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POPPING UP EVERYWHERE

BY: Alex M. | Louisville, Kentucky

His fear of past wrongs overwhelming him was put to rest with a thorough Step Four: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. In reading Step Four, I realized my main character defects were already listed: selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. Resentment, per my grudge list, was easy to recognize. Dishonesty was also easy, since I lied about everything so you wouldn't discover my secrets. Fear was a defect because it was about losing something I had or not getting something I wanted.

These three defects boiled down to selfishness and self-centeredness. These got me into trouble in so many ways, especially when I believed I was all-powerful and could control every aspect of my life.

Writing my moral inventory of what I had done wrong in my past was a liberating experience. For once, I could be honest with myself and didn't have to keep those skeletons in my closet any more. They were like zombies. They wouldn't stay dead and kept popping up where they weren't wanted. When they did, I was flooded with shame and guilt. The committee in my head got fired up. Fear set in about what I did yesterday while in a blackout and what might happen tomorrow after all was discovered.

So I did Step Four exactly as it's suggested in the book, with a lot of help from my sponsor. I wrote about how I resented my parents, wife, family, boss, coworkers, neighbors, people from my childhood and some who had died long ago. I wrote about the injustices I had so stoically endured and all of my justified anger. I wrote about my fear of dying a long, slow, painful death from cancer and my fear of going broke and fear of people hating me...and my fear of never being loved.

I wrote about my inability to have any kind of healthy or fulfilling relationship with anyone and why that was. I wrote about people I had harmed more than they had harmed me and some who hadn't harmed me at all.

I listed character defects I had never acknowledged or accepted as mine. As I saw it, those defects had always been someone else's. I wrote about how much easier it was to play the victim and blame others for my messed up life rather than be accountable for my own role in my miserable life.

At the end, I couldn't believe the mountain of manure I had created. It reeked. And it was all mine. I hadn't cleaned house, I had cleaned out my insides.

The book says, "When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time." No problem there. I wanted that pile of muck gone. So I did Step Five right away. It was long and a little scary, but it was such a relief. I could finally let go of the guilt and shame from my past, and see that maybe, just maybe, I could actually start a new life.

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ACCEPTING STEP 3

My sponsor told me when I came into the fellowship: "Living sober without working the Steps of the program is like trying to push a boulder uphill all by yourself. Or maybe harder. "So I began trying to work the steps soon after surrendering to the fact that I was powerless over alcohol a crucial decision that is still necessary for my continued sobriety.

As I began to talk about the Steps at meetings, I soon found that they meant different things to different people. And as I gained more sobriety a day at a time and began to work the program, I found that the meanings of the steps also underwent subtler changes for me. For example when I entered AA, I had already admitted that I was powerless over alcohol and that my life was unmanageable. I had simply avoided coming to meeting until I reached that point. Later, when I quit fighting and surrendered to the power of the AA program, I realized that I was truly accepting the First step in a way different from any that I could have visualized at the very beginning.

Coming to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity was, for this alcoholic, relatively easy by the time I joined the Fellowship. I had traveled the atheistic route during my drinking days, determined that I had to be in charge and that God could not exist, simply because I said that he did not.

It never crossed my mind to curse or drink about the way things turn out. Instead, I feel that my Higher Power, whom I choose now to call God, has other plans for me. I don't know what they are, but I feel that I've made some progress toward understanding the meaning of our Third step and the way to apply it to my life. If so, that's the most important promotion that I could ask for now.

By G.B.

Step Four is "... the first tangible evidence of our complete willingness to move forward."



From AA Members:

A Power Greater Than Myself

Why the program of Alcoholics Anonymous works so well, on the disease of alcoholism, is hard to fathom when we first come into AA. Most of us are conflicted when confronted with the idea that our perception of life had been all wrong from the very start.

Issues like, faith, higher power, insanity, surrender, denial, guilt, shame, etc. had to be revisited to see where our past thinking had let us down. We realize that we have painted ourselves into the corner of life. And, if we are lucky, we become open to the idea that we may have to seek outside help if we want to have any chance of a normal life.

When we go through this process, in the spirit that it is presented, in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12), wonderful things happen for us. I find it much easier to look back at the way the AA program has worked for me, than it was when I first entered the program and tried to look forward and perceive how it was going to influence every facet of my life in a wondrous way. I wish there was a way to package it and give it away. But, as I look back on my own experience in AA and realize how each of us are conditioned differently.

I know that, not all of us can envision what the result will be. For if they did, they would cut right to the chase and never look back. In the beginning, we usually spend most of our time coming to terms with the most obvious symptom of alcoholism; the drink and I were no exception.

Unfortunately, many of us never get deeper into the program, where most of the healing takes place. For those of us that do come to realize that happiness, and more importantly, peace of mind, are the things that are lacking in our lives and to acquire them, we have to work for them.

This does not mean that we will not experience joy and peace until we complete the process. Not at all, for every time we uncover another piece of the puzzle that barred us from being at peace with ourselves, it allows us to free up that part of our mind that has been wrestling with that issue and we can finally put it to rest. The day-to-day improvement in our own self esteem will be reward enough to inspire (inspirit) us to address the next issue that needs our attention, and one by one we resolve these matters as we Trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

Another thing that seems to be a natural result as we navigate this approach is that, with this new awareness, we refrain from making the regretful mistakes of the past that caused our discontent in the first place. Replacing the wrongs with the rights, you might say, doubles the pace of our growth. We only get to live once and it would be a shame to spend it with that awful mental grinding that goes on between our ears, when the solution is right before our eyes. And, if we continue to spend all our mental energy obsessing on the "not drinking one day at a time" we can do this for years, and then one day, just pick up that drink. A drink has no appeal to alcoholics who are at peace with themselves and with others. Why waste the only life we have when the answers are laid there at our feet?

Do not get stuck in the rut of complacency. Trust this process and ask yourself if you have been thorough with all twelve of the steps. And if not, I recommend that you revisit those loose ends and deal with them. Give this a try, and I guarantee that, you will not regret it.

Written by Rick R.

The Big Book amazingly promises that we will be reborn (p. 63). In Big Book context, Bill W. may have been referring to Dr. Carl Jung's description of a spiritual experience: "Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them." (p. 27). Of course, Bill himself had a near similar experience at Towns Hospital (p. 14).

I had a similar experience when I was about three months sober but had not yet worked the 12 Steps. Late one night while meditating on a pier of rocks protruding into the ocean I was overcome with a tremendous surge of energy and joy that sent me sprinting down the beach. This lasted a long time but had dissipated by the next morning. It occurred to me that I had experienced the same as Bill W on page 14—perhaps I, too, had become "reborn!"

Alas, two months later I marched into a bar and almost ordered a gin and tonic. Thank God I didn't, but I certainly had not had a spiritual experience as the Big Book defines it: "the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism." (p. 567). But as time passes, I realize that God has removed my mental obsession to drink alcohol so long as I remain in a fit spiritual condition.

Indeed, the 10th Step promise on page 85 has happened: "Instead, the problem (mental obsession) has been removed. It does not exist for us." In this context, I have been reborn!

By Bob S.

HEARD AT A MEETING:

MY GOD BOX IS BECOMING SO FULL,
PRETTY SOON IT WILL BE A GOD CRATE.

Is sobriety all that we are to expect of a spiritual awakening?

No, sobriety is only a bare beginning; it is only the first gift of the first awakening. If more gifts are to be received, our awakening has to go on. As it does go on, we find that bit by bit we can discard the old life - the one that did not work - for a new life that can and does work under any conditions whatever.

PLAN A TRIP TO DR. BOB'S HOUSE

The first thing you'll see when you reach Dr. Bob's Home is the twelve stone and wooden steps that lead up to the front porch. To the left of the porch rests the massive stone monument that is inscribed with Dr. Bob and Anne Smith's name. To many visitors, the steps and stone plaque symbolizes the foundation of A.A.

Experiencing Dr. Bob's Home is not something easily described; you simply must come here and discover it for yourself. Only then will you know. Only then will you realize that you have finally come home.

"I think the kind of service that really counts is giving of yourself, and that almost invariably requires effort and time. — Dr. Bob



855 ARDMORE AVENUE

When I walked through the doors of the home of Dr. Bob and Anne Smith, I was transported into another time. It is an experience not measured by hours or days; it was an experience measured by an encounter with all those who had walked over the threshold of that house and into freedom. There is music in the air, but not one of sound. It is the music of hope echoed throughout the house. If you are still, you can feel the Presence of God, and it is as if you have stepped out of time and into His everlasting love.

Listening to the stories of the men and women who came to this last house on the block, I could hear the melody of their stories mixed with my own. As I sat and had coffee, I could imagine myself hearing the accounts of lives conceding their innermost selves of their alcoholism. The walk up the stairs could almost signify the willingness to believe in a power greater than oneself. In Sue's bedroom, as I knelt to ask God to remove the bondage of self, I felt as if my song was joining the song of others who have said that surrender prayer in the past and with those who will take it in the future.

The home became a beacon of light for many who had lost everything. When I looked at the pictures on the wall, I was reminded those who passed through the doors were family. Each life, like the photographs signified, snapshots of the stories of transformation; of lives full of failure and misery turn into ones of love and service. There is still space for many more pictures of those to come. By Patrick C.



In 1947, because of the growing interest in AA, the Grapevine editors decided to write a brief definition of the Fellowship. Thus, the AA Preamble was first published in the June 1947 issue. They used portions of the Foreword to the first edition of the Big Book. The Grapevine had just begun to circulate among non-alcoholics, and the Preamble was intended primarily to describe for them what AA is and is not. It is still often used for public information purposes.

As time passed, it began appearing in all Conference-approved publications, and many groups now use it to open meetings.

The original version was slightly different from what we know today. For example:

- 1) It stated that the only requirement for membership is an HONEST desire to stop drinking, and
- 2) it contained only the very brief statement "AA has no dues or fees."

At the 1958 General Service Conference, a delegate pointed out that the word "honest" does not appear in the Third Tradition, and suggested that it should be deleted from the Preamble. Many delegates felt that as AA had matured, it had become almost impossible to determine what constitutes an honest desire to stop drinking, and also that some who might be interested in the program could be confused by the phrase. The mid-summer 1958 meeting of the General Service Board ratified the deletion, and since then the Preamble has read simply "a desire to stop drinking."

The phrase "AA has no dues or fees" also was clarified to read as it presently does: "There are no dues or fees for AA membership, we are self-supporting through our own contributions." The current version of the Preamble appears on the first page of every issue of the Grapevine.

<https://www.aagrapevine.org>

Grapevine Daily Quote of the day

"AA does not teach us how to handle our drinking; it teaches us how to handle our sobriety."

Panel Officers' Email

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CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG



Special Note:

The material in this newsletter does not necessarily represent Cape Atlantic Intergroup.

Much of it has been contributed by individual members with the intention of passing the message on to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Our Third Legacy in A.A. is "Service"

While the term "service" in Alcoholics Anonymous can refer to everything ranging from making a twelfth step call to sponsorship to chairing meetings or making coffee, the Twelve Concepts deal more specifically with our General Service Structure and AA's World Services provided by GSO and our two Corporate Boards.

What is General Service?

The Twelve Traditions make clear the principle that A.A., as such, should never be organized, that there are no bosses and no government in A.A. Yet at the same time, the Traditions recognize the need for some kind of organization to carry the message in ways that are impossible for the local groups — such as publication of a uniform literature and public information resources, helping new groups get started, publishing an international magazine, and carrying the message in other languages into other countries. The U.S./Canada Conference structure is the framework in which these "general services" are carried out.

What are service meetings?

There are several different types of service meetings — group, district, and area. A group business meeting discusses the affairs of the home group. A district business meeting discusses the collective matters affecting all the groups within that district. At area committee meetings and area assemblies, the collective business of the area is discussed, which includes the groups, districts, and area.

Who serves on the Area Committee?

The committee consists of GSRs (General Service Representative) and DCMs (District Committee Members) of each of the participating districts in the area, the elected area officers and committee chairpersons, the delegate and alternate delegate, committee chairpersons.

Who attends these service meetings?

Anybody is welcome to attend these meetings. Attendees are AAs serving in the General Service structure. Each type of service meeting applies to different levels of the structure. In fact, interested AAs are encouraged to attend to see the third legacy at work.

Do You Know Where The Stories Went That Were Removed From The Big Book?

Check your local intergroup office for the book

Experience, Strength and Hope

This anthology contains 56 stories retired from the first three editions of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. The membership of Alcoholics Anonymous continues to grow and change, but these stories from the past will never be outdated. The essential A.A. story — "what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now" — is a constant. That timeless formula for A.A. talks rings just as true in these stories from our history as it does today in the meeting around the corner.

Pass It On is the newsletter of Cape Atlantic Intergroup. The newsletter contains announcements, meeting changes, events, news and information around intergroup, short articles on sobriety and recovery. All AA members are invited to submit material to the newsletter. Please send correspondence or contributions to:

NEWSLETTER@CAPEATLANTICAA.ORG

Thank you to all newsletter contributors and to the many people that distribute the newsletter throughout our intergroup. We are truly grateful for your service!

Steering Panel Committee

THE INTERGROUP PANEL AND COMMITTEE MEMBERS MEET 2ND WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH .
ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING IS ALSO AVAILABLE VIRTUAL ID 542 744 809



Business Meeting

3RD WEDNESDAY OF EVERY MONTH, AT 7:30PM.
ATTENDANCE AT THIS MEETING IS ALSO AVAILABLE VIRTUAL ID 164 233 922

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