

JULY 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 Seven

Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

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 Seventh Step Prayer...

"MY CREATOR, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good & bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you & my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here to do Your bidding. 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.

7th Step AA

Preparing for step seven - “Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.”

Steps six and seven are known in AA as the forgotten steps because two short paragraphs in the Big Book describe them. As an agnostic, these two steps always struck me as ridiculous. How could God help with the removal of shortcomings? Following years of relapse, I gradually changed my attitude toward the steps. Despite prejudice to religion and the God of my childhood, I had nowhere else to turn.

Thankfully, my second sponsor, Jamie, accepted my agnosticism. He was exactly what I needed. Jamie told me to use AA itself as a higher power and kept reassuring me that step twelve promised a spiritual awakening, not necessarily a God awakening.

After completing steps four and five, Jamie gave me a very involved assignment on step six in preparation for step seven. In this written piece of work, I had to revisit step four. I was to name the defects of character that I had identified in steps four and five. Which specific defects were responsible for clinging on to resentments and rendered me incapable of letting them go? I could no longer deny a vital truth when I finished step six. Ultimately, the defects were the real problem, not the people I resented.

Step seven and the victim belief system

As an adult, I was still blaming others. My dishonest and distorted perception of reality was the primary activator of these defects. Jamie called this mindset ‘the victim belief system.’ It continued to make life in sobriety chaotic and unmanageable. He went on to say that a man is what he thinks. If I saw myself as a victim, I would attract victimizers. I learned so much from Jamie. Alcohol addiction was just a symptom. I drank to medicate continuous anger and the need to blame others for the fact that I ruined my life with alcohol.

The ‘disease of perception’ was my main relapse trigger. In the end, it wasn’t alcohol that forced me to ask for help; it was the warped way that I saw life. Ego drove the defects of character, and the defects made it impossible to “differentiate the true from the false” (BB ps. XXV111). Until the ego collapsed and I admitted that it was me that was the problem, I was in danger of relapsing again and again. I was now ready and willing to get off the merry-go-round of untreated alcoholism.

Nothing else worked to relieve the madness in my head. It was there that the shortcomings lived and where they had complete power. The time had come to face me honestly and take responsibility for the shortcomings mentioned in steps six and seven. When the ego collapsed, I “became as open-minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be.” (12&12 p 24)

The ‘God’ word in steps six and seven

Step six says that we “were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” Step seven says, “Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.” How was an agnostic supposed to work steps six and seven? Jamie told me to practice the character assets that were the opposite of each defect. Sadly, I made limited progress.

Was I trying too hard? I was like a dog with a bone with my problems and utterly obsessed with how to get rid of them. With this mindset, it became impossible to let them go. “Self-will run riot” (BB p.62) made them worse. There was little or no surrender. To a great extent, I was applying self-will to recovery. I was attempting to overcome defects using the very thing that had created them in the first place: The maladapted ego!

“Some of these (defects) refuse to be solved with all the sheer determination and courage he can muster. They simply will not budge.” (12&12 p.39)

Between a rock and a hard place

Very slowly, I discovered a way of working steps six and seven. One thing became apparent. I had to stop fighting and accept that I could not overcome these shortcomings with willpower. Without some greater power, the removal of shortcomings seemed an impossible task. I remember feeling like a defect looking for a character!

“We are obliged to choose between the pains of trying and the certain penalties of failing to do so.” (12&12 p. 74)

There had to be a way forward with step seven! The alternative was to drink again or resign my life to the lonely and miserable existence of a dry drunk.

The challenge of step seven for an agnostic

Step seven tells us that to achieve freedom, we must “Humbly ask him to remove our shortcomings.” The “him” in step seven refers to the God mentioned in step six. Everyone in the fellowship can interpret step seven in a way that works for them. I realized that if I were to make any progress, I would need the help of some power greater than me.

Unable to find a working solution to step seven, I remained “restless, irritable and discontent.” (BB P. XXV111) If not God, then what power could I find to help in the removal of shortcomings?

Then I got lucky. My sponsor introduced me to the importance of a sentence from the Big Book. It demystified the whole idea of a higher power. Negative childhood memories of religion prejudiced my struggle with any notion of a higher power.





Moreover, as a newcomer, I saw God and a higher power as the same thing. I could not use either of these two ideas to aid my recovery.

With the help of my sponsor, the following sentence from the Big Book helped me to discover a practical definition of a higher power. It was a game-changer in my recovery and certainly an interpretation that I could use in recovery on a day-to-day basis. The relevant quote appears on the first page of Chapter Five. “How it works.”

“Some of us have tried to hold onto our ‘old ideas,’ and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.” (BB p. 58)

“Our old ideas” (BB p.58)

Being a dry drunk was worse than the madness of active alcoholism. I always believed in the power of my intelligence.

Concerning recovery, the truth turned out to be quite shocking. My mind was so impaired by years of drinking that my very best thinking had become a liability. I had no clue how to start enjoying sobriety. Bill was 100% correct. Based on my “old ideas,” the result continued to be ‘nil’ (BB p.58) regarding any sober and happy life I was trying to create.

After many years of self-sponsorship, I received the gift of a new life when my ego finally collapsed. I suddenly had a ‘new’ idea! Perhaps I could ask for help? Maybe the suggestions of an AA sponsor could do what I could not do for myself. It worked! Once I became teachable, I began to get well. The new ideas I surrendered to proved highly effective. One day, I realized that the new ideas were undoubtedly powers greater than me.

An agnostic interpretation of a higher power

For someone who doesn’t believe in God, the following definition of a higher power may be helpful.

“A higher power is any source of ‘new ideas’ that would show me how to live in the solution. The best of my “old ideas” condemned me to keep living with the problem, which prevented me from staying sober and recreating my life.”

Some new ideas support progress with step seven.

Regarding step seven, it was necessary to internalize a few of AA’s ‘new ideas.’

- I had to concede to my innermost self that despite my very best thinking, I was powerless over alcohol as well as people, places, and things. Despite not drinking, life continued to be painfully unmanageable.
- In surrendering to the truth of my powerlessness and unmanageability, I ‘made a decision’ (step three) to follow a sponsor’s Good Orderly Direction (Acronym for God). As an agnostic, this is how I worked steps two and three.
- Although I had noble intentions, I had to admit that I could only make marginal progress in overcoming the shortcomings mentioned in step seven.

Fear always held me back. – ” The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear” (12&12 Step 7 p.76)

Finally, in the absence of a belief in God, I had to find a greater power that I could use to remove shortcomings.

Humility

The keyword of step seven is humility. Let’s face it: as a drunk, the idea of humility was nowhere to be found in the database of my “old ideas.” (BB p.58) The fantastic truth was that a daily surrender of self-will gradually taught me something about humility. Surrender and humility became the higher powers that began to help with step seven.

I read pages 87/88 in chapter six of the Big Book every morning. The reading starts with “On awakening.....” It continues to the end of the chapter. The sentence that helps me the most is:

“We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show.” (BB ps 87/88)

If, as an agnostic, I make a daily decision (step three) to stop “running the show,” if not God, then what specific higher power could bring about this much-desired change? I discovered humility’s healing power through a daily surrender to the ideas learned in AA. In the end, it was humility itself that became this greater power. It began to do for me what I could not do for myself. It helped tremendously in gradually removing the shortcomings mentioned in the seventh step.

All I had to do was make a decision (step three) to begin the journey of internalizing the three principles of AA; “willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness.” (BB – Appendix 2 p. 568) Learning to internalize the tenets has also produced a gradual yet tangible path to humility. Where everything else failed, the new ideas learned in AA are doing for me what I could never do for myself.

Without a doubt, through daily surrender, striving for humility in sobriety is the active power that makes step seven possible.

Coming Home, A Returnee's Story

Let's face it, returning to A.A. after relapsing can be extremely uncomfortable, and I should know because I've been a periodic "*slipper*" over the past 20 years. But now, after three lengths of serial sobriety, (5 years, 8 years and now, over 3) and two nearly fatal relapses, there is no doubt in my mind that I need A.A. in order to survive.

But, how to make it work this time?

When I returned to A.A. in 2015, I was not only in the throes of physical withdrawal, but I was also beset with toxic levels of self-pity, anger and jealousy that were blocking me from getting any real relief. For instance, when a dear friend took an anniversary cake for double-digit sobriety, I wallowed in self-pity that I had "*lost my time*" instead of being happy for him.

It took numerous calls to my sponsor to decipher my feelings from the fact that I'm nothing more or less than a jealous, self-obsessed alcoholic, which was quite a relief. And, I was worried that there was something seriously wrong with me! LOL Here's where a thorough 4th Step came in. Sorting out who did what to whom and my part in it was essential, but not as a means to browbeat myself for my defects of character. With Steps 4-7, I did something constructive with those flaws – namely to identify my wrong thinking, be ready to change it and pray like hell to have it removed.

It's taken years for me to put my life together again, but remembering that A.A. is a one-day-at-a-time venture on a long-haul journey is essential for my recovery. Going to meetings and not picking up a drink or drug is essential. But, not picking up a harmful thought, word or action keeps me away from an emotional state that leads me to relapse – and that's my hard-won fact.

True, I haven't done it perfectly. But, as Ethel Merman once said, "*Sure I've made mistakes! But, that's why they put erasers on pencils!*" We returnees are also the life-blood of A.A. and we've got a lot to contribute. Our stories provide our fellows with unique insights into staying sober where we went off the rails, and we can return to "the happy road of destiny" if we're willing.

I'm happy to report that the program hasn't changed, but my willingness to maintain a spiritual solution to my self-obsession problem has.

By Pete A. LACOOA Zone E Delegate, Los Angeles A.A. Central Office Magazine, Fall 2018

Goodbye Mr Green by Ashley W

So, this is goodbye Mr Green it's time to leave
It's time to quit your toxic dust I breath
I have decided you are just not for me
It's time to turn the page and write a different story
After all these years spent up in smoke
And all that time longing for just one last toke
You have taken my shine, you have taken my spark
My eyes were light and now they are dark
Now life is calling and it's time to live
But I will miss those warm night hugs you give
So goodbye Mr Green this is the end
Just so you know I was never your friend.

The Principle of Humility

When I think of the principle of Humility, I am reminded of some of the most humble people that I have met in recovery. What all of these people have in common is that they are grateful, they are comfortable in their own skin and no matter how rich, successful or famous they are, they maintain a modest view of their own importance.

As human beings, it's pretty natural to feel a sort of inflated sense of importance, because we can be so focused on our own thoughts that we begin to believe everything revolves around us. Our ego leads us to believe that we're much grander in the scheme of life than we really are – and as addicts, this is what can set us back. There's a unique dichotomy of addictive minds: "When you think you're the shit, but you really feel like shit".

A big part of addiction recovery is learning to understand that we are not “God”, we don't have complete control over the situations that happen to us or around us, and that we certainly cannot control others. Believing such falsities can cause a lot of distress, discomfort and disease. When I found *Alcoholics Anonymous* and a program of recovery, I was reminded of certain ‘golden rule’ values, such as humility, that helped to keep ego in check, and to create a sense of peace within myself and with others.

For some people, successes and increases in what I call “worldly things” can lead to the opposition to humility- a false sense of reality that feeds ego and character defects. Only when we are stripped of artifice, and at our most raw, and true selves can we truly live authentically in humility. The greatest gift of sobriety for me was expressing vulnerability, getting to know myself, getting comfortable with who I am and genuinely liking myself! I realized that if I am not being humble, I am robbing myself of the opportunity to get to know my authentic self.

In our busy and abundant lives in recovery, there are so many things competing for our attention, that finding balance is an ongoing negotiation. As addicts we tend to think in extremes: all or nothing/right or wrong. But in recovery they say, “right sized”-meaning not blowing things out of proportion or minimalizing something important, and this is part of humility. Putting the principle of humility into practice is a balancing act that gives us freedom from pride and arrogance; it allows us to accept the honor of humbly living a life in sobriety.

Humility: Follow The Golden Rule & Keep It Simple

Humble people tend to be happy people. Some of the happiest people I've ever met are not the highest on the totem pole or the person with the most wealth; in fact, in my experience they are the ones with the best relationship with God or the higher power of their choice. They are in a place where they are not moved or dictated by outside influences, and they are not looking for the answers on the outside, when it's an inside job.

Life is really one long lesson in humility, and that's a beautiful thing. The most humble people seem to do the things they were taught as a child when it was simply about “The Golden Rule”. They practice humility by being:

Trustworthy
Courteous
Kind
Loyal
Obedient
Compassionate
Respectful
Serving God
Serving others

As active addicts, there were certain thought patterns and behaviors that took us out of self, out of reality, creating low self-esteem and the opposite of humility. Even in recovery there are things that can come up, that act as triggers. When in doubt we always have the tools of the steps, and actions to take. We can ask ourselves if our thoughts or actions are in contradiction to what kind of life we want to lead? And we can check our motives daily, being ever mindful of self-pity, dishonesty or self-seeking.

Living In Humility: The Gateway To True Happiness

Living in humility, doing things that you love to do, and surrounding yourself with like-minded people is the gateway to true happiness. Humility is a key to success in recovery but it requires striking a balance between all of our thoughts and feelings. As C.S Lewis once wrote, “Humility is not thinking Less of Yourself; it's thinking of yourself Less”.

Humility is revealed when we are serving God and serving others, it helps us to get to know our true selves. When we are practicing humility we are more teachable and therefore wiser. Living in humility means remembering to put our programs first, and respecting limits. We can embrace but not overindulge in the fruits of success. We can strive daily to keep ourselves spiritually balanced, opening our hearts to the voice of God and to the most supreme principle of Love.

Tradition Seven

Spirituality and Money DO Mix

Twelfth Step work is the lifeblood of Alcoholics Anonymous — carrying the message to the next suffering alcoholic. Without it, the Fellowship would wither and die. Yet, even at its simplest level this vital contact between one alcoholic and another involves an investment of time and money.

The paradox of A.A. is that financial independence and the support of our Fellowship by alcoholics and alcoholics alone not only enhances A.A.'s importance to each of us, but stimulates our engagement in our own recovery. While the Fellowship has always faced problems of money, property, and prestige in one form or another, through the wisdom of the Seventh Tradition we have never been diverted from our primary purpose of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. This is our fundamental work, and to ensure that the hand of A.A. will always remain outstretched, money and spirituality must continue to mix. And for that, we are all responsible.

Download A.A. pamphlet, “Where Money & Spirituality Mix”

Step-Tradition Parallel

The seventh tradition is linked to the sixth tradition just as the seventh step is the natural outcome of working the sixth step. What do I do when I become entirely ready to give up my defects of character? I humbly ask God to remove my shortcomings. What do I do when I become entirely ready to give up pursuing outside contributions to my spirituality by not lending my name to related approaches or outside relationships? I avoid the problems of money, property, and prestige – carrying a message that will be believed because it is carried with a spirit of poverty and not greed.

I seek to be financially self—supporting, not wealthy. The seventh tradition, completed the seventh step this way: Father I humbly ask you to remove my major shortcomings, not placing you first in my life, but placing false Gods first, including money. Please teach me to be self-supporting in my relationship with you! “Fear” automatically results when I think I should handle any situation in life by myself. As soon as I place God first in my thinking and try to hear his voice through prayer and meditation, “fear” is removed.

take12.org/t7/

Tradition Seven Checklist

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help AA (my group, my central office, my GSO) remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new person who can't afford it yet? How generous was I when drunk in a barroom?
2. How do I (or my group) support our International Journals of Alcoholics Anonymous, Grapevine and La Viña?
3. If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn't it be OK to let the government subsidize AA groups in hospitals and prisons?
4. Is it more important for a group to get a big AA collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
5. Is a group treasurer's report unimportant AA business? How does the treasurer feel about it?
6. Does my group have a “prudent reserve”? If yes, do I know what that amount is?
7. If a family member, work colleague or close friend who is not an AA member wants to make a financial contribution to my group, should the group accept it? What if my group is short on funds?

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.
6481 Old Canton Rd.
Jackson, Mississippi
39211**

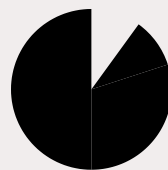
**The Intergroup Central Office wants
to extend a deep thanks to some of our
long standing contributors and our
excited welcome to others!**

James S.	Susan L.	Henry A.
Al & Donna H.	Jimmy T.	Kurt J.
Jeff W.	Hugh B.	Ed C.
Bruce M.	John R.	Andy D.
Will W.	Mary Jane B.	Stacey K.
Roy N.	Frank P.	Joe C.
Mark		

**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**