

CONSCIOUS CONTACT

INFORMATION AND INSPIRATION

VOL 26 NO 7

What is the Difference? Double Tap!

“We are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful.”

(Alcoholics Anonymous, 1939, pg. 17).

When I read this, I can see it for myself within the meetings I regularly attend. Men and women who, although they drank as I have, I would not have been friends with during my drinking career. This is not to say it was because I did not like them, but more that I was selfish—and why would I need them? Why would our paths cross and I say, “Let’s be friends,” outside of, “Are you going to buy me a drink?” I had my drinking partners, and even they became strangers.

I’ve been in A.A. since 2008—or, more accurately, A.A. was introduced to me then, and the seed was planted. Yet, I poured the water back into the bucket rather than onto the grass where the seed lay. I can recall at my third closed outside meeting of A.A., I yelled out to the group, “I’m nothing like you people; I’m going to college!” at the age of 18, while already being a super senior because of my use of alcohol, not knowing how wrong I was. I was young and dumb, or more accurately, a young alcoholic blinded by false pride, and the seed had no chance to grow at that point in my life. Yet, as time went on, the desire to change grew. On May 24th, 2026, the plant of God sprouted because today I am fully aware that “There is a solution.”



“We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past. Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the spirit of the Universe” (*Alcoholics Anonymous, 1939, pg. 75*).

This time around, I acted quickly. My sobriety date is May 24th, 2026, and I completed my 5th step with my sponsor on June 17th, 2026. On this day, it was raining, as though God was letting me know it’s okay to cry. I had so much buried inside. The weight of my own world, plus the weight of the world I carried for others, was released. It all came crashing down with my sponsor as my guide, and he let me know it was okay now to let it all go and not be ashamed.

Some things I carried, I found out I had no part in, for I was just a child. For many other things I did have a part in, it was my duty to take ownership and then let God do the rest. Now, this does not mean God is my scapegoat; for me, there is no getting out of my past mistakes until I keep working the steps. Yet, I learned I cannot live with this weight on my shoulders if I am to be of use to others through service and live a life worth living. I know today I must start each day with the God of my understanding, knowing in my heart of hearts that God has my back.

Faith without trust is why I always went back to drinking. I said the things that I’d never say, looking down at the table in FEAR, yet trusting God and my sponsor to guide me to a point where I could look up again as a new MAN, a better MAN, a MAN free from his drunken mistakes.

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“Step Six – Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 1953, pg. 63*).

“This is the step that separates the men and the boys” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 1953, pg. 63*).

Question: Why do they state this in the beginning? I found the answers as to why this is said within the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

“That any person capable of enough willingness and honesty to try repeatedly step six on all his faults – without any reservations whatever – has indeed come a long way spiritually, and is therefore entitled to be called a man who is sincerely trying to grow in the image and likeness of his own creator” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 1953, pg. 63*).

“So, the difference between the boys and the men is the difference between striving for a self-determined objective and for the perfect objective which is of God” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 1953, pg. 68*).

And so, the question I have heard so many times—even asking this same question myself—has been answered on two different occasions. For me, my sponsor says I should watch out for the words “entitled to be called a man,” as I have had a misconception of what it means to be a man for so many years. I’ve come to the realization that I must take my hands off the wheel of life and ALLOW, not just LET, God to take control. When I allow God to take control, I am trusting God—not just hoping for the best, but prepared to live with any outcome that comes my way. Also, in doing so, I know that when I get angry, lustful, selfish, or scared, I must pause, pray, and proceed as God guides me.

“Step Seven – Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 1953, pg 70*).

“Indeed, the attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of each of A.A.’s Twelve Steps” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 1953, pg. 70*).

“The seventh step is where we make the change in our attitude which permits us, with humility as our guide, to move out from ourselves towards others and toward God. The whole emphasis of step seven is on humility” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, 1953, pg. 76*).

How many of us, including myself, had a misunderstanding of what humility truly meant? At first, it was more of “I am humiliated” in the sense of shame and embarrassment. Why would I want that? Well, that is not the case being made here. Now I can see the difference. This is the virtue of having a modest and accurate view of one’s own importance—thinking less of myself and more of God and others.

Please do not misunderstand the part about thinking less of myself. I have learned that I must love myself first, because you cannot give away what you don’t have. This is meant to mean I no longer place my value in life above anyone else, especially God, which I had done countless times. With this, I have come to understand that growth does not erase consequences, but growth still matters, and it is here that I grow closer to my Higher Power: God.

So, what is the difference today? The difference is that I understand today is all I have. Today I wake up and say, “What’s up, God?” to get out of my head and aligned with my Higher Power. Today when I am anxious, I no longer fantasize about violence, which was a familiar frame of mind for me and would distract me from whatever it was I was worried about. Instead, now I Golden Key life and say, “God is love. God is with me.”

Today when I feel the unbearableness of life and drinking comes to mind, I pick up the phone and call a member of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, and not a man or woman still deep in their addiction. Today I pray before bed for those I once held resentments towards, and those I still may hold a resentment towards, until it disappears. Today I show up for God and my fellows in A.A. meetings and share from the heart. Today I know I must take it one day at a time, starting each day with God and ending each day with God. I tap my finger twice as I say TO-DAY, because the old Chandler is dead and TO-Day we live with God!

- Chandler W.

Step 8:

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Tradition 8:

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

Concept 8:

The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of over-all policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.

Events

AUGUST 8TH

Spiritual Growth Through the A.A. Traditions ANTIOCH RECOVERY CLUB

466 IL St. Rte. 173, Antioch, IL

When..... 11:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Speakers, panels including past delegates of Area 20,
attendee participation, fellowship & refreshments

AUGUST 9TH

2026 District 10 Summer Picnic

HALF DAY FOREST PRESERVE, SHELTER C

24255 IL-21, Vernon Hills, IL

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

AUGUST 16TH

Round Lake Area Alano Club Picnic

CABOOSE PARK

37908 N. Fairfield Road, Lake Villa, IL

When..... 12:00-4:00 p.m.

Burgers, hotdogs, raffles, live music

AUGUST 21ST-23RD

2026 Illinois State Conference Humility in Action

hosted by Area 19

DOUBLETREE OAK BROOK

1909 Spring Road, Oak Brook, IL

Registration & hotel booking.... chicagoaa.org/isc2026/

Questions (Dawn)..... ISC@chicagoaa.org



SEPTEMBER 13TH

ARC Summer Picnic

ANTIOCH RECOVERY CLUB

466 IL St. Rte. 173, Antioch, IL

When..... 1:00-4:00 p.m.

Fun, food & fellowship in the sun!

Please bring a dish to pass

SEPTEMBER 18-20TH

Keys for Serenity - 9th Annual Roundup

DOUBLETREE BY HILTON

3990 S. Roosevelt Blvd., Key West, FL

Information &

Registration..... <https://www.keysforserenity.com/>



OCTOBER 17TH

Area 20 2026 Big Book Conference

MESSIAH LUTHERAN CHURCH - "FAITH" ENTRANCE #3

25225 W. Ivanhoe Road, Wauconda, IL

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

Speakers & panels..... 9:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Meeting Spotlights

WEDNESDAYS, 5:30 A.M.

Early Light Meeting

SERENITY HOUSE

1103 W. PARK AVENUE, LIBERTYVILLE, IL

AUGUST 8TH, SEPT. 12TH, OCT. 10TH

Bonfire Speaker Meetings

ANTIOCH RECOVERY CLUB

466 W. IL Rte 173, Antioch, IL

Fire..... 6:30 p.m.

Speakers..... 7:00 p.m.

Ice cream social! Bring a chair!

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.

ID..... 994 296 7947

Password..... redbook (all lowercase)

Contact Area 20 Treatment Chair

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

The Glum Lot

*I thought spiritual awakening would be more like
yoga, and less like crying on the floor.*

I turned it over... then gave unsolicited feedback.

My character defects took a vacation. Now they're
back with souvenirs.

Conscious Clips

Keep looking up... that's the secret of life.

- Charlie Brown

*One person can make a difference,
and everyone should try.*

- John F. Kennedy

*Mix a little foolishness with your serious plans.
It is lovely to be silly at the right moment.*

- Horace

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, August 23rd

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

Submissions due: Friday, August 14th

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 7th Traditions Contributions

Payable to: NIA Ltd. P.O. Box 95174 Palatine, IL 60095

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 seven (7) 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.

Looking to serve on the D10 committee? Information on duties and responsibilities for committees can be found here: district10nia.org/committees/

D10 contributions from 5/21/26 to 6/19/26: **\$488.57; Pink can: \$209.00**

Newcomer packets are available for **\$3.00/each** – contact the Literature committee

Looking for D10 meeting minutes?
Visit <https://district10nia.org/minutes/>

Looking for delegate and/or Area 20 committee reports, updates & agendas?
Visit aa-nia.org/delegate/ and 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/>

Conscious Contact needs submissions - quotes, jokes, art, articles, etc. Submit via the district website or newsletter@district10nia.org

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.

Detox Facility Available

Gateway Foundation in Lake Villa

Admission hours:

Mon-Fri 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Sat. 8:00 a.m.-4:30 p.m.

For bed availability . . . 847-356-8205 X.3391

Publicize an Upcoming District Event:

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**

NEW D10 Zoom Meeting

ID 861 1954 7045

PW DISTRICT10