

Step 11

“Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.”

Prayer and meditation are our principal means of conscious contact with God.

We A.A.'s are active folk, enjoying the satisfactions of dealing with the realities of life, usually for the first time in our lives, and strenuously trying to help the next alcoholic who comes along. So it isn't surprising that we often tend to slight serious meditation and prayer as something not really nec-

essary. To be sure, we feel it is something that might help us to meet an occasional emergency, but at first many of us are apt to regard it as a somewhat mysterious skill of clergymen, from which we may hope to get a secondhand benefit. Or perhaps we don't believe in these things at all.

To certain newcomers and to those one-time agnostics who cling to the A.A. group as their higher

power, claims for the power of prayer may, despite all the logic and experience in proof of it, still be unconvincing or quite objectionable.

Those of us who once felt this way can certainly understand and sympathize. We well remember how something deep inside us kept rebelling against the idea of bowing before any God.

Twelve and Twelve page 96

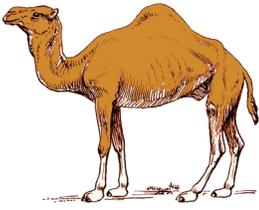
Tradition 11

“Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.”

Without its legions of well-wishers, A.A. could never have grown as it has. Throughout the world, immense and favorable publicity of every descriptions has been the principal means of bringing alcoholics into our Fellowship. In A.A, offices, clubs and homes, telephones ring constantly. One voice says, “I read a piece in the newspapers...”; another, “ We heard a radio program...”; and still another, “We saw a moving picture...” or “We saw something about A.A. on television...” It is no exaggeration to say that half of A.A.'s membership has been led to us through channels like these.

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions—Pg. 180





I am responsible.
When anyone, any-
where, 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 XI

While the Trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants, Therefore the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications for their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

The longtime success of our General Service Board will rest not only on the capabilities of the Trustees themselves; it will depend quite as much upon the competent leadership and harmonious association of those non-Trustee committee members, corporate service directors, executives and staff members who must actively carry on A.A.'s world services. Their quality and dedication, or their lack of these characteristics, will make or break our structure of service. Our final dependency on them will always be great indeed.

Far more than most of the Trustees, these servants will be in direct contact with A.A. world-wide, and their performance will be constantly on view. They will perform most of the routine labor, they will carry on most of our services. They will travel widely and will receive most visitors at the Headquarters. They will often originate new plans and policies. Some of them will eventually become Trustees. Because this group will form the visible image of world service, most A.A.'s will measure our service values by what they see and feel in them. Members of this group will not only *support* the world leadership of the Trustees; in the nature of the case they will be bound to *share* world leadership with them.

Fortunately we already have a sound internal structure of service in which a very competent group of non-Trustee servants are now working, Only a few refinements and changes will still be needed in A.A. World Services, Inc. and at The A.A. Grapevine, Inc., the later being a comparatively recent comer to our service scene. The main outlines of this underlying structure are now defined, and the effectiveness of this arrangement has been well proven.

AA GRAPEVINE



The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

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



NOVEMBER 2020 |

I Don't Need to Understand

BY: CHRIS S. | HILLSBORO, ORE.

A Native American member shares about his spiritual path and how AA gives us the room to find our own way

I have been a subscriber to Grapevine since I got sober in AA. My sponsor got me a subscription for Christmas, which is a policy I continue with my own sponsees. I was reading a member's story recently, and his struggle with the Higher Power moved me to write.

In all my years in AA (in four different states, speaking two different languages) I have never heard anyone criticized for identifying themselves as atheist or agnostic or for talking openly about having trouble with their concept of a Higher Power. I've always encountered a warm acceptance from everyone in AA, whatever religious tradition they were coming from. I always felt a friendly reassurance that, as I often hear in meetings, this is a spiritual, not a religious program. You don't have to believe in anything, and you can use AA itself as a Higher Power.

I came into AA still bitter against what I had experienced of organized religion. I had only seen religion misused in hypocritical ways. In our Fellowship, I learned to both respect and appreciate that many people can find their spiritual inspiration and guidance in ways that don't work for me.

In my own search for spirituality, I found that I needed to return to my Native American roots and strengthen my connection with the Great Spirit. I have no trouble using other religions' words for the same thing: God, Allah, Buddha, or whatever works for each individual. I've come to realize that the people who wrote our original AA literature simply used the Christian language of their upbringing—although many, (including our co-founder Bill W.) had rejected “God” and “religion” themselves at some point.

Let me share one thing I've learned from my own journey since getting sober in AA: When we are truly comfortable with ourselves, and what we have or have not experienced of a Higher Power, we feel no need to run down people who see it differently. We no longer try to mend our insecurities with negative comparisons between others and ourselves. We have no need to criticize atheists or those inclined to spend time on their knees praying for divine protection. We don't need to pick apart other AA members' understanding of atheism or agnosticism or faith.

What's more, we don't attempt to nominate specific human beings (including the Commandant of the Marine Corps, to cite one example I've heard) as a Higher Power for AA. Human beings simply can't handle the job.

Instead, we can turn to a vital ingredient of AA—humility. I was taught by AA old-timers that humility means “being right-sized.” Or, as one member wrote in the Big Book story “The Man Who Mastered Fear”: “The scales had dropped from my eyes, and I could see life in its proper perspective. I had tried to be the center of my own little world, whereas God was the center of a vast universe of which I was perhaps an essential, but a very tiny, part.”

We don't have to call it “God.” We don't have to have a word for it. AA has room for everybody—including those of us who are still wrestling with their unbelief.

It's OK that we human beings can't parse it all out intellectually. Look, gophers and earthworms don't understand nuclear physics. They don't need to. They do their jobs aerating and fertilizing our Mother Earth so she can grow the plants we all depend on. Similarly, I don't understand our Higher Power. I don't need to. All I know is that one evening, when I was really at the end of my rope, I looked into the universe and said, “I could never ‘believe in God’ like folks say you're supposed to, but if there is anybody or anything there who cares whether I live or die, I sure wish you'd let me know.”

Something very wonderful did respond to my call. I choose to call that something or someone the Great Spirit. So I do my job. I stay sober today. I clean house. I help others.

Group Contributions – October 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	\$65.00	Murray Street	\$0.00	\$140.00
Bolivar	\$0.00	\$0.00	Mustard Seed	\$312.00	\$1,253.38
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	Orange	\$20.00	\$200.00
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	\$101.90	Personal Stories Group	\$0.00	\$50.00
Friends of Bill (Port Author)	\$0.00	\$0.00	Port Arthur	\$0.00	\$37.28
Hope Group	\$0.00	\$0.00	Primary Purpose	\$0.00	\$0.00
Jasper Noon	\$0.00	\$0.00	Serenity	\$0.00	\$0.00
Jasper Serenity	\$0.00	\$0.00	St Francis	\$0.00	\$380.00
Keep It Simple	\$0.00	\$0.00	The Buck Stops Here	\$0.00	\$0.00
Kirbyville	\$200.00	\$200.00	TLC	\$0.00	\$656.60
Kountze Daylight	\$0.00	\$0.00	Un Dia A La Vez	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lewis Drive	\$0.00	\$0.00	Vidor	\$0.00	\$0.00
Liberty	\$0.00	\$150.00	West End	\$0.00	\$50.00
Lifeline	\$0.00	\$50.00	Winnie (Unconditional Love)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lufkin	\$0.00	\$0.00	Way Out	\$0.00	\$0.00
			Totals	\$532.00	\$3,334.16

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

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

9th District Intergroup

4224 College
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.

Announcements

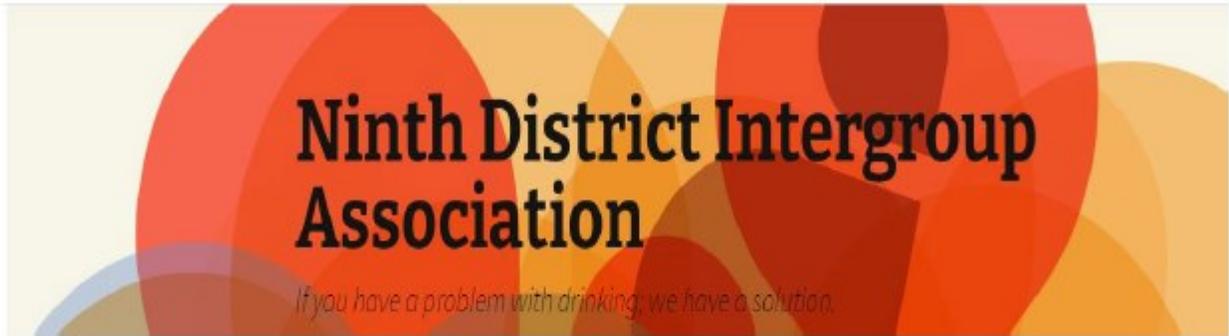
Next District 90 GSR Meeting
December 6, 2020 At 2:00 PM
West End Group
1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

Next 9th Dist. Intergroup Meeting
January 17, 2021 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.

*****ATTENTION*****
SERENITY GROUP
Has a new meeting place for the remainder of 2020
Meetings will be held INSIDE!!!
Starting Monday—November 2, 2020
WESTGATE CHURCH OF CHRIST
Corner of Westgate/Dowlen
Back of Church (Green Doors) Look for Sign
Monday Open 9:30AM
Thursday Closed 9:30AM
Friday 12/12 Study 9:30AM



Holiday Open House

Please Join Us On

Saturday, December 12th, 2020

10:00am to 4:00pm

Refreshments

Enjoy 25% Off

All Merchandise





Happy Birthday To You!!!

Intergroup would like to congratulate everyone who is celebrating a sobriety birthday in November!!!

Bill's Last Message

Bill was one of A.A.'s two cofounders.

My dear friends,

Recently an A.A. member sent me an unusual greeting which I would like to extend to you. He told me it was an ancient Arabian salutation. Perhaps we have no Arabian groups, but it still seems a fitting expression of how I feel for each of you. It says, "I salute you and thank you for your life."

My thoughts are much occupied these days with gratitude to our Fellowship and for the myriad blessings bestowed upon us by God's Grace.

If I were asked which of these blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, the "Concept of Anonymity."

Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical.

On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes.

A.A. must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we, turn back the clock. However, I deeply believe that the principle of anonymity must remain our primary and enduring safeguard. As long as we accept our sobriety in our traditional spirit of anonymity we will continue to receive God's Grace.

And so—once more, I salute you in that spirit and again I thank you *for your lives*.
May God bless us all now, and forever.

*Ever Yours
Bill*

**Read by Lois at the annual dinner given by the New York Intergroup Association in honor of Bill's 36th anniversary—October 10, 1970.*



**11th
Promise**
We will intuitively know how to handle situations which use to baffle us

11th Step Principle
Awareness

