

ANONYMOUS SOUTHJERSEY

SOUTH JERSEY INTERGROUP

September 2017

The 12 Steps Allow Us to Live in Peace and Harmony, and Grow in Goodness

In 1987, I went to a public talk given at a church by M. Scott Peck, psychiatrist and author of *The Road Less Travelled*, a book about what he had learned about life over the years of being a psychiatrist and helping people in that capacity. Clearly a spiritual man, he said something that reverberated to my core and has stayed with me to this day. He said the worst thing that happened in the 20th century was the Holocaust. And then he said the thing that brought tears to my eyes, then and now. He said that the best thing that happened in the 20th century was a meeting that occurred between two men in 1935 in the little town of Akron, Ohio.



We all know what that meeting was. He was, of course, referring to the evening Bill W and Dr. Bob met together and talked together and stayed sober together.

To hear that from a most respected and distinguished doctor and psychiatrist, a man who had had a non-fiction bestseller on the NY Times for 10 years, was, to say the least, inspiring. And for AA to get that recognition--wow.

Of course, AA deserves that recognition. No arguments from me that it is the best thing that happened to humanity in the 20th century.

So what makes AA so incredible? I say--the 12 Steps.

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Poetics of the Steps

Editor's note: Part 2 of 2 of The Poetics of the Steps. Here are steps seven through 12. Continued on page 4.

Step Seven

How hard, how difficult, is Step Seven:

To give up
To finally give up
Running my own show!

To pray,
To really pray,
To God;
To yield completely and utterly
To his completeness,
To do this through the mediation of humility.

The limitations of "this" attitude;
The God as a bush-league pinch-hitter,
helping only a little, now and then
the absolute limitations of this attitude.

How break through to the other side
(apologies to Jim Morrison).

The other side
The passage way to there
Is through surrender and humility;
Saying goodbye to me
And hello to God.

no more me;
goodbye to me;
stepping out of the prison
of me.

Announcements & Things to Do

Sat. Aug. 19 – District 13 Annual Picnic. Food, swimming and a speaker from 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM at Splash Sports Club, 118 E Pittsfield Road, Pennsville, NJ. For more information contact Geni at [856-540-8070](tel:856-540-8070) or Larry at [856-281-4697](tel:856-281-4697).

Sun. Aug. 27 – Pittsgrove Parvin State Park Thundergust Picnic Grove Pavilions 13th annual district 14 picnic from 11am - 4pm - suggested donation \$10, 16 and under free. Bring lawn chairs and all food donations welcomed. more info call: Anthony [856-455-0416](tel:856-455-0416)

Fri. Sept. 15 – Hammonton Group will celebrate their 59th anniversary @ Presbyterian Ch basement 326 Bellevue Ave. Hammonton, NJ. Eating starts at 7:30pm with a speaker meeting to follow.

Tue. Sept. 19 – Mt. Ephraim Women's group will celebrate their 10th anniversary from 6pm - 8pm. Located at Mt. Ephraim Methodist Ch. 201 New Jersey, Mt. Ephraim, NJ. FFF all are welcomed.

Sun. Sept 24 – Cape Atlantic Intergroup will sponsor their 13th Annual Unity Breakfast at the Grand Hotel 1045 Beach Ave. Cape May, NJ. 300 people limit Call Jenna to reg. [609-947-1273](tel:609-947-1273). No tix at the door.



Steps

From page 1

These Steps are a blueprint for life, a "design for living," as the Big Book says. They get us sober. They keep us sober. And they give us a whole new way of life, a whole new life. As page 15 of the 12 and 12 says: A.A.'s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole."

So far in my years of sobriety, I have been able to solve my problems, resolve my conflicts, with one or more of the Steps. Sometimes it's a quick and easy fix with a 10th Step. Sometimes it takes more--another 4th and 5th Step to get at character defects that have cropped up again, followed by 6 and 7.

And maybe 8 and 9! Always it is Steps 1, 2 and 3, and 10, 11 and 12 to continue to live a life of goodness, and continue to grow in peace and serenity.

Do I live in a constant state of Grace? Nope. Wish I did! But most days I do live in relative peace and harmony--especially compared to my drinking days! No comparison! Then I existed. Now I live.

Where did the Steps come from? Bill W wrote of this for the July '53 issue of the Grapevine. Titled "A Fragment of History: An Origin of the Twelve Steps", it is a great read for those interested in our program's history, and can be found on pages 195-202 of The Language of the Heart, a compilation of all Bill W's Grapevine writings. He says on p.195, "In the last analysis, perhaps nobody knows"--where the Steps came from. But he goes

on to say on pages 195-6: "...the main

channels of inspiration for our Steps were three in number--the Oxford Groups, Dr. William D. Silkworth of Towns Hospital, and the famed psychologist William James, called by some the father of modern psychology. The story of how these streams of influence were brought together and how they led to the writing of our Twelve Steps is exciting and in spots downright incredible." Incredible indeed, as you find out in his article. He concludes on p. 202: "This little fragment of history ought to convince the most skeptical that nobody invented Alcoholics Anonymous. It just grew--by the grace of God."

As do I--thanks to AA.

Patricia P.

Editorial Policy

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Contributions from readers are encouraged—you can write about your experience, strength and hope in general, or you can focus on one of the steps or traditions. You can also write about something that touched you at a meeting, something that bothered you at a meeting, or some service commitment you especially enjoy. Submissions are edited for space and clarity. Contact information is required and anonymity is respected.

Due to space limitations, we are unable to publish flyers for events in this newsletter. However, we are happy to include your gathering in the general list of fellowship announcements.

Please send your submissions to newsletter@aasj.org.

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SJIG holds its monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the month at 8 pm at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 1989 Route 70 East, Cherry Hill, NJ

A.A. Trivia Question

September 2017: What experience and skills are needed to chair a committee at Intergroup?



Last month's question:

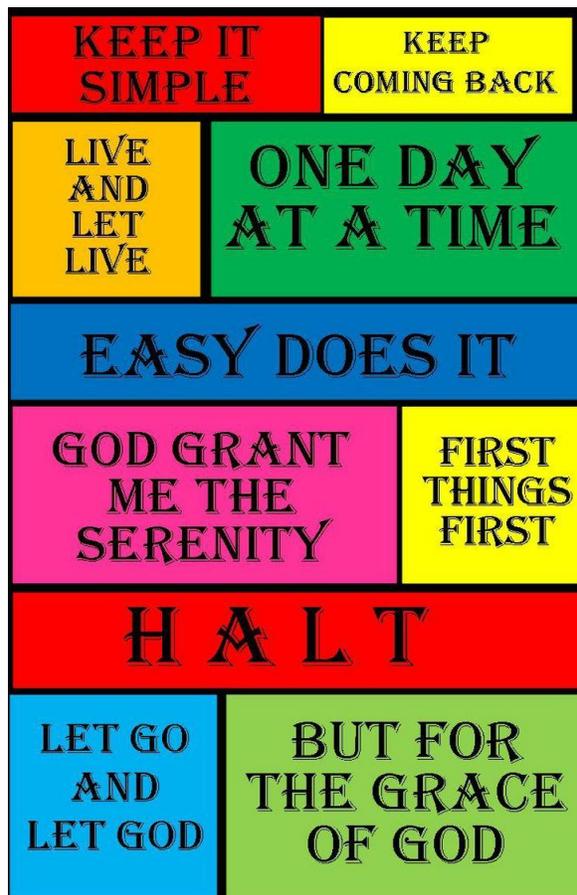
What do you do if you can't keep your Bookers Commitment?

Answer: Let your group's booker and your group know as soon as you are aware that you cannot fulfill the commitment. See if you can send someone else from your group (or sponsee of yours perhaps?)

Call the contact for the group you are visiting to advise them at least 24-48 hours in advance (if possible) to let them know you are unable to attend or send a replacement speaker.

"My 1st sponsor told me that unless I had a true emergency that I was to go. That I am responsible."

Jennifer D, Bookers Co-Chair



Step Ten

Let the force of poetry carry me through
It is too difficult to examine my day
Without poetry
My recovery needs poetry.

Understanding means knowing how to go on
I don't want to drink
And return to destruction and waste

I no longer have to be the controversy
Or have to be the desire
Or the emotion
I can observe it
(continued to take personal inventory)
Re-call it
Re-count it
But it is no longer me

The "self" puts on a thousand disguises
To attack simultaneously
Telling you its not the self, its "outside" circum-
stances
It gets you to react to circumstance
Which draws you further into "self"
It adores you
It wants you
Like the devil.

Step Nine

Making amends, making
changes;
To wife, mother, father, chil-
dren, brothers, sister;
Employers?
To my sponsor?

First stop is my sponsor:
List all the people that piss me
off??
Well, he does, for starting me
off that way!
What does that have to do with
the Ninth Step?
I wanted to, without delay, be
off on my white horse!

He has severely
delayed my mis-
sion.

Perhaps we are making too
much of this Ninth Step?
In the old days, I hear, they did
it all the first day sober!
I am in my eighth year
And just getting round to it.

I wanted these poems to be less
didactic
And more about feeling-tones
Trying to fuse aesthetics with
sobriety:
The aesthetics of sobriety

(rather than the poetics of sobri-
ety).

I am sorry to all those I've hurt
by my drinking behavior
That includes so many

Virtually all with whom I've
had any significant social or
business contact while drinking
As my drinking grew worse
Thank god there is a god
Who may forgive me
Making amends to my self

Step Eight

make a list
settle into conventionality
the rebel without a cause
the caps have disappeared
I forget how to spell
With words
With letters
They are back again
The caps

The people I have harmed are legion
My sponsor brings me back to reality
Start with your wife, mother, father, family
Employers
Embarrassed the rest
All and sundry

My list is no list
It is all that have come into contact with me
Prior to sobriety
Where, for the first time
I learned how to act with a modicum of civility
And didn't destroy every occasion

Can I make amends to the whole world?
Or is this just another ego-feeding proposi-
tion?
Settle way down
And start with the people around you.

Poetics of the Steps

Step Twelve

Genre propels
Mobilizes
Like the internal combustion engine
It guides and takes one forward
It is the true home
Helping others is the genre
The original genre of AA
It the first urge of Bill W.
On the moment of his awakening
His first urge
To go forward and work with others
In the Native American
There is no difference between the word
for
“work” and the word for “love”
Practice and helping others
There is no difference
And this is practicing
In all our affairs
Whether by myself or with others.

The Steps are guide
Which must fall away
Of their own accord
Upon being put into practice
They become sobriety
And a way of life
Larger than life itself
Absorbing all of life’s difficulties
And being the “solution”
In peace and serenity
And in love and being.

Step Eleven

Where is God?
No statement about reality can ever be true;
That is God.
The mystery
The fascination of crime mysteries
The genre itself
Is the tracing of our fascination with a higher
power.

A power greater than myself
Is a power other than myself
Other than
Not me
Of which there is none
I destroy myself
Notwithstanding there is no thing to destroy
For I am not a thing
I just want to end the pain
Of existing
Until I understand a higher power
It is not “mine”
I do not possess it
And what is the difference between conscious and
unconscious contact?
Isn’t contact contact?
Regardless if it is conscious or not?
The power flows in just the same
Irrespective of my awareness.

Dare I say I am part of God
Made of the same stuff
Mustn’t I be?
Do not the birds and trees and flowers and rocks
Pray also?



September Service Opportunities

Answering Service:

Currently we have shifts open on Friday 8 am until 10 am Wednesday 10 am to 12 pm also have shifts on Tuesdays 10 am to 12 pm, 8 am to 10 am, 2 pm to 4 pm, Sunday 2 pm to 4 pm, Friday 6 pm to 8 pm. We also continue to take names for our waiting list and AA members to be available for a 12 step call. Contact us via answeringservice@aaaj.org.

Literature Sales:

The Wednesday, 10 am – noon, and Thursday, 6-8 pm shift are open. Please contact Jimmy at literature@aaaj.org if you are interested.

Public Information:

AA members needed to attend and man tables at The Gloucester County Addictions Task Force Recovery Walk and Memorial Vigil, and National Drug Aware

ness Day in Mt. Holly on behalf of Charity's Purse. Public Information will provide a literature rack for both events. For further information, reach out to either Jim S. or Eileen T. at publicinfo@aaaj.org.

Committee Service:

The committees for **Answering Service, Bookers, Budget and Finance, Meeting List, Newsletter and Unity** are looking for some new people to get involved with possibilities for stepping into the committee chairperson. Please reach out to the current chairperson or e-mail info@aaaj.org for more information.

Intergroup Officers:

New Intergroup Officers will be elected in December to serve for 2018-2019. If you are interested for running for an officer position please e-mail trustees@aaaj.org or call 856-486-4446.

Speaking Commitments

Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) is looking for speakers to visit the following facilities:

Please contact Patti or Frank at handi@aaaj.org if you are able to take one of these commitments.

Tuesday

- Cooper University Psych Unit – 1 Cooper Plaza, Camden 8-9 pm Sept. 5
- Solstice Counseling Services – 1561 Rt. 38 W, Lumberton NJ 7-8 pm Sept. 5, 19, 26
- Delaware House – 21 Ikea Drive, Westhampton NJ 2-3 pm Aug. 22, 29, Sept. 5

Wednesday

- JFK - Emergency Room Entrance, 2201 Chapel Ave, Cherry Hill – 7:45-8:45 pm September 5
- Unity Place I – 1 Keystone Ave, Cherry Hill NJ 12:40-1:30pm September 20
- Northbrook Behavioral Health Hospital – 425 Woodbury-Turnersville Rd, Blackwood NJ 8-9 pm Sept. 27

Thursday

- Ancora - 202 Spring Garden Rd, Hammonton NJ 7-8bpm Aug. 24, 31, Sept. 21, 28
- Lourdes Medical Ctr – 218 Sunset Rd, Willingboro NJ 8-9 pm September 7
- Unity Place II - 121 S White Horse Pike, Hammonton NJ 2-3 pm Aug. 17, 31, Sept. 7, 21
- Daybreak - MICA - 368 White Horse Pike, Atco 10:30 am-12 pm Aug. 17, 24, 31, Sept. 14, 21, 28

Friday

- Vineland Victory Academy, 2000 Maple Avenue, Vineland, 7-8 pm, Aug. 25, Sept. 8, 22

Saturday

- Cooper Psych Unit, 1 Cooper Plaza, Camden NJ 10:30-11:30 am, Sept. 16, 30