

Background Notes



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DISTRICT 0490
Central New York
Area 47

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Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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FROM the Newsletter Chair:

My life is filled with good friends who I met, gotten to know, and developed relationships with over the years in AA. Most have become lifelong friends. I also have friends who I have met through AA who have struggled and gone back to drinking. Some have died an alcoholic death, some I see occasionally and they tell me in passing they "are fine", some on all appearances are OK even though they decided the program is not for them. We see all aspects of alcoholism as we "trudge the happy road to destiny". I know without a doubt that I am a better person because of AA. I know I am happier, have been more productive, a better family man, better member of the community (AA and the community at large), and lastly but most important I am a more spiritual man. I know for a fact that these improvements in my life are the sole result of working the steps of AA and staying involved with AA. I seem to be a creature of habit. The habits I built in early recovery that allowed me to stay sober still pay benefits today. In fact they have become second nature so I can continue to grow along spiritual lines. Even given that there is ample evidence for me that I need the constant reminder by attending AA regularly that I need to do these things daily. I have experienced slow degradation of habit when I become "restless, irritable, and discontented". Sometimes that is due to becoming a little lax in the program, sometimes it's due to life's invariable challenges, sometimes it's due to just becoming a little disillusioned with my lot in life. By staying involved it reminds me to practice steps 10 and 11 daily, but it also gives me the best opportunity to practice the 12th step. AA meetings are the best place I have found to en masse be given an opportunity to help another sick and suffering alcoholic. I have come to rely on AA and the friends I have made in recovery. But most important I was taught to rely on my higher power by actively seeking strength through prayer and meditation. Sometimes I go to my friends to work through things that baffle me, sometimes they come to me, and sometimes to be honest we likely baffle each other. I like my life today because of AA. I think I'll



Coming Home

At 34 years old I was sitting in my second rehab in 8 months. It took those 8 months between the first rehab and the second rehab to drive home what I was really up against with my addiction and alcoholism. I admitted I had a problem, was introduced to a solution and people who practiced the solution, and I was unable to grab it because of my character defects. I have heard it said "AA ruins your drinking". In all actuality my drinking had been ruined long before AA, I just didn't know it. Once I knew I had a problem, knew there was a solution, and continued to drink; I became an emotional basket case. I was surrounded by the four horsemen "Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair!". So there I was sitting in a rehab at a speaker meeting that was supposed to be brought in to that facility. The group that was supposed to come couldn't make it because of a snow storm. One of the counselors was a bit younger than I was. He decided to fill in as a speaker because he was in recovery. There were about 60 of us patients there. At some point he was saying that he wanted us to look around the room, he paused, he said "In six months the statistics show there will be 3 of you still sober", we looked around. Then he said "in a year statistics show, there will be 2 of you still sober!". All that I could think of is "I wonder who the other one will be?"! I don't even know if I knew then how desperate I was. I don't know if even then if I acknowledged that perhaps the desperation to do whatever necessary to get and stay sober had somehow traveled from some vague idea to seat itself in my heart. I do remember that thought was clear and still remember how clear that was today. I remember being driven by many instances in recovery that looking back on where not of my own doing. I couldn't have thought my way to a decision point that I need to make this a priority. I am disciplined in life in many areas, but I could never have prioritized my way to recovery. I don't know if this was a turning point, there have been too many instances like this for me in hind sight that seemed like turning points. It was certainly a significant change in thought (or direction) for me. A random snowstorm stranding members? A fill in that had facts that could penetrate my stubborn clinging to old ideas? Coincidence? Desperation? Other incidents similar to this that I could point to that I cannot for the life of me quantify as happenstance! Many instances in my path to recovery that I can not really explain how the circumstances aligned to allow me to get and stay sober. Two things I know: 1) Out of desperation and a mustard seed of willingness God Stepped in...2) He stepped in in the form of sober people and the Program of A.A.

- Anonymous

On the lighter side



A little drink now and then never hurt any one. Look at me.



Get a Sponsor, be a Sponsor!

Personal Inventory or self appraisal are well proven and documented improvement methods across to many disciplines throughout history. Yet to my recollection I never practiced this on a serious level nor with honesty until forced to in order to recover from alcoholism. It's not that I never thought I was wrong, realized I was wrong, nor saw that my actions were wrong. I certainly did. What seemed to have escaped me is that in order to have any lasting effect I had to develop a consistent method of reflection with depth to ensure improvement. Let me be clear, the 10th step combined with what I learned in the 4th, 5th, and 9th step– gave me a method that not only insured recovery but gave clear practical method and knowledge on how improve as a human being. That in turn gave me better opportunity and a means to be happy. What I practiced in life prior to getting sober and the steps was a guilt based apology system with no clear review of my actions and what had driven those actions. In essence, if I made someone mad at me and then couldn't summon the righteous indignation to justify my actions, I lamely apologized and went about my business. What that ensured was a pattern of behavior, actually a degradation in my patterns of behavior where my character and actions were not only unacceptable to decent society, but in the end, unacceptable to my core being. I couldn't stand myself, what I had become, and I was alone. Most decent people had long seen my poor behavior as a clear sign of my lack of trustworthiness, and it was! I had to get sober. The people who had been able to had worked the steps. My sponsor took me through the steps. What I found in step 4 is a method to honestly and dispassionately get down to what drove my poor actions and reactions to life. The eye opening revelation for me was the 4th column or parenthesis as described in the big book that revealed the underlying emotion which caused my reactions. By understanding what caused my reactions to life, I could correct my behavior going forward. Most common emotional reaction for me was some level of fear. So, when I do my daily tenth step, if I cannot resolve my discomfort and disconnect, I will do a 4th step style 10th step. Talking with my fellowship helps as well. Thank God for the freedom of self inspection. - Anonymous

Am I boring or bored?

I remember when I entered recovery, I thought my life was over. No more parties, nightclubs, wild, fun times. And worse, I felt sentenced to meetings, where there were clicks of people who knew each other – I felt like I was back in high school. Sure, some people reached out to me, but I mostly wanted to isolate and keep to my secrets. And that's when I told my sponsor how boring the program was.

I'll never forget how patiently he listened to me. Once I was done – or had started repeating myself for the third time – he asked me some questions. “Are you asking to join people after the meetings for coffee or a meal?” No. “Are you offering to help set up or clean up after?” No. “Are you going to any of the picnics, roundups, dances and parties that are offered?” No. “Then no wonder you're bored. You're boring!”

My sponsor explained that alcoholism is a disease that wants to keep us isolated so it can kill us. He told me that people in the program insist on having fun and as a group they're not a glum lot. Just look at the laughter and friendships you see. But, you have to take contrary action and join in if you want to be a part of. And deep down, I did. So I did get active. And what I found to be true in the program is also true in life: You get what you put in.

Wisdom of the rooms - Jay R. Arco, Idaho

District News and Events

Speaker Meeting Candlelight Group Methodist Church Main and Grove St.
 Sept. 30th 8pm Speaker- Anniversaries

Anniversaries					
Name	## Years	Home Group	Name	## Years	Home Group
Debbie S.	33	Nooners	John O.	11	Main and Grove(W)
Michael D.	3	Nooners			

District 0490	
PO Box 481 Oneida, NY 13421 Email: district0490@yahoo.com Website: www.aadistrict0490.org	Next District Meeting: Sept. 16, 2:00 pm Oneida Rec. Center 217 Cedar St, Oneida, NY

HOTLINE NUMBERS	
Oneida	315-533-1227
Rome	315-201-6644
Utica	315-732-6880
Syracuse	315-463-5011

Area 47	
CNY Area Committee Treasurer PO Box 4875 Ithaca, NY 14852-4875 Website: www.aacny.org	Next Area Assembly: Sept. 9, 1:00 pm TBA visit website for details

Alcoholic Anonymous World Svc.	
Grand Central Station Box 459, New York 10163 Website: www.aa.org	

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