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A PUBLICATION OF THE INTERGROUP CENTRAL OFFICE OF SANTA CLARA COUNTY

In this December issue: Step Twelve, Tradition Twelve, and Service



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Exciting Service Position

I'm Geena Louise, alcoholic and Editor of the COIN, the monthly Central Office Intergroup Newsletter.

My term as COIN Editor is ending. We need a volunteer to become the next editor. I've loved doing it, but rotating leadership is best. 2 year commitment, 2 year sobriety requirement.

I'm not a professional writer, which is unnecessary. You can optionally write a Letter from the Editor any month and publish your own articles. It's as much fun as it sounds.

Email to coin@aasanjose.org



COIN Schedule of Topics

Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Tradition Twelve

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Service

Contribution to the welfare of others

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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 of the Month

Tradition Twelve

Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

Long Form

And finally, we of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the principle of anonymity has an immense spiritual significance. It reminds us that we are to place principles before personalities; that we are actually to practice a genuine humility. This to the end that our great blessings may never spoil us; that we shall forever live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all.

Practice These Principles – Tradition Twelve

1. Why is it a good idea for me to place the common welfare of all A.A. members before individual welfare? What would happen to me if A.A. as a whole disappeared?
2. When I do not trust A.A.'s current servants, who do I wish had the authority to straighten them out?
3. In my opinions of and remarks about other A.A.s, am I implying membership requirements other than a desire to stay sober?
4. Do I ever try to get a certain A.A. group to conform to my standards, not its own?
5. Have I a personal responsibility in helping an A.A. group fulfill its primary purpose? What is my part?
6. Does my personal behavior reflect the Sixth Tradition--or belie it?
7. Do I do all I can do to support A.A. financially? When is the last time I anonymously gave away a Grapevine subscription?
8. Do I complain about certain A.A.s' behavior--especially if they are paid to work for A.A.? Who made me so smart?
9. Do I fulfill all A.A. responsibilities in such a way as to please privately even my own conscience? Really?
10. Do my utterances always reflect the Tenth Tradition, or do I give A.A. critics real ammunition?
11. Should I keep my A.A. membership a secret, or reveal it in private conversation when that may help another alcoholic (and therefore me)? Is my brand of A.A. so attractive that other drunks want it?
12. What is the real importance of me among 500,000 A.A.s?

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

In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida

According to drummer Ron Bushy, organist-vocalist Doug Ingle wrote the song one evening while drinking an entire gallon of Red Mountain wine. When the inebriated Ingle then played the song for Bushy, who wrote down the lyrics for him, Ingle was slurring his words so badly that what was supposed to be "*In the Garden of Eden*" was interpreted by Bushy as "*In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida*".

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/In-A-Gadda-Da-Vida?wprov=sfti1>

The Twelve Rewards

— Ann C. of Niles, Ohio - sober April 1, 1948

Working Step Nine can free us from guilt, shame, or regret of our past, freeing us to live in the present. It can give us, or another person, hope for a better future.

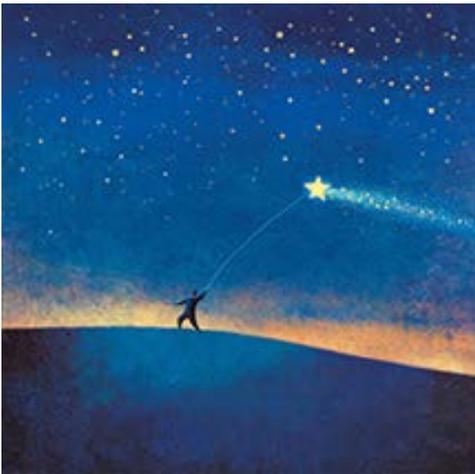
1. We can all have Hope, instead of desperation.
2. Faith, instead of despair.
3. Courage, instead of fear.
4. Peace of Mind, instead of confusion.
5. Self-respect, instead of self-contempt.
6. Self-confidence, instead of helplessness.
7. The respect of others, instead of their pity and contempt.
8. A clean conscience, instead of a sense of guilt.
9. Real friendships, instead of loneliness.
10. A clean pattern of life, instead of a purposeless existence.
11. The love and understanding of our families, instead of their doubts and fears.
12. The freedom of a happy life, instead of the bondage of an alcoholic obsession.

All this and more through *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Are we grateful enough? Gratitude will continue the miracle of your sobriety, I found that out.

Step 12 Spiritual Awakening

— Anne S.

As I worked the *Alcoholics Anonymous* (A.A.) program, Steps 1 through 11 took me through an incredible journey within myself. First recognizing my lack of power over destructive tendencies which wasn't a comforting time. These tendencies drove me to think and do things that hurt myself and others. Even when I knew these destructive powers were real, I didn't have the power to change them even though I wanted to. I found fear, guilt, anger, and want arising and they ruled my life.



As I worked the steps, I came to acknowledge I had become degraded spiritually. But I couldn't raise myself up until I began to discover the helping hand of my Higher Power reaching out to give help. Within the painful recognition of my own powerlessness, there was a nugget of hope.

It was hard at first to turn things over. But, as I couldn't see any other possible solution, I tried to trust. It was a long up and down process. Some days I felt like I could walk on water. Other days the destructive inner voices and doubts became so powerful and persuasive I felt I was sinking back into bad thoughts patterns and old habits. But ,then every time I asked my higher power for help, he was there to save me from my negativity.

With a new trust in my God and a growing sense of his awesome power, I began a personal journey to discover the nature of my wrongs. By discovering these deeper destructive forces within me and confessing them before God and others, they became defined, almost tangible, and I was able to deal with them. I began a course of action to rid myself of these destructive tendencies and character defects. One by one, I turned them over to my higher power. And, one by one they began to lose their power as this greater power took charge in my life and replace them with goodness, peace of mind, joy, and love.

I went forward on my spiritual journey correcting the mistakes of my past, focusing on the potential for good in my life. There were times I tripped, stumbled, and wandered off the path, even went backwards for a while. *But now I had the compass to find the right path again and stay on it.* Through regular self-examination, prayer, and meditation and through a useful and productive life, I moved further and further down the road toward true spirituality.

In Step 12 Spiritual Awakening is not a sudden and miraculous change in my life; I'm not awakening as a completely new and perfect being. I'm beginning to see and understand myself, my life, my Higher Power, and others in a clearer light. And I'm realizing I've risen out of moral apathy and spiritual neglect into the light of pure and living truth. I'm suddenly seeing life in perspective. Sometimes my awakenings are just for a few moments.



And with some, I wake up to a new reality and never go back. *Overall, my spiritual awakenings are a growing awareness of life and its meaning.* I'm realizing more and more I have a purpose in life and that God is caring for me. I recognize that God everywhere.

Carrying the message is a natural result of these spiritual awakenings – telling other people about the program so they too can benefit from knowing about the new understanding of life. I have freely received, now I must freely give.

Practicing these principles, I use these steps in my daily life. Knowing them won't bring about spiritual growth; *doing* them will. They work if you work them.

The Importance of Step Twelve Freedom from all Unresolved Mental Issues

— Rick R.

Chapter 11, A Vision for You, in Alcoholics Anonymous (The Big Book) starts off by reminiscing about the early days of an alcoholic's drinking and how it gave us the feeling that life was good, but not so in the later times. It then talks about

the hideous four horsemen, *Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, and Despair*. The next line is “*Unhappy drinkers who read this page will understand.*”



When I read that Chapter, I knew that I was qualified, as it was the blueprint of my life, up to that moment. *What I didn't understand* was that drinking was but a symptom of a much deeper-rooted *emotional problem*. After many years of sobriety, I still had trouble articulating how one caused the other.

The first paragraph of *Step Twelve* in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (12&12) talks about finding *emotional sobriety*. What emotions are we talking about? That's what I wanted to know. As a child, I had very little supervision and I grew up in a dysfunctional environment. I did a lot of things that I was ashamed of, but I never knew how these things would come back to haunt me later in life. As I started drinking, it *immediately relieved me of the guilt and shame*. It even gave me license to continue acting badly as long as I could rationalize and lie about my behavior.

The only thing that I hadn't considered was that I couldn't hide from my *conscience*. It plagued me 'til I couldn't sleep at night without drinking myself into oblivion. I had been a taker all my life. I never got enough of what I thought I needed. I was insecure. I had no self-esteem. No one had any respect for me except for the losers like myself. Guilt and shame, brought on by a hundred forms of fear ruled my mind. Not a happy way to live!

When they ask me what freedom I cherish the most as the result of practicing the program, most of my fellow members would expect me to say freedom from Alcohol but, they would be mistaken. I would reply that the freedom from all those unresolved mental issues that plagued me to the point that only a drink would quiet my mind. The hope that I experienced the minute I embraced this program, at the

level of my innermost self, removed the obsession to drink alcohol. It has never returned. I no longer have any fear of alcohol.

Having cleaned up the wreckage of the past by thoroughly taking the steps and ridding myself of the selfish motives, my conscience is clear. My self-esteem is high and the feeling of wellbeing is my constant companion. I'm so glad that I didn't fall into that category that become complacent and think that I could rest on my laurels (as they say) at any point. I understand the meaning of Step Twelve suggests, *Practicing These Principles in all our Affairs*.

I try always to be an asset and never a liability. I am neither a victim nor perpetrator. I am always willing to make things right as best I can. I can be trusted and relied upon. I feel that I am on the positive side of the ledger. Peace of mind and a quiet heart have been my goal ever since I entered *Alcoholics Anonymous*. I am happy to say that I haven't been disappointed. One of my favorite prayers is: *Thank You God; it's everything you promised it would be.*

Carry the Message

— Danette G.

Spirituality. I love this word, all that it has come to mean to me, and all that it entails! The spirituality of the Promise that says “*I will not regret the past or wish to shut the door on it*” changed me, inasmuch as I came to realize that my past, my story, was how I would help other women just like me.

At first, it took a while because in my mind, I had loved King Alcohol so much. The result of which was lots of yucky behavior that I didn't think, because of that, anyone would ever want what I had sober, not realizing we would have our similarities, and that my story was going to help other women just like me. God Shot — What happened in the rooms between them and myself, was and is our “tomorrows”.



And voila! The reading and studying of the Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous), the 12 & 12 (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions) and other A.A. Approved Literature suggested by my Sponsor, and done with my sponsor, led me to the path of *spirituality*, leading me to see and be aware of it in my everyday life. Baby



Steps? No! Not hardly, Suddenly it started hitting me pretty quickly and powerfully, once my Higher Power stepped it up.

And then, Bam!. Working the 12 Steps, the digging deep, the writing, writing, writing, and sharing my stuff with my sponsor, changed me more.

Forgiveness of others and myself opened the door wider and wider to my *Spiritual Growth*.

It was to become an all spiritual teaching for me, changing me. It was getting me to the place God wanted me to be, to a place where I had the strength and courage in my new found spirituality of my sobriety. I came to understand and know that, yes, I'm like them and they're like me in our disease, and we have the same thoughts, ideas, feelings, and emotions as each other.

So, our message in *Alcoholics Anonymous* is to carry the message. So, I was to help others just like me. I would help them attain the place of spirituality through the same work my Sponsor did with me. I hope that, like me, *they would be amazed before they were halfway through*.

The Spirituality of Alcoholics Anonymous is one of the best, most beautiful gifts I could ever have imagined!

I pass it on to the best of my ability and I watch others grow, which in itself, is a gift too, and the result of *not regretting my past anymore nor wishing to close the door on it*.

Spiritual Awakening

— Anne M.

Step Twelve is the way we manifest our sobriety in our environment. My sponsor says that we *“carry the message and not the alcoholic.”* I love that line,

because it gives me permission to work my program in a non-codependent manner. I can knock myself out trying to give away to reluctant sponsees what I have worked so hard to learn from Steps One through Eleven, or I can give it away to the members of A.A. and other Sponsees as well as people who seem to want what I have on a more casual but consistent basis.

My experience in A.A. has taught me to keep my spiritual awakening current by having a daily conscious contact with God. If I don't, I have difficulty carrying the message, as well as difficulty practicing the principles in all my affairs. However, the Steps and the fellowship make it very easy to go back to square one and to talk with another alcoholic, preferably a sponsor, about whatever is upsetting me. Then



Step Twelve becomes a privilege for me, because I find the most satisfaction in giving away the precious gift that I have been given of learning how to stay sober under any and all conditions, and in keeping my side of the street clean through the use of the Steps, so that I am content with my life.

A spiritual awakening does not mean I will be perfect, but rather that I would be responsible to myself to do the right thing. I will not know what the right thing is if I am not sober. As a result of having both sobriety and a God in my life, I am available to work the Steps on a daily basis. Step Twelve is the reward I receive as a result of doing the Steps, both spiritually and with other people, because I get to find happiness in my relationship with my Higher Power as well as my relationships in service to my fellow man. Funny how that works. It is the opposite of what the world tells us to do, and yet it is the most satisfying lifestyle I have discovered. I find that the quality of my surrender determines the quality of my contentment with life and those around me.

The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Step Study Meetings

— Rick R.

I consider myself to be one of the fortunate ones that came to *Alcoholics Anonymous* (A.A.) in 1969, at the age of 28, desperately looking for answers. The rehabilitation programs had not gotten off the ground yet, and Drug Addicts did not begin to show up until the mid-1970s.

A considerable number of the members of A.A. came there of their own free will, wanting to get sober. The elders of my first group suggest that, if you plan to attend so many meetings a week, one of them should be a Step Study Meeting, and I have been doing that ever since.

As we do that, we go through the steps four times a year as we split step 12 into two parts due to the number of pages it entails. As new members come into the group they bring with them, their own variety of alcoholic symptoms. It takes time to abandon the things that they feel threatens their own identity. It was not uncommon to see them in the parking lot after the meeting gossiping and bad-mouthing other members that they disagree with. I was no different than them in my early days of recovery.



About 20 years ago, a local group in our community was uprooted from their location and ended up in a new Alano Club at the time and they settled into the Monday through Friday 7 AM slots. The Thursday meeting became a Big Book Study, and the Friday meeting was a Step Study. I was happy to have them so convenient for me. I was much happier when, after we completed Step Twelve, we did not go back to Step One. We went

straight into Tradition One.

In a short time, I noticed how the traditions shined a new light on what *Alcoholics Anonymous* was all about. On the first page in Tradition One it states “*We believe there isn't a fellowship on earth which lavishes more devoted care*

upon its individual members; surely there is none which more jealously guards the individual's right to think, talk, and act as he wishes. No A.A. can compel another to do anything; nobody can be punished or expelled. Our 12 steps to recovery are suggestions; the 12 traditions which guarantee A.A.'s unity contain not a single Don't. They repeatedly say, "We ought..." but never "You must." We don't normally hear these things in the everyday meetings.

Each of the Traditions have their own variety of suggestions that, in the interest of unity, add a mature understanding to those that study them and share them with those that have not studied the Traditions.

When I share at a meeting I try to explain, in a way that does not reflect being in judgement about any individual. I may discuss *character defects* or *shortcomings* and explain the idea that we all have them and for me to point out the faults of others is a *shortcoming* itself.

The person that gets off the beaten path is the person I care about the most. These are all symptoms of alcoholism, and I am no better than anyone in the program. I may be farther down the path, but no better. We may hear the term "*Love and Tolerance*" and try to explain how I include it in my approach to these two words.

Scott Peck was influential in the spiritual approach in the program and in his book [The Road Less Traveled](#). He defines *love*, as "*Caring for and nurturing another person's soul, and not the version we see up on the movie screen.*" It is an action word. I can love everyone even if they do not love me back. As for the word *tolerance*, I would change that word to *acceptance*, as they suffer from the same disease that I once suffered from. I am not superior to anyone in the program of *Alcoholics Anonymous*.



Special Events

INTERGROUP CENTRAL OFFICE IS HOSTING

THE SOCIAL EVENT OF THE YEAR

10TH ANNUAL HOLIDAY TAMALE PARTY

SATURDAY,
DECEMBER 10TH
11 A.M. - 2 P.M.



We'll provide the tamales and drinks...

Want to bring something??

How about some rice, beans, salad, chips and salsa...you get the idea!
UNLESS, you make a mean tamale. THEN BRING THOSE!

OR Just come 'on down and eat and have fun!

*Come join us for a special time of
fellowship, friendship and gratitude.*

**Central Office, 274 E. Hamilton Ave. Suite D,
Campbell, CA**

Questions: Give us a call! 408-889-1001

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 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: 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"
4. For each article, the first mention of "The Big Book" must state the full name of the book underlined as in Alcoholics Anonymous (The Big Book) or The Big Book (Alcoholics Anonymous). Same for 12 & 12.

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@asaanjose.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:

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

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