

# focus



## *Focus:* Attraction rather than Promotion

**S**he came around the rooms a little bit more than six and a half years ago. I was broken, scared, alone and completely empty on the inside. I had lost my self-respect, my self-esteem and any morals I may have been raised with years prior, but now I had lost my husband, my children, my job and was about to become homeless. With all of that happening, you would think I would have given in to the idea of this program easier. Not a chance. My fear and my pride were still much too big and kept me thinking I would figure things out on my own. I knew absolutely nothing about the disease of alcoholism as it wasn't around me growing up. Yet still I thought I knew everything. Then I met a woman. To me she was the coolest woman I'd ever met in my life. She was always happy and joking around with people. With her extremely infectious laugh and her twisted sense of humour, I was drawn to her. She told me a little bit about AA and the disease of alcoholism and I eventually agreed to meet her in the parking lot of a church and

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she took me to my first meeting. During that meeting I met a lot of people and I don't recall much of what was said or who was there exactly, but I do remember how I felt. The whole room seemed to be laughing uncontrollably. They were joking and happy and carrying on with each other in a way I had never experienced in my life. They also claimed to be sober which I found very hard to believe at first.

I wanted to be like that!! That was what I had been searching for all my life. I wanted what they had!!!

That same woman would become my

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sponsor. My attraction to her was not just because she was happy, although that was part of it: but it was primarily because she talked about LIVING the way our Big Book describes. She talked about a God personal to her and in my eyes she still remained very "cool". She never dictated to me or came across as Holier than Thou, she just preached the book, got me connected to a Power Greater than Myself and showed me how to live it. She will always be my life saver.

Today I sponsor women and try to live my life that exact same way. I am a Big Book thumper and believe that I am one of the lucky ones for having being taught this way.

Its not what I say that matters most, it's what I do and how I live today that matters. I am so grateful to those who showed me the way instead of just telling me about it.

The power of God in my life today is unbelievable and I am forever grateful to AA, that beautiful woman and our Big Book for showing me the way.

Lynn B.  
London Ontario  
Homegroup: Arva



*T*radition 11 - Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

OK, so the second part of Tradition 11 is pretty straight forward. Keep my ego in check, and do not use my name in affiliation with A.A. in any outside public happening. That's cool. However,

the first part.... *attraction rather than promotion.... mmmmm.*

Fellow sales and marketing professionals understand that promotion is how you attract new people, how you grow, how you increase market share. But A.A. is not a consumer product on a grocery shelf.

With that in mind, how did I find out about A.A. and why did I drive my junker of a car, without snow tires, in a snowstorm, to my first meeting?

On that fateful morning of December 9, 2011, I woke up on the floor, mouth dry, head pounding, neck throbbing and stomach churning. I looked up at my alarm clock and it was 11:11 am. My cell phone flashed on the floor beside me. Five messages from a client, the final one saying that I was fired for missing the business meeting. Another message was from my mom in tears, telling me to never to call again, that she could not take it any longer. I did not remember the 3:30 am call to her. It was all happening, again. I had broken my mom's heart for the umpteenth time. I desperately needed help.

I googled "alcoholism \_\_ help". An endless list of rehabs and addiction centres filled the page. I started to go though them. Each one I visited was an advertisement for their facility with a lot of clichés and catch-phrases. I was not finding what I wanted. However, many did mention 12 Step programs and some mentioned A.A.

I googled A.A., clicked on a site and there it was, 3 of the 4 P's of marketing.

1. **Product** - A.A. is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope
2. **Price** - There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership
3. **Place** - One click, and I was looking at a local meeting list.

I read more and yes, what I read convince that

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I read more and yes, what I read convince that maybe, just maybe, A.A. is what I needed.

There was a meeting that night, just 15 minutes from where I was living. That is how I found myself sitting in my car, no heater, in a snow storm out side of a church.

I attended that meeting and I encountered people who survived the hell of alcoholism to re-find happiness, love, family, friends, peace and serenity. They had what I craved, what I ached for. In those recovering alcoholics, I experienced the best promotion ever.... a love of life, hope, and compassion. Very attractive. I stayed, and I kept coming back.

The 4th P of marketing is **Promotion**. The best promotion I can be for AA, is not to promote it at all, but to be as attractive as possible through my actions and my words; by doing my best to practice the principles in **all** my affairs and to humbly carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

This is all great, but how do we get the message out to where it needs to be? Answer..... **Service**.

My sponsor got me active in carrying the message right away, first by simple acts such as welcoming people at the door. I was instantly hooked. Since then, I have manned the Intergroup phone, brought PI (Public Information) material to doctors, hospitals, rehabs, retirement homes and high schools. I have brought family, friends and the struggling alcoholic to open meetings.

In carrying the message, I must always remember that A.A. is a program of one alcoholic helping another alcoholic. As such, it is my responsibility: whenever anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A., through me, to be there. This is how a very small cog in the A.A. world, like

My sponsor got me active in carrying the message right away, first by simple acts such as welcoming people at the door.

A.A. Trivia Challenge

**1. Alcoholics Anonymous gave the one millionth copy of the Big Book to:**

- a) The Beatles
- b) President Nixon
- c) Dolly Parton

**2. The actual or potential alcoholic, with hardly an exception, will be absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of:**

- a) moral or religious conviction
- b) (s)elf-knowledge
- c) self-will

**3. Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as:**

- a) intensive work with other alcoholics
- b) attending A.A. meetings
- c) socializing with members of the A.A. fellowship

*Answers on Page 6*

I am, can help to **attract** people to A.A., without promotion.

**Attraction rather than promotion....it works.**

Yours in Love and Service,  
Patrick B.  
DCM - District 8, Area 86, Panel 68

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**H**i I am Mary and I am an alcoholic, proud and active member of the Forest Lakeside group in District 14, Area 86. I have been asked to write an article on attraction rather than promotion. Our tradition 11 states- Our public relation policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films. I would like to break it down into two parts and look at it from the personal level rather than just the public level. Before I found AA, the example I saw of an AA member was someone who was not an example of a program that was being worked, in my opinion today. I was still practicing my addiction to alcohol; it was actually close to the beginning of my start of drinking. Later when my addiction was progressing, I was asked by someone if maybe I could use AA; I of course said NO. Part of that answer was because of the example that I saw

I am one of many in recovery who have taken the 12 steps to recover and have used the 12 traditions to become a better person.

years before.

Let's flash forward to my beginning in the program, the example I had at my first meeting was someone who I listened to and made me think that maybe this program could help me, because nothing else had before. The doctors, therapists, shrinks; none of these options worked because I was not willing to listen or to change, not until the example of the man who spoke at my first Friday Night Open Speaker meeting.

I continued to see many great examples of the program in my early years. These people showed me how the

program worked, and they

showed me how to give back to a program that gave me a life. They were doing service at the group level, at the district level, and they were on the Round Up, the Campout committee, the Spirit of Christmas/ New Years. From seeing these examples I was attracted to being a part of the bigger picture, not just me in my own sobriety. I continue to see these great examples which makes me continue to be a active on many of the committees and my home group.

The second part of the tradition, for me, is to be anonymous in public but not in meetings. If you try to find Mary B in the phonebook (LOL- who uses those anymore) or try to find me on line- you will not. I am not listed that way. I will give my last name and number to those new ladies who have come in and need to talk with someone about AA recovery. What anonymity means to me is being anonymous in the public eye, I am not the voice of AA in public, I am not the picture of AA in the public, I am one of many in recovery who have taken the 12 steps to recover and have used the 12 traditions to become a better person. I do not want the public to see Mary the alcoholic in recovery, I want the world to see AA working in my life to help me stay away from the first drink. When I put it all together, I want to be the best

### AREA OFFICERS

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person I can be, that being the example of the program in action for someone to try our way of life, to see that it can work, inside AA and out in the public.

Yours in Recovery, Unity and Service

Mary B. District 14

**T**radition Eleven: *Our public relations policy is based on attraction, rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.* So, the 11th Tradition stands sentinel over the lifelines, announcing that there is no need for self-praise, that it is better to let our friends recommend us, and that our whole public relations policy, contrary to usual customs, should be based upon the principle of attraction rather than promotion. Shot in the arm methods are not for us--no press agents, no promotional devices, no big names. The hazards are too great. Immediate results will always be illusive because easy shortcuts to notoriety can generate permanent and smothering liabilities. Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us. The inquiring voices are not all alcoholics or their families. Doctors read medical papers about Alcoholics Anonymous and call for more

An aunt dragged me off to meetings by saying that she needed a ride to and from; that I might as well stay and meet her friends,

information. Clergymen see articles in their church journals, and also make inquiries. Employers learn that great corporations have set their approval upon us, and wish to discover what can be done about alcoholism in their own firms. Therefore, a great responsibility fell upon us to develop the best possible public relations policy for Alcoholics Anonymous. Through many painful experiences, we think we have arrived at what that policy ought to be. It is the opposite in many ways of usual promotional practice. We found that we had to rely upon the principle of attraction rather than of promotion.

*Bill W.*

Before hitting my bottom, many tried to help; they all tried to get me off the "Path of Destruction" that I was on. I just refused to see it. My thinking told me that "I was not that bad" or "that I didn't have a problem".

My wife knew that I had a problem and most of our conversations were about my drinking; friends and family were calling, complaining to her.

An aunt dragged me off to meetings by saying that she needed a ride to and from; that I might as well stay and meet her friends, have a coffee. She tried so hard to get me to identify, but all of this promotion drove me away even further. It wasn't until that Sunday morning, after being released from the police station in the early morning trying to put together all the pieces of the puzzle together from the night before. I was facing three charges, had totaled the family car and was facing eviction from the family home all a few days before Christmas. Alcoholics Anonymous started to look very attractive. I was shaking when I reached for the phone, I knew then I had a big problem and maybe the answer was at the other end of the phone line. I was hopeless, You sent me Jack T., who told me his story over coffee and gave me a glimmer of hope that this too could work for me.

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Full of fear, marriage on the rocks and struggling with the thought of going to meetings, you picked me up and carried me, taught me how to pray when I didn't know how. You've helped me change my life and the fear is long gone. Today my marriage is very much alive; we worked hard through the issues and celebrated 44 years this year. It is comforting to know that when you are at your worst, the hand of Alcoholics Anonymous is always there and for that I am truly grateful.

Jim W.



Thanks for reading the Focus Newsletter. It is an Honour to be doing Service for Area 86. Please consider writing a short story for Spring 2019. If you have any questions please contact me at [newsletter@area86aa.org](mailto:newsletter@area86aa.org).

*Yours In Love & Service  
Pam F.*

The next Spring Focus topic will be  
***“Informed Group Conscience”***

### *Area 86 Focus*

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### AA Trivia Answers

1. B) Richard Nixon was given the one-millionth copy of our “Big Book.”
2. B) “But the actual or potential alcoholic, with hardly an exception, will be absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge.” — Chapter 3 pg. 39 Big book
3. A) “Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics.” —chapter 7 pg. 89 Big book

## Support Grapevine

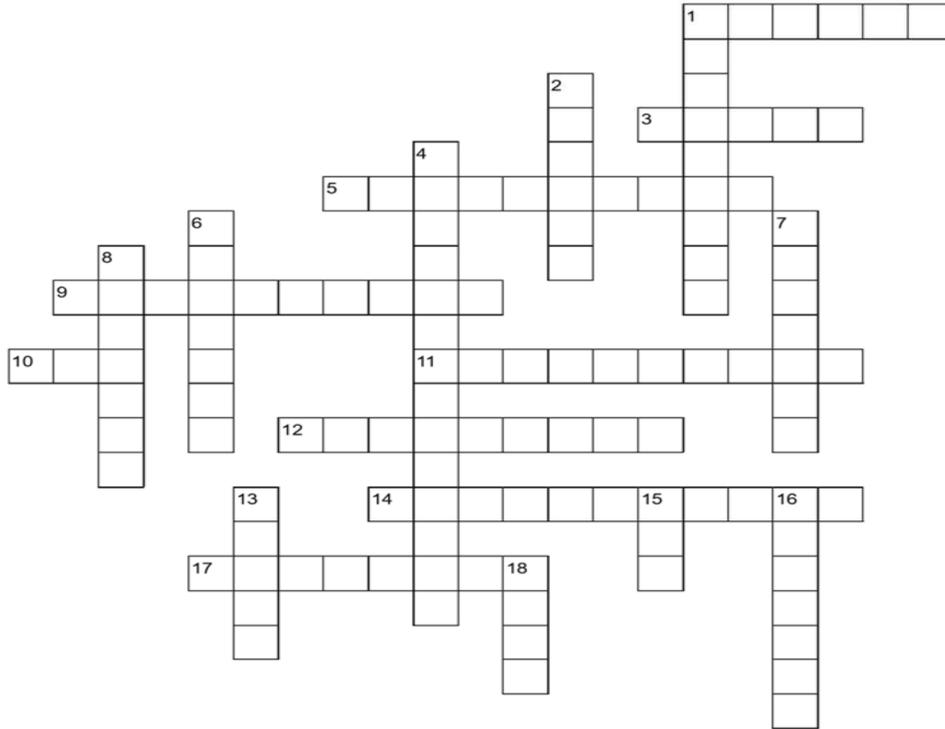


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**Focus Fall 2018**



**Across**

- 1 Step 9
- 3 Newsletter name for Area 86
- 5 Founder
- 9 12 steps refer to 12?
- 10 \_\_\_day at a time
- 11 The act of listening
- 12 Where I have a vote?
- 14 \_\_\_\_\_, honesty & open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery
- 17 The 3 sides of the \_\_\_\_\_refer to the 3 legacies.

**Down**

- 1 Birth place of Alcoholics Anonymous?
- 2 We will be restored to?
- 4 Only people with a desire to stop drinking can attend?
- 6 Integrity
- 7 Basic Text of Alcoholics Anonymous is refer to as?
- 8 the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved
- 13 What is the inventory?
- 15 Group Representative
- 16 Person who is available to confide in?
- 18 \_\_\_\_\_does it.

Across  
1. Amends  
3. Focus  
5. BillWilson  
9. Principles

10. One  
11. Meditation  
12. Home Group  
14. Willingness  
17. Triangle



Down  
1. AkronOhio  
2. Sanity  
4. Closed Meeting  
6. Honesty  
7. BigBook

8. Freedom  
13. Moral  
15. GSR  
16. Sponsor  
18. Easy

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