

AA members are needed to be on Western NC 12th Step Call Lists

-- for Guidelines on the 12th Step Call and more information, please visit Central Office's Web Site:

www.aaNCMCO.org (click on 12TH STEP CALL at the top)

**“I am responsible . . .
When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.
And for that . . . I am responsible.”**

— A.A. Grapevine. Reprinted by permission.

“[About]... **AA's Responsibility Declaration** [above] ... In just a few simple words ... the essence of the Fellowship – one alcoholic sharing with another ... a fundamental building block for the future of the Fellowship. One hand reaching out for the next – a chain reaction of help, healing, and hope.

For those who have reached out for help, alone and afraid, and been met with the firm, supportive hand of AA, the Responsibility Declaration is an emblem of the lifeline that saved them. And for those AAs, sober now, who have taken that outstretched hand into their own, the Declaration is but one small installment on the debt each owes to the Fellowship of AA.

... As we extend the hand of AA, responsibility becomes the bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives can be built.”

----- excerpt from the Foreword of the book,

I AM RESPONSIBLE: The Hand of AA – selected stories from the AA Grapevine
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To follow are additional excerpts from the above-mentioned book:

Working with Others (page 49)

“The impact one alcoholic can have on the life of another is profound. And it doesn't take any special skills to accomplish – all it takes is the willingness to communicate with another in the language of the heart. ... As Bill W. points out in his essay on Tradition Five from the September 1952 Grapevine, reprinted in the “Twelve and Twelve”:

“The unique ability of each AA to identify himself with, and bring recovery to, the newcomer in no way depends upon his learning, eloquence, or on any special individual skills. The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety. These legacies of suffering and of recovery are easily passed among alcoholics, one to the other. This is our gift from God, and its bestowal upon others like us is the one aim that today animates AAs all around the globe.”

[What you may not realize is that sometimes, 'long-timers' in AA call for help, too.]

Fifth Tradition (pages 37-38)

“Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

... Yes my group (made up of individual AAs, including me) has improved a lot in its respect for our Fifth Tradition – in its ways of carrying the message. My own AA history has lengthened considerably since I first caught glimpses of the sobriety-preserving wisdom in the AA way of doing things, summed up in our Traditions. But I have recently discovered something else quite wonderful about the Fifth: It does not say that AAs should help only newcomers.”

I do not agree that the newcomer is the most important member at any meeting. In my opinion, equally important are those old-timers who showed me the way, and any middle-timer who may today be suffering. If newcomers are indeed the lifeblood of AA, old – and middle-timers are its skin and backbone. What a bewildered mess we would be in without them!

So in your next meeting when that Tradition about carrying the message ‘to the alcoholic who still suffers’ is mentioned, please give a thought, not only to newcomers, but also to the alcoholics older in AA who are sitting there. One of them might be me. I still suffer, sometimes. I still need to hear the message, always.” --- BL, June 1970

Pass It On – But How? (pages 134 & 136)

“It is a paradox that one of the basic tenets of the AA program is that we must give away what we have in order to keep it. In other words, it is necessary to our own sobriety that we share freely with others what we have been so freely given. ‘When we see a man sinking into the mire that is alcoholism, we give him first aid and place what we have at his disposal’ (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 132). This has not been seen as optional but necessary to the success of an AA members' program. ‘Though they knew they must help other alcoholics if they would remain sober...’ (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 159).

The importance of passing it on is simply stated in our Responsibility Declaration:

***‘I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.’***

The AA Preamble emphasizes the same point, saying we are ‘men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.’ Tradition Five states the ‘our Society has concluded it has but one high mission – to carry the AA message to those who don't know there's a way out’ (*Twelve and Twelve*, page 151).

Our whole meeting structure is based on this concept, our literature works toward this end, and good-spirited AA members through the years have contributed to this stream of continuity with each passing the message on to others and variously helping his fellows along the ‘Road of Happy Destiny’.

The last words of **the Preamble** say it clearly:

‘Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety’....” ---- Charlie R., Athens, GA, January 2000