

Faithful Fiver Pledge:

Emerald Valley Intergroup
1259 Willamette
Eugene, Oregon 97401

I pledge \$5 per month to support EVI and service work in my community

I'm feeling grateful, I can send _____ per month

I will mail or drop off my contribution:
Monthly

Four times a year (\$15 each)

Once a year (\$60)

Name: _____

Address: _____

when you acknowledge my contribution, please list me as (first name, Initial, or nickname): _____

“Faithful Fivers” are individuals who donate \$5 or more per month to help support Intergroup. We will post your nick name on a board in the office, with a little red dot placed for each months contribution, so you can track of your contribution. (We don't remind you, or otherwise keep track of it for you, and we will send you a newsletter whether or not you have remembered to send in your pledge.) You can contribute monthly, quarterly or yearly, and if you check the receipt box, and are on the News mailing list, we will send you a receipt at the end of the year. (If you want a receipt, but would like to save EVI postage by picking up the News at the Office, or the EVI Business Meeting, fill out your nickname and address, but write “no news” next to your address.) Our “Faithful Fivers” Program is new this last year, and was a great help. The idea came from an article in the G.S.O. Newsletter “Box 4-5-9 on similar programs at other Intergroups.

GET THE NEWS!



stamp

Emerald Valley Intergroup
1259 Willamette Street
Eugene, Oregon 97401

My Nine-Step Program

A collection of wisdom that didn't work

SHORTLY AFTER coming to AA in 1959, I devised my own nine- step program, a mishmash of things I had heard at meetings or things other AAs had told me in discussions. For the most part, I avoided the Twelve Steps program -particularly the middle portion, which required an inventory and the repairing of the damage I had done.

Somehow, I maintained my sobriety for all those years, subsisting on many sayings, aphorisms, and gems of wisdom, each of which contained a grain of truth. But they did not add up to a thorough working of the Twelve Steps.

Stretching these small quantities of truth into my own nine-step program worked - in the sense that I stayed sober, through the grace of God. But by the end of that first decade of sobriety, I was more fearful, more depressed, and more insane than I had ever been, even in my drinking days.

Because I was so sick mentally and spiritually, I became convinced that the program had failed to cure my mental difficulties. In the belief that I was too sick for the program, I sought help from psychologists, psychiatrists, and therapy groups, all to no avail. I just continued to get sicker. Here is the nine-step program that carried me through nearly a decade of a sober hell, filled with depression, fear, and the certainty that I was losing my mind:

(1) Easy Does It; (2) this is an individual program; (3) if you are sober, you are a winner; (4) the Twelve Steps are only suggestions; (5) take an inventory only when you are ready; (6) the only people you really hurt are those closest to you; (7) you make amends just by being sober; (8) most modern AAs (especially me) are high-bottom drunks; (9) the Big Book is outmoded.

If you work my nine-step program, I am pretty sure you will get the same bad results I obtained. But if you want to try anyway, you must equip yourself with a rationale for each of the nine steps. This will enable you to give smart, logical comebacks to the AA members who will continually counsel you to work the Twelve Steps as originally written. The best way to handle these zealots is to explain that you have nothing against any of the Twelve Steps and that you intend to work each of them eventually. But for now, you are simply not quite ready.

For the specific rationale behind each of my nine steps, I suggest the following:

1. Easy Does It

Occasionally, it occurred to me that I should be doing an inventory. Or I might wonder, “why don't I get any serenity and contentment out of this program?” At these moments, there was instant comfort in remembering that getting myself all worked up about such matters might lead me back to the bottle. “Just take it easy,” I'd tell myself. “Remember, I am to progress at God's pace. I will surely get serenity one of these days.”

2. This is an individual program

This is another helpful aphorism. I stopped reading the Big Book after only a couple of months of sobriety because I realized that “this is an individual program.” I could pretty much take (mostly, not take) the measures described in Chapters Five and Six of the Big Book when and as I wished. My “individual program” translated into a lot of meetings and Twelfth Step work. When I felt particularly bad, I would heavy-up on the meetings. Apparently, I was willing to go to an awful lot of meetings if it meant that I didn't have to work the Twelve Steps.

3. If you are sober, you are a winner

What a helper this little step was when I was really feeling down. Often, after a meeting, I would talk, to another AA about my depression or fear. Almost as often, I would be consoled with: “You must be doing something right - you're sober. So you're still a winner.” But there remained my nagging, seldom-expressed question: “If I am a winner, how come I feel so much like a loser?”

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E.V.I. News

August, 2002

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Emerald Valley Intergroup
1259 Willamette St.
Eugene, OR (541) 342-4113



People:

OFFICE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR
Bob E. (747-2246), Bob P. (434-1045)

ACTIVITIES
Leetha (687-6623), Mindy H. (687-9369)

ANSWERING SERVICE
Carola K. (736-8041) Jana (431-3839)

ARCHIVIST/HISTORIAN
Linda (345-5827)

COOP PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY
Frank K. (345-7131)

COOP TREATMENT FACILITIES(CTF)
Laura K. (345-5788) Cathy B. (342-6675)

E.V.I. COMMUNICATIONS
Newsletter: Kurt (747-8925),
Teffany (746-1438)

Website: Michael S.(349-0504),
Darin (342-1098)

Meeting Books: Amanda W. (988-9656),
Elisabeth R. (747-5814)

E.V.I. SPEAKER MEETING
Angel (439-4924), Mary Jean (485-7854)

LITERATURE
Michelle: (232-0101), Dwayne (726-4834)

OUTREACH
Bill N. (747-7486), Ted H. (338-8380)

PUBLIC INFORMATION (PI)
Tom S. (686-8388) Ryan M. (465-1053)

HOSPITALS & INSTITUTIONS (H&I)
Chair: Karl B. (688-1047)

karl@rpginvest.com

HOSPITALS
Larry W. (334-3609)

CORRECTIONS
Ron B. (988-1827), Tom R. (465-1832)

H&I Coordinators
Lane County Jail: Brenda K. (484-6773),
Ted H. (338-8380)

C.C.C. (Women's): Kari M. (344-8147)

C.C.C. (Men's): Tom R. (465-1832)

Alma Work Camp: Bud W. (935-8833)

Pathways: Glen B. (689-8539)

Serbu Detention: Jack C. (463-1046)

Carlton House: Joe C. (554-3558)

W.F.T.-Friday Night: Janis. (935-8833)

W.F.T.-Book Study: Leslie (606-5776)

Serenity Lane-Speaker: Cayce (746-6990)

Serenity Lane-B.T.G.: Gus P. (463-1691)

Serenity Lane-Sat. Kurt (747-8925)

L.C.P.H.: Todd J. (302-6377)

Johnson Unit: Steve S. (683-3564)

V.A. Meeting: Ray T. (689-8429)

E.V.I. STEERING COMMITTEE
Chair: Jim P. (345-5382)

Vice-Chair: Harold B. (579-8087)

Secretary: Dave C. (912-6203)

Treasurer: Ryan A. (513-6498)

Vice Treasurer: Tom L. (683-7706)

At-Large: Todd (607-6349)

At-Large: Sandi (463-0586)

At-Large: Lori B. (684-8670)

At-Large: Bruce P. (338-9892)

BOOKKEEPER

Kurt

Daisy Never Knew

Just once I tried to list all the blessings I have received from AA but I found them so numerous that I couldn't remember them all at one time. However, I am very happily aware of a few things that are terribly important to me, little things that from a patter of life.

Pressure sent me to my first meeting. I had no desire for sobriety, nor did I find in my heart an intention of stopping drinking, for ten long months. Yet on that first evening an invisibly slim thread was woven which has proved stronger than any bond ever designed by man.

I came early, Heaven knows why! In the hallway outside the meeting room I met a girl of about my own age, as frightened and alone as I. We chatted briefly and discovered that AA was a mutually strange, highly questionable outfit. We quickly decided that an immediate celebration of our new-found friendship was a matter of far greater import but as we were leaving a door opened behind us and a girl's cheery voice called out. We stopped and turned. That first thread had been just long enough to reach hold of us. Daisy spoke to us. Well, yes, we had planned to attend the meeting but now we were going toOh, never mind the meeting. Have a cup of coffee with me, won't you? Simple decency and politeness demanded that we accept, other members quickly appeared and , naturally, we stayed on.

Daisy was my sponsor, I guess, in a way though I never thought to ask her. Now I never shall because a year or so later Daisy made the program in its entirety and is no longer with us. But it was Daisy that God chose to fling out that first magic thread he had woven for me. I believe that I caught it then and never fully released it. This led me back to AA then dreary months later. Since that time I have taken no alcoholic drink or any substitute therefore. Daisy's thread is now the basis of a broadened web whose strength protects, encourages and delights me beyond measure.

It has taken many threads to form this web and they have been wonderfully given me during these past nearly ten years. Some stand out sharply in memory, of others I am hardly aware, but for every tiny strand I am deeply, sincerely and eternally grateful.

"God as we understand Him." I suppose that I never completely lost contact with the God of my own understanding but after finding AA I did nothing to improve this contact for a shamefully long time. I'm afraid I still felt, thought quite unconsciously, that I myself was some sort of God, particularly in twelfth Step work. Playing God was a vicious habit but my beloved husband finally brought me to my senses. I had been trying to help an older woman and, in fact, had expended much time and effort in her behalf. (Prayer? None!) I came home one early evening in a magnificent tempest of self-pity. When my husband showed what I considered proper and sufficient concern my torrent of resentment burst forth. Look as all I had done for Mrs. Doe! I had gotten her sober and I was keeping her sober, I still stopped by to see her every day or took her to a meeting! Wouldn't you think that by this time some member of her family might have written me a little note of thanks?

Then the storm crashed about me! Please God, may I always remember the gist of my husband's stern and pitiless lecture, so richly deserved? "Won't you ever learn that what you may be able to do for another you are permitted to do only as God's representative on earth?"

The thread between God and myself had worn thin indeed by my own actions and thoughtlessness over the years, yet it never broke since I was able to accept my husband's timely criticism. Today in Twelfth Step work I ask God's guidance and help, I recognize the road when God's thread leads me. More than once, while on this road, I have literally seen my conception of Him.

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About a year ago, suddenly and unexpectedly, I was faced with surgery on my hands. When I left the doctor's office panic seized me. He had explained that following the operation my hands and wrists would be fully encased in permanent dressings for quote a long time I would be absolutely helpless for weeks! I wouldn't be able to do anything! The drive home was a nightmare but again my husband's wisdom and strength brought me back to earth. He made me realize that, as of old, I had allowed myself to be victimized by on indescribable fear of the future.

It was then I really recognized the strength of the threads that bind me to AA! There must be something in the program that would cover this situation and of course there was. There were many things: Easy Does It, twenty-four hours at a time, our Serenity Prayer, living, not merely staying sober. Before too long my thinking began to clear, fears left me. I was a very lucky girl, indeed: fortunate that my condition was an operative one, lucky that this prospective surgery would not involve some vital organ. A month later fear struck again during a chance meeting with my doctor on a quiet side street. Now I know that our encounter was not mere coincidence but another of God's unexpected and miraculous rewards. Somehow I avoided the subject of my hands as we chatted together; then suddenly I asked the doctor how soon he planned to operate.

"Operate?" he exclaimed, "Oh, you mean your hands. Let me see them. . . ." A moment later I trembled uncontrollably at the utter beauty of his words. "Did I tell you that surgery would be necessary?" he softly inquired. "You must have misunderstood me, Anne, or I didn't make myself clear. At any rate, what I meant to tell you was that this condition frequently indicates surgery. I doubt that your case will come to that. As a matter of fact, your hands seem considerably better than they did last month."

When he had gone I closed my eyes in near-ecstasy. I wanted to kneel on the sidewalk in order properly to thank God. Then I knew that He would hear me as I stood motionless on that quiet street, for at long last I felt that I had learned how to really thank Him. This thread had become a truly conscious contact with the God of my understanding.

The friendship of my AA companions is another thread of unbelievable strength. These friends not only do wondrous works but often they say quite wondrous things. I had not seen a certain dear friend for months and when we chanced to meet she cried, "It's SO good to see you. Oh, Anne, I'm so glad you came tonight!" But that wasn't quite it. "Oh, Anne, I'm so glad I came tonight!" were her actual words. There is a difference, isn't there? To me that greeting still rings sweetly.

These are a few of the threads that have been offered me and so freely given. They are strong, tested and true. Together they form a fellowship whose value one cannot estimate. As a priest who shall be nameless so beautifully labels our Society, "AA is the Golden Thread that binds the hearts and souls of men to the Feet of God."

Anon., Providence, R. I.

reprinted from August 1957 The Grapevine



EVI Office

1259 Willamette (in the alley behind the copy shop)
Eugene, OR 97401
Monday-Friday 9:00 am-5:00 pm
Saturday 9:00 am - 4pm
Drop by for a visit!

EVI Web Site

www.efn.org/~eviaa

Meeting schedules, late breaking news, business meeting minutes, and much more.

The little squiggle in the address is found right next to the exclamation point on the keyboard. Save a book mark or favorite and check back often!

E.V.I. News

Emerald Valley Intergroup's Newsletter for the A.A. Community in Lane County

EVI News is a monthly newsletter of the Emerald Valley Intergroup. It is about, by, and for the members of Alcoholics Anonymous fellowship. Opinions expressed herein are not to be attributed to Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole, nor does publication of any article or event or notice imply endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or EVI. (Exceptions: Quotations from A.A. books or pamphlets which are reprinted with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.) EVI News is produced to support communication within the fellowship; please respect the anonymity of any A.A. member mentioned herein. EVI News reserves the right to edit any submissions for clarity, length, language, and editorial policy. Contributions gratefully accepted for consideration for publication.

Submissions due last Monday of each month. To submit articles or event information, mail them or drop them off at the EVI office c/o EVI Newsletter. Submissions can also be e-mailed to: eviaa@efn.org

Communication Committee (Newsletter & Web Site, Meeting Book) meetings are held immediately following the EVI business meeting the second Monday of each month.

Contributions:

(July/year to date)
 Anonymous/Unknown 0/122.90
 As Bill Sees It 0/0
 Attitude Adjustment 112.60/712.44
 Autumn Group 0/135.00
 Backwoods Bunch 0/0
 Brown Bag Group 0/265.00
 Cottage Grove Noon 4.00/62.00
 Courage to Change 0/201.00
 Creswell Steps & Traditions 0/0
 District 19 50.00/50.00
 Downtown AM group 125.00/1036.22
 Fireside group 0/60.00
 First Monroe Group 0/0
 First Things First 0/0
 Freedom Of Choice 0/0
 Friday Night Stag 0/150.00
 Friday Physical Awakening 0/0
 From the Heart 0/0
 Get Well Group 5.00/15.00
 Gratitude Group 0/0
 How It Works 80.00/80.00
 Last Chance Study Group 0/0
 Language of the Heart 0/0
 Lowell Lakeside 0/0
 McKenzie River Group 0/12.00
 Monday Mens Stag 0/150.00
 Monday Night Cont. Study 0/0
 Monday Night Beginners 0/3.00
 New Freedom 96.00/599.00
 New Freedom II 0/300.00
 Primary Purpose 1.00/1.00
 Recovery By the Big Book 0/30.00
 Saturday Morning Steps 0/180.00
 Search For Serenity 0/587.00
 Serenity Seekers West 0/50.00
 Sober Awakenings 240.00/540.00
 Springfield Monday Night 3.00/12.00
 Springfield Study Group 0/0
 Stairway to Sobriety 0/325.00
 Sunday Morning Big book 560.00/680.00
 Sunday Sunshine 59.76/59.76
 Sunlight of the Spirit 0/75.00
 Sunday Night 12x12 0/45.00
 SW Sunset 0/34.50
 Try God Group 275.00/546.50
 Tuesday Men's Sponsorship 0/50.00
 Tuesday Beginners 0/11.50
 Tuesday Night Book Study 0/100.00
 Veneta Gratitude Group 30.00/95.39
 We Need Each Other 0/100.00
 Wednesday Mens Noon 0/120.50
 Wednesday Men's Stag 0/210.00
 Who am I Group 0/72.00
 Womans Road to Recovery 0/60.00
 Total Contributions (month/year to date)
 Group month/ytd 1641.36/8035.81
Fundraising:
 Anonymous/Unknown 29.17/136.67
 Faithful Fivers, individual 125.00/876.00
 Ind. Contributions/Other 42.95/396.44

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As my sponsor, he encouraged me to work through the Twelve Steps quickly, including the action Steps in the middle, which require a thorough inventory, admission of wrongs to God, to myself, and to another human being, and the cleaning-up of the damage I had done, drunk *and* sober.

Since I started working AA's Steps, much of the fear and depression that haunted my life is gone. Some of my defects have been lifted from me, though I am still wrestling with two of the most damaging.

I believe that if I continue to work the Twelve Steps over and over again, my life will continue to improve in all areas - physical, mental, and spiritual. I also seem to be more willing and better able to help others through working the Steps myself.

D.O., Chicago, Ill. *reprinted from the March 1976 Grapevine*

August Calendar: E.V.I. and District Committee Meetings

All meetings at EVI office unless otherwise noted.

- 1st Mon Steering Committee 7:00
 Tue District 20, 6:30 418 A St. Ken L. 747-8270
 Tue District 33, 6:30 Pam G. 895-5478
 Wed District 19, 6:30 Tracy R. 338-4320
 Thur Speaker Mtg Committee, 7:00 Angel 431-4924
 Sat Cooperation w/Prof. Community, Noon
- 2nd Mon EVI Business Meeting 6:30
 Mon Communication Committee, 7:30
 Wed District 6, 6:30 Gus P. 463-1691
 Sat Answering/Diverter 9AM
 EVI Speakers Meeting, 7:30 Country Club Rd
- 3rd Mon Public Information, 6:30
 Tue Office Volunteer, 5:30
 Wed Activities, 6:30
- Last Wed H& I Committee, 6:00
 Last Day Literature Committee, 6:30

Fellowship Events:

August 16-18 Astoria OR: Youngs River Round Up 2002, Clatsop County Fair Grounds, Contact John Mc.(503)458-5314 or email @ yrruo2@hotmail.com

August 30-September 2 Beacon Rock State Park, WA: District 26 3rd Annual Campout "The Only Oregon Area District Campout Held in Washington", Contact Phoebe S. (503)735-9346, or email Dist26Campout@rainbeaux.net or visit http://www.rainbeaux.net/Dist26Campout

September 20-22 Eugene OR: Oregon Area General Assembly "The Lunacy Commission" at the Eugene Hilton. Contact Karla B. (541)744-0509, Leetha S. (541)937-2705, or Tim (541)726-8558 for more information.

Gratitude:

Currently Available Service Positions:

EVI is currently operating without a **secretary**. This important position is mostly taking the minutes at the intergroup business meeting. Anyone interested in filling this position can talk to one of the volunteers at the EVI office. We need this position to be filled in order to maintain our non-profit status.

Volunteers are needed at the EVI office. **EVI Office Volunteers** work a four hour shift, once a week, or every two weeks. Not very demanding, bring a good book; but you do get to answer the phone, talk to folks who stop by, etc. If you have a little time available, whether you are a year sober, or twenty, this can be a fun way to be of service.

Other volunteer opportunities: **H&I** has a constant, and varied need for people willing to do a little to a lot of service work. There is also a special need for women volunteers for Lane County Jail, CCC, Willamette Valley Treatment, etc. The opportunity for this type of service has really expanded, and H&I has been doing a great job, but they need the AA community to step up and volunteer. This is real service work.

AA Meetings:

New:

How It Works Group Tues 5:30-6:30pm
390 Vernal St. (Spiritual Growth Center)
Eugene (C) Handicap Access

Changed:

The **EVI Speaker Meeting** for the month of August will be held at **Bethel Assembly of God, 2065 Centennial Blvd.,**

Springfield, Oregon, starting at 7:30pm. The Al-Anon speaker is Mary M. from Scotland, and the AA speaker is Allen M. from Scotland also.

Speaker's Meeting- 1st Saturday at the Alano Club in Cottage Grove has been changed to **7-9 pm.**

Last House On The Block Sunday meeting has been changed to **7-8 pm,** and is still held at 601 W. 13th Ave.

Young People Candlelight Tuesday meeting has been changed to **8:30-9:30 pm,** and is still held at the Koinonia Center at 1414 Kincaid. **The new name of the meeting is Young People Big Book Story Meeting.**

Wednesday Beginner's Group meeting has no handicapped access, and is still at the Alano Club from 7:30 -9pm.

Women In Recovery Thursday meeting at the Cottage Grove Library from 7-8:30 **now has handicap access and childcare is available.**

Who Am I Group 5:30-6:30 pm Fridays, Sacred Heart Hospital, **now meets in the Auditorium, NE side, ground floor.**

Women's Good Grief Meeting from 12-1:30pm on Saturday **now has handicap access.**

Canceled:

AA Nooner at the Alano Club on Wednesdays,

First Creswell Group on Wednesdays

Big Book Study at the Alano Club on Fridays,

Put the Plug in the Jug Meeting in

Eugene on Fridays,

Cottage Grove Candlelight Meeting on Saturdays

Please remember to let us know if your group stops meeting - it's a lot easier to remember when you are starting a meeting, but if you stop meeting remembering to remove it from meeting lists may save someone frustration and more when they really need a meeting.

Emerald Valley Intergroup

Business Meeting Minutes-July 8, 2002

6:30 Opened meeting with Serenity Prayer

6:35 Did room introductions, 4 EVI Representatives present.

6:40 Duane nominated and elected as Literature Co-chair to be apprived when we have quorum.

Committee Reports

H&I: Karl gave report

Treasurer: Tom gave report

Office Coordinator: Bob E. gave report. Need women volunteers

Literature: Michelle gave report. Inventory is done, things are good.

Website: Michael not present.

Meetings Books: Amanda gave report.

Newsletter: Kurt gave report.

Answering Service: Carolla gave report.

Public Informatrion: Tom S. gave report. Need vice Chair.

CPC: Frank gave report.

Activities: Chair, Co-chair not present, Linda gave report.

Outreach: not present, no report.

Archivist: Linda gave report. Tapes are done.

Steering committee report: Jim gave report. Can't rent office to Al-anon.

Speaker Meeting: Angel gave report. For July and August speaker meeting will be at 2065 Centennial second Saturday of each month.

New Business

Bob P. voted in as **Office Coordinator vice Chair.** (434-1045)

Dave elected as **Literature Vice Chair.**

Closed with Serenity Chair.

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4. The Twelve Steps are only suggestions

Here was solid backing for my position that you did any of the Twelve Steps you needed, at the time you needed them, in the way you wanted to do them. I never noticed until years later that there are at least a dozen musts in the Big Book. The book offers surprisingly little leeway in the manner and the order in which the Twelve Steps are to be worked. The only way to contented sobriety is to work all of the Steps as they are "suggested." There is no invitation to the reader to modify, reject, or interpret. There is no "easier, softer way.

5. Take an inventory only when you are ready

Another great help to the designer of his own program is this little gem. Its logic always impressed me, because, of course, I wanted my Fourth Step to be thorough, even perfect. "Today," I thought, "I am not prepared to do a perfect Fourth Step. To attempt it might get me more upset, more depressed, even drunk. There is an added benefit. I don't have to take a Fifth Step, either, because I am not yet prepared with a written Fourth." Somehow, ten years went by, and I was still not quite "ready."

6. The only people you really hurt are those closest to you

When I finally did get around to AA's amends Steps, my own sixth step helped a great deal. I told myself that I had hurt my wife and children only during my drinking days. But I had apologized for all of that alcohol-caused misery. Now that I was sober, I was no longer hurting anyone. A long time later, I realized that I had continued to lie, cheat, and steal through all of those sober years as a nonworking member of AA. All in all, I had hurt far more people in those sober years than I had ever hurt in my drinking days, including employees, business associates, shopkeepers, salesmen, clients, and friends - dozens and dozens of people.

7. You make amends just by being sober

Here's another way to duck the amends Steps. I presumed that my years of sobriety had made me a basically nice person, and that my family and others around me should feel privileged to associate with me. Just by being alive and being me, I was making amends to those I had harmed (my immediate family). This simple and beautiful step meant that I didn't have to list on a piece of paper *all* of the people I had harmed, and then make direct amends to them. Somehow, it escaped me that this sober, "nice" guy was abusing employees, lying to bosses and clients, padding expense accounts, and fencing sarcastically with almost anyone whom he perceived as a threat. These defects finally came home to roost when I was fired from a fine job - primarily for the faults just described.

8. Most modern AAs (especially me) are high-bottom drunks

This is another real comforter. The low-bottom, hard cases that Dr. Bob and Bill encountered obviously had to work the Twelve Steps faithfully and fast if they were to ant remain sober. But, just as obviously, the "modern" high-bottom cases (like me) did not have to go to such lengths, I believed. We had much greater leeway in deciding when and how we worked a Step or even whether we wished to work the Step at all.

9. The Big Book is outmoded This concept - that the Big Book was old-fashioned and had been re- placed by newer, better stuff -led me into the wonderful world of non-AA literature. I could ignore the book with the blue cover and immerse myself in red books, green books, 24-hour books, little-this books, and little-that books. When I felt I was wandering too far afield, I could dip into the more modern (but much less specific) *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. There were also side trips into books on personality, psychology, and psychiatry. For ten years, the Big Book, the written source for working the Steps, was a deep, dark secret for me, as I searched for truth and meaning every place except where it was.

Working my nine steps for a period of ten dry years brought me to the point where I was ready to drink again. In those ten years, my untreated character defects caused me untold mental pain, got me fired, and drove me to many forms of mental therapy in a futile effort to cure my depression and fear. The turning point came when I met an old-timer who told me that if I worked the Steps, my fears and depression would begin to lift.

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Rule 62:

Differences of opinion seem to be part of the drinking mystique, and sometimes they can get pretty serious. We heard of a case in which one of the antagonists shot the other in the back. The victim was rushed to the hospital and underwent surgery.

After the operation, the doctor's secretary, who was new and inexperienced, had trouble transcribing the notes for the patient's case history. Coming to the part reading "shot in the lumbar region," she wrote: "He was wounded in the woods." :)

The chap who shot the fellow in the previous tale was hauled off to the pokey by the police, and during the course of his interrogation, fingerprints of his right hand were taken. After it was done, the sergeant directed him to wash up.

The dipso looked at his hands, one ink-stained, the other relatively clean. "Should I wash both of them?" he asked.

The sergeant hesitated for a moment. "No, just one," he replied. "I want to see how you do it."

At a local saloon one night, one of the patrons succeeded in making a nuisance of himself and was thrown out by the bouncer. Staggering back in again, he was tossed out once more. When it happened for the third time, a barfly who had been watching the ejections with interest spoke up.

"Friend bouncer," he said, "your problem is that you're putting too much backspin on him."

A man and his spouse were seated at a bar next to a rather disreputable-looking character, who was putting away large quantities of beer. Eventually, the gas could no longer be contained, and the fellow gave a loud burp. The husband exclaimed "How dare you belch before my wife!"

"Sorry," muttered the offender. "I didn't know it was the lady's turn."

All reprinted from The Grapevine