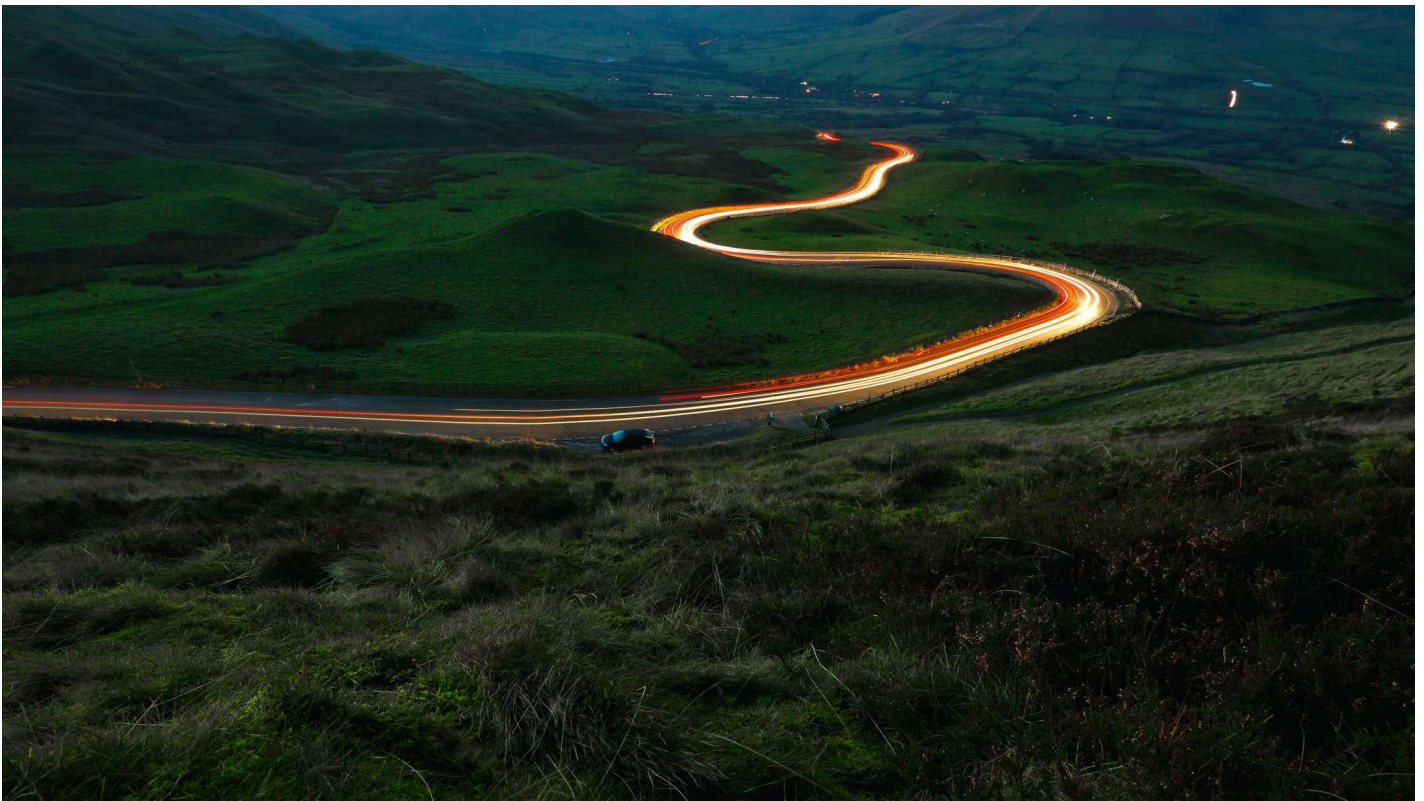


Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter

May, 2021



Sobriety and Serenity

It's cliché, but this has been one of the hardest years of my life because I do not like change. I like control. I like routine and predictable patterns. And then COVID-19 happened. I had about 18 months of sobriety when meetings largely transitioned to zoom in March of 2020. I was finally figuring out how to balance being a mom, a wife, and a member of AA. I had two home groups and also went to several other meetings regularly. I met with my sponsor and was working the steps. I even woke up at the disturbingly early hour of 6:30am to participate in the Design for Living course. I was finally feeling ok for the first time in years and then everything changed.

During the spring of 2020 I was suddenly more isolated than ever, with more responsibilities than ever. Overnight I had to navigate a new reality. This new reality included parenting 4 small children during a pandemic, becoming an expert on virtual schooling and zoom, and still maintaining a strong program and connection with AA. As a mother I often took on more than my share of the emotional and mental load of the family. Pre pandemic, going to AA meetings was my reset button. At the end of long days with my kids I could go to AA, be amongst friends, and spend an hour working on myself. However, the pandemic meant that in person meetings were no longer an option for me because I am in a high-risk category.

If I had to pin point one thing that has helped me the most over this past year I would say, the serenity prayer. The serenity prayer has served many roles during my AA journey which began on August 10, 2018. Early on, repeating the prayer at the beginning and end of meetings helped me feel connected to the program. At home, repeating it over and over helped me throughout the day when I felt overwhelmed. Quickly, the serenity prayer became a guide to my behavior and actions. It helped me process big emotions. During this past year I had to put the serenity prayer into action every single day. I had to accept the things I could not change. I could not change the public health situation unfolding. I could not change that the Canadian/US border was closed. I could not change the fact that I would not be able to see my parents and family for going on a year and counting. I could not change when life and program would return to "normal."

However, I could focus on the things I could change and the wisdom to know what they were. I had to decide to embrace zoom and make sure my fellowship and program was as strong virtually as it was in person. I am so grateful for zoom. I am grateful for those who volunteered quickly and early in the pandemic. I am grateful for those who paid out of their own pockets to create new and informal meetings so that everyone had a place to find the fellowship of AA when the world was a scarier place than ever and when my sobriety was at risk. I will forever be in awe of how quickly the AA program

Sobriety and Serenity, Page 2

adapted and met the needs of the members. I am also very grateful for my sponsor who helped guide me through the chaos of 2020.

While I do desperately miss my in-person meetings, I have actually found that having meetings on zoom means that I can pop on to an afternoon meeting while my kids play outside, or while they're watching a tv show. It has granted more flexibility in my program

than ever before. I don't have to worry about childcare, thank goodness for mute and no video options. I can attend meetings in different time zones so that I can have quiet once they are in bed. I have made friends with people that I never would have met during in person meetings. I can engage as a GSR and attend design for living via zoom.

Embracing zoom and online meetings has been the key to my sobriety this past year. I could dwell on what I was losing (that unique fellowship I could really only get in person), *or* I could find the silver linings, be courageous, focus on the things under my control, and jump into everything that zoom has to offer.

HOW I'VE STAYED SOBER FOR OVER 3 DECADES

I'm just your typical run of the mill alcoholic with a typical run of the mill program. I still make mistakes, but hopefully I'm getting it right more often than not.

For example, I waited until the day before I was told this should be submitted to write it. So, I still do procrastinate, sometimes. And I can be a perfectionist – I was waiting until the right thought/topic came to me so this would be the best story ever. I'm sure none of you can relate to this. The bottom line; I committed to doing this. I tried to just let it go, because no one hounded me, and even thought "I just won't do it". But the truth is, when I say I'm going to do something today, I really have to. One of the most important things to me in this life of recovery is to do what I say I'm going to do. If my word means nothing, I mean nothing.

So, I settled for – I'll just write from the heart. My story; my journey into, and in recovery.

When I say I'm a typical alcoholic, I am. I don't have any great stories. Well, I mean I have a few, but probably only interesting to me. I didn't have any great "bottom", nor did I have a white light spiritual experience. But it has been an awesome journey for sure.

I came to my first AA meeting in my mid-twenties. My brother was ordered to meetings by his attorney, and he asked me if I wanted to go (he apparently knew I drank too much). To this day, I'm not sure why I said yes. In all honesty, I knew I was a mess, knew I drank and drugged too much, but I just thought I had some emotional issues (which I came to find I did).

I knew sitting at that first meeting I was an alcoholic. Those people told my story, my feelings, my drinking. And I thought all along I was the only one who thought, felt, and drank like I did. They removed my terminal uniqueness and told me there was a solution to my misery. And I believed them. Moreover, they were happy and sober. To say I wanted what they had would be an understatement.

I'd like to say I stayed sober from that time on, but I did not. I had a stretch of something near to sobriety, but I did everything wrong. Got into a relationship, didn't get a sponsor, tried to work the steps alone, and never got the "giving back" concept. I was solely in it for me.

After a few years of research, by God's grace I found my way back to AA. This time, I did things differently, but not perfect. Got a sponsor, worked the steps, even found a Higher Power of my Understanding.

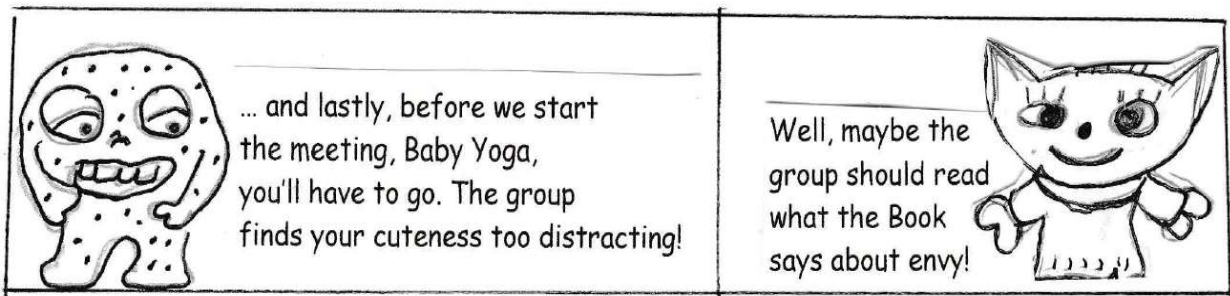
HOW I'VE STAYED SOBER FOR OVER 3 DECADES, Page 2

But what really changed things for me was getting involved in AA. I became Treasurer of my home group, which was the best thing I could have done. I got to know most of

the people there, and really felt part of this deal. I continued with service, being asked to be Treasurer of the Corrections Committee for my area. I met more people, and again felt of service/more a part of the WE.

Then I was asked to get involved in an annual conference. I was involved with that for about 6 years, and it brought tremendous joy each year at the conference to see all those people enjoying the conference and their recovery, and feeling so blessed that I was a part of that.

Keep on trudging' by Phil R.



Announcements & Anniversaries

If your group is hosting an event, or if you or someone you know is celebrating an anniversary,

please contact the newsletter and we will announce it on this page.

EVENTS

Area 33 meeting, May 16th Noon

This is a virtual event

New GSR Orientation 11:00 AM

District 16 Meeting, May 25th 7:00 PM

This is a virtual Event

Current information regarding in person and virtual meetings can be found on the area 33 website: [Alcoholics Anonymous \(aa-semi.org\)](http://Alcoholics Anonymous (aa-semi.org))

Outside the Bottle is the newsletter of District 16.

The newsletter contains announcements, meeting changes, events, news and information around the district, short articles on sobriety and recovery, and even some humor. All AA members are invited to submit material to the newsletter.

Please send correspondence or contributions to: clevebro@yahoo.com

Remember this is your newsletter help us make it better- all suggestions or comments are gladly welcome



A Sincere thank you to
all newsletter
contributors!

AA of Detroit (Wayne
County): 313-831-5550

AA of Oakland County:
248-332-3521

AA of Greater Detroit:
877-337-0611