

DECEMBER 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

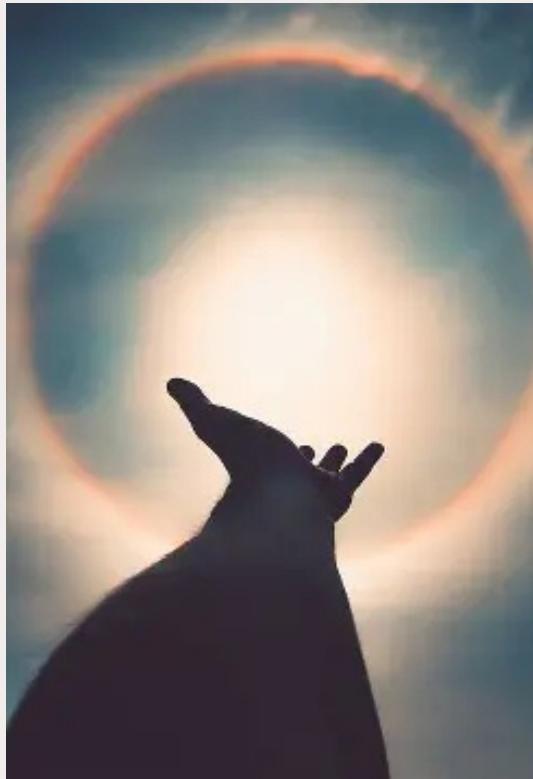
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## Twelfth Tradition

**Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.**

## 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 Twelfth Step Prayer...

**"My spiritual awakening continues to unfold. The help I have received I shall pass on & give to others, Both in & out of the Fellowship. For this opportunity I am grateful. I pray most humbly to continue walking day by day on the road of spiritual progress. I pray for the inner strength & wisdom to practice the principles of this way of life in all I do & say. I need You, my friends, & the program every hour of every day. This is a better way to live."**

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.

# Many Paths to Sprituality

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## Working the A.A. Program

Recognizing, first of all, that we needed to stay sober, many of us began to discover that we could utilize the A.A. program without conforming to religious or spiritual concepts we either disagreed with or didn't have. As we became more familiar with A.A., we began to realize the deep significance in the phrasing of A.A.'s Twelve Steps, which emphasize "a Power greater than ourselves," and "God, as we understood Him." These words and A.A.'s traditional commitment to inclusivity provided comfort to many of us, leaving the door to spirituality open for alcoholics of all faiths, beliefs and practices, and allowing each of us to determine for himself or herself just what to believe. "In trying to find something to believe in, I read books about philosophy, spirituality and eastern religions. I listened to people share in meetings and tried to believe in their higher power. I even tried prayer and going back to church. But, in spite of my efforts to 'educate myself' into a higher power, I didn't know what I believed. But I knew that the days I prayed seemed to go better than the days I didn't, even when I thought I was praying to my bedspread."

## Many Paths to Spirituality

Many of us came to rely on a "Higher Power," whether it was the collective power of A.A., the A.A. group itself, or some other entity, concept or being that helped us to stay sober.

"My sponsor encouraged me to choose my own conception of a higher power. It didn't need a gender, or a name, or any human attributes — it just had to be 'a power greater than myself.' It was then that I realized that the Fellowship, though comprised of human beings, represented a power greater than anything human. Even more surprisingly, by taking the Steps in my own clumsy way, supported by the unconditional love of my fellow alcoholics, I had discovered a quiet, inner voice — a God within."

There were many other ideas and approaches, too, that helped us move forward in staying sober and understanding how the A.A. program could work best for us.

"By incorporating basic Buddhist practices with my A.A. practices — regular meetings, doing service, working with newcomers, living the Steps and reading A.A. literature — I have discovered an awesome way to improve my conscious contact with the God of my understanding and live life on life's terms in relative serenity. I still have anxieties, anger and all the rest of the emotions that come with life, but, bit by bit, I am able to manage them."

Many of us come from different belief systems and cultures, yet there has always been plenty of latitude in A.A. for members to practice whatever belief works best for them.

"I am a Sioux/Blackfoot woman. I have been sober in A.A. for many years. Many of us believe in the Great Spirit, and it was a great relief to find out I could believe in a higher power of my choice. I didn't have to give up any part of my beliefs when I joined A.A. I could live in the white man's world, but also retain all of my people's Native traditions, customs and ceremonies. In fact, A.A. made my beliefs stronger. My joining A.A. didn't restrict me, it gave me more freedom."

The spirit of tolerance is strong in A.A., and members of all faiths and traditions find common ground in our program of recovery.

"I'm a devout, lifelong Catholic. That is an integral part of my experience, strength and hope. I call my higher power God and do not feel I should have to qualify that every time I speak at a meeting. I'm perfectly okay with others referring to Buddha, Mohammed, Yahweh, or whatever name they call their higher power.

"I'm uncomfortable, though, with anyone citing the Bible, the Koran, the Talmud, or any non-A.A. literature as the truth in an A.A. meeting. But I certainly give them the right to refer to or even quote (briefly) from any of these texts if it's part of their A.A. experience. "In my eighteen years of recovery, I have heard plenty of inappropriate talk about religion, and I probably will again.... But so far I haven't found it necessary to take a drink over any of it, and more than once, it has caused me to experience unexpected spiritual growth. And that's the point, isn't it?"

For many of us, sobriety was a gift — freely given and freely received. Yet we have to do our part in maintaining it.

"I'm still an agnostic. But I have discovered that the program will work for anyone who will let it. I didn't have to find a way to make it work. It will work perfectly well on its own, provided I'm willing to do some work myself.

"The first thing I had to do was resign from the debating society. That didn't mean I started agreeing with everything I heard. It means only that I listened without arguing, used what I could use, and filed the rest for future reference.

"The second thing I did was become an active member of my home group, which happened to be my sponsor's home group. (I'd gotten a sponsor immediately. I already knew that was one thing I'd better do right away.) I saw that whatever else spirituality might consist of, it had to include being of maximum service to my fellow alcoholics, whether or not they were still suffering."

In working the program, we came to a better understanding of spirituality and the part it plays in our recovery.

"When I first came to A.A., I thought that religion and spirituality were the same thing. But I've come to realize that religion means being committed to a practice of belief, and being spiritual means actively living life through a life-giving force. I believe this is any power greater than myself, whether I choose to call it God, Allah, Higher Power, Creative Intelligence, or the Power of Good."

"I don't have a specific religious faith that I practice or church that I go to. Matter of fact, I haven't been in a sanctuary for some time. But I do try to practice the principles of the A.A. program. Through this, I believe that my higher power lives within and through me, and that is my sanctuary."



With time, we came to recognize that we could stay sober and enjoy full membership in the Fellowship, regardless of our beliefs. 

“When I finally admitted I was an alcoholic and came into the program four years ago, I thought, ‘Oh God, why me?’ We Jews were supposed to be immune to alcoholism, we were the ‘Chosen Ones’ — or so my denial told me. Yet today I am doubly blessed; I am a grateful, recovering, Jewish alcoholic.

“It took me a long time to separate Judaism from alcoholism, to accept that spirituality did not affect or change my religious beliefs, but enhanced them, that my higher power was not the same as yours, that praying and the posture I use to pray does not alter my Jewishness but is necessary for my recovery. Today I can even recite the Lord’s Prayer without feeling guilty since it was pointed out to me in ‘How it Works’ that I have to go to any length to get and stay sober.

“During my years of alcohol abuse I alienated myself from my family, my friends, the world, and even myself. I forgot the joy of my religion and the feeling of prayer. Now that I am recovering, I am able to accept people in my life, I can accept and love me and I am capable of rejoining the human race.”

As A.A. has grown and taken root literally around the world, cutting across lines of gender, race, language and religion, the Fellowship has kept its doors open to alcoholics of all beliefs, supported by two basic principles found in A.A.’s Traditions: that A.A. has but one primary purpose — that of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and the recognition that the only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

“My sponsor was well versed in A.A.’s Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts. He had a substantial service history and talked to me about the 36 principles upon which A.A. was founded. It is these principles that I would ultimately turn my life and my will over to.

“This God — ‘good orderly direction’ — as represented by the two million or so alcoholics who are members of this global Fellowship, is what I have accepted.

“Living inside of the Steps, the ongoing efforts to promote the unity spoken of in the Traditions, and the discipline we find in applying the Concepts in the way we do business, both internally and with the world at large — these are the things that have provided me with a power greater than myself.

“A.A., I believe, is truly universal, and this conscience that has changed the lives of so many, and continues saving the lives of so many more is worthy of my devotion. I have never seen or felt anything more spiritual than what I witness when I see the transformation that takes place as people begin to live this way of life.”

### A Source of Power

Spiritual experience in A.A. is broad and varied, and for those members who struggle with spiritual concepts, ongoing sobriety often brings the realization that — in some remarkable and unforeseen way — they have indeed experienced a spiritual change.

“When I was a newcomer, I could not understand the concepts of spirituality or faith. I had no God of my understanding. I battled to understand what spirituality meant.

“In reading Appendix II in the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, I have come to understand the profound changes that come from spirituality. The appendix says, ‘With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves. Most of us think this 11 awareness... is the essence of spiritual experience.’”

“The appendix continues: ‘We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.’”

Some refer to a “spiritual awakening,” a phrase found in the Twelfth Step and throughout A.A. literature. In Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (page 106), Bill W. writes about spiritual awakenings:

“Maybe there are as many definitions of spiritual awakening as there are people who have had them. But certainly each genuine one has something in common with all the others.... When a man or a woman has a spiritual awakening, the most important meaning of it is that he has now become able to do, feel, and believe that which he could not do before on his unaided strength and resources alone. He has been granted a gift which amounts to a new state of consciousness and being. He has been set on a path which tells him he is really going somewhere, that life is not a dead end, not something to be endured or mastered. In a very real sense he has been transformed, because he has laid hold of a source of strength which, in one way or another, he had hitherto denied himself.”

“Using the inner resource I have discovered in A.A. as a higher power, I have been able to do the Steps just as they are written in the Big Book. I pray to this inner resource and ask to know what it would have me do and to give me the strength to do it. I carry this message to others. It works! I am experiencing a spiritual awakening and I feel all the promises coming true. I feel better inside than I have in years.

“I am now sponsoring several men and it is a wonderful feeling to see another alcoholic get sober. I am proof that it is possible to be an atheist on matters of the supernatural but still have a spiritual awakening and reap the rewards of the A.A. program of recovery.”



# Tradition Twelve Study

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**Short Form:** Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

**Long Form:** And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

Anonymity, as we observe it in AA, is at root a simple expression of humility. When we use the Twelve Steps to recover from alcoholism, we are each trying to achieve real humility, to put our self-respect on a solid base of truth, rather than on fantasies about ourselves. When we use the Twelve Traditions to work together in AA, we are all trying to achieve humility; as individual members, by recognising our true place in AA; as a fellowship, by recognising AA's true place in the world.

Tradition One reminds each of us that we are not recovering on our own, that we should control our personal desires and ambitions in order to guard the unity of our group and our Fellowship. We ought not (Tradition Two) fancy ourselves as big shots in AA, no matter what office we hold.

All of us are just alcoholics together, and in our groups we are not entitled (Tradition Three) to rule on the qualifications of other alcoholics seeking the same help that we've had. Yes, a group needs humility too. It may make its name public, but in the spirit of anonymity it should see the Whatever Group as merely part of a bigger whole (Tradition Four), careful in every enterprise to consider the welfare of all the other groups that make up AA. In both group and individual activities, we should remember what the full name of our Fellowship is. It does not represent any established religion, nor is it a new religion. We are not evangelists or gurus out to save humanity; we are anonymous alcoholics trying to help other alcoholics (Tradition Five).

In the rising battle against alcoholism, we ought not let our pride in AA mislead us into linking our Fellowship with other agencies, in order to bid for a share in their power, prestige, and funds. If we keep Tradition Six and Seven in mind, we will instead direct all our efforts toward AA's own unique purpose. When we go on Twelfth Step calls, we should not tell ourselves how noble we are for doing such valuable work without pay. The meaning of Twelfth Step work cannot be measured in money (Tradition Eight), and we have received advance pay for it, in coin of far greater worth—our very lives. In the same Tradition, it's suggested that a service centre maintains AA humility by paying its employees decent wages—rather than considering AA so virtuous an outfit that employment there is a favour.

When we are given special responsibilities within AA, Tradition Nine defines these as opportunities to serve, not titles to flaunt. The humility of the Fellowship itself is safeguarded by Tradition Ten, with the refusal to set ourselves up as general authorities, swinging our collective weight around in the public arena.

We do not want to sell our program as a "surefire remedy" in the extravagant terms of a promotional campaign (Tradition Eleven), or dramatise it by identifying noted people in AA, thereby implying that recovery has been for each of us an individual accomplishment. As Tradition Twelve reminds us, we have something stronger than our human personalities to rely on. Our principles come first—and they are not our own invention. They reflect eternal spiritual values. With this Tradition, both as individuals and as a fellowship, we humbly acknowledge our dependence on a power higher than ourselves.

# **Breaking Down Step Twelve of Alcoholics Anonymous**

**“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”**

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

The 12 steps of A.A. in simplest terms are a solution to the disease of alcoholism. They are a set of universal guiding principles that merge the traditional boundaries of religion, history, culture and wisdom traditions. They outline a course of action that, when followed, will remove the obsession in the mind, connect you to a Higher Power and as you continue to grow, show you how to help others who still struggle.

**The principles of AA Step 12 are:**

- |                 |                            |
|-----------------|----------------------------|
| 1. Honesty      | 7. Humility                |
| 2. Hope         | 8. Brotherly/Sisterly Love |
| 3. Faith/Action | 9. Discipline/ Justice     |
| 4. Courage      | 10. Perseverance           |
| 5. Integrity    | 11. Spiritual Awareness    |
| 6. Willingness  | 12. Service                |

## **AA Step 12: Spiritual Awakening**

The concept of “spiritual awakening” has many meanings. Keeping it simple, a spiritual awakening is really just a psychic change that, among other things, eliminates our obsession to drink. For some it can be quite a powerful and immediate experience, for others it is an ongoing co-current part of working the 12 steps.

The co-founder of AA, Bill W. mentions in his autobiography that for him it was a sudden, strong “white light” and life-changing event: “I stood upon a summit where a great wind blew. A wind not of air, but of spirit. In great, clean strength it blew right through me. Then came the blazing thought, ‘You are a free man.’”

It gives me chills every time I read that, because after that moment, Bill never took another drink. Thanks to him there are many more free men and women today. For most of us, the “aha” moments, that may not be a white light, are regular events and part of the spiritual awakening that happens over time in a subtle and gradual way.

## **AA Step 12: Carrying The Message**

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 second part of the 12th step is about carrying the message of recovery to other people. This is not because AA is a cult, it's because “we keep what we have by giving it away.” To keep it simple, when we work with others, our lives change. So, we don't help another alcoholic because they're sick—we help another alcoholic because we are sick, and part of our recovery is that we need to be helping others.

The most important things to remember about this part of the AA Step 12 are:

- The Twelve Steps are a program of attraction, not promotion. We lead by our own example, so talk to people when they are ready and when the time is right they'll ask: “How can I get what you've got?”
- Keep your message for the person who's dependent on alcohol (and/or drugs) to what is was like for you, the result of your steps, and that you have not gotten drunk or stoned.
- When talking to a newcomer, let go of labels and referring to them as alcoholics or addicts. Truthfully tell your story and let other people decide if it rings true for them.

Sometimes carrying the message can be as simple as making sure that there is a warm, caring, non-judgmental place for other alcoholics to come back to and a hand shake or hug that says “We're here for you—come on in—and keep coming back!”

The beauty and eloquence of AA Step 12 is part of many promises of working the A.A. program. Life really does take on new meaning when watching people recover, seeing them help others, and watching loneliness vanish. Frequent contact with newcomers, and with each other, is the bright spot of our newfound lives.

## **The Icing On The Cake: Practicing The Principles**

When we have had a spiritual awakening as a result of our efforts we are finally able to do, feel, and believe that which we could not do before. This gift, which is a new state of consciousness and being, is really the icing on the cake of sobriety.

On a daily basis we have the opportunity to put into practice things that we are finally in possession of: a degree of honesty, tolerance, unselfishness, peace of mind, and love. Practicing the 12 steps in all our affairs, trusting a higher power, cleaning house, sharing our experience strength and hope, staying active in service one day at a time, for the rest of our life...is like eating cake, with icing, everyday.

# Tradition Twelve

**“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”**

## Principles First - People Second

Why are we repeatedly asked in the Traditions to give up ourselves for the greater good? The answer is because any relationship we have that does not involve sacrifice is a relationship that likely will not endure. Each tradition straightens out a disastrous attitude we had about relationships. The twelfth tradition teaches us that a spirit of sacrifice (often times through anonymity) is vital to good relationships.

Giving up the expectation of rewards for doing good is difficult for most of us. It's easy for us to give and then think, “Well, I'll get a reward, even if I don't get public recognition for what I did.” To remove that reward symbol from the back of our minds for whatever good we do is part of practicing anonymity. The next time you hear a speaker in A.A. whose personality is exciting from the platform, see if you can hear the principles behind their words? To which step, tradition, or concept can you relate their pitch? Setting ourselves aside and focusing on the principles of our program is a crucial component in the foundation we need for studying the Traditions and learning how to be in healthier relationships with our fellow A.A.'s and with those in the world around us.

## Step-Tradition Parallel

The twelfth step poses the question, “What is a spiritual awakening?” I believe that the evidences of a spiritual awakening are found in a person who practices the twelfth tradition in all their affairs. Such a person sacrifices self in order to practice principles. Their motive in practicing all of the traditions is anonymity: they sacrifice to help others.

The twelfth tradition completes the twelfth step in the following way: I become spiritually awake when I carry the message by anonymously practicing sober principles.

(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](http://takethe12.org)

## Tradition Twelve Checklist

1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all AA members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if AA as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust or agree with AA's current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other AAs, do I imply that membership requirements go beyond the desire to stay sober?
4. Have I a personal responsibility to help an AA group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?
5. Do I do all I can do to support AA financially?
6. Should I keep my AA membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of AA attractive so that other drunks might want it?
7. What does anonymity mean to me?
8. In light of increased awareness of alcoholism and AA's program of recovery among the general public, why is the principle of anonymity still important?
9. Am I mindful to respect the anonymity of other AA members who may work in my place of employment or my industry? How about AA members who live in my area or neighborhood?
10. What does “principles before personalities” mean to me?

[aagrapewine.org](http://aagrapewine.org)

# 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 nnfillingane@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 -	mrscna.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. 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

"The universe is so well balanced that the mere fact that you have a problem also serves as a sign that there is a solution."

- Steve Maraboli

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 \_\_\_\_\_

Recognition of \$1.00 per year for sobriety birthdays welcomed!

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

