

There have been times over the years when I felt strongly about some item of A.A. business, or even been the maker of a motion that did not pass, and I had to accept that a vote did not go my way. Because I had voiced my opinion, and listened to others when they shared, I was able to accept the group conscience and move on. The ability to compromise cheerfully is one I have gladly cultivated in sobriety, as I prize our A.A. unity above my personal preferences. I may not always agree with a decision, but I agree with our process and I trust that a higher power as expressed in our group conscience has acted in the best interest of the group, the district, the area, or A.A. as a whole. If we later realize we made an error, we can correct it.

Some of the Conference decisions this year have resulted in confusion and controversy and members are talking about what they can do to reverse decisions. I find it disturbing that some are making it political, as if the decisions were motivated by anything other than wanting to reach the still-suffering alcoholic. I heard all different points of view expressed at the Conference, and I assure you that we were thoughtful in our decision-making. Making the language of A.A.'s message of hope more inclusive and accessible does not mean we took anything away from what is already working. But I understand that change can be uncomfortable, especially when it involves cherished aspects of the program that saved our lives.

Despite my belief that we made good decisions, I welcome the voices of dissenting opinion, especially if they feel as if they were not heard the first time. We may see more groups electing GSRs in order to participate in the decision-making that they feel they were left out of. That would be cool. The more groups that participate through their GSR, the more the Conference can truly act for A.A. as a whole. Let's just remember that we can disagree without being disagreeable. As Bill wrote in his essay on leadership, those times when we have to decide whether to compromise or stick firmly to our convictions "are situations for keen timing and careful discrimination as to which course to take." Please feel free to reach out to me if you have any questions about how we made our loving decisions at the Conference, or if you need any information on how to submit a proposed Conference agenda item using the form on our website.

Participation is the key to harmony,
Jennifer B., Panel 71 Delegate