

Faithful Fiver Pledge:

Emerald Valley Intergroup
1259 Willamette
Eugene, Oregon 97401

- I pledge \$5 per month to support EVI and service work in my community
- I'm feeling grateful, I can send _____ per month
- I will mail or drop off my contribution:
Monthly
- Four times a year (\$15 each)
- Once a year (\$60)

Name: _____

Address: _____

when you acknowledge my contribution, please list me as (first name, Initial, or nickname): _____

"Faithful Fivers" are individuals who donate \$5 or more per month to help support Intergroup. We will post your nick name on a board in the office, with a little red dot placed for each months contribution, so you can track of your contribution. (We don't remind you, or otherwise keep track of it for you, and we will send you a newsletter whether or not you have remembered to send in your pledge.) You can contribute monthly, quarterly or yearly, and if you check the receipt box, and are on the News mailing list, we will send you a receipt at the end of the year. (If you want a receipt, but would like to save EVI postage by picking up the News at the Office, or the EVI Business Meeting, fill out your nickname and address, but write "no news" next to your address.) Our "Faithful Fivers" Program is new this last year, and was a great help. The idea came from an article in the G.S.O. Newsletter "Box 4-5-9 on similar programs at other Intergroups.

GET THE NEWS!



8 1

stamp

Emerald Valley Intergroup
1259 Willamette Street
Eugene, Oregon 97401

Slips and Human Nature

William D. Silkworth, MD

The mystery of slips is not so deep as it may appear. While it does seem odd that an alcoholic, who has restored himself to a dignified place among his fellowmen and continues dry for years, should suddenly throw all his happiness overboard and find himself again in mortal peril of drowning in liquor, often the reason is simple.

People are inclined to say, "there is something peculiar about alcoholics. They seem to be well, yet at any moment they may turn back to their old ways. You can never be sure."

This is largely twaddle. The alcoholic is a sick person. Under the technique of Alcoholics Anonymous, he gets well—that is to say, his disease is arrested. There is nothing unpredictable about him any more than there is anything weird about a person who has arrested diabetes.

Let's get it clear, once and for all, that alcoholics are human beings. Then we can safeguard ourselves intelligently against most slips. In both professional and lay circles, there is a tendency to label everything that an alcoholic may do as "alcoholic behavior." The truth is, it is simple human nature.

It is very wrong to consider any of the personality traits observed in liquor addicts as peculiar to the alcoholic. Emotional and mental quirks are classified as symptoms of alcoholism merely because alcoholics have them, yet those same quirks can be found among non-alcoholics too. Actually they are symptoms of mankind!

Of course, the alcoholic himself tends to think of himself as different, somebody special, with unique tendencies and reactions. Many psychiatrists, doctors, and therapists carry the same idea to extremes in their analysis and treatment of alcoholics. Sometimes they make a complicated mystery of a condition which is found in all human beings, whether they drink whiskey or buttermilk.

To be sure, alcoholism, like every other disease, does manifest itself in some unique ways. It does have a number of baffling peculiarities which differ from those of all other diseases. At the same time, any of the symptoms and much of the behavior of alcoholism are closely paralleled and even duplicated in other diseases.

The slip is a relapse! It is a relapse that occurs after the alcoholic has stopped drinking and started on the AA program of recovery. Slips usually occur in the early states of the alcoholics AA indoctrination, before he has had time to learn enough of the AA techniques and AA philosophy to give him a solid footing. But slips may also occur after an alcoholic has been a member of AA for many months or even several years, and it is in this kind, above all, that often finds a marked similarity between the alcoholic's behavior and that of "normal" victims of other diseases.

No one is startled by the fact that relapses are not uncommon among arrested tubercular patients. But here is a startling fact—the cause is often the same as the cause which leads to slips for the alcoholic.

It happens this way: When a tubercular patient recovers sufficiently to be released from the sanitarium, the doctor gives him careful instructions for the way he is to live when he gets home. He must drink plenty of milk. He must refrain from smoking. He must obey other stringent rules. The same tragedy can be found in cardiac cases. After the heart attack, the patient is put on a strict rests schedule. Frightened, he naturally follows directions obediently for a long time. He, too, goes to bed early, avoids exercise such as walk:ing upstairs, quits



E.V.I. News

Aug, 2001

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Emerald Valley Intergroup
1259 Willamette St. Eugene, OR
97401 (541) 342-4113



OFFICE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR
 Judy B. 687-9389, Jim K. 302-0942
 LITERATURE
 Dave S. 465-1767, Yael 344-9395
 ANSWERING SERVICE
 Linda 345-5827
 ARCHIVIST/HISTORIAN
 Linda 345-5827
 PUBLIC INFORMATION (PI)
 Brad M. 741-2579, Tom S. 686-8388
 COOPERATION PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY
 Cathy B. 343-1962, Angel 431-4924
 ACTIVITIES
 Sandi D. 463-0586, Leetha 687-6623
 E.V.I. COMMUNICATIONS
 Newsletter: Robert S. 684-9439, Kurt 747-8925
 Website: Michael W. 343-2566 Michael S. 349-0504
 Meeting Books: Doc. M. Johanna,
 E.V.I. SPEAKER MEETING
 AI D. 345-2058, Gaylene G. 953-3425
 OUTREACH
 Still open
 HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS (H&I)
 Chair: Karl B. 688-1047 karl@rpginvest.com

COOPERATION W/ TREATMENT FACILITIES (CTF)
 Laura K. 345-5788 Cathy B. 342-6675
 HOSPITALS
 Bruce P. 338-9892
 CORRECTIONS
 Ron B. 988-1827

H&I Coordinators
 Lane County Jail: Paul C. (747-3928)
 I.T.U.: Jack C. (463-1040)
 C.C.C. (Women's): Bev L. (349-0145)
 C.C.C. (Men's): Steve G. (915-1933)
 Alma Work Camp: Karl B. (688-1047)
 Pathways: Ron B. (988-1827)
 Serbu Detention: Gary R. (485-7777)
 Carlton House: Mike L. (485-6153)
 W.F.T. - Friday Night: Laura K. (345-1788)
 W.F.T. - Book Study: Wendy W. (431-6920)
 Serenity Lane - Speaker: Duane F. (726-8434)
 Serenity Lane - B.T.G.: Gus P. (463-1691)
 Serenity Lane - New: Gus P. (463-1691)
 L.C.P.H.: Todd J. (302-6377)
 Johnson Unit: Steve S. (683-3564)

E.V.I. STEERING COMMITTEE
 Chair: Chris H. 517-7021 chelmers@efn.org
 Vice-Chair: open
 Secretary: Tom L. 343-2465
 Treasurer: Mel M. 345-4450
 At-Large: Michael W. 343-2566m@mlwebb.com
 At-Large: Dann 484-2330 Dann@lowinsure.com
 At-Large: Gary R. 485-7777
 At-Large: Todd 607-6349 kritler@netscape.net
 Vice Treasurer: Ryan A. 513-6498
 BOOKKEEPER
 Bev L.

smoking, and leads a Spartan life. Eventually, though, there comes a day after he has been feeling good for months or several years, when he feels he has regained his strength and has also recovered from his fright. If the elevator is out of repair one day, he walks up the three flights of stairs.

Or he decides to go to a party—or do just a little smoking—or take a cocktail or two. If no serious aftereffects follow the first departure from the rigorous schedule prescribed, he may try it again, until he suffers a relapse.

In both cardiac and tubercular cases, the acts which led to the relapses were preceded by wrong thinking. The patient in each case rationalized himself out of a sense of his own perilous reality. He deliberately turned away from his knowledge of the fact that he had been the victim of a serious disease. He grew overconfident. He decided he didn't have to follow directions.

Now that is precisely what happens with the alcoholic—the arrested alcoholic, or the alcoholic in AA who has a slip. Obviously, he decides to take a drink again some time before he actually takes it. He starts thinking wrong before he actually embarks on the course that leads to a slip.

There is no reason to charge the slip to alcoholic behavior or a second heart attack to cardiac behavior. The alcoholic slip is not a symptom of a psychotic condition. There's nothing screwy about it at all. The patient simply didn't follow directions.

For the alcoholic, AA offers the directions. A vital factor, or ingredient of the preventive, especially for the alcoholic, is sustained emotion. The alcoholic who learns some of the techniques or the mechanics of AA but misses the philosophy or the spirit, may get tired off following directions—not because he is alcoholic, but because he is human. Rules and regulations irk almost anyone, because they are restraining, prohibitive, negative. The philosophy of AA however, is positive and provides ample sustained emotion—a sustained desire to follow directions voluntarily.

In any event, the psychology of the alcoholic is not as different as some people try to make it. The disease has certain physical differences, yes, and the alcoholic has problems peculiar to him, perhaps, in that he has been put on the defensive and consequently has developed frustrations. But in many instances, there is no more reason to be talking about “the alcoholic mind” than there is to try to describe something called “the cardiac mind” or the “TB mind.”

I think we'll help the alcoholic more if we can first recognize that he is primarily a human being-afflicted with human nature.

William D. Silkworth, MD Grapevine January, 1947

In a given year, about 8 million adult Americans meet clinical diagnostic criteria for alcohol dependence (alcoholism) and about 6 million meet clinical criteria for alcohol abuse. At some time during their lives, 13 percent of Americans experience alcoholism and about 6 percent experience alcohol abuse. **National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism**

The cost of a hangover:

Estimates for the annual cost of decreased productivity due to alcoholic hangovers. Australia, \$3.8 billion; New Zealand, \$331 million; and the United States, \$148 billion. Studies suggest that accident rates among those suffering from hangovers may be worse than for those who are intoxicated - and mostly affect light to moderate drinkers.

Business meeting minutes

continued from page 6

Old Business:
 None

New Business:

1. A motion was made to conduct business without the quorum required, with all business decisions pending approval at the next months meeting. Some discussion, dissenting viewpoints expressing the opinions that by-laws need to be followed, and that all business would just have to be reviewed and re-discussed. Motion carried.
2. A motion was made to replace **Activities** Vice-Chairperson Amy W. Rational that she hasn't responded to any inquiries or contact, and concerns expressed by current Chair Sandi that Amy probably won't rotate in to the chair position. Motion Carried.
3. A motion was made to elect Letha as replacement Vice-chair of **Activities**. Letha was present and expressed her willingness to serve. Motion carried. Letha can be contacted at 687-6623. **Thanks Letha**
4. A motion was made to replace **Literature** Vice-Chairperson Kathy for similar reasoning. Motion Carried.
5. A motion was made to elect Yael as replacement Vice-chair of **Literature**. Yael was present and expressed her willingness to serve. Motion carried. Yael can be contacted at 344-9395. **Thanks Yael**
6. Tim announced that District 20 and District 6 will be hosting the Oregon General Assembly in September of 2002. Requested assistance in coordination by EVI, and use of the business office to store materials. A motion was made to assist the Districts in any and all ways possible. Motion Carried.
7. **Steering Committee** Vice Chair Jim P. announced a decision by the committee to replace Gary R. as a member at large. Rational that he hasn't attended over three business meetings (by-law requirement), or responded to the Business Advisory Committee. Election to be held at the September, 2001 Business Meeting.
8. **Steering Committee** Vice Chair Jim P. announced that current Chair Chris H. is resigning his position, as he is relocating to the Portland Area. Election to be held at the September, 2001 Business Meeting.

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**God grant me the serenity
 to accept the things I cannot change,
 the courage to change the things I can
 and the wisdom to know the difference.**

**Living one day at a time,
 Enjoying one moment at a time,
 Accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.**

**Taking as He did the sinful world as it is,
 not as I would have it.
 Trusting that He will make all things right
 if I surrender to His will;**

**That I may be reasonably happy in this life
 and supremely happy with Him forever in the next.**

Reinhold Neibuhr-1926



EVI Office

**1259 Willamette
 Eugene, OR 97401
 Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm
 Thursday 9:00am- 8:00pm
 Saturday 9:00 am - noon
 Drop by for a visit!**

EVI Web Site

www.efn.org/~eviaa

Meeting schedules, business meeting minutes, and much more.

The little squiggle in the address is found right next to the exclamation point on the keyboard. Save a book mark or favorite and check back often!

E.V.I. News

Emerald Valley Intergroup's Newsletter for the A.A. Community in Lane County

EVI News is a monthly newsletter of the Emerald Valley Intergroup. It is about, by, and for the members of Alcoholics Anonymous fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article or event or notice imply endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or EVI. (Exceptions: Quotations from A.A. books or pamphlets which are reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.) EVI News is produced to support communication within the fellowship; please respect the anonymity of any A.A. member mentioned herein. EVI News reserves the right to edit any submissions for clarity, length, language, and editorial policy. Contributions gratefully accepted for consideration for publication.

Submissions due last Monday of each month. To submit articles or event information, mail them or drop them off at the EVI office c/o EVI Newsletter. Submissions can also be e-mailed to: eviaa@efn.org

Communication Committee (Newsletter & Web Site, Meeting Book) meetings are held the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:30 pm at 2495 Columbia St. Eugene. OR 97401 (call and check 343-2566)



Contributions:

(June/year to date)
 As Bill Sees It **25.00/75.00**
 Attitude Adjustment **276.76/754.70**
 Autumn Group **0/25.00**
 Backwoods Bunch **0/0**
 Brown Bag Group **167.00/367.00**
 Cottage Grove Gratitude **0/0**
 Cottage Grove Noon **0/0**
 Creswell Steps & Traditions **30.00/30.00**
 Downtown AM group **161.55/999.05**
 Drop The Rock **0/0**
 Fireside group **0/60.00**
 First Monroe Group **0/0**
 First Things First **0/0**
 Four Corners **0/0**
 Freedom Of Choice **0/96.50**
 Friday Big Book Study (M) **0/0**
 Friday Physical Awakening **0/120.00**
 Fri night young people **0/0**
 From the Heart **0/0**
 Gratitude Group **0/60.00**
 Harrisburg Group **0/0**
 Jasper Group **0/0**
 Last Chance Study Group **0/0**
 Language of the Heart **0/10.00**
 Lowell Lakeside **0/0**
 McKenzie Bridge **0/2.00**
 McKenzie River Group **0/10.00**
 Monday Mens Stag **50.00/100.00**
 Monday Night Cont. Study **0/0**
 Monday Night New Group **0/20.00**
 New Freedom **130.00/530.00**
 New Freedom 2 **100.00/460.00**
 Physical, Mental, Spiritual **0/0**
 Plug in the Jug **0/0**
 Recovery by Big Book **0/15.75**
 Saturday Night Beginners **0/0**
 Saturday Step **0/409.20**
 Sober Awakenings **0/720.00**
 Sobriety for life **0/190.00**
 Springfield Monday Night **0/40.00**
 Springfield Study Group **0/40.00**
 Stairway to Sobriety **25.00/125.00**
 Sunday Morning Big book **0/240.00**
 Sunlight of the Spirit **0/30.60**
 Sunday Night 12x12 **0/0**
 Men's Sponsorship **0/120.00**
 Sunday Women's Step Stdy **0/90.00**
 Thursday Voyagers Group **0/0**
 Thurs PM Rush Hour **0/20.00**
 T.G.G. Speakers Mtg **0/120.00**
 Tuesday Night Book Study **0/0**
 We Need Each Other **50.00/50.00**
 Wednesday Mens Noon **0/230.00**
 Wednesday Men's Stag **0/252.00**
 Who am I Group **0/100.25**
 Womans Road to Recovery **0/120.00**
 Women's How It Works **0/0**
 Women's Bedrock **0/60.00**
 Ya Po Ah **0/40.00**
 Total Contributions (month/year to date)
 Group month/ ytd **990.31/6,802.65**
Fundraising:
 EVI Speakers Meeting **804.43/804.43**
 Faithful Fivers, individual **76.80/1,053.90**

July EVI Business Meeting Minutes

July 9th, 2001

The meeting was called to order at 6:30 p.m.
The meeting opened with the Serenity Prayer.
Those present introduced themselves.

New EVI Representatives:

Mark P. New Freedom group
An agenda for the meeting was presented and distributed..No quorum of EVI Reps were present to conduct business. (15 required per amendment to by-laws, Only 14 in attendance)
Acting Vice Chairperson **Jim P.** started the Meeting with Committee reports in hopes that a quorum would be achieved later during the meeting. No Dissent.

Committee reports:

Treasurer: **Mel M.**
Profit & Loss statements are available in the office and distributed to all present.
<\$ 808.71> Net income for the month. Book sale income up, with a total sales of \$ 4,487. Expenses greater than usual as the copy machine was paid in full for \$2,200. Inventory and group donations remained constant.

Thanks Mel

Volunteer Coordinator: **Judy B.**

Things going well – could use volunteers for office, summer is coming up and always need fill-ins. Also will be holding a potluck volunteer meeting on July 27th. **Still need help on Thursdays. Thanks Judy**

Literature Chair: **Dave S.**

"We have books for sale". Literature is going well. The Fourth Edition of the Big Book will be available in September, as well as new pamphlets. **Thanks Dave**

Website: **Michael W.**

Website doing well. Reported surpassing over 5,000 hits. **Thanks Michael**

Meeting Book committee: **Doc**

Have new batch of Meeting books in. **Thanks Doc**

Newsletter: **Robert S.**

Robert (541-684-9439) is always looking for area member's articles and additions. Committee meets 3rd Tuesday of the month @ 2495 Columbia, Eugene. **Thanks Robert**

Answering Service (Diverter Coordinator): **Linda L.** NO REPORT

Public Information: **Tom S. for Brad M.**

PI has a letter going out to all the alternative schools in the area. Also working with all the local media. Things are going well. **Thanks Tom**

CPC: **Angel for Kathy**

Angel reported that CPC has not met, and that he has had no contact with Chair. Committee considered defunct. **Need some help here guys. Thanks Angel.**

Activities: **Amy** Picnic is scheduled and will be at Emerald Park. Flyers for the picnic were distributed. **Thanks Amy**

Speaker Meeting: **Gaylene G. or Al D.** NO REPORT

Outreach: **NO REPORT**

Archivist: **Linda L.** NO REPORT

H&I: **Karl B.**

A three page Minutes was distributed. Lane County Jail meeting is going well. " WE STILL NEED WOMEN" for meetings (CTF and Hospitals). **Thanks Karl**

Steering Committee. **Vice-Chair Jim P for Chris H.**

Jim reported Steering Committee met and discussed various issues. Volunteer training at the office is improving, although some problems still exist with timely shift changes. Mel has provided Names of past officers to the Justice department to insure our non-profit standing, and is still working with the landlord to establish consistent billing for utilities at the office. Business Advisory committee has not met to create guidelines for the prudent reserve.

August Calendar:

E.V.I. and District Committee Meetings:

All meetings at EVI office unless otherwise noted.

1st	Mon	Steering Committee 7:00
	Tue	District 20, 418 A St., Karla B. 744-0509
	Tue	District 33, 6:30 Pam G. 895-5478
	Wed	District 19, 6:30 Tracy R. 338-4320
	Thur	Speaker Mtg Committee, 7:00
	Sat	Cooperation w/Prof. Community, Noon
2nd	Mon	EVI Business Meeting 6:30
	Wed	District 6, 6:30 Gus P. 463-1691
	Sat	Answering/Diverter 9AM
		EVI Speakers Meeting, 7:30 Country Club Rd Sun
3rd	Mon	Communication Committee 7:30, 2495 Columbia
	Mon	Public Information 6:30
	Tue	Office Volunteer 5:30
	Wed	Activities 6:30
Last	Wed	H& I Committee 6:00
Last	day	Literature Committee 6:30



6 3 Fellowship Events:

Conventions and retreats in August

Labor Day Weekend, August 31-September 2
Rose City Round-Up, Portland, OR
John Q Hammon Convention Center
Call Lenny Z. @ 503-661-4403 or Steve S. @ 503-314-1642 for registration information and directions.

Oregon Area General Service Assembly
Sept 14, 15, 16 2001 Hosted by District 5
Deschutes County Fairgrounds, Redmond Oregon
Robin P. 541-330-5616 or Cindy T. 541 318-8093
or pick up flier at EVI office.

Sept 21, 22, 23 Skycamp Men's Spiritual Retreat
contact Ted D. 686-0825 or Bill N. 747-7486
or pick up flier at EVI office.

If you are looking for a fun and relaxing way to be of service and are available during the day, consider volunteering at the EVI office.



Gratitude:

Currently Available Service Positions:

EVI Service Committees:

Outreach: Get out to new meetings, meet new folks, and let them know about Intergroup.

Hospitals. Coordinates bringing meetings and info into local hospitals, Lane Psychiatric, and the Johnson unit. You don't have to be crazy to do this.

Other volunteer opportunities:

H&I has a constant, and varied need for people willing to do a little to a lot of service work. The opportunity for this type of service has really expanded, and H&I has been doing a great job, but they need the AA community to step up and volunteer. This is real service work.

There are still service positions available in H&I for women. See page 2 for contact information.

Public information - takes speakers into schools, and in general lets the public know that AA didn't die out in the '40's, and is, in fact, alive and well. We could particularly use someone with some enthusiasm for getting some public service spots on local TV and radio.

EVI Office Volunteers work a four hour shift, once a week, or every two weeks. Not very demanding, bring a good book; but you do get to answer the phone, talk to folks who stop by, etc. If you have a little time available, whether you are a year sober, or twenty, this can be pleasant service work, and worth doing.

Twelve-Step list. If you would like to be on the list that is called by the office or the diverter for twelve step calls, there are sign up sheets going around, or stop by the office. People available during the day, and folks willing to give rides are particularly helpful.

AA Meetings:

New:
Came to Believe
Thursday 7:30-9:00 PM
Eugene, (C)
1150 Maxwell Rd. St. Peters Catholic Church

Women's B.S.
Saturday 6:30-8:00 PM
Eugene, (O,X,W) (BB,12/12)
Somerset Villas Clubhouse, 2800 Sunnyview Lane

Southwest Sunset
Monday 5:30-6:30 PM
Eugene, (O,X,) (BB,12/12)
Somerset Villas Clubhouse, 2800 Sunnyview Lane

Try God Book Study
Monday's 7-8pm
Eugene, (BB)(C)(X)(Wheelchair access)
1275 Polk St.,
Seventh Day Adventist Church

Eugene Men's Book Study
Tuesday 7:00-8:30 PM
Eugene, (M)(C)(BB,12x12)
Emerald Baptist (downstairs)
19th & Patterson,

River Road Book Study Wed 5:30-6:30 3280
River Road The Messiah Luthren Church

Moved:

The Thursday Night Group has moved from St. Judes to Emerald Baptist Church, 19th & Patterson. (8:00-9:30 pm, (C)

There is a Solution is moving to Wednesday, 5:30-6:30 PM
Springfield (WCH)
418 N. A St. First Christian Church

Women's Expect a Miracle moved to Tuesday 7:00-8:30 PM
Goshen (W)
Dillard Ave. Goshen Grange

New Freedom II, Tuesdays & Thursdays at 5:30 has moved to Emerald Baptist Church 19th & Patterson (downstairs) (O)

Sunday Springfield Big Book Study Group is still at the VFW but is meeting at 7pm instead of 8pm.

OOPS:
Thursday night candlelight still meets at Koinonia Center, 8pm
Eugene, 1414 Kincaid St. (O)

There are not many areas of life in Li. which I can claim preeminence. But in one particular area, I can modestly assert that I probably have no peers. That area is the art of worrying.

I am a cutting-edge, state-of-the-art, world-class aficionado to the extent that I am one of the few living quadruple-threat worriers.

As a starter, I am very adept at just plain workmanlike worrying. Second, I can worry about the fact that I am worrying. Third, I can worry that I am not worrying about sori1~thing I should be worrying about. Finally, there is a fourth, post-graduate variety of worrying. This type is very rare. Before most worriers have achieved such proficiency, they have worried themselves to drink or death. I am one of the survivors. The ultimate level was attained when old age sapped my memory to the extent that I now worry about how many things there must be that I have forgotten to worry about.

What has all this got to do with alcoholism and AA . . . ? Just that I had to find some way to handle this perpetualworrying or I would surely take a drink, either because I was worried to distraction that I might take one, or because I was worried that I was not worried about taking a drink. Worrying was stealing my time and energy from exploring and learning to practice the program. The negative force of worrying was displacing constructive forces needed for growth. So I had to find an antidote for this worrying syndrome or be condemned to a white-knuckled existence in AA—or out.

Here is what I found.

Worrying is a dynamic force, a very powerful and persistent force. Un-trained and unleashed, it can raven around in our heads gobbling up every sprout of constructive progress.

Just what is worrying? Webster's Dictionary says it is "plucking at (something) repeatedly in a nervous way. Being anxious, troubled"—a totally destructive occupation. For my money, worrying is anguishing over a negative projection without making any effort to resolve the anguish.

Worries are wholly portable. I can take them wherever I go. They're like a snake in my pocket. While they may not be able to bite me at the moment, they're always wiggling around to let me know they're there.

If worrying is such a dynamic force, isn't there some way I can put it to work to help me grow?

Here are some of the things I have tried and, for the most part, they work (when I use them).

1. I try to postpone worry. My worrying usually involves problems which, at the moment, I either cannot or will not do anything about. It's sort of like gorging on salami and garlic when I don't have any antacid with me. So now I try to postpone worrying about a problem until I am in a time and place where I can give it some undivided concentration.

2. Specifically, w1~at am I worrying about? If it's just an ominous wraith going through my mind, I can't catch it in order to deal with it. So I must identify the worry—give it reality.

3. Set aside a specific time for my worries. When I have set that time, I treat it like an appointment with the President. If something else comes up, I will not say to myself, "Oh, I can worry another time. The worrying is not so urgent." Listen, pal, the worrying time is very urgent because unresolved worrying is reflected in my conduct and

relationships, because it is diverting time and energy from constructive pursuits and thus eroding my progress in AA. Even if the kids want to play ball, it's "Not now, kids, this is Dad's worrying time."

4. Whenever a new worry starts to pluck at my consciousness, I add it to my agenda for the next "beating the worries" period. Postponing it to a specific date makes me less apprehensive than if I had just swept it under the rug.

5. When worrying time arrives, I close the door, turn off the phones, and take my list of worries in hand. I take the most persistent one first and figure out some specific thing I can do about it then and there. Perhaps all I can do is decide when I can do something and then make a note thereof on a calendar. Or perhaps all I can do is work on my attitude and thus improve my ability to cope with the problem when it arises. Whatever it is, I will not leave the room until I have taken at least one specific step in relation to that problem.

6. In my worry sessions, when it would help, I think through the worst case scenarios. What is the very worst thing that could happen? I know we in AA are admonished not to project, but if we have a serious worry it lurks out there as a threatening specter. So I make a sweaty effort to confront the worst case scenario and work out what I would do "if." I make notes of a little emergency plan and tuck it away where I can find it if needed.

Now there's nothing left to worry about, right?

*B.F.P., Vero Beach, Fla
July 1992 Grapevine*



4 5

Sponsorship

If you want to keep your own sobriety growing, listen to the problem and try to live it again yourself.

Most of us have heard expressed, many times and in a number of ways, the thought "I want to stay green in AA because green things grow." Sponsorship offers one way to "stay green," and that includes part-time sponsorship, the type you can exercise when a newer member uses you as a sounding board or a weeping wall.

As either an acknowledged (fulltime) or part-time sponsor, I have found it fruitful to listen *subjectively* to the newer member, and try to *live* the trouble confronting the person who is talking. That person wants to hear something that *he can use*—something more subjective, more personal, than the reply of a drill sergeant who knows all the rules, but nothing about people. The rules of the game (in my opinion) call for giving a person an answer that is valid within the framework of *his* experience and circumstances.

Let me take the case I know most about (my own). After several years in AA, I can almost always get through a few solitary, troublesome hours with the knowledge that I can be at a meeting shortly after eight o'clock. A few years ago, that was not the case; the hours between five and eight were an eternity.

Today, many things are easier for me than they were a few years ago, but I never want ease to become complacency. Sponsorship is a (let's face it) *satisfying* way to stay green, a *satisfying* way to avoid the road of complacency back to the bottle. *W.R. From the November 1966 Grapevine*

Rule 62:

Scotty J. of Connecticut tells of an anecdote about himself back when he was fairly new in AA. He was waiting at an airport one day when he felt an overwhelming urge for his "between planes" drinks. Steeling himself, he hurried to a lunch counter and had soup and a sandwich. But the urge hung on, so he dug into a large ice-cream sundae loaded with syrups, fruit, and nuts.

A very overweight woman seated next to him looked longingly at the ice cream and beseechingly at her husband, but the latter shook his head sternly. After several more pleading looks, he relented. When the woman's sundae was served, she said to Scotty, "Sir, you set a very bad example to people with a compulsive habit!"

RANDALL C. OF MASSACHUSETTS wrote about a different kind of problem. He was one of a pair of middle-aged men who'd been pouring them down at a tavern one night. Toward closing time, one of the duo suggested they call it quits, but the other was reluctant to leave.

"I hate to go home," he confided, "because the same thing always happens. I sneak into the house, tiptoe upstairs, and undress in the dark. But my wife always wakes up anyway, and nags me for an hour about my drinking and staying out late."

"You should try my method," said his friend. "I slam the front door, stomp upstairs, and turn on the lights. All the while, as I'm getting ready for bed, I sing at the top of my voice that old song 'I'm gonna love ya like you never been loved before'—and my wife always pretends to be asleep."