

THE ROAD BACK



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**“...the Road of
Happy Destiny.”**

(Alcoholics Anonymous pg. 164)

RECOVERY

Editorial

The Road Back – AA Ireland’s personal contact with you, the grassroots member. The Road Back is our Meeting outside the Room, a magazine for all to print, or read online, as you choose. The Road Back is one of the oldest AA publications in the world, with a long and honourable history of bringing your personal stories to all AA members, anywhere in the world. Thanks to modern technology it is now simpler than ever to access your copy of the Road Back. Simply open the AA website and your magazine is only one click away. Click on the “Road Back” button and there you are, the latest and older copies of your magazine for you to read! You can do this on your smartphone, tablet, laptop or PC. For those still without access to the internet, it is possible to order a hard copy of the magazine from our General Service Office, free of charge.

As a kind gesture of AA Service you can print a few copies of the Road Back for your home group, allowing other members access to this excellent publication. Some find this a way to ‘give back a little’ of the great gift of sobriety that they have. It is another way to show your gratitude.

“Service is Gratitude in Action.”

Bringing the Road Back magazine to you online makes it accessible to members and non-members alike, anywhere in the world. It carries the AA message of Recovery through the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions and the Programme of Sobriety to anybody, anywhere, who reaches out. The Road Back magazine is the “Hand of AA” reaching out to all.

How can you help? Aside from the suggestion above, you can contribute articles to the magazine by telling us your story of recovery or any interesting stories you may have heard. We are not a gloomy lot. So, send us jokes, cartoons, or any funny or amusing stories you may have picked up during your journey of recovery. All articles are welcome and, once approved, will be published in the magazine or held for future publication. As usual, do not include names or other information that might identify individuals or their families. Apart from breaking anonymity this type of information is not permitted under General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

Thank you in advance for your contributions.

The Road Back Editorial Team



THE ROAD BACK

A meeting in print

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, 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.

The Road Back is published every two months by General Service Conference, Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland. Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park, Swords Road, Dublin 9, Ireland. Telephone: (01) 842 0700

Up to date information on forthcoming Conventions and One Day Events can be viewed on our website at www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

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Honesty and Kindness

I'm eight months into my sobriety journey, and the change in my life since I stopped drinking has been amazing. When I say, 'stopped' I'm taking nothing for granted, but the feeling of waking up every morning with a clear head and a desire to attack the day is addictive, so long may it continue. 28 years of alcohol abuse caused me to be reckless in so many ways, most notably it led to reckless gambling, almost losing my wife and a general feeling of self-loathing.

. . . but the feeling of waking up every morning with a clear head and a desire to attack the day is addictive . . .

For a long time I felt a black mist engulfed me, and that was the way it was always going to be.

Desperation led me to AA. I'd read the self-help books, promised myself I could go without, promised I could stop after a couple etc. Nothing seemed to work for longer than a week, and I realised I was about to lose my wife and daughter. My wife had suggested AA, I hadn't really thought much about it, but the day after my 42nd birthday I walked through the doors.

I almost didn't walk through the doors as when I approached the building, from a distance I saw a happy throning laughing, so was convinced I'd not got the right address.

On entering I was immediately greeted by friendly faces. I'll never forget the kindness of the people who from the first minute went out of their way to make me feel comfortable. Quickly felt at home and started to enjoy the meetings.

I've been determined to do things at my own pace, so rather than jump in, to immediately secure a sponsor I have decided to do that when the time is right.

I saw a happy throning laughing, so was convinced I'd not got the right address.

That time I feel is coming, and I reckon I'll celebrate my first year of sobriety by trying to secure a sponsor. I'm learning so much from the shares, and my service as tea maker has helped me feel even more part of the group.

The camaraderie, honesty, kindness and above all the shared understanding of this illness from those in my home group has played a huge part in me starting to turn my life around.

Heard at Meetings

“ One way to guard against feelings of hate is to give regard ”

“ If I cling to the past; the present becomes difficult, the future impossible ”

“ If you have to see; then see the good in others ”

“ The bigger someone's head gets, the easier it is to fill his shoes ”

“ The fullest possible enjoyment is to be found by reducing our ego to zero ”

“ I was tired of being sick and tired ”

A SIMPLE PROGRAMME FOR COMPLICATED PEOPLE

A recent Group discussion of this A.A. slogan helped to clarify its effective meaning for me. The basic maxim.... to stay away from that first drink today.... is just eight short words. But for me as an alcohol addict, it is not at all easy to keep practising this simple precept each today, rain or shine, unless I try to absorb some or all of the Twelve Steps into today's thinking. I have found by costly trial and error that I can do this only by taking an active part, to the best of my ability, in frequent group discussions of the Steps.

The Steps did not look a bit easy or simple to me when I read them after my first open meeting. The call for a 'spiritual re-awakening' in the 12th bugged me completely.

It evolves slowly and gradually each time I attend a meeting in a teachable frame of mind.

I realise now that my way of thinking about alcoholism in myself and my fellow members has changed nevertheless, as a result of taking part in over 300 closed or open meetings. For me, this change is the

basis of my spiritual re-awakening. It did not come in a sudden flash and it is not static. It evolves slowly and gradually each time I attend a meeting in a teachable frame of mind.

I know well this change of thinking would not have happened if I had brooded alone on the Steps. They would have literally driven me to drink, especially Steps 4 and 5. If my 'searching and fearless moral inventory' had been a solo effort, the outcome would have been paralyzing remorse and not relief from tension.

Taking Steps 4 and 5 in the fellowship of AA has taken a weight off my mind and given me a clue to what patterns of thought and behaviour I have to avoid in order to remain mentally sober as well as physically dry today.

My efforts to live today in some semblance of tune with the 12 Steps have been made more simple by my being carried along in the group to a viable philosophy of live without alcohol which I could not reach on my own. I tried on my own many times and failed miserably.

How or why group therapy works

for me as an alcoholic in AA is just as much of a puzzle to me as an electronic computer.

The simplicity of the AA programme might perhaps be compared with the comparative ease with which a group of workers, aided by automation, produce automobiles which each of them can use for his own transportation, but which only a very exceptional one could make laboriously on his own. The automation in AA is group therapy but, as in a automobile plant, it will not produce anything unless the

workers add their relatively simple individual skills to it by daily individual effort.

How or why group therapy works for me as an alcoholic in AA is just as much of a puzzle to me as an electronic computer.

They both produce results outside the scope of any single human being which puzzle and surprise their own designers and operators.

Anon
(Feb. 1965 Issue Road Back)

Somewhere over the Rainbow
Is in an A.A. room
Where broken human beings
Come back to bloom

Their hearts are renewed
Their brains are too
And they get the courage
To see things through

A horse of a different colour
Their view of life changed
Mental and emotional disease
With the spirit is rearranged

Sensitive to life and all it's pain
Able to live without depending chains
God is the answer
Acceptance is the key
Were all in the same boat
You and Me--!We!

Anon

Looking Back

I vividly remember my first AA meeting – it felt like my first day at a new school. I knew I had nowhere else to turn but was full of fear as I had no idea what to expect. Having got there early I watched the other members going in and was very pleasantly surprised at how normal they all looked. Men and women of all different ages and backgrounds poured in – all fifteen or so of them. I drifted in late, sat at the back and planned on leaving early. When people started talking about their drinking I saw how it was similar to mine.

I'd often go out for one or two beers but end up getting totally drunk. I always blamed the sixth tequila or the fact it was someone's birthday etc...

He had talked about alcohol being but a symptom of a greater problem – life.

As I sloped off hoping to get out unnoticed a tall chap drifted over, put out his hand and smiled. Even though he was a total stranger I'd liked what he had shared in the meeting. He had talked about alcohol being but a symptom of a greater problem – life. There was no doubt in my mind that when I

drank bad things happened but my real problem was my total inability to do life. I struggled to hold down a job, get on with my family, all relationships had been strained to say the least and above all else, I had no idea what the point of life was. As my head was often spinning mulling this all over I often thought a drink was a good idea to calm it all down.

His experience before AA was very similar to mine. He shared about his drinking and thinking and it was remarkably like mine. What he effectively did was win my trust within a very short period of time. No one had done that for years. What I liked, and hugely impressed me about this guy, was the fact that he was nothing like the guy he talked about. He'd been sober for eight years at the time and just seemed happy. He talked about living life on life's terms, having peace of mind and feeling comfortable in his own skin. I hadn't quite worked it out by then but I wanted what this guy had. Part of his own recovery was to help other people and this is why he was happy to help me. He then told me if I were to copy him I could have the same results. Being a guy of logic, science and reason I couldn't deny it made sense. I questioned him on what he'd done and I was shocked at how simple the answer was. I was expecting a huge complicated

prescribed course of psychoanalysis coupled with various rehab courses. Instead he simply said he had been through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous with the help of a sponsor and his life had completely turned around – in fact he said it has solved all of his living problems and he hadn't thought of a drink for a good many years.

He talked about living life on life's terms, having peace of mind and feeling comfortable in his own skin. I hadn't quite worked it out by then but I wanted what this guy had.

I was finished; everything I'd tried to make me feel better had failed. Some of those were; moving areas in London, drinking in different places with different people, lots of exercise, sun beds, getting suits cut etc... The point is I had nothing left and was desperate for a way out and as strange as it all sounded I couldn't deny this chap had an answer to the problems that I couldn't even begin to deal with.

He became my temporary sponsor and went about showing me what he had done thus, what I needed

to do. The first thing he told me was that if I wanted to recover I'd have to develop a relationship with a Higher Power – a so called God of my own understanding. That stopped me in my tracks because I didn't come to AA for that. I came because I didn't want to die. He then asked me where my best shot at life had got me. I smiled, 'AA' I said. He then said I should consider trying to do things differently. He also pointed out that for a guy like me I need a source of infinite power if I am to stay sober. He quoted from the basic text – 'lack of power...'

Fine – I conceded I needed one of these Higher Powers but how? The answer was too simple.

By going through the Twelve Steps I would develop this relationship.

I was encouraged to pray twice a day, read the Just For Today card and write a gratitude list. I was also encouraged to get home groups, do service and above all try and help other alcoholics.

I started doing this out of sheer desperation and I'm still doing the same things six years on quite simply because I love the life I have as a result of going through the Steps. I'd encourage anyone new or struggling to give it a go. What have you got to lose?

Anon

In Alcoholics Anonymous we all work TOGETHER !

All parts of our Fellowship – group meetings, committees, offices, Conferences and group jobs have one joint purpose; to help that one newcomer who has a drinking problem.

But in order for AA to run itself, we have to have a system for finding out how AA as a whole feels about its work affairs, and how it wants to operate.

We need constant honest communications from one part of AA to every other, furnishing a wide cross section of A experience. The General Service Conference makes that possible.

(Of course, neither the General Service Conference, the General Service Board, nor any AA Committee or office has any power to govern anyone in AA, "Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.")

You and I may not need a General Service Conference today, to ensure our own recovery, but what about the millions of sick alcoholics still stumbling out there in the dark?

When they come trying to find us, we want each of them to get the same loving help we all had. The Conference, and the whole general service system has that responsibility; **to keep AA alive and well for those yet to come.**

(extract from Circles of Love & Service)

Teach us to Laugh

Two Alcoholics from Dublin shuffling their way in a drunken haze of mistiness through the city of Pisa. Seeing the Leaning Tower.

"Lookah"

"Whah"

"It's Crookah"

"Ah come on !!!! lookah have another drink"



Anon

The Cuckoo

My mind is playing easy, going oh so very slow, and
then the cuckoo comes to nest, and doesn't want to go

I don't invite him in, I didn't say to call, it's as if he knows
I'm ready, so he takes me for the fall

He makes himself so cosy, pays no rent or fee, but
comes along so cheekily and nestles in my tree

He does not build a nest he doesn't even sing, but
pushes out my eggs, and places, some stupid thing

How can I get rid of him, how do I make him leave, for
me its not that easy he has an ace hid up his sleeve

I give him the power, I get the pain, his eggs they hatch
and produce some young, by then I am insane

But I will have to be so strong, as my sanity does
depend, on keeping so called cuckoos out, until the
very end.

Step 3

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understand him

For me within our own personal programme of recovery I now believe this Step 3 is possibly my most important Step of all. Hopefully by the time we take this Step we have full acceptance of been alcoholic with a disease of the mind we call alcoholism as well as a belief in a Higher Power. I did for many years within AA look at this Step all wrong. Being alcoholic I did focus on that one-word God and this was to cause me much confusion as well as discomfort because I am far from religious. Even at the end of my drinking I was blaming God for how bad my life had become, even resenting Him for keeping me alive because I had come to believe He was only doing so as to carry on punishing me for all the harm my drinking had brought to others. I now know this is the alcoholic mind focusing on that one-word God that never really sat well with me, which I am now glad to say has changed. Again, I was also dealing with the alcoholic racing head jumping ahead of itself.

First thing I did eventually manage to do was break this Step down into two parts. The first part was to look at my own self will. For over thirty years if I could drink every day, afford to do so and no one to bother me about behaving in such a way then everything was ok by me. But that way of thinking and living only got me so far until everyone was gone as well as everything I owned had gone. Even when I was lucky enough to find AA my

own self will was to cause me much distress. Now I had taken the alcohol away I had to deal with the people, places and things and at times this was a real struggle. If only everyone and everything was done solely on my own terms, then everything in life would be ok.

Of course, this is not possible in life but because I was still so self-cantered. I still wanted to change people to my own desires, control things and yet still out of control myself, and fix everyone and everything while broken myself. All the time I was still acting and behaving this way my own alcoholism was getting stronger as the physical pain and with the sensitivity and unbalanced emotions would give me back that mental torture so again the spirit within was under attack and this time without alcohol it was to feel worse than when I was drinking. This unfortunately was far too powerful for me to handle so I did go back drinking lonely to make matters worse. I was to go on to have numerous suicide attempts and all because I never really made that decision to accept that my will with my alcoholism never gave me much chance of leading a happy life.

It was only while in treatment that I finally gave in, no one could take my alcoholism away from me nor could I get rid of it no matter how hard I tried. So, with no other option left I decided to do what I had heard in AA years previously. Turn my will over to God. By

doing so I was asking for his help and yet I felt I was so unworthy of it, even if it is possible. I was still so confused as to how could God help someone like me who was far from religious and never attended a church for over 35 years. He did give us the 10 Commandments for which many of our laws of life are based on and yet even though I don't know all of them I did break a few of them in my drinking career. So, for God to help me he must have the power of forgiveness. I had also come to dislike myself so much for my behaviour while drinking. These thoughts and feelings while sober so I need a God who can be understanding as I can't understand myself, how can I expect any human being to understand me.

So, If I am looking for a God who has the power of being forgiving, kind, loving, caring and understanding. Are these some of the qualities that have been taken from me through my alcoholism?

These some of the qualities I need to be able to tackle my alcoholism. Many people would argue that you should not need God's help to find such qualities. I would say that when you have suffered enough with this illness of alcoholism and the spirit within you has been taken or drowned in alcohol for so long it needs to be rebuilt. So, in this Step I finally made the decision to ask for His help to hopefully gain His will and not mine. I do now have a very strong belief in God and by seeking His will does not make me a God in any way as there can only be one God as my understanding, but I do like to now think of myself as a servant of God through His will and to carry that out as best I can.

As these Steps should be looked upon as our own personal individual programme there are many who may not have a belief in God. For those who do not have such a belief why not look at G.O.D. as good orderly direction. Sure, are not they not the same qualities we. are seeking to enable us to become more tolerant and compassionate to others? As well as ourselves.

By finally making that decision that my will was no way strong enough to tackle my alcoholism, but God's was the difference in me is amazing. I now have a choice for which I once didn't. I now much prefer to live in a spiritual manor than that of the alcoholic way of life. I have now found spiritual strength to be able to combat my alcoholism which does work on most days. And all it took was to make that decision to turn my will over to the care of God as I understand Him and yet I found that so hard to do.

Why so Hard? Because I had to find trust and by placing my trust in God, I have been rewarded with a spiritual strength to fill the void that has been missing in me for so long. And by also doing the suggested things we hear about in AA it also helps to keeps me me spiritually strong.

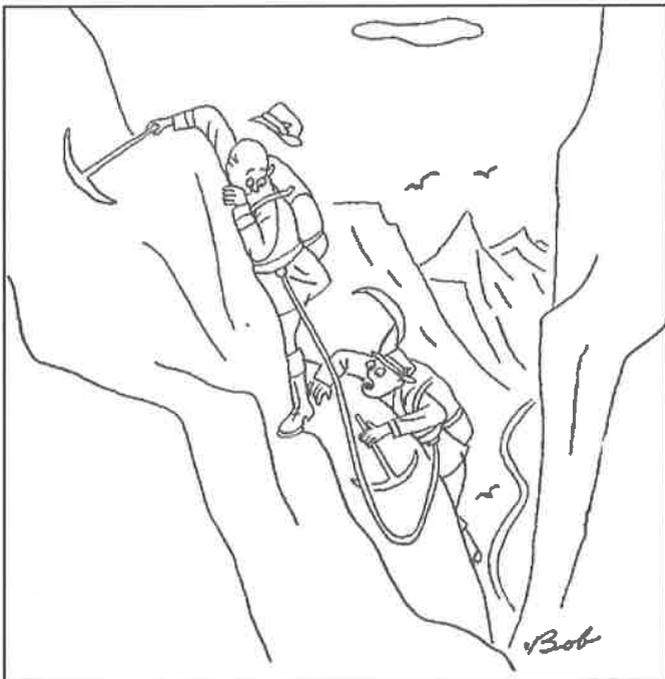
I do understand many people will have different concepts on what God means to them and if it is working for you then let it continue to keep working for you. I have only written this piece as I was asked to do so and if it should go someway to helping just one person with this Step then it has been worth while doing so. I can say I did struggle to make that decision, but I am glad I did eventually make it.



AA Cartoons



**"I may be a little late, honey.
Charlie's in town and wants me to have a New Year's Eve drink with him."**



"This is the damn'dest Twelfth Step call I've ever been on!"

A Member's Story

I was born in a small pub in a small village in north Kerry. I witnessed awful scenes between my father and mother due to my father's drinking. I was an only child. There was my aunt who lived with us.

I swore I would never drink alcohol. When my dad was sober, he was as good as gold. He died aged 55 years in 1963. I was 13 years old. It took me years to get over this.

School days were tough (physical and mental). In my late teens I started working in hotels and picked up a drink in Tralee.

I drank for about 25 years. I enjoyed about 5 years and for the last 10 I was in and out of A.A.

I had serious car crashes and many hospitalisations.

By this time, I was married (2 small children) I held down a job although I never stayed too long in the same place.

My last hospitalisation was in Waterford. I came out around Xmas 1987 and went back to meetings (didn't touch a drink since).

I found it very difficult for a good few years. To make matters worse I was let go from my job.

My wife had to go back to work. I was still attending meetings. I was full of self-pity and feeling lousy. Soul sickness is the best way to describe it.

The more I tried to fix things the worse I was feeling and after 6 or 7 months in A.A. I had a massive breakdown and finished up back in treatment.

Today I count my blessings I have a new freedom and a new happiness . . .

I was put on heavy meds and came home after 6 weeks. I went back to meetings and around Xmas 1989 I picked up a job.

When I eventually looked at the programme and tried utilising it, I slowly came out of the depression I was in. I did some service in A.A. which helped enormously.

Today I count my blessings I have a new freedom and a new happiness and when the down days come, I still go to meetings and try to help others.

As an old-timer said to me one time "A.A will get along without me. I can't get along without A.A."

Anon

From one alcoholic to another

My name is ... and I'm an alcoholic and today I have no fear.

Well one part of that sentence is true, I am an alcoholic. But today, as with yesterday, fear is in my life. I was going to say I suffer fear but that's not true anymore. A look back over the last few years might help as an explanation. I came to AA this time around not understanding fear, I was too strong in character to be in fear after all. Back then, if things unsettled me, I drank it away, or so I thought. If things tried to keep me awake, I drank myself to sleep.

We all know the story. But I didn't recognise fear as it was in my life, until I stopped drinking and started on the road of the Twelve Step Programme.

My alcoholic thought pattern made dead ends out of each remedy I came up with.

So, I started to see fear for what it was and how it was crippling much of my life. All well and good, but that didn't make it go away did it? No, I just knew something about myself that I didn't realise before, "Not a great improvement in my life" I thought, just something else to beat myself up about, scared of everything eh? So how on earth was knowing this about myself going to help? I had heard that I could, 'hand it over', but I didn't have that faith yet. Maybe share about it at a meeting? I hated doing that because

I always said something stupid, forgot the protocol, went red in the face or just plain forgot names. I heard about looking for a sponsor but was afraid of rejection. No, it was all useless. What I needed, I thought, was a way to make fear disappear from my life. After all there were many people in the rooms who were totally fearless, again so I thought. If they could do it then so could I. It didn't work. My alcoholic thought pattern made dead ends out of each remedy I came up with.

I was not until I was at a meeting where I heard someone say that they were living in fear of some issue. He was not sharing, just talking to a fellow member. Here he was, unashamedly. I think that was a turning point, I realised I was ashamed of myself for being, or letting people know I was afraid. Yep, afraid of people's opinion of me. Even in the very rooms of AA I carried my fears. I now realise that knowing my fears can be a great asset, for that meeting opened my eyes, not so much to the person I was, but to the person I wanted to be. Today I'm writing this with a peaceful heart and a smile on my face. Not that I'm without fear, but I do recognise it. I have a Higher Power in my life that I can ask for help from. But before this I learned to not feel ashamed of fear, see it as a part of me and my ongoing recovery and most importantly to share it with fellow members when it tries to grind my down. For within the rooms of the Fellowship I found fear only governs those, who like me, kept it to themselves.

Reprinted - Share, May 2019

No Boundaries, Please

When I first came to AA, I already felt like an outcast. All my life I had heard jokes about or had glimpsed fingers pointed at me for being homosexual. You know, “one of those people.”

Now I was told to stop drinking, join a group, and get a sponsor. Wow, that was some tall order to fill. I managed to stop drinking and I joined a group, but get a sponsor? Who among my newfound friends would want me around?

Finally, with my back to the wall, I got a sponsor. Oh, I tested her and tested her, once more fearing rejection, before I finally said, “I’m

gay.” She kept on sharing with me before I blurted it out again.

Now I was told to stop drinking, join a group, and get a sponsor.

“So what?” she responded. She didn’t throw me out of her home, nor did she run to meetings and say, “Guess what, here’s another of those people.”

I was accepted for exactly who I was: an alcoholic trying to get sober. My sexual preference has nothing to do with my sobriety.

Live and Let Live

One of the wonderful things about our Fellowship is that there is somebody for everybody and we usually seek out people who seem to be a good fit.

All of us in AA have a right to our own opinion, even if that opinion is that somebody else’s opinion is not as good as ours.

There is not a society on earth that places greater emphasis on the individual’s right to think, say, and do what he or she pleases than AA.

The whole structure of AA is based on a democratic spirit. There are no bosses or gurus. Nowhere on earth do we find such a wonderful society, extending so much freedom to so many people.

If it works, don’t fix it. We have grown from two people to two million, and we show no signs of getting smaller. We must be doing something right.

*Jim N.
West Springfield, Massachusetts*



Working with Others

The impact one alcoholic can have on the life of another is profound. And it doesn't take any special skills to accomplish – all it takes is the willingness to communicate with one another in the language of the heart.

From the university professor in this section who sponsored hundreds in his community to the shy woman working as an intergroup volunteer, taking responsibility for the well-being of others has resulted in changed lives – their own and those they reached out to.

As Bill W. points out in his essay on Tradition Five from the September

1952 Grapevine, reprinted in the "Twelve and Twelve".

"The unique ability of each AA to identify himself with, and bring recovery to, the newcomer in no way depends upon his learning, eloquence, or on any social individual skills. The only thing that matters is that he is an alcoholic who has found a key to sobriety.

These legacies of suffering and of recovery are easily passed among alcoholics, one to the other. This is our gift from God, and its bestowal upon others like us is the one aim that today animates AAs all around the globe."



One Point of View

The AA programme is a peculiar thing. It can be grasped as easily by the simple mind as by the most erudite. The simple person accepts on faith what the twelve steps tell us, puts them into practice, finds they work and is satisfied. The learned man accepts them in the same way, puts them to work and finds they are an unending source of new ideas and comfort...

We used to think that the AA's who insisted on complicating the programme weren't really intellectuals, but pseudo-intellectuals. They just thought they were smart. To us, the really smart man with an incisive brain is one who can cut through the outer trivia and get to the core of things immediately. We've come to believe, however, that the intellectual approach isn't intellectual at all.

Alcoholics are notorious alibi artists. They have come up with some of the fanciest and most unique excuses to justify their behaviour that ever have been invented. Thus, we wonder if the "intellectual" AA isn't really a lad who has yet to take the first step? True, he's joined the group and is staying dry. But he's fighting his way, arguing with accepted fact and theory, facts and theories we know are good because we have proved them so. Is our intellectual possibly toying with the idea that he can lick this deal on his own?

Does he have a faint hope that once again he may become a "gentleman of distinction"? We don't know the answer, We do know that a little learning can be a dangerous thing.

With acknowledgements to "Here's How", Chicago

Rigidity in AA

If we stick close to our Traditions, Concepts, and Warranties, and if we keep an open mind and an open heart, we can deal with these and any other problems that we have or ever will have. If we ever falter and fail, it will be simple because of us, it will be because we have too much fear and rigidity and not enough trust and common sense.

If you were to ask me what is the greatest danger facing AA today, I would have to answer: the growing rigidity, the increasing demand for absolute answers to nit-picking questions, pressure GSO to "enforce" our traditions, screening alcoholics at closed meetings, prohibiting non-conference approved literature, ie., banning books, laying more and more rules on groups and members.

And in this trend towered rigidity, we are drifting farther and farther away from our co-founders. Bill, in particular, must be spinning in his grave, for he was perhaps the most permissive person I ever met.

Anon

Road Back now Online!!

Dear Subscriber,

Next year the Road Back magazine will enter a new exciting era as it moves online. The phasing out period for the booklet format has already started and as a valued contributor to the Road Back we wanted to update you on this process.

From January/February 2020 the Road Back magazine will be available to view and print via our website at www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie....**FREE OF CHARGE.**

There will also be a facility to email a copy of the online format of the Road Back to you directly. If this is an option you are interested in, simply email your request to roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie, and you will be added to the Road Back mailing list.

Subscriptions that are due to cease before December 2019, will be extended to the end of this year, at no extra cost to you. There will be no option to renew subscriptions from the September/October issue no. 424.

We will of course honour existing subscriptions that are due to cease during 2020, you will continue to receive your Road Back, in booklet format, until your subscription expires but there will be no renewal option at the expiry date.

Subscriptions due to cease in 2021 can be reimbursed for the remainder of the term, please contact GSO nearer the time to discuss this option further.

We would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank you for your support and hope you will continue to enjoy the benefits of the Road Back magazine long into the future.

Yours in AA.,

General Service Office of AA

Ireland

There is Hope

It was a life without end – right to the edge of the abyss – ensnared by the allurements of pleasure – wandering and staggering from one pub to another – seeking to ring myself of the anxiety – the sorrow – afflicted with my own, very own lifestyle. An emptiness which could not be filled.

**It was not until I
joined AA that I
realised how lonely I
was all those years . . .**

Loved ones pushed aside – a craving for what? A drink? Alcohol? It became that

No release possible in sight – hopeless – seeking an explanation. I will not do it again – became a tune with all the other excuses – Oh! If only they would leave me alone – yes, if only they would:

It was not until I joined AA that I realised how lonely I was all those years – it was not until I got sober

– after a long period of time, that I realised – the real pain I had caused my family the embarrassment they had to endure – covering up, all the time blaming themselves – we must have done something wrong? No they did not. I was called a drunk. I was told I abused alcohol – the symptoms were many – all with the same result.

I now understand what they call the disease of alcohol – I took a drink – whatever happened I don't know – but my body responded to it in such a manner that I had to feed it at any cost with more alcohol – of course my whole self changed because of it – alcohol!

Today the 12 Step Programme of Recovery of AA with a programme of discipline in our 12 Traditions – becoming part of AA, also my family, has wiped out that terrible loneliness of alcoholism – by ego deflation on a daily basis being part of life.

Anon

On New Year's Eve, **Judy stood up at the local pub** and said that it was time to get ready.

"At the stroke of midnight" she said, "I want everybody to be standing next to the person who has made your life worth living".

The bartender was nearly crushed to death!!

AA Cartoons



"Relaxing, isn't it?"



"I'm sure we've met before—was it at Dolan's Drunk Farm or the State Hospital?"

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 practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve 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 non-professional, but our service centres 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.

We, *The Road Back* Editorial Team, look forward to hearing from you with your stories, snippets of amusing things overheard at meetings, indeed anything that carries a message of sobriety to our readership.

Your contributions can be emailed to:

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or posted to:

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Up to date information on forthcoming Conventions and One Day Events can be viewed on our website at
www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie