

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.

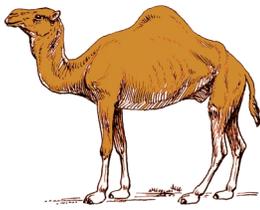
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions
Pg. 34,35

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 2021 | MAKING AMENDS

A Taste of His Own Medicine

BY: RICHARD K. | WICHITA FALLS, TEXAS

In charge of the DWI caseload, a parole officer begins to wonder if he might be on the wrong side of the desk

I'm one of those guys who got into AA by way of the probation department, except that I was on the other side of the desk.

I got a job in 1986 as a probation officer. As soon as I got hired, I was put in charge of the DWI caseload. It was a creepy, déjà vu experience to have all these drunk drivers come in and tell me their stories. I could really identify with them. I attributed my sense of empathy with them to my prior counseling and rehab work with blind people, and I told friends that I was hired for the job because of my past experience.

But secretly, I knew the truth. I identified with the drunk drivers because of my own drinking problem. I sometimes wondered why I was sitting on the probation officer side of the desk instead of the other side. Truth is, I just never got caught.

I was sent to probation officer basic training in Huntsville, Texas, home of the state prison system. Everybody in the training complained about having to show up on a Sunday afternoon. Then something unexpected happened. The trainers opened the curtain on the auditorium stage to reveal a generous buffet spread—complete with a full keg of beer. All complaining stopped.

I remember hanging around the keg with a few hard-drinking types until the janitor tried to shoo us away so he could clean up. We dragged the keg to somebody's room for the "advanced alcohol education workshop." During the weeklong training, which ironically focused heavily on alcoholism and drug addiction, I spent

every night with my new drinking buddies at the Jolly Fox, a local den of iniquity. We drank everybody under the table. In our defense, we always had a designated driver. After all, we were probation officers. We were the good guys.

Meanwhile, we learned to administer the Mortimer-Filkins test to distinguish between problem drinkers and alcoholics. We studied recovery programs and methods and even staged mock interventions. We learned the statistics that linked alcoholism to criminal behavior.

The warden took us on a tour of the local prison and proclaimed, "Most of the guys sent to prison admit to being alcoholics and addicts. The rest of them are lying." When I got back at the probation department, I kept hearing stories from my probationers about how they were arrested for DWIs. They were full of denial and tried to convince me that they didn't have a drinking problem. So I used the Mortimer-Filkins test and got really good at assessing people. I'd give them the results of their tests, cringing inside.

"Mary, you might be an alcoholic," I'd say or, "Joe, you got a really high score so you better start going to those AA meetings." Then one day I took the test myself—in secret. When I saw my own high score, I knew I needed to go to AA myself. That was over 30 years ago.

I don't wonder anymore why I ended up in the probation office in a small Texas town. That job led me to recovery and gave me this new life. But at the time, as a person new to AA, it was very frustrating work. By the end of my first year on that job, I had helped force 20 probationers into treatment through the power of the courts. Nineteen relapsed and the whereabouts of the other one is unknown.

Over time, I went back to college and earned an advanced degree and now I enjoy a lucrative private practice as a



psychologist, living with my wife of 22 years, three cats and a dog. I've learned to be comfortable in my own skin and not drive everybody else crazy. Prior to AA, I couldn't even stand my own company. The Promises came true in my life.

Not too long ago, I got a phone call from out of the blue. The man on the phone told me he was one of my old probationers. Oh, my God, I thought. He's probably just out of prison and he tracked me down to come mess with me. But instead, he identified himself by a name I vaguely remembered, and said, "I want to thank you for pushing me to go to those AA meetings. I just got my 20-year chip."

You just never know when you're going to make a positive impact on somebody's life. That's why we always have to keep doing the next right thing.

My colleagues at the probation department were fond of the old adage: "You can lead a horse to water, but you can't make it drink." I also like to recall another saying one of the judges told me: "If you stake the horse to the waterhole long enough, sooner or later it might get thirsty."

I'm just glad that I got staked out to that desk in the courthouse basement until the message of recovery finally sunk in. And I like knowing that at least one of my probationers got it too. As an oldtimer from my early home group used to put it, "Recovery is the slow seepage of God into the sick soul of the alcoholic."

Group Contributions — February 2021

<u>Group</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Y to D</u>	<u>Group</u>	<u>Month</u>	<u>Y to D</u>
6 O'Clock	\$0.00	\$0.00	Lumberton SOP	\$0.00	\$0.00
A New Beginning	\$0.00	\$0.00	Mid County	\$0.00	\$0.00
Any Lengths	\$250.00	\$250.00	Murray Street	\$0.00	\$0.00
Anahuac	\$0.00	\$0.00	Mustard Seed	\$462.00	\$462.00
Bolivar	\$0.00	\$0.00	New Life	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bridge City	\$0.00	\$0.00	Newton	\$0.00	\$0.00
Buna	\$0.00	\$0.00	Nueva Vida (Port Arthur)	\$0.00	\$0.00
Cornerstone	\$0.00	\$0.00	Orange	\$40.00	\$40.00
Deweyville	\$0.00	\$0.00	Pecan Groves	\$0.00	\$0.00
Downtown	\$0.00	\$0.00	Pineywoods	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fellowship	\$0.00	\$0.00	Personal Stories Group	\$0.00	\$0.00
Fresh Start	\$0.00	\$0.00	Port Arthur	\$0.00	\$0.00
Friends of Bill	\$0.00	\$0.00	Primary Purpose	\$0.00	\$0.00
Hope Group	\$702.46	\$702.46	Serenity	\$0.00	\$400.00
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	TLC	\$223.20	\$223.20
Kirbyville	\$0.00	\$0.00	Un Dia A La Vez	\$0.00	\$0.00
Kountze Daylight	\$0.00	\$0.00	Vidor	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lewis Drive	\$0.00	\$0.00	West End	\$0.00	\$0.00
Liberty	\$50.00	\$50.00	Unconditional Love	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lifeline	\$0.00	\$0.00	Way Out	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lufkin	\$0.00	\$0.00	Totals	\$1,727.66	\$2,127.66

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 28.2021

West End Group

1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

Next 9th Dist. Intergroup Meeting

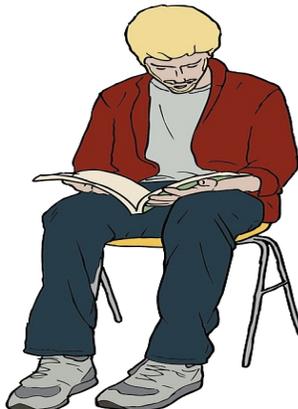
April 18, 2021 At 2:00 PM

West End Group

1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

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



2021 District 90 Convention

Date : August 20, 21 & 22, 2021

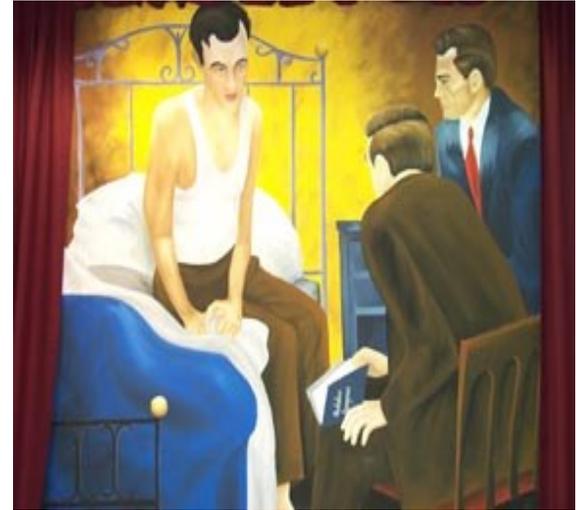
MCM Elegante & Conference Center
2355 I-10 South
1355 Executive Blvd.
Beaumont, Texas 77705

~ Flyer for registration coming soon ~





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



3rd Step Principle

**Faith
Commitment**

3rd Promise

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



**We are not a
glum lot.**