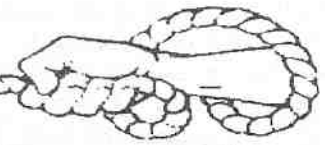


Lifeline



SANTA ANA, CALIFORNIA

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Orange
County
Intergroup
Association

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As of May 10th, the Intergroup meeting has found a new and permanent home at the Jamboree **Worship Center -- 2777 McGaw Avenue – entrance at McGaw off Jamboree – cross street is Alton.** All the Intergroup reps meet the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 PM and every meeting should have a rep. If your meeting doesn't have a rep-you should become one. We have a fun time and the meeting usually lasts less than an hour. It is a great way to get more involved in AA.

CONCEPT VI

On behalf of A.A. as a whole, our General Service Conference has the principal responsibility for the maintenance of our world services, and it traditionally has the final decision respecting large matters of general policy and finance. But the Conference also recognizes that the chief initiative and the active responsibility in most of these matters should be exercised primarily by the Trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Let's talk about trust. If I trust in the future, I have a hopeful confidence that things will come out all right. If I find someone trustworthy, I rely on him or her to be truthful, faithful, ethical, honest and fair. Trusting is more than expectation...it seems to me to include an ethical, moral, and spiritual element. Trust is seldom used in a negative way...although I may expect someone to act badly, I seldom *trust* that he will.

So, when I trust someone or something, I am a "trustor"...I am the one doing the trusting.

And what should I call a person put in an official position of trust? Well, I might call him or her a *parent*, an *airline pilot*, a *surgeon*, a *bridge engineer*, a *sponsor*, or a *banker*, but in general I could use the word "trustee"... a person who is trusted and, hopefully, trustworthy. Just so with our A.A. Trustees.

Our sixth Concept, and Bill W's essay and writings about it, focus on various aspects of the relationship between the entire Conference membership and the Trustee members of the Conference when they act among themselves as the General Service Board of A.A.

We trust our Trustees to be:

- A.A.s bankers and, as such, they are entirely responsible for the investment and use of our substantial reserve funds.
- responsible for our world-wide public relations.
- the active guardians of our Twelve Traditions.
- responsible for preventing (as far as it is within their power to do so) any modification, alteration, or extension of the Twelve Steps without the approval of the fellowship.
- in service to the fellowship of AA by maintaining services for those who are (or who should be) seeking this means of arresting the disease of alcoholism through the application to their own lives of the Twelve Steps.

- responsible for the oversight of all our administrative, publishing, and financial affairs.

Our trustees serve, without pay, for terms varying from four years to six years! Each one serves all year, every year of his or her term. They meet in person with each other several times a year and discuss matters of importance to the current maintenance, activities and world services of our fellowship.

It is through the Trustees' committees that matters of importance are chiefly initiated, determined, defined, recommended and presented to the Conference Committees for deliberation by the Delegates and other Conference members at the Annual General Service Conference. After the Conference is over, our Trustees review the Conference's action advisories and officially authorize the implementation of those actions. They are then responsible for overseeing the implementation for the following year.

We trust our Trustees with our reputation, our money, the oversight of the daily operation of our General Service Office and Grapevine Office, plus the protection of our Traditions and our Steps.

Bill pointed out that the structure of A.A. resembles a large corporation: *"The A.A. groups are the stockholders, the Delegates are their representatives or proxies at the 'annual meeting'; our General Service Board Trustees are actually the directors of a 'holding company.' And this holding company, the General Service Board, actually owns and controls the 'subsidiaries' which carry on our active world services."*

Bill goes on to say: *"This very real analogy makes it even more clear that, just like any other board of directors, our Trustees must be given large powers if they are to effectively manage the principal world affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous."*

Do you trust them? Do you have confidence in them to be fair, truthful and honorable? – as well as able?
I do!

Linda C. - District 18 Area 09
Pacific Region

The Area Archives Committee

A Society that doesn't remember the past, is doomed to repeat it – Carl Sandberg
Number 6 in a continuing series on A.A. Service

From the very beginning, A.A. has been blessed by the fact that Bill W., one of our co-founders, realized that there was an absolute necessity to preserve A.A.'s historical record. Bill lived sober for 36 years and succeeded in amassing over 50,000 pages of correspondence, all of which are housed in the Archives at the G.S.O., (General Service Office) in New York City. Additionally, very early in the journey that has come to be the path of Alcoholics Anonymous, Bill started a newspaper clipping service which not only clipped any articles pertaining to alcoholism, treatment for alcoholism or Alcoholics Anonymous out of

newspapers and news magazines in New York City, but solicited the Fellowship to do the same and send these articles to New York for him to save in our then-national repository. Nell Wing, one of our early non-alcoholic employees was later given this assignment by Bill and became A.A.'s first archivist. After Nell retired, a series of employees have held this vital position. The G.S.O. Archives repository houses a truly comprehensive history of Alcoholics Anonymous and most of it is open to the Fellowship and the general public.

So, how does one get involved in Archives Committee work when the Archives is way off in New York City? I'm glad you asked. The Mid-Southern California Area Archives has one of the finest and most complete archives repositories in the United States. It was started more than 20 years ago and has built a collection that now fills more than 3 rooms. Among other items, the repository contains:

- old meeting directories, (from the 1940's) for Orange County
- old event flyers, (such as the Pink Elephant Ball – what was that?, you'll have to go to the Archives to find out)
- all printings of the 2nd, 3rd and 4th editions of the Big Book, and all but one printing of the 1st Edition
- photos of Orange County founding members
- old newsletters from all Central Offices
- old reports on many events and functions around Orange County
- 78-RPM records of talks by Bill W. and Dr. Bob
- hundreds of old books pertaining to spirituality and alcoholism

The archives repository is located at 6922 Brockton Avenue in Riverside and is open every Saturday from 10:00AM to 1:00PM, or on Sundays or evenings by special appointment. You can make an appointment by emailing your request to archives@msca09aa.org.

If you know where to look in the Archives, you will find these glorious bits of early A.A. history:

- at least one Group didn't believe that beer was alcoholic – so they served it at their meetings!!
- some members of A.A. in Southern California wanted to sell A.A. Group franchises
- you could be kicked out of A.A. and not allowed to return until you "cleaned up your act"
- several of the founding members of A.A. in Southern California had to go to Palm Springs to get a copy of the Big Book off a drunken traveling salesman, who very shortly thereafter got sober and became a founding member of A.A. in Southern California

Currently, the Archives Committee is working on and needs considerable assistance with two major projects: (1) gathering group histories and (2) sorting and classifying a mountain of documents to make them easier to access and to determine what might rightly be better housed in a different location, such as a district or central office repository. This usually includes

duplicates. Just recently the Archives Committee made copies of several old Lifelines that were missing from the Orange County Central Office, and the Lifeline Committee was extremely grateful for the cooperation we received from the Archives Committee. The Archives Committee is always looking for people to help in preserving our rich history in Orange, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties, and that portion of Los Angeles County that lies south of Rosecrans Blvd.

A member of A.A. in Orange County



*From the
August,
1976,
Lifeline*

ARCHIVES

A.P.A

ALL PROBLEMS ANONYMOUS

"Shoemaker, stick to thy last"... better do *one* thing supremely well than many badly. That is the central theme of this tradition. Around it our society gathers in unity. The very life of our Fellowship requires the preservation of this principle."

This is the first paragraph in the chapter on Tradition Five, "Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers", as it appears in our book, *12 Steps and 12 Traditions*.

It doesn't say, "one of the purposes" or, "a purpose", or, "to carry its message to alcoholics, pill-heads, addicts, smokers, coffee drinkers, those with problems of hangnails, hernias, heroin, homosexuality, hemorrhoids, etc." The key words are "one primary purpose" and "carry its message to the alcoholic."

In 1971, I had been medically evacuated from an island in the Pacific to a Naval Hospital in Japan on orders from The Commandant of the Marine Corps that stated a determination was to be made by medical authorities as to my fitness for retention. I needed a little more than 1 1/2 years to complete the 20 years required for retirement. This meant that if I was declared to be unfit for duty, I would be administratively dismissed from the Marine Corps without retirement pay or any other benefits. Having already been divorced, paying child support for four children, bills, etc., this grave threat really got my attention. Although I disavowed any belief that alcoholism was my problem, I stopped drinking immediately. Fortunately, I was under hospital care, so I survived the first month. (I now understand that death can and does occur from alcoholic withdrawal, but there is not one documented case of death as a result of withdrawal from other drugs). I was then diagnosed for (1) Chronic Alcoholism, and (2) Alcoholic Hepatic Cirrhosis, Early, Liver, and declared to be unfit for duty. Some other minor complications were that I had malnutrition, jaundice,

and was told I had less than 12 months to live. (I weighed 148 lbs. and am 6 feet 3 inches tall.)

I was again medically evacuated, this time to the Navy Alcoholism Rehabilitation Clinic (ARC) in Long Beach, California. There I was forced to attend AA meetings. I continued not drinking, only from the fear of being terminated from the USMC and not because I thought I was alcoholic. This teeth-clenching dryness from alcohol lasted another month throughout about 30 AA meetings with my gut level feeling that alcoholism was not my problem, but I'd play their game. I could not identify with any of the members of the fellowship of AA who freely shared their alcoholic experiences with me. Finally, my defenses totally collapsed and I bought Step One completely -- admittance and acceptance that I was indeed an alcoholic. I am convinced that without the ARC I would never have found AA, and equally convinced that without AA I could have been to a thousand clinics and not gained sobriety.

Thank God that my life was saved by alcoholics who shared their *alcoholic* experiences, strengths, and hopes with me -- the alcoholic who still suffered. Had I heard DRUGALOGS instead of DRUNK-ALOGS, I would have been dead by now. Sure, I heard other related disorders from AA members including pills and other drugs, but the primary, number one common denominator was alcoholism. I have not had a drink since. As a secondary benefit, I was returned to duty, completed my time, retired honorably with full benefits and was restored to my highest rank held, Captain.

Today it seems all too frequently I hear individuals say, "I'm Joe, an addict and an alcoholic, or a pillhead and an alcoholic, or a homosexual and an alcoholic. Often I hear a secretary of a meeting, when presenting a cake for 365 days of sobriety, place a whole assortment of conditions other than not drinking on the recipient, such as, "also has not smoked any funny cigarettes, sniffed, shot-up, taken pills,...and on and on". It would not surprise me to hear additional conditions, such as - the ten commandments, sexual purity, gambling, coffee-drinking, etc., added. There are times when I wonder whether I am attending a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous! I don't believe a person can remain sober from alcohol in or out of the program of AA and take non-prescribed drugs for the purpose of mind alteration, so I most certainly do not condone the use of anything for that purpose. However I have seen no references to other drugs, addictions, or afflictions competing with alcoholism as the purpose of our text, "Alcoholics Anonymous".

I do believe that one of the reasons AA has been the salvation of more alcoholics than all the other treatments combined in the history of mankind, is the rifle shot approach to the specific mission of helping alcoholics, rather than the shotgun method of trying to solve all the ailments of society.

As stated by Bill W. in his article entitled, "Problems Other Than Alcohol" (February 1958), our first duty, as a society, is to insure our own survival. Therefore we have to avoid distractions and multipurpose activity. An AA group as such, cannot take on ALL the personal problems of its members, let alone the problems of the whole world.

Sobriety - freedom from alcohol - through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps is the sole purpose of an AA group".

Bill W. further states, "AA members who are so inclined should be encouraged to band together in groups to deal with sedative and drug problems, but they ought to refrain from calling themselves AA groups."

Paul M., Laguna Niguel

MAYBE UNWILLING, BUT READY

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character

THE Sixth Step makes no sense at all except in the light of the preceding two Steps – Four and Five. Facing our load of psychic garbage and getting it out in the open is not an end in itself. It could be so only for one who enjoyed looking at his own filth. Rather, it is a means to the end of getting rid of enough of that garbage to enable us to endure sobriety in our worst moments and to derive progressively deeper joy from it at all other times.

If, as the Big Book says, "alcohol was but a symptom," and the root of the trouble is to be found in character defects such as selfishness, dishonesty and resentment, it follows that the issue is the removal of these defects. Two questions present themselves here: first, who does the removing, and, second, just how far do we have to go with the Step – obviously all sober people in AA are not perfect people.

The answer to the first question is a shocker to some people because, according to the Sixth Step, God is to be the one who does the removing of character defects. I have heard some strong arguments against this point. A friend of mine with twenty years of sobriety insists, "God didn't remove my character defects--I did!" Naturally, this man is welcome to his opinion; if it works for him, fine. But the point is that it is *not* the opinion of the first 100 people who recovered in the Fellowship. Their opinion is clearly and strongly stated in the Sixth Step, and it is *not* that I remove my own defects alone, and it is *not* that God helps me to remove my defects. It is that *God* removes my defects.

What the Step requires of me is readiness. Readiness and willingness are often confused in talking about this Step, and they are not the same. My AA sponsor often uses a comparison that I find useful in clarifying my thinking here. I may hate hospitals and be scared to death of the idea of surgery. But if my appendix is about to rupture, when the ambulance comes by, I get in and go. I don't want to go; I am

unwilling to go; but I *am* ready. The Sixth Step works like that. It is possible to be ready to have these defects removed at many times when it is impossible to be willing.

Even readiness is a difficulty with some of the defects – usually the ones which are the most dangerous. For example, how many of us have had the attitude: God, you can take away all of my defects, but leave my love life to me; or, you can take away all of my defects, but I still have to lie in business to succeed. The way to handle such difficulties is not to justify them but to acknowledge them as blocks to taking the Sixth Step and ask God for strength to become ready in these areas.

As to the question of how far do we go with the Sixth Step, in view of the fact that this is a program of spiritual growth rather than spiritual perfection, two words in the Step hold the key. They are "entirely" and "all." My experience with the Step has been that as long as I was pretty much ready to have God remove most of my defects, nothing happened. When I became *entirely* ready to have Him remove *all* of them, things changed in my life for the better. I did *not* become perfect. But I *did* get enough relief to enable me to get sober and stay sober. I think that, as much as any other single Step, the Sixth Step taken on a thoroughgoing and continuing basis makes the difference between just staying dry and getting the strength to sustain a happy and meaningful sobriety.

T.P. Jr. Hankins, NY

From the August, 1976, Lifeline

SIMPLE BUT NOT EASY

An alcoholic is not simply an imperfect creature who needs improvement. No, an alcoholic is a rebel, a recalcitrant individual, who must lay down his arms and surrender.

Surrendering, confessing your wrongs, making your amends, realizing that you have been on the wrong track, becoming completely willing to start over, that is the only way out for the alcoholic.

This process of surrendering and changing ones life completely is not easy. It is much harder than just apologizing when wrong. It means uncovering the selfish, self-centered egotist and laying bare the soul.

It means dying to be born again. And here's the catch. It requires one hell of a good man to do the job.

Now it must be remembered that AA does not demand that an alcoholic do any of these things. AA simply lays down a formula that has been proposed by a number of similar sufferers who have tried all sorts of other ways to get the job done, and failed.

And the same sort of trouble that makes us need recovery so badly makes the job impossible for us without help.

Thank God, there is One who has all power, who can and will give the help if sought.

Gordon F., Tustin

