

CONSCIOUS CONTACT

INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

VOL 23 NO 10



NEXT DISTRICT MEETING

Sunday, December 10th

St. Gilbert Catholic Church

Grayslake, Illinois 60030

5:30 p.m. Traditions Meeting

6:00 p.m. Hybrid Meeting

C.C. CONTENT DEADLINE

Monday, December 4th

Any A.A. member may contribute.

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DISTRICT 10
ANSWERING SERVICE
877-893-1212
NEEDS MORE VOLUNTEERS!

Reach out to Felicia J. or James M.

**"I AM RESPONSIBLE,
WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE
REACHES OUT FOR HELP,
I WANT THE HAND OF A.A. ALWAYS
TO BE THERE. AND FOR THAT:
I AM RESPONSIBLE."**

Life is Unmanageable.

Sometimes, in my alcoholism, I forget that I am personally responsible for my recovery, that "it is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us"

(Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg. 90). I could offer an entire laundry list of circumstances in my life that would "prove" it isn't my responsibility that I am disturbed; the kids are too noisy, people ignore me, my employer is malicious, people don't return my phone calls, people judge me, or my sponsor gives me some feedback I don't feel is warranted, etc. I didn't cause these incidents, right? It seems normal to be disturbed by these events –I'll be frustrated or angry for a while, maybe pout about it, and then probably take some kind of action to fix things to my satisfaction, generally having to do with modifying other people's behavior –then it's back to happy, joyous and free, right? It is pretty clear to me that I can't live long under the obsession of that kind of thinking. As further injustices occur, I cannot seem to shake them off and, insidiously, I begin to act as if I am the victim of all those that are "opposed" to me. I will then drink. Because I genuinely do not want to drink, I believe the two things my sponsor has told me from the first day of our relationship; 1) "It's an inside job," and 2) "There is a solution, and it's spiritual." These statements make it perfectly clear that when I am disturbed, something is going on inside of me, and that I am responsible for what is going on inside of me. Further, the solution is spiritual, and it is a spiritual axiom that I am responsible. There is no surprise, then, that Bill W. and Dr. Bob listed our twelve steps such that we first admit defeat and surrender, that we then develop a hope that a Higher Power could restore our sanity, and that we invite that Higher Power of our understanding – God for me – into our lives. Through this process I've been guided to a life that includes prayer and meditation. Prayer and meditation, combined with sponsorship and active participation in the fellowship of A.A. is my conscious contact with God. Here it makes perfect sense to me that when I am disturbed, it is a spiritual axiom that there is something wrong with me, that I am responsible.

The experience I want to share, though, is **what am I to do when my prayer life doesn't yield the results it once did?** What am I to do, given that the solution is spiritual, when I am left frustrated after prayer and meditation –feeling as though I no longer have the conscious contact with God and no amount of will power fixes it? I then easily become frustrated or angry with the fellowship – "What is it with you people?" – the burdens of life begin to mount and I have no spiritual recourse as even that isn't working for me. God is everything, and therefore is still there for me.

This is truly the alcoholic dilemma. No God in my life and seemingly no way to get one back in my life. Time to drink. This is precisely the dilemma that I manufactured for myself on a daily basis in my active alcoholism –essentially, I had no choices, clearly I had to act the way I acted. The solution to (or recovery from) this dilemma, though, seems paradoxical to me, as it may to you as well. I have to accept that my Higher Power is either everything or nothing. A Higher Power that is nothing isn't a Higher Power and won't work for me. A Higher Power that is somewhere in between seems unreliable and won't work for me either. So, I believe that my Higher Power, God, is everything. If God is everything, then I am back to the original statement of: it is a spiritual axiom that when I am disturbed, no matter what the cause, then there is something wrong with me. If my disturbance is caused by no

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relief in prayer and meditation, a continuous frustration due to a lack of a conscious contact – then something is wrong with me; God is everything, and therefore is still there for me.

My experience has been that when I go to prayer and meditation with a plan in mind, and get off of my knees thinking, “I sure hope God works this situation out to my benefit,” I will not experience relief from fear. In fact, I will obsessively monitor the situation to ensure that my Higher Power is headed in the right direction, and perhaps even give him a helping hand. My solution then is to manage God. When I manage God, I have high expectations of getting what I want, of situations being resolved such that my dignity and pride are unscathed, that I’m entitled to have things work out to my favor. Expectations and entitlement were how I thought and acted in active alcoholism, but now that I’m not drinking and practice prayer and meditation –somehow having spiritual expectations and entitlements is different. This is not true –it is precisely my alcoholism.

My strength and hope arise from the example of the fellowship and the guidance of the twelve steps. When I open my eyes to our lives restored to sanity, it is clear that God is acting. When I admit in my heart that my life is unmanageable, I understand that I cannot manage God. Through talking with my sponsor, by being active in the fellowship, and by realizing through these actions that it is not all about me, I can conclude my periods of prayer and meditation with, “Thy will, not mine, be done.” When my spiritual life becomes arid, I am responsible; and, as with all alcoholic behavior, I must surrender my will to spiritually experience relief from that obsessive fear.

*Anonymous,
Conscious Contact Mar 2010. Rpt. Nov/Dec 2023*

Where's the Sobriety?

I love A.A. and all of the different activities and service work that are a vital part of the A.A. program. My wife Jenny and I have been blessed by being able to partake in many A.A. and Alanon functions. Some of our favorite moments have been the countdowns which recognize various members’ years of sobriety. Back when I was a newcomer, I needed to be at those meetings to see and hear living proof that, I too, had a chance to receive the gift of sobriety, one day at a time, if I really wanted it.

But over the last few years I’ve noticed that there seems to be something missing. This past winter we were in a room with over three hundred A.A.s, and when the countdown got to six years, only a good friend and I stood up. For some reason, the period from three to fifteen years seems to be void of a significant amount of active sobriety, and I must say that this disturbs me. Maybe it’s been this way for years. I realize I cannot change it, but do I not have an obligation to “give back” to this lifesaving program that changed my life? An obligation to be there...to show up?

I thank God for those who were there for me when I crawled into my first meetings, even though I cared little at that time for what they had to say to me. Over time however, their smiles, laughter, guidance and support gave me the motivation and incentive to keep trying so I could one day receive the same miracles I saw in their lives.

Our responsibility statement - to carry the message and freely give to others what was given to us - means very much to me and I take it very seriously. Yes, it’s a serious commitment to be active in the program. You may wonder, “what do I gain by continuing to move in the right direction and help others?” I receive the joy and satisfaction of watching others grow and thrive in our legacy of unity, fellowship, recovery and service.

I have seen many recover and “get well” in this program and then forget how they actually got there. Some are dry, some are drunk, and quite a few actually tell me they’re just “too busy now” to attend meetings anymore. An example of this is found in a particular gentleman I know who achieved the twenty-one-year milestone last Fall. I broke down and got him a coin, even though the old Rick wanted to tell him to get a home group and maybe he could get one there!

So where am I going with this, besides bitching about something that I know I have no control over? First and foremost, I hope I never forget the grace that was bestowed upon me through the power of this program and my Higher Power. I also have to constantly remember how important it is to get outside of myself and give to receive. Today, I can make a difference and still maintain a healthy balance between my work, family and A.A. life.

Maybe I’ll just call on some folks I haven’t seen or talked to in a while.

*-Rick S.,
Conscious Contact May 2003. Rpt in Nov/Dec 2023*

STEP 11

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

TRADITION 11

Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.

STEP 12

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

TRADITION 12

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

I Will Take You to a Meeting Tomorrow

I somehow knew to dial “0” and ask for A.A. A lady called me, talked to me for a while about the program, asked me if I could not drink the next day and said, “I will take you to a meeting tomorrow.” She never showed up. I said to myself, “screw A.A.” and kept drinking. That window of opportunity slammed shut.

About a year and a half - and so much damage - later, that window opened back up a crack. I was getting sick and tired of being sick and tired. The local Penny Pincher (tiny, small-town newspaper) that came in the mail always listed the A.A. meeting on Friday at 8:00 p.m. in town and I decided to go. I knew I was where I was supposed to be.

Most of us come to A.A. through one of our Service Committees that help spread our message. PI (Public Information), CPC (Cooperation with the Professional Community), Corrections, Treatment, Literature, Accessibilities or Archives. There are recovering alcoholics that sit on these committees; some are professionals, some are newly sober, some are egomaniacs, some just want to help, some are there because their sponsors made them, some are grateful to be sober, some need something to do...there are all kinds. We need them all! Someone sitting on the PI committee put that ad in the little newspaper. Someone sitting on the Answering Service took my 12-step call, now...she didn't follow through but that's part of my story.

When I finally did get sober and stay sober, I realized I didn't want anyone to sit on the front steps of their house with the desire to stop drinking waiting for a miracle, just to walk back in her house an hour later with their head down and pour themselves a drink. Now, I have no idea what happened to that 12-stepping girl, maybe she got hit by a car, maybe someone pushed her into service too early, maybe that district didn't have answering service workshops, or she didn't have a sponsor, maybe I wasn't supposed to get sober then, who knows! What I do know is that I decided to do whatever I could, not complain and do something.

I signed up for our district answering service. District 22 had an awesome Answering Service Chair and he held great workshops. We all left with great ideas, a sense of what to do, and a folder.

I took girls with me who loved going on 12-Step calls and girls who hated it. Some people have to wait for someone to stay sober to fall in love with the work. My first 12-Step call was on a hearing-impaired woman. For some people that might have stopped them cold on the service. She really touched my heart and because of her I got involved in and chaired our area's first Special Needs Committee (now Accessibilities). I 12-Stepped that lady two times and she finally got sober about 20 years later. We all know we just plant the seed so that when they are ready, they come back.

In my last year of drinking, I cut a deal for a felony of mine and didn't have to go prison. Most people have heard the phrase “You're doing my time,” well that is how I felt. I served my 20 years taking meetings into prisons mostly every other week, rotating with others. Three times I went out of

state to women's prisons for weekend 12-Step workshops. It was awesome! We went through all twelve steps in a weekend! I put a lot of miles on my car, but I had a car by then and gas money.

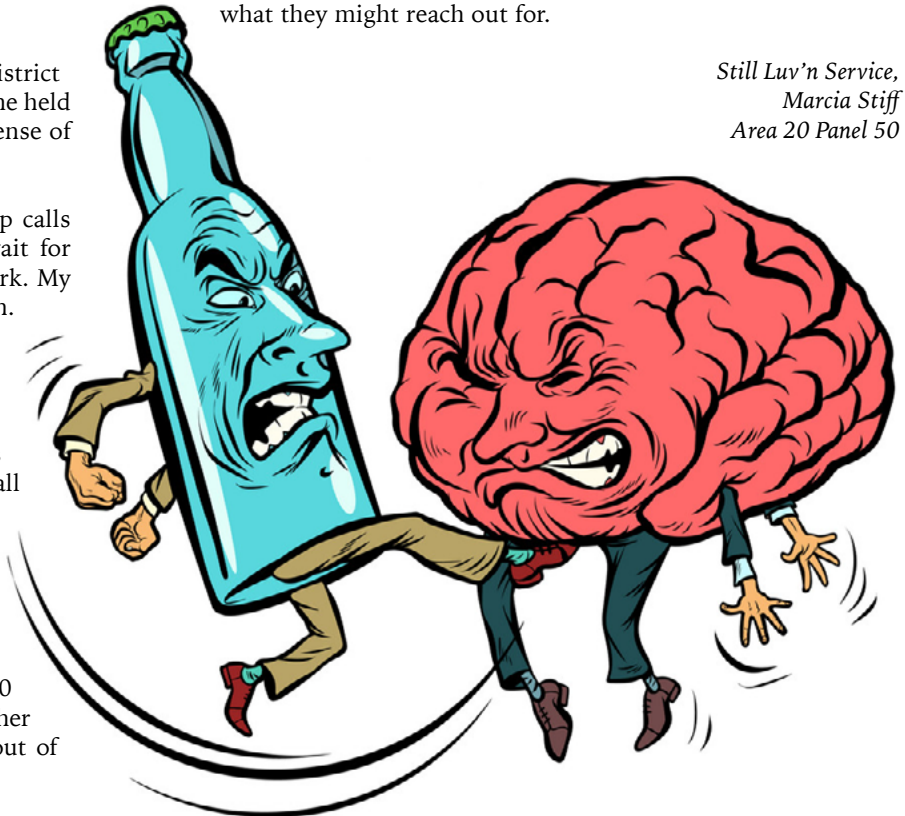
Early on, my sponsor took me to my first district meeting and asked what I might like to work towards. I wanted to be DCM. She said I could, but I would have to hold some positions first! She took me to an area assembly and asked that same question and I chose Delegate. She told me I could do whatever I wanted, I just had to serve the committees below first. She was very supportive and encouraging. I did all of that and my life and sobriety were enriched because of it.

I stayed in service for many reasons. It gave me a sense of worth. I lost my kids and I had a big hole in my heart. I had to stay busy or I was going to drink. And, it was fun - I like people! I have held a lot of service positions, but I was honored to serve as your Delegate in 2000 & 2001 and it was my favorite position of all time.

If you have any desire to do service work, do it. Show up at your group's business meeting, your district's monthly meeting, an area assembly, a regional forum or any workshop. Go to a conference and attend the service committee workshops or panels; see what pulls at your heart. Check the area's website (aa-nia.org) and look at other district events. A.A. does not run itself; the fellowship is awesome, and we need you.

Service really did save my life and I am always willing to reach my hand out to the still suffering alcoholic. If I don't, who knows what they might reach out for.

*Still Luv'n Service,
Marcia Stiff
Area 20 Panel 50*



events

BIG BOOK CONFERENCE 2023: A DAILY REPRIEVE

hosted by NIA 20 District 61

Saturday, November 4th

Doors at 8:00 a.m.

Lord of Life Church

40W605 IL-38

Elburn, IL 60119

Morning Speaker: David C., Palatine

Afternoon Speaker: Tina H., Waukesha

Lunch available for purchase for \$15.

Vegetarian option available.

Must be pre-ordered by 10/25

Register today: www.aa-nia.org/bigbookconference

More info & volunteer opportunities:

bigbook11.2023@gmail.com

9:00 a.m. - 3:15 p.m.

Admission: \$15.00

EAST CENTRAL REGIONAL FORUM

November 17-19th Friday 6:00 p.m. - Sunday 12:00 p.m.

Last day to book rooms:

November 3rd

The Doubletree by Hilton

6200 Quarry Lane

Independence, OH 44131

Registration is FREE at www.aa.org

("Inside A.A." tab → 'Regional & Local Forums',

registration at bottom of page)

or

[https://na.eventscloud.com/ereg/](https://na.eventscloud.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=757215&language=eng)

[index.php?eventid=757215&language=eng](https://na.eventscloud.com/ereg/index.php?eventid=757215&language=eng)

34TH ANNUAL MCHENRY SOBERFEST

November 17-19th

Grand Geneva Resort

7036 Grand Geneva Way

Lake Geneva, WI 53147

Details and registration: www.soberfest.org

LEGACY OF SERVICE: CONCEPTS STUDY

hosted by NIA 20 District 11

3rd Thursday of every month 7:30 p.m. via **Zoom**

Meeting ID: 970 0499 1067

Passcode: 639187

Contact dcm@aa-nia-dist11.org with any questions

VIRTUAL CORRECTIONS WORKSHOP

hosted by Area 20

3rd Wednesday of every month via **Zoom**

Meeting ID: 823 2846 9162

Passcode: 061035

CORRECTIONS MEETINGS ARE HAPPENING AT LAKE COUNTY JAIL!

NEED VOLUNTEERS!

Monday & Thursday

7:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Documents are live &

downloadable via the link at:

[https://district10nia.org/](https://district10nia.org/committees/corrections-committee/)

[committees/](https://district10nia.org/committees/corrections-committee/)

[corrections-committee/](https://district10nia.org/committees/corrections-committee/)



contacts & Info

2023 - 2024 DISTRICT 10 OFFICERS CONFIDENTIAL - INFORMATION IS FOR A.A. USE ONLY. ALL A.A. MEMBERS ARE WELCOME AT DISTRICT 10 MEETINGS.

POSITION	CHAIR	PHONE	EMAIL	ALT	PHONE	EMAIL
DCM	Lorrie F.		dcm@district10nia.org	Dawn. O		dcmalt@district10nia.org
Secretary	Dawn Rene' W.		secretary@district10nia.org	OPEN		secretaryalt@district10nia.org
Treasurer	Eric W.		treasurerchair@district10nia.org	OPEN		
Accessibilities	John C.		accessabilites@district10nia.org	Rachel M.		rmechnic@gmail.com
Answering Service	Felicia J.		answeringservice@district10nia.org	James M.		
Archives	Dean D.		archives@district10nia.org	Sean M.		
Bridging the Gap	Jeff S.		btgchair@district10nia.org	Zoya M.		btgalt@district10nia.org
Corrections	Ted S.		corrections@district10nia.org			
C.P.C.	OPEN		cpcchair@district10nia.org	OPEN		
Directory	Brian B.		directory@district10nia.org	OPEN		
Events	Cindy C.		events@distirct10nia.org	OPEN		
Grapevine	OPEN		grapevine@district10nia.org	OPEN		
GSR Contact	Karl M.		gsrchair@district10nia.org	Robert B.		
Literature	Jeff C.		literature@district10nia.org	OPEN		
Newsletter	Katie D.		newsletter@district10nia.org	Paul W.		
Public Info	Robin D.		publicinformation@district10nia.org	Victoria H.		
Treatment	Gina L.		treatment@district10nia.org	Leslie D.		
Website	Mark H.		webmaster@district10nia.org	Bob L.		altwebBL@district10nia.org

OPEN = Volunteer Needed! Learn more about the positions / volunteer commitment at the upcoming District meeting, or by contacting a District committee member listed above.

SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS 1. GO TO [HTTPS://DISTRICT10NIA.ORG/](https://district10nia.org/). CLICK "DISTRICT SERVICES AND COMMITTEES", THEN "NEWSLETTER".

2. PROVIDE YOUR NAME, EMAIL OR PHONE, IN CASE WE HAVE A QUESTION. 3. TYPE/PASTE YOUR CONTENT. CLICK "SELECT". THAT'S IT!

WEBSITES WWW.DISTRICT10NIA.ORG WWW.AA-NIA.ORG WWW.AA.ORG WWW.AAGRAPEVINE.ORG DISTRICT 10 P.O. BOX 854 LIBERTYVILLE, IL 60048

NORTHERN ILLINOIS AREA 20 P.O. BOX 808 STREAMWOOD, IL 60107 GENERAL SERVICE OFFICE JAMES A. FARLEY STATION P.O. BOX 2407 NEW YORK, NY 10163