



The Willamette Valley Intergroup

Eye Opener

March 2009

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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March, The 3rd Month

Step 3

"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."

Tradition 3

"The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking."

Good Ol' Higher Power

LIKE SO MANY of us, when I first sought help from AA, I was spiritually bankrupt. Also, perhaps like many of us, I was unaware that this was my principal shortcoming. My disease had stripped me of everything that had once been important to me. I speak primarily of my sense of values, honesty, integrity, and moral fiber. My priorities were less than worthless.

I believe that misguided priorities can have *negative* values as opposed to *no* value.

I made what I perceived to be reasonable efforts to mend my tenet: "Don't drink, and go to meetings." On a short-term basis, I had partial success but was not able to stay sober for more than limited periods of time. After twenty years of "half measures," I began to realize that "Don't drink, and go to meetings" was the beginning, but if I really wanted to get well, I would have to realign my life using the suggested Twelve Steps as a blueprint.

I had always avoided the Twelve Steps like the plague. I gave lip service to Step One and Step Twelve. Phrases like "Power greater than ourselves" and "God as we understood Him" scared me away from the other Steps. My spiritual bankruptcy rendered me unable to cope with any higher power (especially if the first letters were capitalized!). By this time, my higher power (Higher Power?), looking at how well I had done on my own, decided that a little intervention was in order. He placed people in my path to say the things that I needed to hear. He made things occur in my life that caused me to listen to these people.

These people suggested two things to me which began to open doors that had been closed for many, many years. First, I was advised to remove from my mind all preconceived ideas that I may have had concerning "God" (whoever that is). That wasn't easy--my parents were devout people and did their best to instill their faith in me. (*Their faith?*) I had a lot of learning to put out of my mind. Second, I was asked to stop denying the existence of God. It would be okay for me to refrain from saying that I believed in God, but I should stop saying that I didn't! In other words, I didn't have to go around saying, "I believe. . . , " but by the same token, I should not say, "I don't believe . . . " It's a compromise we can all make--without compromising!

Those two simple steps got me halfway home. If I no longer had preconceived ideas about God, I no longer had to be puzzled about the things He did that I didn't understand. Accepting God as I understood Him, I no longer had to try to answer all those questions that begin with "How come He . . . ? " Now that I was no longer preoccupied with denying the existence of God, there was room in my mind for evidence that He did exist. At that point, at best, I still had a great void. While I had substantially reduced my negative attitudes, I was still a long way from anything positive. How was I to take the next step? Once again, my newfound friends gave me the answer.

"Don't even think of a 'Higher Power' if that term is too godlike for you. Start off with a power greater than yourself." In its simplest form, a power greater than myself should not have been so hard to accept. Hadn't I thoroughly convinced myself by twenty years of failure that I could not, on my own, control my obsession for alcohol? Hadn't I tacitly, or at least unknowingly, admitted to myself by attending my first meeting that maybe, just maybe, AA could

help me? Wasn't that a power greater than myself? In a way, hadn't I just taken Step One and Step Two? All I needed to do to take Step Three was to accept the help that was offered in Step Two.

While all this was still very fragile, for the first time in my life I was going in the right direction. I had (precariously, I admit) purged the negative attitudes that had blocked my recovery for so long. Now that this tiny spark had been ignited, how was I to keep it burning? "Keep it simple." The first three of the suggested Twelve Steps had gotten me this far. Maybe I should try another Step, I thought. Step Four was a heavy number. That really would get into deeper water. But, spurred on by the positive attitudes developed in Steps One, Two, and Three, I became willing to try it. I read about it in the "Twelve and Twelve," and I listened to others share who had done it before me. Finally, with an uncharacteristic burst of courage (an anonymous gift from my Higher Power?), I made the attempt and then validated what I learned, with Step Five.

I knew now what some of the things were that had forced me to sedate myself over and over again. Once again, I was assured by my friends that if I worked on it, I could eliminate or reduce these character defects to the point that I could tolerate life without sedation. They even went so far as to suggest that if I did a really good job on it, I would find out what serenity was all about. Well, we know by now what that led to, right? Rights! More Steps! Steps Six through Nine turned out to be the tools I needed to reduce the defects to manageable proportions. Thank God (did I say "Thank *God*"?), this is a program of progress, not perfection. If I don't get it all the first time, I can try again. As a matter of fact, I can repeat Steps Four through Nine as often as I want (or need) to, to get the job done. Step Ten gives me what that I need for daily maintenance.

And now comes the good part--Step Eleven. There is no way that I can get this far without feeling the presence of a Higher Power. To tell the truth, by now I'm beginning to say "*my* Higher Power." Some of my friends say they have heard me using terms like "good ol' Higher Power," and He is my very own, personal Higher Power. Every day, through talking to Him and just thinking about it, I can strive to improve and develop this relationship.

Now I have something for which I am very grateful: I have a spiritual side to my life. The bankruptcy is over. I have these wonderful Twelve Steps with which to polish and hone my sobriety and serenity and joy of life, and I have the rest of my life to do it in.

God, as *I* understand Him, did it all for me--despite my best efforts not to let Him!

J. S. Warren, New Jersey

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... our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

A.) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.

B.) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.

C.) That God could and would if sought.



The THIRD STEP Prayer

[As adjusted from the book Alcoholics Anonymous, page 63, line 14]

God, I offer myself to You —
to build with me
and to do with me as You will.
Relieve me of the bondage of
self, that I may better do Your will.
Take away my difficulties,
that victory over them may bear
witness to those I would help
of Your Power,
Your Love,
and Your Way of life.
May I do Your will always.
Amen.



Tradition Three

“The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.”

Long Form;

“Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.”

Bill Wilson’s own words from “The Language Of The Heart” page 317;

“Tradition Three defines the personal liberty of the AA member. It says, in effect, that any alcoholic can be an AA member the moment he says so. Neither can any of us deprive him of that membership, no matter what his behavior. Perhaps no other society has ever staked out such a broad expanse of liberty for the individual as this. Every AA newcomer feels at once that he is wanted and trusted and loved. How well we understand his needs; certainly we have had them ourselves. Seldom has any alcoholic taken unfair advantage of that unlimited charter for freedom. We took this decision for individual freedom years ago. We are glad that we did; there has never been any cause for regret.”

And then there’s this

Dr. Bob & the Good Oldtimers says on page 240-241: "At the same time, the earliest members began reaching out to those who might either have seemed or have felt themselves to be different. By 1939, the prevailing A.A. attitude was summed in the foreword to the Big Book, stating,

'The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking.'

"Most A.A.'s simply wanted to get people into the program, rather than keep them out. This might mean overcoming inbred prejudices and crossing social, religious, racial, and national boundaries in order to carry the message of recovery to anyone, anywhere, who needed help, it also meant doing the very same things in order to accept help. And if A.A. as a fellowship never had any greater achievement, it could say that most members have done more than pay lip service to this idea.

"As the discussion of the Third Tradition in the book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" shows, there was a great deal of fear about alcoholics who might be odd or different. In A.A.'s second year, a man came to an A.A. group and said he was the 'victim of another addiction even worse stigmatized than alcoholism.'

"The group's 'oldest member' spoke in confidence with two others. They discussed the trouble this strange alcoholic might bring and the notion that it might be better to sacrifice this one for the sake of the many. Finally, one of the three said. 'What we are really afraid of is our reputation. And he asked a question that had been haunting him: 'What would the Master do?' No answer was necessary.

"Letters written by Bill in 1938 and 1939 placed this situation in Akron, thereby implying that 'the oldest member was Dr. Bob. Retelling the anecdote in 1969, Bill finally confirmed this identification by using his partner's name."



Tradition Three Checklist

"The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking."

- 1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?**
- 2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?**
- 3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?**
- 4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?**
- 5. Am I over impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?**
- 6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?**

The Promises, In Reverse

If we are casual about this stage of our development, we will be drunk before we are half way through. We are going to know a new imprisonment and a new misery. We will re-live the past and won't be able to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word conflict, and we will know pain. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will sink even lower. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will deepen. We will gain interest in selfish things and lose interest in our fellows. Self esteem will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook on life will suck. Fear of people and economic insecurity will multiply. We will intuitively know how to run from situations without knowing they are bothering us. We suddenly realize God would never have done to us what we are doing to ourselves. Are these extravagant promises? We think not! They are being fulfilled among those of us who are still drinking, on a dry drunk, or about to take a drink—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we drink (or think) for them.

SOBERFEST LOGO CONTEST

Time once again to put your creative hat on and get the juices flowing..... The Soberfest logo contest is underway! If your logo is picked, you will receive a Soberfest package for 2010. When submitting your logo complete with colors and picture, be sure and furnish the committee with the page and A.A. recovery material you are using.

Example:

New and Wonderful
Ties (Logo) on Page
XX of the Big Book,
Name, and phone number



2010 INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

The 2010 International Convention of AA will be held July 1-4 in San Antonio, Texas with the theme A Vision for You A.A. members and guests from around the world will celebrate A.A.s 75th year at this event with big meetings held Friday night, Saturday night and Sunday morning in the Alamo dome. Other meetings, scheduled or informal, will take place throughout the weekend in the San Antonio Convention Center and local hotels. Start your planning now!!

**Have something you'd like to see in the Eye Opener?
Send all suggestions and/or information to:**

Roger.L@comcast.net

March 2009 Calendar

KIS-S Committee Meeting

When Mon, March 2, 5:30pm – 6:30pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

Grapevine Speakers Meeting

When Sat, March 7, 7:30pm – 9:30pm **Where** First Congregational Church,
700 Marion St. NE, **Description** Monthly AA Speaker Meeting

H&I Committee Meeting

When Mon, March 9, 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

District 4 GSR's Meeting

When Thu March 12, 7pm – 8pm **Where** St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

TTCO Speakers Meeting

When Sat March 14, 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, March 16 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR, 97301

TTCO Committee

When Tue, March 24, 7pm – 8pm **Where** Central Office,
687 Cottage NE, Salem, OR

Soberfest Committee

When Fri, March 27, 7pm – 8pm **Where** St Paul's Episcopal Church,
1444 Liberty St. SE, Salem, OR

KIS-S Speakers Meeting

When Sat, March 28, 7:00pm – 9:30pm **Where** Morningside Methodist Church,
Salem, OR **Description** Keep It Simple Speakers Meeting.
AA, Al-Anon Speakers Meeting.



Responsibility Declaration

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

The watermark logo on page one represents one alcoholic helping another alcoholic. As stated in the Responsibility Declaration.

Happy Birthday !!!

Angela G	3-15	Liz S	3-25
Candace	3-1	Maria G	3-30
Connell D	3-4	Ralph L	3-11
Curt	3-29	Scotty	3-30
Dave H	3-9	Sydney	3-26
Jay H	3-13	Tom S	3-4
Jeff G	3-27	Will C	3-1
Karl J	3-16	Greg M	3-5

Attention Motorcycle Riders!!

Weather permitting, we would like to get a group of riders together on a Saturday or Sunday for a "day ride" and some "throttle therapy".

Spend a great day in the wind and have some fun with us.

For Info Call:

Ben 503 375 0382 or Woody 208 634 6462

NEW MEETINGS

SALVATION ARMY CANDLE LIGHT

TIME: 10- 11 PM

DAYS: Wednesday, Friday, Saturday AND Sunday

PLACE: FRONT STREET IN WAREHOUSE

AA WORKSHOP GROUP

Tuesday, 7PM—8:30 PM

SOS Club 1797 Center St NE

Salem, OR

MEN ON A MISSION

(Men Only)

Wednesday, 1PM—2PM

ROCC 1144 Madison ST NE

Salem, OR

Look to this day, for it is life, the very life of life.

**In it's brief course lies all the realities
and verities of existence,
The bliss of growth, the splendor of
action, the glory of power.**

**For yesterday is but a dream, and
tomorrow is only a vision.
But today, well lived, makes every
yesterday a dream of happiness,
And every tomorrow a vision of hope.**

Look well, therefore, to this day.



**Anne Ripley Smith,
wife of Dr. Bob,
Mother and Co-
Founder of A.A.
??- 1949**

A Tribute to Anne Smith

A.A. Grapevine, June 1950

It is doubtful if the true significance of Anne Smith's life can be realized. For Anne Smith was far more than a gracious lady. She was one of four people, chosen by a Higher Destiny, to perform a service to mankind. How great this contribution is, only time and an intelligence beyond man's can determine. With Dr. Bob, Lois and Bill, Anne Smith stepped into history, not as a heroine but as one willing to accept God's will and ready to do what needed to be done.

Her kitchen was the battleground and, while Anne poured the black coffee, a battle was fought there which has led to your salvation and mine. It was she, perhaps, who first understood the miracle of what passed between Bill and Dr. Bob. And, in the years to follow, it was she who knew with divine certainty that what had happened in her home would happen in other homes again, again, and yet again.

For Anne understood the simplicity of faith. Perhaps that's why God chose her for us. Perhaps that's why Anne never once thought of herself as a 'woman of destiny' but went quietly about her job. Perhaps that's why, when she said to a grief-torn wife, "Come in, my dear, you're with friends now -- friends who understand" that fear and loneliness vanished. Perhaps that's why Anne always sat in the rear of the meetings, so she could see the newcomers as they came, timid and doubtful... and make them welcome.

There's a plaque on the wall of Akron's St. Thomas hospital dedicated to Anne. It's a fine memorial. But there's a finer one, letters to Dr. Bob from men and women who knew and loved her well. Each tried to put in words what was felt in many hearts. They failed -- and that's the tribute beyond price. For real love, divine love, escapes even the poet's pen.

So, in the simplest way we know, and speaking for every AA everywhere, let's just say 'Thanks, Dr. Bob, for sharing her with us.' We know that she's in a Higher Group now, sitting well to the back, with an eye out for newcomers, greeting the strangers and listening for their names!