



MID-MISSISSIPPI INTERGROUP

SOBRIETY GAZETTE

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 2

MARCH—APRIL 2022

STEP THREE

“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 reads, “This is the way to a faith that works.”

STEP FOUR

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

Step Four is our vigorous and painstaking effort to discover what these liabilities in each of us have been, and are. We want to find exactly how, when and where our natural desires have warped us. We wish to look squarely at the unhappiness this has caused others and ourselves. By discovering what our emotional deformities are, we can move toward their correction. Without a willing and persistent effort to do this, there can be little sobriety or contentment for us. Without a searching and fearless moral inventory, most of us have found that the faith which really works in daily living is still out of reach.

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The Sobriety Gazette is a publication of Mid-Miss Intergruop. The purpose is to improve communication between local A.A. groups, inform and encourage participation in service opportunities and events that promote sobriety. Opinions expressed do not necessarily indicate endorsement by the Central Office or Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

A DECLARATION OF UNITY

This we owe to A.A.'s future; to place our common welfare first; to keep our Fellowship united. For on A.A. unity depend our lives, and the lives of those to come.

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

A.A.'s Legacy of Service by Bill W.

Our Twelfth Step—carrying the message—is the basic service that the A.A. Fellowship gives; this is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. Therefore, A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of alcoholics in action. We must carry the message, else we ourselves can wither and those who haven't been given the truth may die. Hence, an A.A. service is anything whatever that helps us to reach a fellow sufferer—ranging all the way from the Twelfth Step itself to a ten-cent phone call and a cup of coffee, and to A.A.'s General Service Office for national and international action. The sum total of all these services is our Third Legacy of Service. Services include meeting places, hospital cooperation, and intergroup offices; they mean pamphlets, books, and good publicity of almost every description. They call for committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. And, not to be forgotten, they need voluntary money contributions from within the Fellowship.

As Bill Sees It

In God's Hands

When we look back, we realize that the things which came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands were better than anything we could have planned.

My depression deepened unbearable, and finally it seemed to me as though I were at the very bottom of the pit. For the moment, the last vestige of my proud obstinacy was crushed. All at once I found myself crying out, "If there is a God, let Him show Himself! I am ready to do anything, anything!" Suddenly the room lit up with a great white light. It seemed to me, in the mind's eye, that I was on a mountain and that a wind not of air but of spirit was blowing. And then it burst upon me that I was a free man. Slowly the ecstasy subsided. I lay on the bed, but now for a time I was in another world, a new world of consciousness. All about me and through me there was a wonderful feeling of Presence, and I thought to myself, "So this is the God of the preachers!"

1. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, P. 100

2. A.A. COMES OF AGE, P. 63

VARIOUS QUOTES

"Life is overflowing with the new. But it is necessary to empty out the old to make room for the new to enter."

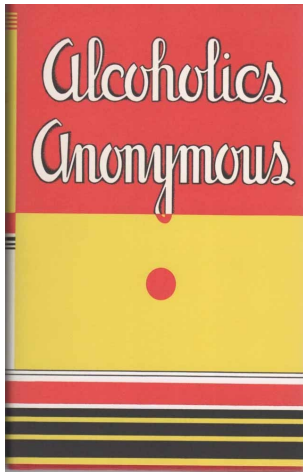
--Eileen Caddy

"If your coasting, you're going downhill"

Success is going from failure to failure without losing enthusiasm.

- - Winston Churchill

BIG BOOK EXCEPTS



"Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all."

~Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition, Bill's Story, pg. 14~

In the forward to the second edition on page xx of the Big Book, it shares with us the recovery statistics from the first 16 years of AA. They tell of a 75% success rate. These facts came from the New York office. Lois kept a list as well at 66%. Sister Ignatia also kept track at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron and recorded 700 out of the first 1000 admitted to the hospital there. Some of the early groups in Cleveland and Akron in the 1940's reported over 90%. Regardless of the which number to use to compare to today, it seems we are not doing a good job at carrying the message.



Daily Reprieve

WHAT WE
REALLY HAVE IS A
DAILY REPRIEVE
CONTINGENT
UPON THE
MAINTENANCE OF
OUR SPIRITUAL
CONDITION.



Self Examination

BIG BOOK EXCEPRTS

Why? Probably several reasons. We have strayed from the basics in the Big Book in favor of discussion meetings. We have forgotten what sponsorship means; what working with others means. It means intensive work with another alcoholic. However, there are a couple of key words on page xx.

It says: "Of alcoholics who came to AA, and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained that way; 25% sobered up after some relapses and among the remained those who stayed on with AA showed improvement. Other thousands came to a few AA meetings and at first decided they didn't want the program. But a great number of these – about two out of every three – began to return as times passed". Those two thirds went back through the same rate of success. So what does really tried mean.

Perhaps that is following the 14 direction on page 58 in the Big Book, that are there before we even get to the 12 steps. Maybe this can be thought of as step 0. In order as the directions appear on page 58 in question form written for me to answer honestly every day.

- 1) Am I thoroughly following our path, the path as precisely laid out in the Big Book? Remember, rarely have we seen a person fail who does this.
- 2) Am I completely giving myself to this simple program? Remember, those who do not or will not will not recover.
- 3) Am I being honest with myself? Remember, those who fail are constitutionally incapable of doing so, usually are those who do not recover.
- 4) 4) Am I grasping and developing a manner of living which demand rigorous honesty? Am I becoming or am I now capable of being rigorously honest with myself?
- 5) 5) If I have other mental and emotional issues, am I being honest so that I can and will recover?
- 6) 6) Does my story disclose in a general way what I used to be like, what happened, and what I am now?

BIG BOOK EXCEPRTS

7) Am I willing to go to any length to get it? Am I willing to go to any length to be ready to take certain steps and remain sober?

8) Am I still trying to find an easier softer way?

9) Am I being fearless and thorough from the very start?

10) Am I holding onto my old ideas? Am I willing to let go absolutely?

11) Do I accept and remember that alcohol is cunning, baffling and powerful?

12) Do I accept that to recover is too much for me alone, and accept that there is One Power? That one is God and ask for help now.

13) Half measures availed us nothing. Am I still doing half measures?

14) Am I asking for His protection and care with complete abandon?

Paul C.

Changes in Gratitude

“Changes in Attitude, Changes in Latitude”, Jimmy Buffett had made it a song. A look at life from his point of view, changing places to keep going on. We AA’s knew attitude had to be changed if we had a chance to survive. Some tried moving away to a new latitude, but old thinking refused to subside. Geographical cures almost never achieve the results they were meant to attain. Moving away from the place where we’d been won’t erase those old thoughts from our brain. We’ve tried it before, only to fail, the old patterns return in a flash. Again hanging out with the same type of folks that resemble the ones from our past.

The change that’s required is not where we live, but rather inside of our mind. An attitude change is required to get to the peace we’re hoping to find. A most difficult task when one’s life has been ruled by a misguided styled gratitude. Just to be left alone, with our friend alcohol, content in our own solitude.

The things that we should have been grateful for, we often times took them for granted. Our family and friends, a roof over our heads, we had somehow become disenchanted. We became grateful for the wrong kind of things, like getting us out of a scrape. Or for not getting stopped at that checkpoint last night, we were grateful that we had escaped. But this friend turned on us, kept demanding we put all our focus completely on him “Just be grateful”, he’d say, “that you have me nearby, for without me your life would be grim”. We accepted his lies and rejected the truth, that he’d taken us towards our destruction. If we were to be free, we were forced to agree, that our gratitude needed adjustment.

We had mostly been grateful for what we possessed, the new car, bigger house, a promotion. Yet we still wanted more of those things we adored, a completely misguided devotion. It had never occurred to accept what we had and be grateful without the desire. To stand out from the rest, to be always the best, be the one who was leading the choir.

So, when things fell apart, as our drinking increased, we replaced gratitude with our ego. We deserve to get drunk, to get out of this funk, alcohol was our valued amigo. Then a man came to call, he had heard of our plight, and described just what he had gone through. With him we could relate, was it chance or by fate, yet we knew that his story was true. He had traveled the same road we found our selves on, a road that led to the abyss. We had got nearly there, loss of hope and despair, we had lost our will to resist. But this fellow said he’d found a way to get back, and to live with a new attitude. To put down the drink, change the way he must think, gained a hold on a new gratitude. He said this may sound strange, since he always was grateful, for things that his money could buy. But he’d since come to learn that those things would get old, fade away in a blink of an eye. Sometimes changing your latitude will change your attitude, but we alcoholics need something more.

To put self-will aside, even swallow our pride, and walk through that clubhouse front door. For it’s there that we see, it’s not all about ME, that old attitude needs amending. Lend a hand to a friend, help relations to mend, lead a life that will need no defending. So, if Jimmy should call, to ask my advice, for a title to put on a song, though the old one was great, it would help us relate, to see where we may have gone wrong. Latitude’s just a place, it will never erase, the old thinking that drinking arranged. I’d suggest using gratitude, instead of latitude, as the way to effect a real change.

Larry R.

FATHER ED DOWLING AND AA'S BILL W.

by Robert Fitzgerald, S.J

Bill Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, was down. His feet hung over the end of the bed that nearly filled the small room he and his wife, Lois, had rented above the 24th Street AA Club in New York. It was a cold, rainy November in 1940. Lois, who supported them both with a job at a department store, was out. Bill was wondering whether the stomach pain he was feeling was an ulcer.

The walls were closing in. Thousands of copies of the Big Book were waiting in a warehouse, unsold. A few people were sober, but Bill was frustrated. How could he reach all who wanted help? Nine months earlier, a gathering of rich New Yorkers had come and gone with applause for the young movement, but no money. Hank P., after complaining for half a year, finally got drunk in April. Rollie H., a nationally famous ball-player, sobered up but broke AA's policy of anonymity by calling the press for a full name-and-photograph story.

Eventually, Bill fell into the same trap as Rollie; he began calling reporters, too, wherever he gave talks. Now he was becoming the center of attention. He had just returned from Baltimore, where a minister had asked him to face the self-pity in his own talk. He was depressed. What if he -- five years sober -- were to drink?

It was 10 p.m. The doorbell rang. Tom, the Club's maintenance man, said there was "some bum from St. Louis" to see him. Reluctantly, Bill said, "Send him up." To himself, he muttered, "Not another drunk."

But Bill welcomed the stranger, all the same. As the man shuffled to a wooden chair opposite the bed and sat down, his black raincoat fell open, revealing a Roman collar.

"I'm Father Ed Dowling from St. Louis," he said. "A Jesuit friend and I have been struck by the similarity of the AA twelve steps and the Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius."

"Never heard of them."

Father Ed laughed. This endeared him to Bill. Robert Thomsen tells the rest of the story this way in his book, *Bill W.*:

"The curious little man went on and on, and as he did, Bill could feel his body relaxing, his spirits rising. Gradually he realized that this man sitting across from him was radiating a kind of grace...

Primarily, Father Ed wanted to talk about the paradox of AA, the 'regeneration,' he called it, the strength arising out of defeat and weakness, the loss of one's old life as a condition for achieving a new one. And Bill agreed with everything..."

Soon Bill was talking about all the steps and taking his fifth step (telling the exact nature of his wrongs) with this priest who had limped in from a storm. He told Father Ed about his anger, his impatience, his mounting dissatisfactions. "Blessed are they," Father Ed said, "who hunger and thirst."

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When Bill asked whether there was ever to be any satisfaction, the priest snapped, "Never. Never any." Bill would have to keep on reaching. In time, his reaching would find God's goals, hidden in his own heart. Thomsen continues:

"Bill had made a decision, Father Ed reminded him, to turn his life and his will over to God ... he was not to sit in judgment on how he or the world was proceeding. He had only to keep the channels open ... it was not up to him to decide how fast or how slowly AA developed ... For whether the two of them liked it or not, the world was undoubtedly proceeding as it should, in God's good time."

Father Ed continued quoting Bill's work to him. No one had been able to maintain perfect adherence to the principles. None were saints. They claimed spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection.

Before Father Ed left, he pulled his body up, and leaning on his cane he thrust his head forward and looked straight into Bill's eyes. There was a force in Bill, he said, that was all his own. It had never been on this earth before, and if Bill did anything to mar it or block it, it would never exist anywhere again.

That night, for the first time in months, Bill Wilson slept soundly.

Thus began a 20-year friendship nourished by visits, phone calls, and letters. Both men spoke the language of the HEART, learned through suffering: Bill from alcoholism, Father Ed from arthritis that was turning his back to stone.

Bill turned to Father Ed as a spiritual sponsor, a friend. Father Ed, in a letter to his provincial, noted that he saw his own gift for AA as a "very free use of the Ignatian Rules for the Discernment of Spirits for the second week of the Spiritual Exercise."

Thus Father Ed endorsed AA for American Catholics with his appendix in the Big Book and his Queen's Work pamphlet of 1947. He was the first to see wider applications of the twelve steps to other addictions, and wrote about that in Grapevine (AA's magazine) in the spring 1960 issue. Bill added a last line to that Grapevine article: "Father Ed, an early and wonderful friend of AA, died as this last message went to press. He was the greatest and most gentle soul to walk this planet. I was closer to him than to any other human being on earth

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For his part, Father Ed counted many gifts from Bill. He had told his sister, Anna, that the graces he received from their meeting were equivalent to those received at his own ordination. And he thanked Bill for letting him "hitchhike" on the twelve steps. In 1942 he wrote to Bill that he had started a national movement for married couples to help each other through the twelve steps: CANA (Couples Are Not Alone). He used the steps to help people with mental difficulties, scruples, and sexual compulsions.

When chided by an AA member about his smoking, Father Ed stopped with help from the twelve steps and wrote to Bill that as a result he was becoming as "fat as a hog."

Next, he tried to use the twelve steps with his own compulsive eating. One story of his struggle ends with Father Ed one night eating all the strawberries intended to feed the whole Jesuit Community. He became so sick he had to receive last rites. He went from 242 to 167 pounds and up again like a yo-yo. He asked Bill to start an OO ("obese obvious") group.

Often Father Ed spoke of being helped by attending an open AA meeting and wrote to Bill that AA was his "lonely hearts club." In his last 20 years his ministry changed radically due to AA and his friendship with Lois and Bill. He gave CANA conferences for families, using the twelve steps, once a month from 1942 to 1960. He cheered Lois on as she started and continued with Al-Anon. Father Ed rejoiced that in "moving therapy from the expensive clinical couch to the low-cost coffee bar, from the inexperienced professional to the informed amateur, AA has democratized sanity."

He wrote his superior to free up another Jesuit, Father John Higgins, who was recovering from mental illness, to work with Recovery Inc., a group Dr. Abraham Low had started for people with mental problems. Those groups for mental illness were especially close to Father Ed's heart as there was a history of depression in his own family. He called people to be "wounded healers" for each other.

Was there anything from the Spiritual Exercises of Ignatius in Father Ed's gift to Bill? Father Ed pointed out parallels between the Spiritual Exercises and the twelve steps several times, but Bill had written the twelve steps before he ever heard of the Spiritual Exercises.

Father Ed did give Bill a copy of the Spiritual Exercises in 1952, underlining the "Two Standards" meditation. When Father Ed met Bill, moreover, he had called him to the place where he bottomed out and surrendered to his Higher Power. Father Ed believed that this was the place where humiliations led to humility and then to all other blessings. In saying this, he paraphrased Ignatius's closing prayer of the "Two Standards" meditations.

FATHER ED DOWLING AND AA'S BILL W.

And this, Father Ed maintained, was where the Exercises become most like AA. He went a step further and invited Bill to make choices based on poverty and humility rather than on money, power, or fame.

This suggestion helped Bill Wilson turn down an honorary degree from Yale. On the packet of letters dealing with his decision, he wrote: "To Father Ed, with gratitude." In the letter to Yale he stated his reasons for declining the honor:

"My own life story gathered for years around an implacable pursuit of money, fame, and power, anti-climaxed by my near sinking in a sea of alcohol. Though I survived that grim misadventure, I well understand that the dread neurotic germ of the power contagion has survived in me also. It is only dormant and it can again multiply and rend me -- and AA, too. Tens of thousands of AA members are temperamentally like me. They know it, fortunately, and I know it. Hence our tradition of anonymity and hence my clear obligation to decline this honor with all the immediate satisfaction and benefit it could have yielded."

This, then, is where Father Ed met Bill that rainy night long ago, in the small room where bottoming out opens up to life, where humiliations lead to humility -- and to all other blessings.

From The Catholic Digest, April 1991

BECOME A FAITHFUL FIVER

“Every AA wants to make sure of his survival from alcoholism, and his well-being afterwards. This is just as it should be. He also wants to do what he can for the survival and well – being of his fellow alcoholics. Therefore he is bound to have a vital interest in the parlance and well-being of AA itself.” Bill W. Language of the Heart, p 166

Faithful fivers are AA members who pledge at least five dollars each month to support their local Central Office. This idea is catching on around the country. The plan came about when we remembered that many of us had spent far more than \$5.00 a month on alcohol during our drinking days. As a Faithful Fiver, you support the efforts of Mid-Mississippi Intergroup to carry the AA message of hope to still-suffering alcoholics. To become a faithful fiver, please send your \$5 monthly donation to the

Mid-Mississippi Intergroup

PO Box 16228
Jackson, MS 39236



CELEBRATING SOBRIETY BIRTHDAYS THIS MONTH



Please email me your sobriety birthdate, so that I can put it in the future editions of the Sobriety Gazette/

Happy Birthday to our Central Office Manager Paxton P. March 12, 2006



PAYPAL FOR MID MISSISSIPPI INTERGROUP

For your convenience we now have the ability to accept PayPal. This is for Individuals, Groups or Faithful Fivers.

Use midmissintergroup@gmail.com to find us

AREA 37 GROUP AND DISTRICT DONATIONS

Please Mail Area 37 Group and District Donations to

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c/o Frank P.

413 Pelahatchie Shore Dr.

Brandon, MS 39047





**Mid Mississippi
Intergroup**

Contact us at

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4526 Office Park Drive

Jackson, MS 39206

Mail Donations to:

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Jackson, MS 39236

Web Site

www.midmissintergroup.org

Email us at

midmissintergroup@gmail.com

Office Hours 12:00 pm - 5:30 pm

Tuesday and Friday Curbside only

Need something special call the
office for arrangements.



UPCOMING EVENTS

Thursday, March 3, 2022 Intergroup 6:30pm at
St. Alexis Church (where Central Group meets)

Mardi Gras Masquerade Ball 15900 Lemoyne
Blvd, Biloxi, MS March 5th at 8pm

Thursday, April 7, 2022 Intergroup 6:30pm at St.
Alexis Church (where Central Group meets)

Area Assembly, Saturday, April 2, 2022 8:30 am.
Pearl Community Center Pearl, MS

Harbor House in March—Beagle Pack is sched-
uled for April men and women speaker's

Harbor House in April—Mannsdale Group is
covering the women's speakers and Way Out
Group is covering the men's speakers.

State Convention 9475 Hwy 49, Gulfport MS
June 24-26,2022

22nd Annual Unity Convention, Columbus MS.
Email unityconvention@yahoo.com or AA Hot-
line @ (662) 327-8941 May 27-29,2022

YOUR TRUSTED SERVANTS

Chair: Steve S.

Treasurer: Karen M

Secretary: Bruce M

Corrections Teresa R

Treatment Centers Sandy S

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Asst. Office Manager Randy B.

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