



# Suite 404

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**Step One: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."**

## OUT OF CHAOS

*For years she controlled everyone else, until alcohol snuck up on her*

I was a late bloomer with my drinking. As the daughter of an alcoholic mother, I found drinking to be a huge turn-off from an early age. I hated the taste of alcohol and I hated what my mother's alcoholism did to our family.

What I did not know until much later in life is that you don't have to be drinking to live like an alcoholic. From a very young age, I surrounded myself with chaos and drama and lots of dramatic people. By not drinking myself, I created the illusion that I was somehow in control.

But in reality, I controlled my brothers, endlessly bossing them around and telling them what to do. I controlled the people around me by telling them whatever I thought they wanted to hear and manipulating circumstances so that I always appeared in the best possible light. I controlled my drunk mother, using her guilt about her own drinking to get what I wanted. I craved drama.

I rarely drank in my teens and 20s. I was busy following my plans and making sure my life stayed on the schedule I had set up. I walked into a law firm and talked them into hiring me as a legal secretary even though I had absolutely no experience. I met a great guy and, after some time, he proposed. We got married and had children, right on schedule.

Our children were still babies when my mother was diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's and I became her caretaker, along with looking after my grandmother. During this time, my husband was working and going to school and I had a part-time job as well. I was living in the eye of the hurricane, which is where I functioned best. I was also starting to drink socially, although my tolerance was very low and I didn't do a very good job of keeping up with my hard-partying friends. It was something of an ongoing joke in my social circles that I was such a lightweight.

Then, something happened around the time I hit 40. For a very short time, my tolerance for alcohol seemed to increase and I found myself drinking on a daily basis. It didn't seem like a big deal. Most of the people I hung out with drank every day. A cocktail after work, wine with dinner, drinks after dinner. Didn't everyone do that? But then a switch seemed to flip somewhere in my brain. Why wait until five o'clock for

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# HELLO 2021

## Concept I

Final responsibility  
and ultimate  
authority for A.A.  
world services  
should always reside  
in the collective  
conscience of our  
whole Fellowship.

## **Tradition One: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity."**

### **DO WE NEED EACH OTHER?**

If the first words I heard in AA eased me into the First Step, it was the second statement that gave me instant hope, making me feel better right away. Now, thirty-one years later, I believe that second sentence I heard contained the healing idea of our then-unwritten First Tradition.

The first words were: "Are you having trouble with your drinking?" Totally unprepared for *that* question, before I knew what I was doing I had nodded a truthful "Yes." It was a wobbly lurch toward Step One. (Later, I slipped off, but finally climbed back.)

My new friend smiled and said calmly, "Well, I'm a drunk myself; come on in, and let's talk it over."

In effect she invited me to participate in Tradition One: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity." Her description of herself struck me dumb with amazement, even relief. So I mutely followed that wonderful woman into another room, to talk it over. At that moment, I would have followed her to Hades, of course, hooked by her unashamed revelation that she was a . . . well, what she said.

"Drunk" was a word I resented, as adjective or noun. It had always disgusted me, until she said it about herself as simply as she might have said she was a woman or a citizen or on a diet. She said, "There are lots of us who have alcoholism, and we're now getting over it."

I was not alone! A sob of relief welled up.

My friend then told me, unemotionally, about her drinking, and carefully asked no questions about me or mine. In that wonderful book *Thirst for Freedom*, David Stewart points out the tremendous helping power of empathy. I wonder why it is not talked about more, either by professional observers of AA or by us.

The empathy of those first AAs I met certainly struck a mighty blow against my drinking and gave me a huge shove toward recovery. It is, I believe, a manifestation of our First Tradition, and it goes considerably deeper than simply identifying. We go on to imitate good examples of sobriety. And in twelfth-stepping, we put ourselves in another person's place in order to help. The empathy around me seemed to elicit some in me, which was the first genuine concern for someone else's welfare I had ever felt.

And it had another benign effect on me. Like some other alcoholics, I had felt the most outcast, lonely person on the earth a long time before I came to AA. In the rosy glow of first drinks, I had felt set apart, above others. Special. Better. Unique. That's an isolated spot, with room for only one.

Maudlin hours later, sloppy drunk or trying to sober up, I had felt just as alone. A special bastard, worse than anyone else, uniquely loathsome and not worth caring about. Alone again--ostracized, undesired, and undesirable.

Now, surely it takes an acrobatic, if not an alcoholic, egotism to flip-flop continually in order to retain a distinction like that--to be either an unappreciated, Christ-like genius or a uniquely horrible specimen. But practice had made me good at it, and I was almost never as conscious of anyone or anything else as I was continuously aware of me and my special-ness. Even when I was not conscious of it, it permeated all I did and said.

My first AA greeter's second statement, "I'm a drunk myself," shattered a lot of my claim to being so specially different. It was exactly what my sick ego needed to hear. Then her tale of

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# Recovery Word Puzzle

G E S I O D D A NG L U M N A N T I P I AT E Z A M N E A MT O T S A F E N I M N I AL A N D I M UT E A R L N I V O E

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

Use the red or underlined letters to reveal the message below.

O V I N D T E OS H A R T U OT A B C L E R ES H A L L M I C O OG R A F I S C I N CS T E D N I N S G I

-----',-----',-----'

## The 65<sup>th</sup> Florida State Convention

is returning to Ft. Lauderdale

August 3-7, 2022

### "Oceans of Devotion"

to be held once again at the beautiful

Harbor Beach Marriott Resort & Spa

Next planning meeting will be held **Saturday, January 23rd at 9 AM**

**Zoom Meeting ID: 882 8429 1768**

**Passcode: FSC2022**

LOTS OF HELP NEEDED...20 DIFFERENT COMMITTEES TO CHOOSE FROM

For more information, contact Convention Chair  
Karen V. (954) 554-0346 or Chair2022fsc@gmail.com

**VOLUNTEER FORMS AVAILABLE ONLINE**



The bookstore is still open on a limited schedule,

**Monday—Friday 1-6 PM,**  
with mask — one person at a time.

Place your order in advance by phone, email or online at  
[www.aabroward.org](http://www.aabroward.org) for shipping or come by and shop.

**SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER**



(continued from page 1)

that first drink? And on weekends? A beer or two at noon when you are working outside shouldn't be an issue. Before I knew what had hit me, I was drinking around the clock and I couldn't stop.

Although my mother had gotten sober in my early 20s and I had participated in the family sessions and open AA meetings at a rehab, it never occurred to me that AA could help me too.

But soon I had my first stay in the detox ward of our local hospital, where a doctor had come in to tell me he could help me. At that point, I was blaming all of my problems on the stress of my job. I didn't need help, I just needed to quit that job and I'd be fine. I quit the job, but the problems didn't go away and now there was nothing between me and the bottle.

Three more months and two more trips to detox and I was finally ready to hear what that doctor had to say. I signed on to spend 30 days in an out-patient rehab center, thinking that they would be able to "fix" me and I would be fine. But my first day there, they told me I would have to go to an AA meeting almost every day. After all I had been through, I still didn't think that AA was what I needed. AA was the end, as I saw it, the last resort. It wasn't going to work for me.

And then, two amazing things happened. First, I went to an AA meeting. And second, I was First-Stepped. I felt that each woman who spoke at that AA meeting was telling my story. I felt completely at home. There was one problem though. I felt that I was different because I didn't get hooked when I was young and had my first drink. I didn't start partying in my teens and spend years doing crazy alcoholic things. I didn't start drinking until much later. Did I still belong?

Then I got a Big Book and read it. I felt that the authors were speaking directly to me, right there in the chapter "More About Alcoholism." It said, "To be gravely affected, one does not necessarily have to drink a long time nor take the quantities some of us have. This is particularly true of women. Potential female alcoholics often turn into the real thing and are gone beyond recall in a few years." Case closed.

There was no arguing left for me. I embraced AA, got a sponsor, worked the Steps and got involved in service work. Ever since then, my life has changed in so many positive ways and I continue to look for new ways to grow.

I have learned that living a life of serenity is so much more than just not drinking. It is a way of life that I never knew was possible. I consider myself to be very lucky that I was able to see myself in the woman who First-Stepped me, in the Big Book and in practically every speaker I have heard since my very first meeting.

In September, I celebrate three years of sobriety. I may have been a late bloomer with my alcoholism, but I have not been a late bloomer with my sobriety.

— Mary O., La Grange, Illinois

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Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33310

# AA BIRTHDAY'S

## January Celebrants

### Broward Men's

Matt R. ~ 6 yrs.  
Manny C. ~ 29 yrs.  
Domenick ~ 25 yrs.

### Serenity Altogether

Dennis M. ~ 32 yrs.

### Smell the Coffee

George M. ~ 26 yrs.  
Donna E. ~ 32 yrs.

### FtL Primary Purpose

### Big Book Study

Heather C. ~ 8 yrs.

### Focus on Sobriety

Janet B. ~ 34 yrs.  
Anne B. ~ 15 yrs.  
Jean C. ~ 25 yrs.  
Randi ~ 25 yrs.  
Sherry C. ~ 24 yrs.

### Sober Sisters

Stephanie S. ~ 6 yrs.

### 441 Group

Ebony D. ~ 13 yrs.

### Freedom From

### Alcohol

Richard S. ~ 22 yrs.

### Margate Group

Matt O. ~ 35 yrs.

### Women's Honesty

Regina H. ~ 27 yrs.  
Lorren ~ 4 yrs.

### NOW Group

Bobby V. ~ 33 yrs.

### Riverside Group

Howie K. ~ 40 yrs.  
Nanette ~ 21 yrs.

### Pride 5:45

Steve W. ~ 35 yrs.  
Clint W. ~ 36 yrs.

### One Day at a Time

Mena L. ~ 19 yrs.  
Paulette R. ~ 21 yrs.

### Express Group

Bill ~ 7 yrs.  
Larry H. ~ 9 yrs.

### Joy of Sobriety

Glenn K. ~ 46 yrs.  
Steve W. ~ 35 yrs.

### Friends of Joe

Rick ~ 31 yrs.

### Sober on the Beach

David L. ~ 41 yrs.

Welcome Home Beginners ~ 3 yrs.

### Other Notables

Debra H. ~ 25 yrs.  
Glenys H. ~ 35 yrs.  
Kelly T. ~ 18 yrs.  
Nancy F. ~ 20 yrs.  
Charlie C. ~ 29 yrs.  
Ed T. ~ 34 yrs.  
Meghan ~ 10 yrs.

### Tuesday Night Step

Don F. ~ 42 yrs.

### Oakland Park Group

Audra P. ~ 42 yrs.  
Stirling ~ 44 yrs.

### Oldtimers

Kelly ~ 2 yrs.

### Living in the Solution

Sonia ~ 31 yrs.  
Clay ~ 26 yrs.  
Judi ~ 19 yrs.

### Women's Hope in

### Recovery

Adrienne ~ 11 yrs.

### Candlelight Meditation

Joe B. ~ 20 yrs.

### Let's Do Lunch Bunch

John G. ~ 36 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.)*

**STAY SAFE  
AND  
STAY HEALTHY**



## BCIC

Broward County Institutions  
Committee

will hold their next meeting on

**Saturday, January 9th  
10:00 AM**

This will be a Hybrid meeting  
[www.bcic-aa.com](http://www.bcic-aa.com)

**The next  
Intergroup Meeting**  
will be held on Zoom

**Sunday, January 17th  
at 1:00 PM**

ID: 241 331 6306 PW: 6Hzur4

## December Celebrants not previously mentioned

### Express Group

Rick ~ 20 yrs.  
Joanna ~ 27 yrs.

### Why It Works

Michael W. ~ 32 yrs.

### Sunlight of the Spirit

Violet ~ 4 yrs.  
Brian S. ~ 12 yrs.

### Back to Basics

John A. ~ 23 yrs.

### A Step at a Time

Chris B. ~ 19 yrs

### Coconut Creek Group

Robin C. ~ 32 yrs.

### Surrender is Freedom

Stacy G. ~ 2 yrs.

### Downtown Dry Dock

Cindy K. ~ 31 yrs.  
Colleen L. ~ 22 yrs.

### Other Notables

Christopher S. ~ 9 yrs.

### 5-3-Zero Group

Dana C. ~ 25 yrs.

### Each Day a New

### Beginning

Mark L. ~ 6 yrs.

### Freedom From

### Alcohol

Karl B. ~ 29 yrs.

### Victor E.

Larry M. ~ 32 yrs.



### Saturday Morning

### Awareness

Christine H. ~ 18 yrs.

### Oakland Park

Fritz A. ~ 3 yrs.

### Easier Softer Way

Arianna G. ~ 2 yrs.

### As Bill Sees It

Jen R. ~ 8 yrs.

alcoholism and recovery in the company of other alcoholics quickly demonstrated that I was far less powerful than the AAs staying sober together. Thus, it seems to me that the principle of anonymity is rooted in these words: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity."

Does this mean I must put the welfare of AA before my own? To answer, I ask myself another question: Would I have any welfare of my own at all if it were not for AA?

Does this Tradition mean we should stifle unpopular or dissenting voices among us? I think it means the opposite. Suppose you and I have opinions poles apart about psychiatry, religion, AA public information activity, or the Steps. Must each of us not respect the other's opinion if we want to stand together in sobriety? I don't mean tolerate; I mean really *respect*.

Learning to work together amicably despite differences is a part of becoming mature, I suspect, and something I had no clue to before AA. The words of our First Tradition had not been written the first day I walked into AA. But when my AA friends assured me we could all stay sober together, although we had not been able to do it alone, I believe they were acting out the Tradition.

The Tradition also seems to me an echo of what Bill W. discovered in 1935 in Akron, Ohio, when he realized he urgently needed to talk to another alcoholic to keep himself sober. On that long-ago day of my own entry into AA, as soon as I heard the implied invitation to join, I longed to be in that company. I'll always be grateful that I soon was, and I have been so ever since.

Our togetherness, our common welfare, our Fellowship mean so much to me that I am puzzled when someone flippily remarks, "The Traditions are for groups, of course, not members. They are there to hold the movement together." Not the members? "The Steps, not the Traditions, are for recovery."

Did any of us recover on our own? Didn't unity with other alcoholics in AA help a bit? Does anyone in AA believe he or she was not helped to recover by the knowledge that we are all afloat on the same life raft? Isn't that the First Tradition?

Ego deflation is important in my recovery, and this Tradition bears on that, too, it seems to me. To the extent that I have experienced anonymity in the spiritual sense, it grows from Tradition One, our unity. It seems to me worth sacrificing some ego satisfactions for, such as those of being recognized as some kind of Alcoholics Anonymous committee member or officer or speaker or Grapevine contributor.

The bonds that hold us together seem to me greatly worth cherishing.

—B.L., Manhattan, NY

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## THANK YOU SO MUCH



AA's Got Talent Committee!  
They raised over \$6000 for  
Intergroup in 2020!!!



Giant shout out to:

Ilene, Cookie, Bob, Sally, Robin, Al, Patsy,  
Tom, Brian and all the performers!!

## Things we cannot change.....

*Larry H., Monica S., Susan B.,  
Leon V. and Miles K.*

**They will be missed.**

**May they Rest in Peace.**



## 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., Vickie T., Howie K., Lewis G., James H., Gerry B., Don W., Eric P., Tara D., Denise J., Robert M., Susan S., Drew B., David S., Bonnie T., Robert H., Sally S., Anonymous II, Michael E., Stephen W., Marlene A., Ernie F., HBeta, Brian H., Steven L., Robin S., Barbara S., Jenae R., Jerilynn D., Charmaine, Fran C., Women's Step by Step, Rachel L., Michael T., Alexander W., Gary S., Dave J., Patrick M., Patrick C., Mary C., Patsy K., Joe G., Nancy S., Al G., Ann L., Glen P., Richard M., Ali S., Erich N., Russell S., Nicolle, Kathy, Peggy, Tracy, Carmen, Sharon G. and Jeff H.

**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, transfer with **ZELLE to help@aabroward.org** or

**DONATE NOW ON OUR WEBSITE USING PAYPAL**

ANSWERS TO PUZZLE from page 3: diagnosed, manipulating, amazement, manifestation, maudlin, revelation, devotion, authors, celebrate, alcoholism, sacrificing, dissenting. Let's have a great, serene month!

**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

**Women's Journey** which met at the Fourth Dimension Club on Fridays NO LONGER MEETS.

**Surrender Group** which met in Pembroke Pines on Tuesday nights NO LONGER MEETS.

**Off the Hook** which met at the West Broward Club 7 days a week now meets at Flamingo Park, 1st Building with Awn-  
ing, 12855 NW 8th Street, Sunrise. All meetings are Open. Rotating format. 5:30 PM

**The Outsiders** which meet in Gore Betz Park in Ft. Lauderdale on Friday have changed their time to 8:00 PM.

**NEW MEETING Seniors in Sobriety** 2029 N University Drive, Coral Springs meets Thursdays at 10:00 AM. OD.

**NEW FRENCH MEETING** Clubhouse #3, 4300 NW 46th Street, Tamarac, 33319 meets Thursdays at 8:00 PM.

**The Sanctuary** on Federal Highway in Fort Lauderdale has temporarily **Closed Again** due to the pandemic.  
Meetings that had started meeting in-person, are now only online again due to church closure.

## Your Intergroup Bookstore will be open on January 18th, Martin Luther King Day from 1:00 PM - 6:00 PM.

### ATTENDING GROUPS WHICH NOW MEET IN PERSON AGAIN

Each group is autonomous and every location has it's own guidelines in place. You may be asked to wear masks at all times, and you may not be allowed in due to diminished capacity.

Please practice Love and Tolerance and remember that we are ALL affected  
by this ongoing pandemic!

## IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

Your Local Zoom meetings and hybrid meetings can be added to the  
search function on our website and designated as such.

Once listed on our website, they will show up on the Meeting Guide App.

This added function will allow you to link right into a  
Zoom meeting, so we are only listing with group permissions.

To add your meeting to the search, please email Intergroup an

**INVITATION TO YOUR MEETING at [help@aabroward.org](mailto:help@aabroward.org) .**

## Upcoming Events

**Jan. 15-17**     **South Florida Area 15 Service Assembly** will be held on Zoom. Check  
[www.area15aa.org](http://www.area15aa.org) for Log-in Information. (Sarasota pending)

**Feb. 18-21**     **57th International Women's Conference** held in Charlotte, NC will be virtual this year.  
Register at <https://internationalwomensconference.org>