

WORLD SERVICE MEETING

“THE AA HOME GROUP:

THE SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION OF OUR RECOVERY,
SPIRITUAL GROWTH IN THE COMFORT OF MY HOME GROUP”.

The AA Home Group, where everything begins.

A new family awaits and when we are ready to open the door, a new life begins. Needless to say, the first approach can be difficult, but the sincere affection we receive the first time we walk into a group is convincing enough to make us “keep coming back...”

I remember the words I heard Mary say last year at the European Service Meeting: “A.A.’s simple suggestions, the Twelve Steps. Simple? Yes, but not easy.” This phrase just kept running through my mind for such a long time, I was not aware of how deeply this program can work for us, when we permit it.

The home group has a special place in my heart because it’s where I found my new identity; it’s where I found enough courage to open the door of my heart and began to discover where my character needed to be corrected and improved.

Let’s start from the beginning; the absolute certainty I felt that nobody could help me if I hadn’t been able to stop drinking on my own - what could the group do for me that I hadn’t been able to do for myself?

It was impossible to understand how much I needed to learn how to listen, how to share and how to let people speak with me. It took quite a while to understand what was written in the Twelve Steps for Recovery, but I was told to take my time. Action is the magic word, but do things slowly and surely. I had never before lived my life with this philosophy. My first reaction? Wow, these people know more about me than I know about myself...Strange to say, I felt at home among newfound friends who were ready and willing to give me their help, to tell me that they had suffered, too, before realizing that only our Higher Power could have worked the miracle to bring us together to share the experience of life.

One of the first impressions that ran through my soul was that I was no longer alone; these people had lived the same loneliness and desperation that I had.

The Spiritual Foundation of our Recovery is in the home group because there we are encouraged to start discovering ourselves, accepting ourselves and admitting our difficulty with communication. I was astonished when I started noticing that every time I had a doubt, there was somebody in the home group ready to suggest an answer and teach me how to battle against alcohol and learn to correct my character. How little I knew, how much I needed to learn...

I like to define the journey in AA as the metamorphosis of my soul; physically I had recovered quickly and the many suggestions given in the first period were helpful for my

mind but I hadn't yet fully understood that I was spiritually ill. In order to heal my soul and discover the spiritual side of life, I needed to look inside myself and start being sincere—even if I didn't like what I saw.

The people in my home group were my comfort as much as my teachers. Patiently, they kept giving me the suggestions necessary to work on the invisible parts of my illness. There was an urgent need to fight my anger, my egotism, my resentment, my self-centredness but the fear of doing so would have made it impossible without the moral support of my home group. Only in that surrounding could I find enough courage to throw off the mask and open my heart, because the impediments were my enemy. I discovered that if I kept my secrets to myself, nobody would have had the opportunity to help me.

“Humility” and “Sincerity” are two magic words that describe what we need to grow spiritually. In our home groups we are accompanied through the dark tunnel, guided until we begin to see the light. The best teachings come from the examples we find in a home group where we learn to have faith, to believe in someone who gives us their trust in return.

Working on our defects takes time and effort, and talking about them with someone is even harder. Becoming adults and discovering how to forgive isn't exactly an easy job, but with the continued patience and good will of our fellow members, we can try.

All these rotating Steps repeated time after time in a home group give us courage to walk into any other group holding our head high and ready to share with new people we meet along the way.

Once we arrive at the peak of our sobriety in Step Twelve, that's where we put ourselves to the test and realize that our only inheritance in A.A. is to “pass it on”. The doors of our home groups are open if we keep them open and if we welcome a newcomer with the understanding knowledge of what is necessary to see him or her keep coming back...Our Twelve Traditions keep us united as one, and in our home groups we learn how to overcome our fears.

I found a family in my home group, and the foundation I was able to set down in that group permitted me to construct a new life. This construction has been built with many hands, many sharings and suggestions, many lessons I needed to learn through the teachings given freely and constantly.

Without all this help, I wouldn't be here speaking in front of you, and even more, I wouldn't have understood the definitions of gratitude, spirituality, or faith. These things I learned when I came into A.A., in my home group.