

## **Newcomers: Watch out for the Time-Bullies!**



### **Don't let anyone talk you out of your miracle.**

By the 1980's, working the 12 Step Program had been replaced by a "Meeting Makers Make It" Program and going to meetings became the program!

In the 1940's and 50's meetings were a place where recovered alcoholics talked about carrying the message of experience strength and hope to suffering alcoholics and help newcomers work out a solution to their problem (alcoholism/addiction).

"Seeing much of each other, scarce an evening passed that someone's home did not shelter a little gathering of men and women, happy in their release, and constantly thinking how they might present their discovery to some newcomer. In addition to these casual get togethers, it became customary to set apart one night a week for a meeting to be attended by anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life. Aside from fellowship and sociability, the prime object was to provide a time and place where new people might bring their problems." (A.A. 4th Ed., 159-160)

Today, our meetings have changed into something else.--endless rituals of readings and poetry recitals intermixed fellowship bromides such as, "This program is caught not taught" and "Keep Coming Back and Wait for the Miracle".

Recovery success rates went from 50% to 75% to less than 10%! Many alcoholics or addicts would be better off trying to quit on their own will power than come to a meeting where untreated alcoholics sit around and talk about their problems and tell the newcomer not to work any Steps for the first year.

### **But something amazing happened!**

Joe and Charlie started a "Back-to-the-Big Book" revival in the late 1980's, whereby the newcomer could work all 12 Steps in a weekend! Since then, there has been a resurgence of working the 12 Steps. Today, thanks people A.A. archivist Wally P. who revived the Beginner Meetings of the 1940's, newcomers are shown, once again, how to work a 12 Step program in four, one-hour sessions!

As a result, newcomers are again experiencing 50% to 75% recovery success rates!

## Schisms in the Fellowship

You would think the fellowship would be excited about such successes, but many were not. Most were threatened by newcomers working the 12 Steps fast. They didn't understand how anyone could work the program in one day. Why this animosity? There are a lot of people in the fellowship who don't have to work a 12 Step program as outlined in the Big Book. They can get by on going to meetings.

Dr. Bob once said,

"There are two ways to work this program. The easy way was the work and in live in the 12 Step program. The other, the hard way, Don't drink and go to meetings."

So a schism developed. Fundamental lines were drawn between the Meeting Makers' program of discussion versus the Big Book Thumpers' program of action.

When a newcomer comes to a meeting, who has just learned how to work the 12 Step program, who has only a few weeks or months of sobriety, they are confronted not welcomed. There are some members in our fellowship members who act like TIME-BULLIES. They're easy to identify, they walk around the rooms announcing themselves with a sense of unbridled ego, "I'm 25 year Bill, "I'm 10 year Sally", I'm 13 years sober Kevin, My name is Dick and I'm 15 years dry", etc. Furthermore, many of them are just dry, no emotional sobriety. They're just "doing time" in meetings.

Time-bullies worship their sobriety time. They plan elaborate Medallion celebrations with endless accolades to those receiving their chip. For them, their sobriety time indicates some measure of higher sobriety over someone with less time. For them, time is a sort of "fellowship currency" and determines their status in the fellowship. For example, there are members in A.A. who smoke marijuana, but because they haven't had a drink in 15 years, claim their sobriety is intact. They bristle with antagonism at the suggestion that they are not sober.

These time-bullies love to attack the newcomer, who comes into the room full of the spirit, who having just completed their first round of 12 Steps, usually in a short period of time, and who want to reach out to other newcomers and freely share what was so freely given to them.

The first thing they're asked, "How much time do you have?" The newcomer replies, "30 days". The time-bully answers back, Oh...you're just a newcomer. What could you possibly offer another newcomer. You're still a newcomer yourself. You should be still on Step 1 and not Step 12. You're just on a pink cloud. You shouldn't be working Steps in your first year" and so on.

These types are energy vampires who suck the spirit right out the newcomer. The newcomer is sometimes ill-equipped to handle such bullying and are sometimes talked out their miracle.

## Newcomer: Learn how to protect yourself

Arm yourself with the facts.

Remember, Bill W. started working with other alcoholics immediately after detox, which was a three to five day stay in a hospital. Ebby T. was 60 days sober when he approached Bill W. with the solution. Dr.

Bob was only a couple of weeks sober, when he and Bill approached Bill D. A.A. number three in the hospital.

Never go to a meeting on your own. Go with two or three others, like yourself who are working the Steps. Take care of each other and support one another.

And start your own meetings with like-minded members and create a fellowship of those living in the spirit.

*Have you run into any time bullies lately?*