

One alcoholic with a few months sober shares his story with a man who wants to quit drinking but doesn't know if he can. Eventually, the two of them find a third man to talk to, then a fourth. They share their stories with each other, and then they share with others. Sobriety becomes possible. Days turn into weeks, weeks turn into months, and months turn into years. New groups spring up, first in cities, then in suburbs and small towns. Meetings start popping up in hospitals and prisons. New groups flourish abroad. Eventually, groups cross the digital barrier and start meeting virtually. A disease that once devastated families now has a solution. An isolating disease becomes the catalyst for a global fellowship. This story saves my life.

I am connected to the rest of AA. My life today is directly linked to Bill's conversation with Bob in 1935, and to the many conversations that followed.

The Conference process, likewise, is the continuing discussions from our earliest members. Should we publish a book? What are we called? Can women join AA? What about Catholics? Atheists? How do we sustain ourselves financially? These questions evolved, but the focus remains the same: how do we make sure every alcoholic stumbling in the darkness can access the life-saving message of Alcoholics Anonymous?

The Conference this year took bold actions to ensure that our message remains relevant and accessible to all who seek it out. Representatives from every corner of the United States and Canada gathered together to share solutions to problems our Fellowship faces. Those solutions came from you, from your home group members, and from the long (and sometimes difficult) conversations we have had over the course of many years. Jennifer will share with us what happened, how it happened, and what happens next. I encourage you to invite your home group members, sponsees, and sponsors to hear the Delegate's Report and listen to the story of the work that was done and the love behind it.

And now we continue. Our primary purpose is to help the alcoholic still suffering, and there are many – too many – still suffering. We have a lot of work to do.

Eric L.,

Alternate Delegate, Panel 71