

The Willamette Valley Intergroup

Eye Opener

Hand to Hand, Heart to Heart

February 2010

Willamette Valley Central Office

687 Cottage Street NE

Monday - Friday 10:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m.

Saturdays 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

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February, the 2nd Month

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."

Gateway to Sanity

Step Two - The words of the Second Step struck me with a kind of elemental force--a force I recognized as truth the first time I read them in southern Arizona after my husband had called AA for help. My first reaction was anger toward him for letting "other people," as I put it, share in the secrets of our married life. It was 1966--we knew nothing about AA-- and I didn't think it was anyone's business if I drank a little or a lot. And anyway, I had pressures in my marriage and job which made me special, and allowed the letting-off of a little steam each night!

My rationalizing, of course, was the mirror image of Step Two: I believed that through the force of my own will and intelligence, I could shape the world into *my personal concept of sanity!*

But in my heart of hearts, I knew that something was terribly wrong, that my personal life and my marriage were headed for some kind of disaster. My husband's academic career was going nowhere, and our marriage, instead of growing in strength as the years went by, was degenerating into a sodden and nonproductive drinking partnership.

Each morning, we would drag ourselves out of bed, eat something if we could, or--if the hangover was too intense--sip beer until it stayed down and the morning "glow" from alcohol temporarily replaced the horror of the early morning shakes. Then we were off to work, trying to nurse ourselves through the day, living first for lunch, always laced with a few drinks, and then for dinner, inevitably preceded by a fifth of Scotch. This was quietly consumed in our little home out on the Arizona desert, blinds and drapes drawn, air conditioner efficiently whirring. Often, even before dinner came around, unconsciousness would overtake us, and we would awaken again at dawn, facing the whole dreadful cycle all over again.

But my husband *did* call AA, and that evening a wonderful man who was to become our lifelong sponsor walked into our lives, smiling outrageously, and carrying an armload of AA literature. His obvious delight and happiness with life was at such variance with the absolutely horrendous story he told us of his many years of disastrous drinking that we listened to him in wonder and astonishment. Could this serene man be saying something that had to do with *our* situation? He left after an hour--we had hidden our drinks in the closet when he came--and we made strong new Scotches and sat down to read the literature he had left.

And then it happened--that sense that the Big Book, the "Twelve and Twelve," and the pamphlets had been designed and written with me in mind. We pored over each sentence, as we poured more and more drinks, and we read all the literature that had been left, exclaiming to each other, "Hey, listen to this!" or "My God, doesn't this sound like us!" or "This is *exactly* the way I feel!" We were utterly charmed, that special AA lightning had struck, and we passed out in the middle of the night, still talking about the magic of the evening--our sponsor-to-be and the literature--not realizing then that we had had, a day at a time, our last drink.

In the morning, we looked at each other in the knowledge that something special and different had entered our lives. Our sponsor was coming in the evening to take us to our first meeting, and we spent most of the day continuing to go over the literature, especially the Steps and Traditions. The First Step immediately made great sense to me because it suggested that I merely admit that I was powerless over alcohol and that my life was unmanageable. But the Second Step posed an urgent problem, I felt, because it suggested I must believe in some strange, far-off power greater than me who could restore my sanity! What is this?

Am I insane, as suggested? Why, I had a quite successful career which flowed from my university achievements. I had taken pride in my intellectual attainments, my "superior" brain, the quality of my reasonable and tolerant nature. Now am I to think of myself as insane? And what about this concept of a power greater than me? Formal religion and I had parted company some years before, and I wondered what, if anything, I had to believe if I joined AA.

I went over the first two Steps again. I had certainly come to the realization, subconsciously if not consciously, that I was powerless over alcohol, and when I saw the words in clear black print, I knew somehow I could accept them. And my husband and I knew that our best attempts to properly manage our lives had come to nothing--that we were in the grip of dark forces over which we seemed to have no control whatsoever. But that Second Step which alluded to the insanity of our present lives and the need of some greater power necessitated for me a leap into what seemed terribly risky darkness.

Yet that early faith in AA was already present. I had the feeling deep down that the program *must* be correct, and that I had little choice but to throw myself without reservation into the full arena of the Steps. I had tried diligently with my intellect to understand myself and my drinking, and to control and properly manage my life. All my efforts had not only failed, but failed abjectly and totally. So I listened to that inner voice saying, "Accept, try, have hope! Just perhaps, something might work here!" And my life of day-to-day sobriety began, a life of satisfaction and joy beyond my wildest, most alcoholic dreams.

When I discovered through reading AA history and listening to old-timers about how the Second Step came to be, tears came to my eyes--and again I had that strange, almost mystical feeling that AA's principles had been hammered out with me in mind! Bill W. tells us that since Ebby's notable visit, to him in the fall of 1934, the program was basically word-of-mouth, with most of the basic program ideas coming from the Oxford Group, William James, and Dr. Silk-worth. There were six major ideas, ranging from acceptance and powerlessness to the need for a full inventory. The sixth concept seems closest to our present Second Step. It read, as Bill remembers, "We prayed to whatever God we thought there was to practice these precepts." Bill realized, as he put it, that these ". . . six chunks of truth should be broken up into smaller pieces." So the first version of the Twelve Steps was written, the number twelve coming up quite accidentally. The revised Second Step read, "Came to believe that God could restore us to sanity," and immediately controversy began. Bill says there were conservative, liberal, and radical viewpoints. Some felt the Christian message should dominate, while others would have nothing to do with doctrinal issues. They emphasized that the Fellowship was spiritual, not religious. Many who read the Steps wanted the word "God" taken entirely out, while others wanted a clear religious statement throughout.

The final version of the Steps reflects the force and value of these heated early discussions, and attempts to strike a balance, making AA open to all, regardless of personal beliefs, or no beliefs at all. And the particular decision regarding the vital Second Step seems particularly providential. Bill doesn't remember who first suggested the actual compromise words, but he says, "In Step Two we decided to describe God as a 'power greater than ourselves,' " and "we inserted the words 'God *as we understood Him*' " in Steps Three and Eleven, deleted the expression "on our knees" from Step Seven, and added, as a lead-in sentence, "Here are the steps we took which are suggested as a program of recovery."

I still feel a bit of a shiver when I read this history, because I wonder if I could have accepted a Step like the Oxford Group sixth concept or the Second Step as it appeared in the first version of the Twelve Steps. No, I doubt it. I needed exactly the freedom and openness and tolerance so beautifully expressed in the Step as it was finally decided upon. In fact, Bill said--in referring to the heated discussions and final compromise language--that "such were the final concessions of those of little or no faith; this was the great contribution of our atheists and agnostics. They had widened our gateway so that all who suffer might pass through, regardless of their belief or *lack of belief*."

It is paradoxically the strength of surrender and the acceptance of help from a "Power greater than ourselves" which set me free from those tight bonds of alcoholic thinking and drinking. The Second Step in its careful language which denies no one, along with the other Steps similarly structured, provides an infinitely wide acceptance pathway. In reflecting on the final formulation of the Second Step, and the other eleven, Bill says, "God was certainly there in our Steps, but He was now expressed in terms that anybody--*anybody* at *all*--could accept and try. Countless AAs have since testified that without this great evidence of liberality they never could have set foot on any path of spiritual progress or even approached us in the first place, it was another one of those providential ten-strikes."

Yes, some time spent reflecting on how the Second Step became so central in our program teaches me again how fortunate I am. We came to believe--perhaps not instantly but in good time--that a power greater than ourselves--however we as free individuals wish to define or perceive this power--could "restore us to sanity." For me, this was the full education of my AA program, the gradual realization of who I was, where I should be headed, and the source of the joy and serenity in my life.

Jan P. Spokane WA

Feb 1989 VOL 45 NO. 9

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"I am responsible . . . When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I ant the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."

**MID-VALLEY REGION (SALEM)
STATE and FEDERAL CORRECTIONS**

Meetings and Contacts

Oregon State Penitentiary (OSP)

Mill Creek Group

First Thursday 6-8 pm, first and third Saturday 8-10 am,

First and third Wednesday 6-8 pm

Contact: Fred D. 503-551-9795

Oregon State Correctional Institution (OSCI)

Santiam Highway Group

Saturday 9 am, Wednesday 6:30 pm

Contact: Chris H. 503-999-1758

Oregon State Penitentiary Minimum (OSPM)

Behind the Wire Group

Monday and Tuesday 7-8:30 pm

Contact: Tim W. 503-612-1835

Santiam Correctional Institution (SCI)

Stepping Out Group

Saturday and Wednesday 6 pm

Contact: Bruce L. 541-752-9100

Mill Creek Correctional Facility (MCCF)

Down But Not Out Group

Friday 7 pm

Contact: Bruce L. 541-752-9100

Hillcrest (Oregon Youth Authority)

Monday 7 pm

Contacts: Tim E. 503-931-5224

Federal Correctional Institution, Sheridan (FCI Sheridan)

Sunday 1:30-3 pm

Contact: Jack C. 541-515-1968

A Second Step Prayer

I pray for an open mind
so I may come to believe
in a Power greater than myself.

I pray for humility
and the continued opportunity
to increase my faith.

I don't want to be crazy any more.

Willamette Valley Intergroup Minutes January 18, 2010

Chairs and Committee members attending: Gene H., Chair; Jane A., Secretary; Kathleen K., Treasurer; Dave S., Computer Administrator; Roger L., Eyeopener Editor; Christan, H&I; Laura F., Office Manager

Group Representatives:

Jane A	Tuesday Chapel Meeting	Roger L	Friday Living Sober
Bill B	Pioneer Group	Peggy E	We Are Not Saints
Bill M	Santiam Highway Rep	Brian S	Capitol Discussion
Fred D	Mill Creek at OSP	Sheri Bee W	Conscious Contact
Tom W	7am Downtown Group	Sue H	Group I
Gary C	7 am Downtown (visitor)		

Opening: Meeting started with Serenity Prayer. **Bill** read Preamble and **Gene** read the 12 Traditions.

Minutes reviewed. Corrected the statement concerning a notebook Laura had created.

Reports:

Access Committee: (Gene H.) none

Al-Anon Liaison: (Barbara S.) not present, printouts of the Al-Anon Information Service meeting available.

Computer Administrator: (Dave S.) He introduced Gary C. who was willing to take on his job.

Eye Opener: (Roger L.) New one is out. He included a page with the GSO statement concerning putting information about what is going on in meetings and names of members out on Face Book, Twitter, and My Space etc.... It is a breaking of Traditions. The Anonymity of all AA members should be treasured and these places on the Internet are public.

H&I Committee: (Christan) The Saturday Bridgeway meeting is going well. The New Freedom committee is still being developed. The Bridging the Gap position is currently vacant. The Marion County jail meetings are going well. The men's side is currently having between 5 and 10 inmates per week while the women's side has between 9-11 attendees pretty steadily. There are plenty soft bound books. The Marion County Work Center has one meeting a month for men and one a month for women. Currently there are between 1 – 4 attendees.

The Oregon State Hospital is in full swing. Contact person for that is Mark C. His phone number is (503) 572-1424 and his email address is rockyzz@comcast.net.

Hillcrest (juvenile) has some need of volunteers. Christan will be stepping down as chairperson of H&I for Intergroup in March. He has done this job for two years. The Intergroup committee is very appreciative of the work that Christan has done.

Intergroup Liaison: (Billy M.) There were a large number of attendees at the last District meeting. There were 3 or 4 new GSR's who were eager to fill the vacant service positions. There are still a few positions needing to be filled. They are secretary, alternate secretary and alternate treasurer. Come to next district meeting and join in. The second Thursday of each month at central Office at 7pm.

Meeting Schedule Coordinator: (Margaret B.) not present. A new schedule is out. She proposes that she update monthly rather than quarterly. She is getting in quite a few changes and the staff at Central Office are updating manually. Motion made to allow her to update as frequently as necessary to keep the information accurate. She asked that when new or changed group information is being given, please provide name and phone number so that if further contact is necessary, they can.

Phone Coordinator: (Ben M.) Not present. He reported that he is still looking for volunteers. His phone number is (503) 375-0382.

Office Manager: (Laura F.) She reported 253 contacts for December and a total of 4558 contacts for 2009. The average per month is 379. The volunteers at Central Office are doing a fantastic job. She has gathered the materials that are being donated to Soberfest and is setting up a schedule for people to man the table at the event. She wants to propose closing the office on Saturday of the Soberfest event. The committee agreed to this as long as the phones are forwarded.

Outreach Coordinator: (Bob) On vacation

Soberfest Committee: (Ron P.) not present. Jane reported everything is going well.

Treasurer: (Kathleen K.) She distributed the treasurer report. Motion made and approved to accept the report.

Webmaster: (Ron P.) not present.

New Business:

Roger requested that the Treasurer report not be put out on the website. Since it is a public forum, anyone could access and misuse the information. He would like the Eyeopener to be put on our website without the treasurer report. Motion made to table this until next meeting to allow Roger the time to research excluding portions of the treasurers' report rather than the whole report. It was felt that since it was on PDF format, excluding portions of it would not be a complicated matter. Many groups want to see their group contributions listed.

Elections for Secretary Treasurer and Computer Administrator:

Jane A. elected as secretary

Kathleen K. elected as treasurer

Gary C. elected as computer administrator

Annual Bi-Law revision not done. Propose it be done in February

Meeting adjourned

Humbly submitted, Jane A., Secretary

Editorial by Bill W.

A.A. Grapevine, January 1948

Sooner or later, every AA comes to depend upon a Power greater than himself. He finds that the God of his understanding is not only a source of strength, but also a source of positive direction. Realizing that some fraction of that infinite resource is now available, his life takes on an entirely different complexion. He experiences a new inner security together with such a sense of destiny and purpose as he has never known before. As each day passes, our AA reviews his mistakes and vicissitudes. He learns from daily experience what his remaining character defects are and becomes ever more willing that they be removed. In this fashion he improves his conscious contact with God.

Every AA group follows this same cycle of development. We are coming to realize that each group, as well as each individual, is a special entity, not quite like any other. Though AA groups are basically the same, each group does have its own special atmosphere, its own peculiar state of development. We believe that every AA group has a conscience. It is the collective conscience of its own membership. Daily experience informs and instructs his conscience. The group begins to recognize its own defects of character and, one by one, these are removed or lessened. As this process continues, the group becomes better able to receive right direction for its own affairs. Trial and error produces group experience and out of corrected experience comes custom. When a customary way of doing things is definitely proved to be best, then that custom forms into AA Tradition. The Greater Power is then working through a clear group conscience.

We humbly hope and believe that our growing AA Tradition will prove to be the will of God for us.

Many people are coming to think that Alcoholics Anonymous is, to some extent, a new form of human society. In our discussion of the First Tradition, it was emphasized that we have, in AA, no coercive human authority. Because each AA, of necessity, has a sensitive and responsive conscience, and

because alcohol will discipline him severely if he back slides, we are finding we have little need for manmade rules or regulations. Despite the fact that we do veer off at times on tangents, we are becoming more able to depend absolutely on the long-term stability of the AA group itself. With respect to its own affairs, the collective conscience of the group will, given time, almost surely demonstrate its perfect dependability. The group conscience will, in the end, prove a far more infallible guide for group affairs than the decision of any individual member, however good or wise he may be. This is a striking and almost unbelievable fact about Alcoholics Anonymous. Hence we can safely dispense with those exhortations and punishments seemingly so necessary to other societies. And we need not depend overmuch on inspired leaders. Because our active leadership of service can be truly rotating, we enjoy a kind of democracy rarely possible elsewhere. In this respect, we may be, to a large degree, unique.

Therefore we of Alcoholics Anonymous are certain that there is but one ultimate authority, **"a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience."**

Bill W.

Tradition Two Checklist

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.

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, AA committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with AA Twelfth Step jobs or other AA responsibility?
3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs? Praise for my AA ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at AA chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

Salem Soberfest 2010

Freedom From Bondage

Program Schedule

Friday, February 12th

4:00 pm - 8:00 pm Registration
5:00 pm - Midnight Open A.A. Meeting
5:00 pm Sweet Tooth Baking Contest Begins
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm Pot Luck Dinner (bring a dish)
7:30 pm - 9:00 pm Convention Kickoff
Speaker: Noah D., Goleta, CA
9:00 pm Sweet Tooth Baking Awards Presented
9:30 pm - 11:00 pm Al-Anon Candlelight Meeting
9:30 pm - Midnight Ice Cream Social / AA Angels / Karaoke

Saturday, February 13th

8:00 am - 8:00 pm Registration
8:00 am - Midnight Open A.A. Meeting
10:00 am - 11:30 am .. Al-Anon Work Shop
10:00 am - 11:30 am .. Ask It Basket
11:30 am - 12:30 pm .. Banquet Luncheon
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm Al-Anon Speaker: Barbara W., Cincinnati, OH
2:30 pm - 4:00 pm Speaker: Nancy N., Tujunga, CA
5:00 pm - 6:00 pm Banquet Dinner
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm Raffle
7:00 pm - 8:30 pm Speaker: Bill S., Las Vegas, NV
8:45 pm - 10:00 pm Al-Anon Candlelight Meeting
9:00 pm - Midnight DJ Dance (free with registration, \$5.00
at the door if not registered for the event)

Sunday, February 14th

8:30 am - 10:30 am Open A.A. Meeting
8:00 am - 9:00 am Breakfast
9:30 am - 9:45 am 50/50 Raffle
10:00 am - 11:30 am .. Spiritual Speaker: Marilyn S., Los Angeles, CA
11:30 am - 12:00 pm .. Countdown and Closing

Salem Soberfest is a social event which is self-supporting through your registrations. No Seventh Tradition baskets are passed at any time during the event! Proceeds are used to promote service within the Willamette Valley Intergroup area.

February 2010 Calendar

Salem Soberfest

When Fri, February 12, 4pm – Sun, February 14, 12pm
Where 4061 Winema Place N.E. Salem, OR 97305 Description at Chemeketa Community College, Building #50. \$20.00 registration fee for the event, includes Convention Speakers, Dance and Entertainment. Banquet meals are extra. <http://www.aa-salem.com/soberfest.htm> , or contact Ron P. 503873-5388.

H&I Committee Meeting

When Mon, Feb 8, 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

District 4 GSR's Meeting

When Thursday Feb 11, 7pm – 8pm **Where** St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

TTCO Speakers Meeting

When Sat Feb 13, 7pm – 9pm **Where** St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

Description Take The Cotton Out Speakers Meeting.
AA, Al-Anon Speakers Meeting.

WVI Committee Meeting

When Mon, Feb 15, 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR, 97301

KIS-S Committee Meeting

When Thurs Feb 18, 5:30pm – 6:30pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

TTCO Committee

When Tue, Feb 23, 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

Soberfest Committee

When Fri, Feb 26, 7pm – 8pm **Where** St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

KIS-S Speakers Meeting

When Sat, Feb 27, 7:00pm – 9:30pm
Where Morningside Methodist Church, Salem, OR
Description Keep It Simple Speakers Meeting.
AA, Al-Anon Speakers Meeting.

The New A.A. Preamble

The original version of the "current preamble" as it was first introduced to AA in the June, 1947, Grapevine.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking . AA has no dues or fees. It is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution. Does not wish to engage in any controversy. Neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

Written by the then editor to describe AA to the Grapevine's non-AA readers, it has become a part of AA literature. It came to be called the "preamble" because it is so often read at the opening of AA meetings.

Much of the phrasing was borrowed from the foreword to the original edition of "Alcoholics Anonymous," where "an honest desire to stop drinking" is described as "the only requirement for membership."

In the September, 1958, Grapevine, the preamble was first published in its present form. It now appears in much of our literature to tell what AA is and does, as well as what it is not and does not. [The Twelve Traditions](#) present a fuller development of most of these ideas.

The current version of the preamble appears on the inside front cover of each Grapevine issue.