In this July issue: Step Seven, Tradition Seven, and Humility

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COIN Schedule of Topics

Topics in this Issue

Step Seven

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

Tradition Seven

Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Humility

Freedom from pride or arrogance. Modesty. Meekness. Remaining Teachable.

Humility, Open-mindedness, Willingness

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Please email all submissions to coin@aasanjose.org
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
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Intergroup Information & Orientation
https://aasanjose.org/intergroup-orientation

Service Opportunities
https://aasanjose.org/service

Central Office Information
https://aasanjose.org/central-office

COIN Editor: Geena Louise R.
Sunlight of the Spirit Cover Art: Elizabeth M.
Central Office Lead: Jody W.

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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 of the Month

Tradition Seven

Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

Long Form

The A.A. groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then, too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasuries which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority.

Practice These Principles

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help A.A. (my group, Central Office, GSO) remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new guy who can’t afford it yet? How generous was I when tanked in a barroom?
2. Should the Grapevine sell advertising space to book publishers and drug companies, so it can make a big profit and become a bigger magazine, in full color, at a cheaper price per copy?
3. If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn’t it be okay to let the government subsidize A.A. groups in hospitals and prisons?
4. Is it more important to get a big A.A. collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
5. Is a group treasurer’s report unimportant A.A. business? How does the treasurer feel about it?
6. How important is the feeling of self-respect, rather than the feeling of being always under obligation for charity received?

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

Brief Wisdom

• “When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but with humility comes wisdom.”
  — Proverbs 11:2

• “Let us be absolutely clear about one thing: we must not confuse humility with false modesty or servility.”
  — Paulo Coelho

• “Without humility, there can be no humanity.”
  — John Buchan

• “I have three precious things which I hold fast and prize. The first is gentleness; the second is frugality; the third is humility, which keeps me from putting myself before others.”
  — Lao Tzu

• “Pride makes us artificial and humility makes us real.”
  — Thomas Merton

Notes on Step Seven

— Bob S.

There was true humility and deep surrender by asking God to “take all of me,” both the “good” and the “bad.” This was an admission that I could not trust myself to differentiate between the two.

I almost drank after five months sobriety before going into the 12-Step process with my sponsor. He wisely pointed out the obvious fact that my mind lied to me—It was not to be trusted! I needed a higher power (God) to see the truth about myself. What an ego-shattering revelation! Yet, it was necessary to give up on myself and trust God to take over my recovery. Someone said: “Self cannot rid self of self with self.”
I often hear long dissertations of what Bill W. meant by “shortcomings” and “defects of character” in Step Seven. Though it may be impossible to overstate the importance of dictionaries, Bill W. uses these words to mean the same thing. Let us look how he came about phrasing Steps Six and Seven:

In *Alcoholics Anonymous* (the Big Book), page 59, Step Seven: “Humbly asked Him to remove our ‘shortcomings.’” Page 76, Step Seven: “I pray that you now remove from me every defect of character that stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.” Consequently, it is easy to see that Bill meant for us to absorb these two words as twins.

I wondered why the closing word “Amen” was not used in the many prayers of the steps leading up to Step Seven. It was explained to me that this word can be used as a *summary* of previous connected facts.

In Step Three we asked to be relieved of the bondage of self, but we didn’t know what that was. Not complete. *No Amen!*

In Step Four we only partially realize the nature of said bondage. Not complete. *No amen!*

In Step Five our sponsor may provide deeper insights of the bondage. Not complete. *No Amen!*

In Step Six we become willing to ask God to remove this bondage. Not complete. *No Amen!*

In Step Seven, not that we have a much better insight of our bondage and are willing to be rid of our defects and shortcomings we are now ready to ask God for help. We have completed the necessary prerequisites. The *summary* has been completed—consequently Bill adds the word, “*Amen.*”

So be it.
The 7th Step — The Humility Step

Reprinted from Volume 9 Issue 7 July 2014
— Danette G., San Jose

Humble: having or showing a state of consciousness of one’s defects or shortcomings; not proud, not self-assertive; modest. Humility = the state or quality of being humble; absence of pride or self-assertion.

The topic of the 7th Step is very timely for me right now. Last week at an 8:30 women’s Step Meeting that I went to for the first time, they had a large print edition of The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) for sale, which I bought because mine, 39 years old...is quite worn from much use, not to mention there’s no room left for jotting down and high lighting my “ah-ha” moments which still show up, as I work with my ladies.

My first 7th Step “ah-ha” moment came when I had my first 6 months. Overhearing two people chatting before a meeting, one person said to the other, “You don’t have to be humiliated to get humility.” “That is deep,” I thought as I pondered it, and wrote it in the front of my 12&12 when I got home. Later on, when reading the 7th Step for the first time, I learned that ... once we learn something about Humility, we never have to be humiliated again. A little different, but I left what I wrote as an “ah-ha “moment ...for it was...but in reverse.

Back then, the 6th & 7th Steps were called the “forgotten steps” because they were rarely discussed. Now, on my own, and with the blessings of my current sponsor, I have given myself an assignment to work, with my new 12&12: It is the same assignment I was given many years ago. Re-reading it, I will go through this chapter, and circle the words humbly, humble, and humility. Will take notes and highlight. When finished, will go back to the beginning of the 7th Step, count the circles and put the total at the bottom of the last paragraph.

Then will refer back to my old 12&12 and see how it compares. Awesome!
Another of my 7th Step “ah-ha” moments was in 2006. One of my young men friends in AA, who went to the same noon meetings as I, gave several of us cross necklaces. Mine, unlike the others, was a wooden cross with a thin, metallic gold cross strip on top of the wood, on a heavy black string.

One day he asked me why I never wore the cross he gave me. My answer was that I would, once I bought a nice chain for it. (The others he gave out were on chains.) His answer to that, which I will never, ever forget was, “I thought that you would not need a fancy chain!”

Yikes...what can I say?

I still wear that cross today, frequently, on the same black string it came on. It has stayed looking as new as the day it was given to me 8 years ago and is one of my favorite possessions. Whenever I put it on, my mind goes to “I wonder what people think about this wooden cross on a string... do they get it?” LOL (Laugh out loud.)

The 7th Step as well as the 6th Step has come to be a life-long proposition for me. Learning my life lessons and letting go of old stand-byes of behavior with humility...when God thinks I’m ready to let go of them with the willingness of the 6th Step.

Just when I think I’m probably finished with the defects, and good to go, I may hear something in someone’s chair or share ...that I have... new ones or old...doesn’t matter... when I recognize that pride is rearing its head again, have found that with the willingness for removal and in all humility, can ask God to take it away...for good and all. Sometimes quickly...sometimes slowly. I can do what I have to do today, with acceptance that I will always have some work to do on this Step for a lifetime.

So...how many circles do I have written down at the end of the 7th Step?

Well...I “ain’t tellin’”...You have to find that out on your own!

Keep comin’ back...it works!
Pride-Humility-Shame
The Golden Mean

— Rick R.

Defining the word *humility* was not an easy thing to do. It took a long time to settle on an understanding that put it to rest for me. I thought that *pride* and *humility* were opposites. The final piece of the puzzle came to me in my 22nd year of sobriety. I was on the phone with a man who was trying to engage me in an argument. When he realized that I wasn't going to bite, he fired his last volley by saying: “*Well, I've heard stories about you, and you're no angel.*” I thought about it for a few seconds and replied, “*I have done things in my life that I am not proud of, but I am not ashamed of anything that I have done in the past 22 years.*” The phone call ended peacefully.

Several years later, in a step study meeting on Step Seven, the topic was *humility*. I remembered that phone call and realized that *pride* was not the opposite of *humility*. *Pride* was the opposite of *shame* and that *humility* fell right in the middle of the two. When I boiled it all down, I concluded that I should not be proud of, or ashamed of the things I do and that I should be in the middle somewhere. This applies to my receiving as well as my giving.

On Page 62 of the Big Book (*Alcoholics Anonymous*) it says, “*Selfishness---Self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows, and they retaliate.*” In *Alcoholics Anonymous* (A.A.) I learned that if selfishness was the root of my problems, I could solve them by examining my motives for all my behaviors and staying on the unselfish side of every decision I make. That one challenge has taken all the shame out of my conscience and has replaced it with compassion and empathy and as a result I receive unselfish comments in return.

Aristotle referred to this as “*The Golden Mean*” where, for example, when we are in the habit of giving compliments to our friends when they deserve it, we should not be so stoic that we cannot accept a compliment with the proper amount...
of appreciation, when we deserve it. To me, this means finding the mean between the extremes and exercising it until it becomes second nature.

I have known some humble people in my lifetime, and they have many things in common: They seldom bring attention to themselves, they never criticize others, they are always comforting, and they are always an asset and never a liability. Humble people do the things they were taught as a child. They treat others with respect. They are: trustworthy, loyal, helpful, friendly, courteous, kind, obedient… Sound familiar? I learned that in the Boy Scouts. I learned the Golden Rule in church, but I was never strong enough to live by it.

Today, I am stronger. If you are not sure what you are supposed to be doing, read the 11th Step Prayer in The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) or The Boy Scouts Laws, or try practicing The Golden Rule. That should be a good start. When I found A.A., I was reintroduced to these values and helped to rein in my ego, and today I am at peace with myself and with the world around me.

Step Seven Taught Me That Pride Can Work Both Ways

Reprinted from Volume 10 Issue 7 July 2015
— Stephanie L.

Step Seven was the ultimate lesson in humility for me. In taking (and retaking) steps Four and Five, I realized that I had overlooked my predominant and single-most destructive character defect. For lack of a better term I call it reverse pride. Whereas I’d never thought of myself as a proud person, Step Seven brought me to understand that pride can work both ways.

Reverse pride in my mind means an utter sense of unworthiness and self-loathing. When people would speak at the podium of “staying right-sized,” I always took that to mean not getting “too big.” I thought it meant not thinking of oneself as “bigger than God,” as “being in charge,” as “operating on self-will.” In my experience, self-will always runs riot. Astounding as it seems now, pride wasn’t even on my first Fourth Step list.
It was a true spiritual awakening. It was as close to the proverbial burning bush experience as I’ve ever had when I realized that not being big enough meant that I wasn’t “staying right-sized.” I was too small.

All my life, I can remember feeling unworthy of love, compassion, time and space. I was never enough. This paralyzing inadequacy even came into my step work. Had my moral inventory been searching and fearless enough? Had I truly turned my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand him? Was I ready for God to remove all of my character defects?

With the sage and gentle guidance of my sponsor, I realized that I was desperately seeking to understand how (and when) my character defects were going to be removed. In hindsight, I was desperately trying to understand how I was going to let them go. It was only in taking my Seventh Step that I realized – truly realized – that all I had to do was to humble myself before God and be willing to ask Him to remove all of my character defects – including my pride.

C.S. Lewis said that true “humility is not thinking less of ourselves, but thinking of ourselves less.” I heard once at a meeting that humility is fundamentally self-forgetting, as opposed to the self-fixation of pride or the humiliation of self-consciousness. I finally realized in taking my Seventh Step that I had to take myself and my own will out of the equation entirely. It was not how I was going to do anything with regard to my character defects. It was about how humbly I asked God to remove them.

Special Book: Voices of Women in AA
A collection of 61 stories from Grapevine. The book begins with articles by or about women who contributed to AA early in its history, followed by stories by some of the program’s earliest female members. Sections are devoted to spirituality, sponsorship, life changes, relationships, family, careers and friendships.
https://store.aagrapevine.org/voices-of-women-in-aa-2
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3. Suggestions for Success: Step One
4. Step One for Bill W
5. Alcoholism: A Disease of Perception
6. The First Step

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2. This Alcoholic Hit Rock Bottom
3. Desperation is a Great Motivator
4. Suggestions for Step Two Success
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3. Step Four: Was I Ready?
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June 2022
1. Who Holds the Key to Willingness?
2. Hints for Newcomers (and Others)
3. 12-Step Clear-Cut Directions … Are Not on the Wall
4. Step Six Experiences
5. Remembering the Start of Alcoholics Anonymous
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CLASS A TRUSTEE, GSB CHAIR

JIMMY D.
AA MEMBER RIGHTS & RESPONSIBILITIES
Dallas, TX

CHUCK & BETH H.
3 LEGACIES IN RELATIONSHIPS
Destin, FL

REILLY K.
12 CONCEPTS
Winston, OR

KAREN C.
SPONSORSHIP
Oakland, CA

ANDREW S.
Marin, CA

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Sept. 16 - 18, 2022

PACIFIC REGIONAL FORUM

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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

AA Women's Step Topics Zoom Meeting • Thursdays 7PM

This meeting is unique worldwide. Our group produced its own book to address the needs of women.

We found that certain A.A. suggestions are misleading for women, including self-forgetting, perfection, and more. We eliminated the word “moral” since there is a double standard for that.

https://aasanjose.org/meetings?meeting=womens-step-topics
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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