

DISTRICT 35

AA NEWSLETTER

Trust God, Clean House, Help Others



THIS MONTHS STEP & TRADITION:

Step 12: *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

Tradition 12: *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities.*

Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill.

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends - this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives. - A.A. BIG BOOK, P. 89

And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all. - LONG FORM OF TRADITION 12

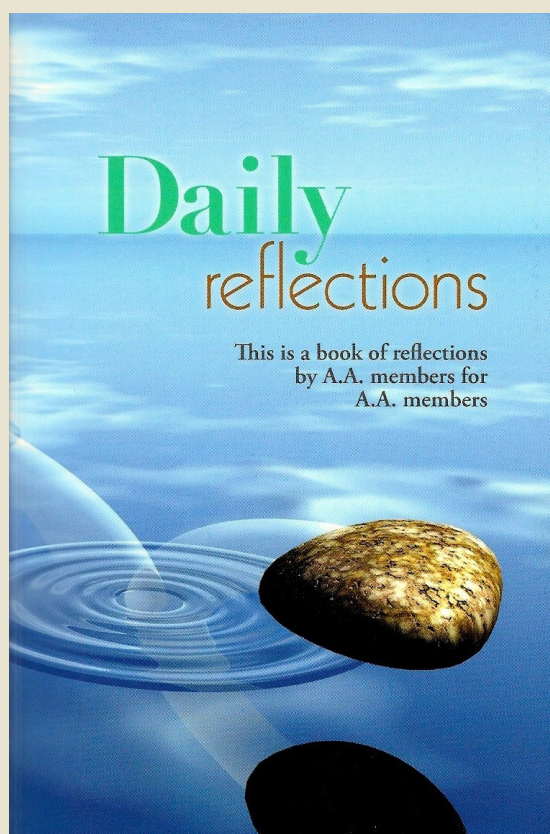
DISTRICT 35 MEMBERS ANSWER THIS QUESTION:

"In Step 12, it speaks of having a spiritual awakening; what lasting changes have resulted from your spiritual awakening?"

The Big Book talks about a spiritual awakening of the educational variety, and that was my experience. It was a collection of little lights, lots of prayer, doing service work, small glimpses of awareness, reading AA literature, working with my sponsor, knowledge learned from other members, from lots of meetings, and I heard "stay with us until the miracle happens." Someone else said he had to make his bed everyday, small things add up to a more manageable life. And one day I was making my bed, saying the serenity prayer; when it struck me that I was happy, joyous, and free from the bondage of alcohol & that the miracle had happened for me! As a result of my experience, I keep doing what worked for me, all of the above, working with others praying, sharing, clearing away the wreckage everyday in little actions, being of love and service wherever I can be.

- Teresa H.

(continued on the next page)



December 5:

A New State of Consciousness

He has been granted a gift which amounts to a new state of consciousness and being.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 107

Many of us in A.A. puzzle over what is a spiritual awakening. I tended to look for a miracle, something dramatic and earth-shattering. But what usually happens is that a sense of well-being, a feeling of peace, transforms us into a new level of awareness. That's what happened to me. My insanity and inner turmoil disappeared and I entered into a new dimension of hope, love and peace. I think the degree to which I continue to experience this new dimension is in direct proportion to the sincerity, depth and devotion with which I practice the Twelve Steps of A.A.

"In Step 12, it speaks of having a spiritual awakening; what lasting changes have resulted from your spiritual awakening?"

Spiritual awakening means new cool shades, highly sensitive hearing aids, a brand new zipper and a sparkling new pacemaker.

The new shades allows me to look at people, places, situations and circumstances in a new light. I am able to see people as they are: good, bad or ugly. I can see where others go through worse than me almost daily but they know and accept it. Going through life changing events, grief and loss are not easy but people just put on their big pants and move on. I see people accept the world as it is. Life is accepted as it is. People just say "We will rebuild" This too shall pass" "It's life". New glasses allows me to see those who have lighter steps have believe in something. Even faith in something that at times did not make any sense. News glasses means looking at a cool person and saying I want to be just like him. Not the ladies guy or the most popular but the one with the most serenity, the person who has a lot of good people around them. A person who is a good friend. New glasses means seeing everything on earth is Creator given and must be respected, connected to and responsible for and to.

New hearing aids mean the ability to listen for long periods of time, even to listen to those who disagree with me. Early in my dry days, much to my surprise and frustration, I discovered I was a poor listener. I was always getting up, getting coffee or leaving the room. In my mind I was at a beach or hockey game or with a hot woman. Whenever I "came" back to the room, I pretend to listen, if only to make a comeback, preferably a smart one. Many times I blocked out the message because of the speaker. I did not want to be that person anymore. But I realized I did not know what to do. I had to ask: how can I listen? I was told to sit down, follow the lips of the person speaking and don't think. I could not even do those things at once. I had to start with what I thought was the easiest chore. But even trying to sit for an hour was a big challenge. I had to tell myself to sit. Watch the speaker's lips. I hated it. Whenever I complained about the speaker I was reminded that if I am hearing the same messages over and over, I am not listening very well. Early on I went to many meeting without say a word. That was the only way for me to learn.

A new zipper: shut up. Listen. Elders use to say there is a reason we have one mouth and two ears. We are meant to learn. Early sponsors use to demand I show up, sit down and shut up. They knew I could not learn if I was talking. But I truly believed I was created to talk, to teach and philosophize. I seem to think the useless information I had as a practicing alcoholic was something the world needed to survive. I thought I had to give you advise on how to live your life. Concentrating on listening helped. The biggest problem was I thought I was an intellectual giant. I was sure I had the answers. That you needed my thoughts and advise. My grandiosity astonishes me.

A new pacemaker means a new heart. A more loving heart, more accepting heart and faith in a Creator that I do not always understand. It means taking a chance at loving someone without conditions, without strings. It means a the ability to be teachable and to reach out, or to carry the message even with a big fear of failure. It means breaking down the walls of fear, hate and anger. It means reaching out to someone who might or will reject you. It means accepting people, places and things just as they are. It means learning that a person who is unwilling or unable to receive is OK. It is not about me. What I have to do is the doing. I had to accept whatever comes out of it. It means trying to understand the Creator and his will for me.

The most significant lasting change, I am most grateful for, is the allowing myself to feel. In order not to feel fear, anger or hate., I turned off the feel valve. What I did not realized was I also turned off love, joy and laughter. Feeling pain was necessary to loving another human being again and giving myself permission to be human. If I give myself that allowance, I am better at accepting you just as you are.

(Written by a member from the Polaris Group)

A.A. Historical Events in December

Dec 1 1940 – Chicago Daily Tribune begins a series of articles on AA by Nall Hamilton.

Dec 5 1985 – Dave B, founder of Montreal Group, dies weeks before 50th anniversary. His story was added to the 4th Edition Big Book.

Dec 6 1939 – Bert the Tailor lends Works Publishing \$1000.

Dec 6 1979 – Akron Beacon reports death of Henrietta Sieberling.

Dec 7 1949 – Sister Ignatia received Poverello Medal on behalf of A.A.

Dec 10 1975 – Birds of a Feather AA group for pilots is formed.

Dec 11 1934 – Bill admitted to Towns Hospital for the fourth and last time (fall '33, '34 in summer, midsummer and final admittance).

Dec 11 1941 – Dallas Morning News reports first AA group formed in Dallas.

Dec 12 1934 – Bill has Spiritual Experience at Towns Hospital.

Dec 12 1937 – Bill meets with Rockefeller Foundation and tries to get money.

Dec 13 1937 – Rockland State Mental Hospital takes patients to meeting in New Jersey.

Dec 13 or 14 1934 – Ebby visits Bill at Towns hospital, brings William James' book, Varieties of Religious Experience.

Dec 19 1939 – Los Angeles hold their first AA meeting there.

Dec 20 1945 – Rowland H. dies (he carried the Oxford Group message to Ebby).

Dec 27 1893 – Rev. Samuel Shoemaker is born.

Other December happenings with no specific date:

Dec 1934 – Bill & Lois start attending Oxford Group meetings.

Dec 1934 to May 1935 – Bill works with alcoholics, but fails to sober any of them. Lois reminds him HE is sober.

Dec 1938 – Twelve Steps written.

Nov/Dec 1939 – Akron group withdraws from association with Oxford Group. Meetings moved from T. Henry & Clarence Williams' home to Dr Bob and other members' homes.

Dec 1939 – First AA group in mental institution, Rockland State Hospital, NY.

Dec 1939 – First home meeting in Los Angeles at Kaye M.'s house.

Dec 1939 – Matt Talbot Club has 88 members, uses wagons to collect old furniture to recondition & sell, not A.A., used A.A. program, material, marked first effort reach alcoholics outside married, middle-class category.

Dec 1940 – First AA group formed in St. Louis, Missouri.

Dec 1940 – Group started Ashtabula, Ohio due to Plain Dealer articles. A.A. Cleveland has about 30 groups.

Dec 1948 – Dr. Bob's last major talk, in Detroit.

Dec 1950 – Grapevine article signed by both Bill and Dr. Bob recommend establishing AA General Service Conference.

Dec 1955 – Man on the Bed painting by Robert M. first appeared in Grapevine. Painting originally called Came to Believe.

Dec 1982 – Nell Wing retires from GSO after 35 years of service.

Alcoholics Anonymous®

Dear Friends,

Greetings from the General Service Office (G.S.O.) of Alcoholics Anonymous!

We are happy to announce a Virtual Western U.S./Canada Forum on December 19, 2020: "2020: Experience, Strength & Hope - what it was like, what happened, and what it is like now."

The one-day event will feature participation from the Pacific, Southwest, West Central and Western Canada Regions. As with traditional Regional Forums, the day will include workshops, presentations, Q&A's, General Sharing, and much, much more!

Registration will open on November 20, 2020 and can be accessed on our website at www.aa.org.

All members are invited, so get on the virtual bus! Bring a newcomer!

In fellowship,

Sandra W.
Regional Forums



Regional Forums