



# Suite 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.  
Oakland Commerce Center  
3317 NW 10<sup>th</sup> Terrace, Suite 404  
Fort Lauderdale, FL 33309  
Phone 954-462-7202, 954-462-0265; [www.aabroward.org](http://www.aabroward.org)

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## Step Ten - "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

### The Practice of a Grateful Heart

**An AA with over 36 years in the program shares his experience in cultivating gratitude**

Before I came to AA, my life had been consumed with an obsession and compulsion to use alcohol to change how I felt. I wanted to be numb. When I was numb, I couldn't feel anything, not even anything good. I was dying mentally, physically and spiritually.

I arrived at the doors of AA broken and without hope. But I had nowhere else to go. Slowly, people in the rooms helped me to recover and to live. They taught me to take stock of the miracle that I was experiencing.

It is now 36 years later and recently at a meeting, I shared that I was grateful for my disease of alcoholism because I now had a wonderful program for living. A young man, in early recovery, shared that he couldn't understand how one could be grateful for a disease. I remember thinking the same thing when I was new.

In my experience over the years, a grateful heart and mind will not drink. Gratitude is such a powerful tool that I must continually develop. In all my years of sobriety, the most special moments are those when I feel gratitude.

Can you recall the feeling of finally fitting in at AA, when the obsession to drink left you, or that awesome feeling when you did Step work with another? I suggest these are all feelings of gratitude. Gratitude, like many other feelings, has to be developed. Let me share my gratitude journey.

I remember how good I felt at night, before falling asleep, because I had made it through a day without alcohol or drugs. Many of my early days in sobriety were consumed with the mental obsession to drink. Then a miracle happened, the obsession disappeared. I cannot recall when that happened exactly, but it was somewhere near the end of the first year. One day I thought, "Hey I no longer am battling the thought of drinking!" I suggest these experiences were the beginnings of my gratitude development.

So how does one develop a grateful heart? Practice, practice and more practice. First I had to recognize gratitude when

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## Concept X

**Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.**

## Tradition Ten - "Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

### On outside issues

In AA we can speak freely on just about any subject we wish. It's only when we get into sensitive areas like politics, alcohol reform and sectarian religion--outside controversial issues that can divert us from helping alcoholics recover--that we are urged not to link our personal opinions to AA. By keeping us out of controversy, the Traditions create an atmosphere in which recovery is more likely to occur.

Our book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions cites an old-timer who declared, "Practically never have I heard a heated religious, political, or reform argument among AA members. So long as we don't argue these matters privately, it's a cinch we never shall publicly."

In 1976, the General Service Conference made the suggestion that "AA members speaking at non-AA meetings refrain from getting involved in a discussion regarding mood-changing drugs." Such discussions could embroil us in controversy about outside issues.

They dash off letters to the editor, which not only breaks the letter writer's anonymity but also injects AA into whatever controversy is being debated. This places AA in the odd position of breaking one Tradition to defend another Tradition. Anonymity breaks may be referred to the local delegate or the General Service Office (GSO).

In February 1963, the first widespread criticism of AA was published in a national magazine. Howls of protest descended on GSO, asking Bill W. to respond. Bill did nothing, thereby setting a lasting example for us all.

Then, in 1976, a prestigious think-tank released a study suggesting that alcoholics could control their drinking. Again, GSO was inundated with media inquiries and Fellowship complaints. Again, GSO issued no comment.

These non-responses were consistent with Tradition Ten, which suggests that, "The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one." They were a good example of the "restraint of tongue and pen" encouraged in the Step Ten essay in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

These were outside issues. However, there are also occasional remarks about politics, alcohol reform and sectarian religion made inside our Fellowship that compromise the spirit of this Tradition.

I was at a meeting one night when a man trolled for votes by announcing he was running for a political office. Another time a man mentioned his political party affiliation at an AA meeting. Past Grapevine articles have described people removing political buttons as they entered AA meetings, so they wouldn't bring politics into the rooms.

I've heard good AA talks marred by disparaging comments about intervention, treatment facilities, counseling, medication and scientific research. I've even heard AAs tell newcomers to avoid psychological therapy and medication. This can endanger the health of newcomers and can make our professional friends wary of referring alcoholics to us.

AA members shouldn't have to swim upstream against the sentiment in some AA quarters, where it's professed that psychiatry and medicine aren't needed if one only works the Twelve Steps properly. Early AAs were wise and compassionate when they wrote in the Big Book that ". . . we should never belittle a good doctor or psychiatrist. Their services are often indispensable in treating a newcomer."

Early in my recovery I sponsored a man whose religious beliefs I strongly disagreed with. I kept my mouth shut because I figured he was in AA to get sober; his religion was none of my business.

I hear AA members announce at meetings that they are "recovering" from a particular religious denomination -- the long form of this Tradition specifically cautions us against expressing opinions on sectarian, or denominational, religion.

## Recovery Word Puzzle

H A M D C T E  
S O S N I B S E O  
F A R L E T G U  
S N I T C O S N E T  
T A I L N O F A I F I  
N A T E L T



*Unscramble  
the letters.  
Answers to  
puzzle can be  
found on  
page 7.*

N E E R V E T I N  
H A B R Y D I T  
P R O T I N G U R E  
N O P N O I I  
C E R N P I L P I  
O S U T I C N U N O

Have a Sober and Safe, Happy Halloween!



## Volunteer Opportunities

9th Annual A's Got Talent show will have the next planning meeting on

**Saturday, October 16 at 1:30 PM**

at the 441 Group, 1452 N State Road 7, Margate

2019 Gratitude Dinner, to be held in November, has the next planning meeting on

**Sunday, October 27th at 1:00 PM**

at the Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, 5555 N Federal Hwy, Ft. Lauderdale

*Pick up a commitment today!!*

**SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER**



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I felt it. When I become aware that I was no longer consumed by the thought of the drink, I could pause, feel the good feeling and then label it as a gratitude. I also believe it helps to share my gratitude at meetings and in one-on-one conversations.

I also need to develop my gratitude around normal life events. Today, I take stock of the folks in my life including family, friends, and coworkers. There was a time, at the end of my drinking when I was alone with the bottle. I have been blessed with grandchildren and spent a lot of time with one while my daughter was recovering. When I think back to some of the moments that I have had with my grandchild my heart fills with goodness and I now know that is gratitude.

When I am at a meeting and hear someone struggling with the obsession, I can sympathize and be grateful I no longer have that obsession. I can be grateful for the tools of the program that can help me solve any issue.

Recently, I got a speeding ticket, which was my fault, so I paid the ticket by check immediately. Well, I had made a mistake and the account number on the check was incorrect. I called the county clerk to resolve it. The clerk was friendly and told me the few steps I needed to take. I really found her to be helpful and can be grateful for her assistance, even though my errors cost me money. Being grateful for help is better than being angry over the ticket!

I used alcohol and drugs to make things better, not knowing things were already great. It was always one more drink, one more pill. There is not enough alcohol to solve the unsolvable quest for numbness. When I shift my perspective to being grateful in the moment that I am in, the gates open to a life where I will be "amazed before I am halfway through."

As part of my Tenth Step, I was taught to review the things in my day for which I was grateful. This practice shifted my inventory from just errors to a more balanced list. I rest more peacefully when my last thoughts of the day are grateful ones. I can choose to be grateful today.

-- Denis F., Colchester, Connecticut      *Online Grapevine Exclusive published October 2014*

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## Thoughts to consider on Tradition 10.....

*Taken from the TraditionsChecklist, ©The AA Grapevine, Inc. revised July 2018*

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an "AA opinion" on doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Alcohol? Prescribed medications? Other drugs? Other 12-Step programs? Vitamins? Al-Anon? The federal or state government?
2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression that I'm stating the "AA opinion"?
3. What in AA history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
4. What would AA be without this Tradition? Where would I be?
5. Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
6. How can I manifest the spirit of this Tradition in my personal life outside AA? Inside AA?
7. Should the meeting secretary intervene to remind AA members about this Tradition if a member starts criticizing one political party compared to others or favoring a religion over others?

### **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 Terrace, Ste 404  
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33309  
954.462.7202

### **BCIC**

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

### **Area 15 General Service**

Treasurer, PO Box 1784  
Pompano Beach, FL 33061

### **District 9 General Service**

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

# AA BIRTHDAY'S

## October Celebrants

### Broward Men's

Bob A. ~ 35 yrs.  
Drew ~ 3 yrs.  
Larry M. ~ 23 yrs.

### Express Group

Cookie ~ 32 yrs.  
Sonia C. ~ 26 yrs.

### Free & Easy

Sam B. ~ 43 yrs.  
Ted M. ~ 40 yrs.

### Friends of Pat C.

Katie W. ~ 6 yrs.

### Meeting in Print

Creig R. ~ 36 yrs.  
Sondra V. ~ 25 yrs.

### Midday Sobriety

Charlie P. ~ 12 yrs.

### Women's Step Into Sobriety

Becky ~ 8 yrs.

### Ft. Lauderdale 12 Step Group

Jimmy E. ~ 30 yrs.

### Davie Women's

Kass C. ~ 36 yrs.

### Into Action

Debbie C. ~ 12 yrs.

### Speak Freedom

#### Morning

Nancy H. ~ 34 yrs.

### Women's Honesty

Robin K. ~ 16 yrs.

### By the Book Beginners

Shannon R. ~ 16 yrs.

### Pride 5:45

Eric P. ~ 8 yrs.

### Smell the Coffee

Mark G. ~ 11 yrs.

### Sunshine Group

Jamie R. ~ 4 yrs.

### Sober Sisters

Jenn S. ~ 26 yrs.

Marisa ~ 13 yrs.

Ally ~ 2 yrs.

### Willing and Able

Cassie ~ 6 yrs.

Pompano Men's Group ~ 50 yrs.

### Other Notables

Jack ~ 44 yrs.  
Dawn R. ~ 31 yrs.  
Jenny B. ~ 13 yrs.  
Evan L. ~ 12 yrs.  
Matt H. ~ 12 yrs.

### Westside Men's

Jon G. ~ 5 yrs.

### Dania After Work

Alison ~ 5 yrs.

### Free To Be

Michelle ~ 13 yrs.

### Freedom From Alcohol

Scott ~ 30 yrs.  
Tony ~ 38 yrs.  
Mimi ~ 41 yrs.  
Gerry D. ~ 52 yrs.

### Happy Destiny

Iris ~ 4 yrs.

### Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Tom G. ~ 12 yrs.

### Just For Today

Paula K. ~ 3 yrs.  
Steven N. ~ 2 yrs.

### JOIN THE BIRTHDAY CLUB!

Celebrate your sobriety by sending \$1 per every year sober to your local Intergroup office to show your gratitude and give back once a year.

*(Birthday listings are not contingent upon contributions...we just like to celebrate sobriety.)*

## BRIDGING THE GAP

has a new number

**724-680-0430**

**BCIC - Broward County  
Institutions Committee**

**Next Meeting:  
October 12 - 10:00 a.m.**

**Twelve Step House**  
205 SW 23rd St.,  
Ft. Lauderdale

**Next  
Intergroup Meeting**

**Twelve Step House**  
205 S.W. 23<sup>rd</sup> St., Ft. Lauderdale

**SUNDAY, October 20th  
at 1:00 p.m.**



## September Celebrants not previously mentioned

### Into Action

Karen D. ~ 18 yrs.  
Patricia M. ~ 10 yrs.

### Rule 62

Frannie C. ~ 2 yrs.

### Women's Honesty

Helen ~ 37 yrs.  
Michele B. ~ 13 yrs.  
Marissa ~ 9 yrs.

### Just For Today

Mike B. ~ 20 yrs.  
Eddie D. ~ 14 yrs.  
Nancy A. ~ 17 yrs.

### Free To Be

Gabby C. ~ 1 yr.  
Stephanie W. ~ 4 yrs.

### Tuesday Night Step

Marty L. ~ 35 yrs.

### Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Michael ~ 1 yr.  
Brett S. ~ 24 yrs.  
Steve ~ 31 yrs.  
Paul D. ~ 18 yrs.

### Downtown Dry Dock

Kathy R. ~ 13 yrs.  
Marlene A. ~ 13 yrs.  
Jessica ~ 6 yrs.  
Paul ~ 2 yrs.  
Mitch ~ 31 yrs.  
Walt ~ 36 yrs.





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Many AAs have strong opinions about praying at AA meetings. In a 1959 letter, Bill W. endorsed the use of the Lord's Prayer and the Serenity Prayer in AA.

Significantly, though, Bill made his remarks in a private letter. Bill was entitled to his private opinion about this matter, and so is every other AA member and group.

Many AAs get upset when newspapers portray AA in a less-than-flattering light.

At some point I tell the men I sponsor something like this: "Go to church or don't go to church; attend other 12-step meetings or don't attend other 12-step meetings; take the medication or don't take the medication. Whatever else you want to do that you believe will help with your recovery is fine with me--as long as you do what we've agreed you'll do in AA."

As far as I'm concerned, that's the Tenth Tradition in action.

-- PAUL C., Oceanside, CA

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### *Local Readers Share.....*

The principle for Step 10 is "perseverance". A definition of perseverance is – continuing in a course of action without regard to discouragement, opposition or previous failure. I heard it said that steps 10, 11 and 12 are "maintenance steps", but these steps are growth steps for me because I have to continuously make progress in my self-discovery. As I continue to take personal inventory, I become aware of character defects that cause me stress and affect my serenity. Taking personal inventories continually and with perseverance has certainly helped my recovery over the years.

I take spot inventories whenever I need to during the day. These help me understand my motivations and reactions. I try to admit when I am wrong as soon as I become aware of it. I do not like to carry that burden around anymore. I also take daily "end-of-the-day" inventories as I write in my journal at the end of the day. I go through what I have done that day, and see if I have been hurtful or unjust. Usually after talking things over with my sponsor, I can make bigger revelations concerning my behaviors that caused me distress.

For example, when I was about 5 years sober, I responded to a negative email I received from someone at work. I sent a negative response back without thinking about it. It felt good to write that response and send it, but then I had to deal with the consequences. Those consequences caused me stress and chaos in my life. I talked this out with my sponsor, and found out that maybe I could have taken a different approach. I could have practiced self-restraint. I realized that I caused my own distress and chaos because I liked it and was used to it. As I was progressing in my recovery, I started liking my serenity better than the chaos.

A few years later, I found myself placing money, property and prestige in front of my sobriety. I was getting caught up in the vortex of the career and looking for the next higher level. I finally realized that this character, which I call ambition, could be good if in check. However, I was using more and more ambition to get ahead in my career at the expense of my recovery and family. It became a character defect. I realize that I was satisfied with what I had, and I could live a richer life by letting go of too much ambition. Having a richer life does not necessarily mean having to make more money or have more prestige.

Even though now I have over 25 years of sobriety, I am still persevering in uncovering more about myself by continuing to take personal inventories and even seeking outside help in therapy. The "big book" says to continue to grow in understanding and effectiveness, and that love and tolerance of others is our code. I also need to remember the spiritual axiom that whenever someone troubles me, it is usually something going on in me that is the problem. Step 10 is a "continuous progress" step that does take perseverance.

—Charlie G., Ft. Lauderdale

### **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.

**Faithful Fivers** are 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., Suzanne J., Bob H., Anonymous I, Elizabeth B., Ron J., Tim S., Lois O., Richard H., Jennifer S., Pat R., Beth D., Craig G., Sandy P., Leo H., Vickie T., Howie K., Kerry W., Lewis G., James H., Joanne D., Gerry B., Don W., Eric P., Tara D., Denise J., Howard S., Bob D., Robert H., Sally S., Anonymous II, Jane T., Fran C., Peter S., Deborah C., Women's Step by Step and Rachel L.

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!

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

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE: matched, obsession, grateful, consistent, affiliation, talent, intervene, birthday, intergroup, opinion, principle, continuous

## I AM RESPONSIBLE....

WHEN ANYONE, ANYWHERE, REACHES OUT FOR HELP,  
I WANT THE HAND OF A.A. ALWAYS TO BE THERE. AND FOR THAT: I AM RESPONSIBLE.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ GENDER: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

PREFER: VOICE: \_\_\_\_\_ TEXT: \_\_\_\_\_ EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_ CITY OF RESIDENCE: \_\_\_\_\_

WILL CALL BACK: \_\_\_\_\_ AND/OR PAY A VISIT: \_\_\_\_\_

AVAILABILITY: MONDAY to FRIDAY: \_\_\_\_\_ WEEKENDS: \_\_\_\_\_

8:00am-12:00pm \_\_\_\_\_ 12:00pm-5:00pm \_\_\_\_\_ 5:00pm-9:00pm \_\_\_\_\_ 9:00pm-8:00am \_\_\_\_\_

TO COMPLETE A 12-STEP CALL, you only need to be sober one day, but you NEVER GO ALONE.  
THANK YOU FOR YOUR SERVICE! SEND COMPLETED FORM TO: [help@aabroward.org](mailto:help@aabroward.org)



## MEETING CHANGES

### Monday

The Bottom Line Group meeting at 7 PM on Monday in Deerfield is now a Men's meeting.

### Tuesday

**NEW MEETING Nuevo Porvenir** has added a meeting on Tuesday from 8-10 PM. Same location, Spanish. 1486 S. Palm Avenue, Pembroke Pines.

Women's Step by Step which meets on Tuesday has moved to St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, 2500 NE 14th Street Causeway, Pompano. Format and time remain the same.

### Wednesday

Lambda Rising Meeting which met at Lambda Clubhouse in Ft. Lauderdale at 6 AM NO LONGER MEETS on Wednesdays.

### Thursday

**NEW MEETING Nuevo Porvenir** has added a meeting on Thursday from 8-10 PM. Same location, Spanish. 1486 S. Palm Avenue, Pembroke Pines.

Coconut Creek Group which met at Calvary Presbyterian NO LONGER MEETS on Thursdays.

### Friday

Discussion Tables which met at the West Broward Club in Davie NO LONGER MEETS.

### Sunday

**NEW MEETING Nuevo Porvenir** has added a meeting on Sunday from 12-1:30 PM. Same location, Spanish. 1486 S. Palm Avenue, Pembroke Pines.

The Bottom Line Group meeting at 8:30 PM on Sunday in Deerfield is no longer a Men's meeting.



**Things we cannot change.....**

*Clifford S.*

*He will be missed. May He Rest in Peace.*

**Intergroup Picnic tickets  
for sale NOW**

**\$8 each / \$10 gate**

Bulk pricing available for advance purchase only.  
Kids under 12 eat free.

Facilities may pay using CC or Check by calling  
Intergroup.

## Upcoming Events

- Oct. 4-6 South Florida Area 15 General Service Assembly** Boca Town Center Marriott, 5150 Town Center Circle, Boca Raton, FL 33486— Free workshops, speakers Friday and Saturday night.
- Oct. 12 Early Timers Meeting** hosted by District 9 Archives Committee, NSU, 3200 S. University Drive, Terry Bldg. 5:30 PM. Free Event, 3 speakers and dessert. Full archives display.
- Oct. 27 44th Annual Intergroup Picnic** will be held at Snyder Park, Caldwell Pavilion. Live band, games, volleyball, raffles, lots of food and double speaker meeting. 11:00 AM—4:00 PM, \$8 in advance, \$10 at gate, kids under 12 eat free. Admission to park not included.
- Nov. 1 56th Annual Gratitude Dinner** Coral Ridge Presbyterian Church, 5555 N. Federal Hwy., Ft. Lauderdale. 6-10:00 PM, Dinner 7 PM, Speaker 8:30 PM, please bring dessert. Advance ticket sales available at planning meetings and through GSRs.
- Nov. 23 Traditions 4-6 Workshop**, presented by Broward County Intergroup, 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404, Oakland Park. Contact office to reserve your seat. 7-9:00 PM. Refreshments served.