

Hill Country A.A.®

Intergroup Connection

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Selfish, Self-Centeredness: That is the Root of our Problems!!

Most of us have witnessed the behavior of a selfish child, and it's unpleasant. A spoiled brat is very selfish, ego-centric, throws tantrums, can't share, and is rude. You wonder why their parents never taught them manners. But what does self-center behavior look like in an adult??

Dr Harry M. Tiebout, a psychiatrist, described how self-centered behavior in alcoholics manifested. He was one of the first professionals AA came in contact with, and found out about us when he received a Big Book in the mail to review. He showed this book to Marty M. one of his female patients, who later sobered up and contributed a story ("Women Suffer,too") to the Big Book. Dr. Tiebout wrote articles for the medical and scientific communities in support of AA and talked about how AA was successful because it involved ego reduction, a spiritual awakening, and accepting powerlessness, . He wrote that only a full surrender would prevent relapse. Another thing unique to Dr Tiebout was his recognizing alcoholism as the *root problem* of the alcoholic not a *symptom* of some other malady.



Selfish, Self-Centeredness...(cont.)

In 1954, Dr. Tiebout wrote an article called "Ego Factors in Surrender in Alcoholism", in which he described what selfishness and self-centeredness looks like in adult form, based on ten years of work with over 250 alcoholics at a rehabilitation center. His description of alcoholics showed they exhibit an "unconquerable ego" and they return to a state of abnormal behavior characterized by exaggerated feelings of self-importance, an excessive need for admiration, and a lack of understanding of others' feelings, and often spend a lot of time thinking about achieving power or success, or about their appearance. They often take advantage of the people around them. He describes the alcoholic as emotionally immature, manifesting in various ways, such as always being in a hurry-with big plans and big schemes-but producing little result. The driven personality that thinks fast, talks fast and lives fast, but unfortunately not matched with an ability to finish the projects at hand. What else? The inability to accept frustration, a feeling that he has the special rights or privilege above and beyond what others have, feeling of superiority combined with low self-esteem. What does it say in the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions? Doctors found that the alcoholic is "childish, emotionally sensitive, and has feelings of grandiosity." (Hmmm. Does this sound like anyone you know?) What's the solution? "Simple, but not easy," the Big Book says! Using our 12 Steps to develop humility-the leveling of our pride and ego-surrender the need to be King for a Day, and living the slogans-Easy Does it, One day at a Time, First Things First. Learning to be one among many, by finding not only physical sobriety, but emotional sobriety and spiritual growth through 10, 11 and 12. Dr. Paul, who contributed a story to the Big Book, wrote two other books, "There's More to Not Drinking Than Not Drinking, and You Cant Make Me Angry, Based on his many years in AA, excellent sponsorship, and a long-ten marriage in recovery, Dr. Paul has much to share on becoming emotionally sane and sober, and how to have better relationships. As the Big Book promises, "more will be revealed" and as Bill W. writes, "We feel that elimination of our drinking is but a beginning. A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations, and affairs." p. 19, Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Norma A., Editor

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The Last Laugh



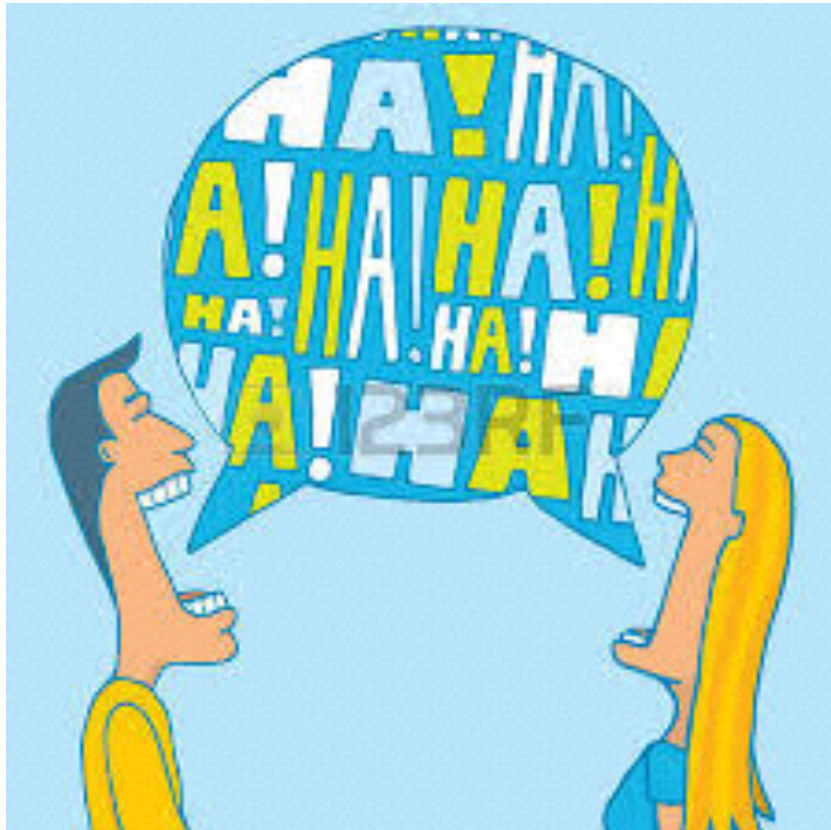
A GROUP OF DRINKING BUDDIES went deer hunting. They split up into pairs for the day. That night, one hunter came staggering back to camp alone, half-bombed and dragging an eight-point buck.

The others said, "Where's Harry?"

"Oh, he passed out, a couple miles back up the trail."

What? You left Harry lying out there alone, and carried the deer back?"

"A tough call," admitted the marksman, "but I figured, who's gonna steal Harry?"



Serenity, Peace, and Recovery for All



Last month, John H., our District 3b/3c Treatment Committee chair organized a workshop for Treatment and Accessibilities, in accordance with our AA Guidelines, which state:
“ Workshops have proved an effective way of informing and preparing new committee members for their work with treatment clients and in sharing the experience of the member already involved in this form of service.”

John invited a number of trusted servants to speak about Treatment and Accessibilities, past and current Treatment Committee Chairs, AA members involved in carrying the message to treatment facilities, our Deaf AA members, and others. He also invited Matt M., who spoke on the need for accessibility for all alcoholics. Here is his contribution.

Hello, my name is Matt. I'm an alcoholic. Sober date 1/4/17. Thank you for having me here to share. I'm excited to be here with all of you alcoholics. Y'all are my family. I was asked to speak about my experience with accessibility and AA. I don't have any experience with treatment centers or detox. As a Deaf alcoholic, accessibility is very important to me in all areas of my life, not just AA. Accessibility for me is related to language and communication. First, I want to set a picture for ya'll to think about. Imagine that you're overseas in another country, in another culture, where no one speaks your language. You're an alcoholic who needs to find a meeting. You look up the meeting list and randomly select a meeting to go to, hoping that maybe there will be someone there who you can relate to or that there will be an English speaker there. You show up at the meeting and there is nothing there in terms of accessibility. You have to use gestures, body language, and your phone, if you have one, to communicate and translate what

people are saying. It would be a challenge. You would miss out on most or all of what's going on. Imagine if you had to do that all the time or a majority of the time. There might be frustration, resentment, different emotions that you're experiencing. This is pretty much what a deaf alcoholic experiences when he cannot find interpreted meetings to go to. I experience this on a regular basis. Right now, there are 2-3 meetings a week that I can find interpreters for. This is actually more than what's available for most deaf alcoholic in the USA. Austin is unique in that way and I'm thankful. Interpreters are expensive and there isn't always funding for them. 90 in 90 days would be a challenge for me. Most hearing people can just pick and choose from any meeting on the list that they want to go to. As a deaf person I can't do that. I would love to be able to do that though. Sometimes I can find people who are willing to type on laptops for me at meetings. That is nice but it's not the same as seeing what's being said in my own language. I've also seen people say to each other, thinking that I can't lip read or understand what they are saying, complaining about the noise of the typing (muttering "what's that!?" or the interpreters being a distraction, people staring at me like they've never seen that before, things like that. You know we alcoholics can be crazy sometimes. I've also seen some people try to flirt with the sign language interpreters. It can be funny..but please don't do that. Treat the interpreters as professionals. I also have to request well in advance for each meeting to make sure there can be an interpreter there. I have to fill out a form and email it, etc etc. this is time and effort that most of you don't have to use. sometimes I do go to meetings on my own and just meditate and read on my own, when I need to get away or focus myself and sometimes my higher power brings people to me there and something cool happens. It's not the same but I have done that before. Now that i've shared some negative things, I want to make it clear, I expect those things to happen. I've ran into those things in all areas of my life, not just AA. But the wonderful thing is, now because of what i've learned from this program, the spiritual principles, these things aren't obstacles. They are opportunities for me to see my higher power working on my behalf and for other people to see my higher power working. I don't have to be resentful or angry or go and drink about these things anymore because i've learned spiritual tools that I can apply to solve these problems. You people in AA, my sponsor, my



own and just meditate and I need to get away or focus my higher power brings and something cool happens. have done that before. Now negative things, I want to those things to happen. I've in all areas of my life, not just thing is, now because of what program, the spiritual things aren't obstacles. They me to see my higher power

friends, have shown me that you are willing to work past these accessibility barriers. When I first came into AA my first sponsor was a man who is an interpreter and so we were able to communicate easily. That's an amazing thing that God did for me and he and I are still close and i'm grateful for that. However, for most deaf people, that usually is not the case, they cannot find someone local who is fluent or native signer. I want to let you know that even if you can't sign don't let that stop you hearing people from thinking you can help a deaf person. My current sponsor doesn't sign but we've been using a voice to text app on our phones that works well for one on one meetings and we email/text to each other. I, myself, have had to work through my issues of not believing that my higher power will meet all my needs. I used to think that I couldn't sponsor a hearing person that didn't know sign language but look at my current sponsor, he has no clue about sign language or deaf culture but he's willing to work with me and go to any lengths to help me. I now believe I can sponsor anyone hearing or deaf if my higher power leads me in that direction. Now because of him and other people in AA who have been showing me a way to live without having to drink, I have hope. I have a purpose in life, to be of service and help other alcoholics. I have a vision of there being one meeting a night, at least, in Austin that a Deaf person can see the message of AA with a sign language interpreter there and find a solution. Many deaf people are afraid to take that first step because they think that there won't be accessibility or that hearing people will ignore them.

I believe that we can change that and make AA even more accessible to all people. I remember when I first came into the rooms, I went to a meeting named rule 62. When I walked into that meeting, I was immediately greeted and hugged by people who didn't know sign language but still went ahead and made me feel welcome because we shared a common problem, alcohol. I felt the spirit of love and fellowship there which I had never felt anywhere else. Anyone can do that regardless of accessibility or communication barriers. Don't let that stop you from going up to a deaf person who might need your help. They are looking for that person who is willing and it might save their lives. If you are a treatment center or if you host a workshop, or conference or recovery event, please don't forget about accessibility and plan for it in advance. It might be inconvenient but Deaf alcoholics need your help. We need hear the message in our own language. , warning, Don't spoon feed us or treat us differently, just be straightforward with us, treat us like you would want to be treated, and make us feel welcome.

I don't know if this is true, I don't always trust statistics that I read but I was told that 1 out of 6 deaf people suffer from alcohol/drug addiction compared to 1 out of 10 hearing

people. Many deaf people hide away and are unable or don't know how to get help. I believe we can change that. The message of AA can and will reach anyone regardless of language. Please feel free to contact me if you know of any deaf alcoholics who need help or if you need help with accessibility issues or anything at all, including treatment centers that will work with deaf alcoholics. I would love to be of service. We are all God's kids. That's what AA is all about. thanks for letting me share.

HUMILITY IS A GIFT

As long as we placed self-reliance first, a genuine reliance upon a Higher Power was out of the question. That basic ingredient of all humility, a desire to seek and do God's will, was missing.

— *TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS*, p. 72

When I first came to A.A., I wanted to find some of the elusive quality called humility. I didn't realize I was looking for humility because I thought it would help me get what I wanted, and that I would do anything for others if I thought God would somehow reward me for it. I try to remember now that the people I meet in the course of my day are as close to God as I am ever going to get while on this earth. I need to pray for knowledge of God's will today, and see how my experience with hope and pain can help other people; if I can do that, I don't need to search for humility, it has found me.

From the book Daily Reflections

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Our History of Carrying the Message

Archives Workshop

August 19th, 2017
10:00 AM -12:00 pm
Western Trails
1800 Fortview Rd, Austin, Texas 78745

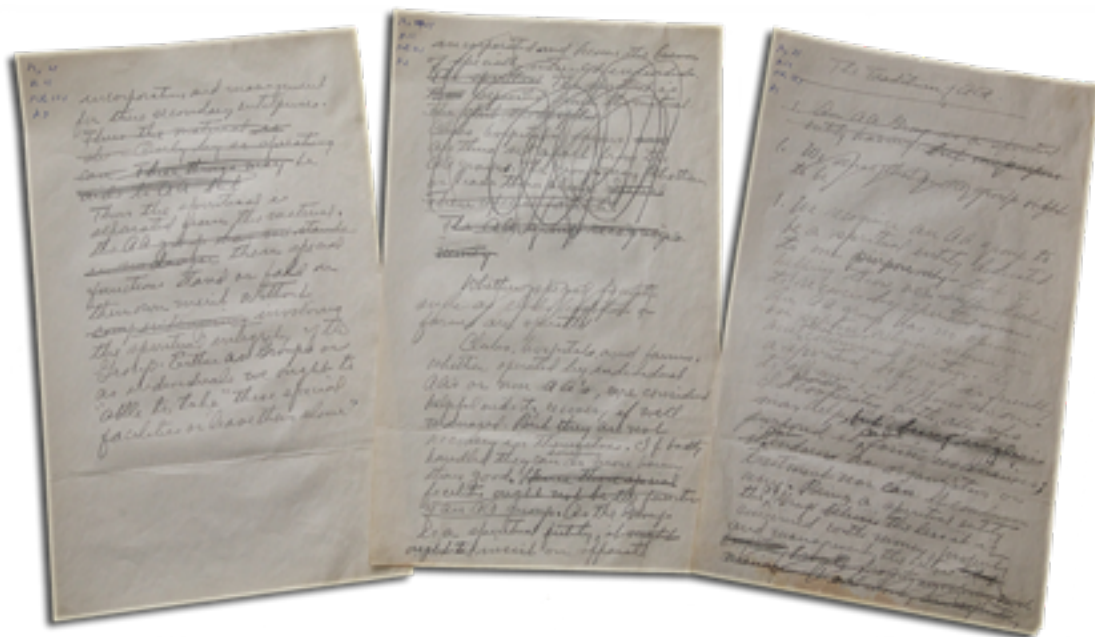


Have an AA Group event coming up?
Make sure it gets on the Intergroup website under News and Events!!
Are you a new group or has your group info changed? We'll
spread the word!!
Just e-mail the Intergroup Manager Gary at
austinaa@gmail.com

The Twelve Traditions

In April of 1946, Bill W. wrote an article for the Grapevine entitled “Twelve Suggested Points for A.A. Tradition,” an early presentation of what would become known simply as The Twelve Traditions. With his usual foresight, Bill had looked around the program some ten years after he and Dr. Bob met in Akron in 1935, and realized that, as A.A. grew, it was important to preserve its unity and singleness of purpose. During the 1940s, Bill received hundreds of letters from the A.A. groups that were springing up all over the country, letters asking him sometimes contentious questions about group autonomy, anonymity issues, A.A. endorsement of outside enterprises, and the like. These letters, which described what Bill would call a “welter of exciting and fearsome experience,” played a key role in helping him formulate the Twelve Traditions. Published one by one in the Grapevine, from December 1947 to November 1948, and adopted at the First International Convention in Cleveland, the Traditions provided guidelines (not rules) that would help A.A. groups then and in the future conduct themselves in their relationship with the outside world and with Alcoholics Anonymous itself. “I offer these suggestions,” Bill wrote in that first April 1946 article, “neither as one man’s dictum nor as a creed of any kind, but rather as a first attempt to portray that group ideal toward which we have assuredly been led by a Higher Power these ten years past.”

Today, A.A. groups continue to use the Traditions to strive towards that group ideal as they carry their message of hope to still-suffering alcoholics around the world.



The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety

by Bill Wilson

Copyright © AA Grapevine, Inc, January 1958



I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA—the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance—urges quite appropriate to age seventeen—prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven.

Since AA began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up, emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse! Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy, and good living—well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious—from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream—be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden "Mr. Hyde" becomes our main task.

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones—folks like you and me—commencing to get results. Last autumn [several years back - ed.] depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer..."It's better to comfort than to be the comforted." Here was the formula, all right. But why didn't it work?

Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence - almost absolute dependence - on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what Grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed, upon any set of circumstances whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing a love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, I could not avail myself of God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependency meant demand—a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words "absolute demand" may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the current can't flow until our paralyzing

dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

Spiritual calculus, you say? Not a bit of it. Watch any AA of six months working with a new Twelfth Step case. If the case says "To the devil with you," the Twelfth Stepper only smiles and turns to another case. He doesn't feel frustrated or rejected. If his next case responds, and in turn starts to give love and attention to other alcoholics, yet gives none back to him, the sponsor is happy about it anyway. He still doesn't feel rejected; instead he rejoices that his one-time prospect is sober and happy. And if his next following case turns out in later time to be his best friend (or romance) then the sponsor is most joyful. But he well knows that his happiness is a by-product—the extra dividend of giving without any demand for a return.

The really stabilizing thing for him was having and offering love to that strange drunk on his doorstep. That was Francis at work, powerful and practical, minus dependency and minus demand.

In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn't a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.

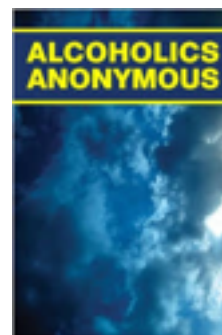
Thus I think it can work out with emotional sobriety. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent unhealthy demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelfth Step ourselves and others into emotional sobriety.

Of course I haven't offered you a really new idea—only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own "hexes" at depth. Nowadays my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine.

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Meet the Board

This is a special section of the Intergroup Connection giving us information about the Hill Country Board Members. In interview style, we will get to know who our trusted servants are and why they choose to serve at HClA!!

Lake . HClA Secretary

What is your name and service position?

My name is Lake W, and I serve as secretary on the HClA Board of Trustees.

How long have you been in AA?

Although I'm 50 years old, I am probably the most junior trustee as far as sobriety goes. My sobriety date is October 25, 2013--I have a little over three years sober.

What is your home group?

My home group is Allandale--specifically, the evening meeting at Allandale. The main Noon meeting at Allandale has a very large attendance, and it can be overwhelming. The evening meeting, however, is smaller and more intimate, and that helps me stay sober. There is something to be said for both meetings.

Who is your sponsor and why did you pick him?

I'm sure my sponsor would prefer to remain anonymous and, to be rigorously honest, I didn't pick him. When I came to Alcoholics Anonymous, I had already checked out physically, mentally and emotionally. It was all I could do to get dressed, drive to a meeting, and actually go in. I couldn't concentrate, and I remember very little of the first few weeks of my sobriety. I was seeing a psychologist at the time, and he suggested Allandale. In desperation, I followed his suggestion. After going to

meetings for two weeks, my therapist believed I meant business, and he suggested I talk to the man who became my sponsor.

I didn't know this man from Adam, and I was terrified to ask a complete stranger for help staying sober. I had never heard him speak, and I couldn't imagine that we had anything in common. If the decision had been left up to me, I wouldn't have chosen this man as my sponsor.

Today I can't imagine having stayed sober without him. He was exactly the right man for the job, and I am grateful everyday that he is in my life. It's a God thing, go figure.

What other types of service-past or present-have you been involved in?

I was somewhat antisocial when I first became a member of AA. In fact, my sponsor tricked me into chairing my first meetings, and he has always stressed the importance of service work in my recovery program. I've found volunteering at Citywide and participating on Texas State Convention and Capital of Texas Conference committees have really helped me to come out of my shell. Before joining the HCIA Board of Trustees, I was a Hill Country Intergroup Representative for two years, and there is always something to do at the group level. Even if it's just making coffee or greeting members at the door to a meeting, I urge newcomers to put your fears aside and get involved. Working with other alcoholics has offered me a lot of insight into myself and strengthened my sobriety.

Do you think sponsoring makes a difference in your program?

I've always believed that teaching something is one of the best ways to learn it, and I've also found it much easier to take someone else's inventory rather than my own. Working with other men, I see my character defects in them every day. And just this week, my sponsor suggested I do something myself that I had just suggested a sponsee do last week. If you are being true to yourself and trying to set a good example, it's really difficult to suggest that a sponsee do something that you're not doing yourself. Sponsoring keeps you honest.

Was there a turning point in your sobriety that you think was significant?

I'm not a big believer of God using a "magic wand". I think staying sober takes work, and changing behaviors that have been around for a lifetime doesn't happen overnight. Perhaps because of these beliefs, my spiritual experience has been more

of the "educational variety". In the early months of my sobriety, I was always looking for the answer. How can these twelve steps keep me sober? Trust the process. Somewhere along the way, when I stopped asking how or why, it sneaked up on me from behind. Faith is a strange thing. I heard in a meeting today, "Faith is a verb." I like that.

Do you think there have been changes in AA since you've been sober?

I've only been in AA for three years, so I haven't seen much change in AA. I have seen a lot of change in me.

What do you hope would be the best thing to come out of your service to the fellowship as an Intergroup Board member?

I have an analytical mind. When I first came into AA, I wanted to know how everything was organized. Who's in charge? What's the chain of command? Where's the organizational chart? I've come to realize that our entire organization is built on personal relationships. As an Intergroup Representative, I thought the HCIA Board of Trustees was an unapproachable group of mentors with perfect sobriety that painstakingly guided Austin AA through life's obstacles. Like almost everything else, I was wrong about that, too.

The Hill Country Intergroup sells chips and literature, maintains a meeting database and website, schedules shifts for and answers the 24-hour Hotline, and presents the Old-Timers' Banquet. But we'd like to do more. The Intergroup Board works for you. We work for Austin's area AA groups and members. Without our members, we don't need to exist, and we want and need your input! What can we do to help Austin AA? What improvements would you like to see in the future? Please get involved. Elect an Intergroup Representative, go to the Intergroup meetings, and let us know what's on your mind.



Thank you, AA Groups!!

June DAC Donations

Allandale	\$50.00
Reading Rainbow	\$18.45
Rule 62	\$160.50
A Way Out	\$22.54
Bridge to Shore	\$150.00
Desire to Stop	\$50.00
Keep First Things First	\$181.00
Westlake Group	\$60.00
Lighthouse Group	\$40.00
Into Action Group	\$100.00
A New Beginning	\$100.00
Anonymous	\$75.00



A BIG THANKS
to all
HCIA Office Volunteers
and Hotline Volunteers !!
Your Service is Greatly
Appreciated!!

Thank you, AA Groups!!

2017 June Contributions

District 3b/3c

Allandale Group	\$466.00
North Austin 24	\$75.00
Reading Rainbow	\$ 43.05
Rule 62	\$165.50
Voices Carry	\$200.00
Welcome Home Group	\$150.00
12 @12	\$200.00
A Way Out	\$112.71
Any Lengths	\$25.00
Keep First Things First	\$423.00
Bridge To Shore	\$489.70
Single Purpose Group	\$25.00
Westlake Group	\$300.00

District 2

Into Action	\$50.00
The River Group	\$25.00
Second Chance Group	\$48.25

District 13

Burnet Noon	\$300.00
Llano Group	\$100.00

Lampasas Group	\$52.50
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District 22

Hope Group	\$214.26
A New Beginning	\$100.00
Worth a Buck Group	\$50.00.
Brushy Creek Serenity	\$25.00
Elgin AA	\$25.00

District 29

Legacies Group	\$125.00
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