



Sobriety in Stumptown

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

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May Stories and Art

Step Five

By George D. from Portland, OR

"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

I took a big gasp of air followed by the utterance, "Oh boy, breathe, George, breathe." For those who know me, they know that is exactly what I do but if we must do the Steps, then let's get going. Working through Step Four, I came away learning a great deal about myself and my many shortcomings.

Step Four revealed much of what led me to drink and what kept me drinking; I am an alcoholic and that's what we do. Step Four also allowed me the willingness to trust in a sponsor. How many times as an alcoholic have I thrown my hands up in the air and screamed, "I will never trust another human being for as long as I live!" Now this Step was asking me to admit my innermost secrets to another individual. "Sure," I said to myself, "let me know how that works out. Hey! I know, being an avid liar, this shouldn't be hard."

However, I was no longer the same old liar; the guy that didn't give a crap about living. I was no longer that broken soul, stuck drowning in the bottom of a whiskey glass. Slowly peeling back the calloused layers of my heart, I found the human being I once was. Was it easy? No.

The human being I chose to share these things with was my sponsor, Gary T. He had never steered me wrong and I felt he never would. I knew he cared about me and therefore he should know about me. "So with all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us had tried to hold onto our old ideas but the result was nil until we let go absolutely." (Big Book, Pg.10)

My sponsor had keys to a church where this new journey began so we sat down and worked out the Fifth Step. Gary impressed upon me the concept of, “just do the next right thing and in doing so, you’ll never have to do this Step again.” There are of course of events you will likely remember later. Those too can be resolved in Step 10. Remember Step 4 and Step 5 are the critical foundation on which we build our sobriety.

Fear

by Anna from Oregon City and beyond

Fear. Probably what most people feel, hear, and experience when they get past Step Four (as if *that* Step isn’t enough).

Let’s assume for a moment that you do a thorough searching and fearless moral inventory. Coffee stained steno pad, a box of tissues used up and your writing hand is cramped and strained beyond measure. You’ve reread your list, weighed your defects against what you perceive is normal, and found yourself shell-shocked and completely drained. Lacking in humanity and petrified that you will drink.

Now what? Say these things out loud? To another human being? A live, breathing one, we ask? Can’t take this to the beach or the mountains and read it to the ether and call it good? Dang!

The Big Book and the 12x12 line out the potential consequences of doing it our way. We might have to make multiple attempts at cleaning up the murky aquarium mess of our past behaviors. We might be wise to remember that “past” is as recent as a moment ago. Not just ten years ago, one year ago or last month. If we drank for decades we might have to dig a bit more; yet we ask for the willingness to use an emotional shovel that will mine peace at the end of the dig.

Here we aren’t asking to be stripped of all responsibility or consequence, rather than find a new depth of personal acceptance. Now the breathing part of whom do we trust? A sponsor or clergy? Someone else in the program we believe is closed-mouthed? We are careful not to box ourselves into what we *should* do, because every circumstance is a little different. As the book says, we do it.

Stop there. “We do it.” We make a decision and make a date and show up and say the words and breathe—in and out. We have written our truth to the best of our ability (in the moment) and now it is going to come out in myriad ways. Say a little prayer and remember this is one more step on the road to recovery. Not the end.

Dear Higher Power, please help me to live in “what’s now” and “what’s true”, rather than “what’s next” and “what if”. Thy will be done.

Move on. Keep it simple. We deserve sobriety and peace and the chance to heal.

Trust

by Luke from Portland, OR

Step Five Involves something few alcoholics have, and it is rarely discussed or even mentioned. Trust. Without that element, the idea of telling someone you often think of as a newfound friend, your deepest, most troubling secrets, is often overwhelming. According to NY Central Office, around eighty percent of those who come to Alcoholics Anonymous never get beyond Step Three. Meetings are great, but they are not how you stay sober. Sponsors are also important, but their primary function is to get you into the book and through steps one through twelve. You know how many people I have gotten through *all twelve steps* in forty-seven years? Not more than a dozen. I have gotten hundreds through steps One, Two, and Three. Probably hundreds more through inventories and then listening to inventories. Sometimes I pick up a sponsee who is interested in doing an inventory (after considerable sobriety) and then letting me hear his work. But to work with someone all the way? It's rare.

So trust, again, seems to be one of the biggest obstacles for some and it rears its head in different ways. It can cause someone to hold back valuable information discovered in their personal inventory work. This problem, unless corrected, can cause relapse later on because the Inventory, as instructed in the book, was not fearless and thorough. How could it be? Imagine the guilt that can foster later on.

And lack of trust can cause a person to doubt their sponsor's worth. Building a relationship with someone means that not only will they find out about you, but you might be shocked about something your own sponsor tells you about himself or (worse yet) you hear or overhear gossip and don't want to let your sponsor know that information you discovered about him, even wondering whether or not it is true. My own belief is this: anything you wish you knew for certain about your sponsor, you have the right to ask. And you should be willing to risk that with him or her. If you are *not* willing, it is a sure sign you don't trust the individual and perhaps you should find someone else you can trust. And by the way? You are entitled to that. You deserve that kind of integrity.

Books have been written about the intimate stranger relationships we have with each other in Alcoholics Anonymous. Often, for us, the people who know us best are people we know little or nothing about. Yet we are expected to share and reveal things which are often embarrassing or have other potential ramifications which are complex and scary. I was lucky that I had a belief in a Higher Power which made the leap much easier. For those who don't, I would suggest getting advice and help from folk who have been around a while and perhaps would give recommendations. The importance of the Fourth and Fifth Steps of the program cannot be overstated. It's one of the few things Bill W. wanted AA's to understand-- if you don't do these two Steps, you are most likely going to relapse.

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 June issue: **June 3rd**

Step Five

"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

Tradition Five

"Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers."

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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