

A Design for Living: Traditions and Concepts

2002 | Part 5 | Reading edition

FORMAT	DURATION	RECORDING ID
Transcript PDF	00:59:29	DP-2002-SPOKANE_05

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The authority for policy and finance to our Board of Trustees. The deal is we will support you and you perform these services for us and we'll support you through our voluntary contributions. You decide what to do with the money. Report back to us. We don't like it. We'll tell you. But they are responsible for policy. Policy, for instance. Public relations policy. We've delegated to them completely. Again, if we sent back to the groups, it would take forever to get anything done, except through the conference. But public information spots, for instance. I was on the PI Committee. Wonderful Committee. It was chaired by old Ralph Rosenberg, who invented L.C. in the Cal, by the way. It was full of PR people. Public information people. Advertising.

He chaired that with a cap pistol. He didn't have a gavel because it was that kind of a meeting. He had a pistol. Ralph had a sense of humor. And we had to be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion on a committee that was filled with people whose whole life was about promotion. And it was an interesting time. One of the things I learned, one of my adversaries on that committee. There were a couple things that I'd like to share with you because it translates to this, the responsibility and authority to do these things.

We had a good radio spot for young people. There were six young people who in a 30 second spot simply introduced themselves, made a real quick little pitch, and then it moved on. It was just a little attention grabber. The problem was of the six, four of them introduced themselves as alcoholic and drug addict. Now many of us on the committee said, we can't send that out. One of my adversaries said, but it would be fake if we don't because that's what's happening in A today. And we bicker for a while.

And then I listened to what he really said. He said, in all the meetings I attend, that's what's going on. And he was from New York. I'm from Colorado. That isn't what goes on. He was giving me his honest experience. As far as he concerned, that did represent A today. As far as I was concerned, it didn't. So after discussion, it would decide we really should take that out. My favorite was one of the best videos I've ever seen for public information piece.

You got a shot of a guy leaving work and getting on the train, and it's obvious he's going to New Rochelle. And then it takes a quick cut to his little family, wife and a couple kids in New Rochelle. And he sits down and he takes a bottle out of his briefcase. You're going to cut to the family. And then you go by another station and another shot. Pretty soon, he's like this, and the train goes by and you see the sign, New Rochelle.

Okay. And then it said, Alcoholics Anonymous. Contact the line we had. For more information, contact Alcoholics Anonymous in a number. And then it said it works. It really does. And that's where we had difficulty. Up to that point, I can go with it. It works. It really does. That's promotion that crosses that work. Had we brought that back out here to all the groups, we'd still be fighting over that. But we know from being group members essentially what the reaction out here is going to be.

So we've delegated to this committee the authority and the responsibility of putting that thing together so it can then go to the conference. Conference still has to approve it. But on some of those PI spots, we've given them

the authority to just put them out. With the delegates approval. It won't show in your area unless you approve it. But they can produce it and put it out. They decide how to spend the money. Have any of you seen it? Sure be sitting in a cell? You like it? It took two years.

And you got it because of the right of decision. The conference action that brought that about was to develop to do a study on the feasibility of a film strip based on the pamphlet that sure be sitting in a cell. That's what we were charged with as trustees. So after the conference, we went to work to see about that. And we found out a film strip was not feasible right off the bat. It took a special projector called the Duquesne Projector.

And damn few people had it. None of the prisons had it. So this would not have been a good way to do it. But we'd been listening to what the conference was really trying to say was we needed some kind of visual aid to go behind the walls because the average reading skills of inmates at that time was between third and seventh grade. So we needed to develop some sort of visual aid. And we heard what you said. So we checked into a film.

Now part of my job as trustee at large was to go out and develop information. At least that's what I thought. And I went to all the forums and area assemblies. I was there in your area assembly. I was at process. I was forever. I'm in Mississippi and I mentioned what we were thinking about doing to the corrections chair in Mississippi. And he said, well the idea is good. I'm not too sure about a film. We have 72 prison units and one 16 millimeter projector.

So I'm not sure that it worked. But every unit has a VCR. Have you ever thought of putting it on VCR? We hadn't thought about that. We hadn't thought about it. At that time all of our films were produced. A comes A and inside view and all that. You can buy it for I think it was \$125 or \$150 or you could rent it. It was expensive for the groups to get their hands on it. So I told him, here's what I'll do. If you'll write that to the committee, I'll carry it in and recover it from both ways so the idea will definitely get in.

And we kicked it around and it became clear the only way we could make a report back to the conference on a visual aid was to have some footage. There's a team of filmmakers, the Chromies, a man and wife who did A and inside view and some others. They're excellent. They know A and they're good filmmakers. So we contacted them to get a price. \$180,000 to do a video and they gave us a storyboard as to what it would look like for us to look at.

To present this to the conference, we had to take a risk. We had to spend \$32,000 to actually get the storyboard developed and four pieces of film because it was in four segments as you know. So the conference could see this is what it looked like when it's finished. If the conference approved it, that \$32,000 would be part of the \$180. If they didn't, we just spent \$32,000. This gives us the duty to do that, to make a presentation to you as to what you really wanted at the conference.

Well, of course what came out of it was a sure be sitting on a cell because it's really a well done piece. We also then sent out with that the idea that don't just show this film. This should go along with AA members so that after seeing the video, now it's only 17 minutes. Now you can have discussion about it and feel questions. Now the long term result of that is that now everything we have is on video. We can produce it and sell it to you for 15 bucks a copy of every group that once it can have it.

All of our films and stuff went on the video. So the decisions that got made had far reaching effect. That's consistent with this. The trustees are given the authority to decide how to spend that money for AA purposes. It still has to come back to the conference for final food. You like this? It took us 10 years. I thought that was funny. Some people think that big blue book is a holy book. I've been trying to get a soft cover edition because those of us in corrections for years to run into a problem.

Many institutions will not let the hard copy in for a number of reasons. The dye that makes it blue is siphoned off and used for tattooing. The back of that hard cover book holds a shank very nicely on a side. The book itself went open and used correctly as one hell of a weapon. So they don't let it in. We needed a soft cover. Couldn't get it because no people didn't want change. What turned that was someone went to the microphone at the conference and mentioned because they'd done their homework.

And at that time there were 48,500 AA members behind the walls that could not have a hard cover. We needed that. That's what we got. And what that opened the door to was the braille edition. The big edition for people like me who can't see without some kind of glasses. It opened the door to all kinds of things. I've got to tell you, I had to laugh because again part of my job was to present this around the country to get feedback.

And you know what the biggest issue was on making that? What color is the cover going to be? That caused more dissension than if we had made changes in the book it wouldn't cause in much trouble. We are a non-profit corporation with a board of directors. We call them trustees. He's a board of directors chartered under the state of New York as a non-profit corporation and subject to the laws of the state of New York. That corporation also owns two other corporations. A World Services Incorporated which runs an office and is our primary publishing arm.

It's a publishing company as well as a service company. And the Grapevine Incorporated which publishes our primary magazine. The concepts say that the trustees should probably not be involved in the daily operation of those other corporations. We show up in New York once every quarter. So we ought not meddle with the daily operations. Where the trustees authority comes from is that they have the ability to elect all the directors of the Grapevine Board in the World Services Board.

Custodial oversight is what it's called. I'm a custodian of all this. I don't run it. We hire people to run it. We have a board of directors for real world services and a general service office manager who runs the office. Same thing with a grapevine. And their job then is to report back and if the board doesn't like what they're doing, tell them to change it. And if they don't change it, they get a new board of directors. That's where the authority and power comes from.

When it's operating correctly. It kind of sounds like where I worked and it kind of sounds like my home when it's operating, right? It made it much easier to deal with the kids and the family. Instead of being the boss, I'm a trustee. I have custodial oversight. I make the major decisions. My wife and I do. Where the money gets spent for one thing. Don't give a hundred dollars to a kid unless you just want to watch them run them up.

What date does the trash go out? The hedges. The color of the house. Everybody gets input, but we decide how this gets spent following all that. And when you get old enough to be a little bit self-supporting, then you can have some authority also. It gets passed on in relation to your duties and your responsibilities. The general

service board, by law, can override any decision made by that conference. They haven't. They probably never will.

But if it appears to the board that it's illegal or would cause great harm, they can override a conference action. It's built right into the concepts. Don't take my word for it. Read about it. It probably hasn't. I don't think it's happened yet. And it's correct that we do that. You and I have some great ideas, but like having the staff member vote because they should, the law says they can't. Not under these circumstances. We need to know that. Part of the way the money gets spent, by the way, is in lawyers fees.

Now, why in hell would we need lawyers? Surely, if we're not going to litigate much, why do we need lawyers? Well, the big books, a clear example of that. In 1985, a replica of the first edition big book showed up. There were 2,500 of them. They were on sale for \$25 a piece, an exact replica of the first edition big book. The board sent the publisher of that a cease and desist order. He said to hell with you. You don't own the copyright.

And we did some checking and sure enough, in 1967, the copyright of the big book went into the public domain. And we didn't even know it. We had copyrighted the first edition, and when we copyrighted the second edition, we assumed that it renewed the copyright to the first edition, which it did in Canada, by the way, but it didn't in the United States. So in 1967, it went into the public domain. The guy was going to sell them at the international of Montreal. Didn't get to because it's still enforced up there.

So we hired some lawyers who now check our literature for copyright and renew them on a regular basis. We need somebody to do that because you and I are busy doing other things. So some of the money gets spent on that. There are some other legal fees to that question. The reason I question them is I don't know why they got spent. I'll quit questioning when I get an answer. The delegates run into that all the time. Why did we do that?

What does other expenses mean? 300,000 for other expenses? Wait a minute. Just tell me what that's about. We are responsible for that. If we don't ask the questions, we're abdicating our responsibility. And it isn't that I want to be a troublemaker. I need to know. Because it's our money. And we need to know. And it's probably all legitimate. I don't believe in conspiracies. I do believe in clicks, but not conspiracies.

Well, there's clicks in this room. Come on. That's the human condition. The way we pick our leaders is addressed here. Really, really important. Starting with the board, we need the best advice we can get because we're going to make major decisions that affect the lives of people as well as the income. So good and appropriate means of choosing our leaders is important. A bad way to pick a GSR is to pick Roy because he hadn't been here for about a month.

Maybe if we make him GSR, he'll show up again. Hey, I've seen it happen. No, no, no, no, no. GSR is the most important job we have. Let's give it to somebody who's going to do the job. We become irresponsible if we don't tell the GSR what the job is. The average length of time of the GSR is 90 days. And the major reason for that is that they don't know what they're doing. And they show up and nobody tells them what they're doing.

Our area, we didn't solve it but we addressed the problem because with all the influx of new GSRs every year, the next assembly all morning was given to GSR workshops. Which meant each chairperson spent 15 minutes with each several different tables of GSRs and only told them what the GSR job was, but told them what

our job was and how you relate to that. See, the primary reason for the entire service structure is very simple.

It's to elect and inform a delegate to go to the general service conference. That's the main reason for any assembly. It has no other real purpose. There are a lot of secondary reasons, but that's the primary one. So how does the GSR get information to the delegate through the assembly? How does the delegate get the information to the trustees through the conference? It means participation. You've got to have people who are willing to show up, stand up, speak up, then shut up.

Oh, that was good, right there. You're not saying that? Do you follow that advice? Yes, sir, I do. So let's take that home. If we're going to operate by these principles, that means a three-year-old does have a voice. How are we going to delegate that? Well, as I mentioned, my wife and I have two votes, and each kid has one. When it comes down to the final thing, we make the decision. But everybody participates. Bumps in the night.

What are we going to do about bumps in the night? Is that scary? Yeah, this is the five-year-old. That scares me. I don't know what to do. Let me see. Maybe I know what to do. Let's say we hear a bump in the night. How about if you get real quiet and I go check on it and see what's there, because I can see the dark. You can. I can. And I know about bumps in the night because I've been around a long time, and I've heard a lot of them.

Oh, OK. I'll trust you. Then we come home one day, and that trust has been going on. The dealers don't leave something on the stairs. Girls were up in their very early teens when we came home one day, opened the door, and it was very clear we had been burglarized. Now, there's nothing that pisses an old burglar off more than rain burglarized. I was not a good burglar. While I was a police officer on my day off one time, I got drunk and broke into a house.

What the hell? It's me. And spent two hours there and left and forgot to take anything, so I gave that up as a career. I wasn't looking for stuff anyway. I was living in a chicken coop and driving a patrol car 80 hours a week. They had something I didn't have, and I thought maybe they could find the magic. But the point is, we had been burglarized, and it was clear. My older daughter said, oh, my God, Dad. What am I going to tell the kids at school?

I've been telling them that God takes care of us, because that's what we're teaching. I can see in the dark because God got you. And for Texas, I said, honey, he does. And he did. We weren't here. All I got was our stuff. And we were getting ready to have a yard sale anyway, so. You know. So they have delegated to my wife and I certain responsibilities in the authority to carry those out, and they never questioned it.

And we've delegated to them certain responsibility and authorities. And we don't question that. I was appalled to discover when my older daughter admitted to sneaking out at night one time. I didn't know she did that. I trusted her. But she had, it was a deck roof right under her window, out and down. Look, the ladder up, back in. She didn't do anything wrong, kids sneak out. How do we pick our leaders? Really important.

I'm not going to tell you how. It's really important. It says here in principle we use experience and trust. That means they have demonstrated those qualities. I watch them. We're talking about that. I watch you. And people watch all of us. Your words may sound good, but I want to see how you handle yourself. I stayed in AA because the people that were talking good, I watched. I wanted to see how they handle themselves on the yard and the

mess hall.

And on the tears. The mindset that AA will hear you are you coming in? You're the GSR. It makes me very nervous. Oh yeah. And if we're going to survive, we need to comply with this. I don't know the term AA railroad, but railroading somebody into the position. 30 days sober, making them the GSR. I'm dealing right now with a fellow who is 15 years sober and drank. And he got sober and pretty much maintained the 15 years by being committed.

From the day one, sobriety was about having a commitment and doing what your sponsor said. His sponsor died. He didn't have a commitment he drank. And the first three weeks, I had difficulty with him because he came to our group and right off the bat, he wanted to be GSR. He was only three days sober. 15 years means nothing to me. It's gone. He's three days sober. We said no, and I took him in a hall and said for the time being, no commitment.

Let's just get sober. And then I found out a week later he'd gone to another group and wanted to be the guy who had the key. So he could have a commitment. And I'm not against commitment. Please don't misunderstand me. But in terms of serving this fellowship, I don't want somebody who can't stay sober. If he's got the key and he's three days sober, he's still subject to the craving from alcohol. And who knows what's going to happen with that key?

That is not what it's about. His commitment needs to be to sobriety. And we'll pick him later if he shows some talent for something. We made the best choice we ever made for area of treasure one time by picking a convicted embezzler. Come on. He knows what to do with the books. He wasn't good enough to keep him getting caught, but he was pretty good. And it got to be funny because Ed, all of a sudden, got a new car and our books balance.

And then he got a new motorcycle and our books balance. And then he got a house and our books balance. As long as the money was there, we don't care. We chose him because it was clear. He not only knew how to do it, he'd been around long enough and on the committee and was quite willing to do the main job that the treasure at that time had to do, which was get the rest of the groups who weren't contributing anything, wanted to contribute something.

Because half the groups were carrying the other half and that isn't quite right. And to do this in a way that doesn't just fundraise, but to get them interested. Why would I want to do that? Why would I want to send you money? Well, here's what we can do with it. And that worked. We made a delegate out of a guy who came out of California and became a DCM. You know, in a mountain area where there were about eight groups and six of them were being run by one old-timer.

Nothing going on there. You couldn't get anything that wouldn't represent anybody. So he went around to the groups and as part of his talk he simply said, by the way, I'm a district committee person. We're going to have an election in July and your group can't vote. And then he just shut up. What do you mean we can't vote? Well, you don't have a representative. They formed the groups. We had 60 people at that election.

We made him delegate. He has the kind of skills necessary to get cooperation out of people when he has an

authority. We put in effective measures of picking our winners. Leaders need to be trained. In the group I came into, you were not allowed to chair the main meeting for a year. You had to be a year sober and have attended that meeting for a year. And we were trained. When I got on the street, we were trained. Our group did things a certain way.

We had a format and you by God followed that format. And if I come to your group and we used to do that by the way, we'd visit other people's groups. I'll chair by your format even if I don't like it, but it's your format. So we'll do that. You'll notice an awful lot of Southern California speakers if you go to many conventions. You know why? They got a lot of speaker meetings down there. They get trained. They learn how to do it.

There's an effective way to speak at a microphone. And there's ineffective ways to speak at a microphone. Leaders need to be trained, but we need leadership and alcoholics anonymous. They need to be servants of the whole, but we need leaders. And Bill describes now a leader as someone who can formulate ideas in such a way that the rest of us want to go along with them. Why would I want to do that? Well, here's why. A good leader is one who's out there doing it anyway.

I'm not brilliant, and I'm not the world's best, but I got an area of committee because we didn't have a corrections chair, and I have a passion. And so I was just carrying meetings to the prisons. I had a parole officer who understood. He got me in. And our area of chair finally came in and said, look, why don't you become our corrections chair? You're doing it anyway. Maybe we can help you. And that's how I got into service from doing it.

Well, we had fun. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority. When the scope of such authority, well-defined. GSRs drop out because they don't know what they're supposed to do. It's in the book, but that doesn't really define it. In my group, and it's been this way since I got to A, if you're the GSR, we will honor you by giving you time to make that report, and that's part of our meeting.

It doesn't happen afterwards. In fact, afterwards everybody's already gone. I don't want to hear this crap. So for a while, we started doing it ahead of time. That was nice, but then people started coming late. Now it's part of the meeting. If we're going to ask you to go there and give up your time, we're not only going to listen to you, we want to listen to you. We want to know what's going on. We want to be part of A as a whole, and have some input into that.

Right now, Colorado's big deal is should we have a fourth assembly. We used to. At our area of convention, we had an assembly meeting all day Saturday, and they did away with it for some reason. And some of us think we ought to go back to that. It exposes the rest of the fellowship to service, because they can come in and sit down and watch what happens. And it gives us time to do some business that we don't have time to do in just three.

But whether that happens or not, it's up for discussion again. And my group wants to be part of that discussion. We have some input. And we're willing to listen to reasons why not to. The only reason I've heard so far is that they're afraid that they're paying their GSRs expenses. If they're checking, they just go to the convention. That's kind of a poor reason not to have it, I think. But anyway, see what I mean? Every service position in Alcoholics Anonymous is well-defined by either tradition, custom, written down somewhere in here.

If you want to know what a committee does, it's written down in here. One of the fun things I had with Trustee at large is it didn't have much in here, so we developed what Trustee at large does. So it could go into this service manual. Because I was lost, clearly lost. There was no constituency, of course, there isn't any anyway. But when you pick a leader, tell them what they're supposed to do. Support the leader. If you don't like where they're headed, stop them.

And if they don't stop, just get off the train, don't go with them. Nothing will bring a leader back to the group, and turn around and find there's nobody there with him. And then the conference charter, of course, in the warranties. I love the warranties. Do me this now. We have just a little bit of time left. We can stay here all day, but I'm not going to. We have this microphone, and I've really tried to cover what takes about six weeks in a couple hours here.

Would you do us all a favor and come to the microphone and either make a comment and inflammatory remark, or ask a question, or we'll quit now. And I know we haven't done it all, but what do you need to get out of this before you go home to feel you got what you came for? It's your party. Will you come back and do another one? Sure. I don't need the microphone. They need this though. I know. The question that I have is everything that we have covered in these two days, and especially the service piece.

We talk a lot about the conference. Does this apply to all of the service area, district, group? Because I think there are people who get confused with that. Especially with the concepts, because they talk constantly about the conference. These are spiritual principles that apply in all of my affairs. And what works here, if it doesn't work at the group level, it isn't going to work here either, because the group has created this.

And while this delineates and describes conference activity, the principles behind it fit very nicely in the group and in the area. And quite frankly, the area is the conference. All area committees are there to elect and inform the delegate. All other reasons for being there are secondary. If you got no other business done, if you had three assemblies a year, and every minute of it was taken up helping your delegate, that's what it's for.

Fortunately, we don't have that much business to do. Hey, it really doesn't have much business doing business. Ooh, that was another good one. Where's this stuff coming from? But yeah, I believe in the principles applying every aspect of my life or the spiritual principles apply everywhere. Let's take the warnings for a minute and take them home. Never become the seat of perilous wealth or power. If I spend all of my time accumulating wealth, my children get cheated.

They don't need money. They need time. They need me. If I'm asserting power over my family all the time, I don't have a family. People asserting power over me cause immediate automatic resistance. And the same thing happens with children. Now I have to have a certain authority because I don't want them getting hurt. But the way most of us raise children is a criminal activity. So I can apply this at home. Fish and operating expenses plus a prudent reserve is enough money.

So I can take that extra time and now the children and I can work together. Okay? That seems to fit. Place not much members in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others. Not the boss in my house. I live in a matriarchy. And I wouldn't have it any other way. Yes, please. I'm Bill Martin and I'm an alcoholic. One of my members, the oldest member of my family, he thinks it's his job to discipline the other two members.

What do you do about that? What would I do about that? Say no. I'll keep on doing it. Shoot him. There you go. Somewhere in between those two answers will be your answer. God show me how to take a common and tolerant view. How can I be helpful to this person? It all comes out of the spiritual principles in the inventory. We realize that the people who harmed us are perhaps spiritually sick, just like ourselves. Show me how to take a common and tolerant view.

How can I be a service? Well, we can't be a service to everybody. But God will show us how to take a common and tolerant. It doesn't answer the question, but it answers the question. Okay. And how can you know that he's in charge? No. My name's Gene. I'm an alcoholic. And I'm not in charge, but I do have a question. And it seems like me that concept 10 and concept 2 are real similar in what they say. Does that seem right?

Yeah. One establishes the authority and the responsibility, the other details how that's going to be carried out. Bill's very specific. The second one says they are the principal planters. They have the authority. And the tenth kind of tells us how they pick the committees, the custodial oversight, the ways in which that will be done that's acceptable. Very similar. And that's the reason he put it in two? I think so.

I don't know, but it makes sense to me that way. Bruce, an alcoholic. I was just sitting here thinking about, you know, the warranties and the concepts. If we were to strip the warranties out, would that make these concepts viable? Or are the warranties an absolute necessary part of the whole in order to ensure or guarantee that principles are practiced? They are that vital. They are the modifiers. They make sure that my ego does not get caught up in the power that the other gives me.

They are the only part that can't be changed. They can't change me. You can change the rest of them, but the warranties cannot be changed. The conference doesn't have the part of changing. You and I could let scrap the whole thing. But the conference can't change that. Hi, my name is Kevin. I'm an alcoholic. Don, can you break down how much of your time goes into your service work, your home group work, and then your individual work with your different people that you work with in the book?

Do you have any general concept of how much a general service takes away from you? Your home group takes and then your individual work with other people just so we can get an idea of what you do? Never thought about it. No need to. A bunch. I don't know. I'd rather not think about it. Good answer. Someone asked me one time, how do you keep up the pace? My answer is I never asked that question. It doesn't take anything from me.

Yeah. No, I can't give you a gauge. It's smart, Alec. But what he's really saying is how much time should I put in? No, but that's what most people would be saying. As much as you want. Oh, you got it. More than you can handle. Always reach for more than you can handle. Always stretch. Always stretch. No, that was a good question. I honestly have never thought about it. I don't know. I'll think about it for a minute.

Hi. I'm Laura and a grateful member of this program. Specialty groups like women's groups, men's groups. What is being said about that? And done? Well, there's nothing to be done about it. There's an awful lot being said about it. In my view, based on principle, that's not a... There is a very real need for women to get together and men to get together, gays to get together. There's a real need for people of common interest to get together.

But AA only has one common problem. And if I cannot attend at your meeting, it's not AA. Even if you talk

about it, it's just not AA, it's in principle. So it's a... One of my best friends and my former sponsor belongs to a very fine men's group in Indianapolis. I've never attended it and I never will. Because it's not AA. And I like to jab him with that. One of the most important things in my life was to learn how to live with women decently.

If I'm hanging only with men, I'm going to learn about women from men who don't know anything about women. I need to learn to interact about learning to interact. That is not set aside in the fact that there is a need sometimes for folks to get together. So I do go to men's retreats. I think those activities are fine. Just don't call it AA because it's misleading. First, again, I want a little take-off on this other gentleman's question is finding a balance between service AA and home.

And I know it's something I have to be careful about. I can get so involved with sponsoring this net that I don't know the person that I'm going home with because I never see them, then my work life complicates her work life. And if we become so involved, all of a sudden we're passing in the dark. On one day you've got this nasty divorce of these nasty fights that become the topic of the meetings now. Finding that balance can be difficult.

Fortunately, it's not our problem, but it's still something we talk about a lot. Well, and we talk about it too, and that's how we resolve it. This changes from time to time. My activity level changes. It was clear when we got married because we talked about it. This is all about communication in one way or another. But this is probably going to be my... here's what I do. Now, one of the things I do is that you come to my house at six in the morning if I'm going to sponsor you, and we take the time for me to read the big book to you, and together you and I go through the steps. That's the initial deal.

Sometimes I can handle five people. Sometimes I can only handle three. That does not interfere with the family. They're getting ready to go to work and go to school, and that's part of why you're there. I want you to see that. When I got into general service, we talked about the delegates job, and as a family we all agreed, yeah, we knew that. I had some role models you might say. We knew about what the activity level was going to be.

With Trustee, it was different. We really had to talk about that. We knew this would be a time commitment beyond anything that we're going to be sacrifices made here. And had she said no, I wouldn't have taken the job. We had no idea how big that was. I was gone 50 weekends a year for four years. That's a big commitment. Plus during the week, business went to hell. There's just all kinds of things. The positive benefits outweighed the negative. The fact is the family made a big sacrifice for that.

And that needs to be acknowledged. Had that not been, I couldn't have done it without previously getting me okay. We all had to understand this is what's going to go on. Out of that came a wondrous thing that's better than balance. When I'm here with you, I am all the way here with you. And when I'm home, I am all the way home. So it's the quality of the time that we put together, not the quantity. There are times when I will not answer my telephone.

Sorry. If you need a crisis counselor, here's the list. Following that heavy commitment, we had to do that because I had gotten exposed. And God has given me somewhat of a gift. I seem to be able to keep you entertained for a couple hours of time anyway. So I'm asked to talk a lot and do retreats and all that kind of. And I like it. But we had to come to a little different commitment thing here. I say four years, my wife said five. She's

right. It took a while to tape her off.

So I prayed about, what can my commitment be? And I have to go to prayer for that. The answer that came to me is that I can probably do justice to the family and the job and to a twice a month. Then I went to my real spiritual advisor, who's the guy who never answers a question. He always asks me a question. That's why I use him. Because I'd never think of the question he just asked me and there's the answer. And he kind of thought that twice a month would be okay.

Because it would serve everybody involved. And I went to my wife and we talked about it. Twice a month is fine with one proviso. If I have two to do this month, one in Spokane, one in Yakima, and someone invites us to Hawaii, say yes. Smart lady. So the balance isn't so much in the time and the activity. It's in the quality of what I put out. And then I truly believe that God takes care of all the rest of us. I get breaks in time. I get incredibly busy at times.

When I was on the board, it was amazing. I ended up with five people to sponsor through the big book the entire four years I was there. And I thought, this is heavy duty. Can't you lighten up a little bit? And then I realized the only reason I was able to do the trustees job is because I did this one. This is where the rubber meets the road. But all the rest of it's fluff. Important fluff, but fluff. I don't know if that's an answer. That's how it played out in my life.

It's about communicating with everybody and then just doing what I have to do. I say yes to every reasonable request. And you have to decide for yourself what that means. Just because you want me to come does not make it reasonable. That's right. Now, to keep myself out of trouble in my little book here, when I have two for the month, on the rest of the weekends, I write in at home. So when you call and ask me if I'm free, I can say, I'm sorry, I have another commitment to my family.

I mistakenly took some Easter things a couple years in a row. Boy, did I catch y'all for you. So in this book, the Easter weekend are two great big no. Because I'm stuck. I'm an innocent. If you ask me, can you come? Are you free? I guess. Yeah. Why not? Let's go. Roy. My name is Roy. I'm an alcoholic. And I can't remember how this got out in my mind or where it came from. But there was 36 principles that applied at work, at home, and at play.

And for my body, mind, and spirit, and in the home, that I was required to live by a spiritual constitution, like the United States as a constitution. But also there were 14 Bill of Rights with the Constitution in the United States. Here I had six Bill of Rights, which were called warranties. In the whole those warranties were protecting the individual from me, and in Alcoholics Anonymous those warranties were protecting me from Alcoholics Anonymous.

I don't know if that made any sense or anything, but it has allowed me to participate in my life, to appeal. I've used these warranties to get through some very dicey situations in life. It makes sense or not, but that has been something that has applied to me. I just wanted to know, is there like a concept that goes with every tradition? Kind of like how it's up to? I don't see them that way. The concepts are primarily an extension of the second tradition.

They all go back to the first one, the promotion of unity. But linearly and legalistically I don't see them that way. But there are spiritual principles. This one at home is great. All important decisions will be reached by discussion, vote, and wherever possible, substantial unanimity. That's really important if you're going to take a vacation with a family. Where do we want to go? Disney, Miami, Hawaii, Yellowstone. So we've got to discuss it.

The discussion is more than sitting down in a formal setting. I write off for a brochure. I've been listening to everybody for weeks. We almost always end up going to Epcot. There's substantial unanimity in my family. That Disney World is a great place for adults. And the kids seem to enjoy it too, so bring along. Discussion, vote, and wherever possible substantial unanimity. When I was supervising a staff, that was very important.

They needed to know that the final decision rests with me. When I want your input on a staff of 10 people, contrary to you, you've got difficulty. If you can get substantial unanimity, they'll all go along with a deal because it benefits them. The spiritual life is one of enlightened self-interests. So anyway, we do a lot of discussion in our house and we wait for substantial unanimity. However, there are some things that is none of my business. My oldest daughter just got married.

Now I happen to like him, but it wouldn't matter if I didn't. I didn't get her choice. You didn't get a vote? I didn't even ask for one. Where I did have to draw the line is she decided she wanted a big wedding. She's going to feed 300 people and a \$35 and a plate dinner at the reception door. I'm sorry, honey, I can give you a couple grand, but I can't go for that. But he's rich, so they had it anyway. It was a great party.

They want to do their thing. I don't do their thing. But there was discussion about that. There's enough openness in the house I could honestly say to your mother and I just can't go \$30,000. I'm sorry, we can't. But we can do this and this we will do and we'll support you in every other way. But if you want more than that, so what the discussion led to was for the last year, she moved with us. So she had no other expenses and a good job. She was able to sock it away.

She self-supporting through all kinds of visions and we were all happy. But it took some discussion to get to that. So it works. And my wife and I agree that's a good solution. We want to put that 30 grand in to the basement after she moves out. Make it a family room. The home theater surrounds the whole business. Guys, thank you so much. I hope you benefit from it. Thank you for coming and sharing. There's more detail if what I say is of interest to you, and I'm not pushing this, but one of our past delegates and I had the opportunity to do an entire weekend on traditions and concepts a couple years ago and it got taped. And I'll see Terry gets the tape. I've got to tell you, I don't much like their judge what we do, but it was a great weekend. Some are and other he might expect. And we got into some depths and if you're interested in that, soon Terry will have that.

It's a good one. It was fun. Again, thank you. This was fun.