

KENTUCKIANA NEWSLETTER

THE VOICE OF AREA 26

CARRYING THE AA MESSAGE

12TH STEP CALLS

Reflections of Step Twelve

Friday November 7, 2008 was just another work day. It was another gray overcast Kentucky fall day. My schedule was light, and I recall thinking about having Saturday off this week as I work every other Saturday. I didn't have any real plans set up for my weekend. My wife Angie works nightshift at a local hospital and she was scheduled to work this weekend.

At approximately 10:30 in the morning I pulled up to a sales appointment on my schedule. I turned off my vehicle and gathered my things for my appointment. At the time I was carrying two cell phones; one personal and one for business. I grabbed my work phone and set my personal phone on the console of my vehicle. Upon exiting my vehicle my personal phone began to ring. My first thought was that I'd return the call after my appointment and began to close

ARE THE LEAVES THE ONLY THINGS CHANGING... CARRYING THE AA MESSAGE

the door of the car. Before the door closed completely, I was moved by curiosity to look at the caller ID on the phone. To my surprise it was an out of area number and I decided to take a moment to answer it. After I said hello this is what I recall hearing

coming from this unknown number, "Is this Brian?" I replied that it is. Next, I remember

hearing "My name is Jim J, I'm an alcoholic from Minneapolis. I got your phone number from Chris R in Ingram, Texas. My son Joshua is holed up in a hotel room in Louisville and he's drinking himself to death." I was amazed by what I was hearing. He added to the story, "I've called the AA Central Office in Louisville and the local police department. Both have sent people over to his hotel room, but he refuses to answer." As I listened I remember thanking God for this phone call and the realization that it wasn't curiosity that moved me to answer the

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phone that morning. My mind raced to the chapter “Working with Others” in the Big Book. I asked questions about his age, employment, and relationship status. Jim and I discussed his possible travel plans to Louisville and I assured him that I would be at the airport awaiting his arrival. Jim then ended the call because his home group meeting was getting ready to start at 10 am central time.

My adrenaline was flowing, and my imagination was fired by Jim’s phone call; I was hardly effective in my sales appointment. Upon return to my vehicle I immediately grabbed my personal phone to see if I had missed a call from Jim. I had not but I felt that I could not keep this experience to myself. I opened my flip phone and began to scroll through my contacts looking for someone who may be able to take a call during business hours. My contacts are sorted by first name rather than last and I finally stopped on the name Robert. I wasn’t sure why I had scrolled that far in my contact list nor why I stopped on Robert’s name. Several years before, Robert and I had the same sponsor, Stuart P, who had moved to Phoenix Arizona. Over the years since Stuart left, I kept up with Robert sparingly, maybe once or twice a year. I pushed the call button on my phone and it began to ring. I was very excited to be able to share this experience with someone, and thankfully Robert answered his phone. I began to explain the phone call with great enthusiasm. Then Robert asked,

“what hotel Joshua is in?” I replied that he’s at the Holiday Inn at 2nd and Broadway. What I heard next I don’t think I’ll ever forget. Robert then said, “Well, I’m with my sponsee right now and we’re at 5th and Broadway.” Coincidence? I didn’t think so. I immediately understood the next indicated action for myself. I told Robert that I was on my way and we’ll meet in the parking lot. Upon hanging up the call I looked to the sky and prayed “Okay God. I understand. Please give me what I need to do this work.”

Upon arrival at the hotel, I shared with Robert and his sponsee (who was only a few months sober) the notes that I had taken about Joshua during my phone call with Jim. (yes, I wrote notes about this prospect) Entering the elevator I made a silent prayer. We approached the hotel room door with the full knowledge that Central Office and Louisville Police had both been unsuccessful. Anxiously we knocked on the door. A few moments later, the door opened just slightly. It was dark in the room and I could barely see the long, stringy blonde hair of the pale skinned man peering out the cracked door. I said, “Joshua?” I don’t remember if he replied or not. I then said, “We’re from Alcoholics Anonymous, may we come in?” I did not wait for a reply and pushed the door open and the three of us walked in. We walked from the light into the dark, both literally and figuratively. Opening the drapes, we were to see many days’ worth of bottles and cans. A

slender, sick man had taken a seat on one of the two double beds in the room next to the nightstand which he was able to find a bottle that still had something for him to drink. Joshua was shaking with nervousness. I must admit that I was nervous too. I explained, “your father has contacted me and stated that you are drinking yourself to death.” Joshua remained quiet.

In the silence I began to share my drinking experience with Joshua. As I remember it didn’t take long for Joshua to start interacting with us. He was to pour out his story of mistakes and failures; how his now former company had repossessed his company vehicle right from the parking lot of the hotel; how his wife is disgusted with his behavior; how he started his drive home to Jacksonville Florida from northern Indiana but began to drink by Indianapolis; how by Louisville he felt like “what’s the use anyway.” As I continued to share my story, Joshua began to shake more. What we were to find out was not only was Joshua drinking himself to death, he had decided to go “cold turkey” with the psychiatric medication that he’d been on for some time.

Earlier that morning I had questioned why I stopped on Robert’s name in my contact list and I thought that question had already been answered. However, as Joshua began to talk about his psychiatric issues, the answer to why I called Robert became even more clear. Robert not only has alcoholism, Robert has also

suffered with psychiatric medications and drinking. Both Robert and I are in AA's class of 95'. I had seen Robert struggle with sobriety and medications. But Robert has remained sober despite the difficulties in his early years of sobriety. He had taken the twelve steps; he has had a spiritual awakening. That doesn't mean he is not engaged with his psychiatrist as well. As I continued to speak about my alcoholism with Joshua, he would interrupt with a question about psychiatry or medications. Without delay Robert would begin to share his experiences with these things; experience which I do not have. God's tapestry was beginning to take shape yet only one stitch at a time was being revealed to us. From a hotel door slightly cracked, we were able to share our experience, strength, and hope with Joshua for more than two hours.

By the end of my time with Joshua he had agreed to not drink to excess and to taper off. I had a few more work commitments to attend to and I promised to return to see him that evening. Walking down the hall from his room I almost felt as if I was floating. The experience I just had seemed so uncommon in this day and age of treatment centers. Pushing the lobby button in the elevator, I began to feel some fear about leaving Joshua. As the elevator descended, I looked up into the fluorescent lighting and said to God, "there must be more that can be done for this man." As I crossed the lobby I stopped at the

front desk. I was aware that later that night KCYPAA was to have their annual convention in this hotel. I asked the attendant at the front desk where the convention was to be held in the hotel. With that information I re-entered the elevator to the convention level. As I entered the empty ballroom I saw three young men across the room setting up some chairs. They saw me, and we met in the center of the empty ballroom. I quickly told what had transpired over the last couple of hours and how I was uneasy about leaving Joshua alone. Without hesitation, the three young men said, "take us to him." We returned to room 504 and I introduced the men to Joshua. The three young men told me that they would rotate turns and each sit with Joshua until my return.

Later that evening I returned to the hotel. When I found the young men, who had been caring for Joshua, they told me that his condition had worsened after I left. Joshua's shaking had become trembling and they feared for his health because Joshua was detoxing not only from alcohol, but from prescription medications including Xanax. A decision was made to take Joshua to the hospital and they told me that he had been admitted. I stayed at the hotel for the evening meeting assuming Joshua was safe and hospitalized. I figured that I'd be picking Jim up from the airport shortly then we'd both go to the hospital. Midway through the Friday night speaker meeting my phone began to ring. The caller ID

looked to be a downtown number with the last digits being 504. I knew the call was coming from Joshua's room and that didn't make sense since he was hospitalized. I stepped out of the meeting to answer the phone. It was Joshua. It turns out that he was not admitted, he was only taken back for triage purposes. Joshua further explained that he left the hospital against medical advice and wandered downtown Louisville until he found his hotel. I gathered a couple of men from the convention and hurried to his room. He was in poor shape; trembling and cold. The men stayed, and I left to the airport to pick up Jim and his AA friend Grant.

Returning from the airport Joshua's condition was the same or worse than when I left. After a few moments of hugs and tears between father and son, I loaded Joshua, Jim, and Grant into my car and we went back to the hospital. Quickly we were taken into triage. Understanding why Joshua left earlier, I asked the nurse if Jeff B was working tonight. Jeff was a longtime friend and fellow home group member of mine. In sobriety Jeff had returned to school and became a trauma nurse. It was a shot in the dark that Jeff was working but the nurse paged Jeff to triage. As Jeff was approaching he saw me there in the ER and he sped up his walk to me. We didn't say a word; we didn't have to. Jeff saw Joshua and told the nurse, "I got this." Just as earlier in the evening when Joshua left AMA, the waiting room was

packed full. There were people in beds just sitting in the hallways. The ER department was over capacity. After Jeff finished taking Joshua's vital signs he said, "I just discharged a patient." Jeff took us all to the far back corner of the emergency department, passing all the people on gurneys, to a private room the discharged patient just vacated. By this time, it was somewhere between 11pm and midnight. Jeff had told Jim the room was theirs until Jeff's shift ended at 7am. He told us that it would be a restless night for Joshua, but he was there to provide as much comfort as possible. Tearfully I thanked my God for the tapestry that is being woven before my very eyes. The later it got I remembered that I had driven everyone to the hospital. They are staying until 7am. I can't stay here all night. What can I do? So, I called my wife Angie, who is working nightshift at a local hospital, this hospital! She comes down from an upper floor to meet Joshua, Jim, and Grant. Angie works until 7am as well. Angie becomes their ride to the hotel in the morning. God's tapestry; you can't make this stuff up!

The next day, Saturday November 8, the men slept all day in Joshua's hotel room. Before they went to bed, Jim called me to say that Joshua hadn't bathed for days and has no clean clothes. I put together a care package of my clothing for Joshua and returned later Saturday evening to have dinner with the three of them. Joshua had stopped shaking. He

was beginning to get some color back in his complexion, and his hair was cleaned and brushed. He already looked like a different man. After dinner we decided to take in the Saturday night speaker meeting at the KCYPAA convention in the hotel. Joshua was familiar with AA as he had attended most of his father's AA birthday meetings, but he had never been to a convention. Joshua sat with me on his right and his dad on his left. As the Saturday night meeting opened, we began the customary sobriety countdown. The feeble man to my left, and to the right of his father, was the lone person to stand for 1 day. With the cheer of hundreds of young people in Alcoholics Anonymous, Joshua received a Big Book signed by all those attending the convention. Joshua's sobriety date is 11/8/2008. I told you, you can't make this stuff!

Joshua, Jim, and Grant remained in Louisville for a few days longer. I was to have regular contact with them and act as Joshua's temporary sponsor. We reminisced about the magical tapestry we were all part of. We shared with each other from our own perspectives. During this time in my sobriety I was serving as Co-Chair and Program Coordinator of the 2009 Kentucky State Convention. I had asked Chris R from Ingram Texas to be one of the speakers. This is how Chris had my information to give to Jim. When I asked Jim how he knew Chris, he said, "I don't." Jim continued, "I emailed all the AA contacts that I have explaining the

situation and asking if they knew anyone in AA in Louisville Kentucky. Apparently, none of my friends knew anyone here, so they in turn forwarded my request to all their AA contacts. Eventually it reached the desk of Chris R and he replied to me with your information." Yet another stitch in God's tapestry that I never could have dreamed. Both Jim and Grant returned to Louisville the following February to meet Chris R and to tell him all that became from a simple email. Had I not been in some form of service in Alcoholics Anonymous, there's a scant chance that I would have involved in this tapestry. God would have found someone, but it may not have been me.

After this experience, I had an idea that Joshua and I would have such a strong bond of friendship and we'd always stay in touch. I dreamed of traveling to Jacksonville to speak at his first AA birthday. Neither of these have happened. I do know that Joshua is now nine years sober but we rarely communicate. What I didn't expect is that Jim and I have a strong bond of friendship and we always stay in touch. A funny thing is that the clothes that I brought to Joshua on his sobriety date were clean but not his style. So, he left my clothes with his father. What is funny about this is that from time to time I'll receive a text from Jim saying only "I'm wearing your jeans." It's a corny text but I smile. The text is not about the jeans at all. It is about not forgetting the warm and bright tapestry woven by a loving God on

a cold and dreary November weekend in 2008.

“For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice

for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead.”

(pages 14-15 Alcoholics Anonymous)

Brian S. DCM DISTRICT 12

STEP 11

My Experience with Step 11

"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with god as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will and the power to carry that out."

First things first-I needed a working relationship with Steps 1 through 10. I discovered my higher power, gave my life to its care and direction, dug into my inner being and confessed my difficulties with another human, gave all of me to my higher power, made amends and daily practice these life-giving ways to live.

It was suggested to me early on if I wanted a relationship with my higher power I needed to spend time with her through prayer and meditation. I was taught as a child to pray certain words to get what I wanted. The Steps have shown me a new way. I have conversations with my higher power-asking for guidance on what she needs me to do. Then I try to listen for an answer. I thought the only way to meditate was to clear my mind and be open for the next thought. Well, clearing my mind is pointless-thoughts (great ones) are always running through. So, I have learned to let them run through and not dissect them. When ideas come I thank my higher power, check with someone human that it is towards the light side of life and pray for willingness and courage to carry on.

This experience I have many times during the day. Today I am not in charge of my life. Step 11 helps me stay right sized and able to do my higher power's bidding.

Peggy S., Archives Chair

STUMP THE CHUMP

1. HOW DO I WORK STEP 11?

On page 86 of the Big Book it states the "When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse, or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken".

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonesty or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives". (BBpage86)

2. WHAT SHOULD I DO WHEN I'M ASKED TO DO A 12 STEP CALL?

It is always a good idea to have the conversation with a sponsor or person who has done a real 12th step call before. Sometimes a 12 step is just answering the phone when a fellow alcoholic needs to talk. Other times its picking someone up and taking them to detox or their first meeting. We should never say no whenever possible to do service in AA. **We do not go on 12 step calls by ourselves.** It's usually best for this to be men with men and women with women whenever possible, just for safety.

3. HOW MUCH SOBRIETY DO I NEED TO SPONSOR SOMEONE?

There is nothing in AA literature that gives a certain time, but it is best if you have worked the steps first or at least a couple of steps before trying to sponsor someone. I have found that it brings a sponsor and sponsee closer when everyone is sponsoring because conversations about the steps and the literature are being talked about.

4. WHO ARE OUR AREA OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS? HOW WOULD I CONTACT THEM?

OFFICERS

DELEGATE ROGER W.
ALTERNATE DELEGATE MARY F.

CHAIRPERSON JENNIFER S.
ALT. CHAIRPERSON ANGIE S.
SECRETARY CINDY H.
TREASURER JEFF L.

LITERATURE ERIC B.
PUBLIC INFO BRIAN N.
REGISTRAR CINDY T.

ACCESSIBILITY NIKKI P.
TREATMENT DANNY F.
WEBSITE STAN H.

COMMITTEE CHAIRS

ARCHIVES PEGGY S.
CORRECTIONS SHAWN W.
CPC CHRIS K.
GRAPEVINE SANDI G.
KENTUCKIANA NEWS VICTOR K.

IF YOU EVER HAVE A QUESTIONS, COMMENT, SUGGESTION OR IF YOUR GROUP OR DISTRICT WANTS TO DO A WORKSHOP; PLEASE DON'T HESITATE TO REACH OUT TO ANY OF THE OFFICERS OR CHAIRPEOPLE. IT'S EASY BY GOING TO AREA26.NET. WE ARE ALL HERE TO SERVE YOU.

OUR ARCHIVES IS OPEN THE 3RD SUNDAY OF EACH MONTH FROM 1-4PM OR BY APPOINTMENT.
3499 LANSLOWNE DR., SUITE 110
LEXINGTON, KY 40517

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, STORY, GROUP HISTORY, JOKE OR JUST HAVE A LETTER TO THE CHAIR PERSON YOU WOULD LIKE TO INCLUDE IN THE NEWSLETTER SEND AN EMAIL TO KENTUCKIANA@AREA26.NET

WE HAVE HAD AN ISSUE WITH OUR EMAIL SUBSCRIPTION LIST. IF YOU WOULD LIKE THE NEWSLETTER EMAILED TO YOU PLEASE LET US KNOW.

WE AREN'T A GLUM LOT

The Promises

Y X B E L N O T R E G R E T Y
T G O W D N S A D F O X F A L
I F N M T U I L E E P G O D E
R W D W A E T L I E Z T E P V
U E A S X T L I R P S A A O I
C W G H S O E I T S A I M M T
E I E L W E E R E T N W O A I
S L F S O N L N I S A D A E U
N L R K C R S R T A E W S Y T
I K O E E S K A A E L A E I N
S N M J E S K V R E H I K N I
H O S L N I B F B P F L Z U L
P W E S N O I T A U T I S E F
W S L G E X T R A V A G A N T
U G F G N I K E E S F L E S E

AMAZED
BONDAGEFROMSELF
EXPERIENCE
EXTRAVAGANT
FEARLESS
FELLOWS
FREEDOM
GOD
INSECURITY
INTUITIVELY
MATERIALIZE
NEWATTITUDE
NOTREGRET
PAINSTAKING
PHASE

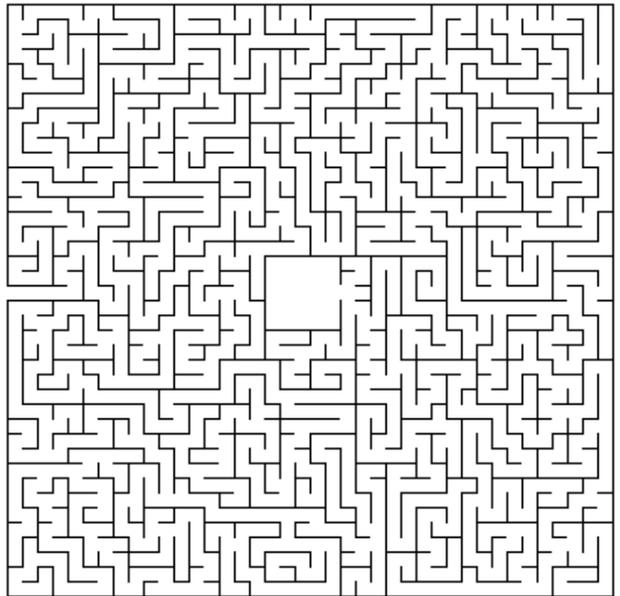


SELFSEEKING
SITUATIONS
SLIPAWAY
USELESSNESS
WEWILLKNOW

“You were sick, but now you're well again, and there's work to do.” — Kurt Vonnegut, Timequake

The first three steps taught me how to give up. Four, Five and Six taught me how to open up. Seven, Eight and Nine taught me how to makeup. Ten, Eleven and Twelve taught me how to grow up.

ESCAPE DISASTER



Suggested donation \$5

KENTUCKY STATE CONVENTION

THE GALT HOUSE

LOUISVILLE, KY

FEB. 16-18, 2018

EVENTS

New Year, New Journey, New Joy

The Derby City Round up

FEB. 10, 2018 6-12AM

Spaghetti Dinner and AA Panel Meeting

Highland Vineyard Church

1649 Cowling Ave. 40205

LOLLAPALOOZA III

HOTEL ML

MOUNT LAUREL, NJ

MARCH 15-18, 22018

OUR GOAL IS TO INSPIRE RECOVERING ALCOHOLICS THROUGH ARTICLES ON AA
TOPICS THAT SHARE THE EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE OF AA MEMBERS.

SUBMIT ARTICLES TO KENTUCKIANA@AREA26.NET

AREA 26 QUARTERLY MEETING

RIVER VALLEY MIDDLE SCHOOL

2220 Charlestown Road, New Albany

47130

APRIL 14-15, 2018