

# Sober Times

Williamsburg, VA- AA District 38

March 2019

## Letter From the Editor:

This being the first edition of the year, I feel it appropriate to dedicate it such to these with little time in sobriety, to remember the basics, remember what it's like to be "on fire" for the program. It is often said that the newcomer is the most important person in the room. It is so easy to forget one's place; to remember that no matter how much time one has, they had to start at day one. Those with little sobriety are often marginalized and overlooked; we can, however, learn from them and recall what it was truly like in early sobriety and (lest we not forget) and hear from them what it takes to stay sober early on. My old sponsor instilled in me the idea that no matter HOW much time you have, life gets lifey and sometimes you truly need to do all that you did in the beginning. It is my hope that the reader will seriously view these accounts as valid; I know all of these individuals personally. I assure you; they are quality AA members whose stories I feel absolutely comfortable printing (they are not random people). I chose them, because I feel they have something to offer the reader. Least of which is the sheer hope offered by this program.

Arlyn S

## A Newcomer Speaks:

The basics of AA seemed counter intuitive in the beginning, and that thought led to a relapse 3 months in. That relapse showed me that I need help from fellow AA's, a sponsor to work the steps with, and a power greater than myself. To not drink I surrounded myself with friends attending meetings daily, and trying to do the next right thing. I found a sponsor who shared on his experience, strength, and hope in the program. He has guided me through the steps, and we continue to work them. Meetings for me are daily, sometimes multiple times a day.

During early sobriety I stuck with the crowd attending meetings regularly, and hung around the sober houses. Now I still do the same things, but try to invite newcomers or people I don't know as well.

When I struggle now, I try to pray first, then I reach out to a fellow AA and invite them to a meeting, or ask how they're doing. Getting more involved in service work, and increasing meetings when I'm really struggling. Don't quit before the miracle happens!

Taylor R.

## Advice on the Basics:

I am relatively new into sobriety, still counting days, and as of today am happy to say that I am 197 days sober. Prior to this, I have made attempts to get and to stay sober, but had ultimately failed. Looking back, the only major difference in my attempts at sobriety in the past and now has been my embracing the principals and the community of Alcoholics Anonymous. For me, the basics of the AA have been a life saver. Until now, I had always failed to fully surrender to my disease. It always felt as though a weight was on my shoulders that I was carrying around each and every day. When I was finally able to be honest with myself about the nature of my addictions and alcoholism and then be open and honest to those around me to finally get help, my life began changing for the better. Much like many others in the AA community, once I was honest with myself and others I began to understand that I could not overcome my addictions and alcoholism alone. I needed help from those around me, and most importantly I realized that I needed help from God. From my perspective, those are the two elements of the program (surrendering and putting my faith in a Higher Power) that have had the most impact on me, my life, and my sobriety. Being a part of a sober community has also been instrumental in keeping me sober as I find great solace in coming together with fellow addicts and alcoholics to share stories about our common struggles, the hope of recovery one day at a time, and the successes so many of us have experienced as a result of AA and working the 12-step program.

For those of us who are struggling to stay sober, my advice is simple (and it's advice I was given by others in the program): Tell the truth, stay connected to your higher power, and go to any lengths to stay away from a drink or a

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drug. For anyone who is struggling, they also need to go to as many AA meetings as possible, even if that means more than one per day to stay sober. Connect with people, exchange contact information, and don't be afraid to reach out to anyone you meet at a meeting for help. Many people have helped me in my sobriety thus far, and I wouldn't be sober today if it weren't for their listening ears, guidance, and love.

Justin C

## He Had But Little Time:

A little less than a year ago I would have never had expected to be sober much less a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am constantly reminded of the blessings that this program has brought in to my life. While I only have a little under a year in sobriety I have grown to understand that staying clean is dependent upon my spiritual fitness on any given day. The program that the 12 steps of AA provides is a guide to strengthening that level of fitness; however, my ability to work the steps is directly linked to a few key fundamentals that are found in the center of my program: work with a sponsor, fellowship, and meeting attendance.

One of the first things I was told upon entering the rooms was the need for a sponsor. Luckily, a power greater than myself made certain I found just that. I had around fifteen days clean and sober when I asked my current sponsor for help. To this day, I believe this was one of the best uses of my willingness early on. Since that time I have been fortunate enough to work the steps with that sponsor, and in doing so I have found a much greater sense of peace than I had ever known to exist prior. In forming a relationship with my sponsor I eventually started branching out to listen to other's suggestions in the fellowship as well.

I have heard alcoholics talk of fellowship as something that happens only inside of the rooms, but I have come to believe differently. Upon entering the rooms of AA I was so socially stunted from years of isolative drinking that the thought of a public outing involving sober friends made me recoil. I can now safely say that one of the cornerstones of my program is just that. I find that most of the fellowship that I am involved in occurs over hot plates of home cooked food, at the gym, or in any outing with other alcoholics. This is not to say that meetings are not a good place to start; however, I have discovered that talking

recovery does not stop once I have walked outside of a meeting.

Meetings, meetings, and meetings. Of everything I did during my recovery early on this is what was most important. If I had one suggestion to give to a newcomer it would be to complete a ninety in ninety, ninety meetings in ninety days. Early on each hour I spent anxiously nestled into couches and armchairs in a meeting was an hour I was not worried that I was going to give into the obsession that I had yet been released from. Meetings allow for me to re-center myself after a long day and listen to others about the mundane and meaningful aspects surrounding their recovery. Every meeting I have attended has produced the opportunity for me to listen to and work with other alcoholics. This is something that is irreplaceable for me.

I think that my program will change over time, and if by the grace of God I am fortunate enough to continue to work on my spiritual fitness it will be through the basics that it is furthered. I need to unflinchingly look from time to time and see if I am integrating work with a sponsor, fellowship, and meeting attendance into my daily life, because these areas that I need to focus on if I am to continue trying to live a life founded in the spiritual principles of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Ashby L

Corrections Committee:

## **Sobriety is an Inside Job**

Being shy, because of fear, has been one of my worst defects of character. Mail call in the joint is the highlight of the day for most men in here. The desire to write to an AA member, whom I could communicate with effectively, was there, but so were the feelings of shame about myself. It was at this first meeting in prison that I picked up the AA pamphlet, "It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell." At that time, writing to an AA member in my home area was impossible – they knew me. Following a suggestion in that pamphlet, I wrote to GSO (the AA General Service Office) for assistance in finding someone to correspond with.

This little action step resulted in a new method of communications for me, not only in AA, but in several other areas also. Have you ever had a self-appointed (I appointed him)

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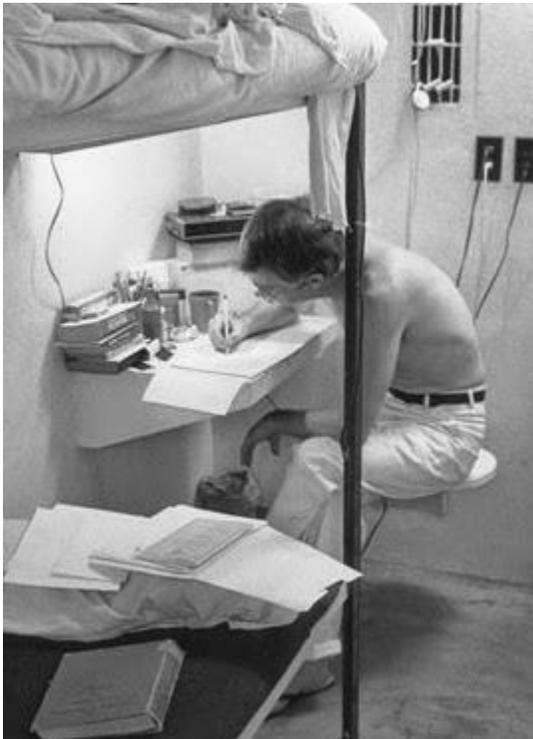
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sponsor via mail? For more than a year, I have had regular correspondence with an AA in New Jersey. This is a man I have no photo of, and I have never talked to or seen, but I do know him. The letters are another AA meeting, and the meetings in prison are limited. For me, they are a very special kind of meeting, one that can be filed away for future reading and a reminder, a cassette on a piece of paper. The help I received in the form of suggestions based on AA experience, answers to various questions, some AA literature, encouragement and thanks, and just plain honest fellowship has had a dramatic effect on my life. This has happened in ways to numerous to list, but I will be forever grateful to my higher power and AA as a whole.

Writing is a very effective way to vent and/or express my thoughts, ideas, joys, and frustrations stemming from the negative atmosphere most inmates live in. Some of the old fears remains, but I'm working on that. Today I have enough faith to attempt writing – so if you haven't done it, don't knock it.

John Doe



## She Took a Leap of Faith:

My first days of sobriety were done with pure self-will and stubbornness. I didn't know anyone in the program, I was afraid to talk to most of my friends and family about my decision to try getting sober. Alcohol had beaten me into submission. I felt like I wanted to die. I was willing to do anything to change that. In my first week I went to a small meeting with a lot of old timers and my future sponsor. Everything they were sharing just spoke to what I was going through and, even though I was terrified, I opened my mouth and I left that meeting with a list of phone numbers and feeling like I wasn't alone. The first things they told me that started to change my perspective were: that I wasn't alone, and that I never had to drink again if I didn't want to. Shocking! I was told to go to as many meetings as I could and stay sober between them which I did (still do) and to find a sponsor.

With her help, and the help of everyone in the rooms, I've found the most important part of my life and recovery that I never knew I was missing. A connection with my higher power. I came to realize I couldn't will myself sober, I needed help from a power greater than myself. Letting go of the illusion of control I had in my life has been the hardest but most rewarding thing. I never could have gotten there without AA.

Through working with my sponsor I learned ways to confront what was really going on in my life. I knew my life felt unmanageable, but with her help I figured out in what ways it was. Getting that stuff down on paper and looking at it helped me realize that I could overcome it. With her help, and the help of everyone in the rooms, I've found the most important part of my life and recovery that I never knew I was missing. A connection with my higher power. Letting go of that illusion of control I had in my life has been the hardest but most rewarding thing. I never could have gotten there without AA.

As someone pretty new who struggles with sobriety often, the best thing I can say to anyone else struggling is that sometimes it just sucks. Plain and simple. It's really hard at times. It's not always pretty. It can be lonely and confusing and frustrating and sad. But not one single problem or emotion that you have can be helped with alcohol. There are people in this program that will care for you and help you if you let them. You can truly be free from the obsession and learn how to live a better life if you surrender and

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are willing. Write a gratitude list. Define your higher power! Try trusting it, just for one day, and see how things can change for you. Go to as many meetings as you can. And no matter what, just don't drink. You never have to drink again, and you're not alone.

Brittany S

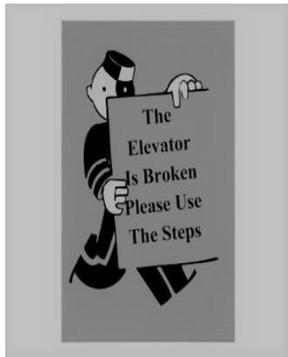
## Event #3

Workshop (Slogans)

June 1<sup>st</sup>

4 pm

St Stephens Church



Sober Times is a publication made possible by the Williamsburg Area Intergroup in District 38. Opinions expressed are strictly those of the authors and do not reflect those of AA as a whole. Contributions, suggestions, and comments are welcomed. So is help. Write to

[newsletter@aawilliamsburg.org](mailto:newsletter@aawilliamsburg.org)

Intergroup meetings are held the 2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday of each month, 630PM at 4925 Centerville Rd. For more info go to [www.aawilliamsburg.org](http://www.aawilliamsburg.org)

All comments, questions, and concerns may be sent to Arlyn S. at [arlynsmith@gmail.com](mailto:arlynsmith@gmail.com). This address may also be used to submit events, as well as recommend people of interest to interview.

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## Mark Your Calendar

### Event #1

Triangle Stepping Stones Spring Fling and Gratitude Meeting-Apr 27<sup>th</sup> at 12 pm

### Event #2

Take Your Sponsor to Dinner

Sat. April 13

Ticket required (\$5 suggested donation)

Meet and Greet 5:15-5:45

King of Glory Lutheran Church-4897 Longhill Rd

