

Step 3

“Made a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of God *as we understood Him* .”

Practicing Step Three is like the opening of a door which to all appearances is still closed and locked. All we need is a key, and the decision to swing the door open. There is only one key, and it is called willingness. Once unlocked by willingness, the door opens almost of itself, and looking through it, we shall see a pathway beside which is an inscription. It read: “This is the way to a faith that works.” In the first two Steps we were engaged in reflection. We saw that we were powerless over alcohol, but we also perceived that faith of some kind, if only in AA itself, is possible to anyone. These conclusions did not require

action; they required only acceptance.

Like all the remaining Steps, Step Three calls for affirmative action, for it is only by action that we can cut away the self-will which has always blocked the entry of God — or, if you like, a Higher Power -- into our lives. Faith, to be sure, is necessary, but faith alone can avail nothing. We can have faith, yet keep God out of our lives. Therefore our problem now becomes just how and by what specific means shall we be able to let Him in? Step Three represents our first attempt to do this. In fact, the effectiveness of the whole A.A. program will rest upon how well and earnestly

we have tried to come to “a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.”

To every worldly and practical-minded beginner, this Step looks hard, even impossible. No matter how much one wishes to try, exactly how *can* he turn his will and his own life over to the care of whatever God he thinks there is? Fortunately, we who have tried it, and with equal misgivings, can testify that anyone, anyone at all, can begin to do it. We can further add that a beginning, even the smallest, is all that is needed.

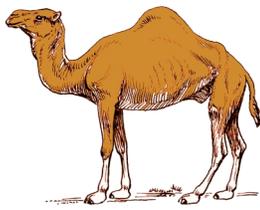
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

Tradition 3

“Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse no one who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.”

This Tradition is packed with meaning. For A.A. is really saying to every serious drinker, “You are an A.A. member if *you say* so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out. No matter who you are, no matter how low you’ve gone, no matter how grave your emotional complications — even your crimes — we still can’t deny you A.A. We don’t *want* to keep you out. We aren’t a bit afraid you’ll harm us, never mind how twisted or violent you may be. We just want to be sure that you get the same great chance for sobriety that we’ve had. So you’re an A.A. member the minute you declare yourself.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions



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.

Inside this issue:

Step 3—Tradition 3	1
Concept III	2
Stories (Grapevine)	3
Contributions	4
District	5
Flyers	6
3rd Promise, Principles	7

Stepping Stones is a monthly newsletter of the Ninth District Intergroup with the office located at: 6640 Eastex Freeway, Suite 149A, Beaumont, TX 77708. It is about, by and for the members of the Fellowship of AA. Opinions expressed herein are Not to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by either AA or the Ninth District Intergroup.

Quotations and artwork from AA literature are reprinted with permission from AA World Service, Inc. and/or The AA Grapevine, Inc.

Contributions from our readers is encouraged. Submissions are edited for space and clarity only. Contact information is required and anonymity is respected. ■

Concept III

As a traditional means of creating and maintaining a clearly defined working relation between the groups, the Conference, the A.A. General Service Board and its several service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives, and of thus insuring their effective leadership, it is here suggested that we endow each of these elements of world service with a traditional "Right of Decision."

The AA Service Manual/ 12 Concepts for World Services—pg. 11 of the Concepts Section

Within the framework of their general responsibilities, whether these be defined by charter, by resolution, or by custom, it should be the traditional right of all world service boards, committees, and executives to decide which problems they will dispose of themselves and upon which matters they will report, consult, or ask specific directions. We ought to trust our world servants with these discretions, because otherwise no effective leadership can be possible. Let us consider in detail, therefore, why the need for a "right of decision" in our leadership is imperative, and let us examine how this principle can be applied practically in all levels of our structure of world service.

We have seen how the A.A. groups, under the concept of the "group conscience," are today holding the ultimate authority and the final responsibility for world services. We have also noted how, by reason of the Conference Charter and the "trusted servant" provision of Tradition Two, the groups have delegated to their General Service Conference full authority to manage and conduct A.A.'s world affairs.

The Conference and General Service Board Charters in broad terms define the responsibility of the Conference to act on behalf of A.A. as a whole. In these two documents a necessarily large area of delegated service authority and responsibility has been staked out. These instruments, in a general way, describe the relation between the groups, the Conference, the Trustees and the active service units. These broad definitions and descriptions are an indispensable frame of reference, and we could not function without them.

Nevertheless it has been long evident that these highly important Charter provisions cannot *by themselves* ensure smooth functioning and proper leadership at the several different levels of service which are involved. This has become crystal clear, and we need not seek very far for the reasons.

Excerpts from The A.A. Service Manual/Twelve Concepts for World Services—pg. 11 of the Concepts Section



AA GRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous



<http://www.aagrapevine.org/>

Grapevine Online Exclusive

Let others win the ribbons

Enjoying long-term sobriety in a small Arkansas town, she finds giving back is reward enough for her

I've been a lot of things in my life. I was a babysitter. I was a secretary and a nurse. I wrote commercials for radio. And I passed out free pickles in a grocery store. But most of all, I've been an alcoholic the whole time.

Before August 19, 1976, I was living in Boston and had been drinking a fifth of liquor every night for the prior 18 months. My first drink had been a fifth of Mississippi moonshine, 16 years earlier. Heavy drinking was habit. I was dealing with high-powered Boston hospital politics and finding out things I wished I hadn't.

A few years earlier, I had my first lesbian affair. There was a lot of drinking involved there too. Actually, all the time. I knew who I was. I also knew exactly how the rest of the world thought of us. In order to take care of others, I couldn't "out" myself. But then someone outed me in a very non-private way. Despite that, I carried on. That fifth-per-night helped. Or so I thought.

In between two blackouts in a Boston bar, I could no longer deny that I had no control over my drinking. Even so, it took still more drinking, as well as a suicide attempt, for me to get to AA.

What I immediately realized about AA is that it works. The core of the program is unconditional love. That was something human institutions failed consistently to provide.

I went to meetings in Boston and read the Big Book every night. I realized going to large meetings was not going to get me sober. Occupying space is one thing. Getting the message is another. So I read literature until I moved back to my home state of Arkan-

sas in 1977.

AA in Arkansas at the time was interesting. Women sat in the back of the room, were not allowed to speak and didn't have to take any Steps beyond the Fifth Step. Women were felt to be too "delicate." And women died because of that attitude. In 1978, our first womens' AA meeting was held, and more proliferated. I was there for that meeting. In 1979, our first gay and lesbian AA meeting was held. And I was there for that too.

Before I left Boston, I had spent three months in a mental health facility as a result of my suicide attempt. There I was diagnosed with manic depression and alcoholism, but my doctor didn't know much about them or what to do. It was clear to me who was in charge, and it wasn't humans. In sobriety I have been admitted twice to a bad mental hospital. The first time I was admitted because my doctor thought I was "cured" and had discontinued my medication. The second time happened when my next doctor prescribed a medicine that resulted in psychosis. But in neither case did I drink, despite losing control over my mental abilities for weeks at a time. The doctors couldn't understand why I didn't drink. Never underestimate HP. I don't.

In 1987, I put my registered nurse license into retirement voluntarily and without any blemishes. But that immediately put my partner and me below the poverty level. Except for two days in 30 years, we have always had food, medicine and a roof over our heads. We had whatever we needed.

And we have always had sobriety. We've seen a lot of things happen

that shouldn't have happened.

The more we keep our relationship with HP active and working in our lives, the less we need to fear. Today I am 70 and still live in our small Arkansas town. I grow herbs but I quit entering the county fair so others could win ribbons. Seeing the effect my herbs have on others is reward enough for me.

One of my best experiences happened when my partner, who is disabled, was asked by a nun to resuscitate a domestic violence agency in our county. My partner got the agency back up and running, even though her success came at a cost to herself. Then I continued that work for a decade, during which time over 500 women and children have been helped to safety.

We go to Hot Springs for the spring water and the Friday AA womens' meeting. We go to Little Rock for the LGBT AA meeting and we attend meetings online. We get Grapevine and donate old copies here and there, including to our local prison. And in the rest of our daily 24 hours, we work the Steps, I've never liked seeing anyone in pain. I didn't like it as a nurse, and I don't like it now. If I can do something about someone's pain, I will. Why would I not?

I knew a lot about the deadliness of alcoholism when I came into AA and I understand more today. AA was, and is, the hope for my community.

Sobriety, to me, is God's time. No longer mine. I couldn't give it to myself and I still can't keep myself sober five minutes. It's a no-brainer.

—Barbara F., Malvern, Ark.

Group Contributions — February 2016

Group	Month	Y to D
A New Beginning (Woodville)	0.00	30.00
Anahuac	0.00	0.00
Bolivar	0.00	0.00
Bridge City	0.00	0.00
Buna	0.00	0.00
Cornerstone	0.00	0.00
Dam Group (Hwy. 225)	0.00	0.00
Deweyville	0.00	0.00
Downtown	0.00	0.00
Fellowship	0.00	0.00
Fresh Start	0.00	0.00
Friends of Bill (Port Author)	0.00	0.00
Jasper Noon	0.00	0.00
Jasper Serenity	0.00	0.00
Keep It Simple	0.00	0.00
Kirbyville	0.00	133.84
Kountze Daylight	0.00	0.00
Lewis Drive	0.00	0.00
Lufkin	0.00	0.00
Lumberton Singleness of Purpose	0.00	150.00
Mid County (Nederland)	0.00	0.00
Murray Street	9.00	16.00

Group	Month	Y to D
Mustard Seed	0.00	75.00
New Life	0.00	0.00
Newton	0.00	0.00
Nueva Vida (Port Author)	0.00	0.00
Orange	10.00	20.00
Pecan Groves	0.00	0.00
Pineywoods	15.00	25.00
Primary Purpose	30.00	30.00
Rule #62 Young Peoples Group	0.00	0.00
Serenity	0.00	294.05
St Francis	0.00	0.00
The Buck Stops Here	0.00	0.00
TLC	0.00	112.00
Un Dia A La Vez	0.00	0.00
Vidor	0.00	0.00
West End	0.00	0.00
Winnie (Unconditional Love)	0.00	0.00
Way Out	0.00	0.00
Women's Gratitude Group	0.00	0.00
Woodville	0.00	0.00
Totals	64.00	885.89

**We want to sincerely thank you for your contributions. Please address your gifts to:
 Ninth District Intergroup Association — 6640 Eastex Frwy., Ste. 149A — Beaumont, TX 77708
 Phone: 409-832-1107 — Fax: 409-898-8977 — E-mail: intergroup9@att.net — Web: aabeaumont.org**

Would You Be On Our 12 Step List?

Home Group: _____

Name: (Please Print) _____ Male/Female: _____

Address: _____

Phone: Home: _____ Work: _____ Cell: _____

Area In Which You Will Serve: _____

Car Available: Yes _____ No _____ Languages Spoken _____

Times Available: (Circle Choices Please) 8 AM – 6 PM 6 PM – 12 MDN 12 MDN – 8 AM

Days Available: (Circle Choices Please) SU M TU W TH F SA

Addresses AA Entities

Ninth District Intergroup

6640 Eastex Frwy, Suite 149 A
 Beaumont, TX 77708

District 90 GSR Committee

PO Box 21279
 Beaumont, TX 77720-1279

Southeast Texas Area 67

PO Box 130433
 Houston, TX 77219-0433

AA General Service Office

PO Box 459
 New York, NY 10163-0459

Opportunities For Service

SHARE THE MESSAGE IN THE COUNTY, STATE AND FEDERAL FACILITIES

We need men and women to go into the County jail on Sat. @ 11:30 each week. There is also a need for men to go into the State and Federal facilities on a weekly basis or even just once a month to give current volunteers a much needed break. Each facility requires a background check before you enter. To find out more information please come to the monthly CSR meeting and talk with the correction committee members or call Intergroup @ 409-832-1107.

TREATMENT FACILITY COMMITTEE

We need volunteers to go into both the men and the women's facilities. Come to the next

Announcements

Next District 90 GSR Meeting

April 3, 2016 At 2:00 PM

West End Group

1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

Next 9th Dist. Intergroup Meeting

April 17, 2016 At 2:00 PM

Westgate Memorial Baptist Church

6220 Westgate Drive, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

Meeting is held in the rear of the building.

**MAIL, FAX OR EMAIL YOUR ANNOUNCEMENTS,
GROUP NEWS AND OTHER SUBMISSIONS TO THE
NINTH DISTRICT INTERGROUP**

intergroup9@att.net

NEW GROUP MEETING

**Hope Group
210 West Barkley St.
Sour Lake
FRIDAYS—7:00PM
OD**

"The Result of These Steps"

35th ANNUAL DISTRICT 90 CONVENTION August 19, 20 & 21, 2016

<p style="text-align: center;"><u>CONVENTION SPEAKERS</u></p> <p>Fri. 08:00 PM AA Steve L., Nashville, TN Fri. 10:00 PM AA Michael B., Beaumont, TX Sat. 8:30 AM AA Four Faces of Al-Anon Sat. 10:00 AM AA Lisa C., Portland, OR Sat. 01:00 PM Al-Anon Corrie L., Wetumpka, AL Alateen TBA Sat. 02:30 PM AA Workshop Sat. 03:45 PM AA Old Timers Sat. 08:00 PM AA Rich B., Ocean City, MD Sat. 10:00 PM Dance Sun. 10:00 AM AA Mary D., Corrales, NM</p>	<p>Please make hotel reservations directly with:</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Holiday Inn Hotel & Suites, Beaumont Plaza 3950 I-10 South at Walden Road Phone (409) 842-5995/Fax (409) 842-7810 www.holidayinnbeaumont.com</p> <p>Convention Rate - \$95 * per night * If reserved by Cut-Off Date™ July 28, 2015</p> <hr/> <p style="text-align: center;">ONSITE REGISTRATION</p> <p>Pre-Registration ends Aug 9, 2015! (AA/Al-Anon \$10, -teen \$3)[†] Onsite Registration opens Fri, Aug 14, 2015 at 2:00 PM</p> <p>AA/ Al-Anon: \$ 12 ea Alateen: \$ 5 ea Dance only: \$ 6 ea Coffee: Incl. w/ registration</p> <p>Dance admission included with convention registration *"Dance only" tickets will be sold at ballroom door Sat night</p>
-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

Hospitality Suites... Sobriety Countdown... First Timers Contest... Raffle... Marathon Meetings... Ice Cream Social
 WE STRIVE TO BE SELF-SUPPORTING - PLEASE DONATE TO THE COFFEE AND HOSPITALITY SUITE CONTRIBUTION CANS!

Note: The city of Beaumont has a smoke free ordinance. Smoking hotel rooms are available, but we encourage you to register early due to limited availability.
 Outdoor smoking areas will be designated to accommodate our smoking guests during the convention.

PRE-REGISTRATION FORM

Name 1 : _____ Email Address: _____ Address _____ City, State, Zip: _____ Badge Name: _____ Home Group: _____ Check One: ___ AA ___ Al-Anon ___ Alateen ¹ <i>Check if Needed: ___ASL Interpreter___Spanish Translator___Special Accom/Need</i>	Name 2: _____ Email Address: _____ Address: _____ City, State, Zip: _____ Badge Name: _____ Home Group: _____ Check One: ___ AA ___ Al-Anon ___ Alateen ¹ <i>Check if Needed: ___ASL Interpreter___Spanish Translator___Special Accom/Need</i>												
<table style="width: 100%;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">Pre-Registration:</td> <td style="width: 50%;">Amt. Enclosed:</td> </tr> <tr> <td>{ } AA @ \$ 10.00 each</td> <td>\$ _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>{ } Al-Anon @ \$ 10.00 each</td> <td>\$ _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>{ } Alateen @ \$ 3.00 each</td> <td>\$ _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td>{ } Sponsorship Donation</td> <td>\$ _____</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: right;">TOTAL ENCLOSED</td> <td>\$ _____</td> </tr> </table> <p>¹Alateens must have signed permission slips!</p>	Pre-Registration:	Amt. Enclosed:	{ } AA @ \$ 10.00 each	\$ _____	{ } Al-Anon @ \$ 10.00 each	\$ _____	{ } Alateen @ \$ 3.00 each	\$ _____	{ } Sponsorship Donation	\$ _____	TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ _____	<p>MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO AND MAIL REGISTRATION FORMS TO:</p> <p>District 90 Convention Treasurer PO Box 1591 Groves, TX 77619</p>
Pre-Registration:	Amt. Enclosed:												
{ } AA @ \$ 10.00 each	\$ _____												
{ } Al-Anon @ \$ 10.00 each	\$ _____												
{ } Alateen @ \$ 3.00 each	\$ _____												
{ } Sponsorship Donation	\$ _____												
TOTAL ENCLOSED	\$ _____												

We urge everyone to pre-register and to book any rooms before the July cut-off date where possible. This helps keep registration fees low/max. convention exp./hospitality/available scholarships—that we may Serve and Carry the Message.

DEAR EBBY



Dear Ebby: I am having a hard time taking the 3rd Step. Can you help me? *Stepper from Stephenville*

Dear SIS: Okay. What worked for me was to imagine all living things are connected to each other by this wonderful power, or, if you will, a "Higher Power." I believe that trust and faith are the principles of this step. If I am taking driving lessons, I imagine someone I trust and have faith in to sit beside me. Substituted God for the driving teacher, and voila! I haven't had a wreck since!

Dear Ebby: I have been working the Steps to the best of my ability, and I have completed my Fourth Step. But I am dragging my heels when it comes to the Fifth Step. I don't like the idea that another person will know all about me. Do you have any advice? *Undecided in Utah*

Dear UIU: Imagine yourself as an onion. While getting to know yourself as you peel away the layers, you see a rotten part of yourself. If you expose it to the sunlight as it disintegrates, No Problem. But if you cut out that rotten spot and put in a paper bag to hide it, pretty soon all those rotten spots start to stink up to high heaven! I much prefer the first method.

THE FUNNY BONE



Cartoon from the Grapevine: A drunk is laying at the threshold to the local bar while a clean cut man looks down on him. The caption reads:

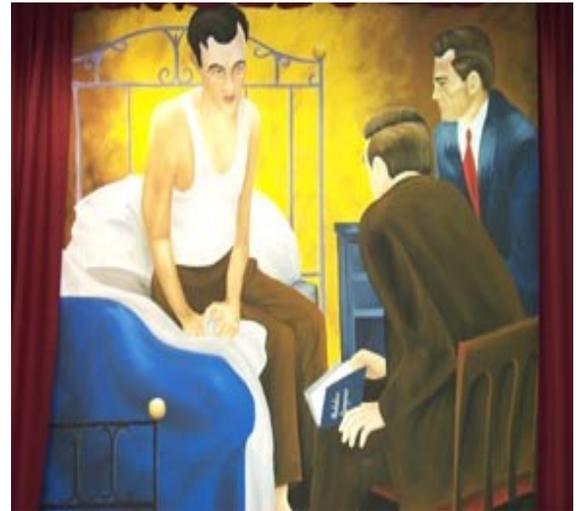
"I'm not powerless over alcohol. I just can't get up."

A **drunk** was sent for treatment at a rehab. Upon his return, a friend asked him how it had been there. "Terrible!" he replied. "For weeks, I lived on nothing but food!"

From the Grapevine, September 1982

The **lush** sat drinking at his kitchen table, complaining to his wife that his bartender didn't understand him.

From the Grapevine, April 1977



3rd Step Principle

Faith Commitment

3rd Promise

We will comprehend
the word serenity, and
we will know peace.





70th Annual Texas State AA Convention

Austin, TX

June 24 - June 26, 2016

Great Events Will Come to Pass...

AA Speakers:

John H. - Sanford, FL
 Astrid H. - Granada Hills, CA
 Rose E. - Spring Hill, FL
 Matthew M. - Port Orchard, WA
 Michealine F. - Escondido, CA

Al-Anon Speaker:

Jenny P. - Eureka Springs, AR

G.S.O. Speaker:

Racy J. - New York City, NY

AA Historian Speaker:

Arthur S. - Arlington, TX

DoubleTree Hotel

6505 N. Interstate 35
 Austin, TX 78752
 (512) 454-3737

Room Rate: \$109 (Group code SCA)

BADGES ARE REQUIRED FOR ALL CONVENTION EVENTS AND ACTIVITIES

Register Online at www.txaaconvention.org

For information or to volunteer, contact us at: AustinAA2016@gmail.com

..... MAIL IN REGISTRATION.....

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Badge Name: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____ Phone _____

2nd Registrant

First Name: _____ Last Name: _____ Badge Name: _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email Address _____ Phone _____

<input type="checkbox"/> AA Registration \$35 Each	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Cash
<input type="checkbox"/> Al-Anon Registration \$35 Each	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Check
<input type="checkbox"/> Registration Donation for Scholarships	\$ _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Credit Card
	TOTAL \$ _____	

Make checks payable to: Texas State AA Convention
 P.O. Box 8425
 Round Rock, TX 78683