



92 years ago 2 men met in May 1935 which spurred a movement called Alcoholics Anonymous AND millions have found a way of out of substance abuse

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MAY 2026

The Voice

Step 5—“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

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MAY 2026 | How the Steps changed my life | STEP FIVE

My Masterpiece

BY: GRANT M. | NEW YORK, NEW YORK

The big day finally came. It was time to do his Fifth Step. Nervously, he climbed his sponsor’s stairs to finally unveil his work of art

When I arrived at my sponsor’s apartment to do Step Five, I was breathing shallow and quick. My notebook, which held my extensive Fourth Step inventory, seemed to radiate some angst-inducing dark energy through my bookbag and into me. I hit the door buzzer to my sponsor’s apartment, and the electrical current seemed to kick in two directions: one notifying him of my arrival and the other notifying my nervous system that this was my last chance to run away.

Over my left shoulder two young finance-looking bros sipped martinis. My sponsor lived above a cocktail bar, a fact which at the time I took quite personally. Yes, I was nervous to do my Fifth Step, but what kept me from u-turning into the building’s downstairs drinkery was some faith that all the work I did on Step Four would pay off in the next few hours.

While initially learning about Step Four, I was surprised when the fellow describing it said it was difficult. As I understood, Step Four was making a few lists about the bad stuff done to you and the bad stuff you had done, then identifying your contribution in each instance. Maybe for some, admitting their part in the packing of their baggage is challenging. But for me, the “my part” portion of Step Four’s various inventories would come naturally.

One of the few areas I have confidence in is self-criticism (self-hate). Of all the things that are wrong with me, I am certain they are

all my fault. It’s an odd type of arrogance. So when asked to identify all the transgressions of my past and what I did to contribute to them, I said, “Aye aye, captain,” and crafted my tome. It took a long time, but masterpieces always do.

The surety in my proper completion of Step Four worked in tandem with another characteristic in which I maintain some self-ssurance: shame formation. Where my internal condemnation was helpful for completing Step Four, my tendency toward existential guilt created expectations around how Step Five would go and what its purpose was. As I climbed the stairs to my sponsor’s apartment, I expected the next few hours to be some sort of psycho-spiritual mortification. I would confess my sins, and if I expressed enough shame and promise to have learned my lessons, I would leave the exercise born again. If not, I could always rejoin my “friends” on the ground floor. These skills, assumptions, and backup plan awarded me some courage to continue on the path to my sponsor’s couch to commence our work.

As I went through my resentments, fears, and harms caused, my sponsor did not give me the anticipated back lashings. When I acknowledged what I had done wrong in each instance, my sponsor would agree and then try to subtly guide my focus back to what I was continuing to do about each item. In my certainty that

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Important Dates

May 10th —Noon

(always 2nd Sunday)

Intergroup/Central Office Representative meet
Lost & Found
616 S. Pine Ave

May 28th-6:45pm

District 17
monthly meeting
Lost & Found Club
6 16 S. Pine Ave

Every Thursday Area 14

Service Workshop, 6pm
Hospitality, 5:45pm
New Topic every Thursday
Zoom Meeting ID:
828 5682 4762; pw: service

FAITHFUL FIVERS

Contribute \$5/month or \$60/year

Contributors:

Joe S, Phil H,

Ralph W, Ginger H

Linda H, Stephanie D,

Casey P

Your membership directly supports 12-Step work at District 17 Central Office

GRAPEVINE Daily Quote

May 4, 2026

“Laughter is one of God’s greatest and most beneficial gifts to us. Laugh with him and sometimes at yourself.”

New York, NY, November 1946, “Sobriety for Ourselves”, Thank You for Sharing: Sixty Years of Letters to the Grapevine





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this whole thing was about getting me to admit offenses, my sponsor's first few attempts to expand focus to the present skipped off my head. Nothing thickens the skull like expectations. Eventually his patience waned and he asked me directly, "What are you still doing that maintains this resentment?" Still doing? But this stuff is done. It's on the list. It's in the past. Hit me. I'll feel it. Then we can move on.

Some quiet seconds on the couch allowed for his words to finally set in. Though the events themselves had ended, their effects had not. "My part" was not only in each item's creation, but in its continuation. That's what made them resentments. That's what got them on the list. I was choosing to allow their persistence. I was still trying to control the least controllable thing—the past. This was not the lesson I had prepared to learn.

The preconceptions I whipped up during my Fourth Step were about punishment, not progress. They were about manufacturing shame, not taking responsibility. Part of Step Four is using the past to recognize when and where I had real agency throughout my life. The real value for me was what

realizing the scope of that autonomy was and how I could apply it moving forward. My idea of personal responsibility was that I should be perfect. If I wasn't, I could highlight that mistake and beat myself into atonement. Taking responsibility is not about self-flagellation. I can't fix anything if I'm busy beating myself up.

Responsibility is about recognizing what I did, seeing what I am still doing and deciding what I can do. Shame—the old way of doing it—does what alcohol did, it makes me feel like I'm doing something without actually doing anything.

OK, I admitted, I was choosing to let these things linger inside of me, but what do I do now? How do I keep something from affecting me when it already does? All roads lead back to the Serenity Prayer. I accept what I cannot change: the past. I ask for the courage to change what I can: the present and my attention to it. As far as the future, there are a few more Steps and none lead to the bar downstairs.

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In Memory of

Rafael Q. passed on April 30th 2026. After forty-eight years of practicing these principles in all his affairs, he demonstrated the healing possible in AA. Rafael Q. loved the AA program and all that it held for him and the many sick and suffering alcoholics looking for a solution to their problem with drink.

He was able to "...watch people cover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an exception you must not miss."

He will be missed and not easily forgotten. He was quick with a quote from our literature and shared his experience, strength, and hope with anyone interested in living this powerful way of life. Rafael truly "passed it on," as Bill Wilson asked that we do.



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The Voice

Tradition 5 —“Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”

MAY 2026 | How the Steps changed my life | TRADITION FIVE

What works for me —BY: CHAD P. | ST. LOUIS, MO

A member takes a keener look at how he helps alcoholics and what our primary pur-

While on a social media AA group one day, I was reading a post by someone saying AA wasn't working for them, and that they didn't know what to do. At first I replied by identifying, then I shared what had worked for me to get through difficulties that reminded me of theirs. I then wrote about applications of the Steps and how I continue my recovery through AA.

Then I realized—and thankfully I got to leave another comment about this—that maybe something else might work better for them. What if they're not one of the alcoholics who AA works for? Where did I get the idea that AA is the only solution for everyone with this disease? What has made me treat this as something that everyone who comes to AA *must* get? That's my ego. It says what's right for me is right for all.

Long before I found a way of life that really works for me, which I got through our Steps, I tried to convert others. Thankfully my advice wasn't taken very often! For a time it was. I may still owe amends to people.

Tradition Five, I'm realizing, doesn't give me either the right or the responsibility to try to persuade another alcoholic, especially one who could be better served by another form of recovery, to stay in AA or to stick with this path. I don't actually know what's best for anyone else, including other alcoholics.

Today I see this Tradition inviting me to share, in one way or another, that I, an alcoholic, have had a spiritual awakening as the result of working AA's Twelve Steps, one which gives me a very good sober life. That doesn't mean I need to tell anyone else what they should do. It means that, as I am blessed to meet with a fellow alcoholic who suffers, I can simply share what works for me. What a relief. How freeing that is.

How scary, too, to my ego at least. It means simply being available for a fellow alcoholic, rather than being in command or control. It means a lot of letting go.

Gene O., a dear friend and hero of mine who passed with 63 years of sobriety, comes helpfully to mind. For years I got to see him at his home group,

sitting close to the podium in a room that maybe 70 or more of us would fill up. Many members would walk up to shake his hand, and he would smile and offer a kind word. Never once did I see Gene walk over to a newcomer and say, "Listen all of you, if you don't stay here and do this, you're going to die drunk!" Week after week I saw him come to the meeting and show friendship to anyone who reached out for it. To me, that was and is carrying the AA message in a powerful way. I hope to be more like him.

That doesn't mean that I should ignore the difficult feelings I've had from having an AA friendship end, even if it's with a newcomer I've only met briefly. Those connections are some of the bright spots of my life and losing them is still a loss. That's when I can definitely benefit from this Tradition. The AA message for me in those cases is that it's OK to feel my difficult feelings and share about them. Sharing can help other alcoholics. We are not alone.

Recently I had been wondering whether or not to keep working with a sponsee who I hadn't heard from in some time. I had prayed about it, and then in reply to one of my emails saw that he had sent me two thumbs up emojis. It felt good, and writing this now, I'm seeing that the good feeling is a gift in itself—and healthy too. Someone in the most important kind of relationship in my life just showed back up, so it's a happy occasion for me. If I had been more focused on trying to persuade lots of people to stay here, I could have missed that joyful experience.

None of this means I should recommend any other approach to treating this disease to any other alcoholics. I don't know anything about other approaches, and I'm grateful there are many substance abuse counselors these days who may. It means I can share what works for me with fellow alcoholics, and that what they do with what I've shared isn't up to me.



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The Voice

UPCOMING EVENTS

Miracles in May—May 13th—5:00pm

(Dinner @ 6pm - Speaker @ 7pm

(Dinner includes Meat, Cake, Drinks—feel free to bring a dessert)

Sponsored by: Weir Crazy Group

Christ Lutheran Church 15699 SE 80th Ave Summerfield, FL

LOVE & SERVICE

(Having had a Spiritual Awakening)

Lina R & Tennessee

Lost & Found Club, 616 S Pine Ave, Ocala

May 16th—Doors Open @ 10:30 AM—Panel @ Noon

Covered Dishes Welcome —Door Prizes— 50/50 Raffle

AA Jeopardy Party

***Event to help support Intergroup District 17
and test your A.A. knowledge***

May 30th—11:00 AM—3:00 PM

Lost & Found Club, 616 S Pine Ave, Ocala

TICKETS \$15 (must be purchased ahead of time)

***(Includes: Top Brand Hamburgers, Hot Dogs, Homemade Potato Salad,
Chips, and Desserts from B'Sweet Treats (our very own Ocala baker) and
lots of fun discovering who knows their AA History
and supporting your local A.A. Intergroup)***

***Call Intergroup Office or come by for your Tickets
Each Jeopardy Game will have 3 Teams of 4 People***

Gift Cards to Team Winners



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Birthdays MAY

Contributions APRIL

- | | |
|------------------------|---------------------|
| Belleview Group | Living Sober |
| John C—3 | Susan L—1 |
| Breakfast Club | Chris C—1 |
| Rick R—1 | Phil S—20 |
| Jan A—3 | Steve H—29 |
| Robin B—8 | Ken C—34 |
| Bryana W—23 | Susan N—38 |
| Bill H—45 | We Give Up |
| Headstart | Bob S—43 |
| James W—2 | |
| Paula—2 | |
| Sara—8 | |
| David S—23 | |
| Jay B—32 | |

Congratulations!

Anonymity	\$ 91.00
Belleview Eye Opener	\$ 150.00
Breakfast Club	\$1,345.88
Happy, Joyous & Free	\$ 296.67
Headstart	\$ 364.03
Last Call	\$ 75.00
Living Grace	\$ 200.00
Living Sober	\$ 291.15
Lunch Bunch	\$ 400.00
Ocala Group	\$ 516.83
On Awakening	\$ 398.07
Sober Yankees	\$ 107.00

*“There is freedom waiting for you,
On the breezes of the sky,
And you ask “What if I fall?”
Oh but my darling,
“What if you fly?”*

— Erin Hanson

From the GSO Pamphlet

*Self-support;
Where Money and Spiritually Mix (F-3)*

10% to District 17
P.O. Box 3081, Ocala, FL 34478

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**10% to Area 14 \*\*\*\*\***

NFAC Treasurer  
P.O. Box 840066

St. Augustine, FL 32080

\*\*\*\*\**(Address changes every two years. Visit [www.aanorthflorida.org](http://www.aanorthflorida.org) for correct address)*

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30% to General Service Office
PO Box 459, Grand Central Station,
New York, NY 10163

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**50% to Central Office/Intergroup 17**  
616 S Pine Avenue  
Ocala, FL 34471