

Step 12 - "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

This is a re-write of my original attempt to convey to the fellowship what the 12th step means to me, and how it has played such an important role in my continuing sobriety. In that first attempt, I dutifully outlined my service resume and proclaimed that such efforts are the 12th step. The result that landed on the paper did not sit well with me. I put it aside. Prayed on it.

Here is the message that I now want to pass on: and service. I have been set free of the self-ous life. I am at ease with knowing that a pow-on today's decision making. Being set free of about this world with that precious "attitude of



The 12th step is a **mindset** of gratitude, humility, centered, self-seeking focus that ruled my previ-er greater than myself has the greatest influence those previous boundaries, I can now move gratitude".

Now, it is my turn to give back what was so freely given to me by the men and women of AA. Those seemingly sense-less tasks assigned to me... all had purpose, Though, it wasn't clear to me at the time, I can now see the end result. That result is my motivation to continue to make myself available to the fellowship and others. And, in the process, doing it with the kindness and love shown to me. Such an opportunity presented itself a few years back at the AA International gathering in Atlanta. I had met up with a man from central Florida whom I had originally met during my first year of sobriety. The next morning, as I was talking with him, he patiently explained to me that I had experienced a *vital spiritual experience*. It was his time spent with me back then that opened the door to my eventual spiritual awakening. This time, being in Atlanta, I came to realize that my friend was very much in need of my help. He was ill equipped with his country upbringing and lifestyle to handle the intense crowds and chaos of this convention. I ended up being by his side the entire weekend. I helped him get to where he needed to be, unscathed and in a timely fashion. Our interactions with each other and our shared fellowship over the course of the weekend will live with me for a very long time. I want others to know that what I pass on today, may not be what I pass on to others tomorrow. I do not know what my higher power has in store for me tomorrow or what lessons I have yet to learn. I have come to know that I can pass on, with assurance, my mindset of gratitude, humility, and service. The 12th step is a great place to be and a life-long commitment to my fellows, and all others, I encounter on a daily basis.

Jim C.

Landmarks in the History of AA in Tallahassee

STEP TWELVE

"To watch the eyes of men and women open with wonder as they move from darkness into light, to see their lives quickly fill with new purpose and meaning, to see whole families reassembled, to see the alcoholic outcast received back into his community in full citizenship, and above all to watch these people awaken to the presence of a loving God in their lives—these things are the substance of what we receive as we carry AA's message to the next alcoholic." —12x12 pg.110

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There are many significant people, places, and dates from the early days of AA in Tallahassee. But, to put these dates in perspective, it is important to remember that Alcoholics Anonymous was founded June 10, 1935. The first AA meeting in Florida was held in 1940 at the Naval Air Station in Jacksonville. In 1945, as the AA message continued spreading in Florida, a gentleman named Tom M. from Tallahassee placed himself in a Jacksonville Sanitarium. While he was in the Old Miller Sanitarium, Tom S. (who worked at the Naval Air Station) twelve stepped him in the sanitarium giving him a "Big Book". Upon Tom's release, he attended meetings in Jacksonville for a while. He then returned to Tallahassee and started a "group" at 808 East Sixth Avenue. On April 8, 1945, he sent a letter to the New York office of AA registering as the sole member! The next alcoholic to join Tom, in that same year, was a man named Bob L. In the tradition of "passing it on" Tom loaned Bob his "Big Book".

Later in 1946, the meeting site became the basement of the Trinity Methodist Church in downtown Tallahassee, and became known as the Central Group. Then, Ed B. (the father of Neal B. - a current member of our fellowship) became the 3rd member of the group.

In 1946, Doc Mays, a Presbyterian minister from Thomasville came to Tallahassee. He talked to Tom M. and went back to start a group in Thomasville, GA. Again, the message being carried from one alcoholic to another. (Continued on back)

TO MAKE PROGRESS...



Progress Not Perfection

As I sat with my readings this morning, I had one of those memories that made me smile. I have come to realize over the last year that I have always been a perfectionist (at least in my own mind). About 15 years ago, I had a stroke patient who would yell "Help!" repeatedly. I started responding to his "Help!" with "Perfect". After a few days, my patient began to holler his request for "Perfect help!" Essentially what I was saying was, "Yes, I will help you perfectly". I have been, and, still try to be, that perfectionist.

I have even been prone to procrastinate when I can't find the tools or order to achieve what I envision as perfection! My years of drinking fed this procrastinating, perfectionist ego nicely. Though, I am certain, it didn't make me the most fun person to be around. The AA program of recovery and service work have forced me to reframe this mindset.

I have learned that progress is more valuable to me than perfection ever was. Progress is my desire to be more accepting of people, places, and things each day than I was the day before. Progress is embracing the notion that I don't have to be perfect, and all things are just as they should be. Progress is having faith that the right words, tools, or helping hands will come when I need them. The truth is that I hope I never stop progressing, now that I have become willing to do so. I have some serious catching up to do!

Niki M.

Came to Believe This group was begun in 1985 by a small group of AA members (Diane V., Dilla F., and Paul P.) who wanted to establish an open meeting that was purposefully inclusive to all individuals in recovery - AA members, Al-Anon's, ACOA's, NA's, OA's, etc. - young and old, married or not, every race, sexual orientation, all religions or no religion at all... EVERYONE! It's an AA meeting, so only members of AA lead the meetings. All are welcome to share their experience, strength, and hope. Discussions focus on living sober and dealing with our problems with alcohol. It's a lively meeting - lots of laughs and, sometimes, tears. This group began meeting at the United Church on Mahan St. and, 34 years later, is still having meetings there at 10:30 every Saturday morning. Because of the longevity of this group some of the "old timers" have moved on to the happy "hereafter" or moved on in other ways, for other reasons. However, many of these folks with long term sobriety will turn up from time to time and when they do it's like old home week. Indeed, even though they've been away, many still consider "Came to Believe" their forever home group.

I started attending this group's meetings more than 20 years ago. Over the years, I've heard it referred to as the "Save the Whales" or "Tree Hugger" group. It is often said that it has an especially spiritual feel. I just know that the "Came to Believe" group fosters a welcoming environment. There is a real family feeling due, in no small part, to the fact that many have been coming to the meetings for as long, or longer than I have.

We celebrate AA birthdays on the last Saturday of every month. On average, I'd say that 30 people attend our meetings on a regular basis. Lots of folks from other meetings join us. We hope to see you there, as well. Ivan S. with assistance from Diane V.

History of AA in Tallahassee: (cont.) In 1948, the group known as Central, moved to the old Dixie Hotel across the street from the old capital building on S. Monroe St. This move started a long series of moves (more on all the moves in the next issue). Ultimately, several years later, in 1962, Central Group bought it's current location, the house at 909 Gadsden St. from the owners, the Seven Day Adventists. Whew! And, these are just the historical beginnings. Much more to come in the next issues of this newsletter. Please contact us if YOU know any AA history in Tallahassee. With much gratitude for the gift of our history to: Bob H. & Neal B.

* We will be highlighting a group in every issue of this newsletter. Please nominate YOUR HOME GROUP to be featured next! * Favorite Slogan? Write about it and send it in! * Suggestions/Comments: message@intergroup5.org

Answering Hotline Calls: I like that I am able to be of service in this way even when I am out of town. Calls that come into the Hotline are routed to my cell phone when I am on duty. About half the calls I get are from people who are already familiar with AA and just need information on meeting times and locations. The other half are from people who have reached their bottom and are searching for a solution to their compulsion to drink. They want to stop drinking, but nothing they have tried has worked. They want to know if and how AA works. Having the opportunity to share part of my story with them and encourage them to get to a meeting ASAP is a great opportunity for me to carry the message to other alcoholics. Jerry C.

To volunteer for the Hotline: intergroup5.org

**Turn your Mess
Into your
MESSAGE**

Group Contributions - 2018

Apalachicola Bay Serenity	\$100.00
Bradfordville	\$175.00
Came to Believe	\$474.07
Capital City	\$250.00
Carrabelle	\$ 40.00
Central	\$3,000.00
Crawfordville	\$180.00
Living Sober	\$ 90.00
Lloyd	\$200.00
Killearn Men's	\$100.00
Men's Faith	\$350.00
Mustard Seed	\$120.00
Quincy 12 Steppers	\$ 86.00
Singleness of Purpose	\$127.00
<u>Southside</u>	<u>\$ 75.00</u>
Total Group Contributions -	\$5,367.92

(Donations of \$1,048.00 supported all events.) For more on Budget Items: intergroup5.org Jim S.

