

Hi I'm Brenda, and I'm an alcoholic. I currently serve as the Alternate DCM for District 8 in Boise, of Idaho Area 18. Thank you for allowing me to be of service today! Our topic is: "Involve - Act: How does ACTION (While working the program) through the Steps, Traditions, or Concepts relate to each other?" With that I'd like to break this into 3 segments of Action in Steps, Traditions, and Concepts of World Service.

To begin, let's talk STEPS. When I came into the rooms of A.A. back in 2006, I was stinky I wore an old, ragged black T-shirt most of the time, had blood-shot eyes and even had D.T.'s! I didn't even notice the coffee or the free snacks! If someone would have mentioned the word, "G.S.R." to me I would have asked, "What?", all blurry-eyed. Then I would have said, "Who cares? I'm dying here! I just need to know how NOT TO DRINK ALCOHOL, please!" Never once did I wonder where that money in the basket went - or who opened the doors that day, or who wrote the meeting script. I was so self-centered, all I wanted was to GET SOBER! After a few days I decided I wanted to STAY SOBER, so I did everything my sponsor suggested. The day she told me, "You need to make coffee", I looked at her with scrunched eyebrows, and asked, "What does making coffee have to do with staying sober?" (and thought to myself, "can't you see I'm having a nervous breakdown here?") She replied, "Brenda, it's not about asking questions, it's about following direction." I reluctantly said, "Okay," and I just DID IT. It was in that very first service position that my head started to lift-up, my eyes started to clear-up, and I noticed there were other people in the room! That action of showing-up for others gave me a reason to stay sober! I began to have meaning in my life. I was doing something that was needed.

Those first couple of years of the Action of Working the 12 Steps and following the direction of a sponsor - resulted in getting some sobriety under my belt. That was really needed before my eyes could really look around and start seeing more! Now, every day, I know, without a doubt that I am an alcoholic. This serves as the foundation of my program. Operating at any moment from any one of the steps... is where I live. Ultimately, every day, I ask, "Who can I help today?", for "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS." So

HOW do we do this? Carry the Message? Let's talk Traditions...

The 12 Traditions are read at every meeting I attend, at first I didn't understand them at all. They sounded kind of "Business-like" and I didn't need to know them or understand them! Those were for the "business people". It wasn't until I started attending my Home Group business meetings that the Traditions became important! Especially holding a position as a GSR, the role is known as "The Guardian of the Traditions". The Traditions were first published in 1946 and later officially confirmed at the first national AA Convention in Cleveland in 1950. The Traditions were created because Alcoholics Anonymous grew bigger and bigger and as a membership then, it needed a way to hold itself together - a "glue", let's say. With a fellowship continuing to grow today - how do we stay unified and operate as a whole? Most importantly, how can A.A. be here for the future, for the alcoholic not yet born? The Traditions give the groups direction for any foreseeable problem that may arise. There is no time here, today, to review all the Traditions, but a couple deserve attention:

Tradition 2: "For our Group purpose there is but one ultimate authority, a loving God as he may express himself in our Group Conscious. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern."

It is absolutely amazing to me to watch this Tradition in ACTION! Especially at Area Assemblies when 200 people gather and vote together, actually get a lot of work done in one day! When everyone places their EGO aside, goes into a Group Conscience meeting with an Open Mind - it is True - decisions are made easily based all the facts presented! Groups experience cohesiveness when everyone practices principles before personalities!

Tradition 3 states: "The only requirement for AA membership is a DESIRE to stop drinking". This is BIG. This means all that is needed to attend an AA meeting is a DESIRE to stop drinking. To truly practice this Tradition in Action is to KNOW what DESIRE itself is. DESIRE is WANTING something a lot, it's a passion for something - so like the DESIRE we used to have for Sex, Drugs, and Rock-n-Roll (a Jim Morrison type DESIRE), that same DESIRE is now being directed towards the DESIRE to stop drinking... WANTING sobriety, Serenity, and a New Life without Alcohol!

As you can see, the Traditions are the cement that holds our program together - in Action. Now, how about the 12 Concepts of World Service?

As GSR, I started studying the AA Service Manual. I also served on a committee to re-write the Bylaws of our local

Intergroup... this is when I fell head over heels in LOVE with the Concepts! We used Concept XII as the preamble for the bylaws. It says:

"The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and whenever possible, substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government; that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action."

The Concepts were written by Bill W. in 1962. We had the 12 Steps as a means of personal Recovery, the 12 Traditions as a way to keep UNITY amongst our fellowship, then finally the Concepts arrived as a way to give structure to our approach to service, especially since our fellowship began to grow around the world!

Again, no time to talk about each concept here today, still let's review Concept I: "Final responsibility and ultimate authority for A.A. world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship". This means You and Me... we are the whole fellowship. It means all the groups who elect a GSR to represent them at Area Assemblies, so the Delegate can hear their voice and take it to the General Service Conference. This is when the ACTION of the GSR to attend District and Area Assemblies is essential to the continued existence of our society! Without the group's involvement - we would have no General Service Conference, and our fellowship would wither away and die! Each member of AA is important.

Bill W. says: "The life of each individual and of each group is built around our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. We very well know that the penalty for extensive disobedience to these principles is death for the individual and dissolution for the group. An even greater force for A.A.'s unity is the compelling love that we have for our fellow members and for the principles upon which our lives today are founded. Therefore we believe that we see in our Fellowship a spiritualized society characterized by enough enlightenment, enough responsibility and enough love of man and of God to insure that our democracy of world service will work under all conditions."

I love Alcoholic's Anonymous! It has saved my life. When I use the word, "it", I mean the spirit of the fellowship, the kindness, compassion, unconditional love I have experienced in these rooms. I have experienced a love I have never known just by sitting next to people who practice this program in their actions. I have experienced patience, tolerance, and laughter with people of like-minds and hearts. This, this here, now - even on "Virtual Reality", is where I get my medicine for my disease. The new technology of online meetings this past year has deepened my spiritual awakening as it has confirmed that true recovery, sobriety, and serenity is Inside... As the Big Book says on page 55, "We found The Great Reality deep down within us...". Even though we do not meet in person, I am in the presence (virtually) (on a screen) of my people, my tribe, and I know I am loved because you are a reflection of Divine Light! I used to get physically embraced with affection at meetings, and now, I close my eyes and I can FEEL the SPIRIT of A.A.. - the Sunlight of the Spirit, without the touch, because just like a Higher Power, "I can't see you, but I know you are there!"

This is why we need to keep Alcoholics Anonymous going... Right now, today, some hungover drunk is walking into the rooms of AA for the first time, just like I did, years ago, a lost soul.

They have no fathom of a clue that we are all sitting here talking about Involvement and Action in AA - to find ways to help them attain and maintain sobriety! We are here today so that AA, as a society will be here for them when they are ready to SEE MORE! After they get some sobriety under their belt, they will see how this beautiful program sustains itself, they will see how important they are, and they too will want to Give to this program, what was given to them. They will want to keep the torch going that was given to us as a result of the involvement and actions of those that have gone before us!

This is a program of Action. We can't Think our way out, or Feel our way out, we must DO what needs to be done for the sake of our own sobriety, and for the alcoholic not yet born. For anything to last long, we need consistency. It is because of the consistency of the Steps, the Traditions, and the Concepts... the stuff that does NOT CHANGE, that we have been able to practice the Spiritual AA principles in a Changing world!