



D5 AA  
FARGO

APRIL 2025

# DAKOTA LANTERN

District 5 Alcoholics Anonymous

## Do you think you're different?

I came into AA in my early teens, forty years ago. I have been lucky enough to not gone back out and I believe one of the main reasons is my sponsor drilled into my head to look for the similarities instead of the differences. The one thing all drunks have in common is they think they are different. The solution for me, a young person, was the same for the forty year old woman (my mother): go to a regular meeting that meets at the same place and same time, get a sponsor who takes you through the steps, and don't drink or use any other outside issues that affect me from the neck up.

It really is that simple, it is only when my ego gets involved and I start having "rights" then I defend those rights, I step on the toes of my fellows and they retaliate, seemingly without provocation that I have real problems. For me that is just another way I am trying to be the director of life. Most of the time with the best intentions for all involved. I feel I am being selfless because I want the person to get what they want, and they would if they just listened to me. Still so wrapped up in self that I won't allow others the freedom to fail or succeed on their own,

my way or the highway attitude has to be abandoned so I can be of maximum use to my higher power. When I do that, I get what I want: True Happiness!  
Don't Drink. *-Rick L.*

## *Service Sunday*

### Institutions Committee

3rd Sunday of the Month at 2:00pm  
SDSOS Clubhouse  
(basement)

### Public Information / CPC Committee

3rd Sunday of the Month at 2:00pm  
SDSOS Clubhouse  
(2nd Floor)

### Group Activities Committee

3rd Sunday of the Month at 2:00pm  
SDSOS Clubhouse  
(2nd Floor)

### District 5

3rd Sunday of the Month at 3:00pm  
SDSOS Clubhouse  
(3rd Floor)

Have an article you  
would like to submit?



701-306-9101 (Text First)  
[editor@ndd5aa.org](mailto:editor@ndd5aa.org)



1112 3rd Ave S, Fargo, ND 58103

## What is our message?

For many twenty-four hours now, I have been asking myself, "what is our message?" The first half of the twelfth step tells us that we are to "try to carry **this message** to alcoholics," but what is this message that we are supposed to carry? In how it works we read that, "Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now." So perhaps the best way I can put this idea on paper is to share the second two parts of my story, since they comprise the message that was carried to me and the message that today I try to carry to others.

When I arrived at the doors of AA I was broken. How could it be any other way? This was the end result of the, "what it was like." I was scared and confused and trying to look like I had any idea of what it was like to be an actual human being amongst fellow humans. How clear that look is to me on the faces of the newcomers I see today. What must I have looked like to those people back then? What must I still look like today to those that came before me? (I relish the opportunity to find out.) How fortunate was I that they saw me in that state and immediately took me in? I had arrived. I did not understand it at the time, but I was surrounded by understanding individuals that were willing to love me and teach me until I was ready to love myself again and eventually pass on to others what would be so freely given to me. I quickly learned that no matter where I roamed, I could find other alcoholics that were willing to trudge this path alongside me. The message

carried to me at that moment was one of unity, it was that I did not ever have to be alone again. My newfound friends soon put me to work. Was this some sort of trick?! I needed help, not tasks to perform. They asked me to set up chairs. They told me to stand by the door and shake hands. Within weeks they had me chairing meetings. Very quickly I began to feel like one of them. Not only that, but at times I began to feel good. And for brief moments the hideous idea of that first drink was absent from my mind. I began to understand that when I stopped thinking about myself and started thinking about the welfare of others I was relieved of the bondage of self. The Big Book tells us that, "Our very lives, as ex-problem drinkers, depend upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs." This idea was starting to take shape in my life. The message that was carried to me was one of service, it was that through selfless acts I could be set free. →



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# HELP WANTED

## -Group Events/Calendar Team

WE'RE LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO KEEP OUR FELLOWSHIP CONNECTED AND THRIVING. IF YOU ENJOY ORGANIZING DETAILS OR BRINGING PEOPLE TOGETHER, WE HAVE A PLACE FOR YOU!

### -Calendar Coordinator

LOVE KEEPING THINGS ORGANIZED? WE NEED SOMEONE TO HELP MAINTAIN THE DISTRICT 5 CALENDAR AND HELP COMMUNICATE WITH LOCAL GROUPS TO KEEP EVERYONE INFORMED ABOUT UPCOMING EVENTS. THIS ROLE ENSURES THAT MEETINGS, WORKSHOPS, AND GATHERINGS ARE WELL-COORDINATED AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL.

### -Event & Activities Volunteers

WANT TO BE PART OF SOMETHING BIGGER? HELP PLAN AND ORGANIZE DISTRICT 5 EVENTS!

- ANNUAL EVENTS: THE SOUP & SPEAKER WORKSHOP (WINTER) AND THE FELLOWSHIP HARVEST FESTIVAL (OCTOBER) ARE GREAT OPPORTUNITIES TO SERVE.
- 2026 STATE ROUND-UP & FALL ASSEMBLY (FARGO): WE NEED A STRONG TEAM TO HELP HOST THIS MAJOR STATEWIDE EVENT!

**No experience? No problem! If you're willing, we'll support you. Step into service and make a difference!**

**Interested? Reach out today! [Events@ndd5aa.org](mailto:Events@ndd5aa.org)**

While all of this was happening the man that told me he would be my sponsor took me through the steps. We talked about what it was like, and he explained that, "I was a victim of the delusion that I could wrest happiness and satisfaction from the world if only I managed well." He made it plain to me that my own powerlessness and selfishness were the roots of my problem. And he told me that if I was willing to turn my will and my life over to the care of God I could be restored to sanity. We knelt together and said a prayer that would forever change my life. He had me make an inventory and taught me to look for damaged or unsalable goods, and to get rid of them promptly and without regret. Together we made a list of the people I had harmed, and he taught me to make amends. As a result of taking these steps I had a spiritual experience and stood in the sunlight of the spirit for the first time. I also learned that if I did not continue to do these steps this spark would be, "blotted out by worldly clamors, mostly those within myself." And I have

continued to work these steps ever since. The message carried to me was one of recovery, that I could be reborn Unity, Service, and Recovery is the message that I carry. It is this and so much more. It is message of hope, that I will never have to drink again. And it is one I hope you will find, find and carry to others. -N.



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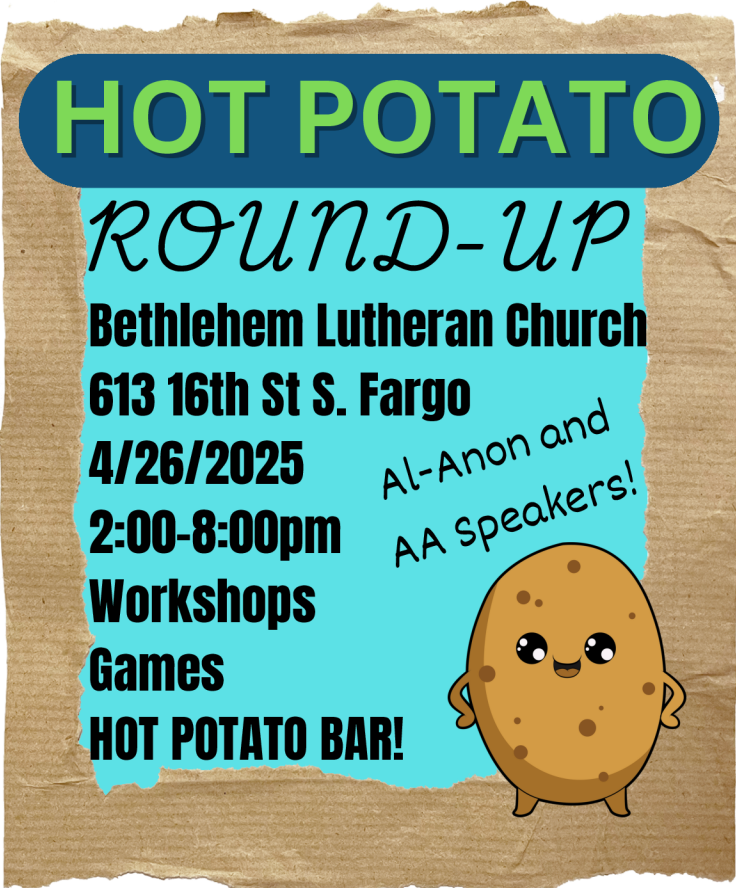


# Overcoming Fear

In January 2023, I found myself deeply entrenched in my drinking habits. What had started as casual drinking turned into a necessity; I was spacing out my shots throughout the day just to stave off the shakes. It was at this point that I realized my situation had become dire and that I had to stop. When I quit drinking abruptly, I experienced severe withdrawal symptoms and Delirium Tremens (DTs). The hallucinations and fear of death from that experience alone terrified me into being sober.

After that encounter I was stuck in a dry-drunk phase for five months. Whilst my mood and health improved, the stress in my life was mounting. I had started a new job at a recently opened establishment and found myself in the most toxic relationship I had ever endured, still socializing with friends who were once my drinking companions. I became so preoccupied with my friend's chaotic divorce that I failed to recognize the warning signs pointing towards a relapse. I was repeatedly told, "You've gone five months without a drop; I'm sure one drink wouldn't hurt." Eventually, I gave in—and it was never just one.

Seven months later, I became utterly exhausted by the person I had become, prompting me to genuinely commit to sobriety once again. A month later, I walked into my first AA meeting, where I quickly found a sponsor, and I began working through the steps with her. During the fourth step, I had a pivotal "Aha!" moment that



revealed what had been the dominant force in my life. It was fear and anxiety that drove my desire to drink, yet it was the same fear that hindered my earlier efforts at sobriety—fear of how others perceived me, fear of being overlooked, fear of both life and death, and the fear of the unknown as well as being alone in my relationship.

It wasn't until the fourth step that I fully grasped the value of the program. It allowed me to shine a light on issues I had been ignoring, helping me recognize the behaviors and thought patterns that contributed to my struggles. Once I identified a significant factor underlying my challenges, I realized that confronting my fears head-on helped keep those negative thoughts at bay. —————>

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**APRIL 2025**

Today, when faced with something beneficial yet intimidating, I embrace it—I try to give it my best shot and take action. Now on step nine, I occasionally grapple with the initial stress of making amends, checking in with myself and asking for guidance to ensure I don't overextend. Nevertheless, I strive to confront my fears as much as I can, learning that they are rarely as frightening as I imagined. Each day brings new discoveries about myself and my growth. I'm eager to explore the possibilities that await and what I can achieve by following the guidance of my sponsor, my higher power, and the steps. It truly does "work if you work it"! *-Tayrn*

## **KNEW LIFE AT NEW LIFE**

A WHILE BACK, I CONNECTED WITH A SERVICE GIG BRINGING AN AA MEETING TO THE NEW LIFE CENTER ON TUESDAY NIGHTS. THEIR RULES DISALLOW PEOPLE JUST SHOWING UP FOR THE MEETING WITHOUT THEIR APPROVAL. THIS RESULTS IN IT BEING A SOLO GIG UNLESS WE RECRUIT SOMEONE WILLING TO CONTACT THEM A HEAD OF TIME. I WAS ATTRACTED TO THE SERVICE BECAUSE I WAS A GUEST THERE SEVERAL TIMES BACK IN THE 1990'S.

THE FOLKS THAT COME UP FOR THE MEETING ARE A VARIED GROUP. FEW FIT THE STEREOTYPE OF TRENCH COATS AND PAPER BAGS. LIKE MANY OF US THEY SOMETIMES DISPLAY GRAVE EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL DISORDERS. SOME CLAIM THAT DRINKING IS NOT A BIG PROBLEM WITH THEM AND OTHERS CLAIM ADDICTION TO OTHER SUBSTANCES.

I SOMETIMES TRY TO RUN A FORMATTED MEETING BUT MOSTLY I LISTEN AND PROVIDE INFORMATION, MEETING LISTS, HELPFUL WEB PAGES AND APPS ETC. HAVING BEEN A HOMELESS "MISSION- HOPPER" BACK IN THE DAY, I UNDERSTAND THE VIBE OF THE PLACE AND PLACE AND GENERALLY DON'T TALK OVER ANYONE'S HEAD. I ALSO TRY TO SHARE MY EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE IN SOBRIETY AND THAT I HAD GIVEN UP HOPE BEFORE AA.

MY FIRST SPONSOR SET THIS EXAMPLE FOR ME BY BRINGING A MEETING TO A PSYCH WARD. IT TOO WAS A LONELY GIG. HE ALSO TAUGHT ME THAT IT WAS NONE OF MY BUSINESS WHAT GOOD I DID. JUST GET BUSY DOING. IF NO ONE COMES UP I OFTEN READ THE GRAPEVINE TIL IT'S TIME TO LEAVE. A LONELY GIG SOMETIMES BUT I'M GLAD IT CAME MY WAY.

*-Anonymous*



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# Tradition Three: The Keystone of the AA Group

The only requirement for AA membership is the desire to stop drinking. That’s it. I have been in meetings sitting next to an intoxicated person on one side of me, and a doctor on the other. Society would tell you that these two people are clearly different, and that the doctor is the “upstanding citizen” and obviously the person who is intoxicated is someone to keep at arm’s length. In AA, nothing else could be farther from the truth. We are a society of truly equal people. We don’t care about age, sex, gender, socioeconomic status, race or any other characteristic.

This pure equality of opportunity in AA is why the program works. Now, you might be asking, why is this equality so important? The central answer to this is that alcoholism does not care about any of these socially constructed characteristics. Alcoholism wants to kill the alcoholic, and it uses the obsession of the mind and the phenomenon of the craving to do this. Without each other, we are dead. The first word of the first step is We, not I. In the upside-down service triangle, the group is the most powerful entity. It is, I believe, so important because we are able to find out Higher Power in the words, thoughts and actions of the other members of AA trudging the road of happy destiny.

This is why the long form of Tradition Three should be understood by everyone in the fellowship. All of the Traditions are important, and everyone should read them in the Twelve and Twelve. For the new comer, Tradition Three is the anchor of one’s acceptance into the fellowship. The long form of Tradition Three reads:

“Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence, we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.”

First, all who suffer from alcoholism are welcomed. In the short form of Tradition Three this requirement is opened up even more, to those who have the desire to stop drinking. The tradition goes on to say that AA cannot refuse none who wish to recover. The only time this is not the case is when someone becomes a danger to those in the meetings, which unfortunately this is the case at times. When this happens, it is the role of the elder statemen and women to step up and make sure the person in question still gets the help they need, if they are receptive to it. —————>

SCAN ME



LINK TO  
LOCAL FARGO  
AA WEBSITE  
(DISTRICT 5)

SCAN ME



LINK TO STATE  
OF NORTH  
DAKOTA AA  
WEBSITE  
(AREA 52)

SCAN ME



LINK TO  
NATIONAL  
AA WEBSITE  
(AA.ORG)

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You never have to give anything to AA. AA is 100% free, you only contribute what you are able to. This is where a sponsor is key to working out that you are in a place in life to give what you are able to. Tradition Three even establishes what an AA group. Literally just a couple of drunks is a meeting, as long as they don't have any other affiliation.

Tradition Three is rooted deep in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous. In AA Comes of Age you can see the many trials that early AA had to go through to develop all of the Traditions. In this day in age, with the development of social media, A.I. and other technologies it is amazing that the Traditions are able to protect the fellowship still, from the possible issues that could threaten the fellowship from within and without. As AA continues to grow, and we go into new countries, and new digital frontiers, I will continue to look to AA's history, and also where we are going to help the still suffering alcoholics. Because, if I don't do that, then I won't be of maximum service to those who still suffer. *-Cody S.*

To Whom it may concern,


**CAMPAARAMAA!!!**     
**MAY 23-26 LAKE BRONSON STATE PARK**  
**GALILEE BIBLE CAMP-NO REGISTRATION**  
**7TH TRADITION FIRST COME FIRST SERVE**

In the beginning of 2018, I was clean and sober for about 4 and a half months on my own for the hundredth time. I had been on and off drugs and alcohol since 2014. Needless to say, my way wasn't working.

All it took was being offered some drugs to get me off and running again. Wasn't long before I was back to drinking. By this time drinking was my enemy and I knew it. But I couldn't stop buying it or begging for it. It didn't matter what time of day it was. If I was up, I wanted to drink. My usage was at its peak as well. My attitude after this relapse was different. I had planned to just use until I died or killed myself. I thought it would happen pretty soon.

I felt like I was battling a million voices in my head and one little voice in the corner would try getting me to hold on. It's going to be ok.

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Finally, one night I was going to really do it. I was directed to call 211 by a 911 dispatcher. I called. The voice on the phone was kind and understanding. I can't remember what we talked about that night in February of 2020, but something changed. My using went on for a few more weeks. My sobriety date is 2/23/2020 but that's not exactly the day. I had to overkill it. First, I stopped drinking, two weeks or so later I stopped everything else. Honestly, that February was really blurry.

I started treatment for the 6th time and started going to meetings. I got a sponsor that I was terrified to talk to. I didn't know how to be sober. I was still very suicidal and felt like a burden. But somehow, I felt the hope in the rooms.

I got my 30 day chip and then the pandemic hit. I thought that was it. May as well use. I had people by my side and a clearer head than I had ever in my life. I wanted this to work.

I started craving meetings and I felt safe from myself at them. I got started on the steps. Now I practice them to the best of my ability in all my affairs. I am grateful to be alive today and to be able to help others with alcoholism. 5 years ago, I wouldn't of been able to imagine anything I have right now because of AA. I have friends that I trust more than actual family members.

We are all miracles! Thank you for allowing me to keep coming back and to be able to call you all friends! *-Anonymous*

### Looking for a way to make a real difference in your community?

Join our AA PI/CPC (Public Information/Cooperation with the Professional Community) Committee! We're dedicated to spreading the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to those who need it most—whether it's reaching individuals struggling with alcohol dependency or educating professionals who can help. Your involvement can have a profound impact, and we're always looking for enthusiastic people who want to help us grow. Be part of a positive change—come see what we're all about! 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday every month at the SDSOS Clubhouse 2:00pm

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#### **TRADITION 4: (LONG FORM)**

"With regard to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg 189).

Similar to the level of personal freedom afforded our individual members, Tradition 4 asserts a potentially wild level of freedom to each A.A. group. Each group is free to do as it sees or wishes, following only the dictates of its own group conscience; no matter the size, scope or experience. Remember Tradition 3 stating, "Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg 189). With this level of freedom on both an individual and group level, how on earth has A.A. survived this long??

Most emphatically, A.A. has survived only through measures and efforts of trial and error; the substance of all of our Traditions were borne out of the experience, and transgressions, of those who came before us. The pioneers have paved the way for us so we need not suffer, if we care to act in accordance with their experience. "Over the years, every conceivable deviation from our Twelve Steps and Traditions has been tried." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg 146). Over time, Tradition 4 came to present two cautionary lessons: "A group ought not do anything which would greatly injure A.A. as a whole, nor ought it affiliate itself with anything or anybody else." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg 147). Surely, in today's world especially, we can see

APRIL 2025

## **Plain Language Big Book Study**

**Olivet Lutheran Church**

**Thursday April 3rd**

**Will last about 3 months**

**Questions contact Jim S. at 7013069101**



**Talk to Lynn R to  
get a Plain  
Language Big  
Book!**

how affiliation could damage AA. Can you imagine politically affiliated groups, for example? But the real wisdom set forth is the experience these pioneers had in knowing themselves as alcoholics; our tendency to be "... a band of ego-driven individualists." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg 146). How often do we consult our plans with neighboring groups? Often with the best of intentions, do we not engage in discussing what we feel is best for A.A., casually forgetting to research the subject or seek past experience on the matter? Potentially the only way to get AAs to conform and survive, is to give every group, "...the right to be wrong." (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pg 147).

For additional support, check out A.A. Grapevine Inc, "Traditions Checklist"

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