

November 2009

Garden Island Sobriety

'Step Eleven'



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



He said: Prayer and meditation, huh?

So what is prayer, anyway? Is it a request for divine guidance or is it a petition for self will to resume wreaking havoc in our lives under the guise of a Holy Crusade? Has it been a query for creature comforts or maybe a well-constructed, well - rationalized begging ritual? Perhaps, our most sincere request for that job we want, because we deserve it? Have we been praying for our obnoxious colleagues to find sanity and reason because our thinking is more rational than theirs? Cures for our sick friends and relatives? Temperate weather to travel by? Sobriety for our struggling spouses? More drunks to save? Can we bargain with the Almighty? How do we know when, (or if), He answers, anyway? Who knows? We have some pretty good ideas don't we? Plenty of romantic ideology planted by 100 years of movie making and thousands of years of polished, religious rhetoric has shaped our thinking, too. Historically, thousands more have claimed to have had intimate contact with the "Maker of Makers". Today, if you asked 100 people to describe God it would probably get mostly similar descriptions that follow the instructions of their particular faith. The other 10 would probably run because they would probably think you were trying to sell them your religion. The human race has been fighting over "God's Will" for us since a long, long time ago in a galaxy far, far away.

I cannot tell you what God's will is for us. I can't tell you what God's will is for me, either. I used to think I had a pretty good idea, but that was usually based on some superstitious experience. The bulk of the day is pretty much up to me. I don't question God anymore. I just live as if I were God by doing Godly things, like being there for my fellow man when I am



She said: I have been so excited to get

to write about this Step for the last 10 because I have a terrific story. Are you ready?

Once upon a time there was a 41 year old girl (girl in maturity level - not age obviously) around her first year of sobriety. She had just finished Step Eleven when her sponsor suggested she attend a "day retreat" on the Eleventh Step to help her with her meditation, which she struggled with. Reluctantly, she went - after all, her sponsor suggested it.

Not having a clue what to expect, she arrived at the retreat, a private home, in the mountains of Colorado on a crisp autumn Saturday day, wearing her usual jeans, flannel shirt, hiking boots and thick socks.

Entering the home, her anxiety rose a notch, which was already pushing the "tilt" zone.

Seated in the living room were probably 10 or so people, all wearing comfortable, loose clothing, seated in the lotus position on the floor in a circle. She was asked to join them. Rather than turn and run, which she *very much* felt like doing, she did as invited. She squatted the best she was able in her "form fitting" jeans - sweating from nerves and heat in her flannel shirt, craving a cigarette (which she hadn't yet given up in her early sobriety).

This set the tone for the "meditation retreat" for this newly sober soldier. She left the event feeling more stressed than ever, angry that she would never achieve the "blissful state of being" the other retreat guests exhibited at the end of the day. THE END!

Some time later (and not that long) in sobriety, I have matured somewhat, having learned a little dignity and grace and *much* about the Eleventh Step. Today, I enjoy the *process* of improving my relationship with *my* Higher Power.

(He Said: continued) needed. My personal spiritual views have instigated many a great debate, so I won't go into it here. All I know is there is a power other than myself and that power can be tapped upon if you know how. My simple prayer: "Show me the Way" does the trick every time because I don't ask for a single thing other than daily instruction. People and tasks cross my path every day. Whether these are "God's will" for me or not doesn't matter. Things just need to get done so I do them. If I don't feel right about something, that's usually that power I'm talking about warning me. I don't gloat over doing good things and I don't care who knows. This attitude keeps the power growing inside me. No longer do I "Second Guess" God nor do I label happenstance as Godly workings. My simple prayer begins when I awake and it ends when I fall asleep, a daily Mantra, if you will. I no longer dissect or try to explain God nor do I defend my beliefs. I just know and it has given me peace beyond my wildest dreams.

I once had meditation explained to me as the art of imagining oneself as we aspire to be as a person. We can imagine the state of being as useful as we can be performing our higher power's will with the utmost efficiency. We can imagine ourselves as being calm and spiritually balanced. I've also heard meditation described as attaining the ultimate calm by emptying our busy heads and letting our thoughts drift by like passing clouds. Again, I've also heard meditation described as focusing on a particular point to instigate a solution. Well, I guess there are just as many ways to pray as there are ways to meditate. My own personal method is to remove myself from all distraction and allow my mind to empty out into nothingness. I feel nothing, I see nothing, I hear nothing and I ask for nothing, therefore, think about nothing. In other words, I'm giving my brain a vacation for while. I get to recharge my batteries a bit by totally, truly letting it all go.

No longer do I feel an insatiable need to know more about God. When I'm ready, more will be revealed. My job for today is to relax and do what's in front of me. That's all I can presume to know about God's will for me, or anybody else, and that's enough.

Mucho Aloha,
~ Tim

(She Said: continued) Prayer, for me, is fairly easy. Today, I no longer pray for specifics, just the "knowledge and power" and I pray for this often, especially in stressful situations that come up throughout my day and life. The good news is meditation is no longer a "big mystery" either. I discovered that meditation can be my design, like my Higher Power. I don't have to sit hours on end, in the lotus position chanting (though I can sit for up to 15 minutes now!). I use a variety of ways to meditate, including walking and breathing and enjoying my surroundings in the here and now. I do my best to quiet my "monkey" mind, whatever form of meditation I am doing, because then I may be "granted a glimpse of God".

The moral of this story is "faith without works is dead." But all things worthwhile require work. Prayer and meditation do work. They are the needed "nourishment for the soul."

~ Kathie G.

~ The Step That Keeps Us Growing ~

Sometimes, when friends tell us how well we are doing, we know better inside. We know we aren't doing well enough. We still can't handle life, as life is. There must be a serious flaw somewhere in our spiritual practice and development.

What then is it?

The chances are better than even that we shall locate our trouble in our misunderstanding or neglect of AA's Step Eleven – prayer, meditation, and the guidance of God.

The other Steps can keep most of us sober and somehow functioning. But Step Eleven can keep us growing, if we try hard and work at it continually.

~ Bill W.

As Bill Sees It, p. 264



MAKELE SEZ:

“A.A.”

“ALTERED ATTITUDE”

“ATTITUDE ADJUSTMENT”

Happy Birthday

Kauai A.A. Meetings

Pat B.	10/28	1981	28 yrs
Ron K.	10/20	1986	23 yrs
Danette	10/24	1987	22 yrs
Diana L.	10/8	1988	21 yrs
Amorosa	10/25	1989	20 yrs
Richard S.	10/6	1990	19 yrs
Susan OK	10/16	1990	19 yrs
Nester N.	10/15	1991	18 yrs
Sue H.	10/25	1996	13 yrs
Laurie A.	10/15	1998	11 yrs
Mo L.	10/24	2000	9 yrs
Alison	10/9	2000	9 yrs
Kira H.	10/7	2002	7 yrs
Alejandro	10/22	2004	5 yrs
Drew	10/15	2004	5 yrs
Darryl C.	10/22	2005	4 yrs
Randall	10/29	2005	4 yrs
Matt J.	10/15	2006	3 yrs
JoRina	10/22	2006	3 yrs
Kevin H.	10/9	2007	2 yrs
Patricia M.	10/16	2007	2 yrs

COMING IN NOVEMBER

Carol O.	11/19	1981	28 yrs
Niamala	11/24	1995	14 yrs
Danny L.	11/6	1995	14 yrs
Tom F.	11/15	1996	13 yrs
Lani A.	11/21	2005	4 yrs
Chris S.	11/3	2007	2 yrs
Jeanie	11/26	2007	2 yrs



Photo ~ Alejandro

Poipu Beach Park, Far West Pavillion

“Sunrise Serenity” Meeting 7:00 am
Every Monday thru Thursday and Saturday too!

Expect A Miracle

Birthday Celebrations

South Shore

- Koloa Monday Women's 'Na wahine ku pono'
5:00 p.m. Last Monday of month. **CAKE & POTLUCK.**
- Aloha Group - 7:30 p.m. Last Tuesday of the month - **CAKE FOR BIRTHDAYS!**

East Side

- Hui Ohana - 7:00-8:00 a.m. Last Saturday of the month. **CAKE FOR BIRTHDAYS!**
- Steps to Freedom - 6:30 p.m. Last Monday of the month. **CAKE & POTLUCK** (7:30-8:30 pm meeting).

North Shore

- North Shore Aloha Group - 7:30 p.m. Last Monday of the month - **CAKE FOR BIRTHDAYS!**
- Princeville-Hanalei Group - 7:30 p.m. Last Thursday of the Month - **CAKE FOR BIRTHDAYS!**

The Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity to accept the things that I can not change, the courage to change the things that I can and the wisdom to know the difference.



For Newcomers

A Newcomer Asks About:

“Anonymity”

So I cracked open the pamphlet “Understanding Anonymity” to answer your question quickly with a couple of quotes and pau. But this is a simple program isn't it?

Point one in the pamphlet reads, “At the personal level anonymity provides protection for all members from identification as alcoholics, a safeguard especially important to newcomers.” “But wait a minute!” says the newcomer “I’m supposed to identify as an alcoholic in the First Step!”

What we mean is that in public, we will not disclose your admission of alcoholism. We won't tell you boss, your P.O. even your family if you don't want us to. Who you choose to tell is up to you. And your right about the First Step. You do not have to be or admit that you are an alcoholic to attend most of our meetings, only meetings designated “closed” are for alcoholics only.

Many people come to AA meetings unsure whether or not they are alcoholic. Some people come because they love or are related to an alcoholic, although they might find Al-Anon meetings more helpful. Lots of people come because they are court ordered. Just being at a meeting does not make you an alcoholic. Whether you are or are not we will not tell anyone that you came to a meeting, just as we ask that you not tell anyone who you see at meetings and especially not what they share.

The Second Point in the pamphlet talks about disclosing your AA membership at the level of press, radio, and films, in these modern times we include the internet. While I doubt any of us are scheduled for Oprah any time soon, many of us are on Myspace, Facebook etc...While you might let folks know that you are no longer drinking, Tradition would suggest that you not tell people that you are a member of AA.

This is really for the protection of AA as a whole. You may choose to post a rather racy picture or tell an off-color joke, you may just have a lousy background scheme. We wouldn't want that to dissuade a suffering alcoholic from trying AA. I

would suggest you avoid posting your membership at all. If you feel you must make some mention run it by your sponsor, or keep it as simple as saying you are doing a twelve step program.

~ Lu

GET YOUR ANSWERS STRAIGHT FROM THE A.A. LITERATURE

E-MAIL YOUR QUESTIONS TO:
KeptSimpleKauai@gmail.com

'Keep It Simple' meets Tuesday nights at 7:30
At the First Hawaiian Church in Kapaa.



Got Literature?

WE DELIVER!

Or Come to the Intergroup Meeting!

- *Books *Pamphlets *GIS Newsletter and
- *Kauai AA Meeting Schedules.

Kauai Intergroup

Next Meeting is November 7th, 9:30am
At The Lihue Neighborhood Center

"Easy Does It, But Do It"



SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

Kaua'i Intergroup
PO Box 3606, Lihue, HI 96766





Oldies but Goodies

~Hear it from the Old-Timers~

Well here it is November and I made a commitment to write an article each month for the Newsletter. I was afraid this time would come and *it has*. Now I need to fess up. I am REALLY bad about meditation.

I pray, goodness knows I pray, I tell God all the things that need to be said but it is soooooo hard for me to sit and wait for Him to answer. The worst thing is, I did used to meditate, kinda, sorta like.

I would go into the bedroom, crawl into the big white chair we have, cross my legs, close my eyes and try to clear my mind. I could do it for short period of time and when I was able to do it I really loved the resulting sense of peace and serenity it brought me. So why don't I do it? Hum, good question.

I guess like most alcoholics I can't explain my behavior anymore than the man who takes that first drink. I just don't do what it takes to make me feel more peaceful and serene.

Here is the thing; when I go through the Steps with my sponsees and we get to the Eleventh Step, I always let them lead. I listen. I hope to learn from them because most of them are better at it then I am. One lady was actually in India learning meditation skills, so I really listened to her.

Now that I have admitted I am failing in this regard I suppose I will have to make a concentrated effort to start doing it once more. Who knows, I may actually benefit from it - duh. Okay, now don't all of you come up to me tomorrow and check on me, okay, give me a day or two to get started

~ Jerrie S., Steps Sisters is my Home Group

You Can Bring HOPE to Hina Mauka AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE

- ★ Where: Hina Mauka Lihue / Outpatient Program
- ★ When: 1st & 3rd Wed. of every month
- ★ Time: 11am - 12 noon

Kauai's Traditional Thankathon



**THURSDAY NOVEMBER 26, 2009
AT THE LIHUE UNITED CHURCH
10:00am– 3:00pm**

- A.A. meetings at 10:30 and 1:30
- Al-Anon meeting at 11:00
- BRING A DISH TO SERVE EIGHT FELLOWSHIP, GRATITUDE AND UNITY.

Concepts Checklist

Concept XI (Partnership):

The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

- ✓ Do we understand how the roles of non-trustee directors and non-trustee appointed committee members help service and strengthen the committee system?
- ✓ How do we encourage our special paid workers to exercise their traditional "Right of Participation?"
- ✓ Do we practice rotation in all our service positions?

I missed the last District Meeting because I was on Oahu planning for the next assembly. Susan ON, the Alternate DCM, chaired the meeting and, needless to say, things went swimmingly without me!

Therein lies the beauty of Alcoholics Anonymous; my experience has shown me and those around me that I desperately need AA -- but AA doesn't need me! And if I am going to stay, I must constantly give of myself.

Fortunately, there is plenty to do and I can volunteer as much or as little of me as I choose at any given time. For me this means going to meetings, sharing, listening, making coffee, serving as DCM for the next 14 months, helping a few trusting souls work through the steps for the first time and contributing whatever I can financially.

The benefits I receive from doing these little things are truly remarkable: yesterday I played golf with two guys I didn't even know a few years ago and although the golf was less than perfect, the laughter was beyond comparison!

As we prepare to gather together for our annual Thanksgiving event, I want to take this opportunity to say thank you to all of you for giving me this chance at such a wonderful new life.

And I want to encourage everyone to use this holiday season to thoroughly look at our fellowship and rededicate themselves to making Alcoholics Anonymous on Kauai the embodiment of our traditions where a loving God expresses Himself in our group conscience.

Here are some tasks to guide us to that end:

- **Stories** for the proposed Special Needs pamphlet are due in NY by 12/15.
- **Responses** to the Conference Committee on Finance's self-support questions are due by 1/12/2010.
- **Due 3/27/2010 @** the Inform the Delegate Assembly:
 - Corrections Survey
 - Theme for the 2010 GSC Presentation / Workshop topics
 - Responses to "Discuss the General Service Conference Agenda Selection Process"

Most supporting information for the above can be found on the website, area17aa.org. If you have additional questions, please feel free to call me or attend the District meeting on the second Saturday of the month, 9:30 am at 4136 Akahi St., Lihue.

In service,
~ Jim D.

**Next District Meeting November 14th
9:30 am, 3146 Akahi St., Lihue**

Kauai District Cash Flow

September 13, 2009 to October 10, 2009
(District Meeting to District Meeting)


Starting Balance	\$ 2439.27
Income	
Kapaa Young People	\$ 20.00
Happy Hour	\$ 18.00
Kauai District AFG	\$ 175.00
Sunday Serenity	\$ 58.52
Interest 8/21 to 9/18	\$ 0.10
Income Total	\$ 271.62
Payments	
DCM Travel/Committee Mtg.	\$ 98.20
Garden Island Sobriety Q4	\$ 75.00
Payments Total	\$ 173.20

SUMMARY FOR 2009

Starting Balance Aug. 9, 2009:	\$ 2439.27
Income Total:	\$ 271.62
Payments Total:	\$ 173.20
Balance	\$ 2537.69
Prudent Reserve:	-\$ 500.00
Available Funds:	\$ 2037.69

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

Kaua'i District Committee
PO Box 1503, Kapa'a, HI 96746
Please include "District 6" & "Group Name" on check





The Grapevine Digital Archives

From Wish List To Gratitude List Unlikely riches and satisfied needs

If you could write your own ticket to the rest of your life right now, you'd short-change yourself by a long shot." My sponsor glanced inward as if remembering something of his own experience.

I was arguing with him about this loving God he claimed was overseeing things and whom I should learn to trust. I was three months sober after twenty years drinking and drugging, a hostile divorce in the works, the IRS serving notice, holed up in a rented room, scraping by on small fix-it jobs, and I was telling him I could conjure a pretty good picture of what my life would look like if there really was a loving God. I had my five-year plan, so why wait for something better from The Big Guy?

Savvy to alcoholism and my personal shortcomings, he agreed I probably had a pretty vivid imagination. We could talk about my five-year plan sometime. But how was I doing today? Was I asking for help? Was I reaching out to others? Was I making progress on that Fourth Step?

I was easily distracted. Besides, today wasn't going well, and was about to get much worse.

My substance abuse counselor took a different tack. He encouraged me to write down what life on my own terms would look like. "If you want to get what you want, first you have to know what you

want," he said with a wink. What he didn't say, but what I've come to understand since, is that, "You can't always get what you want. But if you try--if you try, try, try--you get what you need." But that was years down the line.

A week later I swaggered into the counselor's office, wish list in hand, ready to show this guy he wasn't treating just any old small-time loser. People had said my whole life that I had great potential. Also that I never lived up to it. But I had vision, a direction. While cleaning up the wreckage of my past, I had my eye on all that life would be. . .some day.

Starting with a twenty-acre spread and my custom-designed house on the south side of a local mountain, I talked my way down the list: a new truck for me every year, a station wagon for a pretty blond wife and three well-behaved kids, the thirty-foot sloop we'd all go sailing in on blissful summer weekends, the vacations to Italy and New Zealand, the second home in Hawaii, the substantial real estate investments that would fuel all this, maybe a bid for political office. A believer in hard work (if not always an active one), I emphasized the reputation I'd earn for custom building with my waiting list of eager clients from a wealthy coastal town I couldn't then afford to rent an apartment in. A smart guy with great potential could expect nothing less, right? If there was a loving God, and I lived a sober life and played by all his rules?

The counselor sighed. He looked pained, searching for a gentle way to break bad news. "It sounds like you don't like yourself very much right now," he said.

When I told my sponsor about this little exercise, he raised the same patient smile and asked what I'd learned. I grasped what both men tried telling me, but only in an intellectual sense. It was just information in my head until I'd lived sober and on life's terms for another decade, and grew up some in the process. When asked what a good life would look like, I created a list of things--my pile of stuff--that other people could admire and comment on about how successful I was. Because I didn't like myself very much at the time and was incapable of being part of a lasting relationship, I needed that pile of stuff, if only as a fantasy, to believe that I was worth anything at all.

Missing from that list were:

- 1) The surprising mix of people with whom I'd share the saving grace of AA.
- 2) Any reference to AA's Ninth Step Promises coming true in my life.
- 3) A sober partner with whom to share the serenity, courage, and wisdom of AA for a lifetime.
- 4) Coming to accept and love the family I grew up in, including my alcoholic father, who died four years before I got sober.
- 5) Work that is both enthralling and a service to others.
- 6) Feeling comfortable in my own skin, even when I make mistakes.
- 7) The burning desire to learn, to be open-minded, to seek God's will in troubling situations where experience and understanding aren't enough.
- 8) Good health.
- 9) A quiet excitement for what each day will bring.
- 10) Freedom from the burden of self.
- 11) Wonder, mystery, and gratitude at how failure and conflict are resolved by listening, patience, prayer, persistence; and with a visceral sense of personal growth.

- All missing from that first list.

In fact, today I have none of the stuff intended to impress my counselor with my vision of success. But I know that, had I been granted all those trappings and none of what's come to be meaningful and valuable to me, I would have truly short-changed myself.

I own a few nice things that are useful or fun, including an absurdly expensive bicycle (also not on the list) that I ride with unreasonable pleasure and to no one's benefit. But it's not likely my net worth will ever approach what I pictured at three months sober. Job, home, car, furnishings are all modest by American standards. Taken together, though, they're more than I'm able to fully use or properly take care of. My cup runneth over.

Money, things, reputation, power are still of value, but only relative to the time they grant to explore new ways of living and working with others. So I've given up trying to determine or even guess where I'm headed. But I do know why.

There's a final item on my gratitude list:

- 12) I've surrendered to the will of what I know is a loving God. One whose ways are mysterious to me, but to whom, based on experience, I entrust my own.

A friend in the Fellowship claims worldly success is simpler than it looks anyway. "All you have to do is do the right thing at the right time and do it right." Simple maybe. But impossible on my own unaided resources. And thank God for that. Thank God.

~ Anonymous
Maine

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AAGRAPEVINE.org

Service is Sobriety

Our Area 17  Delegate is

Elizabeth M.

delegate@area17aa.org

Send Area Contributions

ADDRESS IT EXACTLY LIKE THIS:

Hawaii Area Committee

#2107

575 Cooke St., Suite A

Honolulu, HI 96813

Please include "District 6" & Group Name on ck.



Request a newsletter by e-mail



District6newsletter@hotmail.com