**December 2019**

**Area 08, Panel 68, Final Delegate’s Report**

As I round this corner of rotation I feel obligated to tell each of you that Alcoholics Anonymous is going to be alright. I discovered early in my role as delegate that the framework of AA is quite strong and it would be difficult to single-handedly destroy the 12 Step program that has given me a life worth living. I am optimistic about the future of AA though there are many who warn us of being to rigid. The word “rigid” conjures images of inflexible, unwavering and dogmatic people who resist change and if you have been conscience these last two years you know that much has changed in AA, particularly around communication. We are more fluid than we think.

While I remain optimistic about the future of Alcoholics Anonymous, there are many who scoff at our 85 years of helping people recover from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. How the general public views Alcoholics Anonymous varies from year to year but a recent internet search uncovered some disparaging remarks and articles that make you wonder if AA can conceivably make a mark on the millennials who will need our program of recovery now and in the future. One article touted “*Four Reasons Why AA is Harmful and Will Hurt Their Societies.*” Upon reading this single article, I was immediately incensed that people thought so badly of our 12 step program.

The first reason was that **AA denies reality**. Their data, generated by the U.S. government’s own research, showed that each age group after the 18-25 age group had a lower percentage of problematic drinkers and drug users. Since our 12-step mantra is “our problems only grow worse without intervention,” this meant to the author that AA denies this reality. The 2nd reason is that **AA overemphasizes its own success.** They say AAs argument is that AAs who fail to get sober will die and that “”people who leave the program are ostracized by their former group members who predict their demise--unless they return to the fold.” By this time the words I am reading are actually making me fume. The last two reasons are **AA rules out other, often more effective approaches** and **AA’s underlying temperance message actually creates alcoholism and addiction.** I wondering by now if AA were not so effective, why would treatment facilities send their representatives into thriving AA meetings to try and scout out newcomers who might want to check themselves into their rehab centers. This is actually going on in some areas and there is a proposal recently submitted for the Conference next year addressing this problem. What they think the conference can do about it is a real question.

Another woman writer, Gabrielle, who received popular acclaim in 2013 for writing an article entitled “*Her Best Kept Secret: Why Women Drink--And How They Can Regain Control*, has written another article, *The Irrationality of Alcoholics Anonymous*. This one carries her message further saying that “Most important of all, the 12-steps deprive people--societies--of the belief in their own ability to manage substance use. And this loss of personal efficacy is not likely to be a good thing in the coming century.” The most compelling part of her article, and I encourage you to find and read the whole article, was that she read about and then administered to herself, the drug, naltrexone, which the U.S. Food and Drug Administration approved for alcohol-abuse treatment in 1994. Her claim is that the drug worked for her and would work for others--she effectively was “disinterested” in wine after she took the pill. At the end of ten days she no longer looked forward to her, “glass of wine with dinner.” I don’t know about you, but I never had “a glass of wine with dinner.” I had the bottle.

So you see, when I think about Alcoholics Anonymous being here for my grandson, born just four months ago, I think of all we do. The creative workshops on digital anonymity, or the 12 Concepts, the meditation meetings for increasing our spiritual lives, carrying the message through Grapevine and LaVina, improving literature for the changing demography in Area 08, encouraging participation from those who are underrepresented in our rooms, and fighting to have access to technology, language and culture through any means available. These things we do are never ending and forever changing the landscape of recovery in San Diego and Imperial. Please don’t wonder if what you are doing is helping someone. If you are going to wonder at all, wonder how much more you might be doing in the coming new year.

I have so much gratitude to have worked with each of you for our common welfare. I will be with you as we continue to trudge the road of happy destiny. Thank you for allowing me to serve Area 08.

Roxane Rollins

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