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SOBER NEWS

The official newsletter of New York Inter-Group



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Service in A.A. - Intergroup Delegates

by Mario L.- Group Relations Chair

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In A.A.'s Legacy of Service, Bill W at the St Louis convention in 1955, stated: "AA is more than a set of principles: Is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die. Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer – ranging all the way from the twelfth step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service" ... "They call for committees, delegates, trustees and conferences" (St Louis, 1955)

An important function at Intergroup level is the one of intergroup delegates. These trusted servants facilitate communication between recovering alcoholics, A.A. groups and their respective area intergroups. Intergroup delegates help to improve the quality of communication across our vital network and help to carry the message to make our work effective for one primary purpose: To help those alcoholics in need of a solution. At New York Intergroup we would like to encourage those groups that don't have a participant delegate in our assemblies, to try and suggest the nomination of a trusted servant as a NY Intergroup delegate and help us carry the message. Every group needs a voice to help make decisions based on what is best for AA. Please represent your home group as a NYIG delegate and join us at our next quarterly delegates meeting on the second Saturday, March 2021.

24 Hours: A Day in the Life

Michele P

Renewal West, West 87th Street

Sundays at 7pm

2/23/02



Starting with the morning and ending at your bedtime, describe your “24-hour routine”, please share what is that keeps you spiritually balanced.

Hopefully, I am starting my day well-rested, that is key to my perspective throughout the day - good sleep keeps my mind in balance. Then I begin with espresso, half decaf, I have discovered that too much caffeine creates unnecessary anxiety, and then I sit in my large arm chair and read a daily meditation for that date. I have several books, and rotate them for variety, so I will read that and drink coffee. Then I set out to write in my gratitude journal. As of late, this ritual has been the hardest to maintain, I used to write two pages, one page contained all the gratitude items I was presently focused on and the second itemized my future's gratitude, written in the present tense. I have been actively manifesting for the past five-years, and daily writing is part of that work. Then I set off to my paid work. Depending on where we are in the calendar my days are more quiet or extremely busy, so my spiritual condition and what I need is not set in stone. I will log into a mid-day meeting if I feel I need that re-grounding, or text or speak with my sponsor if a work fear pops up.

I have a dog that I walk throughout the day so that gets me outside and walking, which for me, is incredibly important. And I always eat lunch. When I am done with work we like to go for a longer walk, and then prepare dinner and rest. Some evenings I log into an evening meeting or write some more, it again just depends where I am spiritually or what I am in need of for inner peace and serenity.

What are one or two freedoms that you have been rewarded with since becoming sober that allow you to fully enjoy the 24 hours in day?

The first promise was not regretting the past, in more immediate terms. I could recall what I did a week prior and that was a huge gift for me. My world while drinking was such a blur of shame and regret, so simply knowing what I had done and not having to wince was and still is huge for me. The second has taken emotional sobriety to grow and become the woman I am today, and a woman who can own her stuff that will crop up from time to time. Having gone through the steps and maintained sobriety I now really know who I am and can talk about those dark spots without feeling icky and own poor behavior if I acted less than desirable, by my standards.

With the newcomer in mind, please share what is that you do for fun, or an amazing experience that you can suggest that one can have in this city, that's best experienced sober during this trying times.

The thing that sobriety really offers each of us is the ability to shoot for our dreams, so whatever that is go out and work for that dream. In doing so, I worked in a live music venue for over nine years and heard and witnessed some incredible talent and music. Only through my pursuit to earn my degree did I work there, and that was always fun. Overall, once I was sure-footed in my sobriety, I made loads of friends and would go to the Rockaways for fish tacos, arepas and the beach. I would go to the museum to have a spiritual experience and perhaps eat cake and drink coffee in the cafeteria. I would try new foods and restaurants and go for really long walks and explore new neighborhoods. And now that all of these options are not available to us, I stay close to my intimate network of friends and talk on the phone, play board games, I still go for long walks and I keep it simple and count my blessings.

One Laugh at a Time, pt 2



At The Same Time

by Al K.

Sponsorship: To get a sponsor, to be a sponsor. Ah, the youthful plutonium-in-stomach anxieties of asking someone to dance, and getting picked for the team, at the same time. When it was first suggested to me that I need to get a sponsor, I envisioned money and products, because someone was going to be seeking my endorsement. Nope. "You just have to ask someone," I was told. This can't be right. I have to ask someone! What if they say no? Coincidentally, the first guy did. "I can't," he said, with the speed of a switchblade stabbing my fragile heart, and before I came out of the trance caused by the metaphorical knife, he shoved a timid guy in front of me like a salesman trying to win the "biggest closer" competition. "This is the guy for you," he said, eyeing the exit door. I took timid guy's number and left that meeting with the determination to never return. Luckily, I ventured into another meeting the following day where a guy I used to "rip it up" with was celebrating 6 years. I said, "Hey, we used to rip it up, you wanna be my sponsor?" He said yes. I was like, "Uh-oh, he said...yes." He also took me through the steps and would still be my sponsor today had I not moved cross country to NYC where he advised me to get a new one.

You would think it would have been easy to get a new sponsor upon landing at JFK with 3 years, having worked the steps, and also successfully taking a sponsee through them. My ego telling me I was a top AA recruit and old timers would be clamoring for the chance to sponsor me. Nope. Instead, I talent-scouted for 8 months, bouncing from meeting to meeting, focused more on finding a date that would be enamored by the flame of my spirituality, even though it was a mere flicker now. Luckily(again), I found myself at a meeting early one day, sitting next to the guy who would become my current sponsor. He asked me how I was doing. I was not doing well. "You have a sponsor?" he inquired. "Well...not currently you see I have a number of years clean now and upon experiencing a spiritual awakening with a higher power that I myself determined of course to my understanding upon which I have taken another fellow brother through the steps in the sunlight of the higher spirit my journey being the destination so uh I need a guy who I can you know... um... the right one and all." He looked at me and said, "Whuut? If you are in AA, you gotta have a sponsor." He made a lot of sense. "Fine," I said, "How 'bout you be my sponsor?" "Okay, but all my sponsees have left me." "Well, I'm gonna be the first one that doesn't." Oh my god. I totally said that. Like I was giving him a pep talk. So embarrassing.

At The Same Time, cont'd

A normal morning for me goes like this: I wake up in a state of utter panic. Before I take my first breath, I have a combination of thoughts including whether or not I am worthy of following my dream, I 'm gonna get fired from my server gig because I forgot to bring the lemons for that guest's water, of course they are for sure gonna give me a bad review online or probably call the owner about the poor service, and why didn't that girl respond when I texted her "How was her day?" I for sure blew it with her and any potential woman for that matter. I am definitely fired and without a job. All alone. My dreams and dreams themselves are narcissistic illusions and I was so stupid not to become a therapist like my father, mother, and yes, my sister.

Fortunately, my sponsor has taught me Rule no. 2: Don't Think. Get into action. I call him. He picks up in usual fashion, "Psych Ward! You need a bed?" I laugh. Moral of this story: I feel better when I have a sponsor then when I don't, and there are beds available. I remember that my first sponsor suggested that I call him every day. "He's doesn't mean that," I thought. I'll instead call him once a week, when I know he's busy at work, so when he calls back I don't pick up because now "I'M BUSY." I don't recommend this. Even though my first sponsor told me to call him every day, it was 5 ½ years later, and with a new sponsor, that I finally took his suggestion. I have yet to regret it. My regrets are reserved, of course, for how I sponsor.

After completing the steps, to my chagrin, I didn't take the sponsor world by storm. My first sponsee was young and I was resentful towards him because I offered to buy him a coffee, and he ordered the lobster thermidor of caffeinated beverages. He stopped calling, so I angrily called him and left messages. We haven't spoken since. There was a series of other newcomers that didn't work out, until the first guy I took through all 12 steps. I met him when we were both walking to our cars after a meeting. We headed towards his luxury sedan which was coincidentally parked in front of my beige 1992 Toyota Corolla, still alive from my "rip it up" days. My cherry whip was tricked out with hanging bumper affixed by duct tape and a single screw. The duct tape was black. I was proud of that. In any case, I felt shame as I thought there was no way this guy would want what I had. But, right there he said, "Will you sponsor me?" I looked at him and I said, "Yes." And, I'm grateful I did. I learned that if you have worked the steps yourself, you are qualified to take anyone through the steps. He never said anything about my car, but he also never asked me for a ride. He was probably concerned with "not dying." I take the subway now, anyway. I have sponsored a number of guys for various amounts of time until they stop calling and I take it personally. I went through a spell of two years where I had no sponsees and guys would come up to me and ask, "You think it's a good idea if I ask such and such to sponsor me, and could I give them such and such' number?" Once, I took a guy up to Step 11, and he got a really nice job and subsequently told me he was "good." I remember being deep in my feelings about all these situations and telling my sponsor about it. He said, "Are you still sober?" "Yes," I said. He smiled, "THEN WHAT'S THE PROBLEM?"

The magic of sponsorship is that it's not about me or anyone for that matter, it's about the program. There is no hierarchy. I'm not below my sponsor, and I'm not above my sponsees. They are not even "mine!"

We are just one sober conga line at a wedding where the waiter says demurely, "Sorry, coffee will not be served until after dinner when the desserts are brought out." If you find yourself nervous to ask a guy to sponsor you, I was also. If someone asks you to sponsor them, and you don't feel ready. Me too. I know this from my experience: Alcoholics want to dance and get picked for the team, at the same time. What is Rule no. 1, you are wondering? See Rule no. 2. Stop Thinking