



# Suite 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

Oakland Commerce Center

3317 NW 10<sup>th</sup> Terrace, Suite 404

Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

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## STEP 6: "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

### Are We "Different"?

#### Is our Individualism Rugged Or Escapist?

Speaker after speaker in A.A. meetings keep saying that we alcoholics are "different," that we are individualists who could not get along in a regimented world, that we are idealists who could accept no part of compromise. The inference is that we are superior people--a somewhat infuriating attitude to non-alcoholic friends in our audiences.

Chances are we are not one bit different from any group of people who get together in a mutual misery and find certain characteristics in common. Chances are, also, that we'd be a lot better off by not feeding our starved egos and trying to bolster our inner lack of confidence with a lot of boastful words. It could be that our "difference" is what was wrong with us in the first place.

When we get really honest with ourselves we find that our "idealism," for instance, is the idealism of a child--if everything isn't just the way we want it, "we ain't gonna play." Our "individualism," if we face it squarely, certainly wasn't of the rugged variety. We were individualists in that we tried to escape while the "conformists" around us were at least trying to face the realities of life. If that's being an "individual," you can have it. I don't want it--not any more!

If there are any superior qualities inherent in the type of person who becomes an alcoholic, I hope I have them. But I hope that, in A.A., I can learn to use them constructively--and humbly. It certainly doesn't make much sense to me to be constantly talking about "superiorities" that led us into lives of destruction and misery, not only for ourselves but for everyone around us. I can't quite see myself telling my wife and children that all that mess was brought about because I was a misunderstood genius in a stupid world that couldn't appreciate me. I find I can't dodge thrown objects so fast since I've sobered up!

In my opinion we would be wise to stow this "superior" stuff and, in discussing how "different" we are, harken to the 6th Step which says, "We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." Amen, brother!

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## Happy Founders Day



## Concept VI

**The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.**

**Tradition 6: “An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”**

Before I understood even dimly what AA was, I was sure I could improve it. Looking back, I realize now that my pure gall was appalling, since it was rooted so firmly in ignorance. I knew almost nothing about the externals of the Fellowship and much less about its spiritual principles. Since I was too proud to admit that there was anything I did not know, I almost never asked questions.

Practically nothing in the very skimpy AA literature we had then (in 1945) explained how AA or its component units functioned, so my knowledge was based on what I heard and saw in one group. Then as now, we AA members (like other human beings everywhere, I suppose) talked a bewildering melange of facts, guesswork, inspired wisdom, gossip, and nonsense. Yet I assumed that what I heard was the whole AA truth, and, armed only with my small collection of quick impressions and misinformation about AA, I wanted to change it.

Surely, for example, AA should be informing the medical profession about the facts of our disease as we understood them. (The Yale--now Rutgers--School of Alcohol Studies and the National Council on Alcoholism had barely got started, and this was nine years before the American Medical Association established its alcoholism committee.)

The government, I was sure, should change laws relating to alcoholics. (The North American Association of Alcoholism Programs and the National Center for Control and Prevention of Alcoholism were then impossible dreams.)

Detoxification centers, vocational rehabilitation, and other services, improved understanding by social workers, school kids, psychologists, and cops--all these and more were badly needed. Why, I carped, was AA not getting busy?

Just suppose for a minute that our Fellowship had indeed been misguided right smack into all those activities. What a tangled web we could have woven! How many drunks would have been ignored, left to die, as we mounted our political and fund-raising campaigns! How many enemies AA would have made for itself if it had tried to dictate to the medical, clerical, and legal professions!

If my AA group had had prestige, money, and power at stake, I fear my own sobriety would have found little support at our meetings. There would have been no room for it on the agenda. Many of us would have left, I fear--sic transit glorious sobriety, and maybe AA itself.

I am certain now that if any AA-run governmental programs on alcoholism had been set up and had gone bust, my resentments would have burst through my tender, new sobriety. Suppose we had started an official AA club and it had been raided because of gambling, or AA-run retreats for alcoholics had become subjects of gossip. What then? I would have gotten either emotionally embattled or, more probably, alcoholically embottled.

As always, AA as a whole proved much wiser than I as an individual, and my group just plugged along, trying to do its own thing. Even without such complications, we had trouble enough just trying to figure out what our own thing really was. The Traditions had not been written yet.

At first, we felt we had to do at least three things: (1) provide a place where members could play cards, eat, and have coffee any time; (2) maintain an office with telephones as a central clearing-house for Twelfth Step work and information about meetings; (3) keep our own AA meetings and Twelfth Step work going.

The first two involved us in legal corporations, finances, real-estate management, building maintenance, cafeteria operation, a paid secretary, and, naturally, rules and officers. As a result, newcomers who just needed the message often got shortchanged because we were too busy with serious problems like a drunken chef, typewriter repairs, club dues, revising bylaws, a temperamental janitor, and deciding who could and could not use the phone or which brand of coffee to buy.

Continued from Page 2

We made it almost impossible for newcomers to tell the difference between joining a club and simply becoming a sober AA. I know. I was one of those newcomers.

People who did not get elected to boards or did get demoted from jobs proceeded to get drunk. Criticism of the cafeteria cashier's report became resentments of "AA's financial structure," yet! Two fellows I liked were displeased by the cafeteria food, blamed AA, and left. (No wonder! They had heard little else except the food discussed at their first three meetings. They were dead within a year, of alcoholism.)

The solution my group finally found, nearly a quarter-century ago, was quite simple. We decided that, no matter how exciting and how needed such business enterprises were, an AA group ought to stay out of them, because discussions of money, property, and prestige kept us wildly distracted from the Twelve Steps.

As an AA group, we decided to carry the message, period. So we dropped the food business and real-estate management. Some individuals formed separate nonprofit corporations, outside AA, to run clubs or day centers for AAs who wanted such amenities. As for the local central office (or intergroup), it was eventually operated and supported by all the groups nearby.

This arrangement has worked beautifully ever since, both in New York and elsewhere. And now, of course, other services seriously needed by alcoholics are at last beginning to get under way--but not under the auspices of AA. Food, clothing, shelter, and medical assistance are often necessary for the alcoholic's recovery. But other organizations, efficiently operated and professionally experienced in these matters, can handle them better than an AA group.

Nevertheless, let's not overlook a fact seldom recognized, in conversation or in print: Many of the great improvements in the treatment of alcoholics during the last thirty-five years have been brought about quietly, behind the scenes, by anonymous AA members, acting as private citizens interested in a public-health problem. The Sixth Tradition leaves every AA member the freedom to do that, if he cares to, so long as his actions do not constitute AA endorsement (or criticism) of any enterprises, nor "lend the AA name" to them.

(There's another side to this coin, too. Once upon a time, a non-AA alcoholism program tried to create the impression, falsely, that it was endorsed by AA. But the attempt backfired. The professionals at whom the program was aimed thought it was just an extension of AA and would not come near it! I know. I was the guilty one.)

Adherence to our primary purpose makes AA unique--and also gives us a special responsibility, it seems to me. We are the only people who have our own personal experience to share. And we are the only people who try to do nothing except help the individual alcoholic because we have to, to stay sober ourselves. We help him, not for the sake of society or of science, but for the sake of our own sobriety.

As a result, other programs in the alcoholism field have come to depend heavily on AA's continuing integrity. At every single professional meeting, it is a conspicuous fact that non-alcoholics count absolutely on the aid of sober, conscientious AAs who remember When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

—B.L., New York, New York—

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May 2005 Vol. 61 Issue 12.

### **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.

# Gossip Girl

Her biggest struggle is avoiding the “Chatty Cathys” around the water cooler

This September, God willing, I will celebrate three years of continuous sobriety and I am really starting to experience the benefits of the program. Along with working the Steps, I have also lost 30 pounds. I exercise regularly, quit smoking and eat healthier. I have more energy, sleep better and feel more centered than I have in the last 15 years. Which is not to say that I do not have moments where life goes off kilter, my mind exaggerating circumstances into a much bigger deal than they need to be. Thankfully, I have a sponsor and friends in the program who listen, support me and are able to help me “right size” the problems I am dealing with. Most of the time, they just point me in the right direction and, in time, I am able to float back down to reality.

My attitude change is a direct result of my newfound faith, with me finally starting to believe and trust that my Higher Power will carry me through any obstacles. In the past, I used to believe that God put unfortunate circumstances in my path to punish me or deliberately make me feel bad. I do not feel that way anymore. I feel that, no matter how good we have been, we will always come up against adversities, and the way we react to those adversities is a direct result of our relationship with a Higher Power. We can either choose to embrace life's hardships and trust that God will not put anything into our lives that we cannot handle, or we can resist obstacles, blame and deny. None of those negative reactions ever makes anything go away, of course, the resistance just makes the burden heavier.

One of the obstacles I am dealing with right now is working with a bunch of women who like to gather and gossip, very frequently, throughout the day. Admittedly, I get caught up in it from time to time. When the conversation starts to get negative, I can retreat and disconnect from what is going on. I can leave the conversation, do some writing at my desk. If it's slow, I can text a program friend or make a phone call. Gossip is a lifelong problem that I have been working on. More often than not, if I become aware of what is going on around me, step back for a moment and take a look at my part, and then surrender it to my Higher Power, I find I intuitively do know how to handle a situation that used to baffle me.

Following faith in a Higher Power comes having faith in myself. I can get through these problems as they present themselves. Being a typical alcoholic egomaniac with an inferiority complex, I never had any type of confidence in my own ability to handle life's problems. I always believed that I needed some type of savior to fix all my problems. As a spiritual being, I am interdependent. I need the guidance and support of those around me and the strength of my Higher Power to get through these difficulties. Coming through some very serious problems in my life, I know now that, with all the AA tools at my disposal, I can endure anything.

— Janice H., Oakland, Calif. —



# AA Birthdays

## June Celebrants

### Saturday Morning Awareness Group

Mary Ann ~ 5yrs.  
Jack S. ~ 7yrs.  
Michael P. ~ 3yrs.  
Jaime ~ 7yrs.

### Westside Men's

Rick R. ~ 21yrs.  
Tony O. ~ 45yrs.

### Meeting in Print

Matt M. ~ 7yrs.

### Oakland Park

Gene S. ~ 7yrs.

### Free And Easy Group

Bruce P. ~ 23yrs.

### Express Group

Mike. ~ 30yrs.

### Nautical Group

Bart ~ 14yrs.  
Alan ~ 31yrs.  
Natalie ~ 54yrs.  
Myron ~ 33yrs.

### Serenity All Together

Hal D. ~ 21yrs.  
Laura H. ~ 6yrs.

### Hollywood Happy Hour

Patricia B. ~ 12yrs.

### 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.

MR. LORIS SAYS:

I USED TO SUFFER FROM  
A CASE OF TERMINAL  
UNIQUENESS, BUT NOW I  
REALIZE I'M JUST  
ANOTHER  
DRUNK.



### Word Scramble Step Six

1. vtinsoaesrre \_\_\_\_\_
2. tmveeronimp \_\_\_\_\_
3. csntirporataoni \_\_\_\_\_
4. tutonslguo \_\_\_\_\_
5. fmvetiairfa \_\_\_\_\_
6. lutcaitnnsi \_\_\_\_\_
7. ntlaiylotep \_\_\_\_\_
8. drienlenu \_\_\_\_\_
9. rlietcnosied \_\_\_\_\_
10. teamnilie \_\_\_\_\_

(answers on page 6)

### BCIC Broward County Institutions Committee

Next Meeting: June 11<sup>th</sup>

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. 23<sup>rd</sup>, Ft. Lauderdale,

### Upcoming Meetings

June 19<sup>th</sup> — July 10<sup>th</sup>  
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

### 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](mailto:help@aabroward.org) or [will@aabroward.org](mailto:will@aabroward.org)***

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

My favorite passage from AA literature comes from; The Family Afterward, in the book Alcoholics Anonymous on page 124 and it reads:

"We grow by our willingness to face and rectify errors and convert them into assets."

This passage has impacted my sobriety by really spelling out exactly why I cannot regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. First of all, each of the mistakes I made in my life before getting here helped bring me to exactly this place in time. By doing a rigorous and honest fourth step, I can see the nature of my wrongs and hopefully learn from them, so that I can not repeat those mistakes in the future. I have faith today that my Higher Power will put people in my life who will benefit from my experience, and allow me to carry the message to them.

—Shannon A., Pembroke Pines, FL—

**Get Your Tickets**

***Unity XI Breakfast***

***presented by BCIC, Intergroup & General Service District 9***

***\$7.00, June 25 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.,***

***Plantation United Methodist Church,***

**Answers from page 5:**

- 1. reservations 2. improvement 3. procrastination 4. gluttonous 5. affirmative**
- 6. instinctual 7. potentially 8. underline 9. derelictions 10. eliminate**

***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., 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

### Suite 404 readers tell us about their favorite AA literature

**Language Of The Heart**, what a great fountain of information provided by the Grapevine. Articles written by Bill W. Complete and I'm still amazed that the writing of the late 40's and 50's is spot on.

For me I've been mostly to literature meetings and I enjoy the research and quoting of those who came before me. Language of the Heart, brings the traditions home in an easy-to-read fashion and my favorite... when I'm tired of everything I've heard, is the Letter to the alcoholic's Mother.

Having Bill W. stretch out, like he had to for so long with the families we left behind, just reminds me that no matter what; I am responsible.

When anyone, anywhere ...

—Fran C., Ft. Lauderdale, FL—



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

## MEETING CHANGES

### Tuesday

**St. Francis Men's**, 12:00p.m., St. Francis Mission. **Has Moved to** The Twelve Step House, Members Room, 205 SW 23rd. St., Fort Lauderdale, FL. 33315

**By The Book**, 7:30p.m., St. Francis Mission., 208 SE 8th Street, Fort Lauderdale, **No longer meets.**

### Thursday

**New Way of Life**, 7:30p.m., Restoration Outreach, Davie. **Has Moved to** Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, back Chapel, 7601 SW 39th St., Davie, FL. **It now meets at 7:30p.m. Not 8:30p.m.**

**Living Young & Sober**, 7:30p.m., St. Francis Mission. **Has Moved to** The Hope Spot, 218 Dania Beach Blvd., Dania Beach, FL. 33004

**Thursday Night Study Group**, 7:30p.m., Mother Francis Outreach Center, Oakland Park. **Has Moved to** Metropolitan Community Church, Room 1 upstairs, 1480 SW 9th Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL. 33315

### Friday

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

### Sunday

**Touchstones**, 8:00p.m., St. Francis Mission. **Has Moved to** Metropolitan Community Church, Room 1 upstairs, 1480 SW 9th Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL. 33315

### Daily Meetings

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

**Pompano Beach Splinter Group**, 9:00 a.m., M,W,Th,F, **Has moved to** Community Presbyterian Church, 4433 Bouganvilla Dr., Lauderdale by the sea, FL 33308

**Serenity at 6:30**, 6:30a.m., Monday—Friday, St. Francis Mission. **Has Moved to** Metropolitan Community Church, Room 1 upstairs, 1480 SW 9th Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL. 33315

**5:30 Saint Francis**, 5:30p.m., Monday—Saturday, St. Francis Mission. **Has Moved to** Metropolitan Community Church, Room 1 upstairs, 1480 SW 9th Ave., Fort Lauderdale, FL. 33315

### SPANISH MEETINGS

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

## Upcoming Events

- |                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| <b>June 5</b>   | <b>General Service District 9 Founders' Day Picnic</b> , 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 <a href="mailto:supportyourservices@district9aa.org">supportyourservices@district9aa.org</a> . |
| <b>June 25</b>  | <b>Unity XI Breakfast</b> , presented by BCIC, Intergroup & General Service District 9. \$7.00, 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Plantation United Methodist Church, 1001 NW 70th Ave., Plantation FL 33313.  |
| <b>Aug. 3-7</b> | <b>60th Florida State Convention, "New Freedom New Happiness,"</b> Innisbrook Golf and Spa Resort. , Palm Harbor, FL. For information and registration go to <a href="http://www.60.flstateconvention.com">www.60.flstateconvention.com</a> .   |
| <b>Oct. 2</b>   | <b>41st Annual Broward County Intergroup Picnic</b> , Snyder Park Caldwell Pavilion, 3299 SW 4th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, 11:30 a.m. to Sundown. D.J., 50/50 raffle, games, dancing, volleyball, and an open A.A. Speaker Meeting. Tickets \$7.00 in advance.  |