

JUNE 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 Six

An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

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 Sixth Step Prayer...

"GOD, help me become willing to let go of all the things to which I still cling. Help me to be ready to let You remove all of these defects, that Your will and purpose may take their place.
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.

The Virtue of Honesty

In AA, honesty begins with our admission of powerlessness and unmanageability in Step 1. Until then, we have lived in denial. We have been totally incapable of facing up to the truth about ourselves: that we are alcoholic and cannot drink like other people. It's a truth we have to hold on to for the rest of our lives. If we don't, we are certain to drink again. And why not? If that is not the truth, if we are not alcoholic, why shouldn't we drink?

As a purely practical principle, then, honesty is foundational to recovery. The Big Book is forceful about this. We saw it in the passage we quoted in the post on dishonesty: "Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves . . . They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living with demands rigorous honesty (p. 58)."

This is repeated with equal insistence in the very last pages of the book: "Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts" (Index to a Spiritual Experience, p. 568). This is the passage that links honesty with open-mindedness (and willingness) as "indispensable" to recovery. Why the link to open-mindedness? Because honesty requires that we care about the truth, and we cannot get at the truth if our minds are closed to it. But why open-minded specifically about spiritual matters? Because, for AA, alcoholism is more than a mental disorder which psychology might be able to heal, or a physical illness which medicine might. It is also, and most fundamentally, a spiritual disease (Big Book p. 64). Hence the nature of the solution, the spiritual awakening to which all of the Steps are directed.

Honesty is essential to each and every one of these. Our honest admission of powerlessness and unmanageability in Step 1 is a prelude to a different kind of honesty in Step 2. This is an openness to the possibility of a spiritual experience. It opens the door to a process whereby a concept becomes a reality and we do come to believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. We turn our will and our lives over to the care of God in Step 3 because we have honestly recognized that we cannot manage either on our own, and that this unmanageability is part and parcel of our insanity. Our restoration is contingent on a simple relationship whose only requirement is that we be "willing and honest enough to try" (Big Book p. 28). That is all. "Even so has God restored us to our right minds," we are assured in the chapter to the agnostics, "He has come to all who have honestly sought Him" (Big Book, p. 57).

It is on the basis of this spiritually-grounded kind of honesty—honesty "in the sense we find it necessary (Big Book p. 73)—that we can go on to practice this principle in varying ways in each of the remaining Steps. Step 4 calls for an honest examination of our defects and 5 for an honest admission of wrongdoing. In Steps 6 and 7 we need to level with ourselves about how much we really "enjoy" some of our defects of character (12&12, S7, p. 73) and about how ready we really are to let go of them and have God remove them. In Step 8 we need to be forthright about who we hurt and how we hurt them so that our list can accurately reflect the facts. In Step 9 we have to be straightforward in making amends where amends are due. In Step 10 we repeat this process with regard to the present. In Step 11 we make an honest examination of ourselves before we retire at night. Finally, honesty is fundamental in Step 12, for without it the message we would try to carry would be hollow and deceptive, and any attempt to practice the principles fatally flawed.

In the virtues tradition, honesty has some very distinct features. First, as a virtue, it is a human "excellence," which is the concept "virtue" translates. As such, its practice promotes the human good. Second, honesty is both an intellectual and a moral virtue. It is intellectual in that its practice enables us to acquire and transmit truthful knowledge. Hence the association AA makes with open-mindedness. It is moral because it enables us to live that truth out in our human interaction. And third, in this moral aspect, honesty is seen as a virtue of requirement. It is a disposition to do what a situation calls for, to do what is right. As such, it is a sub-virtue of justice. In AA, however, honesty is also—and preeminently—a spiritual virtue.

Though it is not readily apparent, and though he certainly doesn't go on to explain it in these terms, Bill W.'s very simple quote below captures these various features of honesty as a virtue:

"Sometimes we need to place love ahead of indiscriminate 'factual honesty.' We cannot, under the guise of 'perfect honesty,' cruelly and unnecessarily hurt others. Always we must ask, 'What is the best and most loving thing I can do?'"

As a virtue or human excellence, honesty is in the service of the human good, that which is right or just. From a spiritual perspective, it is in the service of the highest good, which is love. Love is defining of AA's understanding of God. When the 12&12 says we are created in God's image, it is saying something noble about us.





Love is God's highest attribute, and to the extent that we share in that love, which is the best of what it means to be human, to that extent love is also our greatest virtue.

Thus understood, honesty is not simply about being factual or telling the truth. The facts and the truth must serve a good and a just purpose. We recognize this in Step 9, which says that we made direct amends to the people we hurt, "except when to do so would injure them or others" (our emphasis). Honesty in Step 9 is in the service of healing, mending, repairing. To disclose facts about our wrongdoing which can only bring about further harm vitiates that purpose.

Virtuous intention or motivation—doing "the best and most loving thing"—is intrinsic to the concept of virtue. William Blake's epigram further below reflects this idea: "A truth that's told with bad intent beats all the lies you can invent." A person who tells a truth in order to hurt is speaking under the "guise" of a good to commit a wrong. He's being dishonest with himself, and thus with the other person, whom he's trying to manipulate into believing his ostensible good intentions. Of course, he can deceive himself that his purpose is good, but that only compounds the self-deception. He's confirming Bill's dictum that "The deception of others is almost always rooted in the deception of ourselves" (ABSI, p. 17). The person is really serving himself. Such a self-serving intention is typically what motivates the person who takes pleasure in being "brutally honest." From a moral perspective, there's no such thing as being brutally honest; the expression is a contradiction in terms. One can be brutal in telling the truth, but one cannot be honest in doing so. To be brutal in telling the truth is to "cruelly and unnecessarily hurt others," as Bill points out. That's not moral; it's immoral. It reflects a character defect on the part of the speaker (arrogance, callousness, insensitivity, unkindness—the list can be long), and a defect cannot be the source of a virtue.

A milder version of the "brutally honest" disposition may be found in those who think that honesty requires "confronting" people, or holding them "accountable." The first expression wreaks of threat and hostility; the second of accusation and punishment. Actions that are motivated by those terms usually have counterproductive results, such as making people feel guilty and putting them on the defensive. In that case, honesty is not serving a good purpose. It is typically countered that people should be held responsible for their actions. This is true. But exactly what is the end that is being pursued?

As a moral virtue, honesty is primarily concerned with the recognition and admission of our own flaws, faults, and wrongdoing. That's the way we practice it through the 12 Steps. What's significant about the brutally honest and those who want to confront and hold accountable, is that they are primarily concerned with somebody else's wrongs. Of course, other people sometimes are and do wrong, and we may very well have to tell them. But even then, we have in the first place to take a good, honest look at ourselves. That's the import of the ODAT contribution below:

"I will examine, with a sharp and honest eye my own motives, for I need to do a lot of straight thinking about my own attitudes and actions."

The emphasis on intention and motivation reflects the understanding that, as a virtue, honesty is not the property of an act, but a trait of a person's character. As we have seen, a person can tell a factual truth and not be honest. She can also refrain from telling a factual truth and not be dishonest. We have seen that with reference to making amends. If our intention is honest, our purpose is not to deceive, but to avoid causing additional harm.

Again, the truth cannot be "indiscriminate." It must serve a morally good and just end. In fact, in some situations moral justice may require, not only that we withhold the facts and refrain from telling the truth, but that we tell an outright lie. This was the case with those Good Samaritans who hid Jews from the Nazis during WWII and lied when questioned about it. Justice required they lie. These cases are rare. They are not situations most of us are likely to face. But they prove the point. Honesty is not just about telling the truth, it's about telling the truth when truth is what is called for.

A spiritual awakening has enabled us to stay sober and undergo a modicum of change. A continuing awakening—growing along spiritual lines—will take us beyond that to a "full and meaningful sobriety" (12&12, S5, p. 62), including emotional sobriety. Our honest admission in Step 1 is our first Step to freedom—but only the first Step. Hence our need to continue to practice honesty through all the subsequent Steps, and beyond that in all aspects of our lives.

To the Big Book's assertion that this way of life demands rigorous honesty, the 12&12 poses an obviously rhetorical question: "Who wishes to be rigorously honest?" (12&12, S1, p. 24). Few if any of us, is the obvious answer. We try some honesty at first out of pure necessity: we want to stay sober. And yet, as we continue to practice honesty day in and day out, the time comes when we find ourselves "in possession of a degree of honesty" of which we thought ourselves "quite incapable". We have received a gift, says the 12&12, and yet, "in some small part," we have made ourselves "ready to receive it." (S12, p. 107). The small part is our practice.

Willingness and Step 6

Toward Alcohol

When we hit bottom in our drinking careers, we're pretty much forced to change. We're truly sick and tired of being sick and tired; we recognize, however faultily, that our way is not working. We become teachable. That is, we're desperate enough to try out AA's approach even though it feels foreign, artificial, and disorienting.

For me this meant giving up the belief that I knew everything. I'd always felt sure I could perceive the lay of the land in a snap and choose the best course, which I then acted on with chutzpah and a dash of fukitol. Drinks made me feel better, so I frickin' took 'em. Certain designated figures, also known as cool people, carried what I craved, so I chased 'em. Responsibility and integrity felt cumbersome, so I shrugged 'em off – free to follow my whims wherever they might lead!

And where was that? Loneliness so lethal I wanted to scream for eternity and futility so rampant I wanted to break and trash and burn every fucking thing that ever touched my life – that's where my knowing everything took me.

AA – the supposed solution – seemed as silly as a cake walk. The 12 Steps, anyone could see, held no more wisdom than a hopscotch grid, and yet all these AA dolts claimed that if you *sincerely* played hopscotch, if you landed in each arbitrarily chalked off square, you'd bust through to frickin' Narnia or something – whatever they meant by this “4th dimension of existence.”

But since a U-turn could lead me only back to the hell, I went ahead. I gave up control, followed directions, did the dance. And I commenced to change – to heal and grow and behold countless unexplored and rich possibilities hitherto invisible to me.

From somewhere inside me, I began to sense a *direction* besides my thoughts. They – my thoughts – were still as dumb and which-way as ever, but this new chord, this voice within – it began to lead me instead of them. Guidance I heard and talked about in AA *aligned* with this voice, but did not constitute it. Rather, I had “tapped an unsuspected inner resource” previously drown out by all the fears, demands, and clutter spewed by my ego.

I'd experienced a psychic change. I'd begun to develop a spiritual life that edged out my craving for booze.

Toward Life Itself

“Our liquor was but a symptom,” says the Big Book, of our messed up approach to life. If we merely take away the faulty solution of drinking, life hits us full force and feels unbearable. The lasting solution is to live on a spiritual basis which flows in tune with reality rather than fighting it.

Spiritual evolution is not a matter of content. That is, it's never a matter of learning X, Y, and Z, passing the quiz, and graduating. Rather, it's a *habit of cultivating open-mindedness and reaching for growth*. In other words, the conditions for continuous growth are the same as those that freed us from compulsive drinking: I elect *not* to buy into my thoughts, *not* to obey my ego, *not* to fall for the idea that my way is right. Only by turning away from these easy-to grab reflexes can I open myself to another voice – the more fundamental guidance of a higher power.

Day by day, growth happens at the juncture between what I'm exposed to and how I react to it. In that immediate crucible, I make more tiny choices than can possibly be noted, but collectively, they coalesce into a “gear” for my outlook. I plop into good-ole self-pity or reach for seemingly impossible gratitude – though I may end up somewhere between. What matters is whether I *ask* my higher power to guide those tiny choices, and whether I commit the incremental shards of my awareness to pursuing that guidance.

Growth can't happen when ego takes over. The world becomes scary, because if what I've decided is *supposed to happen* doesn't, I'm gonna be screwed. There's never enough, so I lock into my plans. I get tunnel vision – which means I'm sealed off from potential good outside my will. I consign myself to stagnation.

The openness of faith reminds me life is always a collaborative effort – mine and god's. Sure, I still plan and take action, but with built-in acceptance of whatever plays out. Even if things fuck up and fall apart, I'll still be okay. My “enough” originates not from stuff or status, but from the power of god's love flowing through me, the strength to generate and nurture and delight.





Consider some dear friends of mine who moved to Wimberley, TX, last year only to lose everything they owned in a recent river flood. One day things were dandy, and next their home was missing two walls and contained only mud and somebody else's overturned couch. They had no renters' insurance. Can you imagine that? I mean, can you really imagine losing everything? Yet these are two happy and thriving, not only because they're sober, but because they live on a spiritual basis. They don't lament. They have their precious lives, their energy, their love – a flow that's providing all they need to rebuild what was lost, even as they pitch in to help neighbors... or support a faraway friend (me) processing a painful break-up.

The psychic change to living on a spiritual basis means we accept life's uncertainty, taking our best shot and leaving the results to god. Failure's fine. It happens. Floods happen. Betrayals happen. We can only keep listening for the voice within and trying to follow it toward good actions and good people, but with no guarantees. Because, while it's true we each reap what we sow, it's also true we're scattering seeds from an unmarked, mixed bag. What will take root and flourish depends, we know, as much on the rain and sun as our work. Yet we do it anyway – and cheerfully.

aspritualevolution.net

My Sobriety

**I was afraid of the dark,
Cuz' my head twisted and turned,
And when the moon was full,
My soul used to yearn.**

**I wished I was happy,
Full of grace and dignity,
I wished I could have seen me,
The way you saw me.**

**I'm was afraid of the day,
Cuz' I felt alone and confused,
In the past it was so easy,
I'd just get up and use.**

**I was afraid of you,
Cuz' you're my deadly disease,
If I took that first pill,
My heart would've been at ease.**

**But I've become stronger,
I've learned to put me first,
I've finally learned my lesson,
Using only makes me worse.**

**I promise I'll never swallow,
The first pill that could kill me,
For now I wish to live,
My sobriety full of serenity.**

By Beautiful Scars

Our Primary Spiritual Aim - Tradition Six

As a fellowship our primary purpose remains carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers (as stated in Tradition Five) and this is absolutely still needed. Why? Because people are still dying of alcoholism, right across the world. Perhaps we don't see people suffering the fatal consequences of alcoholism so much in our meetings or on our streets due to widespread access to hospital care throughout Europe, but each and everyday people are still dying from alcoholism.

“The more AA sticks to its primary purpose, the greater will be its helpful influence everywhere.”

(AA Comes of AA, p.109)

As for money, property and prestige, these are not particularly relevant and if anything, a distraction from the core activity of AA, ‘one alcoholic talking with another’. It's been demonstrated for generations now that necessary financial costs that an AA group does have (for example rent for a meeting room) are effectively met by the voluntary contributions of its own members.

Although an AA group should not affiliate or lend the AA name to outside organizations, AA groups can and do work in a spirit of co-operation with outside organizations, for example taking meetings into hospitals, treatment centers and prisons or running AA public information events for health professionals or policy makers.

By co-operating and simultaneously remaining unaffiliated with any other organization, disagreement, argument, division and problems about money, property and prestige are avoided and our focus in AA can remain on the primary purpose of AA.

As an AA member the application of tradition six in daily life means a continued focus on my primary purpose. Our basic text suggests that I keep close to God and perform his work well (AA Big Book p.63) which includes carrying the message of AA. This can mean being available to newcomers and sponsoring other alcoholics in AA, attending, participating and contributing to AA meetings, actively participating in the AA service structure at group level and beyond. Carrying the message includes outside the AA fellowship through service activity (as part of an established AA service structure) such as public information and co-operating with outside organizations, for example health care facilities, treatment centers and prisons.

Alongside carrying the message of AA my primary purpose includes practicing the principles of the program in all aspects of life, “A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations and affairs” (AA Big Book p.19). So, my primary purpose also includes applying the principles of our program as a way of life; at home, at work and in the community in which I live...

“A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, “a design for living” that really works.” (AA Big Book p.28).

– James S.

alcoholics-anonymous.eu

Tradition Six Checklist

- 1. Why is it important that we not get involved in outside enterprises?**
- 2. Is it ever wise for a group to lease a small building or endorse an outside event?**
- 3. Are all the officers and members of our local clubhouse familiar with “Guidelines on Clubs,” which is available free from GSO?**
- 4. Should the secretary of our group serve on the mayor's advisory committee on alcoholism?**
- 5. Our group's landlord is raising money to pay for a new roof on the building. Should the group make a contribution? What if the landlord specifically asks the group to make a contribution?**

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.
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Community Resources

NA -	mrscna.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**

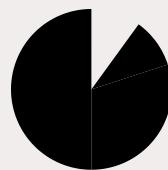
**The Intergroup Central Office wants
to extend a deep thanks to some of our
long standing contributors and our
excited welcome to others!**

James S.	Susan L.	Henry A.
Al & Donna H.	Tommy L.	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.

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

EXAMPLES OF GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS TO A.A. SERVICE ENTITIES

- Distribution of funds from groups that support service entities:



**10% To District
10% To Area Committee
30% To G.S.O.
50% To Central Office/Intergroup**

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 _____

**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	

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**