

MAINSTAY

New Zealand - Aotearoa

December 2014 - January 2015

Experience ~ Strength ~ Hope

The 12 Steps

1. *We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.*
2. *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*
3. *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*
4. *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*
5. *Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*
6. *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*
7. *Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*
8. *Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
9. *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
10. *Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*
11. *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*
12. *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*

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AA Preamble

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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Mainstay is the magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous in New Zealand. It communicates the experience, strength, and hope of AA in New Zealand reflecting a broad spectrum of current AA experience in recovery, unity, and service. Mainstay is a 'meeting in print' including the service and AA group fellowship aspects of AA life and AA meetings, and only publishes articles relating to AA and alcoholism. Mainstay aims to be self supporting and is not affiliated to any outside groups or interests and does not accept paid advertising. Submission of articles and letters (up to 600 words) are invited and should be sent to:

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Publication of any article does not imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or Mainstay. Personal opinions expressed in letters or articles should not be attributed to the Fellowship. There is no payment for contributions and they cannot be returned. The editor may edit material and cannot guarantee to publish every contribution.

Anonymity will be protected, but contributions and correspondents are asked to include their first name, locality and a contact telephone number or email/physical address (not for publication).

I am Responsible

*I am responsible.
When anyone,
anywhere, reaches
out for help, I want
the hand of AA
always to be there.
And for that:
I am responsible.*

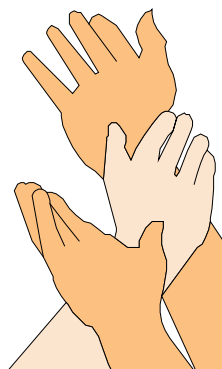


PHOTO CREDITS:
Front: 'Holly' Toni C. Wellington and
Back: 'Christmas dog' by Randal P.

Editorial

Countless Vain Attempts

As this year draws to a close, and the prospect of Christmas is evident in shops, and the social whirl that starts in December commences, I can look back on my own “drinking career” as being a succession of attempts and a myriad of failures.

Satisfied or not, that during the course of each successive year I had consumed industrial quantities of wine, I would attempt to curtail my consumption in December, based on countless social events of a private and business nature in December, combined with the pressure of meeting pre-Christmas sales targets, last minute customer requirements and the added interaction with “family and friends” that Christmas brings.

Was I successful? No

11 years on, I can happily say that despite the “pressures” that the 3 weeks prior to Christmas exert, I find myself detached from it all, and manage to “act well” under all prevailing conditions.

Oh to be relieved of the often overriding, if not slightly insincere sense of “false bonhomie” that prevails in the 3 weeks prior to the 25th of December, allows me to act in exactly the same way each day in December as I endeavour to do in the preceding 11 months of the year.

What is the greatest gift I can possibly have... one of a daily reprieve from drinking, a sense of being joyous happy and free, with happier healthier relationships at work, at home, and in my community. I know I have a phone list, meetings I can get to, and be “a part of” and stay in contact with other AA’s in my community, and in other parts of the country.

I am grateful for the privilege of having served another year as Editor for Mainstay, and thanks to Mike at GSO, June D., and Toni C., my MS support without whom the magazine would not get to print, and to every AA Group who have maintained their valuable subscriptions, and all those who have contributed letters this year and will continue to contribute and support to Mainstay in 2015.

A happy sober Christmas and New year to all

Yours in fellowship,

Randal P. Editor



Sharing...

Mainstay Editorial policy is to accept and publish letters up to 600 words. Any copy exceeding 600 words will be edited to comply. Sensitivity and discretion will be used to maintain the integrity of the original correspondence.

With Thanks

Careful consideration is given to all written submissions and letters of experience strength and hope sent to Mainstay for possible publication.

Preference is given to letters which outline What we were like, what the AA programme has done, or is doing for us, and what we are like now.

Topics , subjects and information deemed suitable for publication fall quite simply into the same criteria that is applied in meetings, and relevant to your own recovery. Is the information you want to share likely to help other alcoholics? Mainstay is "A meeting in print"

Any correspondence not published will have been considered not fitting into any of the above criteria.

We are frequently advised as part of our programme to exercise restraint of pen and tongue. Nowhere is this more important than in the pages of Mainstay. Once in print, Mainstay is an effective means of carrying the message of AA and the programme to the still suffering alcoholic, both inside and outside of AA.

Randal (Editor)

First Christmas Sober

That dreaded trip home turned out just fine after all.

During my first year of sobriety I had quite a hard time. I didn't drink, but the obsession with alcohol was still in me and I see now that I hadn't turned my drinking and my life over to a Higher Power. I was scared, real scared. To find some sort of spirituality, I visited a new church.

One of the ministers there caught my attention. I hung on his every word of hope. One day a small group of us were sitting around a table chatting with this minister. In desperation I asked a general question, trying not to mention anything specific about AA. The minister's answer sounded just like the Fourth Step. Something inside me clicked and I knew I had to talk to him in private.

I waited alone after the session. I hesitated, too embarrassed to reach out, I said, "What you said was extremely meaningful to me." He replied, "I'm glad I could help." I stammered, "Well, what I

"Today is my eighth birthday in AA"



really mean to say is.....I'm trying to stay sober. I have almost a year in AA. What you said to me sounded exactly like the Fourth Step. I needed it, since I'm working on it now."

He looked at me with a funny expression. I looked down at my shoes. I guessed he didn't understand what I had said. After all, how many people would? - unless they were in AA themselves. But when I looked at him again, he wore a big grin.

"Do you know what day this is?" he asked. I wondered if it was some sort of holiday. "No, I don't," I admitted. Now the expression on his face turned to sheer glee. "Today is my eighth birthday in AA," he said.

Well, you could have knocked me over with a soda straw. I'd had no clue that he was in the Fellowship too. So that's why I related to everything he said. It was a real awakening for me.

I decided to blurt out the rest. "I'm going home for the holidays and I'm scared. It's my first Christmas sober." I thought about all of the negativity I would have to face when I went back home. The minister looked serious. He seemed to have confidence in me, even though my own was minimal. "You'll be all right. Just keep the cork in the bottle."

The trip home was as anticipated - no sweet bed of roses, but I got through it sober. Faces and voices of AA friends came flashing into my head. I also found that even my hometown had an AA group, for which I was grateful.

When I returned to my own Group everyone noticed a big change in me. I had made a step forward turning my life over to a higher Power.

Now it is my own eighth birthday in AA. I will be forever grateful to all the people who have helped me. I am also grateful for those "coincidences" that always seem to occur when I need them. They are a great part of what people mean when they say, "It Works!"

**Anonymous, Albuquerque,
New Mexico in the Grapevine.**

*Reprinted from "The News,
December, 1983*

Freedom and Joy at Last

Hi I'm Gordon and I'm an alcoholic .

I'm writing to you from Rabbit Island in Nelson. What a beautiful place. I was thinking how amazing life is without alcohol. Alcohol absolutely dominated my life until the age of 35, It obsessed my mind every minute of the day, especially on some occasions when it was free. Oh, that was just the ultimate - drink as much as I could, and I did. Alcohol and anything to do with alcohol was number one in my life.

My rock botom was horrendous; a night of absolute mayhem. It was the worst few hours of my life I ended up in the hands of the police. The next day I was so broken and my whole life was a mess.

"I had to face reality for the first time in my life. I went to bed that day as it was the only place I felt safe. As I lay in bed I thought about my life and suddenly I thought I might have a problem with alcohol."

I worked for the Justice Dept and that drunken behaviours wasn't acceptable. I was suspended from my job and told to get a lawyer. It was so scary, I was very anxious and all I wished for was for me to be let off; walk away with a warning. But that didn't happen.

I had to face reality for the first time in my life. I went to bed that day as it was the only place I felt safe. As I lay in bed I thought about my life and suddenly I thought I might have a problem with alcohol.

I phoned a guy who had just been to Hanmer (I didn't know it was a recovery centre at that time). He said I was just trying to find an excuse for my behaviours. He didn't think I had an alcohol problem until I told him how my wife and close family were sick of my drinking, how I drunk early in the morning, how my wife marked all the spirit bottles how I drank vodka straight out of the bottle. He agreed I had an alcohol problem and pointed me in the right direction. I went as a patient to Mahu, at Sunnyside Hospital, where I was to learn about my drinking life. That is where I was introduced to the fellowship of

“The power of one alcoholic sharing with me would change my life.”

AA. I actually didn't want to have anything to do with the people in AA. You see I was a loner and I totally isolated myself. I had given up on the joys of life a long time ago.

So here were these AA people, happy, smiling, welcoming and worst of all, they wanted to introduce themselves to me.

That introduction was the day my sobriety begun. The power

of one alcoholic sharing with me would change my life. I felt I had found some true friends. They told me about their life drinking and not drinking. I was

so happy to find maybe a 'cure' to all the madness in my head. They talked about their shame, guilt, relationships, their losses, their crimes, attempted suicide, grief, anxiety, low self esteem, jail terms, psychiatric institutions. They explained that alcoholism is a disease. What a relief to me that was!

Then they started to tell me what their life was like now; Amazingly I could tell before they spoke. Their eyes were sparkling, they had a calmness, they had a life without alcohol, which was amazing.

Immediately I got hope to try the AA programme.

I was the newcomer but I was welcomed in a way that offered me lots of dignity and it was really up to me to find my own recovery, but with the help of the fellowship. I was so open to that - not being told what to do yet the tools of recovery were laid out in front of me and with a sponsor if I wanted one....I did. As well as everything else I was told to do the dishes and it made me feel a part of it all.

Today my life could not be any better because I don't pick up that first drink. I love the freedom and the joy of my sobriety.

Gordon, Nelson

A Change is Gonna Come

Today (30th of December 2013) for the first time in a long time, I have thought about a drink, don't know why but I did. It's just this time of year I suppose, memories of Hogmanays of years gone by, the cunning baffling powerful and patient part of this illness. Telling you it will be alright and one won't hurt, In my experience one is too many and a hundred is not enough.

Then I remember all the good things that have happened to me and how different my life was four years ago. My friends arrived from down south and I forgot they were coming, or maybe I just did not care. I answer the door and try to straighten myself up to try and hide my alcoholism. My boiler broke down and it was minus six outside and with no money to have it repaired. My guests stayed for the Hogmanay celebrations in Edinburgh, left fairly soon afterwards. I was surrounded by ten thousand people and left so alone, and that my life had to change. Every drink I had that day made me sick and wretch. The band playing that year was 'Madness', I still laugh at that today as my Higher Power has a sense of humour.

Six weeks later I came to AA and I have never had to look back or feel alone again. I thank all of you for being there and showing me a new way to live. I will be off to bed soon, sober and grateful to be a member of this wonderful fellowship.

Have a happy, sober safe new year everybody.

Will

Harthill Friday Night

(Reprinted with permission from 'Roundabout' Feb. 2014)

People Who Understand

Hi Friends,

I am an alcoholic and I will soon be celebrating one year sobriety, a day at a time.

Within this first year I have been amazed that the feelings of despair, horror, panic, guilt, shame, embarrassment, anxiety, low self-worth, low self-esteem and many other feelings have begun to leave me.

When I came to AA almost a year ago I thought my life was over. I thought that I would be even more isolated than I already felt I was. I've since found that I have met some of the most sincere and caring people on this earth and found somewhere where I genuinely feel part of. I discovered that all the feelings and thoughts that I had were common in the people I met.

For the first time in my life I felt understood and accepted for who I was. I learned to love myself and love the people around me. I've learned I can only change myself and allow God to take care of me. I am so grateful for what I have in my life today and thank you for the opportunity to share this with the people who understand me the most.

Anonymous.

(Reprinted with permission from 'Roundabout' Feb. 2014)

Keeping at it

This is my AA story from six and a half years ago,

My daughter 'C' passed away as a victim of suicide. She was a nurse in WA. I was here in New Zealand. Before she passed away she was on a life support machine for three weeks.

Another daughter of mine 'R' flew with me to her bedside, where 'K', my third daughter from Cairns, met us along with other members of family. 'C' was brain dead so we turned off the machine which was a terrible decision to make. Because she was so healthy and fit, her heart kept beating for three weeks before she passed, leaving behind her a partner and two children 12 and 14 years old.

I came home a wreck and that was the beginning of my drinking. My daughter 'R' began having serious talks about my drinking. I promised I would stop. Of course, I didn't. I lied to her and she found my empty bottles. Once again I promised to stop.

In the meantime, my ex mother-in-law passed. I was very close to her and the family. I was a mess. My daughter 'K' came home for her funeral. I was drunk at that funeral. Both daughters were so disgusted with me they took me to A&D. I went for about a month.

I didn't think it would work for me, so I phoned AA and started going to meetings.

I continued those meetings for nearly a year. I didn't get a sponsor, even although members advised me to. After that time I thought I could do it on my own; of course I couldn't! I started drinking again. After that I went 'cold turkey' and had terrible withdrawals. I fell over at home and broke my foot.

Back to AA I went - 'moon boot' and all. I admitted to the members what I'd done. They didn't judge me, they gave me confidence and support. This time I got a sponsor, bought books and really worked the programme.

I did well; had nearly two years up and for some reason, I picked up again. This time the withdrawals were just as bad. I was very sick. I phoned my sponsor and within 10 minutes she was at my house. Over the next four days she visited and phoned me. She was just wonderful.

I went back to my meetings confessed what I'd done and forfeited my (sobriety) medals. That was nearly three months ago. I'm now earning my medals back.

I'm a much better person working the programme. I've learned not to judge people. I listen instead of thinking me, me! I trust in my Higher Power.

I know I still have a long way to go. If you're reading this and have failed, don't be afraid to go back (to AA), our members are all friends who have been there too. They'll offer you love and support. The doors of AA "swing both ways".

Shona J

**Richmond Monday, Stoke
Wednesday Big Book**



My name is Dallas and I'm an alcoholic.

Thanks to AA I recently celebrated my 15th year of sobriety – one day at a time. During this time my whole attitude and outlook on life has changed. I've always been willing to pass on the message of Alcoholics

Anonymous and to help another suffering alcoholic. This however has come in the form of attending meetings, sharing, listening, sponsorship and doing service. Unfortunately I've never written to Mainstay as I've never been much for writing my story.

This all changed when during a group conscience at my home group I agreed to submit this letter.

My experience with alcohol was as it's described in the Doctors Opinion of the Big Book. Basically I had an obsession with drinking; either I was drunk or thinking about getting drunk and once I took that first drink it was all on as I have an all or nothing mentality. My rock bottom occurred in London whilst on my

O.E. (Overseas Experience). I was extremely sick and at my wits end with life. Alcohol was no longer working and the pain of not drinking finally outweighed the pain and torment drinking was causing me – I was beat. I had tried for so long to 'think' my way out of my dilemma, to control my intake, control my behaviour, control my self-will. These all failed and I finally surrendered, even asking to a "GOD" I didn't understand for help as I knew I could no longer do this on my own.

"I finally surrendered, even asking to a "GOD" I didn't understand for help as I knew I could no longer do this on my own. "

Thankfully I was heard and an ex work colleague from NZ, who had found sobriety in the rooms of AA took me to

my first meeting. I was given a starter pack and meetings list and started to attend regular meetings. I received plenty of support from the old timers at these meetings who told me about the nature of the disease and offered the hand of fellowship (I was a long way from home). After 3 months got a sponsor who started taking me through the 12 steps as they're laid out in the Big Book.

He was great as he'd always say "Dallas, there's plenty of opinions in AA but there's only one Big Book". He also made it clear that as a sponsor it was his role to put me in touch with a higher power of my own understanding, in football terms he'd say "it's time to find a new manager". I have develop a faith in a higher power and back then commenced cleaning up the wreckage my drinking had caused to me and too others, for my drinking was a dirty sport. This is still an ongoing process to this day.

Since trudging the road of AA recovery my life has had its ups and downs. On reflection this is more good than bad but my mind will constantly tell me more bad than good. You see I may have taken the alcohol out of my system but I'm still left with the mind of an alcoholic – that's why all I have today is a daily reprieve and must remain connected to my Higher Power. Thanks to this programme I've been able to rebuild my life, mend relationships, fall in love, marry and raise two lovely children in a sober household.



Surrendering to the disease of alcoholism and breaking the addiction cycle has been the hardest thing I've done but thanks to God, Alcoholics Anonymous and its 12 Steps my weakness has been turned into a strength. God Willing.

**Dallas, Big Book Study Group
Nelson**

Last Chance

"Rest assured, however, Mr. ..., that if you ever offend again in this way, preventive detention will be very much on the cards and you could face the prospect of having to spend the rest of your life in prison. I am sure you will not let that happen. Please do not."

These are the word which echoed through the High Court as I stood in the dock in absolute disbelief reflecting on how things had gone so wrong.

I am 27 years old and all up I have spent just over 6 and a half years in prison as a result of two alcohol fuelled incidences.

Reflecting back on my past, I have always been an alcoholic. It wasn't something I gradually grew into. I always drunk a little differently to my friends and

would drink for no other reason but to get drunk. Bed wetting and black-outs was, at the time, considered a good night on the juice. Alcohol, I thought, was man's greatest finding. Little did I know, I was actually using alcohol to escape from reality.

My experience with A.A. began in prison. I was walking across the compound when over the speaker came the words "Alcoholics Anonymous is now on in the community room." A thought came to mind which suggested I should probably be going there. That was over two years ago and since then I have attended A.A. every week it has been available.

Prior to A.A I did not have any spiritual beliefs. Something which did concern me early on was this God business. However, with the warning I was given from the Judge, I was prepared to give anything a go. Spirituality has grown on me over the past couple years and I feel as though I have a good relationship with my conception of a Higher Power.

"My core reason for going to A.A. was to sort out my alcohol problem however, I feel as though I have been given so much more."

My core reason for going to A.A. was to sort out my alcohol problem however, I feel as though I have been given so much more. I do feel a lot more peaceful than I use to. I am not immune to life issues such as I was recently declined Parole. However, set-

backs do sit with me a lot better and I am able to re-group and re-focus fairly quickly and accept things as they are. I am still in prison so my real test in relation to alcohol will come once I am out. Something I have shared in meetings is that I don't have to drive past the bottle store or pub and I don't have to attend

social occasions where alcohol is present. These situations will be my tests however, with the fellowship of alcoholics anonymous, I feel confident and optimistic that I can live sober once I am released.

I am incredibly grateful for A.A. and for the guys who have continuously come into prison to share the message and help alcoholics like me. Best wishes to anyone embarking on the journey of sobriety.

Grateful Alcoholic

Service is a spiritual gift

“Faith without works is dead. How appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he cannot survive certain trials and low spots ahead. If he does not work, he will surely drink again and if he drinks, he will surely die. Then faith will be dead indeed”. pg. 14/15 of the big book.

I heard a fellow delegate say “Service is an opportunity to enhance my own sobriety by giving back”. This is a spiritual principal.

When I was drinking I thought I knew everything .The biggest challenge of service in AA was the terrifying thought I would be asked a question I did not know the answer to. I thought it would instantly go around the world. Stop press, Steve S. cannot answer a question! Ironically Service has given me the 10 word answer to that question. “I don’t know but I’ll find out and get back to you” Service is a gift to me because it always takes me to where I need to be. In early sobriety my service was making tea, it got me out of my chair when I was too tired, sick, busy or lazy to go to my meeting. I

always came home better for going. Doing service gave me the gift of self-respect; it turned me into a man of my word. I learnt that not only could other people rely on me, but that I could rely on myself to keep my word. Though the service positions have changed through the years, the gifts have kept coming. Often other people believe in me to do things I wouldn’t have thought I could myself. God never gives you more than you can handle, If God takes you to it, God will take you though it.

Two thirds of the word spiritual is ritual, for instance: to be where you said you would be when you said you be there is a spiritual principle.

Don’t be late is a spiritual principle, selfishness and self-centredness is the root all our troubles, lateness is selfish, so is not doing what you said you would do.

“Service is an opportunity to enhance my own sobriety by giving back”

It also says in our big book that “our very lives as ex problem drinkers depends on our constant thought of others and how we might meet their needs”. Further on in our book it goes on to state “Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us”

To me this means service.

I was told at the beginning of my journey in AA that the spiritual principles contained in the steps are designed to transform me from being a taker to a giver, I was also told to say yes to any AA request.

The spiritual life is not a theory.

AA won't love you until you can love yourself but it will help you until you can help others,

In his last talk our co-founder Dr Bob spoke of love and service I quote “Our 12 steps when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words Love and Service. We understand what love is and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind”

I believe that if we practice our 12 steps with the guidance of a sponsor and adhere to the principles of our 3 sided triangle (unity, service and recovery)

then we can only grow in our spirituality. From this the willingness to serve our fellowship and our fellow alcoholics will follow.

I also believe that if you practice these twelve steps with the guidance of a sponsor you will receive a spiritual awakening as quoted in step 12.

I feel a big part of my own spiritual awakening was the realisation that I had been given the gift of empathy and the knowledge that I have the unique power through my own adversity to help the still suffering alcoholic.

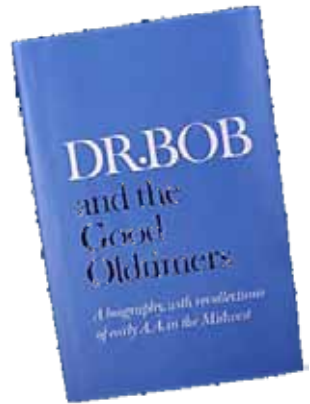
To me it is a bit like the chicken and the egg, spirituality and service are a circle. No beginning and no end.

To quote The Toronto Declaration, “I am responsible, when anyone anywhere reaches out for help I want the hand of AA to always be there and for that I am responsible”.

**Steve S. Mahu Group.
Christchurch**



Doctor Bob and the Good Oldtimers



*(Published 1980, following approval for printing by
The General Service Conference)*

Originally intended as a joint biography of AA's two co-founders, but has ended up as an account of the "fellowship" of these two men in their initial meeting, and beyond, which led to the founding of AA and Bill and Bobs' efforts to carry the message to the first 100 alcoholics

Part 2 of this excerpt illustrates the vital element of the early actions of one alcoholic talking to another, and in doing so they were able to go on and keep each other sober, and commence however haltingly, and much trial and error, to carry the message to others.

Describing his meeting with the man "who was to be my partner... the wonderful friend with whom I was never to have a hard word" Bill said, "Bob did not look much like a founder. He was shaking badly. Uneasily, he told us he could stay only about 15 minutes... Though embarrassed, he brightened a little when I said I thought he needed a drink. After dinner, which he did not eat, Henrietta discreetly put us off in her library. There Bob and I talked until about 11pm."

What actually happened between the two men?... They got together and started talking about not only helping each other, but helping men with similar difficulties.

They went out to the cities' lower edges, in Akron, and gathered together a group of drunks, and they started talking and drinking coffee, (the latter becoming the "unofficial beverage of AA @ 15c a pound). Bobs' wife was to state that she had never made so much coffee as she did over those next two weeks. And they stayed there, drinking coffee and starting this group of one person helping another. This is true; but as we know it, there was more to it than that (there is such a thing as keeping it too simple!)

A number of people had been chipping away at Bob for years; the Oxford Group had 'a programme', Henrietta told Bob, "You must not touch a drop of alcohol"... Obviously Bill brought something new to Bob; himself (and his own experience)

In the conversation between the two men, what did Bill say to Bob? How important were his words? How important was what was said, compared to the fact that it was one alcoholic talking to another? No-one can say precisely.

Indeed, both Bill and Bob placed slightly different emphases on the factors involved.

In the light of subsequent experience, Bill recalled, “I went very slowly on the “fireworks” of religious experience. First “I talked about my own case” until I sensed that Bob could identify with me and what I was intimating (and as Doctor Silkworth was to later suggest)”. Bill continues. “I then hammered home the physical aspects of the disease, the verdict of inevitable annihilation”. This, Bill felt, “brought about in Dr Bob an ego deflation that triggered him into a new life”

Describing their talk, Bill goes on, “it was a completely mutual thing, I had quit preaching, I knew that I needed this alcoholic as much as he needed me, that this was it” This mutual give and take is at the very heart of AA’s twelfth step work today.

Dr Bob was to later note, and documented in Dr Bobs’ story in The AA Big Book (Published four years hence)

“Here was a man who had been cured by the very means I had been trying to employ, that is to say the spiritual approach. He gave me information about the subject of alcoholism which was undoubtedly helpful. Of far more importance”, he continued, “Was the fact that Bill was the first living human being with whom I had ever talked who knew what he was talking about in regard to alcoholism from actual experience, he talked my language.” Bill knew all the answers, and certainly not because he had picked them up from his reading.

Whatever Bill said in the course of those five hours of conversation, he must have thrown everything he ever knew, thought or guessed about alcoholism telling the long version of his story to add weight. Bob stopped drinking immediately.

Bob was to say later “whilst helpful, I had heard most of what Bill was telling me before”

What was important to Bob, was the fact that another alcoholic was telling him.

What is apparent is clearly one alcoholic identifying with another, later in the text Bob goes on to comment “we both had the same thing”. Later Bob was to state “members of The Oxford Group just didn’t have “the same problem”. If the information Bob received from Bill that night had come from William James Carl Jung, Dr Silkworth or The Oxford Groups’ Frank Buchman, Bob would have interpreted it as “just another lecture” (Text paraphrased).



Does Alcohol Really Boil Away in Cooking?



What we found out has really surprised us. The conventional wisdom accepted by just about everyone in the food world is that all the alcohol you add to a dish evaporates or dissipates during cooking. It's wrong. In fact, you have to cook something for a good three hours to eradicate virtually all traces of alcohol. And some cooking methods are less effective at removing alcohol than just letting it stand out uncovered overnight.

A study conducted by the US Department of Agriculture's Nutrient Data Laboratory calculated the percentage of alcohol remaining in a dish based on various cooking methods. The results are as follows:-

Preparation Method:	% of Alcohol Retained
alcohol added to boiling liquid & removed from heat	85%
alcohol flamed	75%
no heat, stored overnight	70%
baked, 25 minutes, alcohol not stirred into mixture	45%
baked, simmered, alcohol stirred into mixture - for	
- 15 minutes	40%
- 30 minutes	35%
- 1 hour	25%
- 1.5 hours	20%
- 2 hours	10%
- 2.5 hours	5%

Now, it may be that the amount of alcohol in a dish is modest to start with, but the fact that some of the alcohol remains could be of significant concern to recovering alcoholics, parents, and others who have reasons for avoiding alcohol.

Find a Meeting App for Android



AA now has an app in the Google Play Store that replicates the meeting map on the website. If you have location services switched on, the App will open with you centred on a map of your area, with flags showing the days of the meetings. If there are more than one meeting at the location, these will be shown as well.

To get this App, go to the Google play store and search on findameeting. The App logo is shown below and the developer is Nathan M.

We are currently looking into developing the same App for IOS (Apple, iPhone).



The Laundry List – 14 Traits of an Adult Child of an Alcoholic

1. We became isolated and afraid of people and authority figures.
2. We became approval seekers and lost our identity in the process.
3. We are frightened of angry people and any personal criticism.
4. We either become alcoholics, marry them or both, or find another compulsive personality such as a workaholic to fulfil our sick abandonment needs.
5. We live life from the viewpoint of victims and we are attracted by that weakness in our love and friendship relationships.
6. We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility and it is easier for us to be concerned with others rather than ourselves; this enables us not to look too closely at our own faults, etc.
7. We get guilt feelings when we stand up for ourselves instead of giving in to others.
8. We became addicted to excitement.
9. We confuse love and pity and tend to “love” people we can “pity” and “rescue.”
10. We have “stuffed” our feelings from our traumatic childhoods and have lost the ability to feel or express our feelings because it hurts so much (denial).
11. We judge ourselves harshly and have a very low sense of self-esteem.
12. We are dependent personalities who are terrified of abandonment and will do anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to experience painful abandonment feelings, which we received from living with sick people who were never there emotionally for us.
13. Alcoholism is a family disease; and we became para-alcoholics and took on the characteristics of that disease even though we did not pick up the drink.
14. Para-alcoholics are reactors rather than actors.



I was emailed this by a friend in AA, and in writing this my first thought was “ What an order I can’t go through with this” (Chapter 5 AA Big Book)

I decided that including it in this issue may well prompt letters and commentary as to others experience of these points. Equally, most of these points appear in AA literature written in a similar way, and point to broader aspects of step 4 inventory template in the big book, although the above are more descriptive.

Confronted? Yep!

Are any of these points true for me? Or have they been? Yep

Are these salient point the basis of further examination? Yep

On a more positive note though, have these defects of character been dealt with as a result of our step work 4, 5 6, 7 8 9 10.

Each one of us can only answer that question ourselves with complete honesty.

All any of us can ask is to be relieved of the bondage of any or all of these behaviours “as they arise”

These points certainly resonated with me, and gave me, and will continue to give me insight into my “reactions” and responses how these points acted as “buttons” “tender spots” etc. which when ignited, activated, pressed or

experienced engendered a response far in excess of our actual response/reaction.

These have given me “signposts” from the past, and I can look to these to see gradual educational and spiritual progress, as a result of doing the steps.



Continuing our series...The Twelve Concepts for World Service, written by Bill W in 1962.

The Twelve Traditions make clear the principle that AA, as such, should never be organised, that there are no bosses and no government in AA. Yet at the same time, the Traditions recognise the need for some kind of organisation to carry the message in ways that are impossible for the local groups - such as publication of a uniform literature and public information resources, helping new groups get started, publishing an international magazine, and carrying the message in other languages into other countries...hence The Twelve concepts for World Service. (Taken from the AA Service Manual combined with Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W.)

Concept XI

While the trustees hold final responsibility for A.A.'s world service administration, they should always have the assistance of the best possible standing committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs and consultants. Therefore, the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

In this, the second longest of the Concepts, Bill explains in great detail the composition, functions and relationships of the standing committees of the General Service Board, its subsidiary operating boards, the General Service Office and the A.A. Grapevine — as they existed in 1962. As A.A. has grown and changed, many of the descriptions would be different today, and some of the issues that are addressed are no longer relevant. Nevertheless, the full text is valuable as an historical document, and many of the principles still apply, as summarized below.

Underlying the service structure we have been discussing, there is another, internal structure of service consisting of the nontrustee members of the trustees' committees; the nontrustee directors of the two operating boards, and the executives and staff members. "Members of this group," declares Bill, "not only support the leadership of the trustees: they share leadership with them."

The following are "several principles . . . which" apply to A.A. World Services, Inc. and the A.A.

Grapevine, Inc.:

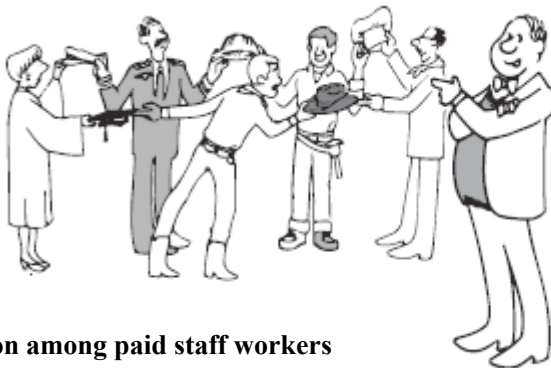
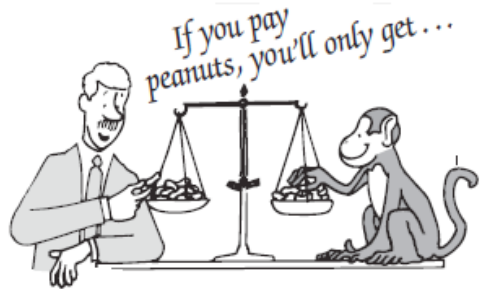


1. The status of executives

No active service can function well unless it has sustained and competent executive direction. This must always head up in one person, supported by such assistants as he needs. That person has to have ample freedom and authority to do his job, and he should not be interfered with so long as his work is done well.

2. Paid workers, how compensated

Each paid executive, staff member or consultant should be recompensed in reasonable relation to the value of his or her similar services or abilities in the commercial world . . . Cheap help is apt to feel insecure and inefficient. It is very costly in the long run. This is neither good spirituality nor good business. Assuming service money is available, we should therefore compensate our workers well.



3. Rotation among paid staff workers

At A.A.'s General Service Office, most staff members' assignments are changed every two years.

When engaged, each staff member is expected to possess the general ability to do, or to learn how to do, any job in the place — excepting for office management.

Remember our
worker in Concept IV.



4. Full “Participation” of paid workers is highly important

We have already discussed the necessity of giving key paid personnel a voting representation on

our committees and corporate boards. They should enjoy a status suitable to their responsibility, just as our volunteers do.

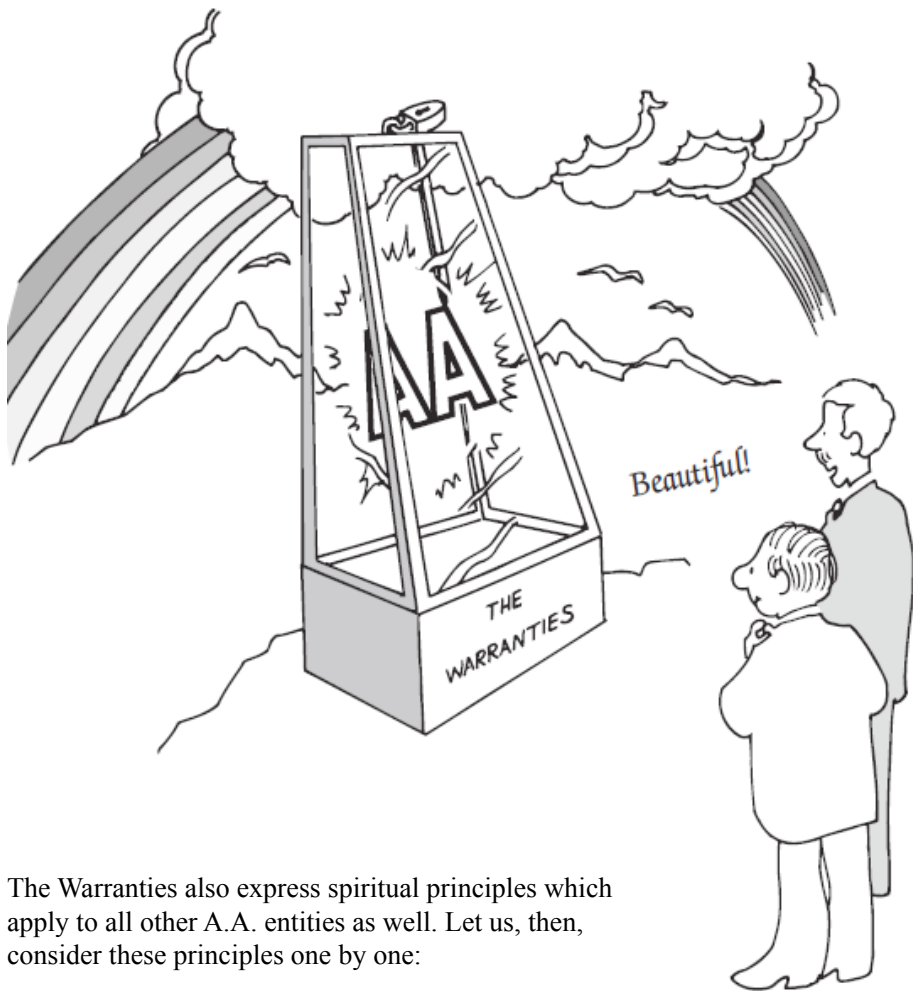
Concept XII

General Warranties of the Conference: in all its proceedings, the General Service Conference shall observe the spirit of the A.A. Tradition, taking great care that the conference never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds, plus an ample reserve, be its prudent financial principle; that none of the Conference Members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others: that all important decisions be reached by discussion vote and whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that no Conference action ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy; that though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.

This Concept consists of the General Warranties of the General Service Conference. It is cast in stone; that is, although Bill leaves the door open for alterations and changes in the other Concepts and points out that the rest of the Conference Charter “can be readily amended,” these General Warranties — like the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions — be changed only by “written consent of three quarters of all A.A. groups” in the world! Why?

Because “these Warranties indicate the qualities of prudence and spirituality

which the Conference should always possess... These are the permanent bonds that hold the Conference fast to the movement it serves.”



The Warranties also express spiritual principles which apply to all other A.A. entities as well. Let us, then, consider these principles one by one:

Warranty One: “The Conference shall never become the seat of perilous wealth or power.” The Seventh Tradition protects us against the accumulation of too much money.

So long as we refuse to take outside contributions and limit individual member’s donations, “we shall not become wealthy in any perilous sense.” And if we live by Tradition Two — that “our ultimate authority is a loving God” and that “our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern” — then we are safe from perilous power.

Warranty Two: “Sufficient operating funds, plus an ample Reserve, should be its prudent financial principle.”

Although many of us as active alcoholics were free spenders, when it comes to supporting

“A.A. service overhead, we are apt to turn a bit reluctant.” Yet, in A.A. the cost of the service office is relatively low in terms of the number of groups served, and if the need for support is made clear, the contributions are forthcoming. The Reserve Fund should be one full year’s operating expenses of the G.S.O. and the Grapevine. The Reserve Fund comes almost entirely from income from the sale of A.A. literature, which also is used to make up the deficit between group contributions and the cost of group services.

Warranty Three: “None of the Conference members shall ever be placed in a position of unqualified authority over any of the others.” This principle is discussed earlier in Concept IV, but “it is so important, we have made it the subject of this Warranty” — a “strong stand against the creation of unqualified authority at any point in our Conference structure.”

Warranty Four: “That all important decisions should be reached by discussion, vote, and wherever possible, by substantial unanimity.” This Warranty is, on the one hand, “a safeguard against any hasty or overbearing authority of a simple majority; and, on the other hand,

it takes notice of the rights and the frequent wisdom of minorities, however small. This principle guarantees that all matters of importance, time permitting, will be extensively debated, and that such debates will continue until a really heavy majority can support every critical decision.”

Warranty Five: “That no Conference action shall ever be personally punitive or an incitement to public controversy.” Although practically all other societies and governments find it necessary to punish individual members for violations of their beliefs, principles or laws, Alcoholics Anonymous finds this practice unnecessary.

When we fail to follow sound spiritual principles, alcohol cuts us down. No humanly administered system of penalties is needed. This unique condition is an enormous advantage to us all, one on which we can fully rely and one which we should never abandon by resorting to personal attack and punishment. Of all societies, ours can least afford to risk the resentments and conflicts which would result were we ever to yield to the temptation to punish in anger.

For much the same reason, we cannot and should not enter into public controversy, even in self defense.

Our experience has shown that, providentially, A.A. has been made exempt from the need to quarrel with anyone, no matter what the provocation.

Nothing could be more damaging to our unity and to the worldwide goodwill

which A.A. enjoys, than public contention, no matter how promising the immediate dividends might appear.

Some situations which may require Conference consideration are:

A.A. may come under “sharp public attack or heavy ridicule” — perhaps “With little or no justification in fact. Our best defense in these situations would be no defense whatever — namely, complete silence at the public level. If the criticism of A.A. is partly or wholly justified, it may be well to acknowledge this privately to the critics — with our thanks.

Public violations of A.A. Traditions.

Our own members may try to use the A.A. name for their private purposes. “Aggressive or punitive action, even in this area, must be omitted. Privately, we can inform Tradition-violators that they are out of order. When they persist, we can use such other resources of persuasion as we have. in the long run, though, we shall have to rely mainly on the pressures of A.A. opinion and public opinion.”

“Another kind of problem is the severe internal disagreement that comes to unwelcome public attention.”

As G.S.O. “is not a police operation,” we can only offer A.A.’s experience as a matter of information.

Warranty Six: “That though the Conference may act for the service of Alcoholics Anonymous, it shall

never perform any acts of government; and that, like the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous which it serves, the Conference itself will always remain democratic in thought and action.”

The A.A. Traditions accord the individual member and the A.A. group extraordinary liberties. In fact, we A.A.s probably enjoy more and greater freedoms than any Fellowship in the world. We claim this as no virtue. We know we have to choose conformity to A.A.’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions or else face dissolution and death.

“Because we set such a high value on our great liberties and cannot conceive that they will need to be limited, we here specially enjoin our General Service Conference to abstain completely from any and all acts of authoritative government which could in any way curtail A.A.’s freedom under God. We expect our Conference always to try to act in the spirit of mutual respect and love — one member to another.

“Freedom under God to grow in His likeness and image will ever be the quest of Alcoholics Anonymous.

May our General Service Conference be always seen as a chief symbol of this cherished liberty.”

Beautiful!

**If you want to drink, that's your
business.....**

**If you want to stop, that's ours.
There is a solution.....**

**Phone
AA WORKS
(0800 229 6757)**



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS CONVENTION

WE ARE NOT A GLUM LOT

JANUARY 16, 17 & 18 2015

VENUE

KINGSGATE HOTEL, WELLINGTON

24 Hawkestone St, Thorndon, Wellington, New Zealand

CONTACTS

PO Box 26046 Newlands 6037

Neil: Neil.acorn@xtra.co
0274411304

Peter: pk2003_595@hotmail.com
021 0277 0520

Heather: heatherh.wsd@gmail.com
or 0211582816

“WE ARE NOT A GLUM LOT”

Reference from page 132 of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

AA meetings on air

You can hear all the meetings so far at
<http://www.aamembers.org.nz/meetings/meetings-on-air>
or
www.planetaudio.org.nz/aameetingonair.



Auckland area only:

Listen on 104.6 FM between 10:45 to 11:15 every Sunday



AA Events

Events for promotion in Mainstay must be received by GSO (events@aa.org.nz) by 28th January to ensure inclusion in the next issue of Mainstay.

7 December 2014

December Shindig

Train rides, sports, games
Palmerston North Model Engineers
Track, Marriner Street,
Palmerston North
Lena P 021 460 007
Ken T 027 368 3387
Cynthia C 06 354 7100

24 - 25 December 2014

Alcothon

12 hours of non-stop meetings
Rongo Atea A&D Centre, Wairere
Drive Hamilton east
Marata 0279 195211
spiritwise@xtra.co.nz

26 Dec 2014 - 2 Jan 2015

Serenity AA Camp

Parua Bay
Christian Camp 1 Wharf Rd
Whangarei Heads
Andrew C 0220876097
Linda G 0212591975

16 - 18 January 2015

52nd National Convention Annual Convention

Kingsgate Hotel
24 Hawkestone St
Thorndon
Wellington
021 02770520
021 1582816
0274 411304

27 Feb - 1 Mar 2015

KIWYPAA

Young people in AA
Camp Adair
2487 Hunua Road
Hunua Auckland
Nat 0272238981
Geoff 0223988485
www.kiwiypaa.com

23 May 2015

Traditions workshop

St Josephs Church
133 Main North Road
Papanui
Christchurch
Peter 03 3527 653

Subscriptions

# Ordered	Type of subscription	Price (inc GST & PP)
	Individual subscription for 12 months	\$30.00
	Group subscription for 12 months	\$30.00
	Sponsored subscription for 12 months	\$24.00
	Sponsored subscription for 6 months	\$12.00
	Overseas subscription for 12 months	\$40.00

Subscriber and renewal details

Name of person placing order	
Post Mainstay to (name and address)	
Send invoice to (name and address)	
Group's name (if order is for a group)	
Contact Phone number and/or email address	

Post completed order and payment to:

Mainstay at GSO, Po Box 6458, Wellington 6141
or email your details to: nzgso@aa.org.nz



The 12 Traditions

1. *Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.*
2. *For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.*
3. *The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.*
4. *Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.*
5. *Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.*
6. *An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.*
7. *Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*
8. *Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.*
9. *A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.*
10. *Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*
11. *Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.*
12. *Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.*

*God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
courage to change the things I can,
and wisdom to know the difference.*

