

## SHARING OR WHINING!

"So, if, aside from fellowship and sociability, the prime object of meetings in early AA was to provide a time and place where new people might bring their problems (as it says in the Big Book), and, if that has not changed, then why is it that problems are not what needs to be shared in a meeting?" What problems can be taken to a meeting? What constitutes a problem? If it is whining, well, whining is not a problem at all. It is feeling sorry for one's self. How to deal with a living issue is a problem. Sharing all the tiny details of that issue is not a problem. That is all smoke and mirrors.

The problems that were taken to the meetings long ago were problems of living a sober life. Dealing with life on life's terms. They were not problems of getting a knot in my shoe lace and then I was late for work and my boss was upset that I was late yet again. Darn shoe lace. Whining! The problem is that I did not get up in time to make sure that if something happened, like a broken shoe lace, I could take care of it and still have time to get to work.

Yes, we bring our problems to the meetings. Not the whining. They are the problems of how can I live a sober life and what am I doing to live a spiritual life. The newcomer has no idea of what to do to stay sober or live a spiritual way of life.

The newcomer has to be taught. Those old-timers back then did to their newcomers just what my sponsor has done to me. (My sponsor what taught by those old-timers from back in the early days.) I was told by my sponsor that I knew nothing about how to stay sober so I had nothing to share because everybody there already knew how to drink. That is all I knew when I got to the fellowship. I knew how to drink. My job was to learn how to listen and learn what the spiritual principles were and how to apply them. When I had a problem, I took it to my sponsor, who just happened to be at that meeting.

In my opinion, nothing has changed about what meetings are for. What has changed is the understanding of what should be shared in a meeting and what should be shared with a sponsor. It is clear to me that when someone is whining, they are either new or don't have a sponsor or have not been taught what belongs in a meeting and what belongs with a sponsor.

It is my sponsor who tells me when I am whining. I usually catch this myself these days. I take my thinking to my sponsor, I don't take it to the group. The group does not need my thinking. The group needs my experience, strength & hope, of living in the Solution in a general manner. The group needs to know that I stay sober on a daily basis and apply spiritual principles and the 12 Steps to deal with life, no matter what. That I am an example and that anyone can see that I live my life the way I share my life. Obviously each of us needs to be there for the newcomer. It is carrying the message to the newcomer that is a big part in what keeps us sober. Without them, we would be very boring people and we would have no one to come over to the house to cut our grass or to wash our windows (just kidding).

Please take note, meetings don't keep us sober. Meetings are not there to keep the newcomer sober. That's what the 12 Steps and practicing spiritual principles are for. Meetings are there only as a gathering point to share some information and gain some knowledge of the fellowship and

the 12 Step way of life. The problem comes when the group members, secretaries and the leaders don't keep subjects on track. That is why some meetings make us want to go to other meetings. The "group therapy" that gets thrown in is in my opinion simply poor meeting management and bad sponsorship.

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