

Delegate's Corner July 2020

July – 7th Tradition Month – comes in the midst of great uncertainty for all of us. With no likelihood of a return to what life was like before the coronavirus anytime soon, we're left in limbo.

As an alcoholic, I prefer certainty and closure, but as a sober alcoholic you have taught me to have patience with the things that are unresolved. Our maxim, one day at a time, has been particularly helpful for me these past months and, I'm sure, for many to come. Yet, as Bill warns us in his essay on leadership, this slogan refers to our mental and emotional lives and that "we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence." He goes on to say that God has given us foresight and expects us to use it.

So, as a sober alcoholic what does this moment mean for me and my 7th Tradition responsibility? When I first got sober, I had little money and found myself at my home group with nothing for the basket. The guy next to me noticed and put in for me. I thanked him and said I would pay him back as soon as I could. He winked at me and told me to pay it forward. One of my home group members was a loving old-timer. I remember him sharing that he had been lucky enough to receive the gifts of sobriety and how grateful he was for that and one way he expressed that gratitude was in the basket. A few years later I heard one of our (now) past delegates talk about *a personal contribution plan* to A.A. Now, up to that point my personal contribution plan had been a fear-based reaction to the basket when it hit my lap in a meeting. Over time, I have become aware of all the myriad ways there are to support my home group, my intergroup, my area, H&I, our general service board, and the Grapevine/La Viña.

Even so, my personal contribution plan remained in my head. One outcome of the current situation, for me, has been for me to write my plan out. It turns out I was doing a good job of patting myself on the back instead of doing a searching and fearless inventory. Turns out that was the key for a larger inventory and all the benefits that flow from that.

In these tumultuous times we should take care of our groups first, our local services next, and then, if we have funds to spare, consider our wider 7th Tradition responsibilities. The way in which our districts, groups, and individuals have responded to the current situation is truly inspirational. We may not have chosen to do it thus way, but these trying times have given us the vehicle to reach new levels of understanding and responsibility as it relates to self-support.