

How Prayer Works – In My Experience

By Damien M.

Toward the end of my drinking I had discarded or been discarded by all but two people in my life. And I was afraid that if I lost those two – my boyfriend and my brother – I would lose my only two places to lay my head out of the elements, while I lied to myself that I wasn't homeless. I was penniless, and would "borrow" enough from last night's host for a burger and a bottle.

I'd stay at my brother's place a few nights, at my boyfriend's a few nights, and when my stomach was "unstable" I'd take advantage of the hospitality of a park bench along Boston's Charles River. When I slept outside, I'd tell the one benefactor that I was at the other's place.

That's part of what it was like for me when I stepped into my first A.A. meeting at the Old West Church in Boston in the fall of 1982. Somehow I didn't drink that first day I went to A.A. I was in a confused fog, but I heard what I needed to hear to get me through that day without drinking, into the next and to the next meeting. It would be 11 months before I began long-term sobriety.

I turned over the apartment keys to my boyfriend and my brother, and told them I couldn't be trusted. I'm not sure I owned up about stealing from them, but I did start asking for some money for lunch and coffee. I'd arrange where I was going to crash that night, and spend the day finding meetings, going to the library and staying away from my outdoor drinking hangouts.

One morning in the first month of sobriety while I was waiting for a halfway-house bed, I was alone in my boyfriend's apartment. He'd left for work, and I had to lock myself out of his apartment ASAP. A savage, frightening craving hit me. I was sure was going to stay in the apartment and reach for a beer in the fridge, or go out and hustle something other than coffee somewhere.

Then, the thought came to me: "Make a call, or pray." I got on my knees. I recited the Serenity Prayer. Slowly. I listened to the words, seeking meaning. And begging Whatever-It-Was to get me through this. Please.

I ended the prayer and felt no different. Disappointed, I stood. Before I could think "What do I do now?" the phone rang. This was not my phone; I'd never been inclined to answer it. But for some reason I picked it up. It was a longtime friend, Joe, whom I'd dumped like so many others. We'd lost contact, and he was calling my boyfriend to find out where I was and how to get in touch.

He asked if I had time for a cup of coffee in Harvard Square, where we used to hang out. I didn't know he was having trouble with drinking; he didn't know I was trying to get sober.

It took quite some time for me to realize my Serenity Prayer had been answered that morning. A year or so down the road, Joe got sober in A.A. He became an important part of my life again, and my sobriety.

I think that says what I wanted to tell you. Thanks for your time.

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Intergroup minutes and reports are now published on our website:
<https://aasantacruz.org/documents/>

From the Central Office



What Is the Diverter? When anyone attempts to contact Alcoholics Anonymous by phone in Santa Cruz County after the Intergroup Central Office closes for the day, that call is diverted to the phone of an alcoholic. That alcoholic will provide general AA and AA meeting information, or have another alcoholic contact the caller to provide general 12-step service, if necessary.

My experience with the Diverter began a little over three years ago and has proven to be a life-saver, not only for myself. Like many AA service positions, the Diverter will put you in contact with many alcoholics, week in and week out. That simple contact will often change the tide of a rough day, situation, or mood and more importantly, insure group and personal sobriety. Simply put, the Diverter is often the lifeline to that still suffering, raw and fresh alcoholic. The alcoholic who, wanting so badly to get sober, will do anything to get anything to relieve the acute emotional, mental, and physical pain of alcoholism.

Who then does this alcoholic speak to when contacting AA. Who? Bureaucratic prerecorded message spitting out meeting times and locations? No, Santa Cruz Central Office runs the AA Diverter with a 24-hour rotation of live AA members, ready at all times to send out a 12-step call or direct the caller to an AA meeting.

Who makes this possible? You and I, fellow members of AA, run the Diverter. Here's an example of a Diverter call:

It's 6:30 on a Monday evening. The phone rings...

"Good evening, Alcoholics Anonymous. This is XXX. How can I help you?"

"Um, I—uh—wanted to find out if there was a meeting tonight?"

"Sure. There's a few at 7:00 and a bunch at 8:00".

"8 would be better."

"Ok. Did you have a particular kind of meeting you wanted to go to?"

"What do you mean?"

"Like a women's meeting, mixed meeting, big or small, that kind of thing."

"Oh, they have those?"

The Diverter needs your help!

Intergroup Diverter Chair Daily Coordinators

2nd Monday	5-7pm
5th Monday	5-7pm
2nd Saturday	11pm-7am
3rd Saturday	7pm-11am
3rd Sunday	5-7pm
4th Sunday	11pm-7am
5th Sunday	11am-1pm

**Learn more by calling the Central Office:
831-475-5782**

Santa Cruz County Intergroup

January - Feb 28, 2024 Contributions

11 Step Meditation Group	100.00
Acceptance Group	57.59
Anonymous	200.00
BYOB	25.00
Aptos Women Serenity	450.00
Aromas Group	161.80
Awareness Group	180.00
Early Risers	416.86
In the Woods	841.02
Jade Street	716.40
Make My Day	121.60
Mattson Lane Group	108.00
Men's Basic Step Study	245.00
Men's Westside Big Book	235.35
Monday Mens Meeting	300.00
Santa Cruz Speakers Meeting	356.01
Saved By Grace	900.42
Scotts Valley Steps and Traditions	282.43
Skyland	60.00
Sobriety and Gratitude	117.62
Soquel Acceptance Group	241.80
Soquel Acceptance Group (Fri noon)	186.00
Sunday Morning Spiritual	48.30
Sunday Nite Candlelight	341.00
Shivering Denizens	80.00
Twisted Sisters	46.20
We Agnostics, (WAAFT)	400.00
Womens Non-Binary	44.00
TOTAL	7,162.40

“Yeah.”

“Ok, well um, I guess, like, one with not too many people and definitely not one with just women.”

Long pause.

“Can I answer any questions?”

“Well, it’s just that I’ve never been to an AA meeting before. What are they like?”

I went on to describe to her the general format of an open discussion meeting. That we say “God” and pray a bit but aren’t associated with any religion. That you don’t have to introduce yourself if you don’t want to, and that there are NO compulsory fees.

This satisfied her somewhat but she was still apprehensive.

“Well, it’s just that it’s going to be really weird going to some AA meeting and I won’t know anybody there.”

“Well, you’ve met me over the phone, right?”

“Yeah.”

“Well, my shift here ends at 7, and I’m going to an

8pm meeting at the little red church across from the Nickelodeon. It’s pretty small, coed, and if you want, I’ll come up and say hi. That way, you’ll know somebody there.”

“Ok, that sounds good.”

“And meanwhile, try not to take a drink, but we won’t kick you out if you do.”

As it happens, she did show up to the meeting, and I see her from time to time. She’s still sober today. What a gift to have had that experience! Serving on the Diverter made that possible.



MARCH Book Special \$11

Fun in Sobriety

Fun in Sobriety features 50-plus inspiring stories by members of Alcoholics Anonymous about the many ways they’ve learned to have a good time after putting down the drink. Includes two stories by local Santa Cruz County writers!

RULE 62 TRIVIA TEST

1. How many questions are in the A.A. pamphlet “Is A.A. For You?”
2. What is Founders’ Day?
3. Where was Bill W. when he first surrendered to his higher power?
4. What is A.A.’s “basic text”?
5. What is Santa Cruz County’s General Service Area called?
6. Where did Bill W. stay when he first arrived in Akron?
7. What year did Bill W. reach permanent sobriety?
8. Which edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous do we now use?
9. Founded in 1921, they followed “The Four Absolutes” and “The Five C’s”. What were they called?
10. How many members did A.A. have when they began writing the Big Book?
11. What five aphorisms are you likely to see on a meeting wall?
12. What is Rule No. 62?

By Damien M.

The answers are given later in this issue.

74th General Service Conference:

Connecting with Love, Unity and Service

I recall sitting at a bar years ago, wondering what folks who don't drink do with their lives. "What a boring existence," I thought as I sat among "friends" who knew as little about me as I knew about them. I didn't care. Many days later, being driven to a treatment center, I remember thinking my life was over, disregarding the overwhelming misery that had pushed me to that center.

Many sober years later, those thoughts amuse me. A.A. has given me a life "beyond my wildest dreams," full and hardly boring. I have a host of friends who I care about and who care about me. My heart brims with gratitude, connecting with love, unity and service.

A.A. service continually opens my heart. The opportunity to relinquish a closed-off heart - and therefore love - is a gift.

I look forward to sharing with other open-hearted folks at the Pacific Region A.A. Service Assembly, or PRAASA, March 1-3 at the Marriott Marquis in San Francisco. About 1,800 people from nine states will attend, and I can't wait to feel that shared service juice: love! Come join us.

The 74th World Conference will occur in New York in April. Agenda topics are available for discussion led by GSRs at your groups. Santa Cruz General Service is planning an Agenda Topics Workshop on March 17 to look at those topics. All are welcome. See enclosed flier for more information. And, a district-wide Unity Day is planned May 18. Our Area Delegate Eric L will share key takeaways from the meeting in New York.

"Connecting with Love, Unity and Service." Staying sober. Living a life beyond our wildest dreams.

Yours in service,

Deb A

District Committee Member Chair, DCMC
District 03, Santa Cruz

Contact Ken W at wyllieken@yahoo.com for more information on either the Agenda Topics Workshop or Unity Day and how you can be of service.



1. Twelve questions
2. Founders' Day celebrates A.A.'s founding on June 10, 1935. It's the anniversary of Dr. Bob's last drink.
3. Towns Hospital, New York
4. Alcoholics Anonymous, or The Big Book
5. California North Coastal Area 06 (CNCA 06)
6. The Mayflower Hotel
7. 1934
8. The Fourth Edition
9. The Oxford Groups
10. About 100
11. "Live and Let Live"; "Easy Does It"; "But For The Grace of God"; "Think Think Think"; "First Things First"
12. Don't take yourself too seriously. Page 149, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

**General Service
Monthly Meeting is
Now Hybrid!
Second Wednesday of each
month at 7:30 p.m. at the
Mid-County Senior Center
or on Zoom
Meeting ID: 898 9003 8938
Passcode: 121212**

SOBRIETY MILESTONES

FEBRUARY

Mary Jane McG	February 16, 1977
Laura L	February 17, 1981
Dario P	February 17, 1981
Mary K	February 14, 1982
Steve R	February 24, 1982
Kim M	February 24, 1982
Linda O	February 14, 1984
David L	February 3, 1986
Carl B	February 5, 1987
Prentice S	February 11, 1987
Michelle B	February 14, 1987
Craig	February 14, 1988
George T	February 22, 1990
Ann B P	February 23, 1990
Tim M	February 22, 1994
David C	February 3, 1995
Alan A	February 15, 1996
Scott G	February 23, 2001
Kelly G	February 11, 2002
Jeanette G	February 2, 2003
Ralph W	February 24, 2006
Lisa H	February 15, 2007
Yolanda M	February 15, 2007
Julia M	February 2, 2008
Julia M	February 3, 2008
Cara F	February 26, 2012
Patty S	February 14, 2013
Brian D	February 20, 2014
Brian D	February 20, 2014
Juliana M	February 10, 2015
Brian T	February 2, 2016
Melissa B	February 5, 2017
Brenda W	February 12, 2015

IN MEMORIAM

Dossie P	February 6, 1970
Tom E	February 26, 1988
Jude W	February 2, 199

Want to list your A.A. anniversary in the GrapeSCINN?

Email your name and sobriety date to:
grapesccin@gmail.com



SANTA CRUZ COUNTY INTERGROUP PRESENTS

MARCH BIRTHDAY SPEAKER MEETING

speaker: AJ from Santa Clara
sober date: August 15, 2007

SATURDAY, MARCH 2ND
DOORS OPEN 5:30PM
MEETING AT 7:00PM

MID-COUNTY SENIOR CENTER
829 Bay Ave, Capitola

hosted by: Mattison Lane Group

UPCOMING EVENTS

For more information
about this month's events, visit
aasantacruz.org

March 2 @ 7:00 pm - 8:15 pm
Birthday Speaker Meeting
Mid-County Senior Center
829 Bay Ave., Capitola

March 3 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
CRUZYPAA Monthly Meeting
Harvey West Park
326 Evergreen St, Santa Cruz

March 6 @ 7:30 pm - 8:30 pm
Intergroup Council Meeting
Meeting ID: 828 1508 0970
Passcode: 588309

March 12 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Joint Committee on Safety
Meeting ID: 892 3730 0658
Passcode: 857738

March 13 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm
General Service District Meeting
Meeting ID: 898 9003 8938
Passcode: 121212

March 14 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
Web Committee Meeting
Meeting ID: 884 7009 1801
Passcode: 2272

March 17 @ 1:00 pm - 3:00 pm
CRUZYPAA Monthly Meeting
Harvey West Park
326 Evergreen St, Santa Cruz

March 20 @ 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm
Intergroup Steering Committee Meeting
Meeting ID: 861 8723 8980
Passcode: 723088

March 24 @ 6:00 pm - 8:00 pm
SC Fellowship Birthday Speaker Meeting
Santa Cruz Fellowship
412 Front Street, Santa Cruz

March 27 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm
H&I Committee Meeting
Trinity Presbyterian Church
420 Melrose Ave, Santa Cruz



PRAASA 2024 is in San Francisco!

Pacific Region A.A. Service Assembly

March 1-3, 2024

San Francisco Marriott Marquis, 780 Mission St., SF

For online registration, hotel reservations, volunteer opportunities & more:

WWW.PRAASA.ORG

Registration: \$40 (plus optional meals) • Hotel Rooms: \$189/night + tax
All A.A.'s Welcome • AI-Anon Participation • Spanish & ASL Interpretation

Join 1500+ A.A. members from all over the Western U.S. and Canada,
plus GSO and Grapevine Staff!

Three-day program features a speaker meeting Saturday night, lots of panels, and roundtable breakout sessions for: GSRs, DCMs, Literature, Grapevine, La Vina, H&I/Corrections, Intergroup/Central Offices, Young People (YPAA), Bridging the Gap, Archives, Public Information (PI), Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC), Accessibilities/Treatment, Remote Communities, Seniors/Cooperation with the Elder Community, Hispanic Women, Newsletters, Websites and Tech, Area Secretaries, Treasurers, Registrars, Chairs, Alternate Delegates, Delegates, and Past Delegates/Trustees.

The purpose of PRAASA is to:

- Develop greater unity among the members, groups, and areas of the Pacific Region.
- Encourage the exchange of ideas and experiences.
- Provide an opportunity for members to discuss pertinent aspects of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Assembly and the PRAASA Committee should always foster the Recovery, Unity and Service legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous.



AGENDA

TOPICS

Workshop

17TH MARCH | 1PM-3PM

VIA ZOOM

MEETING ID: 898 9003 8938

PW: 121212

EVERYONE WELCOME!

SEEKING PRESENTERS

CONTACT: KEN (831) 246-4870

WYLLIEKEN@YAHOO.COM