

NOVEMBER 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.

Contact Information

Telephone

601-982-0081

(Answers 24 hours a day)

Address

4526 Office Park Drive

Mail Donations to:

PO Box 16228

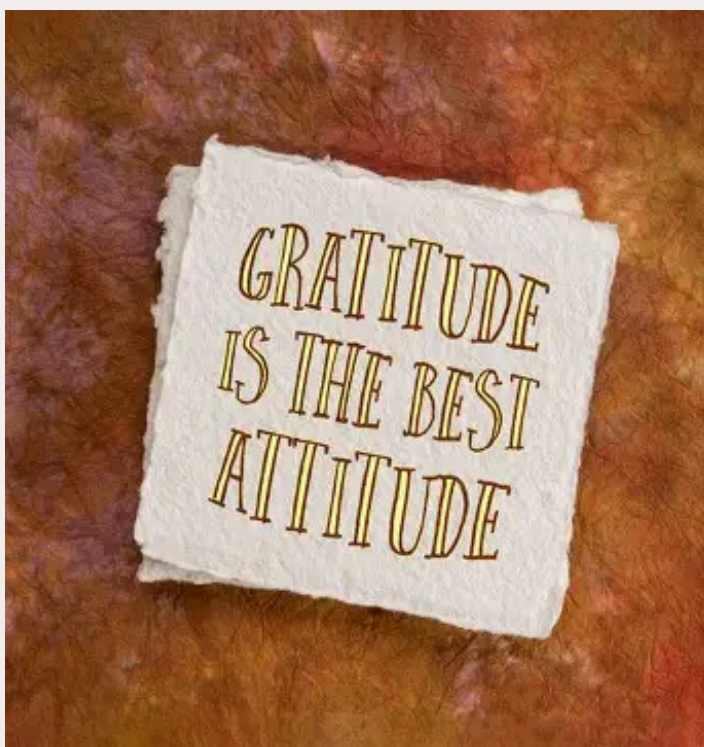
Jackson, MS 35236

Website

www.midmissintergroup.org

E-mail

midmissintergroup@gmail.com



Tradition Eleven

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.

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 Eleventh Step Prayer...

"GOD, I'm agitated and doubtful right now. Help me to stop and remember that I've made a decision to let You be my God. Give me the right thoughts and actions. God, save me from fear, anger, worry, selfpity or foolish decisions and that Your will, not my will, be done.
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.

An Authentic Attitude of Gratitude

Throughout my recovery I've struggled with cultivating an attitude of gratitude towards my life and circumstances. I have suffered with a depressive condition and physical health difficulties all my adult life, which have greatly influenced my viewpoint or 'frame of reference'. I'm a long-term member of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) and find it difficult to relate to the claim of being "happy, joyous and free" made by many within the Fellowship of AA. It seems to me much easier to be thankful if you are healthy and life is going well for you. There is a great emphasis upon being positive in recovery and a tendency to think "I must be doing it wrong" if one feels less than happy and grateful. This is not helped by some AA members suggesting this to be the case and being judgmental of others who don't feel as joyous about their recovery or life experience. Only last week in a meeting I heard an AA member suggesting that he "wouldn't give tuppence" for someone's recovery if they are not happy or grateful.

This viewpoint seems to be connected to the fallacy that spiritual endeavour somehow guarantees being serene and joyous. To the contrary, a significant degree of spiritual growth seems to come about due to experiencing suffering and adversity in life. St Francis of Assisi is a well-known example of this phenomenon; his Step Eleven prayer is often quoted by members of the AA fellowship (p.101, 12 Steps & 12 Traditions). This leads to the related idea that we often only truly appreciate life when we emerge from "the dark night of the soul". It's common for our difficult and destructive experiences to lead to new awakenings and values. Therefore, as well as basic compassion, we have another reason that we should be supportive and not dismissive of others' experiencing unhappiness and adversity in recovery.

Another erroneous idea which is present within the Fellowship of AA, is that you cannot be grateful and unhappy at the same time. While being grateful definitely helps to reduce distress and unhappiness (scientific research says so!), it doesn't exempt one from suffering and the associated negative feelings that often accompany it. It's quite possible to feel unhappy in relation to particular aspects of one's life, or life in general, while feeling grateful for being free from addiction and for the help and support we receive from others. It's also possible to see the inherent beauty within life and nature, while at the same time experiencing suffering, unhappiness and adversity.

I feel genuinely thankful for certain things about my life and towards particular people who've given me love and support, but I don't feel happy about the suffering that I've endured and the distress this has caused me to feel about my life. I can see growth on a personal and spiritual level due to the difficulties I've been through, but I cannot honestly say I *feel* grateful for them. It's also impossible to know how I would have developed if I'd been more fortunate in my life.

I can appreciate that cultivating gratitude is a helpful and beneficial practice and can aid in the 'reframing' of difficult circumstances. However, this needs to be an honest endeavour and not just a strategy to deny the things we feel ungrateful for or unhappy about. It's normal and natural to feel unhappy about negative, painful and distressing things in life.

After facing and honestly feeling our distress in relation to the circumstances we feel unhappy about, we can then choose to focus upon the things in our lives that we are genuinely grateful for. I'm not advocating dwelling upon unhappiness and letting it overwhelm us, just honestly facing and feeling the reality of life and not suppressing it. When I face and accept my difficulties and the circumstances I feel unhappy about, I then find it helpful to focus upon how I can help myself. I'm a great believer in being positive in this sense in an attempt to reduce my suffering, whilst not denying it.

Gratitude for the good things in life is a virtue. However, we shouldn't shame others for finding life unpleasant or very difficult. Suggesting that others "*should be more positive*" or that they should "*be grateful for what they have*" is often more about the individual offering the advice being uncomfortable with their own darker feelings. They cannot bear their own negative feelings and so try to deny them in others to.

In recovery the emphasis upon practising spiritual principles can encourage us to unconsciously dismiss and avoid our darker feelings, which can lead to unhealthy repression. This process is known as "spiritual bypassing", a defense mechanism employed by the ego to protect our perceived sense of self. In order to be whole and healthy we need to experience and work through our naturally occurring "negative feelings" before reaching more positive states of being, such as acceptance, forgiveness and gratitude.

In suggesting the adoption of an authentic attitude towards being grateful, I'm advocating being fully human and accepting the full spectrum of emotions, dark and light. Human beings experience life differently, some suffering more than others, with some seemingly very fortunate in their capacity to be positive and grateful in relation to life and its hardships. Therefore, we should be mindful that our frame of reference is only our experience and understanding and not project this onto others.

I do think that focusing upon things we are genuinely grateful for, whilst not denying our difficulties, is beneficial for health and well-being. It's also beneficial for strengthening our social relationships as people like to be appreciated. All the studies into gratitude suggest that this is the case, but emphasize that sincerity counts. It's unhealthy to falsely express gratitude when we don't genuinely *feel* grateful. It's the quality of our thanks that's crucial to its beneficial power.

Regularly reflecting upon the gifts in life that we honestly value increases our conscious appreciation of them and prevents the tendency to take things for granted. However, this needs to be heartfelt and not just another head exercise. I've been reminded very recently that the best way to express and strengthen the gratitude that I feel in my heart is to 'pass it on' to others. (1) This can be thought of as "living in gratitude" and is a core principle of the 12-Step fellowships. We can give to others 'that which has been freely given to us'.

Whilst finding gratitude difficult in relation to certain aspects of my life, it's in my best interests, and those of others, to authentically practice this much admired virtue and to place my focus upon the things in life that I'm *genuinely very grateful for*.

Breaking Down Step Eleven of Alcoholics Anonymous

“Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.”

“The process of enlightenment is usually slow. But in the end, our seeking always brings a finding. These great mysteries are, after all, enshrined in complete simplicity.” - Bill W

Exploring spirituality in the 11th Step of AA Alcoholics anonymous can be a wonderful and illuminating experience. We now have a solid frame of reference built by the previous Ten Steps of AA. Our recovery has helped us to stay sober one day at a time, and has allowed us to expand our capacity for new information about ourselves, and the world around us. This open mindedness is one of the greatest things about AA. In AA the concept of a “higher power” and “God as we understand him” really affords every single person, from every walk of life, an unlimited choice of spiritual beliefs and actions.

In recovery we find that spirituality really is constantly developing and changing just like us. New situations and new people all have an effect on us and our spirituality needs to grow along those lines. The Step 11 task at hand is therefore finding ways to improve conscious contact and connection with the “God” of our own understanding. We already have a conscious awareness of a “higher power” working in our lives, which we began to develop in Step Two. Working on Step Three we learned to trust that higher power for guidance. In the process of working through all of the steps so far, we were improving our relationship with the higher power. While working on the 11th step we come to realize that reaching out to a God of our understanding is also simply known as prayer and meditation, which can be one of the most effective means for building a relationship with our higher power.

When we first came to Alcoholics Anonymous most of us realized pretty darn quickly that we needed to change our relationship with the word and concept of “God”. Its more than likely that while using our drug of choice we didn’t understand- or care to understand- anything about a higher power and likely had some very unhealthy ideas about it... unless it was to make a brazen demand along the lines of “Do this for me now and I won’t use again.”

Working on the previous 10 Steps you were forming new ideas that allowed for a loving, caring higher power to be a part of your life, and coming to believe in a power greater than yourself. When I sat down to work on my Fifth Step with my first sponsor, I was filled with a quiet certainty that not only could I trust my sponsor and trust this process, but also going forward I felt the presence of a higher power.

This part of the AA journey is going to be so different for everyone, and there’s no right or wrong God, just as there’s no right or wrong way to improve conscious contact. For some, being in recovery may mean healing resentments that we may have held against religious institutions. For some the religion of their childhood was little more than a community or sentimental connection but can now work really well for them as part of their personal spiritual path.

Step 11 Of AA: The Spiritual Path Out Of Addiction

Exploring our spiritual path in Step 11 means picking up, leaning into and/or discarding various spiritual practices. AA it’s self does not have any official or specifically approved spiritual path. The AA program of recovery offers a set of spiritual principles, and uses a concept referred to as “God” or “higher power” or “power greater than ourselves” for members to use as a path out of active addiction. Whether you are solid as a rock in your concept of a higher power and your spiritual path, or if your current state of mind holds no answers for you yet, it doesn’t matter. Why? Because, at this point on our journey we can embark on a search for a better way to understand our higher power.

This process allows us room for adventure, humility and faith. We have the option to visit every place that has anything to do with spirituality that’s available in our community. Some people I know love churches, cathedrals, synagogues and even graveyards as places where they feel divinely in tune. Others find that connection in nature, doing something they love, or through volunteering. It is also highly suggested that as you progress in recovery that you enhance your life with the abundant number of books and publications concerned with AA, spirituality and personal growth.

However, a central part of working Step 11 is not letting our own personal spiritual path take us away from the fellowship and practice of AA. Remember that we need the rooms of AA in order to deal with our addiction; our spiritual path, meditation and prayer will enhance the quality of our recovery but nothing can take the place of AA meetings, service and fellowship. With the 11thstep we are adding to the many ingredients that make up the perfect sobriety pie. Nothing can take the place of the serenity we feel the moment we step into a meeting, or shake the hand of a newcomer.





Prayer And Meditation: A Mindful Place Of Serenity

“In AA we have found that the actual good results of prayer are beyond question. They are matters of knowledge and experience. All those who have persisted have found strength not ordinarily their own. They have found wisdom beyond the usual capability. And they have increasingly found a peace of mind which can stand firm in the face of difficult circumstances.” – Bill W

If you haven't heard it before, AA is a simple program for complex people. Most members of Alcoholics Anonymous will say this simple suggestion about Step 11: Prayer is “talking to God” and meditation is “listening to God's reply.” This collective wisdom succinctly captures the meanings of prayer and meditation so well. It's also a great reminder that improving conscious contact means building a relationship with God. In order to build any kind of relationship there needs to be a dialogue- and not merely a monologue, in one direction.

So how do we enact in prayer and meditation exactly?

When we say that prayer is talking to a higher power, it doesn't always have to be literally in the form of actual speech. Thinking a prayer, writing it or signing it may work for you. The key is to develop a form of prayer that feels right to you. If you have been attending AA meetings you have experienced saying a prayer. Even if the only prayers you say are the ones at AA meetings, you have been asking a higher power to keep you sober another day, for knowledge and the power to carry it out. These are habits that are helpful, healthy and may one day save your recovery.

Believe it or not, you have already been meditating every time you've stood as a community, in a meeting and observed the moment of silence. Every time you were out of your own head and listening intently to the story of another person, you were meditating. I firmly believe that this is one of the reasons meetings are the medicine for alcoholics and addicts; that reprieve we feel from the obsessive mind and that refocusing which brings us to the present moment is a major part of meditation. It is a simple fact that prayer, meditation and conscious contact calms us down and grounds us; usually helping to alleviate the fears that seem to overwhelm and threaten our recovery. That's one of the reasons that we say “ It works if you work it.”

While actively working Step 11, any of us begin to notice more and more times when there is a presence of a higher power and the magnificent ways it works in our life. The presence of a loving God can be experienced in nature, in the force of the ocean, through the unconditional love of our sponsor and other AA members and through the feeling of being anchored by our program during the storm of difficult times. That connection to a higher power and the intention of wanting to know what God's will is for us usually shows up while listening to and talking with other members of AA.

If the reason we've been praying and meditating is to seek the knowledge of our higher power's will for us and the power to carry that out, how do we identify what God's will is for our lives? I think it's much simpler to identify what is not God's will. In fact it's a great starting point to acknowledge that it is not God's will for us to relapse. Therefore acting in any way that might lead us to relapse is not God's will and informs us about a whole bunch of behaviors, choices and thoughts that we should NOT engage in. Using all of the knowledge that we have gained from our previous work on steps, about our patterns and ourselves we try our best to avoid destructive patterns.

In “It works: how and why” we read, “ God's will for us is the ability to live with dignity, to love ourselves and others, to laugh, and to find great joy and beauty in our surroundings. Our most heartfelt longings and dreams for our lives are coming true.”

Moving On From Step 11: Power To Carry It Out

“It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself.” – Ralph Waldo Emerson

Now is the time to put knowledge, faith and ideals into action; we can't pass on something that we don't have. Some members of AA find that consistent prayer and meditation helps put a focus on a higher power instead of on them, which is a relief and a freedom. No longer feeling such an urgency to control every little thing in our lives and surrendering that self will run riot, leads to more satisfaction and success. This is a spiritual awakening. As part of our spiritual awakening we begin to manifest the three elements of recovery in AA, which involves the body, the mind and the spirit. These 3 elements together make up who and what we are and therefore true healing includes all of these aspects of the self. Just like a three-legged stool, our recovery cannot stay upright and secure unless all three legs are equally strong. So we work on and maintain all of them equally. With this faith, courage and strength fully realized our days of active addiction no longer seem like a tragedy or a waste. We see that our experiences can serve a higher purpose; we are ready to carry the message to the addict who is still suffering. In Step 12 we are going to explore the ways in which we can carry the message of recovery and to help others who are still suffering.

The 12 Steps are kind of like a recipe for a super human special cake, one that brings about a personality change sufficient to allow alcoholics to recover from our alcoholism. When we've baked in the spiritual experience and arrived at step 12, it's time for the best favorite part, the icing on the cake!

Tradition Eleven

“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.”

Attraction Rather Than Promotion

Bill W. once said, “We had no public relations policy except for a fear of public relations. Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.”

Good public relations are A.A. lifelines reaching out to the fellow alcoholic who still does not know us.

For years to come, our growth is sure to depend upon the strength and number of these lifelines. Conversely, think about this. Should we identify ourselves by our first and last name when we speak at closed meetings of A.A? Does this violate the eleventh tradition? Of course not. We are only anonymous at the level of press, radio, and films. The press has not attended any closed meetings I have spoken at, so I am free to use my whole name. The final paragraph on page 37 of the pamphlet “Frequently Asked Questions About A.A.” states: “It should also be noted that within A.A., at A.A. meetings and amongst themselves, A.A. members are not anonymous.”

Step-Tradition Parallel

The eleventh step is related to the eleventh tradition: by praying only for knowledge of his will for me and the power to carry that out, I become a source of attraction to God and give Him all credit for my wonderful life. The eleventh step poses the question, “How can we improve our conscious contact?” The eleventh tradition answers that question by pointing out that when we do not take credit for the good we do, we become closer to God in our prayer.

(Excerpts from the text above come from the Traditions Study developed by the Unity Insures Recovery Through Service A.A. Group, Los Angeles, CA.)

takethe12.org

Tradition Eleven Checklist

1. Do I sometimes promote AA so fanatically that I might make it seem unattractive?
2. Am I always careful to keep the confidences shared with me as an AA member?
3. Am I careful about throwing AA members' names around—even within the Fellowship?
4. Am I ashamed of being a recovered, or recovering alcoholic?
5. What would AA be like if we were not guided by the ideas in Tradition Eleven? Where would I be?
6. Am I careful not to identify myself or others as members of AA when I post certain things on social media, such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram?
7. Is my AA sobriety attractive enough that a sick drunk would want such a quality for himself?
8. If my group has its own website, have we considered this Tradition when we designed it, how accessible it is, and the type of content that it offers?

aagrapevine.org

Meditation: Recovery's Fuel and Connection

There's a question that haunted most of us when we first showed up at a meeting, clutching coffee cups like lifelines: "What's wrong with me?" But somewhere along the line, through the gentle, mild or aggressive ambush of ritual, recovery flips that script. We stop mining our souls for defects, and start asking: "What's right with me?" and "What could grow if I just stayed open?"

This is what the old-timers and poets call recovery capital. It's the stack of inner and outer resources i.e. spiritual, practical, communal, that which makes sobriety last longer than a New Year's resolution. It's the "fuel in the tank" that keeps us moving! Even when the going is rough. I'd say it's the difference between white-knuckling and living with both hands open.

Here's where meditation enters, not as an escape or a performance, but as the art of conscious contact, our daily meeting with whatever we call Spirit or God of our understanding (even if we're not sure what to call it today because it does change as we do change ourselves). Meditation in recovery isn't about hitting some mystical mileage marker, or sitting in perfect posture until enlightenment arrives like a doordash delivery. It's about gently, persistently returning to the unadorned truth of who we are, which is behind the voices of shame, fear, or the past's broken records. Every single time we stop to listen not just with our ears, but with our wider hearts we are literally stockpiling recovery capital. With each breath, we're making capital deposits: growing resilience, humility, and self-acceptance. Even when it looks like "just sitting there" to an outsider. If meditation were a drumbeat, it would be the steady rhythm that anchors the improv that is a life in recovery. Not trying to drown out the noise, just reminding us there's more than chaos; we belong to something real, something deeper, something shared.

Buddy Fish, who's beating the big drum these days, he's been facing the hard truths about mortality after his lung cancer diagnosis. Many of our fellows in the program have had this face to face with such a diagnosis. He teaches me and anyone lucky enough to sit in his circle that the real medicine isn't always about curing, but about meaning. So let us meditate, make music, share silence together, because each of us is quietly asking, "How do I want to spend the fuel I've got left?" Sometimes, all we can offer is our flawed presence, our rhythm, and our willingness to listen. And that alone is enough. So if you're new, or weary, or traffic-jammed inside your own head or content or happy: Come sit with us. Bring your heartbeat, your worries, your sly jokes, your questions. We'll meditate, drum, and remind each other: we don't have to figure it all out, just show up and let something sacred do its work. Recovery capital builds not in isolation, but in circles—one breath, one beat, one story at a time.

Buddy, this one's for you.

By Korana Netherland

Shalom Meditation & Drum Circle

Wednesday, December 10th at 6:00 PM

Beth Israel Congregation

5315 Old Canton Road, Jackson, MS 39211

Announcements

Want to be updated about AA Announcements, Events, and the Sobriety Gazette?

Contact midmissintergroup@gmail.com to get involved!

You can also contact the editor at nfillingane@gmail.com for comments or questions!

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 -	mrsena.net
Al-Anon -	msafg.org
SLAA -	wsw.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.
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.	Susan L.	Henry A.
Al & Donna H.	Tommy L.	Brittany D.
Jeff W.	Rocky B.	Sam C.
Bruce M.	John R.	Andy D.
Rusty M.	Lawrence D.	Stacey K.
Anonymous 1		Anonymous 2

Quote of the Month

“Wherever you are, at any moment, try and find something beautiful. A face, a line out of a poem, the clouds out of a window, some graffiti, a wind farm. Beauty cleans the mind.”

- Matt Haig

Shout out to these AA groups for contributions to our Book Fund over the last two years!

Unlimited Southgate Serenity
Traditions Quest
Primary Purpose Way Out
Serenity of Purpose

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 _____

Appreciating Our Sobriety Birthday Contributors!

Joe G. and Norma J.

Remembering Those We've Lost This Month



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