



Sobriety in Stumptown

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Portland Area Intergroup
825 NE 20th Ave,
Portland, OR
503-223-8569

April 2019
Volume 12, No. 4

April Stories and Art

Tradition Four

By Tom C.

When I first attended AA, it was quite a culture shock to hear that in the program “there are no rules.” Based on my alcoholic upbringing, I expected other members to tell me what to do and how to do it. Instead they said, “Follow your heart,” “take what you liked and leave the rest” and “our groups are autonomous.”

As I became familiar with our Twelve Traditions, I realized that there is a “yes, but...” attached to the group autonomy referred to in Tradition Four. (“Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting another group or AA as a whole.”) Abiding by the Traditions has helped me follow this caveat that I not bring harm to the program that has helped me so much.

AA adapted these suggested guidelines from the hard-earned experiences of early groups, so that we might avoid the same pitfalls they faced and assure the program can continue to exist. While “there are no rules in AA,” there is a “yes, but...” to that statement too: “but we remain obedient to the unenforceable.”

But in a lawless organization, how do we maintain a program to help one another recover from self-will, false pride, resentment and self-pity? By recognizing that principles are more important than personalities and by accepting a program on which they know they can depend for help.

Understanding Perfection

by Kyle C. from Portland, OR

“A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret. If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values.

We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up, which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.”

- AA Big Book, page 64

Contrary to common AA lore, Step Four is not the most difficult step and it is not the one that intimidated us the most.

We are not perfect beings. In fact, we are far from it. Imperfection is what makes us unique, and being human is what makes the idea of being wholly perfect unattainable. There are some things however, that we can *do* perfectly. We may not *be* perfect, but we do have the ability to take action toward perfecting bits and pieces in the puzzle of life. Take the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous for example. There is no expectation that you or anyone else will do all 12 steps perfectly. Why? Because we’re human, we all do things a little differently, and what may be a perfect fit for you, may not be so for the next person.

There is one step however, that must be done perfectly. The first step, “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable,” is the only one that can make or break the rest of the steps. It’s no coincidence that all journeys start with the first step, and the first step in Alcoholics Anonymous happens to be the most important. Step one focuses on being honest, *truly honest*, with yourself. If you can’t stop drinking once you start, and mentally obsess over the next drink, you are powerless over alcohol. Powerlessness means using against our will. If you can fully admit to yourself that you have no control over alcohol and that your life is unmanageable when you drink, you are well on your way to completing a successful first step.

If you never want to drink and be in the situation of desperation again, make sure you do the first step perfectly. Then find a sponsor that will take you through steps one through twelve. If you are solid on the first, and you don’t drink or use through the next eleven, you are doing recovery right.

Easy Does it, But Do It!

Ellen S. from Portland, OR

Strangely enough, getting worked up and stressed out often feels easier than just letting things happen as they come. “Easy does it” is an Alcoholics Anonymous suggestion that actually takes some work and a little practice to learn. Newcomers in early recovery have a tendency to see people, places, and things as all or nothing. Our perception of the world may be skewed and the way our brain interprets our surroundings can sometimes get us in trouble. “Easy does it” reminds us to take a step back, breathe, and to just let life happen on its own terms.

The second part of “easy does it,” is “but do it.” The suggestion of taking it easy does have its limits. People who sit on their laurels waiting for a miracle to happen will often end up drinking again. Abstinence does not equate recovery. Recovery takes a lot of work, and people who aren’t willing to put in the work, will often struggle with sobriety. This includes procrastination. Though everyone takes recovery at their own pace, it is important to keep moving forward. Stagnation can have serious consequences. For instance, it’s not uncommon to see some people bounce in and out of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, because they begin the steps, but then stall at step four.

When you are new in recovery, you do need to remember to be gentle on yourself. You are saving your own life and that is no easy feat. People who have some time in recovery offer suggestions like “easy does it, but do it” because they have been in your shoes, and they are telling you what worked and what still works for them. If you stick around, you will find what works for you, and eventually, you will use your own experience to help the newcomer. When your day and everything in it feels overwhelming, practice turning it over to your higher power. This may be a foreign concept to you, but unburdening yourself of the things you cannot control is a crucial life skill in recovery.

Monthly Business Meetings

For details about monthly business meetings, contact the PAI Office at 503-223-8569. Or send your questions or concerns to: 1212@pdxaa.org

Portland Area Intergroup (PAI): Business Meeting, 2nd Monday of every month, 7:00 PM, 4524 SE Stark St. (Unity of Portland), Portland.

Portland Deaf Access Committee: Monthly, 2nd Sunday of every month, 6:30, The Alano Club, NW 24th & Kearney.

Dist 9: 1st Wed, 6:30 PM, 24th and Kearney, Portland

Dist 10: Last Mon, 7:00 PM, 12945 Beaverdam Rd., West Side Service Cntr, Beaverton

Dist 11: Last Thu, 7:00 PM, “URS” Club, Portland

Dist 12: 1st Tue, 6:30 PM, 12x12 Club, 7035 NE Glisan, Portland

Dist 15: 1st Wed, 6:45 PM, 710 6th St., Oregon City

Dist 18: 1st Sat, 9:30 AM, 215 N 6th St., St. Helens

Dist 23: 1st Tue, 6:00 PM, Emmanuel Presbyterian, 19200 SW Willamette Dr., West Linn

Dist 24: 1st Thu, 6:00 PM, 5441 SE Belmont St., Portland

Dist 25: 4th Tue, 5:30 PM, Immanuel Lutheran Church, 39901 Pleasant Street, Sandy, OR

Dist 26: 2nd Sun, 5:00 PM, St Charles Church, 5310 NE 42nd Ave., Portland

Dist 27: 1st Mon, 7:00 PM, 11631 SE Linwood Ave., St. Paul’s Methodist, Milwaukie

Dist 31: 2nd Tue, 7:00 PM, 937 NE Jackson School Rd., Hillsboro

Dist 34: 3rd Sat, 5:00 PM, 485 Portland Ave., Gladstone

Dist 35: 2nd & 4th Sat, 7:00 PM, 18926 SW Shaw St., Suite A, Beaverton

Dist 36: 2nd Thu, 7:00 PM, St. Barnabas Episcopal Church, 2201 SW Vermont St, Portland

Dist 37: 2nd Tue, 7:00 PM, Sherwood Community Friends Church, 23264 SW Main Street, Sherwood, OR

Committee News

Portland Area Intergroup is a committee of volunteers that encourages mutual support and cooperation between Portland A.A. groups and provides services that would be too much for the individual groups to handle by themselves. PAI provides services for the AA community and the general public.

We have several committee positions available. Portland Area Intergroup needs your help. Working on a committee is excellent 12th Step service work. If you are interested in being on any Portland Area Intergroup committee, send an email to pdxaa.org with "COMMITTEE INTEREST" in the subject field. Or, just click on [Service](#) on the Intergroup website. **Intergroup committees carry the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic.** Please help yourself and others. Sign up. Thank you.

Bridging the Gap (BTG): Provides a one-time, temporary contact for people transitioning from a treatment center to A.A. meetings. BTG meets the second Monday of each month at 6:30 PM at the Portland Intergroup Office basement, located at 825 NE 20th Ave, Suite 200, Portland. "We Bridge the Gap so alcoholics leaving treatment don't have to walk alone across that scary gap between the beginning of recovery in treatment and the continued recovery in A.A." Please contact the PAI office via phone, 503-223-8569, or email btg@pdxaa.org, if you are interested.

A.A. Hotline: The A.A. Hotline keeps the Portland phone number for A.A. active 24 hours a day, every day of the year. The way this is accomplished is by volunteer support. Calls to the A.A. number placed after Central Office hours and redirected to volunteers' phones, keeping the volunteer's number anonymous. A volunteer can elect to go on a 12th Step call or just provide the information the caller needs about meetings. Commitments are generally two times a month. In particular, if you're a night-owl, we'd really appreciate your help. Call the Central Office for more information at 503-223-8569.

Corrections Committee Information: Take meetings into correctional facilities & carries the A.A. message to the alcoholic who suffers. The Corrections team is looking for A.A. volunteers, both men and women, to bring A.A. meetings into the jails in Multnomah County, specifically Inverness Jail, the Courthouse and the Justice Center. If you have questions on becoming a volunteer, or if you would like to be on the PAI Corrections Committee, please email: corrections@pdxaa.org, or call the Central Office for more information at 503-223-8569.

Cooperation with Treatment Centers: The Treatment Centers needs your help to share your experience, strength, and hope with the alcoholic who still suffers by taking meeting into treatment facilities. The Treatment Center committee needs volunteers to help coordinate and facilitate meetings at treatment centers. We need your help to contact treatment centers that have reached out to Portland Area Intergroup for A.A. support. We also speak with treatment centers to find out if A.A. is currently bringing in meetings, or if they would like to arrange an appointment to speak with a representative from A.A. that could explain what we can offer them and their patients. We also coordinate with A.A. groups to find out about the service opportunity,

and how their group members can participate in this important 12th Step work. The committee meets monthly at 6pm, before the Portland Area Intergroup meeting. If you have questions, please email treatment@pdxaa.org, or call the Central Office at 503-223-8569.

Public Information Committee: Panels meet with the media, schools, clubs, and the general public and show videos (produced by the General Service Office), provide literature, contact information and answer questions about A.A. For more information, email pi@pdxaa.org, or call the Central Office at 503-223-8569.

Newsletter (*Sobriety in Stumptown*): The committee for the very publication you are now reading is looking for members. Send an email of interest to: newsletter@pdxaa.org

Events: The Events Committee needs committee members. Send an email to Events@pdxaa.org for more information.

Get Published!

If you have A.A. news, a meeting change, a big event, a story, a painting, a poem, or just a rant, Sobriety in Stumptown wants to hear it! Send articles of 1000 words or fewer to:

newsletter@pdxaa.org

Deadline for the May issue: **May 6th**

Step Four

"Made a searching and fearless inventory of ourselves."

Tradition Four

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

Serenity Prayer

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference."

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