

2203 Fairmount Avenue, Ste. A
Vancouver, WA 98661

Vancouveraa.org
vanintgrp@gmail.com
(360) 694-3870

VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP Primary Purpose

FOURTH EDITION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

PAGES 289-294

[Big Book - 2.15 \(2\) Fear of Fear](#)

FEAR OF FEAR

This lady was cautious. She decided she wouldn't let herself go in her drinking. And she would never, never take that morning drink!

I didn't think I was an alcoholic. I thought my problem was that I had been married to a drunk for twenty-seven years. And when my husband found A.A., I came to the second meeting with him. I thought it was wonderful, simply marvelous, for him. But not for me. Then I went to another meeting, and I still thought it was wonderful—for him, but not for me.

It was a hot summer night in 1949, down in the Greenwich Village Group, and there was a little porch out there in the old meeting place on Sullivan Street, and after the meeting I went out on the steps for some air. In the doorway stood a lovely young girl who said, "Are you one of us souses, too?" I said, "Oh, goodness, no! My husband is. He's in there." She told me her name, and I said, "I know you from somewhere." It turned out that she had been in high school with my daughter. I said, "Eileen, are you one of those people?" And she said, "Oh, yes. I'm in this."



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Monthly Business Mtgs

- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. –
12/11/2023 @ 6:00 PM
- ◆ Archives Committee Mtg.-
12/13/2023 @ 5:30 PM
- ◆ District 27 Committee Mtg.
12/16/2023 @ 2pm-4pm
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. –
12/18/2023 @ 6:00 PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. –
12/26/2023 @ 7:00 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. -
12/28/2023 @ 7:00 PM

As we walked back through the hall I, for the first time in my life, said to another human being, "I'm having trouble with my drinking, too." She took me by the hand and introduced me to the girl that I'm very proud to call my sponsor. This girl and her husband are both in A.A., and she said to me, "Oh, but you're not the alcoholic; it's your husband." I said, "Yes." She said, "How long have you been married?" I said, "Twenty-seven years." She said, "Twenty-seven years to an alcoholic! How did you ever stand it?" I thought, now here's a nice, sympathetic soul! This is for me. I said, "Well, I stood it to keep the home together, and for the children's sake." She said, "Yes, I know. You're just a martyr, aren't you?" I walked away from that girl grinding my teeth and cursing under my breath. Fortunately, I didn't say a word to George on the way home. But that night I tried to go to sleep. And I thought, "You're some martyr, Jane! Let's look at the record." And when I looked at it, I knew I was just as much a drunk as George was, if not worse. I nudged George next morning, and I said, "I'm in," and he said, "Oh, I knew you'd make it."

I started drinking nearly thirty years ago—right after I was married. My first drinking spree was on corn liquor and I was allergic to it, believe me. I was deathly sick every time I took a drink. But we had to do a lot of entertaining, my husband liked to have a good time; I was very young; and I wanted to have a good time too. The only way I knew to do it was to drink right along with him.

I got into terrific trouble with my drinking. I was afraid, and I had made my mind up that I would never get drunk, so I was watchful and careful. We had a small child, and I loved her dearly, so that held me back quite a bit in my drinking career. Even so, every time I drank, I seemed to get in trouble. I always wanted to drink too much, so I was watchful, always watchful, counting my drinks. If we were invited to a formal party and I knew they were only going to have one or two drinks, I wouldn't have any. I was being very cagey, because I knew that if I did take one or two, I might want to take five or six or seven or eight.

I did stay fairly good for a few years. But I wasn't happy, and I didn't ever let myself go in my drinking. As my son, our second child, came along, and as he became school age and was away at school most of the time, something happened. I really started drinking with a bang.

I never went to a hospital. I never lost a job. I was never in jail. And, unlike many others, I never took a drink in the morning. I needed a drink, but I was afraid to take a morning drink, because I didn't want to be a drunk. I became a drunk anyway, but I was scared to death to take that morning drink. I was accused of it many times when I went to play bridge in the afternoon, but I really never did take a morning drink. I was still woozy from the night before.

I should have lost my husband, and I think that only the fact that he was an alcoholic too kept us together. No one else could have stayed with me. Many women who have reached the stage that I had reached in my drinking have lost husbands, children, homes, everything they hold dear. I have been very fortunate in many ways. The important thing I lost was my own self-respect. I could feel fear coming into my life. I couldn't face people. I couldn't look them straight in the eyes, although I was always a self possessed, brazen sort of person. I'd brazen anything out. I lied like a trooper to get out of many scrapes.

But I felt a fear coming into my life, and I couldn't cope with it. I got so that I hid quite a bit of the time, wouldn't answer the phone, and stayed by myself as much as I could. I noticed that I was avoiding all my social friends except for my bridge. I couldn't keep up with any of my other friends, and I wouldn't go to anyone's house unless I knew they drank as heavily as I did. I never knew it was the first drink that did it. I thought I was losing my mind when I realized that I couldn't stop drinking. That frightened me terribly.

George tried many times to go on the wagon. If I had been sincere in what I thought I wanted more than anything else in life—a sober husband and a happy, contented home—I would have gone on the wagon with him. I did try, for a day or two, but something always would come up that would throw me. It would be a little thing; the rugs being crooked, or any silly little thing that I'd think was wrong, and off I'd go, drinking. And sneaking my drinks. I had bottles hidden all over the apartment. I didn't think my children knew about it, but I found out they did. It's surprising, how we think we fool everybody in our drinking.

I reached a stage where I couldn't go into my apartment without a drink. It didn't bother me any more whether George was drinking or not. I had to have liquor. Sometimes I would lie on the bathroom floor, deathly sick, praying I would die, and praying to God as I always had prayed to Him when I was drinking: "Dear God, get me out of this one and I'll never do it again." And then I'd say, "God, don't pay any attention to me. You know I'll do it tomorrow, the very same thing."

I used to make excuses to try and get George off the wagon. I'd get so fed up with drinking all alone and bearing the burden of guilt all by myself, that I'd egg him on to drink, to get started again. And then I'd fight with him because he had started! And the whole merry-go-round would be on again. And he, poor dear, didn't know what was going on. He used to wonder, when he'd spot one of my bottles around the house, just how he could have overlooked that particular bottle. I myself didn't know all the places I had them hidden.

We have only been in A.A. a few years, but now we're trying to make up for lost time. Twenty-seven years of confusion is what my early married life was. Now the picture has changed completely. We have faith in each other, trust in each other, and understanding.

A.A. has given us that. It has taught me so many things. It has changed my thinking entirely, about everything I do. I can't afford resentments against anyone, because they are the build-up of another drunk. I must live and let live. And "Think"—that one important word means so much to me. My life was always act and re-act. I never stopped to think. I just didn't give a whoop about myself or anyone else.

I try to live our program as it has been outlined to me, one day at a time. I try to live today so that tomorrow I won't be ashamed when I wake up in the morning. In the old days I hated to wake up and look back at what last night was like. I never could face it the next morning. And unless I had some rosy picture of what was going to happen that day, I wouldn't even feel like getting up in the morning at all. It really wasn't living. Now I feel so very grateful not only for my sobriety, which I try to maintain day by day, but I'm grateful also for the ability to help other people. I never thought I could be useful to anyone except my husband and my children and perhaps a few friends. But A.A. has shown me that I can help other alcoholics.

Many of my neighbors devoted time to volunteer work during the war. There was one girl especially, and I'd watch her from my window every morning, leaving faithfully to go to the hospital in the neighborhood. I said to her one day when I met her on the street, "What sort of volunteer work do you do?" She told me; it was simple; I could have done it very easily. She said, "Why don't you do it too?" I said, "I'd love to." She said, "Suppose I put your name down as a volunteer. We need them so badly even if you can only give one day, or perhaps two days?" But then I thought, well, now wait, how will I feel next Tuesday? How will I feel next Friday, if I make it a Friday? How will I feel next Saturday morning? I never knew. I was afraid to set even one day. I could never be sure I'd have a clear head and hands that were willing to do some work. So I never did any volunteer work. And I felt depleted, whipped. I had the time, I certainly had the capability, but I never did a thing.

I am trying now, each day, to make up for all those selfish, thoughtless, foolish things I did in my drinking days. I hope that I never forget to be grateful.



AA GRAPEVINE TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

Tradition Twelve: Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust or agree with AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, do I imply that membership requirements go beyond the desire to stay sober?
4. Have I a personal responsibility to help an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?
5. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially?
6. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA attractive so that other drunks might want it?
7. What does anonymity mean to me?
8. In light of increased awareness of alcoholism and AA's program of recovery among the general public, why is the principle of anonymity still important?
9. Am I mindful to respect the anonymity of other AA members who may work in my place of employment or my industry? How about AA members who live in my area or neighborhood?
10. What does "principles before personalities" mean to me?

CONCEPT TWELVE:


General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the Conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others; that all important decisions be reached by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that, though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS NOVEMBER 2023

November 2023	Group Name	Contribution
11/07/2023	McGillivray Study Group	328.43
11/07/2023	Lighthouse	50.00
11/07/2023	Ridgefield Recovery	150.00
11/07/2023	Cascade Group	100.00
11/13/2023	Cornerstone	150.00
11/13/2023	First Shot	113.20
11/13/2023	Fresh Start	97.88
11/13/2023	Cyberbaggers	400.00
11/15/2023	As We Recovered	10.00
11/15/2023	Anchor Point	10.00
11/15/2023	A New Morning	293.82
11/15/2023	Camas Group	60.58
11/18/2023	Chapter Nine Couples	107.00
11/27/2023	Battle Ground AA	177.69
11/30/	A New Morning	266.65
Individual Contributions		390.00+140.00 pp = 530.00

Upcoming Events

December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 Grapevine 4pm	9
10	11 Steering Committee Mtg. 6pm	12	13 Archives 5:30 pm	14	15	16 District #27 Business Mtg.
17	18 IG Rep Mtg. 6pm	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26 District #37 Business Mtg. 7 pm	27	28 District #7 Business Mtg. 7 pm	29	30
31						

Archives Corner November

D7/37ArchivesCommittee
Business Meeting Highlights
10/11/2023

Old Business:

Paul acquired a “New Cover” copy of the 4th Edition of the Big Book for the archives.

Paul reported that he had spoken to a representative of the Clark Co. Historic Museum and found that he was mistaken about them moving. When he asked as to what openings they had on their 1st Friday venue he was told that both November 3rd and December 1st were open. After briefly describing the nature of the event, Paul asked if there was a motion to try and put together a small to medium size display for December 1st at the CCHM. Jeff made the motion, James seconded it and it was approved unanimously.

New Business:

11/04/2023 @ 10am Western Washington Area 72 Archives Quarterly. Hybrid Quarterly hosted by the Archives Steering Committee, Area 72 Archives Repository, 3905 Steilacoom Boulevard SW, Lakewood, WA 98499. Zoom ID: 850 7828 7751 Password: Archives
Motion to adjourn by James H. at 5:56pm, Seconded by Jeff C. Closed with the Responsibility Statement.
Feel free to e-mail with any questions or comments: dist7archives@area72aa.org

TREATMENT AND FACILITIES

Carry the Message VOL 2

There is no doubt in my mind that getting involved in treatment panels has helped me stay sober. I'm the type of alcoholic that needs both accountability and to get outside myself. Besides getting a sponsor, taking the twelve steps, and starting my road to recovery with ninety meetings in ninety days; getting involved in treatment panels has been key in my spiritual growth. At seven months sober my sponsor signed me up for a panel at a local detox facility. I was excited to try something new, but also uncomfortable and nervous. Prior to sharing on this panel my experience speaking in front of people was limited. I was unsure if I could carry a message with "depth and weight" (as Dr. Silkworth describes in the *Doctor's Opinion*), but my sponsor encouraged me to give it a try.

At this point in my recovery, I was working through the ninth step: direct amends to all persons I had harmed. I was living at a friend's house because my marriage was in its last days.

This transitional period of my life was the most emotional and revolutionary days I have experienced. Service work was exactly what I needed at that time. I am grateful that my sponsor pushed me to do something outside of my comfort zone.

After finishing that first detox panel I felt better about my abilities to share my experience, strength, and hope with others who suffer from the same condition. It also made me feel like I was giving back. The program as outlined in the Big Book of A.A. along with a higher power, and the fellowship had, at this point, pulled me back to some semblance of sanity. The next month I volunteered for the same panel. I realized that inspiring hope in others would only be a byproduct of keeping myself sober. Selfish altruism, that is the paradox of AA.

The next month the Treatment and Facilities Coordinator position at my home group became vacant and I volunteered to fill it. The group required at least 9 months of sobriety, and I was two weeks away from that requirement. The group made an exception and I have been serving in the role for nearly a year.

My home group now organizes two treatment panels every month and a third in months with five Wednesdays. It is by far the most fulfilling service work I have been involved with. There are so many still suffering in our local treatment facilities and beyond. You can spark change and inspire hope!

Getting involved with treatment panels is a great way to give back and keep what you have. We all have stories of hope to share. Your story may save someone's life. If you are afraid of sharing your story, ask God for the courage to change. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

If you are interested in volunteering, or just want more information on what we are doing for treatment centers, please contact the District Seven Committee Chair, Matt G. at

dis7treatment@area72aa.org.

Vancouver Area Intergroup 2023 Newsletter will be distributed in the first week of each month instead of the middle of the month.

If you would like to share your :

- AA Birthday on the Calendar
- Experience Strength & Hope
- AA related content or topics
- AA Flyers

In the Upcoming Newsletters please feel free to email :

vanintgrp@gmail.com

You Are Wanted Needed & Loved!

****** The Primary Purpose will no longer include the Financial Reports or the Meeting Minutes from either the Steering Committee Meeting or the Intergroups Rep Meeting. Reports and Minutes can now be found on the website under the documents tab.******

[Documents | Vancouver Intergroup Alcoholics Anonymous \(vancouveraa.org\)](http://vancouveraa.org)

