

## FOOTWORK

### Wilmington Area Intergroup Newsletter - - - June/July 2023

#### Step 6

**Were entirely ready for God to remove all these defects of character.**

*Are We Really Willing to Change?*

Excerpts from December 1980  
Grapevine

The first step was a synch for me I had run out of options and my drinking had been devastating; so self-debate about drinking simply didn't exist. I knew I could not drink safely. I did the First Step at the moment I entered a center for detoxification, and I have never questioned it since.

It then took several weeks to get to the second step, but it became apparent that I had not stopped drinking on my own. A Higher Power had obviously intervened, so the Third Step was understandable and necessary.

My sponsor pushed, shoved, and tugged, and I eventually did the Fourth and Fifth Steps from the point onward, I made immense progress. Even the ninth step was faced with resolution and courage. I made the appropriate amends and experienced the feeling of liberation my sponsor had promised.

The other steps were the logical extension of the program for me. I became active in Twelfth Step work and enjoy the rewards.

Still something was missing. There remained lingering feelings of vague discontent. The personality flaws I had uncovered in the Fourth and Fifth steps

had diminished – but were still there. And they started up the same old process that had produced feelings I had when drinking – impatience, irascibility, quick temper, and an unforgiving attitude towards others. I didn't like the way I felt, so I had dinner with my sponsor and discussed my situation with him. He gave me one of his knowing smiles but said nothing. "Well," I demanded, "What's your solution to this problem?"

"You really think you have done all the Steps, don't you?" He asked. I assured him somewhat indignantly, that I had. Hadn't I don't the Fourth and Fifth with him? Had he not seen my Twelfth Step activity with his own eyes? Wasn't he aware of how faithfully – in my mind – I was doing the tenth step.

"All very true," he said, "but what about the 6<sup>th</sup> step?"

That came like a bolt from the blue of course, I was willing to change and have my Higher Power remove my defects of character, what's I? ...Was I?

The Sixth Step means facing ourselves, and that is often more difficult than being honest with another person, I have found it difficult to lie to others but still easy to lie to myself. When I say. All too swiftly, "Of course, I am willing to change, : "I now ask myself, "Really? Who is kidding who?" The fact that I am now questioning my willingness to change has increased my ability to be increasingly willing. I simply don't take the process as lightly as I did before. I can't learn anything unless I am

sincerely willing to learn. Nor will making myself promises to change have any significance until *the willingness factor is developed*. R. B. Manhattan, NY

## **Tradition 6**

**An AA group ought never endorse finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.**

*This is AA* June 2009 Mike M. Fort Wayne IN

In thinking about tradition six I am reminded of my friend George. In the fall of '94 I was on our local intergroup call list. Late one evening I was asked to give George a call, as he might want help. George said that he had tried "AA" before but it had never worked – during several previous stays in treatment, he had gone to meetings there. It was a great surprise to George that most of those meetings were run by the facilities; they were not AA groups but a function of a treatment center or hospital. I said I would be glad to meet him and show him the program of recovery that worked for me – as outlined in our book *Alcoholics Anonymous* – and introduce him to an AA group.

Because of the amount of alcohol George had consumed, I suggested a medically supervised detox. After that I agreed to meet him at my home group. Unexpectedly, I had to leave early, so I arranged for George to be met by a

fellow member, Jimmy D. – who became George's sponsor.

Eight years later when Jimmy D. died, George talked about the wonderful way of life Jimmy had shared with him.

George and I often reminisced about how he had giving up hope of finding sobriety, and how he thought he had tried AA, but had never been introduced to the program of recovery.

"While an AA group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought to never go so far as affiliation as endorsement, actual or implied," AA's sixth tradition, longform, says. (AA's Third tradition, longform, adds: "Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided that as a group they have no other affiliation.")

## **Ham on Wry**

May 1996

A businessman working on his Seventh Step complained to his sponsor, "I don't get it. I prayed for humility and the Board of Directors forced me out. So I became Vice President of another big operations. I prayed for humility again, and got fired from that job too! What should I do?"

The sponsor said, "Pray for something else."

## **Step 7**

**Humble asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**

*Freedom from Fear* July 2000 James G. Warwick, Rhode Island



The second to the last paragraph of Step Seven in the "Twelve and Twelve" was the wake-up call I needed as I reluctantly began my first journey through the steps. Finally I had found, in one sentence, the sum total of my active alcoholic life; "The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear-primarily fear that we would lose something that we already possessed or would fail to get something we demanded.

From the day I picked up my first drink, continuing through early sobriety, fear ruled my life 24-hours a day. To discover that my fears were based on the selfish notion that I deserved the best that life could give me all the way trampling on others rights and feelings- saved my sanity and life. I realized that the fear of losing people, places, or things was not only a waste of time; it caused a multitude of resentments.

My life is far from perfect, of course, but after a few twenty-four hours of sobriety and freedom from fear I have hope and gratitude. When I remember to work the program daily, I am able to replace fear with hope.

#### **Tradition 7**

**Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.**

Means to an End from July 1998

I am probably not the only alkie to come to the Fellowship with a protective coat of cynicism, particularly regarding money. When I heard the traditions and

the word from the Preamble about being "self-supporting through our own contributions," I thought, yeah right.

That attitude was erased when I heard my first treasurer's report (I'd become teachable in the intervening months)

I was delivered by a gravel-voiced man named L. A. He got right tot the point; "We had more than seventy-five dollars so we gave the rest away." I didn't hear another word of his report. My head was racing with the thought Now here's a group of thirty or thirty-five people who donate a dollar each week. And when they get more than seventy-five dollars, they give the rest away! And this guy sounds like he is proud of it! I didn't need to hear anymore; I'd gotten the message I needed; Nobody's in this thing for the money.

Later, I learned about things like prudent reserves and 60-30-10 plans. I saw how money can be important to us without becoming the focus of our attentions or actions. Our donations pay the rent, but literature, and buy refreshments for the meetings.

They also fund our Intergroups, the Districts, the Areas, and World Services, the activities that make a cohesive whole of A.A. present our face to the world and allow newcomers to find us.

In sobriety, I have known prosperity and poverty. My donations have been large and very small, sometimes barely nominal. But sobriety requires that I give other things. My experience, strength, and hope as an alcoholic, my time and service to the Fellowship and other

alcoholics. These commodities aren't measured by the contents of my wallet.

Mike H. Ventura, California

### **Message from the Chair**

Providing Service Opportunities is a Service

"Look, we'll have someone show you what to do - we can have someone pick you up and drop you off. There's a map on the wall, a where and when, and all you have to do is answer the phone and tell people how to find meetings. It's not rocket science, plus you don't answer the phone with your leg!"

This is what was said to me some twenty years ago now, a few months after my last relapse. My then home group had a commitment to answer the phones at the intergroup office the last Sunday of the month and no one else was available to do it. I had objected that I didn't know how to do it, had no way of getting there and still had a busted leg from my last relapse.

Jennifer, who said those words, ended up being my service sponsor and later proceeded me as Area Delegate. I had no idea then that service work would open me up to an entirely new reality or how I would be transformed by it.

I did answer the phones that day and it started me on a journey of discovery as I began to see myself as a part of something larger than myself. When I was drinking, I was so isolated and cut off from the rest of the world that even after the alcohol was removed from my body, I didn't know how I could build a

life where I would actually feel connected to others. After my relapse I ended up in the hospital. When I got out, I called the intergroup. Bob answered, and through the IG 12 step list, I had two guys come out to my apartment and bring me a message of hope and of recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous.

That was my first exposure to how wonderful AA people are.

In Bill's essay on tradition three found in "Language of the Heart" he writes about newcomers "We must enter the dark cave where he is and show him we understand. We realize he is altogether too weak and confused to jump hurdles." P79

That's exactly how I feel about what Howard and Patrick, working through the intergroup, did for me over 22 years ago.

I could not believe how just "Good" you AA people were, to care about a worthless wreck of a human being like me.

I feel that I experience my higher power through the fellowship, and becoming a part of the fellowship through service has allowed me to be part of something good.

When I went to answer phones at the intergroup that day I ended up showing the staples in my leg from the surgery that had put it back together again. It helped reframe his own relapse and put things in perspective.

I ended up discovering that in my very brokenness I had something to offer.



I was invited to participate in the good that this intergroup does. I've heard it said that to get self-esteem one must do esteemable things. By showing up I had the opportunity to see my life mean something, because I could see how my experience may benefit others. I saw God at work in the world through the service you AA people do, and I have been humbled and transformed by answering the call to join you.

That is what this intergroup offers. I think it is important that we maintain a website for ourselves and for Districts 3 and 4, and we have a store where people can buy literature, medallions, stickers and what not - that we have walkathon meetings during the holidays for people to attend, and that we feed people good food and good fellowship. That we have events, like the Founder's Day picnic and last month's Chill Cook off, that we provide a point of contact for treatment providers and the public, that we have a phone where a live alcoholic can be reached 24/7, that we maintain a 12-step list of AA members willing to talk to newcomers and even publish a newsletter. But just as important as the services facilitated by this office are the service opportunities we provide for the volunteers who get to grow spiritually and cultivate meaning and purpose in their lives by doing service.

That is why the intergroup asks for volunteers and that is why I would like everyone here today to go back to your home groups and share about the service opportunities we have here.

In addition to helping with Night-owl phone, volunteering to help Cindy in the office or with LeAnn on the events committee, I would like to propose the groups consider volunteering to help clean the office once or twice a month as a group commitment, not because the IG can't afford a cleaning service, but to get a sense of ownership through participation. It is an experience not to be missed!

Kenneth C. Intergroup Board Chair

### **Note from the Intergroup Office**

Founders Day was a great success! We had two great speakers, Meredith K. and Jack W. both from Wharf Rats. T-shirt sales were great. Our grill masters were on point with Hamburgers and Hot Dogs. We hosted over two hundred and fifty guests. I am amazed at the willingness of our A.A. community to be of service. We had great volunteers setting up, serving and cleaning up! Ticket sales were at a record high this year. We had a great cookout on the Fourth of July at the Fellowship Center! The A.A. community rose to the occasion with many side dishes and desserts provided by our membership. And again, we had great volunteers to set-up, serve, and clean up. I think everyone in attendance had a great time.

Cindy W. July 17, 2023

## Groups that contributed to Intergroup in June

Across the River

At the Crossroads

Carolina/Kure Beach

Castle Hayne

Coastal

Complete Abandon

Ez-Duz-It

Just A Meeting-Zoom

Men Living Sober

Midday

New Whiteville

Oak Tree

Ogden Serenity

One Day At A Time

Radio Recovery

Serenity by the Sea

Shallotte

Tuesday Night Mens

P-84

AA – a kinship of common suffering

“Newcomers are approaching A.A. at the rate of tens of thousands yearly. They represent almost every belief and attitude imaginable. We have atheists and agnostics. We have people of nearly every race, culture and religion. In A.A. we are supposed to be bound together in the kinship of a common suffering. Consequently, the full individual or even our collective views.

Let us instead accord each other the respect and love that is due to every human being as he tries to make his way towards the light. Let us always try to be inclusive rather than exclusive; and let us remember that each alcoholic among us is a member of A. A., so long as he or she so declares.” – Bill W. (AA Grapevine, July 1965)

### Intergroup Board Officers:

Kenneth C. Chair

Joe W. Vice Chair

Sally V. Secretary

Britney P. Treasurer

Lori I. Alternate Secretary

### At-Large Members:

Melissa B.

Brad R.

Butch R.

Frank S.

Hap P.

Kate W.

Mike W.

Penny C. Ex-Officio 2022 Chair

## **BECOME A FAITHFUL FIVER!**

### *What are Faithful Fivers?*

They are A.A. members who graciously contribute five dollars or more each month to support Wilmington Area Intergroup.

As a Faithful Fiver, you support efforts to carry the A.A. message of hope to still-suffering alcoholics in the greater Wilmington Area.