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# Pass It On

Albuquerque AA Intergroup Central Office Newsletter

<https://www.albuquerqueaa.org/>

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## AA News

- ◆ **The 2022 Intergroup Steering Committee Elections are in December. There are seven (7) positions open:** Chair, Treasurer, Intergroup Liaison, Community Outreach Chair, Accessibilities Chair, Newsletter Editor, and Media Librarian. If you or someone you know are interested in one of the open positions, please contact Central Office or let the Nominating Committee know at [abqaacentraloffice@gmail.com](mailto:abqaacentraloffice@gmail.com)
- ◆ Here is the email address for submissions, feedback, etc. for the Pass It On. [abqpassiton@gmail.com](mailto:abqpassiton@gmail.com)
- ◆ **Central Office Intergroup meetings** are always on the second Sunday of every month on Zoom at 2 p.m.
- ◆ **Nov 5, 2022 - Sex Inventory Hybrid Workshop.** 10 - 2:30, Raymond S. Sarracino Middle School, Socorro, NM, see web site for flyer.
- ◆ **Story Solicitation for the Fifth Edition of the Big Book**  
The General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous is asking for stories to be considered for inclusion in the 5th Edition of the English-language and the 4th Edition of the Spanish-language Big Book. The Preface to the Second Edition of the Big Book explains that revisions to the personal history section of the book were made in order "to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby to reach more Alcoholics."

## A Gift

As I write this I have not had a drink in 1222 days and that's a 'bleepin' miracle. I am a drunk. I have been a drunk all my life. For a drunk not to drink is nothing short of a miracle. I am grateful for this gift of sobriety, for the 'psychic change' I experienced as a result of the fellowship and the Steps of A.A. I have been granted a gift which amounts to a new state of consciousness and a new state of being.

I have been alcoholic all my life. I've known it since I was very young. I come from alcoholics. It's a way of life. The only question has ever been "what am I going to do about it?" The core of who I am, my instinct and my unaided will has always been to lean into it, to 'enjoy it', consequences be damned. That is why page 25 resonates with me so much.

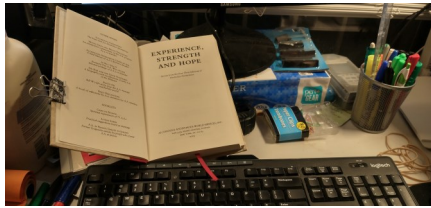
There is NO middle-of-the-road solution. Period. I have but two alternatives: I can go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of my intolerable situation ("F-ck it. I don't care.") OR I can seek and accept spiritual help. Every day. Same choice. Despair or hope. Very simple.

Being convinced that I am alcoholic and could not manage my own life; being convinced that no human power could relieve my alcoholism, and; being convinced that a power greater than myself could and would if sought, I made a decision to take the spiritual solution in the Steps of this program. I make this decision every day and I receive the gift of sobriety every day.

They say there are as many definitions of spiritual awakening as there are people who have them and that common among them is the ability to do, feel, and believe that which we could not do before on our unaided strength and resources alone. That's true for me. That's the psychic change. That's the miracle. That's the gift. I call it grace, the sunlight of the spirit, and I am grateful. The only way I get to keep it is to give it away by practicing these new found principles in all my affairs and by carrying this message to other alcoholics. I am responsible.

Jeff P.

"The purpose of this newsletter is to offer information that may further readers' understanding of the medical, legal and social aspects of alcoholism; the severity and international scope of the illness; and the worldwide efforts being made to combat it. Publication here does not imply endorsement or affiliation. AA does not conduct or participate in research, nor does it hold any opinion on research conducted by others."



## From the Editor...

Thomas Jefferson, one of the leading architects of our republic, is often quoted as Election Day nears. His words serve as a reminder that every American has a responsibility to participate in the election process and vote for legislators and a government that represent the people as our founding fathers envisioned their young nation.

"We in America do not have government by the majority. We have government by the majority who participate," Jefferson said. Steven G.

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## Weighty Reminder

After joining AA, I gained quite a bit of weight. A friend told me it was because I didn't get as much exercise as I used to.

"But I never exercised while I was drinking," I protested.

"Sure, you did," he countered. "The exercise program you were on had a number of routines: hitting the bottle, bending the rules, stretching the truth, running into trouble, jumping to conclusions, stepping on toes, dodging responsibility, pushing your luck, carrying a grudge, throwing fits and picking up the pieces."

Bob M., Green Valley, Ariz.

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## Was That You?

Breakfast was a very late affair that day and the husband and wife were fragile indeed—badly hungover from a particularly wild party the night before. Bleary-eyed, with two trembling hands holding his black coffee, our hero asked his wife, "Was it you I made out with in the garden last night?" She struggled to bring him into focus. "About what time?" she replied.

Bob M., Green Valley, AZ

## Letter from the Chair

### The Use of a Dictionary at Meetings

So, there's a word in the Big Book you don't understand the meaning of or are just not sure. Well then, you want to use a dictionary that is from the time period the book was written. In my home group we have a Webster's Modern Reference Dictionary that was printed in 1934 and is more likely to have the meaning intended by Bill when the Big Book was published.

Why is this important? There are many words for which the commonly understood meaning has changed over time. For instance, on page 291 is the sentence: "Then and only then, after a thorough indoctrination by eight or nine individuals, was I allowed to attend my first meeting." That word "indoctrination" may set off alarm bells for a young person reading it today!

In the 1934 dictionary the definition for "indoctrinate" is: *To imbue with learning, principles or doctrines*. Basically, to teach very well. In the current Webster's Dictionary, the definition is:

*1 : to imbue with a usually partisan or sectarian opinion, point of view, or principle*

*2 : to instruct especially in fundamentals or rudiments : teach*  
With a footnote: *Indoctrinate means "brainwash" to many people, but its meaning isn't always so negative. When the verb first appeared in English in the 17th century, it simply meant "to teach"—a meaning linked closely to its source, the Latin verb docere, which also means "to teach."*

I remember in my first year in AA, after a meeting I told my new sponsor "This is nothing more than just brainwashing!" He smiled, then said "Martin, from what little I know about you, your brain needs washing." Implying I had a lot of trash and old junk in there. I had to agree with that and change my attitude.

Guess what, "brainwashing" isn't even in the 1934 Webster's! In a current Webster's it says: *a forcible indoctrination to induce someone to give up basic political, social, or religious beliefs and attitudes and to accept contrasting regimented ideas*. Which is what I meant. But my sponsor replied with a different use of the word "brainwash" – he thought my mind just needed a good cleaning.

This example of the sentence on page 262 can teach us more than just to be aware that a word can have a different meaning than what we currently understand. The sentence really does not have a clear meaning without putting it in the context of the previous paragraph. When you do so, it's easier to understand that the writer meant he was "well-schooled" in what AA was all about.

Further, it shows us that in the beginning of AA, members were far more serious about a newcomer than we seem to be today. They didn't bring a newcomer to a meeting unless they really thought he wanted to get sober. They didn't want to waste meeting time with someone who was not serious about getting sober. Today, a newcomer can just walk in the door and sit down in a meeting. We understand they may not be serious, but hope a seed may be planted. Unfortunately, sometimes all the attention they may get is to be told to not drink and come to meetings. Good advice, but we should remember to make more of an effort than just that.

Martin W. Intergroup Steering Committee Chair, Keep On Keepin' On

### **Last Call (from January 2020 Grapevine)**

I sat on the worn bar stool that afternoon, full of despair. It was 1985, I was 25 years old and I wanted to die. My plan that morning had been to drink enough to go up to the train tracks and jump in front of a train. But even that I screwed up by drinking too much and passing out. I came to right before my mother was due home from work. I looked at the clock and panic set in. Not having time to shower, I still smelled like stale beer and cigarettes from the night before. I grabbed my hoodie, jeans and money and left the house. I had no place to go but the bar.

As I gulped down my third beer, I reached into my pocket to get a dime for the phone. I sat there staring at the coin, debating whether I had the courage to make that one phone call that might just save me from myself. I ordered a shot of whiskey. Staring at the amber-colored liquor in the shot glass, I took a deep breath. I drank the shot and walked over to the phone, taking my little black phone book out of my wallet. I was anxious. I hadn't spoken to Lester in a year. He always had the answer for me. If anyone would be willing to help me now, it would be him. As I dialed his number, I was torn between hoping I could leave a message for him on his machine...or hoping he'd answer. But on the third ring, he picked up. This was back when there were no cell phones and no caller ID. I told him I needed help. I don't know where those words came from. He must have heard my voice cracking with emotion. I said I had nowhere to go and didn't know what else to do but call him. He told me he could help, adding that this was a one-time deal. If I changed my mind, he said, do not call again. I knew he meant it. He told me to call him back on Saturday at noon to let him know whether I was serious, and he hung up.

It was Wednesday afternoon. I sat at the bar for the rest of the night thinking about what he said. For the next two nights, I went from bar to bar looking for what I would miss if I left. In one dimly lit, smoke-filled bar the juke box played and the quarters were lined up on the pool table for the next player. Looking around, I couldn't come up with one reason not to quit. And yet, I felt split in two. On one hand, I couldn't stop drinking. On the other hand, I wanted to. No matter how much I drank at the bar that night, I couldn't get drunk.

Saturday morning came. I sat on my bed staring at the clock as it got closer to noon. I was feeling better and had a list of excuses in my head to tell Lester when I called. At noon, I dialed his number, hoping he wouldn't answer. On the first ring, he picked up. Before I could rattle off my excuses the words "I'm ready" flew out of my mouth. He told me to meet him at a mutual friend's house in 20 minutes.

I got dressed and walked out of my house. I noticed someone coming down the street on a bicycle. It was a blue 10-speed and the rider was smiling. I had never seen Lester on a bicycle before. I didn't even know he owned one.

He stopped and I realized it was good to see him. His chestnut-brown eyes were clear. I could see specks of gold in them, glistening in the sunlight. He had an en-

ergy about him that I couldn't quite put my finger on. He had something I wanted. I didn't know what that was exactly, but it made me willing to follow him anywhere. We sat in his friend's living room for two hours, just talking.

Lester told me he had joined AA. I didn't know anything about AA. I had called them once when I was a kid, hoping they could help me with my parents' drinking, but that was it. Lester and I had partied together for years. For him to be sober and happy intrigued me. He told me to commit to taking his suggestions for 90 days. If AA wasn't for me, I could go back to drinking. I agreed. I also agreed to meet him the next day at noon to talk again.

I went to the bars that night to say goodbye to everyone, since I was going to change my life. I realized these people were drinking buddies, not friends. There wasn't anyone I was going to miss. Whether I stayed or left, they were still going to drink. So I left. That Sunday, while we were talking, Lester mentioned that we were going to a meeting that night. I froze with fear. "I thought we were going to a meeting tomorrow night," I said. "We are going to meetings both nights," he replied. My mind started racing. Two nights? What was I getting myself into? I was planning on a meeting maybe once a week. Then I remembered what Lester had said. This was a one-time deal. I looked up and said, "I should go home and change my shirt if we are going to a meeting."

"If you need a drink, fine," he replied, "but if you don't come back, the deal is off." I was afraid to go get a drink because I knew, once I started, I couldn't guarantee I would return, so I stayed.

Lester then told me a former drinking buddy of ours, Denis, was picking us up. "Denis, who we drank with?" I asked. He laughed, saying, "Yes, that Denis."

Later, we walked outside and our friend Denis pulled up in a sedan. I got in the front seat. Denis smiled as he said hello. He looked good and he had that same gleam in his eye that Lester had. I was quiet until Denis turned toward me. "Are you nervous?" he asked. "Yes," I responded. "Good," he said with a giggle. I didn't think this was funny, but AA had piqued my interest, since two people I drank with for so long were now sober.

We pulled into a parking lot across from a church and walked across the street into the school gymnasium. I could hear the coffee urns percolating and saw the cookies displayed neatly on a folding table. There were chairs set up facing the stage. Lester introduced me to a few people. I could barely make eye contact with anyone; I was so scared. Then we walked down a dimly lit hallway lined with green and white linoleum tiles. We entered a room with folding chairs facing the front of the room. There was an old wooden desk and a blackboard. Every few chairs, there was an ashtray. The casement windows were open. I could see the sunset reflecting through the stained-glass panels. There were a few young people sitting on the wide oak windowsills, smoking and laughing. Lester introduced me to them. He directed me to a seat in the second row. He gave me a handful of pamphlets and a big, blue book. More people started to enter the room and I pretended to be reading the pamphlets in order to avoid talking to anyone. I looked up when I heard a gavel banging on the desk. Everyone took their seats and got quiet. I was relieved to have someone sit in front of me, which blocked the view between the speaker and me. I folded my arms and slumped down in the chair, hiding behind my barroom attitude. The speaker told his story about when he started drinking, the things that happened to him while drinking, and his life now as a sober person.

(Continued from previous page)

At the break, Lester asked me what I thought about the meeting so far. I didn't have an answer for him. I was uncomfortable. I had not had a drink the entire day and I didn't know how to feel without one. The meeting started again. The speaker asked me if I wanted to say anything, but I said no. People raised their hands to speak and I just wanted to crawl under the chair. They were saying their names and that they were alcoholics. I felt scared and confused. I couldn't think of myself as an alcoholic yet. At the end of the meeting, someone handed me a list with names and numbers. I shoved it in my back pocket and walked out with Lester. Before Denis and Lester dropped me off that night, Denis popped open his glove compartment. I looked down to see a pile of books neatly stacked inside. "These are for you," he told me. I took them and before I got out Lester looked at me with a smile and said, "I will pick you up tomorrow at 7, OK?" I had always trusted Lester. He was the one person I could always count on in my life, so I agreed. I took the books in my arms and headed into my house.

Lester passed away in 2006 at 54 years old. He knew me better than anyone ever will. He could tell my life story and get it just right. That's how well he knew me. I will always be grateful for him being there for me when I needed him the most. I believe he watches over me now, from wherever he is. The look that Lester had on his face that first day on the bicycle—I now know what that was. He saw something inside of me I was too sick to see. I see it now. It was the look of hope.

One of the gifts I received from Lester and Denis was to know them as drinkers and then to see them sober. I saw for myself that AA did something for them. And I wanted it. If you stay in meetings long enough, you get to see miracles happen. People walk in completely broken, with no faith that sobriety can work for them. If they keep coming back, you get to witness the change in them. Eventually, you see the change in yourself.

My life didn't turn out the way I planned it. It's so much better than that. How I cope with life today is healthy, for the most part. I am not perfect, just a work in progress. Today I try to be the best version of me I can be.

For a while, I have wanted to do something in memory of Lester. I thought about dedicating a bench in my neighborhood and sitting there whenever I felt like talking to him. Then I thought of planting a tree in a nearby park. I could watch it grow, like he watched me grow. Nothing felt right or enough for what he did for me. I finally decided to write this story for the whole world to know what a gift he was. I hope and pray that if you ever need help, you have a person in your life like Lester.

Lorraine K.  
Brooklyn, N.Y.

Meet Your Volunteers: *Bernadette C.*

1. **What is your reason for working a desk shift at Central Office?** I like to keep busy and help others when I have free time. I also think it is a great way to meet like minded people.
2. **How has working at Central Office benefitted your sobriety?** I have always thought that God had plans for me, I was just too busy being selfish to recognize what God wanted from me. I now feel like I'm the person God wants me to be and doing God's will.
3. **Any particular call you received that stands out in your mind?** I received a call from a young man who said, "I don't know how you guys stay sober." He did not want to drink and had no one to call. He had 2 hours before he could go to a meeting. I offered to have someone call him but he did not want to hang up because he was afraid he would drink. We talked for about 90 mins and then he left to go to his meeting. He said that he would not leave his meeting that night without phone numbers and hopefully a sponsor, I pray he made it. It felt great talking to him through a rough time.
4. **What is the best part of working at Central Office?** It is so awesome to meet an individual that wants to stay sober and needs help. After listening to their needs, I always recommend that they go to a meeting somewhere. It is so very rewarding and uplifting to hear from people that the individual I spoke with, did go to a meeting and mentioned that I suggested they go there. It's even better when I get to see them at a meeting myself. :)
5. **Any thoughts for those who are thinking about a shift at Central Office?** It is very fulfilling and gives you the opportunity to learn and grow as you reach out to other alcoholics.

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### Meeting Guide Cell Phone App

Meeting Guide is a free-of-charge meeting finder app. The app helps people find AA meetings and resources near them. AA service entities provide the meeting data for the app. *Meeting Guide is available for iOS and Android smartphones.*

**Meeting Guide** syncs with area, district, intergroup/central offices and international general service office websites, relaying meeting information from more than 400 A.A. service entities directly to the app. Over 100,000 weekly meetings are currently listed, and the information is refreshed twice daily.

#### Meeting Guide Features:

- Listing of both in-person and online meetings
- A default view that provides a list of meetings showing time, location and meeting name
- A meeting detail view that offers extra information such as meeting format and any notes provided by the group
- A search function to find meetings by location or keyword, and much more!!