



## ▲ A Life of Principles and Purpose

Rebuilding Our Morality, *By Rick R.*

The Twelve Steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous program, are placed in numerical order for a reason. Each step is preparatory to the next step. And, each step requires a certain amount of attention before we can successfully move on to the next step.

Simply put, Step One is acknowledging that we have a problem. Step Two is about accepting outside help. Step Three is where we surrender to that outside help (a power greater than ourselves). Step Four is the beginning of the action steps where we acknowledge and document the im-

moral behaviors of our past and those we offended. Step Five may be the most difficult step where we must admit to God, to our self and to another human being, all those faulty deeds and habits.

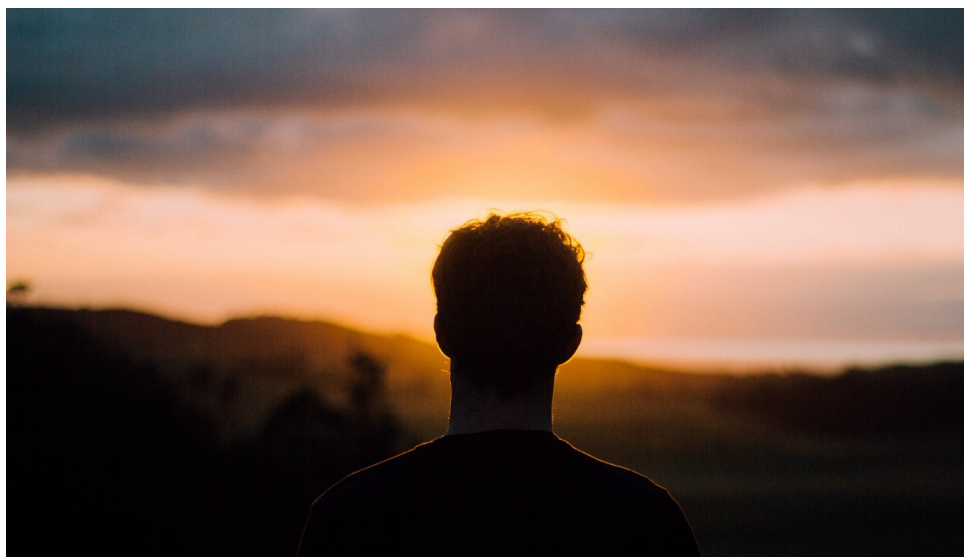
It was that “other human being” part that I found to be the most difficult thing and it delayed my progress for a short time. We cannot change one moment of the past, but we can change our habits and behavior as we begin our journey into the future and that is where Steps Six and Seven come in.

## President Johnson Appoints Marty M.

November 9, 1966



To the First National Advisory Committee on Alcoholism which advises and makes recommendations on research program and policy matters in the field of alcohol abuse and alcoholism.



The man I was will drink again.

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To simplify my understanding of these two steps it occurred to me that most of my faulty behaviors (shortcomings) are the result of my (defective) thinking. Once I discovered the defect in my motives, it was not too difficult to change my behaviors.

On the last page of Step Seven in the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions it says, "The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear." Most of my fears were of the irrational variety as I discovered that they stemmed from experiences in my youth that caused my fears and insecurity and to do things that were morally wrong.

Those actions were the shortcomings that stemmed from my irrational fears. Once I recognize the defect (fear), the Shortcomings (Behaviors) were much easier to change.

"Selfishness--Self-Centeredness! That we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of Fear, Self-Delusion, Self-Seeking, and Self-Pity, we step on the toes of our fellows, and they retaliate." (BB p 62)

If, in fact, Selfishness-Self-Centeredness is the root of our problems it is plain to see that Unselfishness just might be the solution to my problems. I could not have understood this line of thinking when I was still using alcohol to mask these problems.

I do not believe that I would have been strong enough to follow these guidelines had I not completed Step Five and admitted my fault to God, to myself, and to another human being. The proper completion of Step Five was the most humbling experience of my life, but it opened the door to the rest of the program.

Had I not done that I could never have taken my ego out of the game and the rest of the program may have been a shallow facade.

The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. Those words were put in place by the Co-founders of the program Alcoholics Anonymous and it gives each of its members the opportunity to choose their own degree of thoroughness when it comes to practicing the A.A. principles.

I am so thankful that I did not let my ego stand in the way of my spiritual development and all the progress that I have made in the program. I have experienced all the promises and I encourage anyone who is still caught up in the fear of Step Five to take the leap of faith, revisit it, get your ego out of the way, and clear your conscience.

We only live once, and it would be a shame to waste this precious gift.

## ▲ Hope

It is said that every alcoholic has his own rock bottom, his own gutter. I had watched my career, my profession and my health vanish without appreciable effort or anything except the increasing tempo of my drinking.

But one day, twenty-one years ago, I was ordered out of my home and family! My own mother had finally decided that I was useless and *unhelpable*. That was my particular gutter. Not until then had I been willing to face up to how far I had gone down in life.

It was this that brought me to A.A. No one led me there, I came to it myself. I came in desperation, without any hope of anything really happening. The best I expected was that I might possibly manage with its help to keep off another drunk until I had smoothed things out at home.

I was very sick, in the jitters and doped with drugs; mentally sick, confused, and unable to divorce my thoughts from drink; spiritually sick, for I no longer had any hope in anyone or anything, and no longer any faith in anyone, anything or any God.

Most of what I heard that night went in and came straight out again. I received a confused idea that all I had to do was to stay dry for one day, and that I should have to pray, what? Me? And that if I only came back to the next meeting all would be well.

No, it was what I saw that struck home to me. What happened that night to me was a rekindling of a spark of Hope. I heard men describe their drinking lives; I saw them! They were flesh and blood before me. They had had the jitters too. They too had taken those early morning walks to the market pubs, like me; they understood, as I hadn't been able to make anyone else understand, that men like me didn't go out to get drunk—it just happened!

They had been doing all the strange things that I was still doing; they had been thinking in the same crazy way that I was still thinking... and yet they had found a way to recover after all. There was hope for me! What they could do, perhaps I could do as well.

I walked home alone after that meeting, my mind racing and still confused. Now that I again was myself, I hardly dared to keep on hoping. For these others... yes, they had recovered. But for me,

how could it happen? I never had that kind of luck! Yet, that tiny voice of hope kept whispering “They did it... they could do it... why shouldn’t you... if you really try with them?”

That faint hope did keep me dry for the next few days to the next meeting. That same small little hope set me off on the way to recovery and happiness. That same hope can do as much for anyone else.

*Jackville O’C., Dublin, Ireland, Editor “Targets For Thought”  
Central Bulletin Archives, June 1968*

## ▲ Customs or Traditions

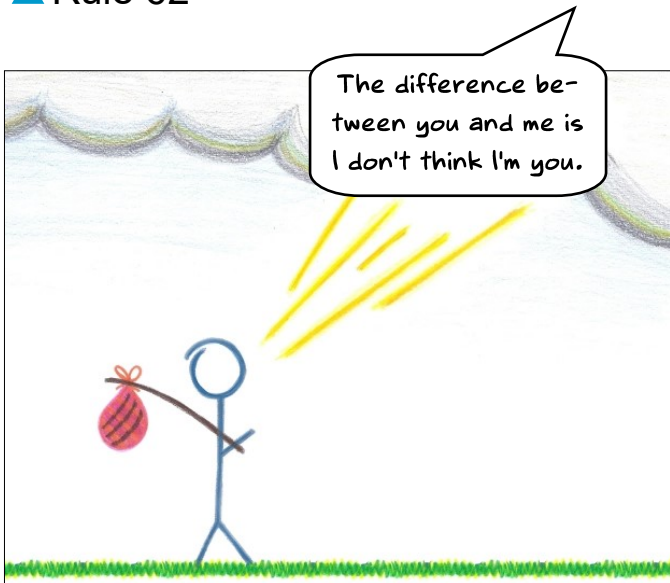
### Sometimes I Just Cringe

The 1960s reminded us that, “Things they are a-changin.” This theme still echoes into today’s AA meeting room customs. Some of these alterations have been beneficial, but in my somewhat-humble opinion—not all!

Of course, these are only customs, not Traditions, the fourth of which allows groups to do as they choose so long as not affecting other groups or AA as a whole.

Consequently, when old customs are cast aside by the new of which I believe detrimental to recovery, I remain silent. However, if I belong to that particular group, I may discuss my opinion at the next group conscience.

## ▲ Rule 62



Here are a few of the newer practices that cause me to cringe:

- When the chairperson ignores the readers name and instead announces: “I have asked a friend to read . . .”, etc. How impersonal is that! Are we just impersonal strangers?
- During the reading of Chapter Five at the beginning some members “call out.” (What’s the point, etc.). To newcomers the 12 Steps needs to be considered very important; such disruptive joking tends to diminish newcomer respect for the AA program.
- I believe the original opening readings are necessary, e.g., the Steps, Traditions and Promises. However, some meetings read, and read! Such over-reading destroys the intended message—too many words become a meaningless blur—besides, how boring!
- The practice of announcing as an “alcoholic and-a something else” is becoming increasingly prevalent—well, who isn’t! This practice dilutes our primary purpose. Alcoholic and-a jaywalker, indeed!
- Lastly, I cringe at the silly “chicken-dance and chanting” following the Lord’s Prayer. I believe this diminishes sincerity of this special prayer.

Of course, many groups still hang on to the old tried and successful customs and have not changed one iota. Thank you, God!

*By Bob S*

## ▲ A Quote

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### FROM MY SPONSOR

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“If we don't take a drink today,  
we'll never take a drink because  
it's always today.”

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Group Newsletter Inside

# November 2022

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For details or to add an event, call us at (216) 241-7387 or go online [aacle.org/events](http://aacle.org/events). Deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month for next issue.