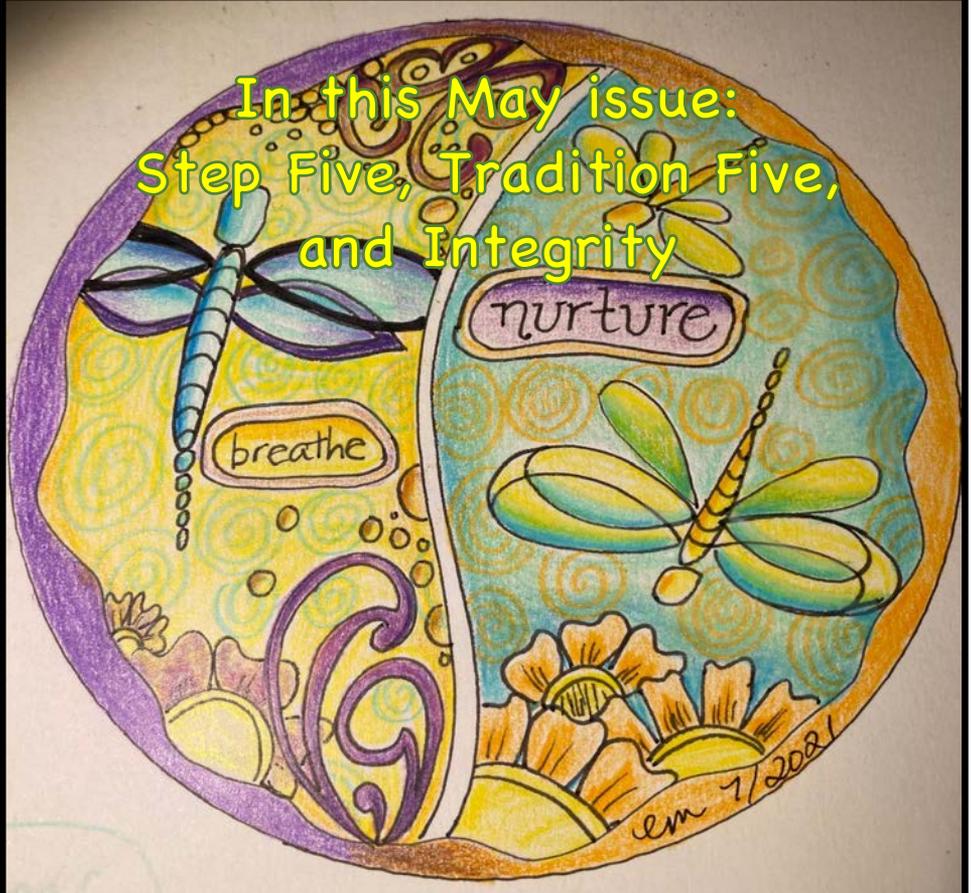


A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERGROUP CENTRAL OFFICE OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY



In this May issue:  
Step Five, Tradition Five,  
and Integrity

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# COIN Schedule of Topics

## Topics in this Issue

### Step Five

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

### Tradition Five

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

### Integrity

Firm adherence to a code or set of beliefs.

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Please email all submissions to [coin@aasanjose.org](mailto: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 Five**

Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

## **Long Form**

Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose—that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

## **Practice These Principles – Tradition**

1. Do I ever cop-out by saying, “I’m not a group, so this or that Tradition doesn’t apply to me”?
2. Am I willing to explain firmly to a newcomer the limitations of A.A. help, even if he gets mad at me for not giving him a loan?
3. Have I today imposed on any A.A. member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
4. Am I willing to twelfth-step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
5. Do I help my group in every way I can to fulfill our primary purpose?
6. Do I remember that A.A. old-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from 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 Five: A Clean Slate Those Tormenting Ghosts of Yesterday

By Rick R.

We were all born with a clean slate. From the first day of our lives, we started to experience different emotions. Those feelings had to do with the way we evolved into who we are today. Instinctively, we responded to the different threats and comforts of life. These were the things that established our mental strengths and weaknesses. I believe, our problems can be traced back to the conditioning we experienced as we formed our mental and spiritual makeup.

The perception we have of ourselves may be likened to a chalkboard containing every experience of our lives. If we can look at it and be satisfied that we had a



good track-record, we would be comfortable with it and lead a normal life. If, however, we find ourselves on the negative side of the ledger in our formative years, we may develop abnormal feelings of guilt and shame that triggers the beginning of the compulsion to drink excessively.

In the beginning we get a temporary relief that tells us that we are fine, but it only lasts until we wake up the next morning and find ourselves in an even deeper quandary. We reach for the bottle, and again it gives us that temporary euphoria. We repeat this process over and over until, something tragic in our lives drives us to *Alcoholics Anonymous* (A.A.) where we are encouraged to go through a process that can restore us to a more normal life.

Steps One through Four are about surrender, acceptance, and discovery. Step Five is about disclosure and for me, it was the gateway to how I was to live the rest of my life. After two attempts at Step Four, I was faced with the decision as to

whether my future was going to be honest and meaningful, or just a meaningless facade. Fortunately, for me, I took a leap of faith and disclosed all those, so called, “*tormenting ghosts of yesterday*,” Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) pg.55.

Looking back on it now, I realize that the decision to do this was the hinge pin for my thoroughness, with the rest of the steps. Had I not *cleaned the slate* at that time, I just do not see how I could have followed the spirit of truth and honesty, with myself and others that would have resulted in the peace of mind that I enjoy today.

My inventory had to deal with bad habits and deeds which had to be changed by the process suggested in Steps Six and Seven. That was the easy part of Step Five. However, *those tormenting ghosts of yesterday* were another story. These



were not habits, but deeds that I had done as an adolescent kid that seemed unforgivable. I thought *No one should ever know; I would take them to the grave with me*. Mustering the strength to take that risk may have been the most crucial step forward I have ever made. My brain had been lying to me, after all; how bad could a thirteen-year-old kid be? That one decision is what I credit with giving me my life back. If

I had not done it, I do not see how I could have given a good effort to the rest of the steps.

I often hear members of the program that seem to resist looking deeper into their regrets and seem to build a wall of reasons why they do not need to. I wonder if they might be caught up in the same dilemma that I was in when I took my Fifth Step. I wish I could reassure them that it is not worth the mental torment that it puts us through and that it may be wise to revisit that step and clean the slate.

We cannot live alone with them; we must talk to someone about them. “*Even A.A. old-timers, sober for years, often pay dearly for skimping this step,*” 12&12 pg. 56. If, you are that person, I encourage you to try to garner the strength to take that risk, and *clean the slate*. Afterall, we only live once. Let us not waste the opportunity to live a peaceful and contented life.

## Step Five Rewards

By Bob S.

My Fourth Step inventory focused the light of truth onto unrealized driving forces of selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. It also provided certain necessary tools to *face and be rid* of these newly discovered grosser handicaps (Great reward!) But still, countless other destructive little demons, of the grosser variety, lurked in some dark dank space deep inside. They freely frolicked in this invisible environment, happily protected from the “Sunlight Of-The-Spirit.” It was as though they were protected under a very opaque umbrella, weaved with the fabric of the Twelve Steps: The grosser handicaps of selfishness, dishonest, resentment, and fear.

My sponsor informed me that Step Five was to include a detailed revelation of these grosser defects of character and shortcomings. Those little demons and devils of conceit, jealousy, carelessness, intolerance, ill temper, and all the rest of it were about to be exposed -- not only to my sponsor, but to GOD! Although my sponsor had not the power to close that umbrella, the Big Book tells me that God could and would if he were sought! (Those little fiends must have been trembling down there!). The sunlight of the Spirit was about to shine on those little demons – for they cannot survive in the sunlight of God’s Truth!



The Fifth Step suggestions, on page 75 of Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book), tell us that we now begin to have a spiritual experience. Well, the realization that God is soon-to-remove the very things that blocked us from seeing and acting on the truth in drink. This indeed speaks to a radical inner transformation! I believe

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the main goal of this vital step is to allow us (me) to realize exactly what dominant inner forces have blocking the truth-in-drink. Only then will I know exactly what imperfections to ask God to remove in Steps Six and Seven.

It was very important that I acted before my mind decided to remember only what it wanted to remember. I believe that the Big Book timetable is very important here! We are told to do Step Four “*at once,*” Step Five “*at the first opportunity,*” review for a short period and “*then*” (not later), do Step Six. It says go right into Step Seven “*when ready.*” Steps Five, Six and Seven are often referred to as the *same day steps*.

I am very happy that my sponsor, Carl, helped me close that umbrella via the Big Book directions. I haven't had a drink of booze since!

## **Peace of Mind and a Quiet Heart What More Could a Person Want**

By Rick R.

In my early days of sobriety, I was hearing a lot of words that were unfamiliar to me. I did not pay much attention to them at the time since I had bigger fish to fry. I had a drinking problem. Everything else took a back seat to that. I was overwhelmed by marital, legal, and economic problems. Words like love, patience, spirituality, and forgiveness were foreign to me. I did not see how they mattered when all I wanted to do was quit drinking. I stayed close to that group, and they started calling me *the fortunate one*. At the age of 28, I was the youngest one in that group. The rest of members in the group were over forty and it stayed that way for quite a while as drug problems had not evolved enough at the time (1969) to affect the influx of younger members. I felt like the elders of that group took a special interest in me and that endeared me to them in a special way.



I was always listening for the magic word that would inspire me and give me a purpose in life. One day it happened. Tears come to my eyes when I recall the memory of the gentle voice of an old farmer named Harlan. As he talked about all the trials and tribulations in the past, that he had endured, he explained how he had stumbled into A.A. and that all the answers were there. But he did not understand it until he had a goal to reach for. The next words that came out of his mouth changed my life forever. He said, “*All I want from life is peace of mind and a quiet heart.*”

The next thought that came to me was, *what more could a person want?* To this day, I still quote Harlan and credit him with the inspiration. He passed away in 2007 being sober 51 years.



I have been through the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) and the 12&12 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions) many times. I have made a slow but very purposeful attempt to rid my mind of all the tormenting memories and regrets of the past. As I processed each one of them, the more I realize that

*peace of mind* is the natural result of living by these principals. Clearing the wreckage of the past, and changing those behaviors that caused it, and practicing unselfish behaviors, with the help of seasoned veterans like Harlan, I move closer and closer to the promise. “*We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.*”

My books are marked and hi-lighted over the years as I evolved through the step study meetings or checked out the references to the Big Book in the Daily Reflections. Recently I have been focusing on the word *peace* and underlining it. It is amazing how often it is linked to other words that seem to get more attention. *Peace of mind encompasses the spirit of recovery in alcoholics anonymous.* I will be forever grateful that God saw fit to lead me to this wonderful program. Harlan, rest in peace and thank you for the inspiration.

## Step Five - Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

By B. Y.

Do I get to discover (and admit) the exact nature of my wrongs? Step 5.

OK, sounds great.

Step Four says, Made a searching and fearless *moral* inventory of our wrongs.

I know this because I have been reading the Twelve Steps at all the meetings and hearing people talk about them all.



But I am on Step Three. *Faith*.

I feel I have been living two steps ahead of my thoughts for some time, and I would really, really like them to catch up, please.

I have been biting on the chomp to get myself sorted out. Not just dried out and dealing (trying, at least.)

Coping without my malfunctioning coping mechanism.

Thank God my sponsor told me I could already, and always, use steps one through three to deal with all my life's troubles. How did I get by before?

Thank goodness, thank God, I get to go forward in this program. I need help. *Integrity*. And maybe I can be helping others, the same like me.

One beginner's courage on the path.

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## COIN Table of Articles

### 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

### April 2022

1. Step Four Need Not be a Saga
2. Perspectives and Jokes
3. Step Four: Was I Ready?
4. Step Four Personal Inventory – One Woman's List

## Special Events

# 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](http://aagrapevine.org/carry-the-message) to get started  
and see our new Carry the Message video at  
[www.youtube.com/c/AAGrapevine](http://www.youtube.com/c/AAGrapevine)



Join in. It's easy!

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MESSAGE  
PROJECT**

hosted by:  
Area 69



**IN PERSON !**

**WWW.2022AAPACIFICREGFORUM.COM**



**Sept. 16 - 18, 2022**

**PACIFIC  
REGIONAL  
FORUM**

Mariott Downtown @ City Creek  
75 W Temple St., Salt Lake City, Utah

**RECOVERY ELEVATED**

## 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.

**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](mailto:coin@aasanjose.org)**

**Santa Clara County Central Office of A.A.  
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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:

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