

The Road Back

July/August 2019 - Issue 423

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Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. (The Big Book Chapter 7)

A word from the Editor

While this particular Step is known to us as the Twelfth Step, it is in fact the culmination of our initial journey through the steps of the program. In his essay on Step Twelve in the 'Twelve and Twelve', Bill W gives a summary of all of the Steps and draws the threads together in this final but daily Step of our program of recovery.

Old timers will often emphasise to us the words in the Step 'as the result of these steps'. For most of us our spiritual experience is of the educational variety i.e. they happen over time. Appendix II in the Big Book is worth referring to here viz;

"The terms "spiritual experience" and "spiritual awakening" are used many times in this book which, upon careful reading, shows that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many different forms.

Yet it is true that our first printing gave many readers the impression that these personality changes, or religious experiences, must be in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals. Happily for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous.

In the first few chapters a number of sudden revolutionary changes are described. Though it was not our intention to create such an impression, many alcoholics have nevertheless concluded that in order to recover they must acquire an immediate and overwhelming "God-consciousness" followed at once by a vast change in feeling and outlook.

Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule. Most of our experiences are what the psychologist William James calls the "educational variety" because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before he is himself. He finally realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone. What often takes place in a few months could hardly be accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.

Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual

experience. Our more religious members call it "God-consciousness."

Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual principles. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial.

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. *Willingness, Honesty and Open Mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.*

"There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance--that principle is contempt prior to investigation." HERBERT SPENCER"

Probably a more accurate term for us to use in the context of our carrying of the message of AA is the use of the term 'Twelve Stepping' as opposed to Twelfth Stepping. We carry the spiritual program of recovery, which is contained in the Twelve Steps. In practising the spiritual principles of the program in all our affairs we are then in a far better position to transmit the message of AA. We are relieved of the 'bondage of self'.

The need to be mindful of the word 'try' is important also. We are simply the agents of the Higher Power. We don't 'get' anyone sober. We come to learn and know that the outcome of our 'Twelve Stepping' is in the hands of God, as we understand Him. We can and will of course delight in seeing the Providence of recovery transform a newcomer's life. While we may not succeed in 'getting' a prospect sober, we will, more importantly stay sober ourselves in the effort.

We know that nothing insures more against drinking than 'Twelve Step' work and nothing more rewarding than to see the life of a practising alcoholic dramatically turned round by our spiritual program of recovery and with the continuing support of the AA Fellowship.

The 12th promise of AA is that we realise that God is doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves. And a sobering thought for us is the Oriental wisdom... before spiritual awakening, chop wood and carry water... after spiritual awakening... chop wood and carry water!!

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) 8420700

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Step Twelve

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Photos courtesy of Ken O'S,
Michael C & Liam O'B

The Views and opinions expressed in The Road Back are not necessarily the views and opinions of the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

A co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous tells how members recover and how the society functions.

TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
WORLD SERVICES, INC.

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Step Twelve

'Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and practise these principles in all our affairs'.

Joy of living is the theme of the Twelfth Step. Action its keyword.

Giving that asks no reward. Love that has no price tag.

What is spiritual awakening?

A new state of consciousness and being is received as a free gift.

Readiness to receive free gift lies in practice of Twelve Steps.

The magnificent reality.

Rewards of helping other alcoholics.

Kinds of Twelfth Step work.

Problems of Twelfth Step work.

What about the practice of these principles in all our affairs?

Monotony, pain and calamity turned to good use by practice of Steps.

Difficulties of practice.

"Two-Stepping." Switch to "Twelve-Stepping" and demonstrations of faith.

Growing spiritually is the answer to our problems.

Placing spiritual growth first.

Domination and overdependence.

Putting our lives on give-and-take basis.

Dependence upon God necessary to recovery of alcoholics.

"Practising these principles in all our affairs": Domestic relations in A.A.

Outlook upon material matters changes. So do feelings about personal importance.

Instincts restored to true purpose.

Understanding is key to right attitudes, right action key to good living

Step Twelve

'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'.

When I came into the Fellowship in January 1981 I knew nothing about spirituality and had no belief in any concept of a Higher Power. Alcohol had certainly proved to be more powerful than me and taking the view that this was a negative power, I set out to cultivate a belief in a power of good. At first I used the Group and AA as a whole, then I developed a belief in a Higher Power that I call God. I believe this to be a power of good, guiding me through life. So my spiritual awakening has been a gradual process.

The practice of the Twelve Steps has enabled me to bring about a change in the way I look at life, instead of just existing, I am living today. I enjoy a quality of life that I never thought possible. A new level of awareness has been reached as a result of adopting this way of life.

Since my first involvement in Service after a short time in the Fellowship it has been my privilege to partake in a wide range of Twelfth Step activities. Not being one for half measures I wanted to be involved as soon as possible because I felt so grateful, and still do, for what has been given to me. I love this Fellowship because it saved my life and presented me with a new life that is so far removed

from that which went before that it is quite astonishing.

It has been important for me when I have been on a Twelfth Step call to be neither pessimistic nor optimistic. My powerlessness over alcohol extends beyond me and it has been helpful for me to remember that. I do not get involved in family matters, offer to counsel or advise people. I am simply a grateful member of AA there to carry this message of hope and to share my subjective experience of alcoholism and recovery. If the alcoholic does not respond, and the family are looking for help, I suggest that they contact Al-Anon, pointing out, that it is a separate organisation for relatives and friends of the problem drinker.

As long as I am satisfied that I have carried the AA message to the best of my ability then that is all I can do. While I may be instrumental in getting someone to AA for the first time, it is not me who will get that person sober. That is a job for the Fellowship as a whole and that individual's own concept of a Higher Power. All I can do is give them the benefit of my experience, strength and hope; the rest is taken on collectively. I feel it is important to acquaint the newcomer with a variety of individual members and meetings. That way they can choose their own company and their own meetings.

In Twelfth Step work I believe in 'horses for courses', being mindful that all of us have different abilities. When asked to get involved in any sphere of Service I

think it is a good idea to consider three questions: (1) am I willing? (2) have I got the time? (3) have I got the wherewithal? These have been a useful guide for me when I have been asked to take on any Service.

Sponsoring members into Service is, in my view, a part of Twelfth Step work. When the opportunity presents itself (and sometimes when it doesn't) I like to share about the benefits of Service and encourage others to get involved. After all, it is our Fellowship and as such needs all the time and energy that we can usefully devote to it.

One aspect of Twelfth Step work that is not spoken about as much as it might be is that of carrying the message through a third party. Obviously this is not the same as a face-to-face contact with someone seeking help, but it is still an important part of carrying the message. There are many people whose professions or vocations bring them into contact with the alcoholic in settings where there is no AA presence and a well informed non-AA can point the alcoholic to an AA contact or meeting.

To a professional person, the sober AA member represents the face of the Fellowship, so it is vital that we seek to select the best examples of AA that we have to take on the task of speaking to non-AA's about the Fellowship. When I am engaged in such talks I have to remember that I am responsible for the preservation of the Twelve Traditions. To this extent I do not get involved in discussions on issues that AA has no

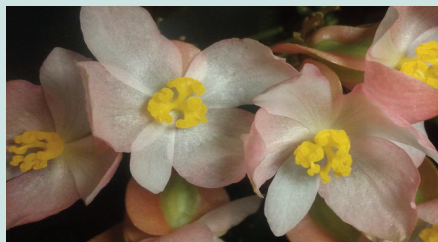
opinion on.

My self-worth has been greatly enhanced by my involvement in Service. Sharing what has been given to me is a pleasure and a privilege in any setting.

Practising these principles in all our affairs means adopting the whole of the AA philosophy as a way of living. This is a living program leading to spiritual growth. I believe that I have caught up on a lot of the maturity that I missed out on because of my obsession with alcohol. Now that this has been removed I am able to move forward continually seeking growth. I look upon life as an ongoing learning process which is never-ending. There are new challenges to be taken on, new avenues to explore. I have a zest for life today that I did not think possible in my wildest dreams.

The whole of AA is more important than any of its constituent parts and this is something that I am very much aware of, so when any disputes arise within the Fellowship, this principle is my guide. Putting principles before personalities both inside and outside the Fellowship does not always endear me to everyone, but I would rather be respected (or disliked) for what I am than be liked for what I am not.

Kevin M., Coventry





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As You Travel Through Life

As you travel through life there are always those times when decisions just have to be made.

When choices are hard, and solutions seem scarce, and rain seems to soak your parade.

There are some situations where all you can do is simply let go and move on.

Gather your courage and choose a direction that carries you towards a new dawn. So, pack up your troubles and take a step forward.

The process of change can be tough, but think about all the excitement ahead, don't dwell on the trivial stuff.

There might be adventures you never imagined just waiting around the next bend and wishes and dreams just about to come true in ways you cannot even comprehend!

Perhaps you will go places you never expected, and see things that you've never seen, or travel to fabulous faraway worlds and wonderful spots in between.

Perhaps you will find warmth and affection and caring and somebody special who's there. To help you stay centered and listen with interest to stories and feelings you share.

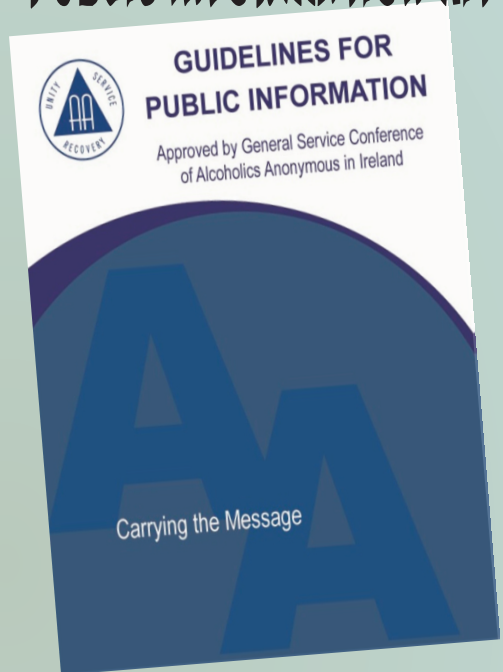
Perhaps you will find comfort in knowing your friends are supportive of all that you do and believe that whatever decisions you make they will be the right choices for you.

So, keep putting one foot in front of the other, and taking your life day by day...

There's a brighter tomorrow that's just down the road. Don't look back! You're not going that way.

Submitted by Linda.

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**A Notable Resource for
the AA Group Intent on
Carrying The Message**

Responsibility Declaration

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

A WOMAN'S VIEWPOINT ON "THE THIRTEENTH STEP"

Throughout my years of membership in AA I have from time to time heard the occasional mention of the problems of "13th stepping", and have, myself indulged to my own detriment.

Unfortunately, the general attitude when this subject has been mentioned swings between a smutty snigger and acute embarrassment. However, the consequences of this practice have recently hit rather close to home, that is, in my own group; and I believe a completely honest overhaul of this area is way overdue within the entire Fellowship.

As a woman, I am particularly concerned with the effects this has upon those of my own sex. The assumption that a woman who does not resist sexual advances is a willing partner, therefore no harm is done, is a total fallacy. Many women when they first join AA feel a great sense of trust towards the members and are often unable to distinguish between a man who is sincerely helping and one who is looking for "a good time". It is up to members of the group to warn her. She is often unaware of the emotional disaster such encounters can cause and lacks the resources within herself to offer much resistance.

This should DEFINITELY NOT be interpreted as keenness to oblige. She is sick ...as ALL of us are when we first stop drinking. The Big Book (pp.68-70) deals with the subject of sex quite clearly and I suggest members read it and apply it;

"Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there. But above all, we tried to be sensible on this question. It's so easy to get way off track. Here we

find human opinions running to extremes – absurd extremes, perhaps. One set of voices cry that sex is a lust of our lower nature, a base necessity of procreation. Then we have the voices who cry for sex and more sex; who bewail the institution of marriage; who think that most of the troubles of the race are traceable to sex causes. They think we do not have enough of it, or that it isn't the right kind. They see its significance everywhere. One school would allow man no favour for his diet and the other would have us all on a straight pepper diet. We want to stay out of this controversy. We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct. We all have sex problems. We'd hardly be human if we didn't. What can we do about them?

We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? Where were we at fault, what should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it.

In this way we tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life. We subjected each relation to this test – was it selfish or not? We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them. We remembered always that our sex-powers were God-given and therefore good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly nor to be despised or loathed.

Whatever our ideal turns out to be we must be willing to grow toward it. We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided we do not bring about still more harm in so doing. In other words, we treat sex as we would any other problem. In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will

come, if we want it.

God alone can judge our sex situation. Counsel with persons is often desirable, but we let God be the judge. We realise that some people are as fanatical about sex as others are loose. We avoid hysterical thinking or advice.

Suppose we fall short of the chosen ideal and stumble? Does this mean we are going to get drunk? Some people tell us so. But this is only a self-truth. It depends on us and our motives. If we are sorry for what we have done and have the honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven and will have learned our lesson. We are not theorising... If we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to drink. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heartache.

I know of one woman in recent weeks who has returned to drink and may never come back to AA as a direct result of men in the Fellowship exploiting her sexuality. While this both angers and saddens me I feel the responsibility lies not only with the individuals concerned but with the Fellowship as a whole for tending to sweep the subject under the mat. If the Big Book considers this a problem for ALL of us, then for God's sake. Let's put it out into the open and look at it as we are advised to do.

I often wonder how many women have come to AA for help and never returned as a result of being 13th Stepped? Certain members I know seem to feel it is OK for a man to 12 Step a woman on his own. To these people I ask how many such women are alive and well and in AA? Upon observation I have noticed very few.

I would like to point out to men in AA that this is a life and death game, and if

a woman seems like a prospective "easy lay", consider first that to take advantage of the situation could be the equivalent to signing her death warrant! The shame and remorse she could feel may well prevent her from asking for help from this Fellowship.

If I offend men in AA by what I say, then I make no apologies. Few women ever make approaches, and whenever a woman does seem to be making herself freely available it is up to the man concerned to let it be known that this is a life saving program and indiscriminate sexual adventures are not recommended in any of our literature as part of our recovery. On the contrary, it is often warned (against) as dangerous to our sobriety.

Sure, it takes two to tango, and there are at times successful marriages within AA but these aren't the situations I am concerned with. I am relating especially with the woman who is reaching out for help and in a very vulnerable state. AA owes it to these people to offer our love and protection. They are trusting the members of AA and to betray that trust is one of the most despicable things we can do.

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

Anonymous

The History of The Road Back

The first edition of The Road Back was issued by the First Dublin Group in April 1949 and has been unfailingly issued since then.

The first edition of The Road Back was three pages of single space stencilled typing intended as a vehicle for the Group to communicate with the larger, rapidly growing A.A. world everywhere. By the second issue it was quoting a letter from Bill D. (A.A. member number 3); by August a letter from Bill W. himself; and quoting Conor F. directly (who brought the message of AA to Ireland but always attributed the founding of AA in Ireland to his home group in Philadelphia), as he and his wife, Margaret were again back on vacation from the U.S.

It was soon listing newsletters and other events from all over the world including some comparatively nearby as in Belfast and London. Sobriety Anniversaries were there from the beginning and new Irish AA Groups that came to be established such as in Dun Laoghaire, Cork, Ranelagh, Bundoran, Limerick and Belfast.

Sackville edited the Road Back for twenty eight and a half years and gave it up in 1976 as his health faltered.

In all those years Miss Gillespie cut the single spaced stencils and reproduced the Road Back for a very modest charge. Sackville mailed copies around the world and articles were frequently picked up in New Zealand, Australia, South Africa and the U.S. to be re-used.

After Sackville retired, the First Dublin Group continued to publish the Road Back with Sean M. as Editor, who was followed by Fr. Pat.

In 1981 the General Service Board became the Editor of The Road Back and has continued its publication to date. In 1992 on the suggestion of Conference, The Road Back was re-vamped into its present format, albeit it has become in recent years a full colour production, retaining and revisiting some old features while incorporating some new ones.

It is the second oldest such magazine in the world.

Members are invited to submit articles for inclusion in The Road Back magazine, by emailing or posting articles to the General Service Office.

**General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park,
Swords Road, Dublin 9,
D09 H584
Tel: +353 1 842 0700**

Email: roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Step 12

for myself holds just as much importance as the 11 before it, for I look upon it as the miracle of an alcoholic being able to stay sober and also for an individual being able to live with a disease called alcoholism.

I, like so many alcoholics before me, used to treat this illness with alcohol and yet the more I drank the worse the illness got. And although I don't believe there is a cure, I do believe very strongly there is a way of coping with this life threatening disease and that coping mechanism now lies in the 12 Steps for me today and not now in the bottle.

It is also a miracle that an alcoholic who suffers from alcoholism can live such a wonderful and worthwhile life that costs nothing and only requires a willingness and an ability for one to get honest with one's self.

My own story consisted of a thirty plus years of drinking every day and the only days I never drank were the one's spent in the police or prison cells.

Quite simply it is not easy to sum up that drinking career as "I took drink, and drink took me" to the degree that I never knew who I really was. I, like all alcoholics or addicts never thought as a child growing up, I would give so much of my life to the addiction of alcohol but I did and even though I cannot get back the lost time I can now look forward to living a life free from the stranglehold of alcohol with the help of the 12 Step program. I was so relieved to have finally found AA as I had been turned away from treatment centres in the past.

I can still remember the words said at my very first meeting "there is a solution" and I wanted that solution so badly. I also went on to do a 12 Step program and I although I did put alot of effort and work into it was only a short-term reprieve in it. I still was to fail miserably again. How come you may well ask? Well the answer is that I never really put into practice what I had learnt. I could still do the talk at an AA meeting but I could not do the walk. I would not put into practice the suggested things I heard, as I still had two major obstacles in my way. One being my huge ego and the other was my pride. I also fell into the trap of believing I was cured and also thinking I was better than most alcoholics within the Fellowship.

How I didn't pay the price with my own life I still don't know, nor do I ever need to know. I had two suicide attempts before I found AA and yet went on to have another five dry years.

Insanity came back as I never attended meetings for about eighteen months and got so cocky that I thought I knew it all. This time I went and bought the rope before the cans!! And this after four and a half years without a drink! Again, I was lucky to make it to Cuan Mhuire for at the time I really didn't know if I wanted to live or die.

Even though I didn't find the experience easy I did put the work into the program. It was not until about the tenth week into a 12 week program that I really found the desire to live again and this is now what I call my 'Spiritual Awakening'.

So how did this happen? The only

answer I can give is my complete belief in the power of recovery. If the power of recovery can come from God surely the power of addiction must come from the devil as it certainly was the case for me in my life of addiction. I also changed my idea of a Higher Power whilst in treatment. I now have a very strong belief in the Holy spirit, a gift I believe God gave to us all.

I also have come to believe in the power of God and keep his Holy Spirit within me strong through the power of prayer and gratitude. I also now have to keep that spirit strong as it is the only way I now know of being able to deal with the emotional weakness, the physical pain and mental insecurities that can still arise in my head on any given day. It is now why I get down on my knees and ask God for help every day so I can overcome these incidents should they occur, because I know I am so powerless over them.

I also now give thanks at the end of each day no matter how good or bad the day has been because I can no longer fall into that booze trap no matter what my head may tell me. So now I try and practise the AA programme on a daily basis as best as I can. I keep the programme very

simple for a very complicated individual like myself. I have found great acceptance through the programme, but I now start to put it into action ... which I never did before. I am also doing the suggested things and I believe in the sayings we have within the AA rooms. It is also down to myself to take action on my defects, which I still have so many of. But change takes time and I have had to learn to give time time. I have to learn how to live one day at a time even though my head does not allow me to. I have also learnt it is far easier to accept especially when wronged than to react. But I must admit I still struggle with that at the moment but it is getting better, slowly.

I have also had to individualise my programme. I am glad to share that it is working to date so far even though I have had to face some very challenging situations of late.

I am not writing this article looking for the big brass band treatment with a fanfare down every high street in the country. I did it because I was asked to, and if it should help another alcoholic or addict well and good. If people think I have written nothing but rubbish... I thank them for



John

A STEP POEM

*I took Step One, began to moan
I can't do this one on my own.
I took Step Two, began to pray
Restore me God, please now, today.
I took Step Three, gave up my will
Maybe God could love me still.
I took a Fourth, I looked inside
Nothing more would I hide,
And on the Fifth, I said aloud
I've done some wrong, and I'm not proud.
I took Step Six, and got prepared
To lose the defects, I was scared.
Now I'm at Seven, take them away
My God, for this I do pray.
And on Eight, the list was long
Amends to make for all the wrongs.
I took Step Nine, put down my pride
Amends made, I will not hide.
Step Ten I take, each day I pray
I make amends along the way.
And on Eleven I pray to know
Each day His Will, which way to go.
I take Step Twelve, I'm like a bird
To others now, I spread the word...*

Author Unknown





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THE ROAD BACK

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w: www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie
t: +353 1 842 0700

Heard at Meetings

The good can often be the
enemy of the best

oo oo oo oo

A chain is only as strong
as its weakest link

oo oo oo oo

A good motive can often
veil a bad one

oo oo oo oo

That which is simple
can be most profound

oo oo oo oo

I came to scoff but
I remained to pray

oo oo oo oo

Easier to retain this
than to try and regain it.

oo oo oo oo

Humble pie is best served hot!

(Step 10)

oo oo oo oo

I didn't know him without his
anonymity!

Don't try to get too damned good
by Thursday!

oo oo oo oo

"Life is what happens, while you are
busy making other plans"

John Lennon

oo oo oo oo

Nothing pays off like restraint of
tongue and pen. (12&12)

oo oo oo oo

Close your mouth and be thought a
fool or open it and remove all
doubt!

oo oo oo oo

Keep on keeping on!

oo oo oo oo



Advice From A Tree

Ilan Shamir

Stand Tall and Proud
Sink your roots deeply into the Earth
Reflect the light of a greater source
Think long term
Go out on a limb
Remember your place among all living beings
Embrace with joy the changing seasons
For each yields its own abundance
The Energy and Birth of Spring
The Growth and Contentment of Summer
The Wisdom to let go of leaves in the Fall
The Rest and Quiet Renewal of Winter
Feel the wind and the sun
And delight in their presence
Look up at the moon that shines down upon you
And the mystery of the stars at night.
Seek nourishment from the good things in life
Simple pleasures
Earth, fresh air, light
Be content with your natural beauty
Drink plenty of water
Let your limbs sway and dance in the breezes
Be flexible
Remember your roots
Enjoy the view!

Courtesy of awakin.org

"Please, Lord, teach us to laugh again; but God don't let us forget that we cried."

A child asked his father, "How were people born?" So his father said, "Adam and Eve made babies, then their babies became adults and made babies, and so on." The child then went to his mother, asked her the same question and she told him, "We were monkeys then we evolved to become like we are now." The child ran back to his father and said, "You lied to me!" His father replied, "No, your mom was talking about her side of the family."

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

What happens to a frog's car when it breaks down?

It gets toad away.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

A husband and wife were driving through Louisiana. As they approached Natchitoches, they started arguing about the pronunciation of the town. They argued back and forth, then they stopped for lunch. At the counter, the husband asked the blonde waitress, "Before we order, could you please settle an argument for us? Would you please pronounce where we are very slowly?" She leaned over the counter and said, "Burr-r-gerrr Kiiiing."

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

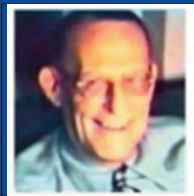
Math Teacher: "If I have 5 bottles in one hand and 6 in the other hand, what do I have?"

Student: "A drinking problem."

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Q: What did the duck say when he bought lipstick?

A: "Put it on my bill."



Dr. Bob Smith - Co-founder of A.A.

"Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance."

Dr. Bob's Farewell Speech

Text Service for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing.

A text-messaging service for the Deaf and
Hard of Hearing is now available at GSO.

Contact, by text only,
087 1460387

**'Each day, somewhere in
the world, recovery begins when
one alcoholic talks with another
alcoholic, sharing experience,
strength and hope'**

Tradition Five (long form)

**Each Alcoholics
Anonymous group
ought to be a spiritual
entity HAVING BUT
ONE PRIMARY
PURPOSE--that of
carrying its message to
the alcoholic who still
suffers.**

Some A.A. Acronyms

PMS	Poor Me Syndrome
AA	Alive Again
WORRY	Wrong Or Right Remain Yourself
ASAP	Always Say A Prayer
ASK	Ass-Saving Kit
CALM	Creating A Loving Me
EGO	Edge God Out
FEAR	Failure Expected And Received
FEAR	Face Everything And Recover



APPROVED FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS AND ONE DAY EVENTS



FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS IN IRELAND

DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
30th Aug.-1st Sept. 2019	Tipperary Area 39th Convention	Clonmel Park Hotel. Tel: 062 6188700. Website: www.clonmelparkhotel.com . Theme: Giving Back
11th-13th October 2019	Donegal Area Convention	Mount Errigal Hotel, Ramelton Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, 00353 74912 2700

ONE DAY EVENTS IN IRELAND

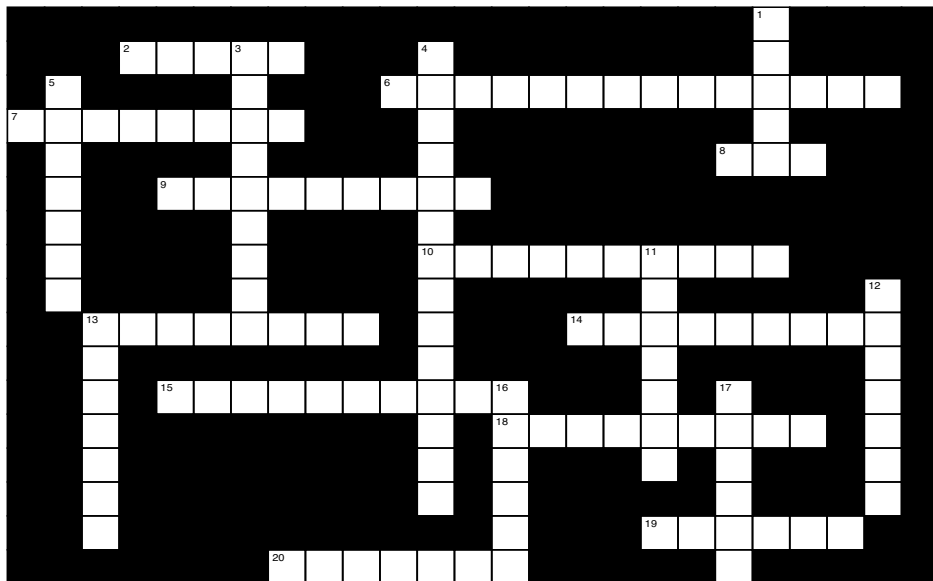
DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
15th September 2019	Down Area Day of Gratitude	The Burrendale Hotel, Country Club & Spa, 51 Castlewellan Road, Newcastle, Co. Down, BT33 0JY, 0044 28 4372 2599
3rd November 2019	Dungannon Group 'A Come & Go Meeting'	Unit 8, Castlevew Buildings, Feeny's Lane, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, BT70 1TX
10th November 2019	Belfast Area Day of Gratitude	Ramada Encore Belfast, St. Anne's Square, Belfast, Co. Antrim, BT1 2LD, 0044 28 9026 1800
17th November 2019	Pinebank Group Day of Gratitude	Mount Zion House, 55 Edward Street, Lurgan, Co. Armagh, BT66 6DB

FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS ABROAD

DATES	COUNTRY	VENUE/THEME
20th-22nd September 2019	2nd Int. AA Ardennes Convention, Belgium	Hotel Vayamundo, 01 Fosse d'Outh 1, 6660 Houffalize
10th-13th October 2019	3rd Annual Biarritz Int. Convention in France	Belambra Club, Anglet-Biarritz, Prom. Des Sources, 64600 Anglet, France
22nd-24th November 2019	AA Costa del Sol Convention, Spain	IPV Palace Hotel, Guengirola, Spain
2nd-5th July 2020	85th International Convention in Michigan, USA	Detroit, Michigan - see www.aa.org for details

The Big Challenge Crossword 423

Test your knowledge of AA literature.



Across

2. Dr Bob's last words "Don't it up".
6. "pitiful and incomprehensible....." (Chapter 3)
7. "there is no middle-of -the-road" (Chapter 3)
8. The recovery acroynm (Chapter 5)
9. "and we have been rocketed into a fourth" (Chapter 3)
10. "that A.A.'s had to hang together or die" " (Foreword to the Second Edition)
13. The type of honesty that is indispensable (Chapter 5)
14. "Our problems arise out of" (Chapter 5)
15. 'willing to belive in a Power greater than himself and that he live by spiritual....." (Chap 7 BB)
18. "insure immunity from drinking as work with other alcoholics" (Chapter 7)
19. He was the first link in the chain of AA's history (....H.)
20. The first AA meeting place was "The shop".

Down

1. The result was nil until we did this.
3. This Episcopalian Minister stuck to his last
4. One of the two AA Declarations
5. "relieve me of the of self"
11. "We stood at the point" (Chapter 5)
12. "something more than human power is needed to produce the essential.... change" (The Doctor's Opinion BB)
13. First name of the very first AA member in Ireland
16. Dr William D.... affectionately known as
17. "we know but a" (Big Book)

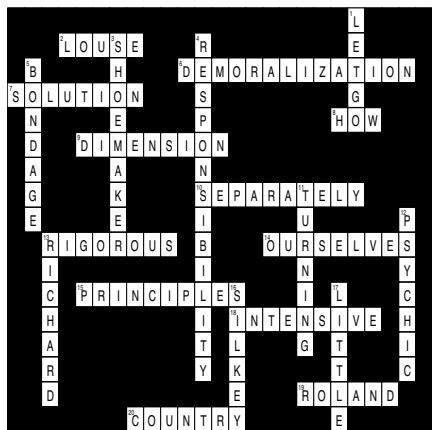
Crossword 420 solution on page 22

**Check out the new AA
website:**

www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Declaration of Unity

*This we owe to A.A.'s future:
To place our common welfare first;
To keep our fellowship united.
For on A.A. unity depend our lives;
and the lives of those to come.*



'Believe more deeply. Hold your face up to the light, even though for the moment you do not see.'

Bill W

God grant me the
Serenity
to accept the things I
cannot change...
Courage to
change the things I can
and **Wisdom** to
know the difference...

The Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through . . .

1. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.
2. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.
3. We will comprehend the word serenity.
4. We will know peace.
5. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.
6. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.
7. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.
8. Self-seeking will slip away.
9. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.
10. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.
11. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.
12. We will suddenly realize 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 materialize if we work for them.

Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th edition, pp. 83-84, with permission of A.A. World Services, Inc.



THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

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THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

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Next issue:

Happy, Joyous & Free

Sept - October 2019 – Issue 424



Your invitation to share at our meeting between meetings.

Just like membership of our Fellowship, you don't have to be a special type of alcoholic to write for *The Road Back*.

Whether you are a newcomer or an old timer we need to hear your experience strength and hope.

Putting pen to paper (or by email) can enhance your sobriety and that of the whole Fellowship. You don't need to be a polished writer either, spelling and grammar can be amended if necessary.

You can write a few lines or a few pages.

Remember *The Road Back* is your magazine, your meeting in print.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

Please share your experience strength and hope with us on the following topics:

Happy, Joyous & Free

Sept/Oct 2019

Articles should be submitted by August 7th 2019 for issue 424

Traditions 1 - 3

Nov/Dec 2019

Articles should be submitted by October 7th 2019 for issue 425

Please mark your mail with the relevant Issue and email to –

roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie

or post to:

Alcoholics Anonymous

Unit 2, Block C

Santry Business Park

Swords Road

Dublin 9

IRELAND