

Hello everybody my name is Jim and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is April 10th, 1996. My home group is the Tillamook Group of Alcoholics Anonymous and I currently serve as your Alternate Delegate for Oregon Area 58. I'm so honored and happy to be with you here today for our PNC . My topic to present today is;

“Carrying The Message Using The Twelve Traditions Then And Now”

At first when asked to present this topic I thought that will be simple. I would tell you how the message used to be carried and how we carry it today. After looking closer the subject became somewhat more difficult, specifically the part about “using the Twelve Traditions”.

I will tell you how the message was carried to me and if I can remember how the Traditions were applied. In my recollection the Tradition that comes to mind that was used, by all who were sharing the message with me, was Tradition Three, “That the only requirement for AA membership was a Desire to Stop Drinking.” Also, I can tell you that the members who carried the AA message to me were kind, patient and genuine. The men and women talking to me were persistent. They talked about their struggle with alcohol and insisting there was hope, (even for me.) Their messages were always in line with each other’s, so I believe that Tradition Five was in use, their messages all stuck to the “Primary purpose”. No, I wasn’t bombarded with hope for my marital situation, my financial situation, my medical conditions, my social standing or my legal issues. They stuck to my seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Again, as I look back, Tradition Eleven was also used “attraction rather than promotion”, I was attracted to the fact that they were all once as

hopeless as I was and now their lives seemed to be in order. I was never pushed into believing anything about a spiritual awakening nor was I told that I had to believe in anyone's God or Higher Power. Their message in my racing mind was very simple for me to understand. Oh yes, I did try to complicate things and I did try to trick them out of suggestions on how to handle all my other issues, but they wouldn't bite, they stuck to their message.

Tradition 10 about "having no opinion on outside issues" was certainly employed. No one wanted to talk about their political persuasion, their religious beliefs or their financial position. They seemed focused on a solution for my alcoholism. Of course, I was kept interested with matters of enjoying life once again.

There has been, in the last 80 years or so, some profound methods in the way the message is passed along. Some of the changes in AA that I believe have evolved profoundly are found in Tradition Nine. Our Service Boards and Committees are focused on carrying our message using today's technology. Today we AA members are not the only people who try to carry the message. Treatment facilities, doctors, psychologist, psychiatrist and so many others with good intentions carry part of our message. They, in most cases don't have to follow our traditions. As mentioned, one of the major changes regarding alcoholism is the use of treatment facilities. Nearly all of them are geared toward "alcoholism and addiction" therefore often water down our "singleness of purpose". Sometimes that causes confusion for the future AA member.

How many of us have heard a newer member who has just “graduated” from a treatment facility give us the spiel of how AA is supposed to work according to what they learned during treatment? I know that in the past when hearing that my first response was to be irritated and upset. Then slowly that changed. I was to realize that if they sensed my attitude, then that would greatly lessen our chances to be successful in our group being attractive. So, I must put into action tolerance, patience and kindness, which I can muster a little more often these days.

How many of us in our Home Groups have had a bunch of folks who are “brought in” from a treatment facility, to hear our message. Do we treat them poorly because they use up our time to talk, they drink our coffee and don’t put anything in the basket? Should I look then at the first part of Tradition Eleven where we use “Attraction rather than promotion”. My best thinking today is, it doesn’t matter how they get to AA, but once they are here then I must treat them with the method and attitude of attraction. I must remember that we spend vast amounts of time and money attracting potential alcoholics to get to our rooms and then we treat them poorly when they get here.

I cannot think of one person nor site one incident where people haven’t had “good intentions” when carrying the AA message. I have seen those “well intentioned” people, in the past and present do things which could, and has caused harm to AA. Look at the celebrities who have broken their anonymity at the public level, only to later become a public spectacle for being under the lash of alcoholism once again. How could that not do great harm to Alcoholics Anonymous?

Technology is astounding these days. I’m still on the fence whether it is a good or bad thing because I have seen and heard many great

things that can be accomplished for AA. Unfortunately, I have witnessed some untruths and ignorance of what AA is and what it is not. The speed today at which we can carry the message in an effective way is incredible. These massive advances could never have even been imagined in 1952-53 when our Traditions were first published. On the other hand, I have also seen lots of anonymity breaches (most often unintentional).

There also are folks who will malign, gossip and break the confidence of AA members purposely. Sticking to our course seems to be the best solution for that.

So, my belief is if the tools of technology are used to carry the message, in the manner that aligns with the way that Alcoholics Anonymous intends, all will be well. I am responsible and personally must always remember that when speaking, using social media and the internet in general.

How did the members of AA carry the message using the Traditions, when there were none? I know that anonymity which is in our Traditions was a huge part of that message and rightly so. I also know that often new people were told that they had to have a spiritual experience in order to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership was “ Desire To Stop Drinking”, that could have not been mentioned as it was not the only requirement then. A Many were told that they had to believe in God to be an AA member. As you see some of the principles of The 12 Traditions were being used some years before they were officially recognized but some were not.

We all can recognize that there are many nuances of how the message used to be carried and how it is carried now. We have seen plenty of

poor ways of how the message was and is carried, but we have also witnessed the message being carried in tremendous and successful ways.

I will wrap up by saying that as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and a trusted servant that I am responsible to keep in mind all the tried and tested suggestions of how to carry the message of AA.

In Love and Fellowship. Jim F