



STEP 4

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”

I’ve heard it said, that some couples wake up every morning laying next to their partner but staring into the eyes of a complete stranger because they don’t know the true depths of the person they are in a relationship with. I spent my entire life living inside the body and mind of a complete stranger because I never had the tools available to understand and get to know who I was. If I’m being honest, even if I had the tools, I never truly had any desire to get to know my true self I lied to myself, I hid my feelings from myself, I manipulated myself, I cheated myself and I did it all while on the beautifully numbing combination of Xanax and Alcohol. Looking back I’m not even sure that I ever fully understood the concept of my true self, or what it meant to be at peace with the being I had to spend every second of every day with. I certainly didn’t understand what the consequences would be if I continued to push myself away. With each passing day a vast distance was growing between the life I was living and the type of life I was intended to live. I was teetering on the edge of a life completely enclosed in a cloud of self hate and shame.

To me Step 4 wasn’t just about uncovering and understanding my liabilities, it was my first true attempt at discovering who I was as a person. It was the first time in my life I was courageously honest with myself and I realized that in my entire life I had been seeking external distractions to keep me from looking anywhere but inward. It didn’t matter if it was women work, sports, gambling, vacations, bars, or drugs, all of these things served one purpose and it was kept me from having to be alone with myself; to keep me from continuously having to feel that uncomfortability just underneath my skin. Anytime I started spending even just a few seconds without a distraction, that uncomfortable feeling was there for me lurking in the shadows. This caused me to become extremely co-dependent on the external world. I was incapable of living in the moment because that’s where my true self lived, so I just hopped from external thrill to external thrill without ever truly being present. On top of that I was filled to the brim with ego based fears that just kept churning out of the hamster wheel that was my mind. With time, this caused the external world to become a little too unbearable for me to deal with as well. I had never been able to deal with the internal world and I could no longer deal with the external world. It left me with one option, drown my sorrows with drugs and alcohol in complete isolation.

The honesty and reflection of self, that came from step 4, has catapulted my inner rela-

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

tionship into something I can barely recognize. Once I was able to be honest about the more difficult items of my past, I was then able to fearlessly scrutinize many of my smaller day to day actions and desires as well. I am more open and honest about my likes and dislikes. I am no longer afraid to be alone with myself and my thoughts. It's an interesting turn of events for me and one I will forever be grateful for. I may be even more grateful that I didn't choose to stall on my 4th step or to put it off. If I had, I may still be struggling with trying to find a way to deal with me, instead of sitting comfortably in front of my computer writing this letter to you. Many of my peers wallowed for weeks or months over their 4th step, worried about the truths that were going to come out when putting pen to paper. I say face your fears with courage, confront yourself honestly, for maybe the first time in your life, and do it without delay. If you're anything like me, you can't afford to wait another moment to get to know the only being you are required to spend the rest of your life with. When you finally do meet your true self, don't be upset that it took this long to make introductions.

- Alec M.

TRADITION 4

«Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.»

I have been involved in recovery (to varying degrees) for a little over eight years. For me, there have been many self-imposed obstacles to recovery. One of the most important was my unwillingness to fully commit to the idea that my sobriety must be the most important thing in my life, above literally all other considerations. I finally truly understood this when I came to a point where I knew I needed to move back to sober living in order to save my life. However, to do so, I had to surrender my two dogs to the Animal Humane Society. Knowing that it was likely they would eventually be euthanized, I knew my recovery – my survival – had to be my number one priority. This principle, expressed in many elements of the program, is clearly reflected in the Fourth Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Fourth Tradition plays a pivotal role in shaping the fellowship's structure and guiding principles. It reflects the delicate balance between individual autonomy and collective unity within the AA community. Tradition Four "...means very simply that every A.A. group can manage its affairs exactly as it pleases, except when AA as a whole is threatened." (12 & 12, p. 146, emphasis added)

Autonomy is the cornerstone of the Fourth Tradition. It empowers individual AA groups to function independently, meaning each group can make its own decisions

to suit their unique needs and circumstances. This autonomy extends to matters like group format, meeting frequency, selecting leaders, observing the Seventh Tradition, etc.

One of the fundamental aspects of this tradition is its emphasis on group conscience. It encourages groups to make decisions collectively. A typical AA meeting type is the Big Book meeting. Perhaps a group reads and discusses the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and has elected to read a single paragraph and stop to discuss it in minute detail, even defining words where necessary, and repeating this for the length of the meeting. Maybe another group also reads and discusses the Big Book, but it prefers to read several pages in the first part of the meeting and then discuss what they've read in the second. Or imagine another Big Book group which reads a paragraph, pauses briefly for anyone who wishes to comment or share, then moves to the next paragraph. My point is that there are virtually unlimited meeting formats that can be adopted, all involving reading and discussing the Big Book.

The intent of autonomy is to create an environment where each group can tailor its approach to best serve its members on their collective journey towards recovery. However, this autonomy is not absolute. The tradition acknowledges the interdependence of AA groups and the fellowship as a whole and reinforces this requirement to members in an elegant way. This delicate dance between autonomy and interdependence is a key aspect of the Fourth Tradition's wisdom. Essentially, we are allowed to conduct ourselves in any way we choose, provided our conduct does not interfere with AA as a whole. Our book, the "Twelve

Steps and Twelve Traditions" reminds us that ultimately, "[s]obriety had to be [AA's] sole objective". (12 and 12, p. 147)

Imagine any of the meetings discussed above using their formats as a means of providing reading comprehension instruction to members whose native language is not English? What if the members of the group provided instruction and additional, non-recovery, practice material to these members? Though a noble and worthy purpose, would this practice not run counter to AA's primary purpose? Hasn't this group's main objective supplanted AA's "sole objective"? Perhaps this example is extreme, but to me it represents the essence of the Fourth Tradition: that our unity, reflected in our commitment to sobriety as our "sole objective", must be of paramount importance, more important even than even our right to autonomy.

Every day, I am so grateful that our fellowship continues to recognize, through this tradition and many other instances, that all who have a desire to stop drinking are welcome and that our sobriety is our purpose above all else. It saves my life over and over, day after day.

Jason B., Saint Paul, MN



THOUGHTS FROM THE BOARD

TRUST GOD, CLEAN HOUSE, AND HELP OTHERS

I joined this fellowship beatdown, homeless, court-ordered, and willing to believe I couldn't change my life on my own. I knew people got sober in AA, but I didn't believe it would work for me. I had major trust issues AND I didn't believe in God. Well, I certainly didn't believe there was a God that could help me, I thought I was too far gone. I was hopeless alright. Lucky for me, this program works miracles on the hopeless variety of alcoholics.

I got a sponsor and started working the steps but I still felt blocked off from everything. I felt everyone in the meetings had known each other for a lifetime and I was the new kid in class. I was sure everyone was talking about me and I was a laughing stock of AA. Gosh, I'm grateful I was wrong about that and just about everything else I thought about God and this program.

I've learned many things while being an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous. One is that AA allows me to strip away some of the walls I've erected over the years to prevent others from hurting me. At least, that's what I believed to be the truth. I've since discovered the truth to be far more revealing. Through the 12-step process, I've been shown a significant defect that permeates my life. That being the need to blame the people, places, and things that "wronged" me because I was incapable of acknowledging my fear in the matter. This defect manifests itself in myriad ways, ways that keep me playing the victim in this life.

I've also discovered that my reluctance to forgive people for their actions was primarily due to my own self-hatred, having done similar things to others. So, what does this mean, and what do I do about it? Can I continue to isolate myself from everyone and everything, or can I find comfort in this human experience and begin to outgrow fear? By acknowledging that no one is perfect (including myself), I realize the best anyone can be is human. I find that when these proverbial dots start to connect as a result of doing this spiritual work, such as prayer and meditation, I draw nearer to those around me.

AA helps me lean on my higher power to shift my perspective. In doing that, I get closer to God as well as all of you. The more I experience

the presence of God's love, the more I can give that love to those around me. How I help others has evolved over my years in AA. In the beginning, I was learning how to be a good roommate instead of a childish 32-year-old. Lately, I have been asking God how I can better serve AA, hence me raising my hand to join the board at St. Paul's Intergroup.

For me to get to this point of my recovery journey, I had to continually strengthen my courage, as well as faith that God will take care of me, just as God always has. With this newfound faith and courage to get out of my old thinking, I'm able to look at how I can help others with the same kind of walls. This program keeps me in contact with countless others who share this affliction.

I find when I'm honest with myself, God, and my sponsor, being helpful at meetings is a breeze. I'm able to bring the solution to the meetings and look for those who are shaking like I was when I showed up in the rooms. I didn't believe that a group of people could be so happy without drink or drugs. And boy, oh boy, I'm grateful I stuck around long enough to see not only were people happy while completely sober, but I could be laughing and enjoying life right alongside them.

The fact of the matter is, I didn't believe that a fulfilling life was in the cards for me. Coming in with so much pain, suffering, and a lengthy criminal record, I wondered if I would even be allowed to help anyone in AA. Well, it turns out that not only am I allowed, but I'm encouraged to go out and scoop people up from the depths of hell. Each one of us is uniquely gifted with our own journey that ultimately brought us to our knees. The wonderful thing is AA was there to help us stand once more. We continue to help others stand together and carry the tradition of helping.

As the years pass, my gratitude and fulfillment deepen when I help others discover this solution. I believe there is no greater gift than carrying this message of hope to the still-suffering alcoholic. I'm happy to report, I'm no longer struggling to be a roommate. In fact, I'm now happily married as well as a homeowner. I'm able to show up for friends and family as well as at work. I owe my life to AA since AA made this life possible. I truly feel as if I have "struck gold" and I know the only way to keep it is by giving it away.

Brandon H

2024 Board Member at Large

OFFICE UPDATE

Hello everyone,

My name is Jacob F., and I am your new Office Manager for the St. Paul Intergroup. I am incredibly grateful to have been trusted with this position, and I feel very honored to serve in this capacity. As some of you may know, Frank N. has retired. Frank dedicated months to working one-on-one with me, showing me the ins and outs of the St. Paul Intergroup. His guidance has been invaluable, and I hope to honor his legacy by contributing positively to our community.

St. Paul Intergroup has seen considerable progress in recent months, a testament to the hard work and dedication of Frank, the board, and myself. Through diligent budgeting and streamlining our operations, we are in a strong position to maintain our services and continue supporting our community effectively.

I want to emphasize that I am always open to feedback and suggestions. Intergroup exists to serve our community, and by extension, I am here to serve you. Whether through email at manager@aastpaul.org, a phone call, or a visit to the office, I welcome your thoughts and hope to meet many of you in person.

One area where we currently need additional support is in recruiting more 12th Step callers and office volunteers. The 12th Step is a foundational element of our program, reflecting the pioneering spirit of our founders and their mission to expand the AA community. Your participation in these roles is vital for our continued growth and impact.

For those interested in volunteering at the office, it offers a serene and accommodating environment for service work. With available WiFi and a quiet setting, it's an ideal place for step work and contribution to our community's wellbeing.

Thank you once again for this incredible opportunity to serve our AA community in this capacity. Your support and engagement are what make our efforts worthwhile.

Sincerely,

Jacob F.

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

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

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PO BOX 41633
PLYMOUTH MN 55441-0633



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34TH CONTINUOUS YEAR OF OUR MEETING!
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APRIL 22, 2024
6:00 PM POTLUCK
7:00 PM SPEAKER
KATHY B. ST. PAUL

ST ANDREWS LUTERAN CHURCH
900 STILLWATER RD
MAHTOMEDI, MN 55115

DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

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)



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 365
West St. Paul, MN 55110-3401
To RSVP - please call 651-227-6602

2024 INTERGROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Advisor to the Board: Elliot W.
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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

VENMO @ASLFund-DistrictEight

Contact District 8 ASL Fund Coordinator

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St. Paul & Suburban Area Intergroup, Inc.

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venmo

Fell Free To Vist our online store at :

aaspi.company.site

You can also donate on our website directly at:

www.aastpaul.org

Office

Volunteers

Thanks to your all!

Bernie

Alec

Shaun L.

Jane H.

Lynn E.

Frank D.

And Thanks to our many Night Owl volunteers as well.

Hoot Hoot!

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

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

- 25 A.A. Groups contributed - \$3,138.01
- 32 Faithful Fivers contributed - \$2,300.00
- Total Contributions - \$5,438.01

Hope Church - Monday AA
Uptown Group
Hour of Power
Downtown Alano Squad 50
Eagan Tuesday Nighters
Pages of Wisdom
Wednesday Night Men's 12 x 12
North Dale Group
11 W. Bernard Group
Fellowship Club AA
Midway Club
Forest Lake Alano

Hastings Club
North Road Group
Michael Brewer
Jumpstart 12 & 12
Mendota St. Peter's Sat 9AM
Elements Group
Saturday Morning Womens Group
Mendota 1030 AA Group
Hope Group - Lakeville
Saturday Morning AA - Lindstrom
Pocketing Our Pride - Mpls
Hillside Friday Night AA

Thank You So Very Much!



Meeting
Info Calls

34



12th Step
Calls

4



Speakers
Calls

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Office
Calls

122

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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).

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Phone: _____
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Frequency: (check one)
 Monthly Quarterly Bi-Annually Annually
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West St. Paul, MN 55118-3431