

Delegates Corner
December 2017

I have a fondness for Thanksgiving, because that was the time of year I first got sober. Somewhere deep inside I knew I would not survive another holiday season. Especially not the way I drank. I was horribly underweight because I no longer ate much, my hands shook terribly and I am sure there was that distinctive aroma about me when alcohol comes through your pores. The woman who was to become my first sponsor took me to a lot of meetings in San Francisco and at practically every meeting the topic was gratitude. November is gratitude month of course. My attitude towards this was less than stellar. I really couldn't see what there was to be grateful for. The 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous would change that attitude. That year a lot would change. I would find a new way of life because of the Steps. I would change physically, mentally, spiritually and emotionally. By the time the next Thanksgiving rolled around, I had a lot to be grateful for. I knew what gratitude felt like.

By the time I had 10 years of sobriety, I had everything I ever wanted but was unable to get because of my disease. The life that Alcoholics Anonymous had given me got in the way of my AA life. I drifted from the program and relapsed after 17 year. That relapse lasted five years. When I returned, what I found was the program of recovery would work again—when I worked it. I again received the psychic change needed to recover from alcoholism. The lesson I learned from my first recovery was balance. Balance between my AA life and the life that AA gave me. I acknowledged that Unity begins with me. (Only I can choose to stay with the Program.) Service begins with me. (It is up to me to make myself available.) And Recovery begins with me. (Only I can choose to work the steps.)

I am grateful today that I am not dying from a progressive fatal disease. I am even more grateful that a program of recovery from this disease has given me a life beyond wildest dreams, incredible friendships and relationships, and a purpose that is nothing I could have ever thought of. It takes the whole triangle—Recovery, Unity and Service—to keep my life steady and on course.

Thank you for letting me be of service,
Joann L.
Panel 67 CNCA 06 Area Delegate