

**STEP SIX**

**“We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”**

**B**efore having experienced this step, I wasn't sure what was meant by the phrase “this separates the boys from the men.” My plan of action was to completely clean house or eventually I was sure to drink again, if I held anything back. Next, I asked my Higher Power for the strength to become entirely ready to have the character defects that caused so much turmoil in the lives of others, not just my own, be lifted from me.

Some of my defects of character I wanted to hold onto fearing there would be nothing left of me. (Of course, fear itself is one of my go-to defects.) This is where I ask my higher power for the willingness and humbly ask him to remove my shortcomings.

Not only have some of my worst character defects been removed, they have been replaced with a kinder, more thoughtful and gentler version of the old me. When my defects of character return, I ask God to remove them at once and make amends if I have caused any harm.

A simple program of directions, but not easily done. The effort and the spiritual work payed off, and the release from the obsession to drink began to be felt while starting a new beginning that will never end, but will always be practiced.

Essence P.

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**TRADITION SIX**

**“An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”**

**S**ince the Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous were adopted at the first International Convention in 1950, our membership and society has vastly changed and grown. Living room meetings are no longer the norm and we have seen how the spread of the A.A. message has positively impacted families throughout the world. It is no wonder why an individual who has recovered from a hopeless state of mind and body would find it to be a great idea to have an A.A. hospital, job center, or rehab.

This Tradition states that we keep these outside enterprises separate in order to keep our primary purpose focused. Our founders discovered that one recovered alcoholic carrying the message to another alcoholic cannot in any way be tainted by any other message or distraction. A.A. does not discourage members from using any facilities in any capacity. In the chapter, “The Doctor’s Opinion”, of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, Dr. Silkworth states, “Of course an alcoholic ought to be freed from his physical craving for liquor, and this often requires a definite hospital procedure, before psychological measures can be of maximum benefit.”

It is my opinion that we should do our best to bend to meet the Traditions just the way they are, rather than change them to meet our needs. Tradition Six keeps our twelfth step work pure. It allows us to confidently offer the newcomer a way out of their hopelessness while asking for nothing in return.

HAPPY 85<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY A.A

- Anonymous

## Words of Wisdom

The best advice I received in AA was, “don’t drink and go to meetings.” For me, that is the basis of my recovery. Sure, I hit a bottom, landed in a detox, and went to a rehab, but the message was always the same. “Don’t drink and go to meetings.” It was in the meetings that I heard many other messages, “You can’t stop drinking, drinking.” “You can’t get dry with a wet towel.” “Put the plug in the jug.” “Take the cotton out of your ears and put it in your mouth.”

Meetings were and are a safe place. We are all in this together. People from various backgrounds and histories, different levels of bottoms and problems, but we are all just trying to stay sober another day. That feels very powerful when we are all together. It seems inevitable that when someone stops coming to meetings, they drink. If they make it back, they always tell us how bad it was. It never got any better. If I felt like drinking, I would go to a meeting and tell the group about it. By the end of the meeting I felt better, and I no longer wanted to drink. It felt like a miracle, because it was.

There were also other things I could only learn by going to the meetings. Sponsorship, service and spirituality were often topics of discussion, and if I wanted to stay sober and enjoy the rewards of sobriety, then there were going to be some things that I was going to need to do. By going to meetings, I learned the importance of picking up the phone and speaking with another recovering alcoholic. It was tremendously helpful to speak with others between the meetings. As I became more comfortable speaking in meetings, it was pointed out that I was long-winded. “You know, if you got a sponsor you wouldn’t talk so much in the meetings!” This eventually led me to the sponsor I would have for more than 20 years, and he was instrumental in the next phases of my recovery. And it was in the meetings were all this began!

Kevin L.

## Beginners Corner

It was all about not picking up that *first* drink, and still is! I was told early and often about the importance of going to meetings, “If you drank every day, then go to a meeting every day.” I discovered when I went to meetings consistently, I felt better on the days that I went, compared to the days that I did not go to meetings.

By going regularly, I was able to hear other important messages about service and spirituality. Not understanding spirituality, it was easier to focus on service. Subsequently, I learned to make coffee, not well, and it did not last long.

There were other commitments I could help with, such as set up and put away the chairs and tables, set up and take down the literature rack, and clean the ashtrays. Yes, there was time when people smoked in the meetings.

It was also important to get phone numbers from people and to actually call them. Obviously there was no texting. The word ‘texting’ didn’t even exist then. These phone numbers were to be used for more than just getting a ride to a meeting. I was encouraged to talk to people and tell them what I was doing and how I was feeling.

My attendance and service helped in feeling a part of AA. It also made it easier to get to know people and for people to know me. This all led to other lessons, which led me to the path of spirituality.

Kevin L.



## Happy 85th Birthday A.A.

### Joy of being sober

**W**e hear all the time about the gifts of sobriety, the joy we get being sober, and how blessed we are. All of these things are true!

One of the most important aspects of this is that my spirituality has to be grounded in a Power greater than myself. The quality of that spirituality will show how easy I can forgive, how easy I can connect with other people. And it is the quality of our spirituality that determines how well we can accept reality and let go of what needs to be released.

In order to gain and keep spiritually fit, there are a few requirements. Quiet time with our Power, prayer time, and quiet time by ourselves. That can look like a walk in the woods, a walk on the beach, whichever works for you. The point is that we do this every day. It is not a box that we check and claim “Well that’s done” and move on. It is not a luxury either, it is a necessity for us.

So be careful not to get “too busy” because we can slip back to old habits and it will take some undoing to get back on track.

I know I can get too busy, guilty as charged! That is why I have become more diligent than ever about prayer and meditation. I hope you do too!

Patti



The views and opinions expressed herein are those of each individual and do not necessarily represent the opinions or policy of South Jersey Intergroup or AA as a whole.



## **BIARRITZ INTERNATIONAL A.A. CONVENTION**

October 9, 2020 to October 11, 2020

Venue: Le Grand Large , 1 rue Dalbarade, 64200 Biarritz, France

**DURING COVID-19 LOCK-DOWN VENUE HOTEL RESERVATIONS ARE SHUT.**

(Attempts to book dates on the hotel website will show hotel as fully booked.)

- Al-Anon & YPAA participation
- Theme: KEEP IT SIMPLE

Speakers: Karen Casey, Ph.D., lecturer, and program member since 1974 will be the speaker of note,

Karen will also facilitate a two-hour workshop/presentation on the Saturday afternoon.

Karen is author of recovery reference books "Each Day A New Beginning", "In God's Care", among over 25 other books.

**ALL accommodations HAVE UNOBSTRUCTED OCEAN/SUNSET VIEW**

- Fly direct to Biarritz Airport (BIQ)
- Website: <https://aaconventionbiarritz.com>
- Registration: Pre-Registration (online) €35.00 (after 30 August €42.00)
  - Venue Accommodation from €55.00/night/person (B&B)
  - Alternative Accommodation from €30.00/night/person (B&B)
- Extend your stay at convention discounted tariffs, enjoy tourism in the region





## Beginners Corner

### Keep going and coming back

**M**y first AA meeting was May 15, 2015, after I admitted I was drinking every day, and I could not stop or even control my drinking (as I had been able to “before”). “Go to AA,” I had been told by both my dad and therapist. Obviously, going to therapy to try and figure out what was going on with me was not going to stop my drinking or tell me why I was drinking like an alcoholic.

OK, off to AA I go, and I’ll learn to stop drinking like an alcoholic! I found out real quickly that just sitting in a meeting (usually with booze in my system) wasn’t going to help me stop. A nice woman started going to meetings with me. She became my sponsor, but didn’t stop me from drinking. Soon it was off to rehab I go. I thought people go to rehab and come out not wanting to drink like an alcoholic and live a normal person after that. That didn’t stop me from drinking either though. Seeing a pattern here?

The other “issue” I had was that I didn’t have the long drinking history as those I heard share. I thought I needed a longer history of drinking everyday, blacking out, hiding booze, lying etc. I’m not worthy of AA like these people, I thought. Never mind that in less than 6 months I was drinking every day, starting at 6 because I could handle being buzzed, hiding my booze, and not remembering conversations. I needed alcohol to have a good day. Finally, when I stopped and actually listened and related, I did realize *yeah, I’m like them*. I could NOT stop on my own. I was killing myself slowly. I had that obsession, and I did some pretty head-scratching behavior. Who hides booze in their backyard? Apparently, there are others!

Step One: yes, I knew my life was kind of unmanageable (still had stuff; didn’t really lose anything) but sure, unmanageable, and I’m not sure what powerless means, but, ok? My sponsor said that it’s when you put that first drink into your body. I didn’t know or realize that I had a mental obsession or that the phenomenon of craving happens after that first drink.

Steps Two and Three: easy peasy--I had always believed in God, was never scared of Him. He loves me and wants to help me. But how does He help me to stop drinking and release that obsession? I had asked and was waiting... Well, I realized that it takes little more than just asking: I have to get out of my own head to try and listen to that Higher Power, that Power that is Greater than me, that is NOT me. Willingness was all I needed, so I kept on with that willingness even when life got a little hard or I felt defeated.

That willingness helped me continue to work the remaining twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, get honest, humble and amend my behaviors in all my aspects of my life. I eventually felt that peace and serenity that so many have shared about. My brain started to rewire and the will of my HP was starting to be heard.

I am writing this on the eve of my 4th year anniversary. Four years ago, I finally fully surrendered. Realizing that my bottom is when I decide. After two years of drinking like that alcoholic I didn’t think I was, I chose to stop falling any further. I am grateful that my HP was just waiting for me to finally surrender when I was ready. Today I keep going and going to meetings, it all started with that phrase, ‘keep coming back’.

-Lisa B., Haddon Heights

## EDITORIAL POLICY

Anonymous South Jersey is a monthly newsletter published by and for members of South Jersey Alcoholics Anonymous. Opinions expressed herein are NOT to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by either AA or South Jersey Intergroup. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are printed with permission from AA World Services, Inc., and/or the AA Grapevine, Inc.

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@asj.org](mailto:newsletter@asj.org).



## THIS MONTH IN AA HISTORY

June 6, 1940 – The first AA Group in Richmond, VA, was formed. “come upon.”

1941 – The first AA Group in St. Paul, Minnesota, was formed.

June 1, 1949 – Anne Smith, Dr. Bob’s wife, died.

1979 – AA gave the two-millionth copy of the Big Book to Joseph Califano, then Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. It was presented by Lois W., Bill’s wife, in New York.

June 8, 1941 – Three AA’s started a group in Kalamazoo, Michigan.

June 10, 1935 – The date that is celebrated as Dr. Bob’s last drink and the official founding date of AA. There is some evidence that the founders, in trying to reconstruct the history, got the date wrong and it was actually June 17.

June 11, 1945 – Twenty-five hundred attend AA’s 10th Anniversary in Cleveland, Ohio.

June 16, 1938 – Jim B., “The Vicious Cycle” in Big Book, had his last drink.

June 17, 1942 – New York AA groups sponsored the first annual NY area meeting. Four hundred and twenty-four heard Dr. Silkworth and AA speakers.

June 18, 1940 – One hundred attended the first meeting in the first AA clubhouse at 334-1/2 West 24th St., New York City.

June 21, 1944 – The first Issue of the AA Grapevine was published.

June 24, 1938 – Two Rockefeller associates told the press about the Big Book “Not to bear any author’s name but to be by ‘Alcoholics Anonymous.’”

June 25, 1939 – The New York Times reviewer wrote that the Big Book is “more soundly based psychologically than any other treatment I have ever

June 28, 1935 – Dr. Bob and Bill W. visited Bill Dotson at Akron’s City Hospital.

June 30, 1941 – Ruth Hock showed Bill W. the Serenity Prayer and it was adopted readily by AA.

June 30, 2000 – More than 47,000 from 87 countries attended the opening meeting of the 65th AA Anniversary in Minneapolis, MN.

June, 1981 – AA in Switzerland held its 25th Anniversary Convention with Lois W. and Nell Wing in attendance.



## NOTES FROM ZOOM WORKSHOP ON RE-OPENING MEETINGS

Some of these points may be more applicable than others to your group but it certainly gives us a lot to consider!

A Zoom New York district workshop was held last month to discuss thoughts, concerns and questions pertaining to re-opening in person meetings.

Lastly, because so many groups are not meeting, GSO is definitely in need of contributions. You may contribute up to \$5,000 per year.

The discussion, which focused on the Traditions and Concepts of AA, raised more questions than answers, but here are some good points that were mentioned:

- The law of the land does not stop at the door to AA. We should abide by the law and not risk putting AA as a whole in the spotlight in a bad way... i.e.: meeting outside in groups larger than is permitted by law can affect AA as a whole. (What if someone's first impression of AA is from reading about an AA meeting getting cited for breaking the law?)

- When in-person meetings start up, will your group be restricted to a certain number of attendees, either by law or the landlord/church? If so, how will your group handle this if more people try to attend than is permitted?

- How to handle contact tracing? Do you give up the names of everyone in a meeting if you get sick? Anonymity concerns?

- Will groups be required to wear masks? If so, will your group provide masks? How will your group handle noncompliance?

- How to handle the 7th tradition basket and germs.

- How to handle passing out readings and germs.

- Will your group still serve refreshments? If so, what precautions will your group take related to germ concerns? What about the "community spoon in a cup of water" for stirring in sugar or creamer?

- Many groups want to have a hybrid meeting with in person and virtually. How to do this? Concerns about anonymity.

- Some states consider AA an essential service and some do not.

