

SUITE 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

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VOLUME 10

OCTOBER 2022

Step 10 - "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

Safety Valve

ONE evening, some years ago, I became aware of an endless stream of selfcriticism flooding my mind as I was returning home at the end of a workday. I hadn't done this; I hadn't done that; I didn't have this; I didn't have that. I should turn my face to the wall in shame. I had no right to exist on this planet, etc. This self-flagellation simply has to stop, I said to myself.

That night I made a list of positive things I had done that day: meditation and prayer in the morning, projects completed or advanced at work, the AA meeting I had attended. That list was an attempt to rein in my negative emotions and achieve some degree of emotional balance.

My sponsor was gentle with me in early recovery. "Why don't you write some of that out?" he would say, when I called him, sometimes three or four times a day, in the throes of fury over some wrong, real or imagined, that had been visited on me by my boss or my wife. But my emotions seemed to burst every dam I sought to construct. Once I had "the goods" on someone, I would go at them with prosecutorial zeal. I had given only cursory attention to resentments in my Fourth Step inventory; I paid a terrible price in not fully grasping that resentment formula in our Big Book: "I'm resentful at . . . Affects my . . . Where (was I) to blame?"

Today that resentment formula is a staple of my Tenth Step inventory. The surprising durability of the old idea that if someone wins, I lose, makes the formula essential. It is where I go when I am gripped by a recurring bad feeling about someone, whatever the cause. It is an effort to ease the power I have given people over me. Many times I have put pen to paper in a rage at man or woman or God and even as I wrote began to feel this release from emotional turmoil and a shift toward blessed peace. I am like a boiler in need of a safety valve to reduce the risk of explosion, and the Tenth Step is that safely valve. If I am to avoid endlessly recycling slights, affronts, and other personal injuries, then pen and paper become effective tools in leaching this emotional pain from my system. It is on paper that I begin to practice self-honesty, make real progress toward the self-discipline that sobriety requires, and slowly learn to treat others with the courtesy, kindness, justice, and love that the essay in Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions sets as a goal.

Toward that end, I give free rein to my emotions on paper, as it does me no good to censor myself. "I feel X is vile. I feel it would be a happy day if he were to be run over by a bus." Feelings may not be facts, as we say, but they are powerful, and writing out my anger in terms of them is a necessary and cathartic first step. Thereafter, I can try to be specific in terms of the hurt or the injury I feel I have suffered and then further specify what it affects in me--pride, selfesteem, security, etc. Further relief is provided when I ask myself what my part in

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SAVE THE

The next Intergroup **Appreciation Banquet at** Tropical Acres will be held on April 29, 2023.

Tickets available for sale on November 1st.

CONCEPT X

Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

Tradition Ten - "Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."

Fatal Distraction

Some months ago, a chairperson closed the meeting by asking everyone to "remember our troops in the Middle East." If this had been an open meeting, nonalcoholics would have gotten the idea that AA supported the Gulf War.

This incident of remembering the troops during the Lord's Prayer made me ask myself: What does Tradition Ten have to do with my personal sobriety and what is my responsibility as an AA member to keep the AA name out of public controversy?

One of the most reassuring things for me about being newly sober in AA was the sense that my private life was protected. Nobody cared how I felt about the Vietnam War, or the Catholic Church, or anything. All that mattered was that I wanted sobriety. At the same time, AA itself had no opinion on any of these things.

Several AA Traditions support this sense of privacy. Tradition Three states that the only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. Tradition Five says our primary purpose is to stay sober. Other Traditions support the concept of AA staying out of public controversy. For myself, I can only understand Tradition Ten by seeing how it is related to the other Traditions.

In most other societies there are beliefs, mores, codes of ethics, and allegiances that the candidate for membership is required to accept as a condition of belonging. Sometimes these good movements seek public attention and their members receive notoriety. In AA we shun all such personal attention; we stay anonymous. What this does for the new person in AA (as well as for the whole Fellowship) is to give the assurance that the society he or she has joined will never be a source of embarrassment or ever pose a threat to personal privacy.

It is comforting for me to know that the society to which I have entrusted my life would never ask me to pledge allegiance to anything but my own sobriety. Tradition Ten guarantees my right to think, act, and believe any way I choose. It also extends to others the right to live as *they* choose. We don't want to dry up the world or change other peoples' attitudes about drinking or anything else. We are not in the business of alcohol education or social reform.

Here are some other examples which show how easily we can forget the importance of AA Traditions. Arriving late at a discussion meeting recently, I heard the speaker talking about the amount of alcohol advertising on TV. She was complaining that advertisers had a bad influence on the country's youth by connecting sports with alcohol. She finally got worked up enough to say, "It's up to us to let the world know there is a better way to live and that this alcohol is really evil." The next speaker picked up the same theme and developed it further. Now, no one for a minute believes that Alcoholics Anonymous is going to go on record against alcohol. But if we aren't united about that within AA itself, how can we hope to stay united about it with the general public?

At another recent meeting, the speaker made an appeal to the audience to support MADD--Mothers Against Drunk Driving. Bill W. says in connection with civic responsibility that we have every right to get as involved with social causes as any nonalcoholic. As a private person I can support any cause I like. But *when speaking as an AA member,* I have no business taking a position on an outside issue, no matter how noble the cause.

What if someone at this open AA meeting had gone away thinking that Alcoholics Anonymous supported MADD? That person, not knowing of our Tenth Tradition, might have gone to the papers and in all sincerity said that Alcoholics Anonymous was promoting this cause.

If AA took a stand for or against MADD or any other issue, our singleness of purpose would be lost.

When I was active with the Springfield Young Peoples Group back in the early seventies, we decided we wanted AA's International Conference of Young People to be held in Springfield. To present a bid, we needed to go to Memphis where the Conference would next be held. To finance the trip we held dances, raffles, and car washes. A few of the elders grumbled. Most were supportive. Some experienced service people, including two Trustees, gave us invaluable quidance on the Twelve Traditions.

Selling raffle tickets at an AA meeting is one thing. But what if we had invited the press to help us promote our trip? We were all pretty fired up at the time and it could have happened. AA members have done more controversial things in the past. But because we had the guidance of older and wiser heads, no such foolishness ensued.

Back in the early seventies a few of us tried to start a young peoples group at a local university. One of the

(continued on page 6)

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.

(continued from page 1)

the difficulty has been. Is it my self-centeredness? My competitiveness? My hypersensitivity? Putting a name to my defects--whether it is envy or jealousy--is an important part of this process. And then prayer. Not once, not twice, but often for a week or even two, praying that this person have the same happiness, prosperity, etc., I wish for myself. It is where I ultimately must go for relief.

Though I do try to list my assets and be mindful of resentment, some emotional disturbance cannot be remedied with a simple formula. In a period of marital crisis, followed by separation and ultimately divorce, I struggled with my core fear--abandonment-- and came to understand, through good direction from my sponsor and a therapist, that a terrified child had accompanied me into my adult years, and how that terror had informed some of my objectionable behavior in my home life. I had sought to deny my powerlessness and mask my fear and vulnerability with long stretches of silent scorn or verbal fury.

To access the underlying source of much of my marital pain, I began to write out my inventory in the form of a question-and-answer dialogue between my lower self and higher self. Over time the exercise highlighted the emotional dependency on my mother that had formed in my childhood years and how that had carried over into adult relationships. If the lower self often spoke as a needy, fearful child, the higher self offered comforting, common sense adult perspective. It would remind me that I was no longer back in that family of origin matrix.

With Step Ten, we have entered the world of spirit, and so, inevitably, this Step and Step Eleven are intertwined. Meditation can be like a dredging operation. Buried fears and resentments sometimes rise to the surface and I see what a moment before had been invisible to me.

Step Ten says "when," not "if." Inevitably, I will be in the wrong at some point. That being the case, it is best for me to promptly admit my error. To leave the wrong unaddressed is to allow it to grow and fester. Rationalization, self-justification and rancor thrive the longer I postpone. I may even seek out others to support my "case." And yet, when I become willing to take the simple action required and follow through with an apology or an amend, then I am returned to a state of emotional equilibrium. I have no past or future. I am simply living in the now, where the Higher Power wants me to be. In this regard, an examination of motive is often useful.

"The real war is the war I fight with myself," a man said some years ago. If that is so, then the real victory is over myself and the cruel dictates of my ego: refraining from that face-to-face outburst or waiting 24 hours before dropping that letter in the mailbox. Before letting fly with an oral or written outburst, I can first ask myself these three questions: Is what I say true? Is it kind? Is it necessary? And how many more humiliations must I suffer before I learn to delay hitting the "send" key on a hastily written and inappropriate email?

Journaling may not be a method suitable for everyone. The Steps in large part do become automatic for many of us as we go along, though for me writing is essential as a way of maintaining contact with myself. An inner guide seems to let me know when it is time to put pen to paper. There was a time when I wrote in my journal every day, and perhaps I would be better off if I still did. But now I go to it two or three times a week.

Emotional disturbance can find me at 29 years of recovery as it did when I had 29 minutes. The longer I am sober, the more deeply I am capable of feeling. I have not outgrown fear. I am not so spiritually evolved that I no longer experience resentment.

And sometimes a written inventory is simply to gain clarity on an issue. A simple pros and cons list can do wonders.

Nothing could be sadder than to lose touch with ourselves in recovery: to have our connection to our Higher Power blocked by resentment; to be governed by old ideas we are only dimly, if at all aware of, and that hold us back; or to be reduced by our fears to living sequestered from life. For the sunlight of the spirit to enter, the window must be kept clean so the light can pour through. It's for me to understand that I can pay to have the windows in my apartment cleaned, but that inner window is one that I must tend to. Sponsors and others can be part of the process, but ultimately it is a task for me to perform.

−DAVID S. | NEW YORK, N.Y.

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Recovery Word Puzzle

LOUFRAM
CLEABNA
SAREELE
TYRSUCEO
RICHTATAC
TERDEAL



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.

TENYRIOTO
BULLEVANIA
LOOSEVIRNACTR
MIDNEOFR
BEDRAINCUTS
TEIDSTAC

2022 Intergroup Picnic has been reserved for Sunday, October 30th



Last PLANNING MEETING

will be held following the next monthly meeting at the Twelve Step House

Sunday, October 23rd at 2:00 PM

Come join a committee and find out where you can do service!

The 2023 Intergroup Appreciation Banquet will be having their

FIRST PLANNING MEETING

Wednesday, October 12th at 6:00 PM

at your Intergroup Bookstore, 3317 NW 10th Terrace, Suite 404, Oakland Park

GRATITUDE
IS AN
ACTION WORD



SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



A.A. Birthdays

October Celebrants

Oakland Park Group

Eric P. ~ 11 yrs. Drew B. ~ 16 yrs. Mark B. ~ 32 yrs. D.J. ~ 11 yrs.

Broward Men's

Bob A. ~ 38 yrs. Drew ~ 6 yrs. Larry M. ~ 26 yrs.

Express Group

Cookie ~ 35 yrs. Sonia C. ~ 29 yrs.

Living in the Solution

Sam B. ~ 46 yrs. Jeff R. ~ 31 yrs. Rita V. ~13 yrs. Khristina ~ 7 yrs. Ingrid S. ~ 6 yrs. Matt K. ~ 6 yrs. Maureen S. ~ 4 yrs.

Free To Be

Michelle ~ 16 yrs.

Bikers in Recovery

Marisa ~ 16 yrs.

Other Notables

Ted M. ~ 43 yrs. Jenny B. ~ 16 yrs. Evan L. ~ 15 yrs. Matt H. ~ 15 yrs. Tara ~ 10 yrs.

Serenity in the Park (SWR)

Matt Z ~ 1 yr. Chris ~ 12 yrs. Andy ~ 8 yrs.

Men in Recovery Jack C. ~ 29 yrs.

Freedom From Alcohol

Scott ~ 33 yrs. Tony ~ 41 yrs. Mimi ~ 44 yrs. Gerry D. ~ 55 yrs.

By the Book Beginners

Randy D. ~ 34 yrs. Shannon R. ~ 19 yrs.

In the Solution Sam C. ~ 10 yrs.

Smell the Coffee Mark G. ~ 14 yrs.

Willing and Able Cassie ~ 9 yrs.

Westside Men's Jon G. ~ 8 yrs.

Dania After Work

Alison ~ 8 yrs.

Just For Today Paula K. ~ 6 vrs.

Paula K. ~ 6 yrs. Steven N. ~ 5 yrs.

Let's Do Lunch Bunch

Tom G. ~ 15 yrs.

Women's Step by Step

Judy O. ~ 13 yrs.

Easier Softer Way Stephanie W. ~ 6 yrs.

Stephanie vv. ~ 6 yrs

One Day at a Time Barbara L. ~ 3 yrs.

Sunshine Group Jamie R. ~ 7 yrs.

Sober Sisters Jenn S. ~ 29 yrs. Adina ~ 6 yrs.

Joy of Sobriety Charlie P. ~ 15 yrs.

Women's Step Into Sobriety

Becky ~ 11 yrs.

Ft. Lauderdale 12 Step

Jimmy E. ~ 33 yrs.

Sunlight of the Spirit

Dawn R. ~ 34 yrs.

Bottom Line

Mike R. ~ 32 yrs. Dennis ~ 21 yrs. Bianca ~ 6 yrs.

Coral Springs

Debbie C. ~ 15 yrs.

Speak Freedom Morning

Nancy H. ~ 37 yrs.

Women's Honesty Robin K. ~ 19 yrs.

Focus on Sobriety
Ginger ~ 12 yrs.

Y.A.N.A.

Yolanda ∼ 25 yrs.

Pompano Men's ~ 53 yrs.

September Celebrants

not previously mentioned.....

Spiritual Principles

Lois P. ~ 19 yrs. Eileen W. ~ 38 yrs.

Serenity in the Park (SWR)

Richie ~ 4 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.)

Don't miss the INTERGROUP PICNIC!!

Food, Fellowship, Raffle
Games and Live Music

Please bring a newcomer and a dessert.

BCIC

Broward County Institutions Committee will hold their next meeting on

Saturday, October 8th

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

The next Intergroup Meeting

will be held on

Sunday, October 23rd at 1:00 PM

Twelve Step House 205 SW 23rd St., Ft. Lauderdale (continued from page 3)

conditions for our using the facility was that we had to register as a student activity and we *had* to accept the university's coffee, free. Both of these conditions violated several AA Traditions: Seven, which says we are self-supporting; Six, which says we do not lend our name to any facility or enterprise. We cooperate with everyone, but affiliate with no one.

Within Western Massachusetts AA a few service people got upset about this and there was talk of approaching the university to try to block the attempt to start this meeting. But an older AA member, well versed in Traditions, advised the vigilante group in this manner: "What if, in trying to stop this group, you accidentally involve AA in a public controversy?" The people trying to close down the meeting backed off and the meeting itself folded because we saw that we would be breaking AA Traditions if we tied ourselves to the university.

Around the same time, some of us were visiting universities as public information people to inform college students about AA. As it happens, in those days Western Massachusetts AA took a rather stiff line against drinking in general, even for nonalcoholics. Some of the students confronted us with what they saw as a one-track attitude toward alcohol and the feeling that AA was trying to brainwash them on the subject of drinking.

Because we felt unwelcome and because we didn't want to risk ridicule in college journals, we stopped making this commitment. It would have been better if we had approached the drinking issue in a less aggressive manner. But all the same, we knew almost instinctively that it was better to avoid creating a campus controversy, mindful that college campuses are places where debate and controversy are encouraged anyway. All things considered, we felt it wiser to avoid the risk of controversy.

The list of possible controversial topics that could be addressed from the AA podium is virtually endless. It happens now and then that a speaker will try to tie AA directly to Christianity and to suggest that Alcoholics Anonymous itself is a Christian movement. But AA asserts that religious belief is a matter of personal choice. It's in the Big Book. It's in the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. And like politics and social reform, religion is an outside issue that could divide AA.

Recently at a meeting a young newcomer approached me with his Bible and other religious literature. He told me that he didn't need AA because he had his Bible. It seems to me that the first half of Tradition Ten works together here with Traditions Three and Five. We don't engage in questions of a person's religious or political affiliation. And because we don't, it wasn't necessary for me to argue with this fellow about his. Tradition Ten gave me the flexibility I needed to be a more effective sponsor. Bill W. says that real tolerance of other people's beliefs and lifestyles makes us more effective in what we're trying to do, which is just to stay sober and carry the message.

What if AA were Catholic, Protestant, or Hindu? What if we had different schools of AA? The new person would first have to decide where he fit into all this tangle of different brands of AA. Then he would have to measure up or down to expectations that have nothing to do with staying sober. At the same time, if Alcoholics Anonymous took a position on any of these things, it would create a fatal distraction for every member, new and old.

The fact is that as soon as a new person comes to AA, he comes smack into direct contact with Tradition Ten. It is his guarantee that his private life and beliefs are nobody else's business and that our Society protects these as sacred and crucial to AA unity.

All the same, being human, we now and then get a little off the Traditions track. Occasionally a speaker will start to wax Christian, or vegetarian, or whole-earth-all-natural. Once the topic at a meeting was: "What can we do about the ozone layer, now that we're sober and globally aware?" Thank God there were enough experienced members in the room to get the meeting back to AA.

By neither backing nor attacking others either personally or in their beliefs, we are not likely to be attacked in return. By not endorsing or opposing anyone or anything, we are free to concentrate on the one thing we do best, which is to fix drunks. By not promoting schools of alcoholism theory or encouraging education through church groups or civic organizations, we stay out of alliances and out of the paper. The public doesn't get confused. And more important, we don't get confused.

Mindful of the "no public controversy" Tradition, I am supported in my personal recovery and all of us are supported two million strong and growing daily in service and recovery because we are united.

—JIM N. | DENVER, COLORADO

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Things we cannot change....

Adam B., Bob H., Michael F. and Carol M.



They will be missed by all who knew them. May they 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.	Drew B.	Kerry W.	Ed H.	Gina B.
Liz J	Gerry B.	Steven L.	Glen P.	Laura E.	Valerie J.	Marsha M.	Thomas J.	Marcy B.
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Pat R.	Michael E.	Patrick C.	Sharon G.	Gil W.	Michael P.	Paul A.	Emily P.	Steven S.
Beth D.	Stephen W.	Joe G.	Jeff H.	Nancy M.	Nancy N.	Robert M.	Christine Y.	Dianne N.
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Howie K.	HBeta	Allison B.	Robert S.	Nancy G.	Gwendolyn	Stephen H.	Michael B.	
Sheldon V.	Dennis G.	Ellen F.		Deborah C.				

Answers from page 4: formula, balance, release, courtesy, cathartic, related, notoriety, invaluable, controversial, informed, disturbance, dictates

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:	EM	AIL:				
PREFER: VOICE:	TEXT: EMAIL	.: CI	TY OF RES	SIDENCE:		
WILL CALL BAC	Κ:	AND/OR	PAY A V	ISIT:		
AVAILABILITY:	MONDAY to FRIDAY:		_ WEEK	XENDS:		
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

24 Hours a Day, which met in Deerfield, has moved to Pompano Beach Community Center, 2669 N. Federal Hwy. In Pompano. OSPD 7:30 PM.

NOW Group, which met at St. Benedict's in Plantation, will NO LONGER MEET.

Tuesday

Sisters Staying Sober, which met on W. Atlantic Blvd. in Margate, NO LONGER MEETS.

<u>Sober Friends (Chevrah)</u> which meets in a Synagogue in Davie, will not be meeting in October until the 25th, due to the Jewish holidays.

Wednesday

<u>Monday Night Study</u> will now be the <u>Wednesday Night Study</u>. It has changed days but will still be at the Church of the Nazarene in Pompano. OBB 7 PM.

Friday

<u>Golden Text Group</u>, which used to meet in Dania, now meets at the Sober Today Club in Hollywood, 1633 S. 21st Avenue (Dixie Hwy). 8 PM. OSP.

Women's Intuition, formerly of Dade County, now meets at the Sober Today Club in Hollywood, too. OCCw 7 PM.

Sunday

<u>The Workshop Group</u> which met at Fourth Dimension Club in Hollywood NO LONGER MEETS.

St. Benedict's Episcopal Church in Plantation will NO LONGER ALLOW meetings on Sundays.

Conscious Contact that was at St. Benedict's has moved to the West Broward Club in Davie. OM 7 PM.

Daily

<u>NEW MEETING La Gran Decision</u> is meeting live at 714-A S. Dixie Hwy., Hallandale. 8:00-9:30 PM. OSH <u>Gratitud en Sobriedad</u> is now meeting live again at the Commerce Center, 5110 S. State Rd. 7, Ft. Lauderdale, Sat/Sun ODSH, M-F CDSH, 8:00-10:00 PM.

Arbol de Vida has moved to 7660 Margate Blvd. in Margate. They will still meet daily 8-9:30 PM. OSH.

Intergroup Picnic Tickets Now on Sale \$10 each or 3/\$25 (advance only)

Upcoming Events

- **Oct. 22 Early Timer's Meeting** presented by District 9 Archives will be held at 101 Club, 700 SW 10th St., Pompano. 6-8 PM. Free event. Bring a dessert and a newcomer. 3 speakers.
- **46th Intergroup Picnic** at Snyder Park, Caldwell Pavilion in Fort Lauderdale. Family fun, live music, volleyball, face painting, 2 speakers, 50/50 Raffle, 11 AM—4 PM. Tickets \$10 per person for lunch and first drink, kids under 8 eat free. Bulk ticket pricing ONLY in advance is 3/\$25.
- **Nov. 19 2022 Holiday Open House** will be held at the Intergroup Bookstore on Saturday, from 11 AM 4 PM. Refreshments, giveaways, sales on selected literature and gift items, 10 40% off. Come do some holiday shopping while you support your local Intergroup, or show a newcomer what our Intergroup has to offer.