

# Speakeasy



Alcoholics Anonymous All South Bay Central Office Newsletter

Fall Issue 2021

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*The Speakeasy is published by the All South Bay Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous. Opinions expressed are those of the writers/contributors and not of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole or of Central Office. We welcome and need your input, opinions, humor and comments. Send them today.*

## Step 11: Prayer & Meditation

### **Simple, Not Easy**

My sponsor Nancy and I went through one step every month. By the time I got Step 11, something deep inside of me knew that I no longer needed a mind altering substance to make it through the day. I couldn't make it through the day without the Serenity Prayer and Dr. Paul's acceptance prayer because I was maladjusted to many things, mostly my home and work life. Two teenage girls at home would be left mostly unsupervised when I left for the night shift at the Post Office. Upon returning home there were guitars, clothes, food and you name it scattered around the room as if it was dropped by the tornado. This happened over and over and no amount of arguments or negotiations made any difference. When I started practicing the 11th Step instead of memorizing it, things changed. It was His help with power to carry it out. I asked God to help me do His will for me, to help me practice my prayer. The Book said "faith without works is dead." I came home and attacked a sink full of dishes unconditionally, because they were there. I told my brain it is better to understand than to be understood. They are doing the best they know how. They are undisciplined kids and I am powerless over them. I kept working and cleaning until my anger left me, then I thanked God for my children, that they were safe, and I slept like a baby. Our home became more peaceful. The kids made attempts at cleaning up after themselves and did much better without being lectured. I spoke less. I asked God to help me live my prayers one day at a time. I've been trying to say less and pray more, ever since that day almost 28 years ago. "Simple, not easy."

—Marta D., San Pedro

### **The Key to Revitalization**

The moment I wake up in the morning, I thank the Lord and ask that they keep me sober for the day. I spend some time in a position of reverence. This helps my mind to slow down and focus on the Lord. I work in homeless services so it is very fast-paced, helping others who are in a constant state of crisis. Throughout my day I usually have positive or uplifting music playing. Right after work I love to go to the ocean and walk a few trails in Palos Verdes. During spring/fall seasons the plants smell so great. I take a prayer walk, where I just chat with the Lord about all and

anything. I reach a point on the trail where I sit in silence and in this moment I am healed, revived, and given convictions. Before bed I confess my shortcomings from that day and thank the Lord. For me Step 11 is the key to revitalization. It helps us to breathe better and slow down.

—Ramon, San Pedro

### **Daily Practice**

As there is currently no cure for the disease of alcoholism, there is no pill or quick fix for my mental disease. Along my journey into sobriety, I was given direction by my therapist, who is also in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, to meditate and pray. While I was at my lowest point living at Miriam's House, gratefully, I grasped onto this concept in conjunction with the program.

I woke each morning, made some tea and walked out to the garden of Miriam's House. I would sit early in the morning before the sun came up everyday. When I first began prayer and meditation, I would sometimes spend an hour or more outside. I found the rise of the sun against the pink sky, the humming birds flying by, the fruit trees and the quiet before the street became live with people and cars, peaceful. I found a little internal solace in the externally chaotic days that were present and that laid ahead. Meditation and prayer have become a daily practice. It provides balance in my daily life. Practicing Step 11 helped provide me with the space and grace in my life that I didn't think was possible to achieve given the circumstances I was facing. It helped provide me with a better approach to dealing with my children's big feelings they were having. I allowed myself to feel the various prayers in order to learn them. When they meant something to me I was better able to recite and understand the prayers for their purpose. One of my favorite spiritual places to go is The Self-Realization Center on Sunset Boulevard in Pacific Palisades. It's free, it's beautiful, quiet, and has a lot of places to meditate. I read pages 86, 87, & 88, The Daily Reflections, Courage to Change, and The Spiritual Diary (self-realization) every morning before I meditate. I make myself a cup of green tea and either go sit on the beach to ground myself or I sit outside on the deck. No matter what day it is, I allow myself the time to sit outside. Nothing puts me at peace like being outside.

My practice remains the same as it began at Miriam's House a year ago. My circumstances have changed but what I do know is that if I discontinue my practices, my dis-ease is sure to rear it's head again. It takes some time for peace to kick in and to begin to see some differences in self (a month or two) but it's much better than being on medication for something I have been able to stabilize through this ancient practice.

Oftentimes, I encourage my children to join me. Usually this works best with a walk outside together. I credit the program of AA and these practices for my mental clarity and attitude towards dealing with some of the heavy circumstances we alcoholics face in recovery as we begin to clean up our lives. This is a crucial part of my recovery program.

—Stacy N., Hermosa Beach

### **Direct My Thinking: Med-i-tate**

- Think deeply or carefully about (something)
- Plan mentally, consider

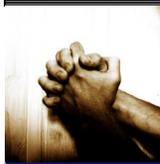
Page 86 of the Big Book says On Awakening we THINK (meditate) about the 24 hours ahead. We ask God (pray) to direct our thinking and let it be divorced from self pity, dishonest and self seeking motives. I keep it real simple, real easy and right out of the Big Book. I make a daily habit of it like brushing my teeth every morning. I say the set aside prayer, the Third Step prayer and the Seventh Step prayer. I can employ my mental faculties with assurance and my thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when my thinking is cleared of wrong motives. When I first got sober in my twenties, I created my own program which did not work. Now I follow everything that comes right out of the Big Book. All the answers for me come from the Big Book. It works and it works really good for me today!

—Jen S., Palos Verdes

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| <b>Step, Tradition &amp; Concept</b> |  | <b>All South Bay Central Office</b><br>1411 Marcelina Ave<br>Torrance, CA 90501<br>Open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., M-F<br>9 a.m.—7 p.m. Sat & Sun<br>Web site: www.southbayaa.org<br>Email: info@southbayaa.org<br>Phone: (310) 618-1180 |
|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| <b>4</b>                             | <p align="center"><b>Step</b></p> <p align="center">“Made a searching a fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”</p> <p align="center"><b>Tradition</b></p> <p align="center">“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.”</p> <p align="center"><b>Concept</b></p> <p align="center">“At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional ‘Right of Participation,’ allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.”</p>   | <p><b>Board of Directors</b><br/>4th Tuesday of the month<br/>6:30 p.m.</p> <p>Currently meeting via ZOOM<br/>Meeting ID: 949 9677 6629<br/>Password: 254568<br/>Phone: (310) 618-1180</p>                                       |
|                                      | <p align="center"><b>Step</b></p> <p align="center">“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”</p> <p align="center"><b>Tradition</b></p> <p align="center">“Each group has but one primary purpose— to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”</p> <p align="center"><b>Concept</b></p> <p align="center">“Throughout our structure, a traditional ‘Right of Appeal’ ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.”</p>   |  |
| <b>5</b>                             | <p align="center"><b>Step</b></p> <p align="center">“Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”</p> <p align="center"><b>Tradition</b></p> <p align="center">“An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”</p> <p align="center"><b>Concept</b></p> <p align="center">“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.”</p>  | <p><b>District 1</b><br/>2nd Tuesday of the month<br/>7:30 p.m.</p> <p>Currently meeting via ZOOM Meeting ID: 929 014 8764<br/>Password: panel70 (all lowercase)<br/>Phone: (310) 740-2963</p>                                   |
|                                      | <p align="center"><b>Step</b></p> <p align="center">“When you call on God in prayer to help you overcome weakness, sorrow, pain, discord, and conflict, God never fails in some way to answer the appeal.”</p> <p align="center">—Sept. 13-A.A. Meditation for the Day,<br/>“Twenty-Four Hours a Day”</p> <p>“And acceptance is the answer to <i>all</i> my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation—some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God’s world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life’s terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.”</p> <p align="center">—Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 417</p> <p>“Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us...”</p> <p align="center">—Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 164</p> |  |
| <b>6</b>                             | <p align="center"><b>Step</b></p> <p align="center">“When you call on God in prayer to help you overcome weakness, sorrow, pain, discord, and conflict, God never fails in some way to answer the appeal.”</p> <p align="center">—Sept. 13-A.A. Meditation for the Day,<br/>“Twenty-Four Hours a Day”</p> <p>“And acceptance is the answer to <i>all</i> my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation—some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God’s world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life’s terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.”</p> <p align="center">—Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 417</p> <p>“Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us...”</p> <p align="center">—Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 164</p> | <p><b>Hospitals &amp; Institutions</b><br/>3rd Tuesday of the month<br/>7:00 p.m.</p> <p><b><i>H&amp;I is now meeting in-person at the South Bay Alano Club</i></b></p> <p>Phone: (310) 707-5606</p>                             |
|                                      | <p align="center"><b>Step</b></p> <p align="center">“When you call on God in prayer to help you overcome weakness, sorrow, pain, discord, and conflict, God never fails in some way to answer the appeal.”</p> <p align="center">—Sept. 13-A.A. Meditation for the Day,<br/>“Twenty-Four Hours a Day”</p> <p>“And acceptance is the answer to <i>all</i> my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation—some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God’s world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life’s terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.”</p> <p align="center">—Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 417</p> <p>“Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us...”</p> <p align="center">—Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 164</p> |  |



# Fast Acting Pain Relief



The fastest transportation to inner transformation is the practice of meditation. Meditation can be a dirty word for some and a great word for others. Another word for meditation is contemplation. What are we supposed to contemplate? Maybe the answer is in the process.

To pray is to capture the thoughts of God or your Higher Power. To meditate is to contemplate those conversations. Meditation is considered a type of mind-body medicine. We alcoholics and addicts need something to help us with the “monkey-mind.” The “monkey-mind,” refers to the thoughts that play havoc on the mind just like a pack of monkeys can play havoc in the wild or even in the zoo. Done right, meditation can produce a deep state of relaxation and a tranquil mind.

I drank to drown out my thinking, only to discover that the darned thoughts learned how to swim. Take away the medicine of an alcoholic, which is alcohol, and we are stuck with our never-ending stream of thoughts. For me, Step 11 is a very powerful tool that allows me to at least keep the demons at bay.

Once the alcohol is gone and we have to deal with life on life’s terms, the stress is palpable. Stress is harmful to the immune system. But if you choose meditation, there are several side benefits that you might expect:

1. It can dramatically reduce levels of stress.
2. It’s like taking a short vacation from your life.
3. It will help with sleep by producing Theta waves.
4. It aids the process of getting rid of destructive habits and behaviors.
5. It improves your ability to concentrate—remember, the brain is like a muscle and every time you meditate, you build up the muscles of your brain.
6. It helps rid the mind of fear and phobias by listening to your soul rather than your ego and the drama king/queen that manifests in your alcoholism.
7. It improves the prospect of happiness.
8. It can help you modify your health and transform your body by lowering your heart rate and balancing your energy flow.
9. It can help relieve chronic pain.

This, my friends, is a simple way to look at what meditation is. Go to YouTube if you don’t know how to meditate and select a simple guided meditation to listen to. It can relieve some of the uncertainty you might feel about meditation—fear of the unknown. It is a great skill and practice!

The only thing making us unhappy are our thoughts. So, change them! As far as prayer is concerned, it is not “pray and you shall receive.” In my mind, it’s more like: “Pray—Believe—Receive!” It’s beyond words. The whole universe is on our side. Believe you deserve it, and the universe will serve it! Trust in divine timing. The universe has our backs. Remember, we live in a universe that responds to what we believe because the universe loves believers.

In Alcoholics Anonymous, we can utilize the Steps to transform old patterns of our minds and let go of thoughts that no longer serve us. If you

can’t pray them away, maybe you can meditate them away!

Meditation is indeed a skill, but don’t expect to solve all your problems through it. Instead, treat it like a part of your D.S.P. (Daily Spiritual Practice). It can play a role in helping you feel better, experience less stress, and be a beneficial presence on the planet. So, pray and meditate until something happens.

We are more than our thoughts, our bodies, our feelings. We are a swirling vortex of limitless potential, here to shake things up and create something that the world has never seen! Our soul is a speck of the Divine Light that fills every part of us! The person on top of the mountain didn’t just end up there, he/she had to do a bit of climbing.

—Tim R., San Pedro  
Sober 27 years

My name is Raquel, I’m an alcoholic and by the blessing of God, I first learned about Step 11 eleven years ago when I arrived to Alcoholics Anonymous in Mexico City via a rehab center. I always bragged about my connection to God being already there. I grew up Jewish in a religious school, was very in touch with my Higher Power and always spoke to Him. What this Twelve-Step program gave me was the opportunity to heal my relationship to God and experience better conversations with Him. In the past, I asked God for specific things and would get very angry at Him if my wishes went ungranted. It took me years of sobriety to open myself to the idea of meditation. Even though we meditated at the rehab center and now and then I joined guided meditations, I didn’t see myself doing it as a daily practice.

When the pandemic began, I was in lockdown and a friend invited me to join a challenge of Jewish meditation and I said, “yes.” I was intrigued about the Jewish point of view in meditation and I loved it. I felt awake, felt clarity, so many answers started to emerge in my life. I finally understood when people said praying is asking the questions and meditating is receiving the answers. I couldn’t believe it! I was finally meditating!

A year later I was invited to a “God workshop” that I didn’t think I needed. However, my sponsee definitely needed it. So I joined because I thought it will help him, not me. I had the “perfect” program. When we started the process, to my surprise, they were asking me to murder my God. They told me my God did not work for me because it hadn’t taken away my stress, anxiety, worries, etc. Anything like fear meant I didn’t even trust my God. Hesitant but curious I followed direction and began to describe God as my friend. So from then on He was renamed. I chose to call Him “my God” instead of “God.” It was more personal and instead of being only my friend, I discovered He could be my best friend. It was amazing! “My God” was even better.

Next, I needed to go on a date with “my God” and I did. No cellphone, no distractions only Him and me. We went on a long walk, we talked and I even heard his voice. I felt so in love with life and felt so

present in everything that was happening, the sound of the ocean, the birds singing, the wind on my skin. The gift I received was to understand that “my God’s” presence in my life makes me present. Without His presence I was not paying attention to anything. I was just busy with work, with plans, with social events, and I knew I needed to find a way to not forget and each day. So I started my daily routine in the morning.

Every morning, I send a text to my friend that invited me to the workshop and he sends a text message to me. We wake up, say a prayer of our choice, we read the Daily Reflection, then we list 7 things we are grateful for. I put my life and my will in “my God’s” hands. My goal is to humbly serve Him and ask for strength to follow His will and not mine. At night we send texts with a list of our accomplishments for the day along with naming at least one opportunity/challenge. The opportunity or challenge helps us identify something that was hard or that we didn’t like that happened during the day. In describing the “opportunity,” I add details the nature of the difficulty with anyone in particular or unresolved issues in a given situation and then I say: “My God I can’t, you can,” and “I put all of this in Your hands and I let go.” So this way the first thing and the last thing I think about every day is “my God” and I have a better chance of never losing my connection. I used to wake up in the middle of the night and think about all my problems, torture myself remembering every single thing I had messed up in my life. Today, I just think of “my God” and I fall back asleep.

My recipe for Step 11 is God for breakfast, God for lunch, God for dinner, God 24/7, breathe God and always know that He goes first, then my program and then myself. During the day if any worries enter my mind I just say “thy will not mine be done.” Thanks to this routine I’ve learned to truly trust “my God.” I’ve been practicing this only 8 months now and I can not even recognize myself anymore. I live through His will and I have achieve so much more than what I had achieved in ten years on a program of me running the show. So why not trust Him? Life gets lighter, easier, better!

—Raquel M., Redondo Beach



## SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

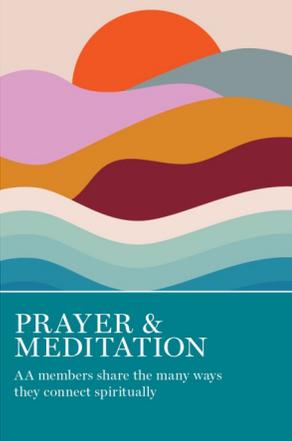
### God-consciousness

Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it ‘God-consciousness.’ Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial. (p. 568)



# ASBCO Bulletin Board

|   |   |
|---|---|
|  | <p><b>IMPORTANT:</b> Central Office needs your help with <b>UPDATED MEETING INFORMATION</b> and group contacts. If your group is still hosting Zoom meetings please call Central Office at (310) 618-1180 to offer updated Zoom Meeting IDs and Passwords. If your group has returned face-to-face meetings following COVID protocols, please update Central Office stating the meeting place, time, and expectations for safety.</p> |
|  | <p>Uncle Walty is retiring from his work as Phone Chair. Please welcome, Trisha N. to this service role. Phone Volunteers! We still need you! The Central Office roster of back-up volunteers has depleted. We will teach you how to work the phones and learn to listen and direct calls appropriately. Please call us or visit our website at southbayaa.org to sign up.</p>  |
|  | <p>The annual Chili Cookoff originally scheduled for October 2021 has been cancelled in light of recent safety concerns due to COVID-19. Please keep an eye out for this event next year. Group and individual support of this event is always amazing. We thank you for your continued support of Central Office events and look forward to hosting this wonderful social event in 2022.</p>   |

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|   | <p>New Grapevine publication available for purchase! <b>Prayer &amp; Meditation</b> features powerful stories by members of Alcoholics Anonymous about the many ways they pray and meditate in their daily lives. The stories in this book show how members begin to pray and meditate and then branch out to develop very personal, and often creative, ways to practice. Chapters include: daily routines, traditional religious practices, activities and exercise, personal techniques, the Serenity Prayer, and connecting with nature and the universe.</p>  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Set Aside Prayer</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Lord, today please help me set aside<br/>Everything I think I know about You,<br/>Everything I think I know about myself,<br/>Everything I think I know about others,<br/>Everything I think I know about my recovery.<br/>So that I may have a new experience of all these things.</p>   |
| <p>All stories were previously published in Grapevine, the International Journal of AA. Great for people in recovery or those who want to explore prayer and meditation.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Ask about this book and the Grapevine at Central Office!</p>               |  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Prayer for Change</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">God, I don't care what I sound like, or look like, who my partners are, or where I live. I just don't want to be like this anymore. On Your terms, in Your time, please remake me as You will. Thank You.</p>  |
| <p style="font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">\$4.50</p> <p><b>Special feature:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Card has a perforated bookmark with a prayer included</li> </ul> <p style="font-size: 1.5em; font-weight: bold;">ASBCO</p> <p>Tel: (310) 618-1180</p> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Birthday/Anniversary Cards</b></p> <p>Central Office now has greeting cards available to help your A.A. friends celebrate</p> <p>From 1 year to 50 years sober</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>Call or visit!</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> <p><b>We've also got the coins!</b></p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Writing for the Speakeasy</b></p> <p><b>Who writes for the Speakeasy?</b> You do. Stories and content contributions are always welcome. All AA members can write in with special interest in those connected to the South Bay.</p> <p><b>When is the Speakeasy deadline?</b> The Speakeasy is published quarterly for the South Bay. The deadline is usually the 15th of the month prior to publication for the 4 Seasons: Winter, Spring, Summer, and Fall.</p> <p><b>What should I write about?</b> Anything related to your experience of getting or staying sober, while respecting the anonymity of other members. Group announcements are also welcome. Write about step-work, struggles, triumphs, lessons learned, transformation, etc. Discretion is advised.</p> <p><b>How long and what format?</b> A good length is about 500 words. Longer contributions may be edited to suit newsletter format. Use plain text or Word documents ideally via e-mail. Send .jpeg files for graphics.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>E-mail: <a href="mailto:speakeasy.asbco@gmail.com">speakeasy.asbco@gmail.com</a></b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Access the <i>Speakeasy</i> Online at <a href="http://www.southbayaa.org">www.southbayaa.org</a></p> |