

News0777

Religion vs. Spirituality

Have you ever really thought about that? I never gave it any thought at all until I came in to sobriety. A friend in recovery said to me, "You need a personal relationship with God!" I thought to myself and said to them, "I already do!" I felt offended by the insinuation that somehow "I" was lacking in that area. I mean after all, I had grown up in the church, I had always believed in God and I had experienced Him in a very profound and personal way a short time before this conversation had taken place. Then my friend said something that jarred me to the core. He said, "If you had the type of relationship you think you have, you would have **never** relapsed." He went on to say, you have **got** to develop a level of intimacy with God that you had with the bottle." WOW!!!! Well as with everything

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Step Three

"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him ."

People talk about the third step and say, "I took my third step and turned my will and my life over to God." Or explain it to someone saying, "When you take your third step you turn your will and your life over to God." This simple switch in words changes the entire meaning of this step. This is proven by the amount of people who linger on step 3 for weeks and months at a time.

The third step does not say that we "turn our will and our lives over" in it. What it does say is that we made a decision to turn it over. Making a "decision" to turn something over and actually "turning it over" are two completely different things. When we look at the steps, it is clear to see that if the early AA's had intended for us to "turn it over" in step three, they would have written, "turned our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him." But they didn't say that, they simply said "made a decision". I have to follow that decision with "action." So when we look at step three, we don't need to stress out over the "action" of actually "turning over our will," we simply need to look at this: "I have admitted that I am powerless over the alcohol, my life is unmanageable and

Cont. pg. 3

Tradition Three:

" The only requirement for A. A. membership is a desire to stop drinking."

This Tradition is packed with meaning. For A. A. is really saying to every serious drinker, "You are an A.A. member if you say so. You can declare yourself in; nobody can keep you out. No matter who you are, no matter how low you've gone, no matter how grave your emotional complications—even your crimes—we still can't deny you A.A. We don't want to keep you out. We aren't a bit afraid you'll harm us, never mind how twisted or violent you may be. We just want to be sure that you get the same great chance for sobriety that we've had. So you're an A.A. member the minute you declare yourself." To establish this principle of membership took years of harrowing experience in our early time, nothing seemed so fragile, so easily breakable as an A.A. group. Hardly an alcoholic we approached paid any attention; most of those who did join us were like flickering candles in a windstorm. Time after time, their uncertain flames blew out and couldn't be re-lighted. Our unspoken, constant thought was "which of us may be the next?"

Twelve Steps
Twelve Traditions pg. 139

Donation Addresses

Please make donation checks payable to West Pasco Intergroup.

West Pasco/Tarpon Springs Intergroup
TREASURER

7121 US 19

New Port Richey, FL 34652

District 15 General Service

TREASURER
P.O. Box 692

Elfers, FL 34680-0692
Area 15 General Service

Area 15 Treasurer
PO Box 206

Bradenton, FL 34206
AA General Service

Office

PO Box 459
Grand Central Station
New York, New York 10163

"EACH MEMBER OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS IS BUT A SMALL PART OF A GREAT WHOLE. AA MUST CONTINUE TO LIVE OR MOST OF US WILL SURELY DIE. HENCE OUR COMMON WELFARE COMES FIRST. BUT INDIVIDUAL WELFARE FOLLOWS CLOSE AFTERWARDS."



as time went on, I came to understand this statement to truly have depth and merit.

You see, I had a very deep level of intimacy with my alcohol, I mean, my alcohol knew everything about me. It knew every success, every failure, every joy, every sorrow, every fear and every private detail of my life! There was absolutely nothing that my alcohol didn't know. There was no aspect of my life that alcohol wasn't a part of. I knew how to rely on it, because of the successful experiences I had with it.

When it came to God, I didn't really understand how to do that. All I had really understood at that point was to pray and that was pretty much it. I learned that what I really had was religion, a belief in God and a love for God. But what I did not have was a "personal relationship" with God to the level that I would have, say with a best friend.

What do I mean? Well, how does a person go from being an acquaintance to a true friend? It happens through a process of giving and receiving. By trusting them with something and seeing that they have your back. By them finding out the "not so pretty things about you" and seeing that they love and accept you just the same. By screwing up with them and seeing that they will forgive you and still be there. It takes time and experience for that type of relationship to develop.

Why would it be any different with God? I mean after all, He created me to be that way. Otherwise I would just go around blindly trusting every "Tom, Dick and Harry" that came along, probably getting hurt and ripped off daily! (No offense to Tom, Dick or Harry!) No, God gave me the ability to observe, weigh and measure, so as to make wise decisions and take healthy actions

Two things were explained to me:

a) Religion is man's "collective concept" of God. That's why there are so many. Even within each particular religion there is a breakdown, from the most liberal concepts to the most extreme. People have need to be able to spend time with those who share similar concepts and beliefs. b) Spirituality on the other hand, is man's "**personal relationship**" with god which can only come about by one's own **personal experiences**.

Now, can someone have religion and not have spirituality? (They are always a fun bunch of people to be around! Sarcasm intended!) Of course! Can someone have spirituality and not be involved in a particular religion? Absolutely! This is supported in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, when it says that, "We found that as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express even a **willingness to believe** in a Power greater than ourselves, we commenced to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, which is God." It goes on to say, "Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another's conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to affect a contact with Him."

So, there you have it. I found that "I" didn't have to figure out God. All "I" had to do was be willing to practice some principles. My friend said to me, "if you will simply work the 12 steps, this process will come about on its own!" This turned out to be true as well. The steps enable me to go through the process with God that I did with my best friend. Take a risk, get results, (i.e.—work the steps). After all, it is not until step 12 that the spiritual awakening is referred to in the "past tense" it says, "Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message alcoholics, and to practice these

principles in all of our affairs."

I am responsible for being willing, honest and open minded. I am responsible to take the action of working the steps. My **Creator** on the other hand, is responsible for all the rest. Otherwise, wouldn't it be easy to somehow take the credit for my life and sobriety, leading to the very sense of false pride, arrogance and self centeredness that got me into trouble to begin with?

Anonymous.



Coping with Stress in Recovery

Stress is simply a part of life that we can not ignore.

When we get sober, coping with stress is one of the many life skills we get to work on. As recovering individuals, our lives are filled with change. The obvious dramatic transition we make into sobriety can make many of us feel overwhelmed and stressed out. Some of us never learned how to deal with stressful situations in the first place. For many of us, getting too overwhelmed only contributed to the problem. Whatever the case may be, coping with stress is a valuable tool to familiarize ourselves with early on in recovery.

Activity at Central Office

Nightline calls.....59

Office calls.....103

Walk-ins.....69

Step Three cont.

Left in my hands it only seems to get worse. Based on these facts, am I or am I not ready to “decide” to do it differently and begin relying upon something greater than myself to make my life better?” Step three is simply about making that “decision” and following it up with the action of a simple prayer (3rd step prayer).

The actual “turning over of the will” occurs through the “action steps” that follow. It is not until Step 12 that the Spiritual Awakening is referred to in the past tense. It says: I can sit in my house and “make a decision” to go to the mall all day long, but I will never make it to the mall just because I make a “decision” in “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and practice these principles in all of our affairs.” It is not for me (my own ability) to bring about the spiritual awakening, or even the turning over of the will. It is the process of practicing spiritual principles (12 steps), and then both of these things occur on their own.

When practicing these principles, pride and ego should not enter in and cause me to think that “I” made myself better. Then, I miss out on the incredible miracle that has occurred in my life. Instead, I come to realize that my role was in exercising **willingness, honesty and open-mindedness**. “God” was the one that brought about the change. This then leads me to begin developing one of the most crucial attributes needed to sustain sobriety... humility.

Rebecca B

Hope Nourishes the Human Spirit



Jean Kerr said, "Hope is the feeling you have, that the feeling you have, isn't permanent." It is what we have when we know that we WILL eventually survive the night and bask in sunshine once again. It does not deny the present darkness, but it reminds us that dawn is coming.

Brigadier General Robinson Risner ("Robbie") spent seven years as a POW at the "Hanoi Hilton," as prisoners of war called their North Viet Nam compound. There he discovered the power of hope. He spent four and a half years of that time in isolation. He endured ten months of total darkness. Those ten months were the longest of his life. When they boarded up his little seven-by-seven foot cell, shutting out the light, he wondered if he was going to make it. He had already been under intense physical and mental duress after years of confinement. And now, not a glimmer of light shone into his cell -- or into his soul.

Robbie spent hours a day exercising and praying. But at times he felt he could nothing but scream. Not wanting to give his captors the satisfaction of knowing they'd broken him, he stuffed clothing into his mouth to muffle the noise as he screamed at the top of his lungs. One day Robbie got down on the floor and crawled under his bunk. He located a vent that let in outside air. As he pressed against the vent, he saw a faint glimmer of light reflected on the inside wall of the opening. Robbie put his eye next to the cement wall and

construction. It allowed him to glimpse outside, but was so small that all he could see was one blade of grass, this single blade of grass and a faint ray of light. As he stared at the sight, he felt a surge of joy, excitement and gratitude like he hadn't known in years. "It represented life, growth, and freedom," he later said, "and I knew God had not forgotten me." It was a tiny glimmer of hope that sustained Robbie through an **u n b e a r a b l e o r d e a l**.

The human spirit is strong. It seems to run forever on nothing but a morsel of hope. Without it, you have nothing. With it, nothing else matters.

Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age

Dr. Samuel Shoemaker's comments from the chapter: "Religion Looks at Alcoholics Anonymous" (page 266)

There are a lot of people who don't like the weakness that is implied in the word "surrender". I was deeply thankful to hear Dr. Tiebout use that word. People like to think they are strong characters who can take care of their own destinies. That is always fictitious thinking. Everybody in this world is some kind of weakling, and if he thinks he is not, then pride is his weakness, and that is the greatest form of weakness of all.

Fuel For Spirituality

Meditation is the driving force behind a relationship with a Higher Power. Learning to be still in the moment will reduce stress and strengthen your relationship with your Higher Power. This spiritual connection is vital for recovery from alcoholism.

BRIDGING THE GAP

Help bridge that precarious gap between a treatment center and the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous.

It works like this:

1. The potential AA calls the "Bridging the Gap" voice mail and leaves their name, phone number, gender, and zip code.
2. An assigned AA checks the voice mail each day and retrieves the messages.
3. They then pair up the potential AA with a "Volunteer AA" in their zip code with their matching gender on the "Bridging the Gap" Volunteer List.
4. The "Volunteer AA" receives a phone call notifying them of the information on the potential AA. They call the potential AA back and set up a time to meet when they get out.
5. The "Volunteer AA" takes them to their first outside meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous and introduces them to the fellowship in their area.

And like magic, the Gap is Bridged!
Call (727) 529-5100 or email btgpinellas@gmail.com

Treasurer's Report

January 2013

Beginning Balance.....\$2,485.80
Income\$2,709.40
Expenses \$2,434.41
Ending Balance \$2,760.79

REPRESENTED AT INTER-GROUP FEBRUARY 2013

Miracle Group
New Hope Beginners
Life Recovery
KIS Women's
Happier Hour
Bayou Group
Came To Believe
Tropical Attitudes
Wonderful Group
Two Or More

*PINELLAS BID FOR FCYPPA &
YOUNG SOBRIETY*
PRESENT:
SKATING WITH PINELLAS
SATURDAY MARCH 9, 2013
9PM - 1 AM
SPINNATION SKATING CENTER
8345 CONGRESS ST.
PORT RICHEY
PRE-SALE TIX \$8.00
\$10.00 AT THE DOOR
MEET AT THE YOUNG SOBRIETY MEETING AT 9:00 PM LOCATED AT 7121 U.S. HWY 19 NEW PORT RICHEY AND CARAVAN TO THE SKATING EVENT AFTER!
ANY QUESTIONS CONTACT BRYAN T. @ 727-409-5784
Looking forward to seeing everyone there!

OPEN HOUSE

Sponsored by
WPTSA Intergroup
Saturday April 6, 2013
10:30 to whenever



Come join us for
Hot dogs, drinks and fellowship
soft
Central Office
7121 US 19
New Port Richey

IT WORKS IT REALLY DOES!!!

CELEBRATING THIS MONTH:

NEW HOPE BEGINNERS

BOB W 39
CHUCK S 39
MIKE H 2

TWO OR MORE

JEAN S. 24

SERENITY GROUP

PAT H. 44

AA WAY

ROGER R. 14
JOHN M. 14

HOOT N HOLLER

ED M. 10
JACOB P. 5

KIS WOMENS

LINDA O .26
DONNA W. 24
CAROL K 11

LIFE GOES ON

ANDREW A. 11

3 & 11 STEPS

FRANK F 3

4TH DIMENSTION

JOE H. 9
CHRIS K. 4
CHRIS B. 2

DAWN L. 1

5

TROPICAL ATTITUDES

JERRY R. .26
ALICE AH. 24
PASCO BB 11

LISA G.

ROSANN K. 11

GLORIA H.

DONNA MAC 3

CYNTHIA S.

RICARDO 9

PASCO BB (FEB) 4

DEB F. 2

CHUCK E. 1

SCOTT R.

JOSEPH F. 16

41 ROBBIE J. 8

20 ROBIN M. 4

RODNEY T. 3

24 TRACEY H. 2

18 **PASCO BB (JAN)**

8 GORD H. 44

7 DAVID S. 26

4 RICH A. 14

1 ROBIN MC. 14

DAVID S. 13

30 CARTER H. 10

23 DANIEL C. 5

21

To update your group anniversary list email to: igu50@yahoo.com Subject: Anniversaries (please include last initials when possible). You can submit lists for the entire year. Thank you for your support.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Non AA Events listed here are presented solely as a service to readers, not as an endorsement by the Newsletter Committee or General Service Office. For any additional information, please use the addresses provided.

Items and Ideas on Area Gatherings for A.A.s—

Mar. 5: District 15 Corrections & Public Info/-CPC Committees both meet at Central Office, 7121 US 19, NPR. 12:00 noon. Members are needed.

Mar. 9: Hernando Unity Meeting 7:30-9 pm, Nativity Lutheran Church, 6363 Commercial Way (US 19), Spring Hill. Doors open at 6:30 pm.

Mar. 12: Treatment Committee meeting 6:30 pm, 7119 U. S. Hwy. 19, New Port Richey.

Mar. 13: WPTSAA Intergroup meeting, 6:30 pm, Central Office, 7121 US 19, NPR. **Send a representative of your group.**

Mar. 16: Unity Meeting, 7 PM Redeemer Community Church, 9230 Ridge Rd. NPR, 1 mile E. of Little Rd., S. side. Host: . Two speakers, fellowship, snacks. Doors open at 6:30.

Mar. 19: District 15 Committee meeting, 6:30 pm, Central Office, 7121 U. S. 19 NPR. Come & learn. Each group should be represented. All AAs welcome.

Mar. 28 Pasco Big Book monthly Eating Meeting at 7 pm, followed by member anniversaries speakers meeting at 8 pm. Edna Ave. Club, 7137 Edna Ave., Hudson. "Bring a dish if you can."

Future Events

March 1-3, 2013: Suwannee Big Book Weekend, The Conference and Retreat Center, Dowling Park, FL. In depth study of the first one-hundred sixty four pgs. Of the Big Book. David Hollister 727-204-6444/ suwaneebigbook@yahoo.com

March 16, 2013 : District 15 Silver Anniversary (Fun-Raiser/dinner \$12 at St. Thomas Aquinas, Old 54 NPR doors open at 1:30, speaker at 3:00 dinner at 4:00. Tickets call Marguerite (727) 729-3699 Volunteers needed call Dena (631) 523-3616 Speaker: Clark D. from Punta Gorda a past delegate from Alaska.

March 15-17, 2013: Annual Sober stock, three days of meetings, workshops, music and free food in a camping setting, 16901 Boy Scout Rd. Odessa, FL
<http://soberstock.com>

May 24-27, 2013: Summer Kickoff Classic, St. Petersburg, FL. Speakers, workshops, entertainment, Hilton St.

July 24-28, 2013: 57th Florida State Convention, 225 East Coastline Drive, Jacksonville, FL, 32202,
<http://57.flstateconvention.com>

Elsewhere Around the Globe



March 22-24: Quest Retreat, St. Leo Abbey. AA, Al-Anon. \$147 includes 2-person room, meals, meditation lesson. Will repeat on Oct. 11-13.

www.questretreat.org

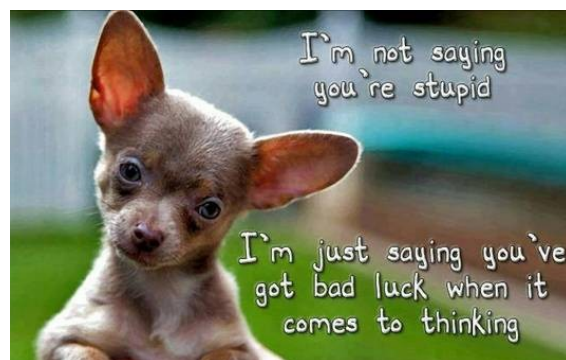
April 13, 2013: Open House, 7121 U. S. 19, New Port Richey, 34652, come join us for hot dogs, soft drinks, fellowship and some history about the AA community.

April 27, 2013: Attitude of Gratitude Cruises Jewel of the Seas, Cozumel and Key West, Cruising with other "friends of Bill" aboard the best ships in the Caribbean, multiple daily meetings, travel and fellowship with a sober group. More info: www.goallouttravel.com/Gratitude_Cruises.php

June 21-23, 2013: A Spiritual Weekend, 78th Anniversary of Alcoholics Anonymous with Sandy B., Tampa, FL and Bob B., St. Paul, MN, Hilton Airport West shore, 2225 N. Lois Ave, Tampa, FL 33607. Call Lee Y. 407.333.4330 or email: gyeldell@cfl.rr.com

Sept. 6-8, 2013: Sisters by the Sea, Waldorf Astoria, Naples, 475 Seagate Drive, Speaker Meetings, Open Discussion Meeting, Workshops, Ask It Basket, featuring Polly P. from Jacksonville, FL. Info: Peggy 239-269-7654.

The Newsletter Committee is soliciting info about any AA Activities; group events, dances, picnics etc.



Submit info by 20th of the month prior to publication to:

igu50@yahoo.com

Subject: Newsletter

Or deliver or mail to: Attn: Newsletter Editor
West Pasco/Tarpon Springs Intergroup
7121 US 19, New Port Richey, FL. 34652

Please keep in mind the seventh tradition: Every A. A. group ought to be fully self supporting, declining outside contributions. That means Central Office is supported by your group contributions. Thanks for your support!

GROUP DONATIONS	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	OCT	NOV	DEC	TOTAL
1001 Reasons													\$0.00
2 For 1 Women's Step													\$0.00
3 & 11 Group	20.00												\$20.00
4th Dimension													\$0.00
7 & Up Group	100.00												\$100.00
24 Hour Group	5.00												
A Club 12 & 12													\$0.00
A Club Beginner's Meeting													\$0.00
A Club Big Book													\$0.00
A Club Morning Step Group													\$0.00
A Club Saturday AM Big Book													\$0.00
A Club Sunday AM Gratitude	100.00												\$100.00
AA Way Group													\$0.00
Amazing Grace													\$0.00
Anonymous		0.75											\$0.75
Aripeka													\$0.00
As Bill Saw It		25.00											\$25.00
Ask It Basket													\$0.00
Back to Basics													\$0.00
Bayou Group													\$0.00
Black Book	13.00												\$13.00
Brown Baggers		20.00											\$20.00
Came to Believe													\$0.00
Candlelight Beginners													\$0.00
Central Office Noon Meetings	188.85	23.00											\$211.85
Cotee River Young People													\$0.00
Daily Reflection		10.00											\$10.00
Discover the Truth													\$0.00
District 15	474.00												\$474.00
Each Day a New Beginning													\$0.00
Easier Softer Way													\$0.00
Friday Night Men's Group													\$0.00
Grapevine Meeting													\$0.00
Happier Hour													\$0.00
Happy Joyous & Free													\$0.00
Hoot n Holler Group													\$0.00
How Important Is It	180.00												\$180.00
In the Beginning													\$0.00
Intergroup AA Meeting													\$0.00
Intergroup	27.00	16.00											\$43.00
James Gang													\$0.00
KIS Women's Group		70.00											\$70.00
Life Discussion													\$0.00
L.I.F.E. Recovery													\$0.00
Let's Get Better Together													\$0.00
Living Sober Group	20.00												\$20.00
Miracle Group													\$0.00
MISC.		11.50											\$11.50
Monday Night Big Book													\$0.00
Morning Inventory													\$0.00
New Hope Beginners	35.00												\$35.00
New Life Group													\$0.00
Noon High	48.32												\$48.32
Not a Glum Lot													\$0.00
NPR KISS Group	10.00												\$10.00
Primary Purpose	20.00	30.00											\$50.00
Pasco Big Book	120.00												\$120.00
Serenity Group		75.00											\$75.00
Sober Not Dead		62.25											\$62.25
Thursday Noon													\$0.00
Thursday 12 & 12													\$0.00
Tropical Attitudes	60.00												\$60.00
Tuesday's Children		21.00											\$21.00
Two or More	61.00												\$61.00
Unity Meeting	22.50	28.00											\$50.50
Why It Works		50.00											\$50.00
Wonderful Step Group													\$0.00
Young Sobriety		20.00											\$20.00
TOTAL:	1,504.67	462.50	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	\$1,962.17

Any groups who mail in your contributions, please remember to put the group name on the check or money order.