



Suite 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

Oakland Commerce Center

3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

Phone 954-462-7202, 954-462-0265; www.aabroward.org

VOLUME 4
APRIL, 2016

STEP 4: "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Fear and the Fourth Step

An AA describes how a Step helped him to change his attitudes and feelings

I think most of us arrive in AA with fear of the unknown. Early in August of 1982, I attended my first few meetings. I can remember wondering: what would become of me?

Would I be OK here? Would I be accepted? How could I fit in? Was I worthy of help? They told me on a daily basis, "Failure here could cause painful death." That statement alone would cause some to head for the doors. Then after I'd been in AA for a while, the fear seemed to level off though it never went away. I still felt as though I wasn't really connected.

I couldn't figure out how to get totally comfortable in the Fellowship, so in my ignorance, I just kept trying to gain other people's approval. Some would call this insanity: "Trying to effect change by repeating the same behavior."

The problem with that sort of thinking is that I can't please everyone all the time. Trying to do so only increases my feelings of low esteem. The bottom line is that I can't control what others think, say or do; I can only control what I think, say or do. In the end, it comes down to a choice; will I remain a slave to the opinions of others, or will I find the freedom to be myself?

My sponsor used to always say, "There's no such thing as new anger, only old anger coming out in a new situation." When you consider that the term resentment means to repeat a feeling, it's plain to see how I continually recreated this negative energy throughout my life. It continues until my suffering is so great, I become willing to look at it, and change the behavior. Step Four is the tool that allows me to see where I've been needlessly inflicting pain on myself, and those about me.

Through several years in the Fellowship, this persisted. Despite the fact that I was free from alcohol, I was not free to be myself within the Fellowship or the world in general—true recovery eluded me.

A few years ago, I was participating in a book study, when I had an epiphany. In Step Four, we're instructed to list our resentments.

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THIS MONTH'S FEATURED BOOK



Concept IV

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.

Tradition 4: "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."

Tradition Four: Autonomy--not Self-will

A political science professor at the University of Missouri once said, "The reason that the Constitution of the United States has been so successful for more than 200 years is that it is so general and so flexible that people don't feel they have to change it every time they have an argument." I have come to believe that there might just be some of that flexibility in our Traditions, particularly Tradition Four.

Through the years I have learned to take arguments about the Traditions, or instances of using a given Tradition to support a personal position, with a little grain of salt. As Bill W. explains Rule 62 in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, let's not take ourselves too damn seriously.

I've learned to laugh just a little through the years because I have been around long enough now to hear some pretty good cases on both sides of any given controversy. I've heard the same Tradition used as support for arguments on both sides of the question.

This is the real beauty in the Traditions. They have survived intact, even more so than the U.S. Constitution, in spite of the many ways we as individuals have used and misused them on our AA travels.

Many other times I have heard an argument supported with one part of a Tradition while the second part is completely ignored. This phenomenon seems to occur quite often in Tradition Four: "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole."

Autonomy most often seems to be used as an argument to explain or defend why a group ought to do what a certain member wants it to do. It occurs to me that the framework that we build around autonomy is the same framework that we build around self, which the Big Book warns us we must get rid of if we are to expect a life of sobriety and serenity. In other words, we often use autonomy to get our way.

I remember a wise old-timer saying to me many years ago that the most important thing that we had to remember about our relations with each other in AA is Tradition One: that everything we do and say should have our common welfare uppermost in our minds and be in support of AA unity.

He went so far as to say that when a group sits down to discuss a given controversy and to have an informed group conscience, that everyone should have the right to know that the meeting is taking place and to say anything they want. But, he said, the group should not feel that it has to take a vote--usually, the group conscience just emerges. If a group is really striving for a group conscience, they won't even be talking about the controversy after a few minutes. They'll be discussing how each of them is so important to the other, and how much they would be willing to sacrifice of "their own way" to preserve the unity of the group.

And so it is with Tradition Four, I believe. It should not be used so much to strike home the point that a group can do anything it darned well wants to. It should also remind us to ask ourselves, in the context of all the Traditions: "Is this decision good for all the groups around us? Will we hurt someone? Are we helping the AA Fellowship as a whole?"

It just appears sometimes that our old habits of trying to concentrate on what makes us different still prevails over concentrating on what makes us similar, what will give us unity, and what will aid in the survival, growth, and well being of the Fellowship.

It seems to me that the biggest part of AA's growth and success in its almost fifty-five years has been that it has clung firmly to its singleness of purpose, and has not tried to be all things for all people. Because of that, even though groups from different parts of the United States and Canada may have different local customs, they are still basically carrying the same and single message of AA recovery to the newcomer.

Continued from Page 1

Then it asks us to look at the cause of these resentments, and what they affected in our lives. Next, we're asked to look at our part. It was here, that I found a key to my thinking. Normally, I'd answer by saying things like, "Well, I was selfish, angry, dishonest, etc." While that's a good start, it doesn't take into consideration the true nature of the defect. I have to consider what would have made that same situation helpful for myself and the other person.

The reason I resent anyone is because their actions hurt me, and I feel afraid. I don't understand what makes them behave in a certain way. Time and again, I become upset with people who practice the exact same behavior that I do.

Sometimes they did wrong me, but no matter where fault lies in a given situation, I'm resentful because of my inability to see that they suffer just like I do. We all share the exact same fears, and at times, exhibit the same behavior. This was a freeing realization.

Step Eleven suggests that we pause when agitated and ask for guidance. Many times I've allowed the behavior of others to anger me, but if I'm able to pause for just a moment, and consider the lessons of the Fourth Step, then I might see their actions for what they truly are. I see that they're acting out on one of their many fears.

For me the ultimate fear is that I won't be good enough to experience love in my life. The spiritual experience we seek may be just that: a better relationship with our fellows.

Perhaps that is the ultimate challenge of a sober life. St. Francis said that the act of understanding is better than that of being understood. It is truly miraculous to come from a place of fear and frustration to one of love and tolerance.

Gradually, I've been able to make this a real part of sober living. I'm happy to report that today I am enough, and I feel at home here in the Fellowship. There will always be those times when the old fear of not being good enough comes calling. However, armed with the wisdom gained from my Fourth Step, I'm able to quickly turn that feeling around. The mature, outgoing love described by St. Francis is my daily goal.

—Larry H., Puyallup, Wash.—

Reprinted from *Grapevine*
March 1977 Vol. 33 Issue 10.

Continued from Page 2

Through trial and error, we AAs have found two very important facts about ourselves and about Tradition Four. First, we have discovered that we must take responsibility for ourselves if we are to recover and have complete freedom, or autonomy within our groups. So we cannot use autonomy for selfish means.

Second, we must depend on each other or die alone. No heritage from our AA predecessors is so precious and so clear. We cannot look inward when we talk about autonomy. We must look always to the greater good. There is no one else who will care for the survival of the Fellowship if we do not. We know our own lives depend on the well-being of all the groups and all the members if the Fellowship and its members are to survive.

I believe any document, whether it's the Constitution or the Traditions of our Fellowship, which has survived all trials and remained for the common good of many people, is spiritual in its nature and its origins. Tradition Four exemplifies in its true meaning this spiritual foundation of our Society.

Taken in this context, all that we do and say should be for the good of the greatest number. The future of the Fellowship and our own futures depend on it.

—Richard B. Iselin, New Jersey,—

Reprinted from *Grapevine*
February 1970 Vol. 26 Issue 9.

Definition of Broward County Intergroup, Inc.

Your Intergroup office services all groups in the Broward County area. It is not a governing body and does not attempt to, nor can it, rule any AA Group. Its sole purpose is to act as a clearinghouse for the convenience of members and groups desiring assistance, and to extend the Twelve Step Work "carrying the message" to the sick alcoholic. The Intergroup office is supported entirely by contributions from groups, usually a specified amount each month or at intervals throughout the year.

The office purchases and sells all conference-approved books and literature to groups throughout Broward County.

Tolerance: A two-way street

The First Tradition has been called our unity statement. Unity is imperative if AA will survive for the next suffering alcoholic who comes through the door. But too often the word "unity" is misunderstood. Often we interpret it as "coming together in a common place"; or, "superficial friendliness and jovial glad-handing"; or even, "public displays of affection (such as hugging)." In truth, while such public expressions may accompany unity, it goes much deeper than these surface levels.

Yes, we share a common malady--our alcoholism--but anyone who has ever frequented the bar life can tell you that commonality in our illness alone produces little unity.

The Big Book says, "Love and tolerance of others is our code." In truth, this is the basis of real unity. Genuine love can come only from the source of love, which we call our Higher Power; tolerance, in turn, is the expression of this love toward our fellows. Tolerance is easy to practice toward those of our fellows with whom we share more than one commonality. For example, it's natural to tolerate people with whom we share a socio-economic status, interests and hobbies, education or (perceived) intellectual level; but what about those of divergent religious, political, cultural and socio-economic backgrounds? Can we be tolerant of them as well?

Since its beginning, AA has tried to foster a climate of acceptance of everyone who has a desire to stop drinking, regardless of background. The short form of our Third Tradition reminds us: "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." In its zeal to accomplish this end, it even added the words "as we understood him" to the word "God" in the Third Step, allowing each person to choose his own conception of God in the hope that this word need be a barrier to none who wish to practice our program of recovery. Thereafter, Christians, Jews, Moslems, Buddhists, Hindus, even agnostics and atheists--at last permitted to seek their own conception of a Higher Power--were able to find recovery from our common illness. This tolerance was key to AA's success and survival.

But tolerance is a two-way street. Living in the Ozarks (firmly located in "The Bible Belt"), I experience frequent examples of low-key "evangelizing" in my AA meetings. This is a subtle form of intolerance that is usually tolerated by other members so long as it doesn't get too far over the line. But occasionally, newcomers, who are not yet aware of the bounds of religious decorum in meetings, do cross that nebulous line, angering those of an agnostic tendency. I recently found myself in just such a meeting.

A young newcomer, returning from morning mass still attired in his white shirt and tie, attended the 10 A.M. meeting of my home group. The meeting included a young lady--also a newcomer, who declares herself an avowed atheist--and an older man who refers to himself as a Wiccan. As the meeting progressed, an elderly old-timer boldly declared his faith in Jesus Christ. Feeling thus emboldened by the comments of the old-timer, the young male newcomer then whipped out a pocket Bible and proceeded to read. As if on the sound of "charge," half the group bolted upright and stormed from the meeting, leaving the young man puzzled. I myself felt embarrassed and ashamed.

After the meeting, I approached the young Bible-reader. I told him that I, myself, though not a church-goer, am also a Bible-reader. However, I said, such readings are not appropriate in an AA meeting, where members of various beliefs attend. I also suggested to the old-timer that perhaps he should go easy on the "J.C." talk. When the Wiccan asserted himself, I also reminded him that Wicca is a religion and not to be promoted in AA.

As I said earlier, tolerance is a two-way street. At the 10 A.M. meeting the following day, virtually the same crowd appeared, except the young Bible-reader. I introduced the topic of "tolerance" for the discussion, and then gently challenged those present about their behavior at the previous day's meeting. I said that tolerance must be practiced both ways--both toward those of an agnostic tendency and toward believers with an evangelical tendency.

AA's unity does not depend on uniformity or even conformity; it depends on love and tolerance of others with their peculiarities. In AA, I've learned to focus on similarities, not differences. AA is not the place for debates about religious dogma, but when newcomers attend, such slip-ups are inevitable. This is when tolerance is most applicable.

Narrow-minded bigotry has no place in AA. We neither promote nor attack another member's religious beliefs; nor is it our job to try to convert anyone to ours. We in AA are here to save drunks, not souls!

AA Birthdays

April Celebrants

Each Day A New Beginning

Anthony D. ~ 6yrs.
Edna C. ~ 7yrs.

One Day At A Time

Tammi Jo ~ 5yrs.
Eddie M. ~ 23yrs

Oakland Park

Lin F. ~ 44yrs.
Paul P. ~ 29yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale Women's

Carla K. ~ 10yrs.
Susan H. ~ 28yrs.

Mountain Group

Michele O. ~ 7yrs.
Craig L. ~ 10yrs.
Rob B. ~ 33yrs.

Saturday Morning Awareness

Chucky ~ 2yrs.
Craig S. ~ 2yrs.

Serenity All Together

Joe G. ~ 18yrs.
Leon V. ~ 39yrs.
Warren M. ~ 34yrs.

It's your Birthday!

Many AA members across the country share their Anniversary by giving a dollar or two, for each year of their sobriety to their Intergroup Office. This insures that the same help that they received will be available to others who are new to the fellowship.

Start this year. It is not how much you give that's important. It's thinking of others on your special day, that makes it so special. This is a wonderful way to express your gratitude by helping others receive the blessings of sobriety.

Group Contributions and individual contributions are the life support of Alcoholic Anonymous. There is no such thing as a small contribution.

Make checks payable to:

Broward County Intergroup, Inc.
3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

Congratulations to all of our celebrants. You deserve to be recognized.

We at Intergroup love to show the newcomers in this program that it works. One of the best ways we find to do that, is by publishing the years our members are celebrating, under the name of your homegroup. This shows newcomers that meeting makers make it.

We have over seven hundred meetings a week in Broward County. Please help us to pass on this message by submitting the celebrating members of your group, or you personally, for publication.

Celebrants should be submitted as early as possible, by the 3rd week, of the preceding month. (Example) May celebrants should be submitted by April 20th, to be published in the May Newsletter. Thank you for your time and effort.



Word Scramble Step Four

1. ysoidrnagit _____
2. tifedsuji _____
3. mnaitinodo _____
4. rylgoainv _____
5. lwlwoa _____
6. gnioivda _____
7. taonndiigni _____
8. ismbitoxehiin _____
9. dzicivtime _____
10. istieblaili _____

(answers on page 7)



I would like to call attention to three volunteers from the Express Group who have gone ABOVE AND BEYOND in their willingness to serve.

These three women took their personal time to do a job no one else wanted, to make our Intergroup office look great and enjoyed themselves in the process.

They typed up 30 hours of spoken workshops for the National Intergroup Seminar. There is absolutely no way I could have done it without you gals.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU
ANNIE, BONNIE AND PAT.

BCIC Broward County Institutions Committee

Next Meeting: April 9th

10:00 a.m. at the Twelve Step House,
205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale.

Intergroup Meetings Are held at:

The Twelve Step House,
205 S.W. 23rd, Ft. Lauderdale,

Upcoming Meetings
April 17th — May 15th
at 1:00 p.m.

General Service Office, NY

P.O. Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, NY 10164-0371
212.870.3127

Bridging The Gap
877.207.2242

Broward Co. Intergroup, Inc.

3317 NW 10th Ave. Suite 404
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309
954.462.7202

BCIC

P.O. Box 22701
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33335

Area 15 General Service

Treasurer, P.O. Box 206
Bradenton, FL 34208
941-266-0609

District 9 General Service

P.O. Box 100126
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310

Suite 404 is a monthly publication of Broward County Intergroup, Inc. (BCI). The opinions expressed here are not necessarily those of BCI or AA as a whole.

We welcome your thoughts and experiences with A.A.

We love to run articles written by local people in A.A. You need no prior publishing experience.

All it takes is a little willingness and a desire to share.

Here are some guidelines that might help you contribute to our newsletter:

Before writing your article, you may want to go through a couple of previous newsletters to see what type of article you might be interested in writing about. We love to hear stories about experiences you might have had working your steps, or what being a member of AA has taught you about the traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. You might want to take a photograph of the room your home-group meets in, and give a brief history of that meeting, or mention what that meeting has meant to your sobriety. There are any number of topics to write about. We are always looking for material, as long as it relates to AA and reflects AA's singleness of purpose.

So let us know about your experiences with Alcoholics Anonymous, or in your local home-group.

Contact us at help@aabroward.org or will@aabroward.org

Suite 404 readers tell us about their experiences with AA

A longtime friend of Broward County Intergroup, Lil M., frequently corresponds with the office using good old fashioned "snail mail". She always takes the time to send some writings about her gratitude and a contribution. This April 26th she is celebrating 38 years of continuous sobriety at the age of 88 years young, as she likes to say. Last month we received this:

"Intergroup was not listed in the phone directory 38 years ago. An ad came on at 5:00 AM, on the morning I came home from the hospital, in Palm Beach, saying, "Alcohol kills. Call Intergroup of Palm Beach." I called and they gave me a number to call the Fort Lauderdale office. I called there and said in a very nasty, attacking tone to Alberta, Intergroup manager at the time, "Why didn't the ad say to call Fort Lauderdale?" She explained they were not listed and told me to come down to the office at 509 Las Olas. I met her there, and still angry threatened to punch her through her open window on the 5th floor.

I did not have the choice of finding A.A. – A.A. found me. A broken, angry animal would not step in an A.A. meeting. So A.A. came to me, through Alberta, Esther, Harriet in the "ole AA office" keeping busy, arranging literature and reading it while doing the job. I later got to work with Jackie, Betty P., Tommie D., Wesley P., etc. Service saved my sobriety.

Thank you for letting my feelings become bare in sharing. I love you unconditionally, "

—Lil M, Coconut Creek, FL—

Suite 404 readers tell us about their favorite passages in AA literature

Lil's favorite passage in AA Literature from page 124 in the Big Book, Chapter 9

"The Family Afterward"

"Cling to the thought that, in God's hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have – the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert death and misery for them."

Answers from page 5:

1. grandiosity 2. justified 3. domination 4. vainglory 5. wallow

6. avoiding 7. indignation 8. exhibitionism 9. victimized 10. liabilities

Faithful Fivers are fellow A.A. members who donate five dollars (\$5) a month to Intergroup as an act of gratitude. Their generosity helps us to carry the message of A.A. to the still sick and suffering alcoholic throughout the year.

Thank you to our Faithful Fivers. Your contributions are so appreciated!

Tom & Liz J., Gregory C., Sherri D., Suzanne B., Ron J. Bob H., Anonymous I, Bobby V., Janet M., Elizabeth B., Happiness Is Group, Lillian M., Tim S., Milinda B., Barbara S., Lois O., Richard H., Richard S., Sam B., Mark S. Howard S., Douglas C., Jennifer S., the other Bob H., Carol B., the original Bob H., Leslie R. Eric P.
and maybe YOU next time?

Please consider becoming a "Faithful Fiver." Your commitment of \$5.00 a month to your Intergroup Office will go a long way toward helping carry the message to the still sick and suffering alcoholic who reaches out.

Fill out this form and mail it in with your contribution today!

It is the still suffering alcoholic who ultimately benefits from your generous spirit!

Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Sobriety Date and Home Group _____

Make checks payable to:

Broward County Intergroup, Inc. 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP

Invites you to our

53rd Annual Intergroup Appreciation Dinner

Saturday, April 23rd, 2016

6:00 pm to 11:00 pm

TROPICAL ACRES RESTAURANT

2500 Griffin Road Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33312

An Evening of appreciation for our Intergroup volunteers & staff

Coffee Hour – 6:00 p.m., Dinner – 7:00 p.m.

Introduction & Speaker – 8:00 p.m.

Advance ticket purchase offers pre-selection of chicken, beef or vegetarian for \$40.00 p/p.

Tickets are all sold in advance, they will not be sold at the door.

For more information call, Intergroup Office: 954-462-0265

Volunteers welcome!

Groups we love your contributions!

We are looking for groups that would like to contribute
a gift basket to be raffled off at our

53rd Annual Volunteer Appreciation Dinner, April 23rd

Tropical Acres Restaurant, 2500 Griffin Road, Ft. Lauderdale, FL. Contact us: 954-462-0265

MEETING CHANGES

Wednesday

NEW MEETING Practice These Principles, 9:00a.m., St Vincent Church, St. Paul Hall, 6350 18th St., Margate, OSTD.

Thursday

Thurs. Night Men's BB Study, 7:30p.m., Luther Mem. Church, 1925 N. 60th Ave. Hollywood. **No longer meets.**

Friday

NEW MEETING Constant Thought, 8:00p.m., Sunshine Cathedral, 1480 SW 9th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, 33315

NEW MEETING Woman's Journey, 10:30a.m., Fourth Dimension, 4425 Hollywood Blvd., Hollywood, 33021 OD.

Saturday

Ninth Chapter, Our Savior Lutheran - 8001 NW 5 St. Plantation, FL 33313. **Now meets at 7:30p.m. Not 8:00p.m.**

NEW MEETING Nooner's, 12:00p.m., Twelve Step House, 205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale, 33315.

Sunday

NEW MEETING 441 Group, 7:00 p.m. Village Plaza, 1452 N State Rd. 7. (441) Margate 33063.

Happiness Is, 11:00 a.m., Dunkin Donuts Conf. Room, 9170 W. State Road 84., Davie. **No longer meets.**

Daily Meetings

NEW MEETING Lunch Express, 12:10p.m., Pride Center, Room 207, 2040 N Dixie Hwy., Wilton Manors.

NEW MEETING Early Risers On The Beach, 7:00a.m., Cleveland House, At Pool, Smoking, 320 Cleveland Street Hollywood, FL 33019 OD.

SPANISH MEETINGS

Grupo Libertad, 8:00p.m., Monday. Sober Today Club, 1633 S 21st. Ave., Hollywood, **No longer meets.**

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|----------------------------|---|
| April 10 | Victor E Picnic , Snyder Park Caldwell Pavilion, 3299 SW 4th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, 11:00a.m. to 4:00p.m. Raffle, games, music, food. A.A. Speaker Meeting. Free. |
| April 17 | Bottom Line Picnic , Quiet Water Park, 401 S. Powerline Rd., Deerfield Beach, FL 33442 , 10:00a.m., Speaker, 11:30a.m., Picnic. Raffle, games, karaoke, DJ, food. Bounce House, Volleyball Tournament. Tickets \$5.00, Advance, \$7.00 at the door. |
| April 23 | 53rd Annual Intergroup Appreciation Banquet , Tropical Acres Steak House, 2500 Griffin Rd., Ft. Lauderdale. 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. Dinner, Speaker meeting. \$40.00. Save the date! Tickets available. |
| April 30 | Intergroup Open House , 3317 NW 10th Ter. Suite 404, Oakland Pk. 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Door Prizes, Refreshments, Raffles, Discounts on Selected Items. Come visit our new office. |
| April 29
-May 1 | The 23rd Woodstock of AA , Holiday Inn - Orlando International Airport, 5750 T.G. Lee Blvd., Orlando, FL 32822. Registration \$35.00 For more info call (407) 273-1646 or E-Mail: gyeldell@cfl.rr.com . |
| May 5-8 | 38th Big Book Seminar , Fort Lauderdale Marriott North, 6650 N. Andrews Ave., Ft. Lauderdale. Registration \$25.00. For more info visit, www.bigbookseminar.org . |
| June 5 | General Service District 9 Founders' Day Picnic , Snyder Park, 3299 SW 4th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale 11:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Tickets \$8.00 in advance, \$10.00 at the door. Bring a newcomer and a dessert! For info. email supportyourservices@district9aa.org . |
| June 25 | Unity XI Breakfast , presented by BCIC, Intergroup & General Service District 9. \$7.00, Advance purchase ONLY. 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Plantation United Methodist Church, 1001 NW 70th Ave., Plantation FL 33313 |