

NNIG MONTHLY MEETING
SPEAKER



January 14, 2023
Patt O., Fullerton, CA
Happy Hour
Speaker at 7:00

Silver Legacy - 407 North Virginia St., Reno - Doors open at 6:30

January, 2023

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GENERAL WARRANTIES OF THE NORTHERN NEVADA INTERGROUP ASSOCIATION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

In all its proceedings, the Intergroup Association observes the spirit of AA Traditions, taking great care that the Intergroup Association never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus a reserve be its prudent financial principal; that none of the Intergroup Association members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decision be reached by discussion, vote and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that no Intergroup Association action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Intergroup Association may act for the service of AA Groups in the Northern Nevada area and parts of Northern California, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous, the Intergroup Association itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

(The above is adapted and modified from "The AA Service Manual", and AA Co-Founder Bill W's. Twelve Concepts for World Service; Concept XII, as adopted by the General Service Conference on April 26, 1962. This adaptation of copyrighted AA material has been approved by the General Service Board)

CENTRAL OFFICE

436 S. Rock Blvd.,
Sparks, NV 89431
Monday thru Friday
9:00 AM to 5:00 PM

Saturday 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM

24 Hour Answering Service:

(775) 355-1151 Fax: (775) 355-1560

EMAIL: officemanager@nng.org

Web Site/Meeting Schedule: nng.org

The Bracer: nngbracer@gmail.com



NORTHERN NEVADA INTERGROUP

FOR THE GOOD OF THE GROUP

Our common welfare is at the top of the list when it comes to what we share

The other day someone at our home group had to be interrupted by one of the long-timers in the room. What could cause an interruption like this, you ask?

Our group conscience says that the needs of the group come before the individual ... in line with our First Tradition. The limited time we have available is for carrying the message, not for providing a forum for someone to carry out a rant about how their life is all messed up. We try to be as tolerant as we can, but sometimes the meeting needs to get back on track. Where did I learn this?

Some 25 years ago, when I was a newcomer, my life was a complete mess. I was in a treatment center and learned to express my feelings in the group. However, the folks in AA were not so sure that was the answer. A couple of times people in meetings with a lot more time than me explained that it was in the best interest of the group that the members practiced the principles. My sponsor explained that it was best for me to call him with my problems and not to use up the group's time to vent all my feelings. He told me that it was OK to share about a problem no more than three times at a meeting. And I needed to try and share what kind of a solution I was going to be applying to the problem. He wanted me to get away from wallowing in my problem with its accompanying self-pity. Sometimes he would just ask, "What Step are you on?"

It does take some courage to interrupt someone when they wander off track, but in the long run it's best for the group. In my case, it was best for me in the long run, too.

There are times, however, when interruptions in meetings are not necessarily for the good of AA. All too often I see a meeting interrupted with shouts of "Who are you?" when someone sharing inadvertently forgets to properly identify themselves. To me, this shows a lack of compassion and patience. Interruptions should be few and far between, such as when someone is disrupting the group. It's actually best to talk to someone after the meeting, so that they are not made to feel less than.

If you're ever in the Roseburg, Oregon area please stop in for a visit to my home group, the Brown Bag group. It meets Monday through Friday at noon. You'll be made to feel welcome and will probably be asked to share. Newcomers are always welcome. **BY: KEN T. | TENMILE, OREGON**

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A A's

Recovery Step One:

"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable"

Three

Unity Tradition One:

"Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity"

Legacies

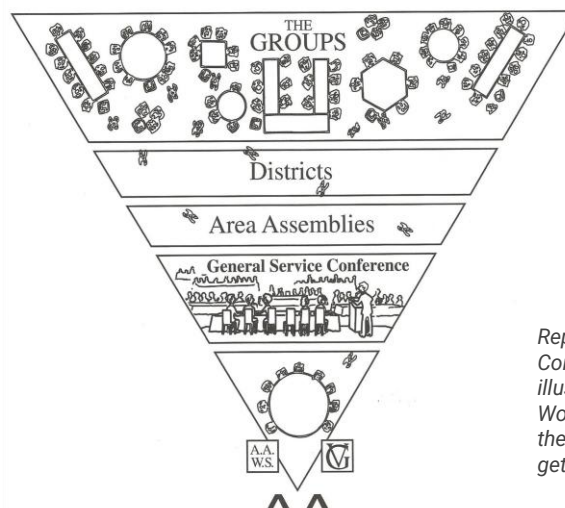
Service Concept One:

"Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship"

Concept I - Responsibility and Authority for A.A. World Services Resides in the Collective Conscience of A.A. as a Whole.

Alcoholics Anonymous has been called an upside-down organization because the "ultimate responsibility and final authority for . . . world services" resides with the groups — rather than with the trustees of the General Service Board or the General Service Office in New York. In Concept I, Bill traces how this came to be. The first step in 1938 was "the creation of a trusteeship," first called the Alcoholic Foundation, renamed in 1954 the General Service Board. Why? To perform the services the groups could not do for themselves: e.g., uniform literature, uniform public information about A.A., helping new groups get started, sharing with them the experience of established groups, handling pleas for help, publishing a national magazine, and carrying the message in other languages and in other countries. A service office was formed to carry on these functions under the board's direction. Both the board and the office looked to the co-founders, Bill and Dr. Bob, for policy leadership. In the midst of the "exuberant success" of early A.A., Dr. Bob became fatally ill and Bill asked, "When Dr. Bob and I are gone, who would then advise the trustees and the office?" The answer, Bill felt, was to be found in the collective conscience of the A.A. groups. But how could the autonomous, widely scattered groups exercise such a responsibility?

Over great resistance by trustees and members devoted to the status quo, Bill managed to "sell" the idea of calling an A.A. General Service Conference (see Concept II), and eleven years later Bill was able to declare, "The results of the Conference have exceeded our highest expectations." This Concept is rooted in Tradition Two, which states: "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority — a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern." The principles of Tradition Two are crystal-clear, Bill asserts: "The A.A. groups are to be the final authority; their leaders are to be entrusted with delegated responsibilities only." The outside world cannot imagine an organization run this way, but Bill calls it "a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, enough responsibility, and enough love of man and of God to insure that our democracy of world service will work . . ."



Reprinted from The Twelve Concepts for World Service illustrated, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc. You may see the whole pamphlet at AA.org or get one from NNIG Central Office.

NNIG & AREA EVENTS

EVENTS HOSTED BY NORTHERN NEVADA
INTERGROUP TO SUPPORT CENTRAL OFFICE

NNIG Monthly Speaker Meetings
Silver Legacy – 407 North Virginia Street, Reno 89501



Monthly Speaker Meeting
Doors open at 6:30 PM
Speaker at 7:00 PM



All meetings located in Silver Barron Room 1-6
Unless otherwise noted

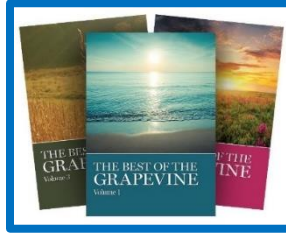
January 14, 2023
Host Group – Happy Hour
Patt O. – Fullerton, CA

February 11, 2023
Host Group – RTC Aloha Group
Stephen H – Vancouver, WA

March 11, 2023
Host Group – Central Office
Jim A. – Depoe Bay, OR

Speaker Chair – Kevin B. (775) 470-4614
Need more info call: Central Office – (775) 355-1151
Join us for dinner at Cafe Central inside the Silver legacy @ 5pm

BOOK OF THE MONTH ALL GRAPEVINE BOOKS \$2 Off



DAMPHLET OF THE MONTH \$.40



Answering Service is in
need of members
to answer the
phone after hours

- 4-hour shifts
- Training provided
- 1 year sobriety requirement

Please call Central Office
775-355-1151

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



OTHER AREA EVENTS



SAVE THE DATE!!!

March 18, 2023
**NNIG's Cribbage
& Cabbage**
**Neil Road
Recreation Center**

AA Area 42 Translation & Interpretation Committee



All Area 42 members are welcome to help
translate minutes, emails, guidelines, etc.

Proficiency in Spanish is NOT required...
in fact, you don't even need to speak Spanish

BILINGUAL SPANISH VOLUNTEERS

NEEDED



We Meet Online
Every 3rd Thursday @ 5:30pm PST

Questions?... Call the
Las Vegas Central Office: (702) 598-1888
And ask that someone from the Translation Committee contact you
Zoom ID: 474 938 3601 • Passcode: Rule62

Central office report from Ronda H. January 3, 2023
 The book of the month is ALL AA Grapevine Books \$2 off.
 Pamphlet is "Do you think you're different?" \$0.40. All 4-
 hour shifts have been filled, still looking for alternates on the
 Answering Service. Check the website for all service
 commitments. Please check website for office closures.
 Website had 16,735 Views 80% from Mobile devices. Sign
 up for The Blast, email of what's happening in our local AA.
 Email officemanager@nnig.org to be added to this once-a-
 month email.

Volunteer Hours: 113

Calls into Central Office: 185

- Calls for AA help - 4
- Calls for Alanon/Alateen - 3
- Meeting information - 44
- Retail / merchandise - 23
- Other 12 step programs - 5
- Events - 48
- New to AA - 2
- Business/Central office- 34
- Visitors - 315, -Dogs-2

Ronda H.
 Central Office Manager



Previous Birthdays



November 2022

Sharon S. 33 Years
 Rich H. 38 Years

October 2022

Naney H. 37 Years

Deve S. 39 Years

September 2022

Kathy S. 14 Years

Mike H. 27 years

Phil S. 46 Years

August

Linda G. 30 Years

Danny S. 20 Years

July

Joanne P.

10 Years

June

Finn G. - 18 years

Ron T. - 11 years

May

Donn T. 32 Years

April

Paul S. 31 Years

March

Kent L. 40 Years

Kim D. 45 Years

February

Skip 22 Years

December 2022

Sean S. - 32 Years



Did you know you can share your sobriety and gratitude in a practical way by joining the A.A. Birthday Club? Sign Up today and be featured in the Bracer Birthday Club section of the Bracer. Show your Support for your NNIG & Central Office. Join the Birthday Club. A donation of only one dollar for every year of your sobriety. Envelopes available at Central Office, NNIG Business Meeting or Intergroup Representatives

Early Birds
Sunday-Saturday
6:45am
412 W Musser St.
Carson City

Beginners are Winners
Sunday - Saturday
6:45 am
635 S Wells Ave
Reno

Please respect
all meeting
place mandates
about face
coverings.

Dawn Patrol
Sunday- Saturday
7:30 am
1640 Prater Way
Sparks

DAILY REFLECTIONS
SUNDAY- SATURDAY
8AM
1276 PIT RD
GARDNERVILLE/MINDEN

AA ANSWERING SERVICE NUMBERS

Reno, Sparks, Carson City and all of Northern Nevada: (775) 355-1151
 Las Vegas and all of Southern Nevada: (702) 598-1888
 Mammoth Lake: (760) 934-3434
 North Lake Tahoe: (530) 546-1126
 South Lake Tahoe: (530) 541-1243
 Susanville, CA: (775) 355-1151
 White Pine County/Ely: (775) 296-0656 Jim C.

N.N.I.G. STEERING COMMITTEE
 Last Tuesday of each month, 5:30 PM
 Central Office, 436 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks

N.N.I.G. BUSINESS MEETING
 First Tuesday of each month, 6:30 PM
 Alano Club, 1640 Prater Way, Sparks

**N.N.I.G. MONTHLY
 SPEAKER MEETING**
 7:00 PM Silver Legacy - Silver Baron A
 2nd Saturday of the month

N.N.I.G. H&I
 First Monday of each month, 5:30 PM
 Central Office 436 S. Rock Blvd., Sparks



District Meetings

DISTRICT-2 2nd Tuesday of each month, 6:30 Central Office
 Zoom # 91904741396 Password D2

DISTRICT 4 First Thursday of each month, 7:00 PM-
 Zoom ID: 876 7717 4234 PW: District4

DISTRICT 6 2nd Sunday of even numbered months-
 For information email
district6@nevadaarea42.org

DISTRICT 8 First Sunday, 3:30 p.m. on odd months
 Call (760) 937-8407

DISTRICT 10A Third Sunday of every other month, 1:30 PM
 680 River St. Elko, NV

DISTRICT 10B Dark since 2017

DISTRICT 11 Only holds meetings 4 time a year, call DCM

DISTRICT 12 2nd Saturday of each Month at 5:00 PM- 457
 Esmeralda Street Wolf Center, Fallon NV

DISTRICT 14 3rd Wed of each "Odd" month at 6:00 PM -265
 Bear Street in Kings Beach CA

DISTRICT 16 Meeting is held 3rd Tuesday of the month
 Sparks Family Christian Church 510 Greenbrae
 Blvd 6:00PM-7:00PM

DISTRICT 18 DARK DISTRICT

DISTRICT 20 Third Saturday of Jan, Mar, May, Aug & Oct
 10:30 AM- Contact DCM @
district20@nevadaarea42.org for location

DISTRICT 22 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month 6:30 PM @
 Central Office

AREA CLUBS

Reno / Sparks Clubs
 Alano Club Sparks, 1640 Prater Way (775) 359-2727
 Driars Club Reno 345 S. Wells Avenue (775) 324-9210
 Triangle Club Reno 635 S Wells Avenue (775) 324-7977

Clubs outside Reno/Sparks Area
 Alano Club Carson City, 1800 HWY 50 East (775) 882-0443
 Bishop Alano Club (760) 873-6700
 Elko Alano Club (775) 738-4747
 Las Vegas Triangle Club (702) 435-0597
 South Lake Tahoe (530) 541-1243

The central Office will be closed the following
 holiday's for 2023

January 16- Martin Luther King Jr. Day
 February 20-Presidents Day
 May 29 - Memorial Day
 July 4 - Independence Day
 September 4 - Labor Day
 October 27 - Nevada Day
 November 11 - Veterans Day
 November 23, 24 - Thanksgiving
 December 24,25 - Christmas
 December 29,30 - Inventory

1ST STEP PRAYER

God, Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, Spirit of Nature or Spirit of the Universe my name is _____, And I'm a real alcoholic ... and I need your help today.
 (pg.. 10-2, 46, & Chp. 3 BB)

Lakes Crossing Center Meetings

Lakes Crossing would like to start meetings back up at their facility. This is a psychiatric evaluation and treatment center, for incarcerated individuals.

Location: 500 Galletti Way, Sparks, NV 89431

The Need:

- Provide two meetings both on Monday's at 6pm.
 - o One serves primarily women. The women's building could get by with every other week if volunteers are scarce. If another day is better for the women's building, we can do that too, any day but Wednesday works for them.
 - o One at the main building. Requested every week.

Requirements:

- All volunteers must be vaccinated against Covid.
- New volunteers to Lake's Crossing must undergo a quick background check which isn't to explore all legal entanglements, just current ones that are open.
- Orientation. This could be done at any of the TB Tests/readings. Please coordinate with Melissa Curley, facility coordinator. 775-688-0492
- The third step which is the most labor intensive is the 2 step TB test. This requires the person to come in to get test administered, then come back 3 days to get it read, then come back a week from the first administration, they have to come back again to get the other arm tested and then return again 3 day later.
 - o The facility is a 24 hr facility so nurses are available all day to read the tests at your convenience.

Contact:
 Joe H. NAGSC Corrections Chair, 415-203-4888
nagsccorrectionalfacilities@nevadaarea42.org

Drink Like A Fish by Rick M.



NNIG/Central Office Group Contributions 2022

<u>Group</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>YTD</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>December</u>	<u>YTD</u>
3rd Tradition Secular Group	1.00	1.00	Happy Hour Reno		1385.00
4th Dimension- ON-LINE		447.90	Kings Beach AA Golden Group		557.82
A Way Home		99.50	Knuckleheads		30.00
Alano Brown Baggers	25.00	75.00	Hispanic State Convention		1138.00
Alano Captains Table		15.00	Minden Saturday Night Fever		240.00
Alano Dawn Patrol			Ladies of the Evening		
Alano Jaywalkers		807.70	Ladies of the Lake	18.78	102.62
Alano Open Heart Open Mind		353.50	Portola Group	125.00	125.00
Back Room Group		643.94	Minden Stephanie Way Group		719.61
Back to Basics Saturday Night	200.00	522.00	Minden Wednesday Night Live		121.65
Battle Mountain Fellowship		45.00	Minden/Gardnerville Group	51.49	953.93
Beginners are Winners On-Line Group		836.15	NNIG Business Meeting	25.00	270.80
Buena Vista Group		300.00	Mt Rose Recovery Room	336.82	4088.82
Caring & Sharing in Stead		1203.99	Minden Saturday Night Group		240.00
Carson Airport AA		50.88	Professionals Meeting		1000.00
Carson Big Book Experience		106.00	Pyramid Way Discussion Group		30.00
Carson Brown Baggers		740.00	RTC Monday Night Mens		494.20
Carson Dr. Bob Nightngales			RTC Afternoon Delight		
Carson Early Birds		1954.43	RTC Almost Heaven	100.00	1100.00
Carson Fallen Women			RTC Grapevine/Big Book		
Carson Happy Hour		533.85	RTC Aloha Group		2380.49
Carson Happy, Joyous and Free		45.53	RTC Big Book Study		50.00
Carson Jay-Walkers Men's		100.00	RTC Beginners are Winners		287.00
Carson Men's NO BS Stag	90.00	170.00	RTC Coffee with Bill		
Carson Sandbaggers	300.00	1300.00	RTC Don't Trip Music Meeting		548.00
Carson Sisters in Sobriety		100.00	RTC Just for Today Women		
Carson Sunday Morning Fire Station		460.00	RTC How We Stay Stopped		235.00
Carson Valley Gratitude		501.00	Positive Acceptance Group		740.43
Carson Women's Night Out		433.00	RTC Mid-Day Group		
Chester Fellowship			RTC Champions of Sobriety		
Chester Saturday Night Group		208.25	Mid-Day Group ON-LINE	45.78	313.16
Choices		200.00	RTC Recien Llegados		40.00
Cornerstone Group		300.00	RTC New Awakenings Group		1217.72
Crystal Bay Nooners		350.00	RTC Little Rascals	50.00	300.00
Dayton Friday Night Rule 62		300.00	RTC Sober N Sane		100.00
Dayton Red Rooster		400.00	RTC Men's Trudgers		840.00
Decompression Chamber/online		1348.19	RTC Good Morning Sobriety		126.00
Deer Park Rebels			Recien ilegados		50.00
District 14	550.00	1550.00	Resentments And A Coffee Pot	180.00	180.00
District 2	25.00	453.00	Sisters of Sobriety SOS		489.81
District 22	25.00	620.00	The Next Chapter		100.00
Dayton Sunday Morning		200.00	South Shore Group		120.00
Double R at Noon		450.00	Spring Festival		77.46
Driar's Oldtimer, Newcomers		100.00	Southside Group	152.70	1691.52
Driar's Serenity Night Ows		50.00	Slide Mountain Candle light Group		150.00
Eye Operner		1095.00	Sunnyside Group		1303.41
Fallon Fallen Women's AA Meeting		65.00	Silver Springs Groups		375.00
Fallon Grapevine Online		20.00	Susanville Wed Womens		
Fernley Groups			Tahoe City Fellowship		750.00
Fallon The Real Lunch Bunch		332.00	The Rock Group		453.00
Galena Friday Night		303.60	Truckee Dawn Patrol	100.00	1250.00
Ground Zero		539.16	Truckee Fellowship		200.00
Grupo Accion	40.00	110.00	Truckee River Men's Stag		1985.20
Grupo Fe Y Esoeranza			The Next Chapter	100.00	200.00
Grupo La Nueva Luz		80.00	Virgina City Plug in the Jug	266.00	266.00
Grupo Latino			Verdi Greener Pastures		50.00
Grupo Nueva Vida		60.00	Whole in the Soul		51.00
Jamesville God Grant Me		12.50	Whole in the Ground Sunnyside		600.00
Jamesville Women's Monday Nigh	136.00	136.00	Willing to go to any Lengths		322.00
Incline Village Fellowship		245.00	Winnemucca Serenity Seekers	75.00	205.00
Fireside Group		1000.00	Step 1		100.00
			The Shop		300.00
			Minden Language of the Heart		40.00
			Old Time A.A. Group	100.00	100.00
			Out and Sober		
			Serenity on Sundays	300.00	500.00
			The Twilight Zone		
			Wednesday Night Beginners Meeting		
			Westwood Monday Night		55.00
			Whole in the Soul		80.00
			Women's New Beginnings		559.40
			Women's New Harmony	200.00	375.00
			Weekend Warriors		70.00
			Young at Heart		83.00
			Total	3,618.57	55,280.12

Tomorrow Never Comes

He had promised himself many times to quit but it was never the right day

As I sat on my couch that morning, it was just another day. It had started like so many other days. I got up early, took my child to day care and my wife to work. I would start the day with the best intentions of getting some great work done and really catching up on things for my job. I pulled my computer out, hooked it up and then the thought hit me that it would be great to have 'just a couple of beers' to help me get past the boredom of the administrative tasks that lay ahead.

I only lightly considered that I had gone through the 'two-to-three drink' scenario hundreds of times without a single success, but somehow my brain thought today might be different. So, I went to the local mini-mart, bought a 12-pack of cold beer. Deep down, I knew that when I got home, I would drink every one of them. The truth is, I drank one of them on the way home from the store. That too had become a habit.

I had become a daily drinker in the previous five years. Before that, I had been a binge drinker. Although, the binges were becoming more and more frequent. I had started hiding my liquor. I lied constantly about my drinking. I would leave town "for work," so that I could be free to drink as much as I wanted and not be seen by anyone I knew. I could get as sloppy as I wanted. Often, I told myself, "I have to quit drinking." But then, I'd think, "What's different about today? I'll quit tomorrow." Tomorrow never came.

On this particular morning, at around 9:30, I sat there filled with self-hatred for "doing it again." I had finished ten beers. I was concocting lies and explanations for my wife and trying to make up work I hadn't done to report to my boss. But meanwhile, I was also figuring out whether or not I could get away with another 12-pack. I wanted it for that evening. I thought I'd cook out on the grill. I was a good husband and always tried to help out with the activities of the family. If you're a drinker like I was, you'll understand the irony in that statement.

But then, in that moment, I somehow knew that I was done drinking. Tomorrow had come.

I visited my first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting that evening, still smelling of alcohol. I don't really recall how I knew about AA, but I did know that's where you went if you were an alcoholic. So, I went and I began the greatest journey I could never imagine.

I don't remember much of that meeting, but I do remember hearing all the things that were good for me – "progress not perfection," "attraction, not promotion," that AA was "self supporting." But more than the words I heard, I felt something different. While the people they were alcoholic, imperfect, troubled, they were still laughing and smiling.

But then I heard someone say that it had taken God to get him sober and that that was what the program was all about. There it was. A deal breaker for me. I had separated myself from all things religious or God-related when I was 19.

But, I took the book of Alcoholics Anonymous home that evening and began reading. I read the first 164 pages by the end of the next day and was overwhelmed with how much sense it made. I think it only fair to say that I also thought it was very poorly written, elementary in structure, and I certainly could help fix it up a bit!

I'm still sober today. I have not had a drink or a drug since that June day in 2007. I have thought about drinking, but the compulsion is gone and I've developed a relationship with God, as I understand God.

I now get to help other drunks like me reach out and gain their own understanding and trust in God, as they understand him. Alcoholics Anonymous, the God I still don't understand, the 12 Steps, my friends, my sponsors, my sponsees, and all the thousands of meetings I have attended, have allowed me to gain a peace that I never knew I wanted. **BY: DARYL R. | OREGON**

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Unmanageable, What's That?

He stopped drinking, so why did his life seem to be getting worse?

STEP ONE: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

I began drinking when I was 15. Alcohol was fun and made me feel a part of the crowd. It removed my inhibitions and my feelings of inferiority. I had found the secret to my happiness and I loved it. After my first drinking experience, I began to drink whenever possible, always to get that initial elusive feeling. Sometimes I reached it, but then I always overshot the mark. But as the Big Books says, I always drank for the effect produced by alcohol.

When I was drinking, I never experienced problems. Oh, I had them—I just never experienced them. When I became restless, irritable, discontented, worried, sad or depressed, I knew just what to do. I'd grab a bottle of problem-remover and poof, no more problems. I used alcohol to manage my life and it worked quite well for a few years.

As with all of us, by the time I reached AA at age 38, alcohol no longer worked for me. Alcohol was certainly my master, so I had no problem with Step One, at least the first part of it. I admitted I was powerless over alcohol.

However, I couldn't see how my life was unmanageable. After all, I still had a lovely wife, two beautiful children, a nice home and two cars in the garage. I was doing well at work and continued to advance in my career. I thought that once I solved my pesky little alcohol problem, life would be perfect.

A friend of mine once said, "The disease (dis-ease) of alcoholism begins when we stop drinking." Man, was he ever right. All the problems I had ignored, all the feelings I had stuffed over the years, came back and hit me like a freight train. I had stopped drinking but I felt worse than I ever had in my life, which was totally out of control. Apparently, AA just didn't work, I thought.

But there was a part of the First Step I hadn't taken. It was the part after the dash. I had never admitted my life was unmanageable. As I saw it, my life wasn't unmanageable because of alcohol. It was unmanageable because I had never learned to confront problems and feel feelings. Alcohol had been my solution, not my problem.

I always wondered why our co-founder, Bill W., separated Step One into two parts, using a dash. I thought that one idea referred to the other. That is, my life was unmanageable because I was powerless over alcohol. Bill had a wonderful command of the English language and wrote very precisely. I looked up the grammatical use of a dash and found this comment by the writer Lewis Thomas, M.D., who wrote: "The dash is a handy device, informal and essentially playful, telling you that you're about to take off on a different tack but still in some way connected with the present course."

I believe Bill was "taking off on a different tack" when he separated the Step. I am powerless over alcohol, is one thought, and, my life is unmanageable, is a second thought. The two are related but should be read as two thoughts.

Over the years, I have seen folks come into AA and things start to get better immediately. There are no more hangovers. They are sleeping through the night. They begin riding on the beautiful pink cloud. The problem is that after a few months, reality sets in and life doesn't feel so good any more. Life begins to get worse. We all know how to make things better. We drink and then go through the downward spiral again. We become convinced that AA doesn't work. I believe it's because we never took the entire First Step. At least that was my experience.

The Steps don't help us get control of our drinking. They help us get control of our thinking and our actions. Only half of Step One even refers to alcohol. Once alcohol is out of the picture, the real work begins. We realize how unmanageable our lives are without alcohol, our problem-solver. The Steps help us handle our sobriety. Therefore, my new life began after the dash, and my recovery continues to this day. Often life throws me a curve, but I know I have the tools to hit it head on. Problems don't stay now, they evaporate. *Ted K., Columbus, Ohio*

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