

STEP TWO

Came To Believe That a Power Greater Than Ourselves Could Restore Us To Sanity.

This is a pretty tricky step, depending on how we were raised and what we believe in when we first come to Alcoholics Anonymous. I can say I was raised with a religion and sort of believed in a Higher Power, but not to the extent that AA was asking of me. Then my sponsor pointed out to me that this is about spirituality not religion. Well, thank goodness for that! What a relief! That was for me.

When we sat down to take a closer look at this step, she asked me to try praying to whatever I could believe in, and if I didn't have something that worked for me, come up with my own description of what God or Higher Power would look like to me.

I gave my Higher Power characteristics that were important to me, such as Strength, Forgiveness, Love, Honesty and Integrity. It had to have all of these, because I certainly didn't! So I began praying everyday to this God as I understood Him. I started to feel better.

My whole outlook and attitude were starting to adjust to the way God would have me be. It says in our Big Book, in the chapter entitled "We Agnostics", that "God does not make too hard terms to those who seek Him". That is a pretty powerful statement that I found to be true. It also says "the realm of the Spirit is all inclusive, never exclusive or forbidding". To me that meant, no matter how awful I thought I was, God loved me and would still be available to me.

One of the hardest steps became the most rewarding for me. I depend completely on the God that I found through the Step Two process. AA gave me a God that I never knew I wanted or needed! What a beautiful experience.

Patti S.

TRADITION TWO

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority-- a loving God as He may express himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Sometimes our homegroup can feel like a family-- in ways both good and bad. Our homegroup is in a sense our home in AA. It requires upkeep and there are chores to be done to keep things running smoothly. Each member from the beginner to the oldtimer should be taking on a commitment to support the efficient functioning of the group. When too many members get lazy and make a few members do all the work, it's not healthy for the group and breeds resentment and dysfunction. So too, when we are all doing our AA jobs, we keep our group around and welcome new folks into it-- people are attracted and want to be with us, with some groups lasting for decades.

As a group member, it is important for me to remember that I am a "servant" to my group, not a leader of my group. After years in a group, we can feel a sense of ownership that borders on "bleeding deacon" status, as described in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. This is the member who sees himself as indispensable and is susceptible to losing sight of the true goal-- helping the next alcoholic-- and the ultimate authority-- God as He expresses himself in our group conscience. This is the member who gets so caught up in the politics of cajoling members to vote the way he wants that he no longer is fully cognizant of what is truly best for the group-- and that he may not know best.

Thinking I know best for others is a dangerous place for me as an alcoholic. I think I may be a "higher power" for the group when I do that--whether it is in my homegroup, with my colleagues, or at my home. The ancients referred to this misguided overconfidence as "hubris"-- they wrote



hundreds of amazing plays that people loved and still perform about people who self-destruct because of their arrogance and pride. They actually thought of pride that leads to ruin in another way too-- as putting oneself on par with the gods or defying the gods. When I think I can decide for the group or I know best for others, I am often unpleasantly reminded that this holds true for me-- I am lacking in humility and behaving as if I am the higher power.

However, when I trust the greater power of the group, I can fill the role of the "elder statesman." This is when I show respect for those who are my fellow members, by trusting that as a group, they often know better than I do as an individual. These are the occasions when I can serve as someone with experience who doesn't try to use that to say "well this is what the group did before, so that's the way it should be now." Instead, the experience is shared in a humble manner and often only when asked! This is when I know that I am leading by example and best serving the newcomer.

In love and service,

Skye from Haddonfield 12 and 12

SAVED THROUGH SERVICE

It is my honor, or should I say privilege, to serve the fellowship to which I owe my entire life. I was taught early on that I should never say no to service of any type in Alcoholics Anonymous. I am here to tell you that is the best advice that's ever been given me.

I was a shy kid and a self-conscious adult. It took a lot of growing up in "the rooms" before I came to believe that my life had meaning and purpose. I found this in the AA fellowship, but specifically in service to my homegroup and Intergroup. Taking speaking commitments is something that I now relish. Imagine that? A once shy, self-conscious person like me can stand before a group of people and tell my story as a woman of grace and dignity. How did this even happen? It just came as I continued to work the twelve steps of Alcoholics Anonymous on a daily basis, to the best of my ability. Not always perfect, but never giving up.

I began my service early on as Intergroup Rep for my homegroup. I immediately felt a kinship with everyone I met at Intergroup. The energy and commitment were contagious. I finally felt a part of something big and immensely important to me. I was never one to join any clubs or activities, as it took away from my "me" time. Selfishness and self-centeredness were my best friends.

I have been blessed to live two lives in one lifetime. Why would I not want to give back to AA for such a special gift? I think sometimes service work above the group level gets a bad rap. No one really talks about it or shares their experience with it. I am here to tell you that except for taking another woman through the 12 Steps, nothing has made me grow more fully into a woman I can be proud of than my service commitments.

Now that I have experienced and live all three sides of the AA triangle, I can say that I am truly happy, joyous and free from the bondage of self.

In Unity, Recovery and Service,

Nancy from The Livingroom Meeting in Haddon Heights



AA Fact Sheet

What A.A. Does

Nonalcoholic guests are welcome at “open” A.A. meetings. Attendance at “closed” meetings is limited to those who are alcoholic or think they may have a drinking problem.

At meetings A.A. members share their recovery experience with anyone seeking help with a drinking problem, and give person-to-person services or “sponsorship” to the alcoholics coming to A.A.

The A.A. program, as set forth in the Twelve Steps to recovery, offers the alcoholic an opportunity to develop a satisfying way of life free from alcohol.

What A.A. Does NOT Do

Make medical or psychiatric diagnoses or prognoses, or offer advice.

Provide drying-out or nursing services, hospitalization, drugs, housing, jobs, money or other welfare services.

Accept any money for its services or contributions from outside sources.

Provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers, court officials, social agencies, employers, etc.

Engage in or support education, research, or professional treatment.

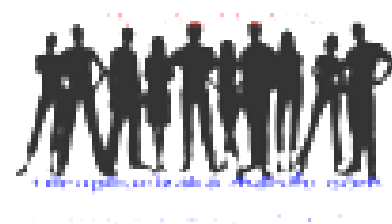
Our recovery is based on sharing our experience, strength and hope with each other, that we may solve our common problem; more importantly, our continued sobriety depends upon helping others to recover from alcoholism. – Rev.1/14/03

Copied from aasj.org website.



COVID-19 UPDATE ! Literature Sales is OPEN, with limited hours at the moment. Please e-mail literature@aasj.org with any urgent literature needs and we will try to accommodate your request.

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.



GET READY

Are YOU Ready?!!



**2020-2021 55th Annual
Area 45 Convention**

March 19 & 20, 2021



COMING SOON

Go to any Length



REGISTRATION OPENS



on JANUARY 10, 2021



<https://area45convention.org>

January 2021						
S	M	T	W	T	F	S
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31						

Registration IS required

**** Free ****



*We suggest a
contribution to offset
our costs*

*** Speakers * Workshops * Merchandise * Entertainment ***



***We sincerely appreciate your support
during this critical time.***



Service Opportunities

Answering Service

There are still openings for the 12th-step list, which is used for those calling the answering service that may need to speak in depth about alcoholism and recovery or may need a ride or might just need to speak to someone that understands. That's when the Answering Service will contact someone from the list, who is willing and able to contact the caller.

Please continue to remind members that volunteers are needed. Areas that need the most help are Berlin, Camden, Hammonton, and Salem. There are signup sheets available for anyone wishing to take a copy to their homegroup. If you know anyone who would like to be of service, please have them contact us at answeringservice@aasj.org or invite them to speak at your homegroup about this much-needed service opportunity.

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 sometimes edited for

space and clarity. Contact information is required and anonymity is respected.

Use your imagination or use one of the following topics: Beginners, Young People, My Best Advice in AA, Recovery in the Time of Coronavirus. You can also send us information on your group's anniversary or other event.

Write one yourself or ask a sponsee or friend to write, as well.

No time to proofread, no worries. Our editing team will fix it up in a jiffy!

PLEASE SUBMIT YOUR ARTICLE IN WORD, PUBLISHER OR A GOOGLE DOC.

Artists: Send some original paintings, drawings or photography (no photos of faces please in keeping with tradition.)

Due to space limitations, we are sometimes 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.

We need you!

Please ask your...
sponsees,
homegroup members,
newcomers,
old-timers
to write articles for us!



EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY

I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA, the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance, urges quite appropriate to age seventeen, prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven and fifty-seven.

Since AA began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover, finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse. Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy and good living. Well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all of our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious, from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream, be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden Mr. Hyde becomes our main task.

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones, folks like you and me, commencing to get results. Last autumn, depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself "Why can't the twelve steps work to release depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer ... "it's better to comfort than to be comforted." Here was the formula, all right, but why didn't it work?

Suddenly, I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence, almost absolute dependence, on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St.

Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed upon any act of circumstance whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis did. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, I could not avail myself to God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependence meant demand, a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words "absolute dependence" may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the real current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependence and its consequent demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love: we may then be able to gain emotional sobriety.

Of course, I haven't offered you a really new idea --- only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own hexes' at depth. Nowadays, my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine."

Bill Wilson
(Thank you Frank Z. for providing this *Grapevine* article.)

ATTITUDE IS EVERYTHING

FEBRUARY HISTORY IN ALCHOLICS ANONYMOUS

February 13, 1937 – Oxford Groups “Alcoholic Squadron” met at the home of Hank P. (“The Unbeliever” in the 1st edition of the Big Book) in New Jersey.

February 11, 1938 – Clarence S. (“Home Brewmeister” in 1st, 2nd & 3rd editions) had his last drink.

February 21, 1939 – 400 copies of the Big Book manuscript were sent to doctors, judges, psychiatrists, and others for comment.

February 8, 1940 – Bill W., Dr. Bob, and six other A.A.s asked 60 rich friends of John D. Rockefeller, Jr. for money at the Union Club, N Y. They got \$2,000.

February 13, 1940 – With about two years of sobriety, Jim B. (“The Vicious Cycle”) moved to the Philadelphia area and started the first Philadelphia A.A. group.

February 28, 1940— Seven alcoholics met in a room at 22nd and Delancey Streets in Philadelphia. The primary purpose was to support the resolve of each of those present not to drink alcohol and to discuss a way of helping others like them to stay sober. They decided to start an Alcoholics Anonymous group in Philadelphia.

February 16, 1941 – Baltimore Sunday Sun reported city’s first AA group begun in 1940 had grown from 3 to 40 members, with five being women.

February 18, 1943 – AA’s were granted the right to use cars for 12th step work in emergency cases, despite gas rationing.

February 12, 1945 – World War II paper shortage forced reduction in size of the Big Book.

February 15, 1946 – AA Tribune, Des Moines, IA, reported 36 new members since Marty M. had been there.

Feb 14, 1971 – AA groups worldwide held a memorial service for Bill Wilson.

February 19, 1967 – Father “John Doe” (Ralph P.), 1st Catholic Priest in AA, died.

February 24, 2002 — Hal M., “Dr. Attitude of Gratitude,” died. He had 37 years of sobriety. Hal testified, anonymously, before the U.S. Senate Subcommittee on

Alcoholism and Drug Abuse on December 3, 1970.

Other February happenings with no specific date:

1908 – Bill W. made boomerang.

1938 – Rockefeller gave \$5,000 to AA.

1939 – Dr. Harry Tiebout endorsed AA, the first psychiatrist to do so.

1940 – First organization meeting of Philadelphia AA is held at McCready H.’s room at 2209 Delaney Street.

1940 – 1st AA clubhouse opened at 334-1/2 West 24th Street, New York, NY

1951 – Fortune magazine article about AA was published in pamphlet form.

1959 – AA granted “Recording for the Blind” permission to tape the Big Book.

1963 – Harpers carried article critical of AA.

1981 – 1st issue of “Markings,” AA Archives Newsletter, was published, “to give the Fellowship a sense of its own past and the opportunity to study it.”

Group Histories

Do you know your group’s history? Your group’s history is an important part of the growth of AA in southern New Jersey. The Archive Committee of South Jersey Intergroup is collecting the histories of the groups in our area. Why not download our group history questionnaire located at <https://aasj.org/resources-page/archives/> and submit it to Archive@aasj.org.

The Archive Committee organizes and stores historic materials regarding the South Jersey Intergroup. We gather histories of the groups and Old-timers for our area. If you have historic documents/literature to donate or would like to be interviewed about your group’s story or your own personal story, please email us at archives@aasj.org