



STEP 4

“Made a searching and fearless
moral inventory of ourselves.”

How Bill W. Duped Me into Writing a 4th Step...And Thank God He Did!

“We have no monopoly on God; we merely have an approach that worked with us.” ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, page 95. I would have added—an approach that is tailor made for a real alcoholic such as myself. Bill W., when writing the 12 steps, knew his audience. He knew of the character defects that plague a newcomer embarking on sobriety for the first time: pride, stubbornness, defiance, self-righteous ego, etc. He knew them because he himself was an alcoholic of the hopeless variety and was intimately familiar with these shortcomings. And so, with some divine inspiration and the heart of a true salesman, Bill W. created the sales pitch of his life—one that would prove to help millions of alcoholics find peace, serenity, and a new way of living—the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

It's no coincidence that the 12 steps are referred to as “suggestions” and not “rules”. Bill W. guides us gently through the first 3 proposals, handling us with “kid gloves,” so as not to scare us off as we are prone to do when we encounter a “must” versus a “should.” In step 2, I wasn't required to believe in a Power greater than myself. I wasn't expected to define that Power. Instead, all I needed was a willingness to believe in something—anything—that was bigger than me and my own willpower. Bill asked me to surrender to an idea that was so broad, it was almost impossible to say no. In step 3, Bill doesn't ask me to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understood him. He simply asks me to make a decision—to set an intention—to let go of my instinct to run the show, knowing that I don't yet know how or have tools to actually do that. Again, this was an easy “yes” for me. So far, so good.

And then I approached step 4, which states, “made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” At first glance, this seemed daunting. But notice, Bill suggests we start with a list of people, institutions, and principles with whom we were angry. Then, in the next column, we write out why we were angry with them. In other words, I'm asked to start my 4th step by taking other people's inventory—by listing all the people who have harmed me—past and present—and the ways in which they hurt me. Well...don't threaten me with a good time! Hadn't I been doing that for the past several years in my head? Wasn't that my motivation for picking up a drink in the best of times? I knew the victim role well, and I jumped at the opportunity to put that down on paper. Looking back, I'm not sure I would have had the willingness to do a 4th step had it been constructed differently, had I been asked to start with the 4th column—my part.

In fact, I probably would have run the other direction.

Before working through the 4th step, I believed that I was a victim and that my drinking and discontent was a result of how others treated me. Unfortunately, I'm powerless over other people, so if my sobriety and happiness was dependent on their behavior, then my future seemed bleak. In reality, the 4th step taught me that I have a part in these situations, and that I am not powerless over my own behavior. Through sponsorship and the 5th step, I was able to identify patterns of my own behavior that didn't serve me well and make changes in the way I responded and reacted to the world and people about me. The irony of writing a 4th step, is that I went into it feeling powerless, but I emerged feeling empowered. There was still more work to be done, but, today, my peace and serenity is not contingent on my circumstances or the behaviors of other people.

I am so grateful to Bill W. and his ability to design a program of recovery that appealed to both the broken alcoholic that I was, as well as the sober member I am today. This didn't happen by accident. There truly is something unique and powerful about one alcoholic talking to another, and I, too, am now sold on the ideas contained in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

-Chris B.

April 16th

District 43 Monthly Business meeting

7-8 p.m.

(Third Wednesday of
each month)

ZOOM MEETING ID:
96566590236

P.W: 932879

**All are welcome
to attend!!**

A.A. members in District 43 of Northern Illinois publish this newsletter. Admissions are to keep members informed of local events, service activities and to share experiences and strength in recovery from alcoholism, and its impact on our families. Ideas are those of the authors and not necessarily those of A.A. PLEASE SEND US any articles, ideas, or questions to groupvineeditor@gmail.com. Comments are most welcomed and encouraged!

Virtual option

available. Advance

Zoom registration

required. *flyer is

available on the

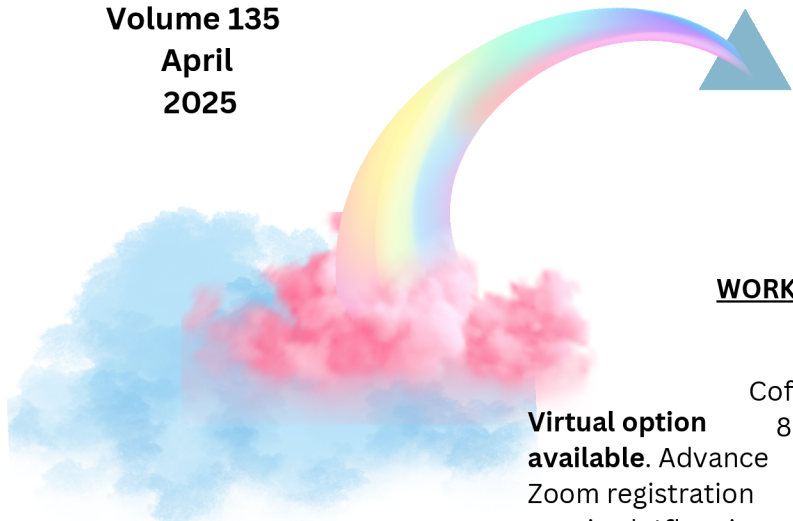
D43 website for

further information.

As Bill Sees it:

"The moral inventory is a cool examination of the damages that occurred to us during life and a sincere effort to look at them in a true perspective. This has the affect of taking the ground glass out of us, the emotional substance that still cuts and inhibits."

W, Bill. As Bill Sees It. New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1967, p. 140.



Hi! I'm Tim, I am an Alcoholic.

At first, I tried avoiding the 4th step like the plague. It was difficult to push my pride and egotism aside sufficiently enough to get a better view of myself. It took me many months and a relapse before I finally took action to make a fearless moral inventory of myself. Working through step four is challenging and emotional. However, I also found it comforting and cathartic. The idea of writing down all of my resentments, fears, regrets, and instances of harm caused to others was overwhelming. With the guidance of my sponsor, I realized writing down these thoughts helps organize them, making it easier to work through the emotional clutter. While difficult, it is also trans formative and has led to greater self-awareness, humility, and eagerness to make my amends. Through prayer and meditation, God has given me the strength, clarity, and spiritual support needed to work step 4. The most important thing I learned working step 4 was to not hold anything back. Step 4 has helped me see myself in a new light. I have gained insight into why I do the things I do. I've learned from my mistakes, discovered ways to be a better person, and how to help others suffering from alcoholism. Thanks to working step 4 I am on a newly designed path for living and am continuously discovering solutions to my drinking problem.

"The walk" Step Meeting

Held every Sunday

through Sunday.

ENDING on April 13th

Naperville Riverfront

(meet at the Gazebo)

Located at the corner

Mill and Jackson St.

For further information

see flyer/calendar events

on the D43 website.

April 26

Swing Into Spring

21st Annual Dinner

with AA speaker

2pm - 7pm.

*for further information

see flyer/calendar events

on the D43 website.

43rd Annual

Northeast Indiana

Convention and 80th

Annual Banquet

May 2 - May 4

120 W. Jefferrson Blvd.

Fort Wayne, In. 46802

For further information

see flyer/calendar events

on the D43 website.

May 24th

AA District 43 Bingo Night

A Night of Fun,

Fellowship & Inspiration

C.U.M.C., 20 North Center St.

Naperville, IL.

Doors Open @6:30 p.m.

(Fellowship, Snacks & Desserts)

Bingo Begins: 7 pm.

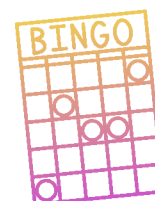
For further information,

please contact:

Lisa M (630) 210-6678

Julie S (708) 363-0209

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R R E S E N T M E N T H F P O



A.A. members in District 43 of Northern Illinois publish this newsletter. Admissions are to keep members informed of local events, service activities and to share experiences and strength in recovery from alcoholism, and its impact on our families. Ideas are those of the authors and not necessarily those of A.A. PLEASE SEND US any articles, ideas, or questions to groupvineeditor@gmail.com. Comments are most welcomed and encouraged!