

Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world leadership once exercised by the founders of A.A. must necessarily be assumed by the Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.

I did not imagine myself as a leader in any sense when I first came to Alcoholics Anonymous. Today as I look around the rooms of District __ and CNCA 06 and I pause and ask myself who will help attract the next wave of General Service Reps, the next wave of District Committee Members? How will each of us help to keep General Service attractive? I can see today that each of us is responsible to take a leadership role in continuously finding the right people for our many service tasks.

Now is the time to look within and ask myself how I can contribute to passing on the third legacy of service. I owe my entire life to Alcoholics Anonymous and nothing good in it would exist without it. Each moment does not belong to me but rather to God, so I must pass on what has been so freely given to me.

I suppose it is really as simple as being asked to sponsor for the first time. I certainly did not believe I was qualified, yet someone with less time than me needed someone to show her the way. If every sponsor is necessarily a leader, then my responsibility is not only to be available for sponsorship, but also for leadership in A.A. What the sponsor does and says, how well he estimates the reactions of his prospects, how well he times and makes his presentation, how well he handles criticisms, and how well he leads his prospect on by personal spiritual example—these qualities of leadership can make all the difference, often the difference between life and death. I know that I cannot turn away from an opportunity for leadership in AA any more than I can turn away a newcomer. Good leadership never passes the buck.

My first introduction to Concept 9 came with an awkward situation in the workplace. Painful experience has taught me to face heavy criticism. A coworker had mistakenly instant-messaged me some negative commentary, about me, which was intended for someone else to read. Crushed, I stepped outside to call my sponsor. On the phone my sponsor asked me if there was any truth to the comments that I read, and if so, could I try to listen to the message and disregard the messenger. I ended up thanking the individual for the difficult but much needed feedback, and explained that although it was unintentional it was quite helpful. I was able to get on with my respective inventory and see the opportunity for growth. This was the beginning of my skin thickening.

Now we come to the all-important attribute of vision. A couple of years ago my Dad had phoned me from Southern California to ask me about moving to the bay area. My now husband and I agreed on inviting him to come live with us. I did not realize at that time that God would soon help me shore up the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. The men who helped move my Dad and his belongings to our home explained that upon their

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arrival to his home it was clear that he was not living successfully on his own independence. After spending some time with him and taking him to a few healthcare appointments, we received news that he was officially diagnosed with mixed dementia, both vascular dementia and Alzheimer's. Walking through this experience I did take it "one day at a time," though I could not cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. I had to think about the months and years ahead. Finances were estimated and budgeted, medical professionals provided guidance, the common welfare of the family was considered and critical decisions were made with principles in mind and heart. Today my Dad lives with my husband and I along with our cat. We tried on the idea for a while and we have since revalued the situation and asked ourselves whether our estimate is still working out. Our home could not be happier. Every other weekend my stepson, N, and his service dog, M, come to stay with us. It is a zoo every other weekend but a zoo full of love. If it weren't for my Dad, A. and my stepson, N. my wallet would be full, my house would be clean, but my heart would be incomplete.