



# Sara-Mana Inter Group

The July 2017 Issue

District 4, Area 15

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## How I Found The Program: Identification of an Alcoholic

Anne P. started drinking at 14 and was a full-blown alcoholic at 25. She got sober at 34. "The last 9 years of my drinking career were hell. I was an isolated, black-out drinker."

Anne knew for years that she was an alcoholic. "I would drink to get drunk. There was no point, otherwise. I knew I would ultimately die an alcoholic death."

Anne didn't grow up with anyone who had problems with drinking. "I was an only child and didn't know anyone who was already active in recovery. I tried everything BUT abstinence, including vitamins, self-help methods, and switching around my types of alcohol. Nothing worked."

Anne was introduced to AA after her first DUI. "I was required to go, by the authorities. I was absolutely not ready to hear what I needed to hear. I was willing to admit that my life had become unmanageable, but I wasn't ready for help."

She began to realize the impact that her untreated alcoholism was having on her family. "It was killing my parents slowly,

watching their only daughter become consumed by this disease." Anne recalls watching her father sit and sob, helpless.



Out of desperation, Anne called the AA hotline in Richmond, VA, and went to another meeting.

"This was different. I had reached a point where I was willing to accept help." At the Richmond meeting, Anne heard others share stories similar to hers. "I could identify with them, although these other alcoholics came in different shapes and sizes. I remember looking my dad in the eyes afterward and telling him, 'I have found MY people!'"

"Most importantly, I began to realize that I had a CHOICE. I could remain self-imprisoned in handcuffs living in a hell on

earth OR I could open up and live the loving and spiritual way of AA, which has ultimately saved my life."

"Today, with 23 years of sobriety, I identify myself as a single, recovering alcoholic woman. I continue to examine my ego and self-conscience. I love steps 6&7 because I get to narrow down my defects and shave down the full edges!"

Anne now lives her life by following the steps. Through tears of joy, she whispered, "I wouldn't trade this life for anything!"

**Interview with Anne P.**

### Key to Sobriety

*The unique ability of each A.A. to identify himself with, and bring recovery to, the newcomer in no way depends upon his learning, his eloquence, or any special individual skills. The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety.*

TWELVE AND TWELVE, PP. 150-151

## Founder's Day Dinner, 2017

By Marcia W.

There was a packed house for this year's Founder's Day Dinner. We were all mesmerized by the speaker, Johnny L., who has been sober for 9 years. Johnny told a stunning story of recovery that moved us to tears. We can't really compare ourselves, or our stories, to others in recovery. But we do share a common bond: we all struggle with the feelings of powerlessness over alcohol. We can all relate to being driven to the point of surrender, to being willing to do whatever it takes to stop the insanity of uncontrolled drinking.

Hearing Johnny L.'s story, I was truly lifted up, because it clearly demonstrates the miracle of recovery. Johnny's drinking began at age 12. As a child, he was surrounded by the use of alcohol. Drinking was rampant in his family, and Johnny's life was complicated by early childhood abuse and trauma. These kinds of hardships make the miracle of recovery all the more bright and joyous.

Miraculously, Johnny's journey to recovery was shared by the same family members who struggled with alcoholism.

Today, Johnny's mother is celebrating 31 years of sobriety. His sister has been sober for 18 years. His father has 19 years of sobriety under his belt.

The audience was engrossed by the story of Johnny and his dad. The older man left his son, but went on to become a sober role model. When he was sober, he returned to Johnny's life as a new kind of authority figure. His dad now wanted to tell Johnny how to stay sober! It's not exactly the relationship that Johnny wanted with his father, but it's a relationship based on common ground, a shared journey, and an unconditional love.

That kind of love is only possible with the grace we receive from the greatest love: the higher power who heals us and draws us forward to a new and better life. Johnny is now pursuing his dream: a Masters in Clinical Mental Health Counseling!

### Embracing the Program

By JD

Five years ago, after many, many failed attempts at lasting sobriety, I embarked on an honest, sincere, and purposeful quest to live life based on the principles of AA (the steps). Days turned into weeks, weeks turned into months, and months turned into years. Unknowingly, my will and my life, after a time, had become a living manifestation of the Three Legacies of AA.

It is said that, "Taken together, the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts embody what are known as the Three Legacies of

Alcoholics Anonymous: Recovery, Unity, and Service."

I sought recovery, embraced unity, and purposefully pursued opportunities to be of service. Whether it be a small act of random kindness or a service commitment within the fellowship.

I found one passage that really captures what I'm feeling:

"Service, gladly rendered, obligations squarely met, troubles well-accepted or solved with God's help, the knowledge that at home or in the world outside we are partners in a common effort, the well-understood fact that, in God's sight, all human beings are important, the proof that love freely given surely brings a full return, the certainty that we are no longer isolated and alone in self-constructed prisons, the surety that we need no longer be square pegs in round holes but can fit and belong in God's scheme of things—these are the permanent and legitimate satisfactions of right living for which no amount of pomp and circumstance, no heap of material possessions, could possibly be substitutes. -- *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 124

I strongly encourage each member of the fellowship—new, returning or long-term members—to seek out opportunities to be of service. Remember, as Bill W. is often credited with saying, "To the

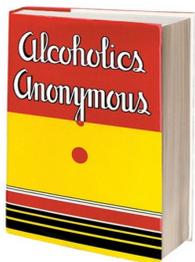
## (Cont'd Embracing Sobriety)

world, you may be just one person, but, to one person, you may be the world.”

“Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” *Big Book*, page 77

We are so blessed.

In humble gratitude, JD



## Back of Book Student of Life

Bill Wilson believed that the personal stories that follow the main text of *Alcoholics Anonymous* could be more valuable to recovering alcoholics than the main text itself. In the story, "Student of Life," (4th Edition, page 319) the author recalls her full realization that she was an alcoholic thus:

“It was my second meeting that clinched my resolve to pursue sobriety . . . (At the podium) I looked at the faces of the people in the room. I saw the understanding, the empathy, the love. Today I believe I saw my Higher Power for the first

time in those faces....

Indescribable relief came over me; I knew the fight was over.”

Edgar C.

*Dear Alkie*

**“Alkie” is a long-time member of A.A. His comments are based on his own strength, hope, and experience, and do not represent any official A.A. position or practice.**

**Q. I know I’m an alcoholic, but AA doesn’t work for me. I’ve been a daily drinker for years and have been mostly successful in life. While I’m dependent on booze, I used to be able to control it. Now the pleasure is gone, and I struggle with control. I’ve been to AA meetings, but they seem like a waste of time for me. Any ideas?**

A. It’s good that you are admitting dependence, but you haven’t YET accepted powerlessness! I’ve been where you now are, and your life is about to get worse. How much worse is up to you. You see that our disease is progressive (“pleasure gone,” “struggle with control”), but you haven’t hit your ‘bottom’ YET. You’ve denied the first step about being powerless (you’re addicted and CAN’T “control it”) and don’t YET see that your life is unmanageable. When your

fear of the known (dependency, misery, deteriorating health) outweighs your fear of the unknown (“how can I live without booze”), we’ll be there for you. You will eventually quit drinking; it’s best if you’re alive, free, and sane when you do!

**Q. In 2015, I joined AA and it changed my life. I got a sponsor, worked the steps, and got my 1-year medallion. A year ago, I got bored, slacked off on meetings, blew-off my sponsor, and you know the rest of the story. My life has fallen apart. I’m so embarrassed. Help!**

A. Go back to your home group and get a beginner chip (you won’t be the first, nor the last, to ‘go out’). There is no permanent cure: only a ‘daily reprieve based on our spiritual condition.’ Sobriety is like riding a bicycle – you must keep pedaling or you’ll fall over. Every day, sobriety/serenity requires effort – sometimes a lot, sometimes a little, but always something.



“Let me know when you take your inventory. You’ll need my help!”

