



Gratitude Gazette

Carrying the message throughout our valley

951-695-1535 Hotline 24 hours

February 2019

Tempering Insanity

With Kent A.

By Crystal B, Sun City

Alcoholics Anonymous

Responsibility Pledge

I am responsible whenever anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there, and for that I am responsible

~Declaration of 30th Anniversary International Convention, 1965

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Kent A. sat down with me a few weeks ago to tell me what his experience has been like over the years with step two. "Came to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity." Ken is one of the most interesting people in the rooms. He speaks honestly and candidly about what it was like, what happened and what it's like now. I look around the room when he shares and often see a choir of bobble heads nodding with affirmation and laughing as they connect their stories with his. There is no other fellowship that indulges its members with the "war stories" of the past in such delightful humor as ours. If you've never heard Kent speak, you are missing out on a great message.

Kent's story goes a little like this:

As an alcoholic, I am in constant conflict with other people. I have learned that I create my own turmoil. Before I got sober and even some time into sobriety, I would stubbornly insist that I was right. I never even considered that I could be wrong! I tried to change others instead of taking responsibility for changing myself. Without a program, I am full of expectations of you and even if you give me what I expect, it is never good enough. I was unhappy, angry and I was often complaining. When things started to go wrong in any part of my life, I clung to the notion that "None of this is my fault!"

(continued)

Once the ball was rolling, nothing I did would work out right. I kept doing things over and over in the exact same way expecting a different result. I then became aggrieved with the insanity of expecting different results when I have changed nothing.

At 6 and a ½ years sober, I discovered that I had severe control issues at work. I was tasked with setting up a new office with our company in the central part of California. I was afraid of failure and this fear drove me hard into success. When I'm in fear of failure and things start going wrong, I immediately start handing out blame. I deal it out like a bad poker game.

As it was, things weren't going well. I was incredibly uptight, always in a bad mood, yelling at my crew and any other bystander. I had just finished a string of very long days. I was working on almost no sleep and still had a long drive ahead of me to make an important deadline in El Centro in the morning. Things continued to go wrong. I finally pulled into El Centro at 4am with just one hour of sleep. I showed up as an emotional basket case and I was exhausted. I went into the office and immediately hammered this guy for one thing, blasted that guy for something else. Never stopping to think of how my behavior is affecting others. I blamed and insulted one person after another because things were not going as I expected. I even lit into my bosses with insulting and degrading language. In passing, I overheard some of the crew guys discussing things. One asked the other "What am I supposed to do when Kent blows up and gets like that?" His buddy responds, "Just get out of the way!" When I am that far off the beam, the only thing left to do is to get to work in this program or get back to drinking.

At this point, I needed to make some amends. I had been carrying the guilt of bad behavior for too long and it was killing me inside. I felt horrible for behaving that way. Not long after, I was riding

with a few friends to a golf tournament. The course was far enough away to give me plenty of time to feel the solemn weight of that guilt. It was gnawing at me and as the drive went on, I felt worse and worse. I was struck with such a strong urgency to make things right that we had to pull over. I felt I had no other choice but to make that phone call. This amend was going to be to my boss. I had been in a black out rage and said some irrational things during my tirade. I feared the outcome, but I had to do it. I made the amends and I was forgiven. I still tend to flare up with anger, but I don't experience the depth of the black out rage like I used to.

I have come to believe that there is a better way. Situations can become overwhelming in a moment's notice, but there are things I practice now to avoid the outcome I got before. I must ask myself "What am I willing to change?". "What are my options?" My choices are to be in acceptance of people, places and situations. I can choose to surrender instead of feeding my rage by blaming. I invite God in no matter what. I am cordial and helpful.

day, before I even get out of my car the head inside my home, I ask God to he accept things as they are in the room ter. I do one helpful thing when I see things are out of place and by doing to lead by example. I am cordial and helpful.

If I had one thing, I would we newcomers to know, it's to trust the cess, participate fully & never give up had to tell my-newcomer-self one thing.

Because I use the tools of kindness and open-mindedness, I was able to take my daughter out for a vegan meal as a way of showing her acceptance and support with her lifestyle. This would not have been a choice I would have made while I was still drinking. I could show her love and kindness by trying something new. I tried the vegan mac and cheese and to my surprise, I liked it! I was cordial to her. I was willing to do something different and I got a way better outcome. I got the gift of spending a happy time with my daughter! We have a better relationship today because of my willingness to do things different. When I can't make things better, I can at least not make things worse. This is one of my main goals today!

When I first got sober, it was all about my drinking problem. Now that I have been sober a little while, it's about my living problem. It's my powerlessness

of the unmanageability and insanity of my life that continue to creep in. I must continue to work on a solution other than drinking. I must work on building a better character. Working with others gives me the best perspective of my own alcoholism. When I give one of my guys an assignment, I do the work again too! I want permanent and long-term sobriety. This is not a "Get Fixed Deal".

The insanity does return still today even when I am working to be a better person but it's not as intense. There aren't so many struggles and my relationships are so much better! In times of trouble I must look to see if my default is AA or self. Today, before I even get out of my car to head inside my home, I ask God to help me accept things as they are in the room I enter. I do one helpful thing when I see things are out of place and by doing that, I lead by example. I am cordial and helpful.

If I had one thing, I would want newcomers to know, it's to trust the process, participate fully & never give up! If I had to tell my-newcomer-self one thing, it would be to keep it simple – remember ONE day, hour, moment at a time, this too shall pass. Growth is pain and I suffer less today.

Kent, thank you again for sharing the message and part of your story with us! As said by one of my favorite ladies in the program "Keep up the good work!"



Step two: "Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

<u>Tradition Two:</u> "For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—A loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."

- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

<u>Concept Two</u>: "When, in 1955, the A.A. groups confirmed the permanent charter for their General Service Conference, they thereby delegated to the Conference complete authority for the active maintenance of our world services and thereby made the Conference—excepting for any change in the Twelve Traditions or in Article 12 of the Conference Charter—the actual voice and the effective conscience for our whole Society."

Service Meetings

H&I Committee Meeting	1st Monday 7:30 pm	Temecula Valley Alano Club 27470 Commerce Center Dr. Temecula, CA 92590
TVCO Board Meeting	1st Tuesday 6:30pm	Central Office 41340 Pear Street Suite 1 Murrieta, CA 92562
Mid So-Cal Area Meeting	2nd Sunday 9:30am	See the MSCA website http://msca09aa.org/
District 17 GSR Meeting	2nd Tues 6:30pm Visitors Welcome!	Springs Church 41735 Winchester Rd #C Temecula, CA 92590
Intergroup Meeting	3rd Tuesday 6:45pm	United Methodist Church, Murrieta 24652 Adams St, Murrieta, CA (At Kalmia & Adams)

Gratitude Quips

I'm grateful for hot showers! I'm grateful for the sunrise I'm grateful for cigarettes

Previously HomelessAnonymous

I'm grateful for my sobriety I'm grateful for my family & friends

I'm grateful for my amazing business

-Marilyn C.

I'm grateful to be sitting in a women's meeting

I'm grateful for clean, running

water

I'm grateful for my sponsor.

~Jan F.

I'm grateful for lessons in faith I'm grateful for my sisters in support. Especially during trying

times.

I'm grateful for my family. They are always here for me!

-Rose W.



God As He May Express Himself

Rick R.

Alcoholics Anonymous came into existence in 1935 at a time when much of our society was centered around the churches in the communities where we lived. Much of the South and the Midwest are still like that to this day. As a child in my home town, on Sunday morning I could look out the window and see a great majority of my neighbors walking to church. That was the way it was in the early 1940's The book, Alcoholics Anonymous was published in 1939, and it seems that it was highly influenced by the many early members of the program at that time. A.A. could have, very easily become a religious program, but fortunately, the elders of that time realized, by the mistakes of the Oxford Group, and the Washingtonians, that they had to make it clear that, a desire to stop drinking was the only requirement for membership, and that the individual members could choose their own concept of a power greater than themselves, i.e. God as we understand him. In Tradition Two it says, "As He may express Himself in our group conscience" When the word God is used in the remainder of the book, it is not always followed by the "as we understand him" qualifier, and I believe that many members get the

idea that somehow, they are trying to push religion on them. I think that's understandable. When I was faced with that possibility, I personally found it easy enough to read the black part of the pages in the book and to not let myself become distracted by what I now recognized as a cultural norm at the time. I had no problem setting aside my religious bias and recognizing the parts of the Big Book and the 12X12 that clearly state all of the options available when it comes to finding a "power greater than myself", and I can name several right off top. 1) Alcohol itself was my higher power for a long time and still would be if hadn't gotten into the program. 2) My EGO ran my life for quite awhile until I got serious about Real life issues. 3) The A.A. program itself. I found myself spiritually lost when I surrendered and entered the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and when faced with the need to come to terms with the Higher Power issue, I now realize why it took such a long time to settle this subject. Years of drinking and an underdeveloped thinking process that was hard to get up to speed right away. As I got more familiar with the Big Book, and the 12X12, I started to uncover all the evidence that debunked the

idea that I had to conform to any religious doctrine. In the 12X12 I read on page 26, "alcoholics anonymous does not demand that you to believe anything." On belief, "to acquire it, I had only to stop fighting and practice the rest of A.A.'s program as enthusiastically as I could." (Pg.27) Also on page 26 where it states, "Take it easy. The hoop you have to jump through is a lot wider than you think..... A one-time vicepresident of the American atheist Society ... got through with room to spare" Then on page 33 of the 12X12 it says "Therefore, Step Two is the rallying point for all of us. Whether agnostic, atheist, or former believer, we can stand together on this step." Today I am very comfortable with my own concept of a Higher Power and I use the word God only to put a name on a concept that has no physical form and I might say that it expresses itself in the collective conscience of the world we live in. I can assure you that if you read these qualifiers and practice the rest of the principals of the program, as enthusiastically as you can, you will come to terms with a personal concept of a higher power as well as any of us.



More Gratitude Quips

"Iam grateful for my sobriety
I am grateful to be available to
help a family that has been affected by cancer

I am grateful for the company I work for. They've given me the time off to help my friends in their time of need. "



"I'm grateful for God never giving up on me

I'm grateful to be sober today.
I'm grateful for the ability to see
my part in things and work to be
a better woman, one day at a
time!"

~Sara G.

"Im grateful for the opportunity to work with a newcomer. It brings us both so many blessings. I'm grateful for my husband's understanding and support in all areas. This includes my sobriety and recovery

I'm grateful for the growth of the relationship with my sponsor. It isn't easy for me to open up to people but I'm there with her and able to be completely me!"

~Crystal R.

"I'm grateful that I am learning leadership skills modeled in the 12 Traditions.

I'm grateful for the love and healing in the relationship with my mom.

I'm grateful for my health.
Without sobriety I would be
sick, exhausted and hopeless.
Today I get to participate at the
gym and experience a healthy,
hangover free lifestyle!"

~Crystal B.

Our Leaders Do Not Govern

A Tradition 2 Observation

Crystal B, Menifee

"Tradition 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself

Being one among many was a new concept for me when I got sober. I have struggled with not being the best and not being the worst in every area of my life. It's no different for me in a business meeting in my homegroup. How does Tradition Two apply to my life and relationships both in and out of the rooms?

For me, this is where God has first introduced the opportunity to practice humility. We are taught that we MUST have more of this quality than we think we need in order to maintain sobriety. The unity of our fellowship is hinged on Tradition Two. I see it as waves and waves of "Me's" learning to become a complete ocean of "We's".

Our Group Conscience is what keeps our meeting's integrity intact. The group decides on everything from bylaws and guidelines to who the coffee person is. When an idea is brought to the group, the group's members discuss adopting the idea.

This process can take a few minutes, a few weeks, a few months or even years to become fully decided upon. The bigger the group, the longer the decision may take. Before sobriety, I didn't take this much care in any of my decision making. I made snap judgements based on limited information without even considering how I really felt about the decision.

(continued)



Member Spotlight!

I am Looking for someone you know (including you!) that is a great example of recovery! One local member will be interviewed and featured every month!

Nominate your sponsor, friend, sponsee, speaker (or your-self) that has made a significant impact on your sobriety!

Nominees must be a sober member of AA.

Send your nominations with a brief example of the impact this person has made on your recovery. Please include their email address or phone number. Thanks!

Also searching for the following recovery related material:

- Cartoons/Jokes
- ♦ Art
- Poetry
- ♦ Photographs (no faces)

Submissions MUST be original and submitted by the owner of the material.

Send submissions to Crystal B. cmbraddock10@gmail.com



I would often agree or disagree based on my comfort level at the time of the decision. No wonder I found myself in crisis after crisis!

After the group votes, the minority opinion gets to state their case & reasoning for voting the way they voted. Each minority opinion is heard one by one. If even one member wants to change their vote, a new vote is called before the final decision is made.

We are a fellowship of equals. No matter where each of us comes from, no matter how long or short we have been sober, no member has any authority over the group.

For AA to stay all-inclusive, it's important to allow everyone a voice. I was once in a business meeting where we were deciding if it was time to do a group inventory. One hadn't been done in many years and to the newer members, it seemed as if the same few people continued to rotate through the leadership chairs not leaving any room for new people to be elected. One of the newer members suggested that the inventory be done. Points were made in the discussion that it would be too time-consuming, there weren't members willing to go through the process, that there wasn't a suitable place to hold meetings for the process. The vote was called, and the majority opinion was to not go forward with the group inventory. When the minority opinion was called to speak, one person shared how they have held a member voted chair for the last two years and that their 12 Step work was not reaching the people it needed to because the chairperson would not recognize them during the

meeting. After each minority opinion was heard, another vote was called, and the decision was overturned. The majority was now in favor of the group inventory. There were several members that weren't aware of the need to look a little deeper into how the group is operating.

When I apply this to my daily life, I become open to hearing the other side at work, at home, in traffic and know that I do not govern, I am just part of a bigger whole. One wave in the ocean. How can I best be of service to God and to my fellows? Am I leading or am I preaching? Am I participating in my life as a trusted servant or am I demanding attention and favor? These are questions that I can turn to in moments of frustration when I don't get my way or when my idea isn't considered the best or not even considered at all! I've learned that you and I are equals always. When I truly practice this Tradition, I am rarely in conflict with anything or anyone and I feel right sized. I am not bigger, I am not smaller, I am not smarter, I am not dumber. I am just one among many.

Did you know?

Dr. Bob had a dragon and a compass tattoo. The dragon wound around his left arm from the shoulder to the wrist. It was blue with red fire.



Earn bragging rights for being the first one to submit correct answers for all 5 trivia questions!

Submit entries to: cmbraddock10@gmail.com

- 1. What is the name of the chapter that contains a list of the 12 steps?
- 2. What is the name of the guy that came into Bills kitchen and talked with him about a solution he had found?
- 3. Who's opinion is given in the beginning of the Big Book?
- 4. What is the only chapter not written by Bill W?
- 5. Dr. Bob was a real doctor. What was his area of

Central Offices Relocates

With Ken S., Office Manager

Ten years ago, the Temecula Valley Central Office opened in Old Town Temecula. The faces have come and gone but one thing has remained since the beginning. The Central Office makes 12 Step work possible.

During normal working hours, the office connects the public to AA. We are listed in telephone directories and the office serves as the face of AA. As the Valley has grown, so has the need for more volunteers, more office space and an office with easier access.

Ken S., our Central Office Manager, has taken the lead on locating a great new space that our fellowship will love! His main motivator was to offer a space where all the needs of the Valley are met. Our new office space is bathed in natural sunlight from the windows. It's a light and happy place to be. It feels very open and welcoming. "I was so stressed about finding the perfect place for the fellowship. I stressed way more than I needed to! God's in charge and the new office meets all of our needs!" Ken explained.

He told me that they uncovered many

~Crystal B. Menifee

items and documents that would create a great archive and history for our Valley. I was interested to know what kind of obstacles they faced during the move and Ken said that the worst part of the move was that one of the trailers wasn't covered and they got caught in a rain shower. "We had some book casualties, but we hurried to load and unload before the worst of it!" While Ken is headed to the chiropractor this week, his younger helpers seem unaffected by the labor! A special thanks to Stuart, Neal and Warren for lending a hand during the two day move!

We have officially started a new chapter in our Valley for 12 Step work. In the months ahead Ken is looking at ways to cut costs by modernizing the daily office processes. This will free up time and money to reach the most people possible. The Central Office is always looking for office volunteers, sober members to be on the 12 Step call list, Spanish speaking volunteers, hotline volunteers and the like.

Stay tuned for the official details on the Grand Opening BBQ!

Heard in meetings:

I have to be in the space of waiting.

Step into the unknown territory & move forward

Get out of God's way

I'm grateful that I don't have all the answers.

can't let my feelings fester

My thinking has to be cleared of wrong motives.





Across

- 4. CONTINUATION IN DOING SOMETHING DESPITE DIFFICULTY OR DELAY IN ACHIEVING SUCCESS
- 9. TO REFRAIN FROM THE USE OF DRUGS AND ALCOHOL
- 12. TO ACKNOWLEDGE WITHOUT RESERVATION THAT ONE HAS AN ADDICTION AND NEEDS HELP
- 15. THE STATE OR QUALITY OF BEING DEDICATED TO A CAUSE OR **ACTIVITY**
- 18. HEALING THE MIND, BODY, AND THE SPIRIT AFTER ADDICTION
- 19. THE PRINCIPALS THAT GUIDE THE FUNCTIONING OF NA AND AA MEETINGS
- 21. HELPING AN ADDICTED PERSON TO DO THINGS THEY CAN OR SHOULD BE DOING FOR THEMSELVES
- 23. REPEATED BEHAVIOR THAT INTERFERES WITH NORMAL, HEALTHY LIFF ACTIVITIES
- ADDICTION OR BEHAVIOR
- 27. THE QUALITY OR STATE OF BEING PREPARED TO DO SOMETHING
- 28. ALLOWS ONE TO CHANGE, ADMIT TO WRONG DOING, TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY, DEVELOP PRINCIPALS AND A STANDARD FOR LIVING A HEALTHY HONEST LIFESTYLE

Down

- 1. THE ABILITY TO BE THANKFUL FOR THE GIFTS ONE HAS IN THEIR LIFF
- 7. A MODEST OR LOW VIEW OF ONES OWN IMPORTANCE; HUMBLENESS 2. THE ACT OF USING DRUGS OR ALCOHOL AFTER BEING CLEAN
 - 3. CONFRONTATION DONE BY EITHER FELLOW ADDICTS, FAMILY, FRIENDS, OR PROFESSIONALS AIMED AT GETTING THE ADDICT TO
 - 5. ISSUES, EMOTIONS, PLACES OR PEOPLE ASSOCIATED WITH DRUG USE AND DRINKING
 - 6. BEING UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF DRUGS OR ALCOHOL
 - 8. THE EXPECTATION THAT THINGS IN THE FUTURE WILL BE BETTER
 - 10. SERIOUS THOUGHT OR CONSIDERATION

ADMIT TO ADDICTION AND SEEK HELP

- 11. A PERSON WHO WHILE IN MEETINGS TALKS ABOUT PAST DRINKING IN A WAY THAT SEEMS TO GLORIFY IT
- 13. A SYMPTOM-FREE PERIOD
- 14. FREE OF DECEIT AND UNTRUTHFULNESS
- 26. THE INABILITY TO RECOGNIZE THE PRESENCE OR SEVERITY OF AN 16. AN ADDICTION BEHAVIOR'S TENDENCY TO SLOWLY BUT SURELY INCREASE IN FREQUENCY AND USE
 - 17. THE REMOVAL OF A TOXIC SUBSTANCE FROM THE BODY
 - 20. A DESIRE TO USE DRUGS OR ALCOHOL
 - 22. WHEN A PERSON CONTINUES TO USE DRUGS AND ALCOHOL TO THE POINT OF NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES
 - 24. REFUSING TO ADMIT TO ADDICTION OR REALIZE AND ACCEPT THE HARM CAUSED BY IT
 - 25. WHEN A PERSON STOPS USING DRUGS OR ALCOHOL RAPIDLY AND SUFFERS A NEGATIVE PHYSICAL RESPONSE

The first person to submit the correct solution to this puzzle will be featured in an upcoming issue of the Gratitude Gazette! Send your submission to cmbraddock10@gmail.com

How Central Office Serves

During the day, your Central Office keeps the doors open to assist recovering and suffering AA members alike and provide the following services:

- ⇒ We provide the Big Book & the 12x12
- ⇒ Grapevine Publications & Other Assorted Literature
- ⇒ Chips & Newcomer Packets.
- ⇒ Meeting Schedules
- ⇒ Information for other Central Offices

Your office manager organizes volunteers, makes sure the office is a healthy place for all, keeps your accounting data accurate, and safe guards your inventory.

The office manager is there to support the groups and the individual members of our fellowship.

We make and distribute your meeting schedules and we publish the Gratitude Gazette. Twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week, volunteers take calls from suffering alcoholics and organize 12 step calls. The phone line and special call-forwarding are paid for by your central office contributions.

Please ask at your next business meeting if you are contributing monthly to your Central Office. Being self-supporting means not only paying for your rent and coffee, but also paying for the services you receive through Central Office.

If your group has stopped contributing (or never started), please bring it up at your next business meeting and take a group conscious. Let us know when and how we can help.

A.A.'s Legacy of Service

By BILL W. as printed in the pamphlet P-44

Our Twelfth Step—carrying the message—is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die.

Hence, an 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.

Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.

"In order to keep it, you must give it away"



Upcoming Events & Office News

Mark Your Calendar!

- ⇒ PRAASA (Pacific Region Alcoholics Anonymous Service Assembly) 3/1—3/3/19
- ⇒ Pancake Smackdown! 3/10/2019 Free event!!
- ⇒ 32nd Annual Woman to Woman Retreat 3/15 through 3/19/19 www.w2wca.org

Send your events to temeculaAA@verizon.net

Service Opportunities

- ⇒ Central Office Volunteer. Shifts open M-F 10am-12:30pm, 12:30pm-3pm, or 3pm-5:30pm Sat shift is 9am-12pm
- ⇒ 12 Step calls—Ken is currently putting together a list of people available for 12 step calls



Central Office NEEDS YOUR HELP!

Currently Central Office only has FOUR office volunteers! It would be ideal to have two people per shift in the office. Volunteers answer phones, sell books from the bookstore and connect AA to the public. Please help us keep this vital service available to the alcoholics who still suffer by volunteering at the office. We are so grateful to be part of such a big community that continues to grow!

A word of thanks goes out to all of you who donate your time, your money, your resources and

yourself.

When you give of yourself, you get out of yourself. None of us would be here without the willingness and gifts from each other.

Thank you for all you do!

re·cov·er·y

/rəˈkəv(ə)rē/

noun—a return to a normal state of health, mind, or strength



