

Carry the Message

Sharing Hope from Tamassee Village

By Jon Holland, CEO of Tamassee Hope Village



We've all seen viral internet videos. Whether a Korean pop song, a British baby biting his brother's finger, a comedian's history of dance, or hilarious animal tricks, these videos get millions of views and inspire endless memes and countless fun conversations.

Long before YouTube and TikTok, the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous went viral. AA has reached millions of people since the Big Book was published in 1939. With over 30 unique 12 Steps programs in more than 180 countries, 12 Steps groups have been wildly successful. The secret's in Step 12, which says, "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

One of AA's mantras is: "You keep what you give away." As a recovering person supports another who is still addicted or just beginning recovery, they reinforce their own recovery. We learn best what we teach, and as we share and show the essential practices of the program – surrendering to God's will, cleaning house, and connecting with God and healthy people – we deepen our own understanding and practice.

The first way to carry the message is sharing our story and hope. Recovering people often spot other addicted people. The pioneers of AA challenged those in recovery to intentionally look for those still suffering, get to know them a bit and share some of your story and the transformation the Steps give. If they are interested, keep supporting them. If not, trust you've planted a seed for the future.



The second way to carry the message is to lead beginners' meetings. The AA pioneers created four meetings to allow those new to the program to cover the Steps quickly. Like triage in the emergency room, beginners meetings offer those new to recovery immediate relief and kick start their diagnosis and treatment. As a crash course through the Steps, beginners' meetings are invaluable.

A third way to carry the message is to serve as a sponsor or peer support for a person earlier on in recovery. Offering daily support is vital in the early stages of recovery. The hard-earned wisdom

we've gained over the years of recovery is indispensable for those still finding their way. Often a sponsor or peer support specialist functions as the other person's prefrontal cortex when their limbic system is triggered and cravings are strong. Apart of crisis moments, sponsors help sponsees notice their denial, learn to surrender in their daily lives, follow through on the best type of amends, and practice two-way prayer. They become life-changing relationships.

At Starlight at Tamassee, we believe mothers in recovery can maintain their recovery by carrying the message to others. To learn more about Starlight, visit <https://www.mytamassee.org/starlight/>, or contact us at starlight@mytamassee.org or 864-944-1390. If your church or civic group is interested in a presentation on recovery, contact Jon Holland at jholland@mytamassee.org.

