

# First Things First

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The Monthly Newsletter of The Rock Solid Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

## Humility vs. Being Humble

Special points of interest:

- What's New with The Rock solid Group
- Concept Seven
- Website News and Info You can Use
- Upcoming Events
- Seventh Tradition Illustrated

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"Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."

A favorite word of mine early in recovery is humility. At times people can confuse humility with being humble. To me, being humble is a goal we all strive for, but never truly achieve. Being humble is not worrying about our status or title in this life. Being humble makes us no better, nor worse, than anyone else. In my opinion, and that's all it is, my opinion, being humble is being God-like. We can strive for it but we will never achieve it.

Humility on the other hand is achievable and should be desirable. Humility is not being humble, but rather wanting to learn. To be teachable. To realize that we don't know everything and anybody can teach us something. To have a sense of humility is not thinking less of ourselves, but rather thinking of ourselves less. Humility makes us part of the Universe – not the center of it.

Having humility is what got me through the seventh step. I was ready to learn – teach me. I was able to recognize my character defects and how they made me the center of your world. Having humility did give me a sense of being humbled. But it wasn't a "healthy" sense of being humble. It was more of shame.

A sense of shame about the way I treated others and myself. This sense of shame came about because of humility. For the first time I was able to put myself in someone else's shoes. By doing that I was able to understand their anger with me. I was thinking less of myself and I was learning – humility was entering my life.

I was becoming a human being. But... how can I describe it without sounding arrogant or pompous? I was becoming a spiritual being. Through humility I began to put myself in others shoes. And I was shown and continue to be shown that no matter how hard I've had it there is always someone who has had it worse.

Think about some of the worst things that can happen to you in this life – what is the "ultimate" worst? Everything you lost due to addictions – family, jobs, friends – can be bad – but is it the worst? To me, the worst would have to be losing a child. No parent should have to live through that, but sadly it happens way too much.

I have met three sets of parents in my life who have lost their children to untimely deaths. A son who was 25, a daughter who was 18, and another son who was 14. Nothing that has happened to



"For the first time in my life I was able to put myself in someone else's shoes."

me can be compare to their pain. And every time I think I can't handle no more, I look at these people and see how they have made best of an unimaginable situation. It is through their pain that their spiritual presence has rubbed off on others.

It is through their pain that they have inspired every one around them. Not for nothing special they have done, but rather for the strength they have shown. It is through their strength that I realize my life really isn't that bad. Humility...

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## Concept Seven

This Concept attempts to clarify the relationship and "balance of powers" between the Conference and the General Service Board. "This... may look like the collision of an irresistible force with an immovable object." On the one hand, "the board is invested with complete legal power over A.A.'s funds and services; on the other hand the Conference is clothed with such great influence and financial power it could overcome the legal rights of the board. "Thus, the practical power of the Conference is, in the final analysis, superior to the legal power of the board. This superior power derives from the traditional influence of the conference charter itself.; from the fact that the delegates chosen by the groups always constitute more than two-thirds of the Conference members"; and finally from the ability of the delegates to cut off financial support by the groups. "Theoretically, the Conference is an advisory body only; but practically speaking, it has all the ulti-

mate power it may ever need."

The Conference "recommends"—though its recommendations have the force of directives to the board. The board executes these recommendations. The board does have the legal authority to veto a Conference recommendation—but in actual practice, it never has done so. As Bill tactfully puts it, the trustees "simply refrain from using their legal right to say 'no' when it would be much wiser, all things considered, to say 'yes.'

"If... the Conference will always bear in mind actual rights, duties, responsibilities and legal status of the General Service Board; and if the trustees... will constantly realize that the Conference is the real seat of ultimate service authority., neither will be seriously tempted to make a 'rubber stamp' out of the other. In this way, grave issues will always be resolved and harmonious cooperation will be the general rule."



### June Statistics

- Starting Balance
- Income
- Expenses
- Ending Balance
- Newcomers
- Releases
- Avg Meeting Attendance
- Unique Website Visitors

"Stick with the winners, and win with the stickers."

"Alcohol gave me wings to fly, then it took away the sky. (Big Book)"

"Humility is like underwear. It's necessary, but it's indecent if it shows."

F	I	R	E	C	R	A	C	K	E	R	S	G	W	L	AMERICA
E	A	G	P	E	I	G	C	B	T	P	T	N	S	O	BASEBALL
X	J	M	Z	E	Y	O	A	G	X	A	R	I	L	F	BIRTHDAY
C	P	K	E	D	R	S	B	H	X	T	E	M	P	E	BURGER
U	U	R	B	R	E	S	N	V	M	R	N	M	V	C	COOKOUT
Z	W	A	I	B	I	K	P	A	A	I	G	I	R	C	DEFECT
N	B	C	A	D	K	C	V	E	O	O	T	W	M	W	FIRCRACKER
Z	U	L	E	D	E	N	A	H	C	T	H	S	J	Y	FREEDOM
T	L	S	S	E	L	F	L	E	S	T	S	I	A	T	HOTDOG
G	U	N	B	K	G	I	F	R	Y	C	I	D	I	M	LIBERTY
O	U	O	X	H	B	W	E	B	E	M	H	V	S	T	PATRIOT
D	V	R	K	E	V	G	J	B	X	T	M	K	E	H	PERSPEC-
T	L	J	R	O	R	T	O	U	R	B	S	X	J	R	TIVE
O	X	T	F	U	O	C	W	I	D	E	F	E	C	T	PRIDE
H	Y	R	B	F	I	C	B	F	R	E	E	D	O	M	SELFLESS
															SWIMMING



JULY  
"Fireworks"

Can you find the hidden words from the list?

### Trivia Question

Answer on page six

Can you think of the only word in the English language that has nine letters, but only one vowel? It is a common word in everyday usage, and it is used in reference to noble and powerful attributes.

(The answer is an UNLISTED word in the word search puzzle.)

# The Seventh Tradition

"Every A.A. group ought to be fully self supporting, declining outside contributions."

We do have to be practical. A group can hardly hold its regular meetings on a street corner, and an empty basket won't fill a coffee urn. As soon as we become active in a group, we learn how many expenses are involved in making its meetings effective. Then our horizons broaden. What about that intergroup or central office so many of us called to ask for help? Phone companies don't give free service. Beyond our own locality, we learn about the A.A. General Service Office and the work it does for groups everywhere. A.A. activity is self supporting at all levels, and in every case the responsibility comes right back to us, the individual members, for we are A.A. Perhaps, especially when we are very new, our contributions clink, rather than rustle. The first members were in the same fix, and it seemed to them that A.A. would need more outside help than the modest gifts then

coming in. Their plans required grand-scale philanthropy. (Tradition Six hadn't evolved yet; Bill W. recalled a scheme for "a chain of hospitals.") But John D. Rockefeller Jr., an early friend, said, "I am afraid that money will spoil this thing." A few A.A.'s had already reached the same conclusion; gradually, this minority became a majority as experience showed that members themselves could provide enough to finance A.A.'s proper aim. In its simplest application. Tradition Seven is easily understood; when we hear about a new A.A. group being started with funds from a Federal antipoverty program, our quick reaction is "Somebody goofed!" But then we come to "borderline" cases: Groups put on a raffle for the benefit of their central office and invite the public to buy tickets; a hometown paper runs an ad for an A.A. dance and show. Both projects would be routine for any

other society. For us, both mean that we've got the hand out again, asking non-members for money. Often, of course, we don't have to ask. A.A. is now high on the worthy-cause list; G.S.O. and groups politely turn down many unsolicited gifts and bequests. In Tradition Seven, there's a note of realism: Handsome gifts may have strings attached. We even put a limit of \$2,000 on the amount members may leave to A.A. in their wills or contribute annually while living, so that none of us can buy influence in A.A., no matter how rich we are. Money may pose a different problem if a group treasury grows too fat, beyond a prudent reserve. Squabbling over uses for the spare cash, groups have lost their unity and strayed from their purpose. But there's one simple solution that strengthens our unity and advances our purpose: Give the excess to A.A. activities

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## July 2007

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
1	Big Book 8:00	2	12 & 12 8:00 Step Seven	3  4	5	6	7	
8	Big Book 8:00	9	12 & 12 8:00 Step Eight Book Drawing	10 Speaker 8:00 TBA	11	12	13	9
LAI Steering Committee 2:00	14 Big Book 8:00	15	12 & 12 8:00 Step Nine	16 Speaker 8:00 TBA	17	18	19	16
20	Big Book 8:00	21	12 & 12 8:00 Tradition Seven	22 Speaker 8:00 TBA	23	24	25	23
26	Big Book 8:00	27	Chairman's Choice 8:00	28 Speaker 8:00 TBA Financial Report	29	30	31	



## The Rock Solid Group

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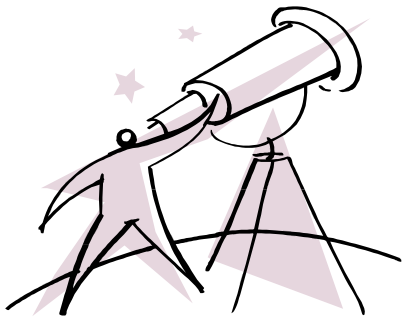


We are The Rock Solid Group of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are what is referred to as an 'inside' group -- that is, we function from within a correctional facility-a 'halfway house', if you will. Residents are typically in house for one to six months. Our meetings are open to all current residents of the transition center. Former residents and guests may attend by special permission from the staff. Because the general public is not free to attend our meetings, and because current residents are not free to attend outside AA meetings at will, an inherent limitation exists for most group members to experience everything that Alcoholics Anonymous has to offer. Since its inception in April 2006, our group's focus has been to bring the 'look and feel' of outside meetings to residents.

For many of us, The Rock Solid Group is our first exposure to AA. We know our group is unique; we know it is special. We are continually looking for lead speakers on Wednesday nights. If you have a story to share and are in the area, please contact us. Thanks for reading about us, and please learn more at our website, [www.aarocksolid.org](http://www.aarocksolid.org).

Trivia Answer: The only word in the English language with nine letters but only one vowel is 'strengths'. Did you find it in the puzzle?

### A Parting Shot...



"The Most Beautiful Word in The English Language"

Several years ago, I read that "windowsill" was voted the most beautiful word in the English language. Being an armchair linguist, this factoid stayed with me. Words have enormous power. They can make us erupt into laughter or bring tears to our eyes. They can influence, inspire, manipulate and shock. They can build and destroy. Some words have different effects on different people. One such word is humility. It is one of

those words that are seldom in neutral gear. Some, like me, love the word and all it stands for. Some almost fear it and interpret it synonymously with lack of self-confidence or timidity.

We often confuse humility with timidity. Humility is not clothing ourselves in an attitude of self-abasement or self-denigration. Humility is all about maintaining our pride about who we are, about our achievements, about our worth – but without arrogance. It's about being content to let others discover the layers of our talents without having to boast about them. It's a lack of arrogance, not a lack of aggressiveness in the pursuit of achievement.

Those who achieve the most brag the least, and the more secure they are in themselves, the more humble they are. True merit is like a river. The deeper it is, the less noise it makes.

Something interesting happens when we approach situations from a perspective of humility: it opens us up to possibilities, as we choose open-mindedness and curiosity over protecting our point of view. We forget about being perfect and we enjoy being in the moment.

There are many benefits to practicing humility, to being in a state of non-pretence: it improves relationships across all levels, it reduces anxiety, it encourages more openness and paradoxically, it enhances one's self-confidence. It opens a window to a higher self. For me, it replaces "windowsill" as the most beautiful word in the English language.

Unless you've already made other plans, have a great day!

-Todd S.