

The Gateway Newsletter, District 14

Altamont, Duaneburg, Guilderland, Niskayuna, Rotterdam, Schenectady, Scotia

August 2012

HMB Area 48, New York

What Real Harm Had We Done?

Step 8

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Tradition 8

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Concept VIII

The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators. They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relations of the Trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities.

Upcoming Events

- ◆ August 17-19: NYS Informational Workshop, Stella Niagara, NY

...What real harm, therefore, had we done? No more, surely, than we could easily mend with a few casual apologies.

This attitude, of course, is the end result of purposeful forgetting. It is an attitude which can only be changed by a deep and honest search of our motives and actions.

Though in some cases we cannot make restitution at all and in some cases action ought to be deferred, we should nevertheless make an accurate and really exhaustive survey of our past life as it has affected other people. In many instances we shall find that though the harm done others has not been great, the emotional harm we have done ourselves has. Very deep, sometimes quite forgotten, damaging emotional conflicts persist below the level of consciousness. At the time of these occurrences, they may actually have given our emotions violent twists which have since discolored our personalities and altered our lives for the worse.

While the purpose of making restitution to others is paramount, it is equally necessary that we extricate from an examination of our personal relations every bit of information about ourselves and our fundamental difficulties that we can. Since defective relations with other human beings have nearly always been the immediate cause of our woes, including our alcoholism, no field of investigation could yield more satisfying and valuable rewards than this one. Calm, thoughtful reflection upon personal relations can deepen our insight. We can go far beyond those things which were superficially wrong with us, to see those flaws which were basic, flaws which sometimes were responsible for the whole pattern of our lives. Thoroughness, we have found, will pay—and pay handsomely.

We might next ask ourselves what we mean when we say that we have “harmed” other people. What kinds of “harm” do people do one another, anyway? To define the word “harm” in a practical way, we might call it the result of instincts in collision, which cause physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual damage to people. If our tempers are consistently bad, we arouse anger in others. If we lie or cheat, we deprive others not only of their worldly goods, but of their emotional security and peace of mind. We really issue them an invitation to become contemptuous and vengeful. If our sex conduct is selfish, we may excite jealousy, misery, and a strong desire to retaliate in kind....

...To put a finger on the nearby and most deeply damaged ones shouldn't be hard to do. Than as year by year we walk back through our lives as far as memory will reach, we shall be bound to construct a long list of people who have, to some extent or other, been affected. We should, of course, ponder and weigh each instance carefully. We shall want to hold ourselves to the course of admitting the things we have done, meanwhile forgiving the wrongs done us, real or fancied. We should avoid extreme judgments, both of ourselves and of others involved. We must not exaggerate our defects or theirs. A quiet, objective view will be our steadfast aim.

Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, pp. 79, 80, 81, 82

THE SHARED GIFT

“Having carefully surveyed this whole area of human relations, and having decided exactly what personality traits in us injured and disturbed others, we can now commence to ransack memory for the people to whom we have given offense.”

Twelve & Twleve, page 81



The way our “worthy” alcoholics have sometimes tried to judge the “less worthy” is, as we look back on it, rather comical. Imagine, if you can, one alcoholic judging another!

The Language of the Heart, p. 37

A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven’t been given the truth may die.

Service Manual, p. 5

Faith is more than our greatest gift; its sharing with others is our greatest responsibility. May we of A.A. continually seek the wisdom and the willingness by which we may well fulfill that immense trust which the Giver of all perfect gifts has placed in our hands.

Grapevine, April 1961

“Our chief responsibility to the newcomer is an adequate presentation of the program. If he does nothing or argues, we do nothing but maintain our own sobriety. If he starts to move ahead, even a little, with an open mind, we then break our necks to help in every way we can.”

Letter, 1942

Tradition Eight Checklist, from the AAGrapevine

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

1. Is my own behavior accurately described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
2. When I chafe about any particular tradition, do I realize how it affects others?
3. Do I sometimes try to get some reward—even if not money—for my personal AA efforts?
4. Do I try to sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On AA itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on humility?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what AA employees do? What workers in other alcoholism agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
6. In my own AA life, have I any experiences which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
7. Have I paid enough attention to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions? To the pamphlet AA Tradition—How it Developed?

SERVICE CORNER - Carrying the Message....



I recently attended the 43rd NYS AA Convention on July 20 and was inspired after attending the Workshop on “Carrying the AA Message—Still Our Primary Purpose.” Chris S. from our Area 48 was on the panel and spoke about service as a way of carrying the message. So I got this great idea to create the “Service Corner” in the Newsletter. The idea is to ask A.A. members (or hopefully they will volunteer!) to briefly share their ideas on ways they carry the message through Service in hopes of sparking an interest in our fellow members to get involved in Service. So, I’ll start us off....

My personal experience with Service came very early on in A.A. as my father had found Alcoholics Anonymous (or maybe it found him...) 2 ½ years prior to me finding it. I watched him attend lots of A.A. meetings and get involved in Service at the district level and eventually the area level. I couldn’t believe he had stayed sober and could only attribute it to his involvement and Service in A.A. He was a great role model for me and still is. When I got sober, I realized that the key to my sobriety was to give back what I had been given. I knew that I needed to get involve if I wanted to stay sober.

I’ve had many experiences with Service throughout my sobriety but the most important Service was carrying the message to another alcoholic. One experience that sticks out for me is that when I was about 19 years sober, I started to feel complacent in the program. I had recently taken on a new sponsee but wasn’t feeling like I truly was giving back. I decided that I needed to take on a coffee maker position and that my sponsee did too! So we made coffee together at a meeting for almost two years - driving together to the meeting, making coffee together at the meeting and driving home together from the meeting. We had a meeting before the meeting, the meeting and the meeting after the meeting. It was terrific and I truly felt like I was serving our fellows and carrying the A.A. message and I stayed sober and so did my sponsee. It’s funny how Service works - I find that the more I give the more I get back - spiritually and emotionally and I continue to stay sober.

I hope you will consider dropping me a line to the D14News@yahoo.com mailbox about ways you carry the message through Service.

In Fellowship & Service - Michelle

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TreasurerGeorge D.
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HELP US MAKE A DIFFERENCE! - The August District meeting will be held on Monday, August 20 from 7:35-9:00 p.m. at the Scotia United Methodist Church.... The meeting is open to all A.A. Members!

Contributions to A.A. as a Whole

District 14
PO Box 494
Schenectady, NY 12301

HMB Area Association
RTE. 30, #114
118 Polar Plaza
Amsterdam, NY 12010

General Service Office
PO Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10163

Capital District Central Office
575 Broadway, Room 128-130
Menands, NY 12204
Phone: 518-463-0906

Please remember to use your group # when sending contributions.

A.A.'s Big Book Designated by the Library of Congress as One of the 88 "Books That Shaped America" - WOW!

July 27, 2012 (NEW YORK) - It's never been on *The New York Times* Best Seller list. Yet the "Big Book," A.A. members' fond name for the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, is now designated by the Library of Congress as one of the 88 "Books That Shaped America," and is included in the library's new exhibition. To read the complete press release, go to www.aa.org. Simply click on the "Media Resources" section and then on "Press Releases."

Save the Date - Fall District Workshop

There will be a Fall District 14 Workshop on either September 15 or 22. If you are interested in helping to plan it, contact Tammy D. at District14DCM@yahoo.com

Upcoming Events

District 4 Picnic: North Hampton Campground:—(5:30 PM, Sunday, August 5, 2012), Northville, NY. Swimming, Horse Shoes, Games, Speaker Mtgn. Bring your own lawn chair. Come in groups—\$8 per car park admission.

2012 NYS Informational Workshop, (Fri, Aug 17 thru Sun, Aug 19, 2012) "Anonymity: Our Spiritual Responsibility in the Digital Age," 4421 Lower River Rd, Stella Niagara, NY 14144.

Open Arms Group Dance, Johnstown Community Center, (1095 East Main, Johnstown, NY, Sat. Sept 1.) Admission of \$5.00 to defray the Group's cost.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

Serenity Group, 29 years, 8/9/83;
Monday @ 6:30, Church of Nazarene

