



ALKI-LINE



TAKE ONE, IT'S FREE

The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter Vol. 28 No. 6 December 2019 – January 2020



Winner Area 11 Home Group Essay Contest



I Belong

As a general rule, I don't like to commit to anything, let alone a home group. I like to keep my options open. But this independent streak leaves me lonely even as I ache to belong. It's a liability to my sobriety. Fortunately, my home group, the "Saturday Morning No Nonsense Big Book Study" in West Hartford, has taught me how to belong.

In the past, I shied away from joining home groups because to belong is to be responsible, to be known and to be seen by the group. But what if I make a mistake? What if they don't like me? I've twisted that fear of judgement and rejection into a disdain for joining. I've rationalized that I can stay sober without a group designated as my home. It isn't mandatory. Home groups aren't mentioned in the first 164 pages of the *Big Book*. I can have commitments at this meeting or that meeting, and what's the difference? The difference, I've discovered, is that without a home group, it's easy to hide in plain sight. That jeopardizes my sobriety because it puts distance between you and me when my sobriety depends upon connection.

It's nearly impossible to hide at "No Nonsense". Despite the fact that there are usually well over 60 people attending, we spend as much time as necessary to go around the room and introduce ourselves. Anyone identifying as a newcomer is given a meeting guide filled with the phone numbers of men and women who also greet them after the meeting. *Big Books* are given away freely. Everyone announces their speaking commitments for the coming week, and these are also posted on a bulletin board so that members can also support other members. Our monthly celebration of anniversaries is a raucous affair. Although we are a large group, it is an intimate meeting. Each week, we read and discuss two pages from the *Big Book*. Women and men alike share openly about their relationships with their Higher Powers, their Fifth Steps and character defects, their amends and how the promises are coming true in their lives. This is what makes

"No Nonsense" so special. Together, we risk becoming vulnerable to each other, and in the process, come to belong to one another as a group.

My whole life, I've ached for that sense of belonging. I thought that if other people just loved me perfectly or if I just drank enough, I'd feel that I belonged. Yet I always felt cut off and disconnected. I've learned from "No Nonsense" that belonging is not a passive state of being, nor is it something that can be bestowed by others. Belonging is an active endeavor. To belong is to be accountable to others. I belong when I fulfill commitments, when I reach out to newcomers, when I show up to the meeting early and stay late. I belong when I share honestly, and when I participate at business meetings. I belong to my home group not when anyone else says I belong, but when I act as if I belong. At "No Nonsense", there are a lot of sober alcoholics all acting as if we belong.

There may be no membership fees to join a home group, but for me there is a price of admission. I pay by surrendering my isolation and by learning to be reliable. I pay by adopting a sense of ownership for the health of the group instead of standing alone in judgement on the sidelines. To belong to a home group is to risk discovering that we are each imperfect and deserving of love and sobriety. Any alcoholic can make the choice at any time in their sobriety to join a home group. If you don't have a home group, I invite you to join one, and learn how you, too, belong in recovery.

—Julie, West Hartford



Ganadora del concurso de ensayos 2019 sobre el grupo base del área 11



Yo Pertenezco

Como regla general, a mí no me gusta comprometerme con nada, mucho menos con un grupo base. Me gusta mantener mis opciones abiertas. Pero esta racha de independiente me deja aislada aunque a la vez anhele pertenecer. Es una carga para mi sobriedad. Afortunadamente, mi grupo base, "Saturday Morning No Nonsense Big Book Study" [*Grupo de estudio*



práctico del Libro Grande del sábado por la mañana] en West Hartford, me ha enseñado cómo pertenecer.

En el pasado, yo evitaba unirme a los grupos base porque pertenecer es ser responsable, ser conocido y ser visto por el grupo. ¿Pero qué tal si me equivoco? ¿Qué tal si no les agrado? Yo he retorcido ese temor de ser juzgada y al rechazo creando un desdén para unirme. Yo he racionalizado que puedo mantenerme sobria sin designar a un grupo como mi grupo base. No es obligatorio. Los grupos base no son mencionados en las primeras 164 páginas del Libro Grande. Puedo tener compromisos en esta reunión o en aquella y ¿cuál es la diferencia? La diferencia, he descubierto, es que sin un grupo base, es fácil esconderse a plena vista. Eso pone en peligro mi sobriedad porque pone distancia entre tú y yo cuando mi sobriedad depende de la conexión.

Es casi imposible esconderse en “No Nonsense”. A pesar del hecho de que usualmente hay más de 60 personas asistiendo, pasamos cuanto tiempo sea necesario para ir alrededor del salón y presentarnos. Cualquiera que se identifique como un recién llegado recibe una guía de reuniones rellena de números telefónicos de hombres y mujeres quienes también lo llega a saludar después de la reunión. Los Libros Grandes son regalados. Todos anuncian sus compromisos que tienen como oradores para la semana por venir, y esto también se publica en el tablero de anuncios para que los miembros también puedan apoyar a otros miembros. Nuestra celebración mensual de aniversarios es un evento estrepitoso. Aunque somos un grupo grande, es una reunión íntima. Cada semana, leemos y discutimos dos páginas del Libro Grande. Mujeres y hombres por igual comparten abiertamente acerca de su relación con su Poder Superior, su Quinto Paso y defectos de carácter, sus enmiendas y cómo las promesas se están convirtiendo en realidad en sus vidas. Esto es lo que hace a “No Nonsense” tan especial. Juntos, arriesgamos volvernos vulnerables unos con los otros y en el proceso, llegamos a pertenecernos unos a otros como un grupo.

Toda mi vida, he anhelado esa sensación de pertenencia. Yo pensaba que si otras personas simplemente me amaran de forma perfecta o si yo solo bebiera lo suficiente, yo sentía que pertenecía. Sin embargo, siempre me sentía distanciada y desconectada. Había aprendido de “No Nonsense” que pertenecer no es un estado pasivo, ni es algo que puede ser concedido por otros. Pertenecer es un esfuerzo activo. Pertenecer es ser responsable de otros. Yo puedo pertenecer cuando yo cumplo con compromisos, cuando extendo mi mano a los principiantes, cuando llego temprano a las reuniones y me quedo tarde. Yo pertenezco cuando comparto honestamente y cuando participo en las reuniones de negocios. Yo pertenezco a mi grupo base no cuando alguien más dice que yo pertenezco, sino cuando yo me comporto como que pertenezco. En “No Nonsense”, hay bastantes alcohólicos sobrios todos comportándonos como que sí pertenecemos.

Puede que no haya cuotas para unirse a un grupo base, pero para mí hay un precio de admisión. Yo pago rindiendo mi aislamiento y aprendiendo a ser fiable. Yo pago adoptando un sentido de asumir responsabilidad por la salud del grupo en lugar de quedarme parada sola juzgando desde la orilla. Pertenecer a un grupo base es arriesgar descubrir que cada uno de nosotros somos imperfectos y merecedores de amor y sobriedad. Cualquier alcohólico puede elegir en cualquier momento de su sobriedad unirse a un grupo base. Si no tienen un grupo base, les invito a que se unan a uno, y que aprendan cómo ustedes también, pertenecen en la recuperación.

–Julie, West Hartford

Recovery

When it happens to you,
You'll know what I mean.
Until then, nothing makes sense.
The first thing you'll know
Is the last thing to go and
From then on, it's all present tense.
The room will be bright—
You'll forget why you came
But you'll know that it's where you belong
The room will be silent –
You won't hear the music
But you'll know every word to the song.
Through the sound of the silence
You'll let go of the violence
That has pushed you so far from the peace.
The sky will give way
And through shades of gray,
You'll see the moon rise in the east.

– Maureen G., New Haven

God Sent Me to A.A.

There I learned how to change resentments into acceptance,
fear into hope, and anger into love.
I can share my concerns with my fellows
and care for them without expectations,
thereby making each day more
joyous and fruitful.
I begin and end each day with my thanks
to Him who has so generously shed His grace on me.

– Anonymous



What Does Our 12th Step Look Like?

We don't know what our words and actions can be for others. When I see a still suffering alcoholic, I want to reach out. It is an intense need for them to know they are not alone. Does what they hear matter? Does it matter at all?

When looking at that part of the 12th Step where we reach out, it doesn't mean that they will or have to accept what we say. What matters is that I reach out because I love my fellows, my fellowship, and myself. Does it work? Well, I look to our founder, Bill W., for this one. He reached out to many alcoholics but hardly any became sober. While Bill was deep in self-pity and having feelings of "not enough", Lois reminds him that more importantly he is sober. Being sober was all he could do, and that is all I can do.

"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much ensure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail." (*Big Book*, page 89) Our meeting reads this every week in our opening statement. It is why we do what we do.

My experience with the 12th Step shows this to be true. I'm at my strongest when I am working the Steps with the group or one-on-one. That the other person remains sober isn't my responsibility. My job as a sober A.A. member is to share my experience, strength and hope so the still suffering knows there are options. It will always be up to the other person to have the honesty, open-mindedness and willingness to embrace a new way of life.

It hurts when we see people decide not to take our solution. I have had other people ask me to reach out to someone in their lives: a sister's friend, a friend's son, a friend's daughter's friend. Sadly, they have not been ready. These people were in the most pain but not enough pain to change their way of living.

Reaching out to a friend's son is my reason for writing today. He did not win his battle, and took his own life. This one is much harder than any other instance in my sobriety. Many feelings have come up. Could I have pushed harder? Could I have said something else? Did I give up too soon? Do I have a right to be this sad and heartbroken? My sober mind answers these: no, no, no, yes. My alcoholic/addict mind answers: you failed, you didn't do enough, you gave up, you have no right to cry – you never met this person!

Thankfully, I work a program of action. When I heard the news, I dropped everything to go to my friend. I was able to offer him some comfort. I was able to share his son's words with him. I was able to feel, to get outside myself, to care and grieve for my fellows. Still feeling extremely sad, I went to a meeting, then another meeting. At the second meeting, I shared my thoughts, and allowed others to care for me in my

time of need. Two newer people reached out and showed me the love that I needed to get through.

While driving home, I cried some more, and called my sponsor who let me feel what I was feeling. Only love and honor was shown. Am I still sad? Yes. Do I feel better? Yes. Will I feel even better after taking this horrible situation through the Steps? Yes.

With all the pain of this loss of life, the fact remains that sometimes people just aren't ready. When the desire to drink or use becomes more powerful for others than the desire for sobriety, the question remains, "Will I keep on with the intense work with another alcoholic? My answer is yes.

I am so grateful for this program in my life even when it hurts. Every minute is worth it. I will never be alone. I have A.A.s at the local meetings, I have my network, I have my sponsor, and mostly, I have my own Higher Power. All these areas of love will assist me in my best life possible.

– C.S., *East Haven*

Everyman

Takes but twenty bucks a day
To keep a good man down.
He might be yellow or
He might be brown.

It might be welfare
Or it might be crack.
He might be white
Or he might be black.

He might've gone to college
Or a drop out too.
Sitting in the corner
Sniffing his glue.

Twisting one up
As he takes a toke.
Or cuts another line
Of his girlfriend's coke.

He ties down the rubber
Then he hits the boot.
It makes no difference
Which form you shoot.

They might be blues
Or they might be reds.
It's all pure evil.
And it wants us dead.
– Dyllan B., *Manchester*



2019 CHRISTMAS ALKATHONS

Ansonia: Sahara Club, 309 Main Street

Tues., December 24 @ 5:00 pm – Wed., December 25 @ 5:00 pm

Branford: Italian American Club, 40 Hamre Lane

Tues., December 24 @ 10 am – Wed., December 25 @ 10:00 am

Bridgeport: Calvary St. George's Episcopal Church, 755 Clinton Avenue

Tues., December 24 @ 6:00 pm – Wed., December 25 @ 6:00 pm

Cheshire: Cheshire Grange, 44 Wallingford Road

Tues., December 24 @ Noon – Wed., December 25 @ Noon

Litchfield: First Congregational Church, 21 Torrington Road

Tues., December 24 @ 6:00 pm – Wed., December 25 @ Noon

Manchester: Pathfinders Club, 102 Norman Street

Tues., December 24 @ 6:00 pm – Wed., December 25 @ 6:00 pm

Oakdale: Chesterfield Fire House, 1606 Hartford New London Turnpike (Route 85)

Tues., December 24 @ 4:00 pm – Wed., December 25 @ noon

West Hartford: St. Mark's Church, 467 South Quaker Lane

Tues., December 24 @ 5:30 pm – Wed., December 25 @ 5:30 pm

2019 NEW YEAR'S ALKATHONS

Ansonia: Sahara Club, 309 Main Street

Tues., December 31 @ 5:00 pm – Wed., January 1 @ 5:00 pm

Bridgeport: Calvary St. George's Episcopal Church, 755 Clinton Avenue

Tues., December 31 @ 6:00 pm – Wed., January 1 @ 6:00 pm

Danbury: The Fellowship Center, 15 Great Pasture Road

Tues., December 31 @ 4:00 pm – Wed., January 1 @ 4:00 pm

East Hartford: New Covenant United Methodist Church, 16 Church Street

Tues., December 31 @ 6:00 pm – Wed., January 1 @ 6:00 pm

Lakeville: Lakeville Town Grove, 42 Ethan Allen Street

Tues., December 31 @ noon – midnight; Wed., January 1 @ 7:00 am – 1:00 pm

Litchfield: First Congregational Church, 21 Torrington Road

Tues., December 31 @ 6:00 pm – Wed., January 1 @ Noon

Milford: Mary Taylor Church on the Green, 168 Broad St

Tues., December 31 @ 4:00 pm – Wed., January 1 @ 4:00 pm

Putnam: St. Mary's Church, 218 Providence Street

Tues., December 31 @ 6:00 pm – Wed., January 1 @ 6:00 pm

Willimantic: First Baptist Church, 667 Main Street

Tues., December 31 @ 6:00 pm – Wed., January 1 @ 6:00 pm

From the *Big Book*

"When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, or situation – some fact of my life – unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment." – page 417



SAVE THE DATE

Twelve Steps Club Annual Children's Christmas Party

December 21, 2019: Noon- 4 pm

Twelve Steps Club, 337 Main Street

West Haven, CT 06516

Food, fun and games for all ages

Inclement weather date: December 22, 2019

New Year's Eve Dance

December 31, 2019: 8:00 pm – Midnight

Versailles United Methodist Church, 4 Church Street

Baltic, CT 06330

Meeting, Food, Fellowship, Dancing

Limited number of tickets will be sold, advanced purchase suggested

\$10 in advance, \$12 at the door; contact: 860-334-1001

The Gathering

February 8, 2020: 8:30 am – 4:00 pm

Second Congregational Church, 385 N Main Street

Manchester, CT 06042

Free event to promote service in District 2

Big Book Comes Alive Weekend

February 7 – 9, 2020

Courtyard by Marriott, 780 Bridgeport Avenue

Shelton, CT 06484

<https://BigBookWeekend2020.eventbrite.com>

Soberfest 2020

June 5 – 7, 2019

Odetah Camping Resort, 38 Bozrah Street Ext.,

Bozrah, CT 06334

We Want To Hear From You!

Share your stories, essays, articles, poetry, etc... with others through the Alki-Line. We are accepting submissions of one page or less:

Email: alki-line@ct-A.A..org

Mail: Alki-Line, P.O. Box 7060, Meriden, CT 06450

Hand material to a GSR

¡Queremos saber más de Usted!

Mándenos las historias personales, los ensayos, las opiniones, la poesía, etc... y entérenos más de usted en el Alki-Line. Se puede entregar una página o menos de las historias a una de las siguiente:

Por el correos electrónicos: alki-line@ct-aa.org

Por el correos: Alki-Line, P.O. Box 7060, Meriden, CT 06450

O De mano: a su GSR or Representativo de Alki-Line

Alki-Line

This newsletter is by and for alcoholics; however, we review submissions by all interested in the A.A. program of recovery. Material may be edited for clarity and length. This newsletter and earlier issues can be downloaded at www.ct-aa.org.

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