

**\*\*\*\*\*Important Notice\*\*\*\*\***

Many A.A. meetings are now online. Please visit <https://ct-aa.org/covid-19> for more information.

### **Back to the Front**

The Back to the Front Monday night Big Book meeting was started in June 1985. I started coming to this one-hour meeting when I became sober in 1996. By the following year, it had become and still remains, after all this time, my home group. It is vital to have a home group, a safe haven, where everyone knows your name and knows you well enough to see when something may not be quite right with you.

I love everything about this meeting. The meeting location is accessible with plenty of parking. The meeting time is 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm, which is perfect for me because it's not too early, not too late. Week after week, we go around the room and read the Big Book from front to back and when finished, we go back to the front. We have quarterly business meetings and are fairly-well disciplined. This comes naturally as there is a great deal of strong sobriety in this room. We try to stay away from crosstalk, helping each other to focus on our primary purpose: to carry the message of sobriety. Our purpose is obvious, seen in the faces of each member listening and even felt through the voices of all who share. We almost always stay on topic and try to get as many people to share as possible. The regulars and old-timers set the example for the newcomer, who is very important to us and to A.A. as a whole. We care about our sobriety and take it seriously. We laugh with each other but never at each other. A tear or two has been shed from time to time. When you walk in, you become part of the group immediately. We have a ready hug for you, or if you prefer, a warm handshake. Some of the same people that were in the meeting when I came in are still here, although many others have joined us since. We keep in touch with members who have moved away. The men are gentleman and the women are ladies, no matter the circumstances. There is no less or greater in this room; we are just the right size. We show concern while respecting each other and our anonym-

ity. Should someone be missing from the meeting for a few weeks, we become concerned. We welcome the newcomer and returning member with open arms.

I love the people in this meeting so much that I find it necessary to describe this depth of which I am a part. It's an unshakeable, often unspoken trust; it's an understanding that just ebbs and flows from one person to the next. We know each other like no one else does. Our group is beginning to contribute more, and become more involved with service. We are learning and growing because we remain teachable. We turn our bodies toward whomever is sharing and give them our undivided attention. I get together with my home group, my chosen family, every Monday night. From the examples set for me in the Big Book and shared by those in the rooms, especially my home group, I have learned to truly live with an attitude of gratitude and joy in my heart.

This essay is my deeply sincere thank you to my home group. They have carried me through good times and hard times, teaching me to do the same for others. I am blessed to share my sobriety with some of the wisest, most caring and funny people I've ever met. I wouldn't trade them for anything, no not anything at all. I cannot wait until Monday night to get my "medicine." Some people can't wait for the weekend to come, but for me Monday night is the best night of all.

(Mon., 7:00pm Prospect United Methodist Church, Bristol)

### **Back to the Front**

La reunión de los lunes por la noche del Libro Grande "Back to the Front" en la iglesia Metodista de Prospect en Bristol, Connecticut se inició en junio de 1985. Yo comencé a asistir a esta reunión de una hora cuando encontré la sobriedad en 1996. Al siguiente año, se había convertido y sigue siendo, después de todo este tiempo, mi grupo base. Es vital tener un grupo base, un lugar seguro, en donde todos saben tu nombre y te conocen lo suficientemente bien como para ver que algo no anda bien contigo.



Me encanta todo lo de esta reunión. El lugar de reuniones es accesible con suficiente estacionamiento. La reunión es de 7:00 pm – 8:00 pm, que es perfecto para mí porque no es muy temprano, ni muy tarde. Semana tras semana, vamos turnándonos alrededor del cuarto y leemos el Libro Grande de principio a fin y cuando terminamos, vamos de nuevo al principio. Tenemos reuniones de negocios trimestrales y son bastante bien disciplinadas. Esto viene naturalmente ya que hay una gran cantidad de sobriedad sólida en este cuarto. Tratamos de evitar la comunicación cruzada ayudándonos mutuamente a enfocarnos en nuestro objetivo primordial: llevar el mensaje de sobriedad. Nuestro objetivo es obvio, visto en los rostros de cada miembro escuchando y hasta se siente a través de las voces de todos los que comparten. Casi siempre tratamos de mantenernos en el tema y tratamos de lograr que la mayor cantidad de personas posible compartan. Los miembros que asisten regularmente y los veteranos ponen el ejemplo para los recién llegados, quienes son muy importantes para nosotros y para A.A. como un todo. A nosotros nos importa nuestra sobriedad y lo tomamos muy en serio. Nos reímos juntos pero nunca unos de otros. Ha rodado una que otra lágrima de vez en cuando. Cuando entras, te conviertes en parte del grupo inmediatamente. Tenemos un abrazo preparado para ti, o si prefieres, un cálido apretón de manos. Algunas de las mismas personas que estuvieron en la reunión cuando yo llegué todavía siguen aquí, aunque muchos otros se han unido a nosotros desde entonces. Nos mantenemos en contacto con miembros que se han mudado a otros lugares. Los hombres son caballeros y las mujeres son damas, sin importar las circunstancias. No existe ni grande ni chico en este cuarto; somos del tamaño perfecto. Mostramos preocupación mientras nos respetamos unos a otros y nuestro anonimato. Si alguien llegara a faltar a las reuniones por unas cuantas semanas, nos preocupamos. Les damos la bienvenida con los brazos abiertos al principiante y al miembro que regresa.

Yo quiero mucho a las personas de esta reunión, tanto que lo encontré necesario describir esta profundidad de sentimiento del que yo formo parte. Es una confianza firme, muchas veces sobreentendida; es una comprensión que simplemente fluye de una persona a otra. Nos conocemos como nadie más lo hace. Nuestro grupo está empezando a contribuir más y estar más envuelto en el servicio. Estamos aprendiendo y creciendo porque seguimos siendo personas a quienes se les puede enseñar. Volteamos nuestros cuerpos hacia quien sea que esté compartiendo y les prestamos total atención. Yo me reúno con mi grupo base, mi familia elegida, cada lunes por la noche. Desde los ejemplos establecidos para mí en el Libro Grande y compartidos por aquellos en estos cuartos, especialmente en mi grupo base, he aprendido a vivir verdaderamente con una actitud de gratitud y alegría en mi corazón.

Este ensayo es mi agradecimiento profundamente sincero hacia mi grupo base. Ellos me han sostenido a través de los tiempos buenos y los difíciles, enseñándome a hacer lo mismo para otros. Tengo la bendición de compartir mi sobriedad con las personas más sabias, cariñosas y graciosas que jamás había conocido. No los cambiara por nada, en absoluto. No me puedo esperar hasta el lunes por la noche a recibir mi “medicina.” Algunas personas no se aguantan a esperar a recibir el fin de semana, pero para mí el lunes por la noche es la mejor noche de todas.

## **My View from the Parking Lot**

At the Avon morning group, we've seen tragedy and miracles shared combined with the incredible wisdom that flows through newcomers and old timers alike. A strong group with the fundamentals of sobriety, Saturday's meeting has grown to between 75 and 100 in attendance. Our group has established newcomer packets with basic literature, schedules and a group phone list. We also have the chairperson ask if there are any newcomers at the meeting, and then ask all the men and women willing to be sponsors to please stand. Usually, the number of people who identify themselves as potential sponsors is noteworthy. Newcomers routinely sit with their sponsors and even grand-sponsors on a weekly basis, and the “meeting after the meeting” often lasts longer than the meeting itself.

I take a photo of the parking lot every time I show up to a meeting at the church. These photos are a powerful testament to the enormous effect my home group has on my life, and hopefully, others' lives.

### **“My View from the Parking Lot”**

I've been given the Grace of another day that adds up to another year of sobriety today.

Each day I gather together comes from the simple process of getting up, giving up, and showing up.

No matter how I'm feeling it's the view from the parking lot that promises the Grace of another successful day in recovery.

Unity, Service, Recovery

That's what is available if only I get to see my view from the parking lot.

Thank God I can get my view almost anywhere I travel. But only if I choose to find my view from the parking lot.

And I'll see you in the parking lot!

(Mon. - Fri., 7:00am, Sat., 7:30 am, 6 W. Main St., Avon)



## Power of the Home Group

The Do it Sobah group is integral to the recovery of young people in Danbury because it symbolizes all three sides of the A.A. triangle.

In my experience, to have a fulfilled recovery within the A.A. community you need all three pillars of A.A.: Unity, Service, and Recovery. The Do it Sobah group has all three. There was a time in my recovery that I had to go back out and do some more "research" to see if I was an alcoholic. Because Do it Sobah was the first meeting I went to when I came back to A.A., I was loved and welcomed with open arms by both my network and acquaintances. To me, this exemplifies unity in a very powerful way because some of us don't get it on our first try. I was not only welcomed back with open arms but was also encouraged by multiple members of my home group to fulfill my commitment and write this essay, which to me exemplifies service. My home group also has recovery of all varieties and lengths. There has never been a time in A.A. that I have doubted how powerfully the message of A.A. is carried by Do it Sobah.

Do it Sobah has a strong presence of unity. We rotate service commitments at our meeting; we promote A.A. group safety at the beginning of every meeting; we take a group inventory regularly; we have an outgoing speaker seeker; and we contribute regularly to GSO, area and district. If you want to see what a group of alcoholics can do working together, you should check out one of our monthly business meetings. We have regular attendance of 20 to 30 members at our meetings and all viewpoints are welcomed. We've had to change our meeting location several times, particularly in the first year. After much searching we finally secured a place where the young people of A.A. in Danbury could come to recover and feel safe.

Do it Sobah has a strong presence of service within the group and at the district level. We currently have many group members that hold positions at district. We have a public information chair at both the group and district level. Currently, members of our group are holding positions on the New England Conference of Young People in Alcoholics Anonymous (NECYPA) bid committee and Area 11 convention committee. We also have a hospital liaison chair. This to me is important because I remember the mornings that I awakened in the hospital not knowing what had happened. Those were some of my most defeated moments. Having someone willing to reach out to sick and suffering alcoholics in hospitals and institutions is a demonstration of true A.A. service work. Along with these many positions and commitments held by our members, you will find a room full of people on any given Sunday night ready to open their arms to the newcomer and spread the message of hope to some-

one who may not believe recovery is possible. That is the most important message of A.A.

Do it Sobah has a sense of recovery that has to be experienced at one of our meetings to truly understand. We raffle off literature which encourages newcomers to learn about the A.A. program. We have a rotating format that alternates from topic discussion to speaker meetings every other week. This is important to me because while discussion of topics in A.A. are important, being able to identify with virtually every speaker I hear keeps me coming to A.A. At the beginning of every meeting, we emphasize the importance of the 12 Steps and the first 164 pages of the Big Book. You need a sponsor to guide you through the Steps and we have many members who are willing, enthusiastic and motivated to take newcomers through the book so that taking a newcomer through the book seems more like a privilege than a duty.

Do it Sobah carries a strong message to the newcomer: that you must have all three sides of the triangle, which are Unity, Service, and Recovery. Do it Sobah saved my life.

(Sun., 7:30pm, 17 Cottage St., Danbury)

## Second Chance Group

The people attending the Second Chance Group each Tuesday evening comprise a diverse group of men and women of different ages and various lengths of sobriety. At the beginning of each meeting, we take turns introducing ourselves and sharing how our day has been so far. The shares range from attendees saying that their day has been "fair to middling" to "sparkling" to "I haven't had to kill anybody yet". After we read a chapter from *Living Sober*, everyone has an opportunity each week to share about the reading based upon their experiences.

This meeting is special to me because of the people who attend and the messages in the readings. During my first 30 days in sobriety, I was able to attend a similar meeting on a daily basis. Alcohol had been my solution for facing life for many, many years. Newly sober, I had no idea how to live as a sober person. To me, readings from *Living Sober* help keep it simple and the shares from those attending the meeting help me to learn how to face life on life's terms. We do it together, one day at a time.

(Tues., 6:00 pm, First Congregational Church, 135 Main St., Thomaston)

— A.A.



## My Primary Purpose

During March of 2015, I moved into transitional sober housing in Portland. After unpacking my small bag of belongings, I went outside for a cigarette and met Glen M., who asked where I was going that night. Attending a meeting every night was required while living in my sober house. When I responded that I didn't know, he said, "Come with me, there's a meeting called Primary Purpose tonight. It's a good meeting and there's an extra seat in the car." By getting into the car that night, I didn't find a home group, my home group found me. I added my phone number and sobriety date to the membership list and found a sponsor, Ed S., who told me I was to take a group commitment. Little did I know that this service was to become the tie that bound me to this group and A.A. A sudden understanding that this is how a home group works arose directly from this service.

During the first six months in the group, I felt better physically and I enjoyed helping set up the room and making coffee. Still, I was bound by my fears, notably the fear of people, that broad encompassing menace and hallmark of my alcoholism. I began to share about fear with my sponsor and others in our group. Freedom to divulge my private fears came from the sense that I was at home at Primary Purpose and these folks seemed like family. Through the example of others, I learned that freedom and trust were interconnected and that my honesty was matched with honesty. Dave W., a long-time member, once said, "Start shaking hands at the door! The keys to the kingdom are right there for you." At the next meeting, I forced myself to stay by the door and greet members as they arrived. After greeting members before several meetings, I found myself smiling, laughing and at ease. I found myself walking back to my seat floating from the hospitality and love. Over time, I began to trust the group and the experience shared by its members. As I began to have trust, my fears dissipated.

My introduction to Primary Purpose was the first occurrence of what I now understand to be a spiritual experience. My spiritual growth is intertwined with actions taken at my home group and I believe it will always be this way. What Primary Purpose provides is a forum to learn and practice a spiritual life by following our Fifth Tradition to the best of my ability. Each growth opportunity that our group presented me, implicitly or explicitly, has been a process of moving from fear into a deeper faith. I was told that this is what we do. I have found freedom from my self-centeredness, purpose in a way I'd never known, and true happiness. I now realize that there is no other place in the world I'd rather be than with this group of drunks in Middletown.

(Mon. & Fri., 7:30p.m., 300 Washington St Middletown

## Win a *Grapevine* Subscription



The writer of one accepted submission for the June-July 2020 issue of the **Alki-Line**, your Area 11 newsletter, chosen at random, will receive a **one-year subscription** to the ***Grapevine*, International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous**.

Share your story, essay, article, or poetry with others in recovery through the **Alki-Line**. We are accepting submissions of one page or less and make sure you identify it as being an entry for the contest.

Don't miss this chance to contribute your experience, strength and hope and enjoy a ***Grapevine*** subscription!

Submit by **May 1, 2020** using: **Email:** [alki-line@ct-aa.org](mailto:alki-line@ct-aa.org)  
**Mail:** Alki-Line, P.O. Box 7060, Meriden, CT 06450

## Save the Date

**Please refer to [ct-aa.org](http://ct-aa.org) for information regarding state-wide recovery events and on-line meetings**

## 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-aa.org](mailto:alki-line@ct-aa.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 los siguiente:

**Por el correos electrónicos:** [alki-line@ct-aa.org](mailto: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](http://www.ct-aa.org).

*This is an honest fellowship; we presume all submissions are original or in the public domain. Following publication all copyright reverts to the owner.*

