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VOLUME 3
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Step Three - "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

The Steps Offer Solutions

I have worked in the field of addictive illness for most of my professional life. In the beginning I worked as a community health nurse developing prevention programs for school-age children, later as a nurse counselor in treatment centers, and most recently as a counselor in private practice. At first, Alcoholics Anonymous was little more than a resource for speakers who could share their stories and experiences with the students. Later, in the treatment centers, which were twelve-step programs, I began to sit in on meetings and listened to the real significance of AA. I liked what I heard at those meetings. Then I read the literature, especially the Big Book, which gave me a better understanding of the principles of the program. As I began to listen and absorb the philosophy, I could see that AA had a way of life to offer many people, alcoholic or not.

In my work today, I believe that alcoholics can recover in AA alone, but utilizing counseling strategies, they can have a stronger recovery. I use the AA philosophy and Twelve Steps to help my clients realize that there are no magic answers, only a simple program of recovery which requires a lot of work. Recovery from any addictive process comes with realizing that there is a way out of the pain and that choices are available. Alcoholics and addicts see themselves stuck in their misery; they feel hopeless about their situation. A twelve-step program provides a positive means of escape.

Many of my clients are either alcoholics or addicts from alcoholic or dysfunctional families. They present themselves in therapy with many adjustment problems, some the result of alcoholism or drug addictions, some resulting from the lack of emotional attachments in childhood. All suffer from a lack of serenity in their lives, and little or no spirituality. AA and other related twelve-step programs give these people principles that can help them change disruptive behaviors. In therapy, I help my clients apply the AA principles to life's issues and probe deeper into feelings, accept those feelings as part of being human, and develop healthier ways of coping with them.

The first three Steps of the Twelve Steps are approached as the foundation to recovery. If I can help the alcoholic see in Step One that acceptance means acceptance of himself as a worthy person, as well as acceptance of his illness, he will begin to believe that he deserves to feel better and recover. An unmanageable life involves a lack of self-acceptance. Helping my clients discover their good qualities as well as flaws is the first step on their journey to recovery.

Step Two continues the journey to hope. Hope encourages the individual to look at options--solutions to getting out of the misery. Sanity, a more manageable approach to living, becomes the goal. A life

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Concept III

To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A. — the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives — with a traditional "Right of Decision."

Tradition Three - "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking."

A Second Round *A newcomer questions whether he belongs*

Do I really belong here? I thought. What do I have in common with these people? I had returned to the rooms for my second round of AA. My first attempt at sobriety, some ten years earlier, had ended badly. On my part, there had been no Step work, no sponsor, no phone calls made, and no reaching out.

I was ashamed to admit it, but the truth was that I had only shown up at those first few meetings to get my sheets signed and then get out. I had not read the Big Book that had been so graciously given to me. And as I said, it ended badly--not with a relapse, but a "never stopped."

Now I had returned--shaking, afraid, newly out of prison, and fully aware that I needed help. I needed to stop drinking. Of course, I had never been able to pull it off by myself. Sure, I had tried. I'd spend a day sober, a week sober, maybe even a few weeks sober, but in the end I always wound up with a drink in my hand. I say "wound up" because many times--if not most times--the drink found me. I got back into the booze as soon as someone casually handed me a beer or offered to buy me one. Just one. And after those first few sips, all my good intentions melted away somewhere. It was as if I were caught in a dark nightmare, trying to run but with my legs bogged down. There was no escape for me; alcohol always found my hiding place.

These people are laughing. What's funny? How can they laugh in the face of this horrible monster called alcoholism? They all say they suffer from it. Really? I glance around the room. No one looks as tired and broken as I feel. They all seem better, livelier, more full of hope. The meeting begins and I listen as some of them tell their stories. It's been years since they've taken a drink. Years! And not just a few, but many--some of them touting fifteen, twenty, even thirty years of continuous sobriety. My mind staggers, trying to grasp the meaning of their words. I cannot imagine anyone staying away from alcohol for that long. I think, Weren't you ever tempted? Didn't anything bad happen to you in all that time? I'll never be able to pull off anything like that. I figure if I make it through a couple of months completely sober, I'll be doing well.

The people talk about working the Steps of AA. I see the Twelve Steps hanging on the wall, inscribed on a large sign. I am familiar with them, and they still scare me half to death. I read through some of them. Steps Three, Seven, and Eleven jump out--my sticking points. I don't see how I can ever work these Steps. I hadn't been able to before, and I don't hold out much hope now. "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over. . . ." "Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings." "Sought through prayer and meditation. . . ." No. It's just too much to ask. I don't really believe in these Steps anyway--do I? Do I really believe in a Higher Power? All my life I had thought of myself as the higher power. But now it's different. I know that I've hit bottom. I'd often wake up in my prison cell and think to myself, There's got to be something better than this. Somehow, I'm going to find it. . . if I could just get some help.

The basket is passed around for donations and I don't put in any money, but I do put in an attendance sheet to be signed by the meeting chair. I feel guilty that I haven't put in a dollar or two, but I don't have any money. I'm broke. I pass the basket quickly, hoping no one notices what I've just done. I see others putting in sign-in slips, but they're different. They're also putting in a dollar or two, and doing it cheerfully.

The AA Preamble comes to mind: "There are no dues or fees for AA membership." That's good, because right now I can't get kicked out of the program. I have a parole officer breathing down my neck every couple of weeks and the alternatives are anything but pleasant. I notice the placard with the Twelve Traditions written on it and I read the Third one: "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking." Hmm. That sounds simple enough. Could it be true? Do I have a desire to stop drinking? Yes. I'm thousands of dollars in debt, I'm on parole, I don't have a job, my friends and family have turned away from me, and I can't look at myself in the mirror. But the people in this room have somehow beaten alcohol. They have found something I want. For today, I want to be like them. Maybe I'll never join the thirty-year club, or the fifteen, or even the five, but I want to be free from alcohol today.

After the closing prayer, someone says, "Keep coming back." Someone else shakes my hand and tells me the same thing, adding, "It gets better." This person can see my pain. For a moment, I connect. If a desire to stop drinking is all that's required for me to return, I think I can provide that. I've been beaten bloody, smashed, trashed, and humiliated by my years of drinking. Apparently, so have all of these people. But they still leave the meeting smiling, laughing, happy, and free. I think I'll be back tomorrow.

Recovery Word Puzzle

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



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

S T O P R U I N T P I O E
D I N E T N O T E
S P O O N N I I
B U S R U S B
T O O N Y O M N
A R K K E O A

DO YOU LOVE CAMPING?



Whether you like camping or Glamping, the new Intergroup fundraiser will involve a weekend conference at Birch State Park in January 2021. Tent or cabin camping available. Details coming soon. Overnight space limited to 118. To get involved please email Mary at help@aabroward.org

INTERGROUP HAS NEW STORE HOURS

Monday — Friday
10:00 AM — 6:00 PM
and Saturday 9:00 AM — 1:00 PM

Volunteer Opportunities

The next planning meeting for the **57th Intergroup Appreciation Banquet** will be
Tuesday, March 10th at 6:00 PM at the
Intergroup Bookstore, 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Ste. 404, Oakland Park

The first **2020 Gratitude Dinner** planning meeting will be held on
Sunday, March 22nd at 1:00 PM at the
101 Club, 700 SW 10th Drive, Pompano Beach, FL 33060

Pick up a commitment today!!

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



(continued from page 1)

without dishonesty or secrets, a life involving people and closeness becomes a reality. In sharing their stories and in sharing their strength, AA members gain new points of view. They also gain strength and more personal or individual power.

Giving up control over one's life, giving up control of everyone else's life, is terrifying. Fear says, "I know what I have--what if things get worse?" Fear immobilizes. "Letting go" implies having faith in another being. My clients cannot trust themselves, so it seems impossible to trust another. And yet Step Three says, have faith and give up the lonely fight. Trust in someone else.

In counseling, we work on exploring the Higher Power concept beginning with a supernatural being. If that's not feasible, a tangible person or group is considered. I encourage my clients to go to meetings and to listen to how others have applied the Steps and principles in their lives and have begun to grow beyond their fears. By giving up the fight to be in control, by trusting in a Higher Power, one has more energy to give to living.

AA's principles are useful not just to the alcoholic, but for anyone looking for a productive, whole life. I am not an alcoholic, and yet the more work I do with the Steps, the more I understand them and the greater respect I have for their impact on lives. The more I see the power in the Fellowship, the more I realize how much the program has to offer everyone as a way of life in a community. AA offers a life of successes and living, rather than just surviving the crises. When in the turmoil of alcoholic thinking, it is inconceivable to see a way out. The Steps offer solutions.

I am grateful to all the opportunities the AA principles have given me to improve my own life spiritually. Today I try to give back to my clients what I have learned about serenity through my own recovery program using the counseling insight and the AA concepts I have been fortunate to acquire in my life.

-- Mary Mele, Reno, NV

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Opinions Anonymous?

Responses from young readers on the topic of singleness of purpose

I'm young in sobriety and not exactly old in age, and I felt compelled to write about a recent situation that happened to me.

One of the opportunities for AA service work in my area is taking a meeting into a girl's detention center. One week, as usual, one of the girls volunteered to read the Steps out loud before the meeting. In the process, she added the words "or her" wherever God was referred to as him. This bothered me but I didn't say anything at the time.

The following week I asked that the Steps be read as they were written, without any added words. All went fine until one of the girls asked why I had made that request. I tried to explain that everyone in AA is perfectly free to have their own concept of God, whatever works for them, but by adding words to the Steps a person could easily get the idea that we were trying to define God.

Of course each girl had her own opinion on this and some shared it. Before I knew it our AA meeting had turned into a wide-ranging discussion about different concepts of God. This didn't last too long until the woman who brought the meeting in with me said we were all there for an AA meeting but could continue to discuss this after the meeting if anyone was interested.

This was a perfect example to me that our primary purpose must remain alcoholism. This is what binds us together.

-- Cheryl A., Bellevue, Nebraska

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District 9 General Service
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Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310

AA BIRTHDAY'S

March Celebrants

Let's Study the Book

Bob H. ~ 29 yrs.
Marilyn M. ~ 8 yrs.

Sober Sisters

Sharon G. ~ 34 yrs.

Oakland Park

Fred S. ~ 55 yrs.
Ken P. ~ 13 yrs.

Rule 62

Marge M. ~ 30 yrs.

Friends of Ralph C.

Chris ~ 37 yrs.

Women's Honesty

Maria M. ~ 9 yrs.
Erica C. ~ 32 yrs.
Elizabeth P. ~ 35 yrs.
Deana ~ 7 yrs.

Women's Step Into Sobriety

Betsy B. ~ 11 yrs.
Debbie D. ~ 16 yrs.

Coral Ridge Group

Tracie D. ~ 11 yrs.

One Day at a Time

Denny W. ~ 30 yrs.
Roger S. ~ 24 yrs.

Entirely Ready

Pat W. ~ 19 yrs.

Men's Independence

Jim W. ~ 31 yrs.
Matthew I. ~ 16 yrs.
Terrence W. ~ 11 yrs.
Adam O. ~ 7 yrs.

Margate Group

Janet M. ~ 36 yrs.

Tough Love

Patrick M. ~ 9 yrs.

Express Group

Diane ~ 8 yrs.
Kristin ~ 4 yrs.
Tyi ~ 6 yrs.
Tom M. ~ 30 yrs.

East Naples

Gary G. ~ 26 yrs.
Jerry T. ~ 19 yrs.
Mike R. ~ 15 yrs.
Tony C. ~ 20 yrs.
Jim H. ~ 36 yrs.

Dania After Work

Denise R. ~ 20 yrs.

Friends of Pat C.

Debbie O. ~ 5 yrs.
Lauren C. ~ 9 yrs.
Peggy R. ~ 24 yrs.

We Came To Stay

Cheryl L. ~ 25 yrs.

Coral Ridge Group ~ 50 yrs.

Surrender is Freedom

Ellen M. ~ 29 yrs.

Thursday Night Study

Philip S. ~ 13 yrs.

By the Book Beginners

Patrick R. ~ 29 yrs.
Don G. ~ 12 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Joe G. ~ 29 yrs.
Richard B. ~ 8 yrs.

Serenity Alltogether

David J. ~ 37 yrs.

Saturday Morning Awareness

Lisa M. ~ 13 yrs.

Splinter Group

Elizabeth C. ~ 3 yrs.

Mountain Group

Sarah O. ~ 29 yrs.

Sober Today

Bill D. ~ 35 yrs.

Sobriety on Two

Laura B. ~ 24 yrs.

Meeting in Print

April ~ 32 yrs.
Art ~ 37 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

724-680-0430

BCIC - Broward County Institutions Committee

Next Meeting:
Saturday, March 14th
at 10:00 a.m.

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

Next Intergroup Meeting

Twelve Step House
205 S.W. 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale

SUNDAY, March 22nd
at 1:00 p.m.

February Celebrants not previously mentioned

Into Action

Beth D. ~ 37 yrs.

Free to Be

Bob M. ~ 7 yrs.

Dania After Work

Cathi D. ~ 2 yrs.

Tamarac Group

Anne B. ~ 14 yrs.

Brothers All Living Life Sober

Carlos R. ~ 27 yrs.

You Are Not Alone

Jorge A. ~ 2 yrs.

Russian Alcoholics

Dmitriy T. ~ 4 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Robert S. ~ 38 yrs.
Daniel F. ~ 13 yrs.
Jim A. ~ 18 yrs.
Jim M. ~ 6 yrs.
Robert A. ~ 30 yrs.
Demot ~ 44 yrs.

Surrender is Freedom

Sheryl F. ~ 19 yrs.

N. Lauderdale Back to Basics

Victor T. ~ 19 yrs.

Coral Springs As Bill Sees It

Milinda B. ~ 14 yrs.



Local Readers Share.....

Nothing I'm about to write is original; through shares and slogans on the walls and passages from books, we gather collections of ideas that ring true for each of us. If possible, we'd give credit, but whomever shared it when I heard it, probably heard it from someone before her.

I was in my first year of recovery, probably the first few months, cleaned up and feeling pretty good and thinking, "hey, getting sober wasn't that difficult, maybe I'm not really an alcoholic!"

Then at some meeting I heard the line that cut through all my denial, all my *"it's gonna be different this times"*, and my *"well I never did THATs"*; "the unacceptable became acceptable." I'll say it again; the unacceptable became acceptable.

A nice young guy from the suburbs trying to make his way in the big city, I slowly got used to the following: phone calls from creditors, late notices for payments, shut off notices from the electric and phone companies, three-day eviction notices on my door, incontinence, hangovers, chronic lateness, and a general lack of a social life. All this happened gradually, all while I was gainfully employed!

The hopes I'd had coming to the city for success, culture, great nightlife, maybe a relationship, all slowly dwindled into the monotony of daily drinking at the local bar around the corner from the office. There were no more dates, "openings" or elegant dinners. Bi-weekly trips to the neighborhood liquor store to stock up with gin (for when I ran out of cash close to pay day and had to drink at home) were routine. Calling in late to work was habitual, and I lived within walking distance to the office. At 29, I woke regularly on the floor thinking "I'm still here"; I hadn't died yet. "I did it again" I'd say. I meant to just have one or two.

Around this time, a friend had started going to AA and planted the seed. By the grace of something, I found my way to my second AA meeting and haven't had a drink or drug since. I "made a decision" to accept I was an alcoholic, AND that I was going to "turn(my) our life and will over to the care of God....." That was 35 years ago. I found my fun and elegant dinners and culture and fellowship and recovery through the rooms of AA and the 12 steps. ODAAT.

— Doug D., Ft. Lauderdale

L U C K
St. Patrick's Day

HAVE A SAFE, SOBER HOLIDAY FULL OF BLESSINGS!

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: incontinence, solutions, changes, disruptive, newcomer, individual, opportunities, detention, opinions, suburbs, monotony, karaoke

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



MEETING CHANGES

Monday

Bottom Line Group has now made the 7:00 PM meeting an OPEN Daily Reflections meeting.

The Workshop Group which meets at Luther Memorial Church in Hollywood is now a CLOSED meeting.

Tuesday

Lit-ter-ture Group which met at Lambda South at 8:30 AM in Fort Lauderdale NO LONGER MEETS.

Spiritual Beginners which met at Christ Community Church in Pompano NO LONGER MEETS.

Wednesday

Living Sober in Pompano has moved to 200 NE 2nd Avenue. Time and format remain the same.

Thursday

Lit-ter-ture Group which met at Lambda South at 8:30 AM in Fort Lauderdale NO LONGER MEETS.

Intracoastal Group which met in Pompano at St. Martin's in the Field NO LONGER MEETS.

Friday

Friday Night Live which meets at the West Broward Club in Davie has changed the time from 10 PM to 7 PM.

Sunday

NEW MEETING Broward Young People meets at the Sanctuary, 1400 N Federal Hwy, Ft. Lauderdale, 6 PM, open, step speaker discussion, young people.

Please have your group consider
donating a gift basket for our
Intergroup Appreciation Banquet
to be held on April 25th .
The basket raffle is a lot of fun and
a key element to the fundraising
success of the dinner.

Thank you for your support.



Upcoming Events

- Mar. 7** **District 9 Spring Fling Festival** NSU, Terry Building, Cafeteria and Steele Auditorium, 3200 S. University Drive, Davie, 6-10 PM. Karaoke and Chili Cook-off.
- Apr. 3-5** **South Florida Area 15 General Service Assembly** Boca Raton Marriott at Boca Center, 5150 Town Center Circle, Boca Raton 33486 Free Service Event — Saturday Workshops, Speakers
- Apr. 25** **57th Annual Intergroup Appreciation Banquet** Tropical Acres Steakhouse, 2500 Griffin Rd., Dania. Appetizers 6:00 PM, Dinner 7:00 PM, 2 Speakers 8:00 PM, Basket Raffles to follow. \$45 Reserved seating only—tickets must be purchased in advance.
- May 7-10** **42nd Big Book Seminar** (in the spirit of Joe & Charlie) Boca Raton Marriott at Boca Center Register online at www.bigbookseminar.org \$30 registration. Begins Thursday 7:00 PM. Seating is limited. 5150 Town Center Circle, Boca Raton 33486
- May 16** **Traditions Workshop** at the Intergroup Bookstore, Traditions 10-12, Free event, refreshments served. 3317 NW 10 Terrace, Ste 404, Oakland Park. 7-9 PM. Call to reserve a seat. (Limited)
- Jun. 5-7** **FCYPAA** will be held at the Bonaventure Resort and Spa. Pre-register and book your room now. FCYPAA2020.COM