

Chair's Report to Area Committee - February 2017

In the past month we have held two successful Area Workshops, our DCM Training in January and the Four Area DCM Sharing Session the first week of February. Thanks to Monty, Jerry S. and their volunteers for their efforts in putting them on. I continue to spend time with Safety Issues and questions about safety coming from many of our members and groups. I attended the East County Intergroup meeting last week to provide them information about our Areas efforts to address a number of safety issues. I also have spent a lot of time working closely with Bill B. and our IT committee with our website and the transitional issues that we have faced with our new webmaster. We will take this up later tonight.

I attended the 4-Area DCM Sharing Session a couple of weeks ago AFTER roughing out the Agenda for this ACM. I was recruited randomly to moderate a Table – 6A. That table workshop topic just happened to be Using Technology in Service. God Shot, of course. And all of what was shared and discussed was timely and pertinent to this Chair report and some of the focus of this evening's discussions.

I want us to spend some time tonight discussing our ideas about the practical side of technology and communication with the purpose of coming to some consensus about what works, what doesn't, and what we might do quickly to improve our information and communication systems. In that spirit, we will hear from our IT Committee about changes and potential improvements to our website, from our newsletter committee about their possible coordination of our information efforts, and from some of you regarding improvements that exist or might already be going on in your committees and districts.

We learn to be sober by practicing sobriety a day at a time. If we stop practicing, we jeopardize our sobriety. Similarly, we learn to live by practicing living each day. And as you all know, we can either accept our life situation and learn from it or avoid it. And avoiding it seems to me to only put off the kinds of opportunities for growth that our higher power provides us every day. Facing our fears in relationships and when communicating (or choosing not to) is part of living each day. We can learn to communicate better by practicing it each day and learning what we can do to improve it.

And this from an old friend of mine from Oregon:

"When her sons were 4 and 7 years old, Lily went to a spiritual retreat and made a recommitment to meditation. When she returned home, she carefully set up an altar in the corner of her bedroom. She found a perfect candle and a meditation cushion with Sanskrit phrases on it. Then she announced to the boys that she would be spending 30 minutes each day in her room meditating, during which they needed to be very quiet.

The day she began her practice, they stood outside her room, compliant and quiet. After about 10 minutes she heard a quiet buzzing, which began to increase decibel by decibel. She tried to ignore the sound, meditating with her special mantra, but the noise grew louder. Soon she could hear the boys hitting one another, then crying and yelling. In exasperation she jumped up, opened the door, and screamed at them, "You two better stop it right now. I mean, stop it, damn it! I am working on my spiritual practice!"

Her sons' faces fell at the sight of their raging mother, and Lily was struck by the absurdity of this scene. Her spiritual practice was hurting all three of them. What her true practice should be, she realized, was

to use every event in the day as an opportunity for kindness and patience to emerge. Nowhere was this practice more important than with her children."

And the message here seems to balance our time spent on the practical details of our service and more on discovering the spiritual opportunities that are offered to each of us every day to serve alcoholics who still suffer. And it's not that many of us aren't doing just these things. But I think that more of us can probably improve the quality of our sobriety AND service by heeding Lily's message. And then rather than spending an unreasonable amount of time on scheduling, planning, and communicating, we can work together to improve our tools and streamline the means we use to be informed. Or we can ask for more help with these tasks. I guess it may be a small wake-up call. At least that's what I have been thinking lately.

So let's see what we can accomplish together tonight and moving forward. And let's start with the pre-conference tasks ahead that have already been laid out by Jane and Roxane. And then let's do everything we can do to help them reach more of our members in a timely fashion with the information they need so that Jane can organize and carry a more complete Area 8 message to New York in April.