

Delegate's Corner

April 2018

Ok, so I confess. I heard this in another 12 step program. But I have found it so helpful and insightful I can't help but share it. And those who know me know I share it a lot. It's a different way of saying the 4th Concept. Participation is the key to harmony. It's so insightful I will say it again. Participation is the key to harmony. How true is this when it comes to our group conscience? If members of a home group do not participate in sharing sessions for the group's business, then a true group conscience may not occur. I have also said that you never know who in the room is going to have the information that might just break your heart wide open. Those of us who have had the experience of being at an assembly where they have heard a heart-felt share during a minority opinion know that this can transform an entire room of people. It does take all of us to come to a true group conscience. And it particularly takes our individual courage to speak up, speak from the heart and speak our truth when we are at a sharing session. We in CNCA are a little bit spoiled. I noticed this at PRAASA when after everyone shared at the mike, people clapped. I know it was just politeness but think of the time that could have been saved by asking people not to clap. The only clapping necessary should be the warm applause when someone went over their time. But the other really good reason for not clapping here in CNCA is to create a safe place to share. (No remarks, no booing, no clapping, no shrugging shoulders, no eye rolling when someone shares.) For some of us, sharing in front of others is intimidating enough without worrying if the group will react to our share. Creating a neutral space helps.

This fourth concept of participation particularly applies when it comes to our assemblies. I want to say especially the Pre-Conference but I am going out on limb here and say it is important the GSR attend all of the assemblies. No exception. The reason for this is that the assemblies are the AA groups' opportunity to express their opinions, thoughts and feelings on business matters that will affect all of AA. This is where the AA groups' responsibility to care for the structure of AA, through participation, is fulfilled. It is a big responsibility to ensure that AA will be here for generations to come. It will not be here in the future if the groups don't take part in the Conference by informing their Delegate. The area assembly is where the AA group, through their GSR, fulfills this responsibility when they participate in the discussion of the business. I can't tell you how exciting it is to just sit and listen at the Pre-Conference assembly. I get to feel your love of AA and the hope for its future.

Participation is the key to harmony. When we talk and talk and talk about an issue, then the vote on that issue results in substantial unanimity, there will be harmony in the group. But everyone's voice matters. I look forward to hearing all of you at the Pre-Conference Assembly in April. Thank you for letting me be of service to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Joann L.
Panel 67 CNCA 06 Delegate