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VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP

Primary Purpose

FOURTH EDITION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

PAGES 72-88

[Chapter 6 - Into Action - \(pp. 72-88\) \(aa.org\)](#)

Into Action

Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it? We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path. We have admitted certain defects; we have ascertained in a rough way what the trouble is; we have put our finger on the weak items in our personal inventory. Now these are about to be cast out. This requires action on our part, which, when completed, will mean that we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our defects. This brings us to the Fifth Step in the program of recovery mentioned in the preceding chapter.

This is perhaps difficult, especially discussing our defects with another person. We think we have done well enough in admitting these things to ourselves. There is doubt about that. In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further. We will be more reconciled to discussing ourselves with another person when we see good reasons why we should do so.



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Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Archives Committee Mtg.-
07/06/2022 @ 5:30 PM
- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. –
07/11/2022 @ 6:00 PM
- ◆ District 27 Committee Mtg.
07/16/2022 @ 10 AM&12PM
- ◆ District 27 Business Mtgs.
07/16/2022 @12PM-3PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. –
07/20/2022 @ 6:30 PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. -
07/26/2022 @7:00 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. –
07/28/2022 @7:00 PM

Some may wonder why this chapter is entitled “Into Action” in the first place. The answer is quite simple. While the first four steps require little more than thought and soul-searching, the remaining steps require much more. There’s still a fair amount of thought and soul-searching involved, but action most certainly takes point. These steps require you not only to think about your recovery, but to actively work on it as well. Many say that recovery requires a simple program. That may be true, but simple doesn’t mean lazy. We cannot stay sober through half-measures alone. We must give this program everything we’ve got if we wish to succeed.

Each of the steps covered by “Into Action” will be broken up and grouped into three sections below. The first section will cover three steps, while the second and third sections will cover two steps each. If you have any sort of vague familiarity with the steps, you might immediately recognize why we’ve chosen to break them up in this way. But if you’re new to recovery, you might get something out of noting the themes presented below. Never forget that our recovery should help us to evolve. Anyone who follows the advice below should eventually find themselves achieving amazing new levels of spiritual growth.

Steps 5-7

“Into Action” begins by explaining our need to discuss our [resentments](#) and [character defects](#) with another person. Those of us who fear [Step Five](#) may argue that there is no need for it. Once we make a personal inventory, it shouldn’t need to be shared.

As the book explains, however, there are three things we learn from this step:

[humility](#), [honesty](#), and fearlessness. We forgo these attributes in addiction, as we constantly deceive in order to hide our disease from others. There are professional actors who spend less time developing their characters than your run-of-the-mill addict or alcoholic. More importantly, admitting our faults out loud makes them real. If we only admit them internally, we may push this [admission](#) back to the far recesses of our minds. We must accept them for what we are before we can move forward.

When we admit our shortcomings to our sponsors, we enable them to help us begin working toward a better way of life. In this way, Step Five informs the work we do from this point forward. Before continuing, however, we must do one last thing. After Step Five, we must spend an hour or so in quiet reflection. We must consider the discussion we just had. If we left anything out, we must call our sponsor and admit this immediately. But if we can say in earnest that our confession has been made in full, then we are ready to begin [Step Six](#).

Just as Step Five revolves around certain traits, the theme of Step Six is willingness. We must be willing to let go of our character defects without holding onto any of them. This is not to say that every single one of our negative traits will disappear in an instant. We will most certainly struggle with at least a few. But now that our sponsor knows about them, he or she can help us stay on the right track.

Note that the above two steps referenced by “Into Action” revolve around admitting and removing our character defects. Step Seven is no different. While some may find this step to be a little more complicated than it first appears, “Into Action” notes that it can be completed with a simple prayer:

“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.”

At this point, we find ourselves ready to move forward with “Into Action” and begin working on our personal relationships.

Steps 8-9

Upon completing the above three steps, we may discover a great deal of faith in our spiritual growth. This faith tells us that we can recover. We can remain sober, and in doing so become better people. But “Into Action” offers one succinct note of caution.

“Faith without works is dead.”

If we wish to become better people, we must first seek atonement for our previous actions as addicts and alcoholics. This is why we find that we must make amends to those we have harmed.

“Into Action” observes that many of us already made the list we need for Step Eight. We did this without realizing it, when we listed our resentments in Step Four. If we performed a true appraisal of ourselves, we likely realized that we weren’t so kind to most of the people on this list. We must therefore go back over our Step Four inventory and identify everyone to whom we must now make amends. Then, we should reflect on this for a moment and determine whether any names are absent from this list. Once we are sure that the list is complete, we allow our sponsor to review our work. We take their advice concerning any names that should be added or subtracted. After this, it’s time to begin our work.

When performing Step Nine, we don’t necessarily need to tell people why we are making amends. In fact, “Into Action” cautions us against this. Some may harbor deep-seated views against AA, or even spirituality itself. Nonetheless, these objections don’t necessarily mean that they will not appreciate our desire to now make things right. Even if the wrongs we’ve done to this person pale in comparison to the harm they’ve done to us, we must grin and bear it. This isn’t about playing the victim. It’s about casting aside blame and learning the benefit of forgiveness. In fact, we might get more out of making amends to those we resent than we’ll get from making amends to those we love. And if we must mention our newfound sobriety to certain close-minded sorts, then we might simply leave off the spiritual side of the program for the time being.

The subjects of our amends may respond in one of three ways. In many cases, they’ll forgive us while admitting to faults of our own. Sometimes, they may forgive us but will still allow us to take sole blame for our past disputes. And in some unfortunate cases, they will find no forgiveness in their hearts whatsoever. But when we’re trying to clean our own house, we can’t obsess over the results. We simply do what we can to make things right. If we owe someone money, we pay it back. In cases where only a simple apology is needed, we ensure that it is made without providing excuses or defense.

We should make the caveat that one must only make amends when doing so causes no further harm. If making amends to somebody might cause emotional turmoil, think twice. “Into Action” also notes that, while we must accept that amends may result in losses or even jail time, we should consider these consequences more fully. If being in jail would prevent us from providing for our family, perhaps it’s not the place for us.

We must simply make sure that we aren't using this as a broad excuse for avoiding the right thing. Do not be overly hasty in making your amends, nor in avoiding them. This goes against what "Into Action" recommends for us. The primary goal is to ensure we become useful and principled people. Keep sight of this goal, and never let your recovery be so fanatical that it harms those who need you most. If your amends might affect someone else, "Into Action" suggests seeking their consent beforehand. For a couple of stories that illustrate this principle rather well, read pages 79-81 of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Take these stories to heart, and many promises just may be fulfilled in your life.

Steps 10-11

Before "Into Action" concludes its section on Step Nine by introducing the Twelve Promises, the chapter includes a rather important passage.

"The alcoholic is like a tornado roaring his way through the lives of others. Hearts are broken. Sweet relationships are dead. Affections have been uprooted. Selfish and inconsiderate habits have kept the home in turmoil. We feel a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough. He is like the farmer who came up out of his cyclone cellar to find his home ruined. To his wife, he remarked, 'Don't see anything the matter here, Ma. Ain't it grand the wind stopped blowin'?"

By working the five preceding steps, we learned to recognize this tornado. We then began patching up some of its mess. Now, the last two steps covered by "Into Action" will help us to ensure those winds stop blowing for good. Because in the end, all we're left with after finishing our amends is a pile of words and promises. In order to rebuild trust with those we love, we must continue demonstrating our sobriety through our actions.

It is noted by "Into Action" that we should continue to take personal inventory by practicing Step Ten. This section states:

"This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime. Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code."

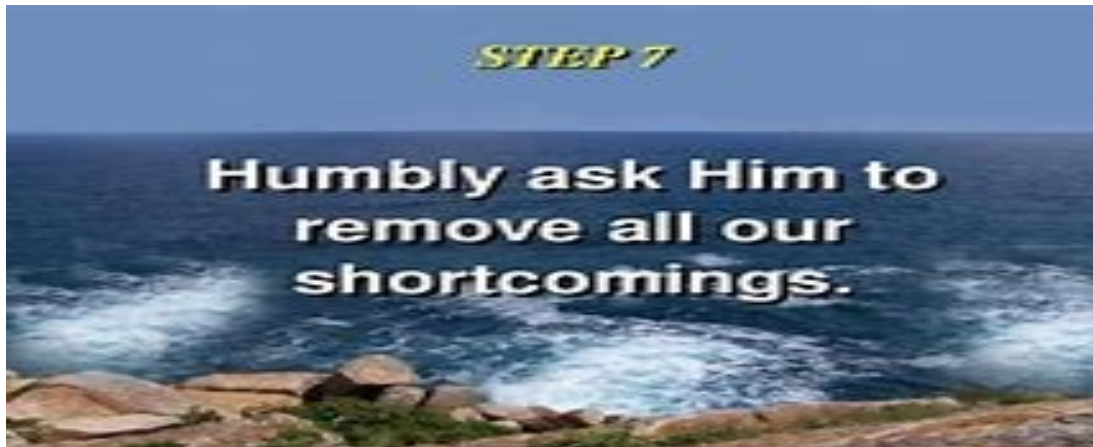
The important thing to remember about Step Ten is that we must never let up. We should always be spot-checking ourselves and continuing to take inventory. But Step Ten is not the only step that demands continuous practice. In fact, continuous practice of the steps will be what ultimately allows us to maintain a sense of spiritual growth.

We find this spiritual growth in Step Eleven. “Into Action” suggests practicing this step by engaging in prayer and meditation at the end of the day—the same time at which we should be practicing Step Ten. While practicing Step Eleven, we think not only of any wrongs we committed during the day, but how we can right them and continue to grow as human beings. When we wake in the morning, we then think about the day ahead of us. We pray for direction in the following manner:

“Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.”

Don’t get too hung up on the word “God.” The point of “Into Action” isn’t that we must all worship the same Higher Power. But it’s important for us to reflect in the manner described above. We can’t face the day while filled with thoughts of doubt and indecision. Instead, we must learn to relax and trust that everything will work out in the manner it should—even if we feel it should have worked out differently.

“Into Action” ends upon describing this leg of our spiritual journey. But that doesn’t mean that the journey is over. As you will see when we cover the next chapter, Step Twelve presents a journey of its own. Until then, keep practicing the steps above. They will work wonders in your recovery.



AA GRAPEVINE TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

Tradition Seven: Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help AA (my group, my central office, my GSO) remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new person who can't afford it yet? How generous was I when drunk in a barroom?
2. How do I (or my group) support our International Journals of Alcoholics Anonymous, Grapevine and La Viña?
3. If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn't it be OK to let the government subsidize AA groups in hospitals and prisons?
4. Is it more important for a group to get a big AA collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
5. Is a group treasurer's report unimportant AA business? How does the treasurer feel about it?
6. Does my group have a "prudent reserve"? If yes, do I know what that amount is?
7. If a family member, work colleague or close friend who is not an AA member wants to make a financial contribution to my group, should the group accept it? What if my group is short on funds?

Upcoming Events

JULY 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6 Archives Committee Mtg: 6:00 pm	7	8	9
10	11 Steering Committee Mtg.: 6:00 pm	12	13	14	15	16 District 27 Committees Mtg.: 10am-12 pm District 27 Business Mtg.: 12pm-3pm
17	18 Intergroup Rep. Mtg. 6:60 pm	19	20	21	22	23
24 31	25	26 District 37 Mtg.: 7:00 pm	27	28 District 7 GSR Mtg.: 7:00pm	29	30



Your Vancouver Archives, serves Districts 7 and 37 of Western Washington Area 72.

We need your group history for the 2022 Pacific Northwest Conference (PNC) on Zoom! Archives will have a Zoom breakout room with a video display of our local group history!

SHARE YOUR GROUP HISTORY through books, letters, fliers, reports, coffee mugs, fliers, anything that represents your group through the years. Sharing our history is vital for our future generations in carrying the message!

You can bring your items to the next Archives Committee Meeting, which meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Intergroup Office OR call Cindy at (702) 806-6466 and I can meet you, and give you a receipt for the temporary display of your items, which will be returned upon completion of our video. We can also permanently house your historical items in our Vancouver Archives Repository, which is secure and climate controlled.

Current Projects:

- PNC planning. Possible Zoom break-out room for local display.
- Refurbishing Grapevine binders that have developed rust.
- Continued digitization of audio cassettes, cd's and group history. This includes storage of "born" digital documents, such as Minutes, Agendas, Financial Reports and event fliers.

Email to: dist7archives@area72aa.org

Contact Cindy M. with any questions or comments at:
dist7archives@area72aa.org or call/text: (702) 806-6466
In Service, Vancouver AA Archives Committee

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS JUNE 2022

June 2022	Group Name	Contribution
06/03/2022	Fireside	100.00
06/06/2022	Friday Night Happy Hour	100.00
06/06/2022	Ready & Willing	50.00
06/07/2022	The Lighthouse	50.00
06/07/2022	Recovery 360	40.00
06/09/2022	First Shot	235.87
06/09/2022	Hockinson Group	118.34
06/10/2022	Sunday Solutions	10.50
06/13/2022	Grays River Grateful	81.00
06/13/2022	A New Morning	283.90
06/15/2022	Wayfarers	77.00
06/16/2022	Cascade Group	150.00
06/24/2022	Men's Fireside	100.00
06/24/2022	Anchor Point Counseling	10.00
06/27/2022	Rock Bottom	25.00
06/28/2022	As Bill Sees It	190.00
06/28/2022	Happy Destiny– Longview	50.00
Individual Contributions		257.00

SHARED BY MEMBERS

A Commonly Asked Question

AA's are often asked "*What is the difference between 'defects of character' in Step Six and 'shortcomings' in Step Seven?*"

According to G.S.O.'s archives Bill W. commented about his use of "*Defects of Character*" and "*Shortcomings*" interchangeably in the Steps in a personal letter he wrote dated March 7, 1963.

Thanks for your inquiry, requesting to know the difference between 'defects of character' and 'shortcomings' — as those words appear in the Steps. Actually I don't remember any particular significance in these phrases. In my mind, the meaning is identical; I guess I just used two ways of expression, rather than to repeat myself. It's just as simple as that.

In another letter, dated November 16, 1965, Bill again responded to a similar inquiry. His letter read, in part:

When these Steps were being done, I didn't want to repeat the phrase 'character defects' twice in succession. Therefore in Step Seven, I substituted 'shortcomings', thereby equating 'shortcomings' with 'defects.' When reading most people do equate that way and there seems to be no difficulty. I used them as though they both meant exactly the same thing — which they appear to many people.

Vancouver Area Intergroup 2022 Newsletter will be distributed in the first week of each month instead of the middle of the month.

If you would like to share your :

- AA Birthday on the Calendar
- Experience Strength & Hope
- AA related content or topics
- AA Flyers

In the Upcoming Newsletters please feel free to email :

vanintgrp@gmail.com

You Are Wanted Needed & Loved!

****** The Primary Purpose will no longer include the Financial Reports or the Meeting Minutes from either the Steering Committee Meeting or the Intergroups Rep Meeting. Reports and Minutes can now be found on the website under the documents tab.******

[Documents | Vancouver Intergroup Alcoholics Anonymous \(vancouveraa.org\)](http://vancouveraa.org)

