

BULLETIN

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The 8th Month, The 8th Promise: Our Whole Attitude an Outlook upon Life Will Change.

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THE SUFFOLK INTERGROUP BULLETIN

Month 8, STEP EIGHT, my experience

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

This Step is all about forgiveness. If we don't forgive a person how are we going to place that person's name on our list? I hold the personal opinion that when we hold resentments we destroy cells within our bodies at a very rapid rate. Forgiveness has a healing effect upon the person doing the forgiving. By keeping the other guy on the hook we keep ourselves tangled up in the line.

If we wish to be free we must allow others to be free (yeah, even the bad guys). The extent to which we condemn others, is the extent to which we are condemned. And it isn't God who is doing the judging; we are our own judge, jury and executioner. Perhaps, as religionists tell us, there will be a judgment one day, but it is not NOW. We're the only ones doing the judging at this time. In my opinion, if there is to be a judgment after death it will consist of one question – "Did you love?" If there should be a second question perhaps it will be, "Did you laugh?" In this magnificent program of Alcoholics Anonymous I have been taught and learned to do both.

At the time of making the list we need not necessarily be ready to make amends to them all. The word "became", as used in the Step, suggests that the willingness will follow the construction of the list. If we make the list when we're ready we may then become willing to make amends to those whose names appear on it.

Every Step has a spiritual dimension, no less this

one. Do you remember the first time you fell in love? The phenomenon that was taking place, perhaps, is that you were able to suspend judgment of that person long enough to see their goodness. Perhaps it's not possible to love everyone else the same way, but it is imperative that we hate no one. Until such time as we do adopt a loving attitude the difficulties our planet is facing will not be overcome. In the finale of the play, "Les Miserables," one of the lines in the song was, "To love another person is to see the face of God."

I've heard it suggested that if we cannot forgive others we break the bridge over which we ourselves must pass. After all, aren't most humans in need of forgiveness to one degree or another?

-Ed H.

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A Lifetime of Sobriety

In June, 1966, a young man named Bob got into a car with two members of the Patchogue Group on his way to his first A.A. meeting. They had another newcomer on that 12th Step call that night. His name was Barry. Bob and Barry sized each other up and both made the same assessment – if I ever get as bad as this guy, I'll definitely have to stop drinking. After attending some meetings and learning about the program of A.A., both men made a silent vow – I won't drink before he does. In June, 2016, Bob called Barry and they congratulated each other on their shared 50th anniversary.

Most Thursday and Sunday nights, Bob T. can be found in his usual seat at the Patchogue Group – the first seat at the table on the far right from the speaker's podium. Bob says he inherited that seat from Clarence, who probably inherited it from another member of the group. One of the many things that always impresses me about Bob is his consistency. He still practices what he was taught 50 years ago in the same group he has belonged to for all of those years. He is an active member of the group, he constantly reaches out to newcomers by trying to carry the message of A.A., and is the voice of reason and wisdom at business meetings. And Bob is not one to sit back after his many years. He continues in his self-appointed role as chief coffee pot washer.

Bob is not a man who is comfortable with accolades or the spotlight. He insisted that the group do nothing special for his 50th anniversary celebration. (He will probably not be happy with me if this article appears in the Bulletin.) He prefers to quietly work with newcomers and lead by example. He doesn't always share at group meetings but when he does I make certain to pay particular attention. Bob has had a positive effect on my sobriety and, I am certain, all of the members of the Patchogue Group. During a half century of sobriety, he has touched the lives of innumerable people by "staying sober and helping others to achieve sobriety."

Awareness

Awareness: I'm a strong believer as of recently that the more aware we are of our motives, thoughts & emotions, the less they have control of our lives. It feels like reprogramming a system that has gone obsolete. Old mind patterns try to reboot. There's a 6:30 Meditation Meeting I go to on Saturday Nights in Patchogue. We read a few pages of the big book. Afterwards they turn the lights off, put on soothing music & for 10 minutes we are alone with ourselves in meditation. After the meditation those who speak often do from their souls. They speak with a clarity and awareness that truly blows my hair back. Everyone seems to be lifted, to be free of self & viewing things with a clearer lens.

<u>Honesty</u>: Knowing that the World cannot give you anything of lasting value, that nothing material will fill what is lacking in me. That peace is only accessible when I'm surrendered & my faith is strong.

Practice: I try to stay on track by daily meditation, prayer & focusing on gratitude. I practice non-judgement as much as humanly possible. However I am human. So I still assess and pass judgement because there's this piece of ego in me that thinks, despite all evidence to the contrary, that I am in position to do so. I ask God's forgiveness when I have judged, been unkind, or resistant. I practice holding myself accountable for the direction I allow my words & thoughts to go in. When I've focused on God throughout my day & slip into prayer & meditation at night. A small voice from deep inside whispers "I am here, I have always been here". I sleep easy. I pray for others. When thoughts drift down dark alleys a good "our Father" usually clears them up.

Reflection: A trembling poodle after a cold bath. This was the perfect analogy for my mentality for the past 30 years. Consumed by self-pity, anxiety, fear, oh what fear! I didn't handle life, life was man-handling me from my perspective. Bad things happened, many bad things but how I reacted to them. I still have fears. I fear my writing is horrible. I fear that I will fall backwards. I fear that I am not enough.

<u>Trust & Faith</u>: At the deepest level of the awareness that watches the mind busy its self through distractions & dwells on its fears is the unshakable faith that...

"Everything is for the best & for the best of all possible worlds". – Voltaire -Maureen H.



LET IT GO!

That song from "Frozen" has so much meaning for us in Alcoholics Anonymous. First, we had to let go of the booze that was killing us. It had seemed like an impossible thing to do. And so difficult to fathom when you're in the grips of the disease. It took me a long time to break through the denial that I had a serious problem with drinking. I saw my husband, sister and brother all stop with the help of AA. Yet, I was different!

I let go of the need to be right all the time. Do I always have to have the last word? Do I think I am the great Wizard, who knows all and who can tell you what I know is best for you and everyone else? "I know, I know": How many times did I say that to my sponsor. Now, with some years working the steps and watching my motives, I can really let go of the egocentric self and let someone else be right more often.

I can let go of what goes on at my meetings. For instance; who is texting during the meeting or checking their messages? Who is daydreaming and not listening to the speaker? Who is up and down for the whole hour? Why can't they talk on topic? I can't be the AA police and take everyone's inventory. I only need to take my own.

I can even let go when it comes to sponsee. Do I give them guidance and also do the work with them? Are we sticking to our primary purpose and giving back through service? My dear beautiful sponsee's rely on me to help them with their problems related to alcoholism. What step can we revisit? Am I leading them toward a better spiritual life with the practice of Step 11? How can I be a better sponsor?

All we need is the willingness to let go of everything and let the God of our understanding lead us. He will never drop us on our heads even if we let go.

-Barbara B., Bay Shore

BOTTOM IS BOTTOM

Why all this insistence that every AA must hit bottom first? *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions - page* 24

In my early sobriety I recall hearing a story about a man who had hit his bottom because he had worn the same shirt two days in a row! I was somewhat amused at this and I remember thinking that he had hit what is termed by some of us in AA as "an emotional bottom." I was certain also that my bottom was an emotional or spiritual one and not a material or physical one. After all, I thought; I still had my home, I still had a job, I still had two cars in the driveway, so no, I was not really at the real bottom. In fact, I prided myself in thinking that I had a "high bottom."

But isn't every bottom an emotional one? Feelings are at the emotional level, and when I felt that I had had enough, well, that was enough. When we feel we've had enough, it's enough. We might ask, "Where do the feelings come from?" Some people suggest they are Godgiven, and that certainly seems okay to me.

A standard dictionary offers several definitions of the word bottom, one of which is "the lowest or deepest part of something." The same dictionary, however, suggests another definition of the word as being, "foundation; groundwork." So on this foundation we can build our sobriety. On this groundwork we can, with the aid of God and AA, forge a new life. And, as I do, look upon my sobriety as a gift.

-Ed H.





Group History

Riverhead

1st Congregational Church

103 East Main Street

Riverhead, N.Y. 11901

"If at first you don't succeed, try, try again" might be the ideal slogan for the Riverhead Group. Try indeed they did for the first time way back in May 1948. A copy of correspondence between Martin C. and Bobbi B., Bill W.'s secretary, exists in the S.I.A. Archives. Martin wrote saying "a new group is being formed in Long Island... as yet we number three but we hope to increase substantially



before long." Unfortunately that didn't happen. Within five months a letter dated October 27, 1948 indicated that Riverhead had folded and all remaining members—if any--- had migrated to the Southampton Group. But you can't keep a good man or woman down and within a mere five years, the group bounced back.

A letter from A.A. World Services dated February 4, 1953 addressed to John H. of New Suffolk started out by saying "We are delighted to hear of the newly formed Riverhead Group." For about its first ten years the group met at St. John's Roman Catholic Church on Fifth Street then sometime between 1960 and 1963 it moved to the church it has been meeting at ever since. Until the 1970s, Riverhead met only on Fridays at 9:00 P.M. Thereafter, Tuesdays were added to the lineup. As is often the case with A.A. groups, tweaking various times and formats on the evenings they meet seems to be the way to go until that perfect combination is found. As of this writing, Riverhead has been in existence for 62 years. This monolith has kept its doors open for the many sober houses in the general area. Its annual countdown meeting is a hot ticket with thunderous applause as those with various lengths of sobriety stand. "Nothing succeeds like success" might make another great slogan. Riverhead has shown that to be true.



WISDOM WORTH REPEATING

I came to AA in February of 1988, and I'm grateful to tell you that I have never had to pick up a drink in the past 28 years. Working nights at the time I began, I used to go to a meeting in the morning on my way home from work and a meeting in the evening before I went back. I did this for a long time, and that, coupled with joining a group, getting a sponsor, embracing the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, and getting a commitment (Coffee Maker) laid a solid foundation upon which I could build a sober life- One Day at a Time!

I met Trudy in August of 1988 at her anniversary. It was either her 14th or 17th year sober...it was so long ago I can't remember. She had a beautiful smile that matched her joyful attitude. After the meeting I approached her, offering my hand with my congratulations. She grabbed my hand, pulled me close, and enfolded me in a most loving embrace! I was a stranger to her, and it was her celebration, yet she treated me like I really mattered. I will always remember her gesture with deep gratitude.

Trudy became my sponsor, and we journeyed together until she went home to be with her Higher Power, Her Beloved Lord, in November of 1999. Though I miss her every day, I still hear in my heart the wise things she taught me. She said many incredible things, but I think the thing she said to me the most was, "Keep a belly full of gratitude."

Trudy modeled how a grateful person behaved. Again and again she would extend her hands in the air, saying," Thank you, Lord!" She was grateful for everything. By focusing on the blessings presented by the present moment, she could offer prayers of gratitude constantly. I learned that gratitude, when practiced, can become quite easy. I think it is the fuel that has kept me going all these years.

So please do something for me this day...call your sponsor and say, "Thank you." Thank your sponsor for the gift of his of her time. Thank your sponsor for the gift of her/ his example. Just say thank you! I know that would make Trudy smile in heaven, and you, too, will feel the joy of walking around with a belly full of gratitude!

With love, peace, and gratitude,
-Brigid, Sayville New Life Sobriety

ATTITUDE CHANGE

There is just as much beauty visible to us in the landscape as we are prepared to appreciate – not a grain more. Objects are concealed from our view, not so much because they are out of the course of our visual ray as because we do not bring our minds and eyes to bear on them.

Henry David Thoreau may have been suggesting that if beauty is first in the mind, beauty may then manifest before our eyes. The connection between mind and nature may be far more intimate than we've dared to imagine.

Appreciation for the beauty in the world was not one of my attitudes when my alcoholism was running rampant. My mind was preoccupied with wondering how I was going to protect my addiction.

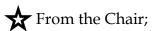
I believed at the time that I was affected by conditions in the world. It never occurred to me that my attitude was shaping my thinking and my perception. The mood I am in affects my perception of the world. In my drinking days it simply never occurred to me that my viewpoint was askew; my outlook was slanted.

The eighth promise of AA suggests that our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

Adopting thoughts of gratitude for the good that is in my life does improve the way I perceive the world. Thoughts lead to feelings and when I think "I am grateful for my bounty" I do seem to experience a better world. It is well to consider that if we are not grateful with what we have perhaps we cannot be trusted with the things we want. During the holiday season there does seem to be an uplifting in the attitude of people we meet. In order to appreciate it, however, there must be an uplifting of our own individual attitude.

Our attitude affects our world. In learning to appreciate beauty we may then experience brighter colors in our world. Do you think we don't color our world by our attitudes? Please consider the following scenario: Someone in a gathering gets up to speak; if we happen to like the person we may think the person is making sense. Others who happen not to like the person may think the speaker is spouting junk. The speaker and the words are the same; the distinction is in the attitude of the listener. If we listen to a politician who is of our own political persuasion, we think he's making sense. If he's not in the political party we affiliate with we think he's a numbskull (and he's ugly too). Attitude shapes what we think; viewpoint shapes what we perceive; our outlook does indeed color our world.





I was so pleased to see the turn-out at the last SIA meeting at Riverhead, it was nice to see Tom the Alternate DCMC from SGS, who gave a wonderful report on how SIA and SGS can and should work together for the good of AA. I would also like to thank Tim from ESCYPAA for informing the reps in attendance about the events and happenings with ESCYPAA. I believe we are all in AA for a reason, and that is to carry the message to the next suffering alcoholic. In SIA, we are here to carry the message to the groups in AA of the happenings around Suffolk County.

Years ago when I was *young in AA* my sponsor suggested to get involved in service and to learn patience and tolerance. So I became my group's SIA rep. That was thirteen years ago and I am still learning. I remember early on hearing "we are all in this together" and I still believe this today. I look forward to having SGS and ESCYPAA to continue to give their reports so we know what is going on outside SIA and around Suffolk County. As I will be trying to attend their service committee meetings to give a report on what is happening in SIA.

I feel that we need to keep this going and I believe through service we can all grow together. That's all I have to say at this time. I look forward to any and all comments, suggestions, and criticisms. Feel free to send them to my email address listed above.

-In Service, Kevin D. Chairperson

Contact your Intergroup chairs!

Chair- Kevin chairman@suffolkny-aa.org
Alt Chair- Tom alt-chair@suffolkny-aa.org
Treasurer- Wayne treasurer@suffolkny-aa.org
Corr. Sec.- Dawn corsec@suffolkny-aa.org
Recording Sec.- Tara recsec@suffolkny-aa.org

Committee Chairs

Answering Service- Ron phones@suffolkny-aa.org
Archives- Bob archives@suffolkny-aa.org
Bulletin- Mary bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org
Corrections- Lee correct@suffolkny-aa.org
Grapevine- Lee grapevine@suffolkny-aa.org
Literature- Laurie books@suffolkny-aa.org
Meeting List- Brodey ...meetings@suffolkny-aa.org
SIA Office Manager- Cheryl.siaoffice@suffolkny-aa.org
Schools- Eileen schools@suffolkny-aa.org
Share A Thon- Gene Marie share@suffolkny-aa.org
Special Events- Patrickspecevent@suffolkny-aa.org
Third Legacy OPEN! ... thirdleg@suffolkny-aa.org
Treatment Facilities- Jackie treatment@suffolkny-aa.org

AUGUST Business Meetings

Webmaster- Troy..... websup@suffolkny-aa.org

> Public Information Committee: 3RD TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 8/16/16 7:00 PM

SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave., Patchogue

> SIA Business Meeting: 1st TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 8/2/16 8:00pm

True North Community Church, 1101 Lakeland Ave., Bohemia

7:00 PM New Group Rep Orientation

• 7:00 PM Share-a-Thon

• 8:00 PM Intergroup Meeting

> SIA Officers & Chairs: LAST TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 8/30/16 7:00 PM

SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave., Patchogue

> Suffolk General Service: 3RD FRIDAY OF EVERY MONTH

Fri. 8/19/16 8:00 PM

True North Community Church, Lakeland Ave., Bohemia

>Treatment Facilities Committee: 3RD TUESDAY OF MONTH

Tues. 8/16/16 7:00 PM

SIA Office, 113-8 Bay Ave., Patchogue



****ANNOUNCEMENTS****



★ We are developing an On-line Speaker Exchange and need your help! If your group is interested in developing and participating please email Tom at: alt-chair@suffolknyaa.org



★ We need you're old books you're not using!



Treatment facilities committee looking for AA members to donate any AA approved books for treatment facilities. You can always drop them off at the SIA office at 113-8 bay Ave Patchogue N.Y. 11772 Mon-Fri 9-3pm and Sat 9-1pm OR contact Jackie at:

treatment@suffolkny-aa.org



★ THIS BULLETIN NEED YOUR HELP!

It need YOUR participation! Please help and send in

- your articles!
- your experiences!
- your announcements!
 - your comments!
- your, artwork, poems, photos, etc.!

Send to Mary at: bulletins@suffolkny-aa.org

★ The Archives Committee is always looking for volunteers to help save our Alcoholics Anonymous history. Help as much as you want. Contact the SIA Office at 631-654-1150.

The Grapevine offers more much more than just the magazine!



- Books
- CD's
- Calendars
 - Slogans
 - AA#3
 - Bill D.
- Man in the bed

And there is more!

I will bring the material to your group!

All you have to do is ask!

Contact Lee at: correct@suffolkny-aa.org