

Lifeline

Experience, Strength, and Hope in Orange County

Questions and Answers

The following questions and answers are prompted by my daily reading. Every year on January 1, I reflect upon them. However, throughout the year I come back to these questions whenever I am feeling a bit depressed with the constant physical pain or stressed out over something. Answering these questions puts perspective on whatever I am feeling today. The process always brings gratitude for sobriety and the gifts received as a result of sobriety.



When I came into Alcoholics Anonymous, was I desperate?

The shrink I was sent to did not want to talk to me. The rehab he referred me to had turned me away as a waste of their resources. I possessed only anger at and fear of my Higher Power/God. I had been dry for around fifteen days and lost in darkness to the point that thoughts of suicide had entered my head once again. When arriving at that first Alcoholics Anonymous meeting, I had nowhere else to go. Yes, I was desperate.

Did I have soul-sickness?

I had absolutely no faith or trust in my Higher Power/God. My understanding was that a Higher Power/God was punishing. My first child had been taken as punishment for how I was living.

Was I so sick of myself and my way of living that I couldn't stand looking at myself in a mirror?

Every morning as I shaved getting ready for work, hungover and

now dry, I looked at the image before me with contempt. I was weak, physically, mentally, and in self-will. I could do nothing as my life spun out of control.

Was I ready for Alcoholics Anonymous?

Alcoholics Anonymous was a last resort. Experiencing seizures/episodes daily made it really difficult to concentrate on anything. The nurse at the rehab interview insisted I take a *Big Book* with me when they cut me loose. I threw it in a desk drawer at work. Occasionally, I

would page through the first three chapters. In Chapter Three, I read the laundry list of efforts to control one's drinking (p. 31). I

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Answering these questions puts perspective on whatever I am feeling today. The process always brings gratitude for sobriety and the gifts received as a result of sobriety.

The Lifeline is published monthly by the Orange County Intergroup Association

Purpose: The *Lifeline* Committee is a group of AA members charged with the responsibility of producing and distributing the Orange County *Lifeline*. The *Lifeline* is published monthly and is supported solely through contributions from the AA groups and members of Orange County. The *Lifeline* proposes to meet the following needs of the Orange County AA membership: to inform AAs of service opportunities, events, and announcements; to share experience in recovery, unity, and service; and to report the actions, finances, and meetings of the Orange County Intergroup Association and other Central Office committees.

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ORANGE COUNTY CENTRAL OFFICE

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Note: This phone number is answered by an AA 24 hours a day.

—CALL BEFORE YOU TAKE A DRINK—

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Website: www.oc-aa.org

Office hours: Mon-Fri: 9AM-7PM;
Saturday & Holidays: 9AM-1PM

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Email: manager@aanoc.org
Office hours: Mon-Fri: 9AM-7PM
Sat and Sun: 9AM-1PM
Website: www.aanoc.org

Welcome 2024
SERVICE BOARD

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For more information on service committees, or if you have a situation that requires an immediate answer, please contact Orange County Central Office at (714) 556-4555 or email manager@oc-aa.org.

VOLUNTEERS ARE NEEDED AT CENTRAL OFFICE

PLEASE CONTACT CENTRAL OFFICE TO FIND OUT ABOUT SERVICE OPPORTUNITIES.

714-556-4555
MANAGER@OC-AA.ORG

Public Information Committee: Meets the **4th Wednesday of the month at 5:30PM** in the Central Office Board Room and by Zoom (Meeting ID: 372 574 1056, Password: PIROCKS)

Group Relations Committee: Meets the **3rd Thursday of the month at 6:00PM** via Zoom (ID: 913 4366 3535, Password: ocaa)

Lifeline Committee: Meets the **1st Thursday of the month at 7:00PM** via Zoom (ID: 886 0942 7655, Password: lifeline) *See page 3 for more details.*

Special Events Committee: meets the **3rd Wednesday of the month at 5:30PM** at Central Office

South Orange County H & I meets the **3rd Wednesday of the month at 6:00PM** (new members' orientation) and **6:45PM** (business meeting), Laguna Beach Canyon Club (small room), 20456 Laguna Canyon Road, Laguna Beach. South County H & I's mailing address is 27068 La Paz Rd., #706, Aliso Viejo, 92656. For more information, go to www.sochic.club.

Orange County H & I meets the **2nd Sunday of the month at 4:00PM** (Institutions) and **6:00PM** (Hopstials) at the Garden Grove Alano Club (9845 Belfast Dr., Garden Grove). Orientation is at **3:15PM** and **5:15PM**. The Committee Meeting is at 6:00, and the meeting opens around 5:40. For more information on Orange County H & I, go to www.ochandi.org or email contact@ochandi.org.

The Central Office Committee meeting time is to be determined.

The OCAA Technology Committee meets the **1st Monday of the month at 6:00PM** via Zoom (ID: 933 6844 2432, Password: ocaatech)

The Orange County Intergroup Assoc. meets the **2nd Wednesday of the month at 7PM (6:30** new rep orientation) at Norma Hertzog Community Center, 1845 Park Ave., Costa Mesa

—IN PERSON ONLY—

For information about **General Service** meetings, please go to the Area 09 website, www.msca09aa.org.

Thank you to our board and committee members.



Letter from the Editor

We hope you enjoy our theme of Step Three and Tradition Three this month. There are many thought-provoking articles about what it's like to turn our will and life over to a Power greater than ourselves, and the *Lifeline* Committee is always working hard to keep to our theme. I was thinking how fortunate we are to have such wonderful regular contributors, and I realized that three of our contributors this month have forty or more years of sobriety (I'm including Chuck H. who is about a month shy of forty years at this point). We are also starting a new column this month. Luis P. is the first AA to share his experience in the Hospitals and Institutions Corner on page 6.

Please join us in welcoming Ezekiel U. as our new *Lifeline* chair. Tanner K. had to step down due to a scheduling conflict, and Ezekiel came onboard to take this commitment for 2024. Ezekiel can be reached at lifelinecommittee@oc-aa.org.

Thank you as always for reading the *Lifeline*. If you would like to sign up to have the *Lifeline* delivered by email every month, you can subscribe at www.oc-aa.org. Printed copies are available at Central Office, the satellite office, and our monthly Intergroup meetings. Location information can be found within the *Lifeline*. If you have any suggestions or would like to submit an article to the *Lifeline*, please email me at oclifineditor@gmail.com.

Jennifer J.
Lifeline Editor

God Saves the Years

I save the day, God saves the years . . .
I do the daily work required to keep myself sober and sane,
And my God does all the heavy lifting for me. How can I argue with that?

Vivian W.

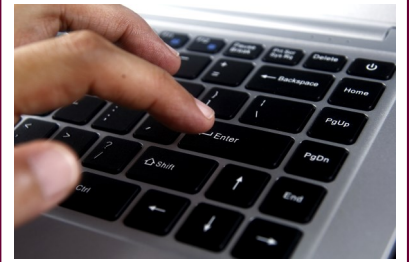
Goodbye, Alcohol!

Alcohol,

I'm writing this to say "goodbye"! We've been best friends since I was thirteen. In the beginning, you were fun until our relationship got ugly. I had lots of fun because you made me feel happy and confident. I could say and do all the things I would never say or do without you. I was judgmental and sarcastic, aggressive and pushy. I felt like I was in control of everyone and everything. You made me feel powerful. But I always felt sick, guilty, and worried the next day. I rarely remembered what I had done. We were enmeshed. It was so normal, and I didn't know any different. You took away my pain, my fear, and my embarrassment. You made me numb. Struggle was inevitable, and chaos was a toxic, comfortable place.

Our relationship lasted most of my life. I have distanced myself from you for almost two years now, and it's time to cut our ties forever. I'm ready to move forward and find a new happiness without you. I am learning to love myself now, and I don't need you. These feelings I have about myself are positive and no longer negative. I am healing from my past traumas, and I don't need or want you anymore! I pass you by when I am at the store, but I don't think of you like I used to. You were constantly on my mind. When we were together, I couldn't get enough of you. We were bonded by the lack of self love, self confidence, and self doubt. It is time now. It is time to part ways forever. I never want to be your friend again! Goodbye.

Josie O.
Grateful Alcoholic



Share Your Thoughts on Sobriety with the *Lifeline*

If you'd like to submit an article, poem, or cartoon to be considered for publication, please send all submissions to the email address below by the 15th of the month for the following month (e.g., August 15th for the September issue). The best articles are under 600 words and are often much shorter. If you are unsure of what to write, you can think of a great share at your favorite meeting. You can write on a topic like how you chose your sponsor, your concept of a Higher Power, or tell your story. Not a writer? A committee member can interview you and write your story. You will have final approval on anything published. Please email oclifineditor@gmail.com for more information.

The *Lifeline* Committee invites you to join us. *Lifeline* Committee members can help read, write, edit, create, design, or simply offer suggestions for the *Lifeline*. The *Lifeline* Committee meets on the first Thursday of the month via Zoom (ID: 886 0942 7655, Password: lifeline).

Our Principles

Step Three: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him.

In Step One, we acknowledge we have a problem with alcohol and are unable to manage our life. In Step Two we learn that in order to change this we're obliged to come to believe in a power greater than ourselves. Once we've chosen this higher power, we'll need to demonstrate our willingness to follow its guidance. Step Three is where we decide to do just that, rather than trying to get sober on our own. It's the point at which we pivot from self-will to accepting help. By committing ourselves to the care of a God/higher power, the Third Step prepares us for the upcoming Steps where our acceptance will turn into action.

Tradition Three: The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

AA is open to every person who suffers from alcoholism with only a single stipulation. However, this lone membership requirement in Tradition Three is flexible. Many of us aren't sure we have a desire to stop drinking when we get here. AA allows every alcoholic to determine this in their own time and there's no test or demand for proof. We're a member if we say we are. The Third Tradition also allows us to focus on our own recovery rather than on who should or shouldn't be a member. Thus, anyone can still join AA even if their desire to stop drinking is only half-hearted. This [applies to AA groups as well](#). By keeping its membership conditions simple, AA remains accessible to as many alcoholics in need as possible.

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

The [second](#) of the [Twelve Concepts](#) identifies delegation as the way in which AA manages its affairs. So, what does this mean? [Concept III](#) addresses the problem of AA service organizations like those listed above having to consult the membership for every decision or task. If this were required, nothing would ever get done. The “Right of Decision,” gives every AA entity and trusted servant the means to decide how to handle problems on their own, and when to seek guidance or assistance from the membership. Under [Tradition Two](#), members are bound to trust these trusted servants. This delegated authority and responsibility serves two purposes: 1) It keeps running AA simpler and therefore, more efficient and 2) it fosters mutual trust within the fellowship. As we work towards fulfilling AA's [primary purpose](#), “[We trust Higher Power/God, we trust AA, and we trust each other.](#)”

[Editor's note: You can read the long form of the [Traditions](#) on [www.aa.org](#) or on pp. 563-556 in the Big Book. You can also learn more about the [General Service Office](#) and how it serves AA.]

Ron B.

How Am I Doing?

Tradition Three: The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.

1. In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?
2. Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?
3. Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?
4. Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?
5. Am I over-impressed by a celebrity, a doctor, a clergyman, an ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us?
6. When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if they can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what they do for a living? Where they live? What their domestic arrangements are? Whether they have been to AA before? What their other problems are?

(Reprinted with permission from the [AA Grapevine](#))

(Traditions Checklist available from Central Office)

([SMF-131 Traditions Checklist](#) is available from the AA Grapevine on [www.aa.org](#))

Support Your Central Office

@OCAINTERGROUP



Scan. Pay. Go.

You can [contribute](https://www.oc-aa.org) online at www.oc-aa.org with Paypal or Venmo (QR codes above).

Checks and money orders can be sent to:

ORANGE COUNTY CENTRAL OFFICE
1526 Brookhollow, Suite 75
Santa Ana, CA 92705



March AA Birthdays

Mary G.	Huntington Beach	15 years
Michael R.	Irvine	34 years
Jill L.	Huntington Beach	35 years
Valerie S.	Fountain Valley	50 years

You can celebrate an AA birthday in the *Lifeline* with a [donation](#) to Central Office. A donation of any amount is a generous way to celebrate the gift of sobriety and support your Central Office.

In keeping with AA's Seventh Tradition, we only accept contributions from AA members or groups.



Located at the end of the 55 freeway in Costa Mesa next to the Donald Dungan branch of the Costa Mesa Public Library

Orange County Intergroup Meeting
Second Wednesday of each month
7:00PM meeting, 6:30PM new rep orientation
—IN PERSON ONLY—
Info: 714-556-4555, www.oc-aa.org

Norma Hertzog Community Center
1845 Park Ave.
Costa Mesa

724 TOTAL CALLS	CENTRAL OFFICE ACTIVITY January 2024			
	12 Step Calls	Meeting Info	General Info	Customers
OFFICE VOLUNTEERS (MAIN + SATELLITE)	7	232	182	252
CALL FORWARDING VOLUNTEERS	5	167	131	0

Central Office/Satellite Office Monthly Book Drawing Winners

Tess, Shelly C., Katie L., Starla, Z. and Pat D.

Hospitals and Institutions Corner



Early in sobriety, I saw that all the happy people were doing “panels.” These were the same type of panels that would come into rehabs and jails I was once in, the same panels I would be so dismissive of and want nothing to do with before I got sober. But the seed was planted without me knowing. My ears were finally wide open to hear the depth and weight of the message from these AA members. I wanted what these men and women had. So, I did as they did and joined in.

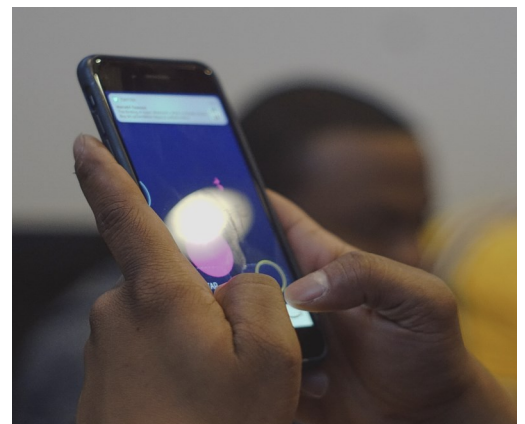
At nine months of sobriety, I began my journey with Hospitals and Institutions (H&I) and became a member at one year. Today, nine years later, I have the privilege of serving as the Institutions Chair and carrying the same message I heard into the same jails I myself was incarcerated in. My own drinking and using experience qualifies me to be uniquely useful to the alcoholic men and women in these institutions. The presence of God I feel when securing the confidence of newcomers makes all the self-sacrifice worth it. In some of my darkest times, I’ve been recognized at meetings because of a panel I was a part of. To hear that something I said had an effect on someone in a positive way has given me no greater sense of purpose and fulfillment.

H&I is all about Tradition Five. All the experiences I’ve had through H&I remind me of this portion of *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* on pages 150-151, “The unique ability of each AA to identify himself with, and bring recovery to, the newcomer in no way depends upon his learning, eloquence, or any special individual skills. The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety.” I’m grateful for the H&I members who shared that key with me, and I’m grateful to have H&I as a staple in my program. Thank you, God!

For more information, please visit www.ochandi.org or email contact@ochandi.org.

Luis P.

Looking for a service commitment you can do with your phone?



The Orange County Central Office call forwarding program insures that our help line phones are answered by volunteers 24/7. During hours when the Central Office is closed, calls are forwarded to a call forwarding volunteer’s home or cell phone, where the volunteer answers the calls just as if they were sitting in Central Office. This allows Central Office to save money because we do not have to use an answering service. More importantly, the caller will be talking to a member of Alcoholics Anonymous. Two years of sobriety are suggested to volunteer for this service. Please call the Central Office Manager in Santa Ana at (714) 556-4555 or the Satellite Office Manager in Laguna Niguel at (949) 582-2697 to sign up for a brief orientation session.

- SHIFTS:**
- Monday—Friday
 - 6AM—9AM
 - 6PM—9PM
 - 9PM—6AM
 - Saturday and Holiday:
 - 6AM—9AM
 - 1PM—4PM
 - 4PM—7PM
 - 7PM—10PM
 - 10PM—6AM
 - Sundays
 - 6AM—10AM
 - 10AM—2PM
 - 2PM—6PM
 - 6PM—10PM
 - 10PM—6AM

Archives Corner

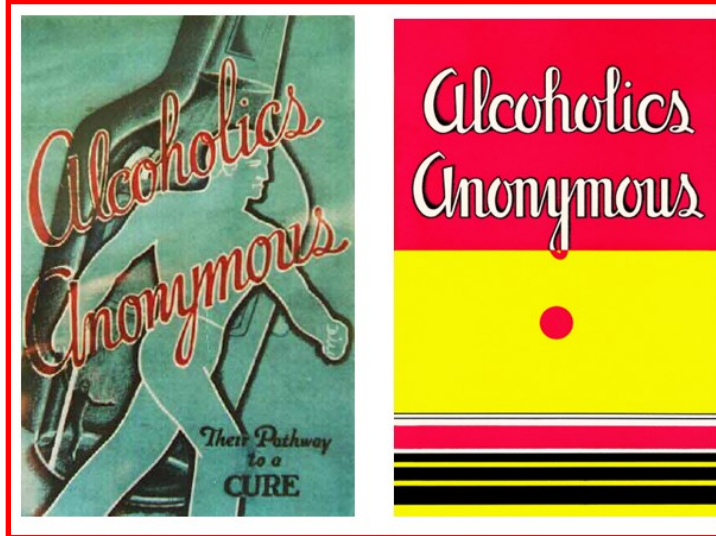
Ray Campbell

In the first edition of the *Big Book*, Ray Campbell of New York City

Appendix II, Spiritual Experience (*Big Book*, pp. 567-568).

wrote his personal story titled "An Artist's Concept." He opened his story with a powerful quote:

"There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments, and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation" - Herbert Spencer. Ray said that the quotation is descriptive of the mental attitudes of many alcoholics when the subject of religion, as a cure, is first brought to their attention. "It is only when a man has tried everything else, when in utter desperation and terrific need he turns to something bigger than himself, that he gets a glimpse of the way out. It is then that contempt is replaced by hope, and hope by fulfillment." Ray chose to write of his search for spiritual help rather than "a description of the neurotic drinking that made the search necessary."



Ray Campbell's designs for dust jackets for the first edition of Alcoholics Anonymous, including the red and yellow jacket that was used

It was decades before it was noticed that the English philosopher Herbert Spencer, although often credited for the quote, was not the original author. The original author may be William Paley, although the quote had become widely attributed to Herbert Spencer, with the first known attributions to him occurring in 1922, almost twenty years after his passing.

Ray Campbell was a huge contributor to the early Alcoholics Anonymous pioneering time. He was a recognized artist who was asked to design the dust jacket for the first edition of the *Big Book*. He presented various designs for consideration, including one that was blue

and in an Art Deco style. The one chosen was red and yellow, with a little black and a little white. The words "Alcoholics Anonymous" were printed across the top in large white script. It became known as the circus jacket because of its loud circus colors. The unused blue jacket is today in the Archives at the Stepping Stones Foundation.

Mary G.
MSCA 09 Archives

Spencer's quote became widely used in the fellowship, especially when talking to newcomers. In the making of the second edition of the *Big Book*, it was decided that Ray's story would not be used, so many members protested. The quote was added in the 1959 third printing of the second edition, placed in the back of the book in

"The more we become willing to depend upon a Higher Power, the more independent we actually are. Therefore, dependence as AA practices it is really a means of gaining true independence of the spirit." As Bill Sees It, "True Independence of the Spirit," p. 26

Before the program, I would fight everyone and everything. Life was a struggle, and everything seemed like pushing a boulder uphill. Granted, some outcomes were pleasant, but for the most part, worry about the future would diminish any potential satisfaction. Now, having a deep faith in a Higher Power, life has just become easier to live. I now know that all I'm responsible for is the footwork today. The final outcome or result is not up to me; I leave that up to God.

There is immense freedom in not having to orchestrate every part of your life and trying to influence the actions of others for your benefit. Having a strong faith minimizes fear (worrying about the future) to a very manageable level. Freedom from debilitating fear is a true gift of our program, but it all starts with a belief in a Power greater than ourselves. It seems counterintuitive to think that dependence on God would give you more independence, but that has been the case for me and all those in our program who have allowed a spiritual awakening to enter into their heart and mind.

Anonymous

From OK to OC

I have battled alcoholism for thirty years. My addiction started in high school in Oklahoma with drinking after football games and on the weekends. By my junior year, my alcoholism was a secret to preserve my reputation as a star athlete and honor student. Between my senior year and college, my addiction took on a life of its own.

Needless to say, college was not where I wanted to be. I just wanted to be back home drinking with no responsibilities. This proved to be my fate as I quit college after one semester. I came home and started up where I'd left off. By April the following year, I was lost in addiction. I was jobless, homeless, and robbing and stealing to feed my disease. It was at this point I had to tell my parents the extent of my addiction and admit my inability to stop.

At twenty-one, I could buy alcohol legally. I'd go on three-day binges where I'd miss work and disappear. This was before cell phones, so I could disappear and not be located. Eventually, my alcohol use led me to a felony case from a fight, and I ended up on probation for three years. I got married after that and moved back in with my parents to save money, but that only gave me less responsibilities. The three-day binges became week-long binges, and my wife got tired of this and moved back in with her parents. I would make promises to reform but always relapsed into the same old behaviors.

Soon after meeting my second wife, I caught some more felonies and went to prison. This was the first of three trips. My father died before I went to prison the second time. While in prison for a twelve-year term, I went through hell. My mom died, and I was diagnosed with Hepatitis C. I stayed sober during this time and thought I'd remain so for life. Within eight months of freedom, I'd blown through my inheritance, was homeless, and was stealing once more to fund my addiction.

I finally got married again, and within a month I was locked up for another three years. The cycle began anew. When I was released, I was still drinking and at risk of violating my parole. I got my act cleaned up and began attending meetings. I met a guy in a meeting who offered me a job

selling cars, and the next eight months were fantastic.



That man became like a mentor to me. He held me accountable. I also got a divorce from my second wife as she was not sober, and our lifestyles didn't mesh. But as I became more successful in business, I became less interested in maintenance of my sobriety. I started drinking again.

It was just a beer here and there, and as we all know, that doesn't work. Next thing I know, I'm all alone on a weekend with no support system because I had become "self-sufficient." I called a

buddy I knew who was in active addiction and was off to the races yet again. In less than a month, my employers knew I was drinking. I'd gone from the golden boy to a guy who couldn't show up for work on time, if at all.

The next six years were more of the same cycle of jail, sobriety, relapse, jail, sobriety, relapse. I bonded out of jail April 29th, 2023, and relapsed the same day. I cleaned up again, got a job, and relapsed again.

This time, a friend sent me a glimmer of hope. She was in rehab in Orange County and killing it. She sent me the info to get out here, and I took the leap of faith. I had nothing holding me back—no family, no job, no kids, and no relationship—just a monkey on my back. I am glad I came out here. I am also thankful for another friend who believes enough in me to stand behind me and has helped every step of the way. For these two women, I am forever grateful.

Today, I have all those lessons learned to propel me forward. I've been in the rooms of AA and always relapsed. Why? I didn't do the program. I didn't live and breathe recovery. Today, I have a sponsor, who I got immediately, and am putting my recovery first. I am taking all suggestions and am giving my life to my Higher Power. In doing so, I have finally found freedom from anxiety.

I have been to AA in Kansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. Until I got to Orange County I'd never been in an hour and half meeting or even heard of a creative expression meeting. Alcoholics are the same everywhere, but here in Orange County things seem more full of life. This could be reflective of my current outlook or just what makes Orange County a special place for recovery.

Rodger B.

Alcoholics are the same everywhere, but here in Orange County things seem more full of life. This could be reflective of my current outlook or just what makes Orange County a special place for recovery.

OCAA Intergroup Presents the 2nd Annual

ST. PATRICK'S DAY

SPRING INTO SERVICE SPEAKER EVENT

MARCH 17TH

4-7 PM
@
NORMA HERTZOG CENTER

1845 Park Ave
Costa Mesa, CA 92627

SPEAKERS START AT 5PM

THERE WILL BE FOOD, FELLOWSHIP, AND A 50/50 OPPORTUNITY DRAWING INCLUDING BOOKS.

PLEASE REACH OUT TO JILLIAN TO CONTRIBUTE IN BRINGING FOOD OR TO BE OF SERVICE WITH SET UP/TAKE DOWN.

Contact Jillian T.
(714) 600-3991

Meeting Spotlight

Men's Stag Speaker and Discussion Meeting

Monday 6:00-7:30PM

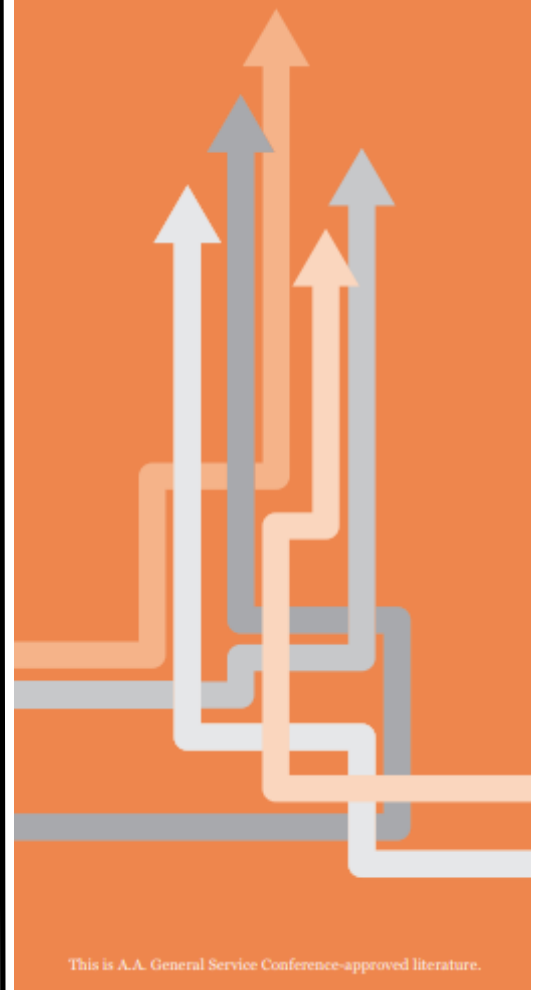


San Clemente Friendship Center
929 Calle Negocio
San Clemente

Contact: Tom P.
949-547-3104

March Pamphlet of the Month

Many Paths to Spirituality



This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature.

A General Service Conference approved pamphlet, [Many Paths to Spirituality \(P-84\)](#) shows how there are many beliefs among AA members. This pamphlet reflects that AA is a spiritual organization, not a religious one.

[Pamphlet available on www.aa.org]



Decision Time



There's a saying often attributed to Bill W., "You can't think your way into right action, but you can act your way into right thinking." I've been unable to find any credible source that confirms he said this. However, that isn't as important as the fact that the Twelve Steps of AA demonstrate the truth of this statement and the key is Step Three. It's where we decide to turn thinking into action in our quest for sobriety.

This doesn't mean thinking has no place in AA. Every action is preceded by a thought, so we do use our brain (or what's left of it) as we recover. Thinking is crucial to the first three Steps but we cannot complete the remaining Steps just by thinking about them. Actions not only speak louder than words, they also speak louder than thought.

In Step One, we admit we're powerless over alcohol. This first happens entirely inside ourselves and is often in reaction to the beating our alcoholism gave us. It's invariably accompanied by guilt, shame, and remorse, feelings that exist only in our minds. But the surrender that results from this honest admission prepares us for the next Step.

Step Two is where we come to believe in a Power greater than ourselves that can help us achieve sobriety. This is another thinking Step, and since we've surrendered to the idea that we can't defeat our alcoholism on our own, why not try surrendering to a Power that can?

A belief in this Higher Power and a little faith can help us find hope. But yet again, it's an inside job. So when does the action begin?

We may have already taken some actions like reading the AA *Big Book*, going to rehab, or maybe a "nudge from the judge" got us into AA meetings. These are great, but there's a difference between just showing up and actually doing the Steps that will help us get and stay sober.

The Third Step involves bridging the gap between thinking and doing. It's the decision where we declare we'll go to any length to achieve sobriety. It's standing on the doorstep of sobriety with our hand on the knob. If we don't commit to fully giving ourselves to this higher power of our own understanding, the knob won't turn and the door won't open. We can make a start by attending AA meetings, reading the Big Book, finding a sponsor, and taking a commitment like coffeemaker, greeter, or clean up.

But we can do all these things and progress no further. We may not be drinking, but our spiritual growth is on pause. This is what's known as being a dry drunk: physically sober but not mentally and emotionally sober. I've known alcoholics who've been doing the first three Steps for years while relapsing repeatedly. They stand before the door to recovery but don't go in. Having a Higher Power/God that can restore us to sanity means little if we don't at least try to follow its will by doing the actions of Steps Four through Twelve to the best of our ability.

You've surrendered. You've found hope. Don't stop there. Your Higher Power is waiting. Time to turn thinking into action by committing to it. Step Three moves us from simply thinking about right action to action that will result in the right thinking found in a happy sober life. What are you waiting for?

Make that decision.

Ron B.



RIDING THE RAFT OF CONTEMPT TO THE PSYCHIC CHANGE LAGOON



Personality change and spiritual awakening are mentioned many times in the *Big Book* and are keys to bringing about a change in behavior and the likelihood of having a successful recovery. Herbert Spencer was a renaissance man from the 19th century whose worldwide reputation as a psychologist, philosopher, biologist, and sociologist and was recognized

as the most famous European intellectual in the closing decade of the century. He was nominated for a Nobel Prize in 1902 and is credited for coining the term "survival of the fittest." On page 568 of the *Big Book*, he wrote a principle recited often in our shares, "contempt prior to investigation." Spencer also noted that one's final opinion is determined by feelings after seeking out the facts.

Like "Silky" in the Doctors Opinion and a parade of other nonalcoholic neurologists and psychiatrists, i.e., Drs. William James, Harry Tiebout, Sigmund Freud, John Stouffer, Carl Jung, W.W. Bauer and the American Psychiatric Association, they concluded that a hopeless alcoholic's problem centered in their mind and was not totally a moral issue which could be addressed solely by dogma, doctrine, threats, imprisonment or banishment from society. The body of an alcoholic was as abnormal as his mind because he was in full flight from reality and outright mentally defective. Emotionally unstable we are!

The *Secret Sauce* inspired by Bill W. was the Twelve Steps of AA conceived cleverly to allow all of its members to *have a God of their understanding*. This was the big tentmaker allowing all atheists, agnostics, religious denominations, and spiritual seekers to belong to a temperance movement which had a dramatic impact on many orthodox beliefs and worldly cultures. One alcoholic works with another for unselfish good where the end goal is the attainment of spiritual solutions. How does one lead a material crusted mind onto a *road less traveled* where spiritual riches become superior to EGO conquests and accumulation of physical possessions?

First, we cleanse the mind of all intoxicants to filter our fuzzy thinking, opening the barn door for the initial stages of emotional sobriety freed from impairment by alcohol. Concurrently, the faulty instincts acquired while employing alcoholic infused behavior must be corrected, modified or nullified to steer through the raging waters and turmoil of early sobriety. Hold steady through these murky waters, and keep the wind to your sails as we navigate to a new design for living. We begin a deep dive slowly to our soul by using Steps Two, Three to **Clear-Up**; and then to understand who we are by dealing with Steps Four, Five where we engage in **Clean-Up** of our mind; next its Steps Six, Seven, Eight, Nine where we **Grow-Up** realizing what we have become and what we capable of becoming; and then Ten, Eleven, Twelve where we **Start Living Daily** our program walking, skipping, and sometimes slowly stumbling on the yellow brick road of courageous hope and manifest destiny with our brothers and sisters.

Upon taking and applying the Twelve Steps to our new way of living, changing our behavior and way of thinking while serving others will further our goal of living an altruistic and meaningful life! Living this way will allow spirituality to naturally trickle into your soul a day at a time. Spiritually is not for sale, only earned by noble and worthy behavior.

John G.

Step Three and Me

The Steps are not work as long as I am doing them. They are work when I am not doing them and should be doing them. Now, I just did not catch on or even know what I was doing when I got sober. Being told to go to ninety meetings in ninety days was not possible. But I did do "today" ninety times.

In sobriety, I learned to write. It started when I was new and wanted to say something or ask something of my sponsor at two in the morning. Sponsors can be a bit rude when called at two in the morning. So, I would write him a letter about what I was feeling and give it to him at the next meeting.

Wanting to write a book, I discovered I would write for a while, get sidetracked and never come back. It is called a lack of fortitude. I could not write a book but discovered I could write essays, just two, three or four pages in length. I could capture a feeling, a lesson learned, or an experience. I wrote an essay called "The Step Three and Marriage" and sent it into the *Grapevine*. While they liked the story, they did change the title to "Whose Marriage Was It Anyway?" It was published in December 2006. I became an international author.

When I was new, I wanted to know how the Steps worked in my everyday life. Maybe you want to know how this works if you are new. How do the Steps work in a marriage? How do they work in the work place? How do they work out there in the streets? So, for me, it took a while to learn they work in all areas of my life.

My sponsor sat down with me and went through the Steps one word at a time. He explained that the Steps are written in the past tense, a simple list of what people before me had done. "Here are the steps we took" (*Big Book*, p. 59). He made a statement about Step Three that had and has a tremendous influence on my life. First, he said, "Chuck, you contribute to your marriage to the best of your ability, so if it does not work out you can walk away with the least amount of guilt or resentment." He continued, "Guilt and resentment will get you drunk."

I started to contribute to my marriage. I later learned to apply the word "contribute" in all my affairs. I started to do things for my wife to please me instead of doing things for my wife to please her. At about eleven months sober, I was riding home from a meeting when I had an inspirational thought. I could not fix my marriage. I could not make it work. So, I said, "Okay, God, you decide how you want it to turn out." I just gave my marriage to God. Two weeks later, it was like throwing a light switch. One day it wasn't working; the next day it was working. The anger was gone; the past was let go of. That marriage lasted fifty-one years until God took her home.



There was a second part to my sponsor's statement that still has a big influence on my daily life. My sponsor said, "It is perfectly okay to turn your will and your life over to the care of God, but if you turn your electric bill over to the care of God, you're going to sit in the dark for a long time. If you have a job to do, get off your dead rear end and do the job." That statement, in turn, caused me to create a prayer that I still say today. When I wake up, I say, "God, please grant me the willingness to do whatever I am supposed to do today. Amen." I do not tell God what He should be doing, and I do not tell God what I should be doing. I just want to get up and have the willingness to do whatever is put in front of me.

Interestingly, several years later, I found a line in *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* on page 34, "There is only one key, and it is called Willingness." Let me tell a story about willingness. I was about six months sober, carpooling to work with a guy who was a programmer. We were both in Aerospace. I knew nothing or very little about computers. (This was before Google). Out of the clear I said, "I would like to learn how to do what you do." It made no sense at all. He invited me down to his office on my lunch hour Tuesday and Thursday, and he would teach me to be a programmer and produce reports. I went down to this man's office every Tuesday and Thursday for four years. That is willingness!

At four years sober, I was promoted to "Master Programmer." I skipped a level. I became a member of the Management computer staff in a very large corporation. What is funny is that I could not read the book on programming. When the human mind is free of drugs and alcohol, it can absorb a tremendous amount of information. I just learned it.

As a result of what my sponsor said, one day at work out of the clear blue sky I quit working for this company, and I did not tell them I quit. I was sitting at the same desk, doing the same job, but I just quit working for the company. I decided that I was going to do whatever they put in front of me. I was going to do (key word, *do*) the best job I could, and the only one I was going to try and please was me. I quit worrying about what the boss thought of me. I quit trying to climb the corporate ladder. Ha! I fell in love with my job.

At five years of sobriety, I was called into the division manager's office and found I had been selected as one of best employees in a very large corporation. I walked out of his office in tears. He did not know I was an alcoholic. He did not know where I came from. All he knew was he had a responsible employee.

Now, I am eighty-six years old and still active in AA. I still try to help others when I can. By the way, God had more plans for me. In my eighties, I met a lady who also got sober in 1984, and we have been married a whole three years. We're just a couple of super senior citizens walking the path that God has put us on. You want to know what a miracle is? Waking up in the middle of the night holding hands. That is the Third Step working in "our" lives.

Chuck H.

We're just a couple of super senior citizens walking the path that God has put us on. You want to know what a miracle is? Waking up in the middle of the night holding hands. That is the Third Step working in "our" lives.

Group Contributions to Central Office, January

	JAN	YTD											
ALISO VIEJO	^	^		LAGUNA WOODS	^	^		Fri 7:05 AM Back To Basics (Ballpark Pi	\$5	\$5	Gerald C, SJC	\$104	\$104
ANAHEIM	^	^		LA HABRA	^	^		Sat. 9:15 A-12x12 Irvine	\$80	\$80	Jenna K.	\$280	\$280
ANAHEIM HILLS	^	^		LAKE FOREST	^	^		MISC. DONATIONS	^	^	Jennifer J., Costa Mesa	\$10	\$10
We 7:00P-Just the Black Print, 4101 E.	\$255	\$255		Mon 7:00P-PAID Women's BB Study	\$185	\$185		Birthdays Donations	\$135	\$135	Marilyn C., San Clemente	\$25	\$25
BREA	^	^		LA MIRADA	^	^		Piggy Bank	\$43	\$43	Matthew D. T.	\$2	\$2
BUENA PARK	^	^		LAS FLORES	^	^		Lifeline	\$5	\$5	Robert R.	\$15	\$15
CAPISTRANO BEACH	^	^		LOS ALAMITOS	^	^		PERSONAL DONATIONS	^	^	Rodger & Annette F., Irvine	\$35	\$35
CORONA DEL MAR	^	^		MISSION VIEJO	^	^		Anonymous	\$50	\$50	Ronald B.	\$25	\$25
Mo 6:30P-CDM BB SS, 1601 Marguerite	\$433	\$433		M-F 12:00P-Diss At Elks. 25902 Marg	\$400	\$400		Amy B.	\$2	\$2	Tera Aj.	\$10	\$10
Tu 6:00P-(W)'s 12x12, 3233 Pacific View	\$250	\$250		We 9:30A-(W)'s Topic, 26051 Margue	\$180	\$180		Brian S.	\$3	\$3	Veronica R., Orange	\$5	\$5
COSTA MESA	^	^		Th 6:00P-(M) 3 G's Park, 26931 El Reti	\$292	\$292		Colleen Mc.	\$50	\$50	IN LOVING MEMORY	^	^
Su 12:15P-High Noon Participation, 204	\$50	\$50		Th 8:00P-Stand/Door, 26051 Marg	\$316	\$316		David B., Fullerton	\$10	\$10	GROUP INFORMATION REQUESTED	^	^
Th 7:00P-12 Steps & 12 Trads Study Gr	\$150	\$150		Fr 8:00P-Couch Meeting, 26001 Muirilan	\$65	\$65		Elizabeth H., Brea	\$25	\$25	Receipt #1498 Jan #431360	\$800	\$800
Fr 6:30P-This Must Be The Place	\$60	\$60		NEWPORT BEACH	^	^		Elizabeth R., Newport Beach	\$100	\$100	TOTALS	\$20,460	\$24,020
Fr 6:30P-The Family Afterwards	\$60	\$60		M-F 12:15P-Shark@Aquatic, 1 Whitecli	1331	\$1,331							
Fr 7:30P-Creative Share, 2525 Fairview	\$60	\$60		Mo 6:30P-(W)'s Solid Solutions, 1441	\$175	\$175							
Sa 6:00P-Sat. Night Refugees, 2144 Th	\$742	\$742		Mo 8:30P-Balboa Island Step Study, 107	\$400	\$400							
CYPRESS	^	^		Tu 6:00P-Castaways (W) C to C-BB St	\$100	\$100							
DANA POINT	^	^		We 7:30P-Men's Stag, 798 Dover	\$25	\$25							
Dly 7:00A-Hardcore Harbor, 34402 E. P	1,500	\$1,500		Sa 8:00A-Dover Men's Stag, 798 Dover	\$100	\$100							
Tu 5:30P-So Coast Men's Stag, 24642	\$96	\$96		Sa 8:00A-EZ Risers, 2046 Mar Vista	\$125	\$125							
We 6:00P-(W)'s SOS, 25975 Domingo	\$139	\$139		ORANGE	^	^							
We 6:30P-Pines Park Discussion, 27012	\$200	\$200		Tu 7:00P-(W)'s Keep It Simple, 1310 E	\$78	\$78							
Th 7:00A-Th Morn Men's Topic, 33501	\$855	\$855		PLACENTIA	^	^							
Th 7:00P-Primary Purpose, 33501 Ston	\$430	\$430		RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA	^	^							
Sa 7:00A-(M)'s 10th Step, 33501 Stone	\$125	\$125		Mo 7:30P-Charter(M)'s, 30605 Ave de la	\$234	\$234							
FOUNTAIN VALLEY	^	^		Thu 7:30P-11th Step Spritual Exp Dis., 3	\$81	\$81							
Dly 8:30A-How It Works AA Meeting, FV	\$25	\$25		SAN CLEMENTE	^	^							
Mo 6:30P-(M)'s No Bull, 16581 Brookhu	\$50	\$50		Fr 7:00P-(W)'s BB & SS, 202 Ave Arag	\$59	\$59							
FULLERTON	^	^		SAN JUAN CAPISTRANO	^	^							
GARDEN GROVE	^	^		Dly 6:00A-Taking a Trip, 31891 Camino	\$125	\$125							
MTh 10:30A-We/OK Today, 9182 Chap	\$200	\$200		Dly Various- San Juan Meetings	2420	\$2,420							
HUNTINGTON BEACH	^	^		Mo 5:00P-(W)'s Solutions, 32382 Del	\$220	\$220							
Dly 6:00A-Early Birds Disc., 8121 Ellis	\$125	\$125		We 6:15P-Effect Speaker Discussion Gr	\$290	\$290							
Dly 8:00A-Hggrs II, H.B Lifegr Tower	\$150	\$150		Th 6:00P-Do the Steps, 32202 Del Obis	\$200	\$200							
Su 9:00A-On/Beach, Lifegr Tower 11	\$250	\$250		SANTA ANA	^	^							
Su Noon-Newcomers BB Discussion,	\$15	\$15		Su 11:00A-Two or More, 1764 S. Main	\$30	\$30							
M-F 7:00A-Huggers, 8200 Ellis	\$90	\$90		SEAL BEACH	^	^							
Tu 6:00P-(W)'s 12x12 SS, 19092 Beach	\$187	\$187		We 7:00P BYOC Coffee BB	\$75	\$75							
Tu 7:30P-Newcomer (M)'s Stag, 9812	\$100	\$100		SILVERADO CANYON	^	^							
We 7:00P-(M)'s Stag, 8121 Ellis Ave	\$150	\$150		SUNSET BEACH	^	^							
Th 10:00A-(W)'s BB Stdy, 18631 Chapel	\$120	\$120		Mo 4:30P-(W)'s Hour of Power, 16865	\$108	\$108							
Sa 6:00A-Sunrise Sobriety, 8121 Ellis	\$36	\$36		Tu 7:00A-Tues at Thursdays, 16865 PC	\$88	\$88							
Sa 9:30A-Charlie St. Overflow, 9812 Ha	\$30	\$30		We 7:00A-Attitude Adj, 16865 PCH	\$162	\$162							
Sa 9:30A-(W)'s BB Study, 19092 Beach	\$60	\$60		Th 7:00A-Thur at Thursdays, 16865 PC	\$30	\$30							
Sa 10:00A-(W)'s Closed Womens BB S	\$300	\$300		Sa 11:00A-Noon at 11, 16865 PCH	\$60	\$60							
IRVINE	^	^		TRABUCO CANYON	^	^							
MW 12:00P-Alton Noon, 5001 Newport	\$259	\$259		TUSTIN	^	^							
Mo 7:30P-(W)'s Disc., 15 Orange Tree	\$210	\$210		Dly 6:00A-Attitude Mod, 1221 Wass	\$300	\$300							
Tu 12:00P-W's Mairiners BB Study, 500	\$136	\$136		Su 7:00P-Sober/Crazy Spkrs, 12881 Ne	\$60	\$60							
Tu 6:00P-W's Courage To Change, 181	\$161	\$161		Th 9:00A-(W)'s SS, 14402 Prospect	\$60	\$60							
LAGUNA BEACH	^	^		Fr 6:00A-Men's Morning Coffee	\$85	\$85							
Dly 7:00A-C Club 7AMs Att Adj, 20456	\$317	\$317		Sa 7:30A-Tustin Acceptance, 225 W. M	\$232	\$232							
Su 7:00A-Whale Watchers (M)'s, PCH	\$797	\$797		VILLA PARK	^	^							
Th 6:00P-Women's Stag, 20456 LCR	\$143	\$143		Su Dly 7:30A-24 Hr Book, 17885 Santia	\$252	\$252							
Fr 6:00P-Happy Hour Disc, 20456 LCR	\$140	\$140		WESTMINSTER	^	^							
LAGUNA HILLS	^	^		WHITTIER	^	^							
Su 7:00P-Legacies Grp, 23802 ADC	\$600	\$600		YORBA LINDA	^	^							
Sa 7:00A-Warmer-Upper, 23802 AD	\$252	\$252		UNLISTED GROUPS	^	^							
Sa 9:00 AM-(W)'s SS, 23802 ADC	\$100	\$100		Anonymous Meeting	\$147	\$147							
LAGUNA NIGUEL	^	^		Mon 6:30 pm Women's Living Sober, Mi	\$163	\$163							
Mo 8:00P-12&12 Stdy, 30071 Ivy Glenn	\$210	\$210		Th 11:00A-(W)'s Closed BB, SJC	\$84	\$84							
We 6:00P- BB 12&12 Study, 30017 Ivy	\$230	\$230		WANDERING GROUPS	^	^							
Fr 7:00A-Back to Basics Men's, 30120	\$315	\$315		We 6:30P- Rolling Men's Stag BB Study	\$250	\$250							
Fr 7:00A-Ivy Glenn (M) Stag, 30071 Ivy	\$358	\$358		ZOOM MEETINGS	^	^							
Fr 7:30P-Here & Now, 24360 Yosemite	\$50	\$50		As Bill Sees It Newcomer	\$72	\$72							
Sa 9:00A-Meditation Meeting, 29102 C	\$75	\$75		Attitude Adj. 7am Cnyn Club	\$514	\$514							
				Back Bay (M)'s Zoom	\$44	\$44							
				Dly Noon Time Recovery (Costa Mesa)	\$50	\$50							
				Tues/Thurs 7:05 A-The 705 Virtual AA	\$288	\$288							

Questions and Answers

Continued from page 1

had not missed many of those methods. Then I read about the jaywalker in Chapter Three, and I recognized myself with my drinking (pp. 37-38). Each time, in my head, it was going to be different, only it never was. I knew I was an alcoholic.

Was I ready to try anything that would help me stay sober and to get over my soul-sickness?

The short answer was no. Firstly, I had no conception of being soul-sick. When I looked at and read Step Two and Step Three, self-will rose up like a tidal wave. I could not/would not believe a Power greater than myself would restore me to sanity—not that I thought I was sane. My fear of and anger at this Higher Power/God completely blocked me from these two Steps. Fortunately, the members of the AA group became my Higher Power for a while. Their sometimes gentle and sometimes not-so-gentle advice began to alter my thinking and behaviors. It would take a year and a half for me to recognize the fact that I could not stay sober on self-will. Once that surrender was made, working our program became easier for I was returned to sanity, and my obsession to drink was lifted that very night.

Should I ever forget the condition I was in?

The short and only answer is no! To forget the mental, physical, and spiritual pain that brought me to the last house in town would doom me to an alcoholic death, quick or lingering. When I review these questions, I can close my eyes and feel all of that chaos and despair. When I remember the condition I was in when I got here, I feel gratitude for where I am today. Our program and the fellowship gave me sobriety, sanity, and faith in a loving Higher Power/God and a thousand other gifts over the last forty-three years.

The above questions are good questions whether you're new in the program or have some time in sobriety. They make me remember and bring gratitude for today. I was once told to write my sobriety date on the inside of my *Big Book* cover and never to change it. Reviewing these questions occasionally and working the Steps of our program one day at a time will allow for continued sobriety.

Trust God, clean house, and help others.

Bill F.

The best character to strive to become is unknown in anything and living in virtuous flow.

—Christopher R.



Speaker Meetings

Costa Mesa

6:00PM, Saturday
HYBRID
Saturday Night Refugees (12X12 Speaker Meeting)
 2144 Thurin St. @ Victoria St. (Grange Hall)
 Meeting ID: 703 741 362, Password: GRANGE
 Contact: Joel B.

7:00PM, Sunday
IN-PERSON
Costa Mesa Speaker Group
 2040 Placentia Ave. (Costa Mesa Alano Club)
 Contact: Christy B.

Dana Point

9:30 AM *First Sunday only each month*
IN-PERSON
Dana Point Harbor Monthly Speaker Birthday Group
 34699 Golden Lantern (Wind and Sea Restaurant)
 Contact: Brent W. or
 Contact: John H.

Huntington Beach

5:45PM, Tuesday
HYBRID
Sun and Sea AA Hybrid Meeting
 8121 Ellis Ave (HB church, upstairs meeting room)
 Meeting ID: 882 0896 9623, Password: Sunandsea
 Contact: Cindy S.

Irvine

7:00PM, Saturday
HYBRID
Turtle Rock Speaker Meeting
 1 Sunnyhill
 Meeting ID: 269 016 646, Password: wildbunch
 Contact: Joseph C.

Laguna Beach

8:00PM, Saturday
HYBRID
Living Sober Speaker Meeting
 428 Park Ave. (St. Mary's Episcopal Church)
 (in the back building, Guild Hall)
 Meeting ID: 129 629 389 (no password)
 Contact: Neil K.

8:00PM, Saturday
HYBRID
CC Sat Nite
 20456 Laguna Cyn. Rd. (The Canyon Club)
 Meeting ID: 269 016 646, Password: canyon
 Contact: Tim A.

Laguna Hills

7:30PM, Sunday
HYBRID
Legacies Group Speaker Meeting
 23721 Moulton Pkwy. (Florence Sylvester Senior Cn.)
 Meeting ID: 446 899 371, Password: Legacies
 Contact: Thelegaciesgroup@gmail.com

Laguna Niguel

7:00PM, Sunday
HYBRID
Laguna Niguel Speaker Meeting
 24360 Yosemite Road (@La Paz Rd.)
 Meeting ID: 451 797 737, Password: NewYMCA
 Contact: Bill W. &
 Jesse C.

Lake Forest

7:30PM, Friday
IN-PERSON
Saddleback Valley Fellowship Friday Night Speaker Meeting
 23401 El Toro Rd. (@ Muirlands Blvd.), Ste. 101
 Contact: Vijay

Orange

8:00PM, Saturday
HYBRID
Saturday Night Visiting Speakers
 395 S. Tustin St. (Community of Christ Church)
 Meeting ID: 620 819 804, Password: aa
 Contact: Matt D.

Orange

7:00PM, Sunday
IN-PERSON
Sunday Night Speaker Meeting of Orange
 250 S. Prospect St. (Revive Covenant Church)
 Contact: Manny A.
 Speaker host: Eddie P.

03/03 David L., Orange
 03/10 Nolan O., Dana Point
 03/17 Tara E., Fullerton
 03/24 Rob H., Dana Point
 03/31 Chris W., Tustin

Rancho Santa Margarita

7:30PM, last Friday of the month
IN-PERSON
Roads End Participation
 Via Con Dios at Santa Margarita Pkwy.
 Speaker last Friday of the month

San Clemente

6:00PM, Monday
IN-PERSON
Men's Stag Speaker and Discussion Meeting
 929 Calle Negocio (San Clemente Friendship Center)
 Contact: Tom P.

7:30PM, Friday
IN-PERSON
Friday Night Open Speaker Meeting
 202 Aragon (St. Clement's By the Sea Church)
 Contact: Tom P.

Tustin

7:00PM, Sunday
IN-PERSON
Sober & Crazy Speaker Meeting
 12881 Newport Ave. (Grace Harbor church)
 Contact: Megan H.

Villa Park

9:02AM, Sunday
IN-PERSON
9:02 Speaker/Participation Meeting
 17855 Santiago Blvd.
 Contact: Kevin M.

WHEN YOUR MEETING HAS A CHANGE OF OFFICERS

- Please contact Central Office.
- A contact name and phone number are needed with every meeting.
- The name and number are for internal use only and will not be shared or published.

- 1) Go to www.oc-aa.org
- 2) Under Meeting Directory, find your meeting
- 3) At the bottom of your meeting listing, click on UPDATE MEETING INFO
- 4) Add name and number in space above the link containing your meeting info

The update gets delivered to manager@oc-aa.org or call Skip at 714-556-4555.



God Is Building with Me and Doing with Me as He Wills

The entry of God into my life began when I was a little girl. My momma and daddy believed in God, yet, they had fallen away from church fellowship. There was a family in our community who took the neighborhood kids to church and Sunday School. I was one of those kids who was blessed by their service. I always intuitively felt like God was with me throughout all of the abuse I was subjected to in my home when I was a child. And when I was at church or Sunday School, I really wanted to respond to the pastor's altar call or to the Sunday School teacher's offer to ask Jesus into my heart. Yet, fear was greater than my desire, and I felt like I was glued to my chair.

God had a plan for me to overcome that fear, and it was a mysterious, wondrous plan during a Kansas thunderstorm. I was ten years of age. My family and I stood on the porch watching this thunderstorm. I saw a huge white cloud in the shape of what looked like Jesus, arms outstretched. I thought that He was coming back to take us all to heaven in what I had heard the pastor call "the rapture." I cried out: "Oh, Jesus, please don't come back until you have come into my heart." I felt like a bolt of electric power went through my body. It was a moment of complete awe. I was relieved that I had at last come out of that fear. This began my journey with God, as I understood God, at that young age.

In the years following that experience, boys, marriage, and booze entered my life. Without realizing it, I had put God on "the back burner" and began to slowly spiral down into a deep, dark hell of what I came to know as the disease of alcoholism. God had never let me go even though I had abandoned Him for this idol of alcohol.

When I was thirty-nine, I was physically dying from the endless side effects of alcohol, and prescribed medicines were destroying my vital organs. I went to my doctor to get more pills. He refused and placed me in rehab, where I would learn

God, I offer myself to Thee-to build with me and do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy will always!

The Third Step Prayer, from p. 63 of the Big Book

that I am an alcoholic. This began my journey in sobriety and the reintroduction to the God of my childhood.

Step Three continues to build a faith in my innermost being that is unshakable and authentic. I'm no longer filled with anger and hundreds of forms of fear with warring fragments of who I thought I was. As I offer my will and my life to God daily, I am guided through and out of the self-sufficiency that I once had into another day of sobriety and God sufficiency. This catapults me in an intuitive way to make a decision, on a daily basis, to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand God.

My whole attitude and outlook upon life has changed. I no longer believe the doctrine that I was taught in church and Sunday School. I now have a God of my understanding who allows me to make healthy decisions. His grace keeps me in His care rather than turning it over to the bottle that was killing me. As the Third Step Prayer continues to be active in my every footstep, it is clear that God is building with me and doing with me as He wills.

I could never make decisions; I was a mess of wishy-washy indecision until I began to practice the Third Step on a daily basis. It was when I began to turn my will and my life over to the care of God that I also began to understand that He cares for me. And His care for me allows me to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety. I now understand what it means to allow God to fit me to be of maximum service to Him and the people about me. It all begins with making the decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God, as I understand God. What a gift of freedom it is, to no longer be bound to the certitudes of religion. That is only because AA's Step Three has allowed my mind to be transformed from the fear of what other people might think about my perspective of the God of my understanding.

No matter what our beliefs are, we get to grow together in the love of the God of our understanding, in the commonality of recovery from a hopeless state of mind and being. We get to make our own decision as to the God of our understanding through the wisdom and freedom in Step Three. Step Three has been a daily practice for me since I went to rehab forty-three years ago.

Effie R.

As the Third Step Prayer continues to be active in my every footstep, it is clear that God is building with me and doing with me as He wills.



Mark Your Calendar

» UPCOMING EVENTS

March 1-3

PRAASA 2024

San Francisco Marriott Marquis
780 Mission St.
www.praasa.org
707-595-0174

March 29-31

39th Annual OCAA Convention
with Al-Anon Participation
Hilton Orange County
3050 Bristol St., Costa Mesa
www.oaac.org

April 5-7

Woman to Woman—Lake Arrowhead
UCLA Conference Center
850 Willow Creek Rd.
www.W2WArrowhead.com

April 19-21

Easy Does It Weekend
Camp Sealy in Crestline, CA
www.easydoesitweekend.com

May 17-19, 2024

Woodstock West

Journey through the Twelve Steps of AA
Four Points by Sheraton, LAX
9750 Airport Blvd., Los Angeles
310-645-4600
www.woodstockwest.biz

Check the www.oc-aa.org events section for updated intergroup committee meetings

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
ORANGE COUNTY INTERGROUP ASSOCIATION
STATEMENT OF INCOME & EXPENSE
PERIOD ENDING 01/31/2024 UNAUDITED

	Jan 24	Jan 24 YTD
Ordinary Income/Expense		
Income		
Literature Resale	3,805.00	3,805.00
Birthday Donations	50.00	50.00
Group Donations	24,003.45	24,003.45
Individual/Fellowship	1,042.02	1,042.02
Interest Earned	4.64	4.64
Literature Sales	20,092.34	20,092.34
Total Income	<u>48,997.45</u>	<u>48,997.45</u>
Cost of Goods Sold		
Cost of Literature Sold		
Cost of Goods Sold	16,632.63	16,632.63
Cost of Literature Sold - Other	0.00	0.00
Total Cost of Literature Sold	<u>16,632.63</u>	<u>16,632.63</u>
Total COGS	<u>16,632.63</u>	<u>16,632.63</u>
Gross Profit	32,364.82	32,364.82
Expense		
Accounting	3,910.00	3,910.00
Auto Expense (all Mgrs.)	62.28	62.28
Convention & Svs Event Expense	55.00	55.00
Copier Expense	293.59	293.59
Credit Card Expense	353.23	353.23
Freight and Shipping Costs	7.50	7.50
Insurances	405.80	405.80
Intergroup Expense	1,899.76	1,899.76
Internet Expense	177.49	177.49
Lease Expense	284.05	284.05
"LIFELINE" Expense	1,625.00	1,625.00
Maintenance & Repairs	160.00	160.00
Offices' Supplies & Expenses	206.67	206.67
Payroll Tax Expense	1,608.73	1,608.73
Reimb. Health	500.00	500.00
Rent Main/Satellite Offices	1,246.00	1,246.00
Salaries	10,271.68	10,271.68
Telephone Expense	386.57	386.57
Utilities	67.37	67.37
Volunteers Coffee & Water	40.50	40.50
Website Expense	356.99	356.99
Total Expense	<u>23,918.21</u>	<u>23,918.21</u>
Net Ordinary Income	8,446.61	8,446.61
Other Income/Expense		
Other Income		
Purchase Discounts	717.82	717.82
Total Other Income	<u>717.82</u>	<u>717.82</u>
Net Other Income	<u>717.82</u>	<u>717.82</u>
Net Income	<u>9,164.43</u>	<u>9,164.43</u>



March Word Search

Name _____

Email address _____
or phone number _____

W S S E N G N I L L I W R A M C W S R N
 P H U E B E C N E G I L L E T N I V X I
 T T T X L S M D R Z P V Q I S E F K R N
 F P P Y A R M Z I Q X W X P Q D V H P R
 H P Z E S Y V J S Z P F M X O H L W J U
 L W U E P M Y Z E I K O U S W W B T F K
 O I M J H W D I D P J O P W E I E S P X
 S W P D E E M M D W Z S R C O I N R X K
 G P G R M M Y Y Y A X E X W E X S G Z K
 Y T I N Y S P E A X Q H Y E M I S W O D
 P U Q V C P K K M U O X G N K L M H B U
 G S O Z S P I R I T U A L D S X N F E R
 Z Y U N G Y D R B K R I X L S Z K H G M
 U K R E F L E C T I O N T J P G X G B O
 G L X X R M D M U T G V C D I Z J T Y Q
 J W U D E C I S I O N Y E V S F W X M E
 U O I N D E P E N D E N C E W K K G O Y
 K I T O L D T I M E R S Y S R S C S C V
 F F Y B C M K F A Y R K Z J E C Y M P K
 Y P W E L X L M T T P I H S R E B M E M

REQUIREMENT
MEMBERSHIP
DESIRE
WILLINGNESS

DECISION
SPIRITUAL
INTELLIGENCE
INDEPENDENCE

REFLECTION
POWER
OLDTIMERS
BLASPHEMY

WIN A FREE BOOK OF YOUR CHOICE!

Complete the word search (these words from the *Big Book* or *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* can be forwards, backwards, up, down, or diagonal), and make sure to include your name and phone number or email address. Take a picture of a word search you completed on paper, or take a screen shot of a word search you accessed electronically and used the markup or highlighter feature on your phone or computer, and email it to: lifelinecommittee@oc-aa.org, or mail the completed puzzle to Central Office at 1526 Brookhollow Dr. Suite 75, Santa Ana, CA, 92705. If your answers are correct, your name will be entered into a drawing for a chance to win a free book of your choice from Central Office.

DEADLINE IS APRIL 15th

Congratulations to January's winner, Kat K.!