
Essay

June 1992

Post Office Box 300
Simi Valley, California 93062

GROUP NEWS

Portland, OR: “Another quarter has passed and the Portland Thursday group is still alive and well. This past quarter enjoyed celebrations of two annual sobriety anniversaries: one year in January and four years in February. Cake never tasted so good! Attendance averages 12–16 people with newcomers every week. (I often wonder why we aren’t growing to overflowing — the numbers are always the same?) We are pleased to have women joining our group and remaining as regular home meeting members. This is fairly new to our group and has spurred some real recovery. Strain, pain, confusion and growth — a stronger, more power-filled group — people with problems in recovery!

We have decided to donate a copy of the ‘White Book,’ *Sexaholics Anonymous*, to the church library where we meet.

(continued on page 3)

IN THIS ISSUE

- Calendar of Events
- Member News
- Feedback Corner
- Box 300
- Group News

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Events listed here are presented solely as a service to readers, not as an endorsement by ESSAY or the Central Office.

June 20, 1992 — One Day Retreat, Long Island, NY. For details call Jerry J. (516) 379-7113.

July 10, 11 and 12, 1992 — Vancouver International Convention. "Progressive Recovery." To register, mail check for \$79 (before May 15) or \$89 (after May 15) to: P.O. Box 4801, Vancouver B.C., Canada V6B 4A4. For SA or S-Anon information call Forbes (604) 980-8119 or Anna (604) 538-9323.

Delta Airlines is offering a discounted rate for flights to the Vancouver Canada International Conference. For information call (800) 241-6760 (Convention Desk).

October 2, 3 and 4, 1992 — Weekend Retreat, Spiritual Life Center, Wichita, KS. Host: Tulsa SA.

Welcome to the Following New Groups

Abilene, TX	Paris, TN
Des Moines, IA	Penn Hills, PA
Dublin, Ireland	Roseburg, OR
Evanston, WY	Santa Cruz, CA
Fayetteville, PA	Sunnyvale, CA
Lewiston, ME	Yakima, CA
Long Branch, NJ	

NOTE: If your group is not listed with the CO, call Pat at (805) 581-3343, or write to Post Office Box 300, Simi Valley, CA 93062.

GROUP NEWS (*cont. from page 1*)

“The quarter closed in preparation for the Northwest Spring Retreat hosted by Portland Metro Intergroup. The Retreat took place April 3, 4 and 5. I know it’s Second Quarter News, but I can’t wait to report on it! People from British Columbia, Washington, Oregon and Idaho. A member from Texas, too. Galveston, to be exact. All together in fellowship — making the real connection. We were home! A highly charged emotional weekend of open honest sharing, kindling and building friendships, banding us one to another as if for a lifetime, I hope. Words can hardly do justice to the experience — we had a great time!” **D.B.**

Asheville, NC: “We remain small with 6–8 regular members. It got kind of bleak over the winter when there often was only two of us at a meeting. However, we continue to draw new people. Many of them don’t return, but some do and that’s encouraging. The sharing is good and sobriety continues to grow — one day at a time.” **J.M.**

Rochester, MN: “We are small — two, sometimes three — but we are sober and grateful. Keep up the good work .” **H.**

University City, MO (Men's Meeting): "We continue to be a strong, committed group. As always, we appreciate your support. God bless." J.R.

Slidell, LA: "In Slidell there are three of us and on Sundays the three of us travel to New Orleans to meet with two others. Quality of sobriety is growing as is length, with two members approaching a year. We are all 'trudging the road of happy destiny' together." C.L.

Chicago, IL (Belmont Community Hospital): "Although small, our group has steady participation and I can say that much recovery and healing has taken place. Thank you for all the services you provide for us." J.R.

Bonn, Germany: "There is a steady attendance of between three to eight members. We're blessed with growing in honesty and recovery, as well as getting increasing willingness to work the Steps. The level of intimacy and love is God's gift to us who didn't know what in the world it was. Thank you for your support, especially through the SA literature. We're also looking forward to hosting the German SA 1992 Spring Convention, to which you are all invited." F.

Buffalo, NY: "Our Growing Together Group in Buffalo, New York has been successful in attracting additional members. Our local treasury is sufficiently large to send a donation to the national organization. One of our members has agreed to provide his address for you. If you wish to contact our group, please do so through this member." V.S.

Nashville, TN: "We now have five meetings on Saturdays! Plus either two or three every other day of the week. It seems we are *really* sick here. There is a good block of sobriety in the three to five year range which helps us a lot. While it is hard to tell how many people are regulars, we do seem to have about one-sixth women in our meetings. On June 6 we will have a regional one-day conference with an SA and S-ANON speaker coming from Chicago. One day at a time we seem to keep getting better, thanks to our Higher Power." D.M.

Avenel, NJ: "I am proud to announce that SA had a workshop at our prison for sex offenders. It came off excellently. We had 15 members from the SA tri-state area and our regular 20 residents plus 10 other inmates. One inmate is going home after 15 years of prison. This was his first SA meeting and he is sorry that he did not attend sooner. The good part is he got himself a sponsor and plans to go to the SA meetings. I honestly believe that SA is a very important part of our return to society to help us from recommitting and end up in prison again." **E.P.**

Escondido, CA: "The Escondido Step Study Monday Night is doing okay. We have some steady people attending as well as a few new members. I was in Tulsa, OK two weeks ago and called the SA phone number. Was able to talk to a member who attended our San Diego Convention. Great to touch base with other SAs." **M.M.**

Sunnyvale, CA: "The idea of passing a second basket around (in our case, a second envelope) for the expressed purpose of financially supporting the Central Office was well received here in Sunnyvale. Curiously, within the same time frame, more funds have been generated this way for the Central Office than for our own group!" **P.T.**

Casper, WY: "We had four people tonight and we even had a business meeting. The first business meeting in two months." **D.W.**

FEEDBACK CORNER

Notes From A Recovering "PCP"

The Politically Correct Policeman (PCP), loosely defined, is a fellowship junky who considers it his job to flag anything in the literature or at meetings that might embarrass newcomers, minorities, or women. The idea is that no one gets offended. Currently I'm in my 10th year of recovery from Politically Correct Policeman-ship in 12-Step fellowships.

As a PCP, my motives are beyond reproach. The newcomer must be protected from scandalizing talk and literature at all costs. Newcomers are the life's blood of the program, remember. Never mind that they might still be acting out and possibly breaking the law, it's the PCP's job to tell them that the program is only suggested and that belief in God is optional. During the meeting the PCP is tense and watchful. One wrong word could condemn our new-found friends to jails, institutions and death. After the meeting the PCP anxiously watches the newcomers' reactions as we form a circle to say the Our Father.

One of the things that aroused my suspicion as a PCP was what I called "preaching religion." Often the offense was nothing more than Bible-speak. For instance, if someone says at a meeting that for them, all the program promises can be boiled down to three promises, namely, "ask and you will receive, seek and you will find, knock and the door will be opened," will they run afoul of the politically correct?

Today I'm grateful that I can let this go. We cannot manage the newcomer's perceptions. And it's the group, not the individual, that carries the message. It's by listening to the group that newcomers find out what happened to themselves. We learn our stories by listening to sober people tell theirs. What brings us together is a common problem. And it's certainly not sanitized sharing, or even great literature, that gets us sober. During lust attacks, the SA book is as much help as a driver's manual in a traffic jam.

Stories and expressions from the Bible are so much a part of Western culture and life that they can't simply be "edited out" at meetings or anywhere else. There's nothing particularly "religious" about the Bible. Everyone, regardless of belief or religious practice, is aware of stories and expressions that originated in the Bible.

As a PCP, I pretended the program came about in a vacuum. Actually it's given to us in its historical context, and instead of apologizing for its roots, those that identify should be encouraged to read up on where it all came from and how it evolved. There's a big difference between stressing the principles that inspired this program and "preaching religion."

(For the best guidance on the desired spirit of SA meetings, I am always referred to "Meeting Quality And Use Of Non-SA Literature" in the SA Meeting Guide. It reads in part: "[A]n ideal meeting does not happen automatically; it usually takes time, pain, sobriety, recovery, and, I believe, hunger and thirst after rightness. There is no filling of the void in our hearts without such hunger, no hunger without sobriety, and no group sobriety and recovery without unity.") And politically correct policemenhip is a poor substitute for this. **Anonymous**

MEMBER NEWS

Bothwell, WA: "Even though my work schedule does not allow me to be available for regular group service, I do ask to lead meetings whenever I am there. I 'fill up' on meetings when I am home. At work overseas, the time is spent studying the Steps and developing my relationship with God. The fact that SA works in spite of such a schedule is a testament to the power of the Twelve Steps. In August I will have one year of sobriety.

"One way I could serve the fellowship occurred to me as I read the current issue of *Essay*. I would like to approach my home group about becoming a liaison between our fellowship and the Central Office. This seems like a need I could meet with my present irregular attendance schedule. Our group in Seattle averages 30 or more people each week. Once every six weeks I might consult the current treasurer and forward available funds to Central Office as the fellowship directs. Because of SA I have a new life and a new hope." **D.W.**

Staunton, VA: "I was disappointed to find that there is no SA here, but I expect to meet with the institution's sex offender group next week and perhaps I may find persons interested in starting SA here. Meanwhile, I gain benefit from the SA literature, contact with my sponsor and going to the 12-Step groups that *are* here. With five months of SA defined sobriety, I grow in hopes of progressive victory over lust." **C.H.**

Hutchinson, KS: "I received the materials you sent last month and I wanted to write and thank you for sending them. Does SA have something like a Pen Pal Program between those in SA? It would help if I had someone from SA on the outside to help me get started in the fellowship in these early months. I am also looking forward to getting involved upon my release in joining an SA group.

"I do want to thank SA for opening my eyes to the deeper level of my sexual addiction. It was one thing to stop child molestation, but another to begin the process of recovery from the addiction. You could say through sending your materials that I was able to look at the whole picture of where I am and where I want to go and that is the road to recovery." **M.H.**

Pomona, KS: "I have now been released from prison and am very happy to be back to my SA group in Kansas City again. I now have 26 months' sobriety and it feels great to have a choice of whether I want to act out or not (which I don't want to today), and remembering that it's for today only. Tomorrow will be today when it comes and I will ask my Higher Power (God) to help me stay sober for that day only. I am also thankful for what I am learning in the groups and the changes it has made in my behaviors and attitudes of how I let things affect me. I have a peace of mind now that I have never felt before. Thanks so much for your program and may God bless each and everyone in their recovery. One day at a time." **J.D.**

Prayers

Among many other gifts, SA hands me the most wonderful toolkit to use in recovery. The essential tools are meetings and telephone calls, working the Steps and Traditions, and contact with God *as I understand Him*. A daily contract for sobriety and a gratitude list are two other important tools. I generally use them only once a day. There is one tool, however, which I estimate I use 20 to 30 times every day and night. That is prayer.

My opinion is that one cannot make progress in sobriety and recovery without memorizing and frequently using the Third Step prayer (Page 63, AA Big Book and our own literature). I use it two or three times during the night, many times during the day and whenever I am sexual with my wife. The motive to use it is always the same: I am experiencing Fear which is a symptom that I am disconnected from my Higher Power. The Third Step prayer reconnects me. I may need to repeat it more than once.

The Serenity Prayer is my obsession or panic prayer. I repeat it slowly, emphasizing each phrase and sometimes each word. Sometimes I insert "those very few" after the word "change" just to remind myself. I really like (and use) Bill W.'s suggestion in *As Bill Sees It*: while walking he slowly said the Serenity prayer out loud as an Eleventh Step tool.

I also have a special three-day prayer derived from Page 162 of our SA Big Book. When I notice a body part on a person or find myself in a fantasy of any sort, I first say: "I surrender my right to [look at or think about the body part or fantasy]." Next I pray "May she (he) find whatever she (he) needs today to be healthy and whole, which is NOT my [looking at or thinking about that person's body part or having a fantasy]. Finally, I pray: God (or Higher Power) may I find in you whatever I thought I would have found in [looking at or thinking about that person's body part or having a fantasy]. I try to then state whatever I was looking for: was I afraid of abandonment or being deprived? Did I simply want a hit of adrenalin or lust? Being specific helps.

I have other prayers, but those three are the essential ones to get me through the day. The Seventh Step prayer is important whenever I feel worthless. Memorizing the "St. Francis Prayer" [Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 99] is still ahead of me as part of my Eleventh Step work.

My disease flares when I lose contact with my Higher Power. I recover when that contact is secure. Prayer is the most common tool I use to keep those ties healthy and whole. **Anonymous**

The Miracle of an Amends

It happened again. Those two simple words “I’m sorry” did their miracle. Two words so simple but so hard to say. An immediate change, from night to day, from misconnection to connection, from resentment to love, after just two simple words. It amazes me every time it works, as if it’s a totally new concept. Why shouldn’t it work? How can two such simple words do such a powerful healing?

It breaks down the barrier of self. It crumbles the wall, keeping others outside, far away from me. After something happens or someone does something that hurts me, I put my guard up and take my defensive stance against the enemy. I’m ready to defend myself from any further hurt. My shields are up to protect me but they also keep others out. I become disconnected. Even if I don’t misconnect physically, even if I force myself to take the actions of love and try to act as if I still love, I’m mentally disconnected — I’ve cut the cord of love and I can’t survive without it. What happens then?

I have to connect. I have to have love, someone to reach out to. I am not whole by myself. I must have some connection. Hence, the misconnection comes to play. It rings my doorbell, promising that the unreal will work this time. Tempting me with fantasy for relief from my pain. Lies, all lies. I’m in trouble if I don’t get back on track with the real thing. The unreal is just waiting for me to take one step toward it. Lust comes creeping right back in. I start looking with my eyes for a possible lust connection. Someone or something to satisfy this awful emptiness inside. What must I do?

I must reconnect and fast. How? By two simple words, “I’m sorry.” They work every time. They force me to open myself up again to those who love me. By lowering my guard, I open myself up to receive love again. It doesn’t matter who was really right. It doesn’t matter what it was about. If it involved me, I played a part in it. The chances are, with my distorted thinking, I’ve been a key player. I don’t have the right to resent anyone, no matter what they have done to me. If I do, I’m the one who hurts. I’m the one who pays the price of lust. And unsundered lust will eventually cause me to act out. One of the actions of love I must take is to make amends. It’s an action of love of myself so that I don’t pay the penalty of resentment. Then the miracle occurs, it breaks down the wall and reconnects me to God and then to whoever else is involved.

Oh yes, if I'm disconnected from another human being, I'm disconnected from God. It's a three-way link. Me, God and others. A three way cord when tied together is stronger and not easily broken. It keeps me sober. The miracle again. J.L.

“The Steps For Me Today”

(The following is an extract from a talk given by Roy K. at the Socio-Psychosomatic Clinic in Bad Herrenalb, Germany, in November 1985. Roy's audience consisted primarily of members of 12-Step Fellowships. Copies of the original tapes are available from Central Office for \$9.00 for a set of six.)

These Steps are not for everybody. They're not for everyone that needs them, they're for those who want them. And for those who are willing to pay the price. So in any group like this, there are people who are not willing to pay the price. We just accept that. All of my remarks are directed at those who I hope want and are willing to pay the price for the great treasure that these Steps promise.

What I want to do is read the Steps slowly and try to give you my feeling on the essence of each Step from where I am today. Step One: *We admitted we were powerless over lust — that our lives had become unmanageable.*

What is the essence of this Step? It is “I can't do it. I can't do it.” *But there has to be something I can't do.* This Step is meaningless unless there is something I can't do. Do you have something today that you are absolutely powerless over? I want us to close our eyes for just a moment and I want you to see in your heart and say in your mind what you are powerless over right now.

“I can't do it” is the essence of Step One. “I give up.” You say you are powerless over something, but have you given up? Have you given up today? That is the only question there is in the Twelve Step Program. If you haven't given up, forget the rest of it. The rest is going to be an academic exercise.

Step Two: *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.* When I came into AA, that power for me was the group. I saw that the group — the people in the group — were staying sober. Somehow a power larger than myself was making it happen. And this was the beginning of that inner voice of mine that said, “I now belong.” So let me ask you the question: Have you become part of a fellowship? Not just going to meetings. Have you come to believe that there is a Power working in this fellowship that is making happen what could not happen in Step One? Is that happening for you?

Step Three: *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.* In the First Step, I said: "I can't do it. I give up." But that's not enough. The completion of the surrender which is Steps One, Two and Three is "I give me up."

I used to capitulate to my self-wants or to the woman. I have to be willing to give me up to the Higher Power. No man can serve two masters. Giving myself to God is different to giving myself to a lover or even to my wife.

Today the question in your heart has to be: Do you want something from this weekend? Do you want something from this clinic? Do you want something from your group? Your group can't give it to you. I can't give it to you. This clinic can't give it to you. Have you surrendered your will and your life to God?

Let's take advantage of this time together and try something. There's going to be one point in each of our hearts today that I call "the sticking point." That will be the only thing in our consciousness that we have to surrender at this moment. There will be other things; but it's one thing at a time.

So what I'd like to have us do is to hold hands in a circle, sitting, and do the surrender of Steps One, Two and Three. [A pause as everyone joins hands.] We're going to keep it simple and focus on the one thing that's the worst, the most impossible in your life right now. Whatever it is, you don't have to tell the person next to you. It's your secret. You can't do it. God can do it. I give myself up now and cast myself onto Him. Don't worry about the consequences. In your heart you know what you have to give up.

As you come to Step Three in your heart now, you can say something like: My God, You know that I don't want to give this up. Help me to be willing to be willing. I want to say, Thy will, not mine be done. I want to give my will and my life to You.

The taking of the Twelve Steps is a very private work.

Step Four: *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.* What does this tell me? It tells me that I will now start looking at the truth about myself. The question is not so much *who* I am, but *what* I am. And also, What have I done?

There's a new scientific journal that deals with death and dying. And one topic this journal deals with is what's called "panoramic memory." There are stories in the journal by people that have experienced this. For example, a man is climbing in the Alps and falls from a great height, and knows he's going to die. You know how we *know* that it's finished? But he

survives. When he came to, this man wrote down what happened inside him on the way down. He had all of his life actually pass before him.

There seem to be many scientifically documented experiences like this. This fact seems to be in the subconscious of the human race. I know that I have within me everything I have ever done. Judgement is within me right now. Step Four means I want to start looking at the truth about myself today — what I am and what I have done. I want to do it *now* because I put it off with my drugs for so many years, I almost didn't make it. I don't want to be surprised. And you know what you give me? In our meetings, week after week, you let me bring my final judgement ahead of time. You let me see it, face it.

So, what are you facing today? Are you able to really look at yourself today? In our SA book we have the parable of the man being chased by the wild elephant. To escape, he takes refuge in a well. Are you willing to face your wild elephant today? Are you willing to turn around and look at him? That's the terror we've been running from and drugging ourselves from. It's that part of ourselves we're not willing to *see*. Step Four — *have you written it out?*

Step Five: *Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our — (what?!) Who put that word “wrongs” in there? I thought this was a self-help Program? [Laughter] But there it is — the exact nature of my wrongs.*

The Twelve Step Program is not for everybody. I'm as sick as my secrets, as we say in AA. But I can only do Steps Four and Five if I have done Steps One, Two and Three. I really can't cheat. I'm blind until I do Steps One, Two and Three. Bill W. of AA calls it “the deflation of the ego.” When Step Three was written originally, the words “on our knees” were added.

Step Six: *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.* Step Seven: *Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.* These Steps really are one. The shortcomings and defects are all tied in together. This is where I send it away to God. The question today is: Am I willing to send away this sticking point, this one thing, to God?

Step Eight: *Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.* Step Nine: *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.* In Steps Eight and Nine, we make right the wrongs that had to do with other people. In Steps Four, Five, Six and Seven, we are willing and we send away our wrongs, but in Eight and Nine, it's very specific.

Why do I have to right the wrongs that I've done to other people? They've probably forgotten all about it.

Let me tell you of an SA member in the very first year of SA. This man started his Fourth Step on resentments. It's the most unusual case I've ever heard. It was a Fourth Step only on resentment, and he had to stop writing it. He stopped writing at number 450. He had perfect recall on every person he was currently resenting in his heart. I've never seen the man, but we talked on the telephone. He said, "These things in my mind are a cancer that I've been holding all my life. I have to make the wrongs right because there's no other way I can erase them inside of *me*."

In my limited experience, I have yet to meet anyone that has found any other way of totally erasing the effects of the past without doing this. Have you? Has anyone here discovered a way of doing that? When you come off your last drug, this inner damage will float to the surface. I urge you to come off the last drug — all of them — so the sickness will come up now and not stay inside and be that cancer.

Do you know how impossible this is? I know how impossible it is. I'm absolutely powerless. I can't do it. But I do it. Part of me knows it has to die in order to do it, and that's how I come to life.

In our sexaholism, we are apparently seeing something else influencing Steps Eight and Nine. That's why we put in Step Eight and a Half": *Surrendering our resentments, we asked for willingness to forgive all persons guilty of real or imagined wrongs against us and forgave each one.*

This is what we discover: When we think about making the wrong right with another person, we really can't do it unless we've forgiven them first. If you're like me, you'll find it impossible to forgive. But I forgive. Not because I want to, because I *don't* want to I have to do it. As soon as I take the action, I receive the grace to forgive.

This forgiveness is part of Steps Eight and Nine. This is the toughest medicine the human race has to swallow. The best medicine. Now, where are you in this Step? Are you forgiving that person you can never forgive? This is how we discover God.

Step Ten: *Continued to take personal inventory and when we were — (what?)!*

All in unison: Wrong [Laughter]

Wrong. ...*promptly admitted it.* I was wrong [Laughter] Impossible. I can't do it. Not only do I not feel like it, I've never done it in my life. God, I just can't. But I do it. Because I have to. There's no choice. Otherwise, I

stay in my death. "I was wrong." The most beautiful words between two human beings that can ever be spoken. Try it and see.

Step Eleven: *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. In my opinion, Steps Eleven and Twelve happen if we have worked Steps One through Ten and continue to work them.* If I'm working One through Ten, Eleven and Twelve are going to happen in my life. All I'm doing in Step Eleven is what comes naturally when I get the junk out of the way and just say, "Come in, Lord." I don't even have to say that. He's already there.

The question for us here this morning is: Are you letting Him in, or are you letting your wrongs shut Him out? That's Step Eleven.

Step Twelve: *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to sexaholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.* This is the one Step that's not in the imperative. This is the Lazarus experience, the awakening. Always in my life I used to look for the magic, the technique, the person that would give me life. You know — the laying on of hands [laughter]. The ecstatic religious experience. Studying theology, philosophy. Looking for the awakening in that magic encounter with another person in order to come to life. It never happened.

It never happened because it's an 'inside job' and only these first Eleven Steps can do it. The question for us today is: What life are you living in? Are you living in the life in which you have always lived, or are you in the new life? Only you can make the choice. God gives us the choice. We can stay in the tomb, or come out.

Box 300

June 1992

Post Office Box 300
Simi Valley, California 93062

NOTES FROM THE OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE...

- In the past, the *Essay* newsletter has been sent free of charge to anyone who requests it, and the Oversight Committee recommends that we continue that policy. However, the committee asks that each member who receives the *Essay* and who can afford to do so, make a voluntary donation of \$10 per year to cover the increased costs of printing and mailing.
- Three reminders concerning our SA Literature: The SA logo may not be used in any form without prior written permission; SA literature may not be printed or copied without prior written permission; no changes may be incorporated into SA literature. If you have any questions, please contact the Central Office.

... AND CENTRAL OFFICE

- Central Office has been receiving this feedback from a number of inquirers: when they call the contact number the Central Office gives them, they are told that the person is either no longer associated with SA or no longer at the listed number. If you were formerly a contact person but no longer serve in that capacity, or if your group contact person has changed, please write or call Pat at the Central Office. This way we can keep our list current and make sure that someone who is reaching out for help is not subjected to this kind of runaround.

- We are again updating our records. All members who wish to be a contact for your group, please send your name and telephone number to Central Office. All members who are now contacts please inform Central Office if there has been a change in phone numbers or are no longer able to be a contact. Because of your wonderful service, it has made it possible for Central Office to give inquirers contacts in almost every area in the U.S., Canada, and internationally.
- When personal checks are used for group or intergroup donations, it should be indicated clearly on the check that this is a group or intergroup donation so that credit can be given. Group contributions will be acknowledged in each issue of *Essay*, whereas personal donations by individuals are not listed.
- In the same vein, if your check or money order includes a voluntary donation for an *Essay* newsletter subscription, please indicate that fact so that Central Office can credit the proper account. Thanks.
- Thanks to the generous donations from members of the fellowship, Central Office now has a FAX machine. If you wish you may fax your correspondence or literature order to (805) 581-4057.
- We would like to start to collect group histories, so if your group has been going for a while and is willing, we encourage you to get together and come up with a brief written history of your group. It might include things like ... date and location of first meeting, founding members, pattern of growth (both in numbers and in sobriety), significant events in the life of the group such as change of location, experiences with group service projects such as hosting a marathon, retreat or convention, etc. Send your group "story" to the Central Office for inclusion in our archives — be listed with the pioneers!

LEADERSHIP IN A.A.: EVER A VITAL NEED

by Bill W. (First published in AA Grapevine, April 1959.)

No society can function well without able leadership in all its levels, and A.A. can be no exception. It must be said, though, that we A.A.'s sometimes cherish the thought that we can do without much personal leadership at all. We are apt to warp the traditional idea of "principles before personalities" around to such a point that there would be no "personality" in leadership whatever. This would imply faceless automatons trying to please everybody, regardless.

At other times, we are quite as apt to demand that A.A.'s leaders must necessarily be people of the most sterling judgement, morals, and inspiration; big doers, prime examples to all, and *practically* infallible.

Real leadership, of course, has to function in between these entirely imaginary poles of hoped-for excellence. In A.A., certainly, no leader is faceless, and neither is any leader perfect. Fortunately, our Society is blessed with any amount of REAL leadership — the active people of today and the potential leaders of tomorrow, as each new generation of able members swarms in. We have an abundance of men and women whose dedication, stability, vision, and special skills make them capable of dealing with every possible service assignment. We have only to seek these folks out and trust them to serve us.

Somewhere in our literature there is a statement to this effect: "Our leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example." In effect, we are saying to them, "Act for us, but don't boss us."

A leader in A.A. service is therefore a man (or a woman) who can personally put principles, plans, and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker and he exercises no judgement of his own — well, he really isn't a leader at all.

Good leadership originates plans, policies and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source.

Good leadership never passes the buck. Once assured that it has or can obtain sufficient general backing, it freely takes decisions and puts them into action

forthwith, provided, of course, that such actions be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility.

A politico is an individual who is forever trying to “get the people what they want.” A statesman is an individual who can carefully discriminate when and *when not* to do this. He recognizes that even large majorities, when badly disturbed or uninformed, can, once in a while, be dead wrong. When such an occasional situation arises, and something very vital is at stake, it is always the duty of leadership, even when in a small minority, to take a stand against the storm, using its every ability of authority and persuasion to effect a change.

Nothing, however, can be more fatal to leadership than opposition for opposition’s sake. It never can be “Let’s have it our way or no way at all.” This sort of opposition is often powered by a visionless pride or a gripe that makes us want to block something or somebody. Then there is the opposition that casts its vote saying, “No, we don’t like it.” No real reasons are given. This won’t do. When called upon, leadership must always give its reasons, and good ones.

Then, too, a leader must realize that even very prideful or angry people can sometimes be dead right, when the calm and the more humble are quite mistaken.

These points are practical illustrations of the kinds of careful discrimination and soul-searching that true leadership must always try to exercise.

Another qualification for leadership is give-and-take, the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. Compromise comes hard to us all-or-nothing drunks. Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a *series of improving compromises*. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then, it is truly necessary to stick flat-footed to one’s conviction about an issue until it is settled. These are situations for keen timing and careful discrimination as to which course to take.

Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism. This is an acid test. There are always the constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship.

Then there are those whom we like to call our “destructive” critics. They power-drive, they are politikers, they make accusations. Maybe they are violent, malicious. They pitch gobs of rumors, gossip, and general scuttlebutt to gain their ends — all for the good of A.A., of course! But in A.A., we have at learned that these folks, who may be a trifle sicker than the rest of us, need not be really destructive at all, depending very much on how we relate ourselves to them.

To begin with, we ought to listen carefully to what they say. Sometimes, they are telling the whole truth; at other times, a little truth. More often, though, they are just rationalizing themselves into nonsense. If we are within range, the whole truth, the half-truth, or no truth at all can prove equally unpleasant to us. That is why we have to listen so carefully. If they have got the whole truth, or even a little truth, then we had better thank them and get on with our respective inventories, admitting we were wrong. If it is nonsense, we can ignore it. Or we can lay all the cards on the table and try to persuade them. Failing this, we can be sorry they are too sick to listen, and we can try to forget the whole business. There are few better means of self-survey and of developing genuine patience than the workouts these usually well-meaning but erratic brother members afford us. This is always a large order, and we shall sometimes fail to make good on it ourselves. But we must keep trying.

Now we come to the all-important attribute of *vision*. Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this sort of striving to be a sort of heresy, because we A.A.'s are constantly telling ourselves, "One day at a time." But that valuable principle usually refers to our mental and emotional lives and means chiefly that we are not foolishly to repine over the past nor wishfully to daydream about the future.

As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. God's real Providence has endowed us human beings with a considerable capability for insight, and He evidently expects us to use it. Therefore, we must distinguish between wishful fantasy about a happy tomorrow and the present use of our powers of thoughtful estimate. This can spell the difference between future progress and unforeseen woe.

Vision is therefore the very essence of prudence, an essential virtue if ever there was one. Of course, we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think at all.

The making of estimates has several aspects. We look at past and present experience to see what we think it means. From this, we derive a tentative idea or policy. Looking first at the nearby future, we ask how our idea or policy might work. Then we ask how our policies and ideas might apply under the several differing conditions that could arise in the longer future. If an idea looks like a good bet, we try it on — experimentally when that is possible. Later we revalue the situation and ask whether our estimate is working out.

At about this stage, we may have to take a critical decision. Maybe we have a policy or plan that still looks fine and is apparently doing well. Nevertheless, we ought to ponder carefully what its long-term effect will be. Will today's nearby

advantages boomerang into large liabilities for tomorrow? The temptation will almost always be to seize the nearby benefits and quite forget about the harmful precedents or consequences that we may be setting in motion.

These are no fancy theories. We have found that we must use these principles of estimate constantly, especially at world service levels where the stakes are high. In public relations, for example, we must estimate the reaction both of A.A. groups and of the general public, both short-term and long-term. The same thing goes for our literature. Our finances have to be estimated and budgeted. We must think about our service needs as they relate to general economic conditions, group capability, and willingness to contribute. On many such problems, often, we must try to think months and years ahead.

As a matter of fact, all of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions were at first questions of estimate and vision for the future. Years ago, for example, we slowly evolved an idea about A.A. being self-supporting. There had been trouble here and there about outside gifts. Then still more trouble developed. Consequently, we began to devise a policy of "no outside gifts." We began to suspect that large sums of this kind would tend to make us irresponsible and could divert us from our primary aim. Finally, we saw that for the long pull, outside money could really ruin us. At this point, what had been just an idea or general policy crystallized firmly into an A.A. tradition. We saw that we must sacrifice the quick, nearby advantage for long-term safety.

We went through the same process on anonymity. A few public breaks had looked good. But finally, the vision came that many such breaks eventually could raise havoc among us. So it went: first a tentative idea, then an experimental policy, then a firm policy, and finally a deep conviction — a vision for tomorrow.

Such is our process of estimating the future, and responsible world leadership must be proficient in this vital activity. It is an essential ability, especially in our trustees. Most of them, in my view, should be chosen on the basis that they have already demonstrated an aptness for foresight in their own business or professional careers.

We shall be in continual need of these same attributes — tolerance, responsibility, flexibility, and vision — among our leaders of A.A. services at all levels. The principles of leadership will be the same whatever the size of the operation.

Maybe this seems like an attempt to stake out a specially privileged and superior type of A.A. member. But it really is not so. We simply are recognizing that our talents vary greatly. The conductor of an orchestra is not necessarily good at finance or foresight. And it is quite unlikely that a fine banker could be a great musical

performer. So when we talk about A.A. leadership, we only declare that we ought to select that leadership on the basis of obtaining the best talent we can find.

While this article was first thought of in connection with our world service leadership, it is possible that some of its suggestions can be useful to anyone who takes an active part in our Society.

This is true particularly in the area of Twelfth Step work, in which nearly all of us are actively engaged. Every sponsor is necessarily a leader. The stakes are about as big as they could be. A human life and usually the happiness of a whole family hang in the balance. What the sponsor does and says, how well he estimates the reactions of his prospects, how well he times and makes his presentation, how well he handles criticisms, and how well he leads his prospect on by personal spiritual example — these qualities of leadership can make all the difference, often the difference between life and death.

We thank God that Alcoholics Anonymous is blessed with so much leadership in all of its affairs.

(Copyright © by The A.A. Grapevine, Inc.; reprinted with permission.)

LIST OF DONATIONS FOR FIRST QUARTER 1992

Atlanta, GA	\$25.00	Outremont, CA	20.00
Alexandria, VA	120.00	Orange, CA	40.00
Anaheim, CA	52.00	Penn Hills, PA	172.15
Akron, OH	30.00	Portland, OR	330.00
Alhambra, CA	153.60	Pasadena, CA	114.00
Appleton, WI	69.00	Pittsburgh, PA	28.00
Baltimore, MD	140.00	Redlands, CA	70.00
Bozeman, MT	81.66	Rapid City, SD	50.00
Binghamton, NY	30.00	Rochester, NY	146.00
Baltimore, MD/ Washington, DC	100.00	St. Louis, MO	210.00
Barrington, IL	235.00	Seattle, WA	100.00
Cleveland, OH	211.50	Slidell, LA	20.00
Chula Vista, CA	75.00	Syracuse, NY	250.00
Cambridge, MA	120.00	San Diego, CA	1,819.02
Casper, WY	34.00	Salem, OR	137.53
Chicago, IL	240.00	S. Barrington, IL	63.00
Dallas, TX	25.00	Sydney, Australia	140.00
Dubuque, IA	15.00	S. California Intergroup	400.00
Denver, CO	99.00	Saskatoon, Sask., Canada	50.00
El Cajon, CA	105.72	Simi Valley, CA	20.00
Erie, PA	50.00	Suitland, MD	151.18
Escondido, CA	170.00	Sunnyvale, CA	100.00
Glen Ellyn, IL	80.00	Santa Monica, CA	20.00
Greensburg, PA	83.76	Tacoma, WA	37.00
Hyattsville, MD	30.00	Tri-State Intergroup, NY	37.00
Hubbard, OR	114.50	Utah	50.00
Idaho Falls, ID	50.00	Vancouver, Canada	664.00
Knoxville, TN	60.00	Victoria, Canada	6.50
Long Beach, CA	65.00	Van Nuys, CA	204.30
Long Beach, NY	25.00	Union City, NJ	25.00
Laguna Nigel, CA	50.00	Westfield, NJ	50.00
Los Angeles, CA	61.00	Washington, DC	250.00
Laurel, MD	40.00	Wichita, KS	200.00
Midlothian, IL	55.60	W. Los Angeles, CA	140.00
Milwaukee, WI	214.50	Warner Robins, GA	35.00
Metuchen, NJ	130.00	Wheeling, WV	12.96
Nashville, TN	631.00	Wentzerville, Australia	115.80
Northridge, CA	72.00		
N. Hollywood, CA	100.00	Group Donations	\$10,036.95
Ogden, UT	60.00	Individual Donations	2,656.63
		TOTAL DONATIONS	\$12,693.58

The Central Office has taken every effort to make the above list correct. If the group name was not noted on the check, the donation is totalled under "Individual." To assure proper credit, please make sure to designate exactly who the donation is from.

This is the First Quarter only. All donations received after 3/31/92 will be in the next

Essay.

STATEMENT OF INCOME AND EXPENSES FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 1, 1992 TO MARCH 31, 1992

	<i>Current Period</i>	<i>(%)</i>	<i>Year-to-Date</i>	<i>(%)</i>
<i>INCOME</i>				
Contributions – Unrestricted	\$6,843.12	100.0	\$24,038.90	100.0
(less) Refunds	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.0
TOTAL INCOME	\$6,843.12	100.0	\$94,209.20	100.0
<i>EXPENSES</i>				
Salaries & Wages	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.0
Auto expense	42.50	0.6	42.50	0.2
Courier & UPS	22.00	0.3	22.00	0.1
Insurance – General	0.00	0.0	367.24	0.4
Legal & Accounting	350.00	5.1	576.35	2.4
Miscellaneous expense	0.00	0.0	45.00	0.2
Office expense	31.31	0.5	170.31	0.7
Outside services	4,007.49	58.6	12,160.73	50.6
Postage expense	1,443.88	21.1	2,534.99	10.5
Printing & Tape Duplication	2,120.55	31.0	2,120.55	8.8
Rent expense	800.00	11.7	2,400.00	10.2
Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	0.0	499.30	2.1
Supplies expense	0.00	0.0	145.51	0.6
Taxes – Payroll	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.0
Taxes – Other	0.00	0.0	253.00	1.1
Telephone	987.23	14.4	2,060.45	8.6
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$9,804.96	143.3	\$23,030.69	95.8
NET OPERATING INCOME (LOSS)	\$2,961.84	43.3	\$1,008.21	4.2
NET INCOME (LOSS) BEFORE TAX	\$2,961.84	43.3	\$1,008.21	4.2
<i>INCOME TAXES</i>				
State income tax	0.00	0.0	10.00	0.0
NET INCOME (LOSS)	\$2,961.84	43.3	1,008.21	4.2

Ordered By:
(Please print or type)

SA ORDER FORM

Name _____

Street _____

City _____

State/Zip Code _____

Phone No. () _____

SA
P.O. Box 300
Simi Valley, CA 93062
(805) 581-3343

fax (805) 581-4057

*All payments must be
made in U.S. funds only*

First Order Repeat Order Method of Payment —

Money Order
 Check

I'd like to order the following books:

Qty.	Cost	Book Title	Description
_____	\$10.00	<i>Sexaholics Anonymous</i>	Title or plain white cover.
_____	\$ 4.00	<i>SA Meeting Guides</i>	Suggested formats & experience in starting new SA groups.
_____	\$ 8.00	<i>Recovery Continues</i>	24 articles that deal with various aspects of recovery.
_____	\$ 6.00	<i>Member Stories—1989</i>	21 recovery stories.
_____	\$ 2.00	<i>Discovering the Principles</i>	SA's growing experience with the Traditions.
_____	\$.20	Brochures (English)	
_____	\$.20	Brochures (Spanish)	
_____	\$10.00	Voluntary Essay Donation	

Total of Merchandise

CA Residents

Add Sales Tax

Shipping & Handling

(Chart at right)

ORDER TOTAL

Shipping & Handling	
0 - \$9.99	\$1.75
\$10.00 - \$19.99	\$2.95
\$20.00 - \$29.99	\$3.40
\$30.00 - \$49.99	\$4.25
\$50.00 - \$99.99	\$5.00
\$100.00 & over	\$6.50

*Not responsible for Cash Remittance.
No C.O.D.'s or Stamps, please!*

Copyright © 1992 Sexaholics Anonymous
P.O. Box 300, Simi Valley, CA 93062
All rights reserved
(Copies of *Essay* may be reproduced
for distribution to other members.)