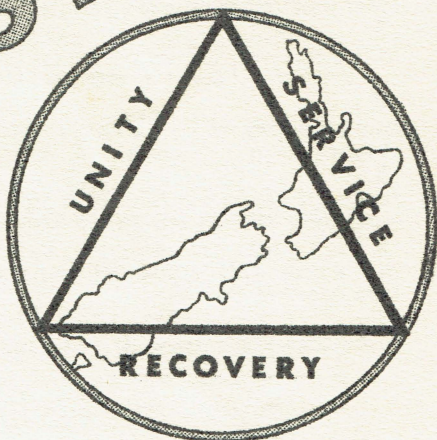


A.A.

is our

MAINSTAY

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AN A.A. MEETING IN PRINT

ADOPTED AS THE VOICE OF ALCOHOLICS

ANONYMOUS IN NEW ZEALAND

BY THE

New Zealand

GENERAL SERVICE CONFERENCE

of Alcoholics Anonymous

(Subscription 10/- per year to -
BOX 6 4 5 8, WELLINGTON)

ALCOHOLICS **A**NONYMOUS 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, organization 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.

TRADITION THREE

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 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.

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.

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

This is a bit of a surprise to some - as is also the fact that there is nothing in the A.A. Steps or Traditions which says you **MUST** stop drinking. What growth and development has led to this wide open invitation to any drunk to come and join us!

Not always were we so free with our invitation. In the early days of A.A. many groups had rules of membership. As the General Service Office developed they were often asked about this subject by new groups. G.S.O. wrote to the groups and asked for any rules that had been made. Many were sent in and they were all tabulated. Then a striking fact became apparent; if all these rules had been in existence when the first few members joined **NOT ONE** of them would have qualified for membership!! Of course such intolerance was born of fear; the fear that all A.A.'s had in the early days in N.Z. as well as in the U.S.A.; fear that what we sometimes saw happen to our good A.A. friend **COULD** happen to us.

Experience showed that the welfare and continued sobriety of A.A.'s could not be ensured by any rules and that, as A.A. was so often the last port of call for most alcoholics what right had we to refuse them their last chance? It is possible that regular association with drinking alcoholics actually strengthens our own sobriety.

The book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" says: "Tradition three is packed with meaning. For A.A. is really saying 'you are an A.A. member if **YOU** say so.' You can declare yourself in, nobody can keep you out." There is probably no other fellowship that opens its doors so wide to the prospective member. Usually some sort of measure is run over the newcomer. A.A. on the contrary, is more concerned with the qualifications of the member who introduces a new man

than in those of the new member himself. And then we are only concerned that the newcomer shall get a complete and sound presentation of the A.A. story. Every alky who turns to us, no matter what motive prompted him, is entitled to the best presentation of the A.A. story we are able to give him. After that it is up to him to decide whether or not he wants to try and find what we so much enjoy. He cannot make a sound decision on only part of the facts.

EDITOR.

A.A.*****A.A.*****A.A.*****A.A.*****A.A.

A READER WRITES:

I have been sober 14 months. I could never have done it on my own. I have A.A. to thank and the Higher Power as I understand Him. I think the Serenity Prayer is a wonderful prayer and it helps me a lot. My wife belongs to Al-Anon and that is a great thing, because it helps her to help me along the road. A woman with an alcoholic husband doesn't have much of a life. But when the alkie finds A.A. and the woman finds Al-Anon life is very different. It took me a long time to get the message. Now that I have it I pass it on to others hoping that they will find sobriety and happiness and stick with A.A.

BILL R. - INVERCARGILL

A.A.*****A.A.*****A.A.*****A.A.*****A.A.

He went into the pub optimistically;
but came out mistyoptically.

CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY - HAWERA - 10TH OCTOBER.

At the invitation of our good friends at Kaikoura, Dick (Hawera), Ian and Heather, met the A.A.'s and Alanons at Kaikoura on Saturday afternoon, 5th September and attended a Public Meeting that night. On the way the A.A.'s attended the Blenheim meeting on Friday night. This meeting can be reached from Wellington any Friday night on the 6.20p.m. plane and a great welcome is assured any who make the trip. There is also a hospital group and always some patients in the hospital very glad to meet visitors.

We arrived at Kaikoura at 3p.m. and went to Phyl and Don's place for a cuppa. Bill L-S arrived later with Jim T. (Cheviot) and Jack P. Then came a car load from Hanmer with John S. Doug H. and 4 others. (Heather has gone on South with all the notes; sorry I can't give all the names).

Guest speakers in the evening were the Bishop of Nelson and Mr. G. Wall both good friends of A.A. and of any alky willing to do something about his disease. Heather spoke for Alanon, Dick and Ian on their experience with John Barleycorn and A.A. In the audience were the Police Constable, The County Chairman, an ex-County Chairman, the District Health Nurse, the Presbyterian Minister, the Church of England Vicar and the Librarian. "An informative evening" was the opinion of this audience. A lovely supper and lots of good A.A. talk completed a very happy visit. Ask us again Kaikoura; and let's have an A.A. gathering in the afternoon and more A.A. visitors. Kaikoura is equi-distant from Christchurch-Hanmer and Blenheim.

CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY - BLENHEIM, 5TH DEC. 1964

STEPS 6,7,8 & 9

I have chosen to unite these four of the Twelve Steps in one article because I see a really admirable gradation in them; they are a logical progression from one to the other and I think their underlying virtue is sincerity, which is a division of honesty, which itself is a part of that virtue I regard as fundamental to the whole system of A.A. - humility.

We made the initial act of humility and honestly admitted that we were powerless over alcohol and our lives, though in dire need of reform had become unmanageable; we saw the goodness of others around us and knowing that they had mechanics of living no different from ourselves, we found the source of their goodness in a Power greater than ourselves, who could also restore us to sanity and transform us into better people; we took the next logical step and committed our lives to God. To see ourselves properly and honestly and also to increase in the fundamental virtue of humility, we made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves, and then progressed another step and hit a blow to fallen human nature by admitting to God, to ourselves, and to another human being (because we were now too clear in the picture of ourselves to trust ourselves) the exact nature of our wrongs.

It is one thing to know one's failures, even to admit them, but quite another thing to labour towards their correction: the first move in this direction is the willingness to be freed of our defects and to strive honestly to overcome them. For the alcoholic there are deep-set habits of thought and ways of judging and acting which must be corrected if he would recover and adjust himself to living with his problem, from which he will never be free.

He will have to alter his self-centred approach to things and practice a rigorous control over his tendency to rationalise and escape issues; he will have to learn to practice self-control to overcome his proness to self-indulgence. This is a task he sees as vitally necessary but also one exceeding his own powers.

Seeing what he needs to do to attain sobriety, he is honestly willing and desirous that God should remove these defects of character which stand in the way of his recovery; and, on the other hand, realising his weakness and incapacity, he humbly asks God to remove these failings.

But to be sincere in this petition, he must also be willing to make the effort to improve: one is reminded of the prayer of King Henry VIII's Lord High Chancellor, Thomas More - "Lord give me the grace to work towards the things I pray for."

The first move towards correcting defects and especially to overcoming self-centredness is to repair damages done to others. A man must learn to walk before he can run; fundamental obligations must be fulfilled before one passes on to higher living; one must restore what is due from him before he can begin to practice generosity on a liberal scale. Hence our next step is to enumerate all persons whom we have injured or wronged and this is not just a question of monetary or material wrongs but of the far more valuable possessions of others, their reputation, honour and also their claim on our love of a special kind by those who are bound to us through ties of either kindred or friendship. Our next step was obvious - we made amends and for our greater progress in humility, we made that reparation directly, but our charity and thoughtfulness, which are growing constantly as self-centredness is being done to death, dictated to us that this making amends must not become another injury; that

there are cases where direct reparation would only hurt the recipient or others and which in that case is more prudently deferred or made through a third party or anonymously or even omitted. An example of this would be an alcoholic's reparation of the love withheld from his partner in marriage or children or family while he was "on the grog". The best way to reparation of this may very well be to intensify the love due and its manifestations, for the present and the future. The important thing here is that the alcoholic is proving and increasing his sincerity.

FROM ALATEEN NEWSLETTER

THE PURPOSES OF ALATEEN

- A. To grow spiritually by living the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.
- B. To give understanding and encouragement to the alcoholic in the home.
- C. To welcome and give comfort to the families of alcoholics.
- D. IMPORTANT PRINCIPLE: To ensure the success of Alateen there should be no gossip nor complaints about the alcoholic parent at our meetings. New-comers can quickly make friends with older members, with whom they will invariably feel free to discuss their personal difficulties privately.

NEWS FROM NAPIER

The newly formed Napier Group is going from strength to strength. All the members are now taking part actively in meetings, and we have made a tape "ALCOHOLISM - A DISEASE" which we have submitted to the local radio station, in the hope that they may broadcast it.

SPONSORSHIP: We have found at our meetings that a good sponsor is imperative. It can make all the difference between a successful group and an unsuccessful one. We are fortunate in having Reg. as our sponsor. We have a lot to thank him for, including the use of the gestetner to print our newsletter.

MEETINGS: Another thing we have found most important, is that meetings should be varied. Guest speakers, films, tapes etc. all help to stimulate interest, and can often provide valuable material for discussion at following meetings. Our Group has had a psychologist, an A.A. member, and a film, and meetings have been lively and interesting.

TAPES: If any Group has a tape containing personal stories we would appreciate hearing from them. Hastings hope to form a group of their own, and a tape of this nature would be helpful.

WHY WERE THE SAINTS SAINTS ?

Because;

They were cheerful when it was difficult to be cheerful

Patient when it was difficult to be patient;

They pushed forward when they wanted to stand still

Kept silent when they wanted to talk;

Were agreeable when they wanted to be disagreeable.

That was all - it was very simple - and still is.

BUT WHAT IS YOUR SCORE ?

... ..

USE THE TOOLS OF A.A. you may be surprised IT WORKS!

An athiest said he doesn't believe in God -
but he can't forget Him.

A GOOD A.A.

The stature of a good AA is measured not by the height of his body, but the depth of his soul; not by the height to which he reaches for learning but the depths to which he stoops for serving. A good AA is not concerned with the wrong judgment of himself by others, but takes every precaution not to pass judgment on others at all. A good AA is thankful for what he may get; he is grateful for what he can give. Your good AA is the one who always makes the best of it when he gets the worst of it.

A good AA spends the moment of silent meditation reflecting on the smallness of self; he says the Our Father after meetings proclaiming the greatness of God. Your good AA strives not for cleverness but for wisdom; he would rather be right than popular. And a good AA would rather make ten costly mistakes in judgment than one cheap mistake in charity. He would rather be called foolish by man than selfish by God.

The good AA is neither a saint nor a soldier, neither a doctor of medicine nor a pundit of philosophy; nevertheless, he is spiritually inspired and intuitively trained in the gentlest and the most beautiful of arts; the art of healing. His battlefields are the homes of the hopeless, the dreary and shabby rooms of the desolate, the jails, hospitals and prisons, where those abandoned by others turn to him in hope. And well do we know that it is not the strength of his will, but the gentleness of his touch which soothes the most desperately sick of men: "The Alcoholic".

From "Chit-Chat"

**** **** **** **** **** ****

COMING EVENTS!!!

NOTE THE DATE - 10TH OCTOBER -

CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY - HAWERA

A READER REPLIES:

Anon. Invercargill who contends that the Lord's Prayer at meetings could be contentious quotes in support of his opinion Matt.VI 6 - 8, where Our Lord is condemning hypocritical Pharisees who do everything (Matt.VI-1,23:5) in order to be seen by men. Obviously Christ is not condemning public prayer but hypocritical praying in public. Gatherings in His name have His blessing. Public worship of the Creator is a rather obvious moral obligation upon the understanding creature. It is meaningless of course if divorced from interior conformity to God's Will but given the right motive (which we shouldn't rashly deny the Chairman) prayer in public is pleasing to God and can be a powerful force for good.

Of course we shouldn't ram religion down people's throats but neither should we be ashamed of publicly acknowledging at appropriate times our dependence on God. Let's not relegate religion to the closet and certainly let's not hack biblical texts out of context to "prove" Christ's perfect summing up of the 12 Steps as out of place at an A.A. meeting.

J.J.B. - WELLINGTON

Drs. Howard & Jellineck US nationwide known physicists after 15 years investigation of alcoholism announced:

"The characteristics which definitely distinguish the chronic alcoholic from the normal is his strong tendency to be suspicious, conceited, scornful of the ideas of others and steadfast in adherence to his own".

Man is the only animal that blushes. Or needs to.

A VITAL AA INGREDIENT FOR THE NEWCOMER

At a recent closed meeting in our group the subject of sponsorship came up. It was soon evident that many newcomers were confused about how to choose a sponsor and what to expect of the sponsor, once chosen. Others, who had been sober for longer, but who had been newly cast in the role of sponsor had questions about the nature and extent of their responsibility to their "pigeons," known in the west as "babies". It was pointed out that everyone should read the AA booklet on sponsorship; but it was obvious that discussion of this subject is sometimes needed as well.

Certain facets of sponsorship that were clarified for us at that meeting may be of interest to members of other groups. It developed that several newcomers felt that the first person to call on them was automatically their sponsor, and had then felt disappointment that this person did not seem to be functioning as a sponsor - or wished they could have as sponsor some other member they had come to know and respect at meetings.

The fact that the first person to call is not automatically a sponsor was stressed, and it was suggested that the first caller make this point clear to the newcomer. The newcomers were assured that they were free to ask anyone at all in the group to sponsor them (assuming, of course, that the women would stick to the women in this capacity, and the men to the men). They were reminded that it is up to them to make the approach to the older member of their choice, and that it was well to do this as soon as possible.

"But why can't I wait until I'm in desperate need to get a sponsor?" asked one three-monther. "Everything's going just fine for me now."

She was told that she is, of course, free to wait as long as she wishes. But she was also shown that a sponsor chosen in time may help to prevent the arrival of "desperate need". Also, that should such need arrive, the sponsor who already knows his pigeon well can be of more help than one called in on an emergency basis.

"If you travel in a foreign land," said one of our older members, "you need a map and a guide. For us, in the new land of sober-living, the program is our map and a sponsor is our guide. Our sponsor can help us to understand and to work the program, and is the desirable person with whom to do the Fifth Step when we are ready for it."

The importance of a sponsor as a loving friend who can help us to see ourselves objectively and in perspective was emphasized. And, from the sponsor's point of view, the necessity for him to keep in strictest confidence his pigeon's revelations to him and to remember that he must not set himself up as a judge was brought out. "The sponsor must always keep in mind," said one old-timer, "that he is an instrument of a Higher Power, but is not himself a Higher Power. If he does so, he will not take great credit unto himself if his pigeon is successful in the program, nor will he feel overpowering guilt if his baby flies the coop. He will, when uncertain how to proceed, pray for guidance and learn to trust in spontaneous instincts that come to him as a result of such prayer. He will not make the mistake of following rigidly along a planned path when unexpected obstacles appear in the way."

"But how much can I ask of my sponsor?" one newcomer wanted to know. "I seem to need a lot more help than some people do."

The answer to that was that the needs of members do indeed vary greatly, as do their

14. personalities.

In conclusion, we were reminded that even the best sponsors cannot - and should not if they could - do our job of growing up in a sober way for us. The sponsor can simply share his own strength and hope, the truths that have emerged for him from his own experience. The pigeon must open his mind and heart to accept these gifts, and must do the real work that follows upon them within and for himself. - Extract 'GRAPEVINE'

WHAT HAVE I DONE WITH MY DAY?

Have I lived it fruitfully - our A.A. way?
I have been shown the way, a glorious way for daily living and yet still, seeing it so clearly, fall far short of the mark so often daily. Step 3, I have tried to take and renew without reserve. Only the trouble is there's still ME. A change of heart, mind, and direction of will yes, perhaps. But what am I? A recovering Alkie! Did expectation to be reborn blind me? Utter dependence on God and trust in Him must be my constant daily aim. Effort alone should not be my only concern, also success and failure is God's business too - He has the scales, let Him do the weighing - without His help the weight would kill me anyway. Again, another day of sobriety - how very, very fortunate am I, for let me pause, consider, - those who still are dying. They have not found their answer to our as yet incurable disease. This thought sometimes makes me feel intoxicated with sobriety.

'GRATEFUL A.A. - WELLINGTON'

HURRAH!! HURRAH!!

WE CAN ALL GO TO TARANAKI

for CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY MEETING

10TH OCTOBER NEXT.

And this is one time AA's have got it on the rest — we can even love 'Ferdinand' —
'cos you know why of course — we ain't a Rugger Team and we've stopped fighting
ANYONE OR ANYTHING!
Isn't it luverly

LIVE
AND LET
LIVE

A.A. LITERATURE

"ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS" - The Big Book.

Basic guide to recovery. 30/- copy.

"TWELVE STEPS & TWELVE TRADITIONS"

The co-founders exposition of the Twelve Steps of Recovery and the guides for group life. 19/- copy.

"A.A. COMES OF AGE"

A history of the movement. 30/- copy.

"PARTNERS IN A.A."

A guide for groups & secretaries. 2/- copy.

"MEMO TO AN INMATE WHO MAY BE AN ALCOHOLIC"

A presentation of the A.A. story. 1/6 copy.

"44 QUESTIONS & ANSWERS"

Answers to key questions about A.A. 1/3 copy.

New list out shortly will have a very full range of A.A. literature. Order from - The Librarian, Box 6458, Wellington. Cash with order is most helpful; we cannot replace stock until we have collected the funds.

MANY HAPPY RETURNS OF THE DAY "GRAPEVINE"

This birthday of the International Monthly Journal of A.A. will not be repeated as it is Grapevine's 21st. Subscriptions (35/- a year) may be entered through Central Area Assembly.

Write - The Secretary, Box 7 1 9, Gisborne.

COMING EVENTS!!

CENTRAL AREA ASSEMBLY - HAWERA - 10TH OCTOBER, 1964.

NORTHERN AREA ASSEMBLY - KAITAIA - 14TH NOVEMBER, 1964.

SAID AT A.A. MONDAY NIGHT CENTRAL GROUP MEETING -

As I walked to our new rooms tonight I felt a great sadness when passing the "tremendous hole" where our VERY old Rooms were in Lambton Quay, (now demolished). For, upon looking at the gap I vividly remembered going to my first meeting. Being taken along the dark, dark alleyway - INTO THE LIGHT OF A.A.

DICK S. - WELLINGTON.

