

## 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.

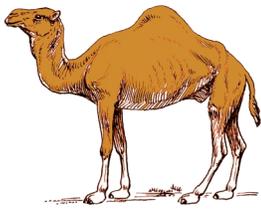
*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*  
Pg. 34,35

## 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, Texas 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 2022

## Emotional Sobriety

### Letting go

BY: CAROL K. | SARASOTA, FLA.

*How a longtimer learned to observe her thoughts and identify her defects so they don't take her freedom away*

Last Sunday night, we had a discussion in my home group about remembering those times we wanted to escape into alcohol. We talked about what we do instead of drinking when the urge comes.

I sat there wondering how I was ever going to share that I've never had that moment of wanting to escape into alcohol. People might think I was a "goody two shoes" or "better than" them. Then I had a flash of insight.

As I listened to other people's comments, I was reminded of what I was like when I came into AA. I was a resentful, self-pitying, fearful, dishonest woman. I rationalized and justified my attitudes and actions so that being a drunk was absolutely not my fault. I fed and watered real or imagined resentments to make it OK for me to drink. I lived in fear always, always that fear.

When I started to go to AA meetings, I unequivocally believed in the first half of the First Step. I

knew I was powerless over alcohol. My ego hadn't been sufficiently dampened yet and I thought I could give the drinking part of my life to AA to handle but still manage my personal life, thank you very much.

I had nursed a resentment against religion for years, often using this quarrel as an excuse to drink, so I didn't want to consider the Second and Third Steps. Open-mindedness wasn't even on the horizon at that time.

I had come to AA after a considerable amount of time being a really good quitter, always promising to quit drinking. But I was an even better starter, as I was always starting up again. I was so very sick physically, but I didn't realize how sick I was mentally. I took great umbrage at the suggestion in the Second Step that I needed to be restored to sanity. I had come to AA after spending 30 days in a locked psych ward and I was sure you put that part in the Steps to single me out and embarrass me.

The good news was that my home group had a three-week rotation of topics: a Step, a Tradition and a topic. The topic meetings were, almost without fail, on character defects. When I heard other people talk about their resentments and fear and self-pity it was like winning the jackpot of insight. I could immediately identify with those defects and how I used them.

After weeks of meetings, I heard that resentment and self-pity are two sides of the same coin, that I would not have one without the other. Here was the magic key to staying away from the first drink. I didn't need to nourish resentments anymore.

The more sober days I strung together, the less fear I had. I was able to do the things I needed to do every day for me and my family.

In the Tenth Step, I learned that I

needed to watch out for "FRED," which is an acronym for fear, resentment, ego and dishonesty. I no longer need to encourage these defects. What I do need to do is to listen to my thoughts. My defects go off the rails in my head long before I'm slamming a door or kicking the dog. If I don't stop the dishonest thinking, the resentment and self-pity will do me in. When I harbored resentments, I fell prey to what I heard described later in AA: "I drank poison expecting the other person to die." That was me. I was fuming, muttering, moaning, not sleeping, while the object of my anger went through their day smiling and peacefully sleeping all night. As funny as it seems now, I did think, Well, if they don't know why I'm mad, I'm not going to tell them. I just punished myself instead.

So after years in AA observing my ego and keeping it in a safe place, with the grace of God, during a flash of insight I discovered that I now was putting my self-centeredness to a new purpose. I do not need these character defects to justify my drinking, and through the grace of God and the Fellowship of AA, I'm not going to give up my freedom to anyone. I have a whole new toolbox of positive remedies when I find myself trying to drum up a good case of self-pity or when I'm convinced that someone has trampled on my feelings.

I remember that this, too, shall pass, that I'm living one day at a time and that things could always be worse. I call my sponsor and I always remember that I need to focus on the three Ss: smile, step back and shut up.

## Group Contributions — February 2022

Group	Month	Y to D	Group	Month	Y to D
6 O'Clock	\$0.00	\$0.00	Lufkin	\$0.00	\$0.00
A New Beginning	\$0.00	\$0.00	Lumberton SOP	\$0.00	\$0.00
Any Lengths	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>Mid County</b>	<b>\$420.00</b>	<b>\$420.00</b>
Anahuac	\$0.00	\$0.00	Murray Street	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bolivar	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>Mustard Seed</b>	<b>\$462.00</b>	<b>\$462.00</b>
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	Orange	\$0.00	\$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	\$100.00	Port Arthur	\$0.00	\$0.00
Friends of Bill	\$0.00	\$0.00	Primary Purpose	\$0.00	\$0.00
Hope Group	\$0.00	\$0.00	Serenity	\$0.00	\$400.00
Jasper Noon	\$0.00	\$400.00	St Francis	\$0.00	\$89.09
Jasper Serenity	\$0.00	\$0.00	The Buck Stops Here	\$0.00	\$0.00
Keep It Simple	\$0.00	\$0.00	TLC	\$0.00	\$0.00
Kirbyville	\$0.00	\$200.00	Vidor	\$0.00	\$0.00
Kountze Daylight	\$0.00	\$0.00	West End	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lewis Drive	\$0.00	\$0.00	Unconditional Love	\$0.00	\$0.00
<b>Liberty</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>	<b>\$50.00</b>	Way Out	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lifeline	\$0.00	\$0.00	<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$932.00</b>	<b>\$2,161.09</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 — E-mail: [steppingstones@abeaumont.org](mailto:steppingstones@abeaumont.org) — Web: [abeaumont.org](http://abeaumont.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 3, 2022**

**West End Group**

**1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX**

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

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

**April 24, 2022 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**





# June 17-19 2022

Austin Hilton in downtown Austin

550 East Fourth Street

Austin, TX 78701

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## Schedule of Events

### Friday, June 17:

- 4:00 – Registration & Hospitality Open
- 6:00 – Old Timers Panel
- 8:00 – AA Speaker – Erica B.

### Saturday, June 18:

- 8:00 – Registration opens
- 8:30 – Delegates Panel & GSO Speaker – Beau B.
- 10:00 – AA Speaker – Lillie H.
- 11:30 – Texas Area Delegate Meeting
- 1:00 – Alanon Speaker
- 2:30 – AA Speaker – Tim R.
- 4:00 – Corrections Panel
- 5:30 – AA Speaker – Bob B.
- 8:30 – "Decades of Dance" We will be taking you on a musical dance journey from the '60s to the present day! We encourage dressing up for the decade, 60's, 70's, 80's, etc.

### Sunday, June 19

- 8:30-10:00 – Open Meeting with timer hosted by Tori J.
- 10:30 – AA Speaker – Georgia B.



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



## SETA Assembly Dates

**2022**

**April 9-10**

**July 9-10**

**October 1-2**

**DoubleTree by Hilton Hotel  
Houston Intercontinental**

**15747 JFK Boulevard  
Houston, Texas, 77032, USA**

**281-848-4000**



**3rd Step Principle**

**Faith  
Commitment**

**3rd Promise**

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



**We are not a  
glum lot.**