

## 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*.”

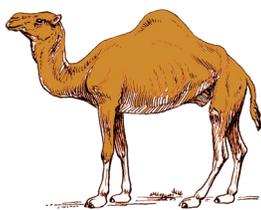
To every worldly and practical-minded beginner, this Step looks hard, even impossible. No matter how much one wishes to try, exactly how *can* he turn his will and his own life over to the care of whatever God he thinks there is? Fortunately, we who have tried it, and with equal misgivings, can testify 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.”



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.

March 2023

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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.”**

*The AA Service Manual/ 12 Concepts for World Services—pg. 11 of the Concepts Section*

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 2023 | GET INTO SERVICE | EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY

## Retired. Now what?

BY: MARY O. | FULLERTON, CALIF.

*The joys and anxieties of my first year of sobriety reminded me of being in high school again.*

The joys and anxieties of my first year of sobriety reminded me of being in high school again. I didn't know where to sit in AA meetings, who to talk to or what to say when I was called on to share for my three minutes.

I got sober in a clubhouse, and I literally hung out there whenever I could to ensure my not drinking would take hold. I was terrified of returning to my life of misery at home, drinking alone after my kids went to bed and staggering up the stairs, keeping a leg over the side of the bed to stop the bed-spins. And that was on a good night, when I hadn't made a total fool of myself by making drunk calls to friends or boy-friends.

That drinking time of my life is an embarrassing memory and it's one I never want to repeat. I'm thankful that a good and patient sponsor helped me to get over my guilt and to get on with my amends to my children, my ex-husband and various others who were harmed by my drinking.

During my sober years, I had the opportunity to start and run a non-profit business. Now I'm beginning

to embark on a challenging new phase called retirement and I'm feeling almost as insecure as I did when I first walked in the doors of AA.

I don't yet know what my place is in the world now, and I'm not sure what these next years are going to bring. My identity as a boss at work is replaced with that of a woman who stays home, walks the dog and goes out to lunch now and then with friends. I guess I was an untreated workaholic because I now have to stop myself from calling the office and giving advice to the new director there. I try to remind myself that God has my back and will show me new adventures, but often I fall into a worrisome state and think of the old song, "Is That All There Is?"

I got to experience 34 years of being a boss, creating programs, helping new therapists become better at their trade. This loss I'm feeling now sometimes resembles the kind of grief we experience when someone close dies. I have moments where I'm lost and sad and spinning around looking for answers.

I raised five kids and a few foster kids, and I earned degrees and started several businesses. My life was full and filled with purpose. In addition, I'm now dealing with crippling arthritis, and I often feel angry that my body isn't giving me the strength to take long walks. I want to write about this part because over the years of my sobriety I've prided myself on only having temporary slumps, and I was always grateful to be able to turn to the Steps, meetings and friendships to get through these tough times.

My new life as a retiree is not organized yet. It's only been a few months. My friends tell me I will adjust and grow to enjoy it. AA is a program of honesty, however, and I don't want to pretend that it hasn't been really tough.

The other day I went to see my doctor for my yearly checkup, which was my only activity on the calendar for that day, compared to earlier

times when my days were squeezed with a million other things on my plate. The doctor told me he was going to name three things and then later he would ask me to repeat them. He drew a circle on a piece of paper and asked me to fill in the numbers on a clock face, which I did. Then I repeated back the three things. I passed the test for memory retention. God is good. I still have my mind.

Some days, I feel like I have no roadmap on how to manage sobriety. I need to lean in on my experienced, retired AA friends and observe how they do this "aging sober" thing with grace and humor, as they maintain their interest in service to others. I'm back to basics again. I will do what my sponsor has always suggested. I will call more alcoholics. I will support newcomers. I will make my gratitude lists and I will meditate more and more because I have come to enjoy it.

I will swim and walk and read and plan little trips. I will continue to call my children and grandchildren and I will look forward to my granddaughters' weddings and baby showers. I will worry less and love more.

As I look down the road to my 35th AA birthday in August, I will remember those friends who have made me laugh until I cried and who brought me chicken soup when I was sick. I will be excited for the woman with 29 days, who will receive her 30-day chip tomorrow and I will get over myself and accept the things I cannot change—like this retirement—and realize that God is doing for me what I can't do for myself.

As an alcoholic whose dad died of alcoholism at age 57, I feel grateful that my life has not been cut short and that I got to walk into that clubhouse long ago to hear the message of hope. "Don't drink between meetings and come back tomorrow," they told me. Brilliant. I've been doing that for more than 12,000 days and, by the grace of God, I'll keep doing it.

## Group Contributions — February 2023

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	Mid County	\$0.00	\$0.00
Anahuac	\$0.00	\$0.00	Murray Street	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bolivar	\$0.00	\$100.00	<b>Mustard Seed</b>	<b>\$372.00</b>	<b>\$372.00</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	<b>Orange</b>	<b>\$20.00</b>	<b>\$40.00</b>
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	\$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>\$256.00</b>	<b>\$256.00</b>
Kirbyville	\$0.00	\$0.00	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	\$206.00
<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>\$698.00</b>	<b>\$1,524.00</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@aa Beaumont.org](mailto:steppingstones@aa Beaumont.org) — Web: [aa Beaumont.org](http://aa Beaumont.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 <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> 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 2407  
James A. Farley Station  
New York, NY 10116-2407

# 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

March 26, 2023



( April meeting )

West End Group

1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

## Next 9th Dist. Intergroup Meeting

April 16, 2023

West End Group

1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

# 2023

## DISTRICT 90 GSR MEETINGS

January 8, February 5, March 5,  
March 26(April), May 7, June 4,  
June 25(July), August 6, September 10,  
October 8, November 5, December 3

## NINTH DISTRICT INTERGROUP ASSOCIATION INC. MEETINGS

January 22  
April 16  
July 16  
October 22

\*\* GSR and Intergroup Meetings start at 2:00pm \*\*  
Location 1235 Crockett Street Beaumont ,Texas

## AREA 67 ASSEMBLY MEETINGS

January 13-15  
April 1-2  
July 8-9  
October 14-15

**Lufkin, Texas**  
**ALCOHOLICS**  
**ANONYMOUS**  
**AND**  
**AL-ANON**  
**GROUPS**

**75TH**

**ANNIVERSARY**

**April**  
**14<sup>th</sup> & 15<sup>th</sup>**  
**2023**

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

**www.lufkingroup.org**

**Building an Arch**

Friday - April 14, 2023

- 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  
Jim P.  
Grand Prairie, Texas

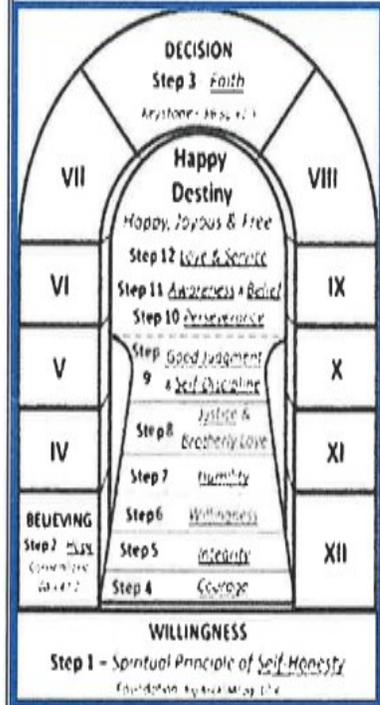
Saturday - April 15, 2023

- 9:30 AM Coffee & Donuts
- 10:30 AM AA Speaker  
Betty G.  
Carthage, Texas
- 12:00 NOON Lunch (No Charge)
- 1:00 PM AA Speaker  
Sarah B.  
Dallas, Texas
- 3:00 PM Al-Anon Speaker  
Diane B.  
Woodville, Texas
- 4:45 PM BBQ Dinner (\$6.00 Donation 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  
Joe H.  
Killeen, Texas

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



**"for we are building an arch  
 through which we shall walk  
 a free man at last"**

Big Book Page 75, 4th Ed.



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



Mid County Group March Birthdays

*Sylvia K 1 yr  
David B 4 yrs  
Catrina B 14 yrs*



**3rd Step Principle**

**Faith  
Commitment**

**3rd Promise**

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



**We are not a  
glum lot.**