

Twelve Step Meeting—Step Twelve

Recovery School Students

Welcome to the Young Peoples Twelve Step Meeting
Step Twelve-Part I 041507
Andrew has entered the room “Young Peoples Twelve Step Meeting”
s.k.011 has entered the room “Young Peoples

Twelve Step Meeting”

s.k.011: hey so do you think more people will come this time?

Andrew: I hope so but it's already 10 and there's just the 2 of us

s.k.011: Yeah I know. I don't understand why no

one has been showing up.

Andrew: me neither, not only do they not come but I haven't heard back from most people

s.k.011: Yeah i know. When I sent out the email for tonights meeting nobody replied to me.

s.k.011: Is jeffery suppose to be here too?

Andrew: they may not have computer access but most people got back to me once or twice along the line

Andrew: I thought he would be here but if not I can email him the transcript

s.k.011: ok cool. just wondering

s.k.011: should we start or do you want to wait and see if anyone else comes?

Andrew: I don't know, what do you think?

s.k.011: I mean we can have a meeting, but it is a

Andrew made two attempts to organize a meeting on Step Twelve. Each meeting attracted one other member; the first meeting included Stef who had attended the first two meetings, and the second meeting included Ryan, who attended for the first time.

The initial conversation expresses their concern about this lack of participation. Typical for the process of recovery from addiction, these concerns are openly expressed and then surrendered for the purpose of moving on with the task.

The group acknowledges my having been present as an observer at previous meetings. Again, discussion of my role is open and explicit, and once addressed, the process moves on.

Decisions continue to be made with the benefit of input from both members of the meeting.

bummer that there is no one else. Cause Im sure our meeting would only last 20 minutes or so, I guess I really don't know what to do..

Andrew: yeah i agree

Andrew: well we could wait a while or just get started

s.k.011: well we can start if you want.. I mean if anyone else shows I am sure that it would probably be soon. you want to?

Andrew: sure

s.k.011: alright well Welcome to the young peoples 12 step meeting. Tonight I believe we are on step 12, would anyone like to start?

Andrew: !

s.k.011: Hi andrew

Andrew: Well my experience with step 12 is somewhat limited because in working through the steps with my sponsor I have not yet reached step 12

Andrew: but as for a spiritual experience, I had more of a gradual spiritual experience than a sudden one

Andrew: more of an evolution of my understanding of my higher power and realizing its presence

Andrew: I do try to help other alcoholics in some

small way

Andrew: whether it's helping a friend from the program move or giving people rides or making or taking phone calls

Andrew: even just talking to new people at meetings, because these are the kinds of things that people did and still do for me and they were so helpful

Andrew: I also try to help out by sharing my story through "leading" (speaking at) a meeting or taking on service positions at meetings

Andrew: I have not sponsored others, and I don't feel I'm ready to yet, but I know the value of sponsorship because it helped me out a lot

Andrew: And as for the last part of step 12, practicing these principles in all our affairs, It's something I work on and I certainly see progress rather than perfection, but often

Stef "steps up" to take the position of chairing the meeting. Even though only two members are present, the formal structure of the meeting is maintained.

Many addicts in recovery experience working the twelve steps in the order that they are given. Even so, from the very beginning of the process of recovery, most addicts are able to identify with working each of the steps in some fashion. Hence the notion of a gradual spiritual experience.

Carrying the message of recovery is also referred to as service. This service to others is often very simple, as Andrew describes. Indeed, participating in these on line meetings might be considered a form of service in carrying the message of recovery from addiction to professionals in the community.

times I have a whole lot of improvement to do, because how well I'm working a program depends not on how I am in a meeting, it's the other 23 hours of the day that are a reflection of my spiritual condition or lack thereof.

Andrew: Thanks for listening, I'll pass.

s.k.011: Thanks andrew

s.k.011: !

s.k.011: Hi im stef i am sn alcoholic and addict Andrew: Hi stef

s.k.011: Well Step 12 "Having had a spiritual awakening" I can't say that there is one moment that I recall. I do believe that I have had glimpse and little bits of spiritual awakenings. like you had mentioned coming to really unstand my higher power and put trust that my high power is there and what not

s.k.011: I have had many small spiritual awakenings, just by being a part of the program. And by starting to understand what its all about

s.k.011: Carrying the message and service work is something that I always try to do

s.k.011: as you said giving people rides to meetings, making coffee, chairing a meeting, speaking opportunities such as at schools or other meetings (sharing my story)

s.k.011: I also try to reach out to new comers because I know how I felt when I was first introduced to the program. Through my experience I feel that you are spreading the message and carrying it by just talking in meetings and sharing your experience strength and hope.

s.k.011: Though one thing i need to mention is

when working step 12 and trying to help other alcoholics from my experience can also be hard. I can become co dependant and start to care so much about a person and end up getting dragged down. I need to be careful that I don't become to attached when working with alcoholics/addicts because we are all still sick and have things to work on

s.k.011: I need to make sure that I am still working my program and not trying to work theirs

Stef joins Andrew in the experience of spiritual awakening being a gradual process. The gradual nature of these changes is consistent with providing support over extended periods of time in structured programs of the type that are described in this book.

Carrying the message entails actions that are taken in addition to words that are spoken.

Carrying the message also entails attaching to other people. This attachment benefits the person who is carrying the message; the primary purpose of each of the Twelve Steps, especially Step Twelve, is to strengthen and safeguard the individual's sobriety.

Stef underscores the importance of maintaining one's sense of self in carrying the message. Working with those who still suffer needs to be an uplifting experience. When Stef refers to the need to avoid becoming attached, she is probably referring to not becoming attached to outcomes, and in particular, not becoming attached to the addiction of another person.

s.k.011: I completely agree with you andrew on what you said about practicing the principles in all our affairs. there is no better way to say it then how you put it

This principle, which applies to all Twelve Step programs, has been clearly described in another Twelve Step program, Al-Anon, for the families and friends of alcoholics. Al-Anon calls this attitude "detaching with love."

s.k.011: Step 12 is important because someone 12 stepped me by carrying the message to me and I need to make sure that I am doing the same because the program saved my life and I know that it can do the same for others. I need to try and give back what it has given to me.

s.k.011: Well thanks for letting me share and listening. I will pass.

Andrew: Thanks Stef

s.k.011: anyone else have anything to share?

s.k.011: I guess we are still the only 2 in here

s.k.011: lol

Andrew: yep

s.k.011: so.. what now? =)

Andrew: Well, I have nothing else to share that I can think of on this topic

s.k.011: me either

Andrew: well, should we just close?

s.k.011: I am thinking so. I don't see that anyone would come if they haven't already?

Andrew: probably not

s.k.011: well then i guess we are done. Is there

anymore meetings after this or was this the last one?

With both members having shared, discussion now centers on how to proceed.

Lol= laugh out loud

=) may represent a smiley face, indicating a light-hearted move towards closure.

Andrew: I think this is the last one

Andrew: there's no more time anyway

s.k.011: Yes true

Andrew: we were supposed to be done about a month ago

s.k.011: Yeah I just found out and filled in last minute so I didn't even know that

Andrew: Well, I can email the transcript to Jeffrey

s.k.011: were there any meetings that were done about a month ago

Andrew: hah nope

s.k.011: crazy

s.k.011: haha

Andrew: I was supposed to be setting it up but nobody got back to me and showed up

Stef and Andrew share information that would help both of them make a decision on closure.

With the meeting about to end, my presence (and implicitly the presence of the readers of the book) is acknowledged.

it was pretty bad

s.k.011: Thats crapy

s.k.011: so are you going to be in DC

Andrew: yeah, I'm flying in wed. night

Andrew: you?

s.k.011: alright. Yes Ill be there. I am pretty excited it is an amazing oppportunite that I was given

Andrew: agreed, I'm really looking forward to it.

s.k.011: Yes it should be really neat. So where exactly are you coming from?

Andrew: well I live in New York but I go to school in Cleveland so I'm coming in from Cleveland

s.k.011: Oh ok, cool. I am coming in from Minnesota, the st. paul area

Andrew: nice

s.k.011: Yeah

s.k.011: Well.. I guess ill be seeing you in DC you have a wonderful nigh

Andrew: you too

Step Twelve-Part II 052007

dryry, "Hello!"

dryry, "Who else is out there?"

Andrew, "Andrew"

Andrew, "Is this Ryan from D.C.?"

dryry, "yup, how you doing?"

Andrew, "pretty good"

Andrew, "enjoying summer"

Andrew, "how have you been?"

dryry, "not bad, i was a good day today did some area service and some meditation"

Andrew, "nice"

dryry, "do you think anyone else will sign onto the chat?"

dryry, "I've never had a meeting like this before"

Andrew, "In the past, all our meetings were small, but our last meeting was just two people."

Andrew, "This was supposed to "replace" that meeting and get everyone to join, but that doesn't look promising."

dryry, I guess we'll see. How does it work? I guess there's no "speaker" (ha ha). Do people just share, or just chat about

Andrew and Stef were two of eight student participants in a national meeting of JMATE on treatment of adolescent addiction. Their interaction after the formally structured part of the meeting is typical of social exchanges that occur outside of the boundaries of the meeting. These interactions are called "fellowshipping," and contribute to the formation of a tightly knit social network that supports sobriety. Engaging in these social exchanges may therefore also be considered part of carrying the message of recovery.

In this second meeting on Step Twelve, Andrew and Ryan meet. Since Andrew is the experienced member in this online format, his welcome to Ryan reflects the theme of the meeting, carrying the message of recovery. As in the prior meetings, the interchange before the meeting starts is an important part of the process. Note how naturally Ryan volunteers his service activity (Step Twelve) and time spent in meditation (Step Eleven).

Note how quickly Ryan engages in examining the process in the here and now. This sensitivity is a major signal of recovery. He also is alert to the presence of a task for the meeting, and asks Andrew for help in understanding this task.

recovery related issues?

“Andrew,” Well the topic is supposed to be Step 12 and we usually just took turns sharing anything we felt like about step 12
“dryry,” nice, I’m just finishing going over that step with my sponsor
“Andrew,” do you think we should go ahead with the meeting or not?

dryry, “Well, good question, I think it’ll be a miracle if anyone else joins us at this point. I’m up for just sharing a little bit about the 12th step and then calling it a night, what do you think?

“Andrew,” sounds good

“dryry,” Maybe I’ll share some of my experience with the 12th step:

“dryry,” Step 12, having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry the message to addicts and practice these principles in all our affairs. I think for me what’s been tough

about the 12th step is to be totally open to helping someone even when they relapse or don’t want to take suggestions. Recently, I meet a newcomer in a meeting who I tried to help by taking him to meetin

“dryry,” ings and calling him on the phone. He seemed to be doing really good, until he suddenly drank one day. It didn’t make sense but I know I’m only responsible for carrying the message, not the addict.”

dryry, “What’s your experience with the 12th step?”

Andrew, “Well I am currently making my list of amends to make (Step 8) so I don’t have lots of experience with the 12th step. I try to practice the principles of the program in all my affairs but I have good and bad days.”

Andrew, “Prayer certainly helps with this as well as acceptance, but I still have lots of progress to look forward to.”

Andrew, “As for helping people, one thing I found very helpful this past school year was the reliance of my fellow Recovery House residents on me for rides to meetings.”

Andrew, “It was nice to be able to help them and also to have a sort of” “commitment” “to get to a meeting every day.”

That Ryan has a sponsor with whom he works the steps is an indication that he brings some direct experience with that step to this meeting.

Having asked Andrew about the agenda, Ryan jumps in and appears to assume the role of chair for this mini-meeting; those who chair the meeting often starts their comment by reading the step they are talking about.

Ryan’s leadership style is more directive than Andrew’s style, as we see from the previous meeting. Ryan asks Andrew to share rather than waiting for Andrew to indicate an interest in speaking. The structure of Twelve Step meetings is open enough to embrace a rather wide variety of leadership styles.

Andrew’s example shows an advantage to living in a collegiate recovery community. He also demonstrates his understanding that his performance of service to others has the immediate benefit of leading him to attend meetings himself.

Andrew, "One issue I'm currently having that sort of relates to step 12 is at home with 2 of my brothers. I used with both of them, getting them into drinking and smoking weed. Now that I'm home from college, I am in an environment where they are still using."

Andrew, "I cannot say whether they are addicted or not, but it is difficult to simply stand by and watch them do what I did, knowing all I can do is be an example to them and to be there if they need help."

Andrew, "I know I can't try to force anything on

them, and I definitely wasn't open to things like that when I was still actively using, but I'm just dealing now with accepting what they are doing and trying not to feel too guilty for starting them using. I also have to know that at some point, even if it wasn't me, someone would have introduced them to drugs/alcohol."

Andrew, "But I know now that I am a good example, at least most of the time, for them and I try to be of maximum service to God and my fellows. Progress, not perfection though, that's for sure."

Andrew, "I guess that's all I really have on step 12 tonight."

Andrew, "Is there anything else you want to say?"

dryry, "Well, I just wanted to say that's rough about

your brothers, I mean living with them now that schools out. My stepbrothers were some of the first people I used with and it was really hard to be

around them in early recovery. But, once they understood what I went through (outpatient and going to meetings) they had a lot of respect for me."

dryry, "I think that's about all I have for now"

Andrew, "Well thanks for sharing, this was good for me"

Andrew, "I'll email a copy of the transcript to Andy and Jeffrey"

dryry, "Yeah, same here, this is interesting and I'm glad to know it exists. Thanks for sharing too. I still have your number from DC, so I'll text mine to you. Keep in touch!"

Andrew, "Sounds good, take care Ryan, enjoy your summer"

dryry, "Thanks man, you too! Peace"

Andrew's relationship with his brothers is a poignant example of addiction being a family disease. Often recovering addicts face the challenge of maintaining their own sobriety in the face of family members continuing to become intoxicated. Sometimes the recovering addict shoulders responsibility for introducing other family members to alcohol or drug use, and then ironically becomes the family member to introduce others to a process of recovery.

Ryan's identification with Andrew supports the common occurrence of addiction in other family members.

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