July 13, 2019---July 20, 2019

Good evening and welcome to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Seattle/Portland **Open** **Saturday Night Open Speakers Meeting.**

I want to thank each of you for choosing to come out tonight to support the meeting.

My name is Leona P. and I am an alcoholic. My Sober journey began May 3, 1977 in a little town called Kansas City., in a little club house called the Southeast Group. Where the late Vernetta Reams, was the Founder, Co-founder, treasurer, guest speaker, the president of the board of directors, and sometimes the higher power in the lives of newcomers. On the other hand, she was one of the original founders of the well-known annual International Women’s Conference which remain in existence today, this year it was held in. I attended (7 of the 56) International Women’s Conferences since 1977.

The Big book says we tell our story in a general way. **What our life was like**, **What happened** and **What our lives are like today*.*** – Showing up on the 3rd of May, that day, sober at 8pm was my first miracle, which lead to these 42 years (a day at a time clean and sober). What it was like, was my life was ***unacceptable*** and I was without the understanding of how to turn my life around to **acceptable sober or drinking.**

Today I know my detoxing process began in the rooms of AA. They did not have treatment centers on every corner in in 1947 t0 1977. What they had was a church on every corner and night clubs on every other corner or vice versa. What I also believe happened that day, was*, the late George Adams had given me a pip talk earlier that morning at 8am, I did not know how or why* ***not drinking was so important.*** If there was anything, I was that day was, *I was not completely ready to stop drinking.* ***I had subconsciously told myself that I was* simply collecting information to pass on to someone else, I did not know, the someone else would be the new me, someday.** During my first meeting I heard something that I could not shake loose from my obsessed mind, It is read in every AA meeting from chapter 5, it was “**Rarely have we seen a person fail who have thoroughly followed our path . . . How It Works**. I also met my sponsor the late Vernetta Ream, who nominated herself to be my sponsor and I was also introduced to her sponsor, Bernadette O.K **I was thankful, grateful, and pleased** that she did, for I was to scare to ask for help on any level. I did not feel worthy of help from her or anyone else, with eight years of recovery I moved to Seattle Washington. Vernetta remain my sponsor for 25 years, until she passed away. By then I was employed at the University of Washington. Her last comment to me was. “She could have, helped me more as a sponsor. “I remember thinking, “You helped me until I was able to ask for help myself.”

I believe my normal and abnormal fears increased as the obsession to drink decreased. The principles of recovery were confusing plus my understanding of new information was nil. I learn, for me my fears were the mother of my many emotional handicaps. Once I was relieved from needing and wanting to drink alcohol my inability to communicate was my next unsolvable problem.

**What happened** was I was Re-introduced to the 12 steps of the Program at the beginning of each meeting. Hearing the steps read seemed like a sedative for my soul sickness. I read and re-read the Basic Text, I read-and re-read each step in the 12 X 12, I stayed in meetings morning noon and night in the beginning. That was the only place I felt safe for a long while. I only understood the first half of the first step, with all the opening reading activities, the ***Preamble, How it Works, the 12 Traditions, and the 12 promises***. **“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- I did not believe my life as I knew it was unmanageable.** My life had always been mentally, Emotional, and Spiritually chaotic if not straight up psychotic.

**What my life is like today**, I am going to share with you this evening an Open-minded Recovery process I set out to embrace; From practicing the Principals of AA, in all of my affairs the principals are**: Honesty, Hope, *Faith, Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Love, Perseverance, Spirituality, and Service*).**

**Step 1.** **Honesty** “**We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and our lives had become unmanageable- so reads the first step.** **When I admitted my powerlessness over alcohol and had the ability to see and feel the sting of my unmanageable lifestyle with or without alcohol, I finally took the position of I had** to **Surrender to Win!**

Step 2. **Hope** Reads “**Came to believe that a Power Greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. --When I came to believe in a Power Greater than myself had to restored me to enough sanity to see what my mind, behavior and drinking was doing to me and for me I not only Surrender my disbelief – But I had the willingness to quite playing God in my life and request God’s help and I begin to accept the things I could not change. “I learned to Live and Let Live.”**

**“Step. 3 –Faith, reads” “Made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”** **I made a decided to turn my life and will over to the care of God and asked for his protection and care. I asked him to do with me whatever his will was for me. While his amazing Grace secretly removed my bondage of self -- Very Slowly, I might add— Most of the time I was the last to know a change had taken place. “Faith without works is Dead faith.”**

**Step 4. reads: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves” The next step within the inventory was to make a list of people, institutions, and principle I resented. The Principle in this step is Courage. I remember my first list being very short. My two children, my parents, myself and the church. I learned I had become my own God, so I now believe It was me I was angry with, not God. One of the many things I learned from my many inventory processes was a faith which would work in my daily living would remain out of my reach without making any attempt to continuously make a fearless moral inventory. Once I was relieved somewhat from my compulsion of drinking – my inability to communicate rose to the surface and became larger than life. My communication consisted of one-or two-words statement, (Yes, No, Maybe, Why and I Can’t. My first complete sentence was: *Hi, My name is Leona and I am an Alcoholic!”***

The 5th step says, **“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrong.” I took the position of “Action is the magic word.”**

**Integrity** is the short version of the 5th step. My fears of facing God, myself, and a half dozen human beings, as I shared my fifth step process over and over was a long and frightening process in the beginning, but it happened. Finally, being convinced within that I had completed step five, I prayed God help me to become willing to let go of all the things I still cling to, each time. And, I could see and feel the transformation in the person who had first walked through the doors of AA on that hot spring May day. I was ready to have God remove some of my defects of character. It took a half dozen 5th steps for me to be free of my will enough to function in peace. At last, “I took the position of my life had been without form and empty.”

Findley, I began to experience a readiness to tactical Step **6th**.

The short principal of Step 6. is **Willingness** “**Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” Asking God to help me become willing to change time and time again became my best pastime.**

**The short principle of Step 7** is the **Humility**. **I “Humbly ask God to help me become willing to have him remove my shortcoming, which were plentiful. Humility was born, and yet I did not know how to explain it. Humility had become my guide. I prayed “My Creator; I am now willing for you to have all of me good and not so good. I later learned that Humility is a rising in spirit.**

**The short Principal of Step 8 is** **Love** **“Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.”**  **I learned to stop drinking is only the beginning stage of recovery. As I used my list use from Step 4, I had become willing to make amends to them all. I was not on this journey alone.**

**9th step** **– Principle is Discipline “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. Between Steps 1 thru 9 and the 12 promises helped me strive to act -- in an amend making process. I learned that this amend making was a lifetime job.”**

**Step 10** Short Principle **Perseverance** “**Continued to take personal inventory and when were wrong promptly admitted it.” Simply put continuing to inventory my life keeps me from creating more bigger than life confusing (4th) Step journey again. I understood the words, I am weak, but thou are strong.”**

**Step 11 – Short Principle Spirituality “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the Power to carry that out. The eleventh step became an opportunity to have the knowledge of his will and the power to carry that out it was action and more action. I wanted what the first 100 men and woman who had recovered from this seemingly hopless state of mind and body.**

**Step 12 – Short principle 12 step is *SERVICE*, Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all affairs.” Some points of having a spiritual experience take on many different signs: working with others, developing new behaviors, wanting to change self-centered thoughts and ways, wanting to carry the message of wellness, and learning to enjoy the joy of living, learning and forgiving.**

**Thank you and may God Bless us all!**

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| 1 | Teachable |  |
| 2 | I now believe in the Power of prayer |  |
| 3 | I am now self-supporting |  |
| 4 | I am no longer a stranger of self-confident |  |
| 5 | Studying to show thy self |  |
| 6 | Learning the value of Listening |  |
| 7 | Became willing to work for what I desire |  |
| 8 | Became hopeful |  |
| 9 | Can separate foolish glory from genuine glory! |  |
| 10 | Spiritual chastisement battles |  |
| 11 | Learned to operate outside the box |  |
| 12 |  |  |