

SPIRIT OF ROTATION II
JULY QUARTERLY AREA 79
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The spirit of rotation is the spirit of being of service. It is our twelfth step work. It is where this service position is not about me, it is about being helpful to others.

In Bill's story we often think of his spiritual awakening as that white light experience where he felt as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through. I suggest to you his spiritual awakening is found a couple of paragraphs later where he says as he lay in the hospital the thought occurred to him that there were thousands of others who could use this message who in turn might help others. That is the thought that saved his life and saved my life. Helping another, being of service.

All my life I have been one of those guys who was always ready to jump into the driver's seat and get things running right. It was like I was born with a gift of always knowing what was good for you – what you should be doing. A gift not everyone appreciated as much as they should have when I shared it, even though I shared with the best of intentions.

Of course, being so driven by ego is what got me here. Luckily for me I arrived in A.A., as we all do, beaten enough by alcohol to have a grain of humility, to be the littlest bit teachable. When I no longer had all of the answers, there was room for my higher power to enter into my life. A crack that let the light in.

Because I did not have all of the answers anymore, I had to ask for help from my sponsor, from others, from the God of my understanding. I began to learn something of patience, tolerance, trust and love.

Service in A.A. has offered a similar experience. I do not drink coffee and had no idea how to make it, so I asked. I did not know how to be a greeter, so I asked, watched and learned. I did not know how to be a DCM so I did these same things. I read A.A. literature, I found a service sponsor, I stayed teachable. I made mistakes. I learned that the best I could do was good enough. A big lesson for this perfectionist. Humility, grain by grain, came from that slightly off balance feeling of not knowing exactly what I should be doing.

When I arrived in A.A. I was an expert in many things, knowledgeable in a few and wise in none. The problem with being an expert is that I already know the best way of doing something, so am intolerant of new ideas or new approaches. In A.A. it seems that I rotate on from a service position just ahead of becoming an expert.

I suppose one might ask if the practice of rotation then makes us inefficient. Perhaps we would get more done if we allowed the people with the experience to serve longer. Bill answers this from one perspective in his Concept XI essay. I have another perspective or experience. It might be that if we held on to our service positions longer in A.A., we could really change some things in A.A. But don't we all come to know that A.A. is not about changing things, it is about changing people. We may sometimes laugh, or sigh in frustration, about how long it takes for things to change in A.A. – how we are never in a hurry. However, is this not really because we are not in the business of changing things, but changing ourselves and helping others find a way to change?

As I rotate on from a position (and it seems easier to think of rotating “on” than rotating “out”), not yet being an expert, I am willing to help the new person with some sense of tolerance, humility and love. To help the new person, not to do it the way I think it should be done, but to help him or her find a way to be of service that is theirs. Is this not what I am called upon to do with the newcomer? Not to push my higher power on them, but to help them find their own? To truly be of service? To simply help them find the path to change.

Tradition Twelve says that “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions”. As I have served in A.A. I have had an opportunity to see and experience the principle of anonymity in action. It is in the examples of the trusted servants who preceded me in this Area. I saw how their lives were enriched when what they did was for the good of A.A. and not about them. They rotated on to become those “elder statesmen” out of a love for A.A. – not for any personal recognition or ego satisfaction.

I have loved every service position I have had in Alcoholics Anonymous. I can’t say I have wanted to give up any of them, but I know what I have received in A.A. When I serve for the good of A.A., I benefit in innumerable and immeasurable ways. You have taught me that to keep this gift, I must “give it away”. I want this joy for others. For them to find it, I must move aside and make room. If a newcomer walked into a meeting of A.A., would I give him my chair and stand in the back so he might find what I have found? When I don’t rotate, am I not holding on to my chair? Saying that I am more important than A.A.? Is it more important for me to keep mine than to help the newcomer?

If I am truly being of service, if I am truly honouring our tradition of anonymity, if I truly love Alcoholics Anonymous and want to help the new person, I will rotate with joy in my heart. Perhaps with a little sadness that the experience is over - but I will have joy in my heart for the experience and joy for those who will follow me and have their own experience.

Thank you for my life.

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