

District 12 Newsletter

February 2017

Tradition Two

*“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority
—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience .”*



Go to Meetings

Tradition 2: Our Way, Not My Way Giving Group Will a Try

When I was drinking, I didn't want anyone telling me what to do, mostly because I was afraid they'd tell me to stop drinking. Getting sober has required letting someone tell me what to do, not as a demand, but as a life-or-death suggestion (like taking a parachute along when you jump from an airplane). When first humbled by my alcoholism, I found it easy to follow instructions. As a result, I developed a lot of habits that are good for maintaining my sobriety, such as going to meetings, reading the literature, doing service work, etc. But as time marched on, I found some new suggestions harder to swallow. I also found myself with a bit of what I call sober pride, which is the belief that I know about AA and staying sober since I have such-and-such time away from my last drink. It's logical. If I have time, I must be doing something right. If I'm doing something right, then I should know what that is. Maybe I know what's best for me now. Maybe I even know what's best for you.

My home group has a nice way of taking its inventory on a regular basis. Every month, we get together and ask ourselves two simple questions: "Are we really serving the newcomers?" And, "Are we really following the Traditions?" This has occasionally led to some self-congratulations on how well we have been doing. At other times, it has led to divisive discussions that last through several months of group conscience meetings. One month, I brought up an observation about the group's diversity. It seemed that fewer and fewer women were staying in our group. I appreciate the greatest variety of experience, including the female point of view, on staying sober and living life one day at a time. What I didn't expect was that the conclusion drawn by the group as to why this was happening and what to do about it would feel like a major slap in my face.

The group concluded that women weren't staying in our meeting because of the foul language bandied about among the men. This seemed ironic to me, since one of our worst offenders had, in fact, been a woman. Nevertheless, the group decided to add to our meeting's opening statement a request that people please use polite language (whatever that meant).

I was outraged. To me, this smacked of censorship. I was also afraid that if we sanitized the meeting too much, newcomers might feel out of place and might not want to come back. I was mostly livid because it meant that I was going to have to change my behavior, when what I really wanted to change was all those people who voted for the proposal.

It Works if you Work it!
One Day at a Time!
Let Go and Let God!
Get a Sponsor don't go
it alone....

I had a choice to make. Either I could follow their edict or rebel and do things my way. I saw my ignoring the will of the group conscience as a form of counter vote. A minority opinion, if you will. This wasn't without precedent in our group history. One time we had asked people to stop speaking more than once during a given meeting so that all would have the chance to share.

Evidently, some people didn't agree and continued to share two, three, even four times in a single meeting, but there was nothing the group could do. We couldn't make anyone conform (nor did we as a group want to-- though I did). But when pondering the rebellion strategy, I couldn't bring myself to do it. I was afraid to disregard the group's decision. Not because I was afraid of being ostracized, but because I thought about the humility I needed when I first got sober and how much that had served me in creating the wonderful sober life I have today. I wasn't sure if my defiance would be an honest, concerned part of me seeking to correct a "wrong," or my alcoholic denial and rationalization system back up in full swing trying to isolate me from the group through resentment and pride.

So I decided to give group will a try. Through gritted teeth, I began to censor my own speech in the discussions. Gone were the "f-bombs" and taking the name of some members' Higher Power in vain.

I searched for new ways to express myself, my resentments, and my fears. The meeting began to sound a lot less like a bar and more like some sort of civic league. I was afraid we might be becoming too Pollyannish and the newcomer might feel like a fish out of water.

Slowly, I began to notice another change, not in the group, but in me. Eventually, I found it easier to avoid street talk. I guess it wasn't as important as I once thought. But the biggest change came from being forced to talk about my anger and fears in new ways. Instead of just cursing, I had to explain how I felt and why.

This growing self-awareness led me to more fully understand the nature of my resentments and deep-rooted fears and how they form in my mind. It helped me get to the "stuff" behind the defects. I began to realize that the things I was angry at were really diversions from a deeper pain that often troubled me, and by getting into that, as opposed to covering it all up with violent language, I was able to face my "causes and conditions" (Big Book, page 64) and work through them. All of a sudden, I was once again experiencing that feeling I had as a newcomer of having my heart opened up and the contents lovingly exposed to the light.

I remembered when I was new and listened to other people share the truth of what they had experienced as active alcoholics. It had touched me deeply. It had given a voice to a pain that had been hammered down into my darkest places by my drunkenness. A place inside me opened up and received the grandest welcome home ever.

I remember my first stumbling words when I tried to tell other human beings how I really felt on the inside. I kept looking at their faces to see if they were comprehending what it was I was saying. I was cracking my shell open to tell them what lay inside (they didn't always understand, but they always smiled and listened to it all, anyway).

Loneliness has vanished. But this time, it's not because I have people around me again, but because I have started to let them in, and I am letting them in through the language of the heart and not of the street. But I would have never known this if it weren't for an expression of love that came through the group conscience.

**Dan B.
Rochester, New York**

Reprinted from AA Grapevine

EVENTS & ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALENDAR IN A NUT SHELL!

Date	Event
Saturday Jan. 28th	Hinkley Big Book Study Group 20th Anniversary Pork Chop Dinner Hinkley First United Methodist Church, 801 N. Sycamore St. Hinkley, IL 60520 Fellowship 4:00 PM, Serving 4:30 PM, Kickoff 6:00 PM
Weekend Feb. 10th to Feb. 12th	ECR Conference of Delegates Past and Present Holiday Inn, French Quarter, 10630 Fremont Pike, Perrysburg, OH 43551 Contacts: John C., 419-340-9646; Henry C., 419-472-1091
Weekend Mar. 24th to Mar. 26th	NIA 20 Spring Assembly Conference Hyatt Regency Schaumburg, 1800 E Golf Road, Schaumburg, IL 60173 Visit the website for online registration and information
Saturday Mar. 25th	35th Annual Tri-County Spring Conference "Miracles Can Happen" UAW Local 72 Union Hall, 3615 Washington Road, Kenosha, WI, 53144 A.A., Alanon and Alateen Speakers, Panels, Food, Dance and more..
Saturday Apr. 8th	Pre-General Service Conference Workshop Lord of Life Lutheran Church, 40W605 IL-38, La Fox, IL 60119 Hosted by the Report and Charter Committee
Sunday Apr. 9th	Districts 10 & 12, Annual Spring Breakfast Bonnie Brook Golf Course, 2800 N Lewis Ave, Waukegan, IL 60085 Coffee 8:00 AM, Breakfast 9:00 AM, Speaker 10:00 AM,

District 12 Business/GSR Meeting.

3rd Sunday of Every Month

**Vista West Medical Center, 2615 Washington St,
Waukegan, IL**

3:00 pm Concepts/GSR Meeting

3:30 pm Traditions Meeting

4:00 pm Business/GSR Meeting

Help Needed for Vista West Psyc Ward Meeting

Meetings are Tuesday Evening & Sunday Morning

Come to the Vista West Cafeteria at 7:00pm, Tuesday to find out the times and procedures for the Sunday meeting

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED 12 STEP WORK

Sponsor Panel: ATP 1 st & 3rd Saturday 12:45-2pm

Back to Basics: ATP 2nd & 4th Saturday 12:45-2pm

Drug Court: 1:30pm Wednesday Court 204

Mental Health Court: 9:00am Monday Court 220

Veterans Court: 9:00am Friday Court 201

Detox: ATP 7:30pm Wednesday, 2:00pm & 7:00pm Sunday

For Info Contact: Frank M. @ 224-730-3045

VOLUNTEERS WE NEED A COMMITMENT!!!

Lake County Work Release

Tuesday and/or Thursday

Once or twice a month 7:15 pm

Both men and women needed

For more info contact: Les 847-336-3275

Want to be Published

Send your Traditions articles to

Dist12.Newsletter@gmail.com

Deadline for the March issue is Feb. 16th

A.A. Contacts

General Service Office:

<http://www.aa.org>

Northern Illinois Area 20:

<http://www.aa-nia.org>

District 12 Website:

<http://www.aadistrict12.com>

District 12 Answering Service:

847-623-9660

Northern Illinois Area 20 - District 12: P.O. Box 8882 - Waukegan, IL 60079-8882

Newsletter Submissions should be sent to Dist12.Newsletter@gmail.com

District 12 Officers (Confidential – this information is for A.A. Use only)

If you are interested in one of the positions listed as OPEN, please contact an officer.

Position	Chair	Phone	Email	Alternate	Phone	Email
DCM	Paul P.	847-849-3928	paulperini@att.net	Pete O.	224-381-9992	peter.choa73@yahoo.com
Secretary	Kris M.	224-627-9768	kris.miller30@yahoo.com	Tracie J.	847-847-9201	tracie_jahnke@yahoo.com
Treasurer	Jackie S	224-247-8963	spencerbox@comcast.net	Karen F.	847-609-7354	k.finkel@comcast.net
Answering Service	Steve N	847-623-5076	stephenrordstrom@gmail.com	Mike C.	847-942-2339	
Archive	Tom B.	847-363-4363	tomhat609@gmail.com	Roy K.	847-293-4616	
Bridging the Gap	Ray L.	847-917-6442	r.leeper@sbcglobal.net	Byron W.	847-744-2325	
Corrections	Frank M.	224-730-3045	aboutme615@gmail.com	Les M.	847-336-3275	
CPC / Treatment	Dick M.	847-404-3713	dick71308@ameritech.net	OPEN		
Directory	Ryan P.	630-731-5377	ryanjames.531@gmail.com	OPEN		
Grapevine	OPEN			OPEN		
Literature	John M..		Contact thru District 12 Website	OPEN		
Newsletter	Mike H.	847-848-4855	dist12.newsletter@gmail.com	Jackie R.	224-610-6646	jacquelinea1241@gmail.com
Public Information	Francis K.	847-505-2555		OPEN		
Special Events	Terry V.	847-650-2251	enchantedattic@hotmail.com	Suzanne A.	224-430-7200	
Webmaster	Danny K.	224-440-2024	kratovild@gmail.com	John P.	773-540-5164	john.jay.p@gmail.com