

HITTING BOTTOM:

THE FIRST STEP AND GRIEVING THE LOSS OF YOUR GOOD FRIEND, BOOZE.

Allow me to pull out a few key points, in sequence, from the essay on the First Step in the book “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions,”:

“Who cares to admit complete defeat? Practically no one, of course. Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness.” — pg. 21

“Alcohol ... bleeds us of all self-sufficiency and all will to resist its demands ... our bankruptcy as going human concerns is complete.” — pg. 21

“In AA’s pioneering time, none but the most desperate cases could swallow and digest this unpalatable truth.” — pg. 22

“Many less desperate alcoholics tried AA, but did not succeed because they could not make the admission of hopelessness.” — pg. 23

“Alcoholics who still had their health, their families, their jobs, and even two cars in the garage, began to recognize their alcoholism.” — pg. 23

“Since Step One requires an admission that our lives had become unmanageable, how could people such as these take this Step?” — pg. 23

“It was obviously necessary to raise the bottom the rest of us had hit to the point where it would hit them. By going back in our own drinking histories, we could show that years before we realized it we were out of control, that our drinking was no mere habit, that it was indeed the beginning of a fatal progression.” — pg. 23

So it goes like this then:

It feels unnatural to admit that you are completely beaten by something — even when you’re diagnosed with a powerful illness (cancer, diabetes, alcoholism) we fight the admission.

The more I think about my own First Step, the more I listen to people in meetings talk about being powerless, about hitting bottom, about what brought them to AA and how they “worked” the First Step — the more I believe that the famous Five Stages of Grief — first proposed by Elisabeth Kubler-Ross: Denial, anger, bargaining, depression, acceptance — are a fair reflection of what someone first *really* confronting their alcoholism may go through. After all, aren’t we grieving the loss of an illusion? The illusion that we can control our drinking? Grieving the loss of our best friend, alcohol? Grieving the loss of that most Western of ideals: The image of ourselves as unbeatable, as able, with enough grit and determination, to achieve any goal, overcome any obstacle?

But the fact is, if you believe that alcoholism is a disease, something that, just like any other disease, has powerful symptoms (a lack of “all will to resist its demands” for example) and, like any other disease, powerful, toxic, and even potentially fatal consequences (“bankruptcy as going human concerns” is not just poetic, it’s chilling, when you consider what it can really mean), then you begin to acknowledge that on your own you cannot treat this illness, just

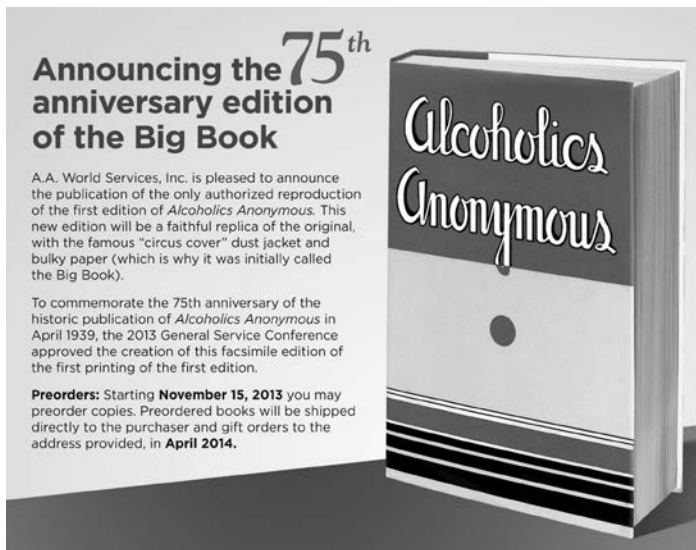
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THE STEPS & THE TRADITIONS

STEP 1 - “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.”
TRADITION 1 - “Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.”

STEP 2 - “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

TRADITION 2 - “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.”



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like, on your own, you could not successfully treat a tumor or a broken bone.

And if you don't fully admit this state of hopelessness, then you won't be able to successfully treat your illness. Just like being diagnosed with cancer and deciding that you know better than the doctors how to treat it, and will in fact do so completely on your own, with your own ideas as to how to go about it and get the best result.

Imagine the conversation one might have, explaining that to someone:

HUSBAND: I just found out that I have a spot of skin cancer. It's pretty bad, they say.

WIFE: Oh my God! That's terrible! What are you going to do? Surgery? Some kind of radiation? What? Do you need me to drive you anywhere? Oh my God!

HUSBAND: No, they recommended surgery to treat the cancer, yeah, but I'm just going to move to a different city. I think the problem is where I live.

WIFE: I'm sorry ... what?

HUSBAND: Yeah, I figure if I move then this thing will just clear itself right up."

Insane, when framed in that way, but if you substitute "alcoholism" for "skin cancer" and put the dialog in someone's mind instead of aloud, it's not that far off from what some alcoholic's treatment strategy may be. They're going to "figure out" how to "handle this on their own."



South Palm Beach County Intergroup would like to say THANK YOU to everyone who volunteered, donated and supported the Gratitude Dinner 2013.

And, a great big THANK YOU to the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous of South Palm Beach County for their support of the ALCATHON 2013-2014.

I Am Responsible ...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.

And for that: I am responsible.

Thus the admission of hopelessness is the admission that on my own I am unable to treat the illness. There is no hope of a successful treatment without help.

But what if I can catch the illness before it becomes malignant? What if I can see the symptoms of a disease's progression and believe the evidence based on many other people's experience that my symptoms match theirs, but I am a bit earlier in the downward trajectory they suffered.

That's raising the bottom. That's what can happen in Open AA meetings, or with an intervention, or even harsh consequences (jail, loss of a job, etc.)

That's why it is important for people in AA meetings to share their drinking history, to talk about their own experience in the downward spiral of real and chronic alcoholism.

Yet even with all that, one of the most profound symptoms of alcoholism is its ability to convince you that it does not exist, that your case is different, that it's not so serious... the biggest symptom of alcoholism is its ability to get you to ignore the symptoms of alcoholism.

No wonder if you can't admit complete hopelessness and helplessness you can't get sober — who could overcome *that*?

South Palm Beach County Intergroup - Profit & Loss - December 2013

	Dec 13	Jan - Dec 13		Dec 13	Jan - Dec 13
Ordinary Income/Expense					
Income			Quarterlies / Mileage Reimb	142.72	1,479.33
Interest Income	2.63	2.63	Miscellaneous Expenses	0.00	(119.00)
Contribution-Non Group			Payroll Expenses	3,312.30	49,900.92
Anonymous	70.40	1,373.45	Postage and Delivery	134.04	344.20
Birthday Club	185.00	681.00	Printing and Reproduction		
Faithful Fivers	0.00	620.00	SCAAN	0.00	1,337.00
Contribution-Non Group - Otl	0.00	871.61	Printing and Reproduction - C	0.00	882.00
Total Contribution-Non Group	255.40	3,546.06	Total Printing and Reproduction	0.00	2,219.00
Contribution Income	3,215.28	44,182.03	Professional Fees		
Fund Raising Income			Accounting	0.00	900.00
2012 Alcathon Income	0.00	1,000.00	Computer Technology	0.00	489.63
2013 Gratitude Dinner	30.00	22,713.00	Total Professional Fees	0.00	1,389.63
2013 Picnic/Raffle	0.00	6,841.41	Program & Committee Expenses	0.00	122.00
2013 Serenity Scramble	0.00	10,185.00	Rent	1,273.58	15,282.96
Total Fund Raising Income	30.00	40,739.41	Repairs		
Sales			Building Repairs & Maintenance	0.00	446.00
AAWS Books	3,003.80	45,726.80	Total Repairs	0.00	446.00
AAWS Other	23.75	1,580.10	Storage	130.00	780.00
AAWS Pamphlets	199.93	2,729.79	Supplies	212.96	3,116.77
Chips	554.75	5,573.00	Telephone	666.56	4,160.53
Demdaco Gift Items	330.00	1,398.50	Utilities		
Gift Items	1,101.98	6,819.91	Electric	216.92	2,553.74
Grapevine Books	357.00	3,218.00	Total Utilities	216.92	2,553.74
Grapevine Other Material	110.00	552.70	Total Expense	7,878.81	112,240.30
Hazelden Books	696.30	6,799.50	Net Income	(1,873.11)	9,312.86
Hazelden Other	10.00	87.35			
Medallions	1,388.50	19,879.50			
Sale of Books	33.00	271.35			
Where & When	180.00	4,455.00			
Total Sales	7,989.01	99,091.50			
Total Income	11,492.32	187,555.38			
Cost of Goods Sold	5,486.62	66,002.22			
Gross Profit	6,005.70	121,553.16			
Expense					
Advertising	0.00	0.00			
Annual Report Fee	0.00	61.25			
Bank Service Charges	15.00	389.10			
Fees Credit Cards	378.70	2,408.56			
Fund Raising Expenses					
2013 Gratitude Dinner	0.00	15,141.13			
2013 Picnic Expenses	0.00	3,088.84			
2013 Serenity Scramble	0.00	5,299.71			
Total Fund Raising Expenses	0.00	23,529.68			
Insurance	97.50	2,877.10			
Inventory Adjustment	1,298.53	1,298.53			

Operating Acct	\$12,864.23	Accounts Receivable	\$0.00	Fixed Assets	3,064.71
Prudent Reserve Act	\$23,739.29	Inventory Asset	25,900.36	Other Asset/Rent Dep	2,769.38
Petty Cash	\$150.00	Other Current Assets	3,856.18	TTL FIXED/OTHER ASSETS	5,834.09
TTL CHECKING/SAVINGS	\$36,753.52	TTL CURRENT ASSETS (Incl. Chk/Sav)	66,510.06	TTL CASH & ASSETS	\$72,344.15

Saturday Office Hours
10:00 AM - 1:00 PM
Effective February 1, 2014

AA HOTLINE – RELAY PHONE



The Hand of AA is Available 24 Hours a Day!

January - Delray Central House Group
 February - Lost Marbles
 March - Journey to Freedom
 April - Young People With A Solution
 May - Big Book Adventure Group
 June - All Aboard!
 July - Boynton Beach Group

FAITHFUL FIVERS

With Gratitude for their support:

Stan R. – Just Before Dawn
 Michael G. – Sobriety for Breakfast
 Bari W. – Welcome Home in Delray



BIRTHDAY CLUB

Margarita - 11/12/12 - 1 yr. (Congrats from Petti T.)
 Cookie D. - 11/19/04 - 9 years
 Diane S. - 1/1/92 - 22 years
 Sharon R. - 1/23/92 - 22 years
 Ray R. - 11/17/90 - 23 years
 Tom M. - 12/9/83 - 30 years
 Rodney J. - 9/2/77 - 36 years

Congratulations!
 from SPBC Intergroup

BIRTHDAY CLUB

SOUTH PALM BEACH COUNTY INTERGROUP

CONGRATULATIONS ON YOUR ANNIVERSARY!

Your donation goes to help the valuable services provided by Intergroup including the AA hotline, meeting schedules, 12 step work, literature inventory, SCAAN newsletter and hospital/institution meetings.

Name _____ Anniversary Date _____

Home Group _____ Contribution* \$ _____

*Recommended contribution is \$1 for every year of sobriety.

If you would like a reminder notice next year, please fill out the address portion below or provide an email address.

Address _____ City _____

State/Zip _____ Email _____

INTERGROUP BUSINESS MEETING MINUTES- NOVEMBER 20, 2013

Chairperson: Ed T. Meeting opened with a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer. Minutes from the October 30th meeting were approved. The Twelve Traditions were read. New group reps were welcomed. The next couple of months will be very busy with the Gratitude Dinner, Holiday Open House and the Alcathons.

New Group Reps: Easy Does It- Craig S.; 2nd Street Sobriety- Moose K.; Women Living Sober- Sharon C.; Divas- Dana B.

Vice Chair: Sarah R. No report.

Treasurer: John S. Financial figures are in the SCAAN. The Intergroup Office is having their annual inventory Saturday, January 7th and will be closed. Baskets were passed according to the 7th Tradition. Intergroup is financially doing well.

Office Manager: Jeannie G. Thanks were given to all the office volunteers. As of today, 427 tickets have been sold for the Gratitude Dinner and only 23 are still available.*Intergroup is having the Holiday Open House on December 7th from 10:30am-1:30pm. There will be the "Big Books for Beginners Annual Sale", food, fun and fellowship including a raffle for "The Book That Started It All"

Archivist: Michael G. Absent.

Archives: Dereck L. Archives will have a booth at the Gratitude Dinner displaying photos and history on Dr. Bob.

Bridge the Gap: Jacob K. (men)- No report. Trish C. (women)- Unexcused absence. No report.

Group Information: Bari W.- No report.

General Service Liaison: David P. The District 8 meeting was held on November 10th at the Triangle Club. Motions were discussed and voted upon. A motion was made that the District 8 minutes electronically distributed eliminate last names, phone number and addresses in respect to 11th Tradition. The motion did not pass. A motion passed that District 8 establish a Current Practices Standing Committee. For a detailed report, contact the Intergroup Office. David P. is stepping down as chair for personal reasons.

Hospitals and Institutions: Phil P. and Kitty B. H&I is currently bringing 44 meetings a week into 17 facilities. The two new facilities, Good Futures Teen Rehab and Summit Detox in Delray are doing well. If anyone would like to chair or speak in a correctional facility they can attend the NPBC Intergroup's H&I meeting on the first Sunday of the month at 5pm at the Triangle Club. There will be no meeting in December due to the holiday. The next meeting will be on January 18, 2014, 2pm at the Intergroup office.

Public Information: Linda C. Unexcused absence.

SCAAN: Maryanne and John T. Articles are always welcomed and can be emailed to the intergroup Office.

Telephone Relay: Willie B. We have group commitments to take the phone till June. We need groups to volunteer from July to the end of the year.

Where and When: Hannah F. No report.

12th Step Committee: David C. (men)- No report. Sarah B. (women)- No report.

Liaison to North County Intergroup: Pam T. The NPBC Intergroup meeting was on November 13th with 69 reps in attendance. NPBC Intergroup has been named as a beneficiary on a trust and they will bring the matter to the body. The office will be closed on Thanksgiving. The office has a second telephone line for Saturday when the Relay Phone committee is taking calls. The number is 561-655-6431. The Institutions Committee meets on the 1st Sunday of the month at 5pm and the new volunteer orientation starts at 4:30pm. For a detailed report, contact the SPBC Intergroup Office.

Gratitude Dinner: JC. The dinner is on Saturday November 23rd at the Embassy Suites in Boca Raton. Sobriety For Breakfast is sponsoring the dinner and has everything ready for a wonderful event. Thanks were given to Intergroup for their help.

Alcathon: Groups picked their time slots for the Alcathon. A schedule of group meeting times will be available at the Intergroup Office.

New Business:

1. Election for General Service Liaison Chair: David P. has stepped down from the position. No one has volunteered. The position is still open. Anyone who is interested, please contact the Intergroup Office.

2. Florida Conference for Young People in AA: The FYCCAPA annual conference will be held in Palm Beach this year at the PGA National Hotel the weekend of July 4, 2014. Volunteers are needed. The committee meets the 3rd Sunday of every month at 1:15 at the PGA National Hotel. There is a camping event at Johnathan Dickinson Park in Jupiter on November 29th- December 1st as a fund raiser. For more information contact advisory@FCYPAAS.net.

There will not be an Intergroup Business Meeting in December due to the Holidays. The next meeting will be on January 29, 2014.

Respectfully submitted by Cheryl S.

MEETING UPDATES

XYZ-32 Group (Previous Name)
The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen (New Name)
Church of the Palms - Saturday @ 6:30 PM - MOD

Untitled Group
Boynton Beach Congregational Church
Saturday @ 10:00 AM - No longer a meeting

Living Sober Women
Crossroads Club - Saturday @ 9:30 AM
ODW (previously listed CDW)

Downtown Boynton Group
Church of Our Savior - Thursday @ 7:00 PM
Celebrating 19th Anniversary in February 2014!
Please come and support our group!

Higher Power Breakfast
Crossroads Club
Tuesday and Thursday - 7:00 AM - OB

UPCOMING EVENTS

February 15
First Annual Florida AA Archives Workshop
Orlando, archives@area15aa.org

February 15
"I love the 80's ROLLER SKATING" - Palm Beach
Skate Zone - Lake Worth, www.wpbfcypaa.com

March 15
Old Timers Speaker Meeting
Holy Spirit Catholic Church - Lantana
www.aa-palmbeachcounty.org

April 4-6
South Florida Area 15 General Service Assembly
Tampa, altchair@district2tampaaa.org

May 2-4
24th Spring Conference - The Woodstock of AA
Orlando, gyeldell@cfl.rr.com

May 8-11
36th Big Book Seminar
Ft. Lauderdale, www.bigbookseminar.com

July 16-20
58th Florida State Convention
Ft. Lauderdale, www.58.flstateconvention.com

August 21-24
56th ICYPAA - San Antonio
56th.icypaa.org www.icypaa.org

Office Volunteers

Joe H., Bari, Caryl, Elizabeth, Ken, Petti,
Michael G., Stan, Dennis, Joe B., Andrew, George,
Alan, Samantha, Kelly, Caitlin, Christine, Danny T.,
Matt, Chris T., Bobby, Fritz, Alexandra D., Bill,
Luke, Carol, Joe A., Langston P. and Sarah R.

February Service Meetings

February 9
District 8 General Service Business Meeting - Triangle Club,
4:00 PM: GSR/DCM SHARING
4:40 PM DISTRICT 8 BUSINESS MEETING

February 15
SPBC Intergroup H&I Committee Meeting
2 pm - SPBCI Office

February 22
SPBC Intergroup Steering Committee Meeting
9 am - SPBCI Office

February 26
SPBC Intergroup Monthly Business Meeting
7 pm - Delray Central House

South Palm Beach County Intergroup Association, Inc.

2905 South Federal Highway • Building C, Suite 15-16
Delray Beach, FL 33483

24-hours: 561.276.4581

Email: southcountyyaa@comcast.net
Website: www.aainpalmbeach.org

Office Hours

Monday-Friday: 9am - 5pm

Saturday: 10am - 1pm

STEERING COMMITTEE

Chair - Ed T. Vice Chair - Sarah R.
Treasurer - John S. Secretary - Cheryl S.
Office Manager - Jeannie G.

COMMITTEES

Archives Derek L.
Archivist Michael G.
Bridge the Gap - Men Jacob K.
Bridge the Gap - Women Trish C.
General Services Liaison OPEN
Group Information Bari W.
Hospitals & Institutions Phil P.
Hospitals & Institutions Kitty B.
Liaison to North County Intergroup Pam T.
Public Information Linda C.
SCAAN Maryanne & John T.
Telephone Relay Willie B.
Twelve Step Committee - Men David C.
Twelve Step Committee - Women Sarah B.
Webmaster David R.
Where & When Hannah F.

SPBC INTERGROUP EVENT CHAIRS

Anniversary Picnic (April) OPEN
Serenity Scramble (October) OPEN
Intergroup Gratitude Dinner (November) OPEN