

A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERGROUP CENTRAL OFFICE OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY



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COIN Schedule of Topics

Topics in this Issue

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

Courage



The strength to venture, persevere, and withstand danger, fear, or difficulty.

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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>

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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.

Tradition Four

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

Long Form

With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount.

Practice These Principles – Tradition Four

1. Do I insist that there are only a few right ways of doing things in A.A.?
2. Does my group always consider the welfare of the rest of A.A.? Of nearby groups? Of groups on the other side of the world?
3. Do I put down other members' behavior when it is different from mine, or do I learn from it?
4. Do I always bear in mind that, to those outsiders who know I am in A.A., I may to some extent represent our entire beloved Fellowship?
5. Am I willing to help newcomers go to any lengths-their lengths, not mine-to stay sober?
6. Do I share my knowledge of A.A. tools with other members who may not have heard of them?

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

Step Four Need Not be a Saga Exposing the Root of Our Faulty Behaviors

By Rick R.

The subjects that we need to address in Step four are the faulty behaviors that caused us to damage our relationships with other people and to get down to the core issues which caused us to behave the way we did.

It is not necessary to drag these episodes out Ad nauseum. Page 65 in Alcoholics Anonymous (The Big Book) starts the process with the word “*resentment*.” This is just the first topic we will address in our inventory but not the last. Some others may deal with subjects such as: *gossip, dishonesty, selfishness, neglect, character assassination, etc.*

These issues are our natural instincts, for protection, but far exceed their intended purpose. More topics will be revealed as you fill in the “why we did these things” part of this Step. I would have one page for each of these matters and as a new issue came up, I would open another page.

I would start with the most obvious person I had a resentment for and try to determine the cause and effect of these behaviors. Once I discovered why I felt threatened by this person or issue, I could deal with it at that level then I would move on to the next person on the list and so on. After going through three or four of these people I found that I was repeating myself and I would move to the next topic. I see that most of these fears stem from my own insecurity.

For example: I was talking to a friend awhile back and I questioned how we could talk about another person without it be considered gossip? His response was life changing for me when he said: “*All forms of criticism and character*



assassination stem from low self-esteem.” The low self-esteem was the defect of character, and the criticism and character assassination were the shortcomings (faulty behaviors).

To put it in simpler terms let’s say you just purchased a brand-new SUV and drove away from the dealership and as you approach the first stop sign you hit the brakes and the car didn’t stop properly and drifted out into the intersection. You carefully drive the car back to the dealership and explain what happened and the salesman said, the mechanic will check it out and see what went wrong. Shortly there-after the salesman returned and explains that they put the wrong break-pads on the car, and they would have them replaced and it should be fine. You get the car back and drive off and when you reach the first stop sign it stops perfectly and it stops perfectly in all the other stop sign that you approach.

The defect was the faulty brakes and the failure to stop was the shortcoming. Once the defect was corrected, the shortcoming went away. The defect was the cause and the shortcoming was the effect. If we simply look at our irrational fears and insecurities as the defects in every case, we can get through Step four quickly. I find it best to add any new shortcomings, as they become obvious, to an additional

page and expose them to the light.



Without a thorough fourth and fifth Step, I can’t see any way that a person can do the rest of the steps with those tormenting ghosts of yesterday still rattling around in their head. They may never drink another drop of alcohol, but they may never rid themselves of those corrosive mental issues. They may miss out on, what I see as, the most important promise in the program and that is, peace of mind. Ridding

ourselves of the root causes of our behaviors is the solution to our mental unrest. In time, we will develop a life of credibility and integrity and above all, a clear conscience. It gets easier as we move forward and get right with ourselves and the world around us.

Perspectives

A drunk in Minnesota decides to go ice fishing. So he packs up his stuff and goes out onto the ice. He starts sawing a hole in the ice, and a booming voice says, *“YOU WILL FIND NO FISH UNDER THAT ICE!”*

The drunk looks up, ignores it, and continues hacking at the ice. The voice repeats, *“YOU WILL FIND NO FISH UNDER THE ICE.”*

The drunk looks up and says, *“God? Is this God trying to warn me?”*

The voice says, *“NO, I’M THE MANAGER OF THIS ICE RINK.”*

Buffalo is a drinking town with a football problem.

Me: *“My name is Matt, and I’m an alcoholic.”*

AAA: *“This is AAA, not AA.”*

Me: *“Yeah, I was just explaining how my car got in the lake.”*

“Dear alcohol, We had a deal where you would make me funnier, smarter, and a better dancer. I saw the video . . . we need to talk.”

Alcoholism is giving up everything for one thing.

Recovery is giving up one thing for everything.



In living, choose your ground well.

In thought, stay deep in the heart.

In relationships, be generous.

In speaking, hold to the truth.

—Lao Tzu

Yesterday I was clever, so I wanted to change the world. Today I am wise, so I am changing myself. —Rumi

Step Four: Was I Ready? 1, 2, 3, AND OUT

By Rick R.

When I attended my first *Alcoholics Anonymous* (A.A.) meeting, I had no idea what any of the steps entailed. But at that meeting I heard the things that were read and sharing about step. I now realize that I came away from that meeting a different man. My life took a 180% turn, and I have never been the same since. For the first time in my life, I saw a refreshing, new approach to living; I had to do, was to show up and listen. That may have been the taking of step 1, but I did not know it at the time. I realize from that day on, I have had a huge *change of perception* and I have learned to recognize faulty thinking and to find the answers to life issues as they were articulated by the collective sharing in that meeting.

I have heard people in the program, when attending a *structured* step study meeting say that there may be as many as 35 people at the meeting when they started on Step 1, but by the time they got to Step 4 they might be down to 12 or 13 people left in the room. They say it is “1. 2. 3. And out.”



There seems to be something in Step 4 that their ego would not let them address at the time. Like myself, I had things that I thought I would take to the grave with me. When this happens, I believe that they may not be ready

for this step yet. If they are hurried into it, they may start to search for an easier softer way. If they stay on that softer path for long, they may end up having a *half-measures* approach, which avails them nothing. They may waste precious years, or worse, they may relapse and do irreparable damage that cannot be undone.

When I hear of a person who has a relapse after having long term sobriety I often wonder if it was due to skimping on Steps 4 and 5, which leads to a much more superficial approach to the remaining steps. Thoroughness is the watchword when taking these steps.

I use the 4th Step in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) to illustrate what I mean when I try to describe the way reading and hearing the things that they describe in Step 4, are things that we live with every day of our lives. Each time we read them again, we realize that we have addressed some of these issues without being aware of it.

I have heard people who have not taken Step 4 yet, using terms such as, "restraint of pen and tongue", or "remove the word blame from my speech and thought." Without realizing it, they are reducing their problems as the result of this different mindset. If they are honest, about not being ready to take Steps 4 and 5, it leaves the door opened for the time when they are more confident, and they will be able to revisit this Step and make a clean slate of it without feeling guilty or being in denial about it.



I believe that the main reason why they wrote and published the 12&12 was because they did not want to establish a precedent of editing the Big Book. They wanted to give amplifying information and examples of how to navigate the twelve steps (a road map if you like).

We can tell stories and drunkalogues of our drinking days and that's fine. But if we don't go through a meaningful process of addressing the causes and solutions to our problems, we will be selling ourselves short, and life is too precious to waste. The question is: If this applies to me, am I strong enough to revisit Steps 4 and 5.

Step Four Personal Inventory

On our grudge list ,we set opposite each name our injuries. Was it our self-esteem, our security, our ambitions, our personal, or sex relations, which had been interfered with?

We were usually as definite as this example:

I'm resentful at	The Cause	Affects my
Jennifer	Flirting with my husband. Told my husband of my bisexual playmate. Jennifer may get my job at the office.	Sex relations, Self-esteem [fear] Security Self-esteem [fear]
Alyssa	She's crazy – she's my friend, but snubs me. She committed her husband for drinking.	Personal relation, Self-esteem [fear] Security Personal relation
My boss	Unreasonable, Unjust, Micromanaging Threatens to fire me for my drinking and padding my expense account	Security, Self-esteem [fear] Financial Security
My Husband	Misunderstands and nags me. Likes Jennifer attention. Wants house put in his name only.	Personal relation, Self-esteem [fear] Sex relations Personal & Financial Security

We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully.

COIN Table of Articles

October 2021

1. My Pot of Gold At the End of My Rainbow
2. Where Is the Hamburger?
3. Step Ten in Action
4. Continued to Take Personal Inventory
5. Check Outside Issues at the Door

November 2021

1. The Values I Learned as a Child
2. Dear Newcomer
3. Ego Good? Ego Bad?
4. Evolving Thinking on Tradition Ten
5. I Do not Understand Thermodynamics
6. Freedom From Guilt
7. A Very Grateful Sea Going Alcoholic

December 2021

1. A Life of Joy and Happiness
2. Reflections on a visit to Elmwood
3. Conference-Approved Book Written by Women?
4. The Importance of Step Twelve

January 2022

1. My Journey to OZ
2. Step One: Understanding Alcoholism
3. Suggestions for Success: Step One
4. Step One for Bill W
5. Alcoholism: A Disease of Perception
6. The First Step

February 2022

1. Big Book Meaning of Insanity
2. This Alcoholic Hit Rock Bottom
3. Desperation is a Great Motivator
4. Suggestions for Step Two Success
5. Getting Off on the Right Foot

March 2022

1. Step 3 Work - From alcoholic and newcomer
2. Step 3 Decision
3. Conceded to My Innermost Self
4. To The Newcomer
5. A Spiritual Choice
6. Step 3: Came to Believe
7. Step Three: God as He May Express Himself

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:

- Sponsees • Newcomers • Prisons • Detoxes • Doctor's Offices • Group Celebrations • District and Area Events • Giveaways

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

TURLOCK UNITY DAY

**SATURDAY
APRIL 23, 2022**



**STAN COUNTY
FAIRGROUNDS- E1
TURLOCK**

FUN BEGINS AT 11!



**CELEBRATING 30 YEARS OF UNITY
AND FELLOWSHIP!**

**FEATURING: LOCAL AND OUT OF
TOWN SPEAKERS, YOUNG PERSONS
SPEAKER AND PANEL ALSO AN
AL-ANON SPEAKER**

**CATERED MEXICAN FOOD DINNER,
DJ AND DANCING, RAFFLES WITH
PRIZES!**

**QUESTIONS? CONTACT BRUCE:
BRUCE.DOWSR@YAHOO.COM**

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>

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