

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

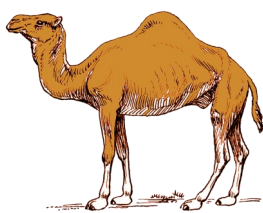
Pg. 34 , 35

Tradition 3

“Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none 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, any-
where, reaches out for
help, I want the hand
of AA always to be
there. And for that: I
am responsible.

March 2024

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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 Inter-group.

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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

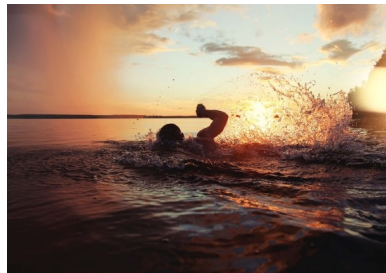


AA GRAPEVINE



The International Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous

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



MARCH 2024 | SPANISH-SPEAKING AA MEMBERS | STEP THREE

Sweet Surrender

BY: JEFF B. | NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE

The first time I got drunk I remember thinking that I was going to make feeling that way my No. 1 priority until the day I died. For the next 13 years I kept my word, minimally engaging in the real world while surrounding myself with people who liked to escape reality as much as I did.

On days when I didn't alter the way I felt, I was miserable and angry. I was constantly obsessing about alcohol, feeling that drinking was the only way to deal with a life that seemed not only indifferent to my needs, but outright hostile.

As my disease progressed, I lost interest in my family, my passions and the beauty of the world. The mere mention of the word "God" while I was intoxicated would send me into an alcoholic rage, because I was convinced that others didn't understand the futility of faith the way I did.

By the time I was 24, my list of accomplishments included two DUIs, two near-fatal car wrecks, an assault charge, a criminal mischief complaint and a trail of hurt and angry women who were unfortunate enough to cross paths with a narcissistic alcoholic who was entering the chronic stage of his disease.

At that time I was suicidal on the days I didn't drink, knowing in the back of my mind that death by my own hand would indeed be my fate. The only question was how many years I would be able to enjoy a good drunk until the consequences became so unbearable that I finally gave up.

One morning in 1998, my brother called to check on me, rousing me from a fitful,

alcoholic sleep saturated with hazy nightmares. For some reason the suffering of that morning was so intense that I begged him for help. "I'm going to die," I whispered. Together with my parents they found a treatment center outside of Nashville, where I was living at the time, and my journey toward sobriety began.

I can still recall the day I arrived at the treatment center, especially seeing the Twelve Steps on the wall for the first time. I scanned them for their philosophical merit, quickly determining that I had made a huge mistake. I found a counselor nearby and informed him that I might have to find another place to go for treatment. A drinking problem was one thing, but the answer to that problem being belief in a Higher Power was quite another. The counselor nodded his head at me knowingly, assuring me that nobody was going to force religion down my throat.

"Have an open mind," he said. "That's all you need right now." But despite the sad state of my life, a truly open mind was not available to me back then.

I managed to stay in the treatment center for 21 days, attending groups and listening to what the medical staff and Big Book had to say about the disease of alcoholism. The concept that I had an allergy to alcohol and drugs seemed intuitive to me, especially the phenomenon of craving. I knew that once I started, I couldn't stop, regardless of my overvalued willpower and intelligence. That was as far as I got regarding the Twelve Steps—one half of Step One. I truly believed that would be enough.

After my stint in rehab, I didn't drink alcohol for two years. I stayed abstinent, going to meetings, working a lot, and using women as my Higher Power. It would be dishonest to say that I was miserable every day during those two years, but I was miserable most of the time. Finally, I couldn't take the emotional or spiritual strain anymore. I woke up one Saturday morning and walked to a bar near my home, coolly telling the bartender to pour me a draft beer. I had to drink.

After five months of hellish drinking and drug use, two friends I'd made in AA took pity on me, pulling me out of my filthy apartment and taking me back to the treatment center. Tortured by anxiety, existential angst and racing thoughts, I wandered the grounds like a zombie for two days, until I finally decided to try

something that I had always refused to do. I went back to my room, closed the door, knelt beside my bed, clasped my hands in prayer and surrendered.

It's always been difficult to express what happened to me that day, but I haven't taken a drink or contemplated suicide since I experienced the power of Step Three. Nor have I ever questioned the existence of a Divine Power that cares for and loves me the way a good father and mother cares for their children. It also became crystal clear to me that it was no longer my job to try to make myself happy.

From that day forward, I've tried to help other people, practice spiritual principles and stop trying to control the uncontrollable. If I follow those directions, God will take care of the happiness. And that's the way it's been ever since.

My last drink was October 3, 2000. I became spiritually and emotionally sober five days later when I placed myself unreservedly under the care of the God of my understanding. For the last 20-something years, not playing God has been the keystone to my physical and emotional sobriety. As the Big Book promises, when I'm established on such footing, I'm less interested in myself and more interested in what I can contribute to life. I enjoy peace of mind; I can face life successfully; I'm conscious of his presence; and I lose my fear of today, tomorrow and the hereafter.

Over the years I have witnessed the collapse of the Twin Towers, the premature death of my father, my wife's battle with ovarian cancer, the death of many friends from addiction and the pandemic. Each of these challenging events have driven me back to the safety and hope of Step Three. I can lean into Step Three on a daily basis if I so choose. For me, it's the challenge of day-to-day living that has always been most difficult.

Every year, when my wife and I take our annual vacation to a gorgeous beach of our choosing, I swim out as far as I can into the salty ocean, close my eyes and reaffirm my commitment to Step Three with these words:

"God, I offer myself to thee—to build with me and to do with me as thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of thy power, thy love, and thy way of life. May I do thy will always!"

Group Contributions — February 2024

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	\$50.00	\$50.00	Murray Street	\$0.00	\$0.00
Bolivar	\$0.00	\$200.00	Mustard Seed	\$305.00	\$305.00
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	Orange	\$20.00	\$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	\$100.00	\$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	\$0.00
Jasper Noon	\$0.00	\$342.00	St Francis	\$0.00	\$0.00
Jasper Serenity	\$0.00	\$0.00	The Buck Stops Here	\$0.00	\$0.00
Keep It Simple	\$10.04	\$10.04	TLC	\$0.00	\$0.00
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	\$354.00	\$354.00
Liberty	\$50.00	\$50.00	Way Out	\$0.00	\$0.00
Lifeline	\$0.00	\$0.00	Totals	\$889.04	\$1,451.04

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@aaabeaumont.org — Web: aaabeaumont.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 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

April 7, 2024

West End Group

1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

Next 9th District Intergroup Meeting

April 21, 2024

West End Group

1235 Crockett, Beaumont, TX

Everyone is encouraged and welcome to attend.

Intergroup has an open position for **Delegate at Large**, please consider serving.

Contact Julian (409-331-4331) for more information



77th Texas State AA Convention

The Main Object...

June 21-23, 2024

Voice of the Convention – Wayne L. (Lakeside Group, Rockwall, TX)

Friday June 21

- 2:00 PM On-site registration opens
- 5:30 PM **Old Timers Meeting**
- 7:30 PM AA Speaker
Marian G. (Knoxville, TN)

The Westin Hotel
4545 W. John Carpenter Fwy
(Hwy 114)
Irving, TX 75063
972-929-4500

For room accommodations,
request the rate for the
"Texas State Convention"

\$129 per night
single or double

Book before June 6 to ensure availability.

Saturday June 22

- 9:30 AM Al Anon Speaker
Nancy S. (Topeka, KS)
- 11:00 AM AA Speaker
Erin B. (Cleveland, OH)
- 2:30 PM NETA, NWTA,
SETA, SWTA Delegates
- 3:00 PM GSO Speaker
Diana L. (New York, NY)
- 7:30 PM AA Speaker*
Jimmy A. (Spring
Lake Heights, NJ)

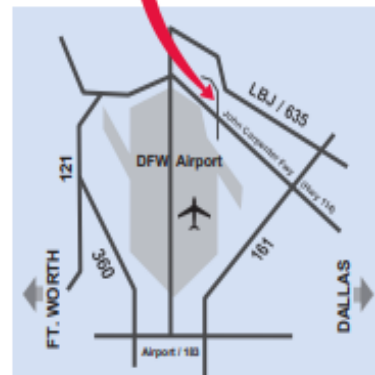
Ice Cream Social Sat. Night
After Meeting

Register online at:
txaaconvention.org

Or use the form below and send payment.

Sunday June 23

- 9:30 AM AA Speaker
Mike S. (Topeka, KS)



✂ DETACH AND RETURN

**An ASL interpreter will be available
for the Saturday night meeting.*

Registration Fee: \$20 per person

Name _____ Name on Badge _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Additional Registrations

Name _____ Name on Badge _____

Name _____ Name on Badge _____

Registration @ \$20 each = \$ _____

Scholarship Contribution = \$ _____

TOTAL \$ _____

MAIL FORM & PAYMENT TO:

Texas State Convention
500 Tanglewood South
Irving, TX 75061

Make checks payable to: Texas State Convention



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



At Wit's End

Newcomer on a treadmill

My sponsor suggested I incorporate exercise into my recovery program. He asked me the other day how it was going, and I told him not so great. The only exercise I seem to be doing is jumping to conclusions, running around in circles and bending over backwards to avoid doing my amends.

J.D.
Big Lake, Minn.



3rd Step Principle

**Faith
Commitment**

3rd Promise

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



**We are not a
glum lot.**