

AS A RESULT OF THESE STEPS

My name is Kenny and I'm an alcoholic. Like most of us, I had to get beat down pretty good before those words came out of my mouth. For

27 years my ego and self-centeredness blew through a thousand "red flags" and I ended up hurting everyone that loved

me. At the end I was hopeless - unemployable, physically sick, full of guilt and remorse, sitting in a VA Medical Center residential program in Brockton, MA, bewildered... How did I get here?

I can assure you it was not in the plan. I'm a West Point Grad and I was an Army Officer and an Assault Helicopter Pilot. After the Army I went on to a "big" job as a manager at a large pharmaceutical company, went to Graduate School and got my MBA. I started a family and had the picket fence, two cars in the garage, stock options... it all looked pretty good, but the truth is I was dying of alcoholism.

When I came into the Fellowship I was completely broken. My ego had been deflated enough that I surrendered to my powerlessness over alcohol. And then God showed up. Right from the start He put people in my life to save me. And right from the start it was service that did the trick.

It started in the "Unity" part of the triangle, which I identify as the Fellowship. I was told to make coffee and set up the hall. At one point my first group was down to just a few members and I felt like I was doing everything. I told my sponsor I was going to be away one week to see my family in NJ, and I remember thinking that the meeting was obviously going to have to be cancelled. The following week I walked up to him, with a self-satisfied smirk, and asked how the meeting went. "Oh", he said, "Best meeting

I've been to in a long time..." I began to realize that I needed AA more than they needed me. And I gained some humility.

The next several years of my life centered around the "Recovery" part of the triangle where I learned and then practiced this life giving program of action. I had a spiritual experience as a result of the 12 Steps and began to practice these principles in all my affairs. I tried to carry the message to others and slowly but surely my life started to open up. My self-centeredness and dishonesty and fear began to fade as I shared

my experience, strength and hope with many guys who were just as sick as I was. I began to realize that at some point I stopped "doing" the steps and started "living" them. They enabled me to recreate my life. Service work in this part of the triangle has continued to amaze me! I still act as a tour guide taking guys through the Big Book and sharing my experience with the solution. I have

had the incredible experience of bringing the message to inmates in the ACI for over a decade. A dear friend and I have been given the precious gift of serenity and peace by carrying the message in "Big Book Boot Camps" and seminars at the Wilson House in Vermont. It is like a dream. And the most amazing thing is that they help me more than I could ever help them...



The Wilson House in Vermont

At two years sober my sponsor did his job and told me it was time to give back to the third side of the triangle, the General Service Structure. After "deputizing" me as Alt-GSR and bringing me to my first District meeting, my journey began. I have had the opportunity to work my way up through the ranks at the District and then Area levels. And each new position gave

me a better appreciation for our Third Legacy and how truly important it is. Today I am astounded at the heavenly gift Bill and Bob gave us back in 1951 before Dr. Bob died. It's like they just

gave us all the keys to the Corvette. And they set up a structure that could withstand decades of hard-headed, ego-driven alcoholics like me beating on it. Through hard-learned lessons we realized there were sacrifices we had to make (Traditions) to ensure our Unity. And there were also guidelines (Concepts) we must follow in order to maintain our worldwide Fellowship. The deeper I dive into these guidelines, the more spiritual they become. Today all 36 principles of our Fellowship have equal footing in my spiritual journey. They are as much a part of my recovery as my precious 12 Steps.

I get emotional every time I think about the incredible gift I was given to represent Rhode Island at the General Service Conference as the Panel 66 Delegate. That experience was simply life-changing... and I am so grateful. To be in a room with so many people who love AA as much as I do, and who truly care for our wonderful Fellowship, is simply amazing and so humbling. AA gave me my life back. It gave me my children back. It gave me my health back and my job. It gave me lifelong friends and an incredible woman who love me. And I could never pay AA back, but I'm going to try. You know, after twenty years on this broad highway, my life doesn't have to get any better... but it probably will.

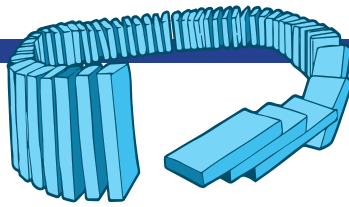
Kenny



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I still act as a tour guide taking guys through the Big Book



Have you ever stopped to think that if we are all here to stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety - then what exactly are the others here for? One of the first things I heard at a beginners' meeting was, "Don't let drinking kill you – AA can help!" When I was newly

(while bleeding deacons linger on to aggravate the rest of us ad infinitum).

My service sponsor explained to me two prevailing theories of successfully arguing with alcoholics . . . neither one of them works!

As such, I believe that we should never compare ourselves with others - they are more disturbed than we think.

Concept V reminds me to keep my words soft and tender, because tomorrow I may have to eat them (i.e., a closed mouth gathers no foot – and that there remains a world of difference between humility and humiliation). What I suggest is that we all try to learn from the mis-

takes of others, since we won't be in any given service position long enough to make them all ourselves. That said, before I judge someone, I try to first walk a mile in their shoes (this way, when I do criticize someone, I'll be a mile

Lastly, AA has instilled in me a sense of responsibility, (i.e., the last person who served in a position is usually held responsible for everything that goes wrong). Which only goes to show, once again, that, "As soon as you figure out what you're supposed to be doing, it's time to rotate on."

With room to grow,
Francis G., Northeast Regional Trustee



sober, I often stopped to think such thoughts (and sometimes forgot to resume thinking again). Therefore, and you won't find these in The AA Group Pamphlet, having served as Northeast Regional Trustee,

I would like to pass along some lessons learned:

AA taught me that it is easier to get older than it is to get wiser and that the best experience we offer is often at the feet of our elder statesmen. I've also observed that well-informed,

trusted servants who are selfless and spiritually centered often go on to undertake worthy endeavors in their family life, work life, and community as a whole

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away and have a new pair of shoes).

The secret to enjoying one's service position is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible.

Area Officers

Delegate Alison H.
AreaDelegate@aainri.com

Alternat Tricia I.
AreaAltDelegate@aainri.com

Area Chair Lauren P.
AreaChairperson@aainri.com

Secretary Grace N.
AreaSecretary@aainri.com

Treasurer Matthew R.
Treasurer@aainri.com

Archivist Don B.
Archivist@aainri.com

Registrar Donna T.
Registrar@aainri.com

Committee Chairs

Archives Chair John N.
ArchivesChair@aainri.com

Convention 2023 Chair Steve L.
ConventionChair@aainri.com

**Cooperation with the Professional
Community/ Public Information Jessamyn S.**
CPCPIChair@aainri.com

Corrections Chair Rachelle B.
CorrectionsChair@aainri.com

Grapevine Martina B.
GrapeVineChair@aainri.com

Information Services John E.
InformationServices@aainri.com

RISCYPAA Host Chair Johnny M.

Treatment/Accessibilities Kurt A.
TreatmentChair@aainri.com