

THE COURIER



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Where Did The 12 Steps Come From?

(The following article first appeared in The Grapevine in July, 1953. Bill W. wrote at that time, his experience with writing the 12 steps of alcoholics anonymous.)

12 STEPS IN 30 MINUTES

AAs are always asking: "Where did the Twelve Steps come from?" In the last analysis, perhaps nobody knows. Yet some of the events which led to their formulation are as clear to me as though they took place yesterday.

So far as people were concerned, the main channels of inspiration for our Steps were three in number--the Oxford Groups, Dr. William D. Silkworth of Towns Hospital and the famed psychologist, William James, called by some the father of modern psychology. The story of how these streams of influence were brought together and how they led to the writing of our Twelve Steps is exciting and in spots downright incredible.

Many of us will remember the Oxford Groups as a modern evangelical movement which flourished in the 1920's and early 30's, led by a one-time Lutheran minister, Dr. Frank Buchman. The Oxford Groups of that day threw heavy emphasis on personal work, one member with another. AA's Twelfth Step had its origin in that vital practice. The moral backbone of the "O.G." was absolute honesty, absolute purity, absolute unselfishness and absolute love. They also practiced a type of confession, which they called "sharing"; the making of amends for harms done they called "restitution." They believed deeply in their "quiet time," a meditation practiced by groups and individuals alike, in which the guidance of God was sought for every detail of living, great or small.

These basic ideas were not new; they could have been found elsewhere. But the saving thing for us first alcoholics who contacted the Oxford Groupers was that they laid great stress on these particular principles. And fortunate for us was the fact that the Groupers took special pains not to interfere with one's personal religious views. Their society, like ours later on, saw the need to be strictly non-denominational.

In the late summer of 1934, my well-loved alcoholic friend and schoolmate "Ebbie" had fallen in with these good folks and had promptly sobered up. Being an alcoholic, and rather on the obstinate side, he hadn't been able to "buy" all the Oxford Group ideas and attitudes. Nevertheless, he was moved by their deep sincerity and felt mighty grateful for the fact that their ministrations had, for the time being, lifted his obsession to drink.

When he arrived in New York in the late fall of 1934, Ebbie thought at once of me. On a bleak November day he rang up. Soon he was looking at me across our kitchen table at 182 Clinton Street, Brooklyn, New York. As I remember that conversation, he constantly used phrases like these: "I found I couldn't run my own life;" "I had to get honest with myself and somebody else;" "I had to make restitution for the damage I had done;" "I had to pray to God for guidance and strength, even

Continued on page 4

STEP NINE: *“Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”*

TRADITION NINE: *“A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”*

TRADITION NINE (Long Form): *Each A.A. group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our over-all public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principle newspaper, the A.A. Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.*

CONCEPT NINE: *“Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety. The primary world service leadership once exercised by the founders of A.A. must necessarily be assumed by Trustees of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous.”*

9Th Step Prayer: *I pray for the right attitude to make my amends, Being ever mindful not to harm others in the process. I ask for Your guidance in making indirect amends. Most important, I will continue to make amends by staying abstinent, helping others and growing in spiritual progress.*

TRADITIONS—CHECKLIST

This is a Checklist for Tradition NINE. Reprinted with permission from Service Material from the General Service Office:

1. Do I still try to boss things in AA?
2. Do I resist formal aspects of AA because I fear them as authoritative?
3. Am I mature enough to understand and use all elements of the AA program—even if no one makes me do so—with a sense of personal responsibility?
4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any AA job I take?
5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any AA job?
6. Why doesn't every AA group need a constitution and bylaws?
7. Have I learned to step out of an AA job gracefully—and profit thereby—when the time comes?
8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?



The 2020 International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous will be held July 2–5, 2020 in Detroit, Michigan with the theme “Love and Tolerance is our Code.” A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.’s 85th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Ford Field Stadium. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the COBO Center in downtown Detroit.

Information about Convention registration and housing reservations will be available in fall 2019. All necessary information will be included in the registration packet which will also be available in the fall of 2019. This packet will list numbers to call for answers to specific questions about housing, the program, etc. The information will be mailed to A.A. groups, offices and contacts around the world and posted on the website. weekend in the COBO Center in downtown Detroit.

DID YOU KNOW THAT LESS THAN 3% OF OUR FELLOWSHIP SUBSCRIBES TO *THE GRAPEVINE?*

Here’s How You Can Help Grapevine Grow. Subscribe – individually or by groups. Submit your stories, editorials, photos, jokes and cartoons. Elect or serve as your Group Grapevine Representative to help spread awareness. Use an article as your meeting topic (It’s all AAWS Conference approved!). Start a Grapevine Meeting. Collect old issues for use in correctional or treatment facilities. Donate a subscription to a medical clinic or probation office. Give your sponsees a gift subscription. Have your group host a writing workshop! We are self-supporting! It’s time to support our “meeting in prin”. To find out more contact the Grapevine Committee at cmte.grapevine@gmail.com

DON'T MISS THIS POPULAR TITLE FROM GRAPEVINE!

Voices of Women in AA

Stories of experience, strength and hope from Grapevine

Voices of Women in AA is a collection of 61 stories from Grapevine.

The book begins with articles by or about women who contributed to AA early in its history, followed by stories by some of the program's earliest female members.

There are sections devoted to spirituality, sponsorship, life changes, relationships, family, careers and friendships and the collection concludes with a chapter devoted to women's meetings.

The stories demonstrate the various ways women alcoholics — often with great courage — find sobriety in AA and embrace the program to live rich and rewarding lives.



VOICES OF WOMEN IN AA

Stories of experience, strength
and hope from Grapevine

Available at the Naples AA Central Office

Continued from page 1

though I wasn't sure there was any God;" "And after I'd tried hard to do these things I found that my craving for alcohol left." Then over and over Ebbie would say something like this: "Bill, it isn't a bit like being on the water-wagon. You don't fight the desire to drink--you get released from it. I never had such a feeling before."

Such was the sum of what Ebbie had extracted from his Oxford Group friends and had transmitted to me that day. While these simple ideas were not new, they certainly hit me like tons of brick. To-day we understand just why that was. . .one alcoholic was talking to another as no one else can.

Two or three weeks later, December 11th to be exact, I staggered into the Charles B. Towns Hospital, that famous drying-out emporium on Central Park West, New York City. I'd been there before, so I knew and already loved the doctor in charge--Dr. Silkworth. It was he who was soon to contribute a very great idea without which AA could never have succeeded. For years he had been proclaiming alcoholism an illness, an obsession of the mind coupled with an allergy of the body. By now I knew this meant me. I also understood what a fatal combination these twin ogres could be. Of course, I'd once hoped to be among the small percentage of victims who now and then escape their vengeance. But this outside hope was now gone. I was about to hit bottom. That verdict of science--the obsession that condemned me to drink and the allergy that condemned me to die--was about to do the trick. That's where medical science, personified by this benign little doctor, began to fit in. Held in the hands of one alcoholic talking to the next, this double-edged truth was a sledgehammer which could shatter the tough alcoholic's ego at depth and lay him wide open to the grace of God.

In my case it was of course Dr. Silkworth who swung the sledge while my friend Ebbie carried to me the spiritual principles and the grace which brought on my sudden spiritual awakening at the hospital three days later. I immediately knew that I was a free man. And with this astonishing experience came a feeling of wonderful certainty that great numbers of alcoholics might one day enjoy the priceless gift which had been bestowed upon me.

THIRD INFLUENCE At this point a third stream of influence entered my life through the pages of William James' book, "Varieties of Religious Experience." Somebody had brought it to my hospital room. Following my sudden experience, Dr. Silkworth had taken great pains to convince me that I was not hallucinated. But William James did even more. Not only, he said, could spiritual experiences make people saner, they could transform men and women so that they could do, feel and believe what had hitherto been impossible to them. It mattered little whether these awakenings were sudden or gradual, their variety could be almost infinite. But the biggest payoff of that noted book was this: *in most of the cases described, those who had been transformed were hopeless people. In some controlling area of their lives they had met absolute defeat.* Well, that was me all right. In complete defeat, with no hope or faith whatever, I had made an appeal to a higher Power. I had taken Step One of today's AA program--"admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable," I'd also taken Step Three--"made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to God as we understood him." Thus was I set free. It was just as simple, yet just is mysterious, as that.

These realizations were so exciting that I instantly joined up with the Oxford Groups. But to their consternation I insisted on devoting myself exclusively to drunks. This was disturbing to the O.G.'s on two counts. Firstly, they wanted to help save the whole world. Secondly, their luck with drunks had been poor. Just as I joined they had been working over a batch of alcoholics who had proved disappointing indeed. One of them, it was rumored, had flippantly cast his shoe through a valuable stained glass window of an Episcopal church across the alley from O.G. headquarters. Neither did they take kindly to my repeated declaration that it shouldn't; take long to sober up all the drunks in the world. They rightly declared that my conceit was still immense.

Continued on page 5

Continued from page 4

SOMETHING MISSING

After some six months of violent exertion with scores of alcoholics which I found at a nearby mission and Towns Hospital, it began to look like the Groupers were right. I hadn't sobered up anybody. In Brooklyn we always had a houseful of drinkers living with us, sometimes as many as five. My valiant wife, Lois, once arrived home from work to find three of them fairly tight. The remaining two were worse. They were whaling each other with two-by-fours. Though events like these slowed me down somewhat, the persistent conviction that a way to sobriety could be found never seemed to leave me. There was, though, one bright spot. My sponsor, Ebbie, still clung precariously to his new-found sobriety.

What was the reason for all these fiascoes? If Ebbie and I could achieve sobriety, why couldn't all the rest find it too? Some of those we'd worked on certainly wanted to get well. We speculated day and night why nothing much had happened to them. Maybe they couldn't stand the spiritual pace of the Oxford Group's four absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love. In fact some of the alcoholics declared that this was the trouble. The aggressive pressure upon them to get good overnight would make them fly high as geese for a few weeks and then flop dismally. They complained, too, about another form of coercion--something the Oxford Groupers called "guidance for others." A "team" composed of non-alcoholic Groupers would sit down with an alcoholic and after a "quiet time" would come up with precise instructions as to how the alcoholic should run his own life. As grateful as we were to our O.G. friends, this was sometimes tough to take. It obviously had something to do with the wholesale skidding that went on.

But this wasn't the entire reason for failure. After months I saw the trouble was mainly in me. I had become very aggressive, very cocksure. I talked a lot about my sudden spiritual experience, as though it was something very special. I had been playing the double role of teacher and preacher. In my exhortations I'd forgotten all about the medical side of our malady, and that need for deflation at depth so emphasized by William James had been neglected. We weren't using that medical sledgehammer that Dr. Silkworth had so providentially given us.

Finally, one day, Dr. Silkworth took me back down to my right size. Said he, "Bill, why don't you quit talking so much about that bright light experience of yours, it sounds too crazy. Though I'm convinced that nothing but better morals will make alcoholics really well, I do think you have got the cart before the horse. The point is that alcoholics won't buy all this moral exhortation until they convince themselves that they must. If I were you I'd go after them on the medical basis first. While it has never done any good for me to tell them how fatal their malady is, it might be a very different story if you, a formerly hopeless alcoholic, gave them the bad news. Because of the identification you naturally have with alcoholics, you might be able to penetrate where I can't. Give them the medical business first, and give it to them hard. This might soften them up so they will accept the principles that will really get them well."

THEN CAME AKRON

Shortly after this history-making conversation, I found myself in Akron, Ohio, on a business venture which promptly collapsed. Alone in the town, I was scared to death of getting drunk. I was no longer a teacher or a preacher, I was an alcoholic who knew that he needed another alcoholic, as much as that one could possibly need me. Driven by that urge, I was soon face to face with Dr. Bob. It was at once evident that Dr. Bob knew more of spiritual things than I did. He also had been in touch with the Oxford Groupers at Akron, But somehow he simply couldn't get sober. Following Dr. Silkworth's advice, I used the medical sledgehammer. I told him what alcoholism was and just how fatal it could be. Apparently this did something to Dr. Bob, On June 10, 1935, he sobered up, never to drink again. When, in 1939, Dr. Bob's story first appeared in the book, *Alcoholic Anonymous*, he put one paragraph of it in italics. Speaking of me, he said: "*Of far more importance was the fact that he was the first living human with whom I had ever talked, who knew what he was talking about in regard to alcoholism from actual experience*".

Continued on page 6

Continued from page 5

THE MISSING LINK

Dr. Silkworth had indeed supplied us the missing link without which the chain of principles now forged into our Twelve Steps could never have been complete. Then and there, the spark that was to become Alcoholics Anonymous had been struck.

During the next three years after Dr. Bob's recovery our growing groups at Akron, New York and Cleveland evolved the so-called word-of-mouth program of our pioneering time. As we commenced to form a society separate from the Oxford Group, we began to state our principles something like this:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol
2. We got honest with ourselves
3. We got honest with another person, in confidence
4. We made amends for harms done others
5. We worked with other alcoholics without demand for prestige or money
6. We prayed to God to help us to do these things as best we could

Though these principles were advocated according to the whim or liking of each of us, and though in Akron and Cleveland they still stuck by the O.G. absolutes of honesty, purity, unselfishness and love, this was the gist of our message to incoming alcoholics up to 1939, when our present Twelve Steps were put to paper.

I well remember the evening on which the Twelve Steps were written. I was lying in bed quite dejected and suffering from one of my imaginary ulcer attacks. Four chapters of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, had been roughed out and read in meetings at Akron and New York. We quickly found that everybody wanted to be an author. The hassles as to what should go into our new book were terrific. For example, some wanted a purely psychological book which would draw in alcoholics without scaring them. We could tell them about the "God business" afterwards. A few, led by our wonderful southern friend, Fitz M., wanted a fairly religious book infused with some of the dogma we had picked up from the churches and missions which had tried to help us. The louder these arguments, the more I felt in the middle. It appeared that I wasn't going to be the author at all. I was only going to be an umpire who would decide the contents of the book. This didn't mean, though, that there wasn't terrific enthusiasm for the undertaking. Every one of us was wildly excited at the possibility of getting our message before all those countless alcoholics who still didn't know.

Having arrived at Chapter Five, it seemed high time to state what our program really was I remember running over in my mind the word-of-mouth phrases then in current use. Jotting these down, they added up to the six named above. Then came the idea that our program ought to be more accurately and clearly stated. Distant readers would have to have a precise set of principles. Knowing the alcoholic's ability to rationalize, something airtight would have to be written. We couldn't let the reader wiggle our anywhere. Besides, a more complete statement would help in the chapters to come where we would need to show exactly how the recovery program ought to be worked.

12 STEPS IN 30 MINUTES

At length I began to write on a cheap yellow tablet. I split the word-of-mouth program up into smaller pieces, meanwhile enlarging its scope considerably. Uninspired as I felt, I was surprised that in a short time, perhaps half an hour, I had set down certain principles which, on being counted, turned out to be twelve in number. And for some unaccountable reason, I had moved the idea of God into the Second Step, right up front. Besides, I had named God very liberally throughout the other steps. In one of the steps I had even suggested that the newcomer get down on his knees.

Continued on page 7

Continued from page 6

When this document was shown to our New York meeting the protests were many and loud. Our agnostic friends didn't go at all for the idea of kneeling. Others said we were talking altogether too much about God. And anyhow, why should there be twelve steps when we had done fine on six? Let's keep it simple, they said.

This sort of heated discussion went on for days and nights. But out of it all there came a ten-strike for Alcoholics Anonymous. Our agnostic contingent, spearheaded by Hank P. and Jim B., finally convinced us that we must make it easier for people like themselves by using such terms as "a Higher Power" or "God as we understand Him!" Those expressions, as we so well know today, have proved lifesavers for many an alcoholic. They have enabled thousands of us to make a beginning where none could have been made had we left the steps just as I originally wrote them. Happily for us there were no other changes in the original draft and the number of steps still stood at twelve. Little did we then guess that our Twelve Steps would soon be widely approved by clergymen of all denominations and even by our latter-day friends, the psychiatrists.

This little fragment of history ought to convince the most skeptical that nobody invented Alcoholics Anonymous. It just grew. . . by the grace of God.

-- Bill W.

TRADITION 9

Who pays the bills? Who opens the door? Who buys the coffee? A member shares a few things she knows about how some groups work...

When I first came into AA, I had a vague understanding of what might happen. So I watched others. It was clear that the person sitting up front was running the meeting. I don't remember today who that person was, but I don't think I thought much about how that person came to be leading. I saw the Steps and Traditions hung up on the wall and I understood that someone would be asked to read them as well.

At first, certain things seemed odd to me. Why do we have to read these every time? Clearly, my thoughts toward others were limited. After being in AA a little bit longer, I started to understand that perhaps there is more to AA than just this meeting right here, right now. Small questions came up in my mind. What happens to the money in the basket? Who pays the electric bill, who buys coffee and who brings the cake? Who decides who leads the meeting?

I paid attention and read the printed material. I understood the concept of an AA business meeting when one was announced. After that, I didn't think too much further into things. It was enough for me at that time to make meetings and stay sober.

Then I started to go to a Big Book study, and before long I chaired that meeting myself. I got my first look at how AA works. When I sat up front, I did what I saw other meeting leaders do. I asked others to read the Steps and Traditions and I myself read the directions for chairing the meeting. I collected money for the Seventh Tradition and for Hospitals and Institutions. I made sure that the money was passed to the treasurer.

Since then, I have grown up a bit in AA and I attend a variety of meetings. I have seen that AA is not a cookie-cutter-style program. Certainly there is a basic format or set standards for most meetings, such as the readings. But apart from those basics, many decisions at an AA meeting seem to depend on the group.

Now that I have been in service and have read the Big Book and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions a few times, I have a better understanding of how the individual group relates to AA as a whole.

In any group, there has to be organization. AA is not just a random collection of alcoholics crying at meetings about how they can no longer drink. Someone has to open the door! AA may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. We form committees and elect trusted servants to help serve the group and to meet the specific needs of those being served.

There are those in the program who embrace the AA way of life and offer themselves to service for the benefit of others and AA as a whole. They may greet others and offer a hug, stock literature, find a speaker or make sure the meeting place is clean and properly secured.

The group, including the newest members, elects people to take responsibility for paying the bills and keeping the group connected to AA at the area, regional and national levels—AA as a whole. It is pretty amazing to me that a regular drunk off the streets can be the same guy who ends up chairing the meeting.

Tradition Nine is about service in action. Through AA, I have found a way to recover and now my recovery depends on my service and AA unity. I want the newcomer to walk in and see how AA works. So I show up and support my group. I share in honesty my experience, strength and hope. And I am responsible to my fellow AAs at the group level.

FINANCES	AUGUST	YTD
Income		
Literature/Merchandise	\$2,937	\$31,968
Group Contributions	4,041	20,719
AA Birthdays	60	511
Faithful Five	10	190
Anonymous		
Total Income	7,047	53,389
Expenses		
Bank/Credit Card Fees	65	690
Travel/Licenses/Permits		
Office Supplies		702
License/Permits		
Payroll Net	1,711	13,688
Payroll Tax		3,340
Postage	40	70
Printing		914
Purchases/Lit./Merch.	1,527	17,554
Insurance		567
Rent	500	4,000
Sales Tax	264	2,173
Telephone/www	197	1,791
Utilities	100	800
Contributions		
Computer Software		761
Computer/Maintain	870	1,352
Travel		218
Total Expenses	5,261	49,432
Net Ordinary Income	1,787	3,956
Other Income		918
Other Expenses	-97	890
NET OTHER INCOME	-97	28
NET INCOME	\$1,689	\$3,983

Thank You to all who contributed to Naples Intergroup/Central Office

Spirituality and Money

"While the work of the group treasurer often involves many details, it is important to remember that the money the treasurer oversees serves a spiritual purpose: it enables each group to fulfill its primary purpose of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This is the fundamental work of A.A. and to continue it the group must keep its doors open. The group treasurer is an important part of this Twelfth Step work."

SELF-SUPPORT:

Where Money and Spirituality Mix

Naples Area Intergroup

1509 Pine Ridge Rd., Unit B
Naples, FL 34109
(50%)

District 20

District 20 Treasurer
P.O. Box 2896
Naples, FL 34106
(10%)

General Service Office

P. O. Box 459
New York, N. Y. 10163
(30%)

Area 15

Lisa D.
PO Box 1784
Pompano Beach, FL 33061
(10%)

Disbursement of a Group's Funds

"After the group's basic needs are met, such as providing for rent, literature, refreshments, and insurance, the group can participate in the financial support of the Fellowship as a whole by sending money to various A.A. service entities: 1) their local Intergroup or Central Office, 2) Area 15 and District 20; and 3) the General Service Office in New York. Many groups provide financial support for their G.S.R.s attending service functions. These entities use contributions in a number of ways, always with the aim of carrying the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. *The A.A. Group Treasurer, F-96,*

*Service material prepared by the
General Service Office*

GROUP*/MEETING CONTRIBUTIONS

The six digit number next to the meeting name is their unique AA Registration Number assigned by the General Service Office in New York. This number signifies they are a "Registered Group"...Those meetings listed without a six digit number are **NOT registered with G.S.O.** and therefore not a "Group" (by AA definition), but is a "meeting".
**Please see A.A. pamphlet: "The A.A. Group...where it all begins" P-16*

<u>Group/Meeting</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>YTD</u>
11th Step Prayer & Med., 715482	0	110
24 Hour Solution	0	69
Aprendiendo A Vivre, 176467	0	0
Back To Basics	0	0
Beach Bums 641645	0	0
Big Book Comes Alive, 710427	0	60
Big Book Steppers, Bonita, 698101	0	0
Big Book Steppers, Naples, 654630	54	54
Big Book Study, 662395	0	0
Bonita Awareness, 124788.....	0	0
Bonita Banyan, 176463.....	0	355
Bonita Beginners	0	0
Bonita Happy Hour, 670997	1,055	2,180
Bonita Men, 654428.....	0	200
Bonita Saturday Night.....	0	0
Bonita Springs Morning, 678493	0	439
Bonita Springs Women's 169127	0	652
Bonita Springs Step,134588	40	80
Bonita Unity	50	225
Bring Your Own Big Book.....	0	0
Brown Bag, 163924	0	1,399
Burning Desire, 653891	0	0
Cake Meeting701813.....	0	50
Came to Believe, 615490	0	0
Candlelight, 606877	0	0
Comes Of Age	0	0
Common Solutions, 179613.....	200	600
Early Reflections, 653770.....	0	0
Early Riser, 161795	450	2,040
East Trail, 150873	0	0
Easy Does It, 156979.....	1,500	2,550
Free 2 Be, 6700930.....	0	170
Friday Big Book	0	0
Girlfriends, 678117.....	0	22
Golden Gate, 123819.....	0	0
Good Orderly Direction, 642330	0	0
Gratitude Hour, 134223	0	500
Happy Hour, 172923.....	0	0
Jaywalkers, 634271.....	0	0
Keep It Positive, 650541	0	0
Keep It Simple, 651598	0	0
Ladies Night, Bonita, 672950.....	0	200
Lil'White House 721896	0	116
Living Sober, 605904	0	0
Living Sober Isle of Capri.....	0	0
Men Of Naples, 634030.....	0	0
Monday Night Men Step 724529.....	0	150
Morning Reflections, 660700	0	78
Naples Group, 103609	0	350
Naples Men's, 694322	0	200
Naples South, 130210	0	213
Naples Young People, 699130	0	0
New Dawn, 632504	0	0
New Women (Thursday noon).....	0	0
Newcomers Coming Together, 684199.....	0	0
No Compromise, 681260	0	0
Not A Glum Lot.....	0	100
Nueva Vida.....	0	0

<u>Group/Meeting</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>YTD</u>
One Day At A Time	0	227
Our Common Welfare.....	0	77
Out To Lunch Bunch, 147323.....	0	0
Pay It Forward, 704772.....	600	1,600
Primary Purpose Marco, 146715.....	0	675
Saturday Morning Girlfriends 678117.....	0	154
Saturday Night Live.....	0	50
Spiritual Solutions, 720796.....	0	0
Start Where You Are.....	0	0
Step By Step.....	92	2
Sunday Night Speakers, 665079	0	196
Sunlight Of the Spirit, 647959	0	0
Sunset Serenity, 654981	0	0
Survivor's, 157268	0	50
SW 239 BID.....	0	0
Swamp Group, 672733	0	0
Tables of Naples, 147671.....	0	211
Third Tradition,143298	0	60
Three Legacies, 679400	0	0
Thursday New Women	0	400
Unity Monday Noon Step.....	0	301
Unity Step	0	56
Veranda.....	0	80
Walk The Steps With Women, 701923	0	0
Wanderers, Ave Maria.....	0	0
We Care, Bonita, 617011	0	217
Wednesday Step St. Johns	0	85
Where Are We	0	0
Women's Spirit.....	0	0
Women's Step,159957	0	0

AA Groups/Meetings listed here are those which are either registered as a Group at the AA General Service Office in New York, or, have contributed financially to the Naples Area Intergroup.



Thank God, The Nightmare is Over

My Life Has Meaning at Last

It was 9 AM and I was just waking up with a terrible hang-over and, for some reason, my brain was telling me that I was going to die prematurely if I didn't do something about my drinking, BUT WHAT was I supposed to do, that was the question. I was leading a *meaningless life/existence* and the only thing that meant anything to me was the ability to promote enough money to support my drinking habit. I was running out of options, and of friends that wanted to help me. I was desperately rummaging around my apartment to find something to drink, and for the first time, that I could remember, I couldn't find a drop of alcohol in the place. An hour later I was sitting in the grass on the front lawn of a small yellow house where they held A.A. meetings. Three sober members of A.A. greeted me with compassion and understanding and two minutes later, I laid back in the grass, covered my eyes with my forearm, and said to myself, "*Thank God, the nightmare is over;*" and it was. That was on Oct. 15, 1969 and I haven't had, nor wanted, a drink since that very moment. What happened to me that day? I have been an avid member of the program from that day until now, I have always strived to understand what took place at that exact moment, and as best I can describe it, I had a *profound change of perception*. Some will call it spiritual awakening but that's where, I believe, we have our most difficult challenge when we try to clarify the word spiritual. I find two definitions that show the different ways we are conditioned to understand spirituality. 1.) *Of, or relating to, or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things. And 2,) of, or relating to religion or religious belief.* Neither definition refers to anything of a material nature. I've resided in my current community for the last 40 years and I attend 8 or 9 meetings weekly and have seen the comings and goings of thousands of A.A. members, and I seem to recognize a difference in the sharing of two groups of people. One will share about material problems or their drinking escapades, and the other will share about things of the inner self, the immaterial or the unseen things such as *guilt, fear, shame, pride, trust, and conscience.* We all have these things, to one degree or another and the sooner we recognize the value of being *right in spirit*, the more we distance ourselves from the useless, meaningless thinking of the past. My heart goes out to those who haven't experienced that spiritual awakening and if they haven't, they may not even know that they haven't. I wish there was a simple way to induce a spiritual awakening in someone but, without the desperation, I may never have experienced it myself. I believe that the futile effort to find alcohol in my apartment that morning, and being unsuccessful, was my bottom and immediately searching out A.A. was like a slingshot for me and I was launched into the program, desperately searching for answers. Until my *desperation outweighed my denial*, my alcoholic thinking had

been the only thing I could rely on, for my decision making. Now all my decisions are based on spiritual (unselfish) principles and most of those material problems are but distant memories. It didn't happen overnight, but it did happen. We all come to A.A. with material problems and we must give them due diligence until those issues are resolved. We learn from our past mistakes and find better ways of doing things. If we dedicate ourselves to *understanding the spirit of the things we learn in the program, and not settle for the letter of the law*, so to speak, we can outdistance the failed ideas of yesterday. We will find peace; happiness and *life will have meaning at last. A profound change of perception (spiritual awakening)* will make it so.

Dick R.



Just published!

Best Jokes & Cartoons from AA Grapevine
Sobriety can be tough sometimes, which is why recovering alcoholics can always use a good laugh. In AA, members learn to not take themselves too seriously, to be happy, joyous and free.

Luckily, sobriety can be pretty darn amusing. Two of the most beloved departments of Grapevine are the "At Wit's End" jokes and the cartoons, all contributed and drawn by AA members.

Take Me To Your Sponsor contains some of the best laughs of the last few years, dealing with meetings, sponsorship, dating and marriage, friends and coworkers, character defects and more.

We're hoping that **Take Me To Your Sponsor** will brighten your day and give you some hearty, well-earned laughs.

Available at AA Central Office.

Celebrate Your Sobriety ... Join the Birthday

Birthday Plan Members:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Sobriety Date</u>	<u>Years</u>	<u>Home Group</u>
Ron P.	03/29/70	48	Beach Bums
Ron L.	07/24/78	40	Gratitude Hour
Don M.	03/09/80	39	Bonita Unity
Rad W.	08/20/85	33	Gratitude Hour
Jackie T. F.	04/25/84	33	Morning Reflection
Dennis F.	07/15/84	27	Unity Step
Richard K.	11/25/90	27	Miami
Peter F.	03/01/95	24	Easy Does It
Bill S.	01/11/02	17	Brown Bag
Mary B.	07/22/02	16	Naples Group
Karen B.	02/11/09	7	Brown Bag
Heather W.	03/22/00	17	Naples Group
Judy W.	03/21/86	31	Easy Does It
Laura T. F.	06/16/16	1	Morning reflection
Steve K.	07/29/92	27	Primary Purpose
Steve L.	08/28/93	25	Early Reflection
Dale P.	05/29/98	20	

History of the Birthday Plan...

The 1955 General Service Conference approved the Birthday Plan, under which members of the Fellowship send a dollar a year for each year of sobriety they have in A.A. Others use a figure of \$3.65, a penny a day, for each year. Some give more, but the amount cannot exceed \$3,000 for any year. Special envelopes are available to send your Birthday Plan contribution.



become a Faithful Fiver

“Every A.A. wants to make sure of his survival from alcoholism, and his spiritual well-being afterward. This is just as it should be. He also wants to do what he can for the survival and well-being of his fellow alcoholics. Therefore he is bound to have a vital interest in the permanence and well-being of A.A. itself.”

Bill W., *Language of the Heart*, p.166

What are Faithful Fivers?

Faithful Fivers are A.A. members who graciously contribute \$5.00 or more each month to support Naples Inter-group/Central Office.*

***contributions are limited to \$3,000 per member, per year and are tax deductible under Internal Revenue Code 501 (c)(3).**

FAITHFUL FIVERS

RON L.^(07/20),

BILL S.,^(01/18) MARY B.,^(03/18) JAMES B.,^(07/19)

THERESA R. MONTHLY, JUDY W.,^(01/18) KATHRYN M., MONTHLY

District 20

(Collier County, the portion of Monroe County bordered by Collier and Miami-Dade Counties, and the portion of Hendry County below the northernmost boundary of Collier County.)

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Robert C., 784-8514
chair@district20aa.org
Alt. Chair:
Peter C.
altchair@district20aa.org
Treasurer:
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treasurer@district20aa.org
Registrar:
Jill M., 309-3879
registrar@district520aa.org
Secretary:
Dianna M., 248-6565
secretary@district20aa.org

Service Committees:

Treatment/Accessibilities

Robert C.
treatment@district20aa.org
Business meeting the first
Thursday of each month at
7 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Corrections

Jeff K., 776-5673
corrections@district20aa.org
Business meeting the first
Tuesday of each month at
5:30 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Public Information/CPC

Dawn L., 253-5481
Business meeting the first
Wednesday of each month at
7pm, 24 Hour Club

Grapevine/Literature

Steve K., 430-9110
Business meeting the third
Tuesday of each month at
5:30p.m., 24 Hour Club

Archives

Laurel B., 451-0095
naplesboff@hotmail.com
Business meeting 3rd Saturday
@ 24 Hour Club at 11am

Current Practices

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jeddleman@aol.com

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Eric H., 738-8871

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District 20

Business Meeting:

Last Thursday of the
Month, 7pm
New Attitudes Club
4133 Tamiami Trail E.
(Lakewood & E 41)
Behind Speedway Gas

Treatment Commitments

DAVID LAWRENCE CENTER

Every day except
Wednesday
7:00 p.m.

John G. 413-777-2065
jwg1953@gmail.com

NAPLES COMMUNITY HOSPITAL

Jim P., 572-2075
jimparadise.sr@gmail.com

WILLOUGH

Sunday, Monday and Thursday
7:30pm
Ken C., kenknauf@comcast.net
J.C., 253-3602
superioryacht07@gmail.com

HAZELDEN

Monday, 7:00pm
Tom H., 777-1430
tomhigh@me.com

BRIDGING THE GAP

Melissa B.
720-982-1852
John B.
537-5862

MONTHLY NAPLES INTERGROUP MEETING Central Office 1509-2 Pine Ridge Rd.

(next to 24 Hour Club)

First Wednesday of
month at 7:00pm

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(South Florida, Bahamas, US and British Virgin Islands, Antigua, St. Maarten, and Cayman Islands)

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Tuesday 9am to 4pm
Wednesday 9am to 4pm
Thursday 9am to 4pm
Friday 9am to 4pm
Saturday 9am to 4pm
Sunday CLOSED

Office Volunteers:

Judy W., Tona W.,
Ivan B., Peter C.,
Ken H., Diane B.,
Nikki E., Karen B.,
Mary B., Holly G.,
Mary Pat B.,
...and loyal Substitutes

After Hours Phone
Mary B., 777-8066