

## Step 3

**“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives 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.

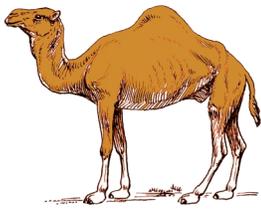
*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*  
Pg. 34,35

## 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 -pg. 139*



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: 4224 College St. Beaumont, Tx 77707. 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 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/>

March 2020 | Puzzled

## A Better Fit

*How 10 aching toes became a powerful lesson about the dangers of being right*

My first interaction with a Higher Power was terse. I had reached the end of my rope, having attempted sobriety for a period of about 19 months. I had relapsed and suffered through 10 months of incomprehensible demoralization. I was genuinely suicidal. So I told my Higher Power that he must give me a way to live on his planet. I could not be expected to figure this out on my own.

With a degree of earnestness that I had never before felt, I told my Higher Power, "If you are the creator, then you know me, and you know what it takes to guide me. Now you must do it or I'm prepared to end this life." I was done with living in fear.

As soon as I made this demand of my Higher Power, I felt immediately at peace and, within no time, I found myself at an AA meeting with a man saying, "These Steps are not going to make you stop drinking, but they are a way to live so that drinking doesn't make sense." So I got a sponsor and began taking the Steps, endorsing the principle each represented with my heart and soul.

As a newcomer, I started helping out, setting up meetings and cleaning up at our local clubhouse by taking a shift. One day when I had about 100 days sober, I came home with aching feet. I told my girlfriend that they were killing me. She looked at them and said, "Your

toes look really red, like your shoes might be too small."

I felt immediately insulted. "That's stupid," I replied. "I've been wearing size eight and a half for 20 years, ever since my company commander bought me a custom pair of jump boots for winning 'Soldier of the Month.'" My girlfriend looked at my feet again and said, "Well, they look to me to be too tight."

"OK," I said, irritated. "Then why don't you go down to the store and get me a pair of nines?" She just laughed and said, "That'll be the day. Keep wearing those for all I care."

The next morning while driving to work, my toes screamed when I pushed the clutch. I stopped off at a shoe store on the way and asked the salesman if he had one of those devices to measure my feet. He gave me an odd look, as if to say, "What 40ish man doesn't know his own shoe size? But he measured my foot and said, 'I believe I can get you in a 10.'"

My mouth fell open. "OK," I said, "get me a pair." I bought the shoes and continued on to work and found it hard to conceal my amazement at how wonderful my new shoes felt. It was as if each toe sang out loud with each step.

I called my sponsor. "Jay, I think I've figured out why I drank like I did," I said, telling him my shoe story. He laughed and said, "Don, you have to share that at the meeting tonight." I said, "Oh, no, Jay, this is a mens' meeting tonight and they will..." But he wouldn't hear any of that. "I want you to share it," he commanded.

So at the podium that night, I shared to a room of about 40 men how I had discovered I'd been wearing shoes that were a size and



half too small for years and how good my new shoes felt. The room erupted in laughter and some guy even shouted, "A man ought to know what size shoe he wears!"

I felt embarrassed as the heat rose in my face, but the heat cooled as I realized that I had been certain I knew my shoe size. I was also certain how women should act, and how kids should behave, and how folks should drive. I was certain about a lot of things, and now I had to face the fact that I was most probably wrong about most things I had always been certain about.

Later that night as my head hit the pillow, I felt reverence for this power I had turned my life over to, that he did know me intimately and had delivered an insight to me that is critical to living my life.

I have learned that there's no growth without open-mindedness, and my Higher Power had opened my mind for me. I've been sober for 30 years now, and ever since that day, whenever I feel absolutely certain about anything, I pause and remember that night and the relief I felt in my toes.

Don S. | Mountain City, Texas

## Group Contributions — February 2020

Group	Month	Y to D	Group	Month	Y to D
6 O'Clock	\$0.00	\$0.00	Lumberton Singleness of Purpose	\$0.00	\$0.00
A New Beginning (Woodville)	\$0.00	\$0.00	Mid County (Nederland)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Anahuac	\$0.00	\$0.00	Murray Street	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bolivar	\$0.00	\$0.00	Mustard Seed	\$0.00	\$402.00
Bridge City	\$0.00	\$0.00	New Life	\$0.00	\$0.00
Buna	\$0.00	\$0.00	Newton	\$0.00	\$0.00
Cornerstone	\$0.00	\$0.00	Nueva Vida (Port Arthur)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Deweyville	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>Orange</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>
Downtown	\$0.00	\$0.00	Pecan Groves	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fellowship	\$0.00	\$0.00	Pineywoods	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fresh Start	\$0.00	\$26.90	Pin Oak Group	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Port Arthur</b>	<b>\$37.28</b>	<b>\$37.28</b>	Primary Purpose	\$0.00	\$0.00
Hope Group	\$0.00	\$0.00	Serenity	\$0.00	\$0.00
Jasper Noon	\$0.00	\$0.00	St Francis	\$0.00	\$0.00
Jasper Serenity	\$0.00	\$0.00	The Buck Stops Here	\$0.00	\$0.00
Keep It Simple	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>TLC</b>	<b>\$229.60</b>	<b>\$229.60</b>
Kirbyville	\$0.00	\$0.00	Un Dia A La Vez	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fannett Grace	\$0.00	\$0.00	Vidor	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lewis Drive	\$0.00	\$0.00	West End	\$0.00	\$0.00
Liberty	\$0.00	\$0.00	Winnie (Unconditional Love)	\$0.00	\$181.00
Lufkin	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>Personal Stories Group</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>
Lifeline	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$336.88</b>	<b>\$966.78</b>

**We want to sincerely thank you for your contributions. Please address your gifts to:  
 Ninth District Intergroup Association — 4224 College St — Beaumont, TX 77707  
 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**

4224 College St  
 Beaumont, TX 77707

**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 GSR 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 District 90 GSR Meeting.

## *Announcements*

### **Next District 90 GSR Meeting**

April meeting



**March 29, 2020 At 2:00 PM**

**West End Group**

**1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX**

### **Next 9th Dist. Intergroup Meeting**

**April 19, 2020 At 2:00 PM**

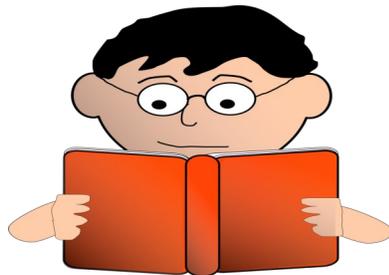
**Westgate Memorial Baptist Church**

**6220 Westgate Drive, Beaumont, TX**

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

Meeting is held in the rear of the building.

**MAIL RECIPIENT PLEASE MAKE THIS MONTHLY NEWSLETTER  
OF STEPPING STONES AVAILABLE TO YOUR GROUP**



Lufkin, Texas  
ALCOHOLICS  
ANONYMOUS  
AND  
AL-ANON

72nd

ANNIVERSARY

April

17th & 18th

2020

1602 Diana Street  
Lufkin, Texas 75901  
Ph# 936-634-6316

www.lufkingroup.org

Responsibility

to Those We Serve

Friday - April 17, 2020

- 6:45 pm Registration Open (Free)
- 7:45 pm \*50/50 Raffle (Tickets \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00)
- 8:00 pm AA Speaker Brad B. Lufkin, Texas

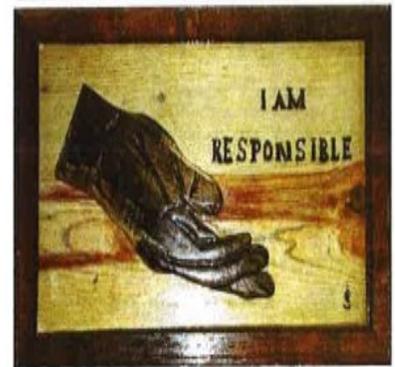
Saturday - April 18, 2020

- 9:30 am Coffee & Donuts
- 10:30 am AA Speaker Daphne B. Port Neches, Texas
- 12:00 pm Lunch (No Charge)
- 1:00 pm AA Speaker Jamie S. Oyster Creek, Texas
- 3:00 pm Al-Anon Speaker Tim G. Lufkin, Texas
- 4:45 pm BBQ Dinner (\$6.00 per plate)

Saturday Continued...

- 6:30 pm \*Main Raffle
- 7:30 pm \*50/50 Raffle (Tickets \$1.00 each or 6 for \$5.00)
- 7:45 pm Sobriety Countdown
- 8:00 pm AA Speaker Carl W. Beaumont, Texas

\*Must be present to win 50/50's & Raffles



I Am Responsible...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible Bill W.

DECLARATION OF 30TH ANNIVERSARY INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION, 1965

\*AS BOLA 500'S 11", Page 132



Stepping Stones would like to include, in it's monthly issue, a personal story from District 90 AA group members.

So, in order to get this rolling, we NEED stories from members. Please see our first story on Page 3. (August 2019 issue)

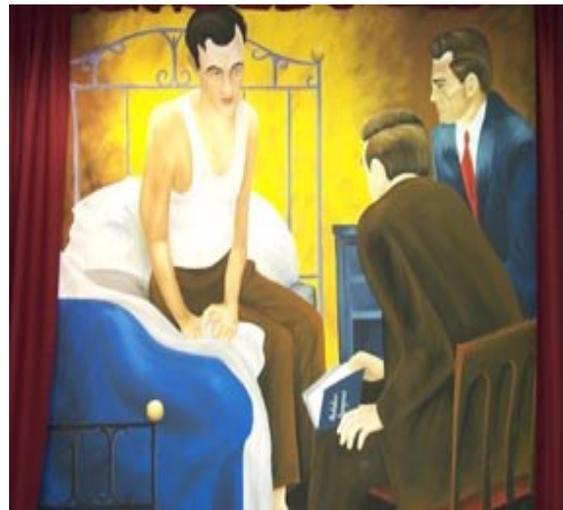
If, in the awesome event, we receive more than one story, we will prioritize by date received and will run them in the next issue until they are all published.

A friendly reminder: Short story 500 -750 words, no profanity, experience, strength and hope, as it relates to recovery from Alcoholism.

Maybe, you want to do this as a Group project and choose a person from your Group each month to submit a story.

Please e-mail us: [steppingstones@aabeaumont.org](mailto:steppingstones@aabeaumont.org), with your story. Or, drop off at our office Monday thru Friday, 10am-3pm.

Thanks Stepping Stones



## 3rd Step Principle

**Faith  
Commitment**

## 3rd Promise

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



**We are not a  
glum lot.**