

Etiquette Suggestions for Meetings

Avoid Crosstalk

It is important to address the group when sharing, rather than addressing another person after they share with the group. When shares are directed to the group, everyone can benefit from the message being discussed, and no individual is singled out.

Use "I" Statements when Sharing

In general, limit your sharing to your own personal experiences by using "I" statements, rather than "you."

Arrive 15 Minutes Early, And Stay 15 Minutes After

An important component of 12-step meetings is fellowship. Arriving 15 minutes prior to the meeting beginning allows for time to converse and get to know other members of the group. Staying 15 minutes after the meeting allows for time to further converse and develop new relationships.

Limit Side-Talk

Sharing in a meeting can be intimidating for many people. When people are chattering or having side conversations while someone is sharing, it can be very distracting and even hurtful to the person sharing. It can also distract others from listening. Do your best to sit quietly and listen to respect your peers while they share. And then there are those people who learned to whisper in a helicopter surrounded by chain saws.

Stick To The Meeting Topic

It is generally best practice to stay focused on the meeting topic when sharing. Some groups may offer the opportunity to share at the beginning or end of a meeting if someone is having a "burning desire" or a pertinent need to

share due to having cravings to use or something pressing they feel they need to share.

Use Proper Terminology

Going to an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting as an addict is acceptable. However, it is respectful practice and customary to identify as an alcoholic when at an AA meeting, even if you identify as an addict. One could say "I'm just being true to myself to identify as both" but it's interpreted as "I'm different." It is further proper to use the term "drinking" rather than "using" to show respect for the meeting and fellowship. The same goes for attending Narcotics Anonymous if you are an alcoholic. The proper term would be to identify as an addict and use the phrase "using" rather than "drinking." This is customary when attending meetings outside of your typical fellowship.

Respect Anonymity

As one of the guiding principles of 12-step programs, anonymity protects not only the participants at the meeting but also the 12-step program as a whole. Never share with someone that another person is in a meeting you attend without their consent.

Limit Cell Phone Use

Cell phones should be silenced or turned off at the beginning of the meeting. If you receive an important phone call you should take it outside, but this should be avoided if possible.

Be Aware Of Time Constraints

It's important to limit your shares to only 3-4 minutes. Some meetings offer a timekeeper, who'll notify you when your time is up. Keeping your shares limited to a few minutes allows everyone to have the same chance to share during the meeting.

Serenity News

352 360 0960

aalakesumter.org

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Welcome to the February issue of Sobriety News, the newsletter for and about Lake/Sumter Counties' Central Office, LSCO. May we all be blessed with continued sobriety and our mission to help the alcoholic who still suffers. This month's theme is: Love

Step Two: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. ("Plain insanity" not crazy crazy – after what we've been through we think taking another drink is ok.)

Tradition Two: For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. (Learn to love, and love to learn)

Concept II: The General Service Conference has complete authority for maintaining A.A. world services. (There are no leaders, but there is a pyramid that ends in NYC.)

Events

Annual Unity Picnic

Co-Sponsored by Lake Sumter Central Office & District 7 A/B

Saturday March 14 10am-4pm

Hickory Point Pavilion

27341 SR 19 in Tavares (north end of Howey Bridge)

\$5 at door - Live music, raffle, meat & H2O

Bring a dish to share and a chair

Bikefest 2026

Office 352 360 0960

April 23-26

105 East Main Street, Leesburg

Friday 10am, 12pm, 2pm, 4pm, 6pm, 8pm

Saturday 10am, 12pm, 2pm, 4pm, 6pm, 8pm

Sunday 12pm

An Alcoholic's Oxymoron
by Butch D

In The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous Bill Wilson wrote there are four stages for an alcoholic. When he hits the 4th stage they've become a "Real Alcoholic." They need to drink 24/7 to survive, and the real alcoholic fate is one of three choices. Prison, Sanitarium, or Death.

An alcoholic in his cups regularly wakes up (or comes to) with DT's, heart palpitations, and anxiety. It's an oxymoron when he has no choice but to take some "hair of the dog that bit 'em." With hands shaking they need to force down some form of alcohol to temporarily ease the panic. What's funny, and the catch 22 is that it's the booze, and blackout the night before that *causes* the DT's. Then the next morning it's deja vu all over again! The vicious cycle continues, and seems never ending for the real alcoholic.

But there are three other choices if they choose: A.A, The 12 steps, and a sponsor! *Millions* of recovered alcoholics have successfully chosen the latter. "Don't drink, go to meetings, and get a sponsor!"

The Orlando Bus Stop

The bus stop sat beneath a flickering streetlight, heat radiating up from the concrete even after dark. Nina learned quickly which meetings ended in time to catch the last bus home. She learned even faster how lonely waiting could feel.

Rochelle stood there one night, arms crossed, short hair plastered to her forehead with sweat. She was older, confident in the way someone is when they've already lost and rebuilt everything once. "Bus late again," Rochelle said, rolling her eyes.

They fell into a rhythm—same night, same stop, same shared frustration. On the ride home, they talked about music, about the weirdness of Florida weather, about how sobriety made time feel both endless and fragile.

One evening, Nina admitted, "I don't trust myself yet." Rochelle didn't rush to reassure her. "That's

okay," she said. "Borrow my confidence until yours grows back."

When Nina finally moved closer to work, they hugged awkwardly and promised to text. They did. Years later, Rochelle still showed up to Nina's anniversaries, sitting in the back, clapping the loudest.

Page 522
by Butch D

When an alcoholic enters their first AA meeting a high percentage have anger issues, even justified anger. That anger may be directed towards a spouse, child, employer, local police. Nearly all alcoholics have numerous resentments, also.

In The Big Book Bill Wilson writes "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."

A newcomer named, Eddie shared he felt, "Angry as hell!" An old timer walked up and handed him a Big Book and pointed to one sentence on page 552. "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."

Eddie recently celebrated 27 years of sobriety and it started with page 552.

Point to Ponder

Point to Ponder: A sponsor asked a newcomer if he knew what the opposite of love is. The newcomer replied "of course.... hate." "Nope" said the sage, "the opposite of love is *indifference*."

As Bill (Saw) It

For all its usual destructiveness, we have found that fear can be the starting point for better things. Fear can be a steppingstone to prudence and to a decent respect for others. It can point the path to justice, as well as to hate. And the more we have of respect and justice, the more we shall begin to find love which can suffer much, and yet be freely given. So fear need not always be destructive, because the lessons of its consequences can lead us to positive values.

GRAPEVINE, JANUARY 1962

We of A.A. obey spiritual principles, at first because we must, then because we ought to, and ultimately because we love the kind of life such obedience brings. Great suffering and great love are A.A.'s disciplinarians; we need no others
TWELVE AND TWELVE, P. 174

One exercise that I practice is to try for a full inventory of my blessings and then for a right acceptance of the many gifts that are mine -- both temporal and spiritual. Here I try to achieve a state of joyful gratitude. When such a brand of gratitude is repeatedly affirmed and pondered, it can finally displace the natural tendency to congratulate myself on whatever progress I may have been enabled to make in some areas of living. I try to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful heart cannot entertain great conceits. When brimming with gratitude, one's heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion that we can ever know.
GRAPEVINE, MARCH 1962

"When I was driven to my knees by alcohol, I was made ready to ask for the gift of faith. And all was changed. Never again, my pains and problems notwithstanding, would I experience my former desolation. I saw the universe to be lighted by God's love; I was alone no more."
LETTER, 1966

I asked myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release me from this unbearable depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer: "It is better to comfort than to be comforted." Suddenly I realized what the answer might be. My basic flaw had always been dependence on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and confidence. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression. Reinforced by what grace I could find in prayer, I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people and upon circumstances. Then only could I be free to love as Francis had loved.
GRAPEVINE, JANUARY 1958

An alcoholic's "I'm fine" doesn't mean okay.

It means nothing new is broken today.

January Contributions

12x12 Tavares	\$ 25.00
As Bill Sees It	145.00
Even Keel	422.00
Gift of Gratitude	220.40
Lady Lake Breakfast	468.50
Leesburg Wednesday Night	34.74
Morning Eye Openers	130.00
Phoenix Big Book	300.00
Saturday Night Alive Group	22.42
Serenity Seekers	360.00
Sober Sunset Speakers	750.00
Speak Easy Mt Dora	402.00
Summerfield Group	125.00
Sunday at Seven	332.00
Take It Easy Women's	279.00
Triangle Breakfast	60.00
Triple Crown	285.00
Welcome Home	522.50
Your Place	55.00
Anonymous (aren't we all?)	<u>20.00</u>
JANUARY TOTAL	\$4958.56

An alcoholic's rock bottom is the moment you realize you're not surprised anymore.
