

# Hill Country A.A.<sup>®</sup> INTERGROUP CONNECTION

Volume 2 - Issue 9- October 2018

**EVERY TIME WE ARE DISTURBED,  
NO MATTER WHAT THE CAUSE THERE IS SOMETHING  
WRONG WITH US: (12&12 pg. 91)**

## OFFICE MANAGER

**Gary H. — Austin**  
*Northland Group*

## HCIA BOARD

**Tammy B. — Austin**  
*North Austin 24 Group*

**Larry D. — Hutto**  
*North Austin 24 Group*

**Brian C. — Austin**  
*Lakeway Keystone*

**Dan H. — Austin**  
*12 @ 12*

**Mark K. — Austin**  
*Lake Travis Serenity Group*

**Kit L. — Austin**  
*R.R. Big Book Study Group*

**Jason I. — Liberty Hills**  
*Way of Life*

**Norma A. — Buda**  
*Single Purpose Group*

## STEP 10.

*Continue to take personal inventory and when we are wrong promptly admitted it.*

**W**OW! Is it really that simple? Yes, what started in Step 4; personal inventory; looking at ourselves, our resentments, our fears - continues as a lifelong practice. Through Step 10 we are encouraged to develop the ongoing practice of inventory. Spot-check inventory (daily ups and downs), periodic self-inventories with or without our sponsor or spiritual advisor, and/or annual/semiannual 'housecleanings' become just as much a part of daily sober living as prayer and meditation.

Why? Bill W in Step 12 in the 12 & 12 states "few people have been more victimized by resentments than we alcoholics." And we learned from our 4th step work that resentments are fatal for us. But what about those situations that arise that we really should be mad about? LOL! We learn that we alcoholics are just not very good at separating 'justified from unjustified anger'! Bill W. understood us so well when he said, "As we saw it, our anger was always justified". And we've got to be just as careful with emotions such as jealousy, envy, self-pity, and hurt pride and/or continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, and fear. Step 10 infers that it is not a matter of 'IF' these kinds of emotions/feelings are going to come up, but 'WHEN' these crop up. What a revelation that was! We've been allowed the grace to make mistakes. My sponsor today says, 'Welcome to Humanity'!

I recall my early days of showing up at my sponsor's house each week with a legal envelope filled with the ups and downs of the past week. Seemed so silly when I read aloud to her what was going on with me. But I have found that to this day, I still need to be able to get 'gut-level honest' about what is going on with me if I am to stay sober.

(continue on page 4)

*"The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us. But that in itself would never have held us together as we are now joined. The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action."*

# MEET Dan H.



## YOUR Board Member

### *What is your name and your service position?*

Dan H. Intergroup Board Member

### *How long have you been in AA?*

39 years

### *What is your home group?*

12@12 Group - Austin, TX

### *Who is your sponsor and why did you pick him?*

Dennis C. He has what I want, he is calm and kind and thoughtful.

### *What other types of service-past or present-have you been involved in?*

Literature chair for the Steering committee chair, treasurer, and literature chair.

### *Was there a turning point in your sobriety that you think was significant?*

Being led to my first sponsor.

### *Do you think there have been changes in AA since you've been sober?*

Yes

### *What do you hope would be the best thing to come out of your service to the fellowship as an InterGroup Board member?*

Helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.



## OFFICE VOLUNTEERS

### **September 2018:**

Coleen B., Dan H., Fletcher M., Glenn S., Jack W., Jay B., John B., Marnie S., Marty S., Michael G., Murdo M., Nancy W., Pat F., Rick A.

## HOTLINE VOLUNTEERS

### **September 2018:**

Gordon K., Jesse B., John F., Jose V., Lana W., Olaf G., Randy R.

## WEEKEND GROUP VOLUNTEERS

### **September 2018:**

Spirit of Love, Elgin Group, Keep First Things First, 7th Street Sisters, South Austin Big Book Group



**TO VOLUNTEER CALL**  
512-444-0071

To volunteer in the office, or answer the Hotline on a weeknight or if your group would like to take the hotline for the weekend.

# THANK YOU - AA Groups and All

For Your CONTRIBUTIONS IN SEPTEMBER

<b>Group Name &amp; District</b>	<b>\$Amount</b>
3Store Sales	\$25.00
3Store Sales	\$25.00
A New Beginning - 22	\$150.00
Allandale Group - 3B	\$161.05
Back To Basics - 13	\$100.00
Bee Creek Group - 13	\$100.00
Bridge to Shore Group - 3C	\$693.79
Brushy Creek Serenity - 22	\$40.00
Burnet Noon AA - 13	\$300.00
Donation Can at HCIA Office	\$12.15
Donation Can at HCIA Office	\$1.00
Graceland Group - 22	\$95.56
Graceland Group - 22	\$96.80
HCIA Board	\$19.00
Hope Group - 22	\$211.31
Krause Springs Group - 13	\$20.00
Legacies Group - 29	\$25.00
Lighthouse Group - 3C	\$100.00

<b>Group Name &amp; District</b>	<b>\$Amount</b>
Little Big Book Group - 3C	\$180.50
North Austin 24 Hour Group - 3B	\$75.00
Northland - 3B	\$297.00
Oak Hill R.U.S.H. Hour Group - 3C	\$30.00
Reading Rainbow - 3B	\$46.90
Reps Meeting	\$39.10
Spearheads AA - 3B	\$30.00
Stoney Point Group - 22	\$24.00
Stoney Point Group - 22	\$6.00
Sunday Morning Sidewalk - 29	\$175.00
The Five Thirty Group - 3C	\$25.00
Triangle Group - 3C	\$12.15
Westlake AA - 3C	\$500.00
What It's Like Now - 3B	\$140.00
Wimberley Group - 2	\$192.98
Women's Recovery - 3B	\$80.00
Worth A Buck - 22	\$50.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,079.29</b>

<b>Group/Name &amp; District</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
A New Beginning - 22	\$150.00
Allandale Group - 3B	\$50.00
Anonymous.	\$10.00
Anonymous.	\$10.00
Anonymous.	\$50.00
Anonymous.	\$10.00
Anonymous.	\$10.00
Anonymous.	\$10.00
Bridge to Shore Group - 3C	\$150.00
Donation Can at HCIA Office	\$5.50
Legacies Group - 29	\$25.00



**THANK  
YOU  
for your  
DAC  
Contributions**

<b>Group/Name &amp; District</b>	<b>\$ Amount</b>
Lighthouse Group - 3C	\$20.00
North Austin 24 Hour Group - 3B	\$25.00
North Austin 24 Hour Group - 3B	\$25.00
North Austin 24 Hour Group - 3B	\$25.00
Northland - 3B	\$297.00
Reading Rainbow - 3B	\$20.10
Triangle Group - 3C	\$12.15
Westlake AA - 3C	\$75.00
Wimberley Group - 2	\$128.65
Women's Recovery - 3B	\$270.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$1,378.40</b>

## (cont.) EVERY TIME WE ARE DISTURBED

Sure, I can nurse those resentments, but I am the one who suffers. I don't enjoy suffering today as I once did. Or I can 'ignore' or 'justify' but they always seem to find their way out! So still today (sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly) I break out the old 'black pen and white paper' and write what is going on inside my head. Healing recovery begins to take place the minute I do that. And further healing continues when I speak the silly/ugly/petty truth as I share the writing with my sponsor and then clean up any mistakes/harms as I go along.

And it is so funny how those resentments just disappear when I do the work. As I write this article I am trying to recall an incident that I thought would be great to share; but now I don't remember what it was! I have

been restored to sanity! Ha...but that brings me to another promise of Step 10...the return of sanity regarding liquor. We 'recoil from it as if from a hot flame'. "We feel as though we have been placed in a position of neutrality-safe and protected". But we must keep in fit spiritual condition. A huge part of that 'fitness routine' is continuing the inventories. "We cease fighting anything or anyone". If I am harboring resentment, unwilling to let go; I can't very well 'carry the vision of God's will in to all of my activities'. So, through no special virtue of mine, I am compelled to continue to 'take a look at me'! I am grateful!

Love and Service, Denise T., Bastrop

## SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION

### STEP 11.

*Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscience contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*

The 12 & 12 states in the chapter about step eleven that the principal means of conscious contact with God is thru prayer and meditation. The Big Book tells me that prayer works if I have the proper attitude and work at it. Prior to "seeking conscious contact" my prayer life was often focused on asking for the wrong things from a place of self-centered desires; I was asking for things I wanted rather than asking for what God wanted. In the beginning I learned in meetings to ask God to "please help me stay sober today" and at the end of the day if sober to say "thank you God". This kept it simple for one who was prone to complicate it. The simple reality about prayer that would unfold with time and practice, was that prayer changed me, not God. My part was only to become willing to allow God to change me.

I was given the gift of staying sober even on this simple start, but it was evident by my inner life of anxiety, fear and guilt, that I would need to develop a deeper relationship with God in order to grow beyond physical sobriety. I would need to continue to grow along spiritual lines for being sober was by my own experience as well as echoed in the words of those before me, not enough. I needed emotional sobriety. How was that to happen? The AA literature guided me to search out other books and resources and my sponsor told me to go buy and read a book titled Sermon on the Mount by Emmet

Fox. My first response to the book was to throw it across the room in a defiant act that I was not going to read some Christian book about the Bible and Jesus. But, at the encouragement of my sponsor, and having made a commitment to be willing even if only a tiny bit, to have an open mind even if only a sliver, I began to read the book. Turns out this was a spiritual experience of the educational variety for in the reading a personality change slowly began. There was a great deal of richness in this reading as it helped me see one way to do spiritual development and be given a roadmap for positive thinking. I certainly needed (and still need) that help. It also gave me a firsthand understanding and look at what the Old Timers meant by, "It is an inside job". This was an important beginning for me to open to the notion of God being much bigger and better than the narrow judgement of Him I brought with me to AA.

It was very hard for me to sit and try to quiet my mind. I had what was referred to as monkey mind where I was swinging from one thought to the next in almost agitated fashion. But I practiced doing it anyway and I talked to other members in AA about what worked for them. To my surprise, doors, opportunities and adventures opened up for

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# WE MIND OUR OWN BUSSINESS

## TRADITION 10 LONG FORM:

*No A.A. group or member should ever, in such a way as to implicate A.A., express any opinion on outside controversial issues-particularly those of politics, alcohol reform, or sectarian religion. The Alcoholics Anonymous groups oppose no one. Concerning such matters they can express no views whatever.*

**W**e avoid public controversy. Reluctance to fight is not a special virtue – it is because survival and spread of A.A. is our primary aim.

Bill W. observes in the Tradition 10 essay: “Never since it began has Alcoholics Anonymous been divided by a major controversial issue”.

But that is not to say that we have not had major differences of personal opinion on matters that temporarily effect our unity. An example is the 1993 discontinuation of the protection of the circle and triangle mark. At the time the fellowship was divided in opinion, however in the end; A.A.W.S. decided that continued efforts to protect the circle and triangle mark could no longer be justified due to costly litigation and diverted resources from activities which related more directly to fulfilling A.A.’s primary purpose.

A more recent example of a major divisive issue amongst the fellowship is the ‘manuscript lawsuit’. In the end, the same points were made; major funds and resources were being diverted from our primary purpose. And our unity was being affected.

It is interesting to observe the parallel between the recovery principles we learn in Step 10 and how they relate to Tradition 10. If I ‘stay on the beam’ by continuing to take personal inventory and I ‘cease fighting anything or anyone’ and ‘carry the vision of God’s will in to all of my activities’; then I am more likely to mind my own business and keep my personal views on outside issues out of the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous and/or resist the urge to use the A.A. name to promote any cause I may be associated with. It reminds me to ‘leave it outside the door’ in deference to the newcomer and our primary purpose. Unfortunately, ‘leaving it at the door’ is often forgotten in our social media threads. This is another way we leave ourselves open to ‘public controversy’.

We do squabble amongst ourselves, but these are the lessons of learning to work and live together. If we apply ALL of our traditions (and our recovery principles) to these disagreements and our conduct, we shall surely continue to be there for the next generation of suffering alcoholics and not find ourselves going the way of the Washingtonians.

## (cont.) SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION

spiritual practices. I was directed to read and study more metaphysical and spiritual teachings from many different paths, including Hindu, Buddhist, Native American, Alpha Dynamics, and Centering Prayer, Celtic and Franciscan Spiritual views. I acquired a spiritual teacher, joined and met with a non-AA meditation group twice a week, learned chanting, drumming and to play the Native American flute. I explored other religious practices different from my background, including Judaism, Muslim, Quaker, and Mennonite. I discovered that God is either everything or nothing and that God is everywhere. More, if it is the truth you will find it everywhere.

My mental recovery was certainly enriched by these studies. Still I felt there was a depth that had not been reached yet. I was opened to an opportunity that was doing work in a mind, body, spirit wellness center. I knew that praying for specific answers was not really the way to go but I did ask for the next right step because this would be taking a road that I had never considered traveling upon.

I did get an intuitive feeling and said yes. The value of this decision was that I actually had the privilege of teaching about wellness including how to meditate. In this environment I was blessed to work with like-minded people, few who were in AA, but had an understanding of spiritual principles. I studied new teachers and authors who stressed the great value of being in the present moment. New authors all stressed that conscious connection with God happened right now in this present moment. A rich new mystery was revealed and that was what the mystics were teaching and saying. Access to God’s love was in this “now moment”. I knew without a doubt that this was the next step for me. Learning and study was invaluable but the next part of my spiritual journey involved connection with mystics, their experience of God and the radically impossible job of trying to describe the mystery of God. In this energy I was called to attend for 2+ years, a certificate program on

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## (Cont.) Step 11 — Sought Through Prayer and Meditation

spiritual direction in the high desert of New Mexico. I experienced the presence of God in this sacred space. As the Celts say, this became a 'thin space' for me where the space between this world and the next is very thin. It is definitely a 4th dimension experience.

I have new companions from this experience and new teachers, John Phillip Newell a scholar in the Celtic Spiritual Tradition, Richard Rohr, a Franciscan Priest who feels Bill Wilson was inspired to write a 12 step recovery program that is a powerful spiritual practice and Rabbi Rami Shapiro who has also referred to the 12 steps of AA as one of the best spiritual practices anyone could follow. All these men have written excellent spiritual books which are worth investigation which in turn directed me to others.

Back to the Big Book and the 12 & 12. The literature says that meditation is always something that can be further developed, having no boundaries and is essentially an individual adventure. That was true for me and these are but just a few of the highlights of that journey. Which by the way is not over.

I have the great privilege of having close contact with someone who is also striving to grow along spiritual lines. In discussion we have identified a few key factors about the 11th step. First the practice of prayer and meditation is the real deal for connecting to God.

We do not share the same religious background but have a common spiritual connection and have studied with some of the same teachers. Our practice of prayer happens individually and privately as well as together. We concur that probably the best prayer is wordless. Meditation is enhanced by the reading of spiritual thoughts to put thinking on a higher spiritual plane. We agree that time passes much more peacefully if daily prayer and meditation is practiced. However in step 11 in the 12 & 12 it states: "*there is a direct linkage between self-examination, meditation and prayer.*" Taken separately these practices can bring much relief and benefit. But when logically related and interwoven, the result is an unshakable foundation for life." We have discussed recently what that interwoven effect creates. Namely, by spending regular quiet time, going within one's self into the heart space, the secret place where God reveals himself that we can better surrender to that which may be lurking in the shadow self. Shining a light, bringing it out into the sunlight allows God to heal or transform this aspect of ourselves. When the sun shines on our shadow self, we grow closer to a God consciousness. Self-Examination, prayer and meditation is a spiritual braid; the three strands are stronger than the two. So our foundation has strength to hold us through the storms of life.

Ann H. and Lou Ann K., Bastrop

### ...attraction rather than promotion...

#### TRADITION 11

*"Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films."*

In trying to remember where or when I first heard of A.A., my best guess is on TV in a drunken state that my mind remembered because I distinctly recall telling my family and others that I knew I had a drinking problem, but was not going to go to "those" meetings. Tradition 11 states that "our public relations is based on attraction rather than promotion" or obviously I wouldn't be sober today. I do recall hearing about A.A. when I was working at an Air Force Base in the 1970's

and they sent everyone including civilian employees (such as me) to Social Actions to learn about alcoholism and we were shown Father Martin's "Chalk Talk".

In my early sobriety I never really studied the Traditions in detail as I have in the past 20+ years. I was working at Bergstrom AFB in Austin and wrote an article for "Airman" magazine basically about my sober experience up to that time, working and living in a small town where the Air Force Base was and the

(continue on page 7)

## (Cont.) ...attraction rather than promotion...

central "social setting" was lots of drinking at each of the clubs on base and how I found AA and about "The Program". It was published and somehow I knew not to use my full name as the author of that article.

Another experience I had with Tradition 11 was when I was asked by a reporter of an Austin paper, following the Austin 1985 State A.A. Convention that I had the honor and privilege of chairing, for an interview. I knew and had heard in the rooms by then not to use my full name or have my picture taken as part of that article and the reporter respected that and complied.

Current experience and extensive study of all the Traditions are part of my spiritual growth as a member of A.A. It is our Second Legacy - Unity - and it is vital to our growth and insures the unity of our cherished Fellowship. In "*The Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*" we learn from our founders in detail the do's and don'ts of this tradition and how to protect our personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

In recent years the use of digital/electronic media has become popular and this has made it the responsibility for all of us to protect our own anonymity and that of others. Tradition 11 as stated in our literature is "a constant reminder that personal ambition has no place in A.A. Each A.A. member becomes an active guardian of our Fellowship."

When we post on social media (Facebook/Twitter/Instagram), send emails and texts, etc., we should be mindful that all of these are at the "public level".

Use of A.A. jargon and stating (or implying) we are members of A.A., using quotes from our literature, pictures of chips, etc., we not only can break our own anonymity, but inadvertently break others anonymity. GSO has numerous complaints from concerned members about anonymity breaks online daily and the inappropriate use of the A.A. name.

I would encourage us all to become more educated on Tradition 11 by the use of our Conference Approved Literature on "*Understanding Anonymity*",

"*AA Guidelines on the Internet*", "*Twelve Traditions Illustrated*", even our Big Book talks about Tradition 11. Also attend Tradition meetings and if your Group doesn't have one, start one, or use Tradition 11 as the subject of a discussion meeting.

Our co-founder Bill W. in his writings in "*Language of the Heart*" on Tradition 11 states, "So it is becoming our code that there are things no AA ever does, lest he divert AA from its sole purpose and injure our public relations. And thereby the chances of those sick ones yet to come." Personally I must always remember our primary purpose ... to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. It is not about "tooting my own horn" or having "personal ambitions" at any public level.

Dr. Bob, our other co-founder commented on Tradition 11 as follows: "Since our Tradition on anonymity designates the exact level where the line should be held, it must be obvious to everyone who can read and understand the English language that to maintain anonymity at any other level is definitely a violation of this tradition."

"Attraction rather than promotion" is the best public information we have in "*Carrying the Message of Alcoholics Anonymous*". As our fellowship grows, we grow personally. It is by our laughter that we promote ourselves and the changes made in our lives that people see in us - that's our strongest attraction. We may be the only Big Book anyone ever sees.

Let's pause and remember that we are here today because God has touched our lives in a special way - "**One Day At A Time**" and that "**I am responsible**" to insure that Tradition 11 is kept intact and we maintain attraction versus promotion at all levels.

Janice W., Lost Pines Group,  
Bastrop, District 29

**HCIA**

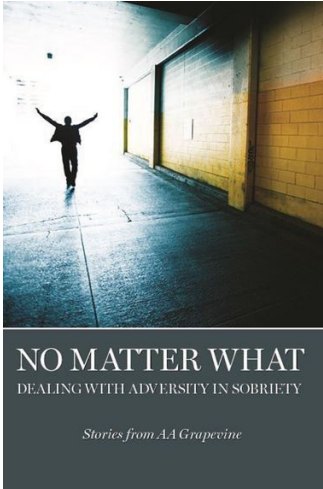
**TO VOLUNTEER  
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**To volunteer in the office, or answer the Hotline on a weeknight or if your group would like to take the hotline for the weekend.**

# THE GRAPEVINE

## Daily Quote

OCTOBER 10, 2018



All of these books can be purchased  
at Hill Country Intergroup Store.

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"Just an Attitude," Durham, North Carolina, April 2002,  
*No Matter What: Dealing with Adversity in Sobriety*,  
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**"W**ith the clock ticking like it  
is, I do not have time for  
anger, resentment, or self-pity.  
Time is far too precious."

**"ON  
WHAT  
SLENDER  
THREADS  
OUR  
DESTINY  
SOMETIMES  
HANGS..."**

Bill W.  
1954  
Texas State Convention

## CHOOSING TO LIVE

OCTOBER 2018

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**Choosing to go to any lengths to stay sober  
means choosing to stay alive**

**"**In AA meetings I was assured that I can always  
change the direction of the 24 hours ahead of  
me. I can choose the road to recovery and hope or  
the road to relapse and despair. Another way I've  
heard this expressed is that if I'm digging myself  
into a hole, I can always stop digging before I ruin  
my whole day.

I began my alcoholic behaviors when I was a teen.  
My parents kept close tabs on me, so it wasn't  
until college that I fell into a full-fledged alcoholic  
pattern of drinking to oblivion and engaging in

regrettable behaviors. My first marriage began  
to unravel and my husband served me with  
divorce papers while I was in a mental ward.  
Then I wanted to do anything to escape from  
my feelings. I careened into still more reckless  
behaviors.

The rest can be found online with  
a Grapevine online subscription.

<http://www.aagrapevine.org/feature/67366>

Holly F., Groveland, Fla.