

Outside the Bottle

District 16 Newsletter
OCTOBER 2022



I Would NEVER Become an Alcoholic!

Peggy S.



Hi all! I was born to two alcoholic parents and then raised by my single, alcoholic father. I knew how bad alcoholism was—it was everywhere from as far back as I remember, and it was ugly. I SWORE I was NEVER going to be an alcoholic. Despite that resolve, there I was. My last drink was January 26, 1988, which was the day before my 24th birthday.

I didn't have a lot of interest in alcohol at first, but from the time I was a young teenager, I never said no to a drug. Drugs would ultimately lead me to drinking to take the edge off or bring me up or down, always looking to get to that perfect drunk or high. Drinking was the poison that would have killed me, of that I have no doubt. I could never stop once I started, until I would pass out. It made me fearless and reckless – completely out of control of myself and my actions. It took me to places I didn't want to be, among people I didn't want to be with.

In the few weeks before I got sober, I was told by my employer to go to rehab or leave. Of course, I left. I was in a sick relationship with a drug dealer 20 years older than I was, I had warrants out for my arrest and my life was absolutely and completely unmanageable. One night, I was all alone and strung out, unable to get high enough or drunk enough to either feel okay or pass out. I remember saying, out loud, "God please help me." The next morning, I was at work (I managed to land another job pretty quickly after being "asked to leave" by my previous employer). The phone rang and when I answered, the caller asked if this was the hotline for a 12-step recovery program that focuses mainly on drugs. I laughed out loud and said, "Furthest thing from it." I had vaguely heard of A.A., but not this other program. At the time, I could admit drugs were a problem, but I wasn't ready to admit I was an alcoholic. I believe the call was the divine intervention I needed. I ended up looking up a meeting, and actually went. Someone gave me that group's version of the Big Book and I took it home and started reading. It was as if I had written it myself. That program led me to A.A., and for that, I am eternally grateful.

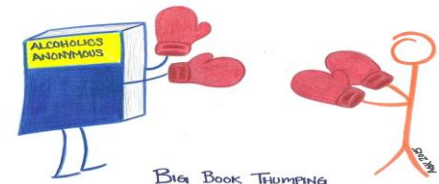
Although those first meetings I went to focused mainly on drugs, the group also required abstinence from alcohol. I wasn't sure about giving up anything for the rest of my life -- I was only 24. Who could give up booze and drugs at that age? I was in enough pain that I figured I'd give it a shot, at least until I got my life straightened around. That was 34 years and 9 months ago, and although the problems I was dealing with back then did get straightened out, I'm still sober. It didn't take long or that many meetings to realize that, for me, there was no difference between addiction to drugs and alcohol and, from the very beginning, I was never able to use responsibly. It was easy to see I was so much better off clean and sober.

I have basically spent my whole adult life in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and have never stopped coming to meetings. When I first got around A.A., people with long-term sobriety were telling me they still attended several meetings a week. I thought to myself, "They must not have a life." Ha! I was so wrong. I have a fuller and more wonderful life than I ever dreamed possible. My program and my sobriety have allowed me to have a family, a home, a career, lifelong friends and most importantly, peace of mind. I have a sponsor, I work with other alcoholics and continue to work the steps, seeking a deeper understanding of myself and closer relationships with my Higher Power and others. I am so very grateful for sobriety. It is the basis upon which every good thing in my life has been made possible. Thank you, A.A.!

**69th Annual
Michigan State Convention**
Hosted by Area 33
DECEMBER 16, 17 & 18, 2022
AUBURN HILLS MARRIOTT
3600 CENTERPOINT PARKWAY
PONTIAC, MI 48341

Registration Fee: \$25.00 / \$30.00 after 12/1/22
Banquet (Saturday at 6:00 p.m.) \$70.00

Register at: aa-semi.org
VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!



GRATITUDE MEETING - NOVEMBER 23RD AT 7:30 P.M.
****DOORS OPEN AT 6:30****

Royal Oak Farmer's Market

216 E. Eleven Mile Road, Royal Oak 48067

Please send contributions to:

A.A. of Greater Detroit, 380 Hilton Rd, Ferndale, MI 48220

Nobody's Fault But Mine

Chris H.



"It's not my fault mom, I was being bullied... it's not my fault officer, someone made me drive them home.... It's not my fault, I just watched my father take his last breath.... it's not my fault sweetheart, I had my heart broken once... it's not my fault Judge, my cousin died, and I was devastated....."

Mine is not a miraculous story. I had loving parents that kept me fed and in good schools. I didn't suffer under prejudice nor persecution. I was a tall, white, skinny kid from the burbs outside of Detroit. But I did live my life in fear and took no responsibility for my actions. My brother offered me a drink of 151 proof rum at 11 years old and I took it. I took it, but of course blamed him later in life. Also, who in the hell starts off with 151?!? But after that, I was off! I no longer had to process my traumas, or why my father had to suffer a disease, no longer had to understand nor learn to express my feelings, no longer had to do anything but to simply escape reality the moment it was unpalatable to me. And how often was that you ask??? Pretty much all the time.

I had learned that I liked being responsible when things went well. I was smart and a good friend so much that my friend's parents saw me as "the responsible one". Girls saw me as trustworthy and someone to confide in. Employers saw me as a hard worker who could get things done. And I saw myself as an incredibly skilled liar. I knew how to manipulate, how to coerce, and how to blame others when things didn't go well. But not by saying it out loud. That was my gift! I knew that wasn't acceptable to voice the blame. However, simply thinking it would allow me to justify what I did and how I continued to use others. Hint, it's a thinking disease. And with each lie, coercion, manipulation, I added another stone to the incredible weight I carried around. I thought I could bare this weight by simply drinking or drugging until I no longer felt their crushing burden. Hell, I thought I was Atlas! And thus, I was the one who created the reality that I found unpalatable. But did I take responsibility?? Nope, once I had run out of other people to blame, I turned to God, He did this to me, clearly, He hates me. My solution.... hate Him back.

This way of thinking came to a head on October 1st, 2019. I had lied my way into a life that appeared idyllic, complete with house, kids, great career, incredible wife, trust of my clients, and a few good friends. The hidden truths being a series of arrests, affairs, drug use, binges, secrets, and escapes because I still thought I was missing out on something I hadn't gotten. Despite so many things to be grateful for I was filled with resentments and fear. So, I used the death of my cousin as an excuse to drink to oblivion at home by myself on a Tuesday afternoon. Then endeavored to hide myself and my car from the family before they returned home by leaving the house and parking around the corner. But in my state, I gently tapped the brick wall I parked against. Hence, the neighbors heard, and the upstanding officers of the Berkley PD found me stumbling down the road. They asked, I answered, and felt the cold grip of handcuffs once again under the charge of Felony 3rd DUI. My lawyer asked, "Why did you admit to it?! No one saw you!" The answer... because I was done. I was done hiding, lying, and pretending I could control the demons. And riding in the cop's cruiser on the way to the hospital, too drunk for a cell, I felt freedom. Of course, the next morning, I was again full of fear. I knew that I was about to lose my family, home, and career. My wife asked what I was going to do? I said I was done, and the only people I knew that could help were in the rooms of A.A. How did I know this? Because after each prior arrest I got a glimpse of what sobriety looked like. And finally, at this moment, I was willing to go to any length to get it.

Within a week I had a sponsor, in the first year I attended a meeting every single day, I did service work, prayed often, and worked the steps. The first result of these efforts was I plead down to a misdemeanor and kept my career. But it still took me 18 months to give up all the fears, secrets, justifications, and finally be honest with myself and others. After all, 29 years of abuse brings some tough behaviors to break. It is said "the chains of habit are too light to be felt, until they are too heavy to be broken". Now my habits are that of service work, meetings, and prayer instead of lies and manipulation. But make no mistake, that devil on my shoulder, Loki as I like to call him, never leaves, never sleeps, and never gives up trying. He is my default and only God can remove him. The greatest gift I have gotten... the dismissal of a divorce and the opportunity to move back into my home with a wife who loves me and two young boys who never have to know what their father is like when he drinks, drugs, or seeks escape from a reality I find unpalatable. On my two-year anniversary I was asked for a "one word how", and the answer was simple: SURRENDER.

Mine name is Chris H., and I am an alcoholic, a husband, a father, and a person once again trusted by my fellows.

Bi-Monthly Intergroup Meeting

MONDAY, OCTOBER 10TH AT 7:00 P.M.

United Methodist Church of Madison Heights

246 E. Eleven Mile Road

New Bylaws for the Central Office will be presented!

SAVE THE DATE!!

Michigan Mock Conference - March 25th, 2023

First United Methodist Church

400 South Main Street

Mount Pleasant, MI 48858

STEPS, TRADITIONS & CONCEPTS

Step Ten: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Tradition Ten: Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

Concept Ten: Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

UPCOMING EVENTS

AREA 33 ASSEMBLY — SUNDAY, OCTOBER 9TH

12:00 to 4:00 p.m. with GSR Orientation & Service Manual Study at 11:00 a.m.
Clawson-Troy Elks Lodge, 2549 Elliott Avenue, Troy, MI 48083 / Lunch will be provided!

A. A. Beyond the Group – Celebrating A. A. in Detroit!

Saturday, October 22nd from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. / Lunch provided / Archive Presentation

Word of Power Ministry: 17400 Manderson Road, Detroit, MI 48203 / Free Parking!

Please direct any questions to Edgar L: area33chairperson@aa-semi.org

Back To Basics – A.A. Beginner's Meeting

Tuesdays 6:30 to 8:00 p.m. – October 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th

St. David's Episcopal Church: 16200 W. 12 Mile Road, Southfield

Statewide Corrections Workshop – a hybrid event hosted by Area 32

October 8th from 9:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at Re/Max, 6870 Grand River Ave, Brighton

Coffee/Doughnuts/Lunch Provided – Zoom ID: 517 414 7992 / Password: area32

District 16 meets at 7:00 p.m. on the 4th Thursday of every month at:

1st United Methodist Church of Madison Heights

246 E. 11 Mile Road, Madison Heights, MI 48071

We are self-supporting through our own contributions. The District, representing the overall conscience of 77 groups, is greatly appreciative for any and all donations. May we all be united together in spreading the message across this geographic area. If groups would like to donate funds to District 16, please mail a check or money order - *Payable to:* **District 16 of Area 33 AA, PO Box 725362, Berkley, MI 48072**

Outside the Bottle is the newsletter of District 16. The newsletter contains announcements, meeting changes, events, news & information around the district, and stories about sobriety and recovery.

Any AA member is invited to submit material to the newsletter. Please send questions/comments/contributions to: district16news@gmail.com



Thank you to all newsletter contributors and to the many people that distribute the newsletter throughout our district. We are truly grateful for your service!

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"Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny."

-Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 164