

Speakeasy



Alcoholics Anonymous All South Bay Central Office Newsletter

Winter Issue 2021

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The Speakeasy is published by the All South Bay Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous. Opinions expressed are those of the writers/contributors and not of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole or of Central Office. We welcome and need your input, opinions, humor and comments. Send them today.



An Attitude of Gratitude



I'm excited to share with you a special message about gratitude. This season is about staying in gratitude. The most powerful practice we can use to elevate and expand our lives is the practice of gratitude. If we want our lives to be victorious in almost every area, gratitude is the way! By saturating our lives with gratitude and making it a way of life we can watch real magic happen.

We are constantly in recovery, which means a gratitude list is recommended on a regular basis, especially when we are having a challenging go of it or having a day in the barrel. Why is gratitude such a powerful tool in our arsenal? Because we can change ourselves into receivers rather than transmitters!

The universe loves gratitude, so for this 2021 Winter Season, make a commitment to give thanks each day as often as you can. Every day look for things to be grateful for. Make 'thank you' your catch phrase or mantra. As you walk from one place to another say 'thank you.' Make your last thought at night: 'thanks for another day.' Yes, even if it was super harsh or challenging. Be grateful under all circumstances, no matter what is happening around you. After just 30 days of saturating yourself with gratitude, your life will change beyond your comprehension. When we radiate and live gratitude, we press the "ON" switch to the Universe and it delivers all the good we want, matching the intensity of our gratitude. Bring it "ON" Universe!

Not every situation is a thing to be grateful for, so we have to train ourselves in the knowledge that we don't have all the answers or we are unable to see the bigger picture that God has for us. We have to say as often as we can, 'Thank you for the things I have;' 'Thank you for the things I am receiving;' 'Thank you for the things I am about to receive;' and 'Thank you for the

things I have received and don't know about.'

If you are new to sobriety and you are new to meetings, you may hear some people say that they are grateful alcoholics. How can some one who cannot drink and party again be grateful? They are consciously admitting that many things in their life or a majority of their personal problems have gotten better. They are consciously admitting that their dependence on the consumption of mind-altering substances like alcohol, is not affecting their lives the way it once did and not causing them to be a menace to others. We have more things to be grateful for. We are not in crisis, going into crisis, or coming out of crisis and those are major things to be grateful about.

Gratitude is a vitamin for the Soul! Once we are thankful, the more life gives us things to be thankful for! Gratitude can bring you many things:

1. It shields you from negativity
2. It makes you at least 25% happier
3. It re-wires your brain
4. It eliminates stress
5. It heals the body and soul
6. It improves sleep
7. It boosts self-esteem and performance
8. It enhances the laws of attraction and vibration
9. It improves relationships
10. It is the most powerful way to pray

The best way to change your entire life is to be in gratitude. So here is a simple trick to keep yourself in gratitude: put a small stone, call it a Gratitude Stone, in your pocket and every time you touch just say 'thank you.' It really works. Wishing you a happy and most of all, a grateful Holiday! My name is Tim and I have been sober for 27 years.

—Tim R., San Pedro

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In early sobriety, I heard a woman say, "My name is Linda, and I am a grateful alcoholic."

I thought, "Grateful alcoholic? What is she talking about? I am not grateful that I am an alcoholic." I knew I was an alcoholic, and I was not happy about it. I truly did not understand how anyone could be grateful to be alcoholic. Not surprisingly, I went out. I had a good amount of time under my AA-belt, but looking back, I realize that I was not grateful. I did not cherish my sobriety. I did all the AA-stuff. I was of service. I followed my sponsor's suggestions. I attended all the AA-functions. But I did not feel grateful about my alcoholism, nor that I was sober. In reflection, I simply took it for granted. By the grace of God and the prayers for the alcoholic who still suffers, I made it back into the rooms. I was completely broken down. I absolutely could not stop drinking, and I absolutely knew that if I did not stop, I would die. I gained the courage to come back by remembering the words heard at a long-ago meeting, "We don't shoot our wounded." I walked through the doors of a Thursday night meeting and looked around. I smelled the coffee and heard the laughter and easy banter of the people there, people who would become my friends—and I was grateful. I took a seat around an oval table with a warm fire burning in a brick fireplace at the end of the room. A sense of relief and gratitude filled my eyes with tears that flowed through the entire meeting. I knew that I could get sober and stay sober. And I knew what Linda meant. My name is Gina, and I am a grateful alcoholic.

—Gina T., Rancho Palos Verdes
Sober since August 16, 2012

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Step, Tradition & Concept

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Step

“Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.”

Tradition

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

Concept

“The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.”

8

Step

“Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.”

Tradition

“Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers .”

Concept

“The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.”

9

Step

“Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

Tradition

“A.A., as such, ought never to be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

Concept

“Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.”

All South Bay Central Office

1411 Marcelina Ave
Torrance, CA 90501
Open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., M-F
9 a.m.—7 p.m. Sat & Sun
Web site: www.southbayaa.org
Email: info@southbayaa.org
Phone: (310) 618-1180

Board of Directors

4th Tuesday of the month
6:30 p.m.

Currently meeting via ZOOM
Meeting ID: 949 9677 6629
Password: 254568
Phone: (310) 618-1180

Intergroup

4th Tuesday of the month
7:30 p.m.

Currently meeting via ZOOM
Meeting ID: 949 9677 6629
Password: 254568
Phone: (310) 618-1180

AREA 9: Districts 1 & 3

2nd Tuesday of the month
6-7 p.m. Concepts Q&A
7-7:30 p.m. GSR Orientation
7-7:30 p.m. Mini Workshops
7:30-9 p.m. Committee Meeting

Currently meeting HYBRID

In-person: Hermosa Kiwanis Club
Zoom Meeting ID: 929 014 8764
Password: panel70 (all lowercase)

Email: district1msca09@gmail.com
Visit: www.msca1district1.org

Hospitals & Institutions

3rd Tuesday of the month
7:00 p.m.

H&I is now meeting in-person at the South Bay Alano Club

Visit : southbayhandi.com

The General Service Office

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station, NY 10163
Phone: (212) 870-3400

“And they presented unto Him gifts—gold, frankincense, and myrrh.’ Bring you gifts of gold—your money and material possessions. Bring your frankincense—the consecration of your life to a worthy cause. Bring your myrrh—your sympathy and understanding and help. Lay them all at the feet of God and let Him have full use of them.”

—Dec. 25-Meditation for the Day,
Twenty-Four Hours a Day

“Lord, make me a channel of they peace—that where there is hatred, I may bring love—that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness—that where there is error, I may bring truth—that where there is doubt, I may bring faith—that where there is despair, I may bring hope—that where there are shadows, I may bring light—that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted—to understand, than to be understood—to love, than to be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen.”

—Prayer of St. Francis

Gratitude is the #1 Defender



I love spiritual opposites that I have learned in sobriety; two things that cannot be done at the same time. For example, fear and faith or depression and serenity. When I am living in fear then I am not trusting God. If I have serenity, then I will not be depressed. I may experience sadness but those feelings of restlessness, irritability, and discontent are gone when I have serenity. The Big Book says, "Resentment is the number one offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick." Another word for resentment is hateful. I cannot be hateful and grateful at the same time. If resentment is my number one offender, gratitude has got to be my number one defender. When I have an attitude of gratitude, I am free of resentment, fear, and depression. I have heard in AA to make a gratitude list; a list of the things I am grateful for. I may have done it mentally several times but have rarely, if ever, put the pen to paper. I have told my children to do it and shared this wisdom with "normies" but it has never been a practice I follow. Instead, some of the concepts I use to cultivate that attitude of gratitude are: *Got to or get to? Don't you know who I think I am? Comparing myself to myself and not other people.*

Got to or get to? This is when I have a feeling of resentment about having to do something, like "I got to go to work today," or "I got to wash the baby bottles tonight." I have learned in AA to switch "got" to "get." "I get to go to work today." "I am thankful that I am employed." "I get to wash baby bottles." "I am thankful that I have a beautiful family." If I wasn't sober, I don't think I could have pursued my education and land the career that I have. I know for certain that I would not be the father and husband that I am. I GET to live this amazing life as a direct result of AA.

When I feel like the world is not treating me with the respect, that of course I have earned, I can become resentful. I want to tell the world: 'don't you know who I am?' By adding in the word think, *don't you know who I THINK I am?*, my whole demeanor changes. I am not as great as I think I am, and nobody owes me anything. It brings me right-sized with the world. I am just one in 7 billion or so. I can turn that resentful attitude into one of gratitude.

Lastly, my tendency is to compare myself to my fellows. Bigger house, nicer car, better job... the list can go on, ad infinitum. Either my sponsor told me or I heard someone in a

meeting say that I needed only *compare myself to myself*. Compare today me to when I walked through the doors of AA. When I got sober I lived at home, my car's front seat was held upright by a screw so when I sat back too hard the seat would lay flat, and I worked at a fast food restaurant. Instead of being resentful of those around me, that I perceive to have it better than me, I am instead grateful for the life I have. Compared to when I got sober, I live in a mansion, drive a Rolls Royce, and am vastly overpaid for the work I do. My attitude of resentment is turned into one of gratitude.

I will end with a quote from the Twenty-Four Hours a Day book, December 11th Meditation for the Day. "Most of us have had to live through the dark part of our lives, the time of failure, the nighttime of our lives, when we were full of struggle and care, worry and remorse, when we felt deeply the tragedy of life. But with our daily surrender to a Higher Power, comes a peace and joy that makes all things new. We can now take each day as a joyous sunrise-gift from God, to use for Him and for our fellow men. The night of the past is gone, this day is ours." The worst part of my life, the feelings of "restless, irritable and discontent" which could only be quenched by the "sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks" is replaced by a "new freedom and a new happiness" as long as I avoid resentment by living with an attitude of gratitude.

—Brandon C., Wildomar

I was born and raised in the South Bay into a family of alcoholics. Not to blame them for anything, but that is how I learned to deal with the world—to escape from it. So, when good things or bad things happened to me, I always ran, most of the time into a bottle or whatever other substance that was available.

What the program has taught me over the years, through working the Steps to the best of my ability and trying to be rigorously honest, most importantly with myself, is that you have to take things one day at a time, one hour at a time, sometimes one minute at a time when things get bad.

I recall when my father passed at a time when I was about three years sober. It was one of the hardest things for me. We were like best friends, we hung out together, even went to meetings together. When he passed it was really difficult. The way I got through that was this: the first thing I did was call my sponsor and he was on his way. And after I connected with him, I called two other sober

alcoholics and they made their way from where they were to where I was. And then I phoned my sister who flew into town the very next day. Having family and friends to talk to and to express my emotions with was important in that moment. But what I found to be most important was actually feeling everything. When things are tough our emotions go crazy, but it is very important to feel those emotions and to walk through them. That is made a lot easier if you have worked the Steps and you are connected to people you trust who you can share your experience with. That's what worked for me. I can't say that the pain of that loss is completely gone fourteen years later, but it lessens as time passes. When I get a case of what I call the "F-its," I really try to focus on what's going on right now, am I okay right now—in this very instant, sitting here doing what I'm doing—do I have food, shelter, friends, people who love me? And if I get off my own pity pot and answer those questions honestly, I'm almost always okay, right here, right now in this very moment. Stopping to ask those questions helps me remember my gratitude for life, for food, for shelter, for love. This is what the Steps have taught me to do.

Just a few months ago I was in Sweden with my wife and we had just left our daughter's wedding, a beautiful, fabulous occasion. We went after the event to her stepson's and we all got COVID. In short order, my wife ended up in the hospital and they were about to intubate her. For the first time in a long time, I was truly scared that she would pass. And all those emotions came up. I started crying a lot and I got in my head about how bad things were, how terrible it was for me, and how I would be affected if she passed. The point is that I was focused on me and not on others. So, I shifted my focus. Luckily, I had my granddaughter with me and I was able to just hold her. I had to let those emotions run through but I kept my attention on what I had in that moment. Although it was a terrible experience, I was grateful that I was able to bond with my granddaughter, bond with my stepson, and spend a lot of quality family time; not focused on what might happen in the future or on the what had already happened. What I had in that moment was really good. That's how I managed to stay grateful, stay positive. When times are bad focus on others, see how you can be service, and stay connected. You'll find a lot to be grateful for, just like I did.

Billy T., San Pedro
Sober since June 2, 2004

In Gratitude for My Sponsor



Too terrified to ask. What if someone says no? Once again everyone seems to have that damned play book I have never seen. Misery in early sobriety finally reaches crisis point. Fear of staying stuck and dry, trumps the fear of asking for help. Summoning all available courage, I approached the meeting secretary for help finding a sponsor. God had placed you within arms-reach as I asked. Years later, I would understand what you were really thinking when I was shoved at you: 'Not another one, I'm very busy.' Yet, you smiled and said "Of course I will work with you." *And it was then that I had hope.*

I remember my first women's meeting. You had me go to Bristol Farms with you, so we could talk afterward over iced tea. I was so nervous! Could this really work for me? Over our drinks you said, "Yes, you can do this and I will show you how. We are going to make a plan right now." I will never forget my drive home from that meeting, around the coast, beautiful bright sun, clear blue sky, and an ocean suddenly full of promise for the future. *And I had ever more hope.*

Then there was the moment I learned I had to leave town and the newly safe space of my home group and my sponsor. Oh no! "Of course you can do it," you said. "Let me introduce you to Margi. She travels all the time and loves her out-of-town meetings. Don't worry we will make a plan." You were right, and with your encouragement I opened a treasure chest of new meetings and new people through my travels. The unconditional love and support from complete strangers fortifies me when I'm away from home. *And I began to believe, it can work for me.*

Then we had to talk about God. I didn't want to. I had no belief in God. "That's okay," you told me. "Don't worry about it." All you asked of me was willingness. We met and spoke of such things. There was movement from a deeper more intelligent space inside. The hardened cement of old ideas began to crack, allowing new information and concepts to unfold. You asked me to pray. "Just ask for help," you said, "whether or not you believe it is important." I found myself willing. I began to hit my knees every morning. The absolute, yet mysterious power of prayer revealed itself to me, gifting me with a certainty in the fundamental goodness of the universe and the power of doing the right thing. I was buoyed with a new sense of my place in this world. *And there, was the beginning of faith.*

You brought me into your home, the lovely living room where so many others had come before me to hear the way out of our seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. We sat on the floral sofas, read from the Big Book and shared like circumstances, feelings, and experiences. I look back with reverence for those sessions. You were so fully present and available for me. Without exception, upon my leaving there was a quiet exuberance and expectation that life had so much more in store for me, and that I would be fully able to access all it offered. *And I had security.*

Finally, ready for the third, you took me to your beautiful church. On our knees, there was a confluence of emotions, unsure, afraid, yet willing, and hopeful. The fourth and fifth on those safe sofas that heard and kept so many secrets. You made the space safe for me to open up and not hold anything back, you helped bring into the light, things never uttered to another human—taking away their power. *And I had relief.*

Six and seven, were not only about defects and shortcoming but attributes as well; an honest nonjudgmental assessment of who I am, who I aspired to be, and where I could improve. Eight and nine, your guidance was inspired, replacing stolen drug money with hope for a comrade in sober living, the amends letter that finally lifted a weight that had been living in the pit of my stomach for ten years—always with the advice, pray first for guidance, for honesty. Additional lessons

continue to follow in living amends. *And I had freedom from guilt.*

You introduced me everywhere, connecting me, pulling me out of the patterns of self-imposed isolation. Showing by example, AA service in action. As the veil of self-obsession slowly began to lift, I noticed others and began to care, listening carefully when someone spoke to me. Pause, ask for the right words so that I may be a channel. Learning lessons of the ego and it's clamoring for constant involvement in all interactions. The pause, so important. As I interact more I realize today I have friends, real friends whom I care about and they care equally for me on a deeper more intimate, honest level than I have ever experienced in previous friendships. *And I have fellowship.*

Gradually sobriety became my new normal and the gnats surfaced: a severely problematic neighbor, readjustment issues in my marriage, business bumps in the road. These are the types of things you taught me that come up inevitably for everyone. The key is my reaction to them; one of my best lessons. *And I have acceptance.*

You told me I was ready (even though I didn't believe you) and I picked up my first sponsee. The door to life opened even wider. Alex, her name was and she ended up firing me, but she and I taught each other valuable lessons. I have sponsored many since and the gifts are too vast to mention, but you know that. *And I am of service.*

My father became terminally ill and you walked with me, laying open the truth of how shared sorrows are lessened as I shared my pain with the group. The lessons continue, contrary action, doing the next right thing, these things pay off in previously unimaginable ways. Throughout my fathers process of dying I was able to be completely present, to sense what was needed and where. His death was beautiful. *And I have intuition.*

We have history, good memories, dinners, meetings, your trip to Maryland, and hard times... the death of your sister, Ron becoming ill, then depressed, your back problems, family stuff, your cancer, losing your rock, beautiful Noel. I watch you day in day out and you are an example of the best of this program. *And I have a design for living.*

Wow, my Mom went crazy; admitted to the psych ward, out of her noodle. I worried, 'will she ever come back?' You held my hand told me a day at a time, pray and trust God. Now, after she has celebrated 4 years of sobriety, it seems like a dream. She and I have had the privilege of sharing this program and a home group. *And I have trust.*

As some friendships deepen and grow on this journey, others fall away. I have learned to be more discerning. There is a fine line and often a very subtle difference between helping and enabling. You have helped me examine this in my relationships and in some cases I have found it healthier to step away and let others grow in their own time and direction. *And I have maturity (sometimes).*

Thanks to you, I know what it feels like to have someone completely on my side, always only a phone call away ready and willing to help. Because I know how much it means to me to have you in my corner, I do my best to do the same for the women that I work with and the bonds that grow out of this sort of relationship are deep and true. *And I have connection.*

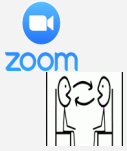
And today as I sit here in the hospital waiting room, while Mom is in surgery I have you with me. I feel the power of all the loving well-wishes and prayers from loved ones in and outside AA. The cancer may or may not be easily treatable, but as Mom said "Whatever it is, we are okay." *And I have serenity.*

Happy 25th year of sobriety, it is so true that no one could ever have told me what this journey held for me because I wouldn't have believed them. I love you and cherish my relationship with you. You are amazing and often at the top of my gratitude list... *And I have gratitude.*

What a gift. What a journey! I love you. Thank you.

—Pam T., San Pedro

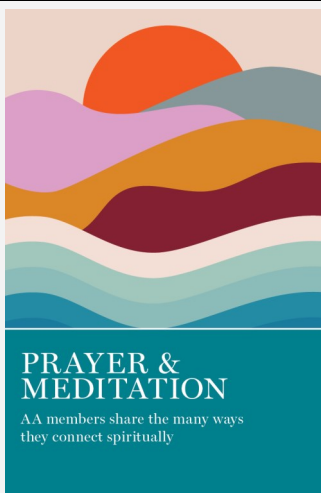
ASBCO Bulletin Board



IMPORTANT: Central Office needs your help with **UPDATED MEETING INFORMATION** and group contacts. If your group is still hosting Zoom meetings please call Central Office at (310) 618-1180 to offer updated Zoom Meeting IDs and Passwords. If your group has returned face-to-face meetings following COVID protocols, please update Central Office stating the meeting place, time, and expectations for safety.



Phone Volunteers! We still need you! The Central Office roster of back-up volunteers has depleted. We will teach you how to work the phones and learn to listen and direct calls appropriately. Please call us or visit our website at southbayaa.org to sign up.



New Grapevine publication available for purchase!

Prayer & Meditation

features powerful stories by AA members about the many ways they pray and meditate in their daily lives. The stories in this book show how members begin to pray and meditate and then branch out to develop very personal, and often creative, ways to practice.

Chapters include: daily routines, traditional religious practices,

activities and exercise, personal techniques, the Serenity Prayer, and connecting with nature and the universe.

All stories were previously published in Grapevine, the International Journal of AA. Great for people in recovery or those who want to explore prayer and meditation.

Ask about this book and the Grapevine at Central Office!

NEW WEEKLY A.A. MEETING ONBOARD THE USS BATTLESHIP IOWA

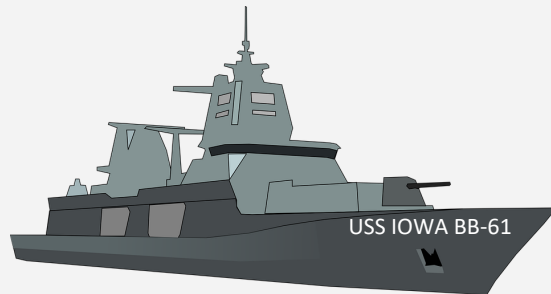
DAY: Every Wednesday Night on the ship!

TIME: 7:30 PM to 8:45 PM

LOCATION: The Wardroom (indoor seating for over 100 people)

ADDRESS: 250 S. Harbor Blvd. San Pedro, CA 90731

FORMAT: Open Speaker and Participation Meeting



Parking:
Veteran Peer
Access Network
(VPAN) parking
lot on the right
in front of the
ship.

There is no charge for parking. Someone will be available to provide directions for boarding the ship.

The meeting will be held in doors on the main deck but dress appropriately to stay warm.

\$4.50

Birthday/Anniversary Cards

Central Office has greeting
cards available to
help your A.A.
friends celebrate



From 1 year to
50 years
sober

Call or visit!



We've also got
the coins!



Special feature:

- Card has a perforated bookmark with a prayer included

ASBCO

Tel: (310) 618-1180

Writing for the Speakeasy

Who writes for the Speakeasy? You do. Stories and content contributions are always welcome. All AA members can write in with special interest in those connected to the South Bay.

When is the Speakeasy deadline? The Speakeasy is published quarterly for the South Bay. The deadline is usually the 15th of the month prior to publication for the 4 Seasons: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall.

What should I write about? Anything related to your experience of getting or staying sober, while respecting the anonymity of other members.

Group announcements are also welcome. Write about step-work, struggles, triumphs, lessons learned, transformation, etc. Discretion is advised.

How long and what format? A good length is about 500 words. Longer contributions may be edited to suit newsletter format. Use plain text or Word documents ideally via e-mail. Send .jpeg files for graphics.

E-mail: speakeasy.asbco@gmail.com

Access the *Speakeasy* Online at www.southbayaa.org