



The Triangle

June 2018

6TH Step: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

6TH Tradition: An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

6TH Concept: The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the conference acting as the General Service Board.

Room to Grow

From the June 1999 magazine.

The way I read Step Six, Bill seems to be saying, "Don't be in too much of a hurry to get better." And the longer I'm sober, the clearer it becomes that I'm not really in charge of this getting better business any more than I was in charge of my drinking. Change is a mysterious and a complex process, however simple the AA program.

Because I'm retired with lots of time to spend, I go to a couple of Step meetings a week, and I do a lot of polite listening at them. I hear people talk about changes that sound so radical and complete in connection with Step Six that I really can't identify.

...continued on page 3

~ A.A. Needs Our Support! ~

Please use the following addresses – and don't forget your group's ID #

HMB District 9

P.O. Box 8112

Utica N.Y. 13505

HMB Area 48

118 Polar Plaza #114

Amsterdam N.Y. 12010

A.A. World Services

P.O Box 459

New York N.Y 10163

Looking for a meeting? Call our district's hotline: (315)226-3501

Announcements

June District Meeting: June 27th (Wed), 6:30pm at Our Savior Lutheran

Group Anniversary Dates: June

- Clinton Group – 6/1/74
- Outsiders Group – 6/1/08
- Just for Today Group – 6/9/89

Joy of Service Day: Saturday June 9th, 9am-3pm. First Reformed Church of Hudson, 52 Green Street, Hudson.

New York State Informational Workshop: Hosted by HMB Area 48. July 27-29, Mohawk Valley Community College, 1101 Sherman Dr, Utica. For registration information and buffet menu visit aahmbny.org/NYSIW/. Registration deadline is June 20th.

~ Does your home group want to make donations to the 2018 HMB Area 48 Convention? ~

Make checks payable to: HMB Area Convention

Bring it to the District Mtg or mail it to:

HMB Area Convention

P.O. Box 91

New Hartford N.Y. 13413.

Traditions Checklist – Tradition 6

1. Should my fellow group members and I go out and raise money to endow several AA beds in our local hospital?
2. Is it good for a group to lease a small building?
3. Are all the officers and members of our local club for AAs familiar with "Guidelines on Clubs" (which is available free from GSO)?
4. Should the secretary of our group serve on the mayor's advisory committee on alcoholism?
5. Some alcoholics will stay around AA only if we have a TV and card room. If this is what is required to carry the message to them, should we have these facilities?

...continued from page 1

In what sense can I claim to be "entirely ready" to have God remove all these defects of character if I don't even know what they are? The Big Book says that "more will be revealed." To me, this means that more will be revealed about me as I get to know myself.

I've been sober in AA for twenty-nine years, and I sometimes see things in my behavior that shock me. I'm often amazed to discover a defect that has been giving me trouble all my life but I hadn't seen it before. So how do I get to see my defects?

My experience is that these defects have to bother me before I even know they are there. It's a lot like the drinking: my behavior as an active alkie got other people's attention long before it got mine. But I didn't do anything about it until that drinking started to bother me. And it's been the same with my defects of character.

One of the really inspired things about the AA program is how beautifully interconnected the Steps are. We place a lot of importance on the order of the Steps, not because we take them in order but because it's an orderly program. A real conscious experience with Step Six is not possible for me without a conscious encounter with all the Steps that follow and come before it.

Take Eight and Nine: these Steps concern my personal relations, which the "Twelve and Twelve" says are the cause of nearly all my problems, including my alcoholism. How can I become willing to have God remove problems with personal relations before I know I have them? They are not just about me, they are me. Take these defects away and I don't know who I am anymore. Having

these things removed sounded to me like having your teeth out. What do you do when they're all gone?

Several things keep this imagined danger at a safe distance. First my defects are never all gone. "Desires can always be found which oppose the grace of God." And if this is a process, not an event resulting in perfection, then I can be sure that I'll be going through it for the rest of my life.

There's plenty of reason to think that this will be the case and plenty of reason to be glad that it will be. For one thing, I need never worry about getting bored, because there's nothing left to do. That I have defects of character makes me useful. Having to struggle against these means I have something to share with others.

But how do I even approach being entirely ready? The program is self-explaining, but I have to look at everything that's in it and not just excerpts. Our literature says that suffering is the touchstone of all growth. No pain, no gain. Because of defective human relations, I don't have attachments, I have adhesions. And in the grip of dependent relations I feel my humanity get squeezed. I suffer those excesses of negative emotion that the "Twelve and Twelve" talks about. I find out what it feels like not to have emotional sobriety. The questions posed at the beginning of Step Ten become suddenly relevant and important: "can we stay sober, keep in emotional balance, and live to good purpose under all conditions?"

My experience in AA tells me that the answer to the first question is yes, and the answer to the second is no. To the third, it depends on who you

ask. The willingness to change is something that comes and goes with me. Now I have it. Now I don't. Like faith, courage, hope, and all the other good things in the Promises, willingness comes and goes. Is there any reason to feel bad about this? I don't think so.

I don't believe I could have stayed sober had I known how far I had to go and how much I had to learn. It would have been overwhelming. And had it been a whole lot easier, it might have become boring. Nothing more to learn? No new horizons? And what about drama? Shouldn't there be a little drama in everyone's life? Had I come into AA and turned entirely ready, the way an apple turns red on the tree, what would there be left to do?

The "Twelve and Twelve" warns me that I can use this casual attitude to give myself an unlimited moral credit line in AA and put off looking at things that need fixing forever. But Step Seven tells me that I am going to ask God to remove these things--not that I am going to remove them myself.

I was at a Step meeting tonight, and the person I was talking to began to badmouth a man we both knew. I'm ashamed I didn't have the backbone to say, "You know, I really like this guy you're talking about. He's done a good job in AA and I don't want

to talk about him this way." That would have taken some spine on my part. But I would have felt better for having done it. And I might have helped my friend to take a look at this practice of "confessing the sins of others." It pained me when I got home to think of how easily I had wimped out and allowed this other AA to intimidate me into agreeing that someone needed to be slandered. Because it bothered me, I was entirely ready to have God remove this defect of character. And because I was entirely ready, I could humbly ask to have it removed. Was it removed like a bad tooth? Probably not. But maybe the next time I'll be able to act differently.

Step Twelve promises a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps. I believe I've had a number of awakenings. There's a connection between experience and learning, but it's not a direct connection. Somewhere in the process, I remain powerless over my defects but willing to be changed. As long as I'm not in charge of my recovery, God will always have more to do and I will always have more to look forward to.

-- Jim N.

West Springfield, Massachusetts

A Sixth Step Prayer

Dear God, I am ready for Your help
In removing from me the defects of
character Which I now realize are an
obstacle to my recovery.
Help me to continue being honest
with myself & Guide me toward
spiritual & mental health.