

GSR News

Coffee Hour Recap

June 2023

*I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.*



Money, Self-Support and Responsibility

The concept of self-support was foreign to me when I came to A.A. I had been looking for something from everyone and life itself since I could remember.

Now I was learning that I had to take responsibility for myself and I had some growing up to do. This didn't mean that I couldn't ask for help, in fact that's what saved my life. But if I

were to recover from that hopeless state of mind and body, I would have to become a giver rather than a taker. I would have to begin to look for what I could contribute in time, effort and money instead of what I might gain. ~Contributed by Amy H.

Tradition Seven

"Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

SELF-SUPPORTING alcoholics? Who ever heard of such a thing? Yet we find that's what we have to be. This

What Does it Mean?

AA's tradition of self support has evolved to meet a variety of needs over time but the purpose behind self support has not. In 1947 Bill Wilson said, **"AA ought not be takers from society, any longer. Instead, let us be givers."** Today, AA has many ways to give to others. We provide a welcoming space for members to meet. We provide literature and meeting lists to anyone who needs them. We work to ensure the phone for Central Office is always answered. And of course, there's the coffee and snacks. Maintaining AA's independence from outside influences is a responsibility every recovered AA member has. In the spirit of walking shoulder to shoulder with each other, trudging this road together, there's very little that AA may even need outside help of any kind.

Personally, I occasionally do a spot check at the strength of my triangle (Unity, Service, Recovery). Are there sides that are smaller than others? Am I too heavy on one? How can I build up the others to be equal measure? Supporting the work of your home group can be a one stop shop for strengthening your triangle. I am proud of what my home group puts together each week and it's all a product of willingness, sacrifice, and, perhaps most importantly, gratitude from each member. The time, energy, and few dollars in the basket each week can have an incredible return on investment



when the meeting is exactly what someone may need that day to plant the seed that our solution to recovery is what they're looking for.

Like any investment practice, the gains will ebb and flow but consistently showing up and contributing to the group will always be worth it if the sick and suffering alcoholic walks away with a sense of hope and belonging. I'm grateful that each group I go to has members who are willing to contribute to AA's primary purpose. When our group's Treasurer reports on any financial strains we may have (usually only a short period of time) I feel a charge to financially provide a bit more because I am in a position

to do so- which is only the result of the solution found in the rooms and Big Book. If AA had a reliance on outside contributions for financial support, I'm not sure the same Treasurer's report being read would inspire me to be so selfless and responsible. The long form of the seventh tradition states that accepting financial support from anything other than AA members is "unwise" and "dangerous", and to that I would say directly jeopardizes the spiritual connection we foster. God has come into our lives and hearts to not just make us better people, but to show new members what is possible if they want it bad enough and what this way of living has to offer. ~Contributed by Patrick L.

Next Coffee Hour

August 7, 7 pm

819 8956 5200

Password: service

Resources:

- Area50WNY.org
- AA.org
- Buffalo Intergroup buffaloany.org
- Gen-Wyoming Intergroup geneseewyomingcountyaa.org
- Niagara Falls Intergroup niagarafallsnyameetings.com
- NY-PENN Intergroup nypennintergroup.org

Next General Assembly:

Saturday June 17,

10 am- 2 pm

Love Joy Church

5423 Genesee St,

Lancaster, NY 14086

Online:

993 4272 4284

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Where Does the Money Come From?

"The A.A. groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then, too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money and authority." - Reprinted from *The A.A. Service Manual, 2003-2004 Edition, pages S13-S14, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.*

With the realization that A.A. must steer clear of outside contributions in order to maintain its autonomy and independence came the understanding that the money necessary for A.A.'s survival would have to come from individual A.A. members and groups. As Bill W. put it in 1957, "Our spiritual way of life is safe for future generations if, as a Society, we resist the temptation to receive money from the outside world. But this leaves us with a responsibility — one that every member ought to understand. We cannot skimp when the treasurer of our group passes the hat. Our groups, our areas, and A.A. as a whole will not function unless our services are sufficient and their bills are paid. (p-3 "*Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix*)



Where Money and Spirituality Mix

"Self-support begins with me, because I am part of us — the group. We pay our rent and utility bills, buy coffee, snacks and A.A. literature. We support our central office, our area committee, and our General Service Office. If it were not for those entities, many new people would never discover the miracles of A.A."

"When we meet and defeat the temptation to take large gifts, we are only being prudent. But when we are generous with the hat we give a token that we are grateful for our blessings and evidence that we are eager to share what we have found with all those who still suffer." (*The Language of the Heart, p. 221*)

~Contributed by Megan C.

Sources:

- The Twelve & Twelve
- (F3) Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix available at aa.org
- Language of the Heart pg 221
- The A.A. Service Manual
- aa.org

Where Does it Go?

What are we contributing to? What do AA entities do with the funds?

Regarding why members of Alcoholics Anonymous provide

AA entities with money, Bill states, **"The answer is simple enough. Every single A.A. service is designed to make more and better Twelfth Step work possible, whether it be a group meeting place, a central or intergroup office...or the world service Headquarters"** (Self Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix, pg 6). Essentially, one of the main purposes of putting a dollar in the basket is to continue to help the next alcoholic who still suffers, and carry the message.

Although understanding why we contribute money and are self-supporting is very important, it is also equally as important to know where the funds go. Typically, once a group's basic expenses are met (rent/literature, coffee, etc.), a group conscience can be formed to determine where to send left over funds. AA entities that receive funds are commonly the local district, area committee, local intergroup or central office, and AA General Service Office.

Each AA entity (district/area/intergroup/GSO) serves different purposes in carrying the message. For instance, the districts are the link between area delegates and the GSRs, and area committees coordinate vital AA activities

over a broad geographic area (such as area assemblies), and send an appointed delegate to the General Service Conference. Local intergroups/central offices provide more "boots on the ground" services, such as answering 12th

step phone calls, generating meeting schedules, and facilitates with literature sales. There can also be specific committees within those entities that are in need of funds, such as Treatment, or Corrections. GSO provides very important services like all literature publications, and the connection with members and groups around the world. Therefore, as a GSR, it is important to know where there is need within one's district, area, or intergroup, in order to help the group form a more informed group conscience on where to send money.

The website aa.org lists some of the vital services that contributions support: groups getting meeting spaces, phones getting answered, alcoholic persons in custody getting big books, professionals getting correct information about AA, lone AAs getting letters, newcomers getting literature

and meeting lists, and overall, AAs around the globe can share experience, strength and hope with each other. To think that all that can be possible by simply putting a dollar (or more) in the basket is truly just another reason why AA is such a gift.

~Contributed by Jen W.

Where Money and Spirituality Mix

Members celebrate sobriety by giving time, energy and money in support of carrying the A.A. message. Members assure that group expenses are paid by voluntarily putting money into the basket passed at each meeting. Contributions support the group and A.A. worldwide. Contributions ensure that:

- Groups get meeting space
- Phones get answered
- Alcoholic persons in custody get Big Books
- Professionals get correct information about A.A.
- Lone A.A. members get letters
- Newcomers get literature and meeting lists
- A.A.s around the globe share experience, strength and hope