

CONSCIOUS CONTACT

INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

VOL 25 NO 5



Unraveling a Lifelong Habit

This could be my biggest character defect: isolation. The pushing away from society's table. Here's a perfectly ordinary example: the other day at work, I was hungry, and the building's downstairs cafe was closed. A coworker suggested a small convenience store tucked away in an alcove on the first floor that sells drinks and snacks. It's just around the corner from the front desk. "I didn't even know that existed!" I said. "Huh. Thanks for telling me. I will definitely check that out."

I have never checked that out. Probably never will. That's for the other people who work in the building.

Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

What's that about? I'm also among the last to arrive at a retirement luncheon being held in the kitchen. If it starts at noon, I'll leave the building around 11:30, come back an hour later, walk through the empty office to my desk, check email, and then go grab a plate while others are finishing.

When isolation isn't possible, run with avoidance. Same thing happens with family and friends. Shouldn't my guts understand the difference between attending a two-hour performance review with my supervisor and hanging out at a lifelong buddy's house, cooking up burgers in the sun? Seems simple enough: one's stressful, the other's not. In fact, one of those is the opposite of stressful.

Well, tell that to my alcoholism. Because all the same fears, inadequacies and self-loathing get triggered before each. All events were cause for preemptive fortification: the good and the bad.

Which, think about it, has nothing to do with my alcoholism. Perceiving everything a fear goes back to kindergarten. Booze only showed up later, and was able to make the bad situations seem tolerable, and then convinced me that the same approach should be used on the fun stuff. Then it became habit, followed by all I knew, even when I knew it was destroying me.

It's like that nightmare scenario of being awake for the operation. I am walking quietly among you, screaming at the top of my lungs, head on fire, breathing in and out, smiling and nodding, until it's isolation time again. And the isolation time kept stretching.

What it's like now: The need for alone time still exists. Meditation, reading, watching the game, kicking around in the garage: all fine activities. But it can't be isolation, because isolation comes with resentments, worst-case scenarios, and behind-my-back plottings that I must always be vigilant of. In short, my isolation is when I give my disease its fair say.

Today: Truly know that there's nothing fair about it. Therefore, avoid times of isolation at all costs.

- Paul W.

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Voices in Response: Reflecting on “The Spirit of the Rooms: A Not-So-Gentle Reminder to Keep It Respectful”

“...The more I focus my mind on its defects – late start, long drunkalogs, cigarette smoke – the worse the meeting becomes. But when I try to see what I can add to the meeting, rather than what I can get out of it, and when I focus my mind on what’s good about it, rather than what’s wrong with it, the meeting keeps getting better and better. When I focus on what’s good today, I have a good day, and when I focus on what’s bad, I have a bad day. If I focus on a problem the problem increases; if I focus on the answer, the answer increases.” – “Acceptance Was the Answer,” Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th ed., Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 2001, p. 419.

To the Anonymous Writer of last month's article, "The Spirit of the Rooms,"

I'd like to thank you for pointing out what should be relatively normal etiquette in our meeting rooms.

What I'd like to address is the tone of your article. Even when there have been disruptions during meetings, I've always felt a sense of community and security. Your tone felt aggressive and scolding. It also seemed like the issues you mentioned were happening consistently in meetings you attend. Why not address them in the specific meeting? Why not talk to the meeting's GSR to make an announcement at the beginning of the meeting, asking for awareness and courtesy toward those around you? Often, public, generalized requests like yours do not reach the intended audience because they are unaware of their behavior. Sometimes, a more direct approach is necessary. I know at some of the 5:30 meetings at Serenity House, we have had to pause the meetings and ask people on Zoom to mute their mics because they were disruptive. We've also had to ask people to put their phones away because they were recording the meeting or engaging in other interruptive behavior. The issue stops immediately, and we move on as a group.

By posting an article chastising people for multiple instances of bad behavior and doing so anonymously, it feels very yucky. Many of us are coming into these rooms and joining a social group as sober individuals for the first time. Some of us are scared, nervous, overly chatty, unsure of what to do or how to act, or trying to find ourselves—the list goes on. We are not perfect; this is a program of progress, not perfection.

I feel we all deserve a bit of grace, compassion, and kindness. If there is truly an issue, address it directly in the spirit of A.A., and I bet things will improve quickly.

My name is Jane B., and I am an alcoholic.

Dear Anonymous,

I was asked to write a response to your article because I mentioned my thoughts on it to one of the Conscious Contact committee members so here it goes.

It was hilarious and on point! I've been attending A.A. meetings for a while, and I'll say that I've been the guy who sneaks in late with a creaky chair, gets up too many times, or even finishes up text conversations when I should be listening. And that's why your article had me nodding along. The “latecomer shuffle” and that “coffee-stirring symphony” part? You nailed those meeting moments perfectly. We've all seen it (and worse too).

Your tips for keeping things respectful are helpful, especially for newbies who might not know what's up yet but also for us more seasoned members too who just need a kick in the behind. A lot of us come into our first meetings completely lost, not even realizing or aware of these types of things. Stuff like keeping shares quick, not interrupting, and saving the spicy stories for our sponsor is good advice. I've personally shared things in meetings that should have been shared with someone who could actually help me with outside issues. Here we can only help with alcoholism. Sometimes there are exceptions and times when it makes sense, but doing your full 5th step sex inventory during a meeting is too much.

“This isn't Tinder” and “A.A. doesn't run on hugs alone” had me laughing. Thanks for the friendly elbow nudge...which made me take a look at myself.

From one anon to another

Heard something powerful at your last meeting?
Our newsletter thrives on the strength of your stories.
newsletter@district10nia.org

Step 6 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Tradition 6 An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

Concept 6 The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.

Events

SATURDAY, JUNE 21ST

Summer Assembly/Post-GSR Panel 75

Delegate Report *hosted by D21*

IMMANUEL LUTHERAN CHURCH

200 N. Plum Grove Road, Palatine

Fellowship (and doughnuts) 8:00 a.m.

Meeting 9:00 a.m.

SATURDAY, AUGUST 16TH

Summer Picnic *hosted by D10*

HALF DAY FOREST PRESERVE, SHELTER C

24255 IL-21, Vernon Hills, IL

Time. 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Speaker 1:00 p.m.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 17TH

Summer Extravaganza (Open)

hosted by Serenity House

SERENITY HOUSE

1103 W. Park Avenue, Libertyville, IL

Time. 12:00 to 3:00 p.m.

DJ, karaoke, gift basket auction

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 7TH

Antioch Recovery Club Annual Picnic

466 W. IL Rte 173, Antioch, IL

Time. 12:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Bake Sale 12:00 p.m.

Questions Justic C. (224) 258-8484

secretary@antiochrecovery.club

Food, music & games! Family friendly!

Meeting Spotlights

**MONDAYS AT 7:30 P.M. . ROUND LAKE ALANO CLUB
NEW Spanish Speaking Meeting**

**SATURDAYS, 7:30 P.M. CHRIST LUTHERAN CHURCH
Vernon Hills Open Speaker Meeting**

Meeting has low attendance & needs support

Saturday, June 14

Open Speaker Meetings

ANTIOCH RECOVERY CLUB

466 W. IL Rte 173, Antioch, IL 60002

Speaker Kris M.

Potluck. 7:00 p.m. (bring a dessert or snack!)

Bonfire Meetings

Antioch Recovery Club

466 W. IL Rte 173, Antioch, IL Bring a chair!

Time. 8:00 p.m.

June 21st Sean, Big Tex (Des Plaines)

July 19th Frank, E.T. (Joliet)

August 16th Paulette (McHenry)

September 20th Brian (Round Lake)

October 18th Guest Speaker

Where Art Thou

She still visits me at night when I'm lost in my dreams.
Subtle winds carry hints of her faint phantom screams.
There's remnant behaviors of who she used to be,
when memories of the past remind me of me.
The me that perceived all life fit unfair.
A hand me down path laced with despair.
An inherent content with going nowhere.
Oh Father where art thou,
Can Lord hear my prayer?

I can still feel her struggle to emerge from inside.
A restless restraint, at times, hard to hide.
Forgive me for leaving her side that day.
But accept the new, she need not stay.
Forget all the troubles. Dismiss all the fears.
Let loose of the reins. I'll take it from here.
Yet, I still sense her grieving. I still feel her stare.
The old me's still breathing. The old me's still there.
Oh Father where art thou,
Can Lord hear my prayer?

The marks from her nails have started to fade.
All of them scars from mistakes that we made.
Her demons still dance in my dark every night.
She waters the candle. She dampens the light.
But I honor her memory. Admire her might.
She did what I couldn't...withstood the fight.
Though her work here is done she still will not leave
I'm done with this past. But it's hard to conceive.
Now I kiss her goodbye when she visits my dreams.
I cover my ears to silence her screams.
Two versions of me in this body we share
Oh Father where art thou,
Can Lord hear our prayer?

By Lisa Marie Duhig

Treatment Meetings

Gateway - Lake Villa - Fridays

MEN @ 7:00-8:00 P.M. (MUST BE ON LIST TO ATTEND)

WOMEN @ 7:00-8:30 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 / PW 994 296 7947 / redbook (all lowercase)

Contact Area 20 Treatment Chair

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

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.

NEXT DISTRICT MEETING SUNDAY, JUNE 22ND

St. Gilbert Catholic Church Grayslake, IL

5:30 p.m. Traditions MTG 6:00 p.m. Hybrid MTG

CONTENT DEADLINE FRIDAY, JUNE 13TH

1. Go to 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 aa.org aa-nia.org 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.

D10 Updates

There are ten (10) 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 3/23/25 to 4/27/25

(less Paypal fees). **\$379.81**

2025 Fall Breakfast will be held Oct. 19th – more information to follow.

La Vina is struggling. A group from ARC voted to **purchase La Vina subscriptions** to be gifted to a church or other organization.

GSR Evangelism continues! Brian C. is working diligently to increase GSR representation within our district. Volunteers signed up to bring the message to groups without GSRs.

C.P.C. & P.I. are looking for volunteers to deliver packets to those within the professional community – contact information on page 4.

Know of any upcoming mental health fairs or events? Reach out to the P.I. committee so they can procure a booth – contact info on page 4.

Treatment Committee needs Grapevines and Big Books – contact info on page 4.

Meeting requests are down at Lake County Jail due to the **jail being at 50% capacity.**

Bridging the Gap has connected a newcomer with an A.A. member!

Corrections committee is asking that **any donations being made to D10 for corrections literature** be noted with your donation so the funds can be properly allocated.

Literature has newcomers packets can for \$2.00 – contact information on page 4.

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/ and aa-nia.org/agendas/**

NEW D10 ZOOM MEETING
ID. 861 1954 7045
PW. DISTRICT10

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.

We regret an error in the poem "I Have Peace. One Day at a Time" by Anonymous, published in our last newsletter, where a few words were mistakenly added. *The corrected version is available at <https://district10nia.org/newsletter/>.* We apologize for any confusion.