



STEP 9

August 1977

The Amends I Most Dreaded to Make

Some things can never be undone, but there is a spirit that heals old wound

I HAD MADE all my amends but one. I had faced my father, my mother, my brothers, my second ex-wife, and numerous employers and acquaintances I had stolen from or cheated. The results had been incredible. Every one of them was kind and appreciative of what I was trying to do with my life. Many of them told me, "If there's anything I can do for you, please let me know." The peace I was beginning to experience was astounding. I also kept a list of the people I wasn't able to locate, in case I should ever come into contact with them. Now, there was no more rationalizing, no more amends to make in order to delay the one I dreaded most.

She was a pedestrian I ran down in September of 1965. She was rushed to the hospital with a brain hemorrhage and wasn't expected to live. There were investigators looking for me, and I kept avoiding them. When I was sent back to jail for the sixth and last time, I learned that she had been released from the hospital at her request and was returning to her home in Brussels, Belgium. That was all I knew. I had no idea what condition she was in. I didn't want to know. I was paying the price for my mistake in time behind bars. My debt was paid.

I had my last drink two years after the acci-

dent. I had just spent eight months trying to stay sober without those damn Steps, and the results had been nil. This time, I decided to give them a try. I had some difficulty understanding and coming to terms with some of the Steps in the beginning. I guess we all do. But eventually, the understanding came and the application followed.

Now, without realizing how far I'd come, I knew I had to face up to the one amends I had dreaded ever since I had come to comprehend Step Nine. That little voice inside me wouldn't let up. I had to do it.

I really didn't know where to start, where to find her. I looked at the police report, found her address in Belgium, and wrote to her. The letter was returned: "Addressee Unknown." I called the Belgian consulate in Los Angeles. They told me there was nothing they could do, but that I might write the American embassy in Brussels. I did.

Then the news: "In response to your letter of April 27, 1972, I regret to inform you that Miss W----died in Belgium in 1966 shortly after her return from the United States. This information was provided to the embassy by her last known employer."

Oh my God, no! Not because of the accident. How would I know for sure? I was torn. Part of me was saying I had done all I could do and I would have to learn to accept it. But another part of me felt uneasy and unsettled. Then I realized that she must have had a family, and that I certainly owed them amends.

In her medical jacket at the hospital, I found

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.

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

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the addresses of a sister in Canada and two doctors in Belgium. I wrote my letter of amends to the sister. It, too, came back: "Addressee Unknown." I wrote to both doctors in Belgium. Six months later, I received a reply from one of them. He commended what I was trying to do and sent the sister's address, in Belgium. I wrote my letter of amends again. In two weeks, I had a reply in Flemish. It took another week to have it translated.

"This morning, we received your letter. I thank you with all my heart. Perhaps your letter helped to cure the deep wound that was caused by the death of my only, loved, younger sister. Yes, she is dead following that accident. It was terribly hard. It still causes such a strong pain. We loved each other enormously. She was an artist; later, I shall send you a copy of one of her works.

"The Insurance concerning the accident was paid to us [the writer and her husband], the trip and the burial by us. We suffered financially terribly much because of her death. She helped us very much. She was a good person. She was so dear to me. A day does not go by without my thinking about her. We have one child, Julie, eight years old. I am sending a picture taken on the day of her first communion.

"We are not rich, but my husband and I are very happy together, and are taking care of everything together with love. We do not want to profit by you. You must pay nothing. If you want, and if you can, perhaps give something to put in Julie's savings account. She will remain alone in life sometimes. But you must not defraud yourself of anything. I would be completely glad about that--the money for the child. I am a schoolteacher, and I try to make a good person out of my child.

"I keep your letter for Julie. And will you write a small letter off and on? That also I would like very much. And you must pray for us and all those who have lost someone in an accident. It is so hard. Life is so short. I am so glad, so very glad that you have written. I am so thankful to you. I shall finish for now, for I must go to school. Julie also prays for you and sends her best regards. I hope you find someone who will translate the letter to you, because I don't know enough English. God is good and merciful, and we must be like that also. God bless you."

I did write again. The letters I received have been even warmer. I found it hard to believe and accept. How could anyone have that much love and forgiveness? Like most of my life in AA, it was too much to comprehend. Then we began to correspond about

seeing each other some day and how nice it would be to sit and face-to-face.

In July 1974, I flew to New York to meet my nine-year-old daughter, who was going with me to Belgium. This was at the suggestion of my ex-wife, and I was startled by her new trust in me. I was impressed that I had changed that much.

It was difficult for my daughter, leaving her mother for the first time. I hadn't seen her in three years, and never had it been just the two of us. On the plane, we had dinner and went to sleep. I woke up suddenly, just before we began our descent into Brussels, and she was standing over me, just looking at me. Then she was in my arms crying, and I felt for the first time in my life the overwhelming and beautiful responsibility of being a parent.

I don't have the words to describe our trip to Belgium. When we were met at the airport by our Belgian friends, we embraced and cried as if we had known one another for years. We lived in their home for two weeks. Our daughters were instant friends in spite of the language barrier. My daughter and I were given a grand tour of western Belgium. We crossed the English Channel from France to Dover. Everything was done for us. They fed us, washed our clothes, and introduced us to their friends. And when the girls had gone to bed, we spent many hours talking about the accident and its aftermath, talking and crying together. My daughter and I were loved in a way so total and so foreign to me that I thought there must be a catch. It scared the hell out of me. One day, they told me that if anything happened to them, I would have to come to Belgium and take care of everything. I was very flattered but had no concept of the depth of what they were saying until my final day there.

At five o'clock on the morning we were to leave Belgium, I awoke to find sitting at the foot of my bed the sister of the woman I killed in 1965. She was crying and looking at me intently. Then, very softly, she said, "You are my brother. My real brother. My very dear and real brother. Don't ever forget that."

I never have. I doubt that I ever will.

By: D. S. | Desert Hot Springs, California

9TH TRADITION

Why I Don't Vote

An AA questions the use of Robert's Rules of Order in business meeting

Some are not aware that I refrain from casting a vote at business meetings. This is not an abstention, but is exercising my choice not to vote. This decision is generally not understood and often met with harsh judgment. That verdict does not bother me in the least. However, I feel it imperative that as part of my choice, it is important to explain the process and logic behind my resolution.

Firstly, I do not agree that Parliamentary Procedure leads to fair or representative voice for all concerned. I think that those pushing this as part of a democratic ideal are either misled or themselves part of a larger group using these procedures to manipulate and control group opinion, while maintaining the posture that the election process is open, free and fair. To conclude it is not, may seem radical and far afield. I pray you hold that verdict and consider my reasoning. I am not trying to convince you or get you to change your opinions, but I hope you are open-minded enough to consider a differing point of view.

In an open forum designed to produce fair and honest discussion, Parliamentary Procedure as carried out clearly favors those well-steeped and knowledgeable of Robert's Rules of Order. The only way to gain this knowledge is through experience--lots of it. This yields a hierarchy that gives advantage to those who have been seated the longest. It also favors those who are gifted as powerful charismatic speakers or bullies who can claim more than their share of the floor both in frequency and amplitude. Much contention in the air is filled with power-driven argument and frothy emotional appeal. It would be relatively simple to provide examples of how this system has led to corruption and influence peddling in large institutions that hold themselves democratic.

But in the halls of Alcoholics Anonymous, it is more dangerous and disturbing. Many of our brothers and sisters are quashed when they get here and find it difficult to find their voice. But in our halls they are given the message that we share a fellowship of equality where everyone who is so-

ber today is an equal. But then they are faced with a decision making process that clearly favors old timers and those with assumed roles of authority. Here issues being considered are put to vote and majority opinions, and after taking into account minority opinion and a chance at putting the issue to revote, are deemed to be "Group Conscience." Many times, I have witnessed motions that are carried but clearly do not represent a group's conscience. This all strikes an inharmonious chord in AA unity.

It has been my observation that this trend has slowly come about primarily within the past 25 years. This causes me to strike out in a different direction to offer another solution and perhaps some balance. It was only around the beginning of the 1990s that I witnessed at Intergroup- and Area-levels adoption of Robert's Rules of Order as guidelines. These motions were often introduced by young turks who were landing in AA escaping the separation conflicts that occurred during the later 1980s as NA struggled to get on its feet and pull away from AA.

I fully admit I had part in this process and on at least two occasions, introduced the idea of using Parliamentary Procedure as a way to conduct business. Immediately, introductory motions to insert matters into meetings sprang up. Concurrently, agendas as to how AA meetings were to look began to be spread about. Looking back, I find, it was here that inroads were put down that paved the way for diminishing group autonomy.

Before then most decisions were garnered without even voting. Most voting at group levels was for the purpose of placing someone in a service position and that mostly seemed symbolic and came about as an answer to an individual being nominated for a "group job."

Very little other business needed voting as groups were settled in how they carried their message and small issues were discussed and held until they normally worked themselves out. This state of affairs really exemplified AA's Ninth Tradition-- that AA, as such, ought never be organized.

It worked really well and promoted a genial spiritual atmosphere that attracted newcomers. It may be interesting to note that NA has never been able to adopt that principle in deed. Now we have a state of affairs that appears deadly serious, veering quite far away from Dr. Bob's admonition to Bill to keep this thing simple and this statement spelled out

in the Fourth Tradition from the Twelve & Twelve, "Don't take yourself too seriously."

What course of action do I favor? Forming consensus. This process is by far a much slower procedure where decision is permitted to evolve after letting all parties give voice to their ideas and opinions. This way seems to favor fairness as it gives all a chance to participate and no one is allowed to steer the group towards a hasty settlement.

Each new idea is given chance to be heard and settle as all participants are provided opportunity to respond to each change in direction. Since it is vital that all respond before proceeding to a new issue, the process slows and no small side wrangling occurs as vote gathering is eliminated. It is from these diminutive side exchanges that political alliances get set up which tend to overtake the group and introduce power that undermines egalitarianism while using parliamentary procedure to conduct meetings for business.

There are two main reasons I favor this approach. The first is quite subjective and honors the immense feeling obtained once group consensus crystallizes. It is here a sense of unity springs forth as a solution arrives without a formal vote but a powerful awareness of common ownership. When this comes about, I gather a real sense of community that seems to be propelled by movement of spirit. It is here too that the way ahead is clear and I get no sense of bitterness by people who feel left out of the decision making process.

The second reason is I believe a call to vote that must be answered stifles discussion and often leads to hasty conclusions that seem harder to remove once they are set into the cement of legislative approval. By inference, newcomers on the scene often regard existing statutes to be inviolable. For example, one of the elements that first attracted me to AA was its lack of written guidelines and instructions about how things should be. We seem to have come a great length from that simple time, to one in which many meetings now seem to be conducted from a boilerplate formula. It makes me wonder where and how a common template was introduced. I slightly remember standard readings and a rigid meeting format were a common feature introducing NA meetings. Slowly readings, one at a time, were injected into AA meetings. I just cannot believe how widespread that has become.

I am thoroughly invested in attending meetings. I work on questioning unclear proposals and trying to ensure that all present have a chance to give

their voice. I fill in the time constructing communication maps to try and see where the conversation is being directed, by and to whom.

In this way I can get an idea of who is trying to direct the show. Even though I do not cast votes, I will accept their results and privately bemoan that AA may just be going the way the Bill W. feared it might if we followed the course of normal human organizational development. We may continue this path until it falls in on itself as over time most organized social groupings do. Over that I can hold no sway but choose to do my best to hold to membership and try and be available to other alcoholics. Like Bill, I find the way forward can only be traversed and sustained could we but hold to the unstructured form of Blessed Anarchy, and most importantly to the principle of Anonymity.

By: Anonymous

THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

Hello!

My name is Lindsey, and I am serving this year as the Advisor to the Board once again. :) I received a call several months ago informing me of a vacancy and was asked if I would be willing to return. After consulting my sponsor, I agreed. I love St. Paul Intergroup and am grateful for the opportunity to be of service again.

Why do I love St. Paul Intergroup?

1) Simply put, it has helped keep me sober. I have been involved with St. Paul Intergroup—first as an Intergroup Representative for my home group and then on the board or attending events—for almost seven years. You all have taught me so much, and I have made many lasting friendships here. I am very grateful.

2) It has helped me grow in the Program. Serving as a “Rep” and being on the board have each taught me different aspects of the Program. I learned about the business side of AA, non-profit operations, and how to conduct business meetings respectfully. It opened doors in AA Service that I was previously unaware of.

3) The events! I love helping host Intergroup events or simply attending them. I enjoy the familiar and new faces I have encountered throughout the years and the powerful message of AA that I hear.

Intergroup needs your help! There are close to 800 meetings in the St. Paul area and its surroundings; yet, fewer than 100 send Representatives to our Intergroup Council Meeting and/or contribute to St. Paul Intergroup. Do all your meetings contribute time and/or money? Is your Group Conscience heard at St. Paul Intergroup? If not, I encourage you and your Group to get involved. Intergroup is here to serve the Groups, and we need your input and service.

Don't forget, board elections are coming up in November! I didn't know what I was getting into when I stood for the position, but I am very glad that I did.

With love and gratitude,

Lindsey D.

OFFICE UPDATE

Happy summertime everyone!!

The office is still doing well!

The office has some opportunities:

- Join the relocation committee, contact the office if you would like to join the committee to relocate the office
- The office now has an updated card reader, accepting apple pay, tap and chip cards

Thank you all for your continued support of St. Paul Intergroup!!

NOTICE

Every Third tuesday of the month at 7:30pm the Board and Reps meeting happens on zoom and in person. Please have a Rep for your group or you yourself show up to stay as up to date as possible about St. Paul Intergroup.

Events with St. Pual Intergroup:

Ice Cream Social: September 7th

Gratitude Night: November 23rd

New Years Brunch Event: January 1st

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**

The 65th

ICYPPAA

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF YOUNG PEOPLE IN AA

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WANT TO:

- KNOW MORE?
- GET INVOLVED?
- BE OF SERVICE?



PRE-
REGISTER



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:
 Mary U.
 John K.
 Brandon H.
 Office Manager: Jacob F.
 Webservant: Jonathan L.
 Night Owl Coordinator: Lesli D.

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

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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

Service Work: The Heartbeat of AA

Why Service Matters in AA?

Service is the lifeblood of Alcoholics Anonymous. It's not just about giving back; it's about keeping the fellowship alive, supporting each other in sobriety, and fostering a sense of community.

Connectivity & Fellowship

Service work is the glue that binds our large community together. By actively participating in service roles, you contribute to the unity and strength of AA. It's a chance to form lasting connections with others who understand the journey to sobriety.

Keep the Miracle Alive

Service work is the heartbeat of AA, ensuring the continuation of the miracle of recovery. When we actively engage in service, we help others stay sober, and in turn, it reinforces our own commitment to a life of recovery.

District Needs YOU!

GSRs Wanted!

Our district needs Group Service Representatives (GSRs) from meetings like yours. Be the voice of your group at the district level and play a crucial role in decision-making processes.

Open Chairs & Positions

There are open positions waiting to be filled. Your skills and commitment are needed to keep our meetings running smoothly.

Meeting Info

- Find your district and times on the Area 36 webpage at area36.org.
- St. Paul Intergroup Board and Reps Meeting: every 3rd Tuesday at 7:30 PM.

Get Involved!

Whether you're a newcomer or a seasoned member, there's a service role for you. Step up, be a part of the solution, and keep AA vibrant and strong.

For more information about how to be of service in AA General Service, speak with your sponsor or visit the area36.org webpage, or reach out to intergroup and the volunteers and staff will be happy to direct you to ways to be of service to Alcoholics Anonymous.

St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.

@SPIntergroup

Fell Free To Vist our
online store at :

aaspi.company.site



venmo

You can also donate on
our website directly at:

www.aastpaul.org

Office

Volunteers

And Thanks to our many Night Owl volunteers as well.

Bernie

Hoot Hoot!

Alec

Lynn E.

If you are intrested in being of Service, please Vist our Website or Contact the office!!

Frank D.

Thanks to you all!

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

- *A.A. Groups contributed - \$7,654.26*
- *Faithful Fivers contributed - \$550.38*
- *Total Contributions - \$9,886.51*

Hope Church - Monday AA
Clay City AA
Hillside Friday Night AA
Valley Step Group
West End Club
Sisters of Serenity
No Time Like the Present
Roseville Wed Night
Valley Creek Thursday Night
Friday Nite 12x12 By The Book
Hole in the Doughnut Group
Main Idea
Wednesday Night Men's 12 x 12
New Beginnings - Newport MN
Midway Club
Downtown Alano Squad 50
Weekend Jumpstart II
Stepsisters of Northfield Group

A Baffled Lot
Forest Lake Alano
St. Joes Monday Night - Stillwater
North Hamline AA Group
Rule 62 Step & Tradition Group
Woodbury Primary Purpose
Highland Park Groups
White Bear 96 Group
Pocketing Our Pride
Hugo Group
Saturday Morning Womens Group
This Simple Program
Forest Lake Thursday BB
Bright Promises AA
There's a Better Way
Old Timers
Maplewood Groups
Como Park BB

*Thank You So
Very Much!*



Meeting
Info Calls

34



12th Step
Calls

5



Speakers
Calls

3



Total
Calls
103

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

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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 Fifteneers* \$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 Fifteneer (\$15.00/month)

3. Choose a Payment Method:

Credit Card/Debit

Visa MasterCard AMEX Discover

Card # ____/____/____/____

Expiration Date: ____/____

Name on Card: _____

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**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.*

Check - Please make payable to:

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