

15 January 2012

Good afternoon and welcome to District 43's first meeting of 2012. My name is BJ, a grateful recovering alcoholic. My home group is "Back to Basics", sobriety date is 1 Dec. 1982 and I am a "Friend of the District". The district committee member (DCM) has asked me to present a short overview to you as incoming General Service Representatives (GSRs).

Why are you here? We hope you are here with a desire to serve AA as a whole - a basic ingredient of a strong GSR. During the next 24 months/12 meetings you will experience the privileged opportunity of growth through our legacy of Service. Responsibilities and guidelines for your position are found in specific AA publications. It is important that each of you learn from the following references, some of which you may already have in your GSR kit from GSO:

1. The AA Service Manual
2. The AA Group (P-16)
3. AA Tradition - how it developed (P-17)
4. The Twelve Traditions Illustrated (P-43)
5. The Twelve Concepts for World Service illustrated (P-8)
6. G.S.R. General Service Representative (P-19)
7. Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix (F-3)
8. Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age

I can assure you from experience that these cited references will broaden your knowledge, enrich your understanding and help you become a better informed GSR. The following excerpt is found in the Service Manual on pg S-49 and lets us consider what specific qualities a service leader ought to have.

~~EXCERPT TAPED ONTO @ THIS PT~~

Leadership in A.A.: Ever a Vital Need

(Excerpts from Bill W.'s article in the April 1959 Grapevine.

See Concept IX, page 38 of "Twelve Concepts for World Service" for the full article)

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." . . .

Therefore, a leader in A.A. service is a man (or 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 judgment 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 service. 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 action be within the framework of its defined authority and responsibility. . . .

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.

Your outgoing GSR, or group secretary, should have by now worked with you to have a GSR Service Kit provided by G.S.O. If you haven't received your kit see the instructions on pg S-29 Chapter 2, Service Manual.

Although this presentation is brief the information referenced is invaluable to your tenure as a GSR. In closing it is my hope that each of you will continue to be involved in AA Service remembering that you are the vision of tomorrow and the promise of the future. Thank you for letting me serve you. Any questions?