

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.aabrowag

TLUME 9 EM R, 2016

STEP 9: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

Step Nine: Captain Chaos

An AA realizes the high cost of "freebies

I made up my own definition for the word "freebie" when I was in my late teens and already an alcoholic. The word described when I got out of doing something I really didn't want to do, but didn't want anyone to know it. For instance, if someone else had to cancel a meeting that I didn't want to show up for--it was a "freebie." Not only did I get out of it, but I also got credit for doing something I didn't do. Does that make sense?

Then, along came sobriety, the Steps, and my sponsor. My sponsor said, "You better do a Fifth before you pick up a fifth." I did my Fifth Step right before my first anniversary. Although it took months for me to do Steps Six and Seven (a story of its own involving stealing but finally making it through the grocery store without grazing), I finally got to Steps Eight and Nine. My first wife was on my list of amends. When the kids were teenagers, we'd gotten divorced, after being married for over seventeen years. When I was coming up on a couple years of sobriety, I went to see her to make amends. She said, "Oh, I know what you're going to do. I'm just glad you're sober, and you don't have to do this." The book says we don't push anyone who doesn't want it. Wow, I thought, a great big freebie.

Years of sobriety followed this experience, and it was not a bad life by any means, especially compared to the life I'd lived as a drunk. I kept my sponsor, even when his company gave him a new assignment and he moved. I became friends with Jim P. If I couldn't reach my sponsor, Jim was there. He was an active old-time twelfth -stepper. I still had a big resentment about my first marriage, and Jim said I needed to pray that she'd get the things I wanted for myself. I said that she'd already gotten all my things (money and material things). But he said he was also talking about security, peace of mind, and, in general, the things I'd robbed myself and my family of in my years of alcoholic terrorism. I'd pray, because I believed Jim, but I didn't have faith in a Higher Power. Things changed, but very slowly.

Five more years passed. One day, I was talking to my sponsor about a problem I was having. Before I finished, he said, "Tell me about your Ninth Step with your first wife.

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Concept IX

Good service
leadership at all levels
is indispensable for our
future functioning and
safety. Primary world
service leadership,
once exercised by the
founders, must
necessarily be
assumed by the
trustees.

Ninth Tradition

Tradition 9 - AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Tradition 9: Don't Tell Us What to Do!

One of my lifelong hostilities used to be directed squarely at fraternal associations, societies, and all other kinds of organizations. It seems to have stemmed from the fact that I could not bear being told what to do or how to do it. Besides that, drinking or not, I never understood what was going on. When people talked about purposes and goals, my mind would go blank.

When I had my last drink, in 1960, and began attending meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, I came in contact with so many people that I was sure AA would turn out to be just another big organization. If so, that meant bosses, competition, and favoritism, a troika I had never been able to deal with successfully. I feared that my newfound sobriety would be short-lived.

But if AA was organized, I could not account for the absence of pressures that are regularly built into organizational structures. For example, nobody approached me with a membership application blank. Nobody told me which group to join or that I had to join any group. Once I had joined, there was no arm-twisting as to how to vote at group elections.

My first awareness of any structure in AA was in my own home group. It came at a time when we were obliged to look for new quarters. What a lot of planning was required. It was just like hunting for an apartment or a house. What part of town did we want to be in? What was the minimum space requirement? How high a rent or contribution were we able to pay?

Once we were reestablished, the group's activities got under way again. On meeting night, the door had to be unlocked and the AA sign hung out. The hospitality chairman had to see to refreshments, setting up the room, and greeting members. All the other officers at group level had their jobs to do: the group chairman, the secretary, the treasurer, and the program chairman, who booked the speakers. Officers beyond the group level had their jobs, as well: the local intergroup delegate, the institutions representative, the Grapevine representative, and the general service representative.

That's quite a lot of organizing, calling for organizational know how! Yet I cannot imagine my group's functioning for long without it or something very much like it. Does that mean that my group is flouting the Ninth Tradition? I don't think so. The Tradition's reference is to the organizing of AA as a whole in a hierarchical, or governmental, sense. It has been my observation that groups practicing the principle of rotation usually have no trouble with the Ninth Tradition.

Rotation, one of the blessed safeguards of our Fellowship, applies not only to groups but to central offices and intergroups, committees, and boards. It provides for limited terms of office, thus assuring the next person the same chance at recovery that we had. It is also designed to help us keep the emphasis on principles before personalities by avoiding the trap of thinking we are the only ones who can do a given job. Rotation is also applied to staff assignments at GSO (the AA General Service Office). In that way, no one staff member becomes the expert on a given subject; the whole staff becomes that much more familiar with our society's problems and their solutions; and our Fellowship gains in the end.

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

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"Whoa. I said, "This problem has nothing to do with that." I reminded him that my first wife said that she didn't want to hear it. He replied, "We need to work on it now." He said I needed to do a Ninth Step with my first wife.

There was a lot of work for me to do. I had to list the nature of the harms I had done--the miserable life in our home as a result of my alcoholic drinking. I was unpredictable and kept the house in turmoil. My family even had a name for me: Captain Chaos. Pretty flattering, huh? The things I'd taken from the family were the things that, years before, Jim had told me to pray about. My sponsor and I talked about it every week for a few months.

Finally, I was ready. We decided that I was going to ask her to have lunch with me. My daughter was having a party for one of my grand-kids in a couple of weeks. My sponsor said while we were all at the party, I could ask my first wife to go to lunch. When the day arrived, there just wasn't the right opportunity. I looked across the room and saw my first wife and her new husband opening the door to leave. I yelled out her name and asked, "Will you go to lunch with me?" The whole room took a breath and stood still, waiting for her reply. "Sure. Give me a call," she said.

Two weeks later, in a restaurant, I made a real Ninth Step amends, and she listened. Things aren't the greatest between us, but we can at least speak civilly to each other. The amends helped my now-adult kids and grandkids, too.

First Jim, and then my sponsor, taught me, with their experience, strength, and hope, about what is important in life, what the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions says at the start of Step Eight. "Steps Eight and Nine are concerned with personal relations." People and relationships, my part in them, and how I treat others, are important in my life. Jim used to say, "When I came to AA, I loved things and used people. But since I've been in AA, I've learned to love people and use things." Jim passed a month short of fifty-three years of sobriety a few years ago. He taught me so much.

With the help of AA, my sponsor, and Jim, I've come to realize how expensive a "freebie" can be. To know "a new freedom and a new happiness," I need to watch out for that easier, softer way that can distract me from working the Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

-- Skitch F., Albuquerque, New Mexico —

Grapevine Online Exclusive

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP

Is having another

OPEN HOUSE

Saturday, October 22, 11a.m. – 4p.m.

DOOR PRIZES * REFRESHMENTS * RAFFLES * DISCOUNTS ON SELECTED ITEMS

3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309

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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Rotation applies throughout our general service structure. The levels of structure start with the group and move by stages to the General Service Conference. From there, they move back to the group, the solid basis from which all general or worldwide service proceeds. A capsule picture of this structure might be in order here.

If a group wants to have representation at the Conference, it elects a GSR (general service representative).

GSRs in a given district elect a DCM (district committee member). The DCMs from a given area form the area committee, where, among other activities, problems affecting the membership are gathered to be brought to the Conference. Once every two years, the GSRs and the DCMs come together in an area assembly to elect an area delegate. The delegate brings his or her area problems to the Conference but is not there solely to represent one area. Each delegate's actions and voting will be directed toward the best interests of AA as a whole.

The General Service Conference meets annually in New York. Groups in the United States and Canada send ninety-three delegates, via area assemblies, to discuss AA business. Conference discussion and its resulting Advisory Actions cover an extraordinarily wide range of subjects. Other members of the Conference are the General Service Board (trustees), the GSO and Grapevine staffs, and the boards of AA World Services, Inc., and The AA Grapevine, Inc.

Here is a very important note about the Conference. In The AA Service Manual, Bill W. wrote that "while the Conference can issue orders to the General Service Office, it can never mandate or govern the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves. The Conference represents us, but cannot rule us."

GSO is located in New York. One of the multitude of services it provides is to coordinate and arrange for the annual Conference. A trip to GSO is a memorable occasion for AAs visiting New York from all parts of the world.

Some of us (and I used to be one) have trouble with the fact that The AA Grapevine, which publishes our monthly magazine, is incorporated and AA World Services, which publishes our Conference-approved literature, is also incorporated. I used to cite those two organizations as proof positive that AA was indeed organized. With time, I came to recognize that we AAs do not exist in a vacuum--that we are subject to local and state laws. By complying with those laws incorporating as legal entities, both the Grapevine and AAWS vastly improved their capability of serving us, which is the only reason for their existence in the first place.

The Ninth Tradition is concerned primarily with our Fellowship as a whole. But it does have a personal application, too. I must have order in my personal life, and I am willing to go to any length to secure it. The achievement of one of my paramount desires, peace of mind, seems to come about as the direct result of discipline (self-organization) in my thinking, in my emotional views, and in my spiritual outlook. My sobriety depends on the well-being and the good, orderly direction of those several aspects of my makeup.

I gained a fresh view of the Tradition one evening when I was scheduled to speak at an AA meeting. Because I had not planned my time carefully, I had to rush, and my thoughts were, scattered when I arrived at the group. I heard myself say to the chairman, "Please give me a minute to get myself organized."

—W.H. Manhattan, New York—

Reprinted from *Grapevine* September 2008 Vol.65 Issue 4

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.

Focus on Sobriety

Sally D. ~ 47yrs. Karen D. ~ 15yrs. Jen L. ~ 7yrs. Patty K. ~ 18yrs.

Davie Women's

Patti L. ~ 11yrs. Naomi P. ~ 8yrs.

Mountain Group

Kim C. ~ 9yrs. Mike M. ~ 10yrs. Lisa D. ~ 34yrs. Lois O. ~ 41yrs.

You Are Not Alone

Jim Mc S. ~ 42yrs. Katia ~ 9yrs. Bill C. ~ 8yrs.

Tamarac Group

Marla ~ 2yrs. Lindsay ~ 2yrs. Barry G. ~ 21yrs. Vinnie C. ~ 2yrs. Jared A. ~ 2yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale Women's

Kathy K. ~ 10yrs. Nancy H. ~ 8yrs.

Oakland Park Group

Bob S. ~ 34yrs. Carmen R. ~ 27yrs. Carol B. ~ 26yrs. Frank G. ~ 39yrs. Wayne G. ~ 30yrs.

Men in Recovery

Ray B. ~ 8yrs.

Rule 62

Fran C. ~ 16yrs.

Lunch Bunch

Mark ~ 2yrs. Kevin ~ 13yrs. Ed ~ 19yrs. Christina M. ~ 27yrs.

Meeting in Print Chuck H. ~ 17yrs.

Nautical Group

Angela ~ 3yrs. Tammy ~ 5yrs. Nadine ~ 7yrs. Nancy ~ 27yrs. Michael ~ 29yrs. Tom ~ 32yrs. Vivian ~ 37yrs. Colette 29yrs. Chris ~ 31yrs. Jim N. ~ 38yrs.

Sober Today Club Is Five Years Old

August Correction

Men's Independence Dan C. ~ 39yrs.

August Celebrants (not previously submitted)

Mountain Group

Dave K. ~ 6yrs. David B. ~ 7yrs. Michelle P. ~ 22yrs.

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

Things we cannot change,

Patrick S. Gary W.

They will be missed by all who knew them.

GREAT + ATTITUDE =

Read the un-circled letters to reveal a hidden message

GLISTENRAR RTCITFUS YEEHAIPA LABIAONT RATONICT AHTSSIREUO ENOLATENRW ERAHSORDID

ATTEND EARLY LATE REPAY SOBER LISTEN TRUST CHAIR **FAITH** SHARE SPONSOR

BCIC Broward County **Institutions Committee**

Next Meeting: September 10th 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** September 18th — October 16th 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. 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 the Big Book. On page, 132 "A vision for you". It reads: "Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny."

This has become a mantra of sorts, to me. As my life in recovery awakens me to so many new and different experiences. It expresses that initial surrender & acceptance that has happened to me in the AA way of living.

I love trudging along each and every day.

-Nancy F., Fort Lauderdale-

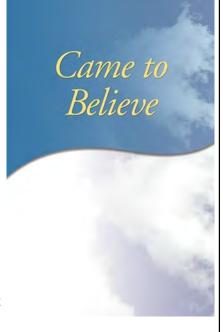


"I don't want to trudge the Road of Happy Destiny -I want to sprint it."

Suite 404 readers tell us about their favorite AA literature

When asked to write a few words about my favorite AA book my immediate thought was the Big Book and the 12/12. By necessity those books have been the major focus of sobriety. But another book allowed me to reach higher levels of understanding my concept of a higher power and enabled me to put to rest the searching and questioning. That book was "Came To Believe."

Like many newcomers I had difficulty acquiring a concept of a Higher Power. I knew what I didn't want, but had no idea what an effective replacement could be. This book cleared up a lot of the problem for me. It consists of many stories of individuals who shared my confusion on the subject. I will only speak of a couple of my favorites in the name of brevity. One of my favorites is "The Belief Will Come". In this story a man relapses after many dry years and realizes he has short changed the "spiritual part" of the program. He began to act as if after his sister told him "pray with disbelief but pray with sincerity and the belief will come". He was able to come to a comfortable understanding which changed his life. He had a spiritual awakening. For him the evidence of the spiritual awakening was: maturity, an end to habitual hatred, and the ability to love and be loved. For me, I needed that kind of simple explanation of something I was trying so hard to complicate.



The second story is named "Evidence of a Miracle". This story is of a woman who went out after many years and struggled to return. She summed up the acceptance I eventually reached in a couple lines of verse: I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see. I sought my God, but my God eluded me. I sought my brother and I found all three. Those few sentences had a huge effect on me. I had been seeking deities and religious practices to provide the answer but totally missing the point. I could only learn to be God-like from my fellow humans. I have found my concept of a Higher Power and now actively pursue it through interaction with people. It has allowed me to move on and continue to grow spiritually.

Don W., Fort Lauderdale

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, Elizabeth B., Happiness Is Group, Tim S., Bobby V., Janet M., Lillian M., Richard H., Milinda B., Lois O., Richard S., Mark S. Barbara S., Sam B., Douglas C., Jennifer S., Ted K., the other Bob H., Howard S., Carol B.. June C.. Bob H., Pat R., Leslie R., Eric P., Tara D., Nancy S. 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!

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Name:	
Address:	
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Sobriety Date and Home Group	
Make checks payable to:	
Broward County Intergroup, Inc.3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404, Ft. Lauderdale, FL 3	3309

Service Opportunities

Picnic Committee Planning Meeting.

Saturday, September 10th, Saturday, September 24th, 1:30p.m. The Twelve Step House, 205 SW 23rd St. Fort Lauderdale, 33315

Broward County Intergroup's 6th Annual AA's Got Talent Planning Meeting

Planning Meeting: Saturday, September 24th, Saturday, 1:30pm, 441 Group, 1452 State Road 7, Margate, FL 33063

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2016 1:00 PM Pompano Beach Group 215 S. Federal Hwy. Pompano, 33060

> **Intergroup Office Will Be Closed:** Monday, September 5th for Labor Day and October 1st for Annual Inventory

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 Center, 5400 W. Atlantic Blvd. Margate, FL 33063 OCCM.

NEW MEETING <u>Atlantic Woman's Group,</u> 5:45p.m., Fellowship Recovery Center, 5400 W. Atlantic Blvd. Margate, FL 33063 CRFw.

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

Saturday

NEW MEETING <u>Doing The Deal.</u> 7:30p.m., Fellowship Recovery Center, 5400 W. Atlantic Blvd. Margate, FL 33063 OSP.

Upcoming Events

- **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, Tickets \$7.00 in advance.
- Oct. 15 District 9 Archive Committee's Early Timers' Meeting, featuring three speakers with over 25 years sobriety. Coffee and dessert 5:00 p.m., meeting at 7:00 p.m. Full archives display. NSU Terry Building, Steele Auditorium, 3200 S. University Dr., This is a free event. Bring a newcomer and a dessert.
- Oct. 22 Broward County Intergroup's 2nd Annual Open House, Saturday, 11a.m.- 4p.m. DOOR PRIZES * REFRESHMENTS * RAFFLES * DISCOUNTS ON SELECT ITEMS, 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404 Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309. Located near I-95 and Oakland Park Blvd.
- **Nov. 3-6 10th International Conference, Seniors in Sobriety,** Bahia Resort Hotel, San Diego, California. For more info check website, www.seniorsinsobriety.org.
- Nov. 11 District 9 53rd Gratitude Dinner, Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, 5555 N. Federal Hwy, Ft. Lauderdale. Coffee at 5, Dinner at 6, Speaker at 7:30. Tickets \$15.00 All proceeds to benefit the General Service Office in New York.