

Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter

March, 2022



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."

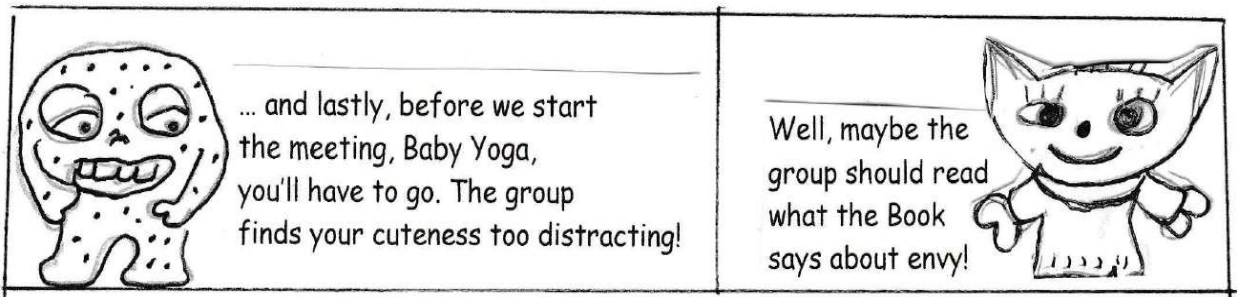
However, I could focus on the things I could change and the wisdom to know what they were. I had to decide to embrace zoom and make sure my fellowship and program was as strong virtually as it was in person. I am so grateful for zoom. I am grateful for those who volunteered quickly and early in the pandemic. 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 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.

Keep on trudging' by Phil R.



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.

All AA members are invited to submit material to the newsletter.

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