



# The Voice



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May 2013

[www.aocalamarion.org](http://www.aocalamarion.org)

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Intergroup District 17-3666A N.E. 25<sup>th</sup> St., Ocala, FL 34470 - [aocalaintergroup@gmail.com](mailto:aocalaintergroup@gmail.com) - 352-867-0660

Office closed: May 27<sup>th</sup>, Memorial Day - Open Weekdays 10:00 am-5:00 pm and Saturday 10:00am-2:00pm

*Intergroup Reps meet at the office Sun., May 12, 4:30 pm. Steering Committee meeting follows.*

## Step Five

*Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.* (Alcoholics Anonymous pages 72-75)

We read, out loud, our written Step Fours, the resentments, fears and the account of sexual conduct to another person. The main thing is that someone else hears it. Occasionally, the person we read it to, our sponsor would comment and give feedback but for the most part we read and he listened without comment.

It is likely to take several hours. Some do two-hour weekly sessions. Some do whole days monthly. But we had to devote the time on a steady basis until it was completed. There is quite a lot of discussion in the Big Book about who should hear the Step Five. We have all found that the best person is our sponsor. The Big Book does not actually mention sponsors because the word "sponsor" was not part of AA jargon at that stage, although the principle of sponsorship through the program was established right from the start. For example, the co-founder Bill W was taken through the steps by someone called Ebby. Their meeting is described in Bill's Story in the Big Book and the word sponsor is not used. But when writing much later in the 12x12, he described Ebby as his sponsor. Also, when the book was written it was imagined that many of the people reading it would not be in personal contact with any AAs at all but would be getting sober as loners, only able to have contact with with the office in New York by correspondence. At that time those who had contact with an AA group were being taken through the program by others who had experience. There the need for a book containing the method wasn't felt so acutely. It was only once the book was written that it was discovered that it was a useful tool for all who were taking the steps, including those who had access to meetings and had AA sponsors {see AA Comes of Age, page 22}. What the Big Book does do is outline some general principles that describe the right person to hear our Fifth Step. It also suggests possible people who you might like to consider if you cannot find someone in AA (eg a clergymen, a member of your family, a doctor, a psychologist), but in each case it raises notes of caution. These are on page 74. The criteria are:

- Someone who understands alcoholics — it says we should take care because, "we sometimes encounter people who do not understand alcoholics".
- Someone who is trustworthy — it says "We search our acquaintance for a close-mouthed friend."
- Someone who is not so close to us that they are too great a part of are drinking past and so would be hurt by our disclosures — it says "we cannot disclose something to our wives or our parents which would make them unhappy."

It must be someone who will "understand, yet be unaffected". In almost every case the person who will match these criteria closest

will be the alcoholic's sponsor. Certainly in our experience, our sponsors turned out to be the best person.

Although our sponsors did not always comment, some themes seemed to crop up for many of us and the comments from our sponsors seemed to be helpful: For example, many of us had resentments against our parents – we wouldn't be human if we didn't. As a result, many of us blame our parents for our problems. There are a number of points to make: firstly, we cannot be certain that any action of our parents, whether good or bad, has contributed in any way to our alcoholism, so it is dishonest to blame them.

Also, we reminded ourselves that in many cases they fed and clothed us, sent us to school and so on – all reasons for us to be grateful to them for bringing us into the world. Even if our parents have done us wrong, we should remember that there are no parents who are perfect and it is very likely that they are simply following the example of their parents before them, just as their parents did before them. We now have the chance to break the chain of behavior thanks to AA. Where our parents have done something wrong, we found it best to strive to have compassion for them and try to forgive rather than blame.

In regard to our desire to blame: in our Step Fours many of us described events that took place decades ago –perhaps 10, 20, 30 years ago, or even more. "Don't you think," one of us was asked when describing something that our parents did to him when he was five years old, "Don't you think it's about time you let your parents off the hook after all these years and moved forward?"

Also, many of us have resentments against other authority figures. Occasionally our sponsors pointed out to us that we go to school to do what our teachers tell us, and we go to work to do what our bosses tell us. So, provided that we are not being asked to do something that is illegal or immoral, we should aim to do what they say, even if we don't agree with it. It was pointed out that if in the past we had accepted this and tried to do our best, they might have given us a fair break.

When all of our Step Four had been read out, we went home and as soon as possible read the passage at the beginning of the third paragraph on page 75 that asks us to consider if we have missed anything out. When we are sure we have put down all that we can remember, we are told that we should, "thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know him better." So, on our knees we say... Thank you God that I know you better.

*Anonymous*

Our most sincere condolences to the family and friends of Mary W. from the Fountain of Gratitude Group and Jim R. from the Happy, Joyous, and Free group. They helped many people in all their years of sobriety and will be greatly missed.

## The Fifth Tradition

Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Tradition 5 aims to unite us behind a common purpose and Tradition 3 reinforces this by dealing with a special case where groups have been diverted from their primary purpose in the past. Consider first the long form of Tradition Five from the appendix in the Big Book: Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose — that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

The phrase 'Its message' here means AA's message. It is defined by the preamble which is read out at every meeting: "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." This indicates why it was advisable for many of us not to share in a meeting until we have all three to offer: experience and strength and hope, rather than just airing our own emotions and grievances. Many in AA share experience, but it is often forgotten that it is only that experience which reveals our strength and hope that is to be offered in a meeting. And that experience, strength and hope should all be directed, as the preamble tells us, towards helping others to recover from our common problem – alcoholism.

Tradition Five is a reason why someone who has had a drink should be stopped from speaking in a meeting. Someone who is drunk can be helped at a meeting (after all Bill W. was drunk when got the message from his sponsor, Ebby), but they cannot give what they haven't got. And so if they have no sobriety, they cannot help others through their sharing.

Also, if anyone is disruptive in a meeting and diverting it from its primary purpose, they should be asked to be quiet or leave. If they continue to be disruptive, ultimately the police can be called to forcibly remove them. We have always found the police helpful in such cases.

There is another revealing phrase in the long form of this Tradition. We are told that each group is a "spiritual entity". An entity is something that is complete in itself. We can test whether or not a group fulfils this criterion by asking the question: "If all groups did as we did, would all alcoholics get the chance to stay sober?" Each group should aim, through a combination of sharing and personal sponsorship, to enable any suffering alcoholic to receive the full AA message. Sometimes we hear, for example, that it's okay to have meeting exclusively for men because women can go to other meetings. However, if all groups were Men's Meetings then women would have nowhere to go in AA. By this argument, such a meeting does not conform to Tradition Five.

This last point was considered so important that Tradition 3 was created to lend it extra weight. Read now the long form of Tradition 3 from the Big Book: Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought AA membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an AA group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation.

Sometimes there is an argument for, for example, a Men's meeting is that it is part of a multi-meeting group and the group as a whole, when all its meetings are taken into consideration (say Men's, Women's, Young Peoples, straight AA meeting), can be that spiritual entity which welcomes all alcoholics. We do not accept this argument. There is a distinction between a meeting and a group in organizational terms (a group has a single GSR and there may be several meetings that use the same GSR) but in this particular context there is no distinction. The tradition says: 'Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves a group'. So in this context it would be an equivalent statement to say

that every meeting must be a spiritual entity as well. As an individual, the single meeting that is aimed at one sort of alcoholic might be my home group. If this is so, then when I carry the message by sharing and doing service, I am restricting my usefulness to only certain alcoholics. As we can only get what we give away, I am necessarily limiting the quality of my sobriety – if I am placing limitations on who will hear my message, then I am limiting the benefits I can get in return. I am not giving it away as freely as I would be at a meeting that opened its doors willingly to all alcoholics.

So it is clear: every single meeting should be open to every single type of alcoholic. In respect of alcoholics, we want to be inclusive, not exclusive. No alcoholic should be barred, or even discouraged from going to any AA meeting because of whatever else they are (although they can be barred for what they do when they get there, as mentioned before). For example, some meetings in Great Britain aimed at a particular type of alcoholic, for example, a gay group, must have the words "non restrictive" included in the meeting description. The phrase is included to comply with Traditions 5 and 3. However, there is still a debate regarding this matter. Some would say, along with the writer, that even with the phrase "non restrictive" the effect is still to favor some alcoholics and discourage others, and so is against the spirit of the tradition which says specifically that membership should never depend on conformity.

Coming back to that phrase in the long form of Tradition Three: "any two or three people gathered together to form an AA group may call themselves an AA group provided that they have no other affiliation." This means that any group will go into the directory as long as it decides to call itself an AA group. They do not even have to conform to the traditions. The exception is if there is an affiliation to another organization or class of people, actual or implied (this is clarified further in the long form of Tradition 6). For example, in London there are some meetings that will only admit doctors and others that will admit only lawyers. This is considered an implied affiliation to their respective professions. So AA says to them, of course you are free to meet, but you can't call yourselves an AA meeting and we will not put you in the AA directory. Those who see Men's, Women's, Young People's, Gay and Lesbian meetings as having a similar affiliation, argue that they should be removed from the directory too (a point hotly disputed by the groups themselves). In reporting this, there is no suggestion here that any AA member is anything but genuine in wishing to see the Traditions applied, or in wanting best for all alcoholics. More often than not, the difference arises not because any party has a lack of regard for the Traditions, but because of an honest difference in how the spirit of the Traditions can be applied.

There is one other thing. Tradition Three, states in its full form, that AA groups are for those who wish to recover from alcoholism. So a meeting is for those who can say they are alcoholics (or those who think that they might be). A combination of Tradition 3 and Tradition 5 reinforces the preamble and Step 12. An AA meeting is a place where one drunk helps another – this is how we solve our 'common problem', as referred to in the Preamble. The reason we keep going to meetings is because Step 12 tells us we must pass on what we have received. In accordance with this no one should share at an AA meeting until they are able to identify themselves as an alcoholic. And we should identify ourselves as an alcoholic only. We should not, for example, call ourselves 'addict' or even 'addict/alcoholic'. If we broaden the scope from our focus on alcoholism alone, we are being diverted from our primary purpose and reducing each member's opportunity to practice Step 12; and accordingly, reducing our chance to stay sober. Anyone can be a member of AA if they say they are and so when anyone in AA says: 'My name is [NAME] and I am an alcoholic.' No one can tell me I'm not.

*Anonymous*

## Mark your calendar.....

**The Woodstock of A.A.**  
**23<sup>rd</sup> Annual Spring**  
**Conference of Cocoa**  
**Beach** May 3 – 5  
 International Palms Resort  
 and Conference Center 1300  
 N. Atlantic Ave.  
 Cocoa Beach, FL 32931  
 321.783.2271  
 Speakers: Doug R., Tujunga,  
 CA, Sandy B. of Tampa, FL,  
 Howard P., Gilbert, AZ,  
 Charlie P., Austin TX, Carla  
 R., Tujunga, CA, Bob B., St.  
 Paul, MN, Bob D., Las Vegas,  
 NV Conference info:  
 407.273.1646, email:  
[gyledell@cfl.rr.com](mailto:gyledell@cfl.rr.com)

**Intergroup Picnic**  
**Planning Meeting**  
 Mon., May 6, 6:45 pm  
 St. Matthew's Lutheran  
 3453 E Silver Springs Blvd.  
 Ocala, FL 34470  
 All are welcome

**9<sup>th</sup> Annual "Miracles in**  
**May" Celebration** on  
 beautiful Lake Weir. Hosted  
 by the Weir Crazy Group  
 Wed., May 8, Cookout 6 pm  
 Speaker 7 pm Sheryl R. of  
 Spring Hill, FL  
 St. John's Lutheran  
 10495 Sunset Harbor Rd  
 Summerfield, FL 34491  
 Bring your favorite dish or  
 dessert to share.

**Intergroup Rep Meeting**  
 Sun., May 12, 4:30 pm  
 3666A NE 25<sup>th</sup> St.  
 Ocala, FL 34470  
 Steering Committee follows.

**District 17 Meeting**  
 Thurs., May 30, 6:45 pm  
 St. Mark's United Methodist  
 1839 NE 8<sup>th</sup> Rd., 34470  
 G.S.R's are encouraged to  
 attend.

**FCYPAA239** May 31 – June 2  
 FYCYPAA2013.COM  
 Sanibel Harbour Marriott  
 Resort & Spa 17260 Harbour  
 Pointe Dr., Ft. Myers, FL  
 33908

**District 14 Archives**  
**Committee Presents**  
**Founder's Day 2013**  
 June 8, Sat., 4 pm – 10 pm  
 History Speaker: Chet P.  
 Speaker: Karen R. - author of  
 "Crossing the River of  
 Denial" Big Book pg. 328  
 Trinity United Methodist  
 4000 NW 53<sup>rd</sup> Ave.  
 Gainesville, FL Please bring a  
 covered dish to share. \$5.00  
 in advance. Dinner & Dance  
 & 50/50

**Founders' Day Herald 78<sup>th</sup>**  
**Anniversary of Alcoholics**  
**Anonymous** June 7 – 9,  
 Akron, OH  
[www.akronaa.org](http://www.akronaa.org)

## **Congratulations! May Birthdays!**

Al W. 1	Rebecca S. 2	Harry P. 4	David S. 10	Jack F. 29
Marc S. 1	Sara S. 2	Norma B. 4	Kevin L. 12	Rich F. 30
Amber C. 2	Tabitha M. 3	Dennis M. 5	Deanne L. 15	Bob S. 30
Andrea S. 2	Lauren H. 3	Bob 7	John J. 16	Andy H. 31
Brigham C. 2	Ron M. 3	Lorainne 8	John T. 25	Merrie Lou B. 34
Greta C. 2	Bonnie S. 4	Edward M. 8	Priscilla P. 26	Roger J. 41
Jill R. 2	Brennon 4	Mike P. 9	Steve P. 28	Judy O. 48

**Participate in The Birthday Plan** - In grateful celebration of their sobriety birthdays, many A.A. members contribute one dollar or more for each year of sobriety to any or all of our four service entities; the local Intergroup, District, Area Assembly, and General Service Office. Every A.A. service is designed to help carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers. Your Birthday Plan contributions help make our vital services possible. Some members attribute their birthday contribution to their home group. If you make note of your home group's name along with your Birthday contribution, Intergroup District 17 will list your group in the monthly newsletter, The Voice. Also, a receipt and 'thank you' letter will be sent to your group.

**Intergroup Insights** – Plans for the Summer Picnic are underway. Thanks to all who attended the meeting of the minds. More minds are welcome at the next planning meeting Monday, 6:45 pm, May 6<sup>th</sup> at St. Matthew's Lutheran, 3453 E Silver Springs Blvd., 34470. The 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Serenity Scramble planning committee is underway, too. The projected date is for the month of November. The former Steering Committee Chair, Barbara B. has stepped down. We are very grateful for her years of loving service. This leaves the Chair and Co-Chair seats vacant. Could this be a service position for you? Also, desk workers are needed for the office on Mondays and Saturdays 10am – 2pm. Don't forget to send your Intergroup Rep to the monthly meeting, Sunday, May 14<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 pm. Let the voice of your group be heard. Call the office for any questions. 352.867.0660.

In loving service,  
 Connie C. – Office Manager

What would you call a drunk who works at an upholstery shop? A recovering alcoholic.

**Intergroup Contributions - 06/01/12 – 03/31/13**

Group	March	Y/T/D
164 Pages	20.00	102.76
Alive & Well	25.00	25.00
A Light in Citra		
All You Need		113.00
Anonymity	3.01	10.53
Belleview Group		300.00
Belleview Eye Opener	31.00	101.00
Belleview God's Way		
Blichton Road		79.00
Breakfast Club	173.57	1,560.43
Cabin in the Woods		403.00
Came to Believe		46.71
Conscious Contact		
Eleventh Step		
Experience Strength & Hope		
Forest Group	0.23	94.81
Forest Men's Group	40.00	165.00
Fort McCoy Group		0.64
Fountain of Gratitude		41.14
Freedom House		29.76
Free To Be	16.90	202.59
Fresh Start		1.37
Grace Group	2.00	75.93
Grateful Gals		111.50

Group	March	Y/T/D
Grupo Mano Abierta		25.00
Happy Hour		140.00
Happy, Joyous and Free		1977.27
Headstart	75.91	717.24
The Healing Group		
Heavy Hitters	10.00	18.69
Into Action		
It's Not Them		
Keep It Green		
Joy of Living		
Keep It Simple		115.98
Last Call		2.58
Living Sober		308.55
Lunch Bunch		80.00
Mcintosh Group		
Marion Oaks 12 Step		
Mid Afternoon Group		4.25
New Attitudes		37.89
Ocala Group	110.98	1,187.28
Ocala Men's		329.50
One Day at a Time	100.00	600.00
Primary Purpose	45.00	142.00
Serenity Group		50.00
Shores Of Sobriety		50.23

Group	March	Y/T/D
Sisters of Serenity		
Sober Yankees		143.42
Start a New Life	37.50	37.50
Stop Whining & Sober Up		
Strength in Numbers		197.66
Summerfield Group		
Sundae Social		
TLC	1.47	6.32
Thursday Night Step		40.00
Together We Can		
Total Surrender		116.00
We Give Up		66.29
We Give Thanks		6.55
Weir Crazy	94.00	465.00
Young People's Group		100.00
District #17		1600.97
Birthday Club		785.00
Double Nickel		
Faithful Fivers		15.00
Individual Members	31.69	352.34
Total	818.26	13182.68

Thank you for your contributions. ☺

**Intergroup 17 Call Center March: Meeting Information: 93 Office Transactions: 70 Twelve Step: 5 Visitors: 38 AI-Anon: 4 Misc.: 110**

**7<sup>th</sup> Tradition Addresses. How Groups and Individuals Support the Work of AA.**

*Below is the financial guideline AA World Services suggests to groups that have an Intergroup office in their area.\**

**50% Intergroup District 17**  
 3666A NE 25th Street  
 Ocala, FL 34470  
 Checks payable to:  
 Intergroup District 17, Inc.

**30% General Service Office**  
 P.O. Box 459  
 Grand Central Station  
 New York, NY 10164  
 Checks payable to: GSO

**10% North Florida Area Conference**  
 P.O. Box 360831  
 Melbourne, FL 32936  
 Checks payable to: NFAC

**10% District 17**  
 P.O. Box 3081  
 Ocala, FL 34478  
 Checks payable to:  
 District 17

*\*From Where Money & Spirituality Mix, AA General Service Conference-approved literature*

**DCM's Corner**

District 17 still has a lack of GSRs attending the District meeting. We meet at 6:45 PM on the last Thursday of the month (May 30th) at St. Mark's. The meeting lasts approximately 45 minutes. If your group has a GSR, please encourage your GSR to attend. I would like to encourage all groups to help financially support Intergroup, District 17, NFAC and our General Services Offices. Many of us live on a tight budget these days. All contributions to any or all of these groups is greatly appreciated. Small amounts from many add up.

District 17 currently has a vacancy for the Bridging the Gap Chairperson. Bridging the Gap is an AA service for inmates being released from jail or prison and client's of treatment programs. The local person has contacts all over the state (and beyond) to arrange for someone to meet in AA to help that person get to their first AA meeting "on the outside." If you are interested, contact Intergroup at 352-867-0600 or attend the District meeting.

If you are not sure what your District Officers and Committees do for you, please feel free to attend. These meetings are open to any member of AA. We like visitors!

**Did You Know...?**

That Archibald Roosevelt, son of President Theodore Roosevelt, served on the General Service Board as a nonalcoholic trustee from April 1953 until April 1970. From 1955 until 1967 he was treasurer of the board. He also served on the committees for Retirement and the 20th Anniversary Convention, and was chairman of the trustees' Finance Committee. In his letter of resignation he wrote, "I wish you to know that what A.A. has done for me is far more than I could ever do for A.A."

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

