



STEP 3

How did this mom's day get so bad so fast? Luckily, she'd been sober a while and knew just what to do

Yesterday, I was given the opportunity for spiritual growth. That is, I had a very bad day. Here's how it unraveled.

I had prepared a big, beautiful breakfast for my family and no one was suitably appreciative. The kids were at a fever pitch; seemingly nothing would satisfy them. I couldn't complete one request before they were demanding something more. I went hours without a finished thought or personal need met. No one was following my directions no matter how much I repeated them—or screamed them.

My husband, seeking to comfort me, offered me a break, but he didn't offer it correctly, so I took an innocent comment he made as an affront to my abilities. I reacted as if he had insulted me.

Taking inventory of everything other than my own actions, I started seeing flaws in my family members, in my home, in the mirror, in the news—and suddenly everything felt deeply overwhelming in its disarray. I asked myself how I could have let all this get so bad. My self-pity machine was primed and running now. I started on a downward spiral. I told myself I was an ugly, screaming, terrible mother and a weak, helpless person. A fraud. Nothing

was safe now from my unmet expectations, not even me. Humility and acceptance were completely absent, and I felt frustrated and trapped. How was this possible, when just the day before yesterday, under similar conditions, everything was serene? How was it possible that so recently I felt joyous, happy and free? What had changed? And so quickly?

By the day's end I was in such a twisted state that I needed release. Before finding the lifesaving principles in AA, this is the state of being that would have driven me to drinking to obtain oblivion.

Thank God for AA and the good sober days that came before this one. I can now withstand a bad day, provided I take responsibility when wrong. If I become willing to ask for help from a power greater than myself and turn things over to that power, I can be relieved of my need to be the director. The petty pain I experience over not getting my way can be erased by acceptance and surrender. What I have, what all of us in recovery have, is "a daily reprieve, contingent on my spiritual condition."

Here's what happened. I signed up for a service commitment that just happened to put my butt in a meeting on the night of the bad day. I can't stay sober on yesterday's actions, but thankfully I had taken enough previous action that I was gently guided back to conscious contact with my Higher Power.

Sitting in that meeting, at first I felt regret. Who has time to be at a meeting on such a bad day? This is hilarious of course. Wasn't it a pretty bad day

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

Website: www.aastpaul.org Online Store: aaspi.company.site E-mail: lifeline@aastpaul.org Phone: (651) 227-5502
Office Hours: Monday - Friday 9:30 to 5:30, Saturday 10:00 to 2:00 Sunday Closed

TRADITION 3

that brought me to AA in the first place? Sitting in the meeting, in a service position, listening to a speaker celebrating 17 years of sobriety, I was reminded of what my bad days used to be like. They didn't include a big breakfast, a happy household clamoring with love and me being needed or useful to anyone like I am today. My bad days used to be quite dangerous. My very first AA meeting was a day I nearly didn't survive.

Sitting in this anniversary meeting, being of service, helped me right-size things. I was reminded that I'm a sober alcoholic. Every day, good and bad, is manageable—as long as I don't drink. As I listened to the speaker, I did a quick review of my day. What could I have done that might have brought a different result? To make that big breakfast that no one appreciated, I had missed my regular morning AA meeting. When I decided I needed a reset and retreated to my room with the intention to meditate, didn't I instead fold laundry? I also didn't reach out to another alcoholic. I didn't call my sponsor. I didn't call a newcomer. I never took a moment to pause and admit my powerlessness. At no point did I ask for knowledge for his will for me and for the power to carry it out. I had forced my will on everyone and everything all day, never stopping to check in with God.

The result was that I was disappointed and resentful. I remembered how I used to string together day after day in this state, all while also dealing with the consequences of my drinking. As I reviewed all the tools in my toolbox, I was overwhelmed with a sense of gratitude that I was being cared for. I became willing to start turning my will over. With that willingness came peace.

In the end, there was nothing about my day that was bad. Nothing truly bad happened and I didn't drink. I was just cut off from the sunshine of the spirit. I had experienced some spiritual growth and some learning experiences. I was reminded that 1) It works if you work it. I need to stay in action one day at a time, stay in service and stay “in the middle of the herd” in preparation for the next bad day. And 2) No matter how much time I get or how good I sound when I share my story in a meeting or whether I write an article, I only have today—and I only have a daily reprieve.

By: Alexis C. | Bowie, Md.

Are the local small-t traditions at our meetings the same as our Twelve Traditions? A member shares his thought

When I came into AA in the mid-1980s, there were a number of local customs that were rarely spoken of in the present tense. These usually took the form of recollections and perhaps remonstrances from the speaker about the way things used to be.

Where I went to meetings, I'd hear people say, “We were taught that when you sober up, you should clean up.” A jacket and tie for the men, skirt and stockings for the women. That was the expected dress code when one led a meeting. And most emphatically, profanity was not tolerated. These recollections may have been a commentary on the changing times, as people flooded into meetings fresh out of 28 days of treatment back then. AA was changing and the oldtimers were concerned.

Thus, a kindly elder statesman explained to me the difference between AA's Twelve Traditions and local meeting traditions. Every AA group has its customs and culture. These are the local traditions with a lower-case “t.” These customs varied from group to group, city to city, country to country. They might include the meeting format, specific readings and prayers recited and sponsorship practices. It even included whether and how the group participated in the local AA service structure and how group funds were allocated to support vital AA services of the local central office, district, area, AA Grapevine and the General Service Office.

All these things, this oldtimer continued,

were the result of the group conscience, which is outlined in Tradition Two. It's not surprising then that the local AA small "t" traditions can and will change over time with an informed group conscience.

But are we placing more emphasis on tradition and custom than on our Twelve Traditions? I can't say for certain because AAs tend to vote with their feet. Don't like a meeting? Go to another. Try as many as you like until you feel comfortable. Get out of your zip code once in a while to see how others are doing it. Think they are doing it all wrong? Well, people are getting sober there. How bad could it be?

There's a wonderful cross-pollination of ideas that occurs when I attend an AA meeting in another part of the country, and the recent impact of virtual meetings cannot be overstated. The ability to attend a meeting in London, Paris or Mexico City will show differing customs, but one primary purpose—to carry the AA message to the still-suffering alcoholic. AA has no secondary purpose.

Let's say that you are asked to lead a meeting or share your story. The group conscience stipulates that men are to wear a tie and jacket at the podium. If you're not the jacket and tie kind of guy, there arises a dilemma. It occasionally roars to life as a topic of local debate. Do you wear the tie or refuse the invitation? If you show up without a tie, some groups will provide you with one. Is it more important to honor the local custom or stand on your personal principles? More importantly, how is the new person served by this tempest in a teacup? What is your motivation in accepting the invitation to speak? The Big Book tells us that, "Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us."

To the traditionalists who think form is more important than function, I would offer this spiritual principle. The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking (Third Tradition). The "long form" of this Tradition is more enlightening: "Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence, we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought AA membership ever depend upon money or conformity." Everything else is subject to a well-informed group conscience.

How well informed am I?

By: Jeff Y. | Cleveland Heights, Ohio

St. Paul Intergroup Outreach Committee

Together We Can Help

- Help keep meetings up to date!
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Thoughts From the Board

I was asked to write a bit about what service means to me, and since I was taught early in sobriety to say yes to service, I did, even though I really did not want to. A writer, I am not, but we'll try to get through this together. From the start, I was told to observe and learn through the actions of others, and as a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I have a responsibility to give back what was freely given to me.

I think it's important to understand what giving "freely" means. My understanding is that it means giving of my time, effort, etc. without an expectation of reward or recognition. The funny thing about this is that I have always found that the more I live in service to AA and to those I encounter in my day, I am rewarded and recognized by my higher power in getting to live a satisfying life that I could never live before my involvement in this program.

In my first business meeting at my homegroup, I got a job. I showed up at the meetings and shared what I thought you all wanted to hear, and I even started sponsoring people fairly early on. In the beginning, there were no altruistic motives to my service. I just saw what you all were doing and tried to do the same thing because I wanted to fit in. This was not a new idea for me. My whole life I was trying to fit in, and even though I didn't want to be here, I definitely didn't want to be an alcoholic. I thought I might as well fit in and be better at serving than anyone else. Pretty alcoholic thinking right? This idea of serving people or things because it's the right thing to do was completely foreign to me. My previous life was built on serving me, but if I "had" to keep coming to these meetings, I'll play your game, I thought. I am grateful to say that these ideas have changed.

What does service look like for me today? As you may guess, I am an alcoholic of the garden variety. Even though I have changed, does that mean that I now jump for joy every time I'm asked to serve AA, to go the extra mile at work, to

put away the dishes at home, or to answer a call from a sponsee? Well, I can answer that with a firm no. What I have learned in this program, through your experience and example, is that I get to act better than that first, usually selfish, thought that I have. My 100% experience in sobriety is that no matter how much I may not want to think about others and do for others before myself, as soon as I start that service, I actually want to do it. I know beyond a shadow of a doubt that this is where I am supposed to be, and I am doing my higher power's will. Pretty amazing!

I am grateful I get to be active in service today in AA and in my personal life. I have a job at my homegroup; I get to serve at District 8; I just started serving on the St Paul Intergroup Board; I sponsor men in this program; I contribute to the day-to-day tasks at home; and I am an employee that shows up when I'm supposed to and does the work that I am paid for. If you're like me, you know what a miracle this is. These were things that were not possible for me before sobriety.

What I know about service today is that it doesn't have to be sponsorship, being on a board, or having a chair position at district. I ask my higher power every morning how I can be of service to his kids, listen through mediation, and I try to live up to that every day the best that I can. That may mean showing up to a meeting and sharing my experience, making coffee even though I don't drink it, or letting someone cut in front of me during rush hour. Am I perfect at this? Far from it, but what I can say is that AA has given me a life that I could never imagine, so giving that back what I can based on my higher power's will, not mine, is a pleasure, especially when I "don't feel like it".

If you've made it this far, I hope that something here speaks to you. If not, the amazing thing about this program is you can forget everything that you've read, go to a meeting today, and hear everything that you need to hear. Thank you for the service that you do, thank you for letting me serve, and with that, I will literarily pass.

- Marc K

How It Works

4th Step

Workshop

*Where: St Paul Intergroup
33 Wentworth Ave
St Paul, MN 55118
Right Conference Room
(street level by front doors)*

*When: Saturday April 18th (part 1) &
Saturday April 25th (part 2)*

*Time: 10 AM to 3 PM
(will break for lunch 12:00 to 12:45)*

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

For sign-up and more information call
St Paul Intergroup 651-227-5502
Christopher B 651-707-5551
Marty Y 651-261-5484

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
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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:

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PLYMOUTH MN 55441-0633**

ST. PAUL INTERGROUP BOARD AND REPS MEETING

EVERY 3RD TUESDAY OF THE MONTH

AT 7:30 PM

All are welcome but we especially
love to see group representatives!

Meet is located in the same building
as the Intergroup office.

33 Wentworth Ave E, West St. Paul

MN 55118

2nd Floor conference room

CONTACT DETAILS:

manager@aastpaul.org

651 - 227 - 5502

DISTRICT SERVICE MEETINGS

2025 INTERGROUP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

District 8 (Ramsey Co.)
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.)
2nd Weds. Of the Month -7pm to 8:30pm
Eagan Community Center
1501 Central Pkwy
Saint Paul, MN, 55121
Lone Oak Room
dist19@area36.org

Advisor to the Board: Ricardo G.

Board Chair: Alex S.

Alt. Board Chair: Brandon H.

Treasurer: Don H.

Alt. Treasurer: Marc K

Secretary: Zach B

Members at Large:

Emily M.

Jamie Lynn

Matt

Kristine C.

Office Manager: Jacob F.

Webservant: Jonathan L. & Ethan

GREEN CAN PLAN

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



CHECKS CAN BE SENT TO

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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

St Paul Intergroup's Annual

Spring Fling Celebration

www.aastpaul.org

Where: Recovery Church 253 State Street,
St. Paul MN

When: April 18th, 2025

Time: Speaker @ 6:00 PM -
Fellowship, Food & Fun
Until 9:00 PM



If you would like to financially contribute to St. Paul, this QR code will bring you to the St. Paul Intergroup website contribution page.



There are other ways to contribute to St. Paul intergroup as well and you can find those on our website or at the office in person.

Office Volunteers

Bernie, Lynn, Frank, Mike, Matt, Macy, Sue

Thanks to your all and thanks to our many Night Owl volunteers as well.

Hoot Hoot!

If you are interested 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 in the month of January:

- 25 A.A. Groups contributed - \$7,193.08
- Faithful Fivers contributed - \$2,141.00
- Total Contributions - \$13,167.26

Forest Lake Alano
Coffee Shop group
Cottage Grove AA
Thursday Night Big Book - Nfld
Extravagant Promises AA
OMD
Wednesday Night Men's 12 x 12
Downtown Alano Squad 50
Hole in the Doughnut Group
11 W. Bernard Group
Hugo Group
New Beginnings - Newport MN

Pocketing Our Pride - Mpls
Friday Nite 12x12 By The Book
Concious Contact
Valley Creek Monday
Woodbury Primary Purpose
A Baffled Lot
North Hamline
Como Park BB
North Dale Group
thursday night 7pm
eagan tuesday nites
Summit Hill

Oakdale Canvas Health Monday
Como Park BB
Saturday Morning Womens Group
No Time Like the Present
Roseville Wed Night

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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 *Terrific Tennes* (\$10.00/month), *Fantastic Fifteeners* (\$15.00/month), or *Thoughtful Thirtiers* (\$30.00).

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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:

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