

# LIFELINE

Salt Lake City Central Office Newsletter

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March 2011

## *Made a decision . . .*

The verbs in the first three steps are: (1) admitted, (2) came to believe, and (3) made a decision. There is a nice natural progression going on here.

When I gave up and asked my friends and loved ones to get me to treatment I only knew that I was defeated. I couldn't imagine getting better and was utterly without hope. For me, recovery began when I heard that hope was not just allowed, but expected, required even (step 2). Yes it would be hard, I heard, and take some time, but fixing yourself up and returning to normal life was really the only good way out. Well ok, I thought, dubious that I would ever feel whole again, but it sounds good, and it beats depression and beats dying. What do I have to do? Well, I heard, you have to decide to do a lot of stuff for a long time (don't worry though, you only have to do it one day at a time). Decision time.

My first good decision about recovery was to not argue with recovery. I knew that I could find plenty about rehab and recovery to argue with but I made a decision. I decided to acknowledge that everyone I came in contact with, especially my counselors and then my sponsor, knew more about recovery than I did. This decision was much more than a simple acknowledgement that other folks knew more than me. It was an operating decision, a decision about how to act, a decision about what attitude to carry. It was a decision to keep skepticism and critical thinking from strangling the baby.

As the step says, I decided *to turn my will and my life over* - in my case to whatever wisdom and practice I could get. My will had gotten me in serious trouble. It was time to borrow someone else's.

The folk wisdom of AA has been clear to me about a fairly unclear concept, that of "God *as we understood him*". The folk wisdom told me not to sweat the God part, that if I learned the *decision to turn over* part, good things would follow.

So I did, and good things followed. I let go. Good arms caught me. The next thing I knew I was going to meetings and having coffee with a bunch of new friends.

I love another piece of AA folk wisdom; "*my best thinking got me here*". I guess this is common, but when I woke up sober and took a look around, my first thought was, "*how did this happen?*" A neat answer, *my best thinking*. Time to recognize that I need the wisdom and practice of others.

I made the decision to turn my life over to the recovery process. I still make that decision every time I go to a meeting. It is more than a decision not to drink. Our program teaches us that a decision not to drink is by itself not very meaningful. After all, addiction acts by subverting that very decision. Instead, we can decide to do all the things that keep us from drinking. We make a decision to begin a new life.

~ The New Yorker, a step study group

# LIFELINE

The Monthly Newsletter of  
Central Office of Salt Lake City, Inc.

We welcome your correspondence and will publish/ your material, space permitting, if it meets editorial criteria. *Share your experience, strength, and hope with another alcoholic.* For a free subscription or to submit articles, suggestions or contributions, contact Central Office of Salt Lake City:

**Central Office of Salt Lake City, Inc.**  
80 West Louise Avenue  
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115  
manager@saltlakeaa.org



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## Groups Represented at the February 2011 Central Office Representatives Meeting

- 12 O'Clock High Group
- Acceptance Group
- An AA Group
- Bog Irish BB
- Bountiful Community Group
- City @ Seven
- Closed Group of AA
- DCMC Dist. 2
- Dog on the Roof
- Early Morning Friendship
- Foothill Group
- Garden Variety
- Grapvine Group
- Happy Destiny
- Murray Group
- New Life
- No Nonsense Group
- Nomatic Lunch Bunch
- Nutbuckets
- Off the Cuff
- Park City Men's Group
- Round Table Group
- Salt Lake Group
- Sharing & Caring
- Spiritual Quest
- Stepping Stones
- Sunday Breakfast
- The New Yorker
- Thunderheart
- Uppgroup
- Vision for You
- We Care
- Welcome Home



## 7<sup>th</sup> Tradition Contribution Addresses

AA World Services  
Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

Central Office of Salt Lake City  
80 West Louise Ave.  
Salt Lake City, UT 84115

Area 69 Treasurer  
PO Box 1422  
Salt Lake City, UT 84110

District 2 Treasurer  
PO 615  
Salt Lake City, UT 84110

District 10 Treasurer  
PO Box 57271  
Murray, UT 84157

District 11 Treasurer  
1065 North 400 West  
Bountiful, UT 84140

### Central Office Statement of Purpose

The purpose of the Central Office is to provide the basic services listed, to include, but not limited to:

- To carry the A.A. message and help those individuals who suffer from alcoholism;
- to maintain a 24-hour Twelve-Step phone list; to answer phone inquiries as needed;
- to compile, update and print meeting lists;
- to maintain A.A. approved literature for sale to members and the public;
- and to print and distribute a newsletter.

Specifically excluded shall be the operation of any club, clubhouse or drying-out place, and acts in violation of the Twelve Traditions of A.A.

# Congrats to our birthdays

It works, it really does!

## Hillcrest Group

Emily	30 Days
Melanie	90 Days
Jake	9 Months
Cameron	1 Year
Daren	1 Year
John	18 Months
Douglas	18 Months
Nancy	4 Years
Jen	4 Years
Randy	4 Years
Gay	4 Years
John	5 Years
Lina	5 Years
Denise	6 Years
Wayne	7 Years
Laura	7 Years
Bonnie	8 Years
Paul	18 Years



## Came to Believe

Laura B.	7 Years
Merritt M.	7 Years
Jo P.	13 Years



## Nomadic Lunch

Desirae	30 Days
Emily	30 Days
Nick	90 Days
Nicholle S.	2 Years
Mike	24 Years
Big Al	31 Years
Russ	34 Years



## City @ Seven

Brian	60 Days
Jane	60 Days
Frank	90 Days
Jennifer	90 Days
Julie	90 Days
Carly	6 Months
John	1 Year
Spencer	18 Months
Suzy	3 Years
Kurt	4 Years
Casy	4 Years
Malcolm	6 Years
Francis	10 Years
John	11 Years
Joseph	15 Years

Kevin	22 Years
David	29 Years



## Living in Sobriety

Donald	60 Days
Lilly	60 Days
Brandy	6 Months
Mike	6 Months
Maino	6 Months
Bri	2 Years
Travis	2 Years
Chad	3 Years
John	4 Years
Nancy R.	4 Years
John	5 Years
Scott	5 Years
Steve	5 Years
Larine	23 Years



Please send your group birthdays to [LIFELINE@saltlakeaa.org](mailto:LIFELINE@saltlakeaa.org) by the 15<sup>th</sup> of the month

**All SL Central Office cassette tapes have been drastically reduced.  
They are priced to sell, come in and see what's still available!**

## The only requirement . . .

### Some AA tradition 3 history

Here is the story about Irma L. I try to tell this true story about what happened not just on Dec. 7th, 1941 (Pearl Harbor Day) but what happened to one of the few women who was in AA at that time and about a letter she received in the mail on Monday Dec. 8th, which virtually kicked her out of AA.

It was very different back in the 30's and 40's for a woman to be an alcoholic. It was a time when women wore hats and gloves, and "respectable women" were not usually found in a bar or at "whoopee parties."

Irma became a member in 1941. She was taken to the home of one of other women in recovery. It was different then for a woman to be an alcoholic, that most of them had burned all their bridges with their families, and were looked down upon, even more so than male alcoholics. AA helped Irma get sober, AA helped Irma get cleaned up, AA helped Irma get her first apartment in sobriety.

Then she said that on Dec. 5th, 1941 a self-appointed group of the members signed a letter to Irma and mailed it 2 days before Pearl Harbor, on that Friday, Dec. 5th. In essence this is what that letter said, "At a meeting of the Executive Committee of the Los Angeles Group of Alcoholics Anonymous, held Dec. 4th, 1941. It is decided that your attendance at group meetings was no longer desired until certain explanations and plans for the future were made to the satisfaction of this committee."

I was stunned. "How could they do this?" Because we didn't have any guidelines, any traditions to protect us from good intentions. AA was very new, and people did all sorts of things, thinking they were protecting the fellowship"

Imagine only 1 or 2 meetings in your entire state, and being shunned by your family and by society and by the only group of people who were on your side, your AA group. Imagine them shutting the door on you and sending you such a letter.

I shivered at the thought of it, It was Christmas time, the stores were decorated and now poor Irma was all alone, I thought about how it was in 1984 with 2000 meetings a

week to choose from in Southern California, and then I imagined having no other help for a hopeless alcoholic.

Irma never came back to another meeting, left AA and died of alcoholism. She wrote to Bill about the incident, and I cannot tell you that is the reason that the following is a part of the 3rd Tradition, but it certainly seems to apply.

From Tradition 3, page 141:

"...that we would neither punish nor deprive any AA of membership, that we must never compel anyone to pay anything, believe anything, or conform to anything? The answer, now seen in Tradition 3, was simplicity itself. At last experience taught us that to take away any alcoholics full chance was sometimes to pronounce his death sentence, and often to condemn him to endless misery. Who dared to be judge, jury and executioner of his own sick brother?"

### JUDGE, JURY AND EXECUTIONER

I remember looking at those words again and again. They seemed to get larger and larger.

I hadn't really noticed Executioner when I had read it the first time at my 12 & 12 study group. Again I felt so bad for this poor lady. Wow, those words really had a different meaning than when I had read the traditions before, So here it is, 23 years later, and each Dec. 7th & 8th I always think about Irma L., and how lucky I am, that we have traditions now.

I learned that night that no one can get kicked out of AA. We can ask a disturbing wet drunk that he needs to settle down or we might have to ask him to step outside for that day, but we don't vote to kick anyone out forever. And we don't shun people because our guidelines, our traditions tell us that no one has to believe in anything (they don't have to like me) and they don't have to conform to anything, they don't have to dress a certain way, or have no facial hair, or pay anything. Even if I get drunk again, I am still welcome at any AA meeting.

Blessings ~Terry

## The Third Concept of Service

*We serve by acting on our conscience through our "Right of Decision" and we trust others when they exercise their "Right of Decision."*

The principle behind the third concept of service is that we serve by acting on our conscience through our "Right of Decision."

We also trust others when they exercise their "Right of Decision."

This concept says that as a trusted servant I am expected to serve by acting on my conscience. I am not simply a messenger. I do not neglect consulting others though. I first exercised my "Right of Decision" in the third step when I decided to turn my will and my life over to the care of God. I now exercise it by choosing to pray for direction in all areas of my life: personal relationships, work, and other areas.

When I act in accord with my conscience I am at peace.

The reading points out the importance of A.A. groups respecting the right of its trusted servants to act on their conscience:

### Concept 3

As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the A.A. General Service board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional "Right of Decision."

Within the framework of their general responsibilities, whether these be defined by charter, by resolution, or by customer, it should be the traditional right of all world service boards, committees, and executives to decide which problems they will dispose of themselves and upon which matters they will report, consult, or ask specific directions. We ought to trust our world servants with these discretions, because otherwise no effective leadership can be possible. Let us consider in detail, therefore, why the need for a "right of decision" in our leadership is imperative, and let us examine how this principle can be applied practically in all levels of our structure of world service.

Knowing that theirs is the final authority, the groups are sometimes tempted to instruct their delegates exactly how to vote upon certain matters in the conference. Because they hold the ultimate authority, there is no doubt that the A.A. groups have the right to do this. If they insist, they can give directives to their delegates on any and all A.A. matters.

But good management seldom means the full exercise of a stated set of ultimate rights. For example, were the groups to carry their instruction of delegates to extremes, then we would be proceeding on the false theory that group opinion in most world service matters would somehow be much superior to Conference opinion. Practically speaking, this could almost never be the case. There would be very few questions indeed that "instructed" delegates could better settle than Conference acting on the spot with full facts and debate to guide it. Of course, it is understood that complete reporting of Conference actions is always desirable. So is full consultation with committee members and general service representatives. Nevertheless, the "instructed" delegate who cannot act on his own conscience in a final Conference vote is not a "trusted servant" at all; he is just a messenger.

**Bill further poses the delicate question of how to relate ultimate authority and delegated responsibility and gives us this insightful answer:**

Some traditional and practical principle has to be devised which at all levels will continuously balance the right relation between ultimate authority and delegated responsibility. How, then, are we going to accomplish this?

The right A.A. solution for this problem is found, however, in the latter part of Tradition Two, which provides for "trusted servants." This really means that we ought to trust our responsible leaders to decide, within the understood framework of their duties, how they will interpret and apply their own authority and responsibility to each particular problem or situation as it arises. This sort of leadership discretion should be the essence of "The Right of Decision," and I am certain that we need not have the slightest fear of granting this indispensable privilege at nearly every level of world service.

There will always be plenty of ultimate authority to correct inefficiency, ineffectiveness or abuse. If the Conference does not function well, the groups can send in better delegates. If the trustees get badly out of line, the Conference can censure them, or even reorganize them. If the Headquarters' services go sour, the trustees can elect better directors and hire better help. These remedies are ample and direct. But for so long as our world services function reasonably well – and there should always be charity for occasional mistakes – then “trust” must be our watchword, otherwise we shall wind up leaderless.

The other aspect of the concept mentioned in the reading is how I apply the principle of the “Right of Decision” to others. In the last paragraph of the reading Bill says that “Our entire A.A. program rests squarely on the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other.”

I need to see that I release others with love to their own decision especially when I disagree with them. I now see

you as a trusted servant so I trust your right to act in accord with your conscience.

This “Right of Decision” should never be made an excuse for failure to render proper reports of all significant actions taken; it ought never be used as a reason for constantly exceeding a clearly defined authority, nor as an excuse for persistently failing to consult those who are entitled to be consulted before an important decision or action is taken.

Our entire A.A. program rests squarely upon the principle of mutual trust. We trust God, we trust A.A., and we trust each other. Therefore, we cannot do less than trust our leaders in service. The “Right of Decision” that we offer them is not only the practical means by which they may act and lead effectively, but it is also the symbol of our implicit confidence.

Commentary by Dennis F.

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## The Rain

It was a busy morning, about 8:30, when an elderly Gentleman in his 80's arrived to have stitches removed from his thumb. He said he was in a hurry as he had an appointment at 9:00 am. I took his vital signs and had him take a seat, knowing it would be over an hour before someone would be able to see him. I saw him looking at his watch and decided, since I was not busy with another patient, I would evaluate his wound.

On exam, it was well healed, so I talked to one of the doctors, got the needed supplies to remove his sutures and redress his wound. While taking care of his wound, I asked him if he had another doctor's appointment this morning, as he was in such a hurry. The gentleman told me no, that he needed to go to the nursing home to eat breakfast with his

wife. I inquired as to her health. He told me that she had been there for a while and that she was a victim of Alzheimer's Disease.

As we talked, I asked if she would be upset if he was a bit late. He replied that she no longer knew who he was, that she had not recognized him in five years now. I was surprised, and asked him, 'And you still go every morning, even though she doesn't know who you are?' He smiled as he patted my hand and said, 'She doesn't know me, but I still know who she is.'

I had to hold back tears as he left, I had goose bumps on my arm, and thought, 'That is the kind of love I want in my life.' True love is neither physical, nor romantic. True love is an acceptance of all that is, has been, will be, and will not be.

