



The Triangle

May 2018

5th Step: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

5th Tradition: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

5th Concept: Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.

Warts and All

From the May 1988 Grapevine magazine.

I would like to share with you one of the most significant aspects of my recovery to date: the freedom from guilt. I came to this program for the same reason many do--I had a drinking problem and had nowhere else to go. I had been drinking for about seventeen years, and at age 34, my life was bankrupt in every department. I had bottomed out some four months before my first meeting, and had been trying not to drink. I knew I couldn't drink but also knew nothing about the disease of alcoholism. I did not have the tools of this program to fix the problems in my life. My wife suggested I go to an AA meeting, because "these are people who are trying to do something about their drinking, and maybe they can help." And so I came.

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~ A.A. Needs Our Support! ~

Please use the following addresses – and don't forget your group's ID #

HMB District 9

P.O. Box 8112

Utica N.Y. 13505

HMB Area 48

118 Polar Plaza #114

Amsterdam N.Y. 12010

A.A. World Services

P.O Box 459

New York N.Y 10163

Looking for a meeting? Call our district's hotline: (315)226-3501

Announcements

May District Meeting: May 30th (Wed), 6:30pm at Our Savior Lutheran

Group Anniversary Dates: May

- Uptown Neighborhood Group – 5/1/83
- Not Perfect But Sober – 5/1/92

2018 Area 48 Spring Assembly: Saturday, May 12th. 9am – 3pm. Hosted by Central Cluster Districts 4, 8 & 14 at BEUKENDAAL Temple Association - 20 Schonowee Ave Glenville, NY.

9:00 -10:00 Meet and Greet	1:00 – 3:00 Draft budget presentation
10:00 - 10:50 Area Committee Reports	Voting on proposals**
11:00 - 12:00 Delegate’s Conference Report	District reports (as time allows)
12:00 – 1:00 Lunch	

Joy of Service Day: Saturday June 9th, 9am-3pm. First Reformed Church of Hudson, 52 Green Street, Hudson, NY

~ Does your home group want to make donations to the 2018 HMB Area 48 Convention? ~

Make checks payable to: HMB Area Convention

Bring it to the District Mtg or mail it to:

**HMB Area Convention
P.O. Box 91
New Hartford N.Y. 13413.**

All Are Welcome Group “An Evening with YPAA” : Monday May 14, 5:30-8:30pm at Our Savior Lutheran Church, 1640 Genesee Street, Utica, NY. Young People in AA (YPAA) from around Area 48 will host a panel discussion sharing their experience as members of YPAA service committees, YPAA conventions and getting sober young.

5:30-6:30 – meet & greet

6:30-7:30 – panel

7:30-8:30 – informal reception/question & answer

Traditions Checklist – Tradition 5

1. Do I ever cop out by saying, "I'm not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn't apply to me"?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of AA help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that AA old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?

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I identified as an alcoholic at my first meeting, and this fact alone kept me functioning for the first nine months in the program. The people I met the first night told me that if I could stay away from one drink for one day, my life would get better. Since I couldn't relive yesterday, and tomorrow wasn't here yet, I really only had to stay sober for one day--today. This led to the certain knowledge that, having stopped drinking, my recovery lay in staying stopped. And so for nine months, I asked of life only physical sobriety. I met every situation with the simple faith that since I was sober, everything was okay. But you already know what the wise in AA have learned, namely, that we don't live to stay sober; we stay sober to live.

And so, when the ordinary cares and desires of life began to reawaken in my conscious thought, I lost my kindergarten serenity. Life once more became menacing. I was forced to find a sponsor, and begin to actually take the Steps suggested as a program of recovery.

I categorize this next period of my sobriety as one of "waiting for the flash." I was intrigued by the prospect of a sudden spiritual experience, such as the one Bill W. related. I kept waiting for a fairy godmother to tap me with a wand and take all my troubles away. In reality, it seemed that someone up there was waving a spiritual "rubber chicken," waiting to bop me every time I started to feel better. To this point, I was thinking of life improvement in the purely physical sense--better health, better clothes, better car. But the Big Book suggests that "it ain't necessarily so" when it points out ". . .for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically." (Note the order of priority.) When I finally grasped this thought, I began to try and do the action Steps, Three through Twelve.

I came to the decision in Step Three through my job. I hated it and wanted to leave, but couldn't; I had a family to support and no other immediate prospects. As I expressed it to my sponsor, "I don't want to be there, but what if my Higher Power

wants me there?" Since my sponsor suggested I stay put until I knew the answer to the question, I moved on to Step Four, I had a lot of trouble with the Step, not uncommon as is lovingly pointed out in the "Twelve and Twelve." The simple truth was I had emotional problems of some depth and was simply incapable of understanding what I was being asked to do. I finally got something down on paper and covered it as best I could with my sponsor (new one in a new city). This man gave me hope. I really never understood that word either until he used it. He assured me that if I was able to stay sober, peace of mind would come.

As a direct result of this attempt at Step Four, I was moved to seek professional help for what seemed an unending depression. I approached my therapy in the spirit of Steps Four and Five, and my only prayer was that I might be honest with the doctor in these sessions. I am one of the lucky ones. I became the patient of a good and competent doctor who was able to release me from my cell of self-imprisonment. I became aware of the difference between being descriptive and being judgmental. I became capable, for the first time, of looking at my past behavior for exactly what it was--my past behavior--and deciding what aspects of it I would like to change. This began the process of self-acceptance, as I really am, warts and all. To help me focus my thoughts and attitudes in this new way of thinking, I used a simple expression given me by an AA member. When I talked to him one night of the anguish caused by my many "failings," as I then saw them, he suggested that I think "not guilty." He reminded me that if I was trying to stay sober, I was not guilty no matter how often I seemed to fail. If I was staying sober, he assured me, I was doing the best I could for that day. Thus I was able to complete Steps Four and Five. By taking an inventory of my "self," and not

my "sins," I could face the facts of my life without sitting in judgment. Since it is not given to me to judge any other human being, how disastrous to sit in judgment of myself.

I now sum it up for myself this way. I am an alcoholic, and my life is unmanageable (Step One). To live life at all, I must ask for the help of a Higher Power (Step Two). Doing this on a daily basis (Step Three) suggests that, if sober, I'm still doing the best I can for this day. In making my daily inventory (Step Ten), I am aware of past failings. Since I now want to live free of these failings, I ask that they be removed (Steps Six and Seven). In the admittance of these failings, I acknowledge my need for forgiveness from this higher authority, without whose help I would be nothing. My daily sobriety therefore is proof that, in fact, I have been forgiven. This then allows me to continue my life, unshackled from my past. I can face each day for what it really is--a brand-new day.

All is not yet perfect, but isn't that what makes this living in AA the great adventure? As Chesterton once observed, "An adventure is only an inconvenience rightly considered." AA allows me to consider the inconvenience of life in the right way. And as the wear and tear of guilt is removed from my life, a new serenity replaces it. It makes for a lot of good, honest living.

**-- Patrick M.
Quebec**