



# SUITE 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

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**Step 4** - "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

**Layers of his Life** The Big Book helped him peel back memories that were sweeter than he had remembered

They say you can't change the past. And the Promises assure us that "We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it." But what if you can't remember large parts of your life?

Years of daily blackout drinking left me pretty foggy for quite a while after I had my last drink. When I began to clear up enough to pay serious attention, I listened to others talk about doing their inventory and the need to tell someone their whole life story. These discussions usually left me a little demoralized, and I was embarrassed to tell anyone about my life.

At that time, my past was little more than a jumble of events with little order. The chronology escaped me, as did the relevance of my memories to my tormented emotional terrain.

I was ashamed of how little I could recall from my daughter's childhood, so I often avoided conversations regarding family. This was unpleasant, because I wanted to tell people about my daughter, who I was very proud of and grateful for. I longed to share stories about her childhood, to join the conversations of others as they talked of their own children and grandchildren. However, if I opened the door to that conversation, they might ask questions I either did not want to answer or couldn't. For instance, I did not want to tell people I had been in jail the day my daughter was born.

Other than two or three new friends who knew some of the facts, there was little of a personal nature that I cared to discuss with anyone. I was sure I would get shunned or ostracized if I told the truth.

Still pretty entrenched in self-centeredness, I failed to see that my daughter had also been robbed of a dad who could share her childhood memories. Having lost her mother because of my drinking when she was a young child, she was raised primarily by my parents, which was a particularly painful point for her. Having parents to share your childhood memories with is something many take for granted, but she had been deprived of this essential life nutrient.

Something else that was problematic was my inability to recall anything of my own childhood before the age of 12. Regardless of how hard I tried, my attempted inventories always got lost in confusion and discouragement. I would inevitably start with a traumatic event or relationship and then get bogged down in the emotional intensity of the events of the past. Although I had a sponsor, his suggestions were well-meaning but

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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 AA as a whole."

## Give Me Liberty!

**In AA we demand - But that doesn't give us the right to push others around**

AT THE MOMENT when Ebby T. said to Bill W., "Why don't you choose your own conception of God?," our Fourth Tradition began to germinate, it seems to me.

As page 12 of the second and third editions of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* shows, that question freed Bill almost miraculously from the prison of his old ideas. And I can now use that notion, as expressed in our Fourth Tradition, as my own charter for personal freedom in AA- as long as I behave responsibly.

"Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole," the Tradition says.

The idea got to me during my first year in AA, 1945, through the slogan *Live and Let Live*. At that time, I was so hypercritical of everyone that I lived in an almost perpetual state of negative feelings about people. My first AA mentors helped me apply the slogan to my family and to others I was continually finding fault with, including AAs.

Maybe this aspect of our program has more to do with the effectiveness of AA than has been widely recognized. Sitting in judgment on other people--a constant preoccupation of mine while drinking--is a temptation that keeps recurring. God is a heavy role to play, and I've conclusively proved to myself many times that my life becomes unmanageable when I try. In helping to free me from that shortcoming, or defect of character, Tradition Four has proved priceless in my own AA life.

I gingerly tiptoed around the edges of Step Three during my early AA months, not *too* scared of it; after all, it did say, ". . . *God as we understood Him*," Step Four suggested that for my own recovery I pass judgment solely on myself, not on anyone else. Step Eight suggested that I concern myself with the inventory of myself only, not with the inventory of persons I had harmed or who I felt had harmed me.

So, despite the fact that Tradition Four had not yet been spelled out, I think its basic idea of liberty coupled with responsibility was already operating to help me stay sober my first year. As I have since detected other outcroppings of it in many forms within our Fellowship, it seems to slap some new humility into me every time. That is a prime value all the Traditions have in my recovery.

Once, an agnostic member began to object to our group's closing the meeting with the Lord's Prayer. True, he said, the group did not force anyone to pray; but the weight of social pressure pushed everyone heavily in that direction, and since that one particular prayer is identified with one religion, he asked the group to change its custom.

For weeks we discussed it, at times even rationally. Two members, one pro, one anti, wrote GSO about it, each sure GSO or the board of trustees would rule his faction right, the other wrong. Both were irritated when they got GSO's reply--that it was up to the group to decide for itself. (I empathize. I still don't like being told, "Grow up.")

No formal group vote ever occurred, because the objecting friend and some who agreed with him decided to start a new group, with entirely different customs. As a result, for years now there have been two thriving groups where only one existed before--twin fruits of Tradition Four--and I have often been able to get from both precisely the help I needed.

The liberty each of us has to start new groups, experiment with meeting formats, or change our home group provides a resilience in AA that has been important in my sobriety. AA is so flexible, it is hard to fight. Anything we don't like about it, we know we are free to change. We do not need anyone's permission, and no one can declare us wrong or overrule us or read us out. As I and some other "slippers" have learned, we can't resign from AA, because there is nothing to send your resignation to!

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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. The deadline for submission is the 15th of each month. Material may be edited for space and content. We welcome your stories, news and comments. Please send your submissions to [help@aabroward.org](mailto:help@aabroward.org).

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ineffective.

One day, while reading the Big Book, I was stopped by a phrase I had seen several times before: "We went back through our lives." I had persistently been trying to come forward, I thought to myself. Even my resentment list started with my early adolescence. I would try "I resent" and could get no further. "Resent" seemed such a mild word to describe the intense emotions that ranged between deep shame and blinding rage. I couldn't find "resent" in that emotional war zone.

So I decided that just for the heck of it, I would try "going back through my life." I started with the present, the most recent relationships, events and institutions. What happened was the equivalent of actually peeling the onion from the outside in, rather than trying to peel it from the core outward.

The chronology of my life began to come into focus: connections, consequences, relationships—all began to make sense. Memories of my daughter's life returned, beginning with the time I first laid eyes on her until the time when she began having her own children.

My boyhood began to unfold. The Tom Sawyer-style adventures still bring an amused twinkle to my eye: the first time I rode a bicycle, the times my dad took me fishing, going to church, my grandmother's farm, friends, dogs I had known, my first day of school—which was also the first time I got kicked out of school. These and many more returned.

While memories of the many traumatic events that impacted my childhood became clear, so did the memories of the good people I had known, of my good and honorable parents, of wonderful and adventurous times. Lessons that had been lost in the maelstrom of alcoholism began to emerge.

During my Fifth Step and subsequent Step work, I became convinced many of my AA brothers and sisters have also had deeply hurtful memories. As long as I was focusing only on the pain and my derelictions, I now see that I was shortchanging myself and conducting a less than rigorously honest survey of my life.

Now my boyhood memory of seeing someone stabbed to death is mitigated by pleasant memories of other events and circumstances of the time. Those days are no longer defined solely by one act of brutal violence. Nor do other traumatic memories have the power to block earlier, more positive memories.

I am now convinced that healing is found in the light rather than in darkness. I have also learned the importance of talking, in meetings, about the simple mechanics of writing a Fourth Step.

By taking my inventory and a solid look at my shortcomings, I developed a substantial and difficult amends list; but the unexpected and wonderful additional gifts of my "precious memories" have deepened my gratitude to God and to AA. And I've come to believe that any attempt at inventory that does not include at least some of the positive is liable to be a morbid and depressing exercise in probing the darkness. The Steps are designed to lead us into the "sunlight of the spirit."

—James L., Pegram, TN

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(Continued from page 2)

We can't break AA rules, because there aren't any. How can I take my marbles and run away from a game played without marbles?

The freedom from the necessity of passing judgments on one another has prevented the Fellowship from breaking up in all kinds of disputes. If the General Service Board, GSO, or the Conference constantly refereed arguments among groups or members, it would be tantamount to pronouncing one side or the other wrong. We'd probably keep squabbling until the unhappy losers went away. And this would happen over and over, after every such judgment was passed.

Instead, we are told--sometimes to our exasperation--to decide for ourselves.

(continued on page 6)

**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

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**BCIC**

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

**Area 15 General Service**

Treasurer, P.O. Box 311  
Safety Harbor, FL 34695

**District 9 General Service**

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

# Recovery Word Puzzle

ZERODADLIME  
VIPEREDD  
CLEARNEVE  
SEEMRIMO  
CRUTAMITA  
LEESCIENTIR



Unscramble the letters. Answers to puzzle can be found on page 7. Words for this puzzle have been used somewhere else in this edition of Suite 404.

ROBEAHLON  
CRESAVIH  
HEEDCLUS  
BESTYIOR  
USATONUMOO  
BRAILELENU

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

will be hosted by District 9 at

**Ft. Lauderdale's Beautiful  
Harbor Beach Marriott Resort & Spa**

**August 3-7, 2022**



*A lot of planning is required to pull this off so go get involved...  
lots of great opportunities for service!*

Some Committees of Interest: Registration, Hospitality, Transportation, Golf, Greeters, Security, Merchandise, LGBT, Archives, Alanon, Grapevine, Program, Decorations, Accessibilities, Graphics

**NEXT PLANNING MEETING April 24th at 9 AM on Zoom**

Meeting ID: 882 8429 1768 ~~~~~ Passcode: FSC2022

**Future planning meeting Dates:**

Saturday, May 22nd

Saturday, June 19th

Saturday, July 24th

For more information contact Karen V., Convention Chair at 954.554.0346 or at [Chair2022FSC@gmail.com](mailto:Chair2022FSC@gmail.com)



The bookstore is still open only on a limited schedule,  
Mon-Fri 1-6 PM and masks must be worn.  
Please just call, email or place the order online  
and we will get it ready for pickup or shipping.  
We accept cash, checks or credit cards .

# SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



# A.A. Birthdays

## April Celebrants

### Riverside Group

Chris ~ 5 yrs.  
Donna C. ~ 20 yrs.  
Jeri ~ 36 yrs.  
Laurie B. ~ 14 yrs.

### Sober Sisters

Toni D. ~ 20 yrs.  
Sara M. ~ 24 yrs.  
Bernadette M. ~ 3 yrs.

### Ft. Lauderdale

#### Women

Susan H. ~ 32 yrs.

### Came to Believe

Bonnie T. ~ 18 yrs.

### Women's Honesty

Phyllis K. ~ 49 yrs.

### Early Risers

Steve L. ~ 22 yrs.

### One Day at a Time

Kelly M. ~ 17 yrs.

### Victor E.

Joe G. ~ 23 yrs.

### Plantation Happy Hour

Sylvia N. ~ 14 yrs.  
Noel ~ 10 yrs.

### Live, Laugh, Love

Evonne M. ~ 8 yrs.

### Into Action Group

Robin D. ~ 12 yrs.

### YANA

Cheryl L. ~ 27 yrs.  
Steve P. ~ 5 yrs.

### Express Group

Joanna P. ~ 17 yrs.  
Maryann M. ~ 25 yrs.  
Iris S. ~ 34 yrs.  
Edna C. ~ 12 yrs.

### East Naples

Paul B. ~ 36 yrs.  
Stew ~ 36 yrs.

### Happy Destiny

Kris R. ~ 5 yrs.

### Joy of Sobriety

Paul P. ~ 34 yrs.

### New Day

Lilla ~ 3 yrs.

### Coral Springs Men's

Pat G. ~ 19 yrs.

### Friends of Pat C.

Marla B. ~ 11 yrs.  
Kathleen I. ~ 37 yrs.

### Mountain Group

Michelle O. ~ 12 yrs.  
Craig L. ~ 14 yrs.  
Rob B. ~ 37 yrs.

### Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Tony A. ~ 11 yrs.

### Meditation at the Rock

Sara P. ~ 3 yrs.

### Davie Women's

Eileen G. ~ 48 yrs.

### Other Notables

Rosie A. ~ 23 yrs.

Riverside Group ~ 39 yrs.

One Day at a Time ~ 34 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch ~ 33 yrs.

Sunlight of the Spirit ~ 20 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,  
STAY SOBER &  
STAY HEALTHY  
PLEASE**



### BCIC

Broward County Institutions Committee will hold their next meeting on

**Saturday, April 10th  
10:00 AM**

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

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

**Sunday, April 18th  
1:00 PM**

Zoom ID 241 331 6306 PW 6Hzur4



**CONGRATULATIONS ON  
ANOTHER YEAR SOBER!**



(continued from page 3)

Local central offices operate under the same guiding principle, of course. Here in Manhattan, years ago, we formed an intergroup association. For a while, it was a delicate little thing. Its fragile life could easily have been shattered if its steering committee had tried to dictate to groups about officers, or meetings, or whatever. Every resistant group could have simply withdrawn its volunteers and financial support--and poof, no intergroup! Instead, the association decided each group was autonomous, thus avoiding the kind of intra-AA squabble that could have been fatal.

Perhaps this Tradition derived from the ego-inflicted suffering some of our first AAs had to endure after getting sober. Robert Thomsen shows so beautifully in *Bill W.*, his stunning biography of AA's chief architect, that co-founder Bill tried and tried to impose various orthodoxies on AA, only to be frustrated painfully time after time.

One of the delights of growing older can be a lessening of my compelling desire to make everybody else do things right. (For "right," read "my way.") It is liberating to learn repeatedly that I cannot bend AA to fit just my particular shape. The pain of such struggle disappears when I can let other AAs have things their own way. That leaves me more energy that I can devote to my number one problem: me.

The price I must pay for this freedom is a corollary responsibility. I have virtually unlimited independence in AA, as long as I act within the framework of the last part of the Fourth Tradition.

Recently, I decided to stop paying my dues in a political organization. The fee is small, and the club takes very little of my time. I still believe in its purpose and generally approve its methods. So why, I wondered, did I want to resign?

Examining my last few contacts with the society, I realized why I wanted out. I had encountered some members (not all, just some) who seemed to me unpleasant and not entirely trustworthy. (I was better at finding such faults in people when I was drinking, but since sobering up I have certainly not lost all my skill at taking others' inventories!)

I caught myself in time. I was judging the whole outfit by a few of its members. Because I found a few not to my liking, I was condemning the whole group. That reminded me of the last part of our Fourth Tradition: ". . . except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole."

Again, I saw that anyone who knows I am an AA member may just as easily judge all of AA by me. If I am found unpleasant and unreliable, someone may easily say, "Those AAs are nasty and dishonest."

Each of us may be the only AA experience some people have. The Fourth Tradition gives me no license to behave in any way that reflects badly on AA.

That's a sobering thought, isn't it? I find that's literally true of all our Traditions, for me.

— B.L., Manhattan, NY

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## **WANT YOUR ONLINE MEETING TO SHOW UP ON THE MEETING GUIDE APP WITH ONE-TOUCH ENTRY?**

Send an invitation link to [Help@aabroward.org](mailto:Help@aabroward.org)



*Things we cannot change. . .*

**Robert W.**

*He will be missed. May he rest in peace.*



***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.

(Easy to set up with your bank or through PayPal)

**Thank you to our Faithful Fivers and all our Contributors! You are all so appreciated!**

Tom J	James H.	Brian H.	Al G.	Fred L.	Cassandre D.	Kerry W.	Ed H.	Gina B.
Liz J	Gerry B.	Steven L.	Glen P.	Laura E.	Drew B.	Marsha M.	Thomas J.	Marcy B.
Gregory C.	Robert H.	Barbara S.	Richard M.	Janine C.	Valerie J.	Maggie H.	Sandy R.	Wilma D.
Suzanne J.	Don W.	Jenae R.	Ali S.	Sheila C.	Giselle P.	Jim S.	Gayle K.	Anne B.
Bob H.	Denise J.	Jerilynn D.	Erich N.	Marilyn M.	Laurel	Javier C.	Phyllis P.	Susan O.
Anonmous	Drew B.	Charmaine	Russell S.	Elizabeth C.	Tony A.	John B.	Marcy H.	Lorna V.
Elizabeth B.	David S.	Michael T.	Nicolle N.	Chester W.	Julie L.	Arthur M.	Douglas R.	Walter B.
Ron J.	David J.	Alexander W.	Kathy	Larry C.	Amanda T.	Debra B.	Sally S.	Denis H.
Lois O.	Bonnie T.	Gary S.	Peggy D.	Robert K.	Kathryn R.	Kerry F.	Kathleen R.	George D.
Jennifer S.	Anonymous	Dave J.	Peggy G.	Jackie P.	Carla B.	Nick B.	Phillip N.	Kenneth K.
Pat R.	Michael E.	Patrick M.	Tracy S.	Dan D.	Corinne S.	Heidi A.	Charles W.	Stephen U.
Beth D.	Stephen W.	Patrick C.	Carmen D.	Robert B.	Jennifer E.	Craig S.	Emily P.	Steven S.
Craig G.	Marlene A.	Joe G.	Sharon G.	Gil W.	Michael P.	Paul A.	Christine Y.	Dianne N.
Vickie T.	Ernie F.	Nancy S.	Jeff H.	Nancy M.	Nancy N.	Robert M.	Barbaree K.	Justine H.
Howie K.	HBeta	Mary S.	Paul	Trish F.	E - Walter	Sam B.	Karen L.	Laurey T.
Sheldon V.	Ronald B.	Allison B.	Victoria M.	Robert A.	George O.	Dan M.	Michael B.	Adie M.
Stephen H.	Dennis G.	Ellen F.						

Answers from page 4: demoralized, deprived, relevance, memories, traumatic, resilience, honorable, archives, schedule, sobriety, autonomous, unreliable

## 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)

## 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.

## MEETING CHANGES

### Monday

**Coral Springs Men's Group** which meets at New Dawn Community Church in Coral Springs has a new address: 9955 NW 31st Street. 8:30 PM.

**Buscando Humilidad** is now meeting in person again at WBC in Davie. OST, Spanish, 8:30 PM

**Margate Men's Book Study** moved to St. Vincent's Catholic Church, 6350 NW 18th St., Margate. 7 PM

### Tuesday

**NEW MEETING Stairway to Heaven** West Broward Club in Davie, OLTm 7:00 PM

**Sandpebble Group** that meets in Deerfield is now meeting in person again. OSP, 5:30 PM.

**New Life Group** which met at Pompano Beach Recreation Ctr. Is NO LONGER having the BB meeting.

### Wednesday

**New Life Group** which met at Pompano Beach Rec. Ctr. Is now TEMPORARILY meeting at PF Insurance, 164 N Powerline Road. OSP, 7 PM.

**NEW MEETING Design For Living** Sunshine Cathedral, 1480 SW 9th Ave., Ft. Lauderdale, OSTSP, 7 PM

### Thursday

**Donuts & Solution** which met at S.Fl. Wellness Ctr. In Ft. Lauderdale is not open to the public at this time.

### Friday

**NEW MEETING Choices** Sullivan Park, 1633 Riverview Rd., Deerfield Beach, ORF 5:30 PM

**Buscando Humilidad** is now meeting in person again at WBC in Davie. OSP, Spanish, 8:30 PM

**Imperial Point Beginners** moved to Unity of Pompano, 261 SE 13 Ave., Pompano—Meeting live at 7 PM. OBG

**NEW MEETING Friday Night Lights** 437 SW 2nd Court, Pompano Beach, 7 PM. ORF

### Saturday

**New Life Group** in Pompano has started a new meeting at PF Insurance, 164 N Powerline Road. OSS 2 PM.

### Sunday

**Halfway to the Next Step** in Pompano has moved to **1754 NE 50th St.**, OSPm 7:30 PM. (changed again)

**Another Day** at St. Benedict's in Plantation now ONLY meets on Sunday.

### Daily

**Serenity in the Park Hollywood** beginning March 1 will TEMPORARILY be meeting at a house NEAR TY Park, 3221 Atlanta Street, Hollywood in parking lot. Park on Atlanta Street. Time changing to 5:30 also.

**441 Group** All meetings are open. See [www.aabroward.org](http://www.aabroward.org) for full schedule.

**Stirling Room** All meetings are open. See [www.aabroward.org](http://www.aabroward.org) for full schedule.

**Another Day** at St. Benedict's in Plantation now ONLY meeting on Sunday. Other 6 days suspended.

**Serenity in the Park (SWR)** is now meeting at 5:30 PM.

## Upcoming Events

**Apr. 9-11 S.Fl. Area 15 Quarterly Assembly** is Virtual again. For log in information, in case you'd like to attend, contact [Registrar@district9aa.org](mailto:Registrar@district9aa.org) or call Intergroup.

**Apr. 25 Customer Appreciation Day** at the Intergroup office. Refreshments, door prizes, sales on books and gifts, free T-shirt with every \$25 purchase and chance to win a full size blanket of the Serenity Prayer.

**May 1 Old Timers Meeting** virtual event hosted by District 9 Archives.

**May 8-9 Virtual Big Book Study/Seminar** the Paul Revere Group is hosting a free big book study. All donations to support Intergroup and GSO. For more info or schedule go to [www.bigbookseminar.org](http://www.bigbookseminar.org)