



ROOM 502

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

Oakland Commerce Center

3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

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STEP 12: "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

A Twelfth Step Call

It was the newcomer who made it

I HAD THIRTY minutes before I was to meet my wife for dinner. Being near an Alano club, I dropped in for a soft drink. A few years ago, it would have been the nearest bar, and my wife would have waited. . .and waited. . .and waited.

There was a stranger sitting at one of the tables, just finishing a lonely game of solitaire. I asked him if he wanted company, and he invited me to sit down. I did, looking him over and immediately deciding that he was new in the area but had "been around" for quite a while. In other words, he looked hale and hearty, thoroughly sober.

I was dead wrong. He had exactly three weeks and was waiting for his newfound sponsor to pick him up for a meeting.

When he discovered I was a few years ahead of him, he just sort of shook his head and said, "I guess it works. It must work."

Twenty minutes later, when I took my leave, I had been back to what it was like for me those first three weeks. Talking to my friend and hearing his brief story, I felt as if I was talking to myself in a mirror and the mirror was talking back. We identified on virtually every point. Our drinking patterns, from the very start, were identical.

He asked me, "What did you do to be like you are now?" I had to think about that for a moment. He could not know--nor was I about to tell this newcomer--that at that moment, I had just (or had almost) succeeded in making it through another day, one day at a time, with a severe financial crisis at home, family illness, job problems, and a host of other problems that once would have sent me into the nearest bar instead of an Alano club.

I didn't want to tell him those things. Besides, there really wasn't time. What I heard myself saying was: "Well, I went to meetings every night and a few during the day for a long time. I still go to four, five, or more a week.

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"Do you think just for once you could decorate the tree without getting decorated yourself?"

Concept XII

The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic

Tradition 12: "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

A Spiritual Attitude

An AA strives to put principles before his personality

In my AA journey, my understanding of the anonymity of Tradition Twelve has been ever-changing. I came to AA in the late eighties, when my wife told me, "Go to AA or get out of the house."

At the time I knew nothing of AA, but if I was to be so humiliated as to be among alcoholics, at least the word "Anonymous" in the name was reassuring. In my early weeks in the program, I would not go to any meeting within ten miles of my home, for fear of running into someone I knew. I soon understood anonymity to mean that they wouldn't tell on me if I wouldn't tell on them.

My first home group studied the Traditions regularly. Tradition Twelve had to do with revealing my alcoholism and AA membership to others. Each individual can be as anonymous as he likes, but we always protect the anonymity of others. I still understand this to be a part of the Tradition.

Still, what was this about "the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions?" That seemed to be saying that the other Traditions were somehow based on this one.

What I know about foundations is that if they are shaky, there will be continuing problems with the rest of the structure and efforts to repair other structural problems will be futile. But if the foundation is solid, problems that develop in the rest of the structure can be dealt with as they arise.

That is the relation I've come to see between Tradition Twelve and the rest of the Traditions. It is asking me to develop a simple spiritual attitude. As long as I have that spirit of anonymity, the other Traditions will follow naturally. But when I don't, the other Traditions will be continually troublesome.

What helped clarify the idea was reading Bill W.'s Grapevine writings on the subject, now published in *The Language of the Heart*. He uses the words "modesty," "humility," "prudence," and "self-effacement" in describing anonymity. In Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, he uses the word "sacrifice" as forming the spiritual substance of anonymity.

Modesty, prudence, self-effacement, and sacrifice are not words we alcoholics like to use very often, but together they describe an attitude that I believe is key to the spirit of anonymity. It's an attitude that wishes to avoid having attention called to oneself. It describes a spirit that would always rather see the Fellowship receive any credit and would rather call attention to God at work than to anything we might do. It goes beyond humility and includes always caring more about the Fellowship and its message than about being recognized. It will always place the principles of AA ahead of personality.

I believe that Tradition Twelve is much more about a spirit of anonymity than about any rules concerned with revealing identities. From this simple attitude, the other Traditions will flow naturally. As long as I maintain this simple anonymous attitude, the common welfare of AA will always come first (Tradition One), the will of a loving God in our group conscience will always be taken as my authority (Tradition Two), and so on.

How has this spiritual anonymity worked day to day?

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Most of the time, I can't think of any other place I'd rather be, because, after a while, I began to catch on to what was happening.

"My spiritual awakening came on slowly before I even recognized it, and it's still going on today, every day. It doesn't stop. It grows stronger. Fear left me, not suddenly but little by little. A calmness, or serenity if you will, took its place. Waking up in the morning was no longer a dreaded thing, but a challenge to find out what the day would bring.

"The obsession and the desire to drink left me, and I don't even know when that happened. One day, it just wasn't there any more. Sure, the thought of it flits through my head once in a while, but that's all it does. It flits through and is gone--after I talk to my sponsor or whoever I can find, go to a meeting, and meditate with my Higher Power.

"Most important, keep coming back. Read, study, and practice those Steps to the best of your ability even if you don't understand them right now. And don't forget, God's with you all the time, right this minute, just like He's with me."

My new friend stared at me for a moment, then nodded. He seemed more cheerful as I got up to leave and go meet my wife. Twenty minutes almost to the second. He didn't know it, but he'd just experienced a Twelfth Step call. I didn't make it. He did.

—A. B., Huntington Beach, California—

Grapevine Online Exclusive

Continued from Page 2

Insofar as I have been able to practice it, the changes are pervasive in my personal life, in my carrying the message to others in the program, and in how I approach service to others. Notably, I've changed how I decide when to reveal my AA membership. After getting past my initial fear of anyone finding out I was in AA, I became much more liberal about talking about my AA membership. The guide I tried to use was whether or not I thought it might help a still-suffering alcoholic.

But I can see that, too often, what I really was looking for was a pat on the back, as in, "What a good boy is he, having conquered the alcoholic scourge," or, "Look at the wonderful things he is doing helping those other alcoholics."

Or sometimes, the hidden motive was to gain favor, as in, "Give me a break, I'm an alcoholic and deserve special treatment." Wasn't my real motive to call attention to myself?

As I accumulated some years of sobriety, a sort of "old-timer syndrome" began to set in. It showed itself in meetings and service commitments, where my sharing began to take on a tone of expertise or authority. I became an expert on the Steps, the Traditions, the Concepts, sponsorship, and all else.

Of course, as my fellow AA members failed to appreciate my experience and expertise, the resentments grew until I learned that in my group, too, I needed to practice the spirit of anonymity. Calling attention to myself by trying to be profound and wise only detracts from the message and blocks me from gaining what others offer. It is placing my personality before the principles. So I am repeatedly brought back to being a simple member of the group, contributing what I can.

"Principles before personalities" applies to me first. In fact, my job is to make sure the principles come before my personality.

So I've come to believe that the anonymity of Tradition Twelve is spiritual and forms a foundation for me in working the Steps and other Traditions. I must continually check my motives to see that I'm not trying to call attention to myself. It is not about me; it's the program that's due any attention and credit. —Ross D., Tulsa, Oklahoma—

Grapevine Online Exclusive

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.

Let's Not Toast to That

A member describes how, it's also the behaviors that will get me.

I was nearly three years sober, and New Years was approaching. I was still pretty much out of the partying mode. I would go to family functions and my family would watch over me. They would tell me which punch bowl I could drink from and which I couldn't drink from. I would go to parties at the local Sober Club and was getting back into the swing of things. A friend from my home group asked me if I would like to come to his house New Year's Eve for a sober party. It sounded like a good idea. Most of the people I knew, and they all supported me in my new way of life. I thought about the last 25 New Year's Eve fiascos and thought it would be nice to celebrate with others like me, so I told him I would be there.

The night came, and I showed up feeling pretty good about having fun in a sober way. When I arrived everyone was having fun. Music was playing, people were dancing, some made a big fuss about being glad to see me, and it seemed great. I settled in and was having a great time, just as my friend assured me I would. The night was going good and I felt completely at ease, not a care in the world.

Shortly before midnight the host got out around 25 plastic champagne glasses, set them on the kitchen table and filled them with sparkling grape juice, waiting for midnight to toast in the New Year. I still felt great and was having the first good New Years in a long time.

When midnight got closer we all gathered in the kitchen and each got a glass of sparkling grape juice, preparing for a grand toast to the new sober year. We started to count down ... five, four, three, two, HAPPY NEW YEAR! Then we all clicked our glasses together and drank. When I finished I broke into a cold sweat, my head was pounding, my thoughts went to a different place, and I was overwhelmed with an urge to drink. My alcoholic brain was talking very loud, telling me: "See, you CAN drink. We should leave now and head for a local tavern and REALLY toast in the New Year!" I must have looked strange, because people were coming up to me and asking if I was all right. Some commented on my wet shirt and forehead, some on the strange look in my eyes, and some on why I had gotten so quiet. I finally told someone that I was having urges to go get drunk, and I was very scared. One of my friends sat down with me and helped me talk through what my head was saying to me. I know now how patient my disease is, and what lengths it will go to, to return me to drinking. I really never felt better the rest of the evening, but I got through it with some help from my friends.

I learned a big lesson that night. I knew that it was not only the thoughts that will get me, it's also the behaviors that will get me. There are some behaviors I can't afford to subscribe to, if I choose to remain sober. From that day to this day, I have not found it necessary to toast to anything. I can be glad and happy about whatever it is, but I don't need to toast. My wife (I got married nine years ago) understands this problem, and usually acts as the mediator when people expect me to participate in a toast. I am open to celebrate with anyone over whatever they are jubilant over, but not the toasting. I learned my lesson.

—Bob F., Wickliffe, Ohio—

Grapevine Online Exclusive

Room 502 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 stories, news and comments. The deadline for submission is the 15th of each month.

Material may be edited for space and content and cannot be returned.

A.A. Birthdays

December Celebrants

Focus on Sobriety

Amy M. ~ 6yrs.

One Day at a Time

Debbie G. ~ 4yrs.

Ernie B. ~ 29yrs.

Lunch Bunch

Irish Mike ~ 5yrs.

Rob ~ 10yrs.

Allen ~ 22yrs.

Nancy ~ 26yrs.

Jim ~ 28yrs.

John ~ 40yrs.

Davie Woman's

Group

Suzanne ~ 10yrs.

You Are Not Alone

Sarah ~ 19yrs.

Ben W. ~ 7yrs.

Wayne S. ~ 6yrs.

Paul W. ~ 11yrs.

Oakland Park

Kym B. ~ 6yrs.

David R. ~ 23yrs.

Meeting in Print

Vicky F. ~ 6yrs.

Men in Recovery

Anthony B. ~ 9yrs.

Billie O. ~ 6yrs.

Roy K. ~ 6yrs.

Mountain Group

Jim B. ~ 4yrs.

Lolly M. ~ 4yrs.

Philip R. ~ 5yrs.

Mike B. ~ 10yrs.

Christine H. ~ 11yrs.

Mark J. ~ 18yrs.

Pete C. ~ 18yrs.

Cindy K. ~ 26yrs.

Saturday Morning

Awareness

Beth M. ~ 11yrs.

Chris ~ 14yrs.

Charles R. ~ 3yrs.

Free And Easy

Group

Arnie ~ 2yrs.

Jodi ~ 9yrs.

Helen O. ~ 31yrs.

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 today. 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.
305 S. Andrews Ave., Suite 502,
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301

**The Intergroup
Office will be closed
Friday, December 25th
for the Christmas holiday,
and
Friday January 1st
News Year Day**

Congratulations to all of our celebrants. You deserve to be recognized. Celebrants should be submitted as early as possible, by the 15th, of the preceding month at the latest. (Example) May celebrants should be submitted by April 15th, to be published in the May Newsletter. Thank you for your time and effort.

Word Scramble Step Twelve

1. semrcweon _____
2. vsporpceite _____
3. licanniaf _____
4. sotgilboani _____
5. maetitiegl _____
6. xaiteneis _____
7. knuarbtpyc _____
8. epincrpisl _____
9. ynevinrto _____
10. spsosesoins _____

(answers on page 8)

BCIC Broward County Institutions Committee

Next Meeting: December 12th
10:00 a.m. at the Twelve Step House,
205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale.

Intergroup Meetings

will be now held at

**The Twelve Step House,
205 S.W. 23rd, Ft. Lauderdale,
at 1:00 p.m.**

Steering Committee meets at 11:30 a.m.

Upcoming Meetings

December 20th

Service Opportunities

Broward County Intergroup's 5th 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 Meeting Schedule

Saturday, December 19,

and the last meeting, Saturday, January 30, 2016

All planning meetings will be at the 441 Group, at 1:30 p.m.

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

INTERGROUP IS MOVING

We have finally found a great space more centrally located to accommodate our members, and offer more convenience to members and staff alike.

Ground Floor – Plenty of Parking – Located at I-95 and Oakland Park Blvd.

MOVING DAY WILL BE DECEMBER, 4th—5th

STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES!

New Address

3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

Room 502 readers tell us about their favorite passages in AA literature

My favorite passage from: Alcoholics Anonymous, (Page 133) The Family Afterward.

"We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free."

Something I never had while I was out there drinking. I was miserable. Today by living the twelve steps every day, my heart is exploding with inner happiness.

--Jay G. Fort Lauderdale--

Room 502 welcomes your thoughts and experiences with A.A. We love to run articles written by local people in A.A. 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**

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 J., Jean G., Ron J. Bob H., Anonymous I, Bobby V., Janet M., Dan C., Lu W., Elizabeth B., Happiness Is Group, Lillian M., Fran C., Milinda B., Barbara S., Lois O., Richard H., Timothy S., Richard S., Sam B., Mark S. Howard S., Douglas C., Jennifer S., the other Bob H., Carol B., the original Bob H., Leslie R.

and maybe YOU next time?

Make a New Years Resolution, of only five dollars a month to help carry the message of A.A.

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.

305 S. Andrews Ave., Suite 502, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301



Wishing all our Friends

A Joyous Holiday Season

Come Join Us In Our New Location

For All Of Your Sober Shopping Needs

3317 NW 10th Terrace Suite 404

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

Answers from page 5:

1. newcomers 2. prospective 3. financial 4. obligations 5. legitimate
6. anxieties 7. bankruptcy 8. principles 9. inventory 10. possessions

**Thank you to all the dedicated volunteers in Broward County,
and for all you wonderful alcoholics who continue to support your
Broward County Intergroup office.**

MEETING CHANGES

Monday

NEW MEETING Sober Moms, 6:00p.m., Christ Church, 901 E. McNab., Pompano ,OBG.

NEW MEETING Lambda Rising 11th Step Group, 7:00p.m., Lambda Clubhouse, 1231 Las Olas, OMg.

NEW MEETING Big Book Meditation, 7:00p.m., St. Francis & Clare Church, 101 NE 3rd St, Fort Lauderdale.

Tuesday

NEW MEETING Perry Street South Group, 7:00p.m., Pro Am Building, 1915 NE 45th St. Ft. Lauderdale, CSD.

NEW MEETING The Place, 7:30p.m., Mt. Olivet Church , 649 NW 15th Way, Ft. Lauderdale, 33311 OCC.

NEW MEETING Spiritual Beginners, 7:00p.m., Christ Church, 901 E. McNab., Pompano, OBG.

Wednesday

Ladies Night, 8:00 p.m., 1400 N Federal Hwy, The Sanctuary, Ft. Lauderdale. **No longer meets.**

NEW MEETING The Broad Highway, 10:00p.m., Sober Today Club, 1633 S 21st. Ave., Hollywood, 33023 LT.

Thursday

NEW MEETING Our Little Meeting, 6:30p.m., Ocean Breeze Recovery, 2413 E Atlantic Blvd., Pompano ,CWBB.

NEW MEETING East Side Back To Basics, 7:00p.m., Christ Church, 901 E. McNab., Pompano ,OBG.

Friday

NEW MEETING Recovery On The Rocks, 7:30p.m., Unity Church, 261 SE 12th Ave, Pompano Beach, ORF.

Saturday

NEW MEETING Saturday Night Solutions, 8:30p.m., Sober Today Club, 1633 S 21st. Ave., Hollywood, 33023

Daily Meetings

Oakland Park Kick Off, 5:30-6:30, 7:00-8:00 p.m., M-F, Mother Francis Outreach, 278 NE 35th Ct., Oakland Park.

SPANISH MEETINGS

NEW MEETING Circulo De Ganadores, 7:00p.m., Wednesday. Gulf Stream Chaplin's Trailer, 901 S. Federal Hwy., Hallandale.

NEW MEETING Grupo Libertad, 8:00p.m., Monday. Sober Today Club, 1633 S 21st. Ave., Hollywood, 33023

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Dec. 5 | General Service, District 9, Holiday Dinner & Karaoke , NSU Cafeteria, 3200 S. University Dr., Davie. 6:00 p.m. Dinner, - 5:45-7:30 p.m. Karaoke, 7:30 p.m. Singing Contest, 8:15 p.m. Speaker. \$8.00., In Advance, \$10.00, at The Door, Bring a newcomer! NSU is a totally smoke-free facility. |
| Feb. 6 | 5th Annual AAs Got Talent , Coral Springs Charter School, 3205 North University Dr. Coral Springs. Contact organizers at: AATalent2016@gmail.com. Tickets \$10.00. Adults only. Coffee and desserts! |
| April 23 | 53nd 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 soon. |