



SUITE 404

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

Dive In, the Water's Fine

A member takes the leap and shares his love of the Step that changed his life

When I got to AA in October 1996, I was done. I'd been working in rock bands and in New York City nightclubs for years, and now I was hiding bottles and drinking room-temperature vodka all day to manage the shakes. I couldn't tell my closest friends, and the loneliness had gotten unbearable. By the time I made it to the rooms, I was ready to do just about anything anyone said.

I wandered in and out of meetings for a while, anonymously, which is easy to do in Manhattan. But one day, for some reason, I walked up to a friendly guy who made the sponsorship announcement. I sputtered, "I need one of those," so he promptly took me over to a total stranger named Scott, who said he'd be my sponsor. To this day I still can't believe I went up to those guys.

Scott was a sweet, quiet Wall Street man, nothing like me. After the meeting he took me to a diner near Union Square and told me how he used to pace back and forth in front of the liquor store there at 8 a.m., shaking and desperate for it to open. I was sold. This guy knew what I was going through. That night Scott started taking me to his favorite meetings, and he hooked me in with other AA guys. I'll never forget him for that.

After a few months I began hearing people talk about doing Fourth Steps, and boy I was ready to roll up my sleeves and do mine. But Scott slowed me down. I think he wanted to make sure I had a Higher Power. After all, it says fearless inventory, right?

When it came time, I made columns just like the "Mr. Brown" ones in the Big Book. The resentments were the easy part. I had no problem listing those. However, when I went to write down what my friends, like Russ and Paul and Judy, did to me, I couldn't figure out what to write, because they hadn't done anything to me! I realized then that I'd been going through life expecting people to behave a certain way, and when they didn't, I would become resentful. What a revelation.

When I got to the "my part" column, I was even more stumped. I thought, What do you mean my part? I was a nice guy! I just couldn't stop drinking vodka all day. But when I asked myself

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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 Three — “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.”

Safe in the Storm

At the heart of Tradition Four is the risky business of autonomy—“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.” But this freedom—without guidance from the spiritual trinity of anonymity, responsibility and humility—can easily become a fool’s liberty, as I’ve found out over the course of my 64 years. Like an ancient alchemist, I can turn autonomy into self-demise. AA has learned to turn it into gold.

The perilous word, autonomy, is defined in my dictionary as the freedom to choose one’s own destiny as well as the route to get there, which, in my case as an alcoholic, includes roads that take a real toll. Can anyone imagine a haphazard collection of ego-driven alcoholic personalities banding together, then being granted the autonomy to choose its own fate? No way could anything enduring come out of this absurd scenario. Yet AA has given each and every one of its groups and members the inalienable right to be unerringly wrong, which has many times resulted in the liberty to be foolish, the sovereignty to self-destruct, and the self-determination to learn from mistakes. Not surprisingly, many AA groups have pulled off some disastrous feats of free will, yet through amazing grace, have survived the ride. From my very first day in AA, my sponsor, who knew my autonomous streak, used it well.

He gave me the self-rule to make decisions, such as to drink or not, when to go to meetings, my timeline working through the Steps, and whether or not to call him. As it turned out, this rugged individualism allowed me to be wrong, to make some enlightening blunders, and to learn some life-saving lessons that went straight to the heart, all the good old AA way—trial and error. I’ve learned some valuable spiritual lessons by following instructions, but I have gleaned most of my spiritual education through home schooling, which means learning from the consequences of mistakes and misdirected instincts, especially when they harmed others.

There is a story in the “Twelve and Twelve,” found in the chapter on the Fourth Tradition, that tells about one of the most valuable blunders a group of drunks pulled off early on in AA’s struggle to survive in spite of itself. This group’s visionaries created a triad of mercy: an AA group, an AA hospital and an AA educational institution, all in one building, financed not with our own contributions, but their contributions. In this instance, stargazing turned into dodging falling stars. The group ran aground on the shore of autonomy and sank their unsinkable star-crossed-mission to save the world. But those who survived the ride did something remarkable. They laughed at themselves and learned a valuable lesson: Autonomy stays afloat by listening to suggestions and keeping it simple, stupid. AA had given them three storm warnings:

1) Avoid taking actions that would jeopardize the welfare of AA as a whole. 2) Do not become affiliated with any outside enterprises. And 3) Stick tight to your primary purpose.

The irony of it all is that they never really ended up compromising AA at all. This over-exuberant fellowship instead actually granted AA a great learning experience by confirming the hard-won wisdom of the Fourth Tradition as well as hitching it to the Twelfth: ever reminding us to never place autonomy before anonymity.

Traditions seem to arise from blunders and triumphs turned into precious metals by humility. AA’s education, like mine, has been acquired as much or more by making mistakes than by intuition. But AA discovered that there was perfect safety in the process of trial and error. This was a hard lesson to learn for a perfectionist like me. The right to be wrong can be an unintentional but essential form of AA service work, not necessarily suggested, but gratefully accepted. I’m sure I’m not the only alcoholic who has passed on the principles of the AA Traditions to others by not heeding their suggestions. Service work comes in many
(continued on page 3)

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if I could have been a better brother or son or friend, then a door swung open and I really started writing.

About three quarters of the way through, I began to bog down. That's when I heard this woman, Gerry, who used to sit and knit at my lunch Step meeting, say, "It's just a list. Write it down. It's just a list." That helped me, because I was trying to put down my whole life story and I was getting hung up on it being perfect. She also taught me that we do Step Four as thoroughly as we can, and I could always do another Fourth Step down the road. Wow, that helped me relax some. Nice. I also heard people say, "look back but don't stare" and to keep moving. I could ask my sponsor for help. It was important to not get stuck. It's not about perfection.

I can't believe how much the Fourth Step has changed my life. I'm not the same guy as the guy I was before I did this incredible Step. I now know how I tick and how I have behaved. This Step helped identify my character defects, which led me to Steps Six and Seven, which then led me to my loving Higher Power.

One of the great gifts AA has given me is the ability to be there for others. Today I get to help a sponsee through his first Fourth Step, to assure him when he's frightened that everything is going to be OK. I tell him that the Fourth Step is our friend. It's not punishment. It's not an excuse to beat ourselves up. We did enough of that when we were out there drinking ourselves to death.

When I was a newcomer, I remember going to Step meetings and being amazed hearing people share about the relief they got from doing their Fourth and Fifth Steps. It reminded me of myself as a kid, standing on the end of the diving board, full of fear, while my friends were already splashing and playing in the pool, yelling "C'mon in! Jump!"

So pick up the pen. Dive in. It's cold at first, but believe me, the water's really fine.

—Danny S., Georgia

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(continued from page 2)

modes and manners. Humility, in the context of trial and error, could be defined as applying the hard lessons learned to the spiritual practice of not doing it all over again. And the acme of humility, says the "Twelve and Twelve," is standing in the middle of the shipwreck of my good intentions while laughing at myself. To pull off this spiritual feat of hilarity, I must be a lifetime member of a fellowship. My wreckage is a very sticky place.

It seems that autonomy without anonymity is a perfect storm, capable of sinking any ship no matter how long it has stayed afloat. The salty crew of AA has survived many storms (by the grace of a Navigator greater than themselves) and now has absolute faith in the process of trial and error. My perfectionism always prevented me from learning valuable lessons from my many mistakes by turning healthy self-examination into condemnation. One of the great gifts AA has given me is the OK to use my past and present mistakes as opportunities to enhance my spiritual growth and avoid injuring others as well as myself. Without autonomy this hidden treasure would still be locked up in the prison of perfectionism.

What other way is there to put out to sea for an alcoholic like me? As long as we all laugh and learn from our mutual mistakes, AA will be safe in the storm, learning to tack and plot a course by heeding other's shipwrecks by day and the guiding Traditions, those stars burning bright, when night falls.

—Ed C., Bowling Green, KY

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Bridging The Gap

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District 9 General Service

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

Recovery Word Puzzle

NEERBUABLA
LAVENTORIE
SALABERENO
GRASHNICE
HEENNCA
KISSTEAM



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.

TVOOCNINEN
SUREFNOD
TREEYSONGI
TEALBEERC
SOSSTIDURA
ROOTRIPNOP

FOUNDERS DAY PICNIC will be held **LIVE** this year
June 5th at Snyder Park in Ft. Lauderdale

COME GET A COMMITMENT TO VOLUNTEER

FIRST PLANNING MEETING will be held on

Tuesday, April 12, 7:00 PM

Skyline Chili, 2834 N University Drive, Sunrise, FL. 33322

2022 Florida State Convention to be held on Fort Lauderdale Beach
STILL NEEDS VOLUNTEERS...NEXT PLANNING MEETING

The Center for Spiritual Living
4849 North Dixie Hwy, Oakland Park, FL 33334
Mask required if not vaccinated (facility rules)

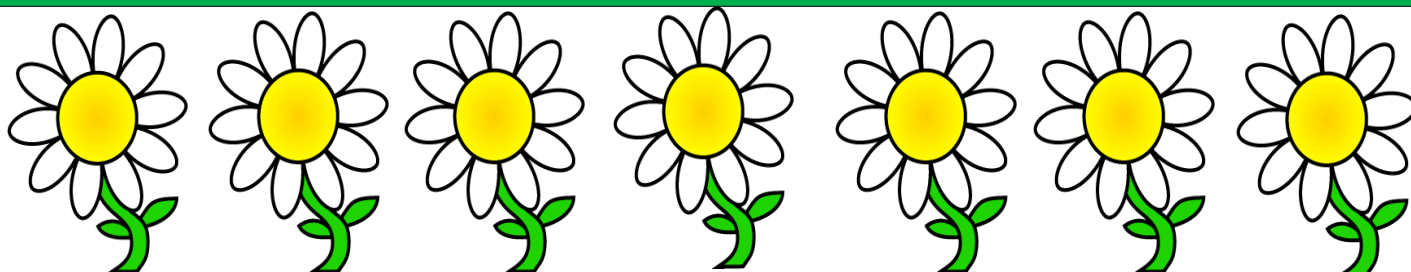
Hybrid option Available

Saturday, April 16th, 2022 at 9:00 AM

More info, Chair2022fsc@gmail.com

Zoom ID 241 331 6306 PW 6Hzur4

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



A.A. Birthdays

April Celebrants

Riverside Group

Chris ~ 6 yrs.
Donna C. ~ 21 yrs.
Jeri ~ 37 yrs.
Laurie B. ~ 15 yrs.

Sober Sisters

Toni D. ~ 21 yrs.
Sara M. ~ 25 yrs.
Bernadette M. ~ 4 yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale Women

Susan H. ~ 33 yrs

Came to Believe

Bonnie T. ~ 19 yrs.

Women's Honesty

Phyllis K. ~ 50 yrs.

Early Risers

Steve L. ~ 23 yrs.

One Day at a Time

Kelly M. ~ 18 yrs.

Victor E.

Joe G. ~ 24 yrs.

Plantation Happy Hour

Noel ~ 11 yrs.

Live, Laugh, Love

Evonne M. ~ 9 yrs.

Mountain Group

Michelle O. ~ 13 yrs.
Craig L. ~ 15 yrs.
Rob B. ~ 38 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Tony A. ~ 12 yrs.

Meditation at the Rock

Sara P. ~ 4 yrs.

Davie Women's

Eileen G. ~ 49 yrs.

Express Group

Joanna P. ~ 18 yrs.
Maryann M. ~ 26 yrs.
Iris S. ~ 35 yrs.
Edna C. ~ 13 yrs.

East Naples

Paul B. ~ 37 yrs.
Stew ~ 37 yrs.

Joy of Sobriety

Paul P. ~ 35 yrs.

New Day

Lilla ~ 4 yrs.

Riverside Group ~ 40 yrs.

One Day at a Time ~ 35 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch ~ 34 yrs.

Sunlight of the Spirit ~ 21 yrs.

Living in the Solution Virtual

Anne D. ~ 2 yrs.
Nicholas P. ~ 3 yrs.
Alta M. ~ 13 yrs.
Sylvia N. ~ 15 yrs.
Al C. ~ 18 yrs.
Nina S. ~ 22 yrs.

Into Action Group

Robin D. ~ 13 yrs.

YANA

Cheryl L. ~ 28 yrs.
Steve P. ~ 6 yrs.

Coral Springs Men's

Pat G. ~ 20 yrs.

Friends of Pat C.

Marla B. ~ 12 yrs.
Kathleen I. ~ 38 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.)



BCIC

Broward County Institutions Committee will hold their next meeting on

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

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

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

**Sunday, April 24th
at 1:00 PM**

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

If your group makes regular contributions to Intergroup, please make sure you check the contribution report to see that they are listed.



We have been receiving some contributions through Zelle and PayPal that have no group name, and we don't know who to credit—they just go into Alcoholics Anonymous

58th INTERGROUP APPRECIATION BANQUET GIFT BASKET RAFFLE

Intergroup is requesting that your group donate a gift basket for our banquet.

It is a fun way for each group to contribute a personalized gift!
The basket raffle is an important element to the fundraising success of Intergroup.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

QUESTIONS? help@aabroward.org

Baskets or pictures/descriptions need to be at Intergroup no later than April 20th.

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.
Anonymous	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.	Robert S.	Nancy G.	Gwendolyn			

Answers from page 4: unbearable, revelation, reasonable, searching, enhance, mistakes, convention, founders, generosity, celebrate, disastrous, proportion

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

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

Monday Morning Women is now meeting live again at St. David's Church on University Drive in Davie. 11 AM.

1st Step Sobriety that met in Pompano NO LONGER MEETS.

East Naples Men's Group meetings are now back in-person, as Hybrid meetings. St. Maximilian Kolbe Catholic Church, 701 N Hiatus Road, Pembroke Pines. OBGm 6 PM, CDm 7:30 PM.

New Way of Life that meets Monday in Davie at Griffin Road Church of Christ now meets at 7 PM.

Tuesday

True Self Group has moved BACK to the Sober Today Club in Hollywood. 1633 S 21st Avenue. 7:30 PM.

Wednesday

1st Step Sobriety that met in Pompano NO LONGER MEETS.

Thursday

Came to Believe in Pembroke Pines is now meeting live again at 7 PM, Temple Beth Emet, 4807 S Flamingo Road, Cooper City.

Express Group has merged with the Express Beginners, so there is no longer an 8:30 PM meeting at this time, only meeting at 7 PM. Christ Lutheran Church, 1955 E Oakland Park Blvd.

Redeeming Grace Women's in Hollywood has changed their meeting time to 7 PM.

Friday

1st Step Sobriety that met in Pompano NO LONGER MEETS.

Saturday

Lambda Rising is now meeting in person at Lambda South Club, Ft. Lauderdale. OMg 8:30 AM.

To Stay Alive Saturday Night which met in Miramar NO LONGER MEETS.

Sunday

Good Morning God is now meeting on Sundays again, in Tamarac at Our Place Too. OBB 10 AM.

Lambda Rising is now meeting in person at Lambda South Club, Ft. Lauderdale. OMg 8:30 AM.

Halfway to the Next Step 1754 NE 50 St., Pompano, has changed their time to 7 PM.

Daily

Bottom Line Group no longer meets at 10 AM or 7 PM.

Serenity in the Park East which meets at TY Park in Hollywood is now meeting at 5:30 PM again.

PLEASE LET US KNOW IF YOU KNOW OF ANY CHANGES TO MEETINGS!!

*Look up your meetings on OUR website, www.aabroward.org, and see if they are listed correctly.
Do they still meet online or hybrid? Has the PW changed for your online meeting?*

Upcoming Events

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| Apr. 1-3 | SCC2022 Broward County Intergroup's first Sober Camping Conference. Birch State Park. Saturday only attendance is \$15. Meals separate. CASH ONLY . Workshops, fun, speaker, food, fellowship. |
| Apr. 3 | Victor E 2022 Picnic Snyder Park, Ft. Lauderdale, 10 AM—4 PM, Live Band, Raffles, food, fellowship and speaker (2 PM). Pay to park. |
| Apr. 23 | 58th Intergroup Appreciation Banquet will be held at Tropical Acres, Griffin Rd. \$50, fundraiser for Intergroup. 4 course meal, 2 speakers, basket raffle, fellowship. Must have ticket to attend. Limited seating. |
| May 14 | District 9 Old Timers Meeting hosted by Archives. Location to be determined. |
| June 5 | District 9 Founders Day Picnic Snyder Park, Ft. Lauderdale. Tickets \$8 in advance, \$10 at gate, DJ, dancing, volleyball, speaker, dessert contest and surprises!! Pay to park. |