In this November issue:
Step Eleven, Tradition Eleven, and Spiritual Awareness
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Writing for the COIN

Q: Who writes the COIN?
A: You do.

This is a publication forum for your personal stories celebrating sobriety and recovery. We welcome your stories, opinion pieces, learnings, questions, thoughts and ideas.

Q: What about sketches, photos, art and flyers?
A: Yes, please!

These are all welcomed and appreciated. We want to give A.A. members a chance to publish their original artwork and photos. We are not a glum lot and love humor, so please send in jokes and cartoons as well. We want the COIN to have a comprehensive listing of all upcoming events and flyers; email your event info as early as possible.

Q: What do I write about?
A: There are monthly newsletter topics that can be found in the COIN.

Each month’s topic is Step X, the Principle behind Step X, and Tradition X, where X is the number of the month. January=1 and December=12. For example, January’s topics are Step One, Honesty, and Tradition One. Stories about a month’s holidays or historic events are also accepted. For example, articles pertaining to a new year/new start in January, relationships and romance in February, stories about the founding of A.A. in June, independence in July, gratitude and giving thanks in November, etc. can all be fitting subject matter.

Write your stories in the first person (using “I” statements). Share your sobriety experience, strength, and hope: the wisdom you’ve gleaned, the mistakes you’ve made, the fun, the troubles, and humor you’ve found in recovery. If you hear something at a meeting that makes you see things in a different light, write about it. If you have stayed sober through a difficult experience, write about it. Help us teach and learn from each other. Most importantly, help carry the message of A.A.

Q: What are the submission deadlines?
A: Deadlines are published in each month’s COIN.

If you miss the deadline, you may still send materials, but they may be saved for inclusion in a future COIN publication. Stories and art are published at the discretion of the COIN editor and the Central Office executive director.

Q: Anything else?
A: Yes.

Please keep the Twelve Traditions of A.A. in mind as you write. Take special care to respect other members’ anonymity. Have fun!

Send your contributions to: coin@aasanjose.org
## COIN Schedule of Topics

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**Next Month’s Issue (December 2020)**

Topics: Step Twelve, Service & Tradition Twelve

Please email all submissions to coin@aasanjose.org.
The garden of the world has no limit except in your mind. Fall of the sun, rise of the sun. End of your garden, beginning of our garden.
Focus on Women: Step Eleven
Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God’s will for us and the power to carry that out.

Seeking Serenity
Prayer and meditation can be practiced in many ways. It could be very traditional, based on western religious beliefs or eastern philosophies. Or it can be a novel spiritual approach. It’s all up to you. The point of Step Eleven is to seek serenity for yourself and reach beyond our finite selves. We focus on letting go of our preconceived expectations, adjusting to the world instead of fighting against it. One my business advisors once said to me, “The World calls the shots, not us.” A valuable concept for a startup company that can be applied to all of our life affairs.

For many of us, prayer and meditation enabled us to achieve a level of serenity that we never before experienced.

We may set aside a daily time slot for meditation, perhaps to start our day with a positive outlook and an attitude of gratitude. Also, we may practice this during the day, as events unfold, to help us maintain a good emotional state. These days there are A.A. meditation meetings. Also, there are outside resources such as guided meditation recordings.

A Personal Experience
We really can personalize of prayers. Depending on your discretion, your prayers may not even resemble prayers in a traditional way. Step Three encourages us to develop our own concept of a power greater than ourselves. For Step Eleven, we develop our own personal concept of prayer. Another person should not say that our prayers are wrong; it’s none of their business.

Our higher power is not punishing, but rather sustains and supports us. Many of us found that
developing habits and rituals can be beneficial.

“Stressed souls need the reassuring rhythm of self-nurturing rituals.” — Sarah Ban Breathnach

For many of us, our father and/or ex-husbands were abusive alcoholics. The idea of “His Will” seems so punishing. It’s better for us to strive for “Goddess’s Hope for me.” Some of us just think of “His Will” as the Spirit of the Universe with which we can co-operate with. In any case, we let go of trying to control things we can’t change, accepting the world the way it is, and acting appropriately for our own good.

Surrender, not Submission

When we accept the world, we are not submissive and give in. Sometimes we eliminate behaviors that harm others. Sometimes we need to stand up for ourselves, set boundaries, and avoid undo pressure to be what someone else wishes. We must remain open-minded and cooperative, realizing that no human, including ourselves, knows all the answers. We really need to listen to others and evaluate each situation as it arises.

In practicing the principals of A.A., we adopt new healthier behaviors that may make others uncomfortable or even angry. This is especially true with close family and friends that were used to our old ways. We avoid getting angry ourselves and de-escalate the situation. Hopefully, they will adapt to your new self.

Adapting Prayers for Ourselves

Recall what Chapter 5 of the A.A. Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) says about the Third Step Prayer: “The wording was, of course, quite optional so long as we expressed the idea, voicing it without reservation.” It is most important to be sincere, which may be best achieved with your own prayer words.

One A.A. member objects to phrases like “do with me as Thou wilt”; they remind her of her negative experiences in past relationships. Just by changing a few words, she makes this prayer more accessible and relevant for her.

Goddess, I open myself to you to work in my life today, according to divine hope for me. Remove me from the bondage of fear, shame, and low self-esteem that I might
become a channel for joy, love, and peace in the universe. Remove my difficulties as you see fit, so that victory over them would bear witness to those I would help of your love and power.

—Dr. Stephanie Covington

A Women’s Way Through the Twelve Steps, (Center City, MN: Hazelden Educational Materials, 1995).

The Seventh Step Prayer focuses on character defects. But you might want to choose another word or phrase for “defects”, one with a more positive or neutral meaning, such as “life patterns” or “defensive mechanisms.”

The Eleventh Step Prayer encourages us to create a positive atmosphere. But “Self-Forgetting” is one of these life patterns that hold us back. As women we are encouraged to serve others at our own expense. We need to balance service to others with self-care. One woman learned this prayer as a child and took it to heart, going overboard, turning those virtues into character defects. Like many women alcoholics, she cared for others first and put herself last. Her Self-Forgetting led to isolation drinking. In working the 12 steps with the help of these Women’s Step Topics, she learned balance and stays sober.

These new practices may seem difficult at first. But, similar to other spiritual practices that we learned in previous steps, it becomes easier with time.

- Geena Louise

Your thoughts of Me are None of My Business

I have been lucky in my sobriety. Lucky enough to have an opportunity and willingness to work on my emotional sobriety and serenity. Part of that emotional sobriety meant getting out of your head and keeping you out of mine.

I’ve had many years of worrying about work, my reputation, the way I looked, the way I acted, the state of my home, and so on. Me, me, me. Do you like me? Am I good enough? Things got a lot easier when I realized it is simply none of my business. Leave it up to this alcoholic to assume others are consumed with thoughts of me.
Taking things one step at a time and one day at a time ironically cleaned up a lot of the mess in my head. This new attitude gave me the space to be a lot more. Not because I was afraid of being inadequate, but because I am excited to be present.

Renting space to others in my head is a habit I have longed possessed. I’ve caused myself much despair trying to gain the approval of others. As a detailed character defect, I spent and continue to spend a lot of time believing my value is dependent on the thoughts and beliefs of others. These beliefs lead to adverse actions, which lead to amends I would rather not make.

As October is a month to consider step 10. Considering my daily inventory is important for me to get clarity on my actions of each day. I am so grateful not to be alone in this journey. Thank goodness I get to consult with a sponsor whom I trust and respect. They guide me through any amends I need to make when I have wronged others. My sponsor maps out what the amends might look like, even amends I need to make to myself.

It is very easy for me to fall into worry and fear. I can worry about my job and whether or not I am doing everything I can to keep my status. My sponsor then reminds me who my real employer is. My sponsor points out that I could do everything perfectly, if there is such a thing, and still lose my job. Besides, I have never experienced a change that did not end up better in the end with the help of my Higher Power.

I used to worry about my children. How they would end up? I wonder how much my decisions may have ruined them. Although I have a responsibility as a parent, I am also human. That, too, is something for which I must be reminded.

Now I worry about my program. Is it good enough? Have I done enough? Will I stay sober? Did I say “yes” enough? In fact, I had a recent bout when I said “yes” more
times than I was able to serve. I said “yes” to caring for my sobriety-sister’s pet while she was away, “yes” to multiple requests to chair meetings in one month, “yes” to leading a meeting, and “yes” to a school commitment. “I said “yes” to entertaining my parents, about whom I feel guilty about all the time. I said “yes” to perfectionism.

Not for lack of trying, when I juggled so many commitments, one eventually fell. Without delay, I fell into guilt, shame, and fear all over again. All of the work shining light on my character defects seem to count for nothing. I had to go to back basics, back to one-day-at-a-time, back to reaching out to my sponsor. I needed to go back to trusting the wisdom of my sobriety sisters. Worrying and self-obsession is more than just a mere irritation. For this alcoholic, it is truly life and death.

Just for today, I choose to live. So, I have to do what others advised when I first came to the rooms. I must listen with the same desperation that I had when was a newcomer.

Despite my progress, or how much I perceive my own success, regressing a few steps back is a possibility for me. Learning to forgive myself and going back to basics are the keys to keep my seat in the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous.

**A New Holiday Perspective**
**Bringing Joy to the Less Fortunate**

How appropriate it seems that there are twelve months in a year, and we have twelve steps in the program. November is often referred to the Gratitude month, mainly due the celebration of Thanksgiving. The joy of good living is the theme of Step Twelve and it blends right in with the Christmas holiday season in December and ending with the New Year’s Eve celebration. This time of year does bring a lot of joy to many of us but it also brings distress to some of the less fortunate ones who have yet to been blessed with the gift of sobriety and peace of mind, in and outside of A.A.

During my drinking days I used to be extremely uncomfortable about the holidays. I never knew how to act around normal people unless I was half smashed. When
invited by one of my siblings to Thanksgiving dinner, I felt like a charity case and would rather just hang out at the bar where I felt safe. I never got into the spirit of reaching out to others. My family always celebrated the different holidays, especially Thanksgiving and Christmas, and I would always (due to my discomfort) put a damper on it by complaining about the tacky gifts that people would buy for each other at Christmas and the mad rush to go shopping and the commercializing facade that it had become. Any excuse was better than facing me and the miserable wretch I had become.

After being sober for several years it occurred to me that I still had some of those same attitudes, and that I was still holding on to them to some degree largely due to the inconvenience of it all. I explained this problem to a dear friend once, and he asked, “Does the rest of the family enjoy the holidays?” I said yes. He then said, “Why don’t you just take a back seat and just watch the joy in their eyes as they experience these things.” I did exactly what he suggested. When I started to observe my wife and two adolescent girls and the childlike innocence and happiness it brought to them, it gave me a whole new appreciation for this time of year. It brought tears of joy to my eyes and I no longer wanted to be the grouch, putting a damper on the joy that they were having. I have been following this line of thinking ever since and it has changed my whole perspective concerning these things.

This change of attitude has inspired me to apply the unselfish lessons that I have come to understand and now I spend the holiday season filled with joy. If it works like that for the holidays, then why can’t I bring it with me for the rest of the year? This has been my mission ever since my friend suggested it, and I am always looking for the opportunity to brighten the lives of people less fortunate than myself. I try to do these things anonymously and
without fanfare. I also try to consider the discomfort that I used to feel when I was the one on the receiving end of a charitable gesture. I am careful to do these things in a way that preserves the dignity of that other person. I do not have to wait for the holidays to do these things. Every day is a holiday in and outside of my home, and you can believe me when I say; I reap more than my share of the joy. I hope this brings a new perspective to those who, like me, had trouble enjoying this time of year and I hope you all have a joyful Holiday Season, and many more.

- Rick R.

A Deeper Look at the Word: LOVE

Love is as Love Does

The longer I attend A.A. meetings the more aware I become of the evolution of the subject matter of meeting topics. In my early days in the 1970s the topic was normally about drunkalogues or whatever the leader wanted to talk about that day. Most of the meetings that I attend today are literature-based meetings and there is amplifying information in the literature that reinforces the topic. On page 164 in the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) it says “We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.” Today we have access to all that they had learned up to that point in time plus everything we have learned since then and the sharing in the meetings is so much deeper as the result of those disclosures.

I was at a meeting recently and the topic was “Love without Strings” from Sept. 28 in The Daily Reflections. It was interesting to hear the differing perceptions mainly based on the differing lengths of sobriety and how the word love was perceived. I looked up the word in a thesaurus and it is all about feelings like fondness, passion, adoration, affection, and many others. Over the years I have heard it said, “I can love him, but I don’t have to like him.” Is it him I don’t like or is it his behavior I don’t like? All of us come to A.A. with behavioral problems. It is not about him. It is about me being judgmental.
There were comments about sexual attraction or “erotic love” which are common in most online definitions but that is not our purpose when dealing with the word love. There are many definitions of the word love and for our purpose I believe the one that Scott Peck writes about in his book *The Road Less Traveled*. He defines love as “The will to extend oneself for the purpose of nurturing one's own or another's spiritual growth.” He implies that it is not that version that we see on the movie screen. To me this means that love is caring for and nurturing another person.

I can love everyone, even if they do not love me back. *It is not about them*; it implies that it’s about me and my actions. As I took this approach, one by one I defused and neutralized all those mental conflicts and accepted everyone exactly as they were. No longer do they crowd my thinking. Do those people that still have behavior problems sometimes cross my boundaries? Oh yes, they do.

Sometimes their *ego* is threatened by something I shared at a meeting or in the community and they need to defend their position. Today I recognize these symptoms in others, and I try to be understanding about what I say at a meeting as to not make people uncomfortable. This takes time. I never respond to innuendoes when someone is trying to draw me into an argument. It takes two to tango. Over a period of time, he gets to know who I really am and is no longer threatened by the things I share. I try to care for and nurture everyone and at some point in time I have run out of adversaries that I know of. In fact, I become their best advocate. Today, the word love is not a noun. Love is a verb. Love is as Love does. Understand them, wish the best for them, and be willing to help them when you can. Who could understand the behavior of an alcoholic more than another alcoholic who has experienced their own development in the program? The founding principles of A.A. is the caring for and nurturing of another alcoholic. If that is not love, then what is? With all my love, I rest my case.

- Rick R.
Cartoons by Alicia L

Wreckage Checklist

- Cheater, cheater...
- Organ failure
- Lost job
- Homeless
- Lost children
- Out (s)
- Liar, liar...
- Divorce
- Drug addiction
- Expert hiding
- Family ties
- E.R. Visit(s)
- Jail
- Institution

- More room on back -

Remember: "It won't chase you if you don't chase it."

24/7 Openness

The world famous House of Higher Powers

Completion of step 3 suggested...
- Serious inquiries only!!!
- This way to a power greater than yourself

Get Results Now

Find yours here - Guaranteed!
- Ready when your willing
- Help is on the way!
Tradition Eleven

“Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.”

Long Form

Our relations with the general public should be characterized by personal anonymity. We think A.A. ought to avoid sensational advertising. Our names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed, or publicly printed. Our public relations should be guided by the principle of attraction rather than promotion. There is never need to praise ourselves. We feel it better to let our friends recommend us.

A.A. ANONYMITY
(Announcement for reading at meetings open to the public)

There may be some here who are not familiar with our Tradition of personal anonymity at the public level:

“Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.”

Thus, we respectfully ask that A.A. speakers and A.A. members not be photographed, videotaped, or identified by full name on audiotapes or in any published or broadcast reports of our meetings, including those reports on the Internet or other new media technologies.

The assurance of anonymity is essential in our efforts to help other problem drinkers who may wish to share our recovery program with us. And our Tradition of anonymity reminds us that A.A. principles come before personalities.
About our Central Office

Central Office is *Physically* closed but open *Virtually*.

Monday, Thursday, Friday: 10AM to 4:30PM  
Tuesday, Wednesday: 10AM to 6:30PM  
Saturday and Sunday: Closed

Please [Click Here](#) for more Information about Central Office 
Holiday Hours.

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Call Central Office with your order: 
Monday thru Friday, 10AM – 4:30PM  
Saturday from 10AM – 2PM.  
We will take your order and credit card information.  
Your order will be available for curbside pick-up on  
**SATURDAYS ONLY, from 11AM – 2PM**