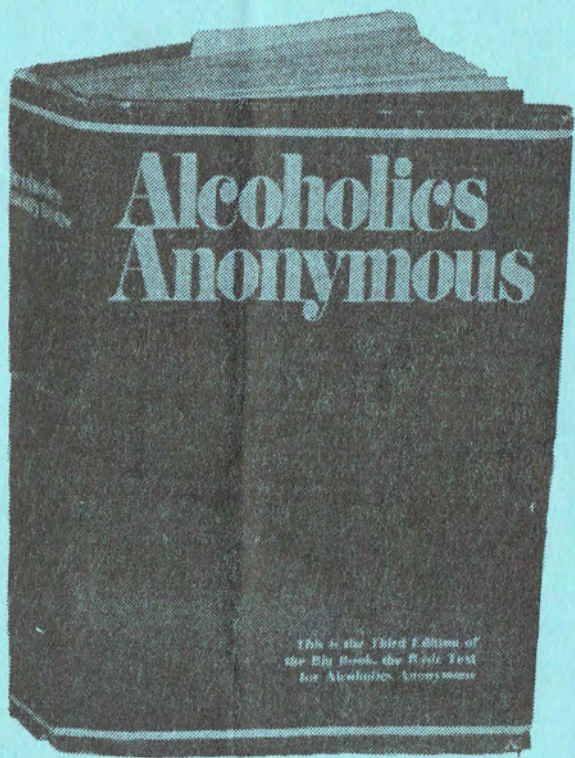


MAINSTAY
Magazine of Alcoholics Anonymous In New Zealand

July 2004



This is the Third Edition of
the Big Book, the Basic Text
for Alcoholics Anonymous

TOPIC OF THE MONTH
7th STEP



Hello from the deep south again.

We are finally able to bring to you the edited transcripts of a Joe and Charlie seminar. Courtesy of the Reviver. This series will run for the next 13 months, this edition being the first. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as what I have so far.

There will be an advert in the Mainstay for a sub editor.

SECTION E

Guidelines for Mainstay Editors approved by Conference in October, 1999.

Mainstay Committee

The Editor is asked to take all reasonable efforts to involve other AA members in the production of Mainstay. If possible, he should form a Mainstay Committee, the majority of whom should have at least two years continuous sobriety.

Alternate Editor

The Editor is asked to keep in mind that circumstances may prevent any individual from continuing his or her involvement in the production of Mainstay, and take reasonable steps to ensure, through the appointment of an Alternate Editor or through the Mainstay Committee, that the magazine could continue to be produced in his or her absence

7th Step is the topic for the month of July.

Remember this is your meeting in Print. All calendar events need to be in by the 7th of each month.

Until next month
Your Editor *Huggles Gloria*

MAINSTAY
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MAINSTAY

The monthly magazine of the New Zealand General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Mainstay, the monthly Journal of AA in New Zealand, aims to be an AA meeting in print, expressing the views and experiences of AA's recovering in all parts of the country. Opinions expressed in Mainstay are not to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of any article imply endorsement by Alcoholics Anonymous or Mainstay. We aim to be representative of AA views and experiences throughout New Zealand, and are dependent on literary contributions from members to obtain this objective. The editors cannot guarantee to publish all material submitted and contributors are asked to accept this condition. Mainstay does not print poetry.

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Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other so 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.

Mainstay Topics for Six Months

July	7th STEP
August	LANGUAGE OF THE HEART
September	9th STEP
October	GRATITUDE
November	11th STEP
December	Serenity

Pick Up The Tools

My name is Rachael and I'm an alcoholic.

To date all the situations I never thought I could deal with have ended up better than I could have ever hoped or imagined. The fast way to any solution is the road least travelled by me. I'll take the painful high road any day. Me and God and my disease, just the three of us trying to fight for supremacy in a battle of wits. Except the game we are playing is with my life and this is where the joking stops. I realise today the seriousness; this is my life we are playing with.

It takes what it takes, you tell me. And it does. A leap of blind faith, you tell me; and it is. Everyday. But I know that my worst day sober is better than my best day drinking.

The more I get honest the more freedom comes. I shared some of my story with a non-alcoholic friend recently and after I put my words on the table, my truths, my realities, my fears, I wanted to run. I wanted to put the words back in my mouth and choke on them. I sat petrified waiting for the onslaught, the yelling and abuse to start. It didn't. I waited, expecting him to run. He sat quietly and asked a few questions. Sensible everyday questions. Well, he said, if that's all it is and there is a solution, that's okay and we can carry on as friends.

My perception and thereby my disease has me pegged as lonely, strange and crazed, destined to be lonely strange and crazed forever. I forget this is about choices- I don't have to be so trapped forever. AA has given me words to describe how I feel, friends to share and relate to, God to guide my thoughts words and actions; a solution. All of which are choices. Pick up the tools. Live, damn it, live. Rachael Sunday Night Bluff Group.

SPECIAL FEATURE SPECIAL FEATURE SPECIAL

JOE AND CHARLIE

(a.k.a. *The Big Book Comes Alive*)



Ever wondered about the proportion of newcomers who get sober? It may be less than ten percent. Why? Joe McQ and Charlie P believe it is because, 'we have abandoned the programme in the Book.'

In the past 30 years, several hundred thousand members of various 12 Step programmes have experienced the spiritual benefits of Joe & Charlie Big Book Study seminars. They show us that the programme works! All we have to do is follow the precise directions given to us by the first 100 members of AA who gave the world Alcoholics Anonymous.

You know, this book doesn't say anything about the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. The Big Book, "Alcoholics Anonymous" talks about **Recovery**. In fact the Big Book was really written before the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. There weren't but one hundred people. They were even nameless. Yet it was this nameless group of people who wrote this book. There was a lot of discussion about what to name the book. We won't go into all that. There were a lot of arguments about this. (See the book "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age," (page 165 for details).

Courtesy of "The Reviver" presents a series of edited transcripts of a Joe & Charlie seminar.

THE BIG BOOK STUDY

So 100 people wrote the book, and they named it *Alcoholics Anonymous*. Alcoholics Anonymous is a textbook, which contains a planned programme of recovery from alcoholism. Now, once the AA book was written, then the first one hundred took the name off the book and put it on their Fellowship. So there are two AA's, really: one is a book, and the other is a Fellowship.

Pull Out: "In 50 years, the programme in the Fellowship, hardly, in some places, even resembles the programme in the book."

In 1939, quite naturally, the people in the Fellowship of

Alcoholics Anonymous practiced the same programme that was in the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. They were identically the same, and nobody has ever changed the programme in the book, but the programme in the Fellowship has gradually changed. You know, people change. We've added a few things; left out a few things; brought in some new things. After 50 years, the programme in some places, hardly even resembles the programme in the Big Book. It's sort of like the people who meet in those churches on Sunday morning. You know, if you go home and read their book, they don't even sound like their programme. (laughter) And I like to do this in my Group. I like to go back home to my Group and listen to what goes on, and compare it with what's going on in the Book, and see how far they have gotten off.

JOE AND CHARLIE

Pull Out: "We open this Book and we begin to talk about what's contained in this Book. Unless you and I have the nerve to do that, then eventually AA itself will fail"

Joe and I got into a meeting long ago. They were talking about group depression, sexual dysfunction; God, I could name another half a dozen subjects. I looked at Joe, I said, 'Joe where in the hell are we anyhow?' He said, 'I don't know - we must be at B.B.' 'What's that?' I asked. 'Beats the hell out of me, but it's not A.A. is it?' he replied. (laughter) You know, many of the older members tend to blame this on the newcomers. They say, 'Those newcomers come in here, and they want to talk about everything except the recovery programme as laid out in the Big Book. And we can no longer identify with them, so we decide

to stay home. And we do that. The older members stay home and that means that **we have abdicated our responsibility for AA.** We have turned it over to the sickest of the sickest - the newcomers - and then we stand back and say, 'Look what they're doing to our AA'. No, **they're not doing it, we're doing it, because we're letting them do it.** You know, the time comes when we need to stand up in our AA meetings, and say, 'Look, whatever you learned out there is probably great information,' but **that has nothing to do with the programme of AA. Here's the programme of AA.** We open this Book and we begin to talk about what's contained in this Book. Unless you and I have the

SPECIAL FEATURE SPECIAL FEATURE SPECIAL
THE BIG BOOK STUDY *continued*

nerve to do that, then eventually AA itself will fail to survive, because we cannot survive without recovery. And you cannot have a recovery without a good programme of action. And that's our job, to teach this to the newcomer, to walk with them as they go through these Steps, to help them have their spiritual awakening, so they can pass that on to the next one. When I came in they called that sponsorship. Today, if you take someone to a meeting, they call that sponsorship. No, taking someone to a meeting is not sponsorship, hell, a taxi driver can do that. Only we can help others have the spiritual experience. And I think

that's really our job in AA. We might say, of course, people change. We know that. One reason for putting this down in a written form was to keep it pure, and to keep it from becoming changed and garbled. Now, the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous today, hardly resembles the original fellowship at all as far as the programme is concerned. But the Big Book has never been changed. So the programme has remained the same even though the fellowship has changed. And, really, we only have one programme of recovery, and it's in the Big Book, "*Alcoholics Anonymous*." In many of our groups today, we talk about everything but that. I think that is the responsibility of the older members of Alcoholics Anonymous: to be sure that the newcomers, when they come in, realize that there is a programme of recovery. It is in the Big Book, "*Alcoholics Anonymous*," and that it's never been changed.

Pull Out: And, really, we only have one programme of recovery, and it's in the Big Book, "*Alcoholics Anonymous*."

SPECIAL FEATURE SPECIAL FEATURE SPECIAL
JOE AND CHARLIE

Pull Out: "I wonder today, are 75% of the people who come to A.A. getting sober? This is what this seminar is all about--getting our Fellowship back to the programme in the Big Book, back to what really works."

In our zeal to help people, maybe in our zeal to play the numbers game and say we've got five million instead of one million, we tend to water down our programme. We tend to be afraid to offend the newcomer, and maybe they'll run off, or something like that. You know, it is our responsibility to tell the newcomer what AA really is. I think we have come to a sorry place when we are letting the newcomers determine the programme that we're going to use within our own groups. I think that's up

to us to determine our programme, and then the newcomer fits into that programme. Now, that's what we're about, and that's what we're for. That's what the Big Book is about.

Okay, here's a--we would like to read this on (p. xx, par. 1) '...public acceptance of A.A. grew by leaps and bounds...Of alcoholics who came to A.A. and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained that way; 25% sobered up after some relapses, and among the remainder, those who stayed on with A.A. showed improvement.' In 1939 when this book was written, and they were using it in the Fellowship, the programme in the Big Book, half the people who came to A.A. got up and stayed sober. Twenty-five percent had some problems and got sober later on. And I wonder today, are 75% of the people who come to A.A. getting sober?

SPECIAL FEATURE SPECIAL FEATURE SPECIAL
THE BIG BOOK STUDY

This is what this seminar is all about--getting our Fellowship back to the programme in the Big Book, back to what really works. (... to be continued)

The Big Book Study
(a.k.a. The Big Book Comes Alive)
© 1987, 1988
Joe McQ. and Charlie P.
For audio tapes/CDs of this
seminar at cost, contact Vince 02
4938 3195, or Greg 02 9972 0741

This transcript is no substitute for the Big Book, "Alcoholics Anonymous." If you don't have one, it is strongly suggested that you get one, and read it. Page references within brackets refer to the Big Book.

How I Had Seen Myself

Hi my name is Hemi, I am 23 years old. and an alcoholic.

Drinking was taking an important and exhilarating part of my life. My drinking became more serious every night. Because of that my partner and I had little money, as I would be paying the bills at the bar. This went on endlessly and gradually things got much worse. Sometimes I stole from my partner and this combination soon landed me on the rocks.

I was ill bodily and mentally I had developed a wet brain. The liquor had caught up with me faster than I came up and in the end my partner had to let go of me and get on with her life. The liquor had become a necessary "Bath Tub" for me. I often thought should I kill myself as I thought this was the answer but my partner would soon have to give me to the undertaker. I knew and almost welcomed the idea. Alcohol was my master but this had to be stopped. I could eat little or nothing when I was drinking.

The door opened and I went to rehab for alcoholics and I told myself that I would manage. My credible desperate desire to stop was explained by understanding myself in high hope. Surely this was the answer. I thought so well of my abilities and myself. So by doing this I hope to make amends. There are no words to tell of the loneliness that I feel at this time. Childhood memories rose before me, I admitted for the first time that I was lost and had to face my sins. My self pity and resentment nearly drove me back to drink. I soon found that when all other measures failed I had to talk with other alcoholics. I have since talked with men and women who feel the same way and it is working for me.

I haven't had a drink since. I am asking for the right direction and strength at this point in time. I am grateful for AA and the fellowship, and new friends that understand how I feel.

Thank you AA

Hemi
Friday Night Group
Invercargill.
NZ.

Allergic To Alcohol

The Editor

My sponsor as well as being a grumpy loving recovering alcoholic was a dentist and as such was aware of the probability of alkies having an adverse reaction to anesthetics and used to stress the need to make surgeons etc aware of this. (This is probably what Doctor Silkworth referred to when he talked about alcoholism being "a physical allergy coupled with a mental obsession").

So when I had surgery recently, I noted in the admission form that I am allergic to alcohol. The admission nurse was curious and we discussed it for a little while. I told her I was an alcoholic, recovering in AA, and showed her the reference in the Big Book. It turns out some of her family were members of AA, as were the parents of two of the other nurses.

The op went well, I am better than I was, and able to reflect on how coincidences occur!?

Warm AA love

Editors footnote name has been supplied.

AA Is Wonderful

My name is Greg and my home group is City Steps meeting at St Mary's Church in Christchurch.

I guess in a way that life has some funny ways of telling me that I was on the wrong track, and boy it was. I was living in Melbourne when the disease of Alcoholism reared its ugly head, I did not have a clue what was happening to me but security was diminishing at a rapid rate of knots. I was living on hollow ground. I realized that my life was all based around me and on my needs, sex, money, no respect for life at all, living in a complete fantasy sick world.

I am 27 years old now and I can honestly say that the programme of AA is wonderful. Two years and four and half months now, and the people I have in AA around me are people with wisdom and knowledge that only a fool can turn away from this gift that they offer. Doing what I am told, becoming a part of society and learning new things inside and out AA.

The memories I leave behind are just that - only memories. They cannot effect me now, with a pinch of humility, a dab of gratefulness and cover it with love, I think these are the ingredients for a fruitful life. One slogan I love is, 'Don't leave 15 minutes before the miracle happens, just live one day at a time. For me anyway, I thank you for letting me write this letter.

Thanks Greg
City Steps Meeting
Christchurch.

**Dry Drunk
(Intoxication Without Alcohol)**

Dear Mainstay,

After being in AA for three years I decided to leave, resentment being a major factor. Unfortunately I failed to realise the seriousness of the disease, believing for me it was simply a physical addiction. Having made few changes, other than stopping drinking, led to a life of difficulties during the next 15 years including problems with delusion, resentment, self-righteousness, selfishness, confusion and control to name a few. Generally a life of uncertainty and more bad than good, even though I was not drinking.

The Big Book describes alcoholism as “our subtle foe” and says most of our problems centre in our heads. My experience proved this beyond a shadow of a doubt.

In the latter years of my Dry Drunk I created a business that grew rapidly and I became obsessed with it. Everything came second to it, just as everything became second to alcohol when I was a drunk.

When Dr Silkworth described alcoholism as a physical addiction coupled with the obsession of the mind he did not say anything about the obsession of the mind stopping when the drinking stops.

As my business grew, so did my ego and self-righteousness. I became very single-minded and controlling, even being able to justify doing things against my fundamental beliefs. Another rock bottom was necessary. Eventually I faced the courts and received a jail term for my madness.

When I came back into AA 15 years after I walked away, I was in worse shape mentally than at my first meeting 18 years before,

although I had not had a drink in that time. I was so full of resentment, shame, anger and self-pity. I spent month after month in depression. Slowly I began to realise my defects and gained an understanding of the things that had happened and why, through meditation, writing things down and going to meetings.

The people in AA have been of enormous help to me, their understanding and non-judgmental attitude, their honesty and willingness to share their experience, strength and hope. Realisations would come to me almost weekly and I would be puzzled why I had not earlier seen something now so obvious.

Life now is pretty good. Family life has never been better. We now talk about our lives, share our worries and joys, spend time together with understanding and love.

AA is an important part of my life but I am careful not to be obsessive about even that because I know if I am excessive about anything other parts of my life will become neglected. There will not be balance in my life which makes me less able to help others.

I do not blame anything or anyone for my experience as a Dry Drunk. It is just the way it had to be for me because I would not listen. The disease is not only cunning, baffling and powerful, it is patient so my message is simple - take the AA program seriously and use it or you will lose it.

John
Invercargill.

*Thought to Ponder . . .
Growing old is inevitable,
growing up is optional,
growing spiritually is up to you.*

CORRECTIONS CORRESPONDENCE SERVICE

The Corrections Correspondence Service is being set up by your General Service Conference, to meet a need in carrying the message here in New Zealand. It is felt that this is a very productive and rewarding way to carry the message to inmates.

It can be very difficult for an A.A. member behind the walls to participate in ongoing individual sharing about the A.A. program of recovery, particularly in large prisons, while on remand or in protection.

We are asking for members on the outside to volunteer to participate in this much needed form of twelfth step work.

The Corrections Correspondence Co-ordinator will send the name and address of an inmate who wants correspondence, to the outside A.A. member, who has volunteered to participate in this service. The outside member, will then make first contact. The outside member may choose to use their home address or they can use their group or Intergroup PO Box.

It is suggested that outside members have a minimum of one year of continuous sobriety, and that men correspond with men and women with women. It is vital that anyone wishing to participate be totally committed, as you may be the only A.A. contact available to the inmate.

It is a wonderful opportunity for members living in areas without correctional facilities to help share the load with those who are able to take meetings to the inside.

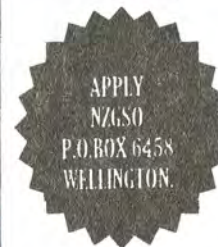
However any member who wishes to be of service in this area is encouraged to participate. Anyone wishing to be part of carrying the message in this area, please contact;

The Correctional Facilities Correspondence Co-Ordinator
P O Box 16
Invercargill.

Or email: rule62@ihug.co.nz

Mainstay Sub Editor

Required



To Help the present Editor with the Mainstay

To be available in the absence of the present Editor

Two Years continuous sobriety is a requirement

Phone 04-4724250

Email nzgs0@xtra.co.nz



The Promises of Alcoholics Anonymous

- We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness
- We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it
- We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace
- No matter how far down the scale we have gone; we will see how our experience can benefit others
- That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear
- We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows
- Self-seeking will slip away
- Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change
- Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us
- We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us
- We will suddenly realise that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly.

They will always materialise if we work for them.

Big Book, pages 83-84

Events Calendar Page

Date Range	Name	Location	Contact Details
30th July-1st August, 2004	2nd Whangarei AA Women's Retreat	Marsden Bay Youth Camp, Ruakaka	Karen 09-437-0322; Michelle 09-438-2930
14-Aug-04	Bill L's 50th AA Birthday	St Mary of the Angels Hall, Boulcott Street, Wellington	Doreen 06-372-7600
27th-29th August, 2004	30th Anniversary AA Poland Rally	AWF(Academy of Physical Ed.), John Paul 2 Avenue, Krakow	
27th-29th August, 2004	Southern Area Assembly, Omaru	Omaru Union Parish Church Hall, Eden St, Omaru	<u>Angus 03-434-5277.</u> <u>Geoff 03-437-2275.</u>
3rd to 5th September, 2004	Lake Karapiro AA Camp	Findlay Christian Youth Camp, Karapiro (Near Hamilton)	Frances 07-886-5965 or 07-886-6930(day);
30th September-4th October 2004	43rd Turkish Alcoholics Anonymous Convention	Kervan Beach Hotel, Balikesir-Ayvalik (Sarimsakli Beach), Turkey	www.adsizalkolikler.com or e-mail info@aaturkey.org
23rd-30th October, 2004	Sober Sailors Convention	On a ship in the Caribbean !	<u>http://www.meetingsenroute.com/contact.htm</u>
6th November, 2004	Central Area Assembly	Plimmerton Pavilion, (past fire station), Plimmerton (off SH1), Kapiti Coast	

Events Calendar Page

Date Range	Name	Location	Contact Details
26th December 2004-2nd January 2005	Parua Bay Serenity Camp	Parua Bay Youth Haven Camp, 1 Whare Road, Parua Bay, Whangarei Heads	George, 2 Arney St, Paeroa 021-379-045.
10th-13th January, 2005	41st International Alcoholics Anonymous Womens Convention	Riviera Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, USA	iaawc2005@yahoo.com
28th-29th-30th January 2005	New Zealand Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous	Lincoln University Christchurch	Margaret 20 Northcote Rd Papanui Christchurch. Phone 03 352-4590.
25th-26th February, 2005	Southern Area Assembly	The Elim Church, 26 Burleigh Road, Blenheim	e-mail willrose@callsouth.net.nz
19th March, 2005 (new date)	Central Area Assembly	St Johns Methodist Church Hall, Cambridge St, Levin	Dave M 06-367-2079 , davemalcolm@paradise.net.nz
30th June-3rd July, 2005	70th AA International Convention	Toronto	search the www.aa.org website
14th-16th August, 2005	Asia Oceania Service Meeting (Delegate Conference)	Gold Coast International Hotel, Queensland, Australia	nzgso@xtra.co.nz

12&12

The Twelve 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 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.

The Twelve Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA 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 AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. AA, 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 AA 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 the Wisdom
to know the
Difference.*