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Step Four - "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

A Sketchy Fourth Step

With help from her sponsor, a member with a learning difficulty did some Step work she thought she'd never be able to do

I'm an alcoholic, and I'm severely dyslexic. In school I got Ds and Fs. I was able to join the military because a friend helped me pass the test. I took a job in the service that did not require reading. Later, under a federal program I was able to take college classes. In college I needed to have someone read the tests to me out loud. I also had to give my answers verbally, instead of writing them down.

I'm now in my 50s and getting As and Bs in my classes. I hope that my story gives hope to newcomers and reminds them that there is a new way to live and that you're never alone. There are people in AA who can guide you through the Steps and help you see how they relate to your life.

My journey in sobriety began in the summer of 1980. I started coming to AA because my mother paid me to take my brother to meetings. I agreed because it covered my gas and gave me a little extra drinking money. I didn't consider myself an alcoholic at that time, even though on three occasions I was sent home because I showed up to work intoxicated.

I remember someone in a meeting suggesting to the newcomers to try not to drink for 90 days. I thought 90 days wouldn't be a problem, since I wasn't an alcoholic. So I challenged myself to two years, and just about made it.

During this first period of sobriety, I got a sponsor with whom I shared some personal things. One day, when I arrived early at a meeting, I thought I overheard her talking about me to another member. That's when I decided I didn't need a sponsor and I could do it on my own. I must mention that years later I came to realize that my first sponsor probably was not talking about me.

While sponsoring myself, I went through some very difficult times, including the loss of my father. In December of 1980, he committed suicide. I was the last one to talk to him. He sounded good and we talked about things he was doing at work and plans he had. About 30 minutes after our conversation, he killed himself. I believe he was in a

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Concept IV

At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

Tradition Four - "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."

Autonomy Is Not an Excuse

The Fourth Tradition seems to me to be one of the least understood and most misinterpreted. During discussions of Tradition Four I've heard opinions expressed all the way from "Autonomous means we can do whatever we want" to "AA as a whole is affected by everything a group does--it's just a matter of degree." In my experience, the truth lies somewhere in between these two.

The idea that a group is autonomous has been used to justify breaking other Traditions (such as affiliating with a club or a treatment facility or failing to be self-supporting by accepting gifts of money or services or rent-free meeting places from other organizations), and to justify failure to participate in AA as a whole through the service structure. Disunity has been seen as independence, and self-will has been justified, all in the name of autonomy.

Familiarity with the long form of Tradition Four has helped me understand the principle involved. The long form reads: "With respect to its own affairs, each AA group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount."

In the long form, the emphasis is on responsibility to the group conscience, and independence from outside influence. No mention is made of separation from other groups or AA as a whole. Instead, emphasis is placed on concern for the welfare of other groups and of AA as a whole: "On such issues our common welfare is paramount."

On matters affecting only my group we have unlimited freedom. No other group can say when, where, or how often our groups should meet. Our format, meeting length, room setup, and internal business affairs concern only the members of our group. We are guided by all of the Twelve Traditions in making our group decisions, but they are our decisions to make. And no other individual or organization has a right to dictate to a group regarding these matters. We ensure our autonomy from outside influence by applying the other Traditions--we are self-supporting; we do not endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to other organizations or causes; we avoid public controversy; we remain nonprofessional.

When the actions of our group affect other groups, however, we are told those groups ought to be consulted. Such situations might include scheduling conflicts, public information efforts, carrying the message into local treatment and correctional facilities, and directing the activities of our local central office. Our group has found that these matters can best be handled in cooperation with other groups through participation in the AA service structure at the district level.

And what about matters affecting AA as a whole? Our group feels strongly that any public anonymity break, solicitation of funds from outside our Fellowship, affiliation with other organizations or institutions--in short, any violation of the Traditions has the potential to affect AA as a whole, and in these matters it is essential to confer with the General Service structure through our area delegate.

We also have a responsibility to share with our delegate, and through him with the entire Fellowship, any bright and shining idea for improvement of Alcoholics Anonymous we may come up with. Do we have a more effective way to carry the message? Have we found the answer to encouraging better communication and participation? Are we aware of a strong need for an additional service committee, pamphlet, video, or other tool for carrying the message? We have not only the opportunity, but the obligation, to share our ideas and information.

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blackout and didn't know what he was doing. I managed to somehow stay sober during this time.

In June of 1982, I went out and had a shot of whiskey and smoked half a joint. This was the last time I drank alcohol or used drugs. I realized that I was going to be out on the street and would have to sell myself to support my habit. I was not about to do this, but I was afraid to go to a meeting in my central coast area of California. And I was avoiding the AA hotline because of a woman I knew who worked there. She had given me rides to meetings and I had overheard her husband say that I would never get sober. So I couldn't call to tell her about my slip and prove her husband correct. Instead, I confided to my supervisor about my slip. He told me to keep it to myself and no one would ever know. But I knew. I kept thinking about what our sobriety chips say: "To thine own self be true." I realized at that point that I had to do something different. The truth is I was afraid that—like my father—I would commit suicide.

I went back to Stockton and called the man who became my sponsor until his death in 2007. He was my brother's sponsor. I liked that he knew my history through my brother. He required that every week I attend a Big Book study group, a "Twelve and Twelve" meeting, a womens' meeting, an As Bill Sees It meeting, a topic meeting and a meeting with him. So, I was at a meeting just about every day. I felt confident that everything I told him would remain confidential. I did as he and other AA members suggested, staying as close to the center of the pack as possible. It was very difficult to reach out to others and confide in others in the beginning and still is, but the fear is much less than it once was.

When we met, my sponsor and I started working Steps One, Two and Three. At this time I did not have a Higher Power. In the beginning, AA meetings were my spirituality. Today, I can say that I have a creator, but the term God still makes me cringe. I now have a Higher Power that I confide in every morning, and when I hear the term God, I tell myself that "G" stands for good, "O" for orderly, and "D" for direction.

When it came time to take Step Four, I told my sponsor I could not do it because I wouldn't be able to write it down. He told me to draw pictures of the things and events in my life that harmed me. About a week and a half later I came to him with a picture book I had created. We sat down and I explained every picture to him. Using the information I gave him and the things we discussed, we were able to complete all the parts of the Fourth Step. By the end, I had a list of my character defects and a list of people I needed to make amends to. I was able to complete the Steps with the guidance of this sponsor. I continue to work the Steps, but will always remember those early days with that sponsor. I appreciate how he was able to guide me through the Fourth Step in a way that suited my learning disability.

I found a whole new way of life after working the Steps. I hope that by reading this other members will see that there's more than one way to work the Steps—as long as we're willing, open and honest.

—Wave P., Fresno, CA

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"While our literature has preserved the integrity of the A.A. message, sweeping changes in society as a whole are reflected in new customs and practices within the Fellowship. Taking advantage of technological advances, for example, A.A. members with computers can participate in meeting online, sharing with fellow alcoholics across the country or around the world. In any meeting, anywhere, A.A.'s share experience, strength, and hope with each other, in order to stay sober and help other alcoholics. Modem-to-modem or face-to-face, A.A.'s speak the language of the heart in all its power and simplicity."

Taken from the Forward to the Fourth Edition, Alcoholics Anonymous, p. xxiv

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Treasurer, PO Box 1784
Pompano Beach, FL 33061

District 9 General Service
P.O. Box 100126
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310

Recovery Word Puzzle

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



Unscramble the
letters. Answers
to puzzle can be
found on page 7.
Words for this

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

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

(when not in quarantine)

Monday — Friday

10:00 AM — 6:00 PM

and Saturday 9:00 AM — 1:00 PM

Volunteer Opportunities

All planning meetings have been cancelled due to Quarantine order. Please check website for any updates or changes as they occur.

www.aabroward.org

Things we cannot change.....

Margaux O.



She will be missed.

May she Rest in Peace.



The bookstore is still open for "take out only" on a limited schedule, Mon-Fri 1-6 PM.

Please just call, email or place the order online and we will get it ready for pickup or shipping.

No cash at this time; only checks or credit card, please.

As soon as we get through this health threat there will be LOTS of volunteer opportunities, as we get our events off the ground with less planning time than usual. Stay tuned and stay willing.

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



AA BIRTHDAY'S

April Celebrants

Riverside Group

Chris ~ 4 yrs.
Donna C. ~ 19 yrs.
Jeri ~ 35 yrs.
Laurie B. ~ 13 yrs.

Sober Sisters

Toni D. ~ 19 yrs.
Sara M. ~ 23 yrs.
Bernadette M. ~ 2 yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale Women

Susan H. ~ 31 yrs.

Rule 62

Bonnie T. ~ 17 yrs.

Women's Honesty

Phyllis K. ~ 48 yrs.

Early Risers

Steve L. ~ 21 yrs.

One Day at a Time

Kelly M. ~ 16 yrs.

Victor E.

Joe G. ~ 22 yrs.

Plantation Happy Hour

Sylvia N. ~ 13 yrs.
Noel ~ 9 yrs.

Live, Laugh, Love

Evonne M. ~ 7yrs.

Oakland Park Group

Lin F. ~ 48 yrs.

Into Action Group

Robin D. ~ 11 yrs.

YANA

Cheryl L. ~ 26 yrs.
Steve P. ~ 4 yrs.

Express Group

Joanna P. ~ 16 yrs.
Maryann M. ~ 24 yrs.
Iris S. ~ 33 yrs.
Edna C. ~ 11 yrs.

East Naples

Paul B. ~ 35 yrs.
Stew ~ 35 yrs.

Happy Destiny

Kris R. ~ 4 yrs.

Joy of Sobriety

Paul P. ~ 33 yrs.

New Day

Lilla ~ 2 yrs.

Coral Springs Men's

Pat G. ~ 18 yrs.

Friends of Pat C.

Marla B. ~ 10 yrs.
Kathleen I. ~ 36 yrs.

Mountain Group

Michelle O. ~ 11 yrs.
Craig L. ~ 13 yrs.
Rob B. ~ 36 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Tony A. ~ 10 yrs.

Serenity Alltogether

John H. ~ 29 yrs.

Meditation at the Rock

Sara P. ~ 2 yrs.

Davie Women's

Eileen G. ~ 47 yrs.

Other Notables

Rosie A. ~ 22 yrs.
Kris R. ~ 12 yrs.

Riverside Group ~ 38 yrs.

One Day at a Time ~ 33 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch ~ 32 yrs.

Sunlight of the Spirit ~ 19 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.)

**WISHING
EVERYONE
STAY SAFE,
SOBER &
HEALTHY**

**BCIC - Broward County
Institutions Committee**

Next Meeting:

Saturday, April 11th
at 10:00 a.m.

Will not be held at the
Twelve Step House

**Next
Intergroup Meeting
will not be meeting at**

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

**SUNDAY, April 19th
at 1:00 p.m.**

March Celebrants not previously mentioned

Sober Sisters

Denise R. ~ 20 yrs.
Attracta ~ 1 yr.

5:45 Happy Hour

Dana ~ 25 yr.
Rick ~ 28 yrs.



Local Readers Share.....

My nearly two decades of alcoholic drinking were not the fun times a young man in his 20's and 30's should have been experiencing. They were dreadful years filled with regret and shame and loneliness. Early on, I had ceased to go out in public. Out there the failure of my existence would have been obvious to any observer. After 18 years of unhappy drinking, I reached that point of pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. That point was my ticket to Alcoholics Anonymous.

I was one of those alcoholics we hear about who walked into his first meeting and immediately knew he was home. Almost four decades later that enthusiasm for AA has not diminished. I was especially enamored with the fellowship which terminated my years of life-sapping loneliness. Another miracle which came my way was to have the obsession lifted on day one. I entered AA, like many do, with a firm desire to go to any length to get sober. I attended as many meetings as I could, but in the early 80's, in Japan, there were not many English speaking meetings. Even so, I was able to connect to people who were eager to help me.

After a couple of years, that length that I had been so willing to traverse, had become considerably shorter. It was not the desire to drink that had caused this redefinition of my willingness, but rather parts of the program that I had decided did not apply to me. My primary objection was all this emphasis on things spiritual. My last contact with anything spiritual had been almost 20 years earlier when I attended church for the last time. The fact that my exclusion of religion from my life happened just days after I experienced alcohol for the first time eluded me. It was years in sobriety before I realized I had found a new God, and it was alcohol. My Burger King program slogged along.

My saving grace was that I always attended lots of meetings, I did service and have made enough coffee to float a battleship. Like a lot of things in life, my program worked until it didn't. My comeuppance happened at the 12-year mark. For the first time, I hit an emotional bottom in sobriety. I couldn't help myself. I was powerless. I would burst into tears. I was lost.

The Sunset Roundup in Key West was happening and I had told group members I would go with them. While there, I heard a woman speak and I was moved by her share. I invited her to go to lunch and poured out my soul to her, hoping this AA woman would have words of wisdom which would solve my dilemma. And indeed she did have them.

She asked me if I had prayed about it. She must have seen the puzzled look on my face. Prayer had never entered my mind. In desperate situations, people do desperate things, and I was desperate. I prayed as though I could make up for the 12 years alcohol had not been a part of my life. AA had put a spiritual toolkit at my feet, but I had never bothered to put any tools in it. After nearly two weeks of almost round-the-clock prayers something happened. The original reason for my anguish had vanished, but I had become a different person. People told me I looked and sounded different.

After hearing that often, I looked at myself and realized my reaction to life had changed. It appeared to be a spiritual experience and I loved it, and I now make prayer a part of my daily life. I struggled to find a definition of a spiritual life before I realized I didn't need one. It is what it is. In the book [Came to Believe](#), in a story named "The Belief Will Come" the writer wrote: "In my view, some of the evidences of a spiritual awakening are: maturity; an end to habitual hatred; the ability to love and to be loved in return; the ability to believe, even without understanding, that Something lets the sun rise in the morning and set at night, makes the leaves come out in the spring and drop off in the fall, and gives the birds song. Why not let this Something be God?" My answer to that question today is, "Why Not?"

— Don W., Pompano

OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE

PLEASE GO TO WWW.AABROWARD.ORG FOR ALL UPDATES

*We are updating the website throughout this crisis to the best of our ability. Thank you to everyone who has kept us informed. We have compiled a short list of local groups' electronic IDs for those who are looking for a local meeting online. We will not post this list to Website because of affiliation, but will share with you if you call 954.462.0403 or email help@aabroward.org, so that we may still be acting in **accordance with our purpose, as a "clearinghouse for the convenience of members"**.*

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.

WE HAVE NEVER NEEDED YOUR SUPPORT AS MUCH AS WE DO NOW!

Please consider becoming a faithful fiver today. Have your bank send us an Auto payment every month from your account or

DONATE NOW ON OUR WEBSITE USING PAYPAL

we are already using our prudent reserve at this time

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE: participation, challenged, separation, paramount, autonomy, obligation, postponed, closures, integrity, computers, enthusiasm, changes

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

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

Keep it in the Day is still meeting at Temple Beth Emet, 4807 S Flamingo Rd, Cooper City. 6 PM. CSP.

Thursday

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.

Saturday

The WAWA Group which met at the West Broward Club in Davie NO LONGER MEETS.

Sunday

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

**If you bought tickets or if your group was working on a gift basket for our
Intergroup Appreciation Banquet please hold on to them!!**

We will still be having our event, but we've postponed it until

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19th.

We truly appreciate your support, and we love this event as much as
you do, so don't worry.... we promise it will be just as special in September.

Upcoming Events

- Apr. 3-5** **South Florida Area 15 General Service Assembly** Boca Raton Marriott at Boca Center, 5150 HAS BEEN CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19 SAFETY BULLETINS There will be a Pre-Conference Assembly held using ZOOM conferencing April 4th and 5th. For more info. go to District9aa.org
- Apr. 25** **57th Annual Intergroup Appreciation Banquet** Tropical Acres Steakhouse, 2500 Griffin Rd., Dania. HAS BEEN POSTPONED UNTIL SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19th, God willing.
- May 2** **District 9 Archives Old Timers Meeting** - NSU in Davie HAS BEEN CANCELLED
- May 7-10** **42nd Big Book Seminar** (in the spirit of Joe & Charlie) Boca Raton Marriott at Boca Center MAY BE CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19 SAFETY BULLETINS. *Please check online at www.bigbookseminar.org for specifics as the date gets closer.*
- May 16** **Traditions Workshop** at the Intergroup Bookstore, Traditions 10-12, Free event, refreshments served. WILL BE POSTPONED DUE TO COVID-19 SAFETY BULLETINS.
- Jun. 7** **District 9 Founder's Day Picnic** at Snyder Park, Ft. Lauderdale HAS BEEN CANCELLED
- Jun. 5-7** **FCYPAA** will be held at the Bonaventure Resort and Spa. Pre-register and book your room now. FCYPAA2020.COM
- July 2** **THE 2020 INTERNATIONAL AA CONVENTION IN DETROIT HAS BEEN CANCELLED.**
- Aug. 6-9** **Florida State Convention** Jacksonville is still planning an amazing convention for this year in August. They welcome registrations. For information on speakers and workshops please go to www.64.floridastateconvention.com