

How I Was Hooked

At my home group, the opening announcement states, "If you want to be the greeter, come to the meeting early and greet people when they come in." A lot of people laugh when they hear that.

I wasn't laughing at much of anything the first time I walked into that meeting. I was scared, anxious, and jumpy. The thirty-something woman with the clear eyes who shook my hand at the door seemed like a beacon of light to me. How I yearned for a shred of the self-confidence she showed when she reached out and took my hand. She asked my name and repeated it, introducing herself as well. I had timed my entrance as close as possible to the moment the meeting started to avoid chatting with others, so I scurried by her to an empty seat and held my breath.

I don't remember much of what was said, and I didn't stick around long enough afterward to talk to anyone. Because of that greeter, though, I returned the following week. And there she was again. Wonder of wonders, she remembered my name! I was hooked.

Since then, I have attended that meeting faithfully, nearly every week. For eight years, I have held various ser-

vice positions, including chairperson and coffee maker, which I loved because I thought I really could show these people something about making coffee. (That was in early sobriety — I've gotten better since then.)

Nearly every year, I have chaired a meeting sometime around my anniversary. I consider it one of the greatest gifts of my sobriety. Every year, the experience changes, because every year, I change. But one thing doesn't change: I am overwhelmed with emotion when I look out at the faces of the members of my home group and see my loved ones, my extended family — the dear friends who know my deepest secrets and love me still. Their faces reflect my joy, my anguish, my sorrow. Their stories mirror my own.

Anne S., Albany, New York

