In this June issue:
Step Six, Tradition Six, and Willingness
Writing for the COIN

Q: Who writes the COIN articles?
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: What are the style guidelines?
A: We strive for consistency.

We accept writings from a variety of authors, then edit them for style, length less than 900 words, correct spelling, fonts, and more. It is challenging to publish each issue in a timely manner. As editors, we do not change the message.

If you can follow some style guidelines, that would help us out a lot. Below is a non-exhaustive list of basic style guidelines.

1. Break all articles into several paragraphs, instead of one big paragraph.
2. Avoid long run-on sentences.
3. Use “A.A.” and not “AA.”
4. Carefully avoid long, run-on sentences.
5. In referencing A.A. books, please use the full titles for the first reference. Optionally include their nicknames for later references. Please italicize the full titles. Use “&” in “12 & 12”, not “12 X 12”.
   - Alcoholics Anonymous (or Big Book)
   - A.A.’s basic text Alcoholics Anonymous (or Big Book)
   - Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous)
   - A.A.’s basic text Alcoholics Anonymous, affectionately nicknamed the Big Book
   - 12 & 12 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions)
   - Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (or 12 & 12)

Q: What about Quality?
A: Don’t worry about that.

There is nothing more powerful than one alcoholic speaking with and supporting another alcoholic. Indeed, most of us never trusted a professional about our drinking. How could they possibly know about our drinking? But I believe other alcoholics. We are amateurs by design. So never worry about whether what you write is good enough. Just speak from the heart with honesty.

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 submissions to: coin@aasanjose.org
## COIN Schedule of Topics

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**Next Month’s Issue (July 2021)**

Topics: Step Seven, Humility & Tradition Seven

Please email all submissions to coin@aasanjose.org

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### Topics for June in this Issue

**Step Six**

*Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*

**Tradition Six**

*An A.A Group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*

**Willingness**

*Inclined or favorably disposed in mind, accept by choice or without reluctance, prompt to act or respond.*

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Without our Sixth Tradition, A.A. may have strayed from our primary purpose of helping us all stay sober. A.A. may have disbanded.

Imagine a world without the Sixth Tradition. We’d be offered Bob’s A.A. Energy Drink and Ann’s A.A. Private Counseling. A.A. Meetings might offer donuts from the “Official Donut Shop” for that meeting.

That stuff would be confusing for newcomers. With the income from A.A. licensing fees, influence would come, perhaps leading A.A. in the wrong direction.

What if the “Official Hospital” of A.A. Santa Clara Intergroup decided some of our practices are out of date? What if this hospital launches a media campaign to influence A.A. members to change A.A. through group conscience votes.

Thank goodness those wise people before us eliminated these problems of influence by outsiders. We alcoholics must decide all A.A. matters on our own.

Sincerely,

Geena Louise
Your COIN Editor

The COIN is what the A.A. Fact File calls “A.A. Literature Produced by Local Groups.” The opinions are those of the individual authors and may or may not be representative of A.A. as a whole.

COIN Editor-in-Chief: Geena Louise
Consulting Editor: Mel M., Website: Phil
Sunlight of the Spirit Art Corner: Elizabeth M. Sobriety Cartoons: Alicia L.

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The Rocks, the Stones, and the Pebbles
My conscience would never let me rest.

Coming to Alcoholics Anonymous from a pit of despair was the best decision I have ever made. My life up to that point was in shambles and I was desperate enough to seek outside help. Understanding the part that alcohol played in my life, up to that point, was difficult. But I knew that if I did not get a grip on reality, I was going to self-destruct, and the progression of the problem was like going ninety miles an hour down that dead end street.

Hope was established immediately as I was introduced to the possibility that I could be restored to a life that was free of the mental torment that I had been experiencing since childhood. The answers to all my problems came in the form of a Profound Change of Perception concerning how I perceived myself. Without discipline or structure in my upbringing, I was insecure and afraid that I would never meet up with the standards of my peers. As the results of that way of thinking, I developed a dishonest and selfish lifestyle which eventually caught up with me in the form of a guilty conscience.

My drinking solved that problem for a time but when the tolerance for alcohol wore off, I found myself back in that pit of despair. When I looked in the mirror, I hated what I saw, and I could no longer drink it away. Like everyone else, when introduced to the program, I first had to stop the (emotional) bleeding by dealing with the current issues that I had been neglecting such as: pay the rent, pay the traffic ticket, clear the beer cans off my dresser, and so forth.

Then I could give the steps of the program the attention they would need if I wanted the relief that they promised. With a new attitude of willingness, I was already getting rid of many of the obvious habits of dishonesty, neglect, irresponsibility, and the like. Next, I was faced with my biggest challenge which came in the form of The Wreckage of the Past that many refer to as a Sack of Rocks.
If we ever want to be free of the guilt and the shame caused by the regrettable memories that we have been harboring, we will have to address these issues when we become strong enough. My sack contained a few rocks that were obvious, a handful of stones, and abundance of, less threatening, pebbles that were not that obvious to me at the time.

Addressing steps 4, 5, 8, and 9 concerning these issues became my greatest challenge and my first instinct was to skip over the most embarrassing memories. That idea, I think, is common in many of us, when first faced with reparation process. I gave it my best shot at first but left out a few of the Rocks due to my ego, but my conscience would never let me rest. Later, as the result of the progress I had made in the program, I became stronger and had the determination to revisit those more glaring issues and clean the slate. Had I not done that, I believe the rest of the program would have been a shallow façade and I would never have attained the peace of mind that I enjoy today.

The Stones were the things that got most of the attention as I did the steps initially. As I became stronger, I took that leap of faith and tackled the Rocks. After cleaning up those issues, the rest of the program became easy. No more denial and much more peace of mind. So, I am finished, Right? Not so fast there Huckleberry! Now I become aware of the less threatening pebbles in the form of the selfish motives in my day-to-day decision making which I will gladly correct, one pebble at a time as I become aware of them. It is a joy to rid myself of the things that used to plague me and today, life is good.

— Rick R.

**Tradition Six Protects A.A.**

I find it tempting to praise all sorts of political and, religious activities that I have been involved with through the years. I believe it does not violate the spirit of Tradition Six to mention them—even by name—during an A.A meeting. However, if I find myself trying to convince other A.A
members that they should join my church or political party, I have then gone a bridge too far. The same goes for a treatment center where I once worked. I believe competition is fine in the outside world, but it does not belong in A.A rooms. Such is sure to provoke friction.

As for finances, I believe all money placed in the A.A basket belongs to A.A and nowhere else! Donations should support only the Intergroup; District Area or GSO. Recovery clubs are considered as “outside enterprises” as well as detox centers and hospitals.

Of course, according to Tradition Eight, a group can pay for services rendered, such as printing informational flyers, and like that. I also believe finances from the group’s prudent reserves are approved for group picnics, conferences, and gas money for out-of-town speakers, etc.

What if the treasurer of a group donates the group’s funds to outside enterprises? Is there no retribution? In Alcoholics Anonymous, page xix from the FOREWORD TO THE SECOND EDITION, states: “None of these principles have the force of rules or laws.”

Of course, there will be rotation and elections. But what if the entire group decides to donate some of its prudent reserve funds to an outside enterprise? This violates the First, Fourth and Sixth Tradition. What to do? Maybe nothing. However, I have seen one instance where the Intergroup Office refrained from listing an A.A group that stood in violation of Tradition Three.

Tradition Six allows A.A to remain autonomously free from outside influence or domination. We must remain aware of consequences if not followed.

— Bob S.

Focus on Women: Step Six Willingness

We work on the steps one at a time, making incremental progress. Before giving up our defective life patterns, we simply become ready to do it in Step Six. Actually doing it is the next step.
We do wonder what our life will be like after giving up some things that we do. The positive experience of alcoholic women who’ve completed the steps should minimize our fears and anxiety giving us a hopeful attitude.

In this step, we review our behaviors and our thinking that led to those behaviors. Some of our behaviors were positive and constructive. Some of them were destructive to us and others. When faced with the resulting negative consequences, we drank. But there is a solution.

We can write a list of the behaviors that had negative consequences. Then we can consider our motivation for each item in the list. Once written, we may see behavior patterns to avoid.

We want to be truthful without blaming ourselves. In doing all steps, we want to avoid being self-critical by stating things in a matter-of-fact, non-dramatic fashion.

Many of us are afraid to start acting differently in so many ways. We wonder: what will happen if we give up a certain behavior, why am I clinging to this behavior, and what behavior will replace it?

The answers will come when we experience change. It is unknown what will happen because we never tried the change before. But, it is a lot easier to avoid destructive without the influence of alcohol on our brains.

How do you do it? The simplest way is to go through your inventory of patterns and habits, concentrating on one pattern at a time, asking yourself how this pattern protects you. What do you fear will happen if you stop behaving this way?

Once you see what’s underneath the pattern or behavior--the
feeling it helps you avoid—then you can ask yourself if you’re ready to face that underlying feeling. If you are, then perhaps you don’t need the pattern for protection any longer. At this point, you might be “entirely ready” to let it go.

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

Step Six enables us to be aware of what we do in life. Being aware of behavior patterns does not immediately lead to giving them up. That is what we will do in Step 7. For now, we just identify them. We become hopeful that we can change when we are ready.

The book Alcoholics Anonymous (The Big Book) says “We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.” Yet in many places it tells us to strive for perfection. Harriet Braiker once wrote “Striving for excellence motivates you; striving for perfection is demoralizing.” Whenever I read the word “perfection”, I mentally substitute the word “excellence”.

Anxiety, fear, self-doubt, and uncertainty can block our progress. But we now know our sobriety sisters successfully worked this step. We want the serenity and confidence that they have. Working Step Six is part of how they attained this. It is a proven path to success.

— Geena Louise

The Road to Mental Freedom
Understanding Steps Six and Seven

Since the day I entered the Alcoholics Anonymous program, I have had an insatiable appetite for learning all I could about the disease of alcoholism. Having completed a very thorough fourth and fifth steps, and examining my motives for everything I did, in steps sixth and seven, it occurred to me that most of my problems in life involved my interfacing with, “Those Other People.”
As I got further into the steps and started to process each and every one of these interactions, it became apparent to me that the basic cause of my discontent was, low self-esteem. Until I resolved that, there would be very little peace of mind. I had to get right with everyone. They say that understanding is the key to right living. I read just about anything I could get my hands on about these issues that reinforce the principles we learn in the A.A. program. This included Emmet Fox’s *Sermon on The Mount*, Scott Peck’s *The Road Less Traveled*, Ernest Kurtz and Kathleen’s Ketchum’s *The Spirituality of Imperfection*, Max Ehrmann’s poem, *Desiderata*, and the like.

This kind of reference material helps me to get a better perspective on how to reduce the obstacles that stand in the way of my ability to solve these problems. I have to be willing to get right with “every human being I know” as suggested in Step Eight in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. Scott Peck describes the word Love as: Caring for and nurturing another person’s soul. I now look at Love as a verb and not a noun.

You can love someone that doesn’t love you back when you use this definition. As the result, I truly wish the best for every human being I know and offer help and guidance when I can. I become their best advocate. If I want to heal, I must look deeper and try to understand that other person I need to be strong enough to reign in my ego and realize that the other person may be reacting to my adversarial position. Finding ways of removing my own judgmental attitudes opens the door to love and compassion.

Today, I can love everyone by simply giving them the respect and acceptance that I would want for myself. After doing my best to adopt this plan of action over the years, I can only say that nothing that I have ever done, with respect to Those Other People, has been more rewarding than this approach. I have, to the best of my understanding, stopped judging others by their outside behavior and have the strength to look deeper. When I do that, I usually find a person, not to
different from myself, trying to protect himself from his fears. Then, I just can’t bring myself to pile on and compound his pain. My heart goes out to him and I don’t have to deal with regrets later on. My ego is neutralized as I come to understand his troubles. The greatest gift I receive as I apply this to all of Those Other People is to allow myself the same latitude without even expecting it since at one time, I was That Other Person. Self-forgiveness and peace of mind seems to be the natural result of my efforts. I can accept everyone just as they are and not mess with God’s work.

— Rick R.

Relapses

I started attending A.A. meetings to satisfy my family. I didn’t really have the willingness to stop drinking. So, I relapsed every few months for four years until I achieved multi-year sobriety. I had to attend A.A. meetings for myself.

I heard many stories of alcoholic misbehavior and wreckage at the meetings. I thought to myself that I didn’t do those things; I must be OK.

Every time I relapsed the consequences were worse than the last time. I heard that I hadn’t done those things YET and “You’re Eligible Too.”

During those early years I got a DUI and had to attend DUI classes for six months. One time I left my spouse waiting at the train station for an hour. I hit a curb with my tire so hard that my air bag deployed.

I got a second DUI when I crashed into a light pole, totalizing my car, but hurting no one. I spent 30 days in jail, did 18 months of DUI classes, lost my license for a year, and then had to put a breathalyzer on my car ignition.

When I told my boss at work that I had to take a month-long leave of absence, he said “They can’t put you in Jail; you have a PhD”. I smiled and said “A PhD is not a ‘Get out of Jail Free Card’.”

Consequences accelerated with each new relapse and my bottom got lower and lower.

Finally I said to myself, I can see lower bottoms, but I don’t want to go there. I finally had the willingness to stop drinking. Then I discovered how great life can be when I’m sober.

There is no reason to test yourself to see how low your bottom can go. You can learn willingness from other peoples’ mistakes.

— Anonymous
Sunlight of the Spirit Art Corner — Elizabeth M
Tradition Six

*An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*

Long Form

Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An A.A. group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to A.A., such as clubs or hospitals which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the A.A. name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, A.A. managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside A.A.- and medically supervised.

While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An A.A. group can bind itself to no one.

Practice These Principles – Tradition Six

1. Should my fellow group members and I go out and raise money to endow several AA beds in our local hospital?
2. Is it good for a group to lease a small building?
3. Are all the officers and members of our local club for AAs familiar with “Guidelines on Clubs” (which is available free from GSO)?
4. Should the secretary of our group serve on the mayor’s advisory committee on alcoholism?
5. Some alcoholics will stay around AA only if we have a TV and card room. If this is what is required to carry the message to them, should we have these facilities?
Special Events

Danville – Diablo Speaker Meeting
Alcoholics Anonymous

1st Saturday of the Month
8:00 PM – Zoom Opens at 7:30pm PST

Birthday Celebration
Unfortunately, the Birthday Chip Drive Through has been
CANCELED JULY 2021 ONLY
See you Next Month!

ZOOM ONLINE FORMAT
Zoom ID 948 2720 6866
Password 146975
Or Dial by your location
+1 669 900 9128 US (San Jose)

7th Tradition online contributions
at Zelle* and Venmo.
Zelle account for electronic deposit:
Diablo Danville Alcoholics Anon
ddsmtreas@gmail.com

*Zelle is affiliated with many banks. We recommend accessing through your online account.

Venmo account for electronic deposit:
Mark-Falgout-72
or QR Code

2021
July 3 – Wally P, Tucson, AZ
Aug 7 – Raymond M, Livonia, MI
Sept 4 – Baseball Dave, Concord, CA
Oct 9 – Jane L, Tallahassee, FL

NOTE: Oct Meeting is on the SECOND SATURDAY

Nov 6 – Kent C, Akron, OH
Dec 4 – Hillary R, Plano, TX

For Zoom link, more call in numbers, and 7th Tradition details visit web site:
ddsm.org

General meeting inquiries or questions - danvillediablosm@gmail.com
Business Mtg – 1st Sunday at 4pm, Zoom 992 492 311, 121212. All are welcome to attend.
About our Central Office

Santa Clara County Central Office of A.A.
274 E. Hamilton Ave, Suite D
Campbell, CA 95008
Map

Our Central Office is open 6 days per week for in-person book and literature sales, as well as other functions.

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm
Thursday, Friday, Saturday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm
Sunday: Closed

See https://aasanjose.org/events
408 889-1001 • info@aasanjose.org • Holiday Closings