

# THE COURIER

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## Step Nine

**A**s I finished my Eight Step, and before I began making amends to those I had harmed, my sponsor asked me: "As you review your Eight Step list, how heavy are the memories, the guilt, the fear and shame you carry in your heart? Have you been thorough?" I recall looking down, knowing that I had wronged many and that guilt and shame was a heavy burden to bear. I made an honest and thorough effort in the Fourth and Fifth Steps and I had created an honest list of those I had wronged and I still felt guilty. At this point, I began to feel the release from fear, however in relationships there was still much to be done.

I had "worked the steps" once before and had been sober for eleven years, experiencing the benefits of a spiritual life. At the same time, I got "busy" gradually taking back life's "steering wheel" resulting in a "slip" that lasted five years. After wrecking sweet, loving relationships, despair set in. Significant wreckage had occurred and I found the progression of the disease included a darkening guilt and the "messy bog of self-loathing."

*"We wallow in this messy bog, often getting a misshapen and painful pleasure out of it. As we morbidly pursue this melancholy activity, we may sink to such a point of despair that nothing but oblivion looks possible as a solution." (Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions)*

Step Nine is a call to action. I was asked to take responsibility for my behavior. Step Nine challenges me to work towards restoring those relationships I had harmed. And so I embarked on the journey of making amends. In many instances I experienced a healing grace, and in other cases it was not yet possible so I prayed to do God's will and to make myself available for when the time is right. In some cases, with input from my sponsor, a "living amend" was the best course of action to pursue.

The benefits have been remarkable. I feel release from the heavy feelings of guilt, remorse, fear, and shame, but most importantly, I began to treat others better. The Big Book suggests that we pray for the knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out. Taking responsibility, living honestly, and making amends when a wrong has been done, is doing God's will. I have experienced joy as the result of living by God's will. I am now a better husband, better brother, and better employee. The result has been a "new happiness and a new freedom."

I, too, have been hurt by my addiction. Should my name also be on the amends list? Step Nine is another change to change self-destructive choices and attitudes that accompany my disease. I abused my body when drinking and now I try to take care of my body in healthy ways. I've sought outside help in order to better understand how past life events affect my current mental health. I have left behind the negative "stinking thinking" which sabotaged relationships.

And finally, I've made amends to my Higher Power. I am no longer blind to the natural beauty and wonder of this world. I am no longer disrespectful of other's expression of faith. I actively pursue prayer and meditation and know the experience of "walking in the sunshine of life." Thank you, God, for the many A.A. members who have shown me your grace and through their example demonstrate the promises resulting in "living" the Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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

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

**CONCEPT NINE:** “Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.”

*9th Step Prayer:*

*Higher Power,  
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?

c. THE AA GRAPEVINE INC., PO BOX 1980, GRAND CENTRAL STATION, NEW YORK, NY 10163-1980

## Step Nine

### *Amends, Guilt & Shame*

I dreaded this Step. To be honest, I didn't make some amends when I had the chance, which I now regret. False pride runs deep in my family, and that was one of my character defects that I turned over to my HP and then took back on many occasions. But when I didn't, I made amends for things like neglect, bad behavior, gossip, dishonesty, betrayal, and alienation.

Shame was a constant companion, and that was probably the biggest obstacle to making amends. In other words, it wasn't only false pride that fueled missed opportunities to amend my past.

Someone asked me once if I knew the difference between shame and guilt. I mumbled something I can't recall. But I remember the answer very clearly. She said, "Guilt is when you think you've made a mistake, shame is when you think you are a mistake."

Wow! That hit my bulls eye. Then and there I realized I had to go back to Step 4 and work on the shame piece. I did, but it never really went away until decades later.

In the meantime, I brought up the topic of shame at meetings because I was aware that it had a direct impact on my ability to work Step 9. I read about shame. I learned the difference between healthy shame and unhealthy shame. I learned how shame had been instilled in me since early childhood. "You ought to be ashamed of yourself," my parents said. I felt deeply flawed because, as a kid, I made a lot of mistakes and heard this refrain all too often.

But when you're a kid, you don't have the cognitive ability to refute the shaming. Your parents are your gods. What they tell you must be true, right? So, this erroneous belief about myself was sown early and emerged time and again in my adult life.

Once I had learned about shame, my adult self felt so sad for the little girl, so I gave her a hug and explained that all kids make mistakes, and that's called learning. There is nothing to be ashamed of. The trick is to learn and try to do it differently the next time.

Now I look at Step 9 not with a sense of shame but with the need to be accountable for past bad behavior, which in itself is a primary symptom of the disease of alcoholism.

Just because I fell prey to this disease doesn't mean I'm not responsible for the bad behaviors of my past. I need to own them and then move on with my life.

But what about the other part of Step Nine that says "except when to do so would injure them or others?"

On my first encounter with Step Nine, I remember thinking, "It would injure me, so I'm not doing it." My

sponsor called me out on that quickly. There were other steps to take care of, she said. But with regard to "others," she suggested I be mindful. I didn't want to cause additional hurt or anguish. So we talked about specifics. Her guidance as I did this step was invaluable because I still tended to rationalize and lacked the discernment that would come later in sobriety.

As it turns out, for me, each amend is an act of learning, of remaining teachable, of being humble enough to know I am far from perfect but that, in sobriety, I must be accountable and responsible if I want to remain that way.

Reprinted from Tucson Just for Today

Written by: Wendy S.

### *Fun Acronyms*

A.A. — Attitude Adjustment

A.B.C. — Acceptance, Belief, Change

A.C.T.I.O.N. — Any Change Toward Improving One's Nature

B.I.G. B.O.O.K. — Believing In God Beats Our Old Knowledge

D.E.A.D. — Drinking Ends All Dreams

D.E.N.I.A.L. — Don't Even Notice I'm Lying

D.U.E.S. — Desperately Using Everything but Sobriety

E.G.O. — Easing God Out

F.A.I.T.H. — Fear Ain't In This House

F.E.A.R. — False Evidence Appearing Real

G.I.F.T. — God Is Forever There

G.U.T. — God's Undeniable Truths

H.O.P.E. — Happy Our Program Exists

I.S.M. — Incredible Short Memory

P.R.O.G.R.A.M. — People Relying on God Relaying a Message

R.I.D. — Restless, Irritable and Discontented

S.L.I.P. — Sobriety Loses Its Priority

S.T.E.P.S. — Solutions To Every Problem Sober

S.T.O.P. — Sicker Than Other People

T.I.M.E. — Things I Must Learn

W.I.L.L.I.N.G. — When I Live Life I Need God

Y.E.T. — You're Eligible Too

Thank you Cincinnati Intergroup for these acronyms!

## Tradition Nine

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

**T**he first portion of this Tradition is very well loved by many members. However, as is often the case with some other Traditions, only a small portion of it is often repeated. Drunks love the freewheeling and devil-may-care approach that this seems to imply. After all, how can anyone hold us accountable in that kind of environment? In reality, that kind of operation masks the irresponsibility we have displayed for so very long during our active illness. Something which our well-developed sense of right & wrong continues to haunt us with, creating a measure of unsettledness that can often be seen in AA business meetings.

The first phrase does not suggest that our activities ought to be poorly operated, half-baked and chaotic affairs. Quite the opposite! It simply suggests that if we need to impose some kind of semi-permanent hierarchy in order to carry something—it ought to be structured in such a way that responsibility and authority are clearly understood by all.

We should also understand that there is a great difference between “efficiency” (which is never mentioned in the Big Book) and the word “effective” (which is mentioned in connection with 12th Step work). Efficiency, in the business world, often brings with it a plethora of rules and regulations. That is what this Tradition seeks to avoid. There is an enormous difference between regulation and communication! In Alcoholics Anonymous our goal is always communication, whether it is with one another or the still suffering alcoholic.

Therefore, this Tradition really sets out to help us achieve several things. First, it simply points out that we ought always to have a clear and coordinated understanding of what it is we are attempting to carry out. In that sense, we will need to take actions that are “coordinated” so that they communicate to everyone what our goal focuses on. When we meet our own responsibilities, God will handle the rest. On far too many occasions we can hear someone say, “Let’s just all be responsible.” Experience clearly indicates that this is the best way to defuse responsibility, and therefore also clarity. It is a classic and well-used alcoholic avoidance technique.

Secondly, the Tradition follows its own advice in clearly spelling out what to do in the event more coordination and clarity are needed—create service board or committees where needed. In being consistent with our other principles, we will need to be clear with what we expect these bodies to do. We do not turn our will and lives over to one another – we turn them over to a Higher Power. What we turn over to one another is the need to communicate what is expected from any formed body in which we vest some responsibility and authority to carry out specific tasks. Communication is the key!

Finally, there is a very clear statement which determines who this formed body will have any authority over—only those who they directly serve. This is what creates the perfect balance that keeps AA both safe and secure. It allows us to task some people with certain responsibilities, but carefully avoids giving them the power to rule anyone. This is the method by which we manage, as a society, to continue to move forward without moving downward.

## The Absolutes

To discover what is true and to practice what is good are the two highest aims in life. If we would be humble, we should not stoop, but rather we should stand to our fullest height, close to our Higher Power that shows us what the smallness of our greatness is.

Remember the four questions,

- **Is it true or false?**
- **Is it right or wrong?**
- **How will this affect the other fellow?**
- **Is it ugly or beautiful?**

Answering these queries every day with absolute integrity, and following the dictates of those answers one day at a time, will surely lead us well on our journey toward absorbing and applying the Absolutes.

## The Serenity Prayer “Way of Life”

In "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age", on page 196, it says the following:

"In 1941, a news clipping was called to our attention by a N.Y. member. In an obituary notice from a local paper, there appeared these words:

'God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.' Never had we seen so much A.A. in so few words. With amazing speed, the Serenity Prayer came into general use."

As a prayer, this is a beautiful way to talk to our Creator (I have always used the "we" version when saying it because I prefer to pray for more than just myself); but if you really look at it, what this prayer says can also be used as a way of life that can bring about peace of mind in any and all circumstances that disturb us. It opens by asking God to grant us serenity to accept things we cannot change. I have always thought that this was unusual because it seems to me that serenity doesn't create acceptance. How it's always worked for me though is that serenity comes after acceptance, but who am I to argue. More importantly, it's been my experience that most of the time, the things I CANNOT change are outside of me.

In the next part, we are asking for courage to change the things we CAN change. Now, I don't know about you, but I have wasted a lot of time trying to change many things I could not change (that's where the wisdom part comes in handy). It's also been my experience that most of the time, the things I CAN change are inside of me. Then comes the difficult part - we ask God for wisdom to know the difference between when to make changes and when it might bring peace to only change our perspective of the situation.

I have come across two definitions for the word "wisdom" that I like. One is, "the perfect combination of knowledge and love", and the other is, "thinking with the end in mind". Since we cannot know the future, the only thing we can do is know the One who does, and since our Highest Power makes His home within all of us, we can tap into that Wisdom. Our program enables us to take advantage of this Wisdom because the first three Steps are for bringing us to the point where we become WILLING to turn our will (which is our motiva-

tion and our thinking) and our life (which is our actions) over to the care of a Higher Power (or Love).

Steps Four through Nine are HOW we turn our thinking and our actions over, and the last three Steps are how we KEEP our will and our life turned over indefinitely.

The Big Book promises that after doing the work of the first eight Steps and also some Ninth Step work that we now have the ability to begin tapping into this Wisdom when it says, "We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us". The Eleventh Step also says that we then can, "ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle.

We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. What used to be the hunch, or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and 2 having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times.

We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it". Also, something that you may not have noticed is that contained in the Serenity Prayer are the ONLY two healthy options that we have when presented with difficulties. Sure, we could complain, get friends to co-sign our misery or do nothing at all, but these are old behaviors and bring about no solution.

Our emotions are nothing more than an inner barometer. When our calm is disturbed, the only two reasonable alternatives that can get us back to our peace of mind is to either do something to change the situation or get a better perspective toward it. THAT'S IT. And the sooner we realize that, the sooner we can get back to our being comfortable within ourselves. That's why it says, "As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action" (Big Book, page 87. Please note that agitation comes WELL before anger & rage, and doubtfulness comes WELL before being in deep trouble).

It's important to realize that we need to make being comfortable on the inside a priority because the more uncomfortable our inner experience is, the more drinking becomes an option. When an alcoholic is "restless, irritable and *continued on page 6*

*Continued from page 5*

discontented, they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks" (Big Book pages xxvi & xxvii). But of course, drinking for the alcoholic has negative consequences. Working the Steps and practicing the principles in all of our affairs ALSO bring about ease and comfort, but the results are beyond our wildest dreams! The effect produced by alcohol needs to be replaced by the effect produced by our continual conscious contact with, and followed guidance from, our Inner Guide.

So, use this prayer during your morning time with God, when needed or not needed throughout the day, and as part of your "search for serenity". And for those of you who have never seen the full version of the Serenity Prayer, here it is:

"God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change; courage to change the things we can; and the wisdom to know the difference  
Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time; accepting hardship as the pathway to peace.

Taking as Jesus did this sinful world as it is, not as I would have it. Trusting that He will make all things right if I surrender to His Will; that I may be reasonably happy in this life and supremely happy with Him forever in the next. Amen"

# 9

Like others of the Steps, Number Nine is closely related to Number Three --"to turn our will and our lives over to God *as we understood Him*." If we have accomplished this step to any measurable degree, we have attained at least a small measure of humility and a realization of our dependence on Him. Having prepared a list of all people we have harmed and brought ourselves to the point where we are *willing* to make amends to them, our Ninth Step is one calling for positive *action*. There is a world of

difference between being *willing* to do a thing and actually *doing* it. How many times in the pre-A.A. state have we said "I am sorry, I won't do it again" and felt that that constituted complete amends.

A sincere apology, with a true explanation to the person harmed, of what we believe to be the reason for our past actions can quite frequently readjust personal relations --but the A.A. realizes that this cannot take care of the ones we have really hurt and invariably these are the ones we should and do love most.

Most of us had at least a few years of real pathological drinking behind us when we first learned of the Twelve Steps. Those terrible years are the ones that become repulsive to us as we progress in our new-found life program for order and happiness--years in which our every action was influenced by alcoholic thinking, with all its implications. It naturally follows that whatever our state in life may be, those close to us bore the brunt of our outrageous behavior. How can one make amends to a dear wife, son or daughter or parent who through no fault of their own truly suffered physically and financially and more important, mentally, the humiliation and embarrassment of going through life with a drunkard? A simple "I am sorry; it won't happen again" is not enough. It is not enough for us and it is not enough for the aggrieved person.

Direct amends, by all means, is a must, in restoring physical property to the rightful owner, paying debts willingly within our ability to do so and retracting the lie that hurt a reputation; but the real amends are made in scrutinizing our day-in and day-out conduct and keeping that conduct "on the beam." The loved ones whom we have hurt don't want their "pound of flesh." Whether they are still in daily contact with us or not, amends are best made to them by restoring the love and confidence and respect they once had for us by the *action* of right living. With that thought clearly in our minds that "first drink" is an improbability, even an impossibility and the well-rounded, good life we all yearn for becomes readily visible to us.

B. H., Forest Hills, New York

*The Grapevine, Inc., July, 1945*



## **SMOOTH SEAS DO NOT MAKE SKILLFUL SAILORS**

The metaphor of the drunken sailor seems particularly apropos for those of us in recovery, and I am certainly no exception. I awoke from a befuddled stupor to find myself abandoned by everyone who had the opportunity to leave, and the ship's deck of my life was in shambles. I had but a vague recollection of having ridden out the most recent tempest, and, as the ship was still reeling, I stumbled around trying to grasp onto anything to make sense of the madness. My sails were in tatters, and new storm clouds loomed on the horizon. I was understand how my situation in what seemed a short period, and a good deal of soul search-around me had not erupted curred overnight.

During the early days learned that I could use the discern my true position. I course toward an initial, tenta-efforts were of damage control fully to prevent it from sinking

finally brought me, broken, and beaten into a state of reasonableness, into AA. Periodically, the sun would break out from the cloud cover to briefly renew my hopes, and I would breathe deeply of my newfound freedom. But, just as often, minor squalls would blow up suddenly, and I would become fearful of capsizing.

Although I was not at once consciously aware of it, I was sailing upon an ocean of emotion, and my vessel was the USS Self. Eventually, I learned that the navigational instruments which I had previously dismissed as irrelevant were vital to my survival. Seeking a safe harbor, I drifted toward familiar shorelines and the company of others who had weathered similar storms. Fellow sailors had much to teach me, and seasoned veterans of the high seas have always shone like heroes to my flagging spirits. Their shared experiences have proven to be life-saving, then and now.

With time and experience I acquired unexpected critical skills, and I began to gain confidence in my new abilities. But I could never afford to take my position lightly nor fail to prepare for the vicissitude of uncertain tides. I found that even if I could not change the wind, I could adjust my sails. A correction in the attitude of my vessel would alter my course completely. But, there were inherent dangers. My perceptions were faulty for awhile and the wildness of my emotions sometimes threatened to spin me back into chaos. I was able to avoid pitfalls common to many such early endeavors, and I survived to become a true Captain. Eventually, the treacherous, raging seas have given way to gently rolling waves and a much more pleasant cruise.

"Smooth seas do not make skillful sailors," and I should have known that I would occasionally encounter rough waters during my apprenticeship. Even now, with years of experience, I can never afford to forget, even for a moment, that the hurricane of destruction could still come upon me if I fail to remain watchful. Indeed, eternal vigilance is the price of my freedom. I am continually tested. With God's grace and a good deal of preparation, I will successfully meet every challenge to live long and happily.

I've worked hard to master the skills of daily sobriety, and I continue to seek the counsel of years. I have attempted to subdue my impetuous nature and harness the winds of an exuberant spirit. I learned to use my serenity as a barometer to fair weather. Today, I plot my course with good intentions and always try to lend a hand to any wayward sailors or castaways that I stumble upon - remembering that they are now as lost as I once was. I relish my new way of life, and I strive to be generous with my treasures. Fresh scents upon the wind draw me on toward new adventures and even greater discoveries.



tatters, and new storm clouds in dire straits, and I struggled to could have become so desperate Later, upon careful reflection ing, I saw that the destruction out of nowhere, nor had it oc-

and weeks of my recovery I tools given to me to accurately began to navigate an uncertain tive destination. My immediate - to stabilize the ship and hope-altogether. That really was what

*~ Jerry E., Naples, Florida (7/4/2011)*

**FINANCES****August****YTD****Income**

Literature/Merchandise	\$2,439	\$21,340
Group Contributions	336	8,982
AA Birthdays	95	1,098
Faithful Five	10	570
Individual/Anonymous	256	683

**Total Income**

3,136 32,675

**Expenses**

Bank/Credit Card Fees	40	420
Travel/Licenses/Permits		30
Office Supplies	14	654
Office Repair		684
Contributions		
Payroll Net	1,711	13,688
Payroll Tax		3,340
Postage	4	87
Printing		371
Purchases/Lit./Merch.	1,024	12,510
Insurance	567	567
Rent		2,500
Sales Tax	182	1,353
Telephone/www	202	1,765
Utilities		500
Computer Equipment		
Computer Software	13	226
Computer/Maintain	60	

**Total Expenses**

3,817 38,694

**Net Ordinary Income**

-682 -6,020

Other Income

Other Expenses

**NET OTHER INCOME****NET INCOME**

\$-682 \$-6,020

## 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

1509-2 Pine Ridge Road  
Naples, FL 34109  
(50%)

##### General Service Office

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

##### District 20

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

##### 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*

Group/Meeting	AUGUST	YTD
11th Step Prayer & Med., 715482.....	0.....	124
24 Hour Solution .....	0.....	0
Aprendiendo A Vivre, 176467 .....	0.....	0
Back To Basics.....	0.....	0
Beach Bums 641645 .....	0.....	250
Big Book Comes Alive, 710427.....	0.....	276
Big Book Steppers, Bonita, 698101 .....	0.....	0
Big Book Steppers, Naples, 654630.....	0.....	0
Big Book Study, 662395.....	0.....	0
Bonita Awareness, 124788.....	0.....	0
Bonita Banyan, 176463.....	0.....	285
Bonita Friday Night.....	0.....	0
Bonita Happy Hour, 670997 .....	0.....	985
Bonita Men, 654428.....	200.....	400
Bonita Morning.....	0.....	408
Bonita Saturday Night .....	0.....	0
Bonita Springs Morning, 678493 .....	0.....	378
Bonita Springs Women's 169127 .....	0.....	908
Bonita Springs Step,134588.....	0.....	40
Bonita Unity .....	0.....	100
Bring Your Own Big Book.....	0.....	0
Brown Bag, 163924 .....	0.....	0
Cake Meeting, 701813.....	0.....	0
Came to Believe, 615490 .....	0.....	0
Candlelight, 606877.....	0.....	0
Comes Of Age .....	0.....	0
Common Solutions, 179613.....	0.....	260
Early Reflections, 653770 .....	0.....	0
Early Riser, 161795 .....	0.....	224
East Trail, 150873.....	0.....	0
Easy Does It, 156979 .....	0.....	0
Free 2 Be, 670930 .....	0.....	276
Friday Big Book.....	0.....	0
Go To Any Length, 305375.....	0.....	0
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.....	150
Lil'White House 721896 .....	0.....	0
Living Sober, 605904 .....	0.....	0
Living Sober Isle of Capri.....	0.....	0
Men Of Naples, 634030 .....	24.....	24
Men's Big Book .....	0.....	75
Monday Night Men Step 724529.....	0.....	0
Monday Noon Daily Reflections .....	16.....	57
Morning Reflections, 660700 .....	0.....	500
Naples Group, 103609.....	0.....	500
Naples Men's, 694322 .....	0.....	200
Naples South, 130210.....	0.....	0
Naples Young People, 699130 .....	0.....	0
New Dawn, 632504 .....	0.....	600
New Women (Thursday noon).....	0.....	200
Newcomers Coming Together, 684199.....	0.....	0
No Compromise, 681260 .....	0.....	0
Not A Glum Lot.....	0.....	0
Nueva Vida.....	0.....	0
Old Timers, 698956 .....	0.....	0

Group/Meeting	AUGUST	YTD
One Day At A Time.....	0.....	174
Our Common Welfare .....	0.....	0
Out To Lunch Bunch, 147323.....	0.....	0
Pay It Forward, 704772 .....	0.....	0
Primary Purpose Marco, 146715.....	0.....	0
Saturday Morning Girlfriends 678117.....	0.....	0
Saturday Night Live.....	0.....	0
Spiritual Solutions, 720796.....	0.....	0
Start Where You Are.....	0.....	0
Step By Step.....	0.....	0
Step Into Life.....	0.....	60
Sunday Night Speakers, 665079.....	0.....	0
Sunlight Of the Spirit, 647959.....	0.....	0
Sunset Serenity, 654981 .....	0.....	0
Survivor's, 157268.....	0.....	129
SW 239 BID .....	0.....	0
Swamp Group, 672733.....	0.....	40
Tables Of Naples .....	0.....	76
The Solution Big Book Study Group 632503 .....	0.....	0
Third Tradition,143298.....	0.....	0
Three Legacies, 679400.....	0.....	0
Thursday New Women .....	0.....	0
Unity Monday Noon Step.....	0.....	230
Unity Step.....	0.....	0
Veranda .....	0.....	0
Walk The Steps With Women, 701923 .....	0.....	125
Wanderers, Ave Maria.....	0.....	0
We Care, Bonita, 617011.....	0.....	227
Wednesday Step St. Johns .....	0.....	0
Where Are We.....	0.....	0
Women's Spirit .....	0.....	0
Women's Step,159957 .....	0.....	0
YANA, 270553.....	96.....	199

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.



## Devoid of All Motives to Deceive

Is there a difference between being honest and practicing rigorous honesty? And if not, why add the word rigorous, unless to imply that honesty comes in degrees?

I know that when I first was faced with the challenge of being honest, (where it is mentioned three times in the first paragraph of *How It Works* in the Big Book), I wasn't against being honest and I was willing to give it my best shot.

Could I attain perfect honesty? I think not. I could, however, reign in my lying about things that mattered. But that still left me with, what I felt was, a half measures approach and that did not sit well with me.

If I was willing to be dishonest about anything, I was leaving myself opened to rationalizing and still I was conflicted. If I could lie once, wouldn't that be like taking just one drink? The second lie comes easier.

Was I dishonest if I embellished the size of the fish, I caught last weekend? All these questions ran through my mind, and many more before I came upon an approach that worked for me, and it all seems to rest upon what my motives are.

I was attending a discussion meeting one evening and the topic was "*rigorous honesty*", and many of these questions were discussed without resolution until a gentleman defined the word HONEST, as "*devoid of all motives to deceive.*"

That meaning of the word gave me the latitude to practice that principle in the spirit that I believe the founders of AA would approve of. If you read the Big Book and the 12X12 you will find some overriding principles concerning these dilemmas. One that comes to mind immediately is: We cannot buy our own peace of mind at the expense of others. (Step 9 in the 12X12) and I would add "*my own self-righteousness at the feet of my loved ones.*"

If the definition of honesty is "*devoid of all motives to deceive*" it leaves me with room to be kind during those innocent moments when my wife returns from the hair dresser and asks me if I like her new hair-do. I always like her new hairdo. The being kind clause trumps the rigorous clause and I am not trying to deceive anyone. What are hairdos supposed to look like anyway?

There is one area where I must be rigorously honest, and that is, with myself. I must not let, what I refer to as, overriding principles get stretched out of proportions to the degree that I start to rationalize and become deceptive again. The trust and respect we gain when we follow these principles does not come easy and if we compromise it, we may never get it back.

In step 9, it also makes exceptions where full disclosure would cause actual harm. When in doubt, I can enlist the help of a trusted advisor and, I can be rigorously honest with him, live in the spirit of these principles and still have honest integrity.

By Rick R.

## The Birthday Club

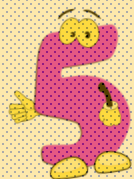
Did you know you can share your sobriety and gratitude in a practical way by joining the AA Birthday Club? Sign up today and be featured in the *Courier*. Show your support for your Central Office. A donation of only one dollar for every year of your sobriety will help carry the message to alcoholics who still suffer. Envelopes available at Central Office or from your Intergroup Representative.



Ron P.	50 years
Ron L.	42 years
Don M.	39 years
Jim B.	38 years
Dennis F.	35 years
Rad W.	35 years
Jackie T. F.	36 years
Judy W.	34 years
Steve K.	28 years
Peter F.	24 years
Bill S.	18 years
Mary B.	18 years
Laura T. F.	4 years
Bree F.	3 years



## Faithful Fivers Needed



### 2020 Faithful Fiver Club

***Welcome Wendy T.***

***Ron L., James B., Theresa R., Judy W., Kathryn Mc., Bill S.,  
Jim B., Tim A., Wendy T.***

We are members of A.A. who want the hand of A.A. always to be there in the Naples, Florida area.

***It's easy to join!***

Use a Check or Credit Card to contribute monthly, or one time.

Stop by the Central Office or Telephone the Central Office for a one time Credit Card charge.

***\$5.00 per month or \$60.00 per year!***

Your membership directly supports 12Step work in District 20 and Central Office Operations.

**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.)*

**District 20 Officers:**

Chairman:

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chairdistrict20aa@gmail.com

Alt. Chair:

Peter C., 784-7225

pete.curtner@yahoo.com

Treasurer:

Registrar:

Jill M., 309-3879

Secretary:

Dianna M., 248-6565

diannamusse@gmail.com

**Service Committees:****Treatment/Accessibilities**

treatment@district20aa.org

Business meeting the first

Thursday of each month at

7 p.m., 24 Hour Club

**Corrections**

Jeff K., 776-5673

kepkajeffery@yahoo.com

Business meeting the second

Tuesday of each month at

5:30 p.m., 24 Hour Club

**Public Information/CPC**

Dawn L., 269-8251

Business meeting the second

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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*The Courier* is published monthly by the *Naples Area Intergroup of Alcoholic Anonymous* with an office located at 1509-2 Pine Ridge Road, Naples, FL 34109-2198. This publication is by, for, and about the Fellowship of AA. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or The *Naples Area Intergroup*. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are reprinted with permission from AA World Service, Inc., and/or The AA Grapevine, Inc..

**Contributions from our readers are encouraged.**

Submissions are edited for space and clarity only.

**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

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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

**Area 15; Panel 69**

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

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Monday 9am to 4pm

Tuesday 9am to 4pm

Wednesday 9am to 4pm

Thursday 9am to 4pm

Friday 9am to 4pm

Saturday 9am to 4pm

Sunday CLOSED

**Office Volunteers:**

Opportunity, Peggy W.

Ivan B., Eric S.

Ken H., Anne Marie C.

Nikki E., Don B.

Dave K., Pat S.

Peggy G., Opportunity

...and loyal Substitutes