



NAATW ANNUAL GATHERING 9/12/20 VIA ZOOM

**“PROTECTING OUR TRADITIONS
AND IMPLEMENTING
TECHNOLOGY THROUGH AN
INFORMED GROUP CONSCIENCE”**

J. BUCK R., AREA 12 – DELAWARE
BUCKP54@DELAWAREAA.ORG

While conducting different types of virtual meetings, do we consider safety, security and anonymity and what's healthy for our membership versus right or wrong?

ISSUES SURROUNDING WHERE WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO . . .

We've heard that even during "stay in place orders," newcomers have arrived on our virtual doorstep and we've been trying to accomplish 12th step calls the best we can.

Are we making sure that what we're doing is best for AA members and groups? Are we respecting the Traditions? Are the Traditions "inconvenient" when using technology? Are we *attempting* or are we actually respecting our members' anonymity. Do we stop and ask, "is this solution safe, secure and good for AA as a whole?" Or, do we consider if our solution is good or bad, or maybe right or wrong? Should we instead ask, "Is that healthy solution for the good of our Fellowship?"

Case in point: When electing a treasurer – at any level -- does this person collect the cash and put it in a box, do they deposit these monies in their own personal bank account or does the group have its own bank account?

A FEW MORE ISSUES SURROUNDING WHERE WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO . . .

AA has over 85 years of experience on these issues and has published guidelines to help us. But here's the short version: when a treasurer uses their own personal bank account the group – and the donors – are at risk of theft, liens and death. Time after time, we hear about groups dealing with such sad things happening and as we hear it we can recall the refrain “our problems are of our own making.”

Read more about it: The AA Guidelines – Finance:

https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/mg-15_finance.pdf

INTERNAL REVENUE SERVICE – LINK FOR AN EMPLOYER IDENTIFICATION NUMBER

<https://sa.www4.irs.gov/modiein/individual/index.jsp>

select “view additional types”

select “community or volunteer group”

SAFETY IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS - HOW A.A. WORLD SERVICES REACHED OUT TO THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY REGARDING DIGITAL PLATFORMS

Safety card for AA Groups

https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-211_SafetyCardforAAGroups.pdf

A.A. press release regarding digital platforms

https://www.aa.org/press-releases/en_US/press-releases/aa-groups-using-digital-platforms-to-find-sobriety-during-coronavirus-covid-19-outbreak

CONSIDERATIONS: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX PLUS BEST PRACTICES - PAGE 1

The brochure “A.A. Self Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix”

https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-3_selfsupport.pdf

Read more about it: AA Guidelines - Internet

https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/mg-18_internet.pdf

CONSIDERATIONS: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX PLUS BEST PRACTICES - PAGE 2

Question: Some members of our group want to pass a “virtual” basket — to collect Seventh Tradition contributions digitally. How could we do this? **Answer:** A number of groups have utilized digital payment platforms as an adjunct to passing the basket in the conventional sense in order to provide opportunities for cashless contributions. There are different payment platforms (such as Venmo, Paypal and others) to facilitate this service, and it is up to the group to determine which one to use. After experimentation with different methodologies, some groups have found that a smartphone app-based payment platform is the most efficient, seamless and minimally disruptive solution for providing a digital contribution. Experience suggests that the treasurer is a likely choice to handle digital contributions, though some groups add more than one trusted servant to share the responsibilities, or create a new service position to inform the group about digital payment options and assist other group members who are interested in contributing this way.

CONSIDERATIONS: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX PLUS BEST PRACTICES - PAGE 3

Question: Our treasurer just ran off with the money. What should we do? **Answer:** Unfortunately, this sort of thing, though rare, does occur. Though legal action is always an option, most groups avoid it. In some cases, the person who stole the money will resurface and return it. Whether or not that happens, some groups have found it helpful to hold a group conscience meeting to review the way the group's finances are being handled. Some sample questions for such a group conscience meeting might include the following: Does the group choose well in their selection of a responsible member to be the treasurer? Is the treasurer helped to an understanding of his or her responsibility as suggested in the pamphlets "The A.A. Group," "Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix," and the service piece "The A.A. Group Treasurer?" Are they holding the treasurer accountable by receiving regular financial reports and are the treasurer's records available for review at business meetings? Are excessive funds being accumulated by the group?

CONSIDERATIONS: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX PLUS BEST PRACTICES - PAGE 4

Service Material from the General Service Office FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ON PRACTICING THE SEVENTH TRADITION AT VIRTUAL MEETINGS:

https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/SMF-223-FAQonVirtualBasket_en.pdf

NY Intergroup Best Practices:

<https://www.nyintergroup.org/remote-meetings/7th-tradition-best-practices/>

Delaware's Box of Technology:

<http://delawareaa.org/forgsrsandothers/7thtradition52320.html>

Platforms (from SF/Marin Intergroup):

<https://aasfmarin.org/digital-contribution-platforms>

CONSIDERATIONS: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX PLUS BEST PRACTICES - PAGE 5

How bad is it? Read the recent letter from Greg T., General Manager, AAWS (scroll down on the page) <http://delawareaa.org/forgsrsandothers.html>

Key concept #1: From Bill W.: We have taken a vow of corporate poverty meaning what we collect goes to carrying the message . . .

Key concept #2: Abiding by Tradition 7 “Is the donor an A.A. member?” How are we asking this question? Are we protecting our Society from outside contributions?

CONSIDERATIONS: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX PLUS BEST PRACTICES - PAGE 6

How does your meeting or group go about collecting digital contributions?

Understand the role of treasurer – read [The A.A. Group Treasurer](#) to learn about the role of treasurer within the group. Here you will learn the importance of selecting a treasurer, how to safeguard and distribute group funds, what a “prudent reserve” is, and more!

Group bank account vs treasurer’s personal account – Your group likely has this sorted out already. For smaller groups or meetings, treasurers tend to use their personal bank account and account for group funds using a spreadsheet. A larger group might have a bank account established in the name of the group.

Digital payment options – [Venmo](#), [PayPal](#), [Zelle](#), [Cash App](#), [Google Pay](#), [Stripe](#), and [Apple Pay](#) are all viable options. The selection process might include protecting members’ anonymity, privacy and security by investigating “information” or “card member” sales to third parties.

CONSIDERATIONS: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX PLUS BEST PRACTICES - PAGE 7

Traditions 1 and 4: Take a group conscience – A group conscience is recommended as each member who wishes to contribute will need to open an account with the chosen service. Many members may already have a service they use and prefer.

Tradition 7: You can select one or multiple – A group or meeting can agree to use just one service, but larger groups may even want to consider multiple options for their members.

Tradition 12: Consider the costs and benefits of each platform – each service has varying fees for money transfers depending on the users' chosen method of payment (debit, credit, checking account, etc.). Some may have a more user-friendly interface than others.

LOOKING AT THE "NEW NORMAL" – WEAVING THE PRINCIPLES OF A.A. WITH TECHNOLOGY

Technology, Professionals and A.A. (a sample from the General Service Office)

https://www.aa.org/newsletters/en_US/f-13_summer20.pdf

Our Calls to Action

Are we sharing these issues completely with our home group, our district, our Assembly, our Intergroup or Central Office? Are we making the necessary changes suggested?

Do we wish to reconfigure how we work our own program and consider what meetings we attend to feel safe? (more Zoom vs less face-to-face?)

Stay around if you can and listen to the upcoming presentation on Future A.A. Technologies as a follow-up to this discussion.

A LAST LOOK AT THE "NEW NORMAL" – WEAVING THE PRINCIPLES OF A.A. WITH TECHNOLOGY

End Notes

Today's trusted servants are working to help our Fellowship thrive and flourish – the rallying mantra suggested by those with many years of service is, "let's stay sober, active and continue to join in service – let's try our best to weave our 36 principles with our technology opportunities."

Finally . . . Do you accept the consideration that only 1.5% of our membership is currently active in service outside the group level? *Here's the math: GSO says we have approximately 1,488,671 members in the US and Canada as of December 2019; 927,393 Big Books were sold in 2019; but only 22,048 service manuals sold in the same time period. As a very small group of trusted servants we have lots to do – so . . . see you at a meeting! Be safe, be sober!*
