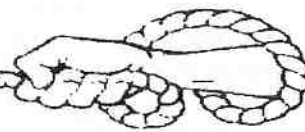


# Lifeline



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Orange  
County  
Intergroup  
Association

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The Intergroup Meeting has found a temporary home for October -March. We have been meeting at Church of the Foothills @19211 Dodge Avenue @Newport Blvd. in Tustin. (Thomas Guide p800-E7.) Every meeting in Orange County should have an Intergroup Representative. If your meeting does not, step up to the plate and become a Representative. Try It! You'll Like it! We have fun and there are lots of things todo.

To our readers: In 2005, we ran an article on the Step, the Tradition and the Concept of the month. Most members of the Fellowship are very conversant with the Steps and the Traditions; after all, we read at least the Steps at every meeting. The Concepts, however, are like a new language to most members. After reading something about them all last year, most of us have become a bit more educated. This year, we are doing the same with new information on each, provided by three trusted servants who like to donate time to the Lifeline and the Fellowship. We all hope you will learn a lot more about our three pronged legacy - The Steps, Traditions and Concepts. We are fortunate in that we have two new members on our committee who are archiving our Lifelines, dating back to our first edition in 1963. In addition, we are now including an article on Service work, and then as a bonus, we have one of our new committee members contributing a piece from the Archived Grapevines. This month starts out with a story from the Big Book written by one of the original members of Alcoholics Anonymous, Jimmy B.

### Editorial on the Third Step

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

When I came into A.A. four years ago, my will was very sick. I had been the confident master of my own affairs, heeding no desire but my own, yielding to no wish but my own. In the hour of disaster, I found myself alone and shaken, unable to think in consecutive steps, unable to arrive at decisions I could believe in, unable to enforce those decisions I did reach. I was so thoroughly in the grip of alcohol that my efforts to do without it worsened my nervous collapse.

I accepted the help of A.A. because I had to. But I accepted with strong reservations. I shied at the 2nd and 3rd Steps first because I didn't believe that this vague something in the universe that we call the Supreme Power had anything to do with me personally. There were other reasons. As a newspaper reporter I had had many contacts with missions dealing with drunks, and I didn't like the "Brother-have-you-been-saved" guys I used to see running missions. And my pious, non-drinking, churchgoing

friends who had suggested that I needed to mend my ways aroused me almost to assault and battery.

So, when my sponsor mentioned the 3rd Step, I winced. But I had to have help, and if I was unwilling to look up into the sky, I could look straight ahead. If I rejected a power higher than myself, I could accept a power other than myself. I could lean on the shoulder of another alcoholic and talk over my problems with him. I could go to meetings and make hospital calls. And when I could do none of these things, I could go off by myself and hold a mental conversation with my sponsor.

As I conducted my moral inventory and did it the way I knew my sponsor would want me to do it, I thought of all my troubles, of my waywardness, of my egotism. There was a slight shift. I was no longer talking mentally with my sponsor, but with something I had not identified. I thought of all the rules of life, the rules that people who don't get into trouble follow. I thought of the men who gave us those rules, some of them long, long ago.

Strangely, I needed little instruction. I knew what was right, and I was recognizing now that I couldn't shade the rules to suit my own pleasure. These rules guided men and women in civilized society for centuries. Great men and small had learned that in their lives something else must come first, that instead of looking within themselves they must look out. Great men and small had learned the need for self denial, the need for unselfishness, the need for doing for others. These are universal rules, and those who disregard them come to disaster eventually. I derided those rules and came to disaster; to escape disaster, I must obey.

The rules belong to the realm of what is good in life, and thus to the Good. As I look up to them, and talk mentally with myself about them and about my performance, I find myself looking to the source of the Good, talking with that source, asking to be judged according to whether I measure up to the standards.

What, then, is this? It is a power higher than my own, and it is the source of my help. It is the same power that I see at work in the group, whether individuals in the group recognize their dependence upon it or not.

I no longer worry about what the Supreme Power is. It is enough for me that my experience has taught me that the Supreme Power exists, and that it is my great help. And as long as I strive to place myself on the level on which I know this Good exists, I keep out of trouble.

Fred S., Cleveland, OH  
The Grapevine, Jan 1946

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## Understanding Tradition Three

**The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.**

-- Tradition 3, Alcoholics Anonymous.

When the first edition of Alcoholics Anonymous was published in 1939, there were no Traditions as we know them. The Steps were in place and it was widely thought that those who adopted the Steps as a way of life would provide the core of A.A.'s membership.

In the period between 1939 and 1950, there were still no formal rules for membership in A.A. In seeming contradiction, however, there were lots of rules. Many of these formed the basis for disputes between and even within groups of the fledgling organization.

So Bill W., one of our two founding members, sat down in 1946 and wrote the 12 Traditions, confirmed by the first convention of Alcoholics Anonymous in Cleveland, Ohio, in 1950. The Traditions approved in that conference were in what is known as the long form and have appeared in the third and fourth editions of our Big Book.

But Bill wanted a shorter form for each of the Traditions, something that could be read aloud at each meeting without occupying the entire meeting. And that's what produced the sentence which began this piece. It is simple and to the point. But it omits some rather vital and significant facets of the long form.

While we have been busily granting carte blanche membership to every tippler on the street, we have apparently forgotten our basic purpose. That purpose is to include in membership all those "who suffer from alcoholism." The long form also makes it clear that we may "refuse none who wish to recover" from alcoholism.

At our meetings we see people who identify as "an alcoholic and a drug addict" or "an alcoholic and an overeater" or "an alcoholic and a nicotine addict" or any of a dozen or more other problems that have been alleviated by the introduction of the 12 Steps in their lives. (The joke currently in circulation says that those who identify with other addictions need to put \$2 in the 7th Tradition basket.) Most A.A. members don't particularly care for the practice but following our code of love and tolerance, we let it slide. But let the attendee identify only as a drug addict or an overeater or a nicotine addict and the result is usually immediate and severe.

"This is Alcoholics Anonymous," several members will call out, "are you an alcoholic?" If the answer is no and it is an open meeting, the non-alky will usually be told he/she can stay but not participate in the discussion. If it is a closed meeting, the non-alky will probably be asked to leave.

That may offend the non-alky. But it will insure the life of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.  
George L., Westminster CA

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**Concept III...To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional “Right of Decision.”**

My 16-year-old daughter offered to go to the grocery store and do the family shopping last week. “*What a great daughter!*” I thought as I assembled the list of things I wanted. When I was finished, I went over the list with her and showed her my menus for the week. I told her that I needed some things for dinner tonight, so if she could do it that afternoon and be back by 3:30 that would be great. She has use of the family credit card, so I told her to charge the groceries and approximately how much I thought she should be spending.

She arrived home at 3:15 with the back of her car filled with grocery bags. We carried them into the kitchen and started unpacking the bags. I checked the items against the shopping list and found that there were several additional items and some of the things I had put on the list weren’t there. I wasn’t happy!

“*I thought we were clear about what I wanted. I even gave you a very specific list,*” I said to her.

“*Well, let me tell you what happened, Mom,*” she said, and sat down at the kitchen table with the list and her notes.

As she went over the list with me, she pointed out that some of the items I had on the list were extremely expensive this week or else weren’t available at all. She thought about what meals I was planning and made a decision to substitute something similar (and just as good) for the expensive or unavailable items. She also had added some items that were on sale and were staples we always needed, so she made the decision to stock up on a few of those good deals. She said she had run into one of my best friends, who had mentioned that my husband and I were coming over to their house for dinner this week (which I had forgotten), so she got a couple of things she would like to fix for herself that night that weren’t on the list.

She said, “*I kept in mind all the things I thought were most important, but thought it was better to make some adjustments on the spot, based on the situations as they arose and with new information. Don’t be mad, Mom. If you’d wanted to, you could have called in the order and had it delivered by a delivery person.*”

Although I might have made some different decisions on the spot if I had gone to the store myself, I had trusted my daughter to do exactly what she did: take into consideration any new information and adjust her decisions. She and I had gone over the parameters of how much she should spend, what I was trying to accomplish, and when I wanted her to return. Taking all of that into consideration, she had done what she thought was best. When she returned she had reported everything clearly and honestly. She had volunteered to be my “trusted servant” and had carried out the task admirably.

“*What a wonderful daughter,*” I thought, again, and told her so.

We, in our AA family, depend on each other to take responsibilities of trust at every level of service. Whether we are leading a meeting, buying cookies and coffee for our home group, serving as a General Service Representative, Intergroup Representative, Conference Delegate, hired to work at Central Office or General Service Office, serve on a committee or as a trustee, take a panel into an institution or any other of the hundreds of “jobs” that need doing in AA, we have the same right of decision.

AA members should make clear the parameters of the service expected from the volunteer or employee, for if they fail to do so, it will not be on the “servant” to explain any difficulties, but on those who failed to define what they wanted.

In the Third Concept, we are all given the right to decide which problems we will dispose of ourselves and upon which matters we will report, consult, or ask specific directions. Yes, it means that we may make some mistakes, or have to accept decisions unlike what some of the rest of us might make, but it means we actually *trust* each other not to stray too far and we can live with our differences.

In practice this concept means that AA’s “trusted servants” should carefully weigh the wishes of the members, but that they are also trusted to exercise their own judgment in the light of all circumstances, facts and arguments that become known to them during the process of voting, deliberating or engaged in a particular area of service work.

I was given the right of decision in writing this article, and I made up the story about a 16-year-old daughter...my daughters are 48 and 41 years old and don’t live close enough to help me with my shopping...but it seemed like a good story... I hope you enjoy it half as much as I enjoyed thinking it up.

Linda C. – An AA member from Orange County

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## Cooperation With The Professional Community

*Number 3 in a continuing series on A.A. Service*

When Bill W. met with Dr. Bob, that historic night after Mother's Day in 1935, that was the first "12<sup>th</sup> Step call" in Alcoholics Anonymous. Ironically, we didn't even have a 12<sup>th</sup> Step at the time – just the 6 steps of the Oxford Groups. The 12<sup>th</sup> step was to come more than 3 years later when the 12 steps appeared in the 1<sup>st</sup> Edition, 1<sup>st</sup> printing of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Being very typical alcoholics, we fit the story to fit our needs. Bob took eagerly to what Bill shared with him, as it offered a hope that Bob had never experienced before. Previously, people were always trying to "help" Dr. Bob, and this New Yorker was simply trying to stay sober, himself. What a concept!! So the two excited drunks immediately sought out another drunk to work with – the 2<sup>nd</sup> 12<sup>th</sup> Step call.

But, let's go back in time just a bit. An event took place between the two 12<sup>th</sup> Step calls that was to be the birth of what we know today as Cooperation with the Professional Community, or CPC, to the acronym-obsessed. Bill and Bob first went to meet with a doctor at St. Thomas Hospital and asked for permission to work with a hopeless drunk – and the doctor pointed out a lunatic on the drunk ward who had most recently blackened the eyes of two nurses – this was Bill D. – A.A. Number Three. And since that moment in time, A.A. members have endeavored to seek ways of cooperation with the Professional Community when working with alcoholics. Among other professionals, we worked with were Dr. Silkworth, Sister Ignatia, Clinton Duffy and Father Dowling. These people came from the fields of Medicine, Psychiatry, Corrections, Religion – from every field of professional endeavor.

But why?! Don't we work with drunks just as well, or even better, without a professional meddling in our 12<sup>th</sup> Step work? If the professional people think they have an approach to help drunks, why don't they just take their best shot and then turn the drunks over to us after they have thoroughly failed again!? Well, the big reason is that the professionals can offer certain things that A.A. cannot. They can offer psychiatric counseling, safe medical detoxification, evaluation and treatment of family members, where needed, and the administration of therapeutic medications, when needed. Now, I can just hear the blood beginning to boil in some of the "no mind-altering chemicals from the neck up" crowd, but it doesn't change the fact that medical professionals CAN offer these services, and A.A. can't. Go ahead, argue the point!

Oftentimes, the first human being to meet and try to work with the suffering alcoholic is a professional – a doctor, a priest, a school counselor.

If we in A.A. don't work to create a cooperative relationship with these professionals, many alcoholics will never hear of Alcoholics Anonymous, and will die never having been given the truth about their illness. Bill W. realized this very shortly after his meeting with Dr. Bob, and we, as responsible members of A.A. today, should also realize this. Countless lives have been saved by professionals who have had cooperative relationships with A.A.

If you are interested in getting involved in this rewarding type of service work, please attend your next District General Service meeting and ask about Cooperation with the Professional Community. It is a truly fulfilling area of 12<sup>th</sup> Step work.

*A member of A.A. in Orange County*

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From the September-October, 1974, *Lifeline*...

"Jimmy B. left us Sunday, September 8<sup>th</sup>, in San Diego after a long illness. He was the oldest living member of Alcoholics Anonymous having been one of the first 100 members of this society. His story as published in *The Grapevine* ..."

May 1968

As NOTED in my story, "The Vicious Cycle," in the Big Book, I came into the Fellowship in New York in January, 1938. At that time it was just leaving the Oxford Group. There was one closed discussion meeting a week, at Bill's home in Brooklyn--attendance six or eight men, with only three members who had been sober more than one year: Bill, Hank, and Fritz. This is about all that had been accomplished in the four years with the New York Oxford Group.

During those early meetings at Bill's, they were flying blind, with no creed or procedure to guide them, though they did use quite a few of the Oxford sayings and the Oxford Absolutes. Since both Bill and Dr. Bob had had almost-overnight religious experiences, it was taken for granted that all who followed their way would have the same sort of experience. So the early meetings were quite religious, in both New York and Akron. There was always a Bible on hand, and the concept of God was all biblical.

