



Step Three

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.

Trying to ferret out the “meaning” of this step was sort of like a dog trying to get all the peanut butter out of his Kong. I got the majority of it, but that last bit of understanding seemed impossibly distant.

My own misunderstandings about this step have eventually brought a better understanding of it. Early on, many meetings seemed to be focused on this step and the insights from fellow members helped me better appreciate it, if I let myself get out of the way. One analogy worked particularly well for me.

When I broke my wrist, I didn’t turn it over to the doctor to fix. I turned it over to his care. He patched it, gave me a set of instructions, and sent me on my way. I followed the directions, including returning occasionally for a check up, and gradually worked the wrist back to regular usage as the *direct result of having turned it over to his care.*

Today, I frequently pause to turn my will and life over to God’s care through prayer and meditation. As it were, I make frequent visits back to God’s office. But it isn’t enough just to go in for that visit, I must continue on with the instructions I receive for improving my life—the remaining steps.

Then the way I follow directions regarding turning my life and will over to the care of God is to continue on with the remaining steps.

Do I occasionally go back to the third one to noodle out a little more understanding? Absolutely! I find great pleasure in noodling out more insight of this and all our steps. And I particularly like doing this with my sponsor and sponsees.

Do I think I will ever get that last bit of peanut butter or that last bit of understanding of Step Three? Absolutely not. That’s one of many reasons why I keep coming back and working with others—I grow more as a result.

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

This is where the real fun begins in sobriety.

For me, the first three steps were a sigh of relief at the diagnosis of alcoholism (Step One), a message of hope that things were to get better (Step Two), and a promise of help for the remainder of the steps (Step Three).

My sponsor started off by having me write a grudge list, just as it is laid out in *Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 65. It was plain and simple with the three columns, as it is in the Big Book. He suggested I not read, just yet, the fourth chapter in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. When I finished the list, we talked it over. And did I ever feel justified in all of my resentments! The whole world had it out for me! I was sure that I was in the midst of my Step Five now, but my sponsor pulled me up short. It wasn’t anywhere near a Step Five. It was nothing more than a gripe session about what *they* had done to *me*.

Oops. You mean to tell me *I* had a part in this?

My sponsor pulled out the Big Book, opened it, and pointed to the second full paragraph on page 67. He sent me back home to add the fourth column. I had to “resolutely look for (my) own mistakes” and write them down. The step then took on a whole new meaning. My grudge list became a list of what I had done to others.

To understand better what this meant for me, I was instructed to read and review carefully from the bottom of page 65 through the end of the chapter as I went down the list of persons I had harmed. I was to do this before adding the fourth column and occasionally along the way.

When I believed I had done as good a job as possible with this four-column list, I was ready to head back over to my sponsor’s house for a real attempt at Step Five.

It’s been a long time since I did that exercise with my sponsor, but to this day, I use pages 66 through 68 whenever I start to jam up and need to do an inventory on a person, place, or thing. And I continually go back to chapter four in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. There I find an expansion of the concepts of Step Four that make further inventories more fruitful.

A Note from the Board Chair

From the Office

Here are the Board members for 2019 (new members are noted with an asterisk *):

Officers

- Chair - Will S. (Term Ends (T/E) 2020)
- Vice Chair - Donna C. (T/E 2020)
- Treasurer - Dara G. (T/E 2019)
- *Alternate Treasurer - LeeAnn P. (T/E 2020)
- *Secretary - Cindy W. (T/E 2020)
- *Alternate Secretary - Penny C. (T/E 2020)

At-Large Members

- Barry M. (T/E 2019)
- *Bill T. (T/E 2020)
- Butch V. (T/E 2019)
- Colin H. (T/E 2019)
- Sam R. (T/E 2019)
- Susan P. (T/E 2019)

As a reminder, the Special Events Committee meets on the first Thursday of every month at 5:30 in the Intergroup office. All AA member are welcome to come and help plan events!

If you have any comments, questions or concerns, please reach out to the Intergroup office, me or anyone else on the Board.

Yours in service,

Will S., Board Chair

Office manager report:

Greetings from the office of the Wilmington Area Intergroup Association!

The start of 2019 has been strong and the office is in a great position to be of service to the community again this year. The Founders Day picnic has been secured at the same location as last year, the Fourth of July event is approved and will be held at the Fellowship Center, with additional meetings scheduled throughout the day, and the Gratitude Dance is shaping up to be a copy of last year’s event, which was regarded as a success by those who attended.

Many new volunteers are signing up at the office to cover the outreach phone and the Night Owl phone.

Opportunities for service are always available and the experience of service work invaluable – come by or call the office to sign up and be a part of what the office provides! Literature specials are being developed and will be announced on the community website – keep an eye out for those and other announcements as this exciting year progresses!

Live Easy But Think First

David G.
Office Manager

Birthday Club

Birthday. Anniversary. Celebration day. Regardless the name, the anniversary of the date we pick up a white chip and join A. A. is an important one.

A very special way to celebrate and give back is to make a donation to Intergroup. One dollar for each year of sobriety makes a small dent in our pockets. But each one of those dollars is a significant amount that Intergroup can put to good use helping carry the message of sobriety.

It is simple to contact the Intergroup Office to find out how to make this important contribution.

Tradition Three

The only requirement for A. A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

One probably shouldn't rank traditions or to have a favorite, but this one is an important. It is also tempting to pontificate rather than share my experience. With this tradition, I have considerable experience but will relate only one.

In my third or fourth year, I was feeling pretty good about A. A. and my role in it. I was involved on many levels from the group up, and was active in meeting attendance and twelfth step work. My sponsor and close friends in the program were traditions oriented, so I had considerable schooling there.

One evening, a fellow showed up at one of my home group's meetings. He was living in a facility nearby and it was obvious that he had significant problems other than alcohol. He proved a disruptive chap, making it difficult for the meeting to have any semblance of order. During one, another fellow and I asked him to join us outside for a private discussion. He was agitated and angry, but understood why we were outside. He bent our ears for a long time about his many problems. We were ready to disinvite him from attending our group, but at the end of his rant, he said, "I just need to keep away from the bottle." With that, my friend and I looked at each other and invited him back inside, if he could try to listen and allow others to talk.

He had a desire not to drink. Therefore, he could be a member.

There were several other times when a couple of us would need to discuss his disruptive behavior with him, but we did so in order for him to bend our ears, not disrupt the meeting.

A.A. Comes of Age is a wonderful book that gives a real understanding of how the traditions arose.

The *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* sums up Tradition Three exactly: "...to take away an alcoholic's full chance (at recovery) was sometimes to pronounce his death sentence, and often to condemn him to endless misery." It could be so if we forbid A. A. membership to someone who does have a desire to stop drinking.

Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A. A. as a whole.

Tradition 4 is straightforward. To over simplify it: My group will operate as it wishes and your group can do the same. We do so as long as we do not come into conflict with other groups or A. A. in general.

This makes for enormous differences among groups. Flamboyant or conservative, meetings exist that satisfy every taste. Some have hard and fast "rules" for conducting meetings, others have almost none. Some seem very spiritually based, while others are more secular. The variety is staggering and mostly refreshing.

Living by Tradition 4, groups do not dictate what others should or should not do. Oh, it's true there may be individuals who attend another group's business or group conscience with a question or suggestion. But for the most part, there is little meddling at the group-to-group level.

However, and it is a big however, the way a group operates has an unstated but very important cautionary note. It does so while adhering to the other traditions.

The traditions evolved as A. A. began to grow. Various groups ran into difficulties on any number of matters. The blowups were sometimes enormous, but in most cases, cooler heads prevailed.

There seems to be two overriding factors that allow groups to grow, flounder, re-group, and then grow again; the authority of a loving God directing group consciences (Tradition 2), and the reality that if A. A. groups fail, the A. A. member will too (Tradition 1).

The literature is very clear and states in several places that we must stay away from alcohol because, "for us, to drink is to die." This sounds a little harsh or even exaggerated. But far too many of us have seen the fatal nature of the disease take its toll. So it is: The group stays strong and the member stays sober; the member stays sober and the group stays strong.

Works out nicely.

Wilmington Area Intergroup, Group Contributions

The Wilmington Area Intergroup Office serves groups in Brunswick, Columbus, Pender, and New Hanover counties to better carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the suffering alcoholic.

Your contributions keep the Intergroup Office functioning.

Group Contributions

Thank you to all the groups who make contributions in support of your Intergroup. It helps us carry the message.....

January and February

1045	Men Living Sober
Acceptance	Midday
At the Crossroads	Midtown
Breakfast Club	New Tabor City
Castle Hayne	New Whiteville
Coastal	Oak Island
Complete Abandon	Ogden Serenity
Daily Reprieve	Primary Purpose
E-Z-DUZ-IT	Proceed Towards
Eustabaphalus	Sobriety
Fresh Beginnings	Reaching Out
Grissetown	Rocky Point
Happiest Hour	Rule 62
Holden Beach	Sisters in Sobriety
How Dry I Am	Sobriety Unlimited
Inside/Out	Southport
Joe and Charlie	Stepping Stone
Just a Meeting	Kitchen
Keep It Simple	Topsail Island
Leland Morning	Turning Point
Edition	Welcome
Living Sober	Young People's
Lumberton AA	

How can I Engage in Service Work?

It's probably not productive to rate one form of service work "better" than another. But one which ranks pretty high is the "Night Owl" phone—the overnight and weekend answering service for the Intergroup Office.

Often, the first contact with A. A. is a telephone call to a local Intergroup. Whether by the active alcoholic in very real need of help, a family member looking for assistance, or by visitors looking for a meeting, each call is important. Callers often need help at times other than usual business hours, so we have 24 hour phone coverage.

After-hours calls are forwarded to a special cell phone. A detailed instruction packet with contact numbers and meeting information accompanies the cell phone. A. A. volunteers handle the phone calls, and give out meeting information, treatment center numbers, and have a list of 12th Step volunteers who can return calls to those needing help.

It is common for a group to volunteer to take the phone for a month, with the phone being passed around members of the group. Other arrangements are possible. Individuals can also take the phone during certain times. Handling the phone is a great way for a sponsor/sponsee to join for service work. Please contact the Intergroup Office for more information

WCYPAA Chili Cook-off

Such a wonderful time spent with young people and not-so-young. Great chili, great fellowship, great afternoon of sober activities.

Congratulations to the Cook-Off winner, Jack!!

From the Archives

The Scope of Our Archives

The historical collection of the Fellowship's records at General Service Office Archives in New York City explores AA's history since its foundation. The formative idea was the brainchild of co-founder Bill W. in the early 1950s. The GSO Archives opened almost twenty years later in November 1975. Its broad scope includes memorabilia and artifactual items significant to the development of AA over the years in the US and abroad.

The scope of the collection conserved in the Wilmington Area Intergroup Archives is naturally more limited and related to the documents and activities of our Intergroup and Districts 3 and 4 of Area 51. The Districts themselves may have their own archives, as may individual groups depending on their desire to collect and preserve the documentation of their activities. The mission of the Wilmington Area Intergroup Archives is to acquire and organize information from both Districts 3 and 4 in the Wilmington Intergroup Area and all the groups included in those geographic areas.

Opened in 2013, thirty years after the formation of Wilmington Area Intergroup, the Intergroup Archives began locating and preserving documents related to the formation of Intergroup in the Wilmington, NC area. The Archives also began documenting the histories of the many groups in the area. Meeting notes and minutes from District and Board meetings are now being filed in the Archives as are copies of the Footwork newsletter. At present they are sporadic and some are paper documents, others electronically filed. One of our present goals and challenges is to store all of these records digitally.

The Archives will need to acquire a computer dedicated to secure storage and retrieval of records in order to accomplish this. We also wish to reenter our inventory onto software designed to more easily store, search and retrieve information. We are a work in progress!

If you are interested in doing service work in the Wilmington Area Intergroup Archives please call or email

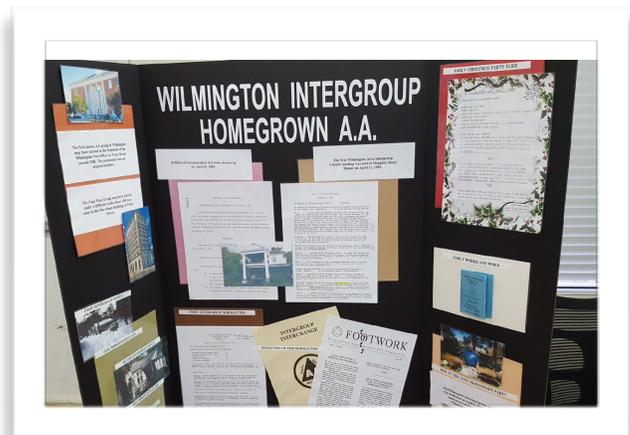
Carol A. at the Intergroup offices 910-794-1840/
intergroupwilmington@gmail.com.

Pamphlet of the Month for April

Understanding Anonymity p-47

This pamphlet clarifies the understanding and application of anonymity in and outside the A. A. community. It clarifies many misconceptions that can cloud what anonymity is all about.

Check it out.



Carol A., our archivist, has put together this portable display briefly describing A.A.'s history in Wilmington. It is available if you wish to display it at special events. Contact Carol through the Intergroup Office.

Dates to Remember

Intergroup Board of Directors, 2nd Thursdays, 5:30 p.m.,
Intergroup Office

Full Intergroup Council, 2nd Thursdays of odd-numbered
months 5:30 p.m., Fellowship Center

CPC/PI 2nd Thursdays, 4:00 p.m., monthly, Port City Java,
Barclay Commons, Shipyard Blvd

Events Committee, 1st Thursdays, 5:30 p.m., Intergroup
Office, all welcome

*If you have recurring events or meetings you want listed here,
please contact the editor.*

Wilmington Area A. A. Intergroup

The Wilmington Area A. A. Intergroup office serves Districts 03 and 04 and provides the following:

- A large stock of AA books, pamphlets, meeting schedules, medallions, chips, and other items;
- A telephone hotline, with the much-appreciated help of volunteers. This is often the first contact of hope for someone suffering from alcoholism;
- Fellowship activities directly related to AA, such as the Founders' Day Picnic, holiday Alkathons (and meals!), the annual holiday speaker/dance/dinner event, and many others;
- Mailboxes for groups so information is quickly distributed;
- A place for some fellowshiping and perhaps a cup of coffee.

Upcoming Regional Events

Crystal Coast Round-up
Oak Island Lighthouse Retreat

Cancelled
May 10-12

Atlantic Beach, NC
Fort Caswell, NC

<https://www.lighthouse-retreat.com>

News from Oak Island

Help Promote the Lighthouse Retreat

Thanks to Sara V. for creating a new webpage for the Oak Island Lighthouse Retreat. The webpage is still under construction with additions of speakers, schedule, and registration. You can help promote the retreat on the internet by searching for "Oak Island Lighthouse Retreat" and clicking on the page. Increasing the number of hits will help move the site up in the search listing.

Pamphlet of the Month for March

Questions and Answers on Sponsorship P-15

When I'm asked to sponsor someone, I ask that they first read this pamphlet. It is a clear representation of what is involved in sponsorship, expectations, responsibilities, and so on. Check it out.

Note regarding District 3

I want the hand of AA to always be thereand for that I am responsible

The 2019 District 3 budget is projected to fall short by \$2500. The expenses are less than last year. The projected income, based on last year's contributions, will not meet expenses. There are 42 home groups in the District. Only 14 groups donated to the District last year. The District supports recovery in prisons, rehabilitation facilities, and home groups. The District follows the seventh tradition and only accepts contributions from members of AA.

What is your group doing to support District 3?

SELF-SUPPORT

The Seventh Tradition states: "Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions."

While contributions cover each group's rent and other expenses, the Seventh Tradition is essential at every level of A.A. service. It is both a privilege and a responsibility for groups and members to ensure that not only their group, but also their intergroup/central office, local services, district, area, and the General Service Office remain self-supporting. This keeps A.A. free of outside influences that might divert us from our primary purpose — to help the alcoholic who still suffers.

The amount of our contribution is secondary to the spiritual connection that unites all groups around the world.

Service Material from the General Service Office

Notice a more clean areas in *Footwork* this issue?

I encourage you to fill it up with articles you write about A. A. in general, your experiences in sobriety, your take on the hot topics going around the groups.

As editor, I can help you chose topics or pick your brain for what you want to write about. Let's fill this thing up.

Articles of about 300 words or less are ideal.

Stephen L. editor
dexlequire@gmail.com

News Flash

Footwork is now available online.

Go to wilmingtonaa.us and follow the easy-to-follow instructions.

News Flash

Also available on-line and free of charge is **Box 459**, the quarterly newsletter from the A.A. General Service Office.

Go to aa.org/pages/en_us/box-4-5-9-news-and-notes-from-gso

