



DISTRICT 4, AREA 15

Sara-Mana InterGroup Newsletter

July 2024

A.A.'S **TWELVE STEPS** ARE PRINCIPLES FOR PERSONAL RECOVERY.

STEP 7

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

THE **TWELVE TRADITIONS** ENSURE THE UNITY OF THE FELLOWSHIP.

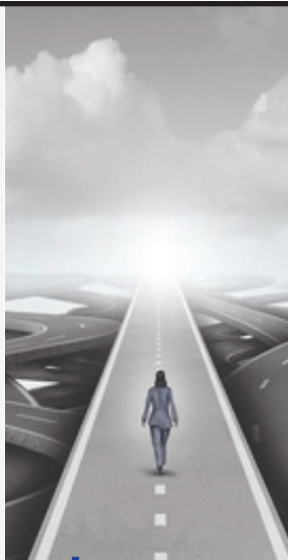
TRADITION 7

Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

THE **TWELVE CONCEPTS** FOR WORLD SERVICE PROVIDE A GROUP OF RELATED PRINCIPLES TO HELP ENSURE THAT VARIOUS ELEMENTS OF A.A.'S SERVICE STRUCTURE REMAIN RESPONSIVE AND RESPONSIBLE TO THOSE THEY SERVE.

CONCEPT 7

The Conference recognizes that the Charter and the Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments: that the Trustees are thereby fully empowered to manage and conduct all of the world service affairs of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is further understood that the Conference Charter itself is not a legal document: that it relies instead upon the force of tradition and the power of the A.A. purse for its final effectiveness.



The Way Out of Alcoholism to Recovery (Metaphorically)

Marine Tom S.
(with apologies to
Portia Nelson's
*"Autobiography in
5 Short Chapters"*)

- 1) I walk down the street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I fall in.
I am lost. I am helpless.
It isn't my fault.
It takes forever to find a way out.
- 2) I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I pretend I don't see it.
I fall in again.
I can't believe I am in this same place.
But it isn't my fault.
It still takes a long time to get out.
- 3) I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I see it there.
I still fall in...it's a habit...but,
my eyes are open.
I know where I am
It is my fault.
I get out immediately.
- 4) I walk down the same street.
There is a deep hole in the sidewalk.
I walk around it.
- 5) I walk down another street.

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Closed: Fridays, Weekends, & Holidays

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ENGLISH: Press 1 SPANISH: Press 2





HEARD IN THE ROOMS

A few acronyms:

ISM = I, Self, Me

EGO = Easing God Out



Wisdom From Our Literature

"Connect... connect... connect. Why not put the price of that first drink that I didn't have to take today into the basket? It makes perfect sense to this alcoholic, since I know that not taking that first drink today has saved me not only the price of dozens more that I would have to chase it with, but saved my life, my self-respect, and a long list of other priceless personal assets that I owe to my sobriety."

From Our Twelve Traditions
"The Price of a Drink" by Gayle S.R.

What is your name?

My Name is Lee I.

What is your sobriety date?

My sobriety date is August 4, 1973.

Where did you first get sober?

I got sober in Gaithersburg, Maryland.

Did you stay after your first meeting, or did you go out and do more research?

I was first sent to AA by a doctor at my work because I had been arrested during an off duty drinking spree. I did not join AA when I first came, but I kept going to meetings about once a week and trying to control my drinking myself. Each new failure led me into worse trouble. As result of my drinking escapades, I lost my job and my wife was about to divorce me.

How long did it take before you got a sponsor?

While I was in jail one night, I made a decision to give AA a 100% try. I got down on my knees and asked for help. When I got out of jail, I got a sponsor. He outlined what I was to do each day. First, I went to detox and then a 28-day rehab in Seneca, MD. After that, I was working the steps with my sponsor and going to meetings every night. I had jobs at the meetings like cleaning ashtrays, sweeping floors, making coffee, etc.

When did you move to Florida?

I moved to Sarasota with about 7 months of sobriety in March of 1974 to start a new job. My sponsor insisted that I get to meetings every day and that I introduce myself as a new member. That worked well and soon I had a bunch of new friends here in Sarasota. Thankfully, I still had a driver's license, but as several others needed rides, I picked up two or three people every night.

What was it like to make the adjustment to going to meetings after you moved?

There were not many meetings in Sarasota at that time, but they were good. I went to meetings every night and made the Central Group, which met at the Church of Redeemer, my Home Group. At the time, there was no Central Office. We did have an answering service which had a list of 12-steppers to call if someone called the AA hotline in the newspaper or phone book. Intergroup met once a month on a Saturday in a bank conference room. I was the secretary for several years, mostly because I had a printer.

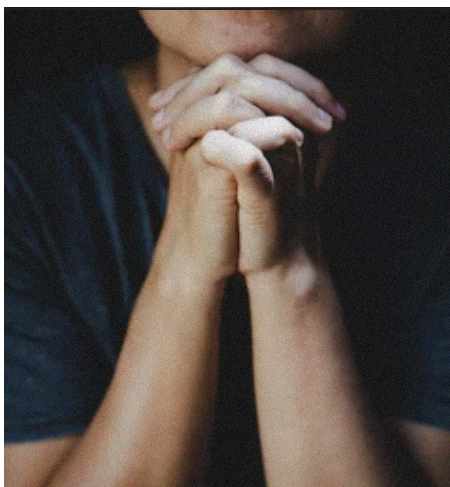
How is AA and the 12-Step world different now than when you started?

The meetings used to be filled with smoke and now they are all non-smoking. In the 70's, there were very few women, but now most meetings are about 50% women. We use cell phones rather than pay phones. We used to make 12th Step calls to houses or motels, but now most people come to AA from rehab. There are no longer Joe and Charlie Workshops, which were a great way to work the Steps. And the internet has made it much easier to find meetings when you are on the road.

Is there anything else you'd like to share?

One of the highlights of my AA experience has been attending International Conventions. It is hard to beat the thrill of holding hands with 50,000 grateful AA members from around the world and saying the Lord's Prayer. This is an experience you must not miss as AA celebrates 90 years! I hope to see you in Vancouver in July 2025!

Thank you so much for sharing your experience, strength, and hope with us.



COMING TO BELIEVE

The process of developing a connection with a Power greater than myself has come to me gradually. I came from a religious upbringing and did not want anything to do with the concept of God that was taught to me from childhood. I believed that there was some type of Higher Power or Spirit of

the Universe, but I did not actually know how to connect with it. I felt like it was outside of me and far out of reach. Before coming to AA, I was interested in spiritual teachings and principles and was attracted to the fact that AA was a spiritual program. I thought I knew everything there was to know about spirituality and God, but I did not know how to stay away from a drink, and I did not know how to ask this Power for help.

Halfway through my fourth step, there was a day when the obsession to drink was very strong, unlike any I had experienced before. I attended four meetings that day to stay safe from a drink and reached out to my sponsor and other woman to let them know what I was experiencing. One woman who I spoke to told me to swallow my pride, get on my knees, and pray to whatever Higher Power I had, to remove the obsession from me. I thought no harm could come from doing it, so I followed her suggestion. I did not expect much from getting on my knees to pray but decided it would be good to try.

I whispered, "God, remove my desire to drink" and I immediately had a white light experience. I felt an overwhelming and powerful feeling of the presence of God. I still do not have the right words to describe this experience but I knew within every fiber of my being that it was God. That day removed any lingering doubt whether a Higher Power existed. The obsession to drink was lifted, and I knew that I was safe and going to be okay. The process of developing faith has not been quick; that spiritual experience was just a beginning. My faith develops more each day as I remember that God did for me what I could not do for myself. The more I seek God and put effort into growing my relationship with God, the more I see miracles working in all the areas of my life.

Alcoholics Anonymous has taught me that I get to choose my own conception of God. I have learned that there are many ways to connect with a Higher Power and that there are many things I can learn from different spiritual paths and people who come from different walks of life, if I keep an open mind. This has been one of the many gifts of sobriety that I never expected when I first entered an AA meeting. I am amazed at how my life keeps getting better the more I invite God to direct me and use me in any way that is needed. Today, I have a loving Higher Power whom I trust and rely on. I allow God to use me and place me where I am needed. I ask God to remove anything that blocks me from doing God's will. I have faith that God will lead me where I need to be.

A Member of our Sara-Mana Community

The Founder's Day Dinner



Our annual Founder's Day Dinner was held on Saturday, June 8th to celebrate 89 years since AA began. From all reports, it was a great success—good food, good company, and good fun. There were 275 members of our community present! This translated to enough tickets sold to make the event self-sustaining (which was the goal of the planning committee). Many of our committees had tables at the event to publicize their good work (and hopefully recruit more volunteers!). For the first time, Alanon and Alateen were also represented at the event. While the featured speaker, Lynn M., is currently from Kentucky, she originally got sober right here in Sarasota. Her parents are also long-time members of our community. She gave a marvelous talk on her experience, strength, and hope, which was simultaneously translated for the benefit of our many Spanish speaking members. The raffle included many of the books any member would want for their AA library (thank you, Literature committee!). The traditional sobriety countdown honored members of our community with time stretching from 3 days to 61 years in recovery! Thanks to the efforts of our GSO and the many volunteers, a good time was had by all! See you next year!

June Anniversaries!

63rd Avenue Group

Dante G. 33 years

Oasis Group

Gloria F 34 years

OMD

Bev I 2 years
Josh H 2 years
Linda M 2 years
Maurice H 2 years
Stacy W 2 years
Jason G 3 years
Keith L 3 years
Robert O 3 years
Paul P 8 years
Deb M 13 years
Bill J 26 years
James N 27 years

Wednesday Women's Holmes Beach Group

Sandy K 1 year
Kelley N 3 years
Berta R 11 years
Monica R 29 years

Candlelight Group

Ashley 2 years
Ryan 2 years

Gulf Gate Noon

Kurt T 3 years
Mary D 4 years
Spencer D 5 years
Kathy F 7 years
Bill M 25 years
Noreen 36 years
Joe G 41 years
Pat C 45 years

Wednesday Night

Beginner's Men's Group

Jeff B 18 years
Jay L 22 years

Bee Ridge East

Lou S 26 years
Tom H 52 years

Primary Purpose

Jane S 8 years



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...



GRATITUDE

**Until I became sober,
I rarely used or thought
about the word
"gratitude"!**

So now, after many years in the program, I continue to express my gratitude to my higher power—for keeping me safe from harm while my alcoholism took me into unsafe situations. Next, for the people placed in my path who helped me recognize that I had a problem—with alcohol, marijuana, and drugs. For the program itself, though yet I suffer still from a lack of progress at times while still striving for perfection a bit too often, and for love and respect for my family that I pretty much can communicate with without being the know-it-all. To all who are new to the program and those who are not, to those I annoy and those who may annoy me, I express my deepest gratitude and love, for you are the mirror for seeing myself as a flawed but ever-searching and sober human being.

Gratitude is now a daily aspect of my life.

Doris H.

To publish your group members Anniversaries—submit the month and day along with the total number of years, (ex., Mary S. 1/21, 32 years), via email to newsletter@aaqrq.org