

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PG. 2

Emotional Sobriety

PG. 3

A take on Tradition 11

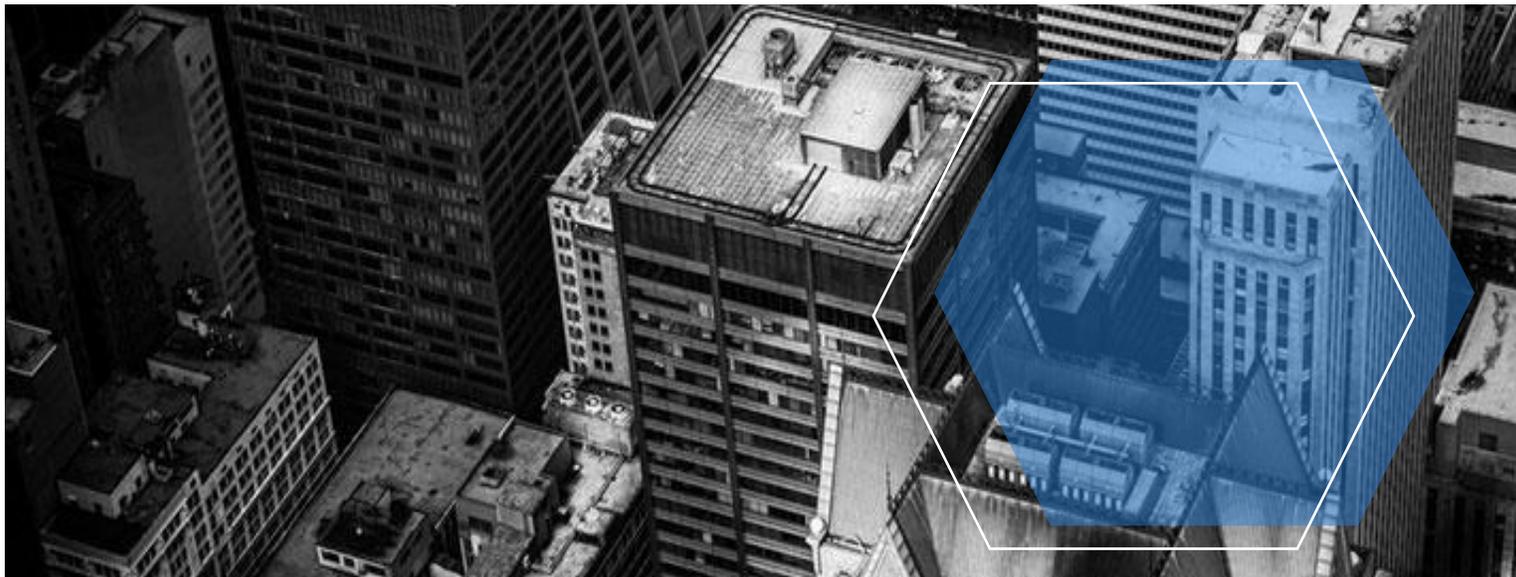


EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY

When I first came to Alcoholics Anonymous, my life was emotionally and spiritually destitute. I've heard it said we have a 'soul sickness'. This resonated with me because I had used alcohol to numb out my emotions, my hopes, my inner being and certainly, my intuition and connection to a spiritual being such as God. I was unhappy, lonely and lost. My view of myself and the world was negative and pessimistic. I was spiritually bankrupt. Before entering these rooms, I couldn't make simple decisions. I second guessed everything I did and said. Moreover, I was riddled with self; selfishness, self centredness and self loathing. From a spiritual point of view, I thought God had abandoned me plus I was overcome with thoughts that life was full of bad things happening even when it seemed things were going well. I lived in fear of the future and grief of the past. I lacked trust and faith in myself and those around me.

I remember hearing "The Promises" being read in those first few meetings and thinking they are a joke; this does not come true. I sure was down on myself and on life itself. I lacked the ability to see beyond myself and my misery; something that only comes with taking the 12 steps and practicing the principles of this amazing program. One thing I promised myself from the beginning of my recovery, I was going to be more than physically sober. I vowed to have emotional and spiritual serenity.

Looking back at my time in Alcoholics Anonymous, I have experienced some struggles and made some mistakes along the way. I have learned valuable lessons; lessons I wouldn't have realized without a connection to a higher power, a sponsor and the teachings of others. I look at life differently and I view it as evolving and changing; things I feared in the past and now, I look forward too. I feel an inner peace that comes from surrender, faith and humility. Through taking the steps and working them, I know who I am, love who I am and no longer place my happiness on the external, ie: people, places and things. I had to put into practice the steps and traditions for God to remove from me my most glaring character defects. I feel grounded in love from God, my fellows and my mentors in the program. Working with the other alcoholic has done more for me spiritually and emotionally than words can say. It is true that we can only keep this wonderful program if we give it away. I am happier than I have ever been in my life. I make decisions that at one time I thought impossible. I can see that God is doing for me what I could not do for myself. The Promises have come true and I am forever grateful. All I had to do was be honest with myself, be openminded to the steps and AA principals and be willing to change. Love of myself and my fellow human being; service to others and focusing on my recovery, have been the keys to my emotional and spiritual health. I am filled with love and devotion to Alcoholics Anonymous.



TRADITION 11

“NOT THE ANONYMITY THING AGAIN!”

Well, here goes a humble thought or two ... after being asked to support our newsletter by doing an article for it referencing traditions the topic that came to mind was on anonymity. The spiritual foundation of our very existence is based on this principle. So a brief look at tradition 11 is the topic and for AA members it is very important to address it at the level of press, radio, films and yes even the internet.

I know today it is ok to admit that one is an alcoholic or for that matter even an alcoholic that is in recovery. It is however a violation to identify oneself as a member of AA at those levels that was mentioned. Celebrities have experienced great pain with this principle and our fellowship also was somewhat negatively affected too. Through my own experience by disclosing my AA membership to the general public I so called became the voice and face of AA. You may think it's not a big deal but what happens if I relapse, and then those people can say the program really doesn't work.

That one experience to this day reminds me that breaking my anonymity to seek any type of accolades is acting contrary to my spiritual program and that it affects AA as a whole.

I need reminding that I may be, “the only Big Book a suffering alcoholic may come in contact with.” Even if I stay sober, but occasionally display some of the character defects at those levels, they may reflect poorly on the program as well. So for today I'll try and leave the general public stuff alone with my anonymity issues and enlighten my fellows, family and friends on how it truly is a privilege to be a part of this way of live called Alcoholics Anonymous. (We do have public relations and means to effectively spread the word. Check out your local district or group to see how service work for you can be an integral part of this way of life.)

