



## STEP TWO

*Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity*

**STEP 2** is a step of hope. A hope that there is a solution to our drinking problem. It is also a step of progress over time. The step states “came to believe” but, for me, this coming to believe that a Power greater than myself could restore me to sanity is a process that, over time, has evolved, changed and matured.

When I walked into the doors of AA I was completely broken. I knew I had a problem with drinking and that my life was starting to unravel and at an increasingly rapid pace. The other thing that quickly became apparent to me after going to meetings was that AA was working for the people in the rooms. They had found a way to be happy and not drink. They told stories that were just like mine and talked about feeling exactly like I felt. I did not know how or why it was working, which was frustrating for me. I could and did argue with the fact that the program of AA asked me to believe in a higher power or admit that I had serious character defects, but I could not and did not argue with the fact that this program worked for people. This gave me hope and a start on Step 2.

The concept of a Power greater than ourselves is a challenging one when starting in AA. The Twelve and Twelve talks about how hard this can be for various different groups of people: the agnostic, the atheist, the former believer, and even the person full of faith who regularly practices a religion. Really, this part

of the program is hard for anyone and everyone. It was hard for me. I fought this part of the program at the beginning and it hindered my ability to work the program and reap the benefits of a sober life.

What did work for me, and has worked for me on every step in AA, was to make an honest attempt at the step with where I was at the time. When I first started, I wanted nothing to do with “God” and, even though I did not know it at the time, I was making myself “God” of my own little world. As I mentioned earlier, I knew the program was working for these people at the meetings and someone in a meeting pointed out that the group of AA was bigger than me or any one person, so it would work to use the group of AA as a Higher Power. I also had to admit that there was something bigger than me in my life, some power that was greater than myself present in my life. With these two things, I was able to move forward with the program using the group of AA as my Higher Power and knowing that there was a Higher Power, and that it wasn’t me.

Over time, my idea of a Higher Power and my relationship with that Higher Power has continued to grow and mature. Today, I have a concept of a Higher Power that I call God (I would have told you that would never have happened when I started in AA). I am also now evidence to the newcomer that the program works. I could not stay sober for five days in a row and now have five years of sobriety using the program of AA.

There is hope. AA works. There is a God and it’s not you.

*Jake B.  
St Paul*

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### ***The Lifeline: Purpose Statement***

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*The Lifeline* is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc. It is about, by, and for groups and members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or St. Paul Intergroup. We welcome articles on a Step, Tradition or Concept, in addition to descriptions of personal experience. We also welcome original cartoons and drawings expressing the wry side of A.A. experience.

Please email your article to [Lifeline@aastpaul.org](mailto:Lifeline@aastpaul.org) or send it by regular mail to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355. W. St. Paul, MN 55118-3431. Materials or articles mailed to us cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length, and content that might violate A.A.’s Traditions, etc.

**St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.**

**33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355, West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431**

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Office Hours: Monday through Friday – 9 AM to 6 PM; Saturday 9 AM to Noon

# ANONYMITY

AT THE

## PUBLIC LEVEL

A SAFEGUARD WORTH PROTECTING

**AS** a newly elected delegate, one of the responsibilities I have is to respond to anonymity breaks that occur in our area. Much to my surprise, on my sixth day as delegate I was made aware of the first anonymity break of my term. It made me think that an article on anonymity would be a good way to start the year. What is our position about anonymity at the public level? Is it still as necessary in 2021 as it was when it was first introduced?

Tradition 11 states “Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio., and films.” There are two aspects that early members found beneficial to guide our relations with the public. We do not promote the A.A. program in the traditional marketing sense, we let our friends recommend us and we always maintain our own anonymity at the public level. It is the second part that is my focus in this article.

The Fellowship has a long history of cooperation with, and appreciation for, our friends in the media. Our membership in the early days grew thanks to articles in popular media outlets including Liberty Magazine, The Saturday Evening Post and The Cleveland Plain Dealer. These articles highlighted our work and the success of the program—not any particular member. That continues to be our approach. Each year the General Service Office sends letters to media sources around the country

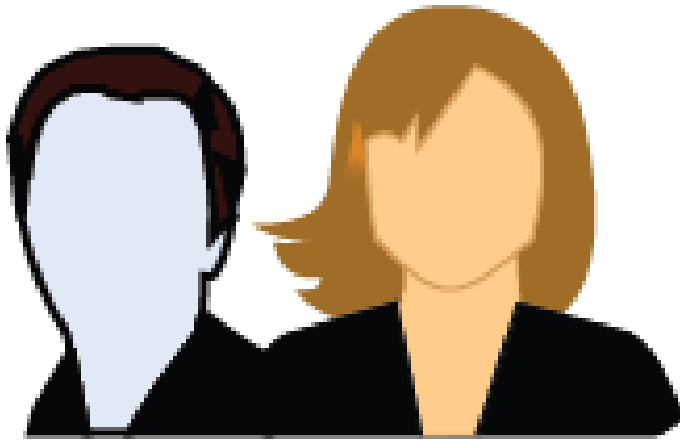
reminding them of our tradition in hopes they will cooperate in protecting the anonymity of a member who doesn’t understand. In responding to the recent situation, I saw that misconceptions and misunderstandings still exist in the media about how the tradition applies. The reporter thought that as long as the member gave their approval to use their full name and full-face photo it made it OK to do so. But this is simply not true.

Personal anonymity is one of our most treasured assets. Tradition 11 protects A.A. from its members. No one person represents A.A. in the public—nor could they. It is imperative that we keep the doors of A.A. as open as possible. If a member of Alcoholics Anonymous breaks their anonymity and subsequently has a fall, it could deter someone else

from coming to us for help. The end result would be a lot of misunderstanding and confusion with the general public. People might wonder if A.A. really works. We want to let the public know that this program works and one of the ways we do so is by avoiding the perception that any one individual represents A.A.

Do we still need this protection? As long as there are alcoholics who might need our solution, the answer is yes. Bill W. said in 1968: “Our Traditions are a list of the lesson of yesterday. If you read the Traditions with a sense of

history and information, you will relive our past, and you will see how we have brought forth from the past, on its time stream, the lessons thereof, and have tried to make estimates about the future. We are not absolutely fixed in all of our principles; there is room for change. On the other hand, we shall not lightly cast away these hard-earned principles, which bear on our unity, on our growth, under God’s grace” Our tradition of anonymity at the public level helps us to not lose sight of the fact that it is our common welfare that comes first. If our public face is more generic it helps us keep the door open for anyone who might need us in the future.



**We are  
anonymous**

*Stacy McV.  
Area 36 Delegate.*

## St. Paul Intergroup Contribution Drive!

***We must reach NEW contributors to continue to provide vital services!***

**HOW:** We need YOU!! Reach out to your AA Groups and fellow AA members and encourage them to contribute. [www.aastpaul.org](http://www.aastpaul.org)

- Become a “Faithful Fiver” – call 651-227-5502 to sign up!
- Online Contributions!
- Mail checks to the office!
- Visit the Office or shop online!
- Square Cash App: \$spintergroup

**GOAL:** \$25-30,000 for expenses through end of the year and another \$30,000 to build our prudent reserve by Jan. 31<sup>st</sup>, 2021.

**WE CAN DO THIS!**

We list 800+ meetings! If every meeting contributed \$18.75/month for the next 4 months, we would hit our goal! About ~24% of meetings contributed last year. ***Does your group contribute?***

***THANK YOU, CONTRIBUTORS!!!!***



**REMINDER:** How does St Paul Intergroup serve the still suffering alcoholic, the AA Fellowship, and Groups? ***Intergroup is who people reach when they look up AA.***

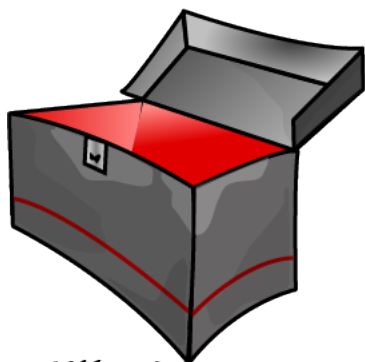
- Answers phone 24 hours a day.
- Publishes a Meeting Directory.
- Provides guidance about finding a sponsor to newcomers.
- Sells AA literature and medallions.
- Maintains the website with meeting and event information.
- Maintains a list of Speakers and those willing to do 12 Step work.
- Publishes the *Lifeline* newsletter!

**NEED MORE INFORMATION?** Email the Outreach Committee at [outreach@aastpaul.org](mailto:outreach@aastpaul.org) or contact Dennis B., Office Manager, (651) 227-5502, email: [manager@aastpaul.org](mailto:manager@aastpaul.org), Office location: 33 Wentworth Ave E., West Saint Paul MN 55118

# A SPIRITUAL TOOLKIT

# GOD AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM

**ONE** morning when my husband and I were on a road trip, we read something in *Daily Reflections* about a “spiritual kit of tools.” As we drove down the highway we decided to make a list of things we would put in our spiritual toolbox. We had such fun that a few days later we stopped at a hardware store and bought the smallest toolbox we could find. We also bought a plug and receptacle so we could “plug in” to our Higher Power. These went into the box along with a Grapevine; a “God box” (a small box where I place notes to God when something troubles me); small copies of the



*What's in your  
toolbox???*

“Big Book” and the “Twelve and Twelve;” a small notebook and pen; and several 3x5 cards with reminders on them such as “Write a gratitude list from one to 10,” “Rule 62,” “Easy Does It,” and other slogans, as well as page numbers of where to find prayers in our literature. In

the tray that sits inside the top of the toolbox, I put my sponsors phone number.

I began using this kit of spiritual tools right away and still do. In moments of confusion I open the toolbox and invariably come across something that reminds me of how to handle a difficult situation. At other times I take out the Big Book and read a passage, or I use the tablet and pen to write something down for the God box.

Since returning from our trip we’ve shared about our spiritual kit of tools at meetings and with sponsees. As a result we’ve heard others share what they would put into their tool kit and some sponsees have made a tool kit for themselves. Having a spiritual kit of tools in the form of a toolbox continues to be a valuable source for spiritual solutions and its great for taking along on trips.

*Reprinted from  
The Sooner Sobriety Newsletter  
Oklahoma City, OK - July 2012  
Lynne C., Bend, OR*

Alcoholics Anonymous came into existence in 1935 at a time when much of our society was centered around the churches in the communities where we lived. Much of the South and Midwest are still like that today (written in 2019).

As a child in my home town, on Sunday morning I could look out the window and see a great majority of my neighbors walking to church. That was the way it was in the early 1940’s. The book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, was published in 1939 and seems that it was highly influenced by the many early members of the program at that time.

A.A. could have easily become a religious program. But, fortunately, the elders of that time realized, by the mistakes of the Oxford Group, and the Washingtonians, that they had to make it clear that, a desire to stop drinking was the only requirement for membership, and that the individual members could choose their own concept of a power greater than themselves (i.e. *God as we understand Him*).

In Tradition Two it says, “As He may express Himself in our group conscience.” When the word God is used in the remainder of the book, it is not always followed by the “as we understood Him” qualifier, and I believe that many members get the idea that somehow, they are trying to push religion on them. I think that’s understandable.

When I was faced with that possibility, I personally found it easy enough to read the black parts of the pages in the book and not let myself get distracted by what I now recognize as a cultural norm at the time. I had no problem setting aside my religious bias and recognizing the parts of the Big Book and the 12x12 that clearly state all of the options available when it comes to finding a “power greater than myself,” and I can name several right off the top.

1) Alcohol itself was my higher power for a long time and still would be if I hadn’t gotten into the program. 2) My EGO ran my life for quite a while until I got serious about life issues. 3) The A.A. program itself. I found myself spiritually lost when I surrendered and entered the program of Alcoholics Anonymous and when faced with the need to come to terms with the Higher Power issue. I now realize why it took such a long time to settle this subject.

Years of drinking and an underdeveloped thinking process that was hard to get up to speed right away.

# NEGLECT

## THE ELEPHANT IN THE ROOM

**WHEN** we are satisfied that we have given steps one through five our best effort and have identified the most glaring defects of character and shortcomings, it's now time to affect the changes in the most obvious of our faulty thoughts and the behaviors that stem from those thoughts by addressing them in steps six and seven.

To be successful in this endeavor, we must first get honest with ourselves and begin to establish some credibility — and by that I mean always doing the things we say we are going to do. We bring most of the basic flaws out in the open as we become aware of them.

The, if we are sure that we are committed to the program, we will want to set in place principles to live by that will cut off our own escape when we stumble and want to revert back to that old way of thinking.

Most of us do this with the help of a sponsor or mentor, if you like, and go by the book as best we can. I did what I thought was a pretty thorough job of it. Then one day about twenty years ago I was trying to park my car in a somewhat crowded parking lot, and as I found the spot I wanted there was a shopping cart blocking my way. I got out of my car and moved the cart aside, then parked my car. I then got that shopping cart and pushed it back to the store entrance, then went about my business.

From that day on, when parking at any market, I search for a stray shopping cart and take it back to the store just to make up for all the times I shoved one into the flower bed and drive away. After telling that story at meetings over the years, I hear people telling how it is very uncomfortable for them to leave the cart adrift in the parking lot, and we all get a big laugh out of it. As best as I can tell, the word neglect is only mentioned two times in the Big Book (page 97 & page 129) and two times in the 12x12 (page 81 & page 151). And seldom, if ever, has it been the topic of a meeting that I can recall. It is like the proverbial elephant in the room.

As I started to catch myself shirking my responsibilities, it became obvious to me that if I wanted to regain some form of self respect and dignity, I was going to have to put the word Neglect on my list of shortcomings, and question my

integrity. DO I do what is right even when there is nobody watching?

If credibility is always doing what I say I'm going to do, then integrity to me is a whole bunch of credibility. To cut off my own escape I do routine things every day that cost me nothing and the result of that is a clear conscience.

If I am doing the little things that I should, I find it much easier to give the big things that same sort of attention. I never throw trash out the car window, I pick up after myself, I never walk away from my bed in the morning without making it, and I linked all that to being an unspoken prayer saying:

- I will be responsible
- I will be orderly
- I will be neat
- I will not be neglectful
- I will be respectful
- I will stay on the unselfish side of the ledger in all my decisions

I sometimes revisit those pages in the Big Book and 12x12 and I try my best not to ignore the elephant in the room.

*reprinted from  
Central Bulletin Newsletter - 2018  
Cleveland District Office  
Rick R.*

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## SOBRIETY IS A GIFT

**FOR** many years in sobriety, I have heard people voice the same lament that after a good period of sobriety they drank again, and now are finding it hard to get back to meetings.

It didn't seem to be enough to say, "*just hang in there*". Something else was needed so I prayed about it, and asked God for an answer I could give.

Not long afterward I was talking to someone I had known for years. She said, "*I got drunk after five years sober, and now I can't seem to get back to meetings. It just isn't working for me*". I suddenly got the answer to my prayer.

# A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES

**WHEN** I first arrived in the rooms of AA I knew I was an alcoholic but I had no belief in God. As an atheist I was immediately put off by the references to a higher power and to God. But I was in bad shape and saw that I needed to stop drinking. So, I began going to several meetings a week.

When I heard people share their experiences with drinking, I began to feel that I was in a place where I belonged. I met people I liked. One person in particular I remember was an older African American man called Julius. He spoke of his life as a long-time hobo, and described himself as an alcoholic and a junkie. He said he had never learned to read or write. He often spoke of his belief in God as his higher power. I was impressed with Julius' humility and sincerity, but his beliefs contradicted everything I believed in. I wanted to accept Julius as a person, so I realized I had to let go of my focus on the contradiction. I had to listen and accept, and when I didn't agree I didn't need to argue. I also saw that my beliefs were important because I was so very important, that the real problem was my ego. My ego was creating a barrier to my acceptance of AA members and the AA program.

I felt that I had a place in AA and was accepted by other AA members. I also felt that AA was my only chance for recovery. I didn't need to change my beliefs, I had to let go of the argument. In time I succeeded at that, and it I was able to embrace AA itself as my higher power. With the help of the program balance and sanity have been restored to my life.

For a long time, I thought that an atheist like me had a special difficulty in finding a path to sobriety through the AA program. Now I see my struggle to reconcile my beliefs with the Twelve Steps of AA was actually a struggle with my ego, and through that struggle I recognized the threat my ego was to my sobriety. If I hadn't struggled with steps two and three how would I have come to terms with my ego? Now I believe that anyone who arrives in AA will find a personal obstacle to recovery, regardless of their views about God.

*Anonymous  
Seattle Intergroup Newsletter*

GOD GRANT ME THE  
SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS  
I CANNOT CHANGE...  
COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN...  
AND WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.



12th Step Calls

8



Website Visits

7,452



Night Owl Calls

229



Meeting Info Calls

79



Speakers Calls

0



Literature Purchased

278 Books

THE FOLLOWING GROUPS, MEMBERS AND FAITHFUL FIVER MEMBERS MADE THE ABOVE SERVICES POSSIBLE:

- Amazing Grace Group
- Children of Chaos Plus
- CGAA in the Park Group
- Day by Dei Saturday
- Defogged Mens Group
- Elements Group
- Grovers Thursday Night
- Highland Park Groups
- Lake City Group
- McCalester Group AA
- New Brighton Alano
- Northfield Thursday BB
- O.M.D. Group
- Pocketing Our Pride Group
- River Falls Serenity Sisters
- Summit Hill
- Third Tradition - Nfld
- Uptown Club
- WBL Monday AA
- WBL Sat AM Women's
- Worthwhile Women's Gp

- 24 A.A. Groups contributed \$4,556
- 25 Gratitude Contributions totaled \$6,652
- 26 Faithful Fivers contributed \$1,005
- 45 Digital Contributions \$8,904



WE WANT TO EXPRESS OUR DEEPEST THANKS TO THE GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE SO GENEROUSLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE CONTRIBUTION DRIVE THIS PAST MONTH!

# LOST & FOUND – STEP TWO

**UPON** walking into my first AA meeting April 25, 2014 with that feeling in the pit of my stomach (we are all too familiar with), of course my eyes rested on the strategically placed shades. Not an easy thing to miss. Step 1, OK you got me, I'm here. Then the all-powerful Step 2, the Cornerstone, the Hope, the Solution to the problem that was Step 1.

Of course, no one is clear enough to see that yet. What do we see? 2 other problems.

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity—Problem 1 and There is no Power greater than myself—Problem 2, I'm not crazy.

What we don't realize is that the insanity referred to in step 2 is the old "threadbare" idea that every alcoholic has that someday, someday, somehow, we will be able to drink like normal people. That somehow, we will be able to control our drinking. This time it WILL be different.

And therefore, we get drunk on a lie and we get sober on the truth. Along comes Step 2 with its simple beautiful wisdom, it offers hope, it's solution. Like many other alcoholics my experience with this step was: that of course I was my own higher power and I didn't do a very good job. Managing my own life was not my strongest point and because I couldn't manage my own life, I decided I was going to manage everyone else's as well. And normally as alcoholics if we can't use ourselves as higher power, we normally choose other things that we deem just as worthy, like money, prestige, jobs, toxic relationships, codependency 's or King Alcohol. Everything except the obvious. God was Not an option for me at first because I was still trying to resolve the way I was living my life. And my idea of the way I should be living my life with a God idea, the two of them did not mix.

Until I could resolve those two forces within myself, I needed to use the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous as my higher power: anything was better than me. I also found it ironic that the chapter in a big book step 2 was introduced is in we agnostics and we agnostics speaks more about faith than any other chapter in the book.

Because, all we really need it was a willingness. But what really cinched it for me was page 52

with its bedevilments and dark promises. I had all of these, wonderful way to live. "we think not" because I had been the manager of my own life for so long.

But again, that measure of hope, that mustard seed was right there and all I needed was the willingness to believe in a power greater than myself.

So, what did I find in my step 2 experience? I found the God of my childhood again only different, only better, through the program and the fellowship.

*Geralyn G.  
Nassau Intergroup  
361 Hempstead Turnpike,  
West Hempstead, NY*

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## DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

### ***District 8 (Ramsey Co.)***

Fairview Community Center  
1910 Cty. Rd B West, Rm 108  
Roseville  
3rd Wed., 7:30 PM  
Email: [dist8@area36.org](mailto:dist8@area36.org) (for Zoom info)

### ***District 15 (Wash. Co.)***

Christ Lutheran Church  
11194 N. 36th St.  
Lake Elmo  
4th Mon., 7:00 PM  
Email: [dist15@area36.org](mailto:dist15@area36.org) (for Zoom info)

### ***District 19 (Dakota Co.)***

Rosemount Community Center  
13885 South Robert Trail  
Rosemount  
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM  
[dist19@area36.org](mailto:dist19@area36.org)  
Email: [dist19@area36.org](mailto:dist19@area36.org) (for Zoom info)

### ***District 26 (SE Ramsey Co.)***

Grace Lutheran Church  
1730 Old Hudson Rd.  
St. Paul  
2nd Sun., 7:00PM  
Email: [dist26-area36.org](mailto:dist26-area36.org) (for Zoom info)

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As I got more familiar with the Big Book, and the 12x12, I read on page 26, "Alcoholics Anonymous does not demand that you believe anything." On belief, "to acquire it, I had only to stop fighting and practice the rest of A.A.'s program as enthusiastically as I could." (page 27)

Also on page 26 where it states, "Take it easy. The hoop we have to jump through is a lot wider than you think ... A one-time vice-president of the American atheist Society ... got through with room to spare."

Then on page 33 of the 12x12 it says "Therefore, Step Two is the rallying point for all of us. Whether agnostic, or former believer, we can stand together on this step."

Today I am very comfortable with my own concept of a Higher Power and I use the word God only to put a name on a concept that has no physical form and I might say that it expresses itself in the collective conscience of the world we live in. I can assure that if you read these qualifiers and practice the rest of the principles of the program, as enthusiastically as you can, you will come to terms with a personal concept of a higher power as well as any of us.

Reprinted from  
The Central Bulletin - March 2019  
Cleveland District Office  
Rick R.



**The Pink Can  
Plan  
change of  
address**

**Mail Contributions  
to:**

**PINK CAN PLAN  
P.O. BOX 41633  
PLYMOUTH, MN 55442-2566**

WE WELCOME YOU TO JOIN US THIS WINTER FOR...

**HAPPY DESTINY'S  
2021 (VIRTUAL)  
AA WORKSHOP!**

**LOVE & TOLERANCE  
♥ IS OUR CODE** 

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 6  
1:00 p.m. - 3:00 pm. CST

OUR SPEAKERS WILL SHARE THEIR EXPERIENCE,  
STRENGTH, AND HOPE, IN 15-MINUTE SEGMENTS—  
AND WILL ANSWER QUESTIONS DURING OPEN FORUM!

**2021 PANEL**

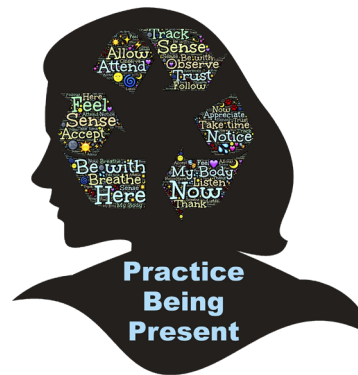
ANGEL S. | Sat. AM Women's Meeting, Woodland Hills, CA  
JEFF W. | Central Pacific, Minneapolis, MN  
SUE M. | Como Park Big Book Study, Roseville, MN

THIS ANNUAL WORKSHOP IS FOR FUN & FOR FREE!  
WE HOPE TO "SEE" YOU THERE.

Online Forum  
Go to [GoToMeeting.com](https://www.gotomeeting.com), click "Join," enter meeting # 627 102 709  
OR dial (571) 317-3112, enter 627 102 709

continued from page 5

I asked her if she believed she was powerless over alcohol. She said "yes." I asked if she had a higher power. She said "yes." Then I asked her the Big Question... did you ever apologize to that higher power for throwing your sobriety away like a piece of garbage? She gave me a funny look and said, "I never thought of that."



I asked her if she through it would hurt—and of course she said, "no." She later told me that after making the apology everything changed. She was now able to stay sober again and she felt that God had forgiven her.

Sobriety is a gift—not an accomplishment.

reprinted from  
Central Bulletin Newsletter - 2018  
Cleveland District Office  
Anonymous



# SELF-SUPPORT SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUPS

“Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.”  
The Conference-approved pamphlet: “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” offers the following suggestions for the distribution of group funds after group expenses have been paid:

## 50% St. Paul Intergroup....

33 Wentworth Ave E.  
Suite 355  
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

## 30% General Service Office

P.O. Box 459  
Grand Central Station  
New York, NY 10163

## 10% Southern MN Area 36

Area Assembly  
P.O. Box 2812  
Mpls., MN 55402

## 10% District Committee....

### **Ramsey County:**

District 8, P.O. Box 131523  
St. Paul, MN 55113

### **Dakota County:**

District 19, P.O. Box 1466  
Burnsville, MN 55337

### **Washington County:**

District 15, P.O. Box 181  
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

### **SE Ramsey County:**

District 26, P.O. Box 75980  
St. Paul, MN 55175

### LOOKING FOR A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY?

*Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl*

If you are interested - Contact:  
Nightowl@aastpaul.org  
to schedule training.

St. Paul Intergroup Office  
33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355  
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431  
To RSVP - please call 651-227-5502

# 2021 INTERGROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBERS!

|                                    |             |
|------------------------------------|-------------|
| Advisor to the Board (non voting)  | Lindsey D.  |
| Chairperson                        | Rachel P.   |
| Alternate Chairperson              | Robyn W.    |
| Secretary                          | Jodie T-W.  |
| Treasurer                          | Lisa L.     |
| Alternate Treasurer                | Renee B.    |
| 2022 Member-At-Large               | Jennifer G. |
| 2022 Member-At-Large               | Elly C.     |
| 2021 Member-At-Large               | Jeremiah W. |
| 2021 Member-At-Large               | Andrew LaB. |
| Manager                            | Dennis B.   |
| Web Servant (non voting)           | Jonathan L. |
| Web Servant (non voting)           | Sergey K.   |
| Night Owl Coordinator (non voting) | Robyn W.    |



### Office Volunteers:

Maroun, Roger G., Chris, Jimmy,  
Mary D., Lynn, Mike S., Peggy,  
Damon, Tomas, Frank

# TRADITION TWO

*For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*

**LONG** before the Twelve Traditions were written our Big Book pointed out that we alcoholics are defiant by nature. I suspect we may present quite a dilemma for those who study us. On the one hand we absolutely resist anyone who we think seeks to have authority over us—while at the same time wanting to exercise our own ‘authority’ over anyone near us. This tends to bring to mind the Celtic graphic of the snake eating its own tail. For a society to be made up of people such as this, and not self-destruct, would present an incredible challenge. A challenge that logic suggests would be unsolvable. The result being the end of the society. And yet we of Alcoholics Anonymous have survived for over eight decades. How is this possible?

It begins with the Home Group. Each of us finds themselves alone in the darkness of our alcoholism. So, when we discover that guiding light in the first AA group we attend, hope is once again a possibility where only despair had survived before. As we participate in the group activities and meetings. As we begin to shoulder our share of the load of responsibility for the group — the spiritual glue that holds AA together begins to form. A bond in which we clearly understand that our individual survival rests to a great on the wellbeing of one another.

While we may abandon that Home Group by going down the street (in a larger community) or to another town (in a rural area) to another group, we instinctively know that it will just not be the same. That first group, for better or worse, was our “first AA love” and regardless of where we go—all subsequent experiences will be compared against

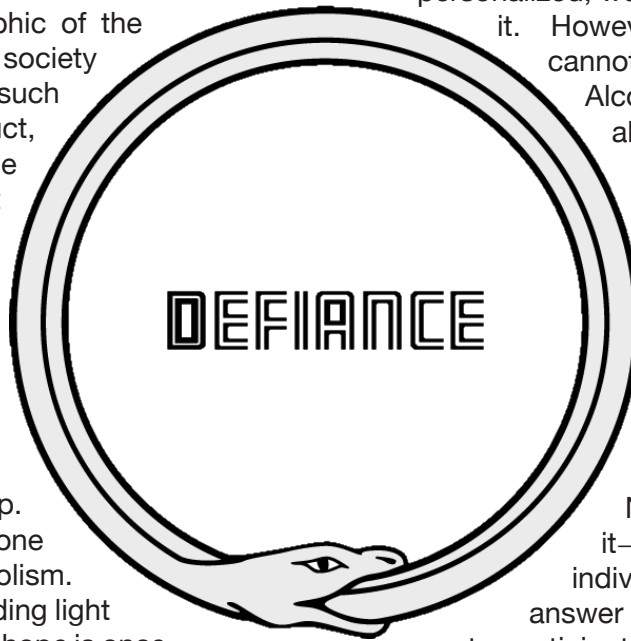
it. That is always true of a “first love.”

So, we stay put—enduring the folks who may irritate us, or who try our patience to the limit or who find other ways to rattle our precious serenity. In so doing we now become part of the Group Conscience—that frame of mind with which one can see and learn what the group thinks about a wide variety of issues. What it will accept and what it will not accept. After all, the Group Conscience is really a composite of the spiritual attitude of all the group members. It is often the ‘safe contact point’ each member uses to guide their personal decisions.

Through this process we have learned to trust ourselves, trust each other and trust a set of principles in which we had little faith previously. In a book written by Glenn Chestnut, entitled *God and Spirituality: Philosophical Essays*, he suggests that we personalize God in order to control God. If God is personalized, we seem to think we can manage it. However, the Group Conscience cannot be personalized. This is how Alcoholics Anonymous has been able to avoid those factors which have eventually eroded the unity and strength of many great societies. Rather than personalizing God—we make God personal, it part of us and we a part of it.

It cannot be personalized because there are just too many personalities within it. Now each of us is a small part of it—and as mentioned at the start—individually we resist authority. The answer has been to allow each of us to participate in that very authority and its expression—the Group Conscience.

The leaders, regardless of whether they are elected, self-appointed, or someone who has risen to a place of leadership all face the same dilemma. They clearly see that anything they might need to accomplish or any goal rests, not in them, but in the Group Conscience. That’s where their guidance is, that’s where the funds are, that’s where the laborers are. Without the Group Conscience nothing is possible, and with it anything is possible. And so they learn to trust the Group Conscience—that’s why we can call them “trusted servants”; not because they are trusted, but because they see the wisdom in trusting the Group Conscience—the expression of a Higher Power.



# I'M CHANGING!

**EARLY** on I never thought my alcoholism affected anyone but me. I didn't understand why people cared so much that I did. I was like a tornado tearing through the lives of everyone around me. See — I drank to block everything out, all the fear, pain and resentment. I was so caught up in my world, that I didn't even see that there were other people in it.

I grew up in a very abusive, dysfunctional, and confusing household. There was drinking all the time, my parents didn't care what I really did. As I got older and the more I drank, the more I blocked out. I never wanted to be in reality. My relationship with my mom has gotten better over the years, but when I was drinking, she would tell me that she hated answering the phone. She always thought it would be "that call," she was relieved when it said it was from the jail. At least she knew I was safe for the moment. Jails, the streets, and institutions became my way of life. Many times, I would wake up in the hospital with my mother beside me in tears wondering of her baby girl was going to make it. My brother and sisters wondering why I was never around anymore. Grandparents very hurt and worried about the path I was on. Not knowing that "my choice" was long gone the moment I put one in me. My friends would sit by my side and watch as I burned myself alive, not understanding why or what to do.

I had four beautiful children in the middle of all that. My kids never had a mother, there were times that I was there, and a mom to the best of my ability at the time. But that was very short-lived, which seemed to harm them even more. They too began go live in fear of not knowing what was going to happen. It was like I forgot the pain of my childhood, that I once endured. I forgot what it was like to live in fear of losing someone close to me over their addiction. I forgot what it was like to be that child that my children would soon become.

The years went by, the disease grew stronger. I was totally lost, not knowing how to get back to a place I had never been before. I knew sobriety. I thought alcoholic was what i was supposed to be. As the kids got older, they started to experiment with what they had learned from me. That's when I woke up and knew something had to change, and that something was me.

So, that's what I did. I got sober for the first

time. I began to experience life. I became a mother, a friend, and a daughter. I had so much fun and laughter, a happiness within myself I never thought possible. My children began to forgive me and want to get to know me. My family trusted me and wanted me to be around. The joys were endless, I just couldn't do enough. There was so much h that I missed out on in life. I worked the Steps and Promises came true.

Then the bedevilmments came creeping back in after the best three years of my life with my family and friends. I crushed them once again. First off, if you remember the beginning, I didn't get sober for me. It was for my children. With so many people dying around me, you would think I'd make better choices. But once again I lost the power of choice when I put one in me. All bets are off. I truly believe I just wanted to die and had no understanding why. This time around it was worse for family and friends. They had grown to love me so much and enjoyed me just being there, they got to truly know their mother for the first time in their lives, only to have me taken from them once again. Over a drink.

Lying in that hospital bed once again, now knowing if i would live or die, I had some time to think about where I went wrong. I stopped believing in God and having fun in His will for me. I took my will and life back, I let guilt and pain back in. I decided this is not the life I want, I do not want to keep waking up in a hospital bed.

So, here I am—newly sober. Trying this once again. I do not expect my children's forgiveness, nor do I deserve it. I'm an alcoholic and addict, I'm human. I know I will always fall short, but I'm going to pick myself up and do this for me. I know the rest will follow. They are super proud of me, even more for not running away like I always did. I'm facing my fears today and stranding still. The disease takes no breaks, so that means neither can I. My children and family love the new me, and so do I. I know that if I honestly work my Steps and pray every day that I can handle that 24-hour day. There is a solution, that brings great joy and happiness. This program helps rebuild all sorts of broken people. No one has to live that way anymore. My family will always be healing, but if I stay the course, I know I can be a good example and maybe my children will have a chance. Stay strong and love each other as God loves you.

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