



# Conscious Contact

Information and Inspiration from District 10, NIA

Vol. 16, No. 10

October 2017

- Next District Meeting: Oct. 22
- Submit content for the next issue no later than Oct. 15

Any member of AA may contribute content for this newsletter. Page 4 includes information on how to submit content for publication.

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“I am responsible . . .

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.”

Northern Illinois Area 20

District 10, P. O. Box 854

Libertyville, IL 60048

[www.district10nia.org](http://www.district10nia.org)

[www.aa-nia.org](http://www.aa-nia.org)

[www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org)

[www.aagrapevine.org](http://www.aagrapevine.org)

**Answering Service**

847-362-1811

Opinions expressed herein are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, NIA, District 10 or other Conscious Contact volunteers.

## Step Ten: Coming Clean and Staying That Way

“For the wise have always known that no one can make much of his life until self-searching becomes a regular habit, until he is able to admit and accept what he finds, and until he patiently and persistently tries to correct what is wrong.”—from the chapter on Step Ten in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.



By the time we reach this step, we have made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, have made a list of persons we had harmed, and had made amends to people, except when to do so would injure them or other.

That process cleared up much of the wreckage of our drunken past.

But none of us is perfect; we fall short daily in our thoughts, statements and actions.

Just like last week’s shower won’t make anyone smell good this week, our work in Steps One through Nine won’t heal resentments and problems that arise today from our anger, jealousy, envy, self-pity and hurt pride.

Step Ten encourages us to examine what is happening today, and when we see how our words or actions have hurt another, we can refresh those relationships by admitting we were wrong. Likewise, when we see ourselves getting angry or hurt by another’s words or actions, we can practice forgiveness, which is a much healthier alternative to resentment, and can clean up stinky situations. — Tom K.

<u>Step Ten</u>	<u>Tradition Ten</u>
“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”	“Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”

## Tradition Ten: Avoid Controversy of Outside Issues

When I first came to A.A., I avoided all Tradition meetings because, to me, they were boring. Therefore I did not understand any of the traditions. I was giving a lead at a meeting where my sponsor attended. Earlier in the day, I read an article about A.A. in which the author wrote how it didn’t work and it was a cult. Of course, I couldn’t wait to speak at the meeting that night. I started the discussion and it became heated, with everyone giving their opinions. When it was my sponsor’s turn to speak, she talked about Tradition Ten; stating the article was an outside issue with no connection to A.A.

She explained that A.A. minds its own business; we keep our nose out of other people, places, or things. This Tradition is also good for us as members. When we’re in a meeting, are we giving our opinions on things other than our common solution, like someone’s smoking as not being really sober?

I’m under a doctor’s care and taking cough medicine with hydrocodone in it right now. No one else’s business; it’s an outside issue. We do one thing well in Alcoholics Anonymous, and that’s present a solution for alcoholism. On other matters, we have no opinion.

Public controversy is to be avoided because it always damages us as a Fellowship, by diverting attention away from recovery for alcoholics. —Victoria H.

## A Call to Action: Revitalizing the District 10 Answering Service

For years, our District has been blessed to have an answering service staffed by dedicated volunteers taking calls from people in need 24/7, 365 days a year. In an effort to make these services even more effective, a team of people (Kevin A., Robin B., Victoria H., Bill J., and Dave J.) met in August to explore what steps the District should take to update/improve the overall operations and service provided through our answering service. Here is a summary of that meeting and its outcomes:



- We confirmed that the overall mission or purpose of our answering service is simple and clear – it is to connect callers with AA. Any potential changes to our current operations must be in service to that simple objective.
- After reviewing the strengths and shortcomings of our current situation, and exploring some “best practices” used by other Districts, the team decided on two changes:
  - ◊ First, we will no longer ask Ansercall24 (our answering service provider) to simply provide first-time callers with lists of meetings when they ask. Instead, we will ask Ansercall24 to route these calls directly to volunteers, knowing that the most effective connections are made through

direct conversations with another alcoholic/addict. (Simply providing a list may or may not move callers to action on their own.)

◊ Next, we will establish more clearly defined and shorter periods of time during which volunteers should be available to take calls.

- In addition to these changes, we developed a plan to refresh the current list of answering service volunteers. In September, the team began to contact all current volunteers to confirm their active status

and ask that they complete a revised volunteer profile— indicating their sex, location and the times they are available to take calls within the new “availability” framework. We also began to distribute signup sheets for new volunteers starting the last week of September. Opportunities for signup also is available on the District website.

- Once our volunteer list has been updated, a volunteer training workshop will be held, targeting late fall.

We are extremely grateful to all past, current and future volunteers on the District 10 Answering Service Team. Maybe this is the right service opportunity for you! Please look for the new signup sheets this month.

## More About Crosstalk and Keeping A.A. Meetings Healthy



I read with interest the article about crosstalk (“Rude Behaviors”) in the September issue, and I feel the need to write a little about that—the very real problem of cross-talk in our A.A. meetings.

We know it can be a very big issue,

and is, indeed, a reason that A.A. members, often newcomers, give for leaving a meeting or the A.A. program in general. So, how it is dealt with can be “a matter of life or death.” Each person and each group or meeting has to look at it—there are no A.A. police, and I know from trying that if one calls the GSO about it, we will be told to talk about it at the group level.

Of course, talking while another person is giving a lead, sharing, or reading is crosstalk and is very rude. This type of crosstalk is easy to spot and easy to stop. The chairperson must be willing and able to manage this by either stopping the offender immediately or by counseling those rude members after the meeting. It could be that the offender is new, or that the offender has been attending other unhealthy meetings where this rude behavior is allowed. The entire group needs to keep itself healthy by discouraging this interruption. Shushing seems rude, but may be effective at the moment and the person may get the message. Allowing

someone to violate the Traditions, particularly the very first one, is inexcusable. Unless there is a fire—then it would be ok!

But on to the other, more sneaky, type of crosstalk: directly talking to any one person during the meeting. The easiest way to identify this is to see if the word “you” is being used. If the word “you” is directed at anyone in the meeting, then, yes, it is crosstalk. It puts a spotlight on a person, rather than on the principles or lessons of our program. If, as mentioned, we feel the need to say “I can really relate to what YOU said,” or, “I felt the same way YOU did,” we are crosstalking, without a doubt. The previous article said “it is perfectly fine” and lets people know that they have been heard,” but is it worth it? Some are made to feel uncomfortable, embarrassed, or singled-out. They then become reluctant to speak. Some thrive on the attention, which leads to monopolizing, people-pleasing, over-sharing, and other similarly unhealthy behaviors. If I feel the need to make those “I can relate to what YOU said” comments, I then have a great chance to really connect with the person by talking to him or her after the meeting, or by giving the gift of a phone call or email to say that their remarks were heard, understood, and appreciated.

There are better, non-crosstalk ways to say what we want to say. We can ponder what was said and what we can add that will

*("More About Crosstalk" Continued from page 2)*

really contribute to the group. For example, instead of looking at someone (non-verbal cross-talk; a topic for another time) and saying "I can really relate to what YOU said," we could try for a little depth and insight, maybe by saying something like "I, too, have felt..." or "when \_\_ happened to me, I ..." or "when I face problems like that, what helps me is \_\_" or, best of all, "the step that helps me when I face these kind of situations is \_\_." It may help us and others to share about how we work the Twelve Step

program of A.A. if we can do it without crosstalk in the group setting. I need to keep the focus on me and my recovery and avoid advice-giving, judgment, or babbling just to be talking.

Some AA groups are healthy and helpful, and some are not. One of the ways I decide if a group is for me is by noticing how much crosstalk is going on. Pay attention; at some meetings, just about every person there is crosstalking! Give this some thought, and talk about it at your group's business meeting—or maybe even do a lead about it!—Anonymous

### Events

Sept. 30, 2017 5 p.m. Doors open 8 p.m. Open Speaker meeting	Round Lake Area Alano Club BBQ Burgers and hot dogs, lots of fellowship. Suggested donation \$5. Bring a dish to pass	Round Lake Area Alano Club 37023 N. Rt. 83, Lake Villa, IL 60046
Oct. 1, 2017 8 a.m. Coffee 9 a.m. Breakfast	District 10 & 12 Fall Breakfast Please buy your ticket in advance—\$18	Illinois Beach Resort 1 Lake Front Dr., Zion, IL 60099 Mike K.
Oct. 7, 2017 6 p.m. Doors open 7:30 p.m. Speaker Peter M.	A Way Out 17th Anniversary Party Free Open Meeting, fellowship, food and fun!	Libertyville Civic Center 135 Church St. Libertyville, IL. 60048
Oct. 14, 2017 8 a.m. Registration	NIA Fall Committee Meeting	Lord of Life Lutheran Church 40W605 IL Rt. 38 Elburn, IL 60119
Oct. 21 11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.	"Working the Steps in Recovery" Workshop October focus: Step 10	Serenity House of Libertyville 1103 W. Park Ave. (Rt.176) Libertyville, IL 60048 Jim M.
Nov. 4, 2017 8 a.m. Registration 9 a.m. Conference begins	NIA Big Book Conference	First United Methodist Church 801 N. Sycamore St. Hinckley, IL 60520 Doug A. Tracy F.
Nov. 11, 2017 8 p.m. Open speaker 9:30 Bowling	See you next Tuesday 12x12 Annual Fall Bowling Event Speaker at Round Lake Alano Club Bowling at Lakes Bowl, Scotch doubles. \$20 per couple	Round Lake Area Alano Club 37023 N. Rt. 83, Lake Villa, IL 60046 Lakes Bowl, 601 Rail Road Ave. Round Lake, IL 60073
Nov. 17-19, 2017	2017 East Central Regional Forum www.aa.org, click on "For AA Members"	Wyndham Springfield City Centre 700 E. Adams St. Springfield, IL 62701
Nov. 17-19, 2017 5 p.m. Registration opens	28th Annual McHenry Soberfest	Grand Geneva Resort/Timber Ridge Water Park Lake Geneva, WI www.soberfest.org
If you have an event that you would like us to include, or see something to correct in our listing, please email the Conscious Contact newsletter chair, Tom K. All other news items should be submitted using the instructions printed at the top of page 4.		



<b>Answering Service (July 24–August 21 Statistics)</b>		<b>Chair: Dave J.</b>	<b>Alternate: Victoria H.</b>
Total Calls	42	Meeting Info	13
Spanish	1	12-Step	2
Solicitor	2	Wrong Number	2
Hang-up	5	Other Districts	7
Will call back	0	Website	0
		General Info	10
		Treatment Facility Info	0
		Halfway House Info	0
		Alanon	0

**How to Submit Content to the *Conscious Contact* newsletter**

1. Go to <http://district10nia.org/>
2. Hover over the “District Services and Committees” menu, and then click on the “Newsletter” submenu
3. Provide your name and either a phone number or email so that we can contact you if we have questions. Then type your content and click the “Submit” button.

**District 10:** PO Box 854, Libertyville, IL 60048**Northern Illinois Area:** PO Box 1056, Yorkville, IL 60560**General Service Office:** PO Box 459 Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163**District 10 answering service:** 847-362-1811**2017 District 10 Officers (Confidential—this information is for A. A. use only.)**

Every member of AA is welcome at District 10 meetings. The meetings typically are held on the fourth Sunday of every month at St. Gilbert’s Catholic Church, 301 E. Belvidere Rd, Grayslake. Through October, meet in the Assembly Hall (Door #3), West Parking Lot, at the back (south side) of the school building. 5:30 p.m. Tradition Meeting, followed at 6 p.m. by the District meeting.

For more details, go to [www.district10nia.org](http://www.district10nia.org).

If the word, “OPEN,” appears after a District position, we are looking for someone to volunteer to serve. Learn more about each position and the volunteer commitment at an upcoming District meeting, or by contacting a District committee member.

Position	Chair	Phone	Email	Alternate	Phone	Email
DCM	Bob P.			Kevin A.		
Secretary	Steve B.			OPEN		
Treasurer	Cori S.			Cindy W.		
Accessibilities	OPEN			Heidi G.		
Answering Service	Dave J.			Victoria H		
Archives	Rick S.			Steve R.		
Bridging the Gap	Mike B.			Josh R.		
Corrections	Larry L.			OPEN		
C.P.C.	Dee E.			Terri G.		
Directory	Dana T.			Andy H.		
Events	Mike K.			Carolyn G.		
Grapevine	Brandon B.			Mike W.		
GSR Contact	Kim T.			Earl N.		
Literature	Gaza D.			OPEN		
Newsletter	Tom K.			Mark H.		
Public Info.	Michael L.			Peter S.		
Treatment	Carl S.			Dave H.		
Website	Dawn O.			Charles K.		