The secret of human happiness is not in self-seeking but in self-forgetting.

- Theodor Reik -

STAY COOL TOO!
Willing to Serve

After five DUls, he was given a choice. Lose is top-secret clearance and end his Navy Career or report to A.A.

I grew up as a farm boy in northern Indiana and joined the Navy at age 18. My plan was to stay in the military until I was married; then I would get out. Four years later, I married. After my wife and I had one child and another in the basket, I reenlisted and spent 27 years in the Navy.

I started blackout drinking long before I entered the service. And I didn’t stop after getting married, although my new wife thought I would. She was in for a shock though. The Navy provided me with plenty of “geographic cures,” from one duty station to another. Upon arriving in Rota, Spain, I was soon in trouble with my drinking. Shortly thereafter, my tour was extended from three to four years. I knew I was in trouble.

After a couple of years there, I was sent for evaluation and diagnosed as a “possible alcohol abuser” and given information on alcoholism. This slowed my drinking down for a few months, but soon I was back at it.

In the fall of 1975, I got my fifth DUI, lost my driving privileges for a year and was given the choice of treatment stateside or three A.A. meetings per week there in Rota. Since going to treatment would cost me my top-secret clearance and end my Navy career, I opted for the A.A. meetings. The idea of treatment scared me way more than A.A. did.

Eventually I stopped drinking as a result of going to A.A. meetings. I woke up one day and realized I hadn’t had a drink for six weeks! A couple of weeks later, I picked up my first chip. It was a two-month chip.

I had not been promoted in eight years. I had given up all hope for ever being promoted and had serious doubts about even completing 20 years in the Navy. But then, nine months after sobering up, I made Chief Petty Officer. I served another 10 years with the Navy. I worked at the CAAC (Counseling and Assistance Center) in Barbers Point, Hawaii, and at a Naval Medical Center as an inpatient counselor.

I spent my last year working directly under the commanding officer. I retired in 1987 as a Senior Chief. I spent my last year working directly under the commanding officer. I retired in 1987 as a Senior Chief.

“I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons”:

“Sense of duty, It is a pleasure, Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me, Because every time I do I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip.”

Dr. Bob
Lucky Me

I have been lucky enough to live one day at a time for a while now. Every now and then, I reflect back to some of the best things I’ve heard at my A.A. meetings, things that have served me well. But I’d like to share about one particular meeting in 1991 that totally changed me.

When I was new in A.A., only about five weeks, a member whose name I don’t remember shared something that had happened, something that wasn’t fair. I remember silently agreeing with him, thinking, ‘You’re right, that was not fair!’

Later, some wise man spoke up and said, “I wonder how many DUIs we all deserve!” He hesitated long enough for me to mentally do my math. How many do I deserve? I thought. To be modest, let’s say one every day for ten years. That’s 3,650 DUIs! Then the man said, “Aren’t you glad life isn’t fair?”

Whoa, that stopped me in my tracks. He followed that with, “I don’t pray for mercy.”

That man’s share changed my sobriety that day. I stopped wanting fairness, I now wanted mercy, for myself and everyone else. That day I gained a new way of thinking and a gentler me.

I thank God daily for the great wisdom that has come from my A.A. meetings over these years. Who could have known that I’d come to see the light in so many ways, when all I wanted to do when I got there was stop my terrible blackouts?

Marcella R., Gulfport, FL
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12 Symptoms of a Spiritual Awakening

1. An increased tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
2. Frequent attacks of smiling.
3. Feelings of being connected with others and nature.
4. Frequent overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
5. A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fears based on past experience.
6. An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
7. A loss of ability to worry.
8. A loss of interest in conflict.
9. A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
10. A loss of interest in judging others.
11. A loss of interest in judging self.
12. Gaining the ability to love without expecting anything.

"We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life." AA, 2001, p. 63

"Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. Give freely of what you find." AA, 2001, p. 164

"Though they knew they must help other alcoholics if they would remain sober, that motive became secondary. It was transcended by the happiness they found in giving themselves for others. They shared their homes, their slender resources and gladly devoted spare hours to fellow-sufferers." AA, 2001, p. 159
What happened to Ted?

I hate to admit it, but the first time I saw Ted I hoped he would not come anywhere near me. It was his first A.A. meeting. He had been on an all-night drunk. His speech was slurred, he smelled like stale booze (and a variety of other unpleasant things) and he looked like he might throw up. I remember saying a quick prayer as he entered the room. I said, “God, please don’t let him sit next to me.”

My prayer was answered but not in the way I expected. Ted spotted the empty chair next to mine and unsteadily made his way toward it. I wanted to move to another part of the room but was embarrassed by what I thought others would think if they saw me change seats. So I stayed where I was.

When Ted sat down, I remember thinking that while the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking, maybe that requirement for membership should be changed to include “and a shower and mouthwash.” Yes, I was really quite full of myself.

At the point in the meeting when people began to share, Ted did not raise his hand to speak. Instead through tears and loud sobs, he blurted out that his family was leaving him, that he was about to lose his job and that he had come to the meeting because he had nowhere else to go.

I can take no credit for what happened next because it was the last thing on earth I consciously wanted to do. All I can say is that I was taken over by a power greater than myself. I leaned toward Ted and put my arm around his shoulders. After the meeting, we exchanged phone numbers. And that’s how our relationship began.

What happened to Ted? Earlier this year, he celebrated 28 years of continuous sobriety. However, as they say in the TV commercials, “wait, there’s more.”

As Ted regained the trust and respect of this family, his employer and his community, my life took a different turn along with his.

I was not drinking so I figured I had gotten all there was to get from A.A. I stopped going to meetings. You can easily predict what came next. It wasn’t long before I was on a wicked dry drunk. I made a series of decisions based on fear and resentment. I quickly reached a place where I just wanted the world to go away, for everyone to leave me alone. And everyone did, except Ted.

When I lost my kids, Ted was there for me. He never nagged, preached or criticized. He was simply there, patiently waiting for me to hit my bottom. And when I did, Ted was the one who put his arm around my shoulders as I returned to A.A.

Today, I know I owe my life to a Higher Power, one that always answers my prayers, although not always in ways I expect. I am forever grateful that the answer to one of those prayers was meeting a man named Ted, and many others like him, in these wonderful rooms of A.A.

Bob R.
Shelburne, VT

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A NEW CONCEPT

Our little home group, South Golden Beach, just north of Byron Bay here in Australia, has been studying the Concepts once a month. Some of us had a growing need to further understand our service structure and be well-educated in our literature to enable us to perform our primary purpose.

Older members had encouraged our district to embrace this idea, and the general conscience of our district was keen to do this. We are a young district and are supported by our northern neighbors, the Gold Coast District. An older member generously donated a Concepts banner and a load of literature to our district to encourage us to start a meeting.

My home group members were a little overwhelmed by the idea of having a Concepts meeting. We are a Daily Reflections meeting and we meet at 9:00 a.m. Saturday mornings. We have a good mix of newcomers in early sobriety and members with time, usually ranging from 15 to 30 in attendance. Some thought, ‘This is a great meeting, why change it?’

As a group, it was decided we would start our monthly Concepts meeting with the Daily Reflections reading, followed by shares relating to that. Then halfway through the hour, after reading “How it Works,” we’d have a guest speaker share on a Concept.

So far, it’s been wonderful. Each speaker has shared his or her experience on a Concept, which helps give a fabulous overall view of our service structure and how it works. It’s been a huge success, an opportunity for all of us to learn and grown.

Many members have been surprised at how they are already implementing the Concepts, both in their service work and in their daily lives. The meeting has also helped bring the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts together for us. We now get to see the bigger picture of how A.A. works as we learn more about our upside-down triangle.

Kerryn R.
Pottsville, Australia

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Help.

It’s a category WAIA uses on the Call Log for callers who are new to AA, or looking for a rehab or detox location, or just wanting to talk, usually about their drinking but sometimes veers onto related situations that often are impacted by their drinking. I received such a call from, I’ll call her Marg, who admitted her drinking was getting out of control. She was extremely upset, sniffing and crying and talking about how her husband will leave her if he found out she was drinking, afraid that the fish bowl community she lives within will find out about her drinking, how embarrassed and ashamed she feels, and on and on.

She recently resigned from her job which gave her some relief, but was the job really the problem; possibly. Turns out Marg had been to AA many years ago but stopped going to meetings. Circumstances improved, life got better, so all reasons to continue going to AA meetings, in her mind, were discarded. Several months ago Marg began drinking heavily and now the insidiousness of alcoholism has her pent down, under its thumb, seized in a strangle-hold. She expressed the familiar feelings of wearing a facade, acting like everything is ok, shame, embarrassment, hiding her drinking, stashing bottles around the house. She felt paralyzed to even let her husband know she wanted to attend AA meetings, because, as she put it, he’d know she was drinking and leave her. She had to sneak even this call, her second, to the Intergroup. She had called the night before, once her husband went to bed and spoke with another phone volunteer who, after a while, suggested she speak with a woman AA member, me, in the morning.

Between her bouts of crying I was able to guide her to the WAIA website, and to the upcoming online and phone meeting list. I asked her to meet me in a meeting; and a Great Thing happened. Marg phoned into the meeting; she felt downloading zoom was too complicated plus she did not want to be recognized. It wasn’t the first time I’d taken such a call, but the caller didn’t follow through. I was thrilled Marg did, and even stayed for the entire meeting, shared, and hung around for the after-meeting. Several members asked for her phone number and email to help her further her journey of recovery. The experience filled my throat and chest with empathy, sadness that this disease has a grip on another woman, hope because this hurting woman has taken a few steps toward recovery, and grateful the meeting of over 50 women were there reaching out to her without realizing that their shares were of the same troubles Marg had disclosed to me earlier. During the after-meeting, Marg was still sniffing, though in part the tears where expressions of joy to have been able to be heard, to unload, to bond in a small way with others who shared during the main meeting; like hiding their drinking, losing a husband, home, children, jobs, feeling like a phony and fake, useless, and shameful. Marg told us she had a bottle of alcohol hidden in her bedroom that she needed to get rid of. Everyone said they’d keep talking to her while she poured it down the drain. She talked while she got the bottle and then said, ‘there, is done, I poured it out’. Everyone was over elated and yelled in all different pitches, totally random, YAY! you did it, Congratulations.

This is why I love being a phone volunteer. This is what our founders envisioned. This is AA.

By the way, when I received a similar call, mentioned above, though she didn’t dial into the meeting that day, she was in a zoom meeting the following day which I happened to be in also. YAY.

Anonymous PhoneVolunteer
CALLED FOR SERVICE:
The Sponsorship Committee is inviting people
to join in planning this year’s conference.
We need people with zoom webinar experience

Steering committee will meet on Thurs, August 13 and 27 at 7 p.m.

Potential panel topics include:
Characteristics and Styles of Sponsors and Sponsees;
Practical Issues of being a sponsor/sponsee; Service Sponsorship; etc.
----------------------------------------

The first annual AA Sponsorship Conference was held on September 14, 2019. Over 100 people were in attendance and it was very well-received. Here are a few evaluation comments:

- "It's an eye-opening experience as a sponsee to better understand the relationship between sponsor and sponsee."
- "Catch the secrets of sponsoring and being sponsored that you were afraid to ask."
- "I learned so much about practices that I want to adopt with my sponsees. What positive energy."

Contact Sponsorship Conference Chair (Will R) for more information.
Email: sponsorshipconference@aa-dc.org
YOUR SEVENTH TRADITION CONTRIBUTIONS
Carrying Our Message Beyond Your Home Group

When you or your home group contributes to the General Service Office (G.S.O.)
your contribution helps an alcoholic around the corner — or around the world.

Here are some of the ways that happens:

1 The G.S.O. Publishing Department has coordinated translations of the
Big Book in 70 languages and translations of other A.A. literature in more
than 91 languages. Further translations are constantly in process.

2 Each year G.S.O. staff responds to over 90,000 emails, letters, and
phone calls from A.A. members, suffering alcoholics, professionals,
students, the press and others interested in A.A. Thus accurate and
consistent information about A.A. is provided.

3 Staff communications often help someone find local A.A. meetings,
link members in service, and support the start of A.A. in countries
where there are no A.A. meetings.

4 G.S.O. maintains and updates the aa.org website that averages over 40,000 visits per day.
The website provides information about A.A., including how to find A.A. in their community,
and provides help to members and those seeking help with their drinking problem, as well as
to families and friends of problem drinkers, and professionals.

5 G.S.O.’s Publishing Department publishes and distributes
all A.A. Conference-approved literature. Approximately
8 million books, pamphlets, video and audio products are
distributed annually. Some of this literature is specifically
designed for sight- or hearing-impaired members. Box 4-5-9,
news and notes from G.S.O., is published four times a year
in English, French and Spanish.

6 G.S.O. coordinates the Loners-Internationalists Meeting
Correspondence Service (LIM), which is often the only link
to A.A. for many A.A. members in remote areas, homebound,
or deployed in active military service.
7 The Corrections coordinator at G.S.O. responds to over 6,500 letters a year, primarily from incarcerated alcoholics. Letters often request literature and many express gratitude for a Big Book supplied or a link to an outside member who can take a soon-to-be released alcoholic to his or her first meeting on the outside.

8 G.S.O.’s Corrections staff member also coordinates a Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS), which each year connects over 1,500 alcoholics behind the walls with outside members in order to share A.A. recovery by mail. Sharing From Behind the Walls, containing excerpts from inmate letters to G.S.O., is printed four times a year.

9 The G.S.O. Treatment and Accessibilities desk responds to letters and communications from residents or patients in treatment centers and connects them with local committees. The staff member on this assignment supports groups and members in making the A.A. message accessible to all alcoholics.

10 Professionals are frequently the first contact for an alcoholic seeking help. The Cooperation with the Professional Community (C.P.C.) staff member at G.S.O. provides information about A.A. to hundreds of professionals each year, often sending them basic literature. This assignment also coordinates A.A. exhibits at over 25 national conferences of professionals in various fields each year and publishes the newsletter About A.A. for professionals.

11 The Public Information desk coordinates the production and broadcast of audio and video Public Service Announcements (PSAs) to help reach the still-suffering alcoholics. Each year PSAs produced by Public Information are broadcast on television and radio. The most recent PSA, Doors, was aired approximately 75,000 times the first year of its release. The Public Information staff member also responds to approximately 500 emails per month from the press and other media, A.A. members and the general public.

12 G.S.O.’s Archives documents the activities of Alcoholics Anonymous for the future and makes the history of the Fellowship accessible to A.A. members and other researchers. Each year the Archives staff responds to over 1,500 requests for information and research.
THE BIRTHDAY PLAN
Many AA members across the country are currently sharing their Anniversary Celebration with others, by giving a dollar or two for each year of their sobriety to WAIA. This ensures that the same help that they received will be available to others that are new to the Fellowship.

Start this year and make it an annual event. It is not how much you give that's important. It's thinking of others on your special day, that makes it so special. If you are truly grateful for your sobriety, this is really a wonderful way to express your gratitude by helping others receive the blessings of sobriety. Thanks.

FAITHFUL FIVERS
Faithful Fivers are AA members who in gratitude pledge to contribute at least five dollars each month toward the support of WAIA in its quest to carry the AA message of hope and recovery to those alcoholics who still suffer in the Washington, D.C. area.

The Faithful Fiver idea came about when we remembered that many of us wasted many times that amount each month during our drinking days. Your contribution (which is tax deductible) will help WAIA get through the money problems we are always facing.

If you are able to join this worthwhile cause, please fill in the form and send it along with your first contribution.

Cardholder Name ____________________________________________

Email Address ________________________________________________

Phone # __________________________ MasterCard ________ Visa ________

Credit Card # ________________________________________________

Expiration Date ______________________________________________

Cvv number ___________________________________________________

Billing Address (if different than subscription address)
_________________________________________________________________

_________________________________________________________________

I authorize WAIA to charge my credit card in the amount of $

Signature: _______________________________________________________

WAIA
4530 Connecticut Ave, NW, Suite 111
Washington, DC 20008
August 11, 2020—7:00 PM
All AA members welcome!

Please join us for the annual Finance Committee meeting to be held over Zoom. We will be discussing trends from the 2020 budget and initiatives for our 2021 planning cycle. Last year we funded a series of local PSAs and dedicated funds for our local deaf AA members to have ASL interpreters at meetings of their choice. If you have a great idea for a new initiative in our area, please bring your ideas.

Meeting ID: 849 8704 3662
Passcode: 672172

One tap mobile
+13017158592,,84987043662# US (Germantown)
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<td>Life Is Good Life Saver/Big Book</td>
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<td>Living Sober by the Book</td>
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<td>May Day</td>
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<td>Men of Dupont</td>
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<td>Merry Miracles</td>
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Yeas & Nays
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THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE

Kathy Perkinson, 45 years sober, College Park/Mt. Rainier, July 10, 2020

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