

JANUARY 2026



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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Tradition One

Our common welfare
should come first;
personal recovery
depends upon AA unity.

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 First Step Prayer...

“GOD, Creative
Intelligence, Universal
Mind, Spirit of Nature or
Spirit of the Universe my
name is _____, and I’m a
real alcoholic... I need your
help today.”

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 One - Alcoholics Anonymous

First exposure to step one

When I first got sober, I was a mass of contradictions. On the one hand, my self-image was fragile; on the other hand, I saw myself as bright and reasonably well-educated. I mention this because believing in the power of my intelligence didn't work when tackling the implications of step one. This step couldn't be more straightforward.

It states: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable."

Powerlessness

If someone asked me to explain what powerless meant, I would not have been able to tell them. As strange as this may sound, I didn't understand the word 'powerless' or how to define it. At face value, it seemed easy enough to understand. To me, it may as well have been Greek. Yet the plain truth was that I spent most of my life trapped in an out-of-control cycle of addiction.

I was nineteen when I ended up a homeless person. At that young age, I had only one agenda: – to drink as much as I could, as often as I could. Dispatching myself from reality was my primary and only purpose. Yet when I came to AA, something in my brain prevented me from understanding what the first step was trying to tell me.

Today, after many years of relapse, I have gained an education about step one that I hope I never forget. When it comes to putting alcohol into my body, I can't stop until I am entirely drunk. Alcohol releases an obsession in my mind and a craving in my body that condemns me to keep drinking until I pass out.

Unmanageability

It was the same with the adjective 'unmanageable.' I was so full of self-will when I arrived to AA, that I was unable to surrender to a sponsor's guidance. I was determined to manage my life without anyone in the fellowship telling me what to do. This attitude created a catalog of disasters that, after a long road of relapse and misery, forced me to ask for help. Despite my best efforts, I achieved very little in early recovery. For over a decade, during which time I was mostly sober, I was unable to make any progress in rebuilding my life.

Yet, the strange thing was that I couldn't tell you what step one was saying. I have often wondered why this was. In hindsight, I must have had a lot invested in denying the truth about my relationship with alcohol. I earnestly believed that I could take it or leave it. In hindsight, I guess it was too humiliating to admit to myself that, with or without a drink, I was a total mess.

The jumping-off place

I fought hard to achieve the career ambitions that would give me credibility in the eyes of others. I failed at pretty much everything I set my hand to. What money I did make was under the table and away from the tax man's gaze. I also wanted to meet a woman and start a family. It wasn't to be. Every relationship I started was unstable and codependent. I just wasn't mentally and emotionally well enough to create anything worthwhile. The relationships I tried were short-lived.

"The primary fact we fail to recognize is our total inability to form a true partnership with another human being."
(12&12 Step Four, p. 53)

"What on earth was wrong," I thought. "I'm sober now!?" Not drinking wasn't working! So, I went into therapy to try and resolve childhood issues. To my great consternation, therapy made me even worse! I was constantly angry and depressed. Even years after coming to AA, I suffered from dramatic mood swings and panic attacks. Depression and self-pity would frequently paralyze me. I remained on this merry-go-round of madness for years, refusing to get a sponsor and take any suggestions.

At the time, I had so much prejudice against The "God" word that I wanted nothing to do with the steps. Moreover, I didn't like the sponsorship idea because they represented an authority figure, which I resented. Gradually, I sank deeper and deeper into despair and eventually ended up with a death wish, stone-cold sober!

"He will be at the jumping-off place; he will wish for the end." (BB "Vision for you" p. 152)

A moment of truth

Of all places, I surrendered in a step one meeting. They were reading the first step from The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. Here I was – counting days again.

"Who cares to admit complete defeat? Practically no one, of course. Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness. It is truly awful to admit that, glass in hand, we have warped our minds into such an obsession for destructive drinking that only an act of providence can remove it from us." (12×12 Step one p. 21)



Ego collapse

At that meeting, after struggling with what I now know was untreated alcoholism, my ego finally collapsed. I knew it was all over and had no alternative but to admit defeat. Quite simply, I had used up all my escape routes. Sex, the illusion of power, money, and trips overseas were only temporary fixes. Sooner or later, I returned to my default position: – a sense of hopelessness and impending doom, “No other bankruptcy is like this one. Alcohol now” (after thirteen years in AA) “become the rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self-sufficiency and all will to resist its demands.” (12&12 Step One p. 21) Initially, I felt humiliated when my eyes opened to the consequences of my impulsive and dishonest choices. I admitted total “bankruptcy” (12&12 p. 21) in every area of my life. This resulted from the very best of my “old ideas.” (BB p. 58), a quote from Chapter Five of the Big Book. I was devastated! It was the darkest moment of my life.

“How dark it is before the dawn!” (BB “Bill’s story” p. 8)

Yet, twenty-eight years later, I am here to tell you that the day my ego collapsed was the best thing that ever happened to me.

Becoming teachable

I finally became teachable. With the help of a sponsor, I learned to be honest and admitted that I had been powerless over alcohol from my first drink. Moreover, despite my best efforts to be secure and in control of my life, I also learned I was powerless over people, places, and things. Steps four to nine taught me that I couldn’t change people’s behavior towards me but could change how I reacted. (Step Seven)

While working on step one, my sponsor also pointed out why a hyphen separates powerlessness and unmanageability. He got me to see that one was the consequence of the other. They are, in fact, interchangeable.

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.”

Very simply, my addiction to alcohol made life unmanageable, and my chaotic and unmanageable lifestyle made for more drinking. Step one suddenly made total sense when I looked at it in reverse. This kind of insanity was the story of my life. I’m amazed it took me so long to see it! I guess it takes what it takes. I could have saved myself a lot of pain if I had been honest with myself sooner.

Today, I know it was my alcoholic ego that had me fooled for so long. I believed everything it told me. My ego rendered me incapable of being honest. The truth was that it was me who had always been the problem. It was me that had made such a mess of my life. Of course, it was easier to blame my dysfunctional childhood. Ultimately, I didn’t take step one through any personal virtue. It happened to me spontaneously after thirteen years of relapse. My crazy, alcoholic ego was left with no choice but to haul up the white flag of surrender.

I hope it doesn’t take you as long to admit step one as it did me.

Agnostics recover too

As an agnostic alcoholic, I didn’t have to believe in God to reap the enormous benefits of working the steps.

“You can, if you wish, make AA itself your higher power.” (12&12 Step Two p. 27)

I try not to listen to “Radio Andy” anymore. After forty years in AA, I still attend regular meetings. Sometimes, the ego can still convince me that it knows best. Running things by my sponsor is always a good idea. Sponsoring newcomers has become a big part of my AA service work. It is gradually teaching me love, humility, and tolerance. I receive a tremendous sense of fulfillment when a sponsee starts making progress.

So long as I keep living in the solutions learned in AA, I have nothing to fear. I am grateful that I know what is wrong with me today. I have a killer illness. But I needed to get the Gift Of Desperation (a helpful acronym for God) before seeing it. As an alcoholic, it is in my best interests to remain teachable. With AA’s help, I turned my life around. Today, I enjoy and don’t endure my sobriety.

In fellowship,
Andy F



Reclaiming Freedom

MY name is Robbie, and I've been sober for six and a half years or so. When I first walked into the Rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, I didn't have much hope left. My life was falling apart in ways I didn't fully understand, and I felt trapped in a cycle I couldn't escape. I thought I could handle it — that if I just tried harder, found the right motivation, or disciplined myself enough, I could drink like a 'normal person'. But deep down, I knew something was wrong. As soon as I started working the Programme of Alcoholics Anonymous, I had to confront Step One which says: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable." (BB p.59) Those words hit me harder than I expected. At first, they made me uncomfortable as I didn't want to think of myself as powerless or that my life was unmanageable. I almost became discouraged right at the start. But over time, I began to realise that Step One wasn't about weakness, it was about truth.

Now, after six years of sobriety, I can say with certainty that Step One was the turning point of my life. It's not just the first step in a Programme; it's the foundation upon which my entire recovery is built. I bristled when I first heard the phrase 'powerless over alcohol'. I didn't like the idea of being powerless over anything. I had always seen myself as independent, capable, and self-sufficient. But if I was honest, my drinking had long since stopped being something I could control.

I used to make promises to myself: "Just on weekends," "No spirits this time," "I'll stop after three." Every time, I broke those promises. I'd wake up hungover, ashamed, and confused. That pattern repeated itself more times than I could count. The word powerless described exactly what I was. I wasn't weak as a person, but when it came to alcohol, I didn't have control. My willpower alone wasn't enough to stop me once I started. That realisation was both devastating and strangely relieving. For the first time, I stopped pretending. Admitting powerlessness didn't mean I gave up hope; it meant I stopped fighting a battle I couldn't win alone. It meant I was finally ready to accept help.

The second part of Step One was just as hard for me to accept. I still had a job, a roof over my head. But when I looked closer, I saw that my life was unmanageable, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. I was full of guilt, fear, and resentment. I was living two lives: the one I showed to the world and the one I lived inside my head. My relationships were strained, my sleep was restless, and my anxiety was constant.

Even when things looked fine on the outside, I felt completely out of control inside. Step One helped me see that unmanageability isn't always about losing everything. My life didn't have to be in ruins to be unmanageable; it just had to be unliveable the way it was. That realisation was painful, but it was also freeing. Once I admitted that my way wasn't working, I opened the door to something new — and that's when real change began.

What helped me finally accept Step One was listening to others share their stories. I heard people describe the same struggles I had — the same promises, the same failures, the same shame. I realised I wasn't unique, and I wasn't alone. Those people had admitted their powerlessness and found freedom, not defeat.

Before I got sober, I thought freedom meant doing whatever I wanted. If I wanted to drink, I'd drink — that was my version of freedom. But that kind of 'freedom' had turned into slavery. Alcohol controlled everything: my moods, my decisions, my relationships, my self-worth. When I admitted I was powerless over alcohol, I thought I was giving up my freedom, but I was actually reclaiming it. For the first time, I was free to live honestly. I didn't have to hide bottles, lie to myself, or wake up hating who I'd become. I could face life as it was — good, bad, and real.

That's one of the paradoxes of Step One that I find most enlightening: when I admitted defeat, I actually found victory. The surrender that once terrified me became the foundation of my strength. That level of honesty was uncomfortable at first, but it became one of the most powerful tools in my recovery, I try to practice that same honesty every day. It doesn't stop with alcohol; it extends to every area of my life. If I'm angry, I say it. If I'm scared, I admit it. Step One gave me permission to be honest — and that has changed everything.

Some people think Step One is something you only do once but for me, Step One is something I keep coming back to. I need to remember that I'm still powerless over alcohol. Before Step One, I thought admitting powerlessness meant failure. Now, I see it as wisdom. It means knowing the difference between what I can and cannot control. It means I don't have to fix everything by myself. That shift in perspective has changed my relationships, my work, and my entire outlook on life. I'm less defensive, less prideful, and more open to guidance. I've learned that asking for help isn't weakness — it's courage.

There's a power in honesty, in connection, in community, that I never experienced before sobriety. I've seen people come into the program clinging to control, just like I did, and then slowly begin to let go. I've watched them transform, finding peace and clarity they never thought possible. Every time I see that happen, it reminds me why Step One is so important — and why I keep working it in my own life. I am so grateful to everyone in AA for all their support and service. Thank you so much.

ROBBIE H, Northampton

Breaking Down Step One of Alcoholics Anonymous

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol --- that our lives had become unmanageable.”

If lucky, our journey has taken us to arriving at a point of surrender. For some people the road they traveled getting to the first step in AA has been more than enough to convince them that unconditional surrender is the only option for recovery.

For a lot of people in recovery, walking into a treatment center or an AA meeting the first time is a major part of “working” step one. Your simple and humble act of asking for help is effectively an admission of powerlessness and unmanageability.

Most addicts are filled with guilt, shame, remorse, and self-loathing when they come into the rooms of AA. They’ve also gotten very used to keeping secrets from pretty much everyone, so opening up about the nature and extent of your alcoholic behavior is going against the grain. It may even feel completely unnatural and you probably don’t want to do it. But sharing your experience and the unmanageability lifts the burden of lugging them around in secret. Letting go of your secrets frees you up to move forward with a different, better life. For many people, the act of sharing Step One in an AA meeting is the true start of recovery.

However, becoming abstinent from alcohol will also be a requirement for starting to work the first step. The first step is all about looking at the effects of alcoholism in your life and for what is needed to be clean: to find a way to stop the behaviors with a perspective that isn’t clouded by alcohol. If you’ve been clean for a while, then the first step is about powerlessness over behaviors that make your life unmanageable.

Step One: Doing The “Work”

There are a lot of things alcoholics can do to fully work Step One. Most of the work is designed to unearth your complete history of use and abuse. Inventories are a great way to work the steps—even starting with Step One. You can make a few lists:

- **A Consequences List:** The easiest way to break through the fog of addiction is to create a list of consequences related to the behavior.
- **Powerlessness List:** Go for as many examples of your powerlessness over your addictive behavior as possible. Be as fearlessly honest as you can, starting with early examples and ending with the most recent. (A note on “Powerlessness” this is used to exemplify the cravings in an alcoholic [or any addict] that are so intense that the ability to resist is almost impossible. Once an alcoholic takes a drink, a chemical reaction occurs within that body, setting off an intense craving for more.)
- **Unmanageability List:** Write out the ways in which your addiction has created chaos and destruction in your life.

Here are some other really great questions to ask yourself while doing Step One:

- What does the disease of addiction mean to me?
- How has my disease affected me physically? Mentally? Spiritually? Emotionally? Financially?
- How does the self-centered part of my disease affect my life and the life of those around me?
- Have I blamed other people for my behavior?
- Have I compared my addiction with other people’s addictions?
- What does unmanageability mean to me?
- What troubles have been caused because of my addiction?
- Have I used alcohol or drugs to change or suppress my feelings?
- What reservations am I still holding onto?
- Do I accept that I’ll never regain “control” over drinking, even after a long period without use?
- What could my life be like if I surrendered completely?
- Am I WILLING: to follow a sponsor’s direction, go to meetings regularly and give recovery my best effort?
- Have I made peace with the fact that I’m an alcoholic and that I’ll have to do things to stay clean?

Responsibility & Acceptance in AA

For each and every one of the millions of success stories in AA you will hear repeatedly about responsibility. It is our responsibility to stay involved in sobriety and follow our sponsor’s suggestions. It is our responsibility to actively cultivate and grow willingness. It’s important to grasp that you are not “powerless” completely: you do have the power to engage in a program of recovery, the power to choose not to abuse substances....but you are powerless over drugs and alcohol if you put them in your body.

Acceptance comes when we feel a profound sense of hope and peace in coming to terms with our addiction and recovery. We don’t dread a future of meeting attendance, sponsor contact and step work; instead we begin to see recovery is a precious gift.

It has been my experience that doing the steps has brought me serenity and the welcome realization that AA is not just a program where sick people get well—it is a way of living that is rewarding in and of itself.

Lot’s of people find that once they do Step One, that all manner of help appears! I feel grateful to have a program that expands as I grow. Having a firm foundation in recovery through steps has also given me a welcoming fellowship to accompany me in my journey.

Tradition One

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on A.A. unity.”

WE BEFORE ME

Unity begins with an individual. Having unity within oneself and with one's Higher Power is vital to expressing unity in any other relationship. When one is following the guidance and will of a Higher Power, inner balance is achieved and then the ability to participate in a healthy relationship is greatly improved. Thus the relationship's unity is best serviced by each individual's unity with a Higher Power.

The Twelve Steps produce recovery and enable us to match calamity with serenity without taking the first drink. Recovery is the restoration of our relationship with God through sobriety. Our happiness, though, is incomplete unless we expand our loving relationship with God to our relationships with each other.

The Traditions show us how to love each other. The principles of the group apply to the individual. Through working the principles of the traditions we carry out the steps in the world. We live in the solution, not the problem. We are united with each other in love. When we love, we want to serve. The concepts of service then show us how to love each other through being of service to the world. Hence, A.A. has the three-word motto, “Recovery-Unity-Service”, based on the Twelve Steps, Twelve Traditions, and Twelve Concepts of Service.

Since the bottom has risen in A.A. there has been a need to go beyond recovery into learning how to get and maintain relationships. We must apply the First Tradition in all areas our life (A.A., Work, Home, etc.) so our sobriety isn't threatened. If we do not place our common welfare first, we could easily stay a loner and eventually drink out of loneliness.

Step-Tradition Parallel

Each tradition answers the question raised by the parallel step. The connection between the First Step and the First Tradition is that I am powerless over alcohol and have an unmanageable life, so I am dependent upon uniting myself with A.A. for my personal recovery. The Step states the problem and the Tradition states the solution. What do I do about my powerlessness and unmanageability? I join A.A. and place our common welfare first, since my personal recovery depends upon doing this.

(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 One Checklist

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person? Am I sometimes divisive? Do I ever gossip or take another member's inventory?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I foster arguments with statements such as “just for the sake of discussion”?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I sometimes abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I ever put down some AA activities for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support AA as a whole in every way I can, or just the parts that I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?

aagrapevine.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 nntillingane@gmail.com for comments or questions!

Your Trusted Servants

Chair -	Sam C.
Treasurer -	Karen M.
Secretary -	Kurt J.
Corrections -	Daryl R.
Treatment -	Natalie F.
Intergroup Liaison -	Carrie T.
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.
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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

**"You can't go back and
change the beginning,
but you can start where
you are and change the
ending."**

C.S. Lewis

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	

**SHALOM MEETING MOVED
TO ST. PHILIPS CHURCH, 5400
OLD CANTON RD**

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

Remembering Those We've Lost This
Month



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 _____

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