

The magic of saying yes

“AA is no success story in the ordinary sense of the word. It is a story of suffering transmuted, under grace, into spiritual progress.”

— Bill W.

Bill’s words ring true not only for each of us individually, but for our fellowship as a whole. The Traditions and Concepts we rely on today were shaped through the early struggles of AA—growing pains, missteps, and the hard lessons learned as the fellowship tried to find its footing. What emerged from that suffering were spiritual principles that continue to guide us. They are gifts, handed down so we don’t have to repeat the same mistakes.

Service often follows that same pattern. At times it can feel challenging or uncomfortable. Yet again and again, that effort is transformed—almost mysteriously—into grace, connection, and spiritual growth.

I witnessed this recently at the District 28 Corrections Workshop at the East Side Center in Batavia. The room was full—easily a hundred people. Corrections work in Warren and Clermont counties is strong, and when members are asked to cover jail meetings, they are saying yes. Listening to their stories was spiritually uplifting. I left filled with gratitude and found myself wondering how we might carry that same energy across all the counties in Area 56. I keep coming back to one word: participation. When you’re asked to serve, say yes. It will change your life.

This same spirit was alive at the Area 55 Mini-Conference this weekend. Watching the dedication of the members in Northwest Ohio as they prepared their delegate for the General Service Conference was inspiring. Their commitment reminded me that service is not just a responsibility—it’s a privilege.

Saying yes to service helps me move from self-centeredness toward usefulness. It frees me in ways I never expected. I see growth—sometimes slowly—in myself and in others. Maybe that’s what “faith without works” is really pointing us toward. Early in sobriety, the question I asked myself was, “What am I willing to do to stay sober.” As we grow in the program, that question deepens into: “What am I willing to do to help you get sober.” AA’s service structure gives us countless ways to answer that question with action.

My hope for you, the reader, is simple: when the opportunity arises—whether it comes from another member or from that quiet nudge in your heart—say yes.