

Hopefully, by the time you read this you will have facilitated in or participated in a group conscience session—or have one planned! I hope your experience is enriching. The power of the group conscience is not only that the will of the group comes to be known, it is that all the participants have the opportunity to undergo the magical formula we have in general service: to listen without opinion, speak their truth, vote their conscience, and trust the process.

That combination of experiences holds within in the promises of change and belonging. When I listen to other A.A. members whose opinions differ from mine, I experience a healthy doubt. Maybe I haven't considered the matter fully. Maybe I can learn something. Maybe my opinion can change. The fact that we do this as a group anchors me in the group with those invisible ties of love and responsibility.

This is the time of year when we begin to infuse our 2nd Tradition with meaning, spirit, and love, starting a process that while it might seem to conclude at the General Service Conference, actually never ends.

Sometimes we hear people say that the topics rotate, as do the trusted servants, and that if you stay around long enough you will see these topics again. That's true. It's true because there are eternal themes in A.A. Themes like our message, self-support, communications, prudence, and keeping A.A. democratic. The individual topics might contain subtle variations, but it's good and proper that the perennial themes are thoroughly examined, year in, year out. Even the first 100 concluded that "we know but a little." May we continue this healthy 6th Step quest not for perfection, but to raise our eyes towards it and walk in its direction.

This year's topics are juicier than most. That means we are all likely to hear a broad spectrum of passionate viewpoints. This has the potential, if we do it right, to draw our fellowship together in unity, but only if we embody the formula of listening like we don't have an opinion, speaking our truth, voting our conscience, and trusting this beautiful never-ending process.