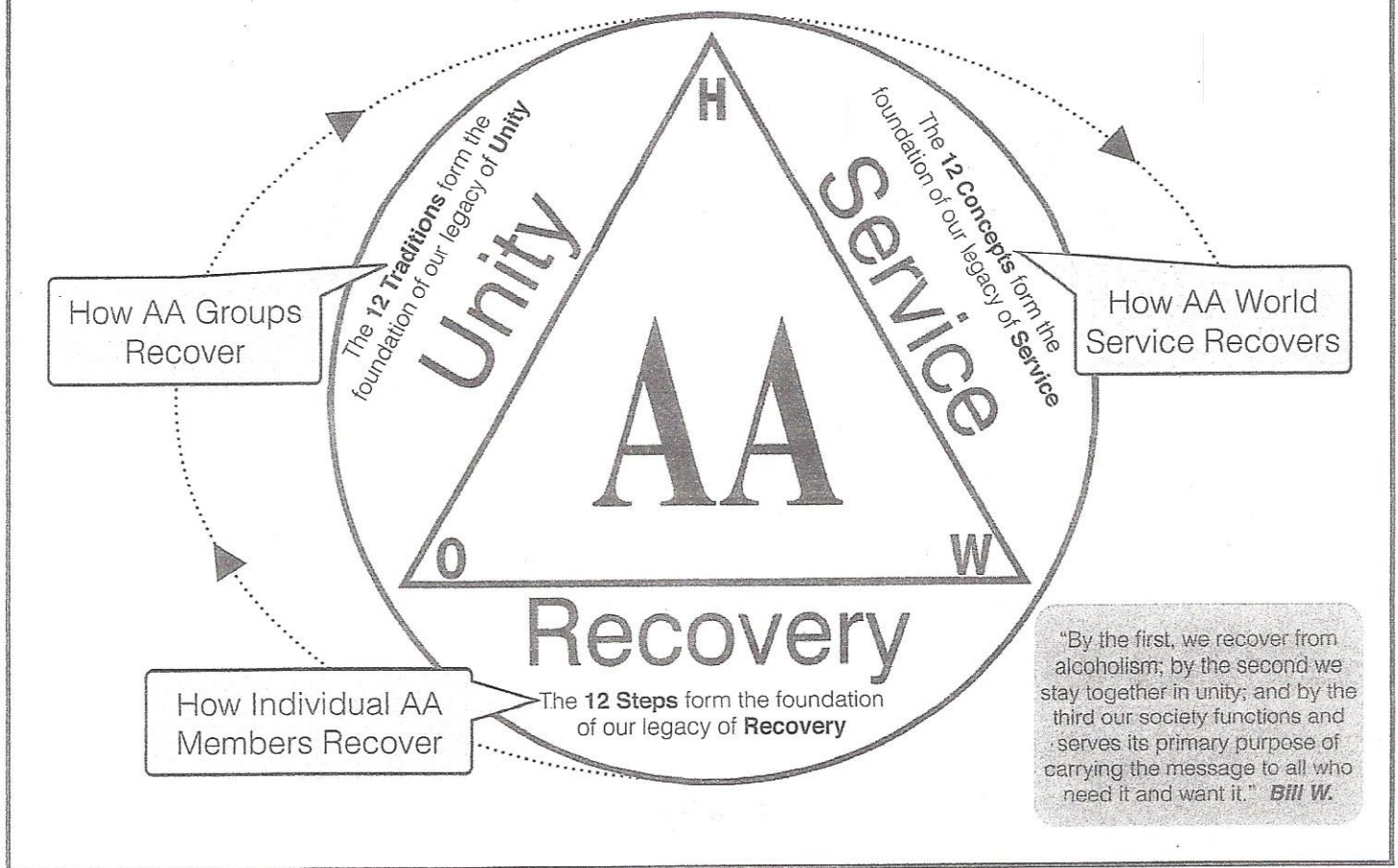


Alcoholics Anonymous' Three Legacies



"OUR GREAT INHERITANCE"

This is what Bill W. refers to when speaking about the Three legacies of Recovery, Unity and Service or the Steps, Traditions and Concepts; "Our great inheritance". I have always noticed that when our founder writes about our thirty six principles it's with zeal. He is always eager to inform us in detail as to how the General Service structure has come together to make twelfth step work possible. When I start to work with others I let them know that the one thing they should want to have is the one thing that I've had; a spiritual awakening! As far as I understand and as confirmed by our founder the twelve traditions and the twelve concepts were written to make twelfth step work possible. Although considered a basic service it is something set apart from services that make twelfth step work possible.

"Our Twelfth step---carrying the message---is the basic service that the A.A. fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence." Hence an AA service is anything whatever that helps us reach a fellow sufferer---ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to AAs general Service Office for

national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our third Legacy of Service."

When I became a member of A.A. I was fortunate to have joined a group where many of the members were practicing all three legacies. Some were working with others through the basic text and they were also serving at the Group, Inter-Group and in General Service at the Area, District, Conference and GSB level. There were early timers who were there before nineteen fifty five and there were old timers who came in after nineteen fifty five. Among all these members was a great feeling of something having been built and it needed to be maintained. This was the feeling and the spirit that was conveyed to me.

I had met men who were going in to jails to do twelfth step work before it was called Corrections, finding proper hospitalization for alcoholics before it was called Treatment, putting a phone number in the local phone book before it was called Public Information, sharing stories of how things were done before it was labeled Archival work. What I understood from their experience was that they were making our ability to do service work easier and they simply named or labeled what they were doing to bring the message of Power -- this twelfth step to others. They lead by ex-

ample because they knew what they inherited. They had gone through the "flying blind period" and accepted responsibility for this priceless inheritance.

"Then the third and last Legacy---the Legacy of Service---will have passed from the hands of the old-timers---people like Dr. Bob and me---to you who are the alcoholics anonymous of today and of tomorrow."

"It will mark the day when, before God and the world, we declare ourselves fully responsible and come of age."

Having read several documents from this period I realized our own "I am responsible" statement has more to do with us accepting responsibility as a whole fellowship for world service through the conference and this was why the wording "anyone anywhere" was written in to it.

I was taught that a business meeting is still an A.A. meeting with a second set of principles employed. I learned through participation that my group and area may experience some of the concepts but not to the degree that a delegate or General Service Board member will. This has been the path that I have tried to convey to others living in and passing on three legacies by example. I work with others by using the basic text and I encourage others to do likewise and pass it on. I have been a subscriber and supporter of the grapevine as long as I can remember.

I have always had a commitment either at the group, intergroup, district, or area level. I have swapped back and forth in service from intergroup over to the area and back up to the group and even back down to the area level.

As the years progress one gains insight into the annual delegation cycle, the conference and its agenda, the necessity of the Traditions and the uncelebrated genius of the Twelve Concepts. I to tears thinking of all the wonderfully generous devoted people I have met in the counties and in the state while serving. In the spirit of the first and fifth tradition I try to carry this message and encourage and support my home group members as best I can to do likewise. I encourage you the reader don't deny yourself this experience. A lasting joy a real happiness and freedom from fear and resentment and a faith in a God who you know works miracles. You're Inheritance.

Derrick H

1979 Conference to Review the Three Legacies

Excerpt From Box 459 Vol. 24, No. 2 April-May 1979

First Legacy. It was our late co-founder Bill W. who first pointed out that the Twelve Steps "suggested as a program of recovery" are a gift passed on to us by the original members who recorded their experience for the book "Alcoholics Anonymous." They agreed upon the Steps after long discussion, and the base line of the triangle stands for that First Legacy, Recovery, on which all the rest of A.A. is founded.

Second Legacy. By 1946, it was clear to farseeing A.A.'s that other principles in addition to those in the Steps were operating in A.A. such as anonymity, self-support, autonomy, the group conscience, and others. Bill wrote out a concise statement of these principles for helping A.A. to stay together and get along with the non-A.A. world — our Twelve Traditions. In 1950, at A.A.'s First International Convention, in Cleveland, Ohio, the Traditions were unanimously accepted as our Second Legacy from the founders. Unity, shown as the left line of the triangle.

Third Legacy. In 1955, at the Second International Convention, in St. Louis, Mo., the Fellowship accepted from its co-founders responsibility for A.A.'s world services, to be guided by the Conference in behalf of the entire membership. Service became the Third Legacy, symbolized by the third side of the triangle. So every time an alcoholic comes to A.A. to recover, the twelfth-stepper who speaks to the newcomer starts passing on, once again, the First Legacy, Recovery. Each time a group reaches a decision, it uses the Second, Unity. And everyone who helps serve coffee at a meeting, or serves on any A.A. committee or board, is making use of that third gift, Service. ▲

*Recovery, Unity & Service; The Theme of
the 65th General Service Conference of
Alcoholics Anonymous... Maybe Important?
Love & Service, Peace & Blessings
John Sergio, AL, DCM, SGS, AREA 49, PANEL 67*