



ALKI-LINE



TAKE ONE, IT'S FREE

The Area 11 A.A. Newsletter Vol. 30 No. 1 February 2021 - March 2021

Connection Lost

"It's been death by a thousand cuts". One of my sponsees, who had moved out of state reached out to me last week. He was bemoaning his increasing isolation and deteriorating state of mind. His therapist had gone remote, his meetings had gone virtual or shuttered. As a result, his ability to connect with the friendly faces and supportive atmosphere that had carried him through the last four years had been severely diminished. I think many of us in recovery have experienced this at some point during this unprecedented year.

As the strands of my own recovery threatened to unravel, I had to get back to basics. I started looking inward for the answers to my increasing feelings of dis-ease and had to admit that I was in denial. I was once absolutely certain that I could overcome my drinking problem by dint of my own intelligence. I seemed bound and determined to ignore my increasing state of isolation and despondency as just "bumps in the road" or "nothing I can't handle".

If I have learned anything over the course of my recovery, it's that this type of thinking is reckless, and ultimately life-threatening to an alcoholic. My disease, a subtle and patient foe, lies in wait for me to abdicate responsibility for my recovery. It wants me to disconnect just enough to lead me away from the wonderful life that recovery has blessed me with.

My sponsee and I broke our respective processes down. *What were we not doing that we had been doing before? How could we restore some kind of nourishing routine in a time of great anxiety and uncertainty? Where do we turn when all seems dark and void of hope?*

As an alcoholic, I have come to believe that the solution to my problems, ALL of my problems, lies in the program of action outlined in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Reading these pages has generated many epiphanies on my journey ...this year is no exception.

There are many opportunities to be of service both inside and outside of the A.A. community. There are many resources available to bolster my recovery and keep my priorities where they need to be. The two of us decided to throw

ourselves into service. We recommitted to our voyage of sobriety. Like ore in a smelter, this feels like a time of purification, passionate dedication, and carrying the message that sobriety is attainable for all who seek it.

— John S.

Conexión perdida

"Ha sido una muerte por mil cortadas". Uno de mis ahijados quien se mudó fuera del estado se comunicó conmigo la semana pasada. Él estaba quejándose sobre su creciente aislamiento y su estado mental en deterioro. Sesiones con su terapeuta cambiaron a ser remotas, sus reuniones se volvieron virtuales o cerraron. Como resultado, su capacidad para conectarse con los rostros conocidos y el ambiente de apoyo que lo había ayudado a sobrellevar los últimos cuatro años se disminuyó severamente. Pienso que varios de nosotros en recuperación hemos tenido esta experiencia en algún punto durante este año sin precedentes.

Mientras aspectos de mi propia recuperación amenazaban con desmoronarse, tuve que regresar de nuevo a lo básico. Comencé a ver hacia adentro en busca de respuestas a mis crecientes sentimientos de intranquilidad, y tuve que admitir que yo estaba en negación. Alguna vez estuve absolutamente seguro de que yo podía superar mi problema con la bebida mediante mi propia inteligencia. Parecía estar comprometido y determinado a ignorar mi creciente estado de aislamiento y desaliento como simples "baches en el camino" o "nada que lo que no me pueda encargar".

Si algo he aprendido en el transcurso de mi recuperación, es que este tipo de pensamiento es insensato y al final una amenaza para un alcohólico. Mi enfermedad, un rival paciente y sutil, descansa en espera de que yo abdicque la responsabilidad por mi propia recuperación. Quiere que yo me desconecte justo lo suficiente para desviarme de la maravillosa vida con la que me ha bendecido la recuperación.

Mi ahijado y yo derrumbamos nuestros procesos respectivos. *¿Qué dejamos de hacer que habíamos hecho antes? ¿Cómo podríamos recuperar algún tipo de rutina fortalecedora*



durante un tiempo de gran ansiedad e incertidumbre? ¿A dónde acudimos cuando todo parece estar oscuro y carente de esperanza?

Como alcohólico, he llegado a creer que la solución a mis problemas, TODOS mis problemas, está en el programa de acción descrito en el libro *Alcohólicos Anónimos*. Leyendo aquellas páginas ha generado varias epifanías en mi jornada...este año no es una excepción.

Existen varias oportunidades para estar al servicio tanto dentro como fuera de la comunidad de A.A. Hay varios recursos disponibles para brindar apoyo a mi recuperación y mantener mis prioridades en donde necesitan estar. Nosotros dos decidimos entregarnos de lleno al servicio. Nos comprometimos nuevamente con nuestro viaje de sobriedad. Como una mena en una fundidora, esto se siente como un tiempo de purificación, dedicación apasionada, y llevar el mensaje de que la sobriedad es alcanzable para todos los que la busque.

– John S.

Turns Out, I'm Not Special

I hadn't had a drink for about four, maybe five, months. I lived in a small apartment in Middletown, had a job flipping burgers and went to meetings every night. For the first time in a long time I was beginning to feel happy. I shared, and more importantly, I listened. I became a member of a homegroup of 90 or so folks on any given Monday and Friday. There was still so much that I just didn't know, and, in my mind, there were a handful of "elite" A.A.'s who I *really* listened to when they shared. One member I looked up to was on a pedestal in my mind. He would share with heart until tears came into his eyes and the room was locked in, or he'd shift with a comic turn and the room would break out in laughter. At least, that is how I remember it.

He and I had never talked for more than a minute or so outside of the meetings. There was another homegroup member, a friend, who came back at the same time as I did. He didn't drive, so I picked him up most nights to go to meetings. He had known this "elite" A.A. for some time. Before one of our meetings, all three of us were talking. When my friend stepped away, this long-time member said, "Hey, I'm speaking this Sunday night, do you want to come?" I said, "I'm in", to which he replied, "Great, let's meet early, get coffee, and we can drive there together".

I was on cloud nine, this guy wanted to take *me* to his speaking engagement. The next day at work I thought to myself, "wow, he must really see something in me. I'm really doing this A.A. thing right!" That night when I picked up my friend, I intentionally did not mention the speaker meeting I had been asked to attend. I didn't know if I could invite him--

didn't want to step on this long-time A.A.'s toes. I also didn't want to miss this chance to spend time with this guy one-on-one. After all, he invited *me*. So, when I dropped off my friend that night, I didn't say anything, neither did he.

I worked Sunday until the afternoon. Throughout the day, not making a plan with my friend kept popping into my head, but I pushed it away, "he'll be fine, he knows other ways to get to a meeting. . . he's not texting me either".

At about five-thirty, I drove to meet "the speaker" for coffee. I was nervous but felt special. I pulled up and didn't see him. I waited a few minutes before he texted me, "Hey sorry, running a little late. . . be there soon". A few minutes later he pulled up and all four doors of his car opened. There were three more faces, which I recognized from our homegroup, who got out with him. I felt about as small as an ant walking across that parking lot. They were laughing and telling me how good it was that I was coming with them. One of those guys was my friend. He said, "I knew you were coming, but felt funny asking you to pick me up again". We ordered coffees and laughed some more. Then squeezed into my "new" friend's car, three big guys squished in the back. I remember looking out the window, smiling and thinking how freaking crazy I really am and how blindingly self-centered I can be.

This "elite" A.A. was no different than I, or anyone else in that car. There are no second or first class A.A.'s. We're all members of an A.A. group going to hear a fellow member share his experience, strength, and hope. When my friend who didn't drive said he'd felt funny asking for another ride, I felt compassion. Later that night I made a point to say, "Never hesitate, please always ask". When we were packed into that car, I felt joy.

During the meeting I felt serene, a part of something. When we went our separate ways and I was back home, I felt humbled, right-sized.

The next day I called my sponsor and walked him through much of what is written above. At some point he stopped me in my verbal tracks and said, "*A.A. is always inclusive, never exclusive*". Tradition Three tells us we are members of A.A. when we say we are, provided we have a desire to stop drinking. Being a member means we *all* have a seat in the car or at the table when we show up. I learned that day, and many other days too, that it is not about *me* anymore, it is about *us*. Without you, I don't stay sober.

– Jordan L., Primary Purpose Group, Middletown

Filling the Tank

My name is Wendy, and my sober date is November 15, 2015. I like numerology and the 11/15/15 helps me to remember always and easily. I am also a checklist type of person. If I



complete a task and it's not on my to-do list, I write it in so I can check it off. I must see my progress, my perfection.

To that end, I organize my tasks by day. Having specific tasks assigned to specific days makes them easier to manage and easier to remember. Mondays I water plants, Tuesdays I do laundry, Wednesdays I go to my home group meeting. These days it's a bit more cluttered than that because I have grandchildren and my parents both require a bit more attention. However, I find that it's all manageable.

While I was drinking heavily, my to-do lists kept me sane. Obviously, I was not an alcoholic if I could have a clean house, living plants and juggle it all, right? As I moved through the progression of alcoholism, the lists became shorter and I lost my sense of balance. Am I on top of stuff? Have I forgotten a birthday? When was the last time I talked to Ma? I could not even organize my thoughts or complete a task without having one or many drinks first.

Alcoholism took away the peace of mind the checklists gave me, and the sense that the world was okay and that I was okay. Alcoholism took away my sense of self.

One of the first skills I recovered in sobriety was task management. I have my list of meetings, phone calls to make, meals to prepare, laundry to do. Life is so full. Life is so good. I have settled in for the rewards of sobriety. I serenely go from day-to-day knowing I'm taking care of me. I'm taking care of things, maybe not perfectly, and that's okay.

Every Wednesday before COVID I would drive to my home group meeting. There awaited a wonderful group of women who get me. Women who had been where I was and are where I am now. At this meeting I shared the real me. Every Wednesday I was refreshed, re-centered and ready again to fully take on the world and its tasks. I love that feeling of being present in all of life's activities. I love feeling like I am not forgetting or missing the important stuff.

Every Wednesday on my way to my home group my fuel light would come on. Getting gas was not on my task list, but it was ironically consistent. I thought, "Wait a minute, this has happened every week". On the way, I must fill my tank to get to my destination. The analogy between the tank in my car and the one inside me is no coincidence. I must attend my meetings to stay on the road to recovery. Having a full tank provides me with the confidence I need to get to my destination soberly, safely, and sanely.

I am a checklist kind of person. On Wednesdays I fill up my tank.

– Wendy J., Hartford



Heard in the Rooms

"The secret is in the surrender".

"God can't drive a parked car".

"Don't believe everything you think".

"We cannot control the wind, but we can adjust our sails".

"If you hang out at the amusement park all day, eventually you'll take a ride".

"Be prepared to lose whatever you put ahead of your sobriety".

"Don't borrow trouble".

"You can look at the past, but don't stare".

"I don't want to ruin today by thinking about tomorrow".

"Seven days without a meeting makes one weak".

*"The difference between **Illness** and **Wellness** is the difference between **I** and **We**".*

"There is no elevator to sobriety. You have to take the Steps".

"H.O.P.E., Help Other People Everywhere"

"Life is a garden. Dig it!"

From the Archives

For all that has been written and for all that has been read, we are led to this instant where one of us will speak and one of us will listen. It doesn't matter how we came to this. We may jump into it or come upon it after great pain or a sudden raw feeling that this is all very real. When we meet like this, I may not have the words, so let me say it now. Nothing compares to the sensation of being alive in the company of another. It is God breathing on the embers of our souls.

-The Way Under the Way, Jim S., Vol.26 No.6 Dec'17-Jan'18

The Unnatural Condition

At a recent A.A. meeting, one member mentioned that being sober, for an alcoholic, was an unnatural condition. Wow! I thought about that, and after noodling it around, I discovered

that it makes perfect sense. I realized how I struggled with my compulsion to drink, the inner twist of the intellect and the corporeal body, the natural predilection for a life fueled on alcohol. Does that mean I can now justify my selfish and unnatural acts for the past 60 years? There was nothing I could do about it. So there!

So, therein lies the problem and the solution. My body is built with an inherent flaw. How it developed is uncertain. Some say it's an allergy, others say it's a disease. I have lived with the effects of this flaw for most of my life. How then, am I able to repair the mind and body that is so affected?

Sobriety is an unnatural condition for this alcoholic. Like many unnatural conditions, it may be difficult to maintain. Now, this makes sense to me. I must choose each day to renew my commitment to this unnatural condition. As my mind and body conspire against me to return to a past life, I must look outside myself for support.

Ding-dong, A.A. is here! At my first A.A. meeting, I wanted the fellowship that I saw in the room. I was so ecstatic that I put \$20 in the basket. That excitement lasted until I got home and celebrated with a drink. This ushered in two years of bouncing in and out of the rooms of A.A., drunk or dry-drunk. In time I was introduced to the Steps, and in time the grace of God revealed to me my Higher Power. This was the very influence that I needed to sustain the unnatural condition known as "sobriety".

For me, this all makes sense and perhaps explains how difficult it was for me to realize that an alternate life exists. I was so embedded in my "natural" life that it felt normal. A life of sobriety requires me to do the unnatural. It asks me to put aside my misconceptions of life. It asks that I make sobriety my priority. The power comes when I truly embrace and absorb Steps One, Two, and Three. The affirmation of my Higher Power on a daily basis sustains my unnatural condition of sobriety, one day at a time.

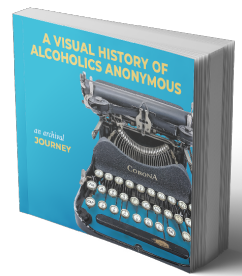
—Al Di.

The Shared Gift

A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

— As Bill Sees It, p.12

New Literature



A Visual History of Alcoholics Anonymous: An Archival Journey

Lavishly illustrated, this lively tour through A.A.'s history is told in hundreds of iconic images never before published in one volume. Illuminating descriptions walk us through powerful moments in our shared history – from the people, places, and things integral to A.A.'s early growth, and forward to today's vibrant, international Fellowship. Includes a special focus on Detroit in A.A.'s history and updated coverage of recent innovations in A.A. group life.

Originally developed as the souvenir book for the 2020 International Convention in Detroit, the book has a release date of February 14, 2021.

See your group Literature Representative or GSR for assistance in obtaining this book and others.

Public Service Announcement

Would you like to get involved in service at the district level?

A District Committee Member (DCM), special committee representative, or your group's General Service Representative (GSR) could provide you with information and guidance. You could also attend a district/GSR meeting.

Don't know when your district meeting is?

Or, perhaps you don't even know what district is yours? [The District Map](#) will help you determine your district. Once you know your district number, go to the [Area 11 Service Calendar](#) to find out the district meeting details – or ask a GSR.

Save the Dates



**Northeast Regional A.A. Service Assembly
(NERA.A.SA)**

It's a Virtual Good Time!

Friday – Sunday, February 26 – February 28, 2021

The purpose of NERA.A.SA is for General Service Representatives (GSR's), District Committee Members (DCM's), Area Officers, members of Area and District committees, and Inter-group/Central Office Representatives of the Northeast Region to discuss General Service Conference related issues and concerns affecting A.A. as a whole, as well as pertinent aspects of recovery, unity and service common to the areas of the Northeast Region.

All A.A. members are welcome and encouraged to attend!

For more information visit: www.nerA.A.sa.org

Be sure to check out the [videos](#)

Area 11 Pre-Conference Assembly

Saturday, March 27, 2021

Meeting times and details are expected in late February.

Please refer to www.ct-aa.org for information regarding state-wide recovery events and online meetings.



Responsibility Pledge

I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.

And for that, I am responsible!

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WWW.CT-AA.ORG



AA GRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

Here's the catch...

We Want to Hear from You!

For each item submitted to the Alki-Line committee for our upcoming April–May, June–July, and August–September issues you will receive an entry into the drawing for a one-year subscription of the A.A. Grapevine. A random drawing will determine the lucky subscription recipient.

The more items you submit, the more chances to win!

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

Email: alkiline@ct-aa.org

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

Or hand your material to your GSR or Alki-Line Representative

¡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: alkiline@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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