

I am an alcoholic and my name is Alex Wheatley. I have the honor and privilege of serving Mid Southern California Area 09 as their Panel 74 Delegate. My home group is "Shut up and Cross talk" . We meet on Tuesdays at 8pm at TLC. I have a sponsor and I work with others.

I got sober January 4th of 2013 in the middle of my senior year in highschool in South Florida. I can't remember where I learned about the circle and triangle but It was my first homegroup where I learned about the Grapevine. I selected an article that I have never read, but couldn't have been more fitting "What shape is your triangle? (after the 1989 Grapevine article)". The circle and triangle have been prevalent for as long as A.A has been around. I saw it for the first time in a third edition big book. To many and to me they represent the three Legacies--Recovery, Unity, and Service. The triangle, symbolizing the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, inside of a circle, which stands for the world at large. The triangle that was chosen much, like everything Bill did was intentional and for a reason. An equilateral triangle: one having three equal sides. Since getting sober it was instilled in me that the three sides represent a bar stool, and one can survive a while with two but certainly the bar stool would fall over if it was down to one. Sitting with all three sides of the bar stool intact would allow for stability and comfort no matter what life might hand me. While reading this article I was able to reflect on my journey up until this point. What I know for sure that I have witnessed, and been taught, is only practical experience can allow me to speak here today. The Twelve Steps for personal recovery, Twelve Traditions for group unity, and Twelve Concepts for world service have given me direction and purpose. As the article states "The Three Legacies are the operative heritage of Alcoholics Anonymous. Surrender, faith, confession, restitution, ego-deflation, and other principles that strengthened personal recovery among early AAs, are handed down through the Twelve Steps of Recovery. Self-sacrifice, humility, tolerance, and singleness of purpose are among the measures that proved to foster unity within AA groups; they are handed down to other groups through the Twelve Traditions of Unity. And practices that contribute to smooth service operations--participation, rights of decision and appeal, discussion and vote--are passed on through the Twelve Concepts of Service." . September of this year marks five years living in Southern California. I found to my surprise that people stayed sober even though the meetings were 90 minutes. To be a member of Alcoholics anonymous means something different to everyone. To me thats what makes A.A the most magical place on earth. Despite living in two places, there are still families being restored, and renewed. There are still people running to the mic and screaming passionately for their point of view to be heard and I am still moved by the membership's ability to give up so much.

During my first year of sobriety, it was through the fellowship that I experienced my higher power. I was asked to join the 2014 FCYPAA host committee and I also was apart of a large sponsorship family. I watched how people were living and followed in their footsteps. We held parties, dinners, and camping trips. We had a community, we had each other and there wasn't anything we couldn't get through. The fellowship was my solution. I simply did not know how to balance out the recovery and service side of my triangle even though I could quote the book, and I could show up. I did enough service, did inventories to get by but was committed to unity.

The depth and weight of all of the 36 principles did not come until I met my current sponsor. How blind had I been to believe that I was active in my recovery, and serving like a servant. I could quote the big book, and there wasn't a commitment I wasn't willing to take on. But it meant nothing to me. I was returning home with four years of sobriety from a three month trip in India when the recovery side of my triangle was put to the test. The sponsorship family was no longer there and my community had overnight been uplifted. I learned that dependency on anything third dimensional would always leave me empty. Desperate to be changed. Maggie and I started to read this book "the spirituality of imperfection". The longest 18 inches I learned are from my head to my heart. Her eyes, soft and sincere, uttered the words "No one cares how many meetings you're speaking at or how many people you sponsor". She would ask me things like, Hows your relationship with your mom, if I called your boss what would they say? Do you owe money? Are you dating one guy or three again? How about character assassination? still getting some guilty pleasure out of that? Are you still trying to control and manage your life and others or have you finally let go. Are you still holding on to the belief that you can wish away the parts in your makeup that you are not fond of? Or have you finally given that to your God. The best thing that happened to me was the fetal position crying so deeply during years Four through seven. It was only in the last couple years that I learned something of being a servant and service.

I was sitting in my car crying after an area meeting. I often ponder now, are you doing it right if you don't feel like throwing in the towel? It was my last time serving as an Alternate Delegate and Area chair. This was a choice I am grateful for accepting but look back and realize what an ego feeding proposition I took on, choosing to serve two positions in hopes that the outcome would lead to another position (Delegate). The tears came, as I sat in my car outside of a baby shower and saw two friends and their baby walking into this party. Here's the reality check. Not only had I missed her being pregnant and the baby being born I didn't even know she was expecting. Over the entire year of 2023, I gave up moments, to serve my ambition. I gave up _____ to write two reports. This was what they talked about "hiding good motives underneath bad ones". I got lost in my commitments and missed the point. That was years 8-10. Holding commitments, and serving from a place of pride, ego, fear, perfectionism and my favorite resentment. I allowed the service side to run my life. It's been only in my 11th year that I have begun to learn something of an equilateral triangle.

Much like the article, amongst the greatest gifts i've been given is cherishing all parts of the triangle. I absolutely love my entire life today, I live in Redondo Beach, CA where I have been gifted, my dreams, my best friends, the love of my life, Stella, my home, purpose, service, adventure, and joy. I am grateful for the sobriety that I received in South Florida, my sponsor is still there. But It's been through living in two places, and traveling all over the world with A.A at every destination that I have been gifted my present life. When I call my sponsor with a new dilemma I am stopped mid sentence with the same question "Have you found it necessary to drink today?" We live life forward, and understand it backwards. In general service everything feels like it's a big deal, at least it does to me. So I can pause and remember the glorious fact that just for today millions of people all over the world have not found it necessary to drink. Like the article states, like you old timers know. The best is yet to come, I hope the fire never

dies in us, I hope we continue to carry the baton, and turn the light on for those stumbling in the dark. There is one thing for certain that I hope and that's that God isn't done with us yet, rather we're just getting started.