

The County Connection Spring and Summer 2017

Points of View

Tradition 2

(Long Form): For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.

(Short Form): 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.

I was told years ago that you go to the “Long Form” whenever there was doubt about what the Traditions or Concepts were really all about. In the case of Tradition 2 the short form is longer than the long form and it holds a very valid warning to those that have been sober for many years or elected to a position - our trusted servants. It is human nature to seek out those with more experience than we have when a problem arises. It is also human nature to seek out those experienced people that we think might give us the answer we wish to find. It didn't take me long to figure out who told me things I didn't like to hear and those that told me I'd be OK. When I finally became involved with service outside the level of my group I had been schooled in causes, conditions, and consequences. I had also figured out that there are often opposing views about almost everything in AA and especially in business meetings.

Tradition 2 says we have an ultimate authority – a loving God that expresses Himself in our group conscience. I heard early that the one word “informed” should also be included. That meant both sides of every discussion are voiced. All the pros and cons and the consequences and benefits should be discussed and reviewed at great length and only then would a vote be taken. If all that has been done and everyone in attendance has had a chance to voice their opinion, then we can be assured that a loving God has expressed Himself in our group conscience whether that group is an AA group, a District, an Area, or a committee.

The short form of Tradition 2 says our leaders should be trusted servants and not govern. As trusted servants most of their duties include informing the members of their respective groups everything they are doing in the position they hold. Treasurers report on the money they have collected, the payments they have made and the money in the bank. The General Service Representative reports on the District meeting business and any other meetings or events that they have attended or may be of interest to the members of the group. Each position holds some responsibilities. The trust is placed in them to do their duties. I've been GSR for my group many, many, times as happens with groups with few active members. During one of my times as a GSR I reported on a District item to be voted on and voiced my opinion. I was informed that I had overstepped and it would be appreciate if I never did that again. My job, as a trusted servant, was to be impartial and state both sides, if possible, and let the group conscience be heard without my attempt to sway the vote.

In the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions there is mention of the “bleeding deacon” and “elder statesmen”. Each is a fairly long time member and has held at least one position as a trusted servant and maybe held it for many years. The “bleeding deacon” holds onto the position because they have decided that no one else can do it like they can. Not true and a bitter lesson learnt by them when they are finally ousted from that position. The “elder statesmen” are those that at one time may have been a “bleeding deacon”. They have held positions and moved on to become knowledgeable about the Traditions and Concepts and are usually in favour of hearing about changes and improvements and how they will help the groups, the District or Area carry the message and will give suggestions or cautions. The “bleeding deacon” may often say “we've always done it that way” and is the first to voice negative comments about any changes, improvements, or amendments to almost everything. Fortunately we need both as I am not perfect and I need the “bleeding deacon” to let me know it has worked up to now and the “elder statesman” to give advice when something should or could be improved. Bill W once said “that sometimes the good is the enemy of the best” and it is up to the group conscience and a loving God to find the best.

Second Article

I have always loved writing. I find it to be so therapeutic and it has always been my way of releasing pent up pain. I have gotten away from that, and it certainly doesn't mean I have any less pain. I may have just got lazy, I don't know, but the times I wrote and journaled I did have some relief.

I am not sure what I wanted to write about, but only knew that an article was brewing.

So let's see what comes forth.....

The longer I'm around, the less I know...What is up with that one? In the beginning, I found that line preposterous and thought that after a month of Sobriety I would be oozing Wisdom... I certainly didn't think I would go along and become less knowledgeable.

Then as the years slide by and accumulate, I have said...OHHHHH. I get it!! I am not so cocky, I will not save the world. And...I definitely don't know everything.

What I know now is life is lived in the grey area. No one is all Right and No one is all wrong. When you get a room full of strong opinionated personalities, just sit back and watch. Those with good sobriety, again, just in my opinion, will lead by example and they will have less to say than the table thumpers who think after so many 24 hours, they have the AA world by the ass and just ask them, they will tell you what great sobriety they have.

If you are serene, you do not have to broadcast it! If you have serenity, which is definitely not a permanent state, people can tell. It is something we all want...And I have experienced it, on occasion, and it is beautiful!!! I would be lying to you to say you can keep it at all times. It is a rare commodity.

Right now, I told the Editor, it would have been a much better article, two years or so ago, when my positivity level was up and my space was more peaceful. Then family nonsense happened or non-family nonsense, and the little confidence and security I gained, all went out the window.

Oh God, Oh no, not the emotional bottom, not another crappie life lesson. Enough is enough!!! I don't do pain well or Graceful. I struggle too long, love too deep, hold on too tight and live in Extremes. Saying all that, and there have been numerous challenges, it is unbelievable that I can stand up again and put one foot in front of the other. I just try to keep breathing, though, suicidal thoughts are never far away.

I don't want to pick up a drink, because if I know nothing else, I know drinking won't reverse, won't bring people back, won't make me feel better or it won't make me be better. That much I do know!!!

I also know I do not need any help getting depressed, my negative thoughts, do a great job of that on their own!!! But, saying all that, just give me a cigarette!!!

I have many, many mantras along the way.... Drastic times, calls for drastic measures.... Referring to not being used and not being a doormat...If your family cannot respect you and treat you the way you deserve to be treated, you don't need to stand in it and feel less than, over and over again. Just because they are wearing that undeserved title, family, doesn't give them the right.

So back to the grey area, everyone is unique and special. What may work well for one, does not mean it is set in stone for another. I feel that is why Dr. Bob & Bill wrote these beautiful principles exactly THE WAY THEY WROTE THEM AND THEN HAD THE WISDOM TO WRITE MOST THINGS IN THE SUGGESTED GENTLE MANNER. If you notice, there are just a few things they (Dr. Bob & Bill) are quite animate about, that is rigorous honesty; the promises (giving hope and passing it on). How it works, could not be a clearer guideline to sobriety. They didn't need long term history to get statistics of the survival rates. They already knew they had a really great program, because when two or more are gathered together ...What beautiful support and who knows better than a practicing alcoholic than another practicing alcoholic. We are far more willing to believe and listen to another that has gone through what we are going through.

I am sorry if I have gone off topic, but back to it. I live my life in the grey area. I have to. I am not adamant about too many things; one of those is, AA works!!! No one seems to understand me like my AA family. I would be dead without them. Suggestions? Your truth and honesty prevail. You have to get honest with yourself in

order to be honest with others. Acceptance, people, places, things, family, OH Boy. Tall order, there. People in your group (Principles before personalities) everyone is bearing some sort of cross, and I believe the people who lash out the strongest are hurting the worst. Let's show more understanding than gossip!!! Never leave a group angry, settle the differences, and then make a good choice for yourself. What feels the best!!! There have been many things suggested to me, I haven't always listened with an open heart but I try. Don't drink and go to meetings, ask for help in the morning and thank him at night, get a sponsor and a home group and just go One Day at a Time!!!!

Simple??? Oh yes!!! Easy? Absolutely not!!! But how many can come and stay and how many get a chance to do life over again, in a better way, sober? Be one of them, one of us, that keeps persevering the storm of life and be one that gets to the point of saying, I am grateful to be a recovering alcoholic or I never would have known this way of life and that it could be so good!!!

I have 21 years' sobriety, only because I kept coming and I didn't die, but for The Grace of God!!!

The days went to weeks and the weeks went to months and the months went to years!!!

I have kept coming through the death of a spouse at 5 years sobriety, the death of my parents and sister, way too soon, and I have drudged on through the trials and tribulations of everyday life, some of them outside influences, not of my own making!!

I have met many beautiful people. I have been blessed.

I really do owe my life to AA and to everyone who has shared and prayed for me when I couldn't pray for myself!!!

Third Article Service

I have always been taught to state that first and for most I am an alcoholic then my name because for many years and still today I can be self-centered and think everything's about me so using my name after never lets me forget that number one is I am alcoholic.

My experience in service is what I have been asked to write about from my service sponsor. The first 11 years of my sobriety my service in alcoholic anonymous was sponsoring, getting involved with my home group and I have learned that my home groups are just the beginning of service but I need to be there in order to be a part of. In the beginning of my sobriety I use to clean ashtrays yup you heard it we use to smoke at our meetings. The meetings in the beginning reminded me of the bar you know where you walked in and could hardly see anyone because of all the smoke I'm not sure if that's why my first meeting I felt like I was at home or not but I liked it. After washing those dirty ashtrays, we would wash the coffee cups yup real coffee cups and we had a lot to wash but you know that was the best part of the evening I found and I'm sure you ask yourself why would that be well it's like this I met new people I learned to laugh and not take everything so serious. I made new friendships and at the same time this was making me stay sober. For the first time in a long time I felt a part of something. Hmm think about it I'm doing service and not even realizing that's what kept me coming back I eventually started chairing meetings and oh what an excitement for me. I was nervous but at the same time I felt I was doing something good for my group. The fellowship before the meeting because people would help me set up so instead of cleaning those ashtrays I was now putting them out on the table with clean cups and coffee jugs. I felt important I guess and I never felt that way while I was drunk or hung over oh what a great feeling that was at that time of my sobriety. When I was about 11 months sober, I sponsored my first girl now that was scary but I remember my sponsor had told me you are the only one who can help this girl and of course I believed her. I did my best sponsoring her not realizing at the time this is service work giving of myself that was given to me so freely. This was definitely a huge thing keeping me sober I use to think well if I drink there will be nobody to help this girl and I really believed that with all of my heart. I can chuckle about it today but imagine giving of my time and sharing with her what was shared with me was keeping me sober. Through the following years, I kept doing these things being a greeter, going to business meetings, being secretary for

my group, then the banker, supply person, library person all of these things not realizing this is the beginning of service work for me. I believe we all have our niche in sobriety some are meant for sponsorship, talks, chairing, etc. Were all different and sometimes it takes a long time to figure out what our thing is in sobriety and that's okay I have learned I'm a baby when I came here and as I learned to crawl I found a niche of what I felt was my thing in sobriety and when I started walking actually walking which I equate that to walking this program for myself I have moved on to other things in sobriety in order to give back.

My group voted me in to be GSR and I must have done a great job because I did it for five years. Not realizing at the time nobody wanted to do it. Once again, I had that feeling of having purpose and giving back to AA I started going to the District meeting that I heard horrible things about. I was full of fear not knowing what I was doing and ready for the things I heard through gossip of course of what happens at these meetings. Well to my surprise it was not at all like these people had said it was. My lesson there was not to believe everything that's said to go experience myself and come up with my own opinion not other people's opinion once again a big lesson for me to learn. I had lots of help and understanding by the people that were there, to guide me through the things I needed to learn. You know it's amazing when I first came in I hung out with a certain group of people and when I got to the District guess who were there yup they were! A good friend of mine basically took me by the hand and showed me what the district was all about and he encouraged me to keep coming back. At my first assembly he explained everything took me to all the meetings and answered any questions I had. What a great experience I had when I first started service at the District level I then did a subcommittee when I had a bit more confidence the One day roundup and I feel I really grew from that experience. The same people still helping me I know now why they have the sobriety they have and I think to myself when I grow up I want what they have. Well how did they get what they have I do believe from doing service they are always active and giving of themselves.

I then became the newsletter person, treasure, secretary, and Alt. DCM which now brings me to the present DCM

Imagine going from washing ashtrays to being DCM for district 23 I'm still in awe of how people actually trusting in me that I would be good enough to represent our District and by the way those people that helped me 22 years ago are still helping me I could not imagine what I would do without you people in my life. Giving of myself is such a huge reward to have to experience it yourself in order to know that feeling of happy, joyous, and free by giving back So to end this my only opinion I have on service is not to listen to all the negative people that have nothing nice to say about service. I believe some people are just unhappy no matter what and have nothing positive to say. Come experience it yourself it's the only way you will know the true experience.

[This Newsletter is a member to member publication and the viewpoints expressed herein do not represent those of AA as a whole.](#)

Up Coming Events

June 10, 2017 Live and let lives 25th Anniversary, Knox Presbyterian Church, 58 Erie St. S. Leamington

July 15, 2017 District 16 Convention Vladimir Ukraine Church, 2000 Tecumseh Rd. E.

Aug. 5, 2017 District 23 One day round up, Lakeside Pavilion Park, 315 Queen St. Kingsville

BIRTHDAY LIST

PENTHOUSE

Dave T. Jan.4 1983
Serge B. Jan. 8 1988
Rick O. Jan. 30 1995
Barb B. Feb. 22 1991
Mike L. Apr. 10 1983
Billy T. Apr. 18 2006
Jim B. Apr. 24 1979
Tom. O. May 1 2005
Bob H. June 3 2005
Jeff D. June 24 2008
Chris R. July 17 2009
Roy R. Aug. 2 1996
Monique N. June 17 2010
Barb M. Oct. 4 2004
Gary V. Oct. 13 2003
Jim L. Oct. 15 1985
Tom C. Oct. 23 1985
Bob P. Dec. 8 1983
Ken M. Dec. 12 2000
Tim C. Dec. 19 1992

LIVE AND LET LIVE

Ron K. Jan. 10 1981
Dale R. Jan. 31, 1987
Brian A. April 14, 2007
Lloyd G. Apr. 15 1993
Glen R. May 14 1978
Trudy L. Sept 2, 2016
Cathy N. Oct 12, 2014
Mary K. Oct. 5 1980

FELLOWSHIP OF MIRACLES

Myra G. Jan. 18 2004
Russ M. Jan. 18 1979
Jeff L. Mar. 1 1994
Rosie V. Apr. 18 1996
Judy P. Apr. 28 2007
Randall June 20 2004
Dave K. July 18 1993
Gary B. July 29 2004
Linda M. Sept. 3 1982

HARROW GROUP

Stephen M. Jan. 8 2007
Beverly H. Feb. 14 2009
Dave D. Feb. 15 1997
Joel B. Apr. 4 2008
Patty K. Apr. 26 2001
Shari D. May 16 2008
Mike L. May 22 1997
Tim C. June 1 2009
Larry T. June 28 1980
Kevin D. Sept. 11 2004
Matt J. Sept. 12 2009
Scott N. Oct. 2 2009
Chris B. Oct. 5 2009
Al K. Dec. 20 2004

SUN PARLOUR

Bill W. Dec. 2 1974
Dave H. Jan. 9 1973
Betty F. May 21 1977
Paul P. June 10 1985
Gary F. July 9 1980
Ellen C. July 28 1989
Kim F. Aug. 15 1981
Leonard A. Aug. 18 1981
Dave C. Feb.9th.2013
Terry M. June 26th.2009
Rob G. Aug.2nd.2011
Janet H. Nov. 24th.,1996
Dave M. Nov. 23 1982
Mike C. Dec. 25 1988

Removed by Group conscience

NEW BEGINNINGS
Mc GREGOR
HUMBLE BEGINNINGS
COURAGE TO CHANGE
ESSEX
FIRST THINGS FIRST
MORNING FELLOWSHIP
WHEATLEY ACTION
THINK THINK THINK
LEAMINGTON

ESSEX GROUP

Pauline R. Jan 1, 2015
Vicki F. Jan.1, 1996
Roy Mc A. Feb.23, 1987
Kevin P. Apr.14, 2012
Linsey M. May 16, 2014
Brandon G. Jun. 3, 2016
Tom B. Jun.11, 1976
Rollie R. Aug.22, 2015
Ray K. Sep.11, 1986
Denise P. Sep.17, 1991
Scott K. Sep.21, 2010
Andy L. Sep.29, 1 994
Mike B. Oct.12, 1984
Shirley D. Oct.13, 1988
Pauline D. Dec.21, 1978
Leo D. Dec.22, 1999

