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A Study of Tradition 4

APR 2021

The short form of Tradition 4 reads "Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole."

The long form of Tradition 4 reads "With respect to its own affairs, each AA group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect AA as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount."

In a March 1948 Grapevine article Bill W wrote that the long form of Tradition 4 repeats and specifically emphasizes the spiritual principles contained in both Traditions 1 and 2. There is a great deal of repetition in the Traditions. It's not always evident in the short form, but is very prominent in the long form of the Traditions.

The 12&12 Tradition 4 essay states that over the years, every conceivable deviation from AA's 12 Steps and Traditions has been tried. That shouldn't be a surprise – we alcoholics are an extreme example of self will run riot. These deviations, however, have also created a body of trial and error experience that can be used to benefit all.

Every group has the right to be wrong and is free to work out its own customs, meeting formats, service structure and many other things. But freedom also requires responsibility otherwise it becomes anarchy. Each group is responsible to avoid any action that might harm others, whether it's our common good, another group or a member. And there have been such actions, or this Tradition would be unnecessary.

AA Comes of Age states that "Implicit throughout AA's Traditions is the confession that our Fellowship has its sins. We admit that we have character defects as a society and these defects threaten us continually."

experienced group understands that the **Traditions** are not technicalities. Thev are proven guides that reinforce the primary purpose of all AA groups and a way to maintain group harmony and unity.



Tradition 3 allows any 2 or 3 alcoholics coming

together as an AA group to seek sobriety just about any way they like. They can disagree with any or all AA principles and still call themselves an AA group. In fact, any member can disagree with any or all AA principles and still call himself or herself an AA member. That's pretty heady stuff and sounds like risky business. But really it's not. (Bill W also wrote in AA Comes of Age that) this kind of liberty prevents AA from becoming a frozen set of dogmatic (or rigid) principles that couldn't be changed even when obviously wrong. It's our wonderful "democratic anarchy" and it does have checks and balances and ways of sorting itself out.

For example, the 12&12 essay on Tradition 4 has a story about an early group that had grandiose plans that predictably fell flat and went down to failure. But it had a happy ending. The story is about "Rule # 62" which is "Don't take yourself too damn seriously." A group in the late 1930s decided to involve itself in

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BILL DOTSON, AA #3

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On a Friday night, September 17, 1954. Bill Dotson died in Akron, Ohio. "That is, people say he died, but he really didn't," wrote Bill Wilson. "His spirit and works are today alive in the hearts of un-counted AA's, and who can doubt that Bill already the great beyond."

Bill Dotson, the "Man on the Bed," was AA number 3. At his death, he had not had a drink in more than nineteen years.

His date of sobriety was the date he entered Akron's City Hospital for his last detox, June 26, 1935. Two days later occurred that fateful day when two sober alcoholics visited him: Dr. Bob Smith of Akron, Ohio, and Bill Wilson, a guest of Dr. Bob's from New York.

A few days before, Dr. Bob had said to Bill: "If you and I are going to stay sober, we had better get busy."

Dr. Bob called Akron's City Hospital and told the nurse, a "Mrs. Hall," that he and a man from New York had a cure for alcoholism. Did she have an alcoholic customer on whom they could try it out? She replied, "Well, Doctor, I suppose you've already tried it yourself?"

Then she told him of a man who had just come in with DT's, had blacked the eyes of two nurses, and was now strapped down tight. "He's a grand chap when he's sober," she added.

Dr. Bob prescribed some medications, and then asked her to transfer him to a private room. He also put him on a diet of sauerkraut and tomatoes. That's all he was allowed to eat during his hospitalization.

The nurse told Dr. Bob and Bill that Bill Dotson had been a well-known attorney in Akron and a city councilman. But he had been hospitalized eight times in the last six months. (Bill Wilson sometimes said "six times.") Following each release, he got drunk even before he got home.

Bill's wife, Henrietta Dotson, had talked to Dr. Bob and Bill earlier. When she told her husband she had been "talking to a couple of fellows about drinking" he was furious at her "disloyalty." When she told them that they were "a couple of drunks" Bill didn't mind so much.

had Henrietta apparently quite conversation with the two men, and she told her husband that their plan for staying sober themselves was to tell their plan to another

Years later, Bill Dotson reflected on the dwells in one of those many mansions in jumbled thoughts in his mind as his wife left and he began to lapse back into withdrawal stupor: "All the other people that talked to me wanted to help ME, and my pride prevented me from listening to them, and caused only resentment on my part, but I felt as if I would be a real stinker if I did not listen to a couple of fellows for a short time, if that would cure THEM."

> So Dr. Bob and Bill talked to what may have been their first "man on the bed." They told them of the serious nature of his disease, but also offered hope for a recovery. "We told him what we had done," wrote Bill, "how we got honest with ourselves as never before, how we had talked our problems out with each other in confidence, how we tried to make amends for harm done others, how we had then been miraculously released from the desire to drink as soon as we had humbly asked God, as we understood him, for guidance and protection."



But Bill Dotson was not impressed. He said, "Well, this is wonderful for you fellows, but can't be for me. My case is so terrible that I'm scared to go out of this hospital at all. You don't have to sell me religion, either. I was at one time a deacon in the church and I still

believe in God. But I guess he doesn't believe much in me."

(Like so many of us on first coming to AA, Bill Dotson thought he was "different.")

But he did agree to see Dr. Bob and Bill again. They came again the next day, and for several days thereafter. When they arrived on July 4, they found Bill's wife, Henrietta, with him.

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BILL DOTSON, AA #3

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are the fellows I told you about, they are the ones and arguing a case. who understand."

Before they could say anything, he told them about his night, how he hadn't slept but had been thinking But then he drank again. Would this time be about them all night long. And he had decided that if they could do it, maybe he could do it, maybe they could do together what they couldn't do separately.

It was apparently on that day that he admitted he When Lois Wilson visited Akron in July of 1935, couldn't control his drinking and had to leave it up to God. Then they made him get down on his knees at the side of the bed and pray and say that he would turn his life over to God. Before the visit was over, he suddenly turned to his wife and said, "Go fetch my clothes, dear. We're going to get up and get out of here."

He walked out of that hospital on July 4, 1935, a free man, never to drink again. AA's Number One Group dates from that day.

That Fourth of July they had plenty to celebrate. So they had a picnic. The Smiths, Bill Wilson, the Dotson's, and Eddie Riley, the first alcoholic they linked themselves to us for good," wrote Bill. tried to help were there. (Eddie didn't get sober at first, but later he did, and Eddie said in a talk that there were two firsts in A.A. — the first one who

accepted the program and the first who refused it.)

Eagerly pointing at them, he said to his wife: "These Within a week, Bill Dotson was back in court, sober,

But at first his wife was doubtful. He had previously gone on the wagon and stayed sober for long periods. different? And he hadn't had that transforming experience that Bill Wilson talked about.

Henrietta shared these fears with her, and asked Lois whether she ever worried about her Bill drinking again. Lois answered without hesitation, "No. Never."

The message had been successfully shared a second time. Dr. Bob was no fluke. And apparently you did not have to be indoctrinated by the Oxford Group before the message could take hold.

The three worked with scores of others. "Many were called but mighty few chosen; failure was our daily companion. But when I left Akron in September 1935, two or three more sufferers had apparently

https://www.prestongroup.org/



Came to Believe

Robert M., 1955

Robert M, illustrator volunteer for the Grapevine, the created 'Came to painting Believe' in 1955, and gave it to Bill Wilson in 1956. It first appeared the in Grapevine in the December 1955 issue, but when the book 'Came to Believe' was published in 1973, the Grapevine editors renamed the reproductions 'The Man on the Bed' to

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One, Two, Three—Ready, Ready, Go

From a blackout to an awakening of the spirit, all in an instant....

Later, after a spending a bit of time in AA, I realized that I had unknowingly taken Steps One, Two, and Three, more or less instantaneously, around 5 o'clock in the morning on 30 January 1988, when I came to from a blackout, lying on my office couch with my winter coat and boots on. At that moment I was blessed with a grace: suddenly I knew that the reason I was so confused and miserable was my drinking, and that I needed to quit drinking.

I was a daily drinker and I'd been drinking for over 20 years, trying, sometimes successfully, but more and more often unsuccessfully, to control my alcohol intake. At that moment, I admitted I was powerless over alcohol although I didn't use those

exact words (Step One).

I had a drinking and drugging buddy whose name was Luc who had gone to a treatment centre and had stopped drinking a year before. One whole year without a drink, while I could not go one day without drinking. Luc obviously was a Power



greater than me. He had often invited me to attend an AA meeting with him, but since I had stopped using drugs a year and a half

previously, I said, "No thank you, I don't do drugs

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1ST TUESDAY OF EVERY MO.

District 30 Meeting When: 6:30pm – 7:30pm Where: 5925 O'Brien

2ND MONDAY OF EVERY MO.

Intergroup Meeting
When: 6:00pm – 7:00pm
Where: Central Office
417 Welshwood

STEERING COMMITTEE

When: Monday Apr—26th 6:00pm – 7:00pm Where: Central Office 417 Welshwood

1ST TUESDAY OF EVERY MO.

District 32 Meeting When: 6:30pm Where: Last Stop Club 2122 Utopia

2ND SATURDAY OF EVERY MO

District 34 Meeting When: 10am Where: 200 E. Cedar St Goodlettsville

3RD SUNDAY OF EVERY MO

District 35 Meeting
When: 4pm
Zoom: 715 0132 4166
Pswd: D3520

At a McDonalds in Tuba City, Arizona last year, I dined with a minister. This man had lived and served the Navajo and Hopi Indian community for many years. Alcoholism and alcoholics are almost part of the culture with these Indian tribes. He believed that continuing to say, "I am an alcoholic" after not drinking for a period, was a lack of faith and an admission the obsession had not been lifted. As he spoke, I recalled all the challenges and failures I shared with many others. We thought God, the church and a belief in divine healing would work for us. I know it has worked for many, and I am glad it did. I do not believe we should ever forget, however, that we are alcoholics.

Just before he ate, he pulled out diabetic supplies and gave himself an insulin injection. With my past, I have to always ask if I am debating or sharing with others. I saw this as a chance to share the disease concept of alcoholism with the professional community (CPC work). I asked if since the insulin stabilized his blood sugar and he lived a normal life, was he still a diabetic? You know his answer.

If alcoholism is a disease and it is treated successfully, leading to sobriety and usefulness to others...we are still alcoholics. I think that often clergy and many well meaning folks do not see the parallel between other diseases and alcoholism. Some diseases have cures; some can be remissed (neglected); and some require acceptance and daily change in our activity and mindset.

I do believe a seed was planted with the diabetic minister, and I hope his views about AA principles were changed. As a diabetic on insulin or other medication, we are granted but a daily reprieve contingent on treating, acknowledging and accepting our disease. The same is true of alcoholism.

On a personal note, I am a Type II diabetic, and I forgot I could not eat like a normal (not diabetic) individual for an extended period. Actually, I did not forget, I just chose not to treat my disease. I know the treatment. Guess what? My blood sugar level has come roaring back to a dangerous level that requires serious treatment that may result in serious consequences if not treated seriously by me. If I do not do the daily deal with the diabetes, I shall have to call that preacher and tell him I am a hypocrite. Actually, I have been a hypocrite! Thanks for the 10th Step!

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One, Two, Three—Ready, Ready, Go

(Continued from page 4)

anymore," not realising that I was drinking more and more. But now, I was convinced he could restore me to sanity and help me (Step Two).

So I decided then and there I was going to call Luc later on that day and ask him to take me to an AA meeting. I would do whatever he told me to do, thus turning my will and my life over to the care of Luc, my Higher Power (Step Three).

He would become my first sponsor. Later on, as I was working the 12 Steps at his suggestion, my awareness of my powerlessness over alcohol grew and my notion of a Higher Power became much larger and more spiritual than just belief in one fallible human being. But in retrospect, that's all I needed to make a start in AA 31 years ago.

ROBERT P. | LOTBINIÈRE, QUÉBEC



PROMISES, PROMISES

Another promise from the big book that I find amazing is that feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. I mean heck. I've had those feelings since high school. Now I understand that the Program works to resolve the regrets and resentments from your past but feelings are just feelings. They can't be just exorcised from your brain. Oh but they can. This miracle of making the feelings of uselessness and self-pity disappear is like many of the promises in the big book. First it's impossible, then it's difficult, then it's accomplished.

The useless feeling was easy to see from our drinking days. If our head wasn't killing us, it was an event. If we weren't throwing up, it was a good day. If we had money, it was an oversight. All these things made us useless to ourselves and to those around us. How many family events did we miss? How much time did we waste planning how and when we were going to get that next drink? By getting and staying sober we became useful to our family. By Twelfth Step work we became useful to society. No wonder the feelings of uselessness disappeared. We aren't useless anymore.

That the feelings of self-pity would disappear is the real trick. When I came into the program it was because it was either that or the grave and I really was deserving of pity. At least from God. But this isn't pity from God, it's self-pity that disappears. It's feeling sorry for myself. And as I worked the Program and started to see the real changes in myself, there was no reason for self-pity. I am happy and whole and so very grateful.

Now there can be times when I feel useless. Like in the middle of winter when I don't feel like doing anything but watching the fire in the fireplace. And when I start a pity party that things are not back to normal because of the pandemic (not sure I remember what normal is). But those feelings are a lot more temporary than they used to be and I don't take them seriously.

So keep looking for the promises to come true in your life as you work the program. They will if you keep working.

FOUNDER'S DAY 2021

The Founders' Day Committee met with University of Akron in February and the University could not commit to hosting our 2021 Founders' Day in June. It was decided that due to the pandemic, we will host a virtual Founders' Day Celebration again this year.

The weekend is June 11, 12 and 13th. We learned a lot last year about what works good when hosting a virtual weekend and hope to make it even better this year. While we would like to have our visitors come to Akron again this year it is just not going to happen. This is temporary and we plan to resume our regular weekend Founders' Day in the future, but in the meantime, please attend virtually and help to support our Akron Area Intergroup.

Please check our website, and we will keep you up to date as plans are finalized. Watch for registration and program plans.

Anyone interested in volunteering for Founders' Day this year can notify the Intergroup Office and your information will be forwarded to the Founders' Day Committee.

YOUR GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS

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SAFE PLACE 325	RECOVERY ON THE ROW		
SAFE PLACE 325	RUSHH HOUR	86	86
	SAFE PLACE		
	SATURDAY NIGHT ALIVE	20	40

GROUP / MEETING	FEB	YTD
SEEKERS, SPARTA	500	500
- SERENITY	25	25
- SERENITY IN THE - PARK		200
SHADE TREE		647
SMYRNA GRATITUDE	864	1,295
- SOBRIETY FIRST - LEBANON	50	50
- SPARTA	50	50
- FELLOWSHIP		50
- SPRING HILL		156
TRINITY		200
TURNING POINT	300	300
- UNITED		200
- WAKE UP		45
WOMEN IN THE SOLUTION		50
WOMEN'S FREEDOM		267
GROUP TOTALS TO DATE	4,828	13,965
- INDIVIDUALS	1,388	4,497
MESSENGER	-	12
COMBINED TOTALS TO DATE	6,216	18,474





A and C were going to prank their friend...

But they just letter B.

Who needs a day for the fools?

I'm surrounded by them all year.

Why was everyone so tired on April 1st?

Because they just finished a long 31-day March.

Babies born March 31st are the easiest to prank on April Fools'...

They were literally born yesterday!





A Study of Tradition 4

(Continued from page 1)

just about everything and anything. They had extravagant dreams of building a huge alcoholic center that groups everywhere would want to duplicate. There were plans for a club on the ground floor. On the 2nd floor they planned to have a treatment center and a special bank to hand out money to alcoholics to pay their back debts and get them on their feet again. Then on the 3rd floor they planned to have an alcoholism education center. And that was only the beginning.

Of course, there was a super-promoter and power driver behind it all. He wrote to the NY office to get an official AA charter for the grandiose plans. The NY office advised him that it didn't issue any kind of charters for any purpose and that similar adventures the super-promoter had in mind had come to some very bad ends elsewhere. Not the least bit fazed, the super-promoter set up 3 corporations and became president of all 3 of them. As an added bonus he also appointed himself manager of the club. All of this would take a lot of money and of course it would be other people's money. In order to keep everyone on the straight and narrow path they adopted 61 rules and regulations.

After a while confusion reigned supreme. The power-driver promoter and members finally reached the point where they wished they had paid attention to AA experience when first advised of it. And, upon admitting defeat in a letter sent to the NY office, out of this was born the famous rule #62 "Don't take yourself too damn seriously." The 12&12 states that under Tradition 4 an AA group had exercised its right to be wrong. It also did a service to AA by letting others know what it did wrong and being willing to take the hard lessons they had learned and apply them in a humble and good-natured manner. Even the chief architect and superpromoter, standing in the ruins of his dream, could laugh at himself. Bill described that as the very acme (or high point) of humility.

Anonymous

Just Love Audio

APRIL BIRTHDAYS

ANY LENGTHS

Amy R	04.15.20
Brandy B	04.22.20
Jennifer O	04.06.17
Jennifer S	04.25.19
John H	04.08.19
Lincoln W	04.23.18
Vicky B	04.29.16

BACK ROOM

Bill S	04.04.90
Caroline B	04.02.18
Jamie H	04.02.08
Johnny R	04.06.94
Leslie M	04.05.96

SHADE TREE

Carl H	04.13.19
Chris H	04.06.13
Kathy B	04.28.94
Kelly B	04.13.13
Patty H	04.28.13

WOMEN'S SPEAKER

Susie B 04.24.15



"There wasn't a law that required you to grow up? You did it voluntarily???"

Middle Tennessee Intergroup Association

Statement of Activities - Actual and Budgeted - Schedule 1

For the Month and Two Months Ended February 28, 2021

		February 2021		YTD 2021						
			Budget			Budget				
Incomo	Actual	Budget	Variance	Actual	Budget	Variance				
Income Net Literature Sales	832.75	2,783.00	(4.050.25)	3,120.13	5 566 00	(2 445 07)				
		,	(1,950.25)	,	5,566.00	(2,445.87) 87.14				
Group Donations	4,828.12	6,939.00	(2,110.88)	13,965.14	13,878.00					
Individual Donations	1,387.76	525.00	862.76	4,496.65	1,050.00	3,446.65				
Messenger Donations	-	12.00	(12.00)	12.00	24.00	(12.00)				
Website Donations	-	700.00	(700.00)	-	4.446.00	(4.446.00)				
Special Events	- 0.04	708.00	(708.00)	0.40	1,416.00	(1,416.00)				
Interest	3.84	184.00	(180.16)	8.13	368.00	(359.87)				
Total Income	7,052.47	11,151.00	(4,098.53)	21,602.05	22,302.00	(699.95)				
Expenses										
Casual Labor	225.00	242.00	(17.00)	450.00	484.00	(34.00)				
Payroll	6,271.00	6,047.00	224.00	12,542.00	12,094.00	448.00				
Legal & Professional	350.00	350.00	-	700.00	700.00	-				
Rent	946.00	1,046.00	(100.00)	1,992.00	2,092.00	(100.00)				
Printing	-	50.00	(50.00)	-	100.00	(100.00)				
Payroll Taxes	480.00	463.00	17.00	943.27	926.00	17.27				
Repairs & Maintenance	-	25.00	(25.00)	-	50.00	(50.00)				
Equipment Rental	104.28	116.00	(11.72)	204.36	232.00	(27.64)				
Telephone & Fax	515.71	475.00	40.71	1,030.95	950.00	80.95				
Answering Service	608.53	216.00	392.53	830.52	432.00	398.52				
Postage	7.81	137.00	(129.19)	259.37	274.00	(14.63)				
Office Supplies	50.00	208.00	(158.00)	139.26	416.00	(276.74)				
Bank Service Charges	40.00	40.00	-	95.00	80.00	15.00				
Computer & Technology	92.86	416.00	(323.14)	445.81	832.00	(386.19)				
Credit Card Service Fees	30.73	-	30.73	140.45	-	140.45				
Intergroup Expense	-	150.00	(150.00)	-	300.00	(300.00)				
Insurance	1,525.00	200.00	1,325.00	1,525.00	400.00	1,125.00				
Special Events	-	375.00	(375.00)	-	750.00	(750.00)				
Travel		583.00	(583.00)	-	1,166.00	(1,166.00)				
Miscellaneous		-	-	-	-	-				
Depreciation	-	12.00	(12.00)	-	24.00	(24.00)				
Over/Under	-	-	-	-	-	-				
Total Expenses	11,246.92	11,151.00	95.92	21,297.99	22,302.00	(1,004.01)				
Net Income	(4,194.45)		(4,194.45)							

	Can you find the words below that come from the story on Page 2?																													
	SI	PIR	IT			Н	EAF	RTS	;		UN-COUNTED					VISITED						CONVERSATION								
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В	T	Ι	S	Н	U	F	C	G	В	M	V	C	X	Y	M	G	T	X	N	N	Z	L	G	P	W	P	J	J	K	
Q	F	K	L	A	P	E	F	R	Ν	Ι	0	F	Ν	Y	U	Z	K	R	P	G	A	A	L	N	L	F	A	L	P	
C	N	G	D	L	G	N	Ι	A	D	Ι	N	Q	X	T	0	C	C	U	R	E	D	\mathbf{M}	\mathbf{M}	Y	A	D	D	H	X	
M	J	F	0	Y	C	F	0	D	R	0	\mathbf{N}	A	A	K	Z	F	U	Z	H	\mathbf{W}	C	L	X	S	W	В	W	M	H	
X	S	R	V	F	T	C	0	G	U	A	\mathbf{V}	E	0	L	S	J	Z	X	\mathbf{V}	H	N	Q	C	R	A	J	\mathbf{W}	F	K	
0	D	D	H	В	C	E	T	F	E	В	В	Q	T	V	C	M	G	I	L	W	\mathbf{M}	Q	P	P	R	M	D	X	N	
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A	F	M	M	C	J	A	Ι	D	В	Z	В	L	P	X	В	L	U	0	N	R	A	В	P	X	T	K	V	F	P	
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