

April 2025



The Sobriety Gazette

A PUBLICATION OF THE MID-MISSISSIPPI INTERGROUP

Let's begin with a moment of silence for the alcoholics/addicts still suffering, followed by the Serenity Prayer... God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

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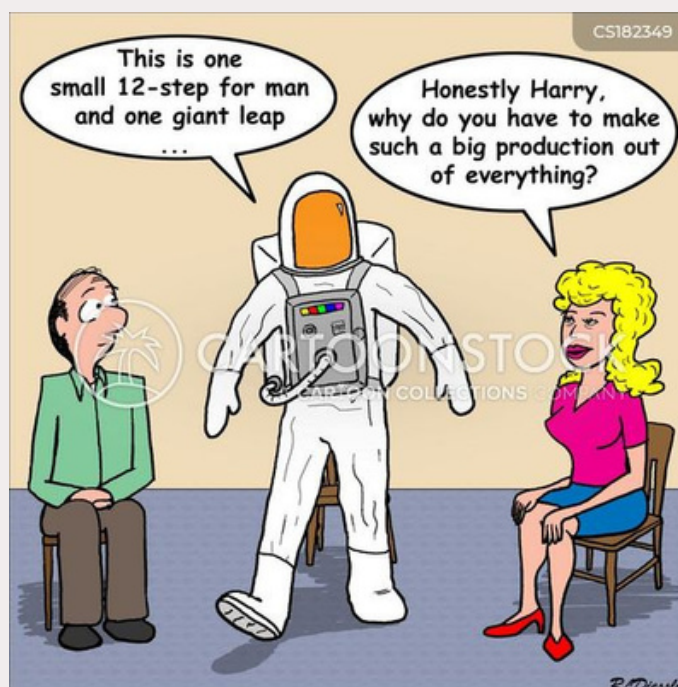
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Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

Responsibility Statement

I am responsible... When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.

The Fourth Step Prayer...

Dear God, It is I who has made my life a mess. I have done it, but I cannot undo it. My mistakes are mine and I will begin a searching and fearless moral inventory. I will write down my wrongs but I will also include that which is good. I pray for the strength to complete the task.' AMEN

The Sobriety Gazette is a publication of the Mid-Mississippi Intergroup. The purpose of this publication is to improve communication between local AA groups, inform and encourage participation in service opportunities and events that promote sobriety. Opinions expressed do not necessarily indicate endorsement by the central office or Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

Step Four Prayer of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA).

What is it and How Does it Work?

The 4th Step often feels like the first big step, but it isn't. The first big step is the first step and everything else follows that first admission. This fourth step reads: Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. This is the first step that involves dealing with our character. And like all the other steps there's a prayer for this one as well "Help me to see where resentment has plagued me and resulted in spiritual malady, but more importantly help me to understand my part in these resentments. Help me to resolutely look for my own mistakes and to understand where I had been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened. Please help me to be searching and fearless in my endeavor to write my inventory."

(<http://friendsofbillw.net/twelve.step.prayers>)

Actually, there are many prayers associated with the Fourth Step, such as this 4th step Resentment Prayer, also from the Friends of Bill W website: "God, please help me to honestly take stock. Help me to search out the flaws in my make-up which caused my failure."

Step Four involves a drastic self-appraisal. When I approach this step, I think it's important to take a whole inventory and not just focus on the flaws we have. The defects of character are the most important part, but I think that seeing the whole person is critical too. When someone takes stock in a warehouse, they want to see what they have and what is missing. By focusing on both, we avoid morbid reflection.

The fourth step is difficult and by seeing the whole picture we avoid beating up on ourselves more than we are likely to. There are going to be many negative feelings as we start to make conscious contact with what we were like perhaps for the first time in our lives. This is the first milestone on the path to dealing with life on life's terms, something most of us were never much good at.

When we were drinking, we were in bondage of self, and we need to realize that most things we did were for our own selfish ends. By taking a fearless moral inventory we start to realize how the problems today are because of our old ways and prepare to deal with the personal consequences. One of the biggest issues with this step is that it becomes so much more than just an inventory and a drastic self-appraisal.

From the bottom of my heart, please think of the words that you will have heard read out in The Promises at every meeting: We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it

There is wisdom in that statement and in this step when we first encounter it and explore what we did for our own selfish ends, there is likely to be a great deal of regret. When I did this step, I felt such guilt that it seemed my mental health was being challenged. Actually, it was my former mental condition that was being challenged, and it was all part of placing me back on the road to sanity.

Let me go back to that promise and try and explain the wisdom of it in one paragraph. If we shut the door on the past and forget our old ways, we risk forgetting what we were like and relapsing. If we regret the past, we will wallow in self-loathing and self-pity, and that too is a danger to sobriety. I see the three main challenges to not wanting a drink as being anger, resentment, and self-loathing. Remember this is all preparation for the next step, the one which is for many the most fearsome of all the twelve steps. Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Only with what is referred to in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous as a "fearless moral inventory" in this step can the fifth step bring all the spiritual progress it is meant to. We can't fully move on to better things when the past is still unresolved. We can't fully move on while we have a single defect of character that we have not revealed and picked apart. We can progress certainly, but if we leave anything uncovered, we are hiding the truth from ourselves, and that, for me at least, affected the way of my usefulness to myself.

So how do we approach this step, this turning point? For me, there were several things I needed to deal with while I did this step.

- The biggest hurdle for me was becoming my chief critic for every particular area of my life. We aren't good at taking hard looks at ourselves. It is a new experience and has to be done with the right ideal in mind for each specific matter.
- We often use the term compassionate understanding when dealing with others. Here we need to try and apply it to ourselves. I was a sick person trying to find the right answer for my life.
- I needed an open mind to deal with each of my own defects. Remember that, for me at least, a fact of my life is that my drinking led to self-seeking motives. The only way I could clean house and prepare for any corrective measures was to be as honest with myself as I could.
- The other thing we need to realize is that when we get to the next step that when we reveal these failings to God, we are opening ourselves up to God's forgiveness. The more complete our self-examinations the more broadly we open ourselves up to a spiritual awakening and the spiritual experience that the AA opens for us.
- When I did this step, I needed to have a tolerance of others. Some of the things we recollect may involve sick people such as ourselves. When we reflect on any questionable situation in our past and feel in those situations that we were wronged, we need to ask God's help.

Were we wronged or is it simply our view that says there was a transgression against us? Remember that as the prayer says we had been, "selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened."

If we were indeed at the wrong end of something, then we need to seek a spirit of forgiveness and to recall our own house is not in order.

This really is where we need to bring the 4th Step Resentment Prayer to bear on our thoughts as we try to do the right thing. Later on, as we carry the message to the still suffering alcoholic, tolerance of others will stand us and those we are trying to help in good stead. It is crucial that we have a tolerant view as we seek the way of patience.

Remember that everything in this 12-step program is connected and bear in mind that in step 8 we will need to make a list of all persons we had harmed.

I think that when I first did this step was when I began to appreciate the value of the serenity prayer. I could not change the things I had done even though from the bottom of my heart I wished I could, and dear God, I needed serenity in great measure to accept that.

This is the time to start making that list of people we will need to make amends to. We must open ourselves fully to our Higher Power in complete honesty to fully invest in the rewards of the spiritual life that starts at this point of the twelve steps. This prayer along with the other recovery prayers acts as a meditation on the meaning and requirements of the steps.

This is also the first step where the sponsor, who is also likely to be the person you admit things to in step five begins to play a huge role. Perhaps the sponsor can find a fourth-step worksheet online and work through it with you. Remember your sponsor has been where you are now and went through the same harrowing exercise as you are now.

Do not focus on comparing your past with what your sponsor was like. Do not compare it with the speakers you have heard. We are all united by our addiction to alcohol and that is the guiding principle, not who was better or worse or more addicted. The reason we are here is simple.

Step 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.

This is not a time to try and minimize the fact by backing away and trying to feel better because someone else's low point was lower than ours. We reached as low as we needed to before we realized that action was necessary.

The book Twelve and Twelve encourages us to write down the inventory. Therefore, thoroughness ought to be the watchword when taking inventory. In this connection, it is wise to write out our questions and answers. It will be an aid to clear thinking and honest appraisal. It will be the first tangible evidence of our complete willingness to move forward. (p. 54)

I like the phrase "first tangible evidence of our complete willingness to move forward." This is an indicator of just how massive this step of self-examination is on this fantastic road to becoming free of drink that cursed us and frankly resulted in hurting others.

By Hilary Reynolds

soberspeak.com/step-four-pray

Service Work: Giving Back in AA, Large and Small

When we've overcome the immense burden of drink addiction, we're bound to feel gratitude for what the program has so freely given us. The small asks from our sponsors and meetings do not compare with the gift of removing the immense misery of addiction.

So we start to think about ways we can give back. We think about what we can do for the program outside of the voluntary money contributions. Thankfully, there are numerous ways for us to engage in service work.

Service work and commitments also help us in our times of need. Often we need to engage in service even when it's not feelings of gratitude that we bring. Service takes us out of ourselves when we're feeling anxious, scared, or angry, so it protects us from slipping.

Sponsorship

The most common way to give back is to sponsor others. Sponsorship depends on you having worked the steps yourself so that you have a message to share. If you haven't worked the steps, get those done so you can engage in the enjoyment of sponsorship.

Becoming a sponsor shouldn't be a passive activity where you only raise your hand when the meeting chairperson asks who's available to sponsor. Instead, you can actively seek out potential sponsees by talking with newcomers and getting to know them. If someone picks up a white chip at the meeting, that's a good queue for you to introduce yourself, get to know them, and offer your phone number. Ask for their phone number and check in with them the next day as well.

Engaging other people and showing interest is a more sure way that they'll ask you to sponsor them. Reaching out to them on your own accord puts you ahead of most people by showing interest and your willingness to help. Newcomers take note of your enthusiasm and already know someone to help and work the steps with them.

Chairing Meeting

Next, you can perform service by leading meetings. Being a chairperson means you have to find a discussion leader beforehand, set up the meeting, pass out readings, and manage the donations.

The time commitment is smaller than full-blown sponsorship and puts you in the center of the action. You're not passively listening in the meeting and passing the time. You are contributing one of the most important forms of service to ensure the meeting goes off well.

Attend a Business Meeting: Take on a service position

Thirdly, business meetings are a great way to find where the meeting needs volunteers. Business meetings are usually held every quarter, either before or after the regularly scheduled meeting. You may need to ask a homegroup member when the next meeting is.

Business meetings are also a great way to see how the upkeep and administration of overall AA processes work. There's a whole world of broad activity that occurs outside of the 1 hour of a meeting. You'll learn about how votes are held for donation handling, paying rent, building up supplies, and changes to the meeting format.

Ultimately, you'll discover the democratic ideology that permeates the entire program, all the way up to the global service office.

If you stick around the business meeting, you may be encouraged to apply for a service role. Let's describe some of these roles.

Treasurer

The treasurer is one of the most trusted positions since it involves managing the group's finances. This position is also one of the hardest to fill since many people don't feel comfortable or skilled at keeping good books and records.

However, most of the time, we're not talking about vast sums of money, and record-keeping isn't as complex as many people believe. For the most part, you keep track of what goes into the bank and what goes out to pay for group necessities, such as rent, coffee, and chips. The time commitment should not be a burden for smaller meetings.

Secretary

The secretary has a vital role in keeping a meeting organized. Tasks include:

- Taking the minutes of the business meeting
- Overseeing the business meeting, such as which topics are brought to a vote and recording yeas/nays
- Keeping an archive of meeting information.

The time commitment is probably a bit less than what's required of a treasurer, but the secretary still plays a vital role in service.

General Service Representative

The General Service Representative, or GSR, brings the group's voice to their area's assembly. Each area is like a district that groups fall under. The area usually meets quarterly or bi-quarterly to vote on matters that affect the broader district.

Literature Representative

The literature rep makes sure official texts are stocked and highlighted during meetings. Literature includes

- Pamphlets and information brochure
- Big Book, 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, and other official texts
- Grapevine subscription information and perhaps old archives to give out

Coffee Crew

The coffee crew is straightforward: show up early to start brewing and stay later to clean up. It also includes the responsibility for ensuring enough supply on hand, shopping for more if needed, and keeping receipts so that the treasurer can reimburse you

Showing up early/leaving late

An essential aspect of getting into any service at meetings is arriving early and sticking by after the meeting ended. Many people show up when the meeting starts and leave at the very minute it ends. Doing the bare minimum will not suffice for finding ways to be of service.

As a rule of thumb, show up 20 minutes early and stay 20 minutes late. This isn't always possible for every meeting you attend, but the rule gives plenty of time for you to learn of new opportunities. Plus, it gives you a chance to meet home group members and regulars.

Giving rides to people without cars

As a result of multiple DUIs, many meeting attendees have lost their driver's licenses. If you have a vehicle, you can give rides to those who don't have easy means of transportation.

The drive to the meeting is also more enjoyable. You get to know a newcomer and hear their story.

These are just a few suggestions for giving back. There are countless ways to get involved. Service strengthens your gratitude for your sobriety, gets you out of your head, and protects you against a possible slip.

The program touts service as one of the only sure ways to stay sober long term. For many, service isn't optional but is the central resource for their recovery. So it should not be pushed aside as a time-suck or distraction from more important matters.

Service work is the most crucial activity for long-term sobriety.

Breaking Down Step Four of Alcoholics Anonymous

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”

How To Do An Inventory: Searching And Fearless

So how do you actually do a personal inventory? Most of the people you will be relying on to guide you through Step Four probably believe there is no exact right or wrong way to practice this step. I think that what is important, is that we follow the general principle of self-honesty, and that we are willing to be “searching and fearless” in the pursuit of truth (By the way, when we say “fearless,” we do not mean you will have no feelings of fear; fearless means you will not let your fears stop you from being thorough in your inventory process. With Step Four, it means you commit to rigorous honesty as you focus on events in your life, including your own weaknesses, and specifically not on anyone else’s weaknesses).

Old timers will take the approach of reviewing the seven deadly sins as laid out in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, while others will benefit from a review of sampling the more significant events from their lives as well. Using the process outlined in the Big Book is an essential guideline to reviewing the biggies: resentments, fears and sexual conduct.

Resentments, Let Them Go

In Alcoholics Anonymous we learn that resentment is a condition or state of mind whereby one relives some past event, and feels the emotion from that event as if it were happening right now. Resentment is literally to feel (sentire) again (re), and it is the fuel that feeds the fires of our addictions. In fact, the original members of AA who wrote the book Alcoholics Anonymous believed “resentment was the number one offender, and that it destroys more alcoholics than anything else.” (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 64).

One way to do an inventory is to list memories of people, institutions or organizations; principles, ideas, or beliefs; and events, situations, or circumstances that have triggered positive and negative feelings (including sadness, regret, anger, resentment, fear, bitterness). There will be some items on your lists that may appear multiple times. That is okay. Do not try to sort or judge or analyze at this point. For now, just be as thorough as possible.

It’s important to note that some people will try to avoid writing their moral inventory, feeling embarrassed or fearful about their writing ability or even about someone else reading what they wrote. I implore you not to let these fears stop you! Until you put it in a tangible form, you still haven’t done your Fourth Step. If there are things that you think are so “bad” that you just can’t include them in your Step Four inventory, you are not alone. I swear to you your sponsor has heard and probably done the same things or “worse.” Rest assured that in the history of AA there has never been something in a Fourth Step inventory that was so unique, or worse than what every other human being has done that they had to create a whole new category.

Questions To Ask While Doing Your Fourth Step In AA

Here are some questions to help guide and prepare you for doing Step Four- they by no means take the place of doing the Fourth Step inventory as laid out in the Big Book of AA:

- What people, places or things do you resent and what led to those resentments?
- How did your behavior contribute to your resentments?
- How have your resentments affected your life, your relationships with others and yourself?
- Who or what do you fear and why? And how do you respond destructively or negatively to your fears?
- Who or what do you feel ashamed or guilty about?
- What feelings do you have the most trouble allowing yourself to feel, and how do you act out?
- How have your fears and resentments affected your friendships, and your family, work and romantic relationships?
- Have you compulsively sought after sex? Have you used sex to try to fill a spiritual void or loneliness? Have any of your sexual practices hurt others or your self?
- What do healthy relationships look like to you?
- Are there secrets that you haven’t told anyone or written about in your step work?

Completing Step Four Of AA Alcoholics Anonymous: Foundation For Freedom

If the thought of making that searching and fearless inventory of yourself feels overwhelming, know you are not alone. My heart goes out to you as I remember my struggles to find the willingness to complete this step. The key is to put pen to paper and just start.

Even though remembering the past may be painful, it can propel you into a new life of peace, as you learn how to look back without staring. Ask someone who has completed this step how it helped him or her, and how the hope of recovery can help you through the pain of remorse to the joy of forgiveness.

Make sure to check in with what spiritual principles you are practicing in your life, how your faith in a higher power has grown, and how you are showing gratitude for your recovery.

Be prepared, when finishing a Fourth Step inventory you can feel exhilarated, or uncomfortable or perhaps even both. No matter what, make sure to congratulate yourself on a major accomplishment, because you now have the foundation for your freedom. After doing Step Four you will have a blueprint for success, and a map to help you steer yourself on the course of continued, long-term sobriety! The only thing left to do is to contact your sponsor and let them know you’re ready to do Step Five.

The Importance of a Home Group

By: Rick W.

When I first came into AA, I didn't have the understanding of the home group I have today. That said, I will say that my first home group was a place that allowed me to identify. There were people in that group that told my story, shared feelings and emotions that I felt and had, did some truly horrible things (like I did) while drinking, and were still sitting in that room laughing their tails off about it all. I was able to find my first sponsor there (even though I was only willing to commit to a temporary sponsor). He was the right and perfect first person that I began to listen to who had already been down the path.

I developed some friends in that group that were very important to me at the time and I was grateful. One thing I will say though, back in 1986 when I first walked in the doors of AA, I never heard one person ever say, "Oh, and make sure you are visiting other groups. Go see what AA is like in other rooms but make sure you make this your home group." Honestly, I didn't even fully understand the idea of a home group because THAT group was the only group I knew about for many, many months. It's not like I didn't know there weren't other groups, it's just that this group met 7 days a week in the same location, had 4-5 meetings a day and since I am gay and it was a gay group, it seemed only logical looking back, that at the time - I wouldn't question it. I simply was never told to go visit other groups... so, I didn't. It was like I was just bouncing off the walls of the Fellowship back then.

I do remember one Saturday night at that home group, it was our biggest meeting each week - a speaker meeting and there generally 100-150 people there each Saturday night. I didn't even know who was speaking, but I just showed up and there was this old woman with big Texas hair who was from the Preston Group across town (I later learned that the Preston Group was one of Dallas's biggest groups and it certainly wasn't gay). I remember thinking to myself, "Who the H is this woman and why is she here speaking to us? She's not gay and she doesn't even belong to this group?" (I'm serious when I say I was kinda just bouncing off the walls of the Fellowship at that point).

It wasn't until I moved to Nashville, TN a year and a half after getting sober that I began to understand what a connection to a home group could look like and that was because the majority of the people with long-term sobriety in that group were all about service and all about giving back. Whether it was to their home group, their District, their Area, or even the Nashville Central Office (Intergroup), I began to see through their example that showing up and giving back was just what they did. I don't know that at that point I would have said that it was vital to my recovery, but I saw them doing it, and since I wanted to fit in, I did it too. I started setting up meetings, washing ashtrays, making coffee, cleaning coffee cups - again, not because I really wanted to, but because it's what THEY did, so I did it too.

It was also the first time that I would begin to truly understand a phrase I heard many years later (and what the real meaning of the phrase was) "Meeting Makers Make It". It was during that time that I showed up, set out literature racks, chaired meetings, greeted people at the door... and I really liked the feeling I had after a meeting know that I played even a small part in making that meeting happen. So, it was then I learned that MIMI is not about how many meetings one attends, it's about the people who make meetings happen - THEY make it. (Service keeps you sober and happy). In my current home group, we have a phrase that I love, "When We Got Busy - We Got Better!"

Since I've been sober, I have had the privilege of helping to start two (2) AA groups - one in New York City (that is still going strong today), and one here in Grapevine, my current home group, The Get In The Car Group of AA. In both instances, I was surrounded by men and women in the Fellowship who were ready for something deeper than what they were currently experiencing. There's a beautiful paragraph on page 164 in the 4th Edition in A Vision for You that says this:

"Still you may say: "But I will not have the benefit of contact with you who write this book." We cannot be sure, God will determine that, so you must remember that your real reliance is always upon Him. He will show you how to create the fellowship you crave."

These men and women helped me find that Fellowship that I craved (in both instances) and I will forever be changed by it. Some of the benefits of having a home group - that place you call home where your family lives:

1. Increased Accountability

At your home group you're known, you're expected to show up, and you're expected to make progress in your recovery. Knowing that your home group is waiting and wants to see you succeed is an extra push of accountability to stay sober. You can't get sober alone which is why a home group shares their triumphs and carries their challenges together, and why accountability is a good thing.

2. Regularity

Structure, like regular tasks and chores are extremely beneficial to sobriety. During my drinking days, it was tough to find any semblance of regularity or normalcy but after I put down the bottle, normal meetings or tasks help remove idol time and overthinking. A regular home group gave me something to look forward to, something to keep my mind occupied, and a sense of normalcy.

3. Friendship and Fellowship

So, you can meet friends and take part in fellowship at any 12 step meeting, but you're encouraged to build real friendships and lasting relationships in your home group. The home group is just that - your recovery 'home.' It's one thing to regularly share at a 12 step meetings but it's another to share at your home group where people understand exactly who you are, the unique obstacles you face, and what type of experience and encouragement will work best for you. My best friend, Shannan C. and her husband Terry C are the perfect examples of that. They are two of the most important people in my life today and had it not been for my home group at the time I met them (which is where I first heard Shannan tell her story), they might not be in my life today - and that's just unacceptable to me.

Having a home group means continuity, responsibility and a place you are seen by others who may want what you have and can get it. This means step work, meeting and greeting and doing the stuff that you may think you are beyond doing such as kitchen duty, toilet duty, mowing the grass and or other needs of that facility where your home group meets that may need help with. One thing though, in the beginning, I might seriously suggest pacing yourself with the amount you take on as this task has led some to go out because of not being able to say HELP or I need some of the load removed.

My life before the program was characterized by isolation. Even when I was with people, I kept them out. I didn't want anyone to know the real me. It's impossible for me to do that with my home group members. They help keep me honest with myself. Other people see me better than I do - especially my home group members.

I hope I never find myself homeless in AA (without a home group). The moment I don't have a home group is the moment I begin to think I don't need my fellow AA members. And I also hope I never find myself in a place again (long story) like I was at 18 years sober where I just showed up once a month or so, gave nothing and took everything each time I graced the doors. Effectively, I was an AA thief, all I ever did was take, take, take.

I love my home group. Is it perfect? No, but I don't think it's designed to be. It was built as a place for me to learn and grow and share with others AS I learn and grow and let them watch me. I think one of the most important things I can do for the newcomer in my home group is to let them see someone with over 3 decades of recovery tell the truth, and let them see when I am struggling. I want them to be able to see what it looks like to be all caught up in my spiritual illness - but to ALSO watch me as I walk through it and get to the other side.

I love my home group. Is it today what it was pre-COVID? No, it is not. But I refuse to let a pandemic get in the way of re-imagining ways in which I can carry our life saving message to the still suffering alcoholic who is dying. I hope I never forget that we are in one business and one business only - the life saving business - and that starts and ends for me in the home group.

Tradition Four

“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.”

It's hard to fathom how well Alcoholics Anonymous has fared throughout its years of existence which began in 1935. Navigating the waters in those early days was a lot more treacherous than the average member of today's AA population would be aware of, since efforts of the founders have been proven to have weathered each and every storm that appeared on the horizon. The AA members of that time did however, have the experience of understanding the mistakes of their predecessors. The Oxford Group, which had some success where it had recorded over one hundred thousand sober members before it ventured outside certain boundaries and got off the track when religion seemed to become more of an agenda than sobriety.

Then there was the similar experience when it came to the Washingtonians that also let outside influences like politics and outside money issues take over the agenda. These mistakes did not go unnoticed by the early members of the AA program and may have been the things that set the tone for being very careful about sticking to our singleness of purpose requirement, and structuring the tradition in a way that gives the individual groups as much leeway as possible as not to discourage diversity yet staying on course when it comes to rules that would omit any alcoholic that wants to get sober.

Autonomy is simply a form of independence that gives each group the latitude to be creative in their own way, when it wants to appeal to certain factions of the alcoholic community at large so long as it doesn't cross over into making those painful mistakes that could lead us down that path that led to the dismantling of those groups that came before AA. Today, in AA we have meetings that cater to specific segments of the AA population, such as: Men's Meetings, Women's Meetings, Closed Meetings, [alcoholics only], Open Meetings, Gay and Lesbian Meetings, Step Study, Big Book, Spanish Speaking, and on and on. The common theme for all of these meetings is to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Anyone who has a desire to quit drinking cannot be turned away if, indeed that meeting wants to continue to be called an AA meeting.

I was serving in the U.S. Navy at the time when I got sober in late 1969 and shortly after my one year sober celebration, I was on a plane heading to the Philippines to go aboard a fuel tanker and I spent the next four months hauling fuel out to the Tonkin Gulf and refueling the convoys of ships out there during the Vietnam War. During that four months period I was unable to go to a single AA meeting. What did happen during that time when I was cut off from the daily news concerning the AA program, without my knowledge was the sad news that Bill W. had passed away. This happened shortly after I left the country and by the time I returned home it was no longer the topic of conversation and I heard nothing about it.

Shortly after I returned home my wife and I attended an AA convention in California and to my surprise, the main event at that convention was the Bill W. Memorial Meeting, and I had no idea when he had passed away, it could have been ten years earlier for all I knew. On the stage at that meeting there were ten chairs lined up and seated in those chairs were ten of the most prominent speakers of that time, and each of them were to tell a five minute story of their own personal experience with Bill. The one story that I still remember from that meeting goes something like this.

On a request from some of his AA friends on the west coast, Bill was on a train going to California to speak at several well planned out meetings. The members of AA in a small Midwestern town heard that his train would be stopping in their town and asked if he would consider stopping over for a day and speaking at their meeting. He agreed to do it as he usually did in those days. When the train arrived the town members expected Bill to arrive with an entourage of people assisting him, and they had arranged a welcoming with a band, a large crowd, and an all the town's dignitaries. When the train stopped, the only one that got off was Bill, as he walked down the ramp alone with one suitcase. He proceeded to the planned meeting place and as the meeting began, Bill was somewhat shocked when the members started the meeting with several church hymns. Never the less, he fulfilled his promise and gave his talk and was again disturbed when the meeting ended with several more hymns. After completing his stay he boarded a train and continued on his way. On the train, what kept bothering Bill was "what are they doing to AA with the hymns" and it didn't seem right. Then Bill started thinking about the size and the population of that small town, and about the large number of alcoholics that attended that meeting and he concluded that, per capita, that was probably the largest meeting in the country and if they wanted to sing hymns, well that's their business.

I believe that tradition four leaves it up to the individual group's discretion to consider the different cultural influences that affect the make up and the structure of the meeting format and I believe that Bill got it right as long as it does not change the spirit of our primary purpose, to carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers and that no one with a desire to stop drinking can be turned away.

LET THEM SING

By: Rick R.

aacle.org

Tradition Four Checklist

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in AA?
2. Does my group consider the welfare of nearby groups in its actions and decisions? Of AA "as a whole"?
3. Do I judge or criticize other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in AA, I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help a newcomer go to any lengths—their lengths, not mine—to stay sober?
6. Do I ever criticize certain groups because I think they don't do things how I believe AA should be done?

aagrapevine.org

Announcements

Want to be updated about AA Announcements, Events, and the Sobriety Gazette?
Contact midmissintergroup@gmail.com to get involed!

Your Trusted Servants

Chair -	Sam C.
Treasurer -	Karen M.
Secretary -	Kelli P.
Corrections -	Daryl R.
Treatment -	Natalie F.
Intergroup Liaison -	Kurt J.
IT/WEB -	Bruce M.
Newsletter Editor -	Natalie F.

Community Resources

NA -	mrsrna.net
Al-Anon -	msafg.org
SLAA -	www.slaa@gmail.com
Ms. Dept. of Mental Health -	dmh.ms.gov

Feel free to contact Mid Mississippi
Intergroup if you have any questions!

Intergroup meets on
the first Thursday of
each month at
6:30 pm.
NEW LOCATION
6481 Old Canton Rd.
Jackson, Mississippi
39211

The Intergroup Central Office wants to
extend a deep thanks to some of our
long standing contributors and our
excited welcome to others!

James S.	Kurt J.	Duan J.
Al & Donna H.	Karen M.	Hugh O.
David Mc.	Keith F.	Chris G.
Preston P.	Jimmy M.	Jason S.
Jeff W.	Andy D.	
Bruce M.	Barry B.	

Quote of the Month

"If I get rid of the drugs and alcohol but
don't work on my morals, principles and
spirituality, I'm still the exact same person
just without the substances, and that really
defeats the main purpose behind
recovery." - Richard Ashcroft

Yes! I Want to Be a Faithful Fiver

Date _____
Here is my contribution of \$ _____ for _____ Months
Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Home Group _____
Sobriety Date: Month _____ Date _____ Year _____

Got any
ideas for the next
Sobriety Gazette? Any
questions for the editor?
Contact:
nntillingane@gmail.com

Faithful Fivers

Faithful Fivers are AA members who pledge at least five dollars each month to support their Central Office. This idea is catching on around the country. The plan came about when we remembered that many of us had spent far more than \$5.00 a month on alcohol during our drinking days.

As a Faithful Fiver, you support the effects of
Mis-Mississippi Intergroup: to carry the message of hope to still-suffering alcoholics.

To become a Faithful Fiver simply send monthly contributions to
Central Office

Post Office Box 16228
Jackson, Mississippi 39236