



DISTRICT SIX

MARCH 2020

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Service Sponsor

Tradition Two states: "AA as such ought never to be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." Alcoholics Anonymous relies on us, its members, to keep the doors open for the next sick and suffering alcoholic. According to the AA Service Manual (which is combined with the Twelve Concepts for World Service):

"...A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer — ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service." — The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service. Sponsorship in A.A. is basically the same, whether helping another individual's recovery or service to a group. It can be defined as one alcoholic who has made some progress in recovery and/or performance in service, sharing this experience with another alcoholic who is just starting the journey. Both types of service spring from the spiritual aspects of the program. Individuals may feel that they have more to offer in one area than in another. It is the service sponsor's responsibility to present the various aspects of service: setting up a meeting; working on committees; participating in conferences, etc. In this matter it is important for the service sponsor to help individuals understand the distinction between serving the needs of the Fellowship and meeting the personal needs of another group member. A service sponsor is usually someone who is knowledgeable in A.A. history and has a strong background in the service structure. The A.A. member is introduced to a new language: G.S.R., D.C.M., area assembly, minority opinion. They will become familiar with the Traditions, Concepts and Warranties, as well as The A.A. Service 26 Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Service, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age and other A.A. literature. The service sponsor begins by encouraging the member to become active in their home group — coffee, literature, cleanup, attending business or intergroup meetings, etc. The service sponsor should keep in mind that all members will not have the desire or qualifica-

tions to move beyond certain levels and, thus, the service sponsor might help find tasks appropriate to individuals' skills and interests. Whatever level of service one performs, all are toward the same end — sharing the overall responsibilities of Alcoholics Anonymous. Eventually, the service sponsor encourages the individual member interested in this form of service to attend district meetings and to read about the history and structure of Alcoholics Anonymous. At this point, the individual beginning this work should begin to understand the responsibilities of service work, as well as feel the satisfaction of yet another form of Twelfth Step work. Such individuals should be encouraged to take an active part in district activities and consider being elected to alternate positions in the district so as to learn about the responsibilities of various jobs in the service structure. During this process it is important for the individual to continue to learn about the Three Legacies — Recovery, Unity and Service, and to understand that the principle of rotation not only allows them to move on in service, but also gives newer members the privilege of serving. Rotation also allows them to understand that no one should hold on to a position of trust long enough to feel a proprietary interest and thereby discourage newcomers from service. Co-founder Dr. Bob said, "I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons: 1. Sense of duty. 2. It is a pleasure. 3. Because in doing so I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me. 4. Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip." 27 The basis of all sponsorship is to lead by example. Service sponsors can impart to their sponsees the pleasure of involvement in the work of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is best done by stressing the spiritual nature of service work and by pointing out the usefulness of simple footwork and faith. Now, through knowledge and experience, the newer member is aware that service is our most important product after sobriety. With this knowledge, the individual is able to share their vision with others and ensure the future of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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The Emmet Fox Corner
With Michel J

"Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically."

Big book page 61

Emmet Fox reminds us that resentment, condemnation, anger, and desire to see someone punished are things that rot your soul. Sometimes we can be very clever in disguising these corrosive feelings and hiding them from our own awareness. These feelings have a much stronger emotional content than we realize and they can cause you many other problems that have nothing whatever to do with your original grievances themselves. The worst of which would be picking up a drink.

Forgiveness does not mean that you have to like the delinquent or want to meet him; but that you must wish him well. Of course you must not make a "door mat" of yourself. You must not allow yourself to be imposed upon, or ill-treated. You must fight your own battles and fight them with prayer, justice, and good will. It does not matter whether you can forget the injury or not, although if you cease to rehearse it you probably will—but you must forgive.

Here's an excerpt from the big book on personal experience with resentment:

This resentment was against my mother, and it was twenty-five years old. I had fed it, fanned it, and nurtured it as one might a delicate child, and it had become as much a part of me as my breathing. It had provided me with excuses for my lack of education, my marital failures, personal failures, inadequacy, and of course, my alcoholism. And though I really thought I had been willing to part with it, now I knew I was reluctant to let it go.

One morning, however, I realized I had to get rid of it, for my reprieve was running out, and if I didn't get rid of it I was going to get drunk and I didn't want to get drunk anymore. In my prayers that morning I asked God to point out to me some way to be free of this resentment. During the day, a friend of mine brought me some magazines to take to a hospital group I was interested in. I looked through them. A banner across one featured an article by a prominent clergyman in which I caught the word resentment.

He said, in effect: "If you have a resentment you want to be free of, if you will pray for the person or the thing that you resent, you will be free. If you will ask in prayer for everything you want for yourself to be given to them, you will be free. Ask for their health, their prosperity, their happiness, and you will be free. Even when you don't really want it for them and your prayers are only words and you don't mean it, go ahead and do it anyway. Do it every day for two weeks, and you will find you have come to mean it and to want it for them and you will realize that where you used to feel bitterness and resentment

and hatred, you now feel compassionate understanding and love.

It worked for me then, and it has worked for me many times since, and it will work for me every time I am willing to work it. Sometimes I have to ask first for the willingness.

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How does one find a service sponsor? Some of us will already have sponsors who are steeped in District and Area Service experience and can provide suggestions/ guidance needed. For the rest of us, the best place to find service suggestions/ guidance is to attend a district or area business meeting. Accompany your Group's GSR to the next district meeting and ask around among the more seasoned folks, attend the upcoming Area 28 Spring Assembly in Bucksport, Maine, from April 3-5. You'll find plenty of experienced trusted servants there. Like all of AA's service work, the biggest surprise is how great it feels to dive right in.



Audrey M, District 6 Newsletter Reporter

Someone Looks out for little children and alcoholics by Claire A. ,The Point

I'm pretty sure "someone" is looking out for all of us, if we care to acknowledge there's a higher power we can tap into. I don't mean to be grouchy, but I don't completely agree with that saying – I've seen plenty of alcoholics who are struggling. What does it mean that someone is looking out for them? They aren't dying? What about those that are dying?

It's easy to think that someone is looking out for me personally, because I can't even believe I ever made it to A.A. It's a huge blessing. And I have certainly heard plenty of stories in the rooms about people who have survived insane car wrecks and multiple suicide attempts. But for every one of us who survives and gets sober, how many others are out on the street or on the bathroom floor? How many are driving into a ditch or hitting others with their cars?

I stopped growing emotionally when I started drinking. Coming at this saying from a different angle, I feel it invites comparison between children and alcoholics. And though alcoholics (this one, at least) lack the innocence of children, there are similarities.

It took me a while to realize that I stopped growing emotionally when I started drinking. The moment I felt the relief of that first drink, that liquid courage, I stopped needing to find my own source of courage. When I drank to relieve stress, I stopped learning to seek stress relief in exercise and meditation (or doing less!). When I drank "socially," which was actually anti-socially, I didn't need to learn how to manage social situations, how to get along with others,

Steps and Traditions

AA is now composed of a growing number of alcoholics who still have their health, families, and jobs. Some of these newcomers are also relatively young. Because they are less desperate, these newcomers are also less motivated to work the Steps.

Few people will sincerely try to practice the A.A. program unless they have hit bottom—the average alcoholic, self-centered in the extreme, doesn't care for this prospect—unless he has to do these things in order to stay alive himself.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg 24

In order to address the needs of this population, Bill “widens the hoop” that members have to jump through in order to feel that they are actively working the AA program. He accomplishes this primarily by introducing the “method of substitution” in his Third Step instructions, and making major changes to the inventory process. In speaking of the trouble that many AA’s have with turning their will and life over to the care of God, Bill says this:

Many a man like you has begun to solve the problem by the method of substitution. You can, if you wish, make A.A., itself your 'higher power.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg 27

Bill clearly expects that alcoholics who use AA as their higher power will eventually adopt a more spiritual outlook. However, Bill’s method of substitution also makes it possible for AA members to feel that they are honestly working the Steps without ever turning their lives over to the care of God.

Bill’s new instructions for the Fourth Step are another significant development. The Big Book outlines an inventory process that sees selfishness as the root of the alcoholic’s problems. In Bill’s new version, however, the root of the alcoholic’s problems is not selfishness, but rather instincts that are out of balance.

Nearly every serious emotional problem can be seen as a case of misdirected instinct. When that happens, our great natural assets, the instincts, have turned into physical and mental liabilities.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg 42

Also, the 12&12 inventory is not focused strictly on defects of character:

The sponsor probably points out that the newcomer has some assets which can be noted along with his liabilities.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg 46

This new inventory is not meant to resemble a soul surgery, in which the Step Worker identifies and carves out the defects of character that are blocking his or her soul from God. Rather, this inventory is an open-ended process of introspection and reflection.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions is less hopeful than the Big Book about the results a person can expect from working the Twelve Steps. There is no promise of a life of freedom from selfishness, or a new life of intimacy with spiritual power. Instead, recovering alcoholics should be content with gradual progress over a long period of time.

Having been granted a perfect release from alcoholism, why then shouldn't we be able to achieve by the same means a perfect release from every other difficulty or defect? This is the riddle of our existence, the full answer to which may only be in the mind of God.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions pg 64

The sentiment that alcoholics should expect sobriety to be marked by long periods of struggle with their personal shortcomings is a reflection of Bill’s own struggles with depression. His decreased expectations for the quality of his own sobriety lead him to lower his expectations for others as well. Bill’s experiences with seeking help from a psychiatrist lead him to a new understanding of the inventory process that is more psychological in nature. Also, in Bill’s mind, the method of substitution is adequate because he does not have the same faith in the ability of spiritual experience to address all of the alcoholic’s troubles. This newer version of step work no longer insists on spiritual experience as the answer to the problems of the alcoholic. Instead, it offers a solution that is social and psychological in nature.

AA's Twelve Steps are a group spiritual principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions From The Forward

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Before The Beginning of AA

Last month, we ran a story on how AA began. But what caused Bill Wilson to stop drinking?

It began with a phone call from an old drinking buddy, Ebby Thacher, who said he was sober. Since Bill’s last information was that Ebby had been committed to an asylum for alcoholic insanity, Bill wondered how Ebby had escaped. Ebby came by to see Bill who noticed immediately that Ebby was inexplicably different. Ebby told how two men came to court and persuaded the judge to suspend Ebby’s commitment. The two men told Ebby of a simple idea and a practical program of action that we now know was the tenets of the Oxford Group. Ebby said he had gotten religion and was following the program of the Oxford Group and talked for hours. Bill’s past experience with religion made him skeptical until Ebby asked: “Why don’t you choose your own conception of God?” This opened the door for Bill who adopted the practices Ebby explained but with his own understanding of a higher power.

AA was born with Dr. Bob Smith’s sobriety after his conversation with Bill Wilson but we owe the genesis of our Program to the Oxford Group not only for Ebby’s visit to Bill Wilson but also to its six steps which led Bill and Dr. Bob to define our Steps as twelve. Despite that the Oxford Group was instrumental to our founding, Bill and Dr. Bob ensured that AA would have no religious or other affiliation with any other movement.

Steve T , D6 Newsletter Reporter



District at a Glance

District 6 met on February 14th; there were twenty one people in attendance. Of those, 8 were GSR's, 9 Committee Members and 4 visiting. We began in the usual way, assessing attendance, and then moving on to Committee reports. We welcomed a new CSO liaison and heard reports from most of the other Committees. The newsletter reported having met and has intentions to continue producing a monthly newsletter. Grapevine reported a desire to start a more active Committee and encouraged others to get in touch with him if they wanted to become involved. PI/CP made continued progress on the racks they are putting together, currently meets every week and is working on putting together a presentation for local facilities. The website reported on some upcoming costs associated with running the site and the treasurer gave a complete report of the district's finances in January. We started the month with \$1,536.27 and received donations from 9 groups, as well as our own Seventh Tradition, resulting with incoming balance of \$548.69. \$120.00 was paid out for rent, leaving an ending balance of \$1,964.96, including the prudent reserve of \$1,100.00.

The district reviewed old business. Tabling the printing of meeting lists for the district as motion passed in December to do the printing. We hope to review this and move forward at the March Meeting.

A motion was made to increase the grapevine budget to \$500.00 and another motion to spend \$311.00 in order to continue hosting the website for another two years. The motions will be discussed and voted on during the March Meeting. We also reviewed the Area 28 motions; information was given to the GSR's to bring back for the groups for discussion and prepare for the coming Area 28 Spring Assembly in April.

District 6 holds its Business Meetings on the 2nd Friday of the month, 6:00pm at the Berean Baptist Church in Brunswick. All are welcome. More thorough minutes are available upon request.

Help Wanted:

The following positions are open in the District:

Archives:

The right person for this position would be willing and able to maintain files and documents that are historic for the District and the Districts Meetings, attend the monthly D6 Business Meetings and Area 28 Business Meetings. There is a recommended guideline of 2 or more years of sobriety and proficiency with computers. Further information can be found on the District Website.

Functions Chair:

Looking for a self-motivated person willing and able to serve a 2 year commitment .Chair of the Function Committee and responsible for the planning of having events in District 6. The role includes managing seed money, proposing events to District Six. Working with a team to provide each event and attend the monthly District Business Meeting. More information can be found on the District Website or at our monthly Business Meeting.

Meeting List:

This position is a two year commitment to maintain a list of all meetings, times and locations in the District and to share said list with district secretary and webmaster so that it may be printed and distributed for the District. This position also updates information with CSO. Further information can be found at the Business Meeting and on the District Website.

Bridging The Gap:

Anyone willing and able to hold this position would be expected to attend monthly District 6 Business Meetings, connect new members that are being discharged from a facility to an AA in their Community. Maintain relationships with hospitals, detox's, rehabs, jails, half-way houses etc. in our district to ensure exchange of contact info between AA and the facility as well as enabling them to contact new members within 24-48 hours of their release to make suggests several types of AA Meetings in the first week and to stress the importance of Sponsorship. This is a two year commitment, more information can be found online or at the Monthly Business meeting

Aly R , D6 Newsletter Reporter

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or how to leave at a reasonable hour. It's astounding to me how many examples of stunted growth I have. I couldn't dance without drinking – I didn't learn how to be comfortable in my own body. Internally, I reacted to others at work in a juvenile way. Because I was too terrified to actually confront anyone, I gossiped about the people I feared. I couldn't communicate with others. I couldn't really stand other people. Toward the end, I couldn't stand myself. It was thoughts of suicide that drove me to get help which eventually led to A.A.

Basically stuck at a much younger emotional age. In A.A., working with a sponsor, I started to see how immature I was. In working the 4th and 5th steps I saw how I held grudges, obsessed about what others thought of me, plotted revenge in my head, fell prey over and over again to my own fears, and was basically stuck at a much younger emotional age. Looking at my character defects and taking responsibility for my actions has let me grow up a little. I'm a work in progress.

One of the greatest teachers and joys in A.A. has been working with other alcoholics. Seeing another person's eyes light up as they take hold of the program, laughing with them over our crazy behavior, sharing what worked: these are all things I never dreamed of, and they are one of the greatest satisfactions of being in A.A.

Now, I suppose the "someone" in the saying could be me and possibly you. As the A.A. saying goes, "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." Obviously, I'm a tiny part of this thing, but I and thousands like me are looking out for alcoholics who are ready to try this program. I suppose that is someone after all.

