

There once was a man who was a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. He faithfully attended a meeting not too far from his home every week for years. He didn't drink and he shared his experience, strength and hope at that meeting whenever he felt like it.

When the time came to pass the basket for the Seventh Tradition contribution, he usually put in a dollar or some loose change as he saw fit that evening. It really wasn't important how much he contributed, the meeting would always be there.

When the Seventh Tradition basket was passed, he put in a dollar or some other loose change as he saw fit that evening.

One night, the group treasurer announced that due to the lack of adequate contributions when the basket was passed, the group could no longer afford to order literature, especially Big Books. The man felt that this wasn't really important for he had a copy of the Big Book as did all of the other members of the group. When the Seventh Tradition basket was passed, he put in a dollar or some other loose change as he saw fit that evening.

A few months later the group treasurer announced that due to the decrease in contributions at that group they could no longer afford to contribute to the local Intergroup. The man felt that this too wasn't really all that important. After all, he knew where all the meetings were in the area and didn't need a new meeting list. He also felt that since he never availed himself of the telephone hot line, it too wasn't that important. Anyway, he thought, there were enough groups around to support the work of the Intergroup. When the basket was passed that evening he threw in his dollar and felt satisfied.

Meeting to Close?

Several months passed and the group treasurer announced that the meeting hall's rent was being raised and that if they could not meet the rent, they would have to close the meeting or find a less expensive meeting hall. The man knew that the rent could be paid. After all, didn't he throw a dollar into the basket every week?

Two weeks passed. The group treasurer announced that the meeting was going to close the next week as they didn't have enough money to meet the rent. The man thought that this was probably God's will. After all, wouldn't God allow the meeting to continue there if it were His will? He didn't throw any money into the basket that week for he felt it wasn't necessary. After all, where would the money go? There was no more meeting to support at the end of the month.

He decided to take a week off and look at his meeting directory to find a new group.

The man didn't go to the meeting the next week because he didn't feel like being depressed by the ending of the group. He decided to take a week off and look at his meeting directory to find a new group.

Two weeks passed and the man drove across town to the hall mentioned in his directory. The parking lot was empty and he thought he might be early. After a half

hour passed he decided they must have changed nights and went to call the AA hot line to see if they did indeed change the night.

Hotline Disconnected?

He called the hot line and heard a recording from the phone company telling him that at the customer's request, the phone was disconnected. Night after night he went to different meeting halls mentioned in his directory. Night after night he ended up with no meeting. Finally, he found a meeting. Almost everyone at the meeting told tales of their losing meeting halls due to increased rents.

He asked the group chairperson when the books on order would be coming in. He was told that the group could no longer afford to order literature.

He felt that at least this was a meeting and when the basket was passed he placed a dollar bill gingerly amid the loose change.

A few weeks passed and he was approached by a newcomer to be his sponsor. He did have the longest sobriety in the group and was the most likely candidate. He went to the literature table to get the newcomer a Big Book only to find that there were none left. He asked the group chairperson when the books on order would be coming in. He was told that the group could no longer afford to order literature.

No Literature?

He told the newcomer that there were no Big Books and that if he could, he would lend him his. But, since it was his only copy, he couldn't do that. The newcomer never came back to that meeting.

That meeting eventually closed as well. The man didn't want to drive any really long distance to get to another meeting in another town. He felt that since he was sober for so long, it really wasn't that important anyway.

He decided to get drunk. He walked to the liquor store and placed a dollar on the counter and asked for a bottle.

Months passed. One night when the man felt the need to go to a meeting due to his having a really bad day at work and his car breaking down he realized that there were no more meetings in his town. He called around and found that there were no hot lines to call, they too had all closed down. The pressure became unbearable.

He decided to get drunk. He walked to the liquor store and placed a dollar on the counter and asked for a bottle. The clerk behind the counter looked at the dollar bill and then back at the man. He asked him what he thought a dollar could buy. The man had forgotten how much it cost to get drunk.

The man had also forgotten how much it cost to stay sober. How much it cost on an emotional level, spiritual level and financial level. He realized that his dollar and the dollars and loose change of others weren't enough to keep the meetings where they were. They weren't enough to keep the hot lines going. They weren't enough to buy Big Books for the newcomer, the still sick and suffering alcoholic.

\$1 Not Enough?

He looked down at the dollar bill on the liquor store counter and finally realized how important it was. It was not just a dollar anymore - it was his life and the lives of countless others. He remembered when gas was only 23 cents a gallon and he was putting a dollar into the basket back then. He remembered when his rent was still a hundred dollars a month on a two bedroom apartment and he was still putting a dollar in the basket. He remembered something called inflation and that his contributions to AA didn't keep up with the times. He also remembered when his job wouldn't give their employees a cost of living increase and how upset he was because he was having a hard time meeting his expenses.

He promised himself that if he could ever find another meeting he would put more than a dollar into the basket to insure that the meeting could continue to be there.

He reached into his pocket and took out a ten dollar bill and purchased a bottle of booze, walked home, drank it and felt sorry for himself.

Remember that the contribution you make goes for not only coffee, but for rent and for everything else.

The next time you throw a dollar or some loose change into the basket as it is being passed at a meeting remember this story. Remember how much your last drunk cost you both on a financial and emotional level. Remember that the contribution you make goes for not only coffee, but for rent and for everything else that keeps you sober.