

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.aabrowar

VLUME 8 UG T, 2016

STEP 8:

"Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."

The Need to Go Deeper

Uncovering all the harm he caused in his drinking days restored his compassion for others

Looking back, it is probably safe to say that I harmed many people whom I came in contact with during my drinking days.

My first stab at an Eighth Step list began easily enough, since I had sort of a head start by simply referring back to my Fourth Step inventory. But if I were going to be thorough, I knew I would need to go deeper—much deeper!

As a newcomer, it wasn't too difficult to list most of the ways and persons I had harmed, because many were obvious and still on the surface. Easily found were injuries of money or property for which I would need to become willing to make amends. Then there were those impending legal dooms, simple to summon up, because the negative consequences loomed so large they were impossible to forget. Willing or not, I would be forced to take care of those.

Although I had a promising start on Step Eight, I quickly learned about damages that were not so obvious. These were not errors I had conveniently forgotten, but instead were slights obscured by the armor of selfishness and self-centeredness, which is typical of our common condition. We only see what we are able to see when we can see it. Only after clearing the surface, and continuing to look deeper, was I able to see more.

One such harm was that, by my actions, I had crushed virtually all the hopes of a close family who were helplessly witnessing me destroy the potential and great promise they saw in a strapping lad like me. I would hear the oft-repeated mantra: "The sky is the limit to what you can do with your life, boy, if you use the gifts you were given." But I vanquished those hopes one by one, as I drank myself out of one golden opportunity after another.

It wasn't only my family caught up in my destructive path. At many meetings I hear it often said that many an alcoholic is an "egomaniac with an inferiority complex." That certainly applied to me, since I pretty much had a problem with everybody, which allowed for the potential to harm anyone I had anything to do with, directly or not. I rarely, if ever, saw eye to eye with anyone. Feeling better than and/or less than are also defining traits of many an egodriven alcoholic with an inferiority complex

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"I promptly admitted I was wrong and got fined \$200!"

Concept VIII

The Trustees of the General Service Board act in two primary capacities: (a) With respect to the larger matters of over-all policy and finance, they are the principal planners and administrators.

They and their primary

They and their primary committees directly manage these affairs. (b) But with respect to our separately incorporated and constantly active services, the relation of the Trustees is mainly that of full stock ownership and of custodial oversight which they exercise through their ability to elect all directors of these entities.

Tradition 8: "Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers."

PROFESSIONALISM AND AA

For years I was confused about Tradition Eight. My first introduction to AA came in a treatment center, where the counselors were AA members who attended meetings with patients and even sponsored some patients (including me). I stayed sober only a year that first time, and later wondered if Tradition Eight had been an issue at all in that situation.

Fast-forward about 15 years, into the 21st century. I am sober now, and a member of a home group that studies the Traditions once a week. What little I knew about Tradition Eight before had come from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, where the issue is complicated by repeated reference to the Twelfth Step. For example, Bill says, "Our Twelfth Step is never to be paid for, but those who labor in service for us are worthy of their hire." The issue is confusing, because earlier in the "Twelve and Twelve," Bill says that "unspectacular but important tasks," such as "arranging for the coffee and cake," are "Twelfth Step work in the very best sense of the word." According to this line of thought, activities such as answering the phone at Intergroup, cleaning up an AA meeting room, maintaining an AA website, or editing an AA magazine, are clear examples of Twelfth Step work in the very best sense of the word. However, some AA members are paid for some of these tasks. So I was confused.

When my group read about Tradition Eight in Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age and then discussed it, I finally listened to and learned something about this Tradition. That book says that the early AA members struggled to figure out the AA viewpoint on professionalism. Bill W. says, "That is where the line finally fell: For face-to-face treatment of a drunk, no money, ever. But AA does have to hire people so that it can function where there are legitimate jobs to be done." In that book, rather than talking about the Twelfth Step, Bill makes it very clear that what is not to be paid for is face-to-face treatment of a drunk.

An old-timer in my group put it like this: "It is AA that is to remain forever nonprofessional. That means that AA (in the guise of a group, Intergroup, sponsor or whatever) does not pay for or receive money for face-to-face treatment of drunks. Now, of course, any AA member is permitted to get paid by a treatment center for being a counselor. That pay is not coming from AA and is not going to AA, and so it has nothing to do with Tradition Eight. The counselor who is an AA member is not being paid to do sponsorship, but rather to do a job of alcohol counseling. If he wants to be an AA sponsor, he does that on his own time."

At last I understand this Tradition, at least for today. Perhaps more will be revealed, but as I see it now, this Tradition says that AA does not pay or receive money for face-to-face treatment of drunks. Consequently, 1) Groups and sponsors of course do not charge newcomers for helping them get sober. 2) Paid AA service workers at GSO and local Intergroups do not do face-to-face treatment of drunks while they are on the job. They do that on their own time. While on the job, they refer drunks to volunteer AA members for face-to-face work. 3) Paid alcohol counselors doing face-to-face treatment of drunks are not paid by AA, nor does AA receive money for their work. This situation is not covered by Tradition Eight, since AA is not allied with those treatment centers or hospitals. Individual members who are alcohol counselors are acting on their own, and not as representatives of AA. If they engage in AA sponsorship, they do it on their own time, just like all the other AA members.

Every August, one of the founding members of my group (a real character, who is jokingly said to be our spiritual leader--or is it spherical leader?) says that in honor of the eighth month and Tradition Eight, he is offering a special discount on sponsorship for anyone who needs it.

Sometimes people take him up on the offer, but a good proportion of them cancel during the introductory trial period. Of course, this is all said in jest at our meetings, and we get a good laugh out of it. Our group motto is, "We will laugh at you until you learn to laugh at yourself," and we practice that principle in all of our affairs.

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such as myself. Thus, the importance of a deeper list came within view.

Digging beneath the surface of my conscious mind, I began to uncover even more harms that were not so obvious and yet cut others so deeply. If I was truly going to get any better, I had to find and keep the right tools to help me to enlarge and improve upon this newly found freedom I was handed by the Fellowship and program of AA. One such tool is a principle quite often ascribed to Step Eight: the principle of brotherly love—or what I would rather call human compassion.

If I am truly going to grow along spiritual lines, I'm going to have to walk with the truest spirit of human compassion for others I can muster in all of my affairs. I believe now that rigorous action coupled with conscious reflection and human compassion will gain me new opportunities for greater hope and harmony with all those I deal with—even ones with whom I disagree. As I continue to see the inherent worth and dignity in every human being, I will continue to live on a more level playing field with everybody. True human compassion is a tool that naturally facilitates daily inventories; it quickly uncovers actions I take that require amends to correct damage done to the harmony of others.

More important perhaps, I believe applying the principles of true human compassion and true brotherly love will continue to give me the daily serenity, acceptance, courage and strength to view myself and others with loving, patient, tolerant and compassionate eyes that reveal unlimited opportunities to help myself and others along this road of happy destiny.

-Richard D., Shreveport, La.-

Grapevine Online Exclusive

Fractured Friendship

Two women, inseparable in drinking and sobriety, until one relapses

My last drinking buddy turned into my first sponsor.

Our final night on the town ended with her swerving home across the Golden Gate Bridge and misplacing her car somewhere in Sausalito. Two weeks later, I called, suggesting we visit our favorite bar. She turned me down, stunning me with her reason: "I'm sober now."

Her words hung in the air as I tried to interpret their meaning. I could hear the smile in her voice, as she continued. "I'm in AA. I've been sober for five days. Do you want to go to a meeting with me?" I manufactured a reason to hang up the phone and sat there on the couch, staring into space. My mind sped through the implications. If she is, then maybe I am. She was far worse ... at least when it came to wine. Maybe it won't last, she's just going through a phase. Would I go to a meeting with her? My mind clamped shut.

A couple of months later, she called me up, sounding strangely chipper again. She was still sober. Did I want to come to dinner? There was no mention of a meeting this time. I decided to accept the invitation, mainly because she seemed genuinely happy, and it bothered me. Though I would never admit it, I wanted what she had. It seemed she was accomplishing something that had always eluded me – getting clean and sober.

When we met for dinner, it was hard not to stare at her face, which had completely transformed over the last few months. Gone were the puffy eyes, ruddy skin and haggard look. Her eyes were bright and clear and her skin smooth and translucent. She had lost that look my husband sometimes refers to as "tore up." She looked young, healthy and strong. I wanted to chain smoke.

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Intergroup wants to express our appreciation

for those groups and individuals who have made generous financial contributions, and give a special thank you to all the members who have volunteered their time to help the sick and suffering alcoholic.

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Later, we sat in her bedroom talking. There were papers on the floor. "I'm doing my Fourth Step," she explained. She picked up a page at random and started reading to me about how her mother belittled her and how her own part included complying with her mother's wishes in exchange for money and gifts. She had written about fear, resentment and shame. She had dug deep. Every part of me felt the truth, that I needed to do this very thing as well. The truth whispered in my mind: I did not drink for taste or pleasure. I drank to blur memories and obscure regrets, to muffle fear and silence the voices of doubt and despair.



"She could not find the language of the heart we had together as sober friends."

She brought me to my first meeting a few days later and I have been sober ever since. The common bond of AA gave us unlimited ways to share our thoughts on things that really mattered: sobriety, a Higher Power, righting our wrongs, seeing our character defects. We talked on the phone for hours until we both fell asleep, receivers still in our hands. She heard my Fifth Step. We watched each other emerge from the encasement of alcoholism. We dusted off our true selves and stepped out into the open air and light. Most of all, we celebrated our freedom and the first real measure of self esteem that either of us had ever known. A friend in AA speaks a language of healing and hope that other friends do not know. With any good friend I can share laughter, concerns and even sorrows. Only my AA friends know and understand the insidious destructive thinking that lies dormant in me, ready to awaken whenever I am prepared to feed it with a deteriorating spiritual condition.

Her first slip began before I even noticed it. Our conversations gradually began to unfold like a whirlpool, beginning with the program, Steps, newcomers and meetings and gradually spiraling toward the center, which consisted entirely of fears, resentment and insecurity. I found myself taking the role of sponsor, trying to steer her to the program's principles to solve her dilemmas. I began to feel like a life coach, parent, and, finally, a voice of reason. By then she was gone, off and running on booze, pills, drugs and men to rescue her.

For years she continued drinking, wrecking cars, getting sick, getting arrested, checking in and out of rehabs all over the country. She'd call from time to time, always chiming, "I'm back!" but it was always short-lived. She could not find the language of the heart we had together as sober friends. The conversations would drift to her weight, her latest boyfriend, people she didn't like at the new facility and tabloid headlines. She would tell me I was lucky not to have relapsed. She said this often, genuine at first, then with increasing bitterness. I've often asked myself why some people can't seem to stick with it, while others can. Two barflies turn sober within months of each other, become sisters in AA, truly bonded through the Fellowship. One relapses, the other doesn't. Why? There were no real answers.

I remind myself that carrying the message is a matter of attraction rather than promotion, so I'm not too heavily invested in luring my friend back to sobriety. I can be there when she calls, and I can share my own experience, but I cannot will her into totally surrendering to the program. Nor can I pretend that we are speaking the same language.

Relationships outside of AA can be full of depth, meaning, mutual understanding and support. They cannot, however, duplicate the inexplicable magic that happens when one alcoholic reaches out to another in the framework of the Fellowship, the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. A relationship with the Power in AA is infinite and flawless.

—Suzan C., San Francisco, Calif.—

Reprinted from Grapevine August 2010 Vol.0 Issue 0

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.



August Celebrants

Women's Honesty

Michele B. ~ 9yrs. Marsha M. ~ 19yrs.

Focus on Sobriety

Lisa F. ~ 24yrs. Robin W. ~ 14vrs.

Serenity All Together Group

Laura C. ~ 5yrs. Peggy B. ~ 7yrs. Rick B. ~ 22yrs. Ken M. ~ 40yrs.

Nautical Group

Strat ~ 13yrs. Cathy ~ 13yrs. Scott ~ 23yrs. Vernon ~ 27yrs. Bob ~ 15yrs.

Pompano Splinter

Ron O. ~ 22yrs.

Oakland Park Group

Don W. ~ 34vrs.

Westside Men's

Scott Z. ~ 23yrs.

Melrose Park

Phil S. ~ 16yrs. Kerry F. ~ 24yrs. Flemming A. ~ 35yrs.

Men's Independence

Dan C. ~ 38yrs.

Saturday Morning Awareness

Dave H. ~ 8yrs. Brenda ~ 8yrs. Virginia ~ 8yrs.

Meeting in Print Shari T. ~ 17yrs.

One Day At A Time

Steve S. ~ 6yrs.

Lunch Bunch

Francois ~ 6yrs. Rose ~ 23yrs. Chuck ~ 30yrs.

July Celebrants (not previously submitted)

Smell the Coffee Liz J. ~ 27yrs.

Bikers in Recovery

Emilio S. ~ 17yrs.

Nautical Group

Laura ~ 18yrs. Ken ~ 3yrs. Harry ~ 36yrs. Laura ~ 3yrs. Ken ~ 20yrs. Diane ~ 38yrs.

Joe ~ 41yrs.

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

Thíngs we cannot change,

He will be missed by all who knew Him.

Karl K. Good Morning God

AVOID THESE, WITH THESE:

Read the un-circled letters to reveal a hidden message

MEHTHELPES HUNGRYANVW PONSORGI EET 1 DNETTAORT RYGLYLOOS ARNS OROSNACKL OPFSPETSY DIRKROWED

FOOD SNACK SPONSOR THEM FORGIVE HELP STEPS WORK **FORGET** GOOD **PRAY SLEEP SWEETS MEETINGS PAUSE**

BCIC Broward County **Institutions Committee**

Next Meeting: August 13th 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** August 21st — September 18th at 1:00 p.m.

General Service Office, NY

P.O. Box 459 **Grand Central Station** New York, NY 10164-0371 212.870.3400

> **Bridging The Gap** 877.207.2242

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

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

My favorite passage from AA literature comes from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. On page, 42 and it reads: "If there were no social instinct, if men cared nothing for the society of one another, there would be no society. So these desires—for the sex relation, for material and emotional security, and for companionship —are perfectly necessary and right, and surely God-given."

While doing the 4th Step, I learned so much about my basic, natural, God given instincts. Having run rampant, they fed my disease to the point of desperation. My desires for importance, acceptance, love (of myself and from others) those natural instincts, in turn, fed what I found to be my most destructive of instincts, fear. It had lead me to doing whatever you wanted, without regard for what was best for me. Anything for acceptance. Like a tennis match, these defects bounced off of each other, back and forth, feeding and growing.

In sobriety I learned to control my basic instincts, and that everything I was looking for in the bottle, was in the rooms of AA.

—David H., Fort Lauderdale—

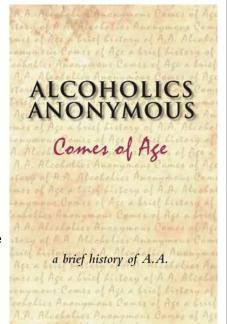
Suite 404 readers tell us about their favorite AA literature

Alcoholics Anonymous: Comes Of Age, First printed in 1957, this conference approved publication tells the stories of our history, how we started, and how we evolved, with special emphasis on our three legacies of service; Recovery, Unity & Service.

Our "landmarks in AA history" listed in the front of the book (following the table of contents) references specific historical AA information by date.

In the "people & places" section there are sixteen pages of photographs. The only piece of AA literature that has all of these photographs in one place.

This book has been my "go to" reference source since I first received it as a gift many years ago. I use it often when asked to give a literature lead, and I always find a story to share from the early days; when Sister Ignatia had to "bootleg rooms" for the alkies at Saint Thomas Hospital, Bill's description of how he wrote the twelve steps, to the adaption of our twelve traditions at the first international



convention in 1950, to Bill's own words. "In reality, the expression, comes of age, is used by us in a very different sense. We simply say we have arrived at a time in life when adult responsibilities have to be faced & dealt with as best we are able. To this end we do try to rely upon ourselves & upon God".

—Pam T., Deerfield Beach, FL—

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., Ted K., the other Bob H., Carol B., the original Bob H., Pat R., Leslie R., Eric P., Tara D. 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	0

Service Opportunities



Picnic Committee - Join our Picnic committee to see that this year's picnic is our best ever! Adults \$7 - Food, fun, fellowship, music, games, raffles, volleyball. Snyder Park, Cauldwell Pavilion, October 2nd.

Tickets are now available.

If you want to get involved call Mary at (954) 462-0265 or email: help@aabroward.org.

Broward County Intergroup's 6th Annual

AA's Got Talent

We need volunteers, bring your talents to us. Committee chairs, co-chairs, TALENT needed!

We welcome singers, dancers, comedians, musicians to sign-up:

Excluding bands due to time limitation of equipment set-up /break-down
Planning Meetings: Saturday, August 27, Saturday, September 24, @ 1:30pm

441 Group, 1452 State Road 7, Margate, FL 33063

GRATITUDE DINNER PLANNING

SUNDAY, AUGUST 28, 2016 1:30 PM Sober Today Club 1633 S. 21st Ave. Hollywood, FL 33020 (just east of South Dixie Hwy., east of the railroad tracks)

MEETING CHANGES

Monday

NEW MEETING Women's Open House, 8:30p.m., 101 Club, 700 SW 10th St. & Dixie Hwy., Pompano, FL. 33060. OBBw

Tuesday

By The Book, 7:30p.m., St. Francis Mission., 208 SE 8th Street, Fort Lauderdale, **Has Moved to** Christ Community Church, 901 E. McNab Rd., Pompano, FL. 33060

NEW MEETING Spiritual Beginners, 8:30p.m., Christ Community Church, 901 E McNab Rd., Pompano Beach, FL 33060 OSPD.

Wednesday

NEW MEETING Solution By The Sea, 8:30p.m., The Hope Spot, 218 Dania Beach Blvd., Dania, FL. 33004 OD **Thursday**

NEW MEETING Men Of Integrity. 8:30p.m., Fellowship Recovery, 5400 W. Atlantic Blvd. Margate, FL 33063 OCCM.

Eastside Back To Basics. 7:00p.m., Christ Comm. Church, 901 E McNab Rd., Pompano. No longer meets.

<u>Open Arms Group.</u> 7:30p.m., **Meetings Are Suspended Until August 10th.** Due to church sabbatical. Mount Olive Baptist Church, 401 E NW 9th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale. 33311

Friday

NEW MEETING Constant Thought, 8:00p.m., Metropolitan Community Church, Room 1 upstairs, 1480 SW 9th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, 33315

Upcoming Events

- **Aug. 3-7 60th Florida State Convention, "New Freedom New Happiness,"** Innisbrook Golf and Spa Resort., Palm Harbor, FL. For information and registration go to www.60.flstateconvention.com.
- Aug. 13th Carry the Message Day. NSU Cafeteria, 3200 S. University Drive, Davie. 6:30p.m. Free service event hosted by District 9, Intergroup and BCIC. Speakers, dessert, and coffee. Bring a sponsee and sign up for a commitment.
- **Aug. 29th** Focus On Sobriety, 12th Anniversary Dinner. St. Malachy Church, 6200 John Horan Terrace, Tamarac, FL 33321. Dinner 6:00p.m., Open Meeting 7:00p.m.
- **Sept 10 District 9 General Service Spaghetti Dinner,** NSU, 3200 S. University Dr., in Terry Building Cafeteria, 6:00 p.m. Dinner, 8:00 p.m. Speaker. Tickets \$8.00 in advance, \$10.00 at the door. Bring a newcomer and a dessert. Dessert/Cupcake Contest.
- **Sept 9-11 17th Annual Serenity Weekend Women's Fall Conference,** "The Girlstock of AA" International Palms Resort, 1300 N. Atlantic Ave., Cocoa Beach. Registration \$30.00 before August 12th, \$35.00 after. For more info., www.sisconference.com.
- **Sept 9-11 Serenity By The Sea,** The Naples Grande, 475 Seagate Drive, Naples, FL 34103 Weekend of food, fun & fellowship. Registration \$45.00 per person. Register online at: www.serenityclubwfl.org.
- Oct. 2 41st Annual Broward County Intergroup Picnic, Snyder Park Caldwell Pavilion, 3299 SW 4th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, 11:30 a.m. to Sundown. Band, 50/50 raffle, games, dancing, volleyball, and an open A.A. Speaker Meeting. Tickets \$7.00 in advance.
- **Nov. 3-6 10th International Conference, Seniors in Sobriety,** Bahia Resort Hotel, San Diego, California. For more info check website, www.seniorsinsobriety.org.