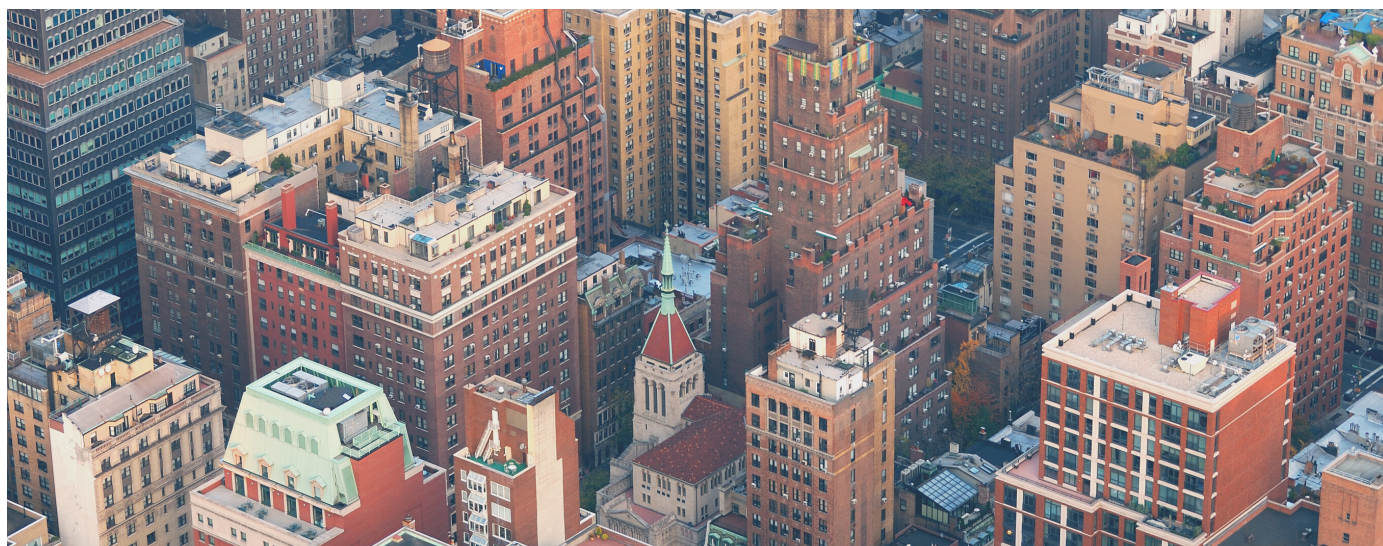


FEBRUARY 2021

SOBER NEWS

The official newsletter of New York Inter-Group



Service in A.A. - Carry The Message

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YOUR HIGHER
POWER**

by Mario L.- Group Relations Chair

grouprelations@nyintergroup.org

Dear AA friend,

NY Intergroup and Group Relations in gratitude brings you an invaluable sobriety tool by endorsing The Grapevine's and La Viña: "Carry the Message" program.

During these times of social distancing, Carry the Message" is a practical way to help another alcoholic that for whatever reason, lacks access to virtual or in person meetings.

As you know The Grapevine and La Viña are resources that carry a meeting in print, now you can gift any of these publications to someone in need.

Visit AA Grapevine's Carry the Message at <https://www.aagrapevine.org/carry-the-message> to learn more about it, you can donate a subscription to the alcoholic in need. Whether we know them or not, we are here to extend the hand of AA to those who need it the most.

24 Hours: A Day in the Life

Verena V.

City Group, St. Peter's Church,

619 Lexington Ave

April 7th, 2014



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

Upon awakening I do my prayers and start my day with a morning meeting. I write a gratitude list and call at least 3 other alcoholics . In the middle of the day I meditate. I keep in touch with my sponsees (reading the AA literature, meeting for a walk, working the steps...). I try to be of service to the people in my life, inside and outside of AA. Before I go to bed I write an inventory and do my evening prayers.

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?

My attitude towards life changed completely! Being grateful for all the blessings in my life, instead of focusing on what I don't have. The promises became true! Today I feel comfortable in my own skin!

With a 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.

I love meeting AA Friends for a walk in Central Park (with a mask and 6 feet apart). It's fun and healthy

One Laugh at a Time, no.3

Make Your Higher Power Your Higher Power

by Al K.

I was on the phone with another alcoholic. I called him; he did not call me. I met him a week prior, in a meeting, and he gave me his number and told me to call anytime. The “anytime” turned out to be a few minutes before my 4:00pm shift at the restaurant. I had begun a practice of “reaching out” right before I had to be at work. I call this technique the “fighter pilot.” If a conversation gets too uncomfortable, I can hit the “eject” button saying, “Sorry, I gotta go to work.”

Here is the conversation:

Me: This guy is trying to screw me over for the work I did.

Alcoholic: Sounds like you made this guy your Higher Power.

Me: Yeah, I totally did.

Alcoholic: You gotta make your Higher Power, your Higher Power.

Me: Of course. Good looking out, man. Sorry, I gotta go to work.

And go to work I did, angry that this guy I called was nuts, and not at all helpful. He did not understand that I was in a crisis, and I was seeking justice. He just wanted to talk about my Higher Power. This was not helpful for me, because I had decided I did not have one. In my mind, I needed to do something, because things were not working out the way I wanted them to. I was in a pickle.

As I reflect back on my earlier experiences in AA, I think of another alcoholic named, George. I was new to meetings, but in my mind, I was confident I knew all that was needed to know about life. I would “do” AA, but I would also make clear to everyone that I knew the way that things were. All I needed from them was to find out what I had to do, and I would do it myself.

I met George at a meeting and asked, “So, what do I...you know... need to do?” He gave me his number saying, “Why don’t you call me tomorrow morning, when you wake up?” I told him, “Look man, I went to 12 years of Catholic school. I know what’s up. So, if you are gonna preach to me about God, we can end this right now.” George smiled, “I’m just saying give me a call, we won’t even talk about God.” I said, “Good, because I’m an atheist.” George said, “Cool!”

I was taken aback by the fact that me dropping the “atheist” bomb on him seemed to have little effect. So, I didn’t call him the next morning. Instead, I waited 14 more days to call George. I was traveling with my sketch comedy troupe and found myself in a bar in the city we were touring. I was drinking a soda; they were drinking beers. It was at this moment that I decided to go smoke a cigarette outside and plan my next move. I told myself that even though I was clean for 15 days, I should have a beer and enjoy my adventure. That when I get back home, I will get sober. Seriously, this time.

O.L.A.A.T., cont'd

I reached into my pocket for my lighter and pulled out the folded gum wrapper that had George's name and number on it. I'm not sure why I called him, but I did. He was actually laughing as he answered the phone. I told him my current situation and he said, "You could do that, or, you could go to a meeting and call me after."

I'm not sure why I went to that meeting, but I did, and I didn't drink. I called George after the meeting to let him know, and he told me that I should now go home to where I was staying, go to bed, and call him in the morning. I woke up the next morning on an air mattress completely relieved I didn't drink. I called George to tell him the good news. I chose not to remind him that I was an atheist.

In recovery, I have learned that the major component of me staying sober is to not pick up. For me to grow, however, "not picking up" is only part of it. The other part is having a Higher Power. I did not come to this other part overnight, and in some ways still question it, on occasion. Progress not perfection.

In my experience, when things are going well, my faith in my Higher Power is amazing. It is only when things are not going the way I want them to go that I seem to lose faith, and spin my hamster wheel-mind to figure out what I need to do to get what I want. This can be disparaging. But, much like calling George helped me to stay sober, I have to take suggestions of those around me, even when I think they are silly. I have to get a Higher Power, unless there is another idea, which I have yet to find.

After many years of staying sober and going to meetings, I finally realized that my idea of a higher power was rooted in someone else's idea of a higher power. In fact, for 12 formative years, I was taught about this Higher Power. Looking back, this is tantamount to going to get ice cream and discovering the shop only has one flavor. Everyone has to eat butter pecan. Butter Pecan is the only true flavor. Butter pecan is ice cream. But, what if butter pecan doesn't work for you, because it is gross? What if you like mint chip? Shouldn't you be able to have mint chip. I say, "Yes!" and the same applies for your higher power. You gotta make your Higher Power, your Higher Power! So, I did. I decided my higher power was a positive force that wanted the best for me. Simple. I even call my Higher Power, HP. It was suggested to have faith in this higher power, I have to stay out of the outcomes. I found that I couldn't do this in my mind, but only through taking action. Luckily, AA is a program of action with a primary purpose: To stay sober, so other alcoholics can achieve sobriety.

I used to scoff at this game plan, and the outcome was that I felt lousy. Now, I just practice doing it; progress not perfection. The result is that my life is bigger than it has ever been. I am currently living far away from where I grew up pursuing a dream that I used to think would only ever be just that. But, it's a reality. And, I feel better.

Coincidentally, that guy never "screwed me" for the work I did. Nothing negative ever came of it. In fact, I look back on that whole situation with gratitude, because I learned some very valuable things that are crucial for the career I'm pursuing. I just didn't see it, at the time, because I was so angry and afraid. I experience this more and more as a result of making my Higher Power my Higher Power. If you don't believe me, that's fine. But, do you really just want to eat butter pecan?