

HOW

A publication of Indian River Central Office

Volume 23, Issue 8

HOW
October 6, 2003

The Origin of our Serenity Prayer

For many years, long after the Serenity Prayer became attached to the very fabric of the Fellowship's life and thought, its exact origin, its actual author, have played a tantalizing game of hide and seek with researchers both in and out of AA. The facts of how it came to be used by AA a half century ago are much easier to pinpoint.

Early in 1942, writes Bill W., in *A.A. Comes of Age*, "A New York member, Jack, brought to everyone's attention a caption in a routine *New York Herald Tribune* obituary that read:

"God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can, and wisdom to know the difference."

Everyone in AA's burgeoning office on Manhattan's Vesey Street was struck by the power and wisdom contained in the prayer's thoughts. "Never had we seen so much AA in so few words," Bill writes. Someone suggested that the prayer be printed on a small, wallet-sized card to be included in every piece of outgoing mail. Ruth Hock, the Fellowship's first (and non-alcoholic) secretary, contacted Henry S., a Washington D.C. member, and a professional printer, asking him what it would cost to order a bulk printing.

Henry's enthusiastic response was to print 500 copies of the prayer, with the remark: "Incidentally, I am only a

heel when I'm drunk . . . so naturally, there could be no charge for anything of this nature."

"With amazing speed," writes Bill, "the Serenity Prayer came into general use and took its place alongside our two other favorites, the Lord's Prayer and the Prayer of St. Francis.

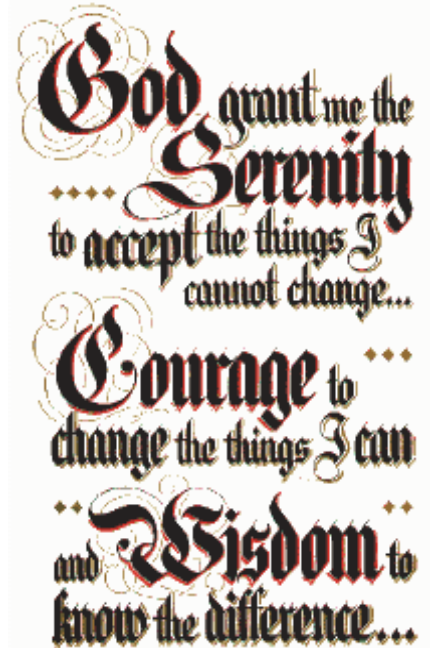
Thus did the "accidental" noticing of an unattributed prayer, printed alongside a simple obituary of an unknown individual, open the way toward the prayer's daily use by thousands upon thousands of AAs worldwide.

But despite years of research by numerous individuals, the exact origin of the prayer is shrouded in overlays of history, even mystery. Moreover, every time a researcher appears to uncover the definitive source, another one crops up to refute the former's claim, at the same time that it raises new, intriguing facts. What is undisputed is the claim of authorship by the theologian Dr. Rheinhold Niebuhr, who recounted to interviewers on several occasions that he had written the prayer as a "tag line" to a sermon he had delivered on Practical Christianity. Yet even Dr. Niebuhr added at least a touch of doubt to his claim when he told one interviewer, "Of course, it may have been spooking around for years, even centuries, but I don't think so. I honestly *do believe* that I wrote it *myself*."

From August/September 1992 Box 459
(Reprinted with permission)

INSIDE CONTENTS:

TEN	2
HISTORICAL TRIVIA	3
TREATMENT SCHEDULES	3
FYI	4
BIRTHDAYS	5
CALENDAR	6
OTHER STUFF	7
YOUR CENTRAL OFFICE	8



"We have entered the world of the spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for a lifetime. Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear."

Alcoholics Anonymous, Third Edition, pg 54





10 Ten X

STEP

"Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

"We can try to stop making unreasonable demands upon those we love. We can show kindness where we had shown none. With those we dislike we can begin to practice justice and courtesy, perhaps going out of our way to understand and help them.

"Whenever we fail any of these people, we can promptly admit it — to ourselves always, and to them also, when the admission would be helpful. Courtesy, kindness, justice and love are the keynotes by which we may come into harmony with practically anybody."

Reprinted with permission from *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*
Copyright © Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

TRADITION

**"Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues;
hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy."**

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really *is* an "AA opinion" on Antabuse? Tranquilizers? Doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Alcohol? The federal or state government? Legalizing marijuana? Vitamins? Al-Anon? Alateen?
2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression I am stating the "AA opinion?"
3. What in AA history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
4. Have I had a similar experience in my own AA life?
5. What would AA be without this Tradition? Where would I be?
6. Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
7. How can I manifest the spirit of this Tradition in my personal life outside AA? Inside AA?

Reprinted with permission from the *Traditions Checklist*
Copyright © Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

CONCEPT

"Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority — the scope of such authority to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws."

"... In our structure we have tried to create at each level accurate definitions of authority and responsibility. We have done this (a) by legal means, (b) by traditional means, and (c) by principles under which doubtful and seemingly or really conflicting situations can be interpreted and readily resolved."

Reprinted with permission from *Twelve Concepts for World Service*
Copyright © Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.



In order to finance the printing of the First Edition Big Book, stock certificates were sold to early AA members and others. Works Publishing, Inc. was the original name of AA's publishing business. It was later changed to AA Publishing and then Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. These certificates were later purchased back so that AA could retain total ownership of the book.

TREATMENT: GROUP COMMITMENTS

ALCOHOPE

5925 37th St, Vero Beach, FL 32966

CENTER FOR EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (CEBH)

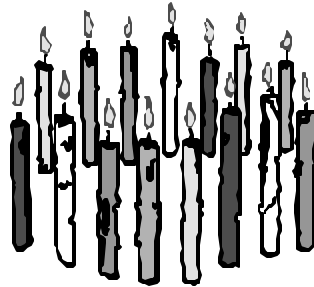
1190 37th St, Vero Beach, FL 32960

TUESDAYS:		SATURDAYS:		MONDAYS:	
Friday Young People's	10-07			NEED GROUP COMMITMENT ?	October 6
Indian River Men's	10-14	Barefoot Bay Wed.	10-11	NEED GROUP COMMITMENT ?	October 13
Candlelight	10-21	South Vero	10-18	Safe Harbor Women's	October 20
Royal Palm	10-28	Discovery Women	10-25	Vero Beach 12 & 12	October 27
Serenity House	11-04	King's Highway	11-01	Noontime Recovery	November 3
Free & Easy	11-11	Beachside Beginners	11-08	South Vero	November 10
ODAAT	11-18	Sebastian Freedom	11-15	Friday Young People's	November 17
Midnight Oil	11-25	Vero 12 & 12	11-22	Indian River Thursday	November 24
		Friday Young People's	11-29	NEED GROUP COMMITMENT ?	December 1
Noontime Recovery	12-02			NEED GROUP COMMITMENT ?	December 8
Indian River Men's	12-09	Discovery Women	12-06	Safe Harbor Women's	December 15
South Vero	12-16	Candlelight	12-13	Vero Beach 12 & 12	December 22
Serenity House	12-23	Vero Beach Group	12-20	Noontime Recovery	December 29
Royal Palm	12-30	ODAAT	12-27		

CARRY THE AA MESSAGE!
FOR INFORMATION CALL LEE: 567-4759



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS



HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

To publish announcements of birthdays being celebrated by your Group's members each month, please bring list of names and numbers of years to Central Office and put in filing cabinet in folder labeled "HOW Editor," send via e-mail to irhow@yahoo.com, or use link from website at indianriveraa.freesevers.com.

ROYAL PALM GROUP		FRIDAY NIGHT BIG BOOK		ODAAAT	
<i>Celebrates Last Monday</i>		Ken C.	18	<i>Celebrates Last Friday</i>	
Dan H.	27			Jim W.	1
John N.	27	SOUTH VERO GROUP		Carole J.	1
Chuck B.	40	<i>Celebrates Last Wednesday</i>		Kathleen K.	2
		Lisa E.	1	Reaann T.	2
NOONTIME RECOVERY		Christine O'C.	2	Jack C.	6
<i>Celebrates Last Friday</i>		Darryl H.	2	Rita F.	12
Vicki R.	2	Jay M.	2	Kate C.	17
Elizabeth T.	8	Dean A.	3	John S.	17
Jimmie C.	11	Stew W.	3		
Terry K.	11	Jim S.	4	INDIAN RIVER MEN'S	
		Lonnie W.	7	Roger B.	1
KINGS HIGHWAY		Russ T.	7	Roy C.	1
Tim McD.	14	Ray O'B.	15	Al H.	13
		Stephanie S.	15		
MONDAY NIGHT HIBISCUS		Phil S.	21	INDIAN RIVER WOMEN'S	
Tim S.	2	John M.	28	Jane M.	2
Bob L.	7			Linda P.	28
Jane A.	15	VERO 12 & 12			
John H.	24	Tom P.	5	DISCOVERY WOMEN'S	
		Patricia W.	12	Debbie D.	12
FREE & EASY GROUP		John H.	31		
<i>Celebrates Last Thursday</i>					
Bob L.	7	SURFSIDE GROUP			
Tom C.	8	John N.	27	HAPPY AA	
Georgi A	21	Joan D.	40	ANNIVERSARY!	



Tradition Ten

To most of us, Alcoholics Anonymous has become as solid as the Rock of Gibraltar. We like to believe that it will soon be as well known and just as enduring as that historic landmark. We enjoy this pleasant conviction because nothing has yet occurred to disturb it; we reason that we must hang together or die. Hence we take for granted our continued unity as a movement.

But should we? Though God has bestowed upon us great favors, and though we are bound by stronger ties of love and necessity than most societies, is it prudent to suppose that automatically these great gifts and attributes shall be ours forever? If we are worthy, we shall probably continue to enjoy them. So the real question is, how shall we always be worthy of our present blessings?

Seen from this point of view, our AA Traditions are those attributes and practices by which we may deserve, as a movement, a long life and a useful one. To this end, none could be more vital than our Tenth Tradition, for it deals with the subject of controversy -- serious controversy.

On the other side of the world, millions have died even recently in religious dissension. Other millions have died in political controversy. The end is not yet. Nearly everybody in the world has turned reformer. Each group, society and nation is saying to the other, "You must do as we say, or else." Political controversy and reform by compulsion have reached an all-time high. And eternal, seemingly, are the flames of religious dissension.

Being like other men and women, how can we expect to remain forever immune from these perils? Probably we shall not. At length, we must meet them all. We cannot flee from them, nor ought we try. If these challenges do come, we shall, I am sure, go out to meet them gladly and unafraid. That will be the acid test of our worth.

Our best defense? This surely lies in the formation of a Tradition respecting serious controversy so powerful that neither the weakness of persons nor the strain and strife of our troubled times can harm Alcoholics Anonymous. We know that AA must continue to live, or else many of us and many of our fellow alcoholics throughout the world will surely resume the hopeless journey to oblivion. That must never be.

As though by some deep and compelling instinct, we have thus far avoided serious controversies. Save minor and healthy growing pains, we are at peace among ourselves. And because we have thus far adhered to this sole aim, the whole world regards us favorably.

May God grant us the wisdom and fortitude
ever to sustain an unbreakable unity.

We have the choice of two paths before us - - -
at every moment...

One ascends to peace of mind, serenity, happiness,
power, success, making a positive contribution
to humanity.

One descends to drunkenness, misery, loneliness,
poverty, ugliness, failure, disease, jail.

To choose the first path, we must be sober.
The second path requires just one drink.

Don D. went to an AA meeting one evening.
He frowned when a member mispronounced
a few words while reading "How It Works."
He felt appalled when another member stood up
and said he was an alcoholic "and an addict."
Another person talked too long.
As he slipped out the door immediately
after the meeting, he muttered,
"That was terrible. I should have stayed home."

Bob M. went to a meeting one evening.
His head was bowed as he listened to the
"Preamble" and to "How It Works."
His eyes moistened as he listened intently
to a member tell his story.
He was grateful for being able
to attend this meeting.
After clean-up and a little socializing, he paused.
And as he locked the meeting room door,
his thoughts were,
"Thank God for such a beautiful fellowship."

Both AA members were at the same meeting.
Each found what they were looking for.

AA WON'T

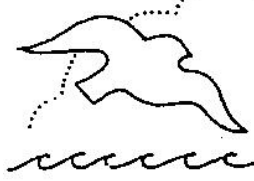
Keep you from going to Hell
Nor is it a ticket to Heaven

BUT IT WILL

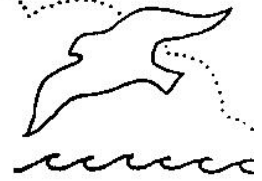
Keep you sober long enough
For you to make up your mind
Which way you want to go!



HOW



Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
 855 Centre, Suite 4, Miracle Mile
 P.O. Box 1776
 Vero Beach, FL 32961
 772-562-1114



URL: www.indianriveraa.freesevers.com

E-MAIL: info@indianriveraa.freesevers.com

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAIR: John H
 CO-CHAIR: Elizabeth T
 TREASURER: Richard E
 SECRETARY: Darcie A

STANDING COMMITTEES

ARCHIVES: Sue L
 WEBSITE COORDINATOR: Dutch VN
 CORRECTIONS WOMEN: Fran H
 Kathy B
 CORRECTIONS MEN: —
 DESK COORDINATOR: Sue L
 HOW EDITORS: Darcie A
 Dutch VN
 LITERATURE: Maureen L
 PUBLIC INFORMATION: Kathy H
 INVENTORY CONTROL: Paul H

STANDING COMMITTEES (Cont'd...)

TELEPHONE COORDINATOR: Bill K
 UNITY CHAIR: Lorrie N
 WHERE & WHEN: Joseph J
 AREA LIAISON DISTRICT 6: Rich K
 FCYPAA LIAISON: Jennifer M

DELEGATES AT LARGE:

Don McC
 Rich K
 Sarah P

Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
 855 Centre, Suite 4, Miracle Mile
 P.O. Box 1776
 Vero Beach, FL 32960

PLACE
 STAMP
 HERE