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Step Eight

Made a List of All Persons We Had Harmed and Became Willing to Make Amends to Them All.

By this point, we are more than halfway through. If we have been honest in the application of the previous seven Steps, then we have seen much in our lives change. We have come a long way in starting to clean away the wreckage of our past and demonstrated a real desire to reform our lives for the good of those around us. The Steps require us to continuously focus the high beam of criticism on our own character, all the while giving our neighbor the benefit of the doubt. This can be a painful experience and we become tempted to concentrate on their shortcomings instead. We always feel a bit superior when we exhume the bones in our neighbor's closet. But, the spirit of Step Eight involves forgiveness. We must be ready to forgive those who trespass against us if we are to have a chance at lasting sobriety.

Fortunately, most of the people we need to forgive have been written down when we completed Step Four. There may be a few others we need to include and upon starting Step Eight, we reflect on who should be included. Then, we write yet again. We write down names of people that we have harmed, no matter how long ago. The mere passage of time does not relieve us of our responsibilities. There is no statute of limitations on forgiveness. When we murder someone else's character we must be held accountable. Whether or not they may have reaped just desserts at our hands is not for us to say. We do not dispense justice, moral or otherwise. We are not qualified to manage our own lives, much less someone else's. Yet that is exactly what we have tried to do over and over

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Step Nine

Made Direct Amends to Such People Wherever Possible, Except When To Do So Would Injure Them or Others.

“Some of us clung to the claim that when drinking we never hurt anybody but ourselves” (As Bill Sees It, p. 64). And that's how it was, too! Drinking might have been Hell, but it was our own Hell. We constantly lived under the delusion that we were only hurting ourselves. It was almost like we thought we were living in a vacuum. When we were in our bottles, we sometimes quite conveniently overlooked the fact that we were not islands. It was easier to forget that we were husbands and wives; fathers and mothers; sons and daughters; friends and colleagues. Our alcoholic tendencies touched all of them. They have witnessed a litany of destruction and had fallen victim countless times to our pursuit of happiness. But which one of us could see it? We were blinded by the voracious nature of our instincts and everything else fell by the wayside. If anyone deserves an amends it is those people closest to us. By default, these are the people we have hurt the deepest. Realizing this, we turn our attention to those on the periphery. These are the individuals that are perhaps the hardest to reach.

There are people on the list that we can hardly speak their names, much less even think about making an amends. This is the group that we believe harmed us more than we ever harmed them. They are the employer who fired us; the friends who had us locked up; the police who abused us; the bartender who cut us off; the teachers who flunked us; and the bill collector who harassed us. Perhaps more hurtful, it was the family member who deserted us in our darkest hour,

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Step Ten

Continued to Take Personal Inventory and When We Were Wrong, Promptly Admitted It

By now, we have certainly made a fair bit of progress upon our spiritual path. Although we may be blind to it, others are not. Perhaps we have heard remarks about our change of countenance. Our family members are slowly returning to our lives from their exile with a renewed sense of hope. Holiday occasions have become happy occasions as opposed to a physical and emotional plundering of those around us. These laudable milestones have not come easy and neither does further progress. We are all destined to slide back into anger, frustration, and resentment; we could not be classified as human otherwise.

All of us, at one time or another, have returned not to the pints of John Barley-corn—but to the draughts of our fermented instincts. We have become drunk on our indignation. After sleeping it off, like an alcoholic hangover the pain sets in. but this is different. We feel sickness in our souls. This pain is more than a superficial, bodily ache; it reaches down into our deepest being and festers like an infected splinter. If it is not immediately removed it will become septic. Step Ten is the surgical tool used to excise such debris from our souls.

- It is imperative to recall two things:
1. We are new to this kind of self-reflection life and “We shall look for progress, not perfection” (12 X 12; p. 91, 1981).
 2. This procedure must be performed at once.

Some of us stick on semantics here, picking out the “when we were wrong”

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again with our friends, family, and even complete strangers. Therefore, their names are recorded in our Ledger of Amends.

Once we have identified who we have harmed, we then must become willing to make amends to them. How many times have we said, “I will never say sorry to person X! They have hurt me too deeply and they do not deserve amends.” This is not willingness, it is contempt.

Willingness comes through prayer and an honest desire to change. There have, indeed, been those in our past that have hurt us. We sometimes have been the victims of others’ misdeeds. However, this is an opportunity for us to forgive them and apologize for our own reactions. We must not pass this up. We must leave the door open to forgiveness, even if it is only a crack.

Some people on our list will be easier to forgive than others. It is easy to be willing with those we want to forgive, or those that we know will receive us with forgiveness and warmth. But, then we are living on our terms, not God’s. We must make amends to all we have harmed, not just those we think will be easy. It was the easier, softer way that kept us in the bottle for so long.

Sobriety is not an entitlement because we show up at meetings or make coffee. It is a gift we are given on a daily basis through the application of the Twelve Steps. We do not get to choose which Steps to complete or in what order. We do not get to choose which aspects to complete based on our personal tastes. We must complete all of them, especially the hard ones such as Step Eight.

Submitted by,
James J., Apple Valley, CA

Tradition Eight

“Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.”

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leaving us to drown in the decisions we have made. These people also deserve an amends. However, here we were the catalyst. We were the bad actors. It was our insistence that others cater to our needs. From the cashier at the dry cleaners to the well-meaning extended family; we were the reason they reacted harshly to us. We must never forget our part in the process. They were reaction to us like a burn victim reacts to fire. And, we must never forget that it was us who lit the match.

Step Nine is also a reminder that we must never clear our own slate at the expense of others. We must not destroy other houses in the process of cleaning our own. We are prohibited from causing needless pain behind the shield of commonly accepted social or moral constructs. As directed by the Twelve and Twelve, “It does not lighten our burden when we recklessly make the crosses of others heavier” (p. 86). Revealing our misadventures to husbands, wives, or other family members can result in a wide swath of wreckage. As alcoholics, we are mandated to be rigorously honest with ourselves and our motives not brutally honest at the expense of others. The point here is to act upon our own inventories instead of taking someone else’s. We are little qualified to run our own lives much less someone else’s.

Step Nine is an action step. It is a difficult thing to humble ourselves before our family, friends, and employers to admit that we have wronged them. They may receive us with relief and gratitude. They may receive us with suspicion and disdain. In some cases, they may not receive us at all. The crux of the matter for Step Nine is our humility before the fellow creatures we have harmed and to let them see us as we truly are.

Submitted by,

Tradition Nine

“A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.”

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phrasing of the Step. Notice it states in clear terms **when** we were wrong, not **if** we were wrong. There is no out for us, no excuse that the other person started it or was at fault. Whenever we feel anger **and then act upon it** we are in the wrong. Our program of recovery is not a criterion for assigning blame. It is a design for a life of self-reflection and love of our fellow creatures. They get all of the benefit of the doubt while we get none of it. We look for our part in the equation and turn a blind eye to theirs. We then humbly ask the their forgiveness, hoping they understand our twisted nature and our sincere desire to straighten out. If they do not, we pray fervently for them always wishing them good. Very often they will come around. Sometime it may take a little while. In either case, it was our action or reaction that caused the schism, and we are responsible for its prompt repair.

Submitted by,
James J., Apple Valley, CA

Tradition Ten

“Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.”

Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Ten—No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues—particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever.

As by some deep instinct, we have known from the very beginning that, no matter what the provocation, we must never publicly take sides, *as A.A.’s*, in any fight, even a worthy one. All history affords us the spectacle of striving nations and groups finally torn asunder because they were designed for, or tempted into, controversy. Others fell apart because of sheer self-righteousness while trying to force upon the rest of mankind some millennium of their own specification. In our won times we have seen millions die in political and economic wars often spurred by religious and

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Tradition Eight

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Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Eight—Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we might otherwise have to engage nonalcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. Twelfth Step work is never to be paid for.



Alcoholics Anonymous will never have a professional therapeutic class. We have gained some understanding of the ancient words "Freely you have received, freely give." For our purpose, we have discovered that at the point of professionalism in other fields, but we accept the sober fact that it does not work for us. Every time we have tried to professionalize our Twelfth Step, the result has been exactly the same; our single purpose has been defeated.

You remember how I was told by A.A.'s group conscience that I could not go to work for Charlie Towns as a professional therapist, and that was right. Early in the game we discovered that under no conditions should an A.A. be paid for taking or carrying this message to somebody else, person to person and face to face. That was out. If professionalism ever invaded us at that level, we were doomed.

But the issue of professionalism had other aspects. For years we were trying to figure out what in A.A. was professionalism and what was not. This problem arose out of the need for paid workers in our service centers, the need for people who would do the jobs that volunteers could not or would not do. Were service workers professionals, or were they not? That was the issue.

Via, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, pgs. 114—115

"He was shaking so bad, when he came to A.A. he could thread a sewing machine while it was running."

Via, 2011 Alcoholics Anonymous History Calendar

Tradition Nine

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Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Nine—Each A.A. group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our overall public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principal newspaper, the A.A. Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.



To this rule Alcoholics Anonymous is a complete exception. It does not at any point conform to the pattern of a government. Neither its General Service Conference, its General Service Board, nor the humblest group committee can issue a single directive to and A.A. member and make it stick, let alone hand out any punishment. We have tried it lots of times, but failure is always the result. Groups have tried to expel members, but the banished have come back to sit in the meeting place, saying, "This is life for us; you can't keep us out." Committees have instructed many an A.A. to stop working on a chronic backslider, only to be told: "How I so my Twelfth Step work is my business. Who are you to judge?" An A.A. may take advice or suggestions from more experience members, but he surely will not take orders. Who is less popular than the old-time A.A., full of wisdom, who moves to another area and tries to tell the group there how to run its business? He and all like him who "view with alarm for the good of A.A." meet with stubborn resistance, or worse still, laughter. In fact, A.A. is so unorganized that someone once suggested we put up a sign in each A.A. club saying: "Anything goes here, folks, except you mustn't smoke opium in the elevators!"

Via, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, pgs. 118—119

Tradition Ten

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racial differences. We live in the imminent possibility of a fresh holocaust to determine how men shall be governed and how the products of nature and toil shall be divided among them. That is the spiritual climate in which A.A. was born and by God's grace has flourished nevertheless.

Let us re-emphasize that this reluctance to fight one another or anybody else is not counted as some special virtue which makes us feel superior to other people. Nor does it mean that the members of Alcoholics Anonymous, now restored citizens of the world, are going to back away from their individual responsibilities to act as they see the right upon issues or our time. But when it comes to A.A. as a whole, that is a different matter. As A.A.'s, we do not enter into public controversy, because we know that our fellowship will perish if we do. We conceive the survival and spread of Alcoholics Anonymous to be something of greater importance than any weight we could collectively throw back of other causes. Recovery from alcoholism is life itself to us, and we wish to preserve in full strength our means of survival.

Via, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, pgs. 123—124

Some Wisdom

Going to meetings is like having a lot of smart people in my family. They all share their experiences and I get to learn from them with the option of not repeating their mistakes. But I have got to go to meetings to see them and hear them! I love having a group of smart people in my head. It sure beats what used to be in there most of the time!

It has been my experience that I need to call my sponsor. Because if I don't call my sponsor, I don't really have a sponsor; I have a phone number.

Via, Desert Lifeline

Intergroup Minutes June 18, 2011

Sam D. opened the meeting at 9:30 a.m.
Melanie W. read the 12 Traditions.
Wayne U. read the Apr. 16, 2011 minutes.
Doug H. motioned to accept, Melanie W.
2nd, approved.

Treasure's Report: Doug H. gave the report
for May. Betty B. motioned to accept the
report, Wayne U. 2nd, approved. See the
newsletter for the full report.

Office Manager's Report: There were 76
visitors to Central Office with 231 info
calls resulting in 2 12 Step calls. Call for-
warding received 176 calls with 2 12 Step
calls. Craig thanked Les W. and the Foun-
der's Day Picnic Committee for their dona-
tion and hard work.

Ways and Means: Founder's Day Picnic
raised \$310.46 despite the incredibly low
attendance. Research to be done to see
what will increase attendance for next year.

Public Info: Radio announcements have
stopped and Craig is trying to reach our
Public Info person to find out what is up.

Old Business: New shifts available at Cen-
tral Office for Mondays, 1-4 p.m. Call
forwarding shifts also available Weds., 4
p.m.-9 a.m., and every other Friday. Credit
cards are now accepted at Central Office
and are working out well. If anyone is not
satisfied with the content of our newsletter,
feel free to submit articles for possible
publication. All inputs would be greatly
appreciated.

New Business: Craig will be attending the
Central Office Manager's Seminar in Tuc-
son on October 1-2, 2011. Discussion
about Craig having a wireless phone credit
card slider was tabled.

Announcements: The Hispanic Intergroup
meets the 2nd and 4th Sundays every month
at 12036 Bartlett Ave., Adelanto.

Next Intergroup meeting will be August 20,
2011 at 9:30 a.m. Betty B. motioned to
adjourn, Melanie W. 2nd, approved. Doug
H. prayed us out at 10:10 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Wayne U., Secretary

ATTENDEES

Sam D., Chairman, Wayne U., Secretary,
Doug H., Associate Member, Melanie W.,
Sun. Campfire Group, Maria, Hispanic
Intergroup, Craig B., Office Manager,
Betty B., Newsletter

Intergroup Minutes August 20, 2011

Meeting called to order at 9:30 a.m. by Sam D.
followed by the Serenity Prayer.

Doug H. read the minutes of the previous
meeting. Betty B. moved to approve, Helen
M. seconded—approved.

Treasure's report read by Doug H. Craig B.
moved to approve, Sam D. seconded—
approved.

Craig B. gave the Office Manager's report. In
July, there were 76 visitors to the office and
183 information calls and 2 12 Step calls. Call
forwarding had 177 information calls and 2 12
Step calls. He welcomed Chad F., the new
Intergroup Rep. for the Sunday Campfire
meeting. All office shifts have been filled.
Thank you! We still need a call forwarding
folks for every other Wednesday, Thursday,
and Friday. Thanks to the 13 meetings and
groups who contributed to Central Office.
Craig gave directory corrections as follows:
Monday, Thursday and Saturday night meet-
ings at the Little House have folded. Saturday,
7:30 p.m. meeting at the Tumbleweed has
NOT closed.

OLD BUSINESS: Dropping the idea of the
"square up" credit card electronic slider to be
used at the convention, as it would require the
purchase of a smart phone, too. Betty B. so
moved, Helen M. seconded. Passed.

NEW BUSINESS: Sheldon S. has resigned as
Treasurer. Matt N., Co-Chairman is moving.
[Sam D. will appoint both.] Doug H. and Chad
F. volunteered. Newsletter editor is running
behind, so next newsletter will be a [triple]
issue. Maria brought an inquiry of having the
Spanish speaking meetings in the directory.

This was addressed in the past as the Spanish
speaking groups now have their own office to
donate to and their own directories. [Their
telephone number is listed in our directory to
give when we have Spanish speaking callers.]
Central Office will have to tap into the prudent
reserve in order to purchase enough literature
to finish out the year. Three to four thousand
dollars will do it. Craig B. is not going to the
Office Manager's Seminar in Arizona this year
as previously planned. [There is not enough
money to pay for his trip.]

ANNOUNCEMENTS: Betty B. celebrated 21
years on August 11.

The next meeting is on October 15, 2011 at
9:30 a.m. at Central Office.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 a.m. with
the Serenity Prayer.

Submitted by,

Doug H., Assoc. Member

Attending: Craig B., Betty B., Sam D., Julie
D., Chad F., Helen M., Doug H., and Maria

H & I Donations for September

The sole purpose of the High Desert H
& I Committee is to carry the message
of Alcoholics Anonymous to those
who are confined and cannot attend
outside A.A. meetings. Our committee
members carry the A.A. message by
distributing literature and sharing our
personal stories with patients or in-
mates.

Your financial support is needed to
continue this vital 12th Step work. The
H&I Committee is entirely supported
through *your* donations. Your dona-
tions cover the cost of the literature our
members distribute at H&I panel meet-
ings. Thanks to the groups and indi-
viduals listed below for supporting our
commitment to carry the A.A. mes-
sage.

Month of September:

Tumbleweed – \$166.10; Primary Pur-
pose – \$32.48; Cedar St. Big Book –
\$10.00; TGIF – \$56.77.

H&I needs more volunteers who would
like to carry the A.A. message. The
committee meets every third Monday
of the month, except July and Decem-
ber, at the Alano Club on Central Rd.
in Apple Valley at 6:30 p.m.

Yours in service,
High Desert H&I Committee

The Clown

From as far back as I can remember I
was afraid. I was afraid of everybody
and everything. I live through my
fear. I accomplished much because of
fear.

When I was in elementary school I
was an outsider. Cliques were big
time, even at that time. I tried every-
thing to be a part of the clique. I
ended up being the class clown. I al-
lowed myself to be the butt end of the
jokes. Yes, the joke was always on
me. But I said to myself, "at least I am
in!" But what was I in? I thought eve-
ryone cared about me because I made
them laugh. That behavior continued

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Central Office Activities

The Clown

(Continued from page 4)

| | <u>JULY</u> | <u>Y.T.D.</u> |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------|
| Visitors | 76 | 618 |
| Info. Calls | 183 | 1,486 |
| 12 Step Calls | 2 | 15 |
| <u>Call Forwarding</u> | | |
| Info. Calls | 177 | 1,225 |
| 12 Step Calls | 2 | 23 |
| <u>TOTALS</u> | | |
| Info. Calls | 360 | 2,711 |
| 12 Step Calls | 4 | 38 |
| <u>AUGUST</u> | | |
| Visitors | 100 | 718 |
| Info. Calls | 259 | 1,745 |
| 12 Step Calls | 4 | 19 |
| <u>Call Forwarding</u> | | |
| Info. Calls | 168 | 1,393 |
| 12 Step Calls | 4 | 27 |
| <u>TOTALS</u> | | |
| Info. Calls | 427 | 3,138 |
| 12 Step Calls | 8 | 46 |
| <u>SEPTEMBER</u> | | |
| Visitors | 108 | 826 |
| Info. Calls | 159 | 1,904 |
| 12 Step Calls | 1 | 20 |
| <u>Call Forwarding</u> | | |
| Info. Calls | 160 | 1,553 |
| 12 Step Calls | 1 | 28 |
| <u>TOTALS</u> | | |
| Info. Calls | 319 | 3,457 |
| 12 Step Calls | 1 | 47 |

throughout high school until my school was integrated during my 12th year. Then things really changed, and I did not realize at the time that it was for the better.

The new kids in my class treated me nice. They were friendly. I did not have to tell jokes or be a clown. They liked me for me. Looking back on that time, I tried to figure out what happened. I was so used to being laughed at; I did not see that these new kids were true. I spent my last year in high school confused because I did not believe that people could like me just for me. I was a class clown until I graduated from high school.

I left home the night of my graduation. Looking for a better life; right! How do you get away from yourself? My school years followed me around until I came into the rooms. How do you live, seemingly as an outcast, and survive?

What about my family? How did they treat me? I was a clown at home, too. Maybe my family was good to me; however, being treated so badly all those years, who do you trust? Is it possible to grow up trusting no one, not even yourself? How much alcohol and drugs can a person consume before they learn to trust? Did the alcohol help me to trust? I am afraid not, because I still have trust issues.

Now that I have a sponsor, am working the Steps, going to meetings, reading A.A. material, doing service work, and getting closer to my Higher Power, I see a little improvement. I am opening up slowly. It is difficult, but I am putting one foot in front of the other and trusting in my Higher Power.

Anonymous, Mesa, Arizona

Via, *No Booze News*, Mesa, AZ

A.A. experience is like a rose. Don't define it. Live it, smell it.

A.A. History Calendar

Upcoming Happenings

October 15, 2011

Intergroup Meeting, 9:30 a.m. at Central Office.

October 29, 2011

Pot Luck, Speaker Meeting, and Fellowship, at Norman Smith Park, Yermo, CA. Pot luck starts at 2:00 p.m. with the Speaker Meeting to start at 4:00 p.m. Chips and birthdays will be celebrated. For more information call Larry at 760-254-2307.

And Finally . . .

When you drink vodka over ice, it can give you kidney failure.

When you drink rum over ice, it can give you liver failure.

When you drink whiskey over ice, it can give you heart problems.

When you drink gin over ice, it can give you brain problems.

Apparently, ice is really bad for you.

Warn all your friends.

~~~~~

Dr. Bob is sitting at his desk writing a prescription. Sister Ignatius is looking over his shoulder and says to Bob, "Bob, you're writing with a rectal thermometer."

Dr. Bob says, "Then who's the a\*\*#@^~ that has my pen?"

Via, *the Internet*