

Booze News

STEP EIGHT

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

The Courage to Become Willing

There are moments in recovery that feel dramatic. Walking into your first meeting. Making your first amends. Celebrating one year sober. But there is another kind of milestone that often goes unnoticed. It's the moment we become willing. Not willing because we suddenly understand everything or because we're no longer afraid. Simply willing enough to take the next step. Many people think courage means fearlessness. In Alcoholics Anonymous, we learn something different. Courage is often choosing to move forward while fear is still sitting beside us.

Willingness Is Rarely Instant

The Big Book tells us, "Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point." Notice that it doesn't say we stood at the point where we had everything figured out. It says we stood at the turning point and recovery is full of turning points: Becoming willing to admit we are powerless. Becoming willing to believe something greater than ourselves might help. Becoming willing to inventory ourselves honestly. Becoming willing to let go of defects we've depended on for years. Becoming willing to make amends we'd rather avoid. Every one of these requires courage before it requires certainty.

TRADITION EIGHT

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

dictionary definitions

WORDS MATTER. SOMETIMES SLOWING DOWN TO UNDERSTAND THE LANGUAGE OF A STEP CAN DEEPEN OUR UNDERSTANDING OF ITS SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLE.

Amends

An action taken to repair the harm caused by one's behavior. More than an apology, an amend is a sincere effort to make things right whenever possible.

Harm

Physical, emotional, financial, or spiritual injury caused to another person—or to oneself—through words, actions, neglect, or behavior.

Professional

A person who is trained, skilled, or employed in a particular occupation. In recovery, professionals (such as doctors, therapists, counselors, or clergy) may support our journey, but they do not replace the experience shared within the Fellowship.

Recompense

Compensation or repayment given to make up for a loss, injury, or wrong. While Step Nine is not about "paying off" guilt, some amends may include appropriate recompense when possible.

Service

Selfless action performed for the benefit of others. In A.A., service includes everything from making coffee and greeting newcomers to sponsoring others and participating in General Service. Service strengthens both the Fellowship and our own recovery.

Willingness

An open and honest readiness to take action, even when it feels uncomfortable or difficult. In recovery, willingness often comes before confidence, understanding, or complete certainty.

TRADITION EIGHT

a checklist for groups

“ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS SHOULD REMAIN FOREVER NONPROFESSIONAL, BUT OUR SERVICE CENTERS MAY EMPLOY SPECIAL WORKERS.”

1. Does my own behavior accurately mirror the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
2. When I chafe about any particular Tradition, do I realize how it affects others?
3. Do I sometimes try to get some reward—even if not money—for my personal AA efforts?
4. Do I try to sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On AA itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on humility?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what AA employees do? What workers in other alcoholism agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
6. Do I know where my local meeting directory comes from?
7. In my own AA life, have I had any experiences which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
8. Have I read the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions? How about the pamphlet “A.A. Tradition—How It Developed”.
9. Can my group rely on me to fulfill my service responsibilities without someone checking on me?

**These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.*

Spiritual Principle Spotlight

Willingness

Recovery begins when willingness replaces resistance.

Responsibility

Owning our actions without excuses or blame.

Brotherly Love

Seeing those we've harmed as fellow human beings—not obstacles, enemies, or judges.

Courage

Preparing to face uncomfortable truths.

Humility

Accepting that healing sometimes requires uncomfortable conversations.

The Weight of Unfinished Business

Resentments aren't the only things we carry. We also carry guilt, shame, avoidance, embarrassment, unfinished conversations.

Step Eight begins clearing emotional clutter before we ever knock on someone's door.

The Difference Between Ready and Willing

Many of us spent years waiting to feel "ready." Ready to stop drinking. Ready to forgive. Ready to let go. Ready to trust. The program teaches us that willingness often comes before readiness. Step Six says we become "entirely ready" to have our defects removed. Step Seven asks us to humbly ask for that change. Notice the progression; we don't remove our own defects. We don't perfect ourselves. We simply become willing. Sometimes willingness sounds like: **"I don't know if I can... but I'm willing to try."**

"WE HAVE A LIST
OF ALL PERSONS
WE HAVE
HARMED AND TO
WHOM WE ARE
WILLING TO
MAKE AMENDS."

— ALCOHOLICS
ANONYMOUS, 4TH ED., P.
76

Not people willing to forgive us or who deserve an apology, but simply people we harmed. It could also be seen as a list of opportunities to become **more free than we were yesterday.**

... Thoughts From our Membership ...

There are many core aspects of Tradition 8. I have chosen this one for my article this month. Tradition Eight states: "Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers." Pg. 168

To me, this tradition means that AA (Alcoholics Anonymous) should never become a professional organization. It's essential that Twelfth Step work should be offered freely, without pay, to preserve the program's spiritual and self-help foundation. Paying for AA's core work could mix money with spirituality, weaken the principle of "freely received, freely given," and harm recovery.

Unlike the first seven traditions, this is the first to focus on service centers rather than the groups themselves. It is also the only tradition that includes a specific exception, which makes it especially significant. The Twelve Steps commonly understood as suggestions that people may follow in their own way. AA groups, however, are expected to follow the Twelve Traditions closely, so this exception stands out. It provides a useful starting point for considering how Tradition Eight applies in daily life.

What Is the Meaning of AA's Eighth Tradition? Two phrases in this tradition need clarification: "nonprofessional" and "special workers." Understanding these terms helps explain how the Eighth Tradition applies to AA. The idea of being "nonprofessional" closely connected to Tradition Seven. From the earliest days of AA, Bill learned that money could interfere with spiritual purpose. Doctors and religious leaders play important roles in the lives of people in recovery, but AA did not believe they should be employed to carry the message. Bill's vision was that sponsors and group members would help fellow sufferers in AA out of compassion, not for personal profit. Those who share their stories should do so to reach and help others. Beyond concerns about corruption or selfish motives, this approach makes the help mutually beneficial, though not financially. Those who help others often find that they are helped in return, much like the saying, "Teaching is learning twice." Without the Eighth Tradition, some might be tempted to misrepresent themselves simply to make money.

What Does AA mean by "Special Workers"?

Although AA says it should remain nonprofessional, it also recognizes that an organization as large as Alcoholics Anonymous needs paid workers to operate smoothly. Early AA groups tried to rely on volunteers for these tasks, but that often did not work. Some volunteers disliked the work or failed to keep up with it, even though offices and meeting places still needed care. Today, volunteers handle some of these duties, but Tradition Eight allows groups that need paid help to hire it without fear of criticism from the General Service Board.

... Thoughts From our Membership ...

Continued from previous page

I have learned that many AA members fear our name could someday be exploited for profit. Even the suggestion of this can stir strong reactions, and such reactions can harm both the innocent and the guilty because they are often unreasonable. Through AA I have learned honesty and trust. Since we cannot predict the future, I choose not to dwell on that possibility.

I believe the members who help manage our money are providing a service from the heart.

As I research Tradition 8, I continue to discover new insights into early AA members' views on money. A central theme of this tradition is the danger that money can corrupt our primary purpose of carrying the message to other alcoholics. In my experience, professionalism can blur the line between money and spirituality. As with several other traditions, a precedent for this Tradition is found in the Big Book. In previous articles, I discussed Traditions 5 and 7. Tradition 5 teaches us not to be distracted by outside issues, money, or unrelated causes. Under Tradition 7, money and spirituality may meet through the collection basket when funds support Twelfth Step work, but not when money becomes the reason for doing the work. "This has always been so obvious and only a very few AA members have ever worked the Twelfth Step for a fee." (Page 166).

Tradition 8 will be a never-ending subject. There have been many discussions from the beginning of AA, and many more will follow. Discussion will continue about payment for valuable services other than Twelfth Step work. Caretakers, secretaries, AA club workers, members who used their personal knowledge of alcoholism privately in the workplace or related health fields, etc. At one point, even Bill and Dr. Bob were accused of making money from AA (See Pass It On, Pages 256–257)

My final thought is this: Tradition Eight reflects AA's spiritual principle, "Freely ye have received, freely give," reminding us that spiritual gifts should be shared freely, without payment or profit. It also connects to the willingness and love needed to work the Steps and carry the message with genuine care.

John D.

★ DISTRICT 14 ★ ELECTIONS

Get Involved!

YOUR DISTRICT. YOUR VOICE. YOUR SERVICE.

ALL POSITIONS WILL BE
**UP FOR
ELECTION!**

Step up. Serve. Help carry the message. *Make a difference!*



★ OFFICER POSITIONS ★

- ✓ DISTRICT COMMITTEE MEMBER (DCM)
- ✓ ALTERNATE DCM
- ✓ SECRETARY
- ✓ TREASURER

★ COMMITTEE POSITIONS ★

- ✓ ARCHIVES COMMITTEE
- ✓ BOOZE NEWS COMMITTEE
- ✓ CORRECTIONS COMMITTEE
- ✓ COOPERATION WITH THE PROFESSIONAL COMMUNITY (CPC)
- ✓ GRAPEVINE COMMITTEE
- ✓ PUBLIC INFORMATION COMMITTEE
- ✓ TREATMENT COMMITTEE
- ✓ ACCESSIBILITY COMMITTEE
- ✓ TECHNOLOGY COMMITTEE
- ✓ WHERE & WHEN COMMITTEE

ALL
POSITIONS
ARE AN
OPPORTUNITY
TO BE OF
SERVICE



YOUR EXPERIENCE,
YOUR STRENGTH,
OUR FUTURE.

We need you!



DATE
SUNDAY
AUGUST 9TH
2025



TIME
1:00 PM



IN PERSON AT
**NEW DAY
RECOVERY CLUB**
4046 FOREST BLVD
EAST SAINT LOUIS, IL

Upcoming Events

Brushstrokes & Breakthroughs August 8 @ 4:00 PM - 7:00 PM

108 Carbon Hill Road
O'Fallon, IL 62269

District 14 Elections & GSR Meeting

ALL POSITIONS ARE OPEN!

August 9 @ 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

In Person at New Day Recovery Club 4046
Forest Blvd, East Saint Louis

Illinois State Conference

"Humility in Action"

August 21 - 23

More information, flyers, & registration
links available on the [Area 19 Website!](#)

Southern Illinois Serenity Campout

September 16 - 20

Full Details & Flyer for your groups
can be found on the [District 14
Website!](#)

District 18 Annual Pcinic

September 27 @ 12:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Lunch at Noon & Speaker at 1:00 pm
Hartford Park, IL – Turn East on 7th Street
off of Hwy 3

Full Details & Flyer for your groups can be
found on the [District 14 Website!](#)

*We Want to Hear
From you!*



**You can now submit your
own content to the Booze
News for publication!**

There is a submission form on
the District 14 Website where
you can submit feedback,
articles, art work, events,
poetry, quotes, your favorite
sober stuff, literature
recommendations, sober
playlists, ANYTHING!

*Submissions will be reviewed & may
be lightly edited for clarity or space,
but the original will not be modified.
Submissions may not include harmful
language, images, or violent content.
Being included in the Booze News is
at the sole discretion of the
committee. Please remember our 12
Traditions where applicable when
making a submission.*

**FULL DETAILS FOR
THESE EVENTS ARE
LISTED ON THE
DISTRICT 14
WEBSITE!**

Reminder!

You can always reach us via email to make
suggestions or comments at:
boozenews.d14.a21@gmail.com

RECOVERY IN PRINT

District 14's monthly newsletter offering encouragement, inspiration, and education grounded in AA literature and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Subscribe
To The
Booze News!



Interested in Getting
Involved?

The Booze News Committee welcomes trusted servants who want to support recovery through service. Writers, editors, and creative contributors are always needed!

Contact Us:

boozenews.d14.a21@gmail.com