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## Step Three

At nearly every A.A. meeting we read a portion of Chapter Five and finish with the “three pertinent ideas:” (A) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives. (B) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism. And (C) That God could and would if He were sought. The next sentence, which we seldom read is, “Being convinced, we were at *Step Three*.” In other words, once we were convinced of Steps One and Two, we were ready for Step Three.

At first glance, it seems like a tremendous leap of faith to turn ones will and life over to the care of God. It is a scary prospect to someone new to sobriety with a life in shambles. I have heard some A.A.s actually tell newcomers that the Step is not about actually turning your life over to God. They quote the Step literally by saying that all one has to do is “make a decision” to do so. True, that is what the Step says. But once one has made the decision, the prescribed action is to follow through. It would be similar to say that once one makes the decision to quit drinking one must stop drinking. I have seen it on signs in A.A. halls: “If you want to quit drinking, you have to stop drinking.” But is this surrendering our will to God such a scary proposition after all? The Big Book says, “being convinced.” If we really are convinced of the unmanageability of our lives and the all encompassing power of a loving God, why would we hesitate? If the God of the Universe is willing to help me, why would I ever have any reservations?

For me, the key word in the Step is “care.” I turned my will and my life over to the CARE of a loving God. I place myself in His love and trusted Him to take an active part in my recovery. In the health professions, we see the Hand of God healing bodies and minds every day. As caregivers we are allowed to facilitate that process, but of course we don’t do the actual healing. When a body fights off an infection, a wound closes and heals, a bone knits back together, healing is being done by processes straight from our Creator. So, knowing that my

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## Tradition Three

Isn’t every organization entitled to have rules for membership? Why did A.A. decide to forgo this privilege, to be “inclusive . . . never exclusive”? That’s easy. Early members tried it the other way, and it just didn’t work. As the Fellowship was nearing its ten-year mark, the office that served as headquarters “asked the groups to list their membership rules and send them in,” Bill W. recalled. “If all of these edicts had been in force everywhere at once, it would have been practically impossible for any alcoholic to have ever joined A.A. About nine-tenths of our oldest and best members could never have got by!” So the rule books went out the window and were replaced by one uncomplicated sentence: Tradition Three.

But, somebody may ask, isn’t the Tradition itself a rule? It does state *one* requirement for membership. Let’s read it again, and ask another question: *Who* determines whether or not newcomers qualify, whether they do want to stop drinking? Obviously, nobody except the newcomers themselves; everybody else simply has to take their word for it. In fact, they don’t even have to say it aloud. And that’s fortunate for many of us who arrived at A.A. with only a halfhearted desire to stay sober. We are alive because the A.A. road stayed open to us.

The problem faced by this Tradition isn’t just past A.A. history. It keeps coming up—for instance, when a group debates whether to exclude alcoholics who have problems other than alcohol or have differing lifestyles. The Tradition mentions no such additional requirements, no demand that prospective members must *not* have a history of drug abuse, a certain lifestyle, or an institutional background. All alcoholics are welcome.

What about the group that seems to impose extra requirements, beyond “a desire to stop drinking”? This might be a “special interest” group or collection of groups in which, for example, each member must be a

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## *In Loving Memory*

God called her home February 16, 2010, after great suffering and pain. Barbara was another A.A. success story. She was dedicated to our A.A. Fellowship, the H.U.G. Group, Front and Center, the Candlelight Meeting and the Traditions Groups. She was a long time member of Victor Valley Alano Club and served on its Board of Directors for five years. We thank her for her service and commitment. She will be sorely missed.

God bless you, Barbara.

Bonnie C., Apple Valley, CA




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## Intergroup Minutes, Feb. 20, 2010

Kara O. opened meeting at 9:30am and Glenn read the 12 Traditions. Wayne U. read the 12/19/2009 minutes. Becky B. motioned to accept minutes, Matt N. 2<sup>nd</sup>.

**TREASURERS REPORT:** Sheldon reported that January was a typical year beginning month as many yearly bills are due, which leaves us with a large negative balance. Wayne motioned to accept report, Sam D. 2<sup>nd</sup>. See Newsletter for full report.

**OFFICE MANAGER'S REPORT:** Craig B. reported 101 visitors, 214 info calls with 1 12 step call. Call-forwarding had 167 info calls with 2 12 step calls, for a total of 381 info calls and 3 12 step calls. The following shifts are available for Central Office: Mondays 1-4 pm, Thursdays 10 am – 1 pm. Call-forwarding every other Wednesday, and every other Saturday and Sunday 9am – 8:30am. Time requirements for: Office shifts, 90 days with sponsor approval, and Call-forwarding, 6 months with sponsor approval. Call Craig B. at 760-242-9292 if interested in donating your time. Thank you to the 16 groups that donated to Central Office.

**WAYS AND MEANS REPORT:** Tom S. approved as Co-chair of Ways and Means committee. TXI Park is longer available as a school will be constructed there soon. Donna S. is trying to secure Doris Davies Park or Schmidt Park.

**OLD BUSINESS:** Committee elections tabled to next meeting.

**NEW BUSINESS:** Board of Directors met and approved to increase the cost for literature to equal the increase that New York made last year, as the original increase was below New York's increase, which does not allow us to purchase as much literature. The average increase will only be .10 to .15 cents per book. A Spanish speaking Intergroup Office has opened up, and the phone # is 760-246-6392. Bob O. will get feedback to determine if they will be selling Spanish literature. A special thanks to the person who put an article in the local newspaper regarding A.A. Thank you to Doug H. for his essays on the Traditions. Anyone wanting to write and submit articles for the newsletter, email article to [vvigco\\_aa@yahoo.com](mailto:vvigco_aa@yahoo.com). Any and all articles would be appreciated.

**THINGS WE CANNOT CHANGE:** Our prayers and hearts go out for: Barbara G., Cindy S., and Cathy M. and their families.

Next business meeting: April 17th at 9:30am. Craig B. motioned to close, Sheldon 2<sup>nd</sup>. Craig B. prayed us out at 10:13am.

Respectfully submitted,  
Wayne U., Secretary

## Humble Pie

Through the years, I have dealt with many flaws. The sometimes frustrating fact is that they will reappear when I am enjoying life on "life's terms," just like it says in our book.

One of the biggest and most persistent ones is "the Big Ego." It seems to sneak in when I am honestly trying to be helpful, and eventually it tries to put me on that proverbial mountaintop, where I certainly must have all the right answers, and the right suggestions, etc.

It's awfully lonesome up there.

Sooner or later, some event will unfold and remove me from that perch that, most of the time, I don't even realize I am on. Then, it's back to reality for me and another big helping of "humble pie." Even though I have been faithfully reading morning meditation books, I'll drag out my good old reliable A.A. literature and get reeducated in the basics of our wonderful program of recovery.

Bob S., Summerfield, FL

Via, Grapevine, Sept. 2009

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Higher Power has my best interest at heart and will care for me when I cannot care for myself, I trust Him fully to do so. That I had forgotten this was partly what led to my slide into addiction.

I retook Step Three on the eve of entering the Whiteside Rehab facility at about 20 days sober. At that time I was completing the two week intensive outpatient program after five days of detox at Kaiser Fontana. I had self-reported to the Board of Pharmacy and the Pharmacist Recovery Program and had been mandated to go to a residence or inpatient facility for 30 days. I was not happy with this. My family was in a very difficult crisis totally unrelated to my addiction, but certainly worsened by it. Our daughter, who had been quite ill, had, she thought, been given only months to live. We found this out only days after my exposure and termination. My legal situation was still up in the air. My license was certainly in grave jeopardy. And my poor wife, distraught over our daughter, was going to be separated from me for at least a month with no contact at all for the first week. I even asked the doctors at Kaiser to write Maximus and plead with them not to “sentence” me to rehab. I really felt that my wife and daughter needed me home during this crisis. And, after all, the Pharmacist Recovery Program was to retain my license – I was already well into recovery (I thought). But “being convinced,” I began to look at the situation in another way. If I had been diagnosed with cancer, I would want to avail myself of every possible treatment: chemotherapy, surgery radiation, nutrition, etc. Shouldn’t I take advantage of every possible treatment modality for my recovery from addiction? It seemed to me then, that while it was certainly not MY will to go to Whiteside, that is must be God’s will. And I made a decision to follow where I felt my Higher Power was leading me. I told God that night that I just could not take care of my family or myself anymore, and that I was trusting Him to look, after all of us as I submitted to 30 days at Whiteside. I put myself completely in His hands.

Was it the right decision? Well, of course it was a very thorough and completed Step Three! And God took care of everybody and everything. My family survived the time without me running things, although they did miss me. I benefitted from the Whiteside experience, mainly by renewing the habit of going to an A.A. meeting every day. I was instantly at home in the daily A.A. meetings they took us to, and they were always the highlight of my day (besides meals). I ac-

tually felt a little guilty, as if I were hiding out from all my problems. But since it was not my will to be there, I allowed myself to heal. I came out ready to do whatever I needed to do to recover all I had lost. And one final, unexpected benefit was that when my legal case was finalized, I was sentenced to 30 days in county jail, but the sentence was credited with the 30 days I stayed at Whiteside. I have trusted my Higher Power ever since. I picture us as being on a tandem bicycle. God is in front steering and pedaling, I’m just pedaling in the back. If you’ve ever ridden one, you know how easy it is for both riders unless the guy in back leans the wrong way in the turns. So, I stay alert, watch where He is taking me, and pedal like mad. It is one fantastic ride!

Submitted by,  
Doug H., Hesperia, CA

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physician—or a young person, a man, a woman, a priest, or law-enforcement officer. By their own account, those attending special interest groups consider themselves A.A. members *first*. They attend genera-membership meetings as well as those that fill their other individual needs. And they remain devoted to A.A.’s primary purpose.

These “special interest” groups offer only one instance of the diverse and inclusive membership within our Fellowship. Our Traditions allow unparalleled freedom, not only to every A.A. member, but to every A.A. group.

## The Prequel to A.A.

Your MSCA Archives Committee will be hosting their Annual Open House on Sunday, March 21, 2010. The theme for this year’s Open House is “The Prequel to A.A.” The doors will open at 9 am with the program, featuring guest Jay S., starting at 10 am.

Jay S., sober since May 2, 1979, has extensively studied the history of the events that lead to the founding of A.A. Jay will lead us on the journey from the Washingtonians to the Oxford Group and how the Oxford Group carried the message to Ebby T. In a second presentation, Jay will show us what happened to the people who carried the message to Ebby and what happened to the Oxford Group.

The MSCA archives are located at 7111-B Arlington, Riverside, CA 92503, in the Riverside Airpark (between the Riverside Airport and Van Buren Blvd.). For more information call 951-785-0845.

## Upcoming Events

**March 19 — 20, 2010**

**4th Annual Ride for Recovery. Starts Friday with a Speaker Meeting at the Barstow Alano Club with the ride to Beatty, NV on Saturday. For more information call Abel at 760-559-1880, Rob H. at 818-929-4119, or Central Office at 760-242-9292.**

**April 4, 2010**

**Easter Egg Hunt and Potluck at the Victor Valley Alano Club, 11085 Central Rd., Apple Valley, CA. For all the detail call Marianne B. at 760-247-6685 or 760-885-9511.**

**May 22, 2010**

**7th Annual Women's A.A. Banquet, 5:00 p.m-10:00 p.m., Quality Inn and Suites — Green Tree, Victorville, CA. For more information contact Melissa at 760-2179330 or Casey at 760-983-6763.**

**May 28 — 31, 2010**

**26th Annual South Bay Roundup, Torrance Marriott Hotel, Torrance, CA. Call the Roundup Hotline at 310-354-7660 or visit [www.southbayroundup.org](http://www.southbayroundup.org) for more information.**

**July 1 — 4, 2010**

**International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous, San Antonio, TX. For more information visit [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org). There will also be information at Central Office.**

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## A DAY'S PLAN

*On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.*

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 86

Every day I ask God to kindle within me the fire of His love, so that love, burning bright and clear, will illuminate my thinking and permit me to better do His will. Throughout the day, as I allow outside circumstances to dampen my spirits, I ask God to sear my consciousness with the awareness that I can start my day over any time I choose; a hundred times, if necessary.

*Via, Daily Reflections, p. 80*

## Become a "Faithful Fiver"

### What are Faithful Fivers?

They are A.A. members who pledge at least \$5.00 each month toward the support of their Central Office to "carry the message." Many of us have spent more than \$5.00 daily/hourly on alcohol during our drinking days!

I agree to pledge \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
and enclosed is my contribution.

Name\*: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_

State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_

*\*You may remain anonymous if you wish.*

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## ALCOHOLISM. . .



a cell of my own making.

Betty B., Apple Valley, CA

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## And Finally . . .

"I only drank on special occasions, like the grand opening of a pack of cigarettes."

Overheard in a meeting

*"Borrowed" from the  
2010 Sobriety Calendar*