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## THE BEAM



## A daughter's note to her father

**“Pop, I enjoyed your poem and the picture from Prom morning. Can’t wait to cook breakfast with you! Your poem reminded me of something I wrote earlier this year. I’d like to share it with you.  
Love, Cal-----The Art of Swallowing Words**

Bruce N is a loving father, a patient husband, and a thoughtful companion. He is a lawyer, an athlete, and a storyteller. He is my hero, my rock. He is an alcoholic.

Alcoholic. I choke on the word. It's hard syllables, unable to gulp down the letters crammed sharp with stigma. I wince on its rough throaty sound. I suffocate as it resonates in the air. I loathe to link my father to its very existence. I want to put some other verb or adverb between him and that menacing word - some loyal letters that would protect him from its protruding ignominy. "Is" and "an" are just too thin, they are too weak. They fail to defend my father's title, instead they really bind him to the word. I fear that they will disintegrate entirely, and my father will become permanently stuck to alcoholics' glue-like, glutinous letters. If I cannot change the verb or adverb, I at least want to change the tense. "Is" is so short, so fragile. "Was" is more durable, protective. "Was" would give my father one more letter of space from that ominous word. Furthermore, "was" is fitting; it is justifiable! "Was" belongs in the sentence. "Is" on the other hand, just brings unnecessary suspicion. He has been sober for seven years, why should my father be condemned to using the present tense.

But he does. He voluntarily does. Every day at AA meetings, his calm voice states it. I have only personally heard him say it once. It was an August Monday morning. I was sitting next to him in a hard plastic chair in the basement of some Portland City church building. "Good morning, my name is Bruce, and I am an alcoholic." The words echoed in my head, "he is an alcoholic." But even when he tells me directly, as well as forty something other people in the room, I find it hard to digest. I once again choke on the sentence. I cannot swallow the words, partly because I do not have one memory from my childhood of my father being drunk, nor do I know of a time that he was absent from my life. I cannot accept it, I won't let my father to be identified with such a word.

Most of my memories I have surrounding my father's alcoholism are the hush arguments between my mother and father when I was in middle school. The other blurred memory I have was of my mother's "talk", where she told me my father was an alcoholic when I was in seventh grade. I faintly remember my confusion, my shock and of course my choking on the stale gruff word. However, other than that the whole situation was non-existent in my life. We never talked about it again; it was an unspoken mystery. I only knew the big details: my parents went to counseling, my father got sober, stayed sober and now everything was fine.

This was why I was surprised when my father invited me to attend an AA meeting with him that August morning. I was even more surprised about what I witnessed when I went. It wasn't just hearing my father for the first time openly talk about his alcoholism that was so striking to me. No, it was something much bigger than that. I realized that my father was a part of this whole other world that I knew nothing about. When we first arrived my father was greeted by several people who talked to him in a close friendly manner. When they looked at me they said that my father had told them all about me, and some even knew my name. He introduced me to his sponsor while explaining to me how sponsorship in the fellowship works. Then he excitedly introduced me to his close AA friends. After meeting many of my father's friends we sat through the discussion part of the meeting and every once in a while he would lean over to explain or clarify things for me. On the car ride home he told me stories of members' recoveries and relapses, as well as his own. —Next Page

## Humility

Perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted or vexed, irritable or sore; to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me.

"It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised, it is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and pray to my Father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and about is seeming trouble."

### **"THE QUALITY OF FAITH"**

**This. . . has to do with the quality of faith. . . . In no deep or meaningful sense had we ever taken stock of ourselves. . . . We had not even prayed rightly. We had always said, "Grant me my wishes" instead of "Thy will be done."**

**TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS, p.32**

**God does not grant me material possessions, take away my suffering, or spare me from disasters, but He does give me a good life, the ability to cope, and peace of mind. My prayers are simple: first, they express my gratitude for the good things in my life, regardless of how hard I have to search for them; and second, I ask only for the strength and the wisdom to do His will. He answers with solutions to my problems, sustaining my ability to live through daily frustrations with a serenity I did not believe existed, and with the strength to practice the principles of A.A. in all of my everyday affairs.**

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ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORLD SERVICES, INC.

### A daughters note to her father

It became clear to me that my father was a part of this beautiful community that not only supports people, but also heals people by sharing their stories. One alcoholic to another, "in the kinship of common suffering" as I am told. And for the first time I began to understand my father's alcoholism. For the first time the words, "he is an alcoholic" no longer pierced my throat. This time I stomached them with pride - pride for my father being sober seven years, pride for my father's dedication to AA, pride for my father's willingness to help the new comer. Pride in his humility to accept the disease as is, on its own terms, and to keep it front and center in his life, in the present tense.

As I puzzled over all of this, I realized the omnipotent power of a diagnosis, a word. It not only stigmatizes its victims, but isolates them. To fight and deny the diagnosis is the easiest way to resist the socially loaded implications. To accept and surrender to the diagnosis, however, is the only way the victim, whom the word imprisons, is set free from the cell of isolation.

### *What We Know Best*

**"Shoemaker, stick to thy last!"...better do one thing supremely well than many badly. That is the central theme of this Tradition Five. Around it our Society gathers in unity. The very life of our Fellowship requires the preservation of this principle.  
TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS, p. 150**

**The survival of A.A. depends upon unity. What would happen if a group decided to become an employment agency, a treatment center or a social service agency? Too much specialization leads to no specialization, to frittering of efforts and, finally, to decline. I have the qualifications to share my sufferings and my way of recovery with the newcomer. Conformity to A.A.'s primary purpose insures the safety of the wonderful gift of sobriety, so my responsibility is enormous. The life of millions of alcoholics is closely tied to my competence in "carrying the message to the still-suffering alcoholic."**

**CSO open house pot luck Christmas gathering-Pot Luck-Friday-December 21<sup>h</sup> noon to 3pm-open to all AA members-(Its your office)  
Please come join us.**

### **District 4 & 7 Anniversary's**

**December-6-Barbara W-10 Years-Florenceville  
December-7-Charlie B-46 Years-Caribou  
December-7-Allen L-3 Years-Woodstock  
December-8-Reg C-36 years-Woodstock  
December-11-Kathryn A-4 Years-Fort Fairfield  
December-15-Charles S-19 Years-Woodstock  
December-17-Sylvio D-38 Years-Caribou  
December-17-Nancy H-7 Years-Caribou  
January-4-Dennis S-25 Years-Fort Kent  
January-5-Rudy St. P-36 Years-Stockholm**

**Caribou-Monday Night Group is hosting an AA Christmas Party-  
Saturday-December-8th at the  
Calvary Baptist Church-  
-43 Access Highway-Caribou-4 pm to 8 pm-Tickets @ the door-\$8.-under 12 free**

**Fryeburg Step Sisters  
Karen A-December-11th-6Years**

**As You Like It Group-Pen-Bay  
Chris F-January-6th-30 Years**

**Second Step-This is not a lot of writing, but what is here is from my Heart**

The first page states that we feel a comradery because we all have felt the throws of alcoholism. I do not feel that way. I believe it is my PTSD. I am a man that considers himself a member of Adult Children of Alcoholics. I also believe that I have come a long way in my acceptance of others, to “:Live and Let Live”. I have definitely learned that it is the first drink that gets me drunk. I used to try not to get drunk while I was drinking, but it never worked. It came down to the point of drinking myself into insanity, jail and or death, or find a spiritual relationship with my higher power who I choose to call God. I chose God. My serenity and happiness comes from a conscious contact with God.. At first I had fought the idea tooth and nail. When I had walked into detox I had sworn that if I seen or heard anything about God I was leaving. Since I did not leave I had become slowly willing to seek God. About a month of being in rehab I had decided to start to seek God. I had started by saying a prayer and asking God for help. A year later I was still obsessed with the urge to drink until I found myself under a huge bridge crying out to God to please take away my obsession to drink. A day later a miracle occurred, I had no longer wanted to drink. God had restored me to sanity. Amen

George L-NJ

**Thought to Consider . . .**

**Seven days without a meeting makes one weak.**

<b>STEP XII</b>	<b>TRADITION XII</b>	<b>CONCEPT XII</b>
<p>“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”                      Joy of living is the theme of the Twelfth Step Action it keyword. Giving that asks no reward. Love that has no price tag. What is spiritual awakening? A new state of consciousness and being is received as a free gift. Readiness to receive free gift lies in practice of Twelve Steps. The magnificent reality. Rewards of helping other alcoholics. Kinds of Twelfth Step work. Problems of Twelfth Step work. What about the practice of these principles in all our affairs? Monotony, pain and calamity turned to good use by practice of Steps. Difficulties of practice. “Two-stepping.” Switch to “twelve-stepping” and demonstrations of faith. Growing spiritually is the answer to our problems. Placing spiritual growth first. Domination and overdependence. Putting our lives on give-and-take basis. Dependence upon God necessary to recovery of alcoholics. “Practicing these principles in all our affairs” Domestic relations in A.A. Outlook upon material matters changes. So do feelings about personal importance. Instincts restored to true purpose.</p>	<p>“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”                      Spiritual substance of anonymity is sacrifice. Subordinating personal aims to the common good is the essence of all Twelve Traditions.                      Why A.A. could not remain a secret society. Principles come before personalities. One hundred percent anonymity at the public level. Anonymity is</p>	<p>General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others: that all important decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves,</p>

### Rewards

**"The rewards of sobriety are bountiful and as progressive as the disease they counteract. Certainly among these rewards for me are release from the prison of uniqueness, and the realization that participation in the A.A. way of life is a blessing and a privilege beyond estimate - a blessing to live a life free from the pain and degradation of drinking and filled with the joy of useful, sober living, and a privilege to grow in sobriety one day at a time and bring the message of hope as it was brought to me."**

**From the new Fourth Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous  
AA Grapevine, December 2001, p. 47**

### ACTIVE GUARDIANS

**To us, however, it represents far more than a sound public relations policy. It is more than a denial of self-seeking. This Tradition is a constant and practical reminder that personal ambition has no place in A.A. In it, each member becomes an active guardian of our Fellowship.**

**TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS p. 183**

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**"What do you mean you're not willing to pay the price for that drink?"**

### BEAM Subscription Form

- New  Renewal
- Save the postage, I read it online

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Mail \$12.00 per year to:  
**Central Service Office**  
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**Portland, ME 04101**



*I Am Responsible...*

*When anyone, anywhere,  
reaches out for help,  
I want the hand of AA always to be there.  
And for that: I am responsible.*



### Where to send your Contributions

**Central Service Office (CSO)**  
**47 Portland Street**  
**Portland, Maine 04101**

**MAINE AREA 28**  
**499 Broadway #225**  
**Bangor, Maine 04401**

**General Service Office (GSO)**  
**P. O. Box 459**  
**Grand Central Station**  
**New York, New York 10163-0459**

***YOUR OWN DISTRICT***

### Faithful Fivers

Faithful Fivers are AA members who, in gratitude, pledge to contribute \$5 each month toward the support of CSO in its task of helping Groups and Members in carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. If you are able to join in our quest please fill out the enrollment form and send it along with your first donation to:

**Central Service Office**  
**47 Portland St.**  
**Portland, ME 04101**

Or sign up at [csoamaine.org](http://csoamaine.org) for a recurring payment with PayPal  
 You will receive a subscription to the BEAM for yourself or for a friend... and much, much more!!!

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Address \_\_\_\_\_

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### Services Offered By Your CSO

- \* Volunteers answer all phone calls; meeting info & 12 Step calls
- \* Sell approved A.A. literature
- \* Publish State Meeting List
- \* Publish *The Beam* (our monthly newsletter)
- \* Print Area 28 Service Workbook & *Boomerang*
- \* Maintain CSO Web-Site, access to meeting information for all of Maine & New Brunswick, Area 28 Events, Forums, The Beam, Speakers, Daily Readings, Forms for all events, meeting changes & registration.
- \* Provide meeting space for Districts & Committee Meetings.

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**CSO Steering Committee Meeting**  
Last Wednesday of every Month  
January 30 @ 6:00 pm

**CSR Meeting**  
First Tuesday of every Month  
January ? @ 6:00 pm

**District One**  
Second Sunday of every Month  
January 13 @ 9:30 am

**Corrections Committee Meeting**  
Second Tuesday of every Month  
January 8 @ 6:00 pm-BTG@5pm

**Treatment Committee Meeting**  
Third Tuesday of every Month  
January 15 @ 6:00 pm-L&S 6pm

**PICPC Committee Meeting**  
Fourth Tuesday of every Month  
January 22 @ 5:15 pm-Sp.Needs@ 6pm

**Bookies' Meetings**  
Third Sunday of every 3rd Month  
Sahara Club 57 Ashmont St-Portland  
January 20 @ 9:30 am-2019

**The Beam is the Monthly  
Newsletter of**  
Central Service Office  
47 Portland Street  
Portland, Maine 04101  
(207) 774-3034  
Web: csoaamaine.org

**Our Purpose**  
*Our purpose is the sharing of  
experience, strength and hope as  
well as opinion, information and  
entertainment, throughout  
the Maine Fellowship.*

Beam /Committee Staff  
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**Volunteers Always Needed,  
Always Wanted**

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2018

**CHRISTMAS 24,25  
NEW YEARS Dec 31 & JAN 1**

**A Declaration of Unity**

This we owe to A.A's Future;  
To place our common welfare first;  
To keep our fellowship united.  
For on A.A. unity depend our lives;  
And the lives of those to come.

**November Hot Line Summary**

There were 253 calls answered this  
month,  
12 which were Twelve Step calls.  
Answering Service 344 call for a total  
of 597 calls.  
Districts are urged to keep their  
12 Step Call Lists current  
to aid in expediting calls efficiently.