



AA District 18

# Newsletter

Volume 6 | Issue 4 | April 2026

Editor: Matt B. Tuesday Night Group, Main St. Community Center, Edwardsville

## *Serenity Prayer*

---

*God, grant me...*

*The serenity to accept the things I cannot change,*

*The courage to change the things I can,*

*And the wisdom to know the difference!*

## *Inside This Issue*

---

Page 2 Announcements, Humor, Thoughts on Step 4

Page 3 Step 4 Thoughts and the Prayer

Page 3.. Working the 4<sup>th</sup> Step

Page 4 AA History in April

Page 4 – Prayer and Meditation

Page 5 Cyber Security / Tech Corner

Page 6: 4th Promise of AA

Page 6: An Ode to Sobriety

Page 7 Tradition 4

Page 8 Concept 4 of the Concepts of Service

Page 8 Meeting Topic suggestions

Page 9 – Step 4 and Virtual Meetings

Page 10 – Writing Step 4 – It's Just a List

# Announcements

Looking for Volunteers to "Bridge the Gap" - helping newcomers coming out of Treatment. [Click to Sign UP](#)

## Birthdays

4/5/2020 Elsie Meeting

4/9/2026 Montana 6 years

- New Women's Meeting Granite City -Saturday 1pm [Click for Info](#)
- New Meeting in Granite City- Sat. 2116 Club Meeting 7pm - 8pm, Closed Discussion [Click for Info](#)
- New Meeting in Granite City - Thrs. Attitude Adjustments a New Way of Living [Click for Info](#)
- Open Speaker Meeting 7:30pm  
\*District 18 GSR's \*- Southern Illinois Area 21 presents a new Service Information YouTube video. [Click here for GSR Training Video.](#)

Area 21 – Monthly Delegate Roundtable MARCH 5 @ 7:00 PM

**We need your help!** Area 21 and the GSO are wanting to make sure they have the correct information for each group's GSR in District 18. **You can make sure your group's GSR is current by filling out the below form.** All GSRs will receive a digital GSR kit and can sign up for a GSR kit to be mailed. [Link to GSR change form.](#) You can also go directly to the Area 21 website, hover over home, and click "change form" to access the same form. [Link to Area 21 website.](#) We have also posted a link on this website under District 18 for easy access. **Thank you!!!**

Click [here](#) to download 2024-2026 AA Service Manual.

[AA Service Manual](#)

## Spotlight on Step 4

"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

Step Four is where recovery begins to move from general honesty to specific truth. After admitting our powerlessness and turning our will toward God's care, we are asked to look closely at the life we have lived. The Big Book describes this as a "searching and fearless moral inventory"—a careful examination of resentments, fears, and harms that have shaped our behavior.

## Humor Corner

I got so drunk one night I tried to pet a fire hydrant. I said, "Who's a good boy?" and scratched it behind the bolt. It didn't wag, but I was pretty sure it appreciated the attention.

A guy walking his dog stopped and just stared at me. I told him, "Relax... mine's very well trained." He said, "Sir... that one's for emergencies."

I got so drunk one night I tried to scan my own forehead at the self-checkout.

I kept leaning in like, "Why won't this thing read me?"

The machine said, "Please place item in bagging area."

So I just stood there... waiting to be approved.

The cashier walked over and said, "Sir... you're not an item."

And I said, "Well that explains a lot."

## Thoughts on Step 4

What happens in alcoholism? The whole human being is destroyed. Body, mind, emotion, and soul. What is recovery? The restoration of body, mind, emotion, and soul. In other words, the job has to be complete. The job has to be complete. There needs to be a total overhaul of the human being. Where do we begin? By finding out what has to be done. We have to find out what has to be done.

Every alcoholic has to ask himself, "Why me?" Many alcoholics say, "Why am I an alcoholic?" When the question should be, "Why was I singled out to get well?" I don't know why, but I believe this. I can't prove it, but I believe it. I believe that everybody has within them some talent that is capable of touching another human heart that others can't touch. You better find out what it is.

**Father Joseph C. Martin,**  
**12 Steps of AA with Fr. Martin**

For many of us, this Step feels intimidating at first. Yet its purpose is not to condemn us, but to free us. Alcohol was often the symptom of deeper patterns—selfishness, fear,

dishonesty, and resentment—that quietly directed our thinking. By putting these things on paper, we begin to see them clearly rather than carrying them as vague burdens.

The Big Book emphasizes that resentment is often the chief offender, for it blocks us from the spiritual life that keeps us sober. Step Four helps us recognize where anger, pride, fear, and self-centeredness have influenced our actions. We also begin to see our part in many situations, not merely what others have done to us.

This inventory is not about perfection; it is about truth. We are learning to live honestly, and honesty requires courage. When we finish Step Four, we hold in our hands something remarkable: a clear picture of where we have been and the beginning of a path toward freedom.

Step Four does not leave us in the past—it prepares us for the healing that comes in the Steps that follow.

Matt B.

---

## Working the 4<sup>th</sup> Step

When I first got sober, I was willing to do almost anything to stay that way—except work Step 4 of Alcoholics Anonymous. The words “*made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves*” sounded intimidating. I pictured digging up every mistake, every resentment, every embarrassing thing I had ever done. It felt like opening a closet that had been crammed shut for years, and I was afraid of what might come spilling out.

For a while, I stayed busy doing other things in sobriety. I went to meetings, listened carefully to other people’s shares, and tried to be helpful wherever I could. But whenever someone started talking about Step 4, I felt a knot in my stomach. I told myself I just wasn’t ready yet.

Eventually, my sponsor asked me a simple question: “Do you want relief, or do you want to keep carrying all that stuff?” That question stayed with me. Because the truth was, even though I had stopped drinking, I was still carrying around a lot of anger, fear, and blame. I had a long list of people whom I believed had wronged me. In my mind, they were the reason I drank the way I did.

## AA 4th Step Prayer

Dear God,  
It is I who has made my life a mess.  
I have done it, but I cannot undo it.  
My mistakes are mine &  
I will begin a searching & fearless moral inventory.  
I will write down my wrongs  
But I will also include that which is good.  
I pray for the strength to complete the task.

<https://www.aacle.org/twelve-step-prayers/>

### Another prayer for Step 4 ...

Merciful God, I confess that I have brought disorder upon my life and cannot mend it by my own strength. Grant me the courage to make a searching and fearless moral inventory, acknowledging both my faults and the good You have worked within me. Strengthen me to complete this task in honesty and humility; through Jesus Christ, my Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

### Grapevine Daily Quote

“I’m better able to love people when the storm of my judgmental mind settles, when I understand and empathize rather than criticize and condemn.”

“The Fine Art of Listening,” September 2008

With me it all comes down to ego and justification. When I have to force someone to agree with my point of view, I do a disservice to myself and harm the other person. What I try to practice is unless my opinion is asked for, I just listen and try to not be judgemental in my head. Depending on what I’m hearing, that can be difficult at times. But I continue working on it. **John G.**

### Miscellaneous Quote

"Second thought -first action"

I don't know how many times my first thought was my first action, and the bad situations that put me in. I've found value in not going with my first thought. Pausing gives me a chance to play the whole situation out, and maybe apply some common sense. I don't need to make a situation worse. **John G**

When I finally started writing my inventory, something surprising happened. Step 4 wasn't about punishing myself or digging up shame. It was about getting honest. As I wrote about resentments, fears, and situations where I had harmed others, I began to see patterns in my life. I saw how often fear drove my actions. I saw how my pride and my need to be right created conflict. And I began to recognize the ways my reactions had contributed to the problems I blamed on other people.

The inventory also showed me something I didn't expect: I wasn't uniquely terrible. I was human. Many of the things I struggled with—fear, resentment, selfishness—were the same things I heard others talk about in meetings. That realization brought a kind of freedom. For years, I had swung between blaming everyone else and quietly hating myself. Step 4 helped me move away from both extremes and toward something more balanced—honesty with a little compassion.

Looking back now, Step 4 wasn't the punishment I imagined. It was the beginning of real change. It helped me clear out emotional clutter I had been carrying for years. Instead of dragging the past behind me like a heavy chain, I started learning how to live with more awareness, responsibility, and hope.

Brandy C.



## AA History in April

### April 1:

1939 – Alcoholics Anonymous AA's Big Book was published.  
1940: Larry J. of Houston, wrote "The Texas Prayer", used to open AA meetings in Texas.

## Prayer and Meditation

One morning during my quiet time, I was reading through the Psalms assigned for that day. These words stopped me in my tracks:

"I will come into your house with burnt offerings; I will perform my vows to you, that which my lips uttered and my mouth promised when I was in trouble." (Psalm 66:13–14)

Sitting there with my coffee, I had to smile. It brought back all those "foxhole prayers" from my drinking days. You know the ones.

"God, get me out of this and I'll never drink again."  
"Just help me this once and I'll change everything."

At the time, I meant every word. But once the crisis passed, so did the commitment. It wasn't that God failed me—I just wasn't ready to live differently. Today, those same words feel different. They sound less like desperation and more like gratitude. Recovery has shown me that staying sober isn't a burden—it's a better life than I ever imagined. God didn't just pull me out of trouble. He gave me a new way to live. And today, one day at a time, I try to keep the promises I once made in fear, now with honesty and willingness.

Matt B.

### Grapevine Daily Quote

"I can't imagine anything that would make me so mad, glad, or sad that I would want to go back to what I was before AA."  
"The Meaning of Success," Napa, California, February 1993

If I don't turn over my will to my HP in the morning, my will will run me into the ground. I have to remember that my worse days today are nothing to fret about, especially thinking what I left behind is my better option. **John G.**

### Grapevine Daily Quote

"Clearly, the chief mark of restoration to sanity is our not taking the first drink."  
"Sanity," March 1981, Step By Step

If I'm not connected with my HP, working the steps and going to meetings, insanity has an easier door to open. My first reaction to any given situation is usually wrong. Sometimes, though few, I get it right the first time. But in most cases, when I pause to consider, it allows time for sanity to prevail. **John G.**

1940 – Larry J. of Houston, wrote The Texas Preamble used to open AA meetings in Texas.  
1966 – Sister Ignatia died at the age of 77. She worked with Dr. Bob in treating many early AA members at St. Thomas Hospital in Akron.  
1970: GSO moved to 468 Park Ave. South, NYC.  
1984 – 12 Coconuts Group, Kapiolani Park, Waikiki, Hawaii, was founded.

**April 2**

1966: Harry Tiebout, M.D. died.

**April 3:**

1941 – First Florida AA meeting was held.  
1960: Fr. Ed Dowling, S.J., died. He was Bill W’s “spiritual sponsor.”

**April 4:**

1960 – The Chicago Daily News reported that Fr. Edward Dowling, Jesuit Priest who helped start the first AA group in St. Louis, had died at age 62.

**April 7:**

1941 – Ruth Hock reported there were 1,500 letters asking for help, as a result of the Saturday Evening Post Article by Jack Alexander.

**April 10:**

1939 – The first ten copies of the Big Book arrived at the office Bill shared with Hank Parkhurst in Newark, New Jersey.

**April 11:**

1938 – Alcoholic Foundation held its first meeting.  
1939 – Marty Mann attended her first meeting at the home of Bill and Lois Wilson in Brooklyn.  
1941 – Bill and Lois Wilson moved into their new home, Stepping Stones.

**April 12:**

1942 – The Windsor Daily Star in Ontario, Canada, reported that over 400 AA’s attended a testimonial dinner for Dr. Bob.

**April 16:**

1940 – A sober Rollie Helmsley caught the only opening day no-hitter in baseball history since 1909.  
1973 – Dr Jack Norris Chairman of the AA General Service Board, presented President Richard Nixon with the one-millionth copy of the Big Book at the White House.  
2005 – Nancy Flynn (IndependentBlond died in Kennett Square PA

## Tech Corner / Cyber Security Tips

Cybersecurity problems often begin with passwords that are too simple. Consider an elderly man who uses the same password for everything—his email, bank account, and shopping websites. He chooses something easy to remember, like his dog’s name and birth year. At first, it seems harmless. But if one website is hacked, criminals can try the same password on other accounts. This is called **password reuse**, and it allows attackers to break into multiple accounts quickly. Warning signs include using short, predictable passwords or repeating the same one across many sites. A safer habit is to create **long, unique passwords** for each account and store them in a trusted password manager. Adding **two-factor authentication**—a code sent to your phone—provides another layer of protection. Good cybersecurity often comes down to simple habits. Strong passwords and careful account protection can prevent serious financial and personal loss.

**Matt B.**

## Step 4 Thoughts

The only piece of literature in A.A. that tells you how to work the Steps, is the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. But in the area of the 4th Step, in the Twelve and Twelve there is some of the best information the world’s ever seen on self-will and what makes people tick. It’s called, “The Basic Instincts of Life”. And I always suggest to people that I sponsor that they go to the Twelve and Twelve, read the first three or four pages about the Basic Instincts of Life, get a working knowledge about the words that you see in there, and then look them up in the dictionary because they’re very important words, and then we’re going to use them a little later on in the third column when we get ready to do the 4th Step inventory.

R., Linda. Joe and Charlie: The Big Book Comes Alive . UNKNOWN. Kindle Edition.

**April 17:**

1941 – 2nd group in Los Angeles, the “Hole in the Ground Group” was formed.

**April 19:**

1940 – First AA group in Little Rock, Arkansas, was formed.

**April 22:**

1940: Bill Wilson transferred his Works Publishing Stock to the Alcoholic Foundation. The Dates on which Hank Parkhurst transferred his stock is uncertain.

**April 23:**

1940 – Dr. Bob wrote the Trustees to refuse Big Book royalties, but Bill Wilson insisted on them for Dr. Bob and Anne.

**April 24:**

1989 – Dr. Leonard Strong died. He was Bill’s brother-in-law and an AA Trustee.

1940: The first AA pamphlet, “AA”, was published.

**April 25:**

1939: Morgan R interviewed on Gabriel Heatter radio show.

1951 – AA’s first General Service Conference was held.

**April 26:**

1939 – Bill & Lois Wilson moved in with Hank Parkhurst after the bank foreclosed on 182 Clinton St. This was the first of over 50 moves before they acquired Stepping Stones.

**April 30:**

1989 – The film “My Name is Bill W.,” a Hallmark Hall of Fame presentation, was broadcast at 9 p.m. on ABC TV.

## Highlighting the 4th Promise of AA:

***“No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.”***

Most of us entered recovery carrying a deep sense of failure. We believed our drinking had wasted years, damaged relationships, and left us with little to offer anyone. Promise Four turns that idea upside down. It tells us that even the darkest parts of our past can become useful when placed in the service of helping another alcoholic.

## Big Book First Published April 1, 1939

The book Alcoholics Anonymous, first published on April 1, 1939, marked a turning point in the understanding and treatment of alcoholism. Written primarily by Bill Wilson and early members of the fellowship, it offered something revolutionary: a practical program of recovery based on shared experience rather than theory alone. Its purpose was clear—“to show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered.”

At the time, alcoholism was widely misunderstood, often seen as a moral failing rather than an illness. The Big Book reframed it as a condition affecting mind and body, requiring both spiritual and practical action. It introduced the Twelve Steps, a simple but profound path that emphasized honesty, surrender, restitution, and service to others.

Though modest in its beginnings, the book quickly became the foundation of a growing movement. Its publication helped Alcoholics Anonymous spread beyond small groups into a worldwide fellowship.

More than eight decades later, the Big Book remains a cornerstone of recovery, offering hope to millions who once believed their situation was hopeless.

Matt B.

## An Ode to Sobriety

I thought my troubles all belonged  
To folks who did me mighty wrong.  
The world, it seemed, was quite unfair—  
A circus run by fools out there.  
If blame were money, I could say  
I’d been a millionaire all day.

Then someone said, with gentle grin,  
“Perhaps you ought to look within.”  
Now that idea seemed quite absurd—  
I nearly choked upon the word.  
Me? Part of trouble? Hard to see—  
I’d filed appeals with destiny.

But pen in hand, I took a seat,  
And started listing—short and sweet.  
At first just names of all who’d sinned,  
But slowly something else crept in.  
It turned out while I kept the score,  
My side had numbers... maybe more.

Matt B.

Our experience—once a source of shame—becomes a bridge. When we share honestly about where we've been, someone else hears their own story and realizes they are not alone. The mistakes, the despair, the humiliations we once tried to hide can become powerful tools for compassion and understanding. No lecture or theory can reach an alcoholic the way shared experience can.

This Promise also reminds us that nothing is wasted in God's economy. Even our worst moments can be redeemed. The very things that once nearly destroyed us may become the foundation for helping others find hope.

When we begin to see our past through this lens, gratitude replaces regret. What once seemed like a useless wreckage becomes a testimony that recovery is possible. And in helping others, we discover that our own sobriety grows stronger.

Matt B.

## Spotlight on Tradition 4:

*"Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole."*

Tradition Four gives each **Alcoholics Anonymous** group the freedom to find its own way of carrying the message. No central authority dictates how meetings must look, sound, or operate. Each group develops its own personality, shaped by the needs of the members and the community it serves. This freedom is a remarkable strength of A.A. Groups can adapt, experiment, and respond to local circumstances without waiting for permission. One group may focus on discussion, another on literature, another on speaker meetings. The form may vary widely, but the purpose remains the same: helping alcoholics stay sober and helping the next one find recovery.

Yet Tradition Four also includes an important safeguard. Our freedom stops where harm to other groups or A.A. as a whole might begin. Autonomy is not independence from responsibility—it is freedom guided by wisdom.

In practice, this Tradition calls for balance. We are free, but not reckless. Creative, but not divisive. Independent, yet still part of a larger fellowship. Tradition Four reminds us that A.A. thrives when groups are trusted to serve their members while still honoring the unity that holds us all together.

Matt B.

I laughed out loud, what else to do?  
The truth walked in and tipped its shoe.  
Turns out my faults were not unique—  
Just human, stubborn, loud, and weak.  
But writing them down cleared the air—  
A lighter load I didn't share.

Now when I stumble, I don't hide,  
Or polish up my wounded pride.  
I grin and say, "Well look at that—  
My halo slipped beneath my hat."  
And somehow life feels less severe  
When honesty moves in to steer.

Matt B.

---

### A Haiku to my Disease

Cup raised to the night,  
Laughter sours into silence—  
Morning finds the cost.

### A haiku to Sobriety!

Quiet morning breath,  
Old chains loosen in the light—  
One day held in grace.

### A Devotion for the Christian in Recovery

#### Verse

Psalm 90:14 "Satisfy us in the morning with your loving kindness, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days."  
(WEB)

#### Meditation

In recovery, we begin to see how often we tried to satisfy ourselves with things that could not last. Psalm 90 directs that longing toward God's loving kindness. The Psalmist does not ask for temporary relief, but for true satisfaction rooted in God's mercy. That request is both honest and wise.

## Spotlight on Concept 4 of Service

Concept Four affirms the “Right of Participation,” reminding us that those who carry responsibility within A.A.’s service structure should also have a voice in the decisions that affect their work. This principle ensures that service is not imposed from above, but shaped through shared responsibility and mutual respect.

In practice, this means that trustees, directors, staff members, and committee members are given an appropriate voice and vote in matters related to their areas of service. Those closest to the work often have valuable experience and perspective, and A.A. benefits when that knowledge is included in the decision-making process.

Concept Four helps protect A.A. from two common dangers: concentration of authority in a small group, and discouragement among those who serve but feel unheard. When participation is encouraged, unity grows stronger and decisions are better informed.

This Concept reflects a simple spiritual principle—respect for one another as trusted servants. It reminds us that leadership in A.A. is collaborative rather than hierarchical. Each voice matters when it is offered in humility and guided by the common welfare of the fellowship.

At its heart, Concept Four strengthens the spirit of cooperation within A.A.’s service structure. By ensuring that participation accompanies responsibility, it helps preserve the balance, fairness, and unity that allow A.A. to continue carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

**Matt B.**

Many of us spent years chasing satisfaction in places that left us empty. Recovery turns that pursuit in a new direction. We ask God to fill what we cannot fill ourselves. His loving kindness is not shallow or fleeting. It reaches the deeper places of the soul where restlessness once lived. As we recover, joy begins to grow from this new source. It is not forced or manufactured. It rises from being satisfied by God Himself. Over time, gratitude replaces craving, and steadiness replaces urgency. The soul learns that what God gives is enough, and in that sufficiency, we find lasting peace.

*Gracious God, whose marvelous works fill our lives with mercy, teach us to give thanks in every season. Open our lips to speak of Your goodness, steady our hearts in gratitude, and strengthen our hope as we remember Your faithful acts; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.*

**Matt B.**

### Morning Prayer for Sobriety

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, for bringing me to the dawn of a new day. I pray that You would give me strength this day to remain sober and free from the temptation to drink. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Your will be done, and not my own. Amen.

### Evening Prayer for Sobriety

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, for bringing me to the close of this day. I thank You for another day of sobriety, kept by Your grace and mercy. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Your will be done, and not my own. Amen.

## Some suggestions for Meeting Topics

- **A Searching and Fearless Moral Inventory**  
What honesty and courage really look like when we begin Step Four.
- **Facing the Truth About Ourselves**  
How inventory helps us see patterns of resentment, fear, and selfishness.
- **The Purpose of Inventory**  
Understanding that Step Four is about freedom, not self-condemnation.
- **Resentments: The Number One Offender**  
Identifying and understanding the role resentment plays in alcoholism.
- **Fear Inventory**  
Looking honestly at the fears that have shaped our behavior.
- **Sex Conduct Inventory**  
Examining relationships and how self-centeredness affected others.
- **Personal Responsibility in Recovery**  
Tradition Four — “Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.”
- **Healthy Autonomy in the Group**  
Balancing group freedom with responsibility to A.A. unity.
- **Freedom Through Self-Examination**  
Promise Four — “Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.”
- **A New Way of Seeing the World**  
How Step Four begins to shift our perspective and thinking.
- **From Blame to Ownership**  
Moving from blaming others to recognizing our own part.
- **Inventory as a Tool for Spiritual Growth**  
How Step Four becomes the foundation for lasting change.

---

*I got so drunk one night I tried to scan my own forehead at the self-checkout.*

*I kept leaning in like, “Why won’t this thing read me?”*

*The machine said, “Please place item in bagging area.”*

*So I just stood there... waiting to be approved.*

*The cashier walked over and said, “Sir... you’re not an item.”*

*And I said, “Well that explains a lot.”*

## Thoughts on Step 4 and Virtual Meetings

The Fourth Step, “made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves,” has taken on a new meaning for me in online meetings. Even though I’m sitting behind a screen, I’ve realized that I still bring all of my patterns, fears, and character defects with me, and I’m not always on my A-game.

I’ve noticed that I can get quickly irritated during some meetings, like when I’m judging how someone shares, feeling overlooked if I don’t get called on, or even disconnecting from the group entirely. When I take a Fourth Step approach, I have to stop and ask myself: *Why does this bother me? What’s my part in it?* That’s not always comfortable or fun, by any means, but it’s where the real work (and emotional maturity) begins.

Online meetings have also made it easier for me to hide. I can keep my camera off, stay quiet, and avoid being fully seen. At first, that felt like something I needed to do to protect my anonymity and be safe, but now I see it as it is: fear of being judged, of saying the wrong thing, or of being vulnerable. My inventories have helped me see those patterns more clearly.

I also catch myself in that old familiar territory of terminal uniqueness (comparing myself to others), thinking someone else is doing better than me, or sometimes worse. Either way, it pulls me out of my own program and further from being part of the group. When I’m honest in my Fourth Steps, I can see that this comes from feeling inferior and insecure, which is rarely ever based on facts, at least for me.

What I’m learning is that the Fourth Step isn’t about beating myself up. Mistakes will happen. It is, however, about becoming aware. It helps me see where I’m holding onto resentment, where I’m avoiding connection, and where fear is still running the show.

Whether in person or online, recovery asks the same thing of me: to be honest, to take responsibility, and to keep growing...one day at a time.

Brandy C.



## Funny Thing about Writing That 4<sup>th</sup> Step

There's a funny thing that happens when folks sit down to write their Fourth Step. Suddenly, people who haven't written a paragraph since high school turn into novelists. You hand them a pencil and a pad, and next thing you know they've produced something that looks like the first draft of *War and Peace*.

And almost always, it takes forever. Months go by. Sometimes years. Sometimes it never gets finished at all.

Now here's the deal. That's not an accident.

A lot of people drag their feet on Step Four because it's uncomfortable. Nobody wakes up excited to take a hard look at themselves. So what do we do? We complicate it. We stretch it out. We turn it into a long, detailed life story. We write page after page explaining why we were right, why they were wrong, and why our anger was justified.

But if you go back to the book—back to the actual instructions—it stops all that in its tracks. It's not a novel. It's a list.

Simple. Direct. Honest. The whole program is built on that kind of simplicity. Even the basic idea of recovery is stripped down to essentials—"treatpeople primarily involves not taking a drink."

Same principle applies here.

I belong, and I am enough. For a long time, I felt like I was on the outside—never quite fitting in, never measuring up. That thinking kept me isolated and chasing approval. Recovery is teaching me that I don't have to earn my place or prove my worth. Simply showing up, being honest, and doing my best is enough. I am part of this, just like everyone else. Today, I can let go of comparison, accept myself as I am, and know that I belong right where I am.

O God, help me accept myself as I am today. Remove the need to compare or prove my worth, and give me the peace of knowing that I belong and that I am enough. Amen.

I don't get a prize for acting like I'm supposed to. For a long time, part of me expected recognition for doing the right thing, as if basic responsibility deserved applause. When it didn't come, I felt overlooked or resentful. Recovery is teaching me that right behavior is its own reward. Honesty, patience, and doing what's expected bring peace, not trophies. I don't act rightly to be noticed—I do it because it's the way I choose to live. Today, I can let go of the need for recognition and focus on living with quiet integrity.

O God, help me do what is right without seeking praise. Give me humility in my actions and the peace that comes from living with integrity for its own sake. Amen.

## One Day at a Time

Living one day at a time in recovery means I've had to learn how to slow down my thinking before it runs ahead of me. There was a time when my mind moved faster than my judgment, and that usually led me into situations I didn't need to be in.

My mind still likes speed. It jumps to conclusions, makes quick decisions, and assumes it understands what's happening before I've really taken a moment to look at it clearly.

Recovery slowly teaches me the value of slowing that process down. A few extra seconds to think, to consider, and to see things as they are can make a big difference in how I respond.

Living this way keeps me sober because it gives me space between thought and action. I don't have to act on the first idea that comes to mind. I can pause, choose carefully, and move forward with more clarity. When I practice that just for today, sobriety holds—and that steady pace becomes a better way to live. **Matt B.**

Step Four isn't about writing beautifully. It's not about telling your story in dramatic detail. It's not about building a case for the defense.

It's about getting it down. Names. Resentments, Fears. Harms. Patterns. That's it.

When guys start writing paragraphs and chapters, nine times out of ten they're not taking inventory—they're arguing their case. They're still trying to prove something. Still trying to justify. Still trying to win.

And Step Four isn't about winning. It's about seeing.

The people who do best with it are the ones who keep it simple. They don't overthink it. They don't try to make it perfect. They just make the list and move on.

Because the real work isn't in writing it. The real work comes after.

So if you're staring at a blank page, wondering how to start, here's the plain truth:

Don't write a novel. Write the list. And get on with it.

Matt B.

*If you've ever planned your whole day around when and where your **next drink** was coming from, you just might be an alcoholic.*



I've noticed that in sobriety, I actually listen when people are talking, which still feels like a new skill I didn't know I needed. I used to nod along just enough to look engaged while my mind wandered off to more pressing matters, like what I was going to do next or how soon I could leave. Now I catch myself paying attention, following along, even remembering what someone said later, which has surprised a few people, including me. It's not that I've become a great conversationalist overnight, but at least I'm present for my own conversations. Every now and then I'll respond in a way that proves I heard the whole thing, and there's a brief moment where both of us seem impressed. It turns out, listening isn't as exhausting as I thought—it's just quieter. And for once, I'm not trying to control the outcome, just sitting there, taking it in, like someone who finally realized the point wasn't always to talk.

## Morning Prayer for Sobriety

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, for bringing me to the dawn of a new day. I pray that You would give me strength this day to remain sober and free from the temptation to drink. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Your will be done, and not my own. Amen.

## Evening Prayer for Sobriety

I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, for bringing me to the close of this day. I thank You for another day of sobriety, kept by Your grace and mercy. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Your will be done, and not my own. Amen.

***DO YOU HAVE AN UPCOMING EVENT OR A BIRTHDAY IN MAY, or are you interested in contributing an article to the newsletter? Please send any of the above to [info@aa-district18.org](mailto:info@aa-district18.org), by APRIL 21, being mindful of our Steps and Traditions. Any suggestions or comments are always welcome and appreciated, and may be sent to [info@aa-district18.org](mailto:info@aa-district18.org) !!!***

***THANK YOU for subscribing to our newsletter!!!***

***Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done, on earth as it is in  
heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those who trespass  
against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power,  
and the glory,  
for ever and ever.  
Amen.***