
Serenity News

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aalakesumter.org

September 2026



Serenity News wants and needs your input! Send articles/notices/
news/meeting info, jokes, etc. to Intergroup: aalakesumter@gmail.com

Central Office Hours: Tues, Wed & Thurs 10am-3pm

Welcome to the September issue of Sobriety News, the newsletter for and about Lake/Sumter Counties' Central Office, LSCO. This month's theme is: change. We're nearing fall, and shortly after that come the holidays, things will be changing, just as we must via the steps. After all, Alcoholics Anonymous is NOT about not drinking, it's about *change*. By working the steps we learn a new way to think, live, and learn. Here's a good description of a spiritual awakening from page 27: *"Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them."*

Step Nine: Made direct amends wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others. (We clean up OUR side of the streetperiod)

Tradition Nine: A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. (We're a people that would otherwise not mix, but we're all equal regardless of the position we hold)

Concept IX: Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees. (Of course, some are more committed than others we need them)

Sponsoring Through the Three Legacies of A.A.

Has your current or previous sponsor ever discussed the spiritual benefit of understanding and practicing our 12 Traditions and/or 12 Concepts of World Service? At this point you may be scratching your head, thinking, "I understand the Traditions, but what are the Concepts of World Service?" These 24 spiritual principles are often misunderstood and rarely addressed. Across all three legacies, effective and intuitive sponsorship is essential to fully understanding how A.A. functions. A.A. has three legacies: the 12 Steps of Recovery are our first legacy, the 12 Traditions of Unity our second, and the 12 Concepts of World Service our third — the legacy of service.

What is sponsorship? We often hear it defined narrowly — that a sponsor's role is to take a sponsee through the 12 Steps and help influence positive change in their life. Working the Steps with a sponsor is essential, but it only touches the tip of the iceberg compared to what a member can gain by studying, practicing, and integrating the other 24 spiritual principles. We often hear members say "my sponsor said this" or "my sponsor questioned my motives" — but how often do we hear anyone talk about being sponsored through the 12 Traditions or the 12 Concepts of World Service? To be fair, many people will say they're committed to and guided by the Traditions. But very few have any real sense of what the 12 Concepts are, let alone how they interact with and shape our behavior. It has been my privilege to sponsor many members through all three legacies of service — and in fact, all of my own sponsors took that journey with me, enriching my recovery and the quality of my sobriety.

For example, Tradition One teaches us that we are but a small part of a greater whole — a humility essential to long-term sobriety. Tradition Seven teaches us to be fully self-supporting through our own contributions. Tradition Ten reminds us not to be critical of others, so that each person can work out their own understanding of these principles with a sponsor's guidance. As for the Concepts of World Service, very few understand them outside those actively engaged in general service — GSRs, DCMs, area officers, delegates, or trustees of the General Service Board. Many of us have heard of the role of "service sponsor," but how did that come about? Essentially, it grew out of sponsors failing to exercise full sponsorship responsibility within the context of the Traditions and Concepts. Those engaged in general service clearly need a working understanding of what underpins A.A. as a whole — not just their home group.

Generally, what pushes people toward understanding the Traditions and Concepts is something going wrong — "things didn't go my way," or "that's not how we did things where I came from." The Concepts also teach us not to punish out of anger, and that the minority voice should always be heard, no matter how frustrating that may be. A.A.'s service activities are meant to balance authority and responsibility — a principle that applies just as well to our own lives, often with remarkable results. In the end, it's all 36 spiritual principles discussed here that have made my sobriety balanced and enjoyable, and that have given me many years of pleasure in sponsoring through all three legacies. In my experience: we have the 12 Steps to prevent suicide, the 12 Traditions to prevent homicide, and the 12 Concepts of World Service to prevent genocide.

As Bill (Saw) It

"It has often been said of A.A. that we are interested only on alcoholism. That is not true. We have to get over drinking in order to stay alive. But anyone who knows the alcoholic personality by firsthand contact knows that no true alky ever stops drinking permanently without undergoing a profound personality change."

LETTER, 1940

We thought "conditions" drove us to drink, and when we tried to correct these conditions and found that we couldn't do so to our entire satisfaction, our drinking went out of hand and we became alcoholics. It never occurred to us that we needed to change ourselves to meet conditions, whatever they were.

TWELVE AND TWELVE, P. 47

How many of us would presume to declare, "Well, I'm sober and I'm happy. What more can I want, or do? I'm fine the way I am." We know that the price of such self-satisfaction is an

inevitable backslide, punctuated at some point by a very rude awakening. We have to grow or else deteriorate. For us, the status quo can only be for today, never for tomorrow. Change we must; we cannot stand still
GRAPEVINE, FEBRUARY 1959

"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

"Change is the characteristic of all growth. From drinking to sobriety, from dishonesty to honesty, from conflict to serenity, from hate to love, from childish dependence to adult responsibility -- all this and infinitely more represent change for the better. "Such changes are accomplished by a belief in and a practice of sound principles in favor of good ones that work. Even good principles can sometimes be displaced by the discovery of still better ones. "Only God is unchanging; only He has all the truth there is." LETTER, 1966

As Bill (Saw) It

cont'd

How often do we sit in A.A. meetings and hear the speaker declare, "But I haven't yet got the spiritual angle." Prior to this statement, he has described a miracle of transformation which has occurred in him -- not only his release from alcohol, but a complete change in his whole attitude toward life and the living of it. It is apparent to everyone else present that he has received a great gift, and that this gift is all out of proportion to anything that may be expected from simple A.A. participation. So we in the audience smile and say to ourselves, "Well, that guy is just reeking with the spiritual angle -- except that he doesn't seem to know it yet!"
GRAPEVINE, JULY 1962

Let us never fear needed change. Certainly we have to discriminate between changes for worse and changes for better. But once a need becomes clearly apparent in an individual, in a group, or in A.A. as a whole, it has long since been found out that we cannot stand still and look the other way. The essence of all growth is a willingness to change for the better and then an unremitting willingness to shoulder whatever responsibility this entails.
GRAPEVINE, JULY 1965

"The A.A. preoccupation with sobriety is sometimes misunderstood. To some, this single virtue appears to be the sole dividend of our Fellowship. We are thought to be dried-up drunks who otherwise have changed little, or not at all, for the better. Such a surmise widely misses the truth. We know that permanent sobriety can be attained only by a most revolutionary change in the life and outlook of the individual -- by a spiritual awakening that can banish the desire to drink."
LETTER, 1966

"You are asking yourself, as all of us must: 'Who am I?' ... 'Where am I?' ... 'Whence do I go?' The process of enlightenment is usually slow. But, in the end, our seeking always brings a finding. These great mysteries are, after all,

enshrined in complete simplicity. The willingness to grow is the essence of all spiritual development."

LETTER, 1955

If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could will these things with all our might, but the power needed for change wasn't there. Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly. Lack of power: That was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live -- and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, PP.44-45

HOPE LIVES HERE

A Benefit for Dr. Bob's Home

*Proceeds Support Dr. Bob's Home, 855 Ardmore Ave, Akron, OH 44302
Dr. Bob Smith, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous*

Saturday, October 17th, 2026

10 AM—3 PM—Doors Open 9:30 AM

Graceway Church

10200 Morningside Drive

Leesburg, FL 34788

Featuring GAIL L. — ARCHIVIST

- The History of Dr. Bob's Home
- The History of the Writing of the Big Book

Tickets—\$32 Per Person (Use QR code below)
INCLUDES BOX LUNCH and DRINK



For more information contact:
Andy D. | swccd7@gmail.com | (352) 933-6353



The origin of AA's using the Serenity Prayer

In 1941, a news clipping was called to our attention by a New York member. In an obituary notice from a local paper, there appeared these words: "God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference." Never had we seen so much A.A. in so few words. With amazing speed the Serenity Prayer came into general use.

A.A. COMES OF AGE, P. 196

Points to Ponder

You never get too old to learn.

You can't teach an old dog new tricks.

The only constant is change.

The more things change the more they stay the same.

Change or die.

A leopard can't change his spots.

People can change.

Old habits die hard.

It's never too late to turn over a new leaf.

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 LONGEST DRIVE FRONT NINE (PAYOUT: \$100) | LONGEST DRIVE BACK NINE (PAYOUT: \$100)
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REGISTRATION FORM

NAME _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

EMAIL ADDRESS: _____

PHONE NUMBER _____ TEAM OR GROUP NAME _____

USPGA DESIGNATED GOLF PRO? (I.E. GOLF INSTRUCTOR, ETC) ☐ YES ☐ NO (IF APPLICABLE - TEAMS OF 4)

\$100 FEE DUE AT TIME OF REGISTRATION - REGISTER AT CENTRAL OFFICE.
 2113 CITRUS BLVD SUITE AA, LEESBURG, FL 34748

Old Dog

His sponsor used the phrase like a diagnosis: you can't teach an old dog new tricks. She said it about herself, forty years sober, laughing at some new resentment she'd caught herself building out of nothing. He didn't find it funny. He was fifty-three and had been the same dog his whole life — same tricks, same teeth, same instinct to bite the hand before it could let go of him first.

Then he watched her do it. Watched her catch the resentment mid-build, name it out loud in a meeting, dismantle it in front of strangers instead of letting it calcify into something she'd carry for another decade. That wasn't an old dog. That was a woman doing something she hadn't done at thirty, or forty, or last Tuesday.

He asked her about it afterward. She shrugged. "Leopard's got no business changing its spots," she said. "But I'm not a leopard. I'm just a person who got tired of being right about how stuck I was."

He thought about that for a week. Then he tried it himself — caught something old mid-motion, and, for the first time, didn't let it finish.

District 7 North Florida & Lake Sumter Central Office

ANNUAL

GRATITUDE
Dinner

THURSDAY • NOVEMBER 5, 2026
FROM 5:00 – 9:00 PM

4:30 PM
CHECK-IN
FELLOWSHIP

6:00 PM
DINNER

7:00 PM
SPEAKER
Lori P
Delegate, Panel 75
Area 14, North Florida

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SUNDAY OCTOBER 18** ★

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We Are Not a Glum Lot

My sponsor says I've changed so much, my resentments don't even recognize me anymore. Which is awkward, because I still recognize them immediately, by name, address, and the exact tone they used in 2004.

They say you can't teach an old dog new tricks. True. But you can teach an old dog to sit still for ninety days and stop biting everyone who mentions his ex.

Someone at my first meeting said "the only constant is change." I thought that was deep until I realized my only constant was showing up late and blaming traffic that didn't exist.

I used to be a leopard who couldn't change his spots. Turns out I wasn't a leopard. I was just a guy who really liked the spots and called it personality.

Step Four asked me to take a fearless inventory. I took one look, got scared, and had to start over. Progress, apparently, looks a lot like doing the same thing twice.

New trick: I stopped white-knuckling my way through Thanksgiving. Now I just leave early and cry in my car like a normal, well-adjusted adult with a car and no boundaries.