



SUITE 404

BROWARD COUNTY INTERGROUP, INC.

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VOLUME 12
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Step 12 - *"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."*

12th Step

FOR THIS ARTICLE, my AA library remains untouched. It would be an easy matter to refresh my mind with the writings of other members, to freshly assimilate their thoughts and present a rich pudding packed with stolen plums. That's called research. But the Twelfth Step is too important a part of my life for me to let this article contain any thoughts except my own. That means, of course, that it will carry the thoughts of others, but only those thoughts and ideas that have become a part of me and my way of sobriety.

The Twelfth Step is the capstone of the AA program. It announces itself as being such with its opening phrases, "Having had a spiritual awakening *as the result of these Steps*. . ." Whatever is to follow those words is the result of all that went before. But first let's examine the opening words.

Few of us experience the "wind. . . of spirit" described by Bill W. Indeed, very few of us experience a sudden, startling spiritual experience of any kind. Usually, the change is gradual. Yet it is no less a spiritual awakening. Whether we awaken with a bound or after much stretching, we awaken. When there is a spiritual awakening, self-centeredness, fear, and frustration are supplanted by helpful friendliness, happiness (perhaps even a touch of serenity), and fulfillment.

I joined AA a few weeks before Vinny F. did, and it was remarkable to me to watch the changes that transformed him within a few months. Why couldn't it be happening to me? I said as much to an old-timer. "Oh, you've changed just as much as Vinny," he told me with a broad smile. I couldn't believe it!

But indeed I had changed, and if my search for spiritual guidance was unsuccessful in its church-oriented aspect, the search itself continued. It went on and on, at regular meetings and at one-to-one meetings with individual members.

Incidentally, during those first, wonder-filled months, I concocted a description of my feeling about most open and closed meetings. I said that the total effect was greater than the sum of its individual parts. To put it another way, a list of the people at a given meeting and a recap of everything said were not enough to account for the height of my elation.

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AA GRAPEVINE YEAR-END SALE

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CONCEPT XII

The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote, and, whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

Tradition Twelve - "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

When Disclosure Is Right and Good

IN APRIL of 1971, I hit bottom. Added to the knowledge that I couldn't (still can't) drink, came the realization that by and of myself I couldn't quit. Fortunately, I knew where a local group of Alcoholics Anonymous held its meetings. One Tuesday evening found me walking in and saying to two men, "I think I'm an alcoholic." Before the meeting ended, I knew that I was (as I still am) an alcoholic and that these people had and would share a way of life designed to free me from *having* to drink. Since then, except when I'm out of town, Tuesday evenings are reserved for AA.

Our group meets in a portion of the basement of the church at which my family worships. On our meeting nights, there often are also meetings of the church council, of various committees, or even of the entire women's guild. Inevitably, church members met and greeted me on some Tuesday evenings. Rather than leave them curious about my presence, I decided to volunteer the fact that I was attending the AA meeting. Since word of this might have reached the pastor indirectly, I sought him out and told him of my new allegiance.

In the office, fellow employees noticed me reading AA books and other literature about alcoholism. Since they had already noticed that I no longer came in hung-over, I answered their questions without boasting and shared with those who were interested what I was learning about this condition, always minimizing what I was doing and emphasizing what was happening to me.

At monthly naval-reserve drill weekends, shipmates soon noticed that I wasn't being carried back from liberty and that I wasn't in a hangover fog during working hours. Rather than taking glory to myself for having "sworn off," I shared the truth with those who asked.

Then, at an out-of-town meeting, a discussion arose about anonymity. It included much talk, many opinions and anecdotes, but no quoting from AA literature. Had I unwittingly breached a tenet of our way of life?

First, I restudied the Twelve Steps, both in Chapter 5 of the Big Book and in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, but found no mention of anonymity. Then I went on to the Traditions, where I read:

"11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."

"12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities."

Mentally, I heaved a sigh of relief. Not having written for the press, nor appeared on radio or TV, I had not violated the Eleventh. And since I did not "hero-worship" anyone in AA, I felt that I was in accord with the Twelfth. But I decided to dig further to find what wiser, more experienced minds had said in exposition of these two Traditions.

In the pamphlet "AA Tradition--How It Developed," there are two Grapevine articles by Bill W. on this subject. In the 1946 article, Bill wrote: "As a matter of fact, few of us are anonymous so far as our daily contacts go. We have dropped anonymity at this level because we think our friends and associates ought to know about Alcoholics Anonymous and what it has done for us. We also wish to lose the fear of admitting that we are alcoholics." In the 1955 article, he wrote: "Of course, no AA need be anonymous to family, friends, or neighbors. Disclosure there is usually right and good."

For further reassurance, I turned to the last two chapters of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Especially on page 190, this book supports the views expressed above.

To keep it simple: If I do not seek glory for myself, If I don't break a fellow member's anonymity, if I avoid the press, radio, films, or any other *public* medium, my anonymity is mine, to retain or lose.

In the February 1972 Grapevine, an article asked, "Did Anonymity Help Kill Jim?" This theme was underscored by "I Had Hoped That You Could Help," in the January 1973 issue.

Let us not be guilty of hiding our light under the bushel of anonymity. We have freely received--freely let us give. Give credit where credit is due--asked how we live without drink, let us share our AA experience, strength, and hope that we may help others to recover from alcoholism.

(continued from page 1)

The human element alone could not have lifted me so high. There was a mysterious, indefinable "x" factor, which I choose to call spiritual.

That there was nothing sudden about this, no bolt of lightning, no rumble of thunder, is evident from the fact that for several years I could not bring myself to go and speak in a prison. One day, as though a veil were torn away, I realized that I *could* speak in jails and prisons. I would not be going beyond the locked gates in order to identify with the men as prisoners. Perhaps some of them would consider me an amateur for not having lost my liberty, but that would be their hang-up, not mine. Since then, I've had good AA conversations with a number of prisoners--as fellow alcoholics.

That leads right into the next phase of the capstone Step: ". . .we tried to carry this message to alcoholics." What message? Hope. Example. The way out. The way back. A handful of simple principles to unravel most of our snarled-up problems. A touch of humor--not taking ourselves so damned seriously. Meetings. Availability. Talk, talk, talk. The willingness to listen with understanding as the still-suffering alcoholic thrashes his way out of his mental mire. Tolerance. Guilelessness. The honesty to face situations and people, not go around them by the old, familiar route of sneakiness and subverted honesty. "Carrying the message" is all these things.

And the list could go on and on. There are the specifics of baby-sitting, housecleaning, and other chores that so many AA women have performed for shaky newcomers. There are the specifics of slogging through a snowstorm to answer a call for help, or driving a guy to a state hospital to keep him from winding up in jail. Practicing the Twelfth Step does not allow for questioning the merits of, or probable "returns" on, these actions. They are the philosophy of the Twelfth Step made manifest. When we do these things, we are carrying the message with a sense of responsibility.

It is precisely at this point in the AA program that a member's depth of understanding is plumbed. "We tried to carry the message" is a saying so battered out of shape by steady use that the deep humility of its intent is frequently lost from sight. This single saying is the basis for calling a visit to an active alcoholic a "Twelfth Step call." We know that speaking at meetings is a form of Twelfth Step work. Occasionally, we learn that we have fortuitously performed a Twelfth Step activity--helped someone without being aware of it at the time. It is the Twelfth Step in action which, to a large degree, keeps AA self-regenerative. Every meeting is an experience in sharing, but Twelfth Step activity is a more personal--and can therefore be a more deeply felt--form of sharing.

Being more personal, Twelfth Step work can become ego-oriented. Like the missionary who believes he is saving the pagans rather than himself, the egocentric member believes he is saving the other person rather than fortifying his own sobriety. Nonsense! The member is merely being given an opportunity to exercise his grasp of the program. Anyone who would take the credit for sobering up another person must also take the blame for failing to salvage those who don't sober up promptly, by the numbers and according to the book. Bunk! Let's remember that a Twelfth Step call is a visit, not a visitation.

Speaking of calling on the suffering alcoholic, it is frequently stated that "When a person wants sobriety badly enough, he'll come to AA." (The statement is often fortified with the remark "That's what *I* did," which makes it the word of God, of course.) *That* is carrying the message? I don't believe it. I didn't know enough to look for AA. Someone brought the message to me. Over seventeen years ago.

(continued on page 6)

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New York, NY 10116-2407

Bridging The Gap

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Recovery Word Puzzle

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



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

U E N R T P D
U A U Q F D I L I N E
D V L O A I E T
V R T R T E D E N O I
X N O T N I T A I
S C E S A E P

HAVE YOU GOT TALENT??

AA's GOT TALENT will be having their **Next Planning meeting**

Sunday, December 10th at 12:30 PM

441 Group in Margate, Village Plaza, 1452 N SR 7

Come sign up for service. Auditions following.

The 60th Intergroup Appreciation Banquet to be held in April 2024 will be having

Their First Planning meeting

Wednesday, December 13th at 6 PM

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

Things we cannot change...

Carol C. and Hannah A.



They will be missed by all who knew them. May they rest in peace.

SERVICE KEEPS YOU SOBER



A.A. Birthdays

December Celebrants

Bottom Line Group

Enza ~ 6 yrs.

Sober on the Beach

Lola W ~ 1 yr.

441 Group

John A. ~ 26 yrs.

Serenity in the Park-SWR

Emily S. ~ 2 yr.

Cindy F. ~ 2 yr.

Anne ~ 2 yr.

Tommy L. ~ 4 yrs.

Al ~ 6 yrs.

Will M. ~ 2 yr.

Easier Softer Way

Arianna G. ~ 5 yrs.

Coconut Creek

Robin C. ~ 3 yrs.

Saturday Morning

Awareness

Christine H. ~ 21 yrs.

Downtown Dry Dock

Cindy K. ~ 34 yrs.

Colleen L. ~ 25 yrs.

Spiritual Principles

Bonnie Lee ~ 26 yrs.

Kate K. ~ 43 yrs.

Each Day a New

Beginning

Mark L. ~ 9 yrs.

Freedom From

Alcohol

Karl B. ~ 32 yrs.

Victor E

Larry M. ~ 35 yrs.

Women's Step by

Step

Heather M. ~ 10 yrs.

Tracy S. ~ 14 yrs.

Imperial Point

Sunday Night

Joyce D. ~ 20 yrs.

Billy D. ~ 34 yrs.

Joey C. ~ 25 yrs.

Empowered Women

Arielle V. ~ 12 yrs.

Express Group

Nereida ~ 12 yrs.

Joanna ~ 29 yrs.

Other Notables

Suzanne J. ~ 18 yrs.

Micah ~ 14 yrs.

Laura F. ~ 24 yrs.

Nancy F. ~ 22 yrs.

Allison B. ~ 12 yrs.

Dennis W. ~ 23 yrs.

Chris S. ~ 12 yrs.

Patricia O. ~ 37 yrs.

Oakland Park

Fritz A. ~ 6 yrs.

David R. ~ 31 yrs.

Y.A.N.A.

Paul W. ~ 19 yrs.

Sarah N. ~ 27 yrs.

Mountain Group

Mark J. ~ 26 yrs.

Sunlight of the Spirit

Tom J. ~ 35 yrs.

Violet ~ 7 yrs.

Brian S. ~ 15 yrs.

Why it Works

Michael W. ~ 35 yrs.

One Day at a Time

Ernie B. ~ 37 yrs.

Women's Honesty

Kirstie ~ 12 yrs.

Serenity Sisters

Nicole ~ 4 yrs.

Sheila C. ~ 22 yrs.

Sandi A. ~ 7 yrs.

5-3-Zero

Dana C. ~ 28 yrs.

Margate Group

Dennis B. ~ 38 yrs.

As Bill Sees It

Jen R. ~ 11 yrs.

Big Book Quote of the Month:

"Actually, he may be helping you more than you are helping him. Make it plain he is under no obligation to you, that you hope only that he will try to help other alcoholics when he escapes his own difficulties."

Alcoholics Anonymous, page 94

BECOME A FAITHFUL FIVER

Set up regular monthly contributions to Intergroup using Zelle, PayPal or bank draft.

The next **Intergroup Meeting**

will be held on

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

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

BCIC

Broward County Institutions Committee
will hold their next meeting on

**Saturday, December 9th
at 10:00 AM**

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

District 9 General Service

Meeting will be held on

**Sunday, December 17th
at 2:00 PM**

Sanctuary, 1400 N. Federal Hwy., FTL
New Rep Workshop at 12:30 PM

HAPPY BIRTHDAY

NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS

.....not previously mentioned

East Naples Men's

Steve B. ~ 15 yrs.

Oakland Park Group

Doug D. ~ 39 yrs.

Serenity Sisters

Cheryl G. ~ 22 yrs.

Judy N. ~ 40 yrs.

Spiritual Principles

Gale D. ~ 19 yrs.

Horacio V. ~ 32 yrs.

(continued from page 2)

You and I know members who, having "caught" the program themselves, find the repeating drunk someone to avoid. I have heard from more than one repeater that some member has told him he cannot return to AA. Imagine one lush excommunicating another! *That* is carrying the message?

You and I have called on drunks whose remorse and frustration were founded principally on their not having done what the self-righteous member had told them to do. They felt beyond the pale.

The last two examples are spoiled fruit of the ego tree. The poor drunk who can't immediately catch fire from Ardent Member's magic words is discarded as unworthy. "He isn't *trying*," says Ardent Member. On what profound knowledge does he base his opinion? So far as I know, there was only One with the power to say, "Go and sin no more."

We have seen old-timers flounder. And we have seen old experimenters finally succeed--because someone held the door open. When we close the door, we are really saying, "You have tested my tolerance and won. Your ability to go on drinking and living threatens my sobriety." So, if we can't give someone the hope implicit in the capstone Step, let's not blame the sick alcoholic. Let's admit that the case is beyond our personal ability to translate the message of AA into terms he can understand. Trying to find new translations is a great way to strengthen our own sobriety. Closing the door to the constant repeater, on the other hand, is an admission of our own lack of tolerance or self-belief.

The last clause of the last Step advises us "to practice these principles in all our affairs." What "these principles" are is contained in the eleven Step articles that preceded this one and in numerous other AA sources.

To me, the last four words have shed one of the most penetrating lights of all AA's illuminating suggestions and ideas for living. I interpret "in all our affairs" to mean that we can have a sane, sober, rewarding life outside our AA meetings. We do not have to be introverted AAs, safe from the lurking horrors only when among fellow alcoholics.

AA is our serum, our antitoxin. The last part of our last suggested Step tells us that AA will guard us through meetingless days. It even tells us that sobriety, like all good news, is communicable.

BY: W. S. R. | SOUTH NORWALK, CONNECTICUT

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GOODBYE 2023

THIS MONTH IN AA HISTORY

Dec 6, 1979 - Akron Beacon reports death of Henrietta Sieberling.

Dec 11, 1934 - Bill admitted to Towns Hospital, 4th/last time.

Dec 20, 1945 - Rowland H. dies.

PLEASE CHECK THE LISTING OF YOUR
GROUP ON

OUR WEBSITE FOR ACCURACY

<https://aabroward.org/>

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.

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

Allison B.	Daniel D.	Ryan W.	Don F.	Kerry W.	Ellen F.
Anonymous	Bob B.	Shannon S.	H-Beta	Marsha M.	Ernie F.
Anonymous	Lee R.	Robert M.	Trish C-K.	Mary S.	Walter B.
Beth D.	Anthony M.	Susan C.	Lorraine C.	Michael E.	Marcy B.
Carmen D.	Ashley F.	Margaret L.	Fred L.	Michael P.	Nancy G.
Robert H.	Bill W.	Matthew S.	Jerrod F.	Pat R.	Marlene A.
Craig G.	Charmaine D.	Travis P.	Ken J.	Phyllis P.	Sam B.
Lew G.	Gregory C.	Teri B.	Katrina F.	Robert A.	Sharon G.
Deborah C.	Jan S.	Tim S.	James H.	Ron J.	Stephen H.
Debra B.	Jean Marie	Tim H.	Jennifer S.	Steven S.	Howie K.
Dennis G.	Jeff H.	Todd G.	John B.	Susan O.	Elizabeth W.
Don W.	Jolynn J.	Lois M.	Kerry F.	Suzanne J.	Joyce K.
Liz J.	Tom J.	Pat W.	Victoria M.	Vickie T.	Milinda B.
Hurbert N.	John L.	Sandra C.	Nancy V.	Belinda	Dylan F.

Answers from page 4: Remarkable, Concocted, Unanimity, Nonsense, Regenerative, Capstone, Prudent, Unqualified, Violated, Introverted, Antitoxin, Escapes

If you are interested in becoming a faithful fiver, you can set up automatic payments from your bank account or in PayPal. You can also send payments by Zelle to help@aabroward.org

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 AM-12 PM _____ 12 PM-5 PM _____ 5 PM-9 PM _____ 9 PM-8AM _____

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

Big Book Meditation which met in Wilton Manors has moved to The Sanctuary, 1400 N. Federal Hwy., Room 103, Ft. Lauderdale. OMg, 7 PM.

Wednesday

Les Vacanciers French meeting is at Sober Today Club in Hollywood again., 2035 Harding St. 8 PM.

New Meeting— The Sober Group meets at Beach Pavillion—3464 NE 16 Street, Pompano Beach at 6 PM

Thursday

Came to Believe that was meeting at the Temple in Cooper City in NO LONGER MEETING.

Entirely Ready that met at S.Fla. Wellness Network in Oakland Park NO LONGER MEETS.

Friday

Northwest Sobriety is now meeting again at Delevoe Park, 2520 NW 6th Street, Fort Lauderdale. ORF 7 PM.

Saturday

Free and Easy which was meeting in Hollywood has moved to the Behavioral Health unit in Davie, 5595 S. University Drive, 9 AM.

Sunday

Imperial Point Sunday which meets at St. Stephen's in Pompano has changed their time to 7 PM.

Breakfast on the Beach has changed locations and now meets at 1100 Seabreeze Blvd, Ft. Lauderdale,.

Daily

Serenity in the Park (SWR) will begin meeting at 4:45 PM again, due to time change, beginning on Nov. 5th.

Daily Dose that meets at Sober Today Club in Hollywood will now meet at 12 Noon.

HAVE A SAFE AND SOBER HOLIDAY

Happy Holidays!



Upcoming Events

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| Dec 16 | Traditions Workshop Traditions 4-6. Broward County Intergroup. Limited seating. Call office to reserve your spot. Refreshments served. Free Event. |
| Jan 5-7 | S. FL Area 15 Quarterly Assembly Hyatt Regency Sarasota hosted by District 4. Free service event. Business meeting Sunday using the Third Legacy procedure. |
| Feb 3 | AA's Got Talent Coral Springs Charter School, 3205 N University Drive, Coral Springs. Desserts and coffee at 5:30 PM, Entertainment 6:30 PM, cash raffle. Adult only event. Tickets on sale soon...\$15. |