



# Sara-Mana InterGroup

The June 2017 Issue

District 4, Area 15

AASRO.org

## The Importance of Giving Back

Interview with Joe R.



I sat down with Joe R. to discuss the importance of giving back, and I had no idea what I was in for! Joe, with 17 years of sobriety, clarified one thing right away: **Giving Back is not just IMPORTANT - it's ESSENTIAL to a recovering alcoholic's sobriety.** Joe also pulled out the Big Book and exclaimed, "Giving Back is the Spirit of the Program!" And, just like a blue print, it was right there on page 129 in The Family Afterward:

**"FRUSTRATION KNEW NO BOUNDS.  
FATHER FEELS HE HAS STRUCK  
SOMETHING BETTER THAN GOLD.  
FOR A TIME HE MAY TRY TO HUG  
THE NEW TREASURE TO HIMSELF. HE  
MAY NOT SEE AT ONCE THAT HE HAS  
BARELY SCRATCHED A LIMITLESS  
LODE WHICH WILL PAY DIVIDENDS  
ONLY IF HE MINES IT FOR THE REST  
OF HIS LIFE AND INSISTS ON GIVING  
AWAY THE ENTIRE PRODUCT."**

Joe went on to share that, to him, Giving Back applied to EVERY recovering alcoholic. "There are so many levels of Giving Back. A newcomer might not have years under their belt. However, their simple sharing at a meeting may just mean the world to another alcoholic who needed to hear their share! When I was new, service work was important to me. I didn't know that making coffee for the group was 'Giving Back.' I just thought that I was making coffee."

"My last few years of drinking left me as an outcast, and I didn't fit in ANYwhere. I felt useless and empty. Once I was in the program, I started showing up early to meetings and greeting other alcoholics. This helped me to acclimate into the program and to develop strong bonds with others. I became part of a 'group' and began making progress in a program that is saving my life."

"Sponsorship is a key tool in Giving Back. Anyone that has successfully been through the steps and can take another alcoholic through the steps is living true to Step 12," said Joe.

"When I started to work with my sponsor, one day, I had an 'aHa' moment. One of my first service positions was becoming InterGroup Rep. My sponsor accompanied me to my first InterGroup Meeting – that's when I started to grasp this idea of 'Giving Back.' He came to my InterGroup meeting with me, because he knew I was scared, and might not attend by myself. My sponsor also let me know that I was helping him as much as he was helping ME."

Joe referenced the Big Book: "Faith without works is dead.", pg. 88. "To be vital, faith must be accompanied by self sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action," pg. 93. "That's exactly what my sponsor was doing. I knew there and then that I needed to follow his example with my own future sponsees, which I do, today. This is how 'Giving Back' started to evolve for me."

"What's equally important for those of us with more time in the program is simply 'showing up.' It's important for me to be an active representative at my Home Group. I attend business meetings and I'm at my Home Group, not only because I need a meeting, but also because I have a responsibility to anyone, anywhere, who reaches out for the Hand of AA."

# Working with Others

(Excerpt, The Big Book)



“Practical experience shows that nothing will so much ensure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion:

Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember, they are very ill.

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience that you must not miss. We know that you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.”

*pg.89, Chapter 7, The Big Book*

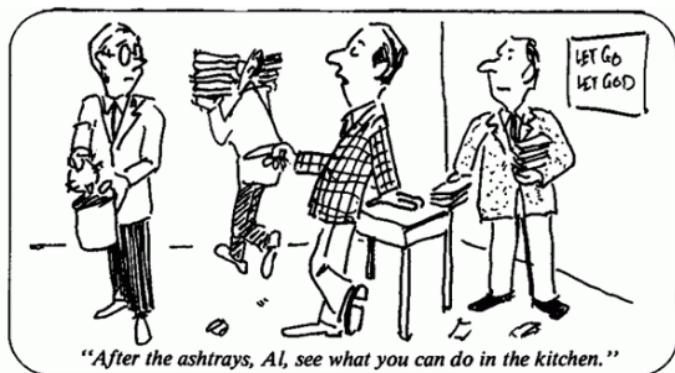
## Giving Back:

**It comes in many shapes and sizes!**

**What have you done to help another alcoholic?**

**Share your story! We want to hear from you!**

**Email us! Newsletter@aasrq.org**



***-The Grapevine***

## Back of the book

### Giving Back Means a New End

Bill Wilson felt that the personal stories in the back of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, would prove to be more useful than the main text. In this story, “Safe Haven,” (page 452, Fourth Edition) the writer tells what A.A.

means to him after his release from prison:

“One of the things I have committed to do in return for God’s grace is to immediately become active in a correctional activity upon my release. Bringing the A.A. message back into the jails and prisons is extremely important to me and my own sobriety today.

“From experience, I’ve realized that I cannot go back and make a brand-new start. But through A.A., I can start from now and make a brand-new end.”

- Edgar C.

## Why Participate in the Basket?

Jan H. Past Delegate Panel 57

Western Pennsylvania Area 60 Newsletter (Excerpt)



“Money in the basket is our way of participating in the health of the group. A healthy group is able to help others by offering literature, paying the rent to keep the meeting place, making the meeting welcoming by offering coffee and maybe goodies for those attending, and, something that I did not know then, supporting our General Service Office in New York, our Area’s service, and Intergroup. They explained that every group strives to be fully self-supporting. I began to understand the extreme importance of my ‘participation in our common welfare through contributions.’”



# AASRQ.ORG 101

Did you know that you can access the Big Book, and other AA related literature, directly, from [www.aasrq.org](http://www.aasrq.org)? You are minutes away from having The Big Book online and at your fingertips! Follow these Four SIMPLE steps!

1

**Go to [www.aasrq.org](http://www.aasrq.org)**



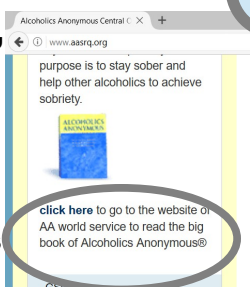
2

**Go to “Quick Links” on the left side bar and click on, “What is Alcoholics Anonymous?”**



3

**You will see a link, “Click Here” to go to the website of AA world service to read the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous**



4

**You'll get to the main website of AA.com and here you have access to the entire Big Book! You can also get to the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.**



*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’ve been sober for years and love AA and my sponsor, who has always encouraged me to ‘give back.’ I’ve made coffee, been a greeter, cleaned up after meetings, been secretary to my home group, regularly share in meetings – but I’ve never been a sponsor. My personality is laid back/ introverted – no one has ever asked me to sponsor and I don’t intrude. How else can I contribute?**

**A.** If you’re not comfortable sponsoring then there are other ways to do service. Look up the General Services tab on District 4’s web site ([aasrq.org](http://aasrq.org)) where service committees are listed. There are ‘outreach’ groups (public info, taking meetings into hospital/institutions, helping with special needs), planning events, record keeping, literature and more. Volunteers are always welcome.

**Q. My best friend and I have been through hard times together – bad marriages, too much partying, and, most recently, a 28-day rehab. She went out again, is messed up and calling me crying for help. I now have a home group and understand the importance of ‘carrying the message.’ How can I help my friend?**

**A.** You can’t yet! It’s natural to want to help a friend in trouble, but your only priority is helping yourself. Your own sobriety is fragile and you can’t give away what you don’t yet have. The phrase you quoted is part of the 12<sup>th</sup> step which begins with “having had a spiritual awakening as a result (of the previous 11) steps.” It’s vital you develop some humility (see step 7), work though all the steps with a sponsor, and make new, close friendships within your home group if you want the habit of sobriety and the serenity that comes with it. Your old friend will either sink or swim on her own commitment and her Higher Power.

# Anniversaries

## Bay Group

May  
James S. 27

## Bee Ridge East

May  
Maureen S. 15

## Friends of the Pelican

May  
Jeremiah 26  
Marcia W. 25  
Tom K. 1  
Tonne N. 1

## Gulf Gate Noon

May  
Jerry G. 39  
Michael 39  
Doreen B. 33  
Chris S. 13  
Judy J. 13  
Paula 2

## Happy Cookie Hour

April  
Gordon G. 21  
Dave B. 20  
Adrian M. 10  
Simon 7  
Kathy S. 4  
Michelle F. 1

## Lakewood Ranch 12&12

May  
Jack M. 32  
Jeannie B. 10  
Tiffanie R. 3

## St. Armand's Noon

May  
Doreen B. 33  
Lisa G. 33  
Tom S. 26

## Pass-It-On

May  
Vinnie C. 40  
Marc 21  
Doris K. 4  
Mike L. 3  
Tonne 2

## Serenity Room

May  
Mel W. 38  
Martha C. 14  
Jaelin H. 4  
Joe C. 1

## Third Legacy Men's

May  
Fred W. 33  
J.P. 30  
Jerry S. 1

## The ROSE Group

May  
Eileen M. 28  
Maureen S. 15

## Wednesday Morning Women's

May  
Helen H. 40  
Lynn B. 21  
Barbara M. 19  
Jeannie B. 10  
Ann C. 4  
Margaret D. 2

## MAY AA HELPLINE CALL STATS

Call Type	# of Calls
Time/Location	95
Meeting in Lieu	8
Actual 12 Step	6
Al-Anon	5
Special Needs	1
Miscellaneous	25
Total	140

## **MY DAILY DOUBLE**

Mike W.

I have a daily double  
I use each and every day.

I seek my Higher Power;  
on my knees to Him I pray.

I ask for his direction  
as I go through the day

To guide me and protect me  
from my sometimes errant way.

When the day is over and  
I'm ready for my bed,

I'm once again upon my knees  
in thanks for this day's bread.

And all the other blessings  
that He has sent my way,

Including my sobriety  
that allows me now to say,

No matter what comes down the pike,  
this has been a real good day.

With this daily double,  
the odds are all my way.

What is this daily double  
that I keep within my sight?

It's humility in the morning  
and gratitude at night.

And if you are going to question I  
f this comes from Him or not,

May I say with all respect that's due,  
He's the only one I sought.



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