



MESSENGER

The Whisper of Humility

ONE part of our great program--The Twelve Traditions--has come to mean life itself to me.

The Traditions, as written by our co-founder Bill, define for me clearly and precisely how to get well and stay well. They tell me who God is, what He does, and where He functions. They show me what spirituality is and how I may seek and find it. They clarify what anonymity means.

Perhaps most important of all, they point out the path toward humility. It is helpful that this path is not described bluntly; rather it is whispered to me in each Tradition.

Tradition One tells me that "Our common welfare should come first. . . ." Not second or fourth or tenth, but *first*. Why? Because "personal recovery depends upon AA unity." So, I learn that after the Twelve Steps have been digested, my group, my AA, *comes first*; not myself, you understand, but my AA group or groups. My own recovery--my most prized possession, since it means life itself--depends upon my group's unity.

I am told how to stay well in Tradition One, and to my surprise, it dawns on me that I have received the first gentle whisper which nudges me along the path of humility.

Tradition Two tells me who God is, where He is, and what He Does. It says, "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority. . . a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." God expresses Himself in a specific locations--my conscience. This is good news to me. I have wondered for over forty years where and who God was and what He did. Now I understand what was meant, long ago, by the command, "Be still, and know that I am God."

I read on in the last half of Tradition Two and I find the second gentle whisper toward humility: "Our leaders [you and I] are but trusted servants; they do not govern." I love the clarity and force of that simple word "but." As a leader I am *but* a trusted servant; I need not govern. Thank God! I have been a dubiously trusted leader who felt that he *must* govern for too long; now I may be relieved of all of that. As God may express Himself in my conscience, I am His and your trusted servant, who governs only me!

Tradition Three tells me that "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." To have a *desire to stop* anything is new to me. So I receive the third gentle whisper toward humility. As I hear and feel these gentle whispers I settle more and more each day to life size, and, as a Los Angeles member has said, "Life comes to be for free and for fun."

Tradition Four brings me clearly and simply into my own right. It says, "Each Group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole." You and I are autonomous. Individually and collectively, we may do as we wish, we are unrestricted. . . *except* when we step on someone else's toes or when we step on a group's toes. Thus the fourth gentle whisper toward humility says to me, "Brother, the common welfare comes first for the truly spiritually selfish reason that your own recovery depends upon its continued existence."

Tradition Five defines in clear terms my only reason for existence. There is no other for me: "Each group has but one primary purpose. . . to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers." There is my answer. I need purpose--and I have it! I must carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. So I say to myself, "Thank God for alcohol and for the unrecovered drunk!" And I hear a fifth gentle whisper toward humility deep within me which says, "At long last you have come to realize that service to others is all that you have to offer in this life!"

Tradition Six clarifies the spiritual side of this program. It says, "An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary spiritual aim." I'm glad to know this, because now I can be on guard. I have a primary spiritual aim which money, property and prestige can bust wide open and devour. I hear a sixth gentle whisper toward humility which says, "*Your* primary spiritual aim is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers!" In the role of a trusted servant, I must follow the instructions of a loving authority who lives in the depths of my soul. It says, "In all reverence carry to the sick alcoholic the message that I have given you."

Tradition Seven tells me how to obtain peace of mind. It shows me how to regain my self-respect. At long last I understand the inner peace that comes from being responsible for myself, and to myself. Tradition Seven says, "Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." What relief that is! No longer do I need to *wait* for contributions. I am now free to *give* contributions.

Tradition Eight gives to me, a professional man, the very keynote of humility: "Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers." I know the professional life; I am in it up to my very ears; I love it. But I know one other thing, too: in my life of service there is absolutely no room for professionalism. In AA I am an ordinary human being with no more skills than anyone else.

Tradition Nine astonishes me by stating, "AA as such ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve." You see, in the past, I have been so well organized (or so I thought) that I almost died from it! I was frightened at first to find that I needed to be in a group that wasn't organized. But in AA I am free to be myself as I find myself at the minute, and here I find another whisper toward humility: I can be on service boards or committees, and I can be a trusted servant who is directly responsible to you, my fellow AAs.

Tradition Ten pleases me very much. I read it daily with a joyful smile: "Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy." Just think, as an AA I need never be drawn into public controversy. I don't have to worry about being right. Never again! I don't have to fight anymore. I've had enough of controversy.

God love our good co-founder, Bill, for taking it easy on my befuddled brain. He held off giving me Tradition Eleven until I could hear and digest Tradition Ten. I read: "Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films." Never again do I have to promote a single thing. . . I am free to be myself. I am free to believe what I believe. I am free to say what I believe in my own way. And I hear a whisper (number eleven) deep within that says, "The way to humility is to realize that you *need* to maintain personal anonymity!" It doesn't say that I have to, or that I should, or that I must; it says I *need--to* maintain anonymity, as I need the very food and water and air that keeps me alive.

And so Tradition Twelve comes into view. "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles above personalities." I've been wondering about this anonymity business. Now I know. Anonymity means that I am only Earle. I am just a guy like you. You and I are equal. There are no class distinctions. I am not a professional man; I am just Earle. The weather way up there on the peak of "prestige and gain" was bitter cold. . . down here in the world of anonymity, it is warm and balmy. I can shake hands with you and look you straight in the eye and say, "Hi, my name is Earle." I am just one guy. No more. No less. I am one of the grains of sand that goes to make up our great beach of AA. Without me as a grain of sand, without each of you as a grain of sand, there would be no AA beach. Without the beach of AA there would be no you and no me.

So I hear the last and best whisper of all. It says: "ever reminding us to place principles above personalities." I smile a deep inward smile. Day after day I come to know that our common welfare comes first, that my God is a living authority located inside of me, that I am His ungoverning, trusted servant who is dedicated to the spiritual activity of carrying the message in complete anonymity to the alcoholic who still suffers.

I smile because in my organization I am unorganized. I smile because I need not be a professional who has opinions that he must cram down your throat. I smile because I can at last be myself, and if I don't attract anyone at least I won't promote anyone.

But mainly, I smile because you--all of you in AA--have given me the opportunity to fight for your principles rather than my personality.

Earle M.

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SERVICE KEEPS ME SOBER

On page five in the AA Service Manual it states “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.”

I was going to title this ‘service will keep you sober’ then I realized I cannot be certain of that where you are concerned. The only thing I can be certain of is that, in my own experience, it has served me well. From the day I crawled in and was given the floor sweeping commitment at Fellowship Hall, until now, twenty-five years later, when I have moved on to other methods of carrying the message, attempting to be of service to my fellow alcoholics has

helped me to not think only of myself.

One of the things that is great about it is that I don’t have to be an expert on anything to share my experience about it. A working knowledge of the Big Book is, of course, helpful. But having had the experience of seeing new meaning in things that book contains, through the eyes of someone else, I understand there will always be more for me to learn. I also know that, for me, I have needed and utilized more than just the information in the book. Especially in the beginning, the Fellowship, and the activities of the Fellowship, have always played a huge role in keeping me around. If there were no AA breakfasts, no 4th of July bbq’s, no sober softball, and no sober dances, I might not have stuck around long enough to have the opportunity to take AA panels into prisons, Rescue Missions, and Salvation Army centers.

You hear people share about staying in the middle of the herd, because that is where it is safe. Being of some kind of service in Alcoholics Anonymous, whatever it might be, allows me the chance to do that.

This is, of course, my own opinion, and in no way reflects the views of Central Office, or AA as a whole. Thanks for letting me share.

Tim

Supporting Member Donation Coupon

I would like to become a supporting member of the Santa Barbara AA Central Office, and help it continue to carry the message and be there for the alcoholic who still suffers. I look forward to finding my monthly newsletter in the mail each month! Encloses in my first contribution of \$ _____ . I will continue to donate this amount on a (circle one) monthly, quarterly, annual, other _____ basis.

I am already a supporting member. This is my regular contribution of \$ _____ .

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Please make check payable to: AA Central Office, S.M.C.
1213 State Street, Suite H
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Every AA group ought to be fully self supporting, delining outside contributions. – Seventh Tradition (short form), reprinted by permission of A World Services, Inc.

Convention News

The more visible parts of the early planning for the 2008 convention are done – picking a theme and a logo, lining up the main speakers, and so on. This means we are in the period when much of the committee jobs take place “behind the scenes”, where the nitty-gritty details are worked out – and there are hundreds of them to be addressed. There’s not much glamour in the work or glory to be had, but you’ll find a team of sober alcoholics all working toward the common goal of making this year’s convention a success. Of course there is a payoff for all that hard work, when the doors open and hundreds of you gather together once again to share the AA message and the fellowship of recovery. If you want to be part of making it happen, there is still plenty to be done. Join us the next committee meeting, 6 PM on May 8th, at Maggie’s place. Check the convention web site, www.sbaaconvention.org, and click on “participate” for directions to the meeting.

The H&I Breakfast Meeting will again be a featured event Saturday morning at this year’s convention. This is a great way to start your day, and it’s not just for people who are now involved in H&I. It is for anyone wanting to hear the experience, strength and hope of four speakers who have been directly affected by H&I work, either through carrying the message into prisons, hospitals or institutions, or by having it brought to them while on the inside. If you attended last year’s meeting you know how moving these stories can be, all examples of the 12th Step in action. Although the meeting is not an attempt to recruit you to serve on the H&I committee or on a panel, after hearing these speakers you may decide you want to participate in this important AA work. No matter what, you will certainly find something worthwhile to take away from this meeting, so plan to join us for coffee, a continental breakfast, and four great messages of recovery.

Last month’s Messenger article mentioned that we’re bringing the Al-Anon luncheon back to the convention this year. The committee’s Al-Anon Chair is working out the menu and the scheduling details with the Site Coordinator. One thing we do know at this point is that there will have to be at minimum of number of people attending the luncheon in order for it to take place. What we need, then, is for you to sign up early if you want to attend. A week before the convention, if it appears we won’t get the required attendance, the event will be canceled, and the cost of the luncheon will be refunded to those who preregistered.

For all our planning, in fact, it’s important for as many people as possible to sign up early. This helps give us an idea of how many to plan for at certain events, such as the barbeque and banquet, and how many of each memorabilia item to buy, as well as providing the advanced funding we need for up-front expenses. More importantly, from your point of view, is that it’s an opportunity to save money. (It’s hard to imagine a tight-fisted alcoholic who isn’t in favor of that.) If you register early, it will cost only \$20, as opposed to \$25 at the door. You could also take advantage of the \$100 package, which will get you registration, the Friday night barbeque dinner, the banquet, a tee shirt and a coffee mug (remember, you get free coffee the entire weekend if you bring your convention mug to Hospitality). We plan to have the registration forms mailed out and at meetings in May, and on-line registration soon afterward, so sign up early and often. We’ll see you there, October 24-26, 2008!

Santa Barbara District 23
General Service Representatives

Why have a GSR?

Bill W. called them the
“Guardians of the Traditions”

The G.S.R. is the group's link with the General Service conference, through which groups share their experience and voice and contribute to A.A.'s Collective Conscience.

Why Else?

- Commitments are thought to enhance one's sobriety!
- Learn more about how AA works as a whole.
- Help to inform your meeting's Group Conscience with Conference Approved information.
- Service, not politics.

The GSR meeting is held the
1st Monday of every month at 6:00 PM @
Holy Cross, 1740 Cliff Drive.

Ask your secretary if your group has a
GSR!

Responsibility Pledge

“I am responsible...

When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help,

I want the hand of AA
always to be there.

And for that,

I am responsible.”

www.ccaadistrict23.com

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Gratitude

A warm sense of appreciations of
kindness received, involving a feeling of
goodwill towards the giver and a desire
to do something in return.

My Experience with the 5th Step

My experience with the Fifth Step has proven to be a revelation to me. I dreaded the prospect of exposing all of my secrets, but this turned out to be a very rewarding experience once I went through with it.

After working on my Step Four inventory, I wasn't particularly thrilled about having to further deal with my shortcomings. Admitting my wrongs to myself was going to be bad enough (nobody likes to admit how screwed-up they really are!), but I thought admitting them to God and to another human being was going to be rough.

I started this Step by admitting to myself all the wrongs I committed. I thought this list would be easy to complete after exploring my past in Step Four, but as I was writing down the wrongs I have done in my life, the list was getting a lot longer than I thought it was going to be. Once I finished my list, I spent quite a bit of time contemplating just how much misery I had caused others due to my actions. This wasn't pleasant, but it was necessary.

Next, I made my admission to God. This was the easiest part because I reasoned He already knew the wrongs I'd done, so I just verbalized to Him what I'd already written down and admitted to myself. Though I reasoned He already knew everything I had just said, I was surprised to find I felt better after actually saying it.

The last (and hardest) part for me was admitting to another human being all of my wrongs. I feared doing this because now everything would be on the table and all of the secrets I'd kept for years would be exposed. However, I fully trusted the person I shared with so I held nothing back. It was an amazing feeling to verbally expose all the wrongs I'd committed in my life. I had bared my soul and I felt as though a great burden was lifted from me.

With my past behaviors now freely admitted, I was ready to move on to the next Step and prepare myself to become entirely ready to have God remove my character defects.



April 2008 Birthdays

Name	Years
Angel A.	1
Alexandra	1
Angela K.	1
Gail F.	1
Gin B.	1
Hiedi	1
Matty P.	1
Olivia C.	1
Troy	1
Alison S.	3
Serge M.	3
Alex B.	5
Ron O	5
Guy M.	6
Mandi M.	6
Nancy E	6
Jed B.	7
Cindy B	8
Steve G.	9
Linda H	10
Traci L	15
Patrick M.	15
Nan S.	16
Michael A.	17
John R.	20
Melody M.	20
John R.	20
Elizabeth P.	21
Elizabeth	21
Jill D	22
Richard P.	22
John C.	24
Quan	26
Mara F.	30
David S	31
Pat F	32
Brian B	32
Dave D.	36
Bill V.	42

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Submissions Needed

The Messenger needs your submissions and letters. For the June 2008 Messenger we are looking for articles for Step 6, Tradition 6, or Concept 6. Or any other AA related story, H and I, or any on your experience, strength and hope.

Send submissions to **JohnS@SantaBarbaraAA.com**

Central Office Statistics

During the April 2008 your Central Office had:

AA Information calls	975
Al-Anon Referrals	65
Referrals to other programs	46
12step via answering service	60
Out-of-town visitors	31
12-step via office	21
Office walk-ins	660
Hits on our Web site	1,087

Service Meetings

General Service Representatives (GSR) on the 1st Monday of each month at 6:00pm at: Holy Cross Church Hall, 1740 Cliff Dr. Behind the Church

IGR's (Intergroup Representatives) meet at 6:00 P.M. the 2nd Tuesday each month at First Presbyterian Church 21 East Constance in Santa Barbara

H&I (Hospitals & Institutions) meets at 6:00 P.M. on the 2nd Monday each month at the Central Office.

PI (Public Information meets the 4th Saturday of each month. Call 687-7673 for more information.

22nd ANNUAL Santa Barbara Convention Committee – 2nd Thursday of each Month, 6:00 P.M. at 3523 Modoc Rd. Commitments Available!

Donations by Group April 2008

	Apr 08	Mar 08	Jan - Apr 2008		Apr 08	Mar 08	Jan - Apr 2008
001 Sunrisers	0.00	0.00	100.00	111 Carpinteria Canalino	0.00	0.00	240.00
003 Eye Opener	225.00	190.00	945.00	112 Montecito/Carpinteria	164.66	0.00	164.66
004 Monday At A Time	0.00	115.50	298.00	113 Sought Through Prayer & Meditation	0.00	0.00	27.00
006 Start Your Week Right	80.00	0.00	160.00	114 Schooner Group	100.00	0.00	201.00
011 Sundowner Group	0.00	300.00	612.00	115 Eleventh Step Meditation	0.00	12.00	59.00
014 El Montecito Saturday Night	73.00	0.00	73.00	117 Way Of Life	630.00	0.00	630.00
016 Big Book Workshop	0.00	20.00	20.00	120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys	186.00	0.00	336.00
021 Summerland Monday Group	0.00	0.00	216.00	130 Saturday Night Sobriety	72.00	0.00	72.00
022 There Is A Solution	60.00	0.00	60.00	133 Action Participation	177.30	0.00	1,058.30
023 For Women Only	60.00	0.00	60.00	139 It's A Hell Of A Deal	177.27	0.00	326.82
024, Mesa-Singleness of Purpose	40.00	0.00	120.00	141 Off Center	75.00	0.00	449.85
030 Sisters In Solution	0.00	0.00	25.00	144 Back To Basics, Young People	0.00	58.11	58.11
034 Women of Change	124.00	0.00	124.00	150 Goleta Sun. Night Speaker	0.00	50.00	50.00
035 12 & 12 Study, Tues.	80.00	0.00	160.00	156 Start Your Day Right	400.00	250.00	1,200.00
045 Alternative Group	52.00	111.00	238.00	161 Back To Basics Group	0.00	162.19	194.62
047 Tuesday Men's Stag	0.00	194.28	250.88	163 Mustard Seed	115.00	0.00	115.00
051 Men's Group At St. Mary's	0.00	0.00	96.00	164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	0.00	175.00	637.00
053 Both Oars In The Water	80.00	0.00	160.00	165 Junkyard Dogs	0.00	350.00	350.00
055 Staying Alive	75.00	60.00	195.00	166 Serenity Sisters	0.00	66.40	124.12
062 Do The Steps Or Die	40.10	30.92	159.96	170 Barefoot Group	47.00	36.00	243.75
067 Rigorous Honesty	0.00	0.00	30.00	181 Keep Coming Back Group	255.00	0.00	626.03
068 Stepping Stones	0.00	0.00	126.21	183 Summerland, Thurs.	800.00	0.00	800.00
070 Success roup	80.00	0.00	80.00	186 Sunday Night Alternative, NH III	0.00	173.85	173.85
076 11th Step	80.00	0.00	160.00	200 Anonymous Donations	98.76	44.68	1,524.44
079 Harbor Group	248.50	173.60	762.20	201 Birthday Donations	408.00	35.00	592.00
091 New Life	200.00	0.00	200.00	202 Supporting Members	437.00	534.00	1,961.46
093 Into Action, Thurs	0.00	100.00	100.00	204 Memorial Fund	0.00	0.00	25.00
097 Almost Saints	300.00	0.00	474.00	211 Rent Received	155.00	165.00	570.00
099 Sink Or Swim	80.00	0.00	160.00	212 Special Events	0.00	5,634.05	5,634.05
100 Student of Life	0.00	50.00	50.00				
101 Big Book Study, Friday	0.00	11.50	11.50				
				Totals:	6275.59	9,103.08	24,670.81

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