

WSI 12th Step Committee Frontier Support Conference Call

October 18th, 2015

2:00pm – 3:00pm PST / 5:00pm – 6:00pm EST

The World Service Inc. 12th Step Committee hosted a Frontier Support Conference Call on October 18, 2015. The purpose of the call was to provide support for members living on the frontier (by definition, 100 miles/160 kilometers from the nearest FA meeting) by addressing several issues that were raised at the 2015 World Service Business Convention. Three FA members were invited to share their experience, strength, and hope regarding two specific topics:

- Building and maintaining your fellowship in your outreach calls/Getting and Staying Connected;
- Attending in-person AA meetings

The following notes were taken from the sharing of those three members:

Anna B.

- Moved from California to Idaho to Scotland, UK, where there were no FA meetings.
- Having moved to a different time zone, I needed to build connections with FA members in my new time zone, as those that I had always called were now unavailable for much of the day.
- Not taking it personally if people didn't call back, instead being persistent and developing a thicker skin.
- Some people find it helpful, when living outside of the US, to have a US phone number, so as to be easier to reach.
- Being specific about what you want on a voicemail instead of being vague
- Business convention has been important in building up connections and being able to put a face to a voice heard over the phone.
- Listening to CDs (mp3s) has been really helpful. Would find out phone numbers of people who made the CDs (now available through the FA office) and call the people I related to.
- Attending AA meetings: I couldn't always rely on AA meetings as much as FA meetings. Learned to lean on phone calls and other resources more. What was important was showing up for recovery in person as if going to an FA meeting; dressing becomingly, getting to meetings early, and meeting face to face. Had to look for the good in the AA meeting as opposed to any negative aspects. Sometimes did find meetings disappointing, but learnt acceptance and how to still get the necessary recovery. If AA meeting wasn't great, listened to a CD. Doing service was really important being on the Frontier. Writing for connection and being involved in a committee filled in the gaps in between AA meetings.

Dan B.

- Started in NYC with a small fellowship and then moved to Chicago with a smaller fellowship. Moved to Spain with no meetings, then moved to Toronto where there were no meetings.
- It was Helpful to have been in an area with meetings before going to the frontier area
- Using the telephone was critical being in areas with no meetings. Phone call is conversation, not a message. Dialed lots of people to try to get connected. Guided to keep track of members he called in order to not keep calling the same people again and again. Taking some notes on people and their backgrounds was helpful.
- Building a fellowship happened with one other person. Was set up with convenience rather than what was best for fellowship. Eventually learned that setting up a meeting on a Saturday around

a mealtime was probably the best idea. Meeting was near a public transit with parking and easy access.

- Having a network of members with lots of experience and time in recovery was really helpful.
- Some moments were frustrating, but had to remember that we have a worldwide fellowship as opposed to just a local fellowship.
- Figuring out a way to make it as easy as possible for US people to call back international people is key – making US number, etc.
- Business convention has always been a priority.
- Attending AA meetings: Thing that saved him was doing FA service on a world service level. Treated AA meetings just as FA meetings in terms of being committed 3 times a week. Guided to go to speaker meetings where people share stories like in FA. Often felt like a phony, but had to find where he related. Find the good in the meetings even though it didn't feel like an FA meeting. Learned the principal of live and let live. Getting out of house and out of isolation was incredibly valuable. Not easy, but the value of being face to face was important. Being in AA meetings taught patience. Sometimes would identify as food addict, but a most times identified as addict and still felt welcomed.

Stella J.

- Started in Alaska, got a Frontier Sponsor List, phone numbers, etc.
- Had to get used to feeling awkward on the phone, sometimes making social mistakes and feeling uncomfortable, practicing being humble.
- Sponsor encouraged her to go to FA World Service Business Convention, go to Intergroup whenever possible, and be a part of fellowship. Investing in recovery was investing in relationship with God. Hugely important.
- Sometimes would feed off pity people gave her about living on the frontier, but it didn't serve her well. Tried to focus on advantages of living on the frontier instead.
- Found it helpful to not only call people with years of experience, but also to make sure to call people who were in similar situations to have a shared experience which then made it easier to ask for help from those with more experience.
- Really need to be present with calls because people on the other end know that you really care.
- Attending AA meetings: starting out in AA was helpful in seeing recovery and service in action. Over time, discovered that there are stronger AA meetings that are similar to FA meetings. One thing that helped was to call an FA member after an AA meeting if uncomfortable feelings came up.