

### The First Three Steps: I Can't; God Can; Let God

The first three steps define the problem and the spiritual solution. They are often referred to as the "AA Waltz ... As in 1-2-3, 1-2-3, and 1-2-3... over and over. It's a simple dance, but not an easy one. It's hard to get started when you don't know the steps. But as our founder, Bill Wilson, realized, he had to make two discoveries before he could begin to formulate the Twelve Steps of AA. The first, Admit the Problem, was that he had a disease with both physical and mental dimensions. The physical part was an abnormal craving for alcohol and the mental dimension was a delusion that he would be able to control his drinking. The second discovery, Open up to a Spiritual Solution, shook Bill to the core as he would later write, "It was only a matter of being *willing* to believe in a power great than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning."

*Hope*  
CHANGES EVERYTHING

These discoveries led to **three core principles** of recovery: **Honesty** - "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable." **Hope**- "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." **Action**— "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him." Steps 1, 2, and 3 form a foundation for moving on to the next steps of the program. We can continue "dancing" for the rest of our lives, but we can not "rest on our laurels" for we are only "half way through". More progress is required.

### What It Was Like, What Happened, and What It's Like Now as I Work Steps 1, 2, and 3

Twenty-two and veteran of nothing much really. I found myself in AA. The disease runs in my blood—many family members had already found their way to the rooms. Determined to be the exception to the genetic rule, I did not resist the temptation of Tennessee Street and the many "whoopie parties" available everywhere! I will spare you the many tales of my escapades, except to mention my legal troubles arising from biting a police officer in a McDonald's parking lot. My drinking was punctuated with my desperation to quit drinking. Even though I was afraid of never drinking again and what that implied, alcohol checkmated me and I had no moves except surrender.

At my first meeting, I was surrounded by those who had fessed up a long time ago. Now, they were gathered together and speaking with peace and humility in their hearts. I wanted what they had, badly. The gave me hope that if I could keep the "plug in the jug" and resigning club, I could have what they had. I became willing to be straight-ened out by AA and to follow God. If there was ever a step I balked at, it was Step 3. Memorizing the prayer, I recited it on bended knees every morning, but with little result. I learned the hard way that pain is a great motivator to take action. Relief from my crippling fear would come from a drink or from trusting God. Drinking was not an option at this point, so I decided to offer myself to God. The principles in Steps 1-3 have sustained me throughout my sobriety. I am not perfect and will often let my self-centered fear get the better of me. Today, I can accept my imperfections and, with God's endless help, I can overcome my difficulties.

GOD, I OFFER MYSELF TO THEE  
to build with me  
and to do with me as Thou wilt  
*Relieve me of the Bondage of Self*  
THAT I MAY BETTER DO THY WILL  
take away my difficulties  
that victory over them may bear witness  
to those I would help of thy power  
thy love, and thy way of life  
*May I do Thy Will Always*

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Ryan A.

## Connecting with the Intergroup 5 Website

Larry H. announced at a noon meeting at Central Group, in April or May of 2006, that he needed help in maintaining the Intergroup 5 website. The website had initially been created in 2002. I will never forget the feeling of hope that I had at that moment. Hope that this was a way that I could find a place in AA. I had the experience needed for the website, but I had less than 90 days of sobriety. I feel like Larry took a chance on me when I volunteered. I will be forever grateful that he did. The service work gave me a purpose and connection that I did not have with the program. I started attending Intergroup 5 business meetings and learned from Larry H. and Stanley P. about the Traditions (Why It Works!) and, more importantly, how to listen. They taught me by example and by some well-needed suggestions!

Intergroup 5 maintains the content on the website which is focused on providing the AA hotline number, the meeting list we refer to as the "Where and When", a meeting calendar, a list of AA events, and the most recent addition to the website, an online "store" where AA literature can be ordered. The website also contains copies of Intergroup 5 business meetings, the treasurer reports, and hotline statistics.

The Intergroup 5 Executive Committee strives to provide up-to-date information on our website to serve our district. I know that I speak for the Executive Committee when I say that it is a privilege to serve, and we are grateful for the opportunity. Comments and suggestions can be sent using the "Contact Us" page. [www.intergroup5.org](http://www.intergroup5.org).

Debbie R.

**The Killearn Men's Group** was founded in 2012 at the Killearn United Methodist Church. A few years later, it moved across the street to the current location, the Church Annex at 2711 Killearn Way (next to the Ming Tree Chinese Restaurant t on the roundabout). The Group meets every Monday night at 6:30 pm and is comprised of men only (hence the name!). We usually have between 10-15 men attending the meetings.

The format of the meetings is open discussion. Members range in age from early 20's to men in their 70's with decades of sobriety. Discussion is always thoughtful and compassionate about our shared issues, problems, and solutions. After opening the meeting, a member brings up a topic and discussion continues in a round robin format, giving each member an opportunity to pass or share their experience, strength, and hope. If time allows, a second topic is addressed.

Most of the men in the Group have been active in the AA program for many years and are always willing to share their experiences with newcomers. Almost all of the members have been or are currently sponsors and active in the District 5 organization. We recognize milestones in our members' sobriety and although we don't have anniversary parties, we do give away a new car when a member achieves 1 year of sobriety. Members treasure these as they put them in their pocket for the trip home! So, if you want fresh, strong coffee and the companionship of fellow travelers on the continuing road to sobriety, come join our group!

Mick E. & Jim C.

## The Link to "The Message"

It's been only a few months since the publication of this newsletter was restarted ... With God's help! It will be a bi-monthly publication. The goal is to present "messages" or articles from and to AA group members in District 5. These articles will consist of members' stories: their experience, strength, and hope with the steps and life, in general; their examples of carrying the message and other service work; descriptions and news from their home groups; their favorite "AA approved" books; and much, much more. **News!** Available now on the Intergroup 5 Website: [Online access](#) to previous and current issues of "The Message" and [Direct contact](#) via link to the Editor of the newsletter.

## Do the Steps: Dance for a Lifetime 1, 2, 3 and 1, 2, 3 and 1, 2, 3



**From the Bookshelf:** [Living Sober](#) is not about getting sober, but rather staying sober and enjoying life. Included are suggestions to challenges such as: "How do I explain to others that I am not drinking?" "What can I do when I am lonely?" The rest of the book is about the tools of the program and will be covered in the next issue. In closing, I share one passage: "Now is the time, the only time there is. And, if we are not kind to ourselves right now, we certainly cannot rightfully expect respect or consideration from others." Available from Intergroup 5 Literature Store. Mick E.