



THE MESSAGE

Service Work in Sobriety

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2022

We Claim Spiritual Progress Rather than Spiritual Perfection Healing, Self worth and Restoration

I remember it all so vividly. The last born and the youngest of a family that showed no emotions except anger. My father, an alcoholic and addict. My mother, a codependent woman who struggled with pleasing my dad and the rest of us. She struggled with this all her life wanting to be a loyal wife and mother to her kids. She was quiet and submissive to a volatile husband. There was nothing but loud screams and heavy monstrous hands in the household. As a kid seeing this, experiencing this, I could only think, "What did I do?" My father was a militant, strict and abusive man but was that his fault or mine? My mother was codependent and full of fear but was that her fault or mine?

My siblings were full of fear and anger and there was a lack of good emotions. Was that their fault or mine? I was the baby of the family and everyone grew up fast and left the nest, was that their fault or mine? Oh the feelings I had as a kid growing up where no one said, "I love you." Was that their fault or mine? I could tell you how I got abused and beaten and how it made me feel. However, I am sure you could take a good stab at it and conclude that I felt horrible about myself and everyone around me. I did not know why any of these things were happening?

How come? Why was it that I was even birthed, especially into this

family? I felt hated. I felt as if no one loved me. My father's lack of affirmation and self worth was passed down to us. My brother was definitely my father's seed. I received mistreatment and abuse not only from my father but from my brother as well. What did I do? I lived in fear all of my life. Resentment and anger is what drove me to drink or did it? Or was this alcoholism and addiction and codependency passed down to me from my parents and siblings? It was so wonderful when my brother gave me my first drink at the age of 11. Right then and there I felt something I never felt before, courage. I felt indestructible and invincible. A new me was born, and I was ready to take on the world. Drinking became my solution and then the drugs. Which made me feel even more invincible. I loved the feeling it gave me.


"I have truly found victory in AA, by living one day at a time and claiming spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection."

Now, I was able to stand up to my brother whenever he started something with me and then later I was able to stand up to my dad. The liquor gave me this feeling of courage that was so immense that I desired it otherwise I would still be in fear and a little punk is how I thought. As I got older, my addiction progressed

and I began to become more and more angry. Angry at the fact that I grew up with these horrible people. Angry at my mom and dad for divorcing when I was like 5 years old. Angry at my siblings for abandoning me. Angry at my dad for leaving me and angry at my brother for leaving me and getting arrested. Angry at my mom for sending me away to stay with that monster of a dad I had.

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Step 9

Now that we have a list of names we must take action 

In order to right our wrongs we must (1) sincerely apologize, (2) try to repair our wrongs, and (3) ask for forgiveness. It is NOT required that the other person grant that forgiveness

“Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others”

I was so angry, I thought to myself, "How could she love me to do something like this? To ship me off and abandon me to go live with this man that I hated and that I did not want to know or even be close to?" I lived in anger and resentment and fear. Later on in life, I made the decision to move back with my mom and I started going to church. I was on some kind of a quest to fix my life. However, the whole God thing just made it worse. I did not like God, God reminded me of my father. So in turn I resented God for placing all these rules upon me and if I did not adhere I got punished or I was going to hell. So I said, "Screw you God! I cannot live up to this standard, I'm done with you." Back to my pride and anger and fear I went. Of course you can guess, right back to my solution, alcohol.

When I say the solution, it was the solution, I mean that. It was all I knew how to do. I also knew that alcohol would always be there. Alcohol never did me wrong or mistreated me or abused me. Instead it gave me exactly what I needed. That was the courage to change the circumstances I was facing and not deal with them, to escape. I led a life of being powerless over alcohol but it made me feel so powerful. Everyone and everything became my enemy except alcohol, she was my lover, companion and confidant. Me and alcohol had an open relationship, I was able to let her kiss others as I passed her over to another's lips. She was okay with being used, so I was okay with it. For the most part though, I wanted her all to myself. I was so attached. Attached to the feelings she gave me. For I knew without a doubt that she loved me and that was all I needed. I needed her affirmation and validation constantly.

Eventually, alcohol did me wrong entirely. She had me waking up in places, passing out, mistreating others, resentful, in jail, stealing, lying, and left me with a cold heart toward others. She also eventually had me losing everything over and over again and ending up on the streets. I lost everything, my family, my morals, my identity, my self worth. I did not know who I was or who I was becoming. I was a totally different person when I was in the relationship with her. I tried my hardest on my own to stop and to deal with myself, but I did not know how. I didn't know how to treat myself or others. It wasn't until alcohol beat me down completely that I was ready to break up with her and stop being abused and mistreated by her.

Shortly after coming back to AA because I tried before or at least I thought I did but again I was so accustomed to the solution that I went right back to her. Resentment after resentment, the hatred toward God, myself, and my family. Those resentments were still there underneath it all. It wasn't until I was beat down again and in so much pain that I had a moment. I can't really explain that moment to you. It was just a moment, a moment of sound mind we will call it. That's when I said, "I am done with you alcohol. We are over and I do not want to feel this way anymore." Then I remember not even a day later walking back into AA, literally I walked all the way to the room from my house. I was desperate and willing to try anything.

I got a sponsor about three weeks in and we went through the steps together immediately. Step 4 was when I realized that I had been carrying all these resentments with me for such a long time. I also came to the realization that I really hated myself for all that I had done and for being an alcoholic. As I did a fifth, sixth, and seventh step, there was this peace that came over me. I felt that I was starting to heal. I was beginning to see the light and even look at myself in a different way. Step 8 was done and then I was willing and ready to take action. So I proceeded with Step 9 and I began to make amends to those whom I had harmed. It was refreshing yet hard but also eye opening. I set out to contact my ex girlfriends, my mom, my family, God, and others that were on that list. This is where the healing really took place and the restoration. I was restored with my mother, my family, my ex girlfriends and others that I had harmed.

I did not expect to be forgiven and even restored with these people yet alone God. I thought God would never forgive me because I did a lot of evil. However, I was forgiven and restored to God and these people. There was one thing missing, my relationship with my dad and my brother. I thought I had let go and I had forgiven them but I never said anything to them, I just simply kept saying to myself, "I forgive them." It wasn't until two years later when I actually made a real amends to my brother. It was such a healing experience for both of us. Never did I expect him to actually cry with me and make amends to me. The promises of Step 9 began to manifest in my life. It wasn't until three years after making amends to my brother that I made one with my dad. Again, what a powerful experience that I would have never expected. I didn't expect my father to say the most healing words to me, "I love you son." How much did I want to and needed to hear that all my life. Now my relationships with others are restored and continually being restored. Wow! I know for sure that my amends to God and myself first allowed me to be able to have the courage and face my fears and no longer be a victim.

I have truly found victory in AA, by living one day at a time and claiming spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. Step 10 is what they call one of the maintenance steps. My God has given me a wonderful and creative way of walking out step 10 daily in my life and that is through the gift of writing. Journaling, poetry, books, this is the way that I develop my self worth and self esteem and this is where I found my purpose. To not only help myself but to help others. This step may be easier for me than for others because of that, I don't know. But I do know that now I am able to look at myself with complete honesty. I am able to write down my feelings, which is something I did since I was eight years old but I never knew that God would use it in such a way to heal me.

"We continued to take personal inventory and when wrong we promptly admitted it." Such beauty now in my life of knowing and being aware of when I am wrong and being able to admit it. Who would have thought I would ever be able to do that, especially promptly.

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We Claim Spiritual Progress . . . continued from page 2

However, this is where I have found freedom in being myself and realizing that I am human. The solution now is discovering myself a little more each day, the good, and the bad. There is such beauty in coming to know myself. That yes, I am an alcoholic and an addict but I am also human. My wrongs I am able to make right with myself and with others most of all with God.

Now I am able to see just a little more clearly each day of where I am in fear, resentful, selfish, dishonest, worried, or in self pity. I now have the ability to look at myself and heal. I am also able to look at the good that is in me and the good that I have done on that day. I used to look at only the bad and what has been done to me but now I have the freedom to look at the good in me and in others. I'm grateful that after these 6 and half years of AA and living this way of life, I have discovered not only more about me but more about others. I only know a little but each day more is being revealed. With step ten I am able to come to a place of acceptance. Acceptance of myself and acceptance of others. The most important, at least for me, is that I can also get to a place where I realize that my Higher Power accepts me just as I am and always has and always will. I am no longer a victim because now I have victory. I am able to choose that now each day. Today will I be a victim or a victor? Choose wisely.

~ Kareem R, Tallahassee

**CONTINUED TO TAKE
PERSONAL
INVENTORY
and when we were wrong
PROMPTLY
ADMITTED IT**

Step 10

This step is all about continued growth and vigilance. Living mindful of our behaviors and attitude, helps us admit when we are wrong.

The best thing that an ongoing personal inventory does is keep us "on track". It keeps us from straying from our path of recovery.



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Saturday, October 29th, 2022 ~ 1:30pm-4:30pm ~ Trick or Treat Service Fair

Central Group, 909 N. Gadsden Street, Tallahassee, FL

Hear the spooky news about service in your Area! Our gloulish guests will cover Archives, Corrections, Treatment, Grapevine, Literature Public Information, Cooperation with the Professional Community, Intergroup, Area, and Conference. Sandwiches, Snacks, and Drinks served!

Contact: Richard S. (DCM-District 5) 850-778-6903 ~ **COSTUMES ARE OPTIONAL!**

Saturday, October 29th, 2022 ~ 5pm-10pm ~ Alkathon - A HALLOWEEN TO REMEMBER

Crawfordville Group of Alcoholics Anonymous, 54 Ochlocknee Street, Crawfordville, FL 32327

Meetings ~ Food ~ Fun Music ~ Karaoke ~ Dancing ~ Uno ~ Jenga ~ 50/50 Drawing and door prizes!

Spaghetti Dinner . . . bring a covered dish to support us or a dessert. All are welcome. Please bring family and friends.

\$3 dollar suggest donation.

Best costume wins a prize !

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District 5 GRATITUDE DINNER

Sunday, November 13, 2022

5:00 p.m. Doors open

5:30 p.m. Dinner

6:00 p.m. Speaker Meeting
and Countdown

Speakers: Jane D. & James L.

Jackson Masonic Lodge
2818 Apalachee Pkwy
Tallahassee, FL

**Bring a covered dish!
Suggested donation \$5**



**In Person Only.
All are welcome.**

When we join a 12 step program, where no one has a last name. We're often given a "handle" that becomes our claim to fame. So meet some of our new fellows, with "tongue in cheek" good fun. Because when we can laugh with each other, Recovery has begun!



Pam has just celebrated one year of sobriety and she is still walking around in her pink cloud. She never imagined that black could that hung over her head for all those years could become so beautiful !



Carl was always teased at school because of his curly head hair, so alcohol became his only friend. Today he is sober and loves his curls and all the friends he has found in the rooms of A.A.

H.O.W. ~ Honesty, Open-Mindedness, Willingness

In 2002 I found myself standing in front of an unassuming little white house in search of an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. I remember thinking this was a bad idea. If AA did not work this time what else was there? I had been in the rooms of AA 10 years prior but it did not stick. I attended a lot of meetings, I had multiple sponsors, and I did all the social events. I white-knuckled my sobriety like a champ. I met a lot of really nice people who seemed to get a lot out of being sober in AA. One day a six-pack called my name louder than the program and I was off to the races. Ten years later, here I was standing on the sidewalk trying to will myself to walk through that door.

When I crossed the threshold and made it into the room I was immediately struck by a large wooden placard front and center on the wall with the 12 steps. During that first meeting, I was able to check them off one by one no big deal. It was such a relief. I felt like I did years earlier when I hung around AA for a while and things seem to get better on their own. I walked out of that meeting sure that I had renewed confidence and I'd be able to get it this time. If memory serves, I didn't make it 2 blocks before I turned into a liquor store. This pattern of going back and forth through the revolving door would continue for 2 years while I continued to drink and wreak havoc in my life and the lives of those around me. At first, I had a long list of "not yet's". As the drinking progressed and things got worse I found I was able to check off more of those things I thought I'd never be capable

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H.O.W. ~ Honesty, Open-Mindedness, Willingness

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of. I was able to blot out the reality that my standards were deteriorating. I was dragging down myself and the people I loved but I did not see it that way.

Eventually, I drank myself out of a job, a relationship, and into the detoxes and hospitals. I had finally reached complete bankruptcy of mind and spirit. One night a friend found me unconscious in my living room. I was taken to the hospital where they pumped my stomach and committed me to the local psych hospital. Once I was medically stable I was given the option to stay there or go to rehab in a nearby city. I jumped at the chance to change locations.

The area around the facility had been ravaged by a recent hurricane, causing a lot of destruction, but the rawness of that transformation was quite beautiful. Early one morning I was sitting alone on the beach, my mind occupied by counting the number of days until I could leave when suddenly I became aware of the immense forces of nature surrounding me. The trees were bending in the wind, the sun was rising in the distance and the waves were violently crashing onto the shore by an unseen force. I had a moment of clarity on that small shabby beach. There must be a power greater than myself as I have no control over these events. At that moment I found the willingness to be open-minded and consider the possibility of a higher power. I could not control these forces of nature and I alone could not control my drinking. I needed help from a power greater than myself and I was finally willing to believe in the existence of that power. I was reminded of a line in Bill's story on page 12 of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. He said, "It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning."

I did something I had never tried before. I knelt in the sand and I said a quick but heartfelt prayer to a power I did not understand nor was I sure I believed in. I said I realize I cannot control my drinking nor can I do any of this alone, please help me. At that moment I felt a perceptible shift in my being. A burden I had carried for most of my life was suddenly lifted. I walked upright for the rest of the time I was in rehab.

When I returned home an old timer pulled me aside to work the steps together. We discussed steps one and two agreeing that I was solid on both. When we reached step three, I enthusiastically read the prayer from the Big Book. In step four I wrote down my resentments and found my part in them. In step five I told my entire story withholding nothing including those "take it to the grave" secrets. After careful contemplation, I asked my higher power to remove all my defects of character. I made a list of all of those I had harmed and then it was time to make amends.

At step nine I met my first stumbling block There were some lingering reservations about my amends. I was a quiet almost recluse drunk. I did serious damage to myself, but did I harm others? I was still hanging on to the victim mentality. I did a lot of praying to my new friend to find the willingness and the humility to continue. When I took an honest look at how my actions truly affected others, I was able to move forward with

this vital step. It certainly did not come easy but my desire to never return to that place of alcoholic torture was greater than my reluctance to move forward. With the help of a sponsor, I was able to figure out which amends needed to be made in person and which ones were better handled indirectly. Some of the folks I had harmed were hard to find or had passed away so I did those to the best of my ability. Our literature said the key was the willingness to do them all no matter the humiliation I felt at reliving those moments. I did have had one amends I could not conceive of ever making. My Father had passed away the year before I got sober and I had a deep hatred in my heart for him. I knew I had made mistakes and I needed to take responsibility for them but I didn't think it was possible. I prayed for the willingness to make that amends and moved on to the next steps.

Open-mindedness is the willingness to search actively for evidence against one's favored beliefs, plans, or goals, and to weigh such evidence fairly when it is available.

Steps ten, eleven, and twelve became and still are a part of my daily life. I don't always get them right but I do my best to keep my side of the street clean, seek his will for me through meditation and do my best to extend the hand of AA whenever possible.

Several years ago I was working with a sponsee and in the process of hearing her fifth step, I realized my deep hatred for my Father had been healed and the resentment was lifted. I went to his gravesite and made my amends. The old wreckage of the past was finally cleared away.

AA has given me a new way of living. My kids have never seen me drunk, insane, or suicidal. Today I am a small part of a bigger plan and I owe it all to my higher power, the twelve steps, and the willingness of others to help the still suffering alcoholic, and for that, I will always be grateful.

~ Amy W.

"...one of the primary differences between alcoholics and nonalcoholics is that nonalcoholics change their behavior to meet their goals and alcoholics change their goals to meet their behaviors."

~ Alcoholics Anonymous



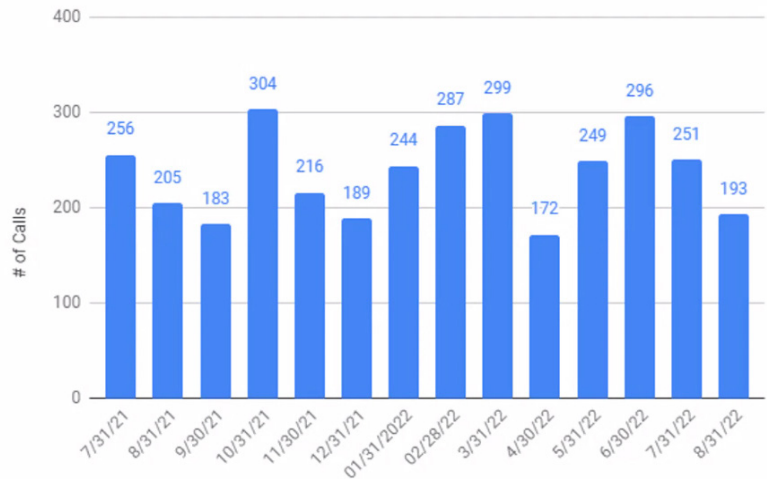
The “Primary Purpose” of Intergroup 5 is to assist AA groups in District 5 to carry the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers. These functions are: (1) Providing a 24 hour “Hotline” service; (2) Making available [free pamphlets \(to individuals and groups\) and AA literature for purchase](#); (3) Maintaining a website that provides information on meetings, events, etc. related to AA; and (4) Publishing a newsletter for groups in the AA community. Please submit an article for this newsletter at [intergroup5.org](#) - Editor: message@intergroup5.org

Need 12th Step Work?

Intergroup5 Hotline has four openings. Interested in service work, contact Evelyn at helpline@intergroup5.org

Intergroup5’s business meeting is the first Wednesday every month, online at 7pm, via Zoom. The link to this online meeting is at the top of the [intergroup5.org](#) homepage. Intergroup5 service representative is an excellent way to perform recovery service work. Check with your A.A. group about being a representative. Please note everyone is welcome to attend these online meetings. Come see how it all happens.

AA Hotline Calls by Month 2021-2022



“**Newcomer Packets**” are now available from the Literature Store free to each A.A. group, with up to 6 packets per month as long as funds permit. Order yours from the Intergroup5 Literature Store.



Contact Intergroup5 for further information regarding any of our activities.



Get Your Own Personal “Where & When”

Download the Meeting Guide App! Intergroup5 has integrated our information with the Meeting Guide App. You can find a link for both Google Play and The Apple Store on the meetings page of [intergroup5.org](https://intergroup5.org/meetings) (<https://intergroup5.org/meetings>). The Meeting Guide can help you find meetings for many areas, including online meeting info.

