

## PREPARING FOR THE NINTH CONCEPT OF SERVICE

(Read pp. 39-45 of the “Twelve Concepts for World Service”)

### **THE NINTH CONCEPT OF SERVICE:**

**We serve by being a personal spiritual example of good leadership. We seek advice. We accept criticism and disagreement. We compromise. We take tough stands. We exercise vision.**

Let us prepare for the study of the ninth concept of service by examining our leadership capabilities. Am I willing to be of service and express my gratitude for sobriety by offering leadership to A.A.?

1. Am I willing to seek the advice of others?
2. Am I willing to surrender personal ambitions, feuds, and controversies in order to serve others?
3. Am I willing to become accountable and criticized for my decisions?
4. Am I willing to have others take my inventory and learn from them?
5. Am I willing to develop attributes needed by a leader: tolerance, responsibility, flexibility and vision?

“UNITY INSURES RECOVERY THROUGH SERVICE”  
MEETING OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

**THE NINTH CONCEPT OF SERVICE**

**We serve by being a personal spiritual example of good leadership: We seek advice. We accept criticism and disagreement. We compromise. We take tough stands. We exercise vision<sup>1</sup>**

Homework: Writing Inventory on the Ninth Concept of Service  
By Dennis F.

I prepare to be a good leader in A.A. by working the steps, traditions, and the concepts of service in my life. There are five qualities of leadership that Bill highlights in our reading that I can write inventory on to see where I need to grow in my leadership abilities in A.A. at home and at work. I can prepare to better carry the message by asking myself the following questions:

Do I seek advice or do I try to solve all problems by myself? Can I accept criticism without being defensive? Can I approach differences with possible compromises or must solutions be done my way or not at all? Do I refuse to take tough stands when it means that my comfort or security will be threatened?

Bill gives us some interesting insights on how to treat these situations in our lives:

**CONCEPT 9**

**Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate method of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders of A.A., must necessarily be assumed by the trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.**

No matter how carefully we design our service structure of principles and relationships, no matter how well we apportion authority and responsibility, the operating results of our structure can be no better than the personal performance of those who must man it and make it work. Good leadership cannot function well in a poorly designed structure. Weak leadership can hardly function at all, even in the best of structures. But once we have created a basically sound structure, that job is finished, except for occasional refinements.

With *leadership* we shall have a continuous problem. Good leadership can be here today and gone tomorrow. Furnishing our service structure with able and willing workers has to be a continuous activity. It is therefore a problem that in its very

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<sup>1</sup> The wording of the “concepts” as given here is an interpretation by Dennis Fitzpatrick.

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nature cannot be permanently solved. We must continuously find the right people for our many service tasks.

Let us consider what specific personal qualities a world service leader ought to have. For whatever use it may be to future generations of our trusted servants, I here offer a discussion on this subject published in the April 1959 issue of the A.A. Grapevine.

Somewhere in our literature, there is a statement to this effect: “our leaders do not drive by mandate, they lead by example.” In effect, we are saying to them, “Act for us, but don’t boss us.”

A leader in A.A. service is therefore a man (or a women) who can personally put principles, plans, and policies into such dedicated and effective action that the rest of us want to back him up and help him with his job. When a leader power-drives us badly, we rebel; but when he too meekly becomes an order-taker, and he exercises no judgment of his own – well, he really isn’t a leader at all.

Good leadership originates plans, policies, and ideas for the improvement of our Fellowship and its services. But in new and important matters, it will nevertheless consult widely before taking decisions and actions. Good leadership will also remember that a fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and will give credit to the source.

A politico is an individual who is forever trying to “get the people what they want.” A statesman is an individual who can carefully discriminate when and *when not* to do this. He recognizes that even large majorities, when badly disturbed or uninformed can, once in a while, be dead wrong. When such an occasional situation arises, and something very vital is at stake, it is always the duty of leadership, even when in a small minority, to take a stand against the storm, using its every ability of authority and persuasion to effect a change.

Another qualification for leadership is give-and-take, the ability to compromise cheerfully whenever a proper compromise can cause a situation to progress in what appears to be the right direction. Compromise comes hard to us all-or-nothing drunks. Nevertheless, we must never lose sight of the fact that progress is nearly always characterized by a *series of improving compromises*. We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then, it is truly necessary to stick flat-footed to one’s conviction about an issue until it is settled. These are situations for keen timing and careful discrimination as to which course to take.

Leadership is often called upon to face heavy and sometimes long-continued criticism. This is an acid test. There are always the constructive critics, our friends indeed. We ought never fail to give them a careful hearing. We should be willing to let them modify our opinions or change them completely. Often, too, we shall have to disagree and then stand fast without losing their friendship.

Then there are those whom we like to call our “destructive” critics. They power-drive, they are politickers, and they make accusations. Maybe they are violent, malicious. They pitch gobs of rumors, gossip, and general scuttlebutt to gain their ends – all for the good of A.A., of course! But in A.A., we have at last learned that these folks, who may be a trifle sicker than the rest of us, need not be really destructive at all, depending very much on how we relate ourselves to them.

To begin with, we ought to listen carefully to what they say. Sometimes, they are telling the whole truth, at other times, a little truth. More often, though, they are just

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rationalizing themselves into nonsense. If we are within range, the whole truth, the half-truth, or no truth at all can prove equally unpleasant to us. That is why we have to listen so carefully. If they have got the whole truth, or even a little truth, then we had better thank them and get on with our respective inventories, admitting we were wrong. It is nonsense, and we can ignore it. Or we can lay all the cards on the table and try to persuade them. Failing this, we can be sorry they are too sick to listen, and we can try to forget the whole business. There are few better means of self-survey and of developing genuine patience than the workouts these usually well meaning but erratic brother members afford us. This is always a large order, and we shall sometimes fail to make good on it ourselves. But we must keep trying.

How do I handle the question of vision? Do I plan for the immediate and distant future, or do I put off making a budget, for example, with the excuse that this is not living a day at a time?

In our reading today, Bill Wilson will point out that living a day at a time “means chiefly that we are not foolishly to repine over the past nor wishfully to daydream about the future.” (“Twelve Concepts for World Service”, p.43)

We need to estimate the future by making good estimates. I put it this way: I plan for the future but execute that plan a day at a time.

Now we come to the all-important attribute of *vision*. Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this sort of striving to be a sort of heresy, because we A.A.'s are constantly telling ourselves, “One day at a time.” But that valuable principle really refers to our mental and emotional lives and means chiefly that we are not foolishly to repine over the past nor wishfully to daydream about the future.

As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. God's real Providence has endowed us human beings with a considerable capability for foresight, and He evidently expects us to use it. Therefore, we must distinguish between wishful fantasy about a happy tomorrow and the present use of our powers of thoughtful estimate. This can spell the difference between future progress and unforeseen woe.

Vision is therefore the very essence of prudence; an essential virtue if ever there was one. Of course, we shall often miscalculate the future in whole or in part, but that is better than to refuse to think at all.

We have found that we must use principles of estimate constantly, especially at world service levels where the stakes are high. In public relations, for example, we must estimate the reaction both of A.A. groups and of the general public, both short-term and long-term. The same thing goes for our literature. Our finances have to be estimated and budgeted. We must think about our service needs as they relate to general economic conditions, group capability, and willingness to contribute. On many such problems, often, we must try to think months and years ahead.

Such is our process of estimating the future, and responsible world leadership must be proficient in this vital activity. It is an essential ability, especially in our trustees. Most of the, in my view, should be chosen on the basis that they have already demonstrated an aptness for foresight in their own business or professional careers.

We shall be in continual need of these same attributes -- tolerance, responsibility, flexibility, and vision – among our leaders of A.A. services at all levels. The principles of leadership will be the same whatever the size of the operation.

As I grow in these five areas in my ability to give better service by becoming a better leader, I become more useful as a sponsor, husband, and worker. I also seek to serve by helping you be a good leader by volunteering any service I can give you.

I am grateful for the leadership qualities in my own sponsors who led me into sobriety.

I like Dr. Sam Shoemaker's comment on sponsorship from "A.A. Comes of Age", (p.264): "We first lean on another human being who seems to be finding the answer and then we lean on the Higher Power that stands behind him."

I first practice leadership in A.A. by being a sponsor. Nowhere does Bill write more movingly about the challenge of being a sponsor than in the close of this chapter:

While this article was first thought of in connection with our world service leadership, it is possible that some of its suggestions can be useful to anyone who takes an active part in our Society.

This is true, particularly in the area of Twelfth Step work, in which nearly all of us are actively engaged. Every sponsor is necessarily a leader. The stakes are about as big as they could be. A human life and usually the happiness of a whole family hang in the balance. What the sponsor does and says, how well he estimates the reactions of his prospects, how well he times and makes his presentation, how well he handles criticisms, and how well he leads his prospect on by personal spiritual example – these qualities of leadership can make all the difference, often the difference between life and death.

We thank God that Alcoholics Anonymous is blessed with so much leadership in all of its affairs.<sup>2</sup>

*End of Reading*

## COMMENTARY

The journey through the first nine steps brought me into a place of peace in facing today because I had confronted my past through inventory (steps four and five), personality change (steps six and seven), and amends (steps eight and nine). For the first time in my life, I was totally free to dedicate my energy to today. I no longer belonged spiritually to the past. Physically, I was no longer exhausted much of the time.

The first nine traditions similarly delivered me from the bondage of poor relationships with others to a state of divine order with God and humanity. Just as oneness with my past resulted after my last ninth step amend, oneness with Divine Order resulted when I stopped

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<sup>2</sup> Copyright by The AA Grapevine, Inc.

trying to organize life to suit me and accepted God's order in the ninth tradition. The poor state of my relationships with other people had gotten into Divine Order. I was now united with other people in love; and that is the gift of practicing the principles of the traditions in all my relationships. The last three traditions are like the last three steps, they are maintenance traditions to be practiced daily. To maintain good relationships, I became a peacemaker, I stay out of your inventory and only take my own (tenth tradition); I have good relationships when I live a life of attraction (eleventh tradition); and by having a spirit of sacrifice, I have loving relationships by placing principles before personalities (twelfth tradition).

No less dramatic are the changes in my attitudes of selfishness in serving others to a spirit of selflessness in completing the first nine concepts of service. By giving service, I learned how to express my growing love of everyone I encountered. Let us recap our growth in the first nine concepts of service.

Concept one taught me that I couldn't love you unless I became dedicated to serving you. My personal welfare depended on giving service. The second concept taught me that I had to develop discipline in my life in order to give service. The third concept taught me that with the "Right of Decision", I had free will. I was not a robot. I had the right to pray. I could make mistakes and so could you. Concept four taught me that I have a "Right to Participate" in a sober life fearlessly. I have a right to be a "trusted servant" and so do you. Concept five showed me that I could serve by having the courage to take a minority stand when led to do so. We are no longer doormats. When I am in the majority, I am to respect your minority rights. Concept six taught me the proper division of responsibility in carrying the message: I have the active responsibility while God has the ultimate responsibility. I no longer need to worry about the outcome of any situation. Concept seven taught me the importance of being responsive to the group conscience in giving my service. Concept eight taught me that I could not serve unless I was willing to be responsible and volunteer. Increased responsibilities were the key to continued growth.

Now we come to the ninth change that must take place in me before I am thrust into the present to give service a day at a time. I must become a selfless leader. When I am living the first nine concepts in the service I give, I am then ready to practice concepts ten, eleven and twelve on a daily basis. I inventory the use or abuse of my talents in giving service (tenth concept); I give quality and dedication to the service I give (eleventh concept); and I observe the six warranties in my life in order to have the freedom to give selfless service (twelfth concept).

What are the changes that need to take place in my life in the ninth concept in order to serve as a good leader?

I need to surrender some old ideas about leadership. As a leader, I serve. I'm not leading in order to be served. I need to be willing to put aside any personal ambitions, feuds, and controversies that prevent me from offering leadership to the group. I need to become a spiritual example.

I need to stop fighting with God, with A.A., at home and at work. I surrender my grandiose dreams of financial success for a dream of offering leadership by becoming an example of loving service.

We exercise leadership to its ultimate in A.A. by becoming a sponsor. Bill Wilson stresses the importance of sponsorship in A.A. in these words: “The stakes are about as big as they could be. A human life and usually the happiness of a whole family hang in the balance. What the sponsor does and says, how well he estimates the reactions of his prospects, how well he times and makes his presentation, how well he handles criticisms, and how well he leads his prospect on by personal spiritual example – these qualities of leadership can make all the difference, often the difference between life and death.” (“The A.A. Grapevine”, April 1959, quoted in “Twelve Concepts for World Service”, p.45.)

In the above article, Bill details five areas that constitute good leadership: we seek advice, we accept criticism and disagreement, we compromise, we take tough stands, and we exercise vision. It seems to me that he has centered on certain attributes that are qualities difficult for many alcoholics, especially this one, to achieve. But to give good leadership, I must be an example in each of these areas.

1) SEEKING ADVICE: When I drank, I never sought advice because I was right and you were wrong. So what need was there to get advice? That is the way that I thought most all of my life. I saw getting advice as a sign of weakness. I did not understand that the advice one gets from the group conscience multiplies in its wisdom. When I decide something, it is not as sure as when two of us decide it. When four of us decide something, it is four times as powerful as when one of us decides it. The power of the group conscience will eventually get us onto the right track.

My attitude towards getting advice has undergone a 180-degree change. I will now seek to confirm major decisions by testing the waters by asking for the opinions of others. I will now delay taking action for twenty-four hours when I am absolutely certain about a decision, so that I can get some feedback from trusted servant friends. When I must make a decision now, the first thing I do is to pray to God for his advice.

2) ACCEPTING CRITICISM AND DISAGREEMENT: This is the most difficult area of leadership for me and Bill certainly writes about it in a very perceptive manner. “It might seem that constructive criticism is easier to handle than destructive criticism. But what about those times when we have to disagree with our friends and then stand fast without losing their friendship?” (Twelve Concepts for World Service, p. 43) What about accepting constructive criticism in a marriage?

The challenge of accepting constructive criticism for me is to give up my old habits of not silently pouting while I am being criticized and then nod my head in agreement while I think of ways to retaliate. Instead, I want to welcome criticism. I especially pray to God to correct me so I can serve him better. I pray for the ability to welcome criticism and accept it in a loving manner for the sake of giving improved service.

I can tell if I am growing in maturity or not by how I respond to destructive criticism. Unasked for advice and inventory taking are easy to give but tough to take.

When faced with destructive criticism, I must pray for a listening ear and an understanding heart to hear true principles behind a person's words or I will not stay at peace. (I use this same prayer when I feel bored with another's conversation.) Without prayer, I hear nothing and only react. Maturity for me in leadership comes from a willingness to listen without comment to somebody who, as Bill phrases it, "may be a trifle sicker than the rest of us." (Twelve Concepts for World Service, p.43)

Bill goes on to explain:

"If they have got the whole truth, or even a little truth, then we had better thank them and get on with our respective inventories, admitting we were wrong. If it is nonsense, we can ignore it. Or we can lay all the cards on the table and try to persuade them. Failing this, we can be sorry they are too sick to listen, and we can try to forget the whole business. There are few better means of self-survey and of developing genuine patience than the workouts these usually well meaning but erratic brother members afford us. This is always a large order, and we shall sometimes fail to make good on it ourselves. But we must keep trying."<sup>3</sup>

The longer I'm sober, the more I want to listen because I now know that no person can see his own shadow. The only way I can learn something about me is if I listen to you. I did not understand that as a principle of growth for some time.

The thought that occurs to me from the above quotation is the devastating question I can put to myself when I am receiving destructive criticism: am I too sick to listen? There is a lot of food for thought in that idea: am I too sick to listen to somebody who is sicker than I am? I have to realize that when I think I am being unfairly criticized that the person criticizing me is doing the best he or she knows to do at the present time.

There is almost always some grain of truth somewhere in criticism if I will take the trouble to find it. The more defensive and uncomfortable I become when I am criticized, the surer I can become that there is more than a grain of truth present in the criticism. I usually protect before I change. If I am really uncomfortable, there might be a bushel of truth present. When I take criticism personally, I lack the objectivity to find the truth in the critique that could be my source of growth. When I don't take criticism or disagreement personally, my buttons can't be pushed anymore.

I need help to see myself objectively` for I am my toughest critic. This is where a sponsor and other trusted voices of the group conscience could give me balance in my self-appraisals.

I now have the tools, though, to cope with constructive or destructive criticism and disagreements. I pray for a listening ear and understanding heart while I am being criticized and when I am alone I write inventory to see if there is truth present in the criticism. I don't respond in kind. I can disagree without being disagreeable. I can love others no matter what.

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<sup>3</sup> Twelve Concepts for World Service, p. 43

Instead, my response to someone criticizing me or disagreeing with me is that I will pray about the matter.

I need to realize that as a leader, I am accountable to God, to the group, to my soul mate, and at work. Criticism usually contains some seeds that can help me to grow. If I grow, I stay sober.

3) COMPROMISING: What an odious word “compromise” is to an alcoholic. “Isn’t everything black or white, right or wrong?”

Bill Wilson states the case for compromising in the “Twelve Concepts for World Service” on p. 42: “Compromise comes hard to us ‘all-or-nothing’ drunks.” We need to develop “the ability to compromise cheerfully . . . progress is nearly always characterized by a series of improving compromises.”

Could it be that the general population does not have the trouble compromising than an alcoholic has? These requirements for leadership certainly seem especially appropriate for an alcoholic.

I always regarded compromising my desires with throwing the towel in. I was not flexible enough to incorporate your view of justice with my view. I only thought that my view was correct. I certainly never compromised cheerfully or viewed a series of compromises as improvements.

The only time I ever made a series of compromises was when I was driven to it by circumstances. I now know that if I don’t pray for correct decisions, I am likely to be pig headed and to be forced to surrender to a compromise.

I also now see that there is more than one point of view of the truth. The more I surrender my self-will-turn-riot views, the more I am able to see the truth in your point of view. This leads me to a wider perception of the truth as I become more open to the group conscience.

The one area, of course, that I do not compromise is God’s will for me. I don’t take the first drink no matter what. In areas not as clear as this, I consult the group conscience. It is in the area of self-will-run-riot that many compromises will be necessary to put me back into balance with the group conscience.

The question here is, can I compromise with a loving attitude rather than with forced resignation? Can I welcome compromise as a way of accommodating your point of view, which I respect and don’t belittle because it differs from my view?

4) TAKING TOUGH STANDS: bill says that we need to take stands against the storm when required. “We cannot, however, compromise always. Now and then it is truly necessary to stick flat-footed to one’s conviction about an issue until it is settled. These re situations for keen timing and careful discrimination as to which course to take.” (Twelve Concept for World Service. p. 42)

I am more comfortable with this requirement for offering good leadership. I like being the hero by taking the tough stand. But I think Bill has something different in mind here. I think he might be suggesting what I take tough stands with love not hostility.

When I drank, I liked to think that I could take on the whole world because you were all crazy. But taking a tough stand with love while trying to maintain a friendship with you at the same time that I am strongly disagreeing with you is demanding.

The question might be asked, “Well, how do you know when to seek advice, when to compromise, or when to take a tough stand?”

In my opinion good leadership knows when to seek advice, compromise or take tough stands through the spiritual awakening provided by the steps, traditions, and concepts. By improving my conscious contact with my Maker, I am led to the world of spiritually informed but intuitive decision making.

Through an active prayer life, I am led to right decisions. Without an active prayer life, I am unsure of God’s will for me. Of all the thirty-six steps, tradition and concepts there is only one that says we improve. The eleventh step says that we improve our conscious contact with our Maker. If I have difficulty making decisions, I go back to the big book and reread the bottom paragraph on page 86 and the top paragraph on page 87. It talks about how to improve my conscious contact so the eleventh step.

5) VISION: Bill says that “we shall be in continual need of these . . . attributes, tolerance, responsibility, flexibility and vision – among our leaders of A.A. services at all levels.” (Twelve Concepts for World Service, p. 44)

Vision might be one of the most important attributes of a good leader, but how can we have vision and live a day at a time. Bill answers this by saying:

“Vision is, I think, the ability to make good estimates, both for the immediate and for the more distant future. Some might feel this sort of striving to be a sort of heresy, because we A.A.’s are constantly telling ourselves, ‘One day at a time’. But that valuable principle really refers to our mental and emotional lives, and means chiefly that we are not foolishly to repine over the past nor wishfully to daydream about the future.

As individuals and as a fellowship, we shall surely suffer if we cast the whole job of planning for tomorrow onto a fatuous idea of Providence. God’s real Providence has endowed us human beings with a considerable capability for foresight, and He evidently expects us to use it. Therefore, we must distinguish between wishful fantasy about a happy tomorrow and the present use of our powers of thoughtful estimate. This can spell the difference between future progress and unforeseen woe.”<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup>Twelve Concepts for World Service, p. 43

Bill points out that living a day at a time means that I don't look upon the past through guilty eyes or upon the future with fearful projections. Rather the past is experience, the future is hope, and I am then free to face today with strength.

I look upon vision this way: I plan for the future, but I execute these plans a day at a time. Of course my long-range plan is subject to change as God directs me. Nevertheless, I must have long-range goals and plans to make future progress as Bill points out at the end of the above quotation.

I need a vision of God as a loving God. I need a vision of you as the loving voice of the group conscience. I need a vision of myself as a trusted servant leading by example.

On a twelve-step call, I have a vision of the sober life in the sick and suffering newcomer could have!

I appreciate the vision of Bill Wilson in providing the concepts of service to keep A.A. growing. A.A. is now forty-seven years old. The emphasis in A.A. these past forty-seven years has been primarily on recovery. But sobriety need not be limited to recovery. I have a vision of myself and other A.A. members growing in happiness through practicing the principles of the twelve traditions and the twelve concepts of service at home, at work, and in all our affairs, as well as in A.A. Getting and staying sober comes first. But getting and maintaining loving relationships with each other through unity and service helps us to want to stay sober. The motto that best expresses my vision of A.A. is this: Unity insures recovery through service.

The ninth concept of service prepares me for leadership through the parallel tradition and step: having made all my amends, I am now in divine order and am now capable of being a spiritual example of good leadership.

My ninth concept prayer is this: Father, may I be an example of good leadership by seeking your advice, welcoming your corrections, taking tough stands and compromising as you direct me and exercising your vision! May I do all these things with a spirit of love!

As we stop for our three-minute meditation period, let us examine where we stand in relationship to the five qualities of leadership just discussed and see where we can grow. Do I accept advice with love? Do I seek advice at all? Do I pray for a listening ear and an understanding heart when I receive constructive or destructive criticism? Am I too sick to listen to someone a trifle sicker than I? Do I welcome God's corrections with love? Do I compromise with love? Do I take stands against the storm in a loving manner? Do I follow the visions and dreams he gives me? Am I willing to follow God's leadership in my life? Do I willingly go to all the places he leads me?

I know that my working a program based on the twelve steps, traditions, and concepts of service that I will be prepared to be a good leader. Am I working on the steps, tradition, or concept that I am on so I can offer A.A. good leadership?

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In my meditation I am going to thank God for entrusting me with the leadership roles he has given me in sobriety. I particularly am grateful for the opportunity to serve as a sponsor. May I draw closer to God as I try to be responsible with the gift of my sobriety in serving the sick and suffering alcoholic. I like Dr. Sam Shoemaker's comment on sponsorship from "A.A. Comes of Age" (p. 264): "We first lean on another human being who seems to be finding the answer and then we lean on the Higher Power that stands behind him."

Father, I offer myself to you to use in any way you wish to carry the message. May I lead by humble example.

(Pause for three minutes of meditation.)

Working a concept means to me that I am willing to write inventory and allow it to surrender something within me.

Let us write inventory on any leadership deficiencies in our relationship with God and A.A., in our intimate relationships, and at work.

**HOMEWORK: WRITING INVENTORY – PART ONE**  
**(My Leadership)**

1. **GOD AND A.A.:** Do I seek advice in my prayers? Do I accept criticism in A.A. with an open mind? Do I examine criticism in prayer to see if it has even a shred of validity?

Inventory Example – (Try to condense to three sentences.)

- a) The Story: When I am criticized, I overreact.
  - b) What did I do wrong? I don't pray immediately for restraint.
  - c) What would God have me do instead next time? Delay twenty-four hours before I react and examine the criticism in prayer and with the group conscience.
2. **HOME:** What is my attitude concerning criticism at home? Am I defensive and argumentative? Do I promptly admit it when I am wrong, especially when I receive criticism in a destructive manner?

Inventory Example – (Try to condense to three sentences.)

- a) The Story: When I am criticized and I know I am wrong, I do not like to give the other person the satisfaction of knowing that they are right in their criticism.
  - b) What did I do wrong? Instead of promptly admitting that I am wrong, I take their inventory.
  - c) What would God have me do instead next time? Pray for the courage to admit my mistake and say nothing more.
3. **WORK AND OTHER TALENTS (arts, sports, etc.):** How do I accept corrections from others at work? Do I ask for criticism so that I can remove flaws from my ideas? Do I have the reputation at work for having an open mind or are others shy about making constructive suggestions to me?

Inventory Example – (Try to condense to three sentences.)

- a) The Story: I rarely ask for a critique of my solutions to work problems.
- b) What did I do wrong? Pride keeps me from examining solutions that differ from mine.
- c) What would God have me do instead next time? Pray for an open mind that I will be led to the best solution, whether I thought of it or not.

## HOMWORK: WRITING INVENTORY – PART TWO (Helping You)

4. GOD AND A.A.: Do I pass on my skills as a sponsor, secretary, or speaker when I see that others can use them? Do I volunteer to help others provide leadership? For example, do I volunteer to help at central office?

Inventory Example – (Try to condense to three sentences.)

- a) The Story: I get more concerned with my leadership responsibilities than with helping develop other leaders.
  - b) What did I do wrong? I become an “in charge” leader instead of a “servant” leader.
  - b) What would God have me do instead next time? Pray for an attitude of helpfulness to others rather than being overly concerned about myself.
5. HOME: Do I help my mate with his or her leadership responsibilities? If my wife needs help, do I provide it for jobs she usually does such as taking care of our son, shopping, or picking up around the house?

Inventory Example – (Try to condense to three sentences.)

- a) The Story: I don't take enough time to help with my wife's leadership role when she could use the help.
  - b) What did I do wrong? I think of the demands that already exist on my time.
  - c) What would God have me do instead next time? Pray to follow God's time schedule; He always provides time for me to be of service.
6. WORK AND OTHER TALENTS (ARTS, SPORTS, ETC.): Do I pass on my leadership skills to others at work? Do I train others to be good managers, or am I a poor example of leadership at work?

Inventory Example – (Try to condense to three sentences.)

- a) The Story: I don't take the trouble to teach others to lead unless I must.
- b) What did I do wrong? I think of my own job, not what I can contribute to fellow workers.
- c) What would God have me do instead next time? Pray to be unselfish and pass on my skills to any who want them