

Victor Valley Intergroup, Central Office, Inc.
18888 Highway 18, Suite 107
Apple Valley, CA 92307
Telephone: 760-242-9292; Email: vvigco_aa@yahoo.com;
Web site: www.victorvalleyaa.org



Step Two

Came to Believe that a Power Greater than Ourselves Could Restore Us to Sanity

We can embark upon Step Two only after the following conditions have been met:

1. Our complete defeat over alcohol has been realized.
2. We recognize that the life entrusted to us has become an overwhelming shambles due to our powerless state of existence.

One would think that these conditions were self-evident. A cursory survey of the debris left in the wake of our devastation; splintered families, razed careers, and wrecked friendships should stand as a testament to our misshapen character. Step One has revealed our complete helplessness. Step Two begins to address, and indeed provide the tools to solve our problem. Now that we have been boxed into a corner, there is only one place to turn: a Power greater than ourselves.

Upon examination of the Second Step of our journey, we turn back towards the words, and the spirit, of the instruction: what Power, exactly, and why do we need it? The text is very explicit about what kind of Power, but not about what form this Power shall take. The only condition here is that we come to believe that this Power is greater than us, and that it will restore us to sanity. Again, we are immediately confronted with the unthinkable: if I need to be restored to sanity, then that must mean I am insane. There is no other conclusion. Either we accept this as fact or crawl back to our blurred realities in the dungeons of the tyrant—King Alcohol. The spirit of Step Two is revealed in the Power we will come to rely upon for our very lives. It will restore our sanity, because we have been rendered helpless. A further dissection of Step Two brings out into the open that this Power must be rational. If we cannot transmit something we do not possess, then the Power that rebuilds our san-

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Tradition Two

“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

Our A.A. experience has taught us that:

Two—For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.

via, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

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Now let us think about Tradition Two: *“For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”* We A.A.’s have learned this principle the hard way. Few obstacles have been tougher to remove than those which blocked the way to realization that A.A.’s group conscience can be the only ultimate authority in our affairs.

I expect that many and old-time still does not believe this proposition. He feels that he is older and more experienced than recent generations of A.A.’s and that it was his guidance and leadership that brought them into the new life. We oldsters often construed our longer experience as a sort of vested right, even an unlimited license, to run A.A. indefinitely. Whenever we got sick, tired, or old, we naturally thought our selves entitled to hand-pick our own successors. Who could know better than we?

But with the passage of time most of us came up against some hard facts of A.A. life. We ruefully discovered that the groups, no matter how much they liked and respected us, simply did not want us to be the self-appointed managers of their service and policy affairs

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*Step Two**(Continued from page 1)*

ity must be sane. It has reason. It is whole and unbroken. If we are to be restored; it does not follow that anything less than a rational, creative Power accomplish this work. The essence of Step Two in our recovery is that a doorknob, a willow tree, a light bulb, the A.A. group, or a sponsor cannot restore us to sanity. We require this Power to fulfill both criteria: a native capacity beyond human abilities and the intelligence to reinstate sanity. Nothing less will reform our warped lives. Nothing less can.

Having entirely completed Step Two, with all of its tents, where does the path lead? The text is very clear about where the next Step will lead us. It specifically directs us to that which will become the wellspring of our experience, strength, and hope. It directs us toward a Power we will come to know as God.

Submitted by,  
James J., Apple Valley, CA

*Tradition Two**(Continued from page 1)*

forever. Neither would they let us pick our own successors to do the job for them. They wanted to name their own service committees. Again and again they showed us that the ultimate authority must speak through the groups. For some us this was tough to take.

*Via, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, pg. 98—99*

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## A Beginner's Humility

I looked around the noon Attitude Adjustment meeting in Quartz Hill, CA, not recognizing a soul, yet feeling right at home. Thinking it would be “just another meeting,” I didn’t foresee the revelation [that was] about to happen, or realize that I sported an attitude that needed adjusting. When the “chip chick” asked if there were any newcomers or folks attending this meeting for the first time, I raised my hand and introduced myself. I was first shocked and then chagrined to see her bustling towards me holding out a shiny, silver newcomer’s chip, like it was adhesive and she was going to stick

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The Osmosis Plan [for sobriety] doesn't work anymore than sitting in a chicken coop for 90 days will make you a chicken.

## Quotes

*Happiness is when what you think, what you say, and what you do are in harmony.*

*Whatever you do may be insignificant, but it is very important that you do it.*

*Freedom is not worth having if it does not include the freedom to make mistakes.*

*The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong.*

*Fear is not a disease of the body; fear kills the soul.*

*Honest differences are often a healthy sign of progress.*

*You must not lose faith in humanity. Humanity is as ocean; if a few drops of the ocean are dirty, the ocean does not become dirty.*

*It is unwise to be too sure of one's own wisdom. It is healthy to be reminded that the strongest might weaken and the wisest might err.*

*Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever.*

*Author: Mahatma Gandhi*

*Via, Duffy's Napa Valley — Hummer*

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## The Cookie Lady

I was so scared when I attended my first meeting. I was one of only a handful of females in the room, and by far the youngest. I was 19 years-old, and had already had a difficult life behind me. I’d lost the good home I’d had with my foster family due to my drinking when I was 18.

I was 88 minutes late to a 90-minute meeting; I arrived at the closing.

The secretary mad and announcement: “If you do not want to drink anymore, then see me. We have the coffee and cookie position open – the cookie lady is resigning.” For a fleeting moment it crossed my muddled mind to ask what coffee and cookies could possibly have to do with not drinking. Yet the man seemed sincere.

He then led the closing prayer. Somebody caught my hand. Tears ran down my face, and I didn’t know why. All I knew was that I had experienced something. After a moment, I pulled myself together and approached that man who had offered a “coffee and cookies” solution to my drinking

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## One Day at a Time

The greatest *joy*—**giving**  
 The greatest *loss*—**loss of self-respect**  
 The most *satisfying work*—**helping others**  
 The ugliest *personality trait*—**selfishness**  
 The most *endangered species*—**dedicated leaders**  
 The greatest *shot in the arm*—**encouragement**  
 The greatest *problem to overcome*—**fear**  
 The most *effective sleeping pill*—**peace of mind**  
 The most *crippling failure disease*—**excuses**  
 The most *powerful force in life*—**love**  
 The most *dangerous pariah*—**a gossip**  
 The world's most *incredible computer*—**the brain**  
 The worst *thing to be without*—**hope**  
 The *deadliest weapon*—**the tongue**  
 The two most *power-filled words*—**I can**  
 The *greatest asset*—**faith**  
 The most *worthless emotion*—**self-pity**  
 The most *prized possession*—**integrity**  
 The most *beautiful attire*—**a smile**  
 The most *powerful channel of communication*—**prayer**  
 The most *contagious spirit*—**enthusiasm**  
 The most *important state of being*—**sober**  
 The most *important thing in life*—**God**

*Via, the Internet*

## December and January H & I Donations

The sole purpose of the High Desert H & I Committee is to carry the message of Alcoholics Anonymous to those who are confined and cannot attend *outside* A.A. meetings. Our committee members carry the A.A. message by distributing literature and sharing their personal stories with patients or inmates.

Your financial support is needed to continue this vital 12<sup>th</sup> Step Work. The H & I Committee is entirely supported through *your* donations. Your donations cover the cost of literature our members distribute at H & I Panel meetings. Thanks to the groups and individuals listed below for supporting our commitment to carry the A.A. message.

|                 |          |
|-----------------|----------|
| SNCG            | \$254.26 |
| Tumbleweed      | \$166.45 |
| The Place       | \$ 34.07 |
| Primary Purpose | \$104.69 |
| H.U.G.          | \$ 20.00 |
| Dog Town        | \$ 10.00 |

H & I needs more volunteers who would like to carry the .A.A message to those confined. The Committee meets every 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday of the month, except July and December, at the Alano Club on Central Road in Apple Valley, at 6:30 p.m.

Yours in service—High Desert H & I Committee

problem.

It seemed almost too easy to be true, but I was desperate. Just 24 hours earlier, I had struggled with how to end my drinking problem and the only real answer seemed to be to end my life.

Everything happened so fast. The man at the podium again assured me that the “coffee and cookies” commitment would keep me sober. Before I knew it, I was walking home with a key to the doors of A.A.

I was terrified all week. I couldn't drink or kill myself, because those people were depending on me to open the doors and get the coffee going before next Thursday's meeting. Later, I learned that I was not the only key holder, and that there was a backup plan.

The outgoing coffee and cookie lady became my first sponsor, and I attended a lot of meetings.

I struggled greatly over the idea of admitting to myself that I was an alcoholic. I admitted that I had a drinking problem, yet I thought that I was too young to be an alcoholic. The thought was overwhelming. I followed the other members' advice and acted as if I were one until I know for sure.

When I least expected it, God intervened. During a meeting, I had a very clear thought: I'm not too young to be in the graveyard. All of a sudden, it made sense to me that I was not too young to be and alcoholic.

Obviously, there is more to the recipe for sobriety than just “coffee and cookies.” Yet, I am so glad that the secretary of that first meeting exaggerated a little when he promised me that being the coffee and cookie lady would keep me sober. As it turned out, I have been sober since then, and will soon celebrate 24 years. I have had the gift of being able to grow up in A.A.

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it on my forehead! I stood mortified, not hugging back, as she enveloped me, the newcomer, in a welcoming bear hug.

I'd been sober four years, a dedicated member attending a thousand meetings, sponsee, sponsor, GSR, District secretary; the list goes on and on and on, *ad infinitum* (*ad nauseous* is a better description). In the few short seconds it took her to cross the room and hug the breath out of me, I'd formulated my rebuttal and prepared by defense, that a newcomer's chip was beneath me, a stalwart member in above-average standing. And I'd just opened my mouth to say as much when she indicated that it was their practice to give newcomer's chips to *both* those alcoholics with less than thirty days sobriety *and* those visitors fellowshipping with them for the first time. Thank God she didn't ask me how I did it!

I felt flushed with embarrassment, grateful that I hadn't (once again) opened-mouth-and-inserted-foot, thankful for one more revelation why *Keep Coming Back*, even for us cocky toddlers, is so important. After I settled down, I discreetly substituted my four-year-chip with the shiny newcomer's chip in the small plastic window of my Big Book cover to remind me that maintaining "newcomer humility" in A.A. is essential for so long as I remain a sober member, whether that be a day or sixty years. I've come to appreciate the wisdom of maintaining childlike humility and gratitude just for today. As my friends in Clifton Forge, Virginia are fond of saying: Don't get too many years and not enough days!

Submitted by,  
Ed L., Wrightwood, CA

## Upcoming Events

**March 11—13, 2011 at the Ambassador Hotel, Victorville, CA, the 27th Annual Sunshine of the Spirit High Desert A.A. Convention with Alanon Participation. For more information call Matt N. at 760-267-0512 or Jeff L. at 760-596-8846 For more Alanon information call Loreina C. at 760-559-1881.**

**March 26, 2011 Ride to Recovery. Early registration ends Mar. 10, 2011. Flyers and registration forms available at Central Office or online at [www.victorvalleyaa.org](http://www.victorvalleyaa.org). Or for more information call Lloyd R. at 760-964-9586.**

## Directory Changes

### BARSTOW

Time change

Sunday Prayer and Meditation meets at 8:30 a.m., **not** 8:00 a.m. (B1)

Delete

Tuesday 12X12 at B1

### HESPERIA

Saturday Candlelight Meeting is now a **Closed Meeting (cl)**

### WRIGHTWOOD

Time change

Thursday's meeting is at 6:00 p.m, **not** 6:30 p.m. and is "As Bill Sees It."

## And Finally . . .

A man and his wife were awakened at 3:00 a.m. by a loud pounding on the door. The man gets up and goes to the door where a drunken stranger, standing in the pouring rain, is asking for a push.

"Not a chance," says the husband, "it is 3:00 in the morning!" He slams the door and returns to bed.

"Who was that?" asked his wife.

"Just some drunk guy asking for a push," he answers.

"Did you help him?" she asks.

"No, I did not! It is 3:00 in the morning, and it's pouring rain out there!"

"Well, you have a short memory," says his wife. "Can't you remember about three months ago when we broke down and those two guys helped us? I think you should help him, and you should be ashamed of yourself! God loves drunk people, too."

The man does as he is told, gets dressed and goes out into the pounding rain. He calls out into the dark, "Hello, are you still there?"

"Yes," comes back the answer.

"Do you still need a push?" the husband calls out.

"Yes, please!" comes the reply from the dark.

"Where are you?" asks the husband.

"Over here on the swing set," replied the drunk.