

CERAASA  
Living the Principles, Accepting our Differences  
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"Welcome, everyone, to this presentation. 'Living the Principles, Accepting Our Differences.' I'm Luca and I am an alcoholic Today, we'll explore how Alcoholics Anonymous's foundational principles extend beyond sobriety, guiding us to embrace and celebrate the diverse backgrounds we all bring to the table. These principles are the backbone of our unity and growth as individuals and as a community.

Alcoholics Anonymous is built on three legacies: recovery, unity, and service, each underpinned by its own set of principles. Recovery is guided by the 12 Steps, unity by the 12 Traditions, and service by the 12 Concepts. Today, I'd like to delve into the foundational elements of these principles.

What is the essential ground from which these roots and this tree grow?

So I turned to my Big Book , this quote is found in appendix II Spiritual Experience.

"We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable."

So today I want to discuss the principles of Willingness, honesty and open mindedness and how they can move us towards accepting our differences.

So what do these Core Principles mean to me:

Honesty: It's about being truthful with ourselves and others. Honesty fosters trust and genuine connections. When we practice honesty, we acknowledge our own biases and work towards overcoming them.

Open-mindedness: This means being willing to listen to different viewpoints, even when they challenge our own beliefs.

Open-mindedness allows us to learn from each other's unique experiences, fostering empathy.

Willingness: Openness to change and grow. It's about being ready to adapt for personal betterment and community harmony. Willingness to change helps us adapt and accept others' ways of living and recovering. And through these we build a community where everyone feels included and valued.

So just How can we apply these principles to embrace the diversity we encounter daily in AA?

Embracing diversity in AA through the principles of honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness involves a conscious effort to integrate these values into our everyday interactions within the fellowship.

Honesty: begins with an acknowledgment of our own biases and prejudices. In AA, this can mean openly sharing our struggles with understanding or accepting differences in how others experience or approach recovery. By being honest about our own limitations, we create a space where others feel safe to share their unique perspectives. Implementing honesty could look like admitting when we've made assumptions based on someone's appearance, background, or beliefs, and then actively seeking to learn more about their experiences to correct our misconceptions. This practice not only fosters trust but also deepens our connection with others, reinforcing the unity that AA strives for.

Honesty about our own experiences with alcohol and our prejudices allows us to connect on a deeper level with others. When we share our stories with candor, we invite others to do the same, regardless of how

different those stories might be from our own. This openness paves the way for the second step in our journey through the 12 Steps- where we come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. Here, honesty helps us acknowledge that this power might manifest differently for each person, respecting the diverse ways people find their spiritual path.

Open-mindedness: is about actively listening and valuing the diverse stories within AA without judgment. Every member's journey to sobriety is unique, shaped by personal, cultural, and social factors. To apply this principle, we can challenge ourselves to attend different meetings, engage with members from various backgrounds, and be genuinely curious about their recovery stories. This might mean asking questions to understand different viewpoints or cultural practices related to sobriety. By being open-minded, we not only broaden our own understanding but also signal to others that their experiences are valid and appreciated within the AA community. This inclusivity can lead to innovative ways of supporting recovery that we might not have considered otherwise.

Open-mindedness is crucial when we move to the third step, deciding to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him. This principle encourages us not only to accept but to actively learn from the varied spiritual practices and beliefs present in AA. It teaches us that recovery is not about conformity but about finding personal truth and support in the collective wisdom of the group.

Willingness: is perhaps the most actionable of these principles; it's about being ready to change and grow. In the context of diversity, this means being willing to step out of our comfort zones, to adapt our behaviors, and to evolve our thinking. We can implement willingness by volunteering for service roles that expose us to different parts of the AA community, participating in workshops or discussions on diversity, or supporting initiatives that aim to make AA more accessible to all. Willingness also means being open to feedback about how we might inadvertently exclude or misunderstand others and then taking steps to rectify this. It's about actively choosing to be part of a community where everyone can feel they belong, by continuously learning and adapting.

Willingness becomes our beacon as we navigate the 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts, which govern how AA groups operate and how service is conducted. This principle is about being ready to change, to learn, and to serve in ways that might not have been part of our initial vision for recovery. For instance, Tradition Three reminds us that the only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking, underscoring the inclusivity that willingness fosters. In terms of service, as outlined by the 12 Concepts, willingness means being open to serving in roles that might not align with our personal interests or comfort but are essential for the group's welfare and for upholding the spirit of AA's unity and purpose.

By integrating honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness into our daily lives within AA, we not only enrich our own recovery journey but also contribute to a fellowship where diversity is not just acknowledged but celebrated as a strength. This approach not only aligns with AA's principles but also with the broader human experience, fostering a compassionate, inclusive environment where every member can recover in their own way.

Alcoholics Anonymous groups truly reflect the vast tapestry of human experience, embodying a microcosm of society where members come from all walks of life. Alcoholism does not discriminate; it touches people across every demographic you can imagine - from the high-powered executive to the stay-at-home parent, from the young to the old, from different ethnicities, religions, genders, and socioeconomic backgrounds. This diversity in AA meetings is not just anecdotal; it's a fundamental part of the fellowship's strength and appeal. When we step into an AA meeting, we see faces that might look like ours or utterly different, but the shared language of recovery unites us. Understanding and embracing this diversity begins with the core principles of honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness, which serve as the foundation for navigating through the rest of AA's guiding structures.

These core principles are not just about personal recovery; they are about creating a community where every individual feels they belong, regardless of their background. They teach us to look beyond our differences, to find common ground in our shared struggles and victories, and to serve in a way that reflects AA's mission of carrying its message to anyone who seeks it. In this environment, the diversity of AA not only enriches our meetings but also our lives, making our recovery journey one that is both deeply personal and universally connected.

To wrap up, living by these principles not only supports our personal recovery but also builds a supportive, diverse AA community where everyone feels valued.

Thank you for participating in this presentation.

Remember, our journey in AA is not just about sobriety but also about growing together in love and tolerance.