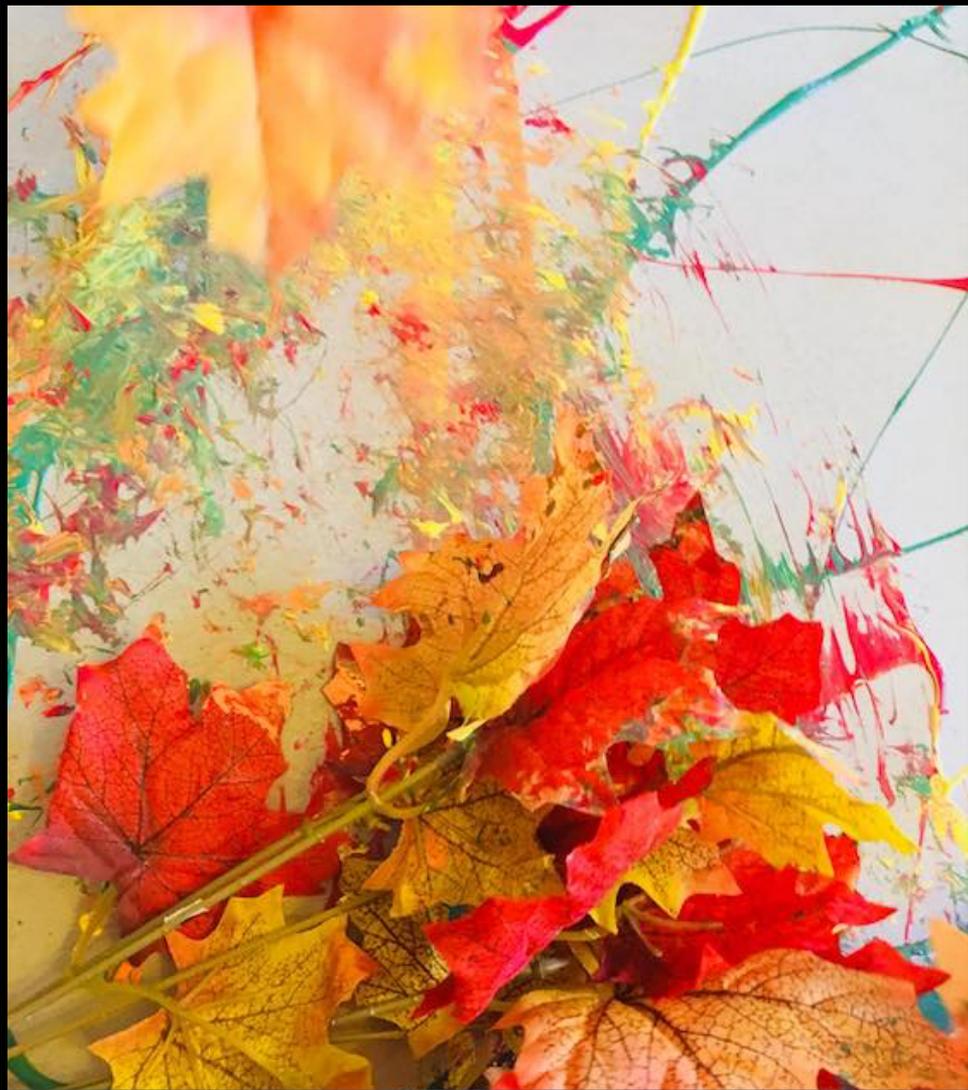




October 2020
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A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERGROUP CENTRAL OFFICE OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY



In this October issue:
Step Ten, Tradition Ten, and
Perseverance

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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

Newsletter Issue Month	Submission Deadline	Step & Tradition	Virtue
January	15-Dec	1	Honesty
February	15-Jan	2	Hope
March	15-Feb	3	Faith
April	15-Mar	4	Courage
May	15-Apr	5	Integrity
June	15-May	6	Willingness
July	15-Jun	7	Humility
August	15-Jul	8	Love
September	15-Aug	9	Justice
October	15-Sep	10	Perseverance
November	15-Oct	11	Spiritual Awareness
December	15-Nov	12	Service

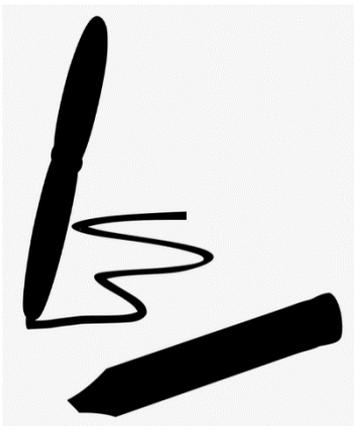
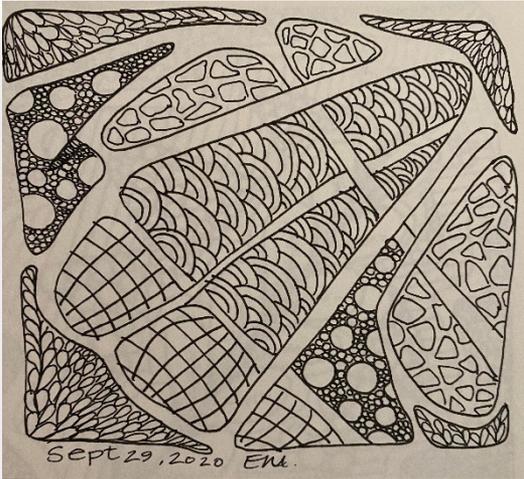


Next Month's Issue (November 2020)

Topics: Step Eleven, Service & Tradition Eleven, Spiritual Awareness

Please email all submissions to coin@aasanjose.org .

Sunlight of the Spirit Art Corner- Elizabeth M



1entangle

Like an exquisite cheese, the Big Book gets better with time

How delicious!

When I first came into the A.A. program, I was not too enthusiastic about reading A.A.'s basic text *Alcoholics Anonymous*, affectionately nicknamed the *Big Book*. As a young woman in her twenties, the hairs on the back of my neck stood up in protest every time I noticed the use of male-dominant pronouns and concepts. "How could these old men possibly know anything about my experience?" It wailed in my head.

Luckily for me, I was given ample opportunities to read our literature since my home group studies the steps, the traditions, or the Big Book each week. I distinctly remember reading Step Two in the 12 & 12 (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*) and asking myself, "Who or what is this mysterious John Barleycorn character they keep mentioning?" It turns out "John Barleycorn" was the title of an autobiographical novel written by American author Jack London, in 1913, which detailed his alcoholism struggles.

London's inspiration for this title was a 16th century English Folk song that depicts "suffering

attacks, death, and indignities." By the time A.A.'s literature was being written, "John Barleycorn" had become a euphemism for alcohol or alcoholism, according to <http://domania.us/gts-today/John-Barleycorn-Info.html>.



I remember sharing some of my grievances about A.A. literature with my sponsor one day. She gently pointed out that the text was simply a product of its time, a piece of history that should be honored and respected. The truth is, "[I] had missed the beauty and reality of the *forest* because [I was] diverted by the ugliness of some of its *trees*" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, Ch. 4, "We Agnostics," p. 50). I couldn't see the gems of timeless wisdom contained in each page because I was too busy focusing on how I thought the words *ought to be*. I realized that it was up to me to approach A.A. literature in the same manner A.A. taught me to approach the meetings. I needed to look for the similarities instead of the differences.

I heard a speaker once say they didn't fully grasp the steps until they had to teach them to someone else. I found this to be true for me, too. It wasn't until I had the honor of taking another woman through the steps that the Big Book indeed came alive. Others in A.A. freely gave me the gift of sobriety, and with a fierce determination, I wished to pass on the gift to others; I cracked open the Big Book and put the Joe and Charlie workshops on repeat. Since then, I've developed a deep sense of gratitude for the wisdom our A.A. pioneers wrote down for us. Their words have saved countless lives throughout the years, including my own. Here are a few of my favorite A.A. quotes.

"If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men, but for alcoholics, these things are poison." - *Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 66.

As someone who tends to lean towards anger, this paragraph was a huge eye-opener for me. Whenever I started to resent something or someone (which was often), I would remember that my recovery depended on practicing forgiveness and learning how to let go of my anger.

"So, our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves..." - *Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 62.

As I started regularly doing Step Ten inventories, this line kept popping up in my head. As I wrote down the situations that disturbed me and their causes, I realized that most of the things I was upset about were in my head. They were not problems in the real world; they were scenarios I imagined in my head. Once I learned how to see situations as they were, I was free.

"Understanding is the key to right principles and attitudes, and right action is the key to good living..." - *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 125.

When I become frustrated or unsure of my next step, I seek a spiritual solution to guide me.



Only spiritually aligned actions take comfort in knowing that if take spiritually aligned actions my

attitude and perception will change. This is a program of action. Knowing the steps intellectually isn't enough, I have to live them on a daily basis to change. It's called *working* the program for a reason because it isn't easy, it takes work.

“Acceptance is the answer to *all* of my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation- some fact of my life- unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment...” - *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 4th ed., page 417.

When I'm feeling upset or disturbed, this is the quote I always go back to. It reminds me that happiness is an inside job. I don't need to wait for situations on the outside to change for me to be free. I can choose peace right now in this very moment.

“Our very lives, as ex-problem drinkers, depend upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs.” - *Alcoholics Anonymous*, page 20.

This quote reminds me that it's not just about me anymore. My recovery depends on my commitment to serve a purpose

greater than myself (helping others). Before I got sober and for many years after, helping others was not high on my priority list. As I result, I spent a lot of time in my head, worrying about how I was going to fix all of my imaginary problems. Today, I know that the more I practice being of service to you, the less time I worry about me.

- Sam V

Working the Diverter

A 30-year retrospective

As I sit down for my Diverter shift this Sunday, May 31, 2020, and open the binder where I have the current and some old Diverter Instruction Packets, I am flooded with memories. I have been holding down the Fifth Sunday of the Month-Noon to 4:00 shift for at least twenty-six years.

How do I know? Because I have saved some of my first *Diverter Instructions*, *12-Step Lists*, and *Alternate Diverter Worker Lists* that I received when I started in the early 1990s.

In my black 3-inch Diverter Binder, I have a *Diverter Instruction Booklet*, dated August 8, 1992. From that, I can assume that my first shift was sometime in late 1992 or in early 1993.

At that time, the *Central Office* was located in a warehouse building near Race and Parkmore, close to the old *Saddle Rack*, where many members had drinking history. The phone number in 1994 was 297-3556, if calling from San Jose, the 408 area-code was not required.

Over the years, I have periodically cleaned out older *Diverter Packages* from my binder, but I have saved a few packages. Saved are *Volunteer Lists* from February 1994, February and May 1995, May 1997, May 1998, and May 1999. It is interesting to note that the 1994 *Volunteer List* has more names than the current list. I wonder why is that so?

Going through the 1994 *Volunteer List*, I see names of members who have passed on to the *Great Meeting in the Sky*. A few that I recognize are Dick S, Don D, Gary H, Glenda J, Jon M, Peter V.D., Allie S., Jerry H., Pat M, Mingo H, Physical Ed McC.

Impressive are the names of volunteers from the 1990s who are still *Diverter Volunteers*. Listed on the *August 2019 List* are Bernadette P, Rose W, Lee C., and Mary Pat P. I am sure there are others. If I had a way to digitally match the lists, I would certainly acknowledge them. Even if I did

not acknowledge you, I thank you for your long service to our Fellowship of the Spirit, as a *Diverter or 12-Step Volunteer*.

My early afternoon shifts on Fifth Sundays have never been demanding. Between calls, I have watched baseball, football, basketball or golf. There has never been a large volume of calls. Many have just been from persons already familiar with A.A., seeking the location or time of a particulate meeting. Some calls have been from a member needing a ride to a meeting. Some have been from a family member of someone who has a drinking problem. The most important calls have been from someone in the process of identifying that they have a problem with alcohol and recognizing the need for Alcoholics Anonymous.

Every Fifth Sunday shift for the last two years, I have fielded a call from a woman who moved from this area to Texas. She just seems to need to make contact with A.A. in Santa Clara County. I have come to look forward to her call, and we have become friends. I have learned about her daughter and her husband. The last time she called, I directed her to our Zoom meetings. I was somewhat disappointed that she didn't call on

my shift today. Hopefully, she has been able to reconnect with her A.A. friends in the Campbell area though Zoom.



On the more productive side, I have dispatched numerous A.A. volunteers to make phone calls to, or to make personal visits to those seeking the *Helping Hand of Alcoholics Anonymous*. On a few occasions, after my shift was over, I have collected one of my A.A. friends and made that visit myself, or the next day have made a follow-up call.

Probably the most significant call I have fielded over the years was from a woman who confessed that she had taken pills and was in the midst of a suicide attempt. I kept talking to her on my cell phone, while my wife called 911 on her phone. First responders and AT&T were able to trace the call and dispatch a police unit to the woman's residence.

The last words I heard from her were, "I need to go, there is a policewoman here now." I have

since wondered if she found recovery in A.A. and have prayed that she is now doing well.

My experiences over the past twenty-five years have certainly been that this work is both important and rewarding. As with all A.A. service, *working the Diverter* has helped keep me free from taking that first drink.

My suggestion to you, if you have not yet had the opportunity to be a Diverter Worker or a 12-Step Volunteer, give it a try. The information to get involved in this service is shown on the AASanJose.Org Website. Just go to <https://aasanjose.org/service>.

- Andy L

Focus on Women: Step Ten

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

By the time we get to Step Ten, we've learned the spiritual tools to keep us sober. We learned about our life patterns that held us back. We forgave ourselves for the wreckage of past. In doing Step Ten, we take an inventory in the present. We take action on the previous steps as new things arise simply by living our lives. We can still make some mistakes. No

human is perfect, but we strive for excellence.

By practicing a regular inventory in Step Ten, we keep ourselves aware and focused on the present. We refer to Steps 10, 11, and 12 as the maintenance steps.

As much as we might want to slow down, relax, or even stop, we need to be careful about sliding back into old habits and patterns. That's why we practice a regular check-up in Step Ten; the observation and self-reflection monitor our lives and relationships in the present.

While we were active in our disease, many of us went through emotional turmoil when we were jealous, fearful, had unrealistic expectations, anxious, resentful, and other items from our Step 7 list of unhealthy patterns. If these issues arise now, we can take note of them in a Step Ten inventory. Then we can recognize them as a situation unfolds, allowing us to avoid repeating mistakes from the past. We avoid getting a resentment and escape having to make new amends. When we take care of things in the short term, we don't have them weighing us down while taking up mental space.

We find it useful to do inventories over different time-periods. A spot check inventory is

taken any time of the day. It may be that after a conversation with someone, something is bothering us. We may do a Step Ten inventory focused on that conversation. Some of us found benefits of doing a Step Ten inventory at the close of each day. And we can share a Step Ten inventory with our sponsor, pastor, rabbi, spiritual adviser, or a close friend. Catching them up on things that happened since their last meeting. We can do an informal inventory listening to our unconscious mind or gut feeling.

It is important to keep current with a handful of trusted close friends. Then if you need help or advice, you don't have to first tell a background story. You can get straight to the point.

Remember that responsibility means "the ability to respond." When we're responsible we don't necessarily fix or take care of things, we respond appropriately.— Dr. Stephanie Covington

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

As women must be compassionate and non-judgmental with ourselves. We

need to be honest but avoid taking too much blame, focusing on our part. We don't minimize our actions, but we don't dramatize them. We plainly speak matter-of-factly.

Carefully think about "when we were wrong". Someone may cause harm to us through insensitivity, verbal or physical abuse, lies, or gossip. The feelings we develop from this do not make us wrong. Our actions may make us wrong if we fall back to our unhealthy patterns that we had during our drinking days, such as revenge and manipulation.

We found that when we stopped people pleasing and honestly admitted being wrong, the conversation became more intimate and perhaps uncomfortable. There is little conflict in a discussion of facts such as "California is north of Mexico" or observations such as "it is raining". But personally-intimate discussions often lead to conflict. Sometimes we can work through the conflict, reduce expectations, and let go of outcomes. We may need to allow ourselves and others to feel the feelings that arise.

A calm sea never made a skillful sailor. — Anonymous

At first practicing the Tenth Step may be hard. But by repeating the exercise, it becomes natural. It enables us to be perceptive and aware of what is happening in the present. It gives us freedom from alcohol controlling us, empowering ourselves to make great choices.

- Geena Louise

Step Ten: Beginning of the Maintenance Steps

Understanding the Disease of Alcoholism Takes Time

After being in the program for a while, it occurred to me that, there was no way I could have performed all the measures suggested in the steps on my first go-around. Coming from an alcoholic's approach to the issues we plan to address, we eventually come to understand that we can only give it our best effort to start the process. Understanding the disease of alcoholism takes time. We can however establish a framework without concluding that we have completed the steps. As we continue to grow in the program more will be revealed about the steps taken. Step Ten gives us the opportunity to revisit past steps and fill in the empty spaces as we evolve.



That does not mean that we cannot address those issues when we become aware of them. If we stay sober long enough to get to this level of understanding, we will continue to repair our broken relations with others. We clear up legal, marital, and financial problems that can be a distraction when it comes to looking at the deeper rooted emotional, mental, and spiritual issues. We cannot ignore the need for up-keep and maintenance in the program no more than we can ignore the up-keep and maintenance when we purchase a new car. Brake shoes wear thin, oil gets dirty, coolant evaporates etc. The same effect takes place in the process of recovery. If we become complacent at any level of this process, as it often happens, we may relapse or miss out on the benefit of The Promises set forth in step nine.

Step Ten: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it”. I believe that most of the members of A.A. that actually go through the

steps, as suggested in the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous), have been doing this to some degree since they became aware of it in the 4th and 5th Steps. The reasons they reintroduced us to this topic in the Tenth Step was to make it clear that we will continue to do this for the rest of our lives. We are never finished when it comes to executing the steps.

There is a line that we cross when we are committed to the goal of becoming the best we can be in life. That is where we stop asking “Why we must do all the things that the program suggests?” to a point where we start asking the question “Why wouldn’t we do these things that result in freedom of the mind?”

The biggest misconception that many of us have is the idea that, somehow, we are responsible for becoming an alcoholic and this is simply not the case. Alcoholism is a disease that we did not have the capacity to decide to become afflicted with when we were born. You might say that alcoholism is a byproduct of guilt, shame, and low self-esteem based on habits and deeds of the past. When we took our first drink it did something for us than it did not do for the normal person. It masks all our fears and insecurities temporarily but did

not erase those embarrassing behaviors from our minds and our conscience. We behaved poorly as we evolved through our adolescence and young adulthood due to the fears and inhibitions associated with alcoholism.

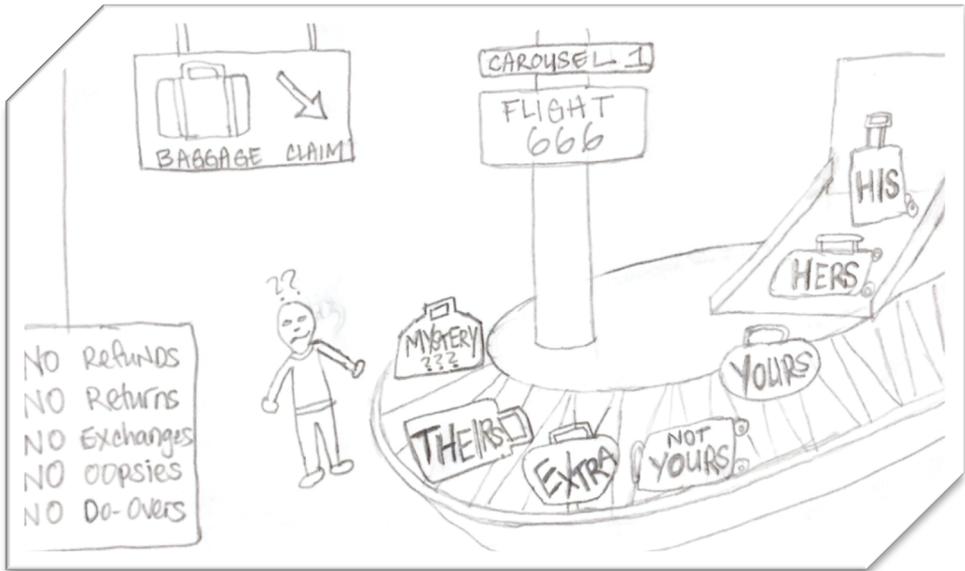
Who could fault the person who discovers they have a disease, takes it upon themselves to treat that disease, restores and accounts for all the faulty behaviors that stem from that disease, makes restitution, and

becomes a model citizen? This is the natural development that evolves as the result of working the steps and continue the up-keep and maintenance process. I Thank God that the program of Alcoholics Anonymous has taken one hell of a load off my mind. I am mentally at peace when my head hits the pillow at night.

- Rick R



Cartoons by Alicia L



Tradition Ten

“Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on out-side issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”

Long Form

No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues—particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters, they can express no views whatever.

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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Saturday from 10AM – 2PM.

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Your order will be available for curbside pick-up on

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