

Step 4

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

Creation gave us instincts for a purpose. Without them we wouldn't be complete human beings. If men and women didn't exert themselves to be secure in their persons, made no effort to harvest food or construct shelter, there would be no survival. If they didn't reproduce, the earth wouldn't be populated. If there were no social instinct, if men cared nothing for the society of one another, there would be no so-

ciety, So these desires — for the sex relation, for material and emotional security ,and for companionship — are perfectly necessary and right, and surely God-given.

Yet these instincts, so necessary for our existence, often far exceed their proper functions. Powerfully, blindly, many times subtly, they drive us, dominate us, and insist upon ruling our lives. Our desires for sex, for material and emotional

security, and for an important place in society often tyrannize us. When thus out of joint, man's natural desires cause him great trouble, practically all the trouble there is. No human being, however good, is exempt from these troubles. Nearly every serious emotional problem can be seen as a case of misdirected instinct. When that happens, our great natural assets, the instincts, have

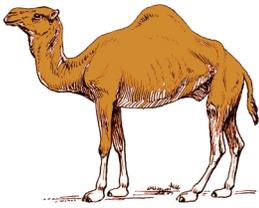
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Tradition 4

“With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount..”

AUTONOMY is a ten-dollar word. But in relation to us, it means very simply that every A.A. group can manage its affairs exactly as it pleases, except when A.A. as a whole is threatened. Comes now the same question raised in Tradition One. Isn't such liberty foolishly dangerous?

Over the years, every conceivable deviation from our Twelve Steps and Traditions has been tried. That was sure to be, since we are so largely a band of ego-driven individualists. Children of chaos, we have defiantly played with every brand of fire, only to emerge unharmed and, we think, wiser. These very deviations created a vast process of trial and error which, under the grace of God, has brought us to where we stand today.



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.

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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.

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

Concept IV

Throughout our Conference structure, we ought to maintain at all responsible levels a traditional “Right of Participation,” taking care that each classification or group of our world servants shall be allowed a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge..”

The AA Service Manual/ 12 Concepts for World Services—pg. 15 of the Concepts Section

The principle of “Participation” has been carefully built into our Conference structure. The Conference Charter specifically provides that the Trustees, the Directors of our service corporations, (A.A. World Services, Inc. and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc.) together with their respective executive staffs, shall always be voting members of the General Service Conference itself.

Exactly the same concept is borne in mind when our General Service Board elects the Directors of its wholly-owned active service corporations, A.A. World Services, Inc. and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. If it wished, the General Service Board could elect none but its own Trustees to these corporate directorships. But a powerful tradition has grown up to the effect that this never ought to be done.

For example, A.A. World Services, Inc. (which also includes the A.A. Publishing division) currently has seven directors, only two of whom are Trustees. The other five non-Trustee. Directors comprise three volunteers, both expert in office management and publishing, and two directors who are paid staff members: the general manager and his assistant. The general manager is traditionally the president of A.A. World Services, Inc. and his assistant is a vice president. For communication linkage, the editor or a staff member of the Grapevine or his nominee is invited to attend A.A. World Services, Inc. meetings.

Therefore the active management of A.A. World Services, Inc. and its publishing division is composed of Trustees whose mission is to see that these projects are properly managed; of volunteer experts who contribute their advice and professional experience; and of two paid office executives who are charged with getting most of the work done. It will be seen that each member of every classification, is a director, and so has a legal vote; that each corporate officer bears a title which, both practically and legally, denotes what his (or her) actual status and responsibility is.

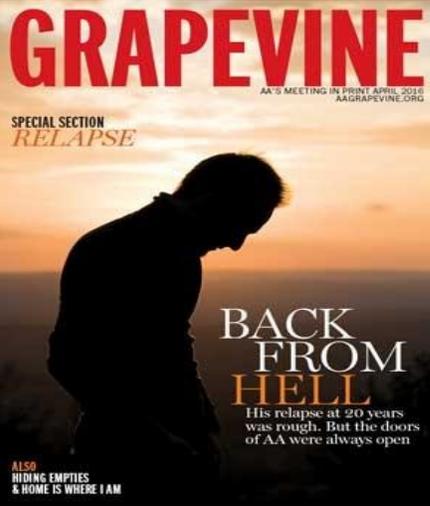


AA GRAPEVINE

The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous



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



Grapevine Online Exclusive

At 20 years, he decided to take a break from AA.

What followed was years of detoxes, psych wards and pain

That was the start of the kind of hell I had not experienced “yet”—bad things I heard others speak of in meetings. I call them “yets” because these hadn’t yet happened to me and I always assured myself they never would.

At year 23, I finally took a drink one day after I ran out of my pills. That time, I stopped at only a couple of beers. I went to a meeting the next morning, ’fessed up and got a desire chip. I didn’t drink for a couple of months but I didn’t change inside. When the idea of a drink came back again, I didn’t even fight it, and that started two years of drinking and using pills like never before. I was to learn the true meaning of powerlessness. Not just over alcohol, but over all of the events to come.

I can’t really explain what it was like. I drank continuously, hiding alcohol at home. When I woke up in the night full of insanity, liquor would be there to calm me down so I could go back to sleep. At sunrise, I would have more to tide me over until the store opened. I had no power to stop. I was in and out of hospitals continually and was once tied down to a bed for 10 days, going through DTs. When I got out, I went straight to the liquor store on the way home.

When the people at the emergency room wouldn’t help me anymore, I went to another one. There were five rehabs. I got tossed out of the fifth for drinking. I walked into a telephone pole once, walking home in a blackout. My neighbor saw me lying in the street and called for an ambulance. I sat in the waiting room later with stitches above my right eye and half my face bruised black, calling my wife once again to come get me. She went through hell but stayed with me through it all.

Finally, I was court-ordered to the place we go when all else has failed—the psych ward. Four times. I then overdosed accidentally and was actually clinically dead in the ambulance on the way to the hospital. But God wasn’t through with me “yet.”

I realized I was dying a slow, torturous death, so I tried to speed it up and took an entire bottle of pills and sat down in my chair to die. When I was just about out, I called a friend to say farewell, and the friend figured out what was happening and called for help (without my permission). I woke up in the hospital again (I was not happy or grateful)

with a “life guard” sitting next to me until the sheriff came and took me back to the psych ward.

I can tell you all of these things but I can’t express the worst part, which was happening inside of me. I finally got so sick they couldn’t accept me back in detox. I could no longer eat. I was beyond human aid.

I had been praying to God that I could have back what I once had when I was sober. He answered my prayers and I made it back to my old home group. I was greeted back like the prodigal child. All my friends hugged me and welcomed me back. I was so sick. I lived on nutritional supplements, since I could not eat solid food. I lost 35 pounds. My health and sanity did not return until around the time I received my nine-month chip.

But through it all, God supplied my wife and me with all we needed, spiritually and materially, through the angels in our AA group and our church. They kept us afloat.

In a few months, I will receive a two-year chip. It is only through the mercy and grace of God that I am now living a happy, good life, brought back from hell. We are still recovering from the financial ruin I caused. I went through my retirement savings and a fat 401K, leaving us in financial jeopardy. In time, I know our financial problems will be taken care of.

The important thing is that I am closer to God than ever. I’m sober and able to help others. I am a contributing member of my church again. I know my purpose today. I have experienced a miracle and am still experiencing it one day at a time.

I hope my story helps another alcoholic stay the course.

—Chuck C., Austin, Texas

When I arrived in AA in 1984, I carried all my possessions with me in a half-full trash bag. I was blessed with a sponsor who knew the Steps and lived in the solution. He possessed the patience and perseverance it takes to work with a low-bottom, hardheaded drunk like me. I became very close with him and his family and we worked the solution together for five years. Then he started to become a bit distant in the last year we were together, before he fell to the disease and died in 1990. The entire AA community in our area was shocked in disbelief as he had been a backbone of support for so many of us.

It was a good while before I learned enough about living to be able to get and keep a job. At three years sober, I was living in the large parking lot of a recovery clubhouse, doing odd jobs there to earn enough money to live on 50-cent sandwiches that a nearby store sold at closing time. I kept the club clean and stocked, went on Twelve Step calls and stayed sober.

I learned a lot in the ensuing years. I got married and found a job making more money than I ever had before. I bought a house and acquired many toys. All this time I was active in AA, chairing speaker meetings, sponsoring, doing Twelfth Step work, chairing detox and jail meetings, as well as “feeding” myself from the Big Book. I had a good sponsor.

Along about year 20, I began to let things fall away. It came about so slowly I didn’t realize what I was doing. I stopped calling my sponsor and decided I needed a “break” from the detox and jail meetings. I fell into fits of anxiety, and instead of calling my sponsor, I went to the doctor, without admitting to myself the relief I was seeking. The doctor prescribed a small dose of an anti-anxiety drug, which I convinced myself was safe to take. But in the back of my mind, I knew the truth.

Group Contributions — March 2016

Group	Month	Y to D	Group	Month	Y to D
A New Beginning (Woodville)	0.00	30.00	Mustard Seed	0.00	75.00
Anahuac	0.00	0.00	New Life	0.00	0.00
Bolivar	0.00	0.00	Newton	0.00	0.00
Bridge City	0.00	0.00	Nueva Vida (Port Author)	0.00	0.00
Buna	0.00	0.00	Orange	10.00	20.00
Cornerstone	0.00	0.00	Pecan Groves	0.00	0.00
Dam Group (Hwy. 225)	0.00	0.00	Pineywoods	15.00	40.00
Deweyville	0.00	0.00	Primary Purpose	0.00	30.00
Downtown	0.00	0.00	Rule #62 Young Peoples Group	0.00	0.00
Fellowship	0.00	0.00	Serenity	0.00	294.05
Fresh Start	0.00	0.00	St Francis	100.00	100.00
Friends of Bill (Port Author)	0.00	0.00	The Buck Stops Here	0.00	0.00
Jasper Noon	0.00	0.00	TLC	0.00	112.00
Jasper Serenity	0.00	0.00	Un Dia A La Vez	0.00	0.00
Keep It Simple	0.00	0.00	Vidor	0.00	0.00
Kirbyville	0.00	133.84	West End	0.00	0.00
Kountze Daylight	0.00	0.00	Winnie (Unconditional Love)	0.00	0.00
Lewis Drive	0.00	0.00	Way Out	0.00	0.00
Lufkin	0.00	0.00	Women's Gratitude Group	0.00	0.00
Lumberton Singleness of Purpose	0.00	150.00	Woodville	0.00	0.00
Mid County (Nederland)	0.00	0.00			
Murray Street	7.00	23.00	Totals	122.00	1007.89

**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
 If you see mistakes, please call, write or come in. We want to be accurate and ask that you verify your totals.**

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

May 1 , 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.

**Please visit our website (aabeaumont.org)
to download a copy of the flyer for the following:**

- . District 90 35th Annual Convention**
- . Texas State Convention**
- . St Francis Eating/Speaking Meeting**



**Lumberton Singleness of Purpose April Birthdays
Woodcrest Methodist Church—Hwy 96/69 Split
April 24th—6:00 PM—Eat—7:00 PM—Celebrate Birthdays
Group will furnish meal, bring dessert if you want to
contribute. See you then.**

- **Jeff M.—7 years**
- **Richard D.—7 years**
- **Richard B.—5 years**

**Mid-County Group April Birthdays
908 Boston Ave., Nederland, TX
April 26, 2016—Potluck 7PM—Birthday Meeting 8PM**

- **Daphne (g.) T. - 6yrs**
- **Jacob B. - 8 yrs**
- **Travis W. - 8 yrs**
- **Will C. - 15 yrs**
- **Paula J. - 25 yrs**
- **Dan J. - 26 yrs**
- **John D. - 27 yrs**
- **Charley A. - 27 yrs**

DEAR EBBY

Dear Ebby: I was reading the Grapevine magazine for November 2015, and in the Section named “Dear Grapevine” was a letter concerning his displeasure of group members who use their cell phones during meetings. He called it “inconsiderate” and “rude.” What is your take on this matter? *Seeking Wisdom in Washington*



Dear *SWW*: Ah, yes. The technological progress of our society! I’ve seen this practice in my own home group. Actually, I was of the same opinion as the author of the letter. I brought this to my sponsor’s attention. Boy, did he light into me! Paraphrasing what he said, he reminded me about the many times I got drunk and in a blackout and how I would call up my home group during, before and after meetings, asking for someone to come to my house to help me, knowing full well I didn’t want to stop drinking but was simply lonely. He told me to get off my high horse, and let others who are more suited handle such matters!

Dear Ebby: My sponsor suggested that before we get together to make my inventory lists, I should read the section in the Big Book titled “How it Works.” I was doing pretty good until I reached a sentence that says: “One school would allow man no flavor for his fare and the other would have us all on a straight pepper diet.” I’m confused. Is this from the Big Book or a Betty Crocker cookbook?!! *Hungry in Houston*

Dear *HIH*: You are a sharp one! There may be a recipe in one of the Appendices. But you have to read all of the Book to find out!!

THE FUNNY BONE



A **drunk with a terrible hangover** strolled into a bar, seated himself shakily on a stool, and asked for something to drink in a hurry. When the bartender began to reel off suggestions, the drunk cut in with, “Oh, just give me something tall and cool and full of gin.”

A drunk sitting on the adjacent stool turned and said indignantly, “Sir, you are talking about the woman I love!”

From the Grapevine, March 1961

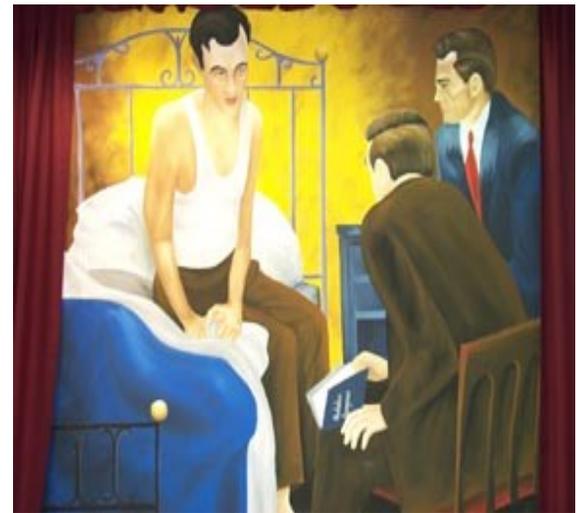
A **chap was getting very tipsy** at a party and making a nuisance of himself. Toward the end of the evening, he became attracted to a pretty girl who was playing the grand piano. He fell against it, causing the cover to come down on his fingers.

On the way home, his wife remarked acidly, “Remind me to put a piece of raw steak on your black eye when we get home.”

“It’s my fingers that hurt,” he replied. “I don’t have a black eye.”

You’re not home yet,” she answered grimly.

From the Grapevine, January 1984



4th Step Principle Courage

4th Promise

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

