



The Power of a Hand Shake

Thirty five years ago, I entered my first A.A. meeting in Bridgeport, Connecticut. I was full of emotional pain, embarrassment and fear. I did not know what to expect.

As I entered the meeting room door, a man approached with his hand stretched out before me. I accepted his firm handshake and he welcomed me warmly to the meeting. I was confused because I had not felt welcomed anywhere for quite some time. I was homeless then. I was secretly sleeping in the back room of a store where I worked. I was estranged from my family and friends because of my alcohol related bad behaviors.

I sheepishly approached the snack table and helped myself to a cup of coffee. Later, that same man who greeted me at the door, sat down next to me and we started talking. I told him that this was my first meeting. He told me to keep coming and that things would get better. I saw a lot of people smiling and they seemed so friendly to one another.

When the meeting was over, I started to leave. A lady by the door reached out and grasped my hand with both of her hands. She looked at me directly and asked me to come back. She made me feel like the other people wanted me there again even though I said nothing during the meeting.

Those two handshakes had a powerful effect on me. The next day, I went to another A.A. meeting. Again I was greeted with a warm welcome and a hardy handshake. Those handshakes provided the warm human touch that I needed so desperately at that time in my life. Those handshakes planted the seed of hope and recovery directly into my heart.

Thirty five years later, I still attend A.A. meetings. Usually I am seated by the entrance as the official group greeter. When people arrive, I offer them a handshake and a warm welcome. After the meeting, I again shake their hands and thank them for coming. I always seek out the newcomers. I

strive to give to them the gift of a warm welcome that was given to me so many years ago.

I do not remember the name of the man and the woman who greeted me years ago at my first A.A. meeting. I now understand that my Higher Power was working a miracle through them and their warm handshakes.

Sometimes, the miracle of recovery begins with the power of a simple handshake. In the first five years of sobriety, my recovery gave me many blessings, including a new marriage, a new home and a new career. More importantly, in the later years of sobriety, my recovery allowed me to make valuable contributions to my family and to my community.

My advice to the beginner in recovery is simple: go to meetings, listen, find someone whose recovery you admire, and then ask him to be your sponsor.

The spiritual journey of a 12 step program of recovery begins with abstinence from alcohol. But it ends up giving you the opportunity to be the best parent you can be, the best spouse you can be and the best community member you can be.

In the beginning, I kept treating God like he was a janitor whose job was to clean up the messes I made with my bad choices. Now I understand that my job is to serve His will and to help other persons.

Recovery is easier than addiction. That's why we generally regard the solution to be better than the problem. There is nothing easy about being a slave to the craving for a drink.

When I was drinking, I made a list of rules for how I would drink in a controlled manner. This great plan worked for about three weeks until I found excuses to break the rules one by one.

A Word of Caution

No one said it would be like this. It is all A.A.'s fault. Yeh, I know I asked for this ... now that I have it, what do I do with it? What do I do with sobriety? I never asked that question before. When I came into the A.A. rooms all I wanted to do was manage my drinking. Heck, I didn't really want to stop drinking - just get it under control. I liked the buzz after a few drinks. My problem was that I could not stop drinking after the "buzz". I kept loading in the booze until I blacked out.

A word of caution: Following the A.A. Program ruined my "buzz" and all that followed. I discovered that I would never get "it" under control. I had to be either in or out of the Program. I had been living the "out" for fifty years. I have been working at the "in" for five years. If my math is correct, I have been sober just ten percent of my drinking days. If I live long enough, I can make it to twenty or twenty-five percent. But hey, it's not the numbers that are important, it is the quality of those years.

A word of caution: A.A. can ruin your drinking and interrupt your death. It did mine. I did not expect what happened after a year or so in the Program. I just wasn't paying attention to anything other than the Steps and going to meetings. What I didn't see happening was that my life in sobriety was changing. Changing not only me, but also how my family and how my friends saw me.

A word of caution: A.A. can set you adrift from your drinking buddies. I had one serious drinking buddy. When I went to his house he was usually "under the influence" ... me too. We just continued to drink at his basement bar. Hmmm, I really don't miss him. I was in the Program when his family made it clear that he needed to seek help. I supported him while in rehab and when he came out. I took him to his first meeting. It didn't last long and so we drifted apart.

A word of caution: A.A.'s fellowship will make many friends available. They are just like you, me and the person sitting in the chair next to you. Every meeting I go to I hear the wisdom of experience – the good, the bad, and the ugly. I try to learn a little bit from every meeting. The secret is that I try to listen. Not just to hear. Hearing is a mechanical response in the ear. Listening is a response of the heart.

A word of caution: A.A.'s version of sobriety is not what they say it is. It is a lot more. But then, you have to experience it. My sobriety is like adding a little salt to steak or dressing to a salad. The flavor is enhanced, and my taste buds are energized. Energized. Yeh, that's a good word for my sobriety. My life is energized. I look forward to attending A.A. meetings. A room full of people like me, traveling our separate paths toward a life of sobriety.

A word of caution: A.A.'s Program is only "One day at a Time". If I were to think that I would never drink again, I might consider drinking again. I can handle one minute at a time, one hour at a time, one day at a time. That is all the Program asks of me – to consider not drinking for a day. One day leads to another. Each day is special, never to be seen again. I often forget that fact and waste a day in non-appreciation of the gift of the A.A. Program.

A word of caution: Be aware of what you seek in the A.A. Program. What we find will not be what we expect. It will be better – but only if we work for it – "One day at a Time".

Al Di, Guilford

Steps, Traditions, and Concepts Six & Seven

Step Six: "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

Tradition Six: "An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose."

Concept Six: "The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board."

Step Seven: "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings"

Tradition Seven: "Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

Concept Seven: “The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purpose for final effectiveness.”

SAVE THE DATE

Area 11 SoberFest 2024

June 7-9

Wilderness Lake Campground & Resort

150 Village Hill Road, Willington

Adults: \$15.00 for the weekend

Children (17 and under): FREE

[Click here to register](#)

Rompiendo Fronteras/Breaking Frontiers 2024

23º Día de Compartimiento BILINGÜE Anual de AA
“Construyendo Puentes con Amor, Unidad y Servicio”

23rd Annual AA BILINGUAL Sharing Day

“Building Bridges with Love, Unity and Service”

SÁBADO, 27 DE JULIO DE 2024/Saturday, July 27, 2024

St Joseph's Parochial School

29 Edson St, New Britain

[Click here to register](#)

Area 11 A.A. Service Manual Meeting

Meets every second Monday of the month at 8 p.m.

Login Information (on Zoom):

Meeting ID: 853 6254 9241

Password: 162425

Reviewing the material in advance is strongly encouraged!
Content to be covered: Chapter 1 (“The Group and its G.S.R.”), pages 7-12 in the 2021-2023 A.A. *Service Manual*—**access to the A.A. *Service Manual* as a PDF [here!](#)**

All A.A. members are welcome!

[Area 11 Service Calendar](#)

Save The Date

District 7

Meets every 3rd Thursday at 7:00pm in the Holy Trinity basement. Pizza will be served. Starting Feb 15, 2024

Create & Print Meeting Schedules and more! on the Area 11 Website

Our Area 11 Website continues to evolve and be a central source of information and communication. This resource is even more critical during these times of limitations with in-person interaction. Some, but not all, of recent enhancements/additions include:

- ****Create & Print meeting schedules****
- Landing page links to crucial information & events
- Meeting finder tool
- Contact information for the Area 11 Officers
- District maps and information
- From the events calendar, links to events outside of Area 11

Visit www.ct-aa.org

“What’s New” on www.aa.org

Did you know that www.aa.org has a “What’s New” section linked directly off the home page? (Scroll to the bottom of the landing page and click on “What’s New”)

You can find up to date announcements, activities, and more, along with notices from the past few months. Access info on a F.A.Q. for the 2025 International Convention, Special Forums, Press Releases, Requests to the Fellowship, PSA Announcements, Quarterly Reports, and more!

[Click here and check it out!](#)

News and Notes

Box 4-5-9 Winter 2023

Newsletter from the General Service Office: [F-36 Box 459 Winter 2023 \(aa.org\)](#)

Delegate’s Reports

Monthly Delegate’s Reports are available on www.ct-aa.org in English and Spanish. [Click here for quick access.](#)

AAGRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

AAGV – Podcasts

Visit www.aagrapevine.org/podcast for a new podcast each week! Tune in for the Ask-it Basket, trivia, recovery-related jokes, & more!

Subscriptions and Literature

Visit store.aa.grapevine.org for magazines, books, & more!

Carry the Message Project

Want to help another alcoholic? Grapevine and La Viña are Great Twelfth Step Tools!

Give a gift subscription to an alcoholic who needs it. Great for: Sponsees * Newcomers * Prisons * Detoxes * Doctor's Offices * Group Celebrations * District and Area Events * Giveaways.

Go to <https://www.aagrapevine.org/carry-the-message> to get started. Carry the Message, it's easy!

We Want To Hear From You!

The Alki-Line is a bi-monthly publication by the Area 11 Alki-Line Committee, a dedicated team of trusted servants, whose primary purpose is to offer current events, articles, and information that foster experience, strength, and hope in recovery, in the spirit of the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous and in particular "to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety."

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

The Alki-Line has many service positions and would benefit significantly from more district representation.

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.

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

The Gratitude List.

Visit the Alki-Line page at: <https://ct-aa.org/alki-line/> to tell us something you are grateful for.

A gift from God

For me, A.A. is a gift from God. I wasn't sure if I would succeed in this program, but after a few stumbles, things started turning around for me. I owe much gratitude to the other fellows at meetings, my sponsor and God.

Rocky

Gratitude List from Roundup 2024:

I'm grateful for the past that brought me to the present and to live with hope for the future.

Thomas N.

Having a car and a driver's license to go to Roundup.

Laura S.

I love everyone thanks to A.A. and God.

Joy P.

For today.

Anonymous

I'm grateful for A.A. and the true friendships I have formed.

Anonymous

I'm grateful for the opportunity to be of service to A.A. and be part of the process.

Anonymous

The smile on my face and gratitude in my heart thanks to God and the fellowship in A.A.

Anonymous