

Keep In Touch

June 2003

Announcements

The Area website address is as follows:

www.area62.org
southcarolinaaa.org

Check out K.I.T. & other committees -
Please sign the Guest Register!

2003 KIT Topics:

Service
Bridge the Gap "Prison"
Treatment "Sponsorship"
Founders Day
History Theme "Old Timers Panel"
Crossroads or Turning Points
Newcomers Corner

KIT (Keep In Touch) presents the experience and opinions of members of Alcoholics Anonymous on the disease of alcoholism. Opinions expressed here are not those of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or the South Carolina Area Assembly.

Please do not be alarmed if your story did not appear in this issue of KIT. Your story or article will be incorporated in a future issue. If for any reason the KIT Committee has decided not to publish an article that has been submitted, we apologize.

The KIT Committee Members would like to thank everyone for taking the time to write an article for this publication. If you have any suggestions or comments regarding the publication of KIT, please contact a KIT Committee Representative. We welcome your feedback.

SUBMISSION OF ARTICLES, DISTRICT HAPPENINGS, OR CALENDER OF EVENTS

JoAnne G.
P.O. Box 1016
Aiken, SC 29802

JoAnne_99_1999@yahoo.com

The next KIT publication will be presented at the next Area Assembly. What events are happening in your district or group between Oct. 2003 - Feb. 2004 that you would like published? **Deadlines for submission of articles is Sept. 1st, 2003.**

THE 7 UPS OF RECOVERY

1. WAKE UP!

Get out of bed and decide to have a good day.

2. DRESS UP!

The best way to dress up is to put on a smile. A smile is an inexpensive way to improve your looks and your attitude.

3. SHUT UP!

God gave us two ears and one mouth, so He must have meant for us to do twice as much listening as talking.

4. STAND UP!

...for what you believe in. Stand for something or you will fall for anything.

5. LOOK UP!

...to God. Remember humans have clay feet, but God will never disappoint...

6. REACH UP!

...for something higher. Seek God's will in your every day.

7. LIFT UP!

...your prayers. Make prayer and meditation a part of your daily routine.



Have a Great Day!
Christine

Calendar of Events;

59th SE Regional Conference

Memphis, Tennessee
August 7 - 10, 2003

57th Annual SC State Convention

The Embassy Suites, Greenville, SC
March 18 - 21, 2004
"The Sunlight of the Spirit"

60th SE Regional Conference

Jacksonville, Florida
August 4 - 8, 2004
"The Joy of Living"

Next Area Committee Meeting

Sept. 7th, 2003 @ 10:00 am
Subject to change.

Next Area Assembly

Oct. 4th & 5th, 2003 @ 10:00 am
Subject to change.

Other Recovery Events

Founders Day

Saturday, June 14th, 2003
Speaker Meeting @ Noon - Food After
Shady Group in Florence
More Info: bbd007dale@aol.com

First Annual Founders Day Celebration

District 51's Lancaster County
Saturday, June 14th, 2003
Andrew Jackson State Park - 12 Noon Until 6 P.M.
Lunch at 1 P.M. Bring a covered dish.
History of District 51 & A.A. at 2 P.M.
Followed by Speaker Marshall L.
Join the fun - fishing, horseshoes, & fellowship!

Founders Day Cookout

Greenville Intergroup
Saturday, June 14th, 2003
9 A.M. to 4 P.M. at Timmons Park

SCCYPAA

August 29th - 31st, 2003
Charleston Riverview Hotel
Contact: Chrissy R. @ cmreich@edisto.cofc.edu

Low - Country Roundup

November 14th - 16th, 2003
Charleston, South Carolina
Beach Holiday Inn - (843)588-6464

Fellowship By The Sea

September 25th - 28th, 2003
Springmaid Beach Conference Center

Delegate's Corner

Delegate's Report: Patty T., Area 62 Delegate, welcomed new GSRs and others to their first Assembly. The New Group Form: how can we improve it to insure closer compliance with A A's group responsibility and requirement for singleness of purpose? Types of groups: Active or Active/Unknown, Inactive, Merged, and Pending. GSO has added another pending category for groups requiring further study. The pamphlet "Let's be Friendly with our Friends" can help you better cooperate with Voc. Rehab and other services. "The AA Group" pamphlet is full of answers for you, too. The 17th AA World Services Conference was held in Ouide, Spain last summer. Ireland delivered a "message without borders." Despite the Irish island's two governments, etc., One AA General Service office serves Ireland's AA members. They granted, in unity, 50,000 Euros to the International Literature Fund to further translations and distribution of literature to countries not yet able to support their own services. The Feb/Mar Box 459 has a great article by Class A Trustee, George Valiant, on singleness of purpose, and another on a Braille meeting. Patty is excited to go to New York to represent you. The Conference will be similar to yesterday's pre-Conference workshop and as intense and stimulating, for days on end, without enough smoke breaks. Another issue she will bring up is the February "Love, Sex and Recovery" Grapevine cover; the articles were great, but the cover was not appropriate as a representative AA material to be seen by families, etc. please call her with any other ideas or concerns.

Alternate Delegate's Report: El N. reminded us of the guideline for reimbursement of Area Officers. Keep up with how we spend our funds; this is how the Assembly's work gets done. As treasurer of Convention Committee, she reported \$16,144.81 in the treasury: prudent reserve is a bit less than this amount. Following Charleston, the Committee will reassess the status of the reserve and decide what to do. At the SE Regional Forum, Patty participated in awesome discussions about God and AA. We also met trusted servants from GSO. Bob Miller, non-alcoholic, Class A Trustee, and a person of faith, is rotating off the Board. We elect a new trustee this year. Any suggestions for the position, please let us know. At the SE Delegate's Get-Together, El learned more about responsibilities of delegates, alternates, and the legacy of service. A suggestion that each group send \$1 to GSO as a symbol of participation in AA; groups tend to forego contributions when they can't make large donations. Do it! Less than 50% of groups contribute; wouldn't it be great for Patty to be able to show our Area's support with this small gesture. Suggestions for speaking at the mike; "If it's been said, don't say it." "Don't state the obvious." "Don't go to the mike but once." "Always be prepared, always be dressed (up, clean), and always be open to new ideas." Ideas for delegates at the Conference, but you applied them here, and we can apply them on our home group and everywhere.

Concept V

Throughout our world services structure, a traditional "Right of Appeal" ought to prevail, thus assuring us that minority opinion will be heard and that petitions for the redress of personal grievances will be carefully considered.



Service

Where do I begin? Can what I have to say make a difference? The negative in me immediately sets in. I remember what my first sponsor tried to reinenforce into this brain early on "Stay in the positive, stay in the solution. Now Nancy, just do it." The word SERVICE means more and more to me every day that I continue to stay sober and do the things that are suggested, even when I don't want to. I was told that if I put on-half the effort into staying sober as I did to drinking, I might find some peace and serenity. That is the truth for me today and I hope that in sharing what I know today and not what I think will make a difference to just one person, even if that person is me.

I am one of those drunks that listened to my sponsor concerning AA but not necessarily in other areas of my life; and today in both areas I feel I have some experience and knowledge. Bill Wilson tells us that carrying the message is everything from making the coffee to going on that Twelfth Step call. Today I know that is true. He says that anything that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer is hence AA service. I know for me today that to say no to AA is something I can't do.

For so long I thought that a lot of "old timers" pushed me into service responsibilities and left me there for the wolves to gnaw on. I know today that I have always expected people to tell me things instead of researching them on my own. In AA there is written answers for every problem that I may encounter, if I just do the research. I am supposed to be a guardian of the Traditions but do I know what the Traditions mean and how they work? I didn't. I thought (my problem) that if it seemed like the best thing to do then it was, just like I thought I knew what was best for me in my personal life because at the time it just felt good. I know and believe today that these trusted servants that put their experience on paper knew what they were talking about. So if you are new to SERVICE read your Service Manual, the AA Group Pamphlet, and the AA Traditions pamphlets. Study the history books of AA. All the problems we have today in AA, they had sixty years ago.

Three years ago I thought my life was over and I was so miserable that there just wasn't much left in life for me. Someone who cared enough pointed out to me the first paragraph in Chapter 7 of the Big Book. I didn't want to drink but I wanted to die. For some reason I took some action and the misery began to lessen and I got better. Today I am so grateful to be where I am and not where I wanted to be at that time. Through that experience I learned that when I sit around and think about me all the time, I am just plain miserable and misery isn't something I enjoy anymore. It is so depressing and it's the height of self-centeredness and selfishness and my Book tells me those things will kill me. So do I want to live or die? Today I choose to live.

Just the title of today's topic brings a judgmental attitude, the beginnings of a resurrected resentment. (A resentment that has never been healed). None of us are exempt from feeling this way when those who we consider as high maintenance members of our fellowship "share their same misery at every single meeting, over and over again".

We tend to talk about how that makes us feel with others when together outside of the meetings.

Here is an experiment you should try at the next meeting you attend. When the meeting is over and you have closed with the Lords prayer, 3rd Step Prayer, or simply a moment of silence; when you have held hands in unity or hugged in fellowship as you spoke the word's "Keep coming back, it works"; take a good look at what you have just engaged in. What you and your fellow members have just partaken in was a collective spirit of unity and a statement of bold encouragement and reverence towards God and the program. Now, I want you to be very aware of what happens next. A few of us will make arrangements to go for coffee, some will hang out side the building we meet in, smoke cigarettes and talk about a variety of subjects, and some may head off to their homes to close out the day. Now, here is where we begin to move from unity to disunity. It's what I call the "Disunity of W.A.W. (Whining About Whiners).

One of the first things we talk about after we have left the meeting is other people. We determine who is serious about their recovery, what someone said that was totally out of line in the meeting. We judge people for their faith, color, attitude, sexual orientation, religion or lack of religion. For some reason we feel that now we are no longer in the meeting, we have earned the right to pound our opinions about outside issues. Issues surrounding other people. In other words the first thing we talk about after a meeting is the other guy or gal. "Why can't they just get it?" we say "When he or she shares they are always a mess." "I'm in here to hear the message, not the mess".

Does any of this sound familiar? And even if we are not the one who has opened that can of worms, we are quick to join in the tearing down of our fellow program members. We are "Whiney About the Whiners". We have formed our little circle of friends and plot to fix the other guy or to avoid them altogether.

Folks if personal recovery depends upon our unity, we are in big trouble. We have become much worse than the so-called whiners. We have graduated to the highest level of dishonesty. If we continue in this behavior we will eventually as proverbs says, "like a dog we will return to our vomit." Our behaviors will bring us around full circle and we will be living the life of the ultimate lie. We may never use mind-altering chemicals but there are even more destructive behaviors than using. We will find ourselves back on the streets of self-deceit, and we will soon find ourselves all alone. We no longer trust anyone particularly our Higher Power. We have become what we were so adamant about escaping from.

So, what do we do with the Whiners? It's simple really, we get off our blessed assurances, we once more turn to the man or woman in the mirror, reset our priorities, stay away from unhealthy people that would seek to suck us into judging others, make an amends to those we have been gossiping about, amends to God and amends to ourselves. Then we get back on the horse and bury our faces in the 12 Steps, the unity, the compassion and the firm but loving spirit of what the program was really meant to be.

Folks, if we continue to take the splinter out of someone else's eye while the log is still in ours, we will cause an irreparable amount of damage to both ourselves and the other member. When this happens we are guilty of breaking the circle of unity.

So, what do we do with the Whiners? We bring ourselves back to the 1st Step and start from rock bottom and this time we honestly, open-mindedly, and willingly become part of the solution and not a part of the problem. If this article is about you. If this article is about me. Let us take a full and complete inventory of ourselves and determine to heal the judgmental cancer within us by being 'part of' and not the king whiner of the Kingdom of self. I plan to take just that kind of inventory today.

Perhaps we all should.

Today I choose to experience the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, not just read it. The joy of the steps for me today it to take someone else through them, to watch them recover, to see them help others, and to see loneliness vanish.

Early on my sponsor encouraged me to join a Home Group and later on in sobriety my Service Sponsor continued to emphasize that point. The AA Group pamphlet tells me this is the group where I accept responsibilities and try to sustain friendships and that it is the strongest bond between the AA member and the Fellowship. My group today is real important to me, just as it was when I first joined AA. I have a commitment to this group. It is my family. I learn in my home group how to live through the controversy we have and in turn I am better able to handle the controversy that comes up in the work place and in my home. Through Alcoholics Anonymous I can become a better daughter, sister, mother and friend. All this started in the Home Group. I helped start this group, I didn't particularly want to but I didn't know how to say no and I had no intentions of it ever becoming my Home Group. Someone announced to my old group that I was not a member anymore and out of resentment I joined this one. Right now you couldn't drag me away.

If you are new to AA or if you have been around for a while, get a sponsor and get a home group and start to do the things that are suggested even if you don't want to. Make the coffee, chair a meeting,

reach out to that newcomer, come early and stay late, help clean up. Try it for awhile and see if you "feel" a little better and if you do then get a little more involved. It just got better for me and I can share that I'm not the first to realize that and hopefully not the last. I hope I never get too busy for Alcoholics Anonymous for it was here I found a new life, new friends and family and a Higher Power that I thought didn't want to have anything to do with me. Today I can thank Him for all He has given me and for all He hasn't given me. I KNOW He wants the best for me. And you! I'm grateful that I am an alcoholic and that I didn't settle for what I thought was best. I try to remember that today. I hope and pray that everyone heard JoAnne say that if we don't write for the KIT then there will be no KIT, I immediately went home and began to write. My thought after the last assembly was that she would probably have so many articles to pick from that mine would be pushed aside. That's were my thinking will get me so if you are reading this and you haven't sent something to KIT, just do it. A lot of hard work goes into this and remember that you can make a difference. Share your experience, strength and hope. When I came to Alcoholics Anonymous I thought there was no hope and that my experience was garbage. How that has changed, I could never give back what has been so freely given to me. It is a privilege to be a member of Alcoholics Anonymous.



Submitted by Nancy.

Aiken Central Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

Aiken, S.C., incorporated on December 19th, 1835, became a health resort at the turn of the century and was highly influenced by the “winter colony” for the next 50 years. The “winter colony” were wealthy people who lived in the North during the summer but made their homes in Aiken from Thanksgiving to Easter.

A housekeeper for one of these winter residents had sobered up in the North and when coming to Aiken for the winter of 1946-47 sought out alcoholics who might help her stay sober. She found a few in Aiken and with the help of an A.A. group in Augusta, meetings were started in the parish house of St. Thaddeus Episcopal Church on Pendleton Street.

One of the earlier Aiken members, Rudolph B., had given a house to St. Paul's Lutheran Church several years before for use as a parsonage. In 1948 and 1949, A.A. meetings were held in St. Paul's wooden educational building on Pendleton Street.

An alcoholic from Graniteville, Bill T., had heard about A.A. from his brother, who had moved North and found sobriety. He suggested that Bill seek out A.A. and give it a try.

Bill went to his first A.A. meeting at St. Paul's on March 24th, 1948, and exactly a year later became the first member to celebrate a year of continuous sobriety. That night he sat alone in the meeting place for some time, wondering if there would be a meeting, for no one else appeared.

Then, his wife Vera came in, then his children, and other relatives, and finally, A.A. members from both Aiken and Augusta. It was a surprise party which the family has never forgotten. Bill never took another drink for the rest of his life. He died in 1974 after “26 years of wonderful sobriety”, as his family puts it.

Other members in Aiken didn't fare as well as Bill, as one by one they succumbed to John Barleycorn. Meetings were discontinued late in 1949 and Bill began meeting with A.A. members from Augusta.

In 1950, construction of the massive Savannah River Plant began and with it came thousands and thousands of new people to the Aiken area. As former A.A. members sobered up and new members arrived, A.A. meetings were again resumed at the original location in St. Thaddeus's parish house. Meetings have been held continuously ever since.

Later in 1950, another member, Bert W., offered the second floor of a building he owned on Laurens Street for use as a meeting place for the A.A. group. It housed the Jones Electric & Gas Company on the first floor and basement, and had two apartments and a large meeting room on the second floor. Weekly meetings were continued at this location until one cold Monday night -- January 26th, 1953, when a strong odor of gas in the building caused the A.A. meeting to be called off.

At 8:30 the next morning the owner's son, Jimmy J., turned on the exhaust fan to remove the fumes. An explosion resulted. Jimmy was thrown from the building, but survived. Others in the building were less fortunate, as they died in the blast and ensuing fire. In addition to the Jones Electric building, the fire also leveled the adjacent R.W. McCreary's Dry Goods Store, the W.J. Platt Drug Store, the Diana Shop, and the Liles Drug Company. Windows were broken in buildings in an area of four square blocks.

St. Mary's Help of Christians Catholic Church on Park Avenue offered its recreational building as temporary quarters for the A.A. group. Later in 1953 the group leased a basement area in the Bank of Greenwood (later the State Bank and Trust

Company) on Laurens Street. The basement area was made into a club-like atmosphere and meetings were held there until 1965.

From two meetings a week in 1965 the number has grown to 21 meetings a week today, including three Al Anon meetings.

In 1966, The Aiken Central Group, as it is officially called, welcomed a new member who had recently returned to Aiken, Frank S. He had been the 64th member of the original members of Alcoholics Anonymous. He remained a member until his death on November 21, 1973. His 1965 automobile license from the state of Ohio, “AA-64”, is still displayed in the clubhouse.

In 1995, the “Recovery Incorporated Club,” was formed with its 9-member board of directors, new by-laws, and club rules.



**Recovery Incorporated Club
Aiken, South Carolina**





countryjohn sez...

hello everyone...

i am hailed by the handle of "countryjohn the alcoholic"...my greatest claim to fame is that i finally grew up to amount to something...i'm a graduate from the school of hard knocks...and received my phd in alcoholism... (phd... as in... pretty hardcore drunk)

been in and out of the doors of AA since 85... did things my way for the longest time... which is why i only have 10 years sobriety... sometimes at meetings i like to introduce myself as "countryjohn the stupid alcoholic" because it took me so long to get this simple program...

i'd like to say something that might be beneficial to the newcomer... that might shorten his or her path to recovery... when i came into AA there was a lot of talk about "keeping the plug in the jug"... "you can't get drunk if you don't take that first drink"... which is very good advice in the beginning... but the truth is that if we merely remove the alcohol and don't replace it with something better then our lives may be even more miserable than they were before... and we will be what is referred to as a "dry drunk"... this is why i wish to share with you the highlights of my recovery... the things that i consider paramount in my recovery...

first and foremost one must develop an open minded attitude... be willing to listen without premeditated judgements... learn to be still... learn to accept people just as they are... learn to think for yourself... examine your belief system... which beliefs are yours and which have been imposed upon you by others... ie... parents... schools... religion... government... peers and so forth...

the third step prayer on page 63 of the big book contains a simple little one liner that always plagued me... "relieve me of the bondage of self, that i may better do Thy will"... ahhh... "bondage of self" is indeed the shackles we wish to drop... when you discover peace within yourself you will see that it was truly your "self" that was the enemy all along... and i know of no way better or faster way to find this

freedom than to commit yourself to doing the 12 steps of AA to the best of your ability...

the following page 64 contains a message that is truly profound and tells us exactly what kind of disease we suffer from... read it please... it was from reading this page that the obsession to drink was finally taken out of me... and this was like 12 years after coming into the program... so as you read it... read each line and examine its meaning... the answers are there if you can comprehend them... it worked for me... all i wish to do is to light your fire... you'll do your own burning after that... recovery is an inside job... but we sometimes

need someone to loan us a light... and maybe that light will be just enough for you to discover who you really are... and from there you'll learn to love yourself in the proper light and wish to share your gift with others... it's the coolest thing i've ever discovered... it's the greatest thing since vanilla ice cream... it's just too good for words... hope you find it as i have... thanks for giving me the opportunity to share... and just remember the immortal words of "mr. rogers"

"IT'S A WONDERFUL DAY IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD BOYS AND GIRLS"... lol...

Countryjohn has TENURE...

By countryjohn... (2/4/92)

has it been 10 years...since my last drink...
seems like only yesterday...
days have been so full and merry...
and have passed so slowly by the way...

each day a lifetime to be lived...
and full of all the things we need...
to enjoy the task of carrying the message...
of giving love and planting seed...

to watch the newcomer blossom before us...
to see the sparkle grow in his eye...
tis such a joy to know this feeling...
to know he does not have to die...

to look around the room with love...
and all our dearest friends we see...
there's Sweet Ole Bill... and Tom... and Sherry...
there's Dennis... Andrea... and W.C.

tis God Himself... that does the works...
a gift He's given... you and me...
so laugh my friends... enjoy the moment...
may you feel God's Love... through eternity...

Strength

Before getting sober I thought of myself as very strong. I was a survivor - a typical product of an alcoholic home. It was that same strength that I thought would keep me from being an alcoholic - like my dad. I was wrong. It was through recovery in Al-Anon that I rediscovered my relationship with my Higher Power. It was the strength of that relationship that led me to the rooms of AA. Since getting sober I have discovered a strength I never knew - and it comes from God. That strength resonates in the promises that God will equip me with the tools I need to face the experiences that life has to offer. I no longer have to live in fear and let that fear steer me recklessly along my path. I thank God and AA for my new found strength.



Danielle K.
Charleston, SC

Humility

A lesson in humility is not always wanted; however it is always a growing spiritual experience.

While working with young people in AA, as their "traditions sponsor," I got carried away and volunteered to lend them money to use to buy t-shirts to sell and make a profit. Thus giving them money to make money. They in turn reminded me of Tradition 7 the "we are self-supporting through our own contributions." A way was worked out that this group could purchase the t-shirts and not be indebted to me.

Though my intentions were good, they were against traditions. As Bill was told, "Sometimes good is the enemy of the best."



Patty W.
Hanahan, SC

Hope

I had lost all hope before coming to AA. I drank for years and always managed to hold down a job, despite 2 DUI's, broken relationships and alienation from my family and friends. In the last year of my drinking I lost the ability to slow down my drinking enough to make it to work. I would miss 2 days to 2 weeks and I never knew how long I would stay drunk. My drinking became continuous. I lost my job of 4 years. I drank more and more. I wanted to stop, but couldn't.

I hitchhiked to my doctor and asked him to have me committed as I had no insurance. I told him I couldn't stop drinking and I was suicidal. He gave me a prescription to detox myself and told me to go to County. I filled the prescription and bought 3 cases of beer and a 1/2 gallon of bourbon. I drank all of that in 3 days and didn't even get high. It was either Sunday or Monday night around 8 p.m. when I ran out. I thought I'd take a couple of pills and then thought, "What the hell!" So I took 60.

I woke up in ICU in a psychiatric hospital. After I had become somewhat clear minded, a woman from a treatment center came to see me. She asked me if I wanted to get well and I desperately said yes. That was a big turning point in my life. I really wanted to change. I saw some hope and I have been sober ever since, with a lot of help from AA.



Anonymous
Johns Island, SC

D E F I N I T I O N S	T O L I V E B Y	INTEGRITY: To conduct oneself according to a sense of what's right and wrong ~ Soundness of mind
		FLEXIBILITY: The ability to alter plans when necessary ~ Adaptable to change
		INITIATIVE: To do something because it needs to be done ~ Taking action
		PERSEVERANCE: To continue in spite of difficulties ~ Steadfastness
		ORGANIZATION: To keep things in an orderly, usable way ~ Prioritizing
		SENSE OF HUMOR: To laugh and be playful without hurting others ~ Taking oneself & others less seriously
		EFFORT: To try your hardest ~ Doing the best that I can
		PRUDENCE: To use good judgement. ~ Common sense
		PROBLEM SOLVING: To seek solutions in difficult situations using the tools available ~ Seeking help
		RESPONSIBILITY: To be accountable for your actions ~ No blaming
		PATIENCE: To wait calmly for someone or something ~ Waiting upon God
		FRIENDSHIP: To make & keep a friend through mutual trust and caring ~ Not isolating
		CURIOSITY: A desire to learn more
		COOPERATION: To work together toward a common goal or purpose
CARING: To feel concern for others		
COMPASSION: To be sympathetic to others needs, conditions, circumstances		
TOLERANCE: To allow others their right to have differing opinions or beliefs		

Step Nine

"Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others"

Simple if the person you'd like to make amends to is around to hear them. But how do you make amends to someone who is no longer among those who are living? The only way I can think of is to live a sober life to the best of your ability, treating others as you'd like to treat the person you'd like to make amends to.

Whenever I think of making amends, my brother comes to mind. There's a lot of things I'd like to make amends for, unfortunately he died 8 months ago; so direct amends are no longer possible. I make indirect amends by living the 12 steps to the best of my ability, treating people I meet the way I'd like to be able to treat my brother - with love and compassion. Making amends is hard enough when the person you're making amends to can sit in front of you and look you in the eye. They're doubly hard when the person you're making amends to is no longer living. Finding ways to make amends sometimes takes creativity and thought. But most often it takes a huge amount of effort.



Anonymous
Hanahan, SC

Willingness

Willingness to participate and give back what AA has done is a daily activity in my journey for achieving sobriety. The AA program (steps - traditions - concepts) has kept this alcoholic sober for 9 years. Willingness to accept service work is the best of all the world of AA. Whether I make the coffee before a meeting or act as a trusted servant for different committees at the group, district or area level, I have found sobriety at it's utmost. Willingness to accept my alcoholism is also contingent on my living the steps of AA. I have found serenity in my life inside and outside the rooms of AA due to one simple word - Willingness.



Bob M.
North Charleston, SC

When I first came into AA, I had been so personally defeated spiritually, mentally and physically that I was willing to try anything. It was like an experience in my early teens. I lived in the country and one night, along with a few friends, we decided to go out at night and steal some strawberries. We found a field but the barbed wire fence was tall and the strands were close together; so you couldn't climb over or through it. We walked a ways down the road and found a low spot below the strawberry patch. We got in and were in the process of filling our t-shirts with strawberries. Suddenly all the lights came on in the house of the farmer. We tried to be still and quiet when a shot gun went off. At that point I became willing to climb the fence.

It was that way in my drinking days. I was in the vodka patch of life and facing death in the not too distant future. It was then I became willing to climb out of the patch.



Mike F.
Folly Beach, SC

Gratitude

Every morning, as I pour the water into my coffee maker, I get filled with gratitude. Because I can still remember 14 years ago, every morning filling a glass with brandy to get my day started. I'm grateful today I don't have to do that.



Art V.
Church Creek Group

Honesty

I used to think I was honest - never stole money or anything like that. It took a while in sobriety for me to realize that I was profoundly dishonest. My whole life had been spent pretending to be something I wasn't, because i didn't like who I was - a scared little girl. So I said what I thought others wanted to hear, always dressed to please others, was never confrontational in any way. My whole life was a lie.

I'm still not completely honest. I still fight my tendency to please others. But I'm getting better about letting the real me show - even when that means having to admit that I'm afraid or angry or sad. I feel I'm learning to bring the outside "me" in sync with the inside "me." And the miracle is that I like the real me a lot more now that I'm sober and growing in the program. So showing the real me is not so scary anymore.

Being honest is not easy. But learning to be more honest has been a wonderful journey. It has taught me that I'm a child of God like everyone else; and that just being who I really am is enough.



Carla
Charleston, SC

A circular fingerprint graphic in the background, with the letters 'KIT' overlaid on it.

KIT