



The Santa Barbara MESSENGER

May 2009

On the 5th Step

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

ADMITTING "the nature of our wrongs" to God and ourselves sounds much easier than confessing to another human being. We can do the first in complete privacy. No one is listening, we say. Yet, it's not so easy that we all are able to accomplish this Step in one sweeping confession. Several false starts sometimes are necessary before we find both the courage and the insight to admit even to ourselves the true, unvarnished nature of our wrongs.

One of the obstacles to applying this Step is our deep-rooted habit of refusing to face facts, or admit the truth even to ourselves if and whenever the truth was unpleasant. We are grooved in the pattern of glossing over, covering up, beating around the mulberry bush, sticking our head in the sand--or any of the other old clichés which are simply an indirect and longer way of spelling "l-i-e."

The truth is that during the active drinking period the patient has been doing more lying to himself than to anyone else and even after he has decided to turn to the truth finds the way strange and difficult to follow. After 15 to 20 years of self-deception the truth is not easily recognized.

At first, the application of part of this Step may seem to have been achieved. The newly enlightened patient has had a heart-to-heart talk with himself. He has admitted to himself the nature of his wrongs. Or, has he admitted only part of the nature of his wrongs? Has he spared himself just a little, left just a little of the varnish on the truth? Has he spared himself again in just a bit more self-deception, in just one or two self-pitying reasons or explanations of the wrongs?

Frequently, a second and a third confession, more, is needed before the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth is brought to light. Sometimes a great deal of digging is needed to get beneath the many layers of self-deception that have been piled on each other and become virtually petrified over the years.

Courage implemented by searching analysis and perseverance are needed here, the courage to face and admit the truth as it's brought to the surface, and the perseverance to keep digging until it is.

Usually the presence of an audience intensifies the difficulties of admitting self-truths, even when the audience is a sympathetic friend. Sometimes the mere voicing of inner secrets is a wrenching process, especially for anyone who for years has been hiding all unpleasant facts even from himself.

Furthermore, one must forgive himself before he is ready to forgive the world of which he has been so resentful.

For these reasons many who have succeeded in the full practice of this Step recommend that it be started with one's own conscience as the sole audience. Better begin there, they say, first to learn what there is to be admitted and, second, to generate the courage to take another into the confidence.

But, all who have practiced the Step successfully are quick to say, too, that the tremendous relief which follows richly compensates for whatever mental pain and labor may be experienced in the beginning. Confession, of course, has eased men all through history. Its rewards have not diminished and are within reach of the A.A. who has advanced to this point in his recovery of a useful and happy way of life.

CHANGE

From the time I was very small, I can remember having the belief system that the truth was none of anyone else's business. My entire view of life revolved around the idea that I should be able to do whatever I wanted. This viewpoint led me to embrace the idea of anarchy, until such time as I realized that if I lived in an anarchist society, everyone else would be able to do exactly as they wished as well, which might interfere with my own exercise of self-will. At this time, I switched unconsciously from anarchy to fascism (naturally I would be part of the ruling elite).

I don't know exactly what it was that convinced me that I was better than everyone else, but I instinctively knew that the rules created for the masses did not apply to me.

When one is the most important person in the world, it is difficult to get enough of the things one wants and therefore deserves. There is not enough money, nor clothes, food, alcohol, or good feelings in the world to fulfill the expectation of a person who needs MORE in order to be reasonably content.

As I was indubitably the most important person in the world, the world owed me, in my opinion, as much as I wanted of everything. As it appeared the world was not going to hand this to me, I took the things that I wanted from other people.

I thought for a long time that the things that were happening to me were the result of bad luck, or too much drinking of just too much. It never occurred to me that my attitudes and behavior was the root of most of my difficulties.

It took the world, which I thought owed me so much, taking everything away from me in order for me to be prompted to do something about myself. I had to lose my money, my home, my car, my freedom, my work, my self-respect, the people I loved, all my material possessions, and my confidence. I had to be completely broken in order to seek help. Even then, I thought the help I was seeking was just to stop drinking and using, or at least cut down. I was absolutely clueless that there was anything about the way that I interacted with the world and with other people that was not perfectly normal.

I had to give up my pride and my will in order to gain any measure of peace. Those things were hard for me to give up, as I believed they were the only things I had left to hold on to.

However, once I had admitted that I was so beaten and so broken that pride and self-will were worth giving up even for the possibility of the promise of peace, once I admitted that I did not have all the answers and that I was no better and no worse than anyone else, once I admitted my problems were not of anyone's making but own, once I finally let myself believe that I could live a different kind of life, with a different set of rules not so heavily weighted in my favor, but ultimately more beneficial, that was when I began to admit the possibility of peace for myself. When I stopped letting my will stand in the way, my life became inordinately less difficult than it had previously been. I found that the things I had thought would make me happy were not the things that I have begun to find joy in. I found that while I continued to do the things I needed to do without enforcing my will on the situation, the things that I needed came to me in such abundance that it was even more humbling to my pride. Finally I found that God, toward whom I had harbored enormous resentment and distrust since I was a small child, truly does not make too hard of terms with those who serve him. Life is not always easy, but it is a million times easier than I have ever allowed it to be.

Arielle, D. Alcoholic

4th of July BBQ

To Benefit
Central Office
11 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.
(Meal served at Noon)

Tucker's Grove
N. Turnpike Rd & Cathedral Oaks

Games, Fellowship, Bake Sale,
50/50 Raffle and lots of Fun

Resentment Wall

\$5 per plate

Purchase tickets at

Central Office

or at the

BBQ



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! Encloses in 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, delining outside contributions. – Seventh Tradition (short form), reprinted by permission of A World Services, Inc.

District 23 General Service

www.ccaadistrict23.com

Featured this month:

Public Information (PI)

Public Information (PI) in Alcoholics Anonymous means carrying the message of recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic by informing the general public about AA. Here are some of the projects your PI Committee organizes:

- Literature: Distributing AA pamphlets and meeting guides to recovery facilities and sober living houses.
- Public Service Announcements (PSA's): Providing conference-approved DVD's and CD's to local TV & Radio Stations for free airing.
- Posting placards & telephone tear-off signs
- Delivering meeting guides to local hotels
- Parolee Orientation Day: AA attends this monthly meeting (sponsored by the Police & Corrections Team/PACT) to get literature and AA outreach to new parolees.

If anyone is interested in volunteering for any of the above, or have any ideas for new projects, please contact your group GSR or call/email your DCM at the numbers below.

Thank You!

Upcoming GSR events:

June GSR meeting: 1st Monday, June 1, Holy Cross Church, 1740 Cliff Dr., 6 PM

Area Delegate General Service Conference

Report-Back Day: Coming up in June or July

For more info, please contact DCM (Don H.)

Phone: 630-4834 or email:

dcm@ccaadistrict23.com

Responsibility Declaration:

"I am responsible.

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of AA always to be there.

And for that: I am responsible."

MAY 2009 CONVENTION UPDATE "HOPE IS THE KEY"

So many of us found hope in Alcoholics Anonymous, and that is the theme for this year's convention. Where there was once only despair, discouragement and gloom, AA opened the door to the possibility of a bright and useful future. Hope is the key.

Now we need a logo for the Convention that is based on the theme, so we are calling on the creative members of our recovery community to provide it. The logo will be used on the Convention web site, registration forms, badges, tee shirts, coffee mugs, and on the big banner above the speaker podium.

When you're considering ideas for your design, keep in mind also that this is the 25th anniversary of the Santa Barbara Convention. If you can incorporate that milestone into your submission, all the better.

You can give your artwork to any committee member, mail it to Central Office (1213 State St., Suite H. Santa Barbara, CA 93101), drop it off there, or bring it to the next committee meeting (click "Participate" on the convention website for directions to the meeting). Be sure to give us a way to contact you if you don't submit your work in person. The next committee meeting will be 6:00 P.M. on May 14, and we will select the logo then. If you mail your artwork or drop it off at Central Office, it must arrive by May 14

On other matters, there are still plenty of opportunities for you to get involved in this year's convention. There are several committee positions still open, and of course, the convention would not be possible without the help of all our volunteers, so that's another way you can participate. Not only is this a way to be of service, but it's a lot of fun, and an opportunity to work with and get to know a good group of sober men and women. Come to the next meeting to find out more.

And for everyone in the AA community, save the dates October 23rd, 24th and 25th, 2009. Plan on a weekend of fun, fellowship, good food, and strong messages of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. We look forward to seeing you there, and between now and then, log on to the convention website at sbaaconvention.org and check back regularly for news updates. We'll update the site as soon as information becomes available. We're already lining up this year's speakers, planning menus and coming up with ideas to make this year's convention a special one. Don't miss it.

Your Convention Committee

This is a copy of the article Bill W. wrote on the 5th Tradition, published in the Grapevine, prior to it's use in the 12 x 12.

On the 5th Tradition

Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose-- that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Says the old proverb, "Shoemaker, stick to thy last." Trite, yes. But very true for us of A.A. How well we need to heed the principle that it is better to do one thing supremely well than many things badly.

Because it has now become plain enough that only a recovered alcoholic can do much for a sick alcoholic, a tremendous responsibility has descended upon us all, an obligation so great that it amounts to a sacred trust. For to our kind, those who suffer alcoholism, recovery is a matter of life or death. So the society of Alcoholics Anonymous cannot, it dare not ever be diverted from its primary purpose.

Temptation to do otherwise will come aplenty. Seeing fine works afoot in the field of alcohol, we shall be sorely tempted to loan out the name and credit of Alcoholics Anonymous to them; as a movement we shall be beset to finance and endorse other causes. Should our present success continue, people will commence to assert that A.A. is a brand new way of life, maybe a new religion, capable of saving the world. We shall be told it is our bounden duty to show modern society how it ought to live.

Oh, how very attractive these projects and ideas can be! How flattering to imagine that we might be chosen to demonstrate that olden mystic promise: "The first shall be last and the last shall be first." Fantastic, you say. Yet some of our well-wishers have begun to say such things.

Fortunately most of us are convinced that these are perilous speculations, alluring ingredients of that new heady wine we are now being offered, each bottle marked "Success"!

Of this subtle vintage may we never drink too deeply. May we never forget that we live by the Grace of God--on borrowed time; that anonymity is better than acclaim; that for us as a movement poverty is better than wealth.

And may we reflect with ever deepening conviction, that we shall never be at our best except when we hew only to the primary spiritual aim of A.A.--"*That of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers alcoholism.*"

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Bill W.

GRAPEVINE BOOK PRICE INCREASES

AA AROUND THE WORLD	\$11.00	EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY	\$11.00
BEGINNERS BOOK	\$10.00	THE HOME GROUP	\$6.00
BEST OF BILL	\$6.50	I AM RESPONSIBLE	\$11.00
BEST OF BILL (LARGE PRINT)	\$7.50	IN YOUR OWN WORDS	\$11.00
DR. BOB&BILL W. MEMORIAL	\$7.50	LANGUAGE OF THE HEART	\$14.00

**April 2009
Birthdays**

Name	Years
Brandon C	1
Leslie B	1
Kara H	1
Tom V	2
Gail F.	2
Ginny B	2
Jane B	4
Alison S	4
Peter N	4
Serge M	4
Kathleen	4
Jeff S	4
Ron O	6
Scott S	6
Hebiziah	7
Mandy M	7
Guy M	7
Carm V	10
Steve G	10
Linda H	11
Daniella J.	11
Buddy L	12
Nancy B	12
John P	14
Traci L	16
Vicki B	16
Michael A	16
Nan S	17
Sherrie S	18
Allison C	20
Blanca	21
John R	21
Elizabeth P	22
Jill D	23
Arnie C	23
Dan P	27
Jeannie R	27
Alice	28
Mara F	31
David S	32
Craig B	32
Pat F	33
Billy B	43

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1213 State Street, Suit H
Santa Barbara, California, 93101**

805-962-3332

sbaa@santabarbaraAA.com

Submissions Needed for June 2009

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 Sixth month, June we need writing on Step 6 and Tradition 6. Send submissions to **JohnS@santabarbaraAA.com**

Central Office Statistics

During April 2009 your Central Office had:

AA Information calls	743
Al-Anon Referrals	41
Referrals to other programs	42
12step via answering service	39
Out-of-town visitors	33
12-step via office	36
Office walk-ins	421
Hits on our Web site	1,406

Service Meetings

General Service Representatives (GSR) Monday at 6:00pm meet at: Holy Cross Church Hall, 1740 Cliff Dr. Behind the Church

IGR's (Intergroup Representatives) meet at 6:00 P.M. the second Tuesday each month at First Presbyterian Church 21 East Constance in Santa Barbara

H&I (Hospitals & Institutions) meets at 6:00 P.M. at the second Monday each month at the Central Office.

PI (Public Information) meets the fourth Saturday of each month. Call 687-7673 for more information.

25th ANNUAL Santa Barbara Convention Committee
2nd Thursday of each Month, 6:00 P.M. at 3523 Modoc Rd.
Commitments Available!

Donations by Group, April 2009

	Apr 09	Mar 09	Jan - Apr 09		Apr 09	Mar 09	Jan - Apr 09
001 Sunrisers	0.00	216.00	216.00	113 Sought Through Prayer & Meditation	18.03	23.72	63.75
003 Eye Opener	231.00	220.00	896.00	114 Schooner Group	118.00	0.00	206.00
004 Monday At A Time	0.00	147.57	356.57	115 Eleventh Step Meditation	83.00	0.00	83.00
005 Noon Step Study	0.00	9.00	9.00	120 Sat. Morn. Home Boys	158.00	192.00	518.60
006 Start Your Week Right	120.00	0.00	220.00	122 Came to Believe Candlelight	50.00	0.00	50.00
010 Foundation Group	263.77	0.00	263.77	130 Saturday Night Sobriety	0.00	0.00	72.00
011 Sundowner Group	0.00	0.00	210.00	133 Action Participation	206.63	0.00	372.83
019 Onward & Upward	0.00	60.00	294.00	139 It's A Hell Of A Deal	0.00	209.00	209.00
020 Cambridge Group	0.00	0.00	100.00	144 Back To Basics, Young People	60.00	0.00	253.96
021 Summerland Monday Group	0.00	325.19	325.19	145 The How And Why Of It	0.00	40.00	90.00
022 There Is A Solution	132.00	0.00	252.00	150 Goleta Sun. Night Speaker	100.00	0.00	100.00
023 For Women Only	0.00	70.20	70.20	153 Happy Destiny	0.00	350.00	350.00
024, Mesa-Singleness of Purpose	0.00	40.00	40.00	163 Mustard Seed	0.00	75.00	75.00
045 Alternative Group	0.00	112.00	203.20	164 Men Who Have Lost Their Legs	435.00	0.00	660.00
047 Tuesday Men's Stag	156.00	0.00	216.00	165 Junkyard Dogs	0.00	0.00	190.00
051 Men's Group At St. Mary's	0.00	0.00	79.00	166 Serenity Sisters	0.00	0.00	65.38
053 Both Oars In The Water	120.00	0.00	220.00	170 Barefoot Group	16.00	20.00	91.00
055 Staying Alive	0.00	0.00	216.00	177 Key Group	840.00	0.00	1,540.00
035 12 & 12 Study, Tues.	120.00	0.00	220.00	180 Thursday Ladies Night	110.00	0.00	110.00
062 Do The Steps Or Die	0.00	0.00	75.33	181 Keep Coming Back Group	493.91	0.00	1,045.46
064 Women's Serenity Group	173.61	0.00	173.61	183 Summerland, Thurs.	0.00	0.00	360.00
067 Rigorous Honesty	132.26	0.00	368.56	186 Sunday Night Alternative, NH III	0.00	0.00	67.00
068 Stepping Stones	30.00	0.00	87.00	187 Turning Point	50.00	0.00	50.00
070 Success Group	0.00	0.00	10.00	197 Big Book Comes Alive Women's Meeting	0.00	0.00	70.00
079 Harbor Group	125.00	140.00	497.00	201 Birthday Donations	135.00	800.00	1,188.00
076 11 th Step	120.00	0.00	220.00	202 Supporting Members	707.50	1,272.00	6,596.99
084, 83 – 87 Group	0.00	213.60	391.48	204 Memorial Fund	0.00	250.00	250.00
089 Here & Now	0.00	0.00	80.00	207 Gratitude Month	0.00	0.00	51.95
093 Into Action, Thurs	0.00	0.00	100.00	210 Convention Income	0.00	0.00	2,706.00
097 Almost Saints	0.00	150.00	375.00	211 Rent Received	169.00	52.00	416.00
099 Sink Or Swim	120.00	0.00	220.00	212 Special Events	100.00	0.00	100.00
112 Montecito/Carpinteria	0.00	124.00	124.00				
					\$5,693.71	\$5,111.28	\$25,130.83

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