

APRIL 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.

## 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](http://www.midmissintergroup.org)

E-mail  
[midmissintergroup@gmail.com](mailto:midmissintergroup@gmail.com)



## Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA 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...

GOD, mold my ideals in this particular area of my life and help me to live up to them. What should I do in each specific matter? Guide me God and give me strength to do right. 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.

# Understanding Principle Four of Alcoholics Anonymous

## #4 - The Principle of Courage

---

**Change in life is inevitable, but it's also one of the things that scare us the most.**

Getting sober and maintaining a life in sobriety is all about change. Practicing the Twelve Steps and a lifestyle of recovery involves what is arguably one of the hardest things to change: ourselves. It calls for changing who we are, the way we think, and the way we live. In order to do this takes immense courage. Surprisingly, someone who has courage may not be “fearless”; having, showing, or doing things with courage does not mean fear is absent. It's about having fear and doing the thing that scares you anyway.

I had to have so much courage to get sober because I was so fearful of letting go of my best friend, who's name was Grey Goose. Maybe you've heard of him? The problem was that he always brought me the relief that I needed, every time I wanted it, but he was killing me. It took all the courage I could muster to recognize the greater opportunities and life I would have when I let go of that friend. And because he's so sneaky, it took courage once again to come back into the rooms after relapse.

It turns out he's no real friend of mine.

Thanks to a support system in recovery I now truly know that I am not alone in this. The ability to do something that frightens us is not an uncommon experience for those of us in recovery, and it's a big part of living this miraculous ridiculous life in sobriety! The interesting thing about the principle of courage is that you only find it, or need to call upon it when you are faced with “situations” as some like to say. Without the struggle, there is not much benefit. So courage, it turns out, is really about somebody's willingness to grow.

As we all know, anything worth having is usually not easy. Taking the easy way out doesn't yield the best outcomes. For some people, it takes years of sidestepping or seeking “easier and softer” ways to avoid the courage it takes to face the fear of losing what is known. But courage is the antidote to fear. Acting in the face of this fear and calling upon the virtue of moral courage means getting to live the way that God wants us to live, and become the person he wants us to be.

### **Courage In Recovery**

When I got the courage and became open and honest about my using, it opened up this opportunity for love and compassion beyond what I knew existed.

I was living in so much fear and turmoil; I was kind of just feeding the beast.

It was an uphill battle for me until I was able to get open and honest with everyone else around me - but most importantly, with myself and God.

I didn't get relief until I talked with a few key sober people, who helped to build my courage up. I had this breakthrough moment where I realized that by using I had been suppressing and blocking myself from relief and potential. Having the courage to get sober showed me the greatest potential for a life well lived and that the sky was the limit!

That being said, relapse is also a part of my recovery story. Strength in the face of pain or grief is even more challenging and requires us to have more courage. I've struggled so many times with the shame and grief of relapse. While I was in treatment after my relapse I remember feeling like I did not have courage at all. During my stay, I ran into somebody I had worked with professionally, who was touring the facility, and I just felt so much shame. I even came up with my acronym for what shame meant to me:

S-Self


H-Hatred

A-Against

M-My

E-Existence

What it took to turn that ship around was an inordinate amount of courage- and the courage once again came from people who supported me through this period. They showed acceptance and understanding until that self-hatred became self-love.

When I have the support of other people it gives me courage. Once I get the courage to face the things I fear it allows the opportunity for more courage to appear. This I have learned in recovery and by bearing witness to the courage of my fellows. Throughout history the true heroes have not been the men and women that were not afraid, but rather those that faced their fear, acting despite those fears, and moving forward to overcome its grip on their lives. This, to me, is grace. 

## Courage: The Grace Of God To Face Your Fears



Prayer, meditation and talking with God is an important part of my recovery and what helps me to consciously and continuously chip away at fears. When I pray for courage in the Serenity Prayer I recognize in God my spiritual source. When getting in tune with what His will is for me and for the courage to change the things I can, I decide to rely on the grace of God.

And there are reflections of His grace everywhere I look.

These days I can look at a task or situation that causes fear in me as an opportunity for me to become more courageous, resilient and reliant on God's grace. The courage we all ask for and practice one day at a time is the courage to live the way God wants us to live, for the highest good of all.

Any great life requires great courage. Just for today, we can pray to face our fears and focus on the courage to move forward, with loving grace.

### Things Found In My Closet

George Gabriel

The time reads ten on the clock  
and I take in hand my pen.  
I pull up my chair to my makeshift desk  
and begin removing books from the  
panel  
so that I may lift it and peer into my  
chest.  
One by one I move them, one and all,  
the short and the tall.  
Moby Dick, The Idiot, Republic, Walden  
and Civil Disobedience, The Oxford  
Book  
of American Verse, Alcoholics  
Anonymous,  
The Divine Comedy, This Side of  
Paradise,  
VITA NUOVA, Paradise Lost and  
Paradise  
Regained, Selected Poetry and Prose of  
Poe,  
The Audacity of Hope, and so on and so  
on until not one was left not even the  
Bible which had rested on their heads.  
I opened my chest and went searching  
for treasures of my past. Most  
were trinkets I stored away like a pack  
rat.

I found little figures of pirates and  
soldiers which I played with when a boy,  
marbles and sand dollars, Chinese stars  
and nun chucks, most were not even my  
favorite  
toys. I saw yearbooks from middle school  
and  
others from high school. I dared not  
crack their  
spines for I felt not enough time has  
passed  
yet. I found letters from Francheska,  
Lucy, and Jenny.  
I saw pictures of Stephanie, Virginia, and  
Niki.  
then I began to read poems from Nicole  
and  
glanced at the time. It was already one  
twenty nine.  
Alas, it was a nice trip to the past, but  
now it is time  
to close the panel and resume to my  
books  
and my work, for if my head stayed in  
my chest I  
would surely go berserk!

# Breaking Down Step Four of Alcoholics Anonymous

**“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”**

---

Step Four of AA’s Twelve-Step Program of recovery is infamously the “scary” one, probably because it’s a crucial step towards effective and lasting recovery. Since the overall philosophy of Alcoholics Anonymous is that alcoholism is just a symptom of a spiritual disease, the real problem is in character flaws that need to be faced and when possible, overcome. This requires a searching, bare it all revelation-inducing inventory that will become the blueprint for your success.

## So Much to Gain

The benefits of completing Step Four are strengthened sobriety, spiritual growth and movement towards mending your relationships to your HP, yourself and other human beings. What’s the biggest requirement for this action step? Be honest! You and the people around you will benefit from this crucial step. In case you didn’t know, keeping secrets is threatening to our recovery, and we have all had secrets that nearly killed us. Our secrets, in and out of sobriety, keep us sick.

Almost everyone comes into recovery having trouble separating fact from fiction in our own lives. The reality is that the “drunkalogues” and war stories that accumulated over the years of using are so embroidered into the fabric of whom we think we are. However, while working on our step inventories we get a new perspective on the bigger picture, on patterns, selfishness, our responsibility in situations and in this process we are building up an accurate self-appraisal with true self-worth as the reward.

## Breaking Down Step Four Of AA Alcoholics Anonymous

At this point it has probably become pretty clear to you that recovery is a process of steady personal growth and enlightenment that feels so good, you probably wish everyone you knew were doing it! Although you may be pink clouding it, and enjoying the clarity that comes from sobriety, the truth is that our past addiction crippled our ability to reflect honestly about our lives. Addiction created delusional thinking that limited our ability to understand the damage and havoc (the liabilities) it caused in all our relationships. So before we could safely move forward we needed a framework through which we could sort out our past honestly. The Step Four inventory provides that framework.

The inventory you will do in Step Four of AA will help you to identify negative thoughts, emotions, and actions that have ruled your life. In the past you probably justified bad behavior and blamed other people, places, or things for the problems you had created. Now you will begin to take responsibility for all your past and current actions. This may mean even acknowledging painful, embarrassing, or difficult events, thoughts, emotions, or actions. But that’s cool, it’s all good, because your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs are actually the roots of your addictive behaviors.

While writing out your inventory you will get to examine all your tendencies toward:

- Fear
- Relationships
- Pride
- Sex/Abuse
- Resentments/Anger
- Secrets
- Self-will and self-pity
- Assets
- Guilt/shame

## 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. High five!

# Tradition Four - Our Decisions Affect Others

---

For too long, I thought I was autonomous in my own right; this is also called being self-centered or selfish, with “self-will run riot.” This Tradition helps me understand that I cannot take any actions harmful to others without dire consequences to myself. I learned that nothing was really good unless other people also were considered. If I don’t seek the advice and help of others in matters affecting them, then I again become God in my own life, the exact nature of my wrongs.

The one word that characterizes the fourth tradition is the word “decisions.” This tradition teaches me how to make decisions and maintain good relationships with God and you at the same time. The traditions show us how to get along with each other. The second half of the fourth tradition teaches me to consult others when I make decisions that affect them.

I am not to be a dictator in making decisions that affect other people’s lives (or the community) as I did when I was drinking. I need help from others, especially in matters affecting them. My goal is unanimity. <I repeat> If I don’t seek the advice and help of others in matters affecting them, then I again become God in my own life, the exact nature of my wrongs.

## Step-Tradition Parallel

If I don’t seek the advice and help of others in matters affecting them, then I again become God in my own life, the exact nature of my wrongs. The steps help to restore my relationship with God (through inventory among other things) and the traditions show me how to get along with God (and others). I was God in my own life. I was a dictator. With others, I was just the opposite. I sought their approval. The fourth tradition solves this dilemma: I seek to be one with God and to be one with others about matters affecting them. There are certain things that must be done alone with God, such as writing inventory. Writing inventory is an autonomous function. Interesting parallel.

(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/t4/](http://takethe12.org/t4/)

## 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](http://aagrapevine.org)

# Announcements

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

Contact [midmissintergroup@gmail.com](mailto:midmissintergroup@gmail.com) to get involved!

You can also contact the editor at [nfillingane@gmail.com](mailto:nfillingane@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 -	<a href="http://mrscna.net">mrscna.net</a>
Al-Anon -	<a href="http://msafg.org">msafg.org</a>
SLAA -	<a href="mailto:wsw.slaa@gmail.com">wsw.slaa@gmail.com</a>
Ms. Dept. of Mental Health -	<a href="http://dmh.ms.gov">dmh.ms.gov</a>

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.	Kurt J.
Jeff W.	Hugh B.	Ed C.
Bruce M.	John R.	Andy D.
Will W.	Lawrence D.	Stacey K.
Anonymous 1	Frank P.	David Mc.

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

## 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 \_\_\_\_\_

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

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

## 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