

Motion #3
New Business

Oregon Area 58 Motion

Submitted by: Cha-Cha (GSR) District 24

Motion: Submit a request to the Trustees Literature Committee to delete “of the opposite sex” from page 117 in the book ‘Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.’

This would change the sentence from: *“Nearly every sound human being experiences, at some time in life, a compelling desire to find a mate of the opposite sex with whom the fullest possible union can be made.*

To *“Nearly every sound human being experiences, at some time in life, a compelling desire to find a mate with whom the fullest possible union can be made....”*

Intent/Purpose: While it is a very important to preserve our historical documents as they are written, it also may serve us well as a fellowship to be willing to make small adjustments to some of our literature to help ensure that our effectiveness is never diminished by terms that may have outlived their usefulness. We can all agree that our Big Book should be left alone, but, as our other literature plays a crucial role in helping newcomers identify, it is important that we, as a fellowship, pay attention to opportunities where we can adjust our literature without compromising the integrity of our message. We feel that this is one of those opportunities.

Current Practice: On occasion, AA does make adjustments to its literature to maintain its effectiveness. An example of these adjustments in recent years would be our fellowship-wide examination of the pamphlet “Letter to Woman Alcoholic,” which was eventually removed from publication due to Fellowship-wide understanding that it was outdated and may have posed gender bias concerns among other reasons.

Budgetary Impact: None to Oregon Area, Cost to AA World Services is unknown.

2nd by Bob

Discussion:

Isaac: I very much support this motion. I think it is a very small change to make in the book and feel it would eliminate a lot of bias, as Dave said. I would, however, like to know what the cost would be to AAWS; and I would also like to take this back to my group. I think it needs a little more examination.

Kathy: I am in favor of this motion. I think the way we have handled the verbiage of do we use God or Higher Power is an example of how we try to get it to a point where every person can identify. I have several sponsees who are gay, and when I get to this point in the book and it actually catches my breathe and I am a Christian.

Judy: Against motion. If it is not broke, don't fix it. We need to take it back to the groups because there is a budgetary impact.

Eve: Strongly support this motion. I think it's an unnecessary qualifier that has nothing to do with recovery or sobriety. It has the potential to alienate a lot more people and just the removal of it would welcome more.

Ted: Every word in our books, the AA book and the 12x12, has worked for 35 years or since 1935; and just because a group of individuals are against this wording, too bad. You gotta get a life.

Crowd starts to boo

Gus interjects to say...this is not ok. We do not engage in this kind of behavior here at the Oregon Area. We should not be wildly applauding and we definitely do not boo each other. We need to show each other the love and kindness of allowing each of us to participate. We listen to each other with love and respect. We don't have to agree with each other.

Cherie: Opposed to this motion. We are in trouble with costs at GSO anyway and this would cost money. Our Big Book talks "men" and us women have had to learn how to say ok this was written in 1935. We have to adjust to the fact that this literature was written many many years ago and it has worked all of these years.

David K: Great conversation to keep our AA message of recovery in a modern context. Curious to see, if we do bring this back to our groups, if there is more information from the literature committee regarding whether

the wording ever changed in the 12x12 and what is the history for that specifically.

PJ: I'm opposed to anything that changes the Big Book or the 12x12. It's one of the tools that we give the newcomer when they come in and it is our primary purpose. That is whole reason for our existence if you read our service manual. Another reason, because I am a DCM I serve the people that are above me which is ultimately my group members, and if anything, this should be taken back to them. I don't think that we should consider ourselves so important as to come to this conclusion right now without the people we serve. That's what we are here for, to serve the people that can't come to these conferences. Are we losing sight of that?

Jade: I don't think our discussion presupposes that we are going to vote today. I think it helps us bring more clarity back to our groups in terms of the conversation. We know that gay & lesbian are 10% of the general population and being from that population I know that the number of alcoholics is much higher, so there really is a wide range of folks that are alienated by some. I want to point out the precedent that we did pull the pamphlet "Woman Alcoholic" because the language was so sexist. This is some of the literature that Anne, Our Delegate brought back to us. I do think we should take a look at *when* another edition is being produced; that's when changes should be made.

Jeff M: Not a voting member of this body but I am an alcoholic. I want to say that it is important for us to have dialogue. We have had a trend over the last several years of getting out the door of these business meetings and we love to call the question and I encourage as much dialogue as possible. When I first got here, I could not stand the dialogue. The first AA Assembly I went to in September 2004 they were having a discussion of Christianity in AA and it kind of made this look tame so if you are feeling a little chemistry right now, don't worry we've been here before. There are slogans we have and maybe borrowed from someone else like Live And Let Live....there is a line that came to my mind out of the Big Book and it is "we realize that we only know a little"that was so important for me to hear because the first thing that I took note of when I walked into these rooms was the one line that seemed to contradict to itself, in my alcoholic mind was; *God as we understood Him*. So for an alcoholic like me, that was a hard one for me to get over. So I appreciate us preserving our history but we also need to take a look at who we are and what message we are sending. Lastly, I want to say NOTHING.

Buck: I am a heterosexual alcoholic. I feel compelled to remind the Assembly that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking and therefore we are not exclusive, we are all inclusive. I see no harm in deleting these 4 words from the 12x12 and thereby becoming inclusive.

Cha Cha: Would like to quote the 4th Edition of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Preface page XII... "All changes made over the years in the Big Book have had the same purpose: to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby to reach more alcoholics. If you have a drinking problem, we hope that you may pause in reading one of the forty-two personal stories and think: "Yes, that happened to me"; or, more important, "Yes, I've felt like that"; or, most important, "Yes, I believe this program can work for me too." I would like to say this is not about an individual group; this is about reaching out to the newcomer. That part in the 12x12 if you read it goes on to talk about a personal story and like it has already been mentioned it won't change the connotation of the paragraph by deleting those 4 words. In fact, it would just make it more inclusive to those who do like people other than the opposite sex.

Veronica: Isn't this a point of personality before principles and our ego trying to change this and trying to make us separate instead of a unity.

Shanna: Initially when I heard people trying to change verbiage I thought it was ridiculous. Sitting here listening to all of this I was really struck by the fact of how would I feel? When I first got here I was so sensitive. If we can do this one little thing for one alcoholic then we are really serving our purpose. It's not about upholding old school ideas or bringing in new wave ideas, it's about serving an individual alcoholic who is dying, who wants to live, and who wants to get sober. If we can delete a little bit of verbiage to make them feel like they fit in I think it's worth it as opposed to it's there and it's been and we are not going to change it.

Casey: Calls the question
2nd by Pam, District 20
Vote to end debate - debate has ended
Urgent and/or Administrative
Motion is tabled