



MESSENGER

Third Step - Turning It over

I REACHED the Third Step after trying to understand the first two. I had reflected on the First--I can't handle alcohol. In the Second, I had come to believe, slowly, in a Power that could restore me to sanity. Since I now did believe, it seemed a sensible idea to turn myself over completely to this Power. My own way of living had proved a disaster. Now I was willing to try the way of Someone Else.

Doing that isn't complicated. If I have a toothache, I turn my problem over to a dentist. I don't question him; I know that he is not going to drill a hole in my shoulder, that his knowledge and skill will end the toothache. The idea of turning to someone more competent than I can apply to multiple areas. In their fields, the doctor, lawyer, CPA, plumber, butcher, and so on are all greater powers than I. Only my ingrown pride, arrogance, and conceit could deter me from admitting this.

So now I made a decision to turn my will and life over to God, as I understood Him. There was no defensible reason for quibbling; I knew I should just try turning it over, and shut up. But then I asked myself: How? It wasn't enough to say the Third Step aloud, then sit back and wait for miracles.

At first, I thought that since I was generously turning my life over, the Higher Power should quickly turn something over in return. The possibility that the Power, in taking such control, might cancel my free will and options (which I thought I cherished) didn't occur to me at that point.

Time brought a little common sense. Some strictly one-day-at-a-time way of turning it over must be found. It took a lot of meditation to reach the concept I hold today: Only one day need (or can) be tackled. Each day when I wake, I am guided by a set of conditions that outline what I must do, or ought to do, in the normal course. These might include going to work, or working at home, or caring for the children. The conditions are different for each person.

Since the Higher Power isn't going to write out instructions or give audible directions, I will have to proceed as best as I am able. Since I have free will, and certain duties have been laid out for me, I can either tackle or rebel. The mother of several brats, or the guy whose boss just sneered at him, may feel free to rush out and board a bus for Seattle. But all history proves that those who run out on others, who quit cold in the clutch, whose collars get a bit tight, eventually pay a high price one way or another. It seems I must try to do the things that come along in the course of just one day.

If I try to live one hour or one instant at a time, and do my best at each task with a cheerful and serene attitude, I believe I am implementing fully the spirit of the Third Step. I am turning my will and life over by doing all that has been placed within my reach today, which is apparently what He wants. No longer am I letting self-will and selfishness run riot.

This is how I try to put myself to work on the Third Step. Others may in other ways try the same thing, groping for answers as I must do. I am a mediocre student and must think slowly and carefully. But with daily practice, my habit of reflection will become easier and at length constant, like breathing. And as Bill W. said, far from preventing anyone from exercising free will, such a daily effort of turning over everything in full trust will help lead to "those sterling qualities which can add up to greatness of spirit and action--true and lasting freedom under God, the freedom to find and do *His* will

**THE
MANAGER'S
CORNER**

I want to thank everyone who was there February 27th supporting your Central Office. Our FunRaiser ended up bringing in over \$1,000 profit. This was our first ever Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast breakfast, making it financially a huge success.

I would like to thank all the volunteers who made this event such a success: the cooks, the Casa Girls, who were everywhere helping out, and everyone else who helped out with set-up and clean-up. It was really awesome to see so many people enjoying good food and great fellowship.

Who knew so many sponsees would enjoy taking their sponsor to breakfast, a morning of fellowship, a great speaker and just a lot of fun.

Our next big FunRaiser is going to be the 4th of July Picnic at Tuckers Grove, which will be another great chance for a bunch of alcoholics getting together to enjoy each others company and some great fun and food. Hope to see you all there. More information to follow on the BBQ.

If anyone who attended would like to write an article about their experience, I would love to get it for the Messenger. It was such a great feeling to see so many people enjoying recovery. What a great message for the newcomer to see!

Again, thanks to everyone who participated in the Take Your Sponsor to Breakfast breakfast. I hope all of you enjoyed it as much as I did.

In Service,

John S., Manager

Supporting Member Donation Coupon

I would like to become a supporting member of the Santa Barbara AA Central Office, and help it continue to carry the message and be there for the alcoholic who still suffers. I look forward to finding my monthly newsletter in the mail each month!

Enclosed is my first contribution of \$_____. I will continue to donate this amount on a (circle one) monthly, quarterly, annual, other _____ basis.

I am already a supporting member. This is my regular contribution of \$_____.

Name _____

Street _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Please make check payable to: AA Central Office, S.M.C.
1213 State Street, Suite H
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. – Seventh Tradition (short form), reprinted by permission of AA World Services, Inc.

Tradition 3 The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

Tradition 3 helps keep Alcoholics Anonymous pure. I didn't dilute my drinks; don't weaken AA. Tradition 3 offers (1) freedom, and (2) opportunity to take responsibility in your participation in AA. Tradition 3 can also offer spirited discussion with sponsees or newcomers or relapsers.

Groups generally have financial or societal membership requirements. With us, membership is free and without obligation. (Freely received, freely given.) In fact, '*You are an AA member if you say so.*' (Pg. 139) Anyone has freedom to become a member.

Example- I may be a 'member' of my condominium Home Owners Association. Membership is limited to those who own property. I may never go to a single meeting, never offer a vote in any decision affecting the condo, or I may join the Board of Directors; I am still a member.

Example- I may be a 'member' of a charitable organization. Requirement for *that* membership may be financial. I may never attend one of that group's meetings, they may not even be in my home state, but I am still considered a member.

Back to AA, where anyone can be a member. The real question is:

Are you a *participating member*?

Anyone can be a *member* if he/she says so, (pg. 139) but a *participating member* involves a connection and contribution to the group. Showing up, of course, is the first action, closely followed by choosing a home group, taking a commitment, offering to set up or pull down chairs, read a literature selection, sponsor other members- the list is wide-ranging.

A motivating note: it's the *participating members* who usually keep their sobriety dates and enjoy years of recovery.

Another consideration: Anyone can *be* a member, and the next question is:

Can you *stay* a member?

Experience has shown that *participating members* usually *stay* members.

In the early days, '*...nothing seemed so fragile, so breakable as an AA group.*' (pg. 139) '*So great was the sum of all these anxieties and fears,*' (pg. 140) that a list of rules- 'protective regulations' - were put in effect, so that '*...we'd cater only to pure and respectable alcoholics.*' (pg. 140)

The more fearful I become, the more rules I set up, and I become more controlling and more manipulative I become. Somewhere, I've probably forgotten Step 3, where I've made the *decision* to let God (or whoever or whatever) be in charge of my life.

One classic Tradition 3 line follows: '*We were grim because we felt our lives and homes were threatened.*' (pg. 140) Isn't that so true? When I feel challenged, when my back is up against the wall, I may not default to spiritual principles; I may rely on character defects. So it was with our original groups. The list of rules designed to protect the groups were choking them.

Somehow, the realization dawned that '*...we must never compel anyone to pay anything, believe anything or conform to anything.*' (pg. 141)

What generally happens is that an individual will drop out of AA if he/she doesn't want to 'do what we do.' They'll usually leave. We don't enforce; we inform.

A newcomer showed up to an early AA group, desperate to get well. But since he was '*...the victim of another addiction more stigmatized than alcoholism,*' (pg 142) would the group let him join?

Discussion asked '*What would the Master do?*'

(pg. 142) and '*Who dared to be judge, jury and executioner of his own brother?*' (pg. 141) So the newcomer was welcomed, and '*Never did he trouble anyone with his other difficulty.*' (pg. 142)

That's why we identify as *alcoholics* at a meeting of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. I'd never think to introduce myself as an alcoholic and a cook... or a swimmer... or a piano player; why include addict? (Although – I wonder where and when this new habit of introducing oneself as 'Mary alcoholic' or 'Bill, alcoholic' showed up? Unless one's name is Mary Alcoholic, the traditional way of introducing is 'My name is Mary, and I'm an alcoholic.' Or 'I'm an alcoholic, my name is Bill.'

Minimal, but isn't it relevant? Why cut corners anywhere at all?"

Another classic line from Tradition 3- '*Could we then foresee that troublesome people were to become our principal teachers of love and tolerance?*' (pg. 141) Keep this in mind for the people that inspire our self-righteous anger.

These people are our best tools for learning spiritual principles.

If I pray for patience, patient itself isn't bestowed upon me. Instead, opportunities to learn and practice patience are given me, often in abundance. And when I'm on the express line at the supermarket, and I refrain from counting how many items are in the cart ahead of me, I've achieved the beginnings of patience.

Irritating newcomers, contrary old-timers, insolent relapsers - all these troublesome people remind us that '*love and tolerance of others is our code.*' (BB)

Later on in T3, we're introduced an atheist named Ed, whose '*pet obsession was that AA could get along better without its "God nonsense."*' (pg. 143)

When confronted by irritated members, Ed quoted Tradition 3, and stayed an AA member.

Tradition 3 ensures that no one can be forced *into* AA, just as no one can be forced *out of* AA. "*What if we had actually succeeded in throwing Ed out for blasphemy?*

What would have happened to him and all the others he later helped?' (pg. 145)

Indeed, if Ed could be thrown out for blasphemy, why couldn't people be thrown out for...say... bad haircuts? Sounds silly, but would we draw the line?

Referring back to the second question from page 145: who knows who can reach who? Who will be my best teacher? Who will I best serve?

These examples illustrate what our early members struggled with to create our Traditions as we know them, our Traditions which solidify Alcoholics Anonymous and ensure its survival.

Maryjean B

CONVENTION NEWS 2010

The 26th Santa Barbara Alcoholics Anonymous Convention will be held October 22nd - 24th, 2010 at the Elks Lodge in Goleta!!! The Convention Committee held it's first meeting on February 11th to discuss a variety of issues and there is a lot of work ahead of us.

We are in need of a Treasury Chair who must have a minimum of 5 years sobriety. In addition, there are openings for co-chairs and many volunteer opportunities are available throughout the year. We will be discussing theme submissions next month. Themes must be a quote from conference approved literature; a hardcover such as the Big Book, Twelve & Twelve or Daily Reflections, not pamphlets. Please include the quote, what publication it came from and page number. Bring your suggestions to the next meeting, drop it off at Central Office or give it to a committee member.

Our next meeting will be held Thursday, March 11th at 6 p.m. at 3523 Modoc Rd. Call Central Office at 962-3332 or go to the Convention website and click "participate" for directions. Future meetings will be held the 2nd Thursday of every month and we welcome your participation. Join us in planning for this fun and memorable event!!!

Your Convention Committee

Gratitude

On July 29th, 2008, while driving under the influence, I fell asleep and rolled my vehicle six times on the freeway. Luckily no one else was injured, and my children by the grace of God were not in the car that day with me. I wish I could tell you that that was enough to get me help, but it was not.

In September of that year we were homeless, and Child Welfare Services removed my children from me because I was an unfit mother. I had no money, no job, I was living at a shelter for Domestic Violence Survivors, and I was still drinking to escape my reality. I was not lucid, and my lifestyle was precarious to say the least.

It was almost a year after the accident when I was facing some rather serious charges -- attempted murder and kidnapping -- which I was not guilty of, but which I was caught up in because I had lessened my standards of companionship, that I realized I needed to get help.

I put myself in a recovery home for women that I knew would only be available to me if I were ready. I knew I was all but ready. I did not have what it took anymore to be lifeless on the streets, drunk. I went into treatment on July 16th, 2009.

I can tell everyone today my life isn't a bowl of cherries, but I do have a sobriety date, a sponsor, and a home group. I have a projected return home date for my children on March 18th, 2010. I have a job and I live in a beautiful home in which I can see the ocean from my driveway. I have my mother back in my life, and we meet each other each weekend and attend church. I have wonderful, meaningful friends today whom I love.

I feel so blessed in my life today that it is amazing to be writing this article. AA and the 12 steps have shown me how to live, how to forgive, how not to be resentful, how to pray for others, and how to be of service. But mostly, AA has given me the tools to stay sober one day at a time. And for that, I am thankful.

Tammy L., Alcoholic

District 23 General Service

Pre-Conference Feedback & Fellowship Day

Saturday, April 3rd

9 AM-12 Noon

Veteran's Memorial Building (Upstairs)

112 W. Carrillo, Santa Barbara

Free Food and Fun!

Come for the free food! And help us to answer many important questions that are facing AA. Your feedback and comments will be read by our Area Delegate Jeff J., and the group conscience of our District will be heard at the upcoming General Service Conference at GSO in New York.

There is no schedule, just show up and participate! GSR's will be there to help with any background information and we will have displays and info to help, too.

You will be seeing a Feedback Questionnaire floating around your meetings soon. ANY MEMBER can fill it out, OR your Group can have a meeting to answer with their own group conscience. Fill it out on your own, and turn it in at the Feedback Day or to your GSR or DCM.

We need volunteers and food donations! Please call if you or your group can help:

Contact your group GSR -or- DCM (Don H.) at (805) 630-4834, e-mail at donmspi@yahoo.com

Upcoming General Service Meetings & Events:

- **Mar. 3: Facilities Committee Meeting** (1st Monday): 6 PM, SB AA Central Office.
- **Mar. 5-7: PRAASA:** Los Angeles, CA (Go to www.praasa.org for more info)
- **Mar. 16: Public Information /CPC Meeting** (3rd Tuesday): 6 PM, SB AA Central Office.
- **Mar. 20-21: Area Pre-Conf. Workshop and Assembly:** Simi Valley
- **Mar. 27: Area Archives Anniversary:** Oxnard
- **Apr. 3: District Pre-Conf. Feedback and Fellowship Day:** 9 AM-12 Noon, Vets Bldg, SB
- **Apr. 5: GSR Monthly Meeting (1st Monday): 6 PM, Holy Cross Church, 1740 Cliff Dr.**



February 2010

Name	Years
Billy H	1
Hunter B	1
Hope	2
Caroline D	3
Brandi B	3
Robert S	3
Bob S.	4
Cathleen F.	4
Andrea B-K	5
Ania D.	5
Anoy V	5
Clare L	5
Tim M	5
Allen O	6
Ben	6
Patrick N	6
Ron	6
Andrea L	7
Chucky	10
Eric L	12
Barton	14
Rick (Aloha)	15
Guy S	18
Laurie	18
Lowell B	19
Ned N.	19
Peggy F	19
Lisa H	20
Liz K	20
Susan H	22
Charlie	23
Will W	23
Walter	24
Frances	25
Jan H	25
Jim F	26
Julia	26
John Mu	27
Vince	27
Cindy V	28
Joan S	30
Renee L	33
Mary M.	39
Carlton P	40
Sally A	47

**The Messenger is published monthly by:
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 Santa Barbara, California, 93101
 Phone: 805-962-3332
 Email: sbaa@santabarbaraAA.com
 Website: <http://SantaBarbaraAA.com>**

Submissions Needed

The Messenger needs your submissions and letters. We are looking for articles for the step or tradition associated with the month of the same number. For the 4th month, April, we need writing on Step 4 and Tradition 4. Send submissions to JohnS@santabarbaraAA.com

Central Office Statistics

During the February 2010 your Central Office had:

AA Information calls	625
Al-Anon Referrals	39
Referrals to other programs	28
12step via answering service	25
Out-of-town visitors	31
12-step via office	33
Office walk-ins	324
Hits on our Web site	1,505

Service Meetings

General Service Representatives (GSR) meet at 6:00 p.m. on the 1st Monday of each month at Holy Cross Church Hall, 1740 Cliff Dr. Behind the Church.

IGR's (Intergroup Representatives) meet at 6:00 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at First Presbyterian Church, 21 East Constance in Santa Barbara.

H&I (Hospitals & Institutions) meets at 6:00 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of each month at Central Office.

PI (Public Information) meets at 6:00 p.m. on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Central Office.

Facilities Committee meets at 6:00 p.m. on the first Wednesday of each month at Central Office.

Donations by Group February 2010

	Feb 10	Jan 10	Jan - Feb 10		Feb 10	Jan 10	Jan - Feb 10
002 Courage To Change	0.00	65.00	65.00	161 Back To Basics Group	102.00	0.00	102.00
003 Eye Opener	300.00	275.00	575.00	164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	300.00	0.00	300.00
004 Monday At A Time	0.00	106.40	106.40	165 Junkyard Dogs	0.00	324.00	324.00
011 Sundowner Group	0.00	140.00	140.00	166 Serenity Sisters	74.96	0.00	74.96
014 El Montecito Saturday Night	60.00	0.00	60.00	170 Barefoot Group	10.00	2.00	12.00
022 There Is A Solution	154.80	0.00	154.80	173 Let it Go-11th Step Meditation	48.00	0.00	48.00
024, Mesa-Singleness of Purpose	40.00	0.00	40.00	177 Key Group	700.00	0.00	700.00
045 Alternative Group	0.00	76.50	76.50	181 Keep Coming Back Group	0.00	263.13	263.13
047 Tuesday Men's Stag	42.00	72.00	114.00	201 Birthday Donations	0.00	193.00	193.00
067 Rigorous Honesty	52.39	110.45	162.84	202 Supporting Members	957.00	306.00	1,263.00
068 Stepping Stones	25.00	27.00	52.00	207 Gratitude Month	15.00	71.00	86.00
074 Casa Serena (BB Study)	0.00	121.10	121.10	211 Rent Received	190.00	62.00	252.00
079 Harbor Group	200.00	70.00	270.00	212 Special Events	1,533.00	0.00	1,533.00
084, 83 - 87 Group	350.00	300.00	650.00	Totals:	\$6,307.65	\$3,525.80	\$9,833.45
094 Questions & Answers	0.00	15.05	15.05				
097 Almost Saints	150.00	0.00	150.00				
111 Carpinteria Canalino	240.00	0.00	240.00				
112 Montecito/Carpinteria	0.00	135.17	135.17				
113 Sought Through Prayer & Meditation	11.00	15.00	26.00				
114 Schooner Group	0.00	91.00	91.00				
120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys	188.30	163.00	351.30				
125 On Awakening	80.00	140.00	220.00				
130 Saturday Night Sobriety	0.00	72.00	72.00				
133 Action Participation	188.40	0.00	188.40				
139 It's A Hell Of A Deal	142.20	0.00	142.20				
144 Back To Basics, Young People	120.00	0.00	120.00				
145 The How And Why Of It	33.60	0.00	33.60				
148 San Ysidro	0.00	100.00	100.00				
153 Happy Destiny	0.00	210.00	210.00				

***Note: This is the list of groups who have donated so far this year. If you do not see your group here, this is because no donations were received for January or February. We look forward to seeing your group listed in the following months.**

Central Office
1213 State Street, Suite H
Santa Barbara, CA 93101
(805) 962-3332

