

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.

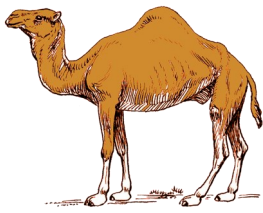
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

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.

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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 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."

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 rea-



AA GRAPEVINE



The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

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



In March of 2013, I was sitting in our local church meeting room, waiting for our small-town, Friday night open-discussion meeting to begin, as I have for many years.

After the usual Serenity Prayer and Preamble had been read, an elderly man walked into our meeting dressed as if he had just stepped out of the 1940s. He sat down at the table, which held about 12 people.

After the readings were finished, the chairperson introduced herself and as the basket was passed, we each introduced ourselves. When we got to the elderly man, he looked up and spoke for several minutes. "My name is Hershel," he said. "I came here to thank Alcoholics Anonymous for saving my step-daughter 22 years ago from a horrible life as an alcoholic. Her name is Linda L. She is on her deathbed from cancer right now. I just wanted to thank you all for the years she learned how to stay sober and how much this means to her mother and me."

The chairperson, who has over 20 years of sobriety, said she remembered Linda. I remembered her too, along with some of her early struggles in sobriety.

The chairperson explained to Hershel that there is a format that AA follows and if he wanted to speak with us after the

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meeting, we would be glad to listen.

Hershel had hearing aids in both ears and told us he was 87. It was apparent that he did not hear what the chairperson had just said. So I took Hershel by the hand and walked him into the next room, which was the church's kitchen.

I listened to him for a while. He told me about the turmoil and sadness Linda's drinking had caused the family all those years before she found AA. I reached over to hold his hand, since he was now tearing up as he explained how sad he felt that Linda was only 53 years old and the doctors told them she only had a few more days before she would pass on.

I handed Hershel a box of tissues and continued to listen. He shared all of the wonderful times that Linda had with us during those 22 years of her sobriety. He told me he was sure that God had answered their prayers when Linda found AA and that he really thought he should take the time to thank our home group.

I asked him for Linda's address, which he gladly gave me, also giving me his business card. I hugged him. Hershel hung onto me as if he was afraid to let go. I asked him if he would like to say the "Our Father" with me. I explained that is how we closed our AA meetings. Hershel's face brightened as he replied, "Oh, yes, will you please?"

Hershel and I joined hands and bowed our heads. I began

to pray and he immediately joined in. I felt such a strong feeling of the power of AA during this moment. I felt so grateful that my Higher Power, whom I call God, allowed me to be Hershel's AA contact that night. This experience reminded me of many years ago when I first got sober in Cincinnati, Ohio, and how all the old-timers would drag us newcomers to in-home Twelfth Step calls, since there weren't as many treatment centers back then.

After a while, I walked Hershel to the door and told him goodbye. When the meeting was over, the chairperson thanked me for handling the situation. I told her that I needed to thank God for this amazing opportunity.

The next day I sent a card to Linda L. I signed it "Hillsboro AA" and I also sent Hershel a card to thank him for letting us know about Linda and how much AA had touched their family.

The cards were mailed on March 3. On March 17, I received a card back from Hershel. This is what it said:

"AA, I had to send you this message to tell you how nice it was of you to send Linda a card. She died Thursday, March 14 at 5:30 in the evening at her home. Let the good Lord take a liking to you. My sincere thanks, Hershel."

This is the core of AA. I want the hand of AA always to be there.

-- Beth S
Hillsboro, Ohio, USA

Group Contributions — January and February 2017

Group	Month	Y to D	Group	Month	Y to D
6 O'Clock	\$0.00	\$0.00	Murray Street	\$0.00	\$0.00
A New Beginning (Woodville)	\$0.00	\$0.00	Mustard Seed	\$0.00	\$190.00
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 Arthur)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Buna	\$0.00	\$0.00	Orange	\$10.00	\$30.00
Cornerstone	\$0.00	\$0.00	Pecan Groves	\$0.00	\$0.00
Dam Group (Hwy. 225)	\$0.00	\$0.00	Pineywoods	\$10.00	\$20.00
Deweyville	\$0.00	\$0.00	Primary Purpose	\$23.76	\$23.76
Downtown	\$0.00	\$0.00	Rule #62 Young Peoples Group	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fellowship	\$0.00	\$0.00	Serenity	\$0.00	\$202.12
Fresh Start	\$0.00	\$150.00	St Francis	\$0.00	\$0.00
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	\$0.00
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	\$131.20	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	\$0.00			
Mid County (Nederland)	\$0.00	\$0.00			
			Totals	\$43.76	\$747.08

**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

April 2, 2017 At 2:00 PM

West End Group

1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

Next 9th Dist. Intergroup Meeting

April 16, 2017 At 2:00 PM

Westgate Memorial Baptist Church

6220 Westgate Drive, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

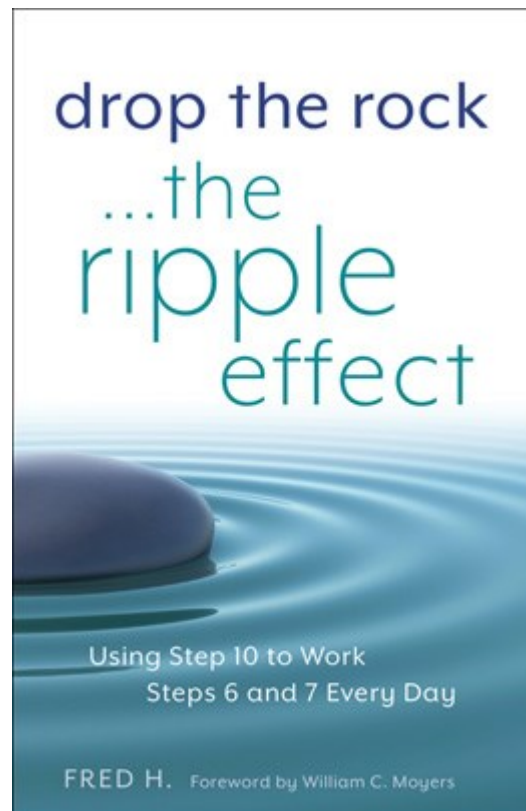
Meeting is held in the rear of the building.

***There is a new book on
our shelf.***

***The "Drop The Rock"
with a "ripple effect"***

Get Your Copy Today!!!

\$14.95





It's a Miracle

A pastor is stumbling across a parking lot looking for his car, when a cop sees him.

The officer walks up to him and asks, "Have you had anything to drink tonight sir?"

"No," the pastor replies.

"So, what's in that cup?" the cop asks.

"Water sir, take a look!" he says.

Looking in the cup, the officer says, "This isn't water, it's wine!"

Gasping, the pastor exclaims, "He did it again!"

—Barry O., Albuquerque, N.M.

Double Trouble

A drunk stumbles up to the only other patron in a bar and asks if he could buy him a drink. "Why, of course," the guy replies.

Drunk 1: "Where are you from?"

Drunk 2: "I'm from Ireland."

Drunk 1: "Hey, I'm from Ireland too. Let's have another round to Ireland!" Then with a curious look, he asks, "Where in Ireland?"

Drunk 2: "Why, Dublin!"

Drunk 1: "I can't believe it, me too! Lets have a round for Dublin!"

Drunk 2: "Of course! Hey, what school did you go to?"

Drunk 1: "Saint Mary's. I graduated in '62."

Then both drunks yell in unison: "Me too! This is becoming unbelievable!"

About that time, one of the regulars strolls in and sits down at the bar. "What's up?" he asks the bartender. "Oh, nothing much," replies the bartender. "The O'Malley twins are drunk again."

—Anonymous

The above are excerpts from archived "At Wits End" Series from the Grapevine Magazine



3rd Step Principle

Faith Commitment

3rd Promise

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



**We are not a
glum lot.**