

THE TRUDGE

A photograph of three people walking away from the camera down a snowy path in a forest. The person on the left is wearing a green jacket, yellow pants, and a backpack. The person in the middle is wearing a brown jacket and black pants. The person on the right is wearing a tan jacket, blue pants, and black boots. The forest is filled with tall, thin trees, some of which are covered in snow. The ground is a smooth, white snow path.

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Editor's Letter

In this issue of The Trudge, we're diving deep into the concept of Steps 5 and 6, themes that felt especially relevant as we navigated our program of recovery. We're thrilled to bring you powerful recovery content from the fellowship of our AA members. Overcoming adversity and using the power of the program, The Trudge shows a stunning and captivating example of the AA spirit.

As always, our incredible team poured their hearts into this edition. A special shout-out to our awesome members who helped create this edition and thank you to everyone who sent in there submissions. The fellowship brings a vibrant vision to life and thank you to our dedicated writers for their sharp insights. We hope these pages inspire you, challenge you, and offer a moment of AA connection.

– Harold S. (Boston, MA)

aaHG Communication & Literature Chair



The Importance of Me Completing Step 5

— G.

After seven years of writing inventory, I wanted to share how I work my step 5 & 6 and the notes that I have written in my Big Book. This is where I usually find awareness in my sobriety from alcohol.

We avoid retaliation or argument. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. We cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one.

Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other man's. When we saw our faults we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.

Notice that the word "fear" is bracketed alongside the difficulties with Mr. Brown, Mrs. Jones, the employer, and the wife. This short word somehow touches about every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion trains of circumstances which brought us misfortune we felt we didn't deserve. But did not we, ourselves, set the ball rolling? Sometimes we think fear ought to be classed with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble.

We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them. Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? Self-reliance was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough. Some of us once had great self-confidence, but it didn't fully solve the fear problem, or any other. When it made us cocky, it was worse.

Perhaps there is a better way—we think so. For we are now on a different basis; the basis of trusting and relying upon God. We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. We are in the world to play the role He assigns. Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity.

Alcoholics Anonymous, *How It Works*, pp. 67–68.
All excerpts are from Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition.

I start by keeping my 4th column in mind — the part I played leading up to the resentment:

~~“We avoid~~ **I DON'T SHARE** ~~retaliation or argument. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we~~ **EVERY TIME I** ~~do, we~~ **I** ~~destroy our~~ **MY** ~~chance of being...”~~

~~“Referring to our list~~ **INVENTORY** ~~again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done~~ **1ST COLUMN,** ~~we resolutely looked for our own~~ **PART LEADING UP TO THESE** ~~mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved~~ **1ST COLUMN** ~~entirely. Where were we to blame~~ **WAS MY PART?** ~~The inventory was ours, not the other man's. When we saw our faults we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white~~ **4TH COLUMN.** ~~We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing~~ **ARE** **CONSIDERING** ~~to set these matters straight.”~~

.....

I know who's in my 1st column, and the cause. My 3rd column, harms, needs to be given to God instead of my 1st column:

*"Notice that the word "fear" is bracketed alongside ~~the~~ **THE AGNOSTIC** difficulties with Mr. Brown, Mrs. Jones, the employer, and the wife. This short word somehow touches about every ~~aspect~~ **MOMENT** of ~~our lives~~ **MY DAY**. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion ~~trains of~~ **USING** circumstances..."*

*"...Wasn't it because ~~self-reliance~~ **AVOIDING THESE FEARS** failed us? ~~Self-reliance~~ **AVOIDING THESE FEARS** was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough..."*

*"...Just to the extent that we ~~do as~~ **DO FOR OTHERS AS** we think He would have us..."*

.....
My 3rd column is my fear inventory, still keeping my 4th column in mind:

*"We reviewed our ~~fears~~ **3RD COLUMN** thoroughly. We ~~put~~ **WROTE** them on ~~paper~~ **A NEW PAGE**, even though we had no ~~resentment~~ **1ST OR 2ND COLUMN** in connection with them. We asked ourselves why ~~we had them~~ **DO I FEAR THIS**. Wasn't it because ~~self-reliance~~ **AVOIDING FEAR** failed us? ~~Self-reliance~~ **AVOIDING FEAR** was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough.*

Some of us once had great self-confidence, but it didn't fully solve the fear problem, or any other. When it made us cocky, it was worse."

.....
Breaking down my fear inventory I find "I am nothing". I'm a resentful person. When I am happy, someone else is resentful at me. (It just happens) I used to do my 5th Step in the meeting, keeping me miserable. Didn't work for me, but I only tried over and over.

I always end up finding some importance in the way a person will look at me and think of me. I go through this every day. My agnostic part. I end up waiting to be accepted by others. Leaving me open to being knocked down, kicked, or worse. Lasting days, weeks, months, can last years.

*“Notice that the word “fear” is bracketed alongside **the THE AGNOSTIC** difficulties with Mr. Brown, Mrs. Jones, the employer, and the wife. This short word somehow touches about every **aspect MOMENT** of ~~our lives~~ **MY DAY**. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion ~~trains~~ **A USE OF** circumstances...”*

*“...Just to the extent that we ~~do as~~ **DO FOR OTHERS AS** we think He would have us...”*

.....

My 5th step in any meeting is my agnostic part wanting the meeting to accept my harms as valid so I can feel sober. Where I abandon my self to start another 4th Step. Then I do it again, and again.

A sponsor gives me constructive criticism without any group. I’m seeking refuge in a meeting. Spiritual growth. A sponsor keeps me on track with the 7th Step prayer.

MOVING INTO SIXTH STEP:

Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand?

If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all—every one? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.

Alcoholics Anonymous, Into Action, pp. 75-76.

My fear inventory broke down to “I am nothing”. Why I am nothing? I cannot find a way to be accepted in the group. My agnostic part becomes purpose of living. (I’m not heard; I feel threatened; my sobriety isn’t safe; ad infinitum) My harms return. I give them back to my 1st column by just remembering them.

“...Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the ~~page~~ **PAGE 59** which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five ~~proposals~~ **STEPS** we ask if we have ~~omitted~~ **AVOIDED** anything, for we are ~~building~~ **BUILDING WITH STEP 3** an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the ~~stones~~ **PROMISES** properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand? **SATISFIED WITH ONLY READING THE BIG BOOK WITHOUT SERVICE, OR SATISFIED WITH ONLY SERVICE, WITHOUT READING THE BIG BOOK?**”

“...Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things **FEARS** which we have admitted are objectionable?...”

“...If we still cling to something **SOME STATE OF MIND** we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing...”

I am entirely ready to have God remove all these (pride; wrath) defects of character. A sponsor helps me stay grounded in my conception of Truth.

Humility allows awareness. The sunlight of the spirit. Applying myself, committing myself to self-sacrifice how I want to feel, separates this sunlight from the darkness of obsession. Otherwise, how could I accept the 7th Step prayer as Truth. For I am building on a 3rd Step prayer, an arch through which I will walk a free man at last

(This is just me sharing how I work my step five and six. This is not as direction or advice on how to do any part of steps 5 or six. This is just where I found myself.)

Thank you, aaHomeGroup.



Humility is the first step towards learning. You can't learn until you are humble enough to realize there is something for you to learn.

Robert T. Kiyosaki

quoteandyou

I Walked This Road Alone

– Anonymous

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I looked right, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I looked left, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I looked back, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I looked up, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I couldn't think, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I couldn't get out of bed, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I couldn't take a step, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I couldn't leave my house, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I couldn't breathe, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I couldn't talk, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I got angry, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I got hurt, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone,
but when I opened my eyes, you were there.

I thought I walked this road alone
but when I hit my knees, you were there.

I know I don't walk this road
alone because you are there.
WE don't walk this road alone
because you are always there.

Thank you to my sponsor, aaHG, and Alcoholics Anonymous

Step 5 Word Find

Find the words printed in **bold**

Admitted to **God**, to **ourselves**, and to another **human** being the **exact nature** of our *wrongs*. (p.55)

When it comes to **ego deflation**, few **Steps** are **harder** to **take** than **Five**. (p.56)

Few **muddled attitudes** have **caused** us **more trouble** than **holding back** on Step Five. (p.56)

...**relief never** came by **confessing** the sins of **other people**.
Everybody had to **confess** his **own**. (p.57)

...**without** a **fearless admission** of our **defects** to **another** human **being** we could not **stay sober**. (p.57)

Almost without **exception**, **alcoholics** are **tortured** by **loneliness**. (p.57)

Step Five was the **answer**. It was the **beginning** of **true kinship** with **man** and **God**. (p.57)

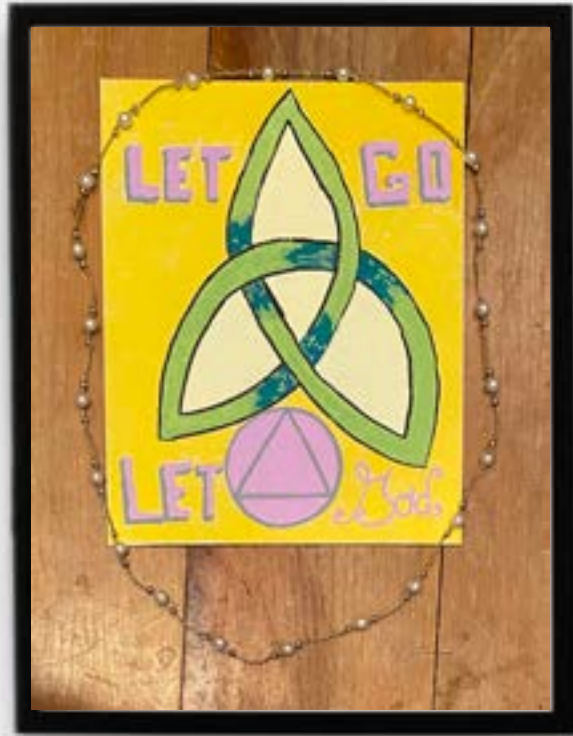
...it was **only** when we **resolutely tackled** Step Five that we **inwardly knew** we'd be **able** to **receive forgiveness** and give it, too. (p.58)

No **defect** can be **corrected** unless we **clearly** see what it is. (p.58)

When we are **honest** with another **person**, it **confirms** that we have been honest with ourselves and with God. (p.59)

As the **pain subsides**, a **healing tranquility** takes its **place**. (p.62)

C E H T R O T U O H T I W A J E L G O I M D A R E
G Q U I L E E F U H A F I R E W S N A U A N L D E
J E M R O H L B R I S V E T G K O H E H N O M T E
A T T I T U D E S H T O O T A I C L M O E R O C C
Q L E R L T Y G O M C H U P S F E A R L E S S D A
C D P I H S N I K A E F G S L Y H S B D K H T G L
O X C O M O T N E O F X I R B E M U S I D U O R P
N A T U R E A N F R E M A N V B O L K N C A S E D
F L A W H E N I G E D E R R I R N G A G O N S S W
E C L Y I Z J N B A D M I T T E D G I O N A L O N
S O U R M L F G Y D E H Y T X I E D R Z O M A L T
S H T L C L I M B M L E I A D C F Y E N O U Q U O
I O T A S C A U S E D U C K R Y L T V R B H O T R
N L K D C L S M Q E D T F E L B A I E M I N B E T
G I V M A K D S F G U R M X H K T L N A W J H L U
Q C J D E F L P E Q M A Y A K O I I P D A T E Y R
F S K O O T H E R N U N E L N W O U L P O O F I E
Y T S R G G O O D E I I I T A W N Q H N Z M B F D
F H X E N C B P V D G L H G L D S N A F S J E S K
I L C A F W O L P I U Q E Y L P G A R E C E I V E
V R T I O N S E L V K L K N E W E R D I L B N S A
E V E R Y B O D Y E S A M J O H N T E E I H G S H
D I E I N A B C S L N U S E V L E S R U O G O I R
E S C N B O E G H S N H R A R C G O G O N A I D L
C A I N W A R D L Y L O U K C X O M R N S T A Y T
P L R O A K L E V O M N I D A H U N O P I T S H O
G R E F I F O R G I V E N E S S I E F A N L I O N
K R E A I S T O H A E S O F T E N I G I N D A N B
M N P E R S O N V L K T O E H L J F D N R S E E G
A W N X I L O T C O R R E C T E D F R A I M I N H
H S A L T I Y P M E S T O T A S E D I S B U S T S



— Patricia B

I painted these canvases for the silent auction for the next Jamboree AA Conference in El Paso Texas and I wanted to share them with aaHG. Some of the paintings come with a necklace that my wife donated. One comes with a coffee mug that AA Central Office of El Paso donated it.



– Patricia B.



Still Here I Sit

Dropped into my favourite duck n dive

Waiting for the sun to shine

Do I drop my swimming bag at home?

Or wait and listen for the clock to chime

It's 3:30pm, an hour and a half to wait

If I go home again, I'll only deliberate

Whether I can be bothered to step outside

Or stay at home, where I love to hide

*If I stay in my room, it'll be the usual
benders*

*Of drinking wine, watching dreary
Eastenders*

Thank goodness I can swim at Park Road

Indoors too long, turns to heavy load

Heavy load of depressing thoughts

Log onto AA where we go to get taught

Part of me thinks it's a load of shit

Sun's out, clock chimed, still here I sit

— The Anonymous Poet

STEP SIX:

Ready to Release What Helped Me Survive

— Kristy W.

“Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”

Step Six was never about perfection for me—it was about readiness. But readiness doesn't always come easy, especially when the very defects I'm being asked to release were once necessary for survival.

This line always hits me—not because it's about toughness or gender, but because Step Six is where I started to feel the weight of real spiritual maturity.

I've spent much of my life surviving. As a trauma therapist, a sober woman, a single mother—I've worn armor made of self-protection, perfectionism, and over-functioning. These character defects didn't grow out of nowhere; they were survival strategies. They got me through rooms where I didn't feel safe, relationships where I had to shrink to stay, and seasons where I believed control was love.

But survival is no longer the point. Recovery invites me into something more sacred: **freedom.**

Step Six doesn't demand instant transformation. It asks for readiness—a willingness to loosen my grip on what no longer serves me, even when those parts of me once kept me alive. It invites me to trust that God can remove what I can't manage, and that I don't have to do the cleaning—just the surrendering.

It's humbling to admit that some of the very traits that made me “strong” now block me from intimacy, from rest, from joy. But this program has shown me that God doesn't strip me of anything without offering something more whole in return.

So, today, I become ready. Ready to believe that gentleness is stronger than grit. That humility is braver than control. That I am safe enough now to let go.

And for today, that's enough.



The Power of Powerlessness

*How Being a Human Windmill
Can Save Your Day*

— Manny B.

Hello everyone! My name is Manny B and I am an alcoholic. Today, I am writing to You about a topic that's near and dear to many of us: the power dynamic—or, more specifically, the frustrating lack of power. It's a dilemma that shows up in workplaces, relationships, and let's be honest, when your Wi-Fi decides to take a nap.

Now, I used to think power meant the ability to control everything around me. I admired motors for their brute strength. I mean, who doesn't love a roaring engine? It's the mechanical equivalent of a flex at the gym. But then, I discovered something revolutionary: some motors don't just consume power—they generate it.

Take the windmill, for example. It's like a motor's cooler cousin who decided to be environmentally friendly. Instead of using fuel or electricity, a windmill harnesses the wind's motion to spin its blades, converting that kinetic energy into electrical power. Thanks to Michael Faraday's laws of electromagnetic induction, that spinning generates current, which we can store or use right away. That's

right—physics lets us turn gusts of air into light bulbs and, if you're lucky, a warm cup of coffee.

This is a classic example of energy conversion, energy can't be created or destroyed, only transformed. So, if you think about it, your power isn't lost when you feel powerless; it's just changing forms.

Now, let's add a little humor. Imagine you're at a party, trying to start a conversation, but everyone's ignoring you. That's like trying to be a motor without fuel—no matter how much you rev your engine, you're not going anywhere. But if you stop pushing and start listening, you become more like a windmill—using the energy of the room to generate meaningful connections.

In engineering, this is the difference between a motor and a generator. A motor converts electrical energy into mechanical energy (motion), and a generator converts mechanical energy back into electrical energy. They're basically the yin and yang of electromechanics. And in life, this means learning when to act and when to receive.

From a psychological standpoint, this mirrors the concept of radical acceptance in mindfulness practice. Instead of resisting the things we can't control, we accept them and find ways to work with them. Kind of like a windmill that says, "Hey, wind, you do your thing. I'll just keep spinning."

And here's the kicker: in many recovery and self-help programs—there's an emphasis on surrendering control to a higher power, not as defeat but as a way to redirect energy. It's the human equivalent of flipping the motor/generator switch.

So, if you're feeling powerless, remember the humble windmill. It doesn't fight the wind; it uses it. When you stop trying to push against the storm and start spinning with it, that's where the real power lies.

Thank you—and may your internal generators keep humming!

Hey family of AA HG! I AM JESSICA S.
an alcoholic and addict. Out of all the
stories in the AA Big Book, "Acceptance was the
ANSWER" p407 BBAA, was my story, minus the
"doctor" part. Then on page 417, after reading
this, I had to make a poster out of it, hang
it on my wall because it had such a profound
impact on me + my recovery. The other day I
made an acronym out of it to help me remember
what practicing acceptance does for me.

Acceptance

- A - I am an alcoholic, Addict of many, I
Accept this first today and
- C - courageously, I change my thought
- C - Creating a cool, calmer me
- E - Empowering me to Evolve
- P - Pausing to Pray, then Proceed
- T - Teaching me to Trust the Process
of love and Tolerance
- A - Accepting what I can NOT Change;
Answers came, Awareness of what I can Change
- N - NOW, neutral, NON-judgemental, in the Now, I
- C - Can Continue with life, Calmly with Clarity
- E - EGO leaves, extending grace, Empathy.
Equanimity is my grateful result.



LOSING THE STEPS

(IN REVERSE ORDER)

— *David G*

I had bottomed out. I had a roof over my head, just no electricity in the walls. I had a bed to sleep on, but the mattress would have been better served in a biohazard landfill. I went to rehab and then to outpatient. The result was a decision that would change my life forever. No, not the first step. Not quite yet.

The decision I made was to adopt two cats, a choice that helped me focus on something besides myself. They kept me alive long enough to finally commit to AA.

I was the guy going in and out, coming to meetings while in a stupor. Then something happened. I was done. I can't explain it. A fellow dared me to write my sobriety date in my Big Book. I did. It was a contract with God, I told myself.

Getting sober wasn't easy. It took a long time to accept my alcoholism and even longer for the obsession to lift, which is why I appreciate some of the old-timer stories in the Big Book that admit to the same. I got the Twelve Steps into my life. I became an active member of my home group. I sponsored. I was even elected chairperson, which I guess is what happens when you don't show up to the business meeting.

As for my life, the Promises came true. All of them. Even the ones I never thought would happen. About a baker's dozen sober years had passed. I was a steady and reliable member of AA, on top of my chosen field, a superhero at work. I had attained my master's, with opportunities to pursue a doctorate, drove an awesome car, and lived comfortably in a house not just with cats but with another human being. She had cats too.

The obsession to drink and drug had long since lifted. I had a healthy logical fear of relapsing, not to be confused with anxiety or a phobia. More akin to petting an alligator or diving into an empty cement pool. It would simply be ludicrous to do so.

As the years passed, I ceased to participate actively in AA. It's a story as old as AA itself. I moved. You all know the rest.

I was still a member. But I was busy, so busy. I told myself I was still spiritually sound. That living life by the AA principles alone would be enough. I'd return when 'the time was right.'

STEP 12

I stop carrying the message to other drunks and addicts. What was so freely given to me by a group of complete strangers, I no longer pass on. My focus is no longer on the next suffering alcoholic but instead on myself.

STEP 11

I continue to do the right things, but for the wrong reasons. My goals are clouded with dreams of ego, position, and worth. My story is no longer a warning of where alcoholism can lead nor a glimmer of light to someone in darkness. Instead, it has become a self-deceptive, delusional tale of survival, comeback, and glory. I forget that I am always one bad decision away from destroying everything all over again.

STEP 10

The most subtle acts of selfishness, resentment, and dishonesty crawl back in. Regular folk can have these and not let them be destructive, can surf those waves, but I cannot. Like a bad seed, they plant themselves in my fears and slowly poison me.

STEP 9

Throughout sobriety, I would remember things where I was in the wrong, where I may have caused harm, where I had been cruel. But I don't need to do that anymore. I'm fine, a good person relative to the rest of the world. And that is when the Promises begin to disappear.

STEP 8

I am now completely focused on myself. I become self-loathing, self-pitying; self, self, self. I stop counting my blessings, so I forget I have any at all. I conclude it is not alcohol and drugs that make me crazy; I am crazy anyway and in a life going nowhere. I am now the cliché self-centered egotist with low self-esteem.

This is when I relapse. The thought of doing so has been in my head for some time.

It is horrible. No utopia, no oblivion, just an awful experience. The next day my only thought is to do it again.

STEP 7

The defects of character I have gotten rid of come back in spades, and the ones I kept multiply. I am right back where I left off, and it is worse than ever. I begin to steal what is prescribed to my partner. I am now a thief.

STEP 6

I know I am heading in the wrong direction, but there is nothing I can do. I am still in touch with God, but what am I praying for? Who knows. It certainly isn't to remove this malady from me. Perhaps it is to remove everything else except that.

STEP 5

I am completely isolated. Plans with family and colleagues are canceled. Appointments are postponed indefinitely. Letters remain unopened. I invent business trips just to stay in a hotel for days at a time.

STEP 4

My life is in shambles. Work hates me. School no longer trusts me. I am a burden. My partner worries about me. The cats cannot hide their disappointment. Resentment, dishonesty, selfishness, and fear are at their maximum.

STEP 3

The only things that come out of my mouth are lies and manipulation, even to God. My only goal every day is to give myself time and space to be inebriated. The hours when I am functional are spent covering up my actions. This is my pattern. This is my life now. It has been my life for the past few years.

STEP 2

No one trusts me. I don't trust myself. Drugs and alcohol have destroyed my life. All I want to do now is more drugs and alcohol. Suicide feels like a logical alternative. I am completely insane.

STEP 1

I am dipping my toe back into AA, this time online. I do not change my sobriety date. I know it all. But I am still getting inebriated every day. I pause, but I don't stop. I tell myself I can still live life and have my vices, right? Even now, when it is all destroyed, with all the knowledge in the world, the obsession to have it as a part of my life is still there.

STEP 0

I am too wasted to finish my doctoral dissertation. The last hope, the last dream, is over. The damage is done. I am done.

STEP 1

I know what I am now. Somewhere along the way, I lost my fear of relapse. I ask myself how the hell did that happen? I know the answer. Because I am an alcoholic and carry all the isms that come from that word. I have no power to control my addictions. My life is unmanageable, what is left of it.

I pray.

I ask for help.

I am given an answer:

“Stop drinking. Go to meetings. Get a sponsor. Do the Steps.”

I write my new sobriety date in my Big Book, right under my old sobriety date.

The cats approve.





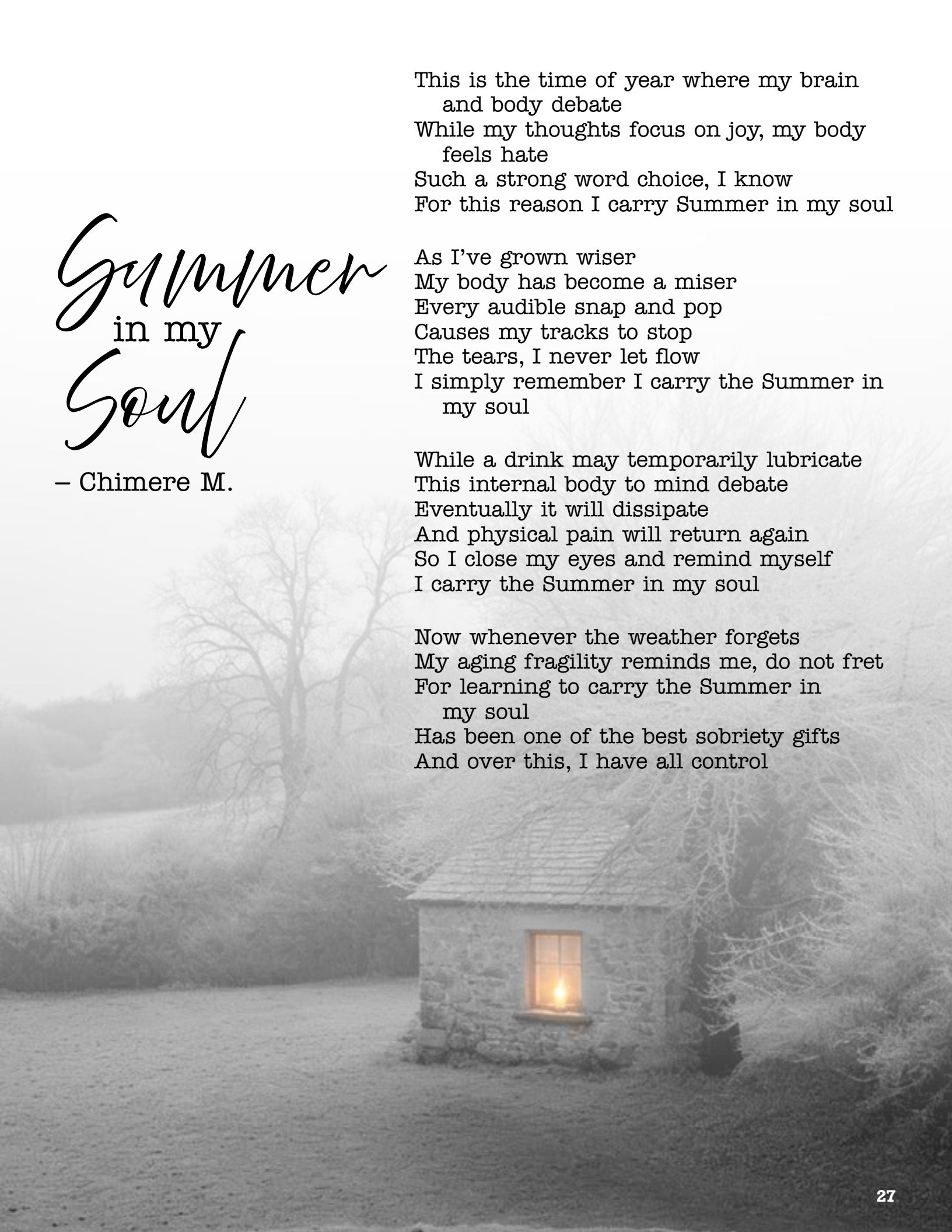
An Internal Quake

– Gabrielle Y.

I just saw a story about an earthquake that struck a remote island in Russia. A tour boat happened to be there, and they captured the moment when hundreds of sea lions suddenly dove into the water, sensing the quake before anyone else. It made me think – I could either be like the boat, steady and observing in awe, or like the sea lion, caught in the chaos, swimming for my life as the world shakes around me.

What struck me most is that no one would have even known the earthquake happened, except for the sea lions who felt it and responded. That reminded me of my own journey with sobriety, recovery, and healing from addiction. It's like an internal earthquake – something no one else may see, but I feel it deeply.

In those moments, I have a choice: I can surrender it to God and witness His power at work, or I can panic and flail like the sea lion, trying to survive on my own. The shaking will come either way – but how I respond is what defines the experience.



Summer in my Soul

– Chimere M.

This is the time of year where my brain
and body debate
While my thoughts focus on joy, my body
feels hate
Such a strong word choice, I know
For this reason I carry Summer in my soul

As I've grown wiser
My body has become a miser
Every audible snap and pop
Causes my tracks to stop
The tears, I never let flow
I simply remember I carry the Summer in
my soul

While a drink may temporarily lubricate
This internal body to mind debate
Eventually it will dissipate
And physical pain will return again
So I close my eyes and remind myself
I carry the Summer in my soul

Now whenever the weather forgets
My aging fragility reminds me, do not fret
For learning to carry the Summer in
my soul
Has been one of the best sobriety gifts
And over this, I have all control



RAGING STORMS

Dear Lord these raging storms
have me shook

The guilt and shame haunt me
for the lives that I took;

I get constant shakes all day long

Dear God I feel like I'm weak but
you say that I'm Strong;

My mind and my thoughts they
consume me

I don't even remember the
person I used to be;

These raging storms they fill my
heart with pain

I try to go back to the person I
was but it's not the same;

Lord I'm drowning with no
lifeguard on duty and it feels like
your not there

God please help me and save me
from my own despair;

Lord this weight is too much to
carry I can't do it on my own

I keep calling out your name not
hearing nothing back from you
has me feeling so alone;

The effects of these raging
storms is too much to bear

Suicidal thoughts fill my head as
darkness and silence fill the air;

These raging storms have a
whirlwind of thoughts flowing
through my head

I can't help but feeling like I
would be better off if I was dead

These raging storms getting
stronger continuing to grow and
spread;

Lord if you're there I really need
your help

There is an emptiness deep in my
soul like I've never felt.

SOBRIETY

SOBRIETY IS NOT EASY, SOBRIETY IS NOT FUN,
AND SOBRIETY IS HARD

WORK

SOBRIETY REQUIRES YOU TO DESTROY ANY BITTERNESS IN
YOUR HEART WHERE ADDICTIONS SEEM TO

LURK;

SOBRIETY REQUIRES YOU TO LOOK DEEP INSIDE
YOUR SOUL AND EVALUATE

YOURSELF

YOU NEED TO TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT YOU,
BECAUSE ONLY YOU CAN DO THAT AND NO ONE

ELSE;

SOBRIETY ASKS YOU TO DIG DEEP TO FIND
HOPE AND STRENGTH IN ORDER TO

OVERCOME

SOBRIETY ASKS YOU TO START MAKING YOURSELF
A PRIORITY AND MAKE YOURSELF NUMBER

ONE;

BUT MOST OF ALL SOBRIETY ASKS YOU TO BE
SOBER EVERYDAY OF THE REST OF YOUR

LIFE

SOBRIETY ASKS YOU TO LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS,
LOVE YOURSELF AND MOST OF ALL TO LOVE YOUR

WIFE.

STEP 6 TRIVIA



1. FILL IN THE BLANK: Step Six states: “*Were entirely ready to have God remove all these _____ of character.*”
2. According to Step Six, what is the “**key**” word in this Step?
3. FILL IN THE BLANK: The 12&12 says, “*This is the Step that separates the men from the _____.*”
4. Step Six calls what attitude “indispensable”?
 - a. Patience
 - b. Willingness
 - c. Discipline
 - d. Honesty
5. The book says that the difference between “trying to change ourselves” and “becoming entirely ready” is like trying to do what impossible task? (→ Hint: It involves pulling.)
6. Step Six reminds us that defects are not removed all at once but are replaced by what? FILL IN: “The faulty foundation stone is replaced by a _____ one.”
7. What does the book say most of us cling to “with such persistence that it seems astonishing”?
 - a. Our drinking habits
 - b. Our resentments
 - c. Our defects of character
 - d. Our fears
8. According to the 12&12, is it true or false that perfection is required in Step Six?
9. What “natural desires” does Step Six say God gave us that often get twisted into defects when misused? (Name two.)
10. What defect is described in Step Six as “the greatest obstacle to all the rest”?

11. The 12&12 says, “*Self-righteous anger can be very enjoyable. In a perverse way we can actually take satisfaction from the fact that many people annoy us...*” What Step is it explaining here?
12. According to Step Six, what quality of character makes us feel secure but can lead to being “domineering” if abused?
13. The book says that “some people cannot be convinced that their character defects are serious enough to warrant attention.” What example does it use to describe this resistance?
(→ Hint: It compares them to a type of insect.)
14. Step Six explains that “**God never does for us what we can do for _____.**”
15. The book asks: “*Is it not evident to all of us that we have been brought to where we are by a certain kind of faith and a certain kind of _____?*”
16. In Step Six, defects are compared to what kind of “block” between us and God’s will?
17. According to Step Six, what is the “chief activator of our defects”?
18. The book says that if we are still clinging to a defect we may only be “ready” to do what?
- | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|
| a. Pray for willingness | c. Hide it |
| b. Remove it ourselves | d. Ignore it |
19. Step Six teaches that the removal of defects is ultimately whose work?
- | | |
|------------------|----------------|
| a. Ours alone | c. God’s |
| b. Our sponsor’s | d. The group’s |
20. The chapter closes by reminding us that what attitude will make us more ready for God’s help:
- | | |
|------------------|-------------|
| a. Perfectionism | c. Humility |
| b. Self-pity | d. Pride |

GOODBYE HEROIN,
YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD ME
CHAINED, LIVING IN A SHADOW,
DROWNING IN THE PAIN.
EVERY HIT I TOOK,
YEAH, IT PULLED ME DOWN,
BUT NOW I RISE UP,
NO MORE WEARING THAT
FROWN.
DAYS BLURRED TOGETHER,
LOST IN THE HAZE,
CHASING FALSE HIGHS,
TRAPPED IN A MAZE.
BUT I BROKE THE CYCLE,
TOOK BACK MY SOUL,
NOW I'M LIVING LIFE,
FEELING FINALLY WHOLE.
LESSONS LEARNED HARD,
BUT I'M WISER NOW,
STANDING ON MY FEET,
I'M MAKING MY VOW.
TO CHERISH EACH MOMENT,
EMBRACE THE FIGHT,
NO MORE WASTED NIGHTS,
I'M SHINING SO BRIGHT.
GRATEFUL FOR THE STRUGGLE,
IT SHAPED WHO I AM,
FROM ASHES I RISE,
LIKE A PHOENIX, I STAND.
SO HERE'S TO THE FUTURE,

**MY
GOODBYE
LETTER
TO
MY
ADDICTION**

I'M READY TO SOAR,
GOODBYE TO THE DARKNESS,
I'M OPENING DOORS.
DAYS TURNED TO NIGHTS,
I WAS TRAPPED IN YOUR GRIP,
BUT NOW I'M BREAKING FREE,
I'M NO LONGER ON THIS TRIP,
RISING FROM THE ASHES,
I'M READY TO FIGHT,
BLESSED TO SEE THE DAWN,
FINALLY FINDING MY LIGHT.
NO MORE WASTED MOMENTS,
I'M LIVING LIFE FOR REAL,
EVERY BREATH I TAKE,
MAN, I'M LEARNING HOW TO
FEEL, FROM THE PAIN I GREW,
NOW I'M STRONGER THAN
BEFORE, GOODBYE TO THE
STRUGGLE,
NOW I'M READY TO SOAR.
LIFE'S A PRECIOUS GIFT,
I'M EMBRACING EACH DAY,
NO MORE LOOKING BACK,
I'M PAVING MY OWN WAY,
SO HERE'S TO THE FUTURE,
I'M READY TO THRIVE,
GOODBYE HEROIN,
I'M JUST THANKFUL
TO BE ALIVE
— MICHELLE B

I found myself confused and broken, shattered and afraid... Lost in desperation... from the wreckage I had made. I didn't see a road to freedom, despair was closing in, I was on a sheet of hopelessness and the ice was getting thin.

For a moment I had clarity, and I knew I had to act... I raised my hands, looked up above... & that's when I made a pact. I said "Lord if you help me to be all that I can, I'll share it with my brothers and I'll help my fellow man".

I felt a warmth come over me, I'm told it was God's grace. I got out of the drivers seat and I let him set the pace. Now brother I assure you, if you feel like I felt, Raise up your hands, look up to God, and ask him for some help.

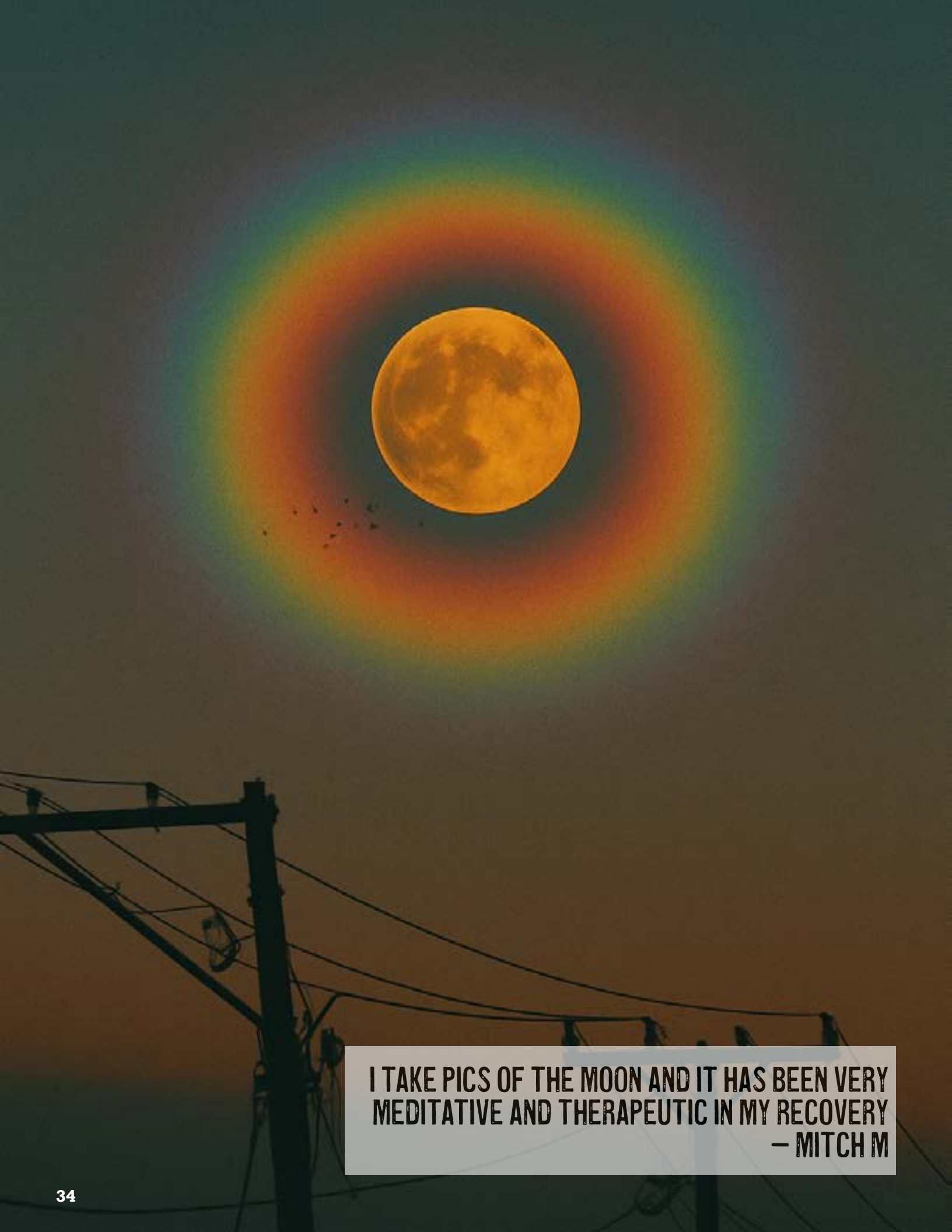
It may not happen all at once but I'm certain if you try, to be willing with an open heart, he'll help you to get by.....

He'll turn your grief into gratitude, your fear into faith. You're loneliness to holiness, your pain to peace and praise.

He'll turn your tragedy to triumph, your sins to sanctity, your greed turns into giving, and you'll have all you need. Now you may seem defeated, but look up to God above, He'll turn your anger to acceptance, humility, and love.

Found Myself

— Damien H.



**I TAKE PICS OF THE MOON AND IT HAS BEEN VERY
MEDITATIVE AND THERAPEUTIC IN MY RECOVERY
— MITCH M**

LAUGHTER ECHOES, HOLLOW AND BRIGHT,

SILENCE LINGERS, HEAVY AS NIGHT.

THE DARKNESS CALLS IN A SIREN'S TONE,

A WHISPER OF COMFORT, YET I'M STILL ALONE.

HIGH ABOVE, UNTOUCHED, UNTAMED,

YET THE MUSIC FADES, THE NIGHT FEELS DRAINED.

NO PAIN, NO FEAR, A PERFECT DISGUISE,

BUT HOW DO I SHINE WITHOUT BORROWED LIGHT?

SPINNING, FALLING, LOST IN THE HAZE,

CHASING SHADOWS OF YESTERDAYS.

I SWORE BEFORE, NEVER AGAIN,

PERHAPS THE FALL IS WHERE I BEGIN.

— ALAN M., ALCOHOLIC

Sober Wisdom

1. Sobriety doesn't make life easier — it makes you stronger.
2. A resentment is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die.
3. Your Higher Power never asks for perfection, just willingness.
4. Meetings are like showers — skip too many and people will notice.
5. Don't borrow tomorrow's troubles when today already has enough.
6. If nothing changes, nothing changes — but if you change, everything does.
7. You can't outdrink loneliness, but you can outgrow it.
8. A sponsee is just a newcomer who reminds you not to get cocky.
9. The Big Book doesn't get bigger, but somehow you do.
10. One day at a time doesn't mean tomorrow disappears — it just means today deserves your attention.
11. "Let go and let God" doesn't mean doing nothing — it means not doing everything.
12. If coffee and laughter aren't at your meeting, check the address.
13. Secrets keep us sick, but honesty sets us free — and sometimes makes us laugh in the process.
14. The Steps don't take away your problems, they take away your excuses.
15. If you want to know your Higher Power's plan, stop interrupting with your own.
16. Old-timers aren't wise because they're old — they're old because they chose wisdom.
17. The phone weighs 500 pounds... until you pick it up. Then it weighs nothing.
18. Sobriety is not thinking less of yourself, it's thinking of yourself less.
19. Don't measure your worth by your worst mistake — measure it by your daily progress.
20. God doesn't waste pain. If you survived it, you can help someone else through it.

GRATITUDE

GRATITUDE IS AN ATTITUDE.

IT CHANGES YOUR PERSPECTIVE AND
POINT OF VIEW.

IT MAKES YOU FEEL BETTER ABOUT ME AND YOU.

COUNT YOUR BLESSINGS AND YOU WILL FIND

THAT THEY WILL UPLIFT YOUR MIND.

A THANKFUL HEART CAN HEAL AND MEND,

IT LIFTS YOU UP AGAIN, MY FRIEND.

FOR LIFE FEELS RICHER, CALM, RENEWED,

WHEN YOU ARE FILLED WITH GRATITUDE.



— VASHAMALLAH

Sobriety

Sobriety is better than being drunk

It pulls you out of your funk.

Sober you'll be happy, joyous, and free,

And the best version of you that you could possibly be

Recovery is good for your heart and soul,

And can make you complete and whole

One day at a time, keep walking the line,

Soon you'll see your whole life start to shine.

The laughter returns, the pain starts to fade,

A brand-new foundation is solidly laid.

Hold your head high, let the past be done,

You've battled the storm –and now you've won.

– Vashmallah

Hope, Spoken Out Loud:

WHAT STEPS 5 & 6 GAVE ME

When I first heard people in AA talk about hope, I didn't relate to it. I wanted relief. I wanted the noise to stop. Hope felt like something meant for other people — people who hadn't done what I'd done or hurt who I'd hurt. I believed change might be possible in general, just not for me.

Step Five is where that belief started to crack.

Sitting across from another person and saying things I had never said out loud was terrifying. I expected judgment. I expected disappointment. I expected disgust. My brain was running crazy with my expectations: What are they thinking about me? Did I choose the right person to hear all of this? Could I, should I trust them?

What I didn't expect was to still be breathing afterward — or to feel lighter. For the first time, the story I had been carrying alone was shared. I wasn't minimized, corrected, or rejected. I was heard. And in that moment, something shifted. If I could tell the truth and still be accepted, maybe I wasn't as broken as I thought.

That was my first real experience of hope — not excitement or confidence, but relief. Relief that I didn't have to keep pretending. Relief that the worst parts of me weren't disqualifying. Step Five didn't make my past disappear, but it stopped it from defining my future.

Step Six came quietly. There was no dramatic readiness, no sudden willingness to let everything go. What I felt instead was tired — tired of carrying the same defects that kept showing up in different forms. Control. Fear. Self-centeredness. I didn't know how God would remove them, and I wasn't convinced I was ready for all of them to go. I didn't even know what letting go looked like. But I was willing to stop defending them.

That, I've learned from others, is what readiness often looks like.

Step Six gave me hope not because I changed overnight, but because I stopped believing that I couldn't change. I didn't have to fix myself. I just had to be open to becoming someone different — someone less driven by fear and more guided by trust.

Together, Steps Five and Six taught me something I couldn't think my way into: hope isn't about certainty. It's about honesty and willingness. It's about telling the truth, letting go a little at a time, and trusting that I don't have to do this alone.

Today, hope doesn't mean I never struggle. It means I no longer feel trapped by who I used to be. And that, for me, has made all the difference.

— Liz P



Easy Baked Mexican Cube Steak Taco Filling

By MaryJane B.

SERVES:

6–8 people

INGREDIENTS

- 6 cube steaks, cut into bite-size pieces
- 1 large onion, diced
- 1 (15 oz) can sweet corn, drained
- 1 (15 oz) can black beans, not drained
- 1 (4 oz) can diced green chiles, not drained
- 1 (14.5 oz) can diced tomatoes, not drained
- 1–2 cups shredded cheese (cheddar, Mexican blend, or your choice)

SEASONINGS *(to taste)*

- Fajita seasoning
- Ground cumin
- Sugar (just a pinch)
- Hot sauce
- Soul food seasoning
- Seasoned salt
- Honey (1–2 tablespoons, to taste)

INSTRUCTIONS (Oven Method)

1. Preheat oven to 425°F (218°C).

2. Prepare the meat

- Cut cube steaks into bite-size pieces

3. Mix everything together

- In a large bowl or baking dish, combine:
 - ◇ Cube steak

- ◇ Onion
- ◇ Corn
- ◇ Black beans (with liquid)
- ◇ Green chiles (with liquid)
- ◇ Diced tomatoes (with liquid)
- Add seasonings and honey. Stir well.

4. Bake

- Cover loosely with foil.
- Bake for 45 minutes.

5. Add cheese

- Remove foil, sprinkle cheese on top.
- Return to oven for 5 minutes, until melted.

6. Rest & serve

- Let cool for 5 minutes before serving.

SERVING IDEAS

- Spoon into taco shells or wraps
- Serve over rice, noodles, or mashed potatoes
- Use as a burrito or quesadilla filling

OPTIONAL ADJUSTMENTS

- **Too soupy?** Stir in a little flour or add more cheese to thicken.
- **Want it spicier?** Add extra hot sauce or chili seasoning.
- **Want a sweeter flavor?** Add a drizzle more honey.

ALTERNATE COOKING METHODS

- **Stove-top:**
 - ◇ Brown cube steak in a large skillet.
 - ◇ Add remaining ingredients and simmer 30–40 minutes, stirring occasionally.
- **Crock Pot:**
 - ◇ Add all ingredients to slow cooker.
 - ◇ Cook on LOW 6–8 hours or HIGH 3–4 hours.

This recipe is very forgiving—taste and adjust as you go.



New to AA?

If you're new to Alcoholics Anonymous—or just trying to figure out how this all works—you're in the right place.

aaHomeGroup is a 24/7 online fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength, and hope with one another. We're here to help each other recover from alcoholism and to remind one another that none of us has to do this alone.

*You don't need to say anything in a meeting.
You don't need to be sure you're an alcoholic.
You just need a desire to stop drinking –
or the willingness to explore what that might look like.*

Most of all, you don't need to have it all figured out. We'll help you with that. Below is a quick guide to help you feel more at ease as you get started.

WHAT IS ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS?

Alcoholics Anonymous is an international fellowship founded in 1935 by Bill W. and Dr. Bob S. It is nonprofessional, self-supporting, apolitical, and open to people of all backgrounds.

AA is available almost everywhere—and here at aaHomeGroup, it's available anytime.

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

WHAT HAPPENS AT AAHOMEGROUP MEETINGS

Our meetings are simple and welcoming. You'll find:

- **Open meetings** where anyone interested in recovery is welcome
- **Speaker meetings**, where a member shares their story
- **Discussion meetings**, where members talk about recovery and AA literature
- **Step-focused meetings**, for those who want to explore the program more deeply
- **Special workshops**, offering focused sessions on the Steps, Traditions, and Concepts, designed to support deeper understanding and practical application

You're welcome to listen, participate, or just observe until you feel comfortable.

WHAT TO EXPECT WHEN YOU JOIN A MEETING

- You'll hear people introduce themselves by first name.
- Members share honestly about their experience with alcohol and recovery.
- There's no pressure to speak—listening is enough.
- Meetings are guided, respectful, and focused on recovery.

Every meeting is a little different, but the goal is always the same: connection, support, and hope.

GETTING STARTED

- Keep coming back. Recovery takes time, and familiarity helps.
- Listen for what resonates. You don't have to agree with everything.
- Connect with others. Many members are happy to talk before or after meetings.
- Be open. You don't have to have answers—just a willingness to try.

Most of us arrived unsure, uncomfortable, or overwhelmed. You're not doing this wrong.

ANONYMITY MATTERS HERE

Anonymity is a cornerstone of AA and of aaHomeGroup.

What's shared in meetings—and who you see there—stays within the fellowship. This creates a safe, trusting space where people can be honest and vulnerable.

WE'RE GLAD YOU'RE HERE

Whether this is your first meeting or your thousandth, you're welcome here.

Just for today, you don't have to drink.
And you don't have to do this alone.

Welcome to aaHomeGroup.



NOT A GLUM LOT

Why did Step Six get a promotion?

Because it was entirely ready.

What's an AA member's favorite type of math?

Subtracting resentments and multiplying gratitude.

Why don't alcoholics ever play hide and seek?

Because no matter where they hide,
their sponsor will "Step" in and find them.

How many AA members does it take to screw in a lightbulb?

One, but the lightbulb really has to want to change.

You know you're an old timer if...

...you've got more sobriety chips than your grandkids have Pokémon cards.

...you tell your story and half the room mouths it along with you.

...your sponsee's sponsees call you "Grand-sponsor."

...you start sentences with, "Back when I came in..."

...you think "Zoom" is what your sponsee's car did on the way to the bar.

...you've told a newcomer: "Sit down, shut up, and listen" — and then bought them coffee.

You know you're an alcoholic if...

...you've ever woken up and had to check whose couch you're on — or if it's even a couch.

...your bar tab is higher than your car payment.

...you buy mouthwash for the alcohol content, not the fresh breath.

...you know the exact time gas stations stop selling beer in three different counties.

..."one drink" always meant "one case."

...you've ever prayed to God at 3 a.m. to get you through — and then forgot the prayer by noon.

...your definition of a "balanced diet" was a drink in each hand.

ME: MY NAME IS MATT, AND I'M AN ALCOHOLIC.

AAA: THIS IS AAA, NOT AA.

ME: YEAH, I WAS JUST EXPLAINING HOW MY CAR GOT IN THE LAKE.

Dr. Bob's Humility Prayer

Humility is the perpetual quietness of heart.

It is to have no trouble.
It is never to be angry or irritable,
to wonder at nothing that is done to me,
to feel nothing that is done against me.

It is to be at rest when nobody praises me,
and when I am blamed or despised.

It is to have a blessed home in myself where I
can go in and shut the door and kneel to my
father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep
sea of calmness when all around and about is
seeming trouble.

Amen

HOW TO BE MENTALLY STRONG

DON'T **FEAR** ALONE TIME

DON'T **DWELL** ON THE PAST

DON'T **EXPECT** IMMEDIATE RESULTS

DON'T **FEEL** THAT THE WORLD OWES YOU

DON'T **WORRY** ABOUT PLEASING EVERYONE

DON'T **WASTE** TIME FEELING SORRY FOR YOURSELF

DON'T **WASTE** ENERGY ON THINGS YOU CAN'T CONTROL

DON'T **LET** OTHERS INFLUENCE YOUR EMOTIONS

DON'T **RESENT** OTHER PEOPLE'S SUCCESS

DON'T **GIVE UP** AFTER THE FIRST FAILURE

DON'T **SHY** AWAY FROM RESPONSIBILITIES

DON'T **FEAR** TAKING CALCULATED RISKS

STEP 6 TRIVIA ANSWERS

1. **Defects** of character. (p. 63)
2. The key word is “**ready.**” (p. 65)
3. “...separates the men from the boys.” (p. 63)
4. **Willingness** (p. 65)
5. Like trying to **pull ourselves up by our own bootstraps.** (p. 64)
6. “The faulty foundation stone is replaced by a **solid one.**” (p. 64)
7. Our **defects of character.** (p. 64)
8. **False** — perfection is not required; willingness is enough. (p. 65–66)
9. **Natural desires:** sex, security, society (companionship). (p. 65–66)
10. **Pride** (p. 67)
11. Step **Six** — self-righteous anger as an example of clinging to defects. (p. 66)
12. **Security** — can become domineering when abused. (p. 65)
13. Compared to a **bee stung on the nose** — they cannot see beyond their own discomfort. (p. 66)
14. “God never does for us what we can do for **ourselves.**” (p. 68)
15. Faith and **courage.** (p. 68)
16. Defects are a **block** between us and God’s will (p. 64)
17. The **pursuit of self-centeredness / self-centered fear** is the chief activator. (p. 67)
18. Only “ready” to **ask God to make us willing.** (p. 65)
19. The removal of defects is **God’s work.** (p. 68)
20. **Humility** (p. 69)

THE BACKDOOR

NEWCOMER RESOURCES

- New to AA: Is A.A. for Me? | Alcoholics Anonymous
https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-36_isAAforMe.pdf
- A Newcomer Asks: A Newcomer Asks | Alcoholics Anonymous
https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-24_anewcomerask.pdf
- Big Book: The Big Book | Alcoholics Anonymous
<https://aahomegroup.org/#bigbook>
- Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions: Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Book | Alcoholics Anonymous
<https://www.aa.org/twelve-steps-twelve-traditions>
- Sponsorship: Questions and Answers on Sponsorship | Alcoholics Anonymous:
https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-15_Q&AonSpon.pdf

Our Next Issue: "Serenity & Peace" – Steps 7 & 8

We are seeking articles for our next issue on serenity and peace - what it means to you, how you've experienced it, and your thoughts on Steps 7 & 8. We also welcome content on any AA or aaHG recovery-related topics, including personal stories, original art, poems, recipes, AA book reviews, jokes, pet pictures, and advice.

This is **YOUR** newsletter, and we want to feature your experience, strength, and hope. Submissions can be anonymous if you prefer.

Send your submissions to communications@aahomegroup.org —

We can't wait to share your voice in the next issue!