

THE COURIER

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It is said that every alcoholic has his own rock bottom, his own gutter. I had watched my career, my profession and my health vanish without appreciable effort or anything except the increasing tempo of my drinking.

But one day twenty-one years ago, I was ordered out of my home and family! My own mother had finally decided that I was useless and un-help-able. That was my particular gutter. Not until then had I been willing to face up to how far I had gone down in life.

It was this that brought me to A.A. No one led me there, I came to it myself. I came in desperation, without any hope of anything really happening. The best I expected was that I might possibly manage with its help to keep off another drunk until I had smoothed things out at home. I was very sick, in the jitters and doped with drugs; mentally sick, confused, and unable to divorce my thoughts from drink; spiritually sick, for I no longer had any hope in anyone or anything, and no longer any faith in anyone, anything or any God.

Most of what I heard that night went in and came straight out again. I received a confused idea that all I had to do was to stay dry for one day, and that I should have to pray, what? Me? And that if I only came back to the next meeting all would be well.

No, it was what I saw that struck home to me. What happened that night to me was a rekindling of a spark of Hope. I heard men describe their drinking lives; I saw them! They were flesh and blood before me. They had had the jitters too. They too had taken those early morning walks to the market pubs, like me; they understood, as I hadn't been able to make anyone else understand, that men like me didn't go out to get drunk—it just happened!

They had been doing all the strange things that I was still doing; they had been thinking in the same crazy way that I was still thinking... and yet they had found a way to recover after all. There was hope for me! What they could do, perhaps I could do as well.

I walked home alone after that meeting, my mind racing and still confused. Now that I again was myself, I hardly dared to keep on hoping. For these others... yes, they had recovered. But for me, how could it happen? I never had that kind of luck! Yet, that tiny voice that there is hope kept whispering "They did it... they could do it... why shouldn't you... if you really try with them?"

That faint hope did keep me dry for the next few days to the next meeting. That same small little hope set me off on the way to recovery and happiness. **That same hope can do as much for anyone else.**

Jackville O'C., Dublin, Ireland, Editor "Targets For Thought"
[Central Bulletin](#) Archives, June 1968

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PREAMBLE:

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or Institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety. (AA Grapevine, Inc.)



APRIL: The Fourth (4) Month Of Alcoholics Anonymous

STEP FOUR: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

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

TRADITION FOUR: (Long Form) With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

CONCEPT FOUR: "Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional "Right of Participation," taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge."

47th Step Prayer: "God, Please help me to be free of anger and to see that the world and its people have dominated me. Show me that the wrong-doing of others, fancied or real, has the power to actually kill me. Help me to master my resentments by understanding that the people who wrong me were perhaps spiritually sick. Please help me show those I resent the same Tolerance, Pity and Patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend.** Help me to see that this is a sick man. Father, please show me how I can be helpful to him and save me from being angry. Lord, help me to avoid retaliation or argument. I know I can't be helpful to all people, but at least show me how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one. Thy will be done."(66:2, 66:3, 66:4, 67:0, 67:1)

TRADITIONS—CHECKLIST

This is a Checklist for Tradition FOUR.

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1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of AA? Of nearby groups? Of Loners in Alaska? Of Internationalists miles from port? Of a group in Rome or El Salvador?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—his lengths, not mine—to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of AA tools with other members who may not have heard of them?



We Are All Going to Foot the Bill

I got sober a few days before Christmas in 1986, so I feel especially grateful and reflective this time of year. I am still awed at how miraculously A.A. has worked in my life, even before I walked into my first meeting.

I was desperate, but a bit clueless. I saw a classified ad (and I am showing my age!) in the back of the local paper that said: “Drinking problem? Maybe we can help.” That was followed by a listing of meeting times and places in my neighborhood. It would take me a few weeks of white-knuckling it before I went to my first meeting. I was welcomed into a warm room and offered refreshments. And while someone told me I would never have to hurt like this from alcohol again, I couldn’t get out of there fast enough. But my getaway was slowed by a gauntlet of members who handed me A.A. pamphlets and meeting books and encouraged me to stay for the second meeting. It took me a few days to return, but I didn’t drink.

As an alcoholic, self-centered in the extreme, I just came to expect that all this help would be there for me. It wasn’t until my first business meeting that I realized it was made possible by the money members were putting in the basket. This was my first of many lessons over the years in the power and impact of self-support.

Bill W. wrote of the critical importance of self-support to the Fellowship and the special obligation this tradition asks of members in his October 1967 article “A.A.’s Tradition of Self-Support,” which is included in the 2025 International Convention commemorative edition of Language of the Heart.

“Every single A.A. service is designed to make more and better Twelfth Step work possible, whether it be a group meeting place, a central or intergroup office to arrange hospitalization and sponsorship, or the world service Headquarters to maintain unity and effectiveness worldwide.

These service agencies are absolutely essential to our continued expansion — to our survival as a Fellowship. Their costs are a collective obligation that rests squarely upon all of us. Our support of services actually amounts to a recognition on our part that A.A. must everywhere function in full strength — and that, under our Tradition of self-support, we are all going to foot the bill.”

We all share this responsibility to ensure that A.A. is there for the next person who stumbles into our rooms, as it was for us when we needed the gift of recovery. Bill’s recognition that “we are all going to foot the bill” is both our spiritual responsibility and our spiritual heritage.

By John W. – Class B General Service Trustee and AAWS treasurer

Camel Symbol

The camel each day goes twice to his knees.
He picks up his load with the greatest of ease.
He walks through the day with his head held high.
And stays for that day, completely dry.

Spiritual Principles

- Prayer
- Faith
- Spirituality
- Sobriety – One day at a time.



Dr Bob's story of the AA Camel

Dr Bob, physician, and a cofounder of Alcoholics Anonymous – “. . . would explain prayer by telling how the camels in a caravan would kneel down in the evening, and the men would unload their burdens. In the morning, they would kneel down again, and the men would put the burdens back on. 'It's the same with prayer,' Dr. Bob said. 'We get on our knees to unload at night. And in the morning when we get on our knees again, God gives us just the load we are able to carry for that day.'” Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers (1980), page 229

Camel Prayer

“The tasks of the day can pass with ease
when a camel or I start on our knees.
One Master we serve, the camel and I,
and stay for that day completely dry.”

- Fred Joiners, Alcohol Self-Help News

Introduction to *THE LORD's PRAYER*

when closing a meeting.

Mary Pat B., Naples, Florida

The reason we join hands as we say the LORD's PRAYER ... is to remind us of the truth ... that we are not alone ... our prayer is for the still suffering alcoholic ... those who are with us ... and, those who are still searching for us. Hold on to the hand of the person next to you like your life depends on it ... **someday, it may.**

“Let today's troubles be sufficient to today.”

“Distilled Spirits,” Indianapolis, Indiana, August 1982, AA Grapevine



YOUNG & SOBER

Stories from
AA Grapevine

“Life hasn’t been all smooth sailing, but because of AA, I no longer have to live in fear. I sleep at night ... I have a purpose in life.

“Wanted,” Mankato, Minnesota, May 1997, Young & Sober: Stories By Those Who Found AA Early

What I Gained by Forgiving

Lisa F., Red Bank, NJ

Although I know every circumstance and person is different, I wanted to share what I gained by forgiving my mother, my first abuser and probably the most abusive person who impacted my life. My mother, I am sure, through no conscious choice of her own, sent me off to embark on life with very little self-confidence, a belief I was stupid, ugly, had no value or talents, especially when I tried to sing. I was also taught I was the cause of most of what was wrong in her world and those whose lives I touched. Often, when I share about my childhood, many wonder how I arrived at a place where I am not bitter, resentful or apathetic. Through years of self-searching, learning about the cycle of abuse and understanding most of us are a byproduct of how we were raised, I gained insight and empathy for the journey my mother must have endured to become the person she was.

My memories of my childhood are not fond. No matter how hard I tried, I could do nothing right in my mother's eyes or please her. I desperately wanted her to treat me with love, but my yearning was in vain. I am sure part of it was the fact I resembled my father, a man she hastily married to get out of her house at the age of 18, and soon found he was not the knight in shining armor she envisioned. I only know part of what my mother went through with my father: there was physical abuse, control and no imaginable way out for many years. The feeling of being trapped came to a reality early in the marriage when my mother was pregnant for the first time. My father threw her down a flight of stairs and she suffered a miscarriage. Distraught and scared, she turned to her parents, who told her she would have to live with the choice she had made.

I am not sure what my mother experienced throughout her childhood until she left home to marry. Judging on how she handled life, I imagine it was not good. In addition to having low self-esteem, my mother exaggerated, embellished, had issues with food, rarely made eye contact and placed great importance on material gain. She also had multiple relationships with numerous men starting before the time she left my father and for decades after. Instead of being built on mutual caring and sharing, the relationships mostly consisted of wants and needs. Many times, I saw my mother sacrifice her identity and morals to hold on to what she perceived was a necessity for living and surviving. Perhaps her dynamics with men, stemmed from growing up in an era where meeting Prince Charming was something every young girl aspired to, not having a positive influence as a father and never learning to cultivate her own worth and value.

I left home when I was 14, almost 15; my mother signed me over to the state under the grounds I was unmanageable, in all honesty, I was. My home life was abusive, both physically and verbally. I thought things would change when my mother married her second husband, but they didn't. Unhappy at home, I began to hang out with older kids, started skipping school, drinking and running away frequently. Underneath it all, I know I just wanted to be loved and feel I was cared about. When my needs were not met, I sought refuge in my peers and through numbing my feelings with alcohol. Alcohol instantly transformed me into the person I always wanted to be, suddenly, I was sure of myself, felt intelligent, pretty and confident. My goal after my introduction was to drink to my heart's desire when I became of legal age.

As a result of living in controlled environments and never being invited to come back home, my drinking was curtailed, with the exception of periodic weekend passes till I was 18. Once I turned 18, I was in full blown alcoholism until I was fortunate enough to be given the gift of sobriety at the age of 25. In the period in between, I embarked on a life filled with the lowest of lows. Sacrificing my own morals and self in the pursuit of the next drink. By the time I became sober, any sense of self-worth and dignity I possessed had been stripped away, only to be covered by a façade that I was somewhat okay, when I truly was anything but. It has taken a great deal of time to build self-esteem and self-worth. Through my journey, I gained humility and compassion for the challenges many of us face when our experiences in early life do not facilitate an environment of nurturing and unconditional love.

After I became sober, my mother tried to become part of my life even though distance separated us. I ended up living in an area about 250 miles from where I grew up; I have been told this was not a mistake. Though not in close proximity, my mother and I spoke on the phone frequently, and she became someone I turned to for advice on subjects like decorating and cooking. It also became a regular occurrence to receive packages from her filled with touching and heartfelt gifts. I knew she was extremely proud of me and relieved I found sobriety. My first sponsor told me she believed, even as a child, I represented what my mother wanted to be. Although I respected her, I quickly dismissed my sponsor's words as an inaccurate assessment of my mother's feelings.

[Continued on page 7.](#)

What I Gained by Forgiving ... [continued from page 6.](#)

Several years later, when my mother was visiting, out of nowhere, she told me of all her children, she was jealous of me. I was overcome with tears and emotion; how could anyone be jealous of me? I had fought so hard to gain the little amount of self-esteem I acquired in sobriety. Although I was taken aback, in time, I gained compassion and understanding of the relationship dynamics between my mother and myself.

It wasn't many years later that my mother was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Though she was miles away, I made a trip to see her and we talked on the phone most every night. The person who I knew to be a martyr and a chronic complainer, turned into one of the strongest people I have ever known in my life. Lying in a hospice bed, knowing she was going to die, my mother spent countless hours engaging in two-way conversations with me and laughing at my newly acquired parrot in the background, who whistled and imitated snoring. Unfortunately, my parrot hadn't mastered the art of word mimicry before my mother passed away; I can only imagine how much it would have delighted her. It was amazing, facing her impending death, my mother did not talk about her own needs nor, I'm sure, fears, instead, she became interested in those around her.

One month before my mother died, a friend and I were playing at a coffee house; my friend played guitar and I sang. I asked my mother if she wanted to listen to us; she did. I called her, placed the phone down and she listened while we played for probably an hour and a half. When we were finished, I picked up the phone and she was still there. Later she would tell me her favorite, of all the songs we did, was Sarah McLachlan's *I Will Remember You*. Without realizing it, we chose and performed a song prophetic to the event that would soon transpire, my mother's death. Looking back, I am still in awe of how selfless she became at the end of her life, especially listening to me sing; a gift she possessed and handed down genetically to me, but never had the opportunity to pursue through her own dreams.

Shortly after this time, my mother became cognitively unavailable. How I missed our nightly conversations and feeling close to her even though she was not nearby. Wanting to see her before she passed, I made the trip to the hospice facility she was in. It was a beautiful place, run by an angelic staff. I slept in her room, stayed beside her and for some reason, felt amazingly peaceful. I was told by the hospice workers that most people choose to die when they are alone. For this reason, I would routinely tell my mother, who appeared unable to hear me, I would be leaving to do this or that. Shortly after I returned from my last trip to get coffee, the dying process started. I put my hand on her shoulder and kept it there until her spirit left her physical body. I felt and feel truly blessed my mother granted me the honor of being with her when she died. At the end of her journey and in her death, my mother gave me so many things she was incapable of giving me through most of her life. Had I not forgiven her and been present, I would not have received the gifts she so freely gave.

The scars many of us have, run deep. Though we may understand why the people who hurt us did what they did, it is extremely difficult to rid ourselves of old tapes. In respect to my mother, I try to think about how she would have wanted to treat me, instead of how she did when I was younger. I am certain, if she had a choice, she would have nurtured, loved and encouraged me when I needed it most. When I find myself being self-critical, not living up to my God given potential, thinking I am not good enough or undeserving of joy and love, I try to think about what my mother would want for me. In my heart of hearts, I know she thought highly of me and wished for nothing but the best to come of my life. If I can continue to carry my mother's true desires for me forward, in time, I will be closer to obtaining true forgiveness; a place where I have broken free from the chains and bonds of the past, and begin to experience true, self-love.

**“How do I know when I'm doing God's will?
I don't ... but, I KNOW when I'm not.**

AA GRAPEVINE, February 2003

“In AA we have no VIPs, nor have we need of any. Our organization needs no title-holders nor grandiose buildings ... Experience has taught us that simplicity is basic in preservation of our personal sobriety and helping those in need.”

AA Co-Founder, Dr. Bob, September 1948, “The Fundamentals in Retrospect”, Spiritual Awakenings: Journeys of the Spirit



SPIRITUAL AWAKENINGS

Journeys of the Spirit



THE LANGUAGE OF THE HEART

Bill W.'s
Grapevine Writings

“A fine plan or idea can come from anybody, anywhere. Consequently, good leadership will often discard its own cherished plans for others that are better, and it will give credit to the source.”

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., April 1959, “Leadership in AA: Ever a Vital Need”, The Language of the Heart

Spirituality, Humility and Me



As I write this story, I think back to what I was doing thirty-five years ago today. On that day—October 7th—a friend drove me to my first AA meeting. I was a beaten-down, empty shell of a person, and out of answers. I was sick and tired of being sick and tired, and I finally admitted that I needed help. That morning was the last time I said those dreaded words about my drinking: “I did it again.” In that moment, something in me surrendered, even if it was not perfect or complete. It was the best I could do.

I remember walking into that meeting room like it was yesterday. I was completely on edge. I was hyper vigilant as I kept my eyes down and made my way to a seat near the front of the hall. I felt exposed, flooded with fear, and unsure of everything except that my life was not working. To avoid looking at anyone, I stared at the Twelve Steps banner hanging on the wall. That was the first time I read them. Seeing the word “God” in several steps instantly brought back my old sense of dread. My first thought was, “Too much God for me. This will not work.”

My relationship with God had been strained since I was a young boy. What I knew of God came from childhood experiences, disappointments, trauma, violence, shame, and feeling abandoned.

I grew up convinced that God had no interest in me. Out of fear and pride, I decided I didn’t need Him either. At the time, this felt like strength. Today, I know it was self-centered fear disguised as independence and resilience.

Eventually, I decided to take a closer look at what spirituality could mean for me. I joined twelve-step study groups, listened at meetings, read more, and tried to stay open—even though I still danced around the God issue. What struck me was that nobody tried to shame me or convince me of anything. They simply shared their experience and offered an invitation: “Keep searching. You’ll find your own understanding.”

What I discovered over time was simple but profound: spirituality is not about rituals or doctrines. It is a way of living. It is the gradual uncovering of my better self—the part rooted in truth, courage, compassion, forgiveness, justice, and humility. These values live inside me, and they are awakened when I quiet the noise, look inward, and stay in the present. My sponsor put it best: “Getting sober is an inside job.” I did not understand it then, but I do now.

I also learned that these values are the way God teaches me. They are His way of inviting me into a life that is fuller, peaceful, and more honest. When I began to walk this path—even in small steps—my desire to drink faded away. The God I ran from for so many years turned out to be gentle and forgiving, not punishing. His will was not something scary; it was simply doing the next right thing with a willing heart.

[Continued on page 10.](#)

Spirituality, Humility and Me ... continued from page 9.

For this alcoholic, spirituality is about an inner experience that allows me to encounter God each day. I become more aware of God's presence and the opportunity to align my life with God's will. Slowly, I realized that the sacred was not far away. It was right here, woven into daily life. No wonder spiritual people told me, "God is closer than you think."

This is an encounter with the living God. We get to see and do his work through others, and if we choose, we too become a channel of God's grace. Like the prayer of Saint Francis says, "Make me an instrument of your peace." And when I say yes—when we choose to trust, to love, to forgive—we begin to notice a certain peace. Not the shallow peace of comfort or ease, but a deeper calm that roots itself in the soul. This peace is the quiet confirmation that we are moving in harmony with God, even if the path remains unknown.

But the biggest obstacle to spirituality, the one that nearly kept me from ever finding it—was pride.

Pride told me I could manage my drinking. Pride told me I did not need help. Pride told me I was right and everyone else had it wrong. Pride convinced me that vulnerability was weakness and that taking risks to improve myself might be dangerous. Sometimes pride made me feel worthless and unlovable; other times it made me feel superior and entitled. Pride is tricky, it changes masks depending on what it needs to protect. But underneath every version of pride is fear.

If humility opens the door to spiritual life, pride is what keeps it slammed shut.

In recovery, pride almost killed me. Whenever I listened to pride, I drifted away from meetings, sponsors, honesty, and growth. I picked up some resentments, too. Pride pushed me back into isolation and self-reliance—two of the most dangerous places for this alcoholic to live. Pride blocked the sunlight of the spirit and made me restless, irritable, and discontented. It kept telling me, "You've got this." And every time I believed it, I landed in the same lonely, miserable place.

What I have learned is that pride and humility can't coexist. When pride takes over, there is no room for God, no room for truth, and no room for others. But when I let humility in—even just a crack—something shifts. I have become teachable again. I can admit mistakes, ask for help, and let go of the need to be right. That's when recovery deepens. Humility is not thinking less of myself; it is seeing myself honestly—no more, no less—and becoming willing to do God's will. Pride says, "I will." Humility says, "thy will."

Pride feeds my ego, but humility feeds my soul. And it is my soul that needs to stay sober.

Bill W. put it beautifully: "Perfect humility is doing the will of God." It took me years to understand that. Now, each morning, I ask my Higher Power to help me stay open to His will, not mine. It is a simple request, but it changes everything.

The closer we grow to God, the more we realize that His will is the deepest fulfillment of who we are. It is the opening of the unique life He intended when He created us. To follow God's will is not to lose ourselves but to become our truest selves. Inner spiritual life is the space where this discovery takes place.

-Tim B.

Alcoholics Anonymous Cleveland

“As faith grows, so does inner security.”

AA Co-Founder, Bill W., January 1962, “This Matter of Fear”, Best of Bill



THE BEST OF BILL

Reflections on Faith, Fear, Honesty,
Humility, and Love

Plus Bill's Classic Essay on Anonymity



“As long as I am willing to do what I am called to do in any given moment and to abandon the effort to control the results of my actions, then I am following the path that my Higher Power – call it God, Good Orderly Direction, the soul, the life force, or anything else – has set out for me.”

**“A Remarkable Sensation,”
Thompson, Pennsylvania,
March 1997, AA Grapevine**



The Origin of the Four Absolutes in AA History

I was asked to research the origin of the Four Absolutes and the pamphlet by that same name published by our office. We have scant local resources for research of this kind, so I reached out to the Archives Department at our General Service Office. It was assigned to Associate Archivist Steven D'Avria who spent considerable time and careful effort on this task. Thank you so much, Steven! I blended his research with ours.

The Four Absolutes come from the Oxford Group, a precursor of AA. Both Bill W and Dr. Bob attended their meetings before starting AA and for a few years thereafter. We were originally the "drunk squads" of that organization. The book "What is the Oxford Group" presents these four moral principles (Honesty, Unselfishness, Love, Purity) in great detail but offers no advice from whence they came. The book "The Oxford Group: Its History and Significance" describes these as: "The ethical program of the [Oxford] Group is epitomized in the counsel of moral perfection defined by the Four Absolutes." It further details much of the sources of the OG's tenets and suggested that the Four Absolutes themselves originated from the works of Presbyterian Minister Robert E. Speers.

When asked why the Absolutes were omitted from the Big Book, Bill stated "The Four Absolutes... are expressed or implied in the Twelve Steps. Bill W also opined that their "moral perfection" was too lofty a goal for most alcoholics; "We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection." Bill also strongly wanted to differentiate AA from the OG. The OG had experienced some public controversy which we needed to avoid.

Nonetheless many AA members hereabouts found and find these principles of such universal usefulness that Lloyd H, co-editor of Cleveland's Central Bulletin, wrote essays on these principles as they apply to AA members. They were published in serial form in the January to June 1960 issues. These received such wide acclaim that in October 1962 we decided to publish them in pamphlet form. They first appeared as a 16-page booklet in April 1963 but the oldest copy we have in the office archives was printed after 1974.

I and others, facing indecision, rely on these as a touchstone of God's will for me—the moral path to pursue. Dr. Bob spoke of this at length in his last major talk in 1948.

By Bob McK, Cleveland District Office Archivist, December 2017



Step Four At A Glance

My sponsor, wisely, did not allow time for fear to develop before writing my Fourth Step. He pointed out that the Big Book indicates that we are to begin Step Four “at once!” (p. 64). It seems like only seconds after we prayed the Third Step Prayer that he laid out four sheets of paper with respective headings of Selfishness, Dishonesty, Resentment and Fear. I was to write: “God help me I am writing my inventory” under each of these words.

I was informed that I was not capable of enough honesty to do this alone. I needed God to help me. (After all a week or so before I had marched into a bar and almost spoke out: “Gin and tonic, please” —Thank God I didn’t). Obviously, my mind lied, so I did, indeed, need Gods help!

The Oxford Group called this ‘automatic writing.’ If the words did not come from deep within, I was not to write them. No thinking allowed! I believe more honesty landed on those papers in a few minutes than many weeks out of my good-keen-intellectual-alcoholic-mind.

This was not exactly Step Four, but it brought about honest information for the upcoming Fourth Step fun

Then from page 65 of the Big Book I learned how selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear had negatively affected me—and others. These were the very ingredients of the “bondage of self” I had asked God to remove in the Third Step Prayer! I needed to learn how to face and be rid of these aspects of my personality. How? I didn’t even know what they were! I believe such understanding is a vital function of this step. The Big Book refers to the above four character defects as our “Grosser handicaps.” (p. 71)

I was taught how to face and be rid of repeating thoughts of anger (resentments) on page 67. The same for irrational fears on page 68. I came to realize how dishonest and selfish I had been by my sexual conduct on pages 69 and 70. This vitally important information was necessary to adequately do Step Five with my sponsor and to be willing to ask for God’s help in Steps Six and Seven (p. 76). Honest information from this step was even helpful in Steps Eight and Nine because I had listed my harms to others on page 70.

I was taught to remain continually aware of these “Grosser handicaps” because they crop up in Step Ten all through the day and in Step Eleven before going to bed at night. Step Four is a learning process to be used in the maintenance Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve for the rest of my life.

By Bob S., Cleveland Central Office

AA Volunteer Opportunities



*Naples Area
Intergroup*

Mornings: 9:00 to 12:30

Afternoon: 12:30 to 4:00

(One morning or afternoon each week.)

and, Telephone Helpline

After-hours, various days.

1-year continuous sobriety.

For information: 239/262-6535

**Calling all AA
Authors !!!**

**Please submit
an article to**

The COURIER !!!

Email article to:

naplesintergroup@yahoo.com



Your Groups'

Activities

Can Be Here

Next Month.

To Highlight

Your Group,

Please Call Us:

Intergroup Office

239/262-6535



If you've spent any time in Alcoholics Anonymous, you've probably heard the Serenity Prayer more times than you can count. Many meetings open or close with it. Some members say it quietly to themselves during the day. Others keep it on a card in a wallet or taped to a refrigerator.

The words are simple and familiar:

God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.

For many of us, this prayer becomes more than something we say at the end of a meeting. It becomes a way to live.

How the Serenity Prayer Found Its Way Into AA

The Serenity Prayer was written in the early 1930s by theologian Reinhold Niebuhr. In the early 1940s, a member of AA came across the prayer in print and shared it with others in the fellowship.

The message struck a chord right away. Here was something that captured an important spiritual idea in just a few lines. Soon, copies were being printed and shared among groups, and before long the prayer became a regular part of AA meetings.

Over time, it simply became part of the fabric of the fellowship.

Why It Means So Much in Recovery

Many alcoholics spent years trying to control everything—other people, circumstances, and the way life unfolded. When things didn't go our way, we reacted with anger, resentment, or despair.

The Serenity Prayer offers a different way.

Serenity reminds us that some things are simply beyond our control. The past cannot be changed. Other people will do what they do. Learning acceptance brings a kind of peace many of us never knew before coming to AA.

Courage reminds us that recovery is not passive. We can change our attitudes, our actions, and the direction of our lives. The Twelve Steps ask us to look honestly at ourselves and make changes where needed.

[Continued on page 16.](#)

Serenity Prayer in AA ... continued from page 15

Wisdom helps us learn the difference between the two. That difference can be hard to see sometimes, but over time—through meetings, sponsorship, and the Steps—it becomes clearer.

A Prayer for Everyday Life

Many members find themselves turning to the Serenity Prayer outside of meetings as well.

It might come up when facing a difficult conversation, dealing with a problem at work, or feeling overwhelmed by something that can't be fixed right away. Sometimes simply pausing and remembering those words can change the way we approach a situation.

Instead of reacting, we take a moment to ask:

Is this something I need to accept, or something I can change?

That small pause can make a big difference.

One Day at a Time

The Serenity Prayer continues to be one of the most widely shared parts of the AA program. It's short, easy to remember, and speaks to something at the heart of recovery: learning to live life on life's terms.

For many of us, it becomes a daily reminder that we don't have to fight everything anymore. With a little serenity, some courage, and a bit of wisdom, we can face whatever the day brings—one day at a time.

* * * * *

I Finally Understood Anonymity

I've never been called the brightest bulb in the pack. So, imagine my surprise when, after years of being in the program, I was presented with a deeper rationale for anonymity that was so much more compelling that I immediately took to it.

My initial understanding of anonymity was the commonsense understanding – the old “quid pro- quo.” I wouldn't want anyone blabbing to my boss, in-laws, or neighbors that I was secretly the town drunk. So, I easily understood that I, in return, should keep my trap shut and not disclose who I saw or what I heard. Easy-peasy.



Then came the lightning bolt. I was at an AA conference where there was a possibility that professional athletes or Hollywood stars or big name businesspeople might be in attendance and that they might not want their anonymity blown ('natch).

What blew me away was this new reason why I shouldn't name drop. Protecting their anonymity was an act of humility for me! Back home in Cleveland, instead of puffing out my chest and coyly saying, “Oh, you know, so and so was there,” I should realize that my motive would be, once again, “aren't I special?” I would be strutting around trying to draw attention to me (once again) – how cool I was for rubbing shoulders with so and so. For the first time I was seeing that practicing anonymity was an act of humility on my part. Yes, I could still act on the old commonsense understanding, but here was a profoundly spiritual reason not to break someone's anonymity – deflation of my own insatiable ego.

I am forever grateful for this lesson which reminds me to regularly examine my motives.

**BE A PART OF SOMETHING
WONDERFUL!**

LOOKING FOR SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES?

**HELP MAKE THE
SISTERS BY THE SEA, 2026
CONFERENCE SUCCESSFUL!**

JOIN THE HERD AND HAVE SOME FUN!

**COMMITTEE MEETINGS ARE ON MONDAYS AT 5:30 PM AT
THE NAPLES INTERGROUP OFFICE IN PERSON OR ZOOM**

ZOOM ID: 2397844921 PW: 2026

Meeting Dates:

**January 26th; February 23rd; March 30th; April 13th;
April 27th; weekly in May; and June 1st.**

**The final conference meeting will be held on June 8th in
the Governors Suite at the Hilton Naples.**



MEMORABILIA



BE A GREETER



ENTERTAINMENT



REGISTRATION

**SISTERS BY THE SEA JUNE 12,13,& 14TH
HILTON NAPLES**

REGISTER AT WWW.SISTERSBYTHESEA.COM

QUESTIONS?

CALL PEGGY P.E. AT 239-269-7651

OR E-MAIL SISTERSBYTHESEALLC@GMAIL.COM

The Serenity Club's

30TH ANNIVERSARY

Dinner/Karaoke

**DOOR
PRIZES!**

**50/50
RAFFLE**

Faith Lutheran Church Fellowship Hall

4150 Goodlette-Frank Road, Naples, Florida 34103

ONLY \$30.00 PER PERSON!!



SATURDAY June 27, 2026

*** FROM 6:00 PM UNTIL 10:30 PM ***

FOOD, FUN & FELLOWSHIP!!

Barbeque Dinner, Karaoke and Guest Speakers:

Diana M. (Largo, FL) &

Stanley S. (Largo, FL)

For More Info: Call John F. at 239-248-0596

68th FLORIDA STATE CONVENTION

ORLANDO, FL

August 6TH-9TH, 2026

A NEW FREEDOM



**Scholarships
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Fun Activities

- ✓ Indoor Go-Karts
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- ✓ Dance Parties
- ✓ Scenic 5K Run

Experience Freedom

- ✓ Workshops
- ✓ Great Speakers
- ✓ Meet New Friends
- ✓ Marathon Meetings
- ✓ Panels

Speakers

TOMMY M., LARGO, FL
ANGIE P., CLEVELAND, OH
KARL M., COVINA, CA
TERRENCE H., PINELLAS PARK, FL
KATHY H., CINCINNATI, OH
STEVE L., NASHVILLE, TN
SCOTT T., LOS ANGELES, CA
JENNIFER H., PLANO, TX
DEB H., AKRON, OH

Register Today While Rooms Are Available!!!

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Scan the QR Code with your camera. For assistance call 727-530-0415



Overflow
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\$20 add. person
Hyatt Place

8741 International Dr.
Orlando, FL 32819
1-407-370-4720



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Hotel 2 – \$159
Rosen Centre

9840 International Dr.
Orlando, FL 32819
1-407-996-9700

*Host Hotel
Sold Out*

Call 1-407-996-9700

to be put on a
waiting list if
available. - \$159

9700 International Drive
Orlando, FL 32819



Serenity By The Sea!



SEPTEMBER 11 - 13, 2026

*A Weekend of Food, Fun & Fellowship Featuring
Meetings, Workshops, Speakers, and a Saturday Night Banquet!*

BOB D.

Las Vegas, NV

STEPHANIE B.

Konawa, OK

JIMMY D.

Dallas, TX

LAURA B.

Austin, TX

BILLY N.

West Palm, FL

Dynamic Talks from around the United States



A VARIETY OF SPECIAL EVENTS!

(Badges must be worn to attend all meetings & workshops)

~ Workshops! ~ Archives! ~ Speakers

The rest will be a Surprise!

Sunrise/Early Bird and Sunset/Night Owl Meetings!

HOTEL REGISTRATION INFORMATION

The Naples Hilton Resort!

1-800-445-8667

Please visit *our website for*
additional information and one-click booking!

\$140 Per Night Single or Double Occupancy
(Free Self-Parking, Wi-Fi, & No Daily Resort Fees!)

GROUP Name Serenity By The Sea 2026
Group Code: SBTS26

For more information visit www.serenityclubswfl.org/

(Reservations must be made as soon as possible, to receive this rate.)

If you need additional information, or have special needs, please call
John F. at 239-450-1044, email jfisheraa05@gmail.com, or write:
Serenity By The Sea, 12435 Collier Blvd. unit 107 Naples, FL 34116

Your Registration Includes:

Access To All Meetings And Workshops!

SERENITY BY THE SEA REGISTRATION
(Register online at www.serenityclubswfl.org)
\$60.00 Per Person

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____

ZIP _____ PHONE _____

EMAIL _____

Name on Badges _____

Registration Fee (Required) **\$60.00**

Saturday Night Banquet (Optional) **\$65.00**

Guest Banquet **\$65.00**

TOTAL _____

Make Checks Payable To:
and Mail To:

The Serenity Club
12435 Collier Blvd., Ste. 107
Naples, FL 34116

This is a fundraiser. All sales are final. NO REFUNDS. Cancelled/unclaimed registrations will become scholarships.

FINANCES**Mar 26****YTD 26****Income**

Literature/Merchandise \$5,553 \$17,534

Group Contributions 1,985 \$6,125

AA Birthdays

Faithful Five

Individual/Anonymous 40 154

Total Income 7,578 23,813**Expenses**

Bank/Credit Card Fees 115 345

Licenses/Permits -

Office Supplies 539 1,221

Office Improve/Repair -

www Hosting -

Payroll 2,425 7,275

Payroll Tax -

Postage -

Printing - 1,871

Purchases/Lit./Merch. 3,865 8,198

Insurance -

Rent 500 1,500

Sales Tax 774 1,076

Telephone/www 286 858

Utilities 100 300

Computer Equipment - -

Computer Software 114 408

Licenses / Memberships - 270

Accounting Services 155 924

Total Expenses 8,873 15,372**Net Ordinary Income** (\$1,295) (\$433)

Gratitude Dinner Tickets -

Raffle Ticket Sales

Gratitude Expenses -

NET OTHER INCOME -**NET INCOME** (\$1,295) (\$433)

**Thank you to all who contribute 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-B Pine Ridge Road
Naples, FL 34109
(50%)

General Service Office

James A. Farley Station
P. O. Box 2407
New York, N. Y. 10116 (30%)

District 20

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

Area 15

Area 15 Treasurer
2950 W. Cypress Creek Rd.
Ste 333 #1097
Ft Lauderdale, FL 33309
New Address (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*

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>Mar 26</u>	<u>YTD26</u>
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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 Naples Area Intergroup.



The Birthday Club

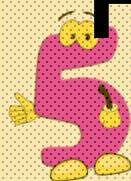
Did you know you can share your sobriety and gratitude in a practical way by joining the AA Birthday Club? Sign up today and be featured in the *Courier*. Show your support for your Central Office. A donation of only one dollar for every year of your sobriety will help carry the message to alcoholics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



Rick G.	55 years
Paul B.	54 years
Ron P.	51 years
Ron L.	47 years
Jackie G.	39 years
Bill D.	38 years
Merle B.	37 years
Michael L.	36 years
Dennis F.	35 years
Rad W.	35 years
Judy W.	34 years
Steve K.	32 years
Bill S.	24 years
Ken H.	23 years
Laura .	7 years
Eric S.	6 years



Faithful Fivers Needed



2025 Monthly Faithful Fiver Club

April O., Bill D., Bill S., Eric S., Jeanette H., Jim H., Judy W., Kathryn Mc., Ken H., Ralph W., Rick G., Ron L., Theresa R.

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 for a one time Credit Card charge.

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:

Chair:

Joe S. 845/554-8721
chair@district20aa.org

Alt. Chair:

Tom D. 845/230-6780
tomadavison@yahoo.com

Registrar:

Scott N., 262/374-2269
registrar@district20aa.org

Treasurer

Bob A., 440/667-4372
treasurer@district20aa.org

Secretary:

Maury D. 239/370-7232
maury@mdailey.com

Service Committees:

Archives

Heather O. 272-2632
district20archives@gmail.com

District 20 Business Meeting

4th Thursday of each month,
7:00pm @ 24 Hour Club
1509 Pine Ridge Road

Current Practices

Pete C., 784-7725
pete.curtner@yahoo.com

Grapevine / Literature

Lauren F. 220-2792
laurenfrosh@comcast.net
Jody L. 518/335-9748
jojopr1025@gmail.com

Business meeting the third
Tuesday of each month at
5:30 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Institutions

Maria M.
mmetchear@aol.com
1st Thursday of each month
at 7:00 p.m., 24 Hour Club

Public Information/CPC

Leonard H., 239/315-6120
leonardheller1@gmail.com
3rd Friday of each month,
at 6:00pm, Serenity Club

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:

FOURTH Thursday
of the Month, 7:00 pm
Twenty-Four Hour
Club
1509 Pine Ridge Road

NAPLES AREA INTERGROUP MEETING

Central Office

1509-2 Pine Ridge Rd.
(next to 24 Hour Club)

SECOND Wednesday of
each month at 7:00pm

Technology Opportunity.

Commitments

DAVID LAWRENCE CENTER

Every day except
Wednesday
7:00 p.m.
Maria M., 370-2034
mmetchear@aol.com

WILLOUGH

Sunday, Monday and
Thursday
7:00pm
Peggy E., 269-7651
marco-
angel2000@gmail.com

HAZELDEN

Monday, 7:00pm
Nick Geer 818/424-5463
nicgeer@gmail.com

BRIDGING THE GAP

Joe S., 845/554-8721
joeascalai@icloud.com

Area 15; Panel 75

(South Florida, Ba-
hamas, US and Brit-
ish Virgin Islands,
Antigua, St. Maar-
ten, and Cayman Is-
lands)

Delegate: Lisa D.
delegate@area15aa.org

Alternate: Donna W.
altdelegate@area15aa.org

Chair: Bron F.
chair@area15aa.org

Treasurer: Alan T.
treasurer@area15aa.org

Registrar: Lea A.
registrar@area15aa.org

Secretary: Paul M.
secretary@area15aa.org

Naples Area Intergroup

Trusted Servants

Chair:

Service Opportunity

Interim Chair:

Robert C. 784-8514
bcrowe616@aol.com

Treasurer:

Dalton M.
781/444-7070
daltonmurfee@aol.com

Secretary:

Jasmine C., 220-7798
jasmineyenter@yahoo.com

Members at Large:

Service Opportunities

Office Manager:

Ken Helton
1509-B Pine Ridge Road
Naples, Florida 34109-2198
naplesintergroup@yahoo.com
Office: 239-262-6535
239/963-7820
www.aanaples.org

Office Hours:

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

Amy D., Becky S., Bill
S., Caroline H., Carrie W.,
Eric S., Gay S., Geoff S.,
James S., Natacha A., Peggy
E., Ralph B., Swen L., ... and
loyal substitutes.

Service Opportunity

After-Hours Phone Volunteers

Bob M., Craig P., Geoff E.,
Heather B., Ken H., Lauren
F., Steve K., and Tim A.

Service Opportunity