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STEP 3

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

For me step 3 was hard because I wanted to control everything. I didn't want to surrender because that meant someone else would have control. My decision making is what got me here. But after working step 3 and I surrendered to my higher power, life and my recovery became easier. I finally realized that the only thing I could control was myself. I turned my life and my will over to the care of my higher power (whom I choose to call God). My life still isn't perfect, but I'm much happier than I was.

STEP 4

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

Step Four calls upon us to examine our physical and mental liabilities, our emotional deformities, so that we can correct them. Our urges to seek fulfillment of our goals and security at any cost can turn on us, distorting our words and deeds into thinking and behavior destructive to self and others. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions tells us that, “Alcoholics especially should be able to see that instinct run wild in themselves is the underlying cause of their destructive drinking”. We look outside ourselves at “causes and conditions” rather than inside where we may learn that “we needed to change ourselves to meet conditions, whatever they are” (p. 47). This recognition is the start of a lifelong practice of identifying our character defects. Thoroughness ought to be our watchword when taking this inventory. “When we saw our faults, we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.” (Alcoholics Anonymous p. 67)



STEP 4 *continued*

Our Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous lays out a clear process for working Step Four, listing our resentments with thoroughness and honesty. We are reminded of the futility and unhappiness of harboring resentments, “shut off from the sunlight of the Spirit.” (p.66) We are reminded of the threat to our very lives of continuing on this path of resentment. We are also reminded of the power of fear and the importance of “trusting and relying upon God...enabling us to match calamity with serenity”. “We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.” (p. 68)

Overcoming self-will through faith removes our barrier from God. Having made a decision in Step Three to turn over our will and lives to God as we understand him, we can now go forward with the self-knowledge gained from the development of our inventory.



SPONSOR / SPONSEE ROOM

We all know how important building a relationship with a sponsor is. Whether doing step work, discussing life issues, advice on decisions, etc., a sponsor can help with all of the above.

Sometimes you need a quiet, private place to meet.

Whether it be something as important as a fifth step, or just something you don't feel comfortable talking about at a coffee shop, a diner, etc.

We have created just such a place. Please call the Intergroup Office @ 910-794-1840 to check for availability, and reserve a time.

Looking forward to seeing you.

A NOTE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

We are celebrating a Zoomiversary! It has been a year since the shut down and for many of us the reality of recovery has been “virtual in person” I am full of gratitude for Intergroup hosting the Noon meeting Monday thru Friday. It has been able to serve our community with the message of recovery for many newcomers, people in other AA communities and our local AA members who have stepped up to chair the meetings. A newcomer from Florida read the traditions the other day in the noon meeting and started them off with a couple of paragraphs from page 561 APPENDICES (4th Edition Big Book) The A.A. Tradition. “To those now in its fold, Alcoholics Anonymous has made the difference between life and death. A.A. can, of course, mean just as much to uncounted alcoholics not yet reached. Therefore, no society of men and women ever had a more urgent *need* for continuous effectiveness and permanent unity. We alcoholics see that we must work together and hang together, else most of us will finally die alone.

The “12 Traditions” of Alcoholics Anonymous are, we A.A.’s believe, the best answers that our experience has yet given to those ever-urgent question, “How can A.A. best function?” and, “How can A.A. best stay whole and so survive?” The traditions follow on the next page. The first tradition speaks to our personal recovery depending on unity. *Unity* is the thing that I have continued to observe in our A.A. meetings and still no one can answer why this fellowship saves alcoholics from the “denizens” of the alcohol sea and raises them up. I have continued to experience the message of “experience, strength and hope” in every virtual meeting world wide that I have attended. This journey of recovery that we alcoholics are on is certainly one of Hope where once we were hopeless. Our Intergroup has continued to be of service to many who *need* it and has given them the hope that is needed to begin a new life. If you have a chance to visit Intergroup in person (with a mask), please take advantage of the selection of literature and the safe, friendly atmosphere that is offered. Intergroup continues to appreciate the support of our recovery community. Easy Does It, Cindy W. Intergroup BOD Chair

TRADITION 3

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

Our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions tells us that there are no conditions under which we can be excluded from AA if we ourselves declare ourselves a member. To “take away any alcoholic’s full chance [for recovery] was sometimes to pronounce his death sentence, and often to condemn him to endless misery”. Thus AA abandoned all membership regulations. Regardless of individual belief and expression, all are welcome to participate. “Any alcoholic is a member of our Society when *he* says so.”

Bill W. writes in The Language of the Heart that “Even in self-protection, we do not wish to erect the slightest barrier between ourselves and the fellow alcoholic who still suffers”. (p. 79) He continues, “If he is anything, the sick alcoholic is a rebellious nonconformist. How well we understand that; every member of Alcoholics Anonymous was once a rebel himself”. There are no conditions and no “musts”.

The only qualification requires that any group calling itself an AA group have no other affiliation than Alcoholics Anonymous. No designations by religion or politics are allowed. “We cannot lend the AA name, even indirectly, to other activities, however worthy.”

Bill finishes by writing, “Let us of AA therefore resolve that we shall always be inclusive and never exclusive, offering all that we have to all, save our title. May all barriers be thus leveled, may our unity thus be preserved. And may God grant us a long life-and a useful one!”

TRADITION 4

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

The dictionary defines autonomy as self-government with respect to internal affairs or self-determination in regards to a state, community or a group. How does this apply to our structure of AA groups? The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions refers to the "vast process of trial and error which, under the grace of God, has brought us to where we stand today". (p. 146) Groups would eventually "conform to whatever tested principles would guarantee survival". So this means that each individual AA group uses its own conscience to guide its activities. This unqualified freedom is accompanied by only two guidelines. One, not to do anything which would harm AA as a whole, and two, that AA groups not also affiliate with any other non-AA group or individual (as previously stated in Tradition Three).

In The Language of the Heart Bill W. describes Tradition Four as a "specific application of general principles outlined in Traditions One and Two...our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward" and "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority-a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience." Groups make their own decisions without any challenge from authority even at the risk of being wrong. The group's conscience can be counted on to bring it back into balance with AA's principles. "But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, these groups ought to be consulted." (p. 81) Democracy is preserved, and anarchy avoided. Groups consult one another or the intergroup agency out of respect on matters that might also concern them. Bill W. sums up Tradition Four by stating, "On such issues our common welfare is paramount." (p. 82)

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO ARCHIVES

Wilmington Intergroup Archives is compiling a collection of material related to the Covid-19 Pandemic of 2020. We welcome submissions from all members of the fellowship whether you are a member of long standing or newly arrived.

A.A. Archives Guidelines tell us that "Archives service work is more than mere custodial activity: it is the means by which we collect, preserve, and share the rich and meaningful heritage of our Fellowship. It is by the collection and sharing of these important historical elements that our collective gratitude for Alcoholics Anonymous is deepened". They further state that "A.A. members have a responsibility to gather and care for the Fellowship's historical documents and memorabilia. Correspondence, records, minutes, reports, photographs, newspaper and magazine articles from the past and the present should be collected, preserved, and made available for the guidance and research of A.A. members and others (researchers, historians, and scholars from various disciplines)-for now and for generations to come.

There is no doubt about it. We are going through a most challenging time in our history. We have been presented with a task of historic proportions, and we have responded with prompt and creative solutions. The solidity of the program of A.A. and the dedication and flexibility of its diverse members drives the success of our ongoing enterprise.

Please help us in making a lasting record of how our Wilmington Intergroup Area has continued to provide services "Consistent with A.A.'s primary purpose of maintaining our sobriety and helping other alcoholics achieve recovery..." during this time of duress.

Your level of service could be anything from calling with an idea up to assisting with assembling the collection. Writing is not a necessary skill, and all offers of assistance will be appreciated. I welcome all contacts.

THE INTERGROUP AND AA FUNCTIONS

The Intergroup has had a long history of sponsoring events and outings to fellowship and celebrate different holidays.

When I first came to AA, I had been isolated for so long that I could barely be around other people. I had lost whatever social skills I once may have had but I forced myself to keep coming back no matter how uncomfortable it was for me.

Sometime between sixty and ninety days I started volunteering in the office. Answering phones, folding where and whens and doing whatever Bob H. told me.

Not long after I started volunteering, the Founders day picnic happened. It was at that event that I began to see how important these functions were to my sobriety. Seeing a couple of hundred alcoholics having a good time without alcohol gave me confidence that I could do it too.

When the Thanksgiving, Christmas and New Year's Alkathons took place, I really got to see the amount of planning, work and generosity it took to make these functions happen.

The functions put on by the Intergroup are so helpful to so many people. Whether they are dealing with social issues, estrangement from their families or just to feel useful by volunteering.

I pray that we can get back together soon and enjoy each other's company, like we were meant to. Until then, I wish you all peace, prosperity, and sobriety.

Ashley F.

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