

COIN Schedule of Topics

Topics in this Issue

Step Two

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Hope

To want something to happen or be true and think that it could happen or be true. Someone or something on which hopes are centered.

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Next Month's Issue (February 2021)

Topics: Step Two, Tradition Two, & Hope

Please email all submissions to coin@aasanjose.org

Newsletter Issue Month	Submission Deadline	Step & Tradition	Virtue
January	12-20	1	Honesty
February	01-20	2	Hope
March	02-20	3	Faith
April	03-20	4	Courage
May	04-20	5	Integrity
June	05-20	6	Willingness
July	06-20	7	Humility
August	07-20	8	Love
September	08-20	9	Justice
October	09-20	10	Perseverance
November	10-20	11	Spiritual Awareness
December	11-20	12	Service

Resources

COIN – Central Office Intergroup Newsletter

<https://aasanjose.org/coin>

Financials/Minutes

<https://aasanjose.org/central-office-financials-and-intergroup-minutes>

Calendar of Events

<https://aasanjose.org/events>

Celebrating Sobriety Birthdays

<https://aasanjose.org/celebrating-birthdays>

Meeting Guide

<https://aasanjose.org/meetings>

Contributions

<https://aasanjose.org/contributions>

Intergroup Information & Orientation

<https://aasanjose.org/intergroup-orientation>

Service Opportunities

<https://aasanjose.org/service>

Central Office Information

<https://aasanjose.org/central-office>

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Forgetting about our idea of God from the Past

In spite of the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) saying that any concept of a Higher Power will be effective, it continuously refers to a traditional Christian viewpoint.

We can forget our old idea and others' ideas of God and reinvent it for ourselves. We can call it *Our Higher Power, Goddess, Spirit of the Universe*, or simply *Life*. We try to accept the stream of Life, and instead of trying to swim upstream against it, we can swim down stream and navigate life better.

"She who controls others may be powerful, but she who has mastered herself is mightier still." — Lao Tzu

Best wishes, Geena Louise, Your COIN Editor

About the COIN

COIN is the Central Office Intergroup Newsletter. It is what the *A.A. Fact File* calls "*A.A. Literature Prepared by Local Groups*." The opinions are those of the individual authors and may or may not be representative of A.A. as a whole.

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The COIN is published on behalf of the Santa Clara County Intergroup Service Group of Alcoholics Anonymous (Intergroup). Opinions expressed are the writers', and publication of any article, event, or other information does not imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous, Intergroup, or Central Office. Quotations from A.A. books and pamphlets, and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions are reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.

Tradition Two

For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

Long Form

Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward.

Practice These Principles – Tradition Two

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, A.A. committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with A.A. Twelfth Step jobs or other A.A. responsibility?
3. Do I look for credit in my A.A. jobs? Praise for my A.A. ideas?
4. Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn at A.A. chores?
6. In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

These questions above were originally published in the A.A. Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions from November 1969 through September 1971.

Articles

Big Book Meaning of Insanity

Step Two: *“Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to **sanity**.”*

I came into *Alcoholics Anonymous* (A.A.) after a long nonstop toot with the usual accompanying delirium tremors. During my first meeting I was still hearing “non-existent” music and for several weeks my emotions were a roller coaster. For a normal person that might warrant a diagnosis of a schizophrenic with a bipolar disorder (e.g., insane.) However, I have come to believe that the Big Book use of that word is in the context of something quite different.



I finally realized the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) was trying to get across to me only after studying the

Big Book for some time. Two examples:

In Jim’s story on pages 35-37, Jim came to the erroneous conclusion that he could safely drink whiskey so long as he mixed it with milk. As foolish as this may sound no medical professional would clinically declare him insane. Alcoholic, yes. Insane no.

Then later on page 37 I found: *“Whatever the precise definition of the word may be, we call this plain insanity.”*

We fellow alcoholics might simply consider this as “Alco-logical” thinking. I believe this is what Bill W. meant to get across to us:

- **Sane:** When an alcoholic can see and act on the truth in drink.

- **Insane:** When an alcoholic cannot see and act on the truth in drink.

—Bob S.

This Alcoholic Hit Rock Bottom

Throughout my life, I have been a Catholic, an Atheist, and an Agnostic. Today, I am a Student in the Program of AA. My sobriety date is December 1, 2020.

For me, the concept of a Higher Power (HP) is something that is still evolving. I love science, and I am a

voracious consumer of all things quantum. Because I have struggled with the God word, I am sharing my experience here to encourage any fellow alcoholics who might feel that God is an elusive concept. Specifically, I want to share my conviction that any alcoholic can practice the 12 Steps of AA – regardless of where they may be in terms of spiritual convictions.

For me, my HP is a dynamic energy hundreds of billions of years alive. My HP is the level of consciousness that created mankind and every living particle in existence. Everything is living through the energy of this HP, and everything in existence is energy. Matter is nothingness - only presenting at my level of consciousness. There is no place where one person begins or ends because at the very smallest particle everything is also a wave. Sometimes, like ocean surfers, I can catch this wave. Sometimes a change in my consciousness allows me a connection to this HP as follows.

I was climbing down a steep cliff near my home in Baja. Of course, I had been drinking. About midway down, my sandal strap broke, and I fell about 10 feet onto the jagged rock surface. I landed on my right elbow – the same elbow that I had severely broken years ago while on a fishing trip. The pain was excruciating, and I could not

breathe for a moment. I was unable to sit up. I glanced over at my elbow and saw the bone sticking out from under my skin. I was dizzy and nauseous from the sight of the injury. I had broken my elbow – again!



I was a 2-hour drive away from the nearest medical facility. I was screaming for help, and at the same time I knew that my screams were obliterated by the wind and surf. I was isolated and helpless. I cried out: God, please help me! My vision blurred, and I felt the daylight leaving me as though I was going to pass out. I called out again: God, please help me! The sound of the wind and surf vanished. Time and place were gone. I heard a voice say clearly to me, “*Be still and I will help you.*” I looked around me for a fellow climber – but there was none. I was overcome by an indescribable sense of peace and serenity.

When my partner found me, he surveyed my elbow and said that it looked broken. We would need to make our way to a medical facility. Somehow, I intuitively knew that my elbow was severely injured – but it was not broken. The elbow would be fine, with some ice and rest. My partner replied that I was in a state of shock and that my discernment was severely compromised. I agreed with him and told him that I would need to lie down before we embarked upon the long drive.

I was helped to bed, and we applied ice compresses. Three hours later, the hematoma had shrunk, and I was able to bend my elbow a little bit. We never made the ride to the clinic. Today, my elbow is fine. Question: Who spoke to me at the cliffs that day?

—Linda C.

Desperation is a Great Motivator

Sincerity is a Great Healer

Recovery in *Alcoholics Anonymous* (A.A.) affects people in many ways. The first and most obvious is their ability to abstain from the use of alcohol for without that there can be no recovery. Next is the willingness to abandon the idea that they can do this on their own and to seek the help of something outside of their own failed

way of thinking. Third is the act of surrendering and buying in completely.

At this point, the recovery process may differ depending on your age, your gender, your economic situation, your marital status, your legal woes, and other side issues. It is not our role to judge anyone who comes to A. A. seeking help nor is it our job to bail them out of their current situation out of sympathy. That does not mean that we cannot buy a meal for a hungry soul or give them a few bucks for gas.



We are recovering alcoholics and our role is to listen and to try to understand what they need from us consistent with the principles we have learned and relate our experiences with them. Younger arrivals usually are dual addicted. The average long-term alcoholic that has not experienced the drug culture lifestyle may have a difficult time identifying with them.

Recovered addicts usually share about their *rip off* mentality as a user, while the average common variety alcoholic talks about the guilt and shame and the need to pay bar tab. A high percentage of our membership arrive in their forties in the middle of, or on the cusp of the threat of a divorce, and without experienced feed-back, make bad decisions. In some cases, they could have salvaged their marriage and saved the children the damage caused by divorce.

My main question when greeting a newcomer at a meeting is usually *“What brings you to A.A.?”* Usually, their response comes in the form of a complaint about the situation they are in, (divorce papers, DUI, Fired from job) etc. My next question is, *“If that hadn’t happened, would you be here today?”* Their response is usually, *“Probably not.”*

I then explain that my first wife could have filed for divorce ten times before she became desperate enough to do it and, had she not, I would, still be out there circling the drain or worse. For two years I tried to convince her to take me back, but it did not happen. Desperation brought me to the door of A.A. where I began the life I live today.

This type of perspective usually gets his attention, and they often turn out to

be more accepting of the need to change. Next, I share the experience that worked for me. It may come in a sincere statement such as, *“I know that I have been wrong about what a husband/father’s responsibilities are and that I am an alcoholic. I believe that I’ve found the solution to my drinking problem. You have suffered from all of this, and I have learned greatly from the mistakes I have made, and I intend to do my best to make it right. Whatever the outcome is, I want to minimize the trauma to the children as we move forward.”*



This type of sincerity sometimes takes the pressure off and gives her some breathing room and in some cases, opens the door to salvaging the marriage. My question is: *“Can you live up to these proposed actions?”*

Another area where sincerity and ownership of past mistakes has an unexpected outcome is in the courtroom. Judges have heard every flimsy excuse in the world and can see

right through all the BS of a con artist. They are not fooled by them. Believe me when I say that I have witnessed more than my share of these two approaches to resolving the damages of alcoholic behavior. The sincere approach far outweighs the con job, most of the time, and you cannot fake sincerity.

—Rick R.

Suggestions for Step Two Success Turn it Over to Life

We often want to defend ourselves from harm when we feel that life has cheated us, or people have betrayed us. We try to control them. This is really an illusion of control. So, we continue our addictions, leading to even more isolation. Often, alcoholics believe the solution to isolation is more isolation.

Without something to entrust, life is very difficult without being able to trust anything and anyone. Can we come to believe that something can be a positive reinforcement for us? Can life itself support us?

Many of us in A.A. found the courage to believe that our sobriety sisters, Sponsor, and a Higher Power can support us very well. It takes some experience in the A.A. program to accept this idea. Truly, life would be

significantly easier if we didn't have struggle by ourselves.

We can set aside this illusion of control, and it is just an illusion, if we allow a higher power to enter our lives. As said many times, we don't have to get sober by ourselves in isolation. We found that when we start to trust, we become more at ease and comfortable.

Give up Self-Will, practice Self-Love and Self-Care.

With my sponsees, I ask that they make a two-column list of “*self*”: phrases: negative and positive. On the negative side there is self-will, self-centeredness, and self-gratification. In the positive column, there is self-love, self-care, self-worth, and self-esteem. I look in the mirror and say “*I love you. You are so generous and kind to people.*”



For people who have been victims of physical and/or emotional abuse like

myself, I must put aside thoughts that I deserved this abuse or that I was too sensitive.



We try to accept the stream of Life, and instead of trying to swim upstream against it, we can swim down stream and navigate life better.

—Geena Louise

“By letting it go, it all gets done. The world is won by those who let it go. But when you try and try, the world is beyond the winning.”

—Lao Tzu

“It is as impossible for humans to demonstrate the existence of God, as it would be for Sherlock Holmes to demonstrate the existence of Arthur Conan Doyle.”

—Frederick Buechner, Christian Minister

“Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.”

—Mahatma Gandhi

Getting Off on the Right Foot

A New Beginning

The world outside of Alcoholics Anonymous has little understanding of what goes on in A.A. meetings. In the last 40 years or so, we have been inundated with problem drinkers who were sent into rehabilitation programs. Sometimes they come to us with a new perspective on what the Alcoholics Anonymous program is all about. Rehab programs are focused on the alcohol and the A.A. program is focused on re-learning how to live life.

The first step in the book: Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) is only four pages long. At the lower half of the third page it says: *“To the doubters we could say, ‘Perhaps you’re not an alcoholic after all. Why don’t you try some more controlled drinking, bearing in mind meanwhile what we have told you about alcoholism?’”* This attitude brought immediate and practical results.

It was then discovered that when one alcoholic had planted in the mind of another the true nature of his malady, that person could never be the same

again. Following every spree, he would say to himself, “*Maybe those A.A.s were right.*”



After a few such experiences, often years before the onset of extreme difficulties, he would return to us convinced. He had hit bottom as truly as any of us. John Barleycorn himself had been our best advocate.

I would also recommend going into the Big Book, (Alcoholics Anonymous) chapter three at the bottom of page 31 “*We do not like to pronounce any individual as alcoholic, but you can quickly diagnose yourself. Step over to the nearest barroom and try some controlled drinking. Try to drink and stop abruptly. Try it more than once. It will not take you long to decide if you are honest with yourself about it. It may be worth a bad case of the jitters if you get a full knowledge of your condition.*”

For more information about dealing with newcomers and sometimes with their families, I would suggest reading from the middle of page 100-103 in the Big Book especially the paragraph containing the Greenland Icecap. This will give you a sound approach when interacting with doubters and with believers and you will be able to establish credibility with everyone in the program.

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. Half Measures avail us nothing. I believe that the message that the foregoing approach accomplishes that we are not able to do anything for him or her if they think that there is any possibility that they drink successfully.

After someone has a relapse and comes back into the rooms, the first question I ask him or her is “*How did it work out for you?*” We get a little chuckle out of it. We may have just removed the idea that drinking will ever work for them again and they get a new perspective about practicing the A.A. program.

—Rick R.

Special Events

Open Intergroup Positions

If you are interested, please email jayezdaisy@yahoo.com with a short bio, sobriety date and why you would like the position. Looking forward to hearing from you!

Activities Chair

2 Years Sobriety

2 Year Commitment

- Coordinate and oversee activities sponsored by Intergroup. Act as responsible party for budget and communication of events to Santa Clara County.
- Sit on ad-hoc committees for additional special activities as directed by Intergroup Chair.
- Attend monthly Intergroup meeting to report on upcoming activities, ask for help with communication and build up excitement.
- Suggested events: Chili Cookoff, Sponsor Brunch, Old Timers Meeting, Annual December Intergroup Potluck at Intergroup meeting.

WANT TO HELP ANOTHER ALCOHOLIC?

GRAPEVINE & LA VIÑA are Great Twelfth Step Tools!

Give a gift subscription to an alcoholic who needs it. Great for:

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Get your group, district, area or AA friends to join in. Carry the Message, it's easy!

Go to aagrapevine.org/carry-the-message to get started
and see our new Carry the Message video at
www.youtube.com/c/AA Grapevine

Join in. It's easy!



2022
CARRY
THE
MESSAGE
PROJECT

**NCCAA
73rd Annual
Spring Conference**

**Northern California Council of
Alcoholics Anonymous**

Oldest AA Conference Since 1947!

San Jose, CA

Holiday Inn San Jose-Silicon Valley

1350 North 1st St San Jose, CA 95112

March 11, 12, 13, 2022

<u>Friday March 11, 2022</u>	<u>Saturday March 12, 2022</u>	<u>Sunday March 13, 2022</u>
2:00 PM Registration Opens 5:00 PM Long Timer's Panel 8:00 PM Open Speaker Meeting	11:00 AM – NCCAA Delegates Meeting – Officer Elections 8:00 PM Open Speaker Meeting	8:00 AM Morning Meditation 10:00 AM Open Speaker Meeting
Dave B. Torrance, CA	David D. Los Gatos, CA	Nicole C. Morgan Hill, CA
Additional program information on back of flyer		

Al-Anon and Spanish Speakers & Participation

Area 06 & 07 Updates – Marathon Meeting

Saturday Night Dance – Free Drawing

Sunday Morning Meditation Meeting

Officer Elections will be held at this Conference

Visit NCCAA website for more information on how to be of Service to NCCAA.

[NCCAA Website](http://www.norcalaa.org)

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

PRE-REGISTRATION CUT OFF DATE IS MARCH 1st, 2022

CONFERENCE RATE FOR HOTEL CUT OFF DATE IS FEBRUARY 22nd, 2022

PRE-REGISTRATION - \$20.00 (per person) - AT THE CONFERENCE - \$25.00

If you already registered for the canceled 2020 San Jose Conference your Registration will be honored.
Please check NCCAA website to check if your name is on the list.

VISIT OUR WEBSITE AT --<http://www.norcalaa.org>



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”

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

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

**Open 6 days a week for in-person
book and literature sales, and more.**

Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday 2:00 pm – 6:00 pm

Thursday, Friday, Saturday 10:00 am – 2:00 pm

Sunday: Closed



Details, Map, Calendar, Holiday Closings, and More:

<https://aasanjose.org/central-office>

408 889-1001 • info@aasanjose.org