

# CONSCIOUS CONTACT

INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

VOL 25 NO 11



## Seemingly Manageable... Until It Wasn't

**“WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL— THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.”**

I first admitted that I might have a problem with alcohol at my first meeting back in August 1989. The reality of my hangover that day, on my walk to a DePaul University classroom, was overwhelming.

Tom M. suggested that maybe I try another way to stay sober.

I wasn't ready to stop, but I played the role of an alcoholic nicely for my friend.

I remember being so embarrassed about attending that meeting and admitting I was an alcoholic. As I walked out of the A.A. classroom, I decided my life was manageable enough—I had a good-paying job, my wife tolerated my insanity and I was too young to start this journey of sobriety. Four years later, I was kicked out of my Chicago condo, divorce papers were filed, and I lost more money than I'd like to admit.

The first word of the first step is “We”—that allowed me to finally ask for help. My new A.A. group was a closed men's meeting in my first year, a community I never knew existed.

The word “unmanageable” took time to unpack through working the other eleven steps, one after another, with my sponsor. Who knew I'd be granted freedom by my Higher Power and relief from alcohol and all mind-altering substances?

Just remember: We are to live the first step perfectly, and our lives will continue to grow, allowing us to share our experience, strength, and hope with the still-suffering alcoholic.

*By Jim W.*

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# Twelfth Step Talk with Eileen G. Sobriety Date: 12/26/1991

**Q: Have you had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps?  
If so, was it a lightning-bolt moment, or more of a slow dawning?**

A: Yes, I have indeed had a spiritual awakening as the result of the steps. I have had many “lightning- bolt” moments; some that just made me smile and look up, knowing that my higher power was directly involved, and some that were profound and moving. But more significantly, I have experienced the slower transformation that is described in the appendix “Spiritual Experience.” I have been changed by the steps. I am not the same person that I was when I walked through the doors.

**Q: When you first encountered step 12, what did you think it was asking of you – and how has your understanding of it changed over the years?**

A: Most discussion that I heard about step 12 when I first got to the rooms was about helping other alcoholics. I heard a lot about 12th step calls, and about how important it was to be willing to help a suffering alcoholic when he or she reaches out. So, in the beginning, I thought it was about picking people up and bringing them to meetings and being willing to talk to them on the telephone. And those things are still vital elements of 12th step work. But over the years, my understanding of step 12 has grown and includes not only being willing to do service work, but to become a steadfast member of Alcoholics Anonymous, and carry myself in such a way as to be a reflection of all that is good in Alcoholics Anonymous. In other words, practicing the principles in all my affairs, in and outside of the rooms.

**Q: When did you feel ready to start helping another alcoholic the way someone helped you?  
What was that like?**

A: It did not take long before I started to feel ready to help another alcoholic. My sponsor once suggested that I greet new women when they came into a meeting, shake their hand and introduce myself. I said to her, “Well, I’m not a friendly person.” And she said something to me that I will never forget. She said, “Well, you can be.” Imagine that! Acting differently than how I feel! Alcoholics Anonymous has often asked that of me. So much of the program goes against my nature, at least initially, so extending a hand, reaching out, and being a welcoming member of A.A. was something I had to work at. But my sponsor had me doing just that from the very beginning.

**Q: Looking back, what role has sponsoring others played in your own sobriety?  
How do you feel that lines up with what the founders had in mind?**

A: Probably the most meaningful way I’ve been able to carry the message is through sponsorship. I have had only two sponsors since I have been sober in Alcoholics

Anonymous, and those relationships have helped shape me in this program and were vital to my growth and in my understanding of the steps. And I have sponsored many women over the years – some briefly, and some for many, many years. It is a very special relationship, and something that keeps me tied to the program in a wonderful way. Meetings are great and meetings are important, but the special “something” that happens when one alcoholic talks to another is something that can’t be duplicated in any other way. The founders knew this.

They knew that helping people understand the message they were conveying in the book Alcoholics Anonymous had to be preserved, cared for and transferred to others by trusted servants. Sponsorship also links us to the past. Our sponsors have sponsors who had sponsors who had sponsors who had sponsors. So, sponsorship quite literally keeps us connected to the beginnings of this beautiful program. And if that is true, and I believe it is, sponsorship also links us to the future. Our sponsees will sponsor others who will sponsor others. I always encourage the women I sponsor to sponsor others.

**Q: Steps 12 says we practice these principles in all our affairs. What area of life – family, work, money, relationships, etc. – has been the toughest for you to consistently live the program in, and how has that changed or improved over time?**

A: Practicing the principles/steps of Alcoholics Anonymous in all my affairs has to include all areas of my life –family, work, finances, relationships, etc. What has been the toughest for me? Probably relationships. But every area of my life has improved profoundly because of the 12 steps. Quite simply, I am not the same person that I was when I first came into the rooms. I have learned to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand God, and trust that things will work out. I have learned to identify my character defects and ask my HP to remove them, and make amends quickly when I have wronged someone or acted badly. I turn my attention to someone I can help when all else fails. I can talk to my sponsor or another alcoholic when things like fear, anger or uncertainty crop up. These steps are not a one and done. I have learned to use them in all areas of my life.

**Q: Is there anything else related to step 12 that you’d like to share with our readers?**

A: I love how Step 12 is worded. It says, “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps...” That sounds like a promise to me! It doesn’t say, “If you have a spiritual awakening, carry this message to others.” It tells me that I will have a spiritual awakening – a profound change in my reaction to life – if I take these steps to the best of my ability. And yes, I have had a profound change in my reaction to life. The most significant way, is the fact that I don’t drink anymore. That was my reaction to life. I drank. And my reaction to life has changed in every other possible way as the result of these steps. *I am so grateful.*

**Publicize an upcoming District 10 Event:**  
<https://district10nia.org/publicize-an-upcoming-district-10-event/>



### **Heard something powerful at your last meeting?**

If a share hit home and could lift others too, nudge that member to send it our way!

Our newsletter thrives on the strength of your stories.

**newsletter@  
district10nia.org**

# **Navigating Sobriety During the Holidays Tips**

We are in the week before the holiday season begins. So, you may be wondering how one might navigate sobriety during a season that has all sorts of drinking, dinners and whoopee parties. A few simple ideas for dealing with family, friends, and co-workers:

- If the event or party makes you the least bit uncomfortable, leave yourself an out.
- Drive your own car.
- Tell your partner. (Be honest.)
- If there is drinking, set a time limit. Stick to it.
- Have your phone with your sponsor or an A.A. member handy. (Speed dial?)
- Join in the fun, games, gift exchanges and food.
- Bring your own drinks.
- Be a part of the season; do not hide away by yourself. We are here to enjoy life.
- Remember: there are service opportunities.
- Club Christmas parties.
- ATP, Gateway or WRS all have people who can benefit from your help and experience.
- Put up the decorations. Play the songs.
- Open your house up to the less fortunate.
- Donate. There are many ways.
- Help at your local halfway house or church.
- Spread the love of the season. Remember that there are those who need your help, so go help.
- Bring cheer and good wishes wherever you go. Be that walking Big Book.
- Do not live in the memories of the past. Create new sober memories.
- Make your meetings and keep your commitments. Live sober.

*By Kevin A.*



# The Twelve Steps

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
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.
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.

**Upcoming District Meeting: Sunday, January 25th**

St. Gilbert Catholic Church Grayslake, IL  
5:30 p.m. Traditions MTG 6:00 p.m. Hybrid MTG

**Submissions due by: Friday, January 16th**

**1.** Go to [district10nia.org](https://district10nia.org). **2.** Click "District Services and Committees", then "Newsletter". **3.** Provide name, email or phone, in case of questions. **4.** Type/Paste your content. Click "Select". That's it! Any A.A. may contribute.

**WEBSITES** [district10nia.org](https://district10nia.org) [aa.org](https://aa.org) [aa-nia.org](https://aa-nia.org) [aagrapevine.org](https://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 **AA.ORG/AA-CONTRIBUTIONS-SELF-SUPPORT**  
*Opinions expressed herein do not necessarily reflect the opinions of A.A., NIA, District 10 or Conscious Contact volunteers.*

**NEW D10 ZOOM MEETING**

ID ..... 861 1954 7045  
PW ..... DISTRICT10

# D10 Updates

**There are eight (8) open positions that need to be filled.** If you are interested in learning more about a position, please join us at the next D10 meeting.

D10 contributions from 9/24/2025 through 10/24/2025: **\$938.29 + Pink Can \$221.00**

**Corrections is looking for women volunteers** to bring meetings into Lake County Jail — see *Contacts & Info*.

**Have an event flyer to distribute?** Both [district10nia.org](https://district10nia.org) and [aa-nia.org](https://aa-nia.org) offers quick & easy submissions via their websites

**Treatment needs Grapevines and Big Books –** see *Contacts & Info*.

**Literature has newcomers packets** that can be purchased for \$2.00 – see *Contacts & Info*.

**Looking for District 10 meeting minutes?**  
Visit <https://district10nia.org/minutes/>

**Looking for delegate and/or Area 20 committee reports, updates and agendas?**  
Visit [aa-nia.org/delegate/](https://aa-nia.org/delegate/) and [aa-nia.org/agendas/](https://aa-nia.org/agendas/)

**Corrections meetings are happening at Lake County Jail. Volunteers needed!** Monday & Thursday 7:00 – 8:00 p.m. Documents are downloadable via the link at: **<https://district10nia.org/committees/corrections-committee/>**

Dear Readers,

As we wrap up another meaningful year, we are deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Conscious Contact team. It's been our honor to connect, share and support one another.

We eagerly look forward to continuing our service in 2026. Wishing you all a safe, sober and joyful holiday season filled with peace and connection.

*Your trusted servants,*  
**Paul W. (Chair) & Katie D. (Alt. Chair)**

**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.**

## Events

### SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13TH Area 20 Winter Assembly

hosted by District 43

#### LORD OF LIFE CHURCH

40W605 IL-38, Elburn, IL

Doors . . . . . 8:00 a.m.

Meeting . . . . . 9:00 a.m.

### SATURDAY, JANUARY 24TH 29th Anniversary Hinckley

#### Pork Chop Dinner

#### HINCKLEY FIRST UNITED

#### METHODIST CHURCH

801 N. Sycamore St., Hinckley, IL

Speaker . . . . . Amanda B. (Montgomery, AL)

Fellowship. . . . . 4:00 p.m.

Serving. . . . . 4:30 p.m.

Kickoff . . . . . 6:00 p.m.

Cost . . . . free event run entirely on donations

## Treatment Meetings

### Gateway – Lake Villa – Fridays

Men . . . . . 7:00-8:00 p.m.

(MUST be on list to attend)

Women . . . . . 7:00-8:00 p.m.

### ATP – Waukegan – Co-ed

Mondays & Fridays . . . . . 7:30-8:30 p.m.

Saturdays . . . . . 10:00 a.m.

### WRS – Vernon Hills – Women

Thursdays . . . . . 7:30 - 8:30 p.m.

### Treatment Monthly Workshop

#### 3RD THURSDAY OF THE MONTH AT 7:00 P.M.

Zoom ID . . . . . 994 296 7947

Password . . . . . redbook (all lowercase)

Contact Area 20 Treatment Chair

Kevin A. . bbkevin8@gmail.com, 224-201-8978

## Meeting Spotlights

### WEDNESDAYS

#### NEW! Early Light Grapevine

#### SERENITY HOUSE

1103 W. Park Ave, Libertyville

Doors . . . . . 5:30 a.m.

### TUESDAYS

#### Antioch Recovery Club

#### Open Speaker Meeting

466 W. IL Rte 173, Antioch, IL

Doors. . . . . 5:30 p.m.

Speaker (Joe P.) . . . . . 6:00 p.m.

### THIS MEETING HAS CLOSED:

#### Spiritual Kindergarten

#### TUESDAYS AT 7:00 P.M.

Grayslake

#### Miracles Did Happen

#### Virtual Meeting Group

Monday - Friday . . . . . 7:00 a.m.

Saturday & Sunday . . . . . 8:30 a.m.

## Conscious Clips

"Humility is the mother of giants. One sees great things from the valley; only small things from the peak."

-G. K. Chesterton

"Though much you recite the sacred texts, but do not act accordingly, you are negligent; what benefit are they to you? You are like a cowherd counting another's cows."

-The Buddha

"There are two kinds of people: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, 'All right, then, have it your way.'"

-C. S. Lewis

"You always own the option of having no opinion. There is never any need to get worked up or to trouble your soul about things you can't control."

- Marcus Aurelius

**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.

**Concept 12:** The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

**In Alcoholics Anonymous, nothing “comes after” Step 12 in the sense of additional numbered steps—the 12 Steps are complete at Step 12. But in practice, recovery continues. Here’s what typically comes after Step 12:**

#### 1. Living the Steps Daily (not finishing them)

Step 12 marks the beginning of a lifetime practice, not the end of the program. Most people keep working:

**Step 10 daily** (inventory)

**Step 11 daily** (prayer/meditation)

**Step 12** through service and carrying the message  
The Steps become an ongoing spiritual toolkit.

#### 2. Ongoing Service

After Step 12, many people deepen their service by:

- **Sponsoring** more people
- **Taking commitments** at meetings
- **Participating** in outreach
- **Serving** in AA groups, districts, or committees
- **Service** becomes part of sober living.

#### 3. Sponsoring Others Through the Steps

**Most people who reach Step 12 begin helping others through the Steps.** This is a vital part of maintaining long-term sobriety.

#### 4. Continuing Spiritual Growth

You continue practicing spiritual principles - the steps. There’s no “graduation”—just growth.

#### 5. Building a Sober Life

Many find that Step 12 leads to:

- **better** relationships
- **more stable** emotions
- **renewed** purpose
- **a sense** of usefulness
- **deeper connection** with others & with their Higher Power

**After Step 12 comes living the program one day at a time. There are no more numbered steps—there is just continued recovery, service, spiritual growth, and helping the next alcoholic.**

**Step 1:** We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.

**Tradition 1:** Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

**Concept 1:** Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.

**Step 1 is about honest self-recognition. It asks a person to acknowledge two connected realities:**

#### Powerlessness over alcohol –

This doesn’t mean weakness or failure. It means recognizing that once alcohol enters the picture, it triggers a cycle a person can’t reliably control. Willpower, promises, or intentions haven’t been enough to change the pattern.

#### Unmanageability –

This refers to the impact alcohol has had on one’s life: relationships strained, work affected, health declining, legal or financial trouble, emotional turmoil, or simply feeling out of control internally. “Unmanageable” can be dramatic or subtle — it’s whatever shows that alcohol is running the show, not the person.

#### Why Step 1 matters:

Step 1 is considered the foundation of recovery because nothing can change until reality is accepted. It shifts the mindset from “I can fix this myself” to “I need help”—from denial to clarity. It’s not about shame; it’s about relief, honesty, and beginning a new direction.

#### What Step 1 isn’t:

- **It’s not saying a person is powerless in all areas of life.**
- **It’s not saying they’re flawed or hopeless.**
- **It’s not a moral judgment.**

It’s a focused admission: When it comes to alcohol, trying to control it hasn’t worked, and the consequences show it.

#### How someone knows they’re at Step 1:

**People often reach Step 1 after repeating the same cycle—swearing off, trying limits, hiding drinking, feeling guilt, making excuses, or facing consequences—and seeing it still doesn’t change.**

**Step 1 clicks when a person says: “I can’t win this battle alone.”**

