



STEP 3

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.”

When I first came into AA, few things boiled my blood more than sayings like “When life gives you lemons, make lemonade.” I hated a lot of things as drinker, and positive thinking was at the top of the list. Out of all the positive-thinking people who shared, I was most annoyed by the ones dealing with their DUI experiences. “It was the best thing that ever happened to me,” a woman once said at my regular Sunday morning discussion meeting. One old-timer speaking at my home group said, “I am so grateful to that police officer for arresting me that I send him a card every year on my anniversary and thank him.” Over and over, I heard people claim that their DUI arrests were blessings bestowed upon them by their loving Higher Power. These people, I thought, arms crossed over my chest, are either liars or idiots. If arrests are blessings, please shower me with curses.

Over the six weeks between my first AA meeting and my court date, my attitude started to change. I went to meetings, got a sponsor and a home group, and read the literature. I went without a drink for days, weeks, and then over a month, and I started to allow a positive little thought to creep into my head--maybe, just maybe, it was a good thing that I got caught. I needed the wake-up call before something much worse happened. Then one day I was at a speaker meeting and a man stood up and explained how he had come to AA

right after getting arrested for what would have been--if he were convicted--his third DUI. “I really worked the program,” he said, “and my Higher Power rewarded me because when I went to court I got off on a technicality.” That’s it, I thought. It all made sense to me. I was well on my way to exceeding ninety meetings in ninety days. I had read the Big Book twice. I even had a coffee commitment. How could my Higher Power not come and bail me out? That had to be my reward for sobering up and working a good program.

My sponsor cautioned me. He pointed out the page in the Big Book where it mentions that we are still accountable for the mistakes we made while drinking. Sobriety, he said, doesn’t remove accountability. He also mentioned the Third Step, and the idea that I should be doing what was right without expecting anything in return. “We don’t pray for things,” he said, quoting the literature, “but only for the knowledge of [God’s] will for us and the power to carry that out.” I heard him, but didn’t really listen. I preferred the idea that my Higher Power would conjure up a technicality and get me off for the DUI. It happened for that other guy, I reasoned. Why not for me? Then, on the day of my court appearance, my lawyer told me that the prosecutor had me dead to rights and urged me to plead guilty. “If you plead guilty, the judge will go easier on you,” he said. “If you don’t, he probably won’t.” I didn’t argue. I knew I was guilty, and it looked after all like my Higher Power would not intervene. No miraculous technicality had appeared to save me from the consequences of my actions. I plead guilty and got my sentence. That night, at my regular discussion meeting, it seemed that everyone had some joy to share. One man spoke about getting his family back after quitting alcohol. A woman talked about buying her first house. Another

The Lifeline is the monthly newsletter of the St. Paul and Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc. It is about, by, and for groups and members of the A.A. Fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to A.A. as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by either A.A. or St. Paul Intergroup. We welcome articles on a Step, Tradition or Concept, in addition to descriptions of personal experience. We also welcome original cartoons and drawings expressing the wry side of A.A. experience.

Please email your article to Lifeline@aastpaul.org or send it by regular mail to Lifeline Editor, St. Paul Intergroup, 33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355, W. St. Paul, MN 55118-3431. Materials or articles mailed to us cannot be returned unless accompanied by a self-addressed stamped envelope. Intergroup reserves the right to edit submissions for clarity, language, length, and content that might violate A.A.’s Traditions, etc.

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Office Hours: Monday through Friday – 9:30 AM to 5:30 PM; Closed weekends and holidays

gushed over the fact that she'd just landed her dream job. Finally, a guy with time addressed me and the rest of the newcomers. "I used to be like you," he said. "I had nothing. I was miserable. Now, I have a big house, a car, and a beautiful family, all because I work a good program."

I could feel my face turning red with anger, my head starting to pound. I wanted to say that sometimes people worked good programs and didn't get material rewards, but when the leader called on me I started spouting lies. "I am really glad I came tonight," I said. "It's great to hear how well everyone is doing. It gives me a lot of hope." I went home and stewed, feeling I had some angry, betrayed feeling I had always felt toward my Higher Power. Other people were being showered with blessings, and I had to pay the DUI fines and live without a license for six months. Where were the joys of sobriety for me? I started riding my bike to work each morning--it was a ten-mile round trip--and I couldn't help but notice how reckless and dangerous so many of the drivers seemed. "But they," I thought, angrily directing my thoughts toward my Higher Power, "never have to suffer any consequences for their actions." Morning after morning, I left convinced that I would probably get hit by a truck and become paralyzed, and then I would spend the rest of my life in a wheelchair, listening to happy people tell me about the lemons and the lemonade.

I wallowed in my anger and resentment, though I knew it was both irrational and dangerous. Irrational because I knew I was guilty and deserved the punishment I had received. Dangerous because I had read in the Big Book that resentment sent more people out on drinking binges than anything else. I started telling people how I really felt before, during, and after meetings. "I haven't gotten anything from sobriety," I would say. "My life sucks more now than it did when I was drinking." The answers I got all came down to about the same thing: You're right where you ought to be. Don't drink and go to meetings. It gets better. At one beginner's meeting, I told the leader that I didn't really believe in Step Three, turning our lives and our wills over to a Higher Power. I pointed to the crucifix on the wall in the church classroom we used for our meeting. "Jesus said 'thy will be done,' and look what happened to him." The leader told me that I should pray for acceptance. I asked him if he had heard me when I had told him that I didn't trust God. He told me he had once felt the same way and that prayer had worked for him. "Try it," he said.

Try it? I didn't have any better ideas, so I began to pray as I rode my bike to work--or I tried to pray. At first, my prayers would often dissolve into angry screeds, with me once again rail-

ing against God. Gradually, I found myself more and more making the trip in a state of serenity, repeating the Lord's Prayer and the Serenity Prayer, or sometimes thinking about people I knew who seemed to be suffering and asking that God remove their suffering. Because I had to get up so early to pedal to work, I started to notice the sunrise, and--peddling along the streets, rocks popping under my wheels--the flaming colors of fall leaves all around me. One particularly beautiful morning a thought popped into my head: This sure beats waking up with a hangover.

I lost fifty pounds in the first two months of riding. What had been restless nights since the time I had started drinking suddenly became restful as the stress that used to harass me all night long burned away during my rides to work. One day, a woman I worked with who commuted fifty miles from New York to New Jersey each day, saw me getting on my bike and getting ready to ride home. She said, "I wish I could ride to work every day. You're really lucky." As I rode home that afternoon, the headlamp on my bike flickering along the sidewalk in the now dusky fall evening, I started laughing at myself. I had spent so many mornings feeling sorry for myself, telling myself that working the program had been such a total waste of time, and here was someone who, getting into her car for the fifty mile commute through brutal North Jersey traffic, looked at me and my bike and thought, "Boy, that guy is really lucky. He gets to ride his bike to work."

It brought it all home to me. What I saw as a negative, others saw as a positive. Riding the bike to work wasn't a good or bad thing in and of itself; it was what I decided to make of it. My punishment had, in fact, become something of a blessing, just as I'd been told it would--as long as I worked my program. I wish I could say that from that point on I enjoyed total serenity and acceptance, but the program doesn't work that way for me. I am new and still have my ups and downs, days when I lose faith and take my will back. I make sure to share when I am feeling frustrated or down at meetings because I want the guys with less time than me to know that sobriety isn't a blissed-out fantasy life where we never suffer or doubt.

But I also like to share about the positives that have happened for me during my time in the program, especially how one time when I gave myself lemons through my drunk driving, the program made them into lemonade--despite me.

By: Richard D. | Red Bank, New Jersey

TRADITION 3

«The Only Requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking»

I am a twenty-two-year-old recovering alcoholic. I began drinking and taking drugs when I was fourteen years old. It was the year 1994 and the rebellious songs of Green Day and Offspring surrounded the world of the fourteen-year-old. We were a generation inspired by the skater crowd, the nineties version of the sixties' greasers and the eighties' punk rockers. To be in the cool crowd, you had to wear clothes eight sizes too big, walk cool, smoke cigarettes and pot, and drink beer. In those days, I would have jumped off a 100-foot cliff if it meant I could be considered cool. Drinking a petty beer or smoking a little joint was an insignificant hurdle for me on my road to social acceptance. After all, I was invincible and the worse the action, the more attention I would receive. I attended the Drug Abuse Resistance Education (D.A.R.E.) classes and sat through countless drug-prevention speeches, but those did not apply to such a cool rebel without a cause.

Just eight years later, I found myself unable to complete the simplest of tasks without an anxiety attack or to stick with a job for more than two months before getting fired for my habitual tardiness. Today, with the help of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, my life consists of re-learning how to complete a full day without acting on my impulses. I am bombarded with feelings of pain and strife that I cannot even begin to explain. I have watched this disease take the life of my aunt and destroy the lives of my mother, grandparents, uncles, and cousins. To this day, I am amazed that you can watch a loved one die a slow and painful death from alcoholism, only to go home at night and consume the same death potion yourself. Most of all, I am saddened by the ignorance and denial in our society.

I believe that it is only through my willingness to completely turn my life over to AA that I have the chance of recovering a life of any value. This is a program that has not only saved millions of lives, but has single-handedly reshaped and almost eliminated the absolute helplessness that this willing-to-recover alcoholic used to experience. This is a program that, through faith and

action, slowly allows an alcoholic to recover from spiritual, physical, mental, and financial bankruptcy.

Alcoholics Anonymous, I believe, is built on the foundation that no matter what one's religion, race, creed, gender, or degree of hopelessness, its members will do anything in their power to help. Therefore, I can walk into a meeting anywhere in the country and find a room full of the broke and the rich, the powerful and the powerless, the famous and the ordinary citizen. Anonymity makes us all equal and everyone feel welcome. This anonymity is what gave me the courage to walk through those doors. It's what gives me the strength to keep coming back.

By: Elliot H. | Manhattan, Montana



Saint Paul Intergroup Pesents

Family Friendly

April 13, 2024

Spring Fling!

4:00 - 9:00 PM

Main A.A. Speaker: Dave A.

- ***Starts at 6:30 pm***

5 minute A.A. Speaker: Greg & Marguerite

Al-Anon Speaker: Bob

Sobriety Countdown

Games | Fellowship | Food | Raffle

Lutheran Church of the Redeemer

285 Dale St N, Saint Paul

THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

WILLINGNESS AND DESIRE

The longer I'm an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous the weight of the question "How bad do you want it?" seems to get heavier and heavier in all aspects of my life. Whether it's finances, my occupation, my family, my relationships, hell even my dog, that sometimes-overused question becomes much more important the further removed I am from drugs and alcohol. I know when I first got into the program the analogy on wanting sobriety the way I wanted drugs and alcohol seemed to pop up a lot, and for the first few years of me trying to get sober I simply only had the desire to have the desire to be sober.

Now I'm not too sure if there was a paradigm shift in my final days of use that gave me that aching desire to be sober, but I can say for certain after having some time under my belt that my urge to stay sober was on par with my old urge to drink or use. I believe that there wasn't necessarily an inert fear of going back to the destructive ways I used to live, but instead my desire was fixated on how much better my life had gotten and a want to continue that trajectory. With that desire came the willingness to do what needed to be done to progress my life in the positive direction it was headed. I had to do things I didn't necessarily want to do at first, I had to meet with my sponsor, I had to go to meetings even though I wasn't big on socializing, I had to explore my relationship with God, I had to make amends to people I was certain hated me, the list could go on infinitum. I was a master at making excuses at first for why I couldn't do X,Y or Z, but the willingness was driven by my desire to get better and progress.

Now that the abstinence from drugs and alcohol aren't my main prerogatives in life that willingness and desire has been spread out to more and more things. They may even look like simple acts of "adulting" to some, like paying bills, cleaning the house, or getting the tabs updated on my car, but early on for me these were obstacles that I had to ask myself that previously stated question, "How bad do I want it?" or better yet "How bad do I want to keep this?". Those questions drove me to living a life beyond my wildest dreams, simple steps

and actions all answering that big question of "How bad do I want it?". This even pushed me into the sport I compete in, bodybuilding, where things like training, dieting, and cardio don't always seem like the most fun thing in the world, but I wanted it badly, so I took the actions to get me to where I am now.

As most of us have heard from the 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, "The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking", but the idea of desire is very subjective for every person, like I mentioned before, when I was trying to get sober 6 or so years ago I only had the desire to have the desire, I wanted to want it, and my willingness to do the things that were asked of me to stay sober directly reflected that desire. If you are early on in your sobriety, I highly suggest you ask yourself the question, "How bad do I want it?" and then check yourself with a follow up of, "Am I taking the actions necessary to exhibit my desire?". We can want so many things in this world, but in my experience those things will never come to fruition if we don't work for them.

I hope everyone has a fantastic rest of their 2024, stay safe and God Bless.

Eliot Wood

Advisor to the Board

OFFICE UPDATE

- **Urgent Need for 12th Step Call Volunteers:**

Critical Shortage: Our office urgently requires more volunteers for 12th Step calls.

Vital Support: These calls provide immediate help and guidance to those in need.

Call to Action: If you or someone you know can help, please contact our office promptly to volunteer.

- **Switch from Comcast to CenturyLink:**

Cost-saving Move: We've transitioned our phone and internet services from Comcast to CenturyLink.

Smooth Transition: We're already reaping the benefits of improved service and reduced costs.

- **AT&T Bill Reduction:**

Operational Efficiency: Additionally, we've managed to reduce our AT&T bill by two-thirds, further optimizing our expenses.

- **We Need Your Feedback:**

Invaluable Input: Your suggestions, concerns, and ideas are crucial to our operations and service improvements.

Your Contribution: Your feedback helps us serve the AA community more effectively. Please share your thoughts with us.

Thank You

Whether volunteering, providing feedback, or supporting us in other ways, your contributions are invaluable. Together, we can continue making a positive difference in the lives of those we serve. If you can assist with 12th Step calls please reach out to our office directly.

SELF-SUPPORT SUGGESTIONS FOR GROUPS

“Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.” The Conference-approved pamphlet: “Self-Support: Where Money and Spirituality Mix” offers the following suggestions for the distribution of group funds after group expenses have been paid:

50% St. Paul Intergroup

33 Wentworth Ave E.
Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

30% General Service Office

P.O. Box 2407
James A Farley Station
New York, NY 10116-2407

10% Southern MN Area 36

Southern Minnesota Area Assembly
P.O. Box 2812
Mpls., MN 55402-0812

10% District Committee

Ramsey County:

District 8, P.O. Box 131523
St. Paul, MN 55113

Dakota County:

District 19, P.O. Box 1466
Burnsville, MN 55337

Washington County:

District 15, P.O. Box 181
Lake Elmo, MN 55042

WAYS TO FINANCIALLY SUPPORT INTERGROUP

1. VIA SQUARE

Use the camera on your phone to scan this QR code to be redirected to the SPI contribution webpage :



2. VIA CHECK

You are always welcome to stop by during business hours, or mail a personal or AA group check to the office at:

Saint Paul Intergroup
33 Wentworth Ave E, Ste 355
West St. Paul, MN
55118-3431

AREA 36 PINK CAN PLAN

THE PINK CAN PLAN COLLECTS FUNDS TO PURCHASE AA LITERATURE FOR ALCOHOLICS IN CORRECTIONS FACILITIES IN SOUTHERN MINNESOTA.

MAIL CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

**PINK CAN PLAN
PO BOX 41633
PLYMOUTH MN 55441-0633**

Dakota Alano
How It Works
4th Step
Workshop

Where: Mount Calvary Lutheran Church
(Next door to Dakota Alano)
3930 Rahn Rd
Eagan, MN 55122

When: Saturday & Sunday
March 2nd & 3rd

Time: 1:00 to 5:00 PM

Bring: Big Book, paper, pencils or pens & a
friend or two. Everyone and all 12-step
programs welcome!

For more information call
Christopher B 651-707-5551

DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

2024 INTERGROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)

Fairview Community Center
1910 Cty. Rd B West, Rm 108
Roseville
3rd Wed., 7:00 PM
Email: dist8@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 15 (Washington Co.)

Christ Lutheran Church
11194 N. 36th St.
Lake Elmo
4th Mon., 7:00 PM
Email: dist15@area36.org (for Zoom info)

District 19 (Dakota Co.)

Rosemount Community Center
13885 South Robert Trail
Rosemount
2nd Wed., 7:00 PM
dist19@area36.org
Email: dist19@area36.org (for Zoom info)

Advisor to the Board: Elliot W.
Board Chair: Kelly K.
Alt. Board Chair: Ricky G.
Treasurer: Devin R.
Alt. Treasurer: Brittani G.
Secretary: Alex S.
Members at Large:
Janice K.
Mary U.
John K.
Brandon H.
Office Manager: Jacob F.
Webservant: Jonathan L.

GREEN CAN PLAN

PLEASE HELP PROVIDE AN ASL INTERPRETER AT AN AA MEETING IN DISTRICT 8



CHECKS CAN BE SENT TO

ASL FUND

PO BOX 131831

ROSEVILLE, MN 55113-0020

OR

CONTRIBUTE ELECTRONICALLY

VENMO @ASLFund-DistrictEight

Contact District 8 ASL Fund Coordinator



LOOKING FOR A SERVICE OPPORTUNITY?

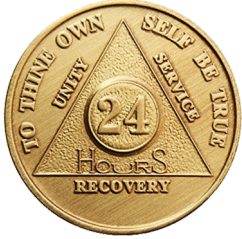
Become a St. Paul Intergroup Night Owl

If you are interested - Contact:
Nightowl@aastpaul.org
to schedule training.

St. Paul Intergroup Office
33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431
To RSVP - please call 651-227-5502

Friends in Recovery

CLEAN AND SOBER FUN FOR THE RECOVERING FAMILY
friendsinrecovery.org Twin Cities Minnesota



Bowling Extravaganza!



Sunday, Apr 28, 2024

Start time, 1:00pm

Sunray Lanes

2245 Hudson Road; St. Paul, MN 55119

Cost \$10 Includes shoes and three games

We start rolling at 1:00pm, so get there by 12:30 to check in and gear up.



St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.

@SPIntergroup

Office
Volunteers



venmo

- Jason
- Shawn
- Jane
- Lynn
- Jake
- Frank
- Bernie
- Adam
- Suzanne
- Alec
- Bob
- Noah
- Todd

THE FOLLOWING GROUPS, MEMBERS AND FAITHFUL FIVER MEMBERS MADE THE SERVICE OF INTERGROUP POSSIBLE LAST MONTH:

- 44 A.A. Groups contributed - \$9,836.07
- 42 Faithful Fivers contributed - \$5,882.46
- Total Contributions - \$15,718.53

Thanks to your all!

And Thanks to our many
Night Owl volunteers as

Hope Church - Monday AA
Maplewood Groups
Weekend Jumpstart II
Apple Valley Daily Reflections
Valley Creek Thursday Night
Sisters of Serenity
North Dale Group
Cottage Grove AA
Valley Creek Monday
Basic Text
White Bear 96 Group
A Baffled Lot
St. Joes Monday Night - Stillwater
Tuesday Night Friends
Woodbury Primary Purpose
Friday Nite 12x12 By The Book
Day by Dei Online Women's
Hole in the Doughnut Group
Roseville Wed Night
Wednesday Night Men's 12 x 12
Second Sandwich
Fourth Dimension
Dakota Alano SAT 9AM As Bill Sees It
Defogged Men's Group
Thursday Night Big Book - Nfld
Forest Lake Thursday BB
Forest Lake Alano
Oakdale Canvas Health Monday
Uptown Group
White Bear Lake AA - Monday Night

Eagan Burnsville Savage Groups
Summit Hill
Rule 62 Step & Tradition Group
Saturday Morning Womens
Group
Highland Park Groups
North Hamline AA Group
Monday Morning Women's
Group
MNYPAA
Pocketing Our Pride - Mpls
Hugo Group
Como Park BB
Women's Basic Text
Midway Club
Defiant Brats East
Forest Lake 12 & 12
SOS Afton Sat Morn
Hope Church - Monday AA

*Thank You So
Very Much!*



Meeting
Info Calls

41



12th Step
Calls

6



Speakers
Calls

7



Total
Calls
150

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup
33 Wentworth Ave E
Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431

Change Service Requested

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Please let us know a month in advance if your address changes. It saves us the cost of return postage and enables you to get each issue of The Lifeline. Our mailing permit does not provide for mail forwarding. THANK YOU!



St. Paul Intergroup **Individual Contribution** Enrollment Form

Your Intergroup strives to be self-supporting, and with your personal support we can continue to carry our vital message of Hope and Recovery to all who need and want it. Your contribution entitles you to a one-year subscription to the Lifeline. Contributions may be made annually, bi-annually, quarterly, or monthly. Please consider becoming one of our *Faithful Fivers* (\$5.00/month), *Terrific Tennes* (\$10.00/month), or *Fantastic Fifteeners* \$15.00/month).

1. Contact Information:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

2. Amount & Frequency:

Amount \$ _____

Frequency: (check one)

Monthly Quarterly Bi-Annually Annually

Start on: ____/____/____

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Terrific Tenner (\$10.00/month)

Fantastic Fifteener (\$15.00/month)

3. Choose a Payment Method:

Credit Card/Debit

Visa MasterCard AMEX Discover

Card # ____/____/____/____

Expiration Date: ____/____

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Signature: _____

**I authorize St. Paul Intergroup to automatically bill my account as specified (monthly, quarterly, etc). I understand that I am free to cancel this authorization at any time by contacting Intergroup.*

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33 Wentworth Ave E, Suite 355
West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431