

# The Road Back

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March/April 2019 - Issue 421

## Step Ten



*But when we approach Step Ten we commence to put our A.A. way of living to practical use, day by day, in fair weather or foul. Then comes the acid test: can we stay sober, keep in emotional balance, and live to good purpose under all conditions?*

*(Twelve & Twelve page 88)*

## A word from the Editor

Ten is a significant number in many different contexts and more particularly so for we AAs as we continue to claim spiritual progress through Step Ten.

On the surface of it Step Ten is a scanning exercise of our moral thinking and behaviour that continues for our lifetime. It isn't that we are consigned to that 'stupid, boring and glum' life (A Vision for You) like some righteous people we know but on the contrary we adopt the constructive cultivation of a regimen that will stand us in good stead throughout our sober years.

Our BB explains how we are an indisciplined lot. We need structure. The formation of good habits in turn forms us.

Our inventory is not just an exercise in seeing what is not working for us but it also asks us to look at what is working well for us and to credit ourselves accordingly.

The 'spot check inventory' developed in the 12&12 is like what a member friend of mine describes as that annoying beep in his car when he fails to put on his seat belt. It is something that simply cannot be ignored. When we are troubled in such a way we need to discuss it with another as soon as possible.

This continuous maintenance Step is elaborated in Bill's essay on this Step in the 12&12 as follows:

*A continuous look at our assets and liabilities, and a real desire to learn and grow by this means, are necessities for us. We alcoholics*

*have learned this the hard way. More experienced people, of course, in all times and places have practiced unsparing self-survey and criticism. For the wise have always known that no one can make much of his life until self-searching becomes a regular habit, until he is able to admit and accept what he finds, and until he patiently and persistently tries to correct what is wrong.*

The periodic overhaul or more intensive inventory is also referenced as a kind of retreat from the mountain that figuratively speaking can often become our lives. To gain a clear perspective of the mountain we need to retreat a distance from it. Similarly we need to pull back from life and assess where we are at in our spiritual development.

We know from earlier steps that the reasoning behind all of them is that we be relieved of the bondage of ourselves. Unburdened thus, we can ascend to newer perspectives and without the anchor of our impediments we can be better poised to help another for we know we cannot transmit what we haven't got.

All of our liabilities in behaviour and personailty are obstacles to our growing and becoming the kind of person that would allow us the freedom to be happy, joyous and free.

Taking the medicine maybe somewhat routine; however there is nothing wrong with the enjoyment of good health in all its facets.

# The Road Back

# A meeting in print

**A**lcoholics 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.

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## Step Ten

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The Twelve and Twelve  
Extracts

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# Step Ten

“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

*A summary of Step Ten in the Contents Page of the Twelve and Twelve.*

Can we stay sober and keep emotional balance under all conditions?

Self-searching becomes a regular habit.

Admit, accept, and patiently correct defects.

Emotional hangover.

When past is settled with, present challenges can be met.

Varieties of inventory.

Anger, resentments, jealousy, envy,  
self-pity, hurt pride - all led to the bottle.

Self-restraint first objective.

Insurance against “big-shot-ism.”

Let’s look at credits as well as debits.

Examination of motives



# Wrong Turn

Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

The first question I had about Step Ten was: How soon do I have to admit when I am wrong? "Promptly" seemed so vague. The answer from an AA old-timer was: "How long you been sober?" Annoyed, I asked back: "What has that got to do with it?" The answer was: "The longer you are sober, the shorter the 'promptly' gets!"

The next thing I had to learn about Step Ten is that it doesn't say anything about being "sorry." When I was drinking I had a constant stream of "Sorrlys." Now that I have been free of the booze for a few thousand days, I rarely have to say I'm sorry, but I often have to say that I was wrong. There is a big difference.

I've been taught that if I say "I'm sorry" and then leave it like that, it means that I am leaving a lot unsaid that should be said. I am really asking for forgiveness or some sort of "general absolution." But that's not what this alcoholic usually needs.

What I need to say is how I was wrong and where I went wrong (thinking of the exact nature of my wrongs, Step Five). And, thinking of Step Nine, how I was going to make it up to the person or set things right. What are my amends here? No empty promises of "I'll never do it again!" No begging for forgiveness. An amends makes me work to put things back to the way they were before my wrong was committed.

To say I was wrong is also part of that AA medicine of ego deflation at depth. I'm not sorry because you are hurt but rather I am admitting that I am wrong because I did something to harm you. Big difference in my book!

I have spent time figuring out what exactly I was wrong about, and I have spent time figuring out a proposal of how I am going to straighten things out, since that too is my responsibility and not yours. But I am going to confer with you about this and not impose my solution on you. I may offer several options for you to choose from. I am going to continue a radically honest (but calm and tactful) dialog with you in whatever way is appropriate.

Another thing I had to learn about this Step was that it means that I only take responsibility for when I was actually wrong. If I wasn't wrong on one part but was wrong on another, I say so. I cop it sweet for the parts that I was wrong about but not for the rest of it.

For instance, I often have to say something like: "Son, I want to tell you that I was way out of line by raising my voice and yelling at you like that. It was wrong of me to do it in a public place and in front of your friends because that is not only embarrassing but also rude and insensitive. In the future I propose to take you aside or wait until we are away from your mates. I will work on getting my volume and impulsive anger under control. Can you help me by telling me that I am yelling or that I am embarrassing you if I forget? On the other hand, I believe that what I said was correct. What you were doing was risky and a bit dangerous. I stand by my statement but was wrong to yell and embarrass you. I'll make it up to you by . . ."

Lastly, I've been taught that this Step contains the most important word out of the 200 (count 'em) words in all of the Steps. That word is "continued." Makes a nice word to meditate upon.

*Chuck F.  
Canberra, Australia*

*With acknowledgement to October 1999 Grapevine magazine.*

# This thought brings us to Step Ten....

which suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime. Continue to **watch** for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we **ask** God at once to remove them. We **discuss** them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely **turn** our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code.



Bill W.

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it

as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding



temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality—safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is how

we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.

*(extract from Into Action, The Big Book)*

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## My sense of Step Ten and the Higher Power

In taking yet another step in my recovery programme I am reminded that it is always worthwhile to revisit and revise the previous Step.

After Step Nine our book states that sanity will by now have been restored! My misconception was that that took place back at Step 2!

Also the famous 12 promises appear just before Step Ten and these are not something to be attained as badges of merit but revelations, kinds of happenings as Bill puts it when writing of happiness i.e. it is a by product of proper living.

The realisation in the promises that 'God is doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves' is significant. This notion of the spontaneous happenings that are the promises end with the idea that they will happen if we work for them. Yet there seems to be a contradiction of sorts here. It seems despite my 'best efforts' I was unable to get and stay sober. Powerlessness and acceptance are principles in our recovery ... letting go, letting God... moreso than having and doing and grabbing and holding.

In the chapter on Step One (12&12) I learn that 'only an act of Providence could expel the obsession to drink'. Here is a very stark statement. That really my efforts were in vain... simply futile against the mental obsession and the alcoholic cravings that I experienced.

For me, as the BB states... 'the result was nil until we let go absolutely'. Absolute is a word that can only be attributed to an infinite power. I am not one that can let go absolutely. However "there is One who has all power... that One is God, may you find Him now".

The Great St Augustine is quoted in our literature i.e. "of myself I am nothing". For me this means that on my own I can't do it. I cannot control my drinking... I cannot 'expel the obsession to drink and be allowed to live happily and usefully whole' (preface 12&12). A further construction on Augustine's words are

that 'of myself I am no-thing'... meaning not matter therefore spirit. Echoes of the notion that I am a spiritual being having a human experience. And this fits with the concept that alcoholism, primarily being a soul sickness - a malady of the spirit, requires a spiritual solution.

In the famous passage on acceptance in our literature we learn that 'nothing happens in God's world by mistake'. The humiliation of drinking was a 'wake up call' for me... an awakening or an awareness that the carnage of my drinking and my equally unmanageable life had to stop.

The realisation that there was nothing in the drink for me anymore was a moment of sanity, a moment of clarity... possibly a kind of spiritual awakening of sorts. It was for me the beginning of the end of my drinking.

I happen through the grace of God to be sober for a number of decades in this program. It's nothing new to say that the 'hand of destiny' inspired the program and was instrumental in bringing AA through the 'slings and arrows' of the early years. Our Traditions are doubtlessly as spiritual as the Steps. They have saved us as a fellowship when 'self-propelled' egos might well have destroyed it.

My own sense of this disease is that it is very much an ego driven affair. Our book outlines to us in Chapter Five 'that our problems arise out of ourselves'. This idea comes from the Book of James (The Bible), used in AA's early meetings before the days of the Big Book.

Our problems are of our own making, hence the need for Steps 4, 5 and 10. Often the charge is made against us as a fellowship that we tend to live in the past and the repetition of the negative episodes does nothing for our self-esteem. However I have come to know that being esteemed by one's Higher Power is far more important than being pumped up with what is really an ego based self-esteem.

We make mistakes but we learn that we are not mistakes. We fail but we learn that we are not failures.



The challenge of step Ten ... and live to good purpose under all conditions ... is not a difficult one when one turns it over. The main thrust of the program we learned from the early members was the establishment, maintenance and development of a relationship with a power greater than ourselves.

To live in intuition mode with a Power Greater than ourselves is a phenomenal way to live. The work all gets done because He is doing for me what I cannot do for myself.

The member who 12 stepped me taught me that to be relieved of the bondage of self was a prized freedom. I trusted him. He had cred. Two of his sons committed suicide and he didn't drink. He had a spiritual demeanour. He worked tirelessly in service, loved the fellowship passionately and never reacted to the begrudgers.

Like the prodigal son I came home to AA but much more than that AA gave me the gift that allowed me to come home to myself.

Our Big Book tells us that the 'Great Reality' is within each of us. In AA we often need to 'look to the light even for the moment we cannot see and believe more deeply'.

Emmet Fox, one whose works are acknowledged to have influenced our program also wrote a treatise on the prodigal son. The older son suffers from the sin of disposition i.e. the idea that one is greater and deserving of better and looks down his nose at others etc. Members like myself who are around for a while can suffer from this condition also. However, the chastening and comforting words of the Father affirm: 'son you are always with me, and all I have is yours'. If I could but bask in these words.

Like the Father of the Prodigal Son, AA accepts us back again and again unconditionally, without judgement and without condemnation... we are genuinely and joyously welcomed home again for life the great teacher has taught us lessons that have chastised us and allowed a measure of contrition to enter our hearts readying us for a life of recovery ahead.

Step Ten is about critical introspection, about looking at what's working well for me and what's not working well and doing something about it. Motives I learn in AA have to be examined rigorously.

Bill W was such an accomplished writer and his insights jolt the reader. His acute observation of the apparent good motive veiling a bad one at heart is quite confrontative.

I need to come away to the rooms to get perspective. I need to talk on a one to one and also I need to occasionally take time out for a major overhaul.

My only reservation with Step Ten is the word 'promptly'. While this is generally good in principle there are times when we need to practise prudence: to let the dust settle for a while. If someone is still reeling from a wrong we have perpetrated on them the emotional temperature might be such as to make a hasty approach somewhat precarious to say the least. This is a not a rationalisation to defer indefinitely though. As has been pointed out to me the Step states 'promptly admitted it' not promptly made amends.!

While we don't have lists of 'do's and don'ts' in AA, for alcoholism is a disease of defiance, we do however see the principles of restraint, balance and sobriety in all its facets as being the natural outcome to living a full spiritual life.

A sage in the East was once pressed by his devotees for a golden rule as to how to live their lives and after much persistence by his followers he said: 'try not to hurt another human being'. Surely everything is contained in this one simple axiom. It covers every realm... stealing, cheating, even resentment and taking care of a shared world. Trying not to hurt covers the physical, material, mental, emotional and spiritual. It really does keep it simple.

AA reminds me 'we know but a little' and 'much more will be and has been revealed to us' provided we keep in fit spiritual condition and enlarge our spiritual life.

*An older anonymous one*

# *The Birth of A.A*

*One man's meat is another man's poison and so the story goes  
The demon drink slayed many the man as everybody knows  
Both Bill and Bob had succumbed to alcohol's deceitful glow  
They tried hard to control it. but could not let it go*

*Bill's business took him to Akron where he was determined to show  
His friends and business acquaintances that he was once again in the know  
The deal fell through, his friends withdrew and left him high and dry  
He thought of drink, but just knew if he did, the great abyss was nigh*

*Through help from his God Bill made contact with Bob  
They spoke at length of their trials and woes and battles with addiction  
Then lo and behold they were inspired - they could overcome their crucifixion  
By letting go and letting God they achieved their divine conviction*

*Liam, Abbeyfeale*

## **A Bird's Eye view of the Steps**

In **Steps One to Seven**, we have set about fixing ourselves on the inside. In **Steps Eight and Nine** we have done our level best to fix what we can on the outside. In other words, we have set ourselves very firmly on the road of recovery, one day at a time. **Steps Ten to Twelve** are about growth, particularly spiritual growth. This is underscored in the passage on **Step Ten** in the Big Book (P. 85), where we find one of the most frequently quoted sentences in AA literature: 'We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.'

**Step Ten** makes it clear that persistent and careful self-examination, the correction of faults and the ongoing making of appropriate amends must become an inherent part of the daily practice of anybody who is serious about recovery and wants a close relationship with their Higher Power.

*Ken, Galway*

# A Calming Balance

*He found that he could use the slogan, "Easy Does It," as a kind of meditation.*

"Easy does it" is my favorite slogan. It became my favorite slogan when I "promptly admitted I was wrong." It started while talking with a difficult employee who said something that triggered a temper flare up in me.

It was not good. My temper had always been difficult for me, and others. This flare up left me with an emotional hang over. Step 10 kept crossing my mind: "when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

I was wrong for sure. What a wonderful time to practice Step 10. I went over to the employee and admitted I was wrong. She said something and my temper flared again. This time with much more heat.

Emotional hangovers come in different sizes, and this one was a lot worse than the original one. The best thing for me is to quiet the anger and rage. Then to admit I was wrong to myself. "Easy Does It" slows things down for me.

The mistake, for me, was promptly admitting that I was wrong to others, before I was over my temper tantrum. In the Step Ten chapter of the Twelve and Twelve, it indicates that we promptly

admit it to ourselves! Of course, also admitting to other trusted people like my sponsor and/or spiritual advisor could be helpful.

Promptly admitting my wrong to other person involved is to be done when I can approach folks in a calm and balanced manner. To help me to do this, there are two steps to fall back on. I look back at Steps Eight and Nine. I become willing to make amends, and make those amends except when to do so would injure them or others. This action gives me time to balance myself before proceeding.

"Easy does it" is a form of meditation. Just saying the words make me smile. Have a smile, change a thought.

Emotional hangovers can be very painful and dangerous. They can make a drink very tempting. I can think that this tantrum and emotional hangover are worse than any others, and I will never be OK again.

Slogans can be positive grounding tools that help us stay balanced. "Easy does it" nudges me into a positive mindset. Then I can, if appropriate, make amends.

*-- Bob D.*

*Haverhill, Massachusetts*

*With kind permission of the Grapevine*





"It's been said that if you always tell the truth, you don't have to remember what you said. A visitor to my home group told us that he loved Step Ten because it allowed him to "clean up the wreckage of his present." It's truly the Step that allows me to sleep well."

*Dennis O'N, Washington*

## Progress, Not Perfection

Having been in the rooms of AA long enough, I learn there are plenty of sayings that are stated in one form or another during every meeting.

Step Ten of Alcoholics Anonymous introduces the tried and true philosophy of progress, not perfection. This saying may seem overstated-and maybe even a little cliché-but it an important saying nevertheless.

Progress, not perfection can be seen as the recovery equivalent of practice makes perfect in the fact that I must try and work my own program of recovery in the face of stresses of everyday life to the best of my ability.

When I progress in my recovery, I make it a point to take time each day to draw up my personal inventory (as I learned in Step Four) in order to figure out where exactly I am at, where I am going, where I want to go, and what I need to do in order to move past any obstacles that may impede my progress.

When I reflect on my daily personal inventory, I realize that I'm not a perfect human being by any manner of means and that you I make mistakes. My ultimate goal is to do the best I can when I can and

problems eventually work themselves out.

By continuing to take personal inventory, I am remembering that I must try to make things right with those I may have hurt along the way. I do mess up along my recovery journey - and I can mess up a lot. True progress can be measured if I make every attempt to make amends to those I have wronged. If I habitually hurt people and move forward without making those amends - I feel I am not progressing and I am just sabotaging my efforts to get spiritually healthy.

I do believe in perfection though... If I don't take that drink one day at a time... whatever way I manage to do that... I find that surely is perfection!

### 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.**



## My Daily Conscience

"Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

Before entering the rooms of AA my idea of Step Ten would have consisted of the philosophy that if you believed I had aggrieved or upset you, then this was your fault for taking it so personally. I was a seriously damaged human being and you should understand this and not get all worked up by it, and as a result it was your problem not mine. As far as I was concerned I never caused any harm, and if I did that was because of you or because I had such a traumatic childhood. There were numerous reasons I had for my behaviour or actions.

Freshly into the rooms and working The Steps with a sponsor left me doing an honest Step Four that left me wondering why I would ever need to do a Step Ten. After all I would be an unflawed perfect human being by the end of The Steps. The reality is that no matter who you are and how well you work The Steps, emotions are always going to be there, and sometimes we cannot always help how we react to any given situation or circumstance. There are times when I do not feel well or I am tired and I react on my feelings before thinking. I am glad that today I have a conscience that means things do not sit well with me to the extent I feel sick. Practising Step Ten for me is something I do throughout my day, I ask myself if what I am saying or doing is about me, and is it causing harm to others.

Today I do Step Ten throughout my day because I am an alcoholic and a human being and I am far from perfect. Today I

understand my character defects and how they affect my behaviour. Today I know when I am wrong or have upset or affected someone. Step Ten for me is understanding where I may have been wrong in my actions or judgement and apologising or making amends where needed. Today thanks to working this step daily I get to do this before walking away from a person or situation and I know when I have been wrong. Step Ten for this alcoholic also involves an inventory of the good things, the situations I have dealt with positively. Step Ten for me is not all about the wrong but also admitting when things have been right.

I ask my Higher Power every morning and evening to be a better person than I was the day before and I ask to be of service to others. Step Ten for me is at the core of this, Step Ten is my conscience throughout my day. Step Ten allows me to look at my day and plan amends if needed and allows me to sleep at night with a clear conscience knowing that I have been the best I could be one day at a time.

*ROBERT. Letchworth Friday Night*

*(with kind permission of Share magazine, AA UK)*



One day you'll reach the Shining hour ahead  
One day you'll find your fondest dreams come true  
You won't fret about life shadows that have fled  
When strong clouds have vanished in the blue.  
Keep the lamp of Faith still burning in your soul  
Meet the troubles that beset you with a smile  
Remember everyday you are further on your way  
Keep on marching bravely till you reach your goal.

W.F.O. *The Road Back Feb 1950*

## Letting Go

(extract)

One way of living in the past is holding on to grievances. As a first step toward being fully in the present - I make a list of people I resent.

I offer each of them an amnesty, an absolution, and let them go.

The absolution will not come if I feel that they alone are guilty and I am blameless.

I must see myself as being coresponsible with the offender for each offence that I have been the victim of.

If I mean to give up living in the past I must drop regrets as cleanly as I drop resentments.

What I tend to look upon them as losses; my failings, my mistakes, my handicaps, the lack of opportunities in my life, my so-called bad experiences - I must learn to see them all as blessings.

For in the dance of life all things cooperate to do us good.

*Vincent, Raheny.*



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*"As we have seen, self-searching is the means by which we bring new vision, action, and grace to bear upon the dark and negative side of our natures. It is a step in the de-velopment of that kind of humility that makes it possible for us to receive God's help. Yet it is only a step. We will want to go further."*

*p.98 (Twelve & Twelve)*

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# The Road Back

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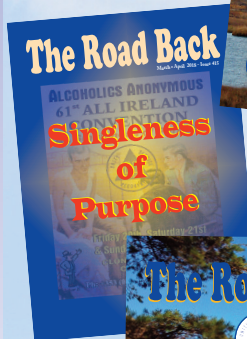
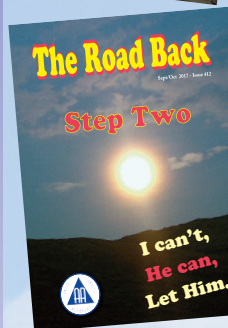
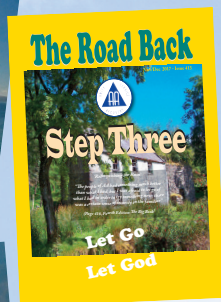
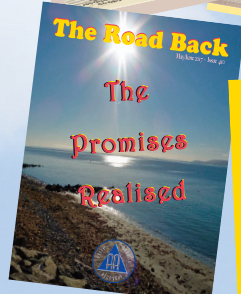
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## CONSENT

I/we confirm that I/we personally have included, or consented to the inclusion of the personal data contained in this form for the purposes of GDPR Compliance by the 'General Service Board of Catholic Anonymous Ireland (GSBAI)'. I/we hereby formally give my/our consent to the inclusion of my/our personal data in the AA database and all relevant use thereof for legal compliance and service purposes by GSBAI. I/we also consent to GSBAI retaining this personal data securely for all relevant periods and for the same thereafter to be placed in the secure and restricted AA Archive for historical purposes.



# Heard at Meetings

I drowned my sorrows with liquor until  
the little feckers learnt to swim!

∞∞∞∞∞

I have many teachers in AA, some  
teach me what to do and others what  
not to do!

∞∞∞∞∞

More meetings help stop the beatings!

∞∞∞∞∞

A good sob is often better than a  
thousand words

∞∞∞∞∞

When I can't even talk to my Higher  
Power I talk to another 'alkie'.

∞∞∞∞∞

Caught in a trap I couldn't spring.

(Chuck C)

∞∞∞∞∞

If you STAY you won't need to come  
back!

∞∞∞∞∞

I've never met an alcoholic yet who  
once decided to become an alcoholic!

∞∞∞∞∞

Life is fragile, handle with prayer!

∞∞∞∞∞

And Paddy said to Paddy!

∞∞∞∞∞

I am a human being with human  
failings.

∞∞∞∞∞

When I begin to see the problem the  
solution isn't far away.

∞∞∞∞∞

If you feel you need to cut down on  
your meetings... only go once a day!

∞∞∞∞∞

(RTFM) Read the ffn manual.

∞∞∞∞∞

Today it's more self interest and self  
care rather than selfishness.

∞∞∞∞∞

We share in a *general* way!

∞∞∞∞∞

I need to remember that I'm only one  
drink away from the person I used to be.





# Step 10

“Aren't these practices joy-killers as well as time-consumers? Must A.A.'s spend most of their waking hours drearily rehashing their sins of omission or commission? Well, hardly. The emphasis on inventory is heavy only because a great many of us have never really acquired the habit of accurate self-appraisal. Once this healthy practice has become grooved, it will be so interesting and profitable that the time it takes won't be missed. For these minutes and sometimes hours spent in self-examination are bound to make all the other hours of our day better and happier. And at length our inventories become a regular part of everyday living, rather than something unusual or set apart.”

*Pages 88 & 89 Twelve & Twelve*

## What's My Secret?

(An oldtimer tells us how she did it)

I cherish the full and meaningful life I live today – a life made rich by a commitment to AA and its principles as a way of life, a design for living. Looking back over the past 35 years for common denominators, I have always been a member of at least one AA home group, one to which I am committed in a special way. While not the only meeting I attend every week, I hold the meeting time of my AA home group as sacred and schedule work and family around it as best I can. I attend the business meetings and hold service commitments in my home group whether I feel like it or not. AA friends always know where to find me on Monday evenings.

You see, I live my commitment to AA as though my life depends on it – because I believe that the full and meaningful sobriety I enjoy does depend on it!

*Mary Ann R*

*Grapevine Online Exclusive*

*Published February 2014. .*

## 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.*

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

Three 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"! (Vincent)

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

A robber points a gun at the bank cashier. 'Give me all the money or your geography' he shouts. 'Don't you mean history?' queries the cashier. 'Just put the money in the bag and don't change the subject', shouts the robber.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Wife to husband: 'you certainly made a fool of yourself last night. I just hope nobody realised you were sober!'

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

A little boy comes home from school and tells his mother he's got a part in the school play. 'That's wonderful' says his mother. 'Who are you playing?' The boy says 'I'm playing the husband'. The mother scowls and says, 'Go back and tell your teacher you want a speaking part.'

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Paddy is strolling through a cemetery when he comes across a man weeping over a grave. 'Why did you have to go?' sobs the man. 'Why? Why?'. Paddy stops to offer some words of comfort. 'I'm so sorry for your loss' he says. 'Is that your wife's grave? 'No' sniffles the man. 'It belongs to her first husband.'

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

A tramp comes up and says 'Give me €10 till pay day'. 'When's pay day?' replies your man. I dunno, says the tramp. You're the one who's working.'

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Countries are making nuclear weapons like there's no tomorrow!

(Emo Phillips)

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

# Some A.A. Acronyms

PAID: Pitiful And  
Incomprehensible Demoralization  
PHD: Poor Helpless Drunk

FEAR: Forgetting Everything's All  
Right

DRY: Doing Recovery Yourself

HIT: Hang In There

SWAT: Surrender, Willingness,  
Acceptance, Trust

WE: Walls Evaporate

TRUST: Try Relying Upon Steps  
and Traditions

TIME: Things I Must Earn

STEPS: Solutions To Every  
Problem, Sober

NICE: Neurotic, Insecure, Crazy,  
Emotional

KISS: Keep It Simple, Surrender

ISM: In Side Me

HEART:

Healing, Enjoying And Recovering  
Together

## 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**

## Our Singleness of Purpose

This is a closed meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. In support of A.A.'s singleness of purpose, attendance at closed meetings is limited to persons who have a desire to stop drinking. If you think you have a problem with alcohol, you are welcome to attend this meeting. We ask that when discussing our problems, we confine ourselves to those problems as they relate to alcoholism.

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





## APPROVED FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS AND ONE DAY EVENTS



### ALL IRELAND CONVENTION 2019

<b>26th-28th April 2019</b>	62nd All Ireland Convention	The Great Northern Hotel, Bundoran, Co. Donegal. <b>Theme: The 12 Steps</b>
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### FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS IN IRELAND

DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
8th-10 March 2019	Sligo/North Leitrim Area Convention	The Clayton Hotel, Clarion Road, Ballytivnan, Sligo, F91 N8EF. <b>Theme: I am Responsible</b>
8th-10 March 2019	Cork City Area Convention	The Blarney Woollen Mills Hotel, Blarney, Co. Cork. <b>Theme: Pass It On</b>
31st May-2nd June 2019	Galway East Area Convention	Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry, Co. Galway. <b>Theme: First Things First</b>
31st May-2nd June 2019	Cork County Area Convention	Riverview Hotel, Macroom, West Cork. <b>Theme: Gratitude</b>
14th-16th June 2019	Antrim Area 37th Annual Convention	Drummond Hotel, Ballykelly, Co. Antrim. <b>Theme: There is a Solution</b>
11th-13th October 2019	Donegal Area Convention	Mount Errigal Hotel, Ramelton Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal.

### ONE DAY EVENTS IN IRELAND

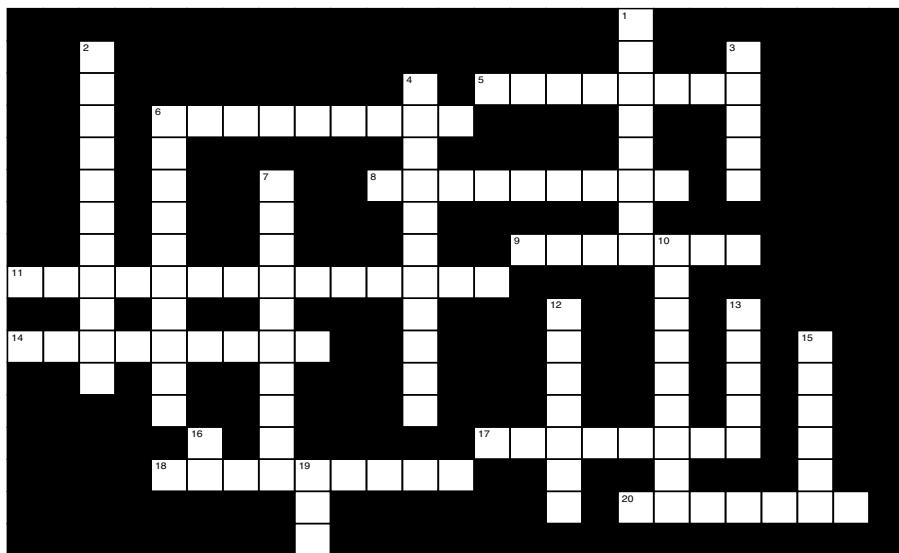
DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
15th September 2019	Down Area Day of Gratitude	Castlewellan Road, Newcastle, Co. Down, BT33 0JY, 0044 28 4372 2599
3rd November 2019	Dungannon Group 'A Come & Go Meeting'	Unit 8, Castlevision Buildings, Feeny's Lane, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, BT70 1TX
10th November 2019	Belfast Area 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
22nd-24th March 2019	AA Highland Gathering in Scotland	Jury's Inn Hotel, Inverness, Scotland. <b>Theme: Acceptance is the Key</b>
4th-6th April 2019	Kolkata AA Convention, Darjeeling, India	Anand Palace (beside Darjeeling Big Bazar), India. <b>Theme: Spirit of Unity</b>
26th-28th April 2019	7th Int. Convention in El Albir, Alicante, Spain	Hotel Kaktus, Albir Beach, Costa Blanca, Spain
11th May 2019	59th Flemesh Convention, Belgium	Europahall, 7 Generaal Maczekplein, 8700 Tiel, Belgium. <b>Theme: Happy, Sober, Helping</b>
16th-19th May 2019	25th International Convention in Greece	Grand Bleu Beach Resort, Eretria Beach, 34008 Evia Island, Greece
10th-13th October 2019	3rd Annual Biarritz Int. Convention in France	Belambra Club, Anglet-Biarritz, Prom. Des Sources, 64600 Anglet, France

# The Big Challenge Crossword 421

Test your knowledge of Step 10 and AA general knowledge



## Across

5. because a great many of us have never really acquired the habit of ..... self-appraisal" (Step 10, 12&12)
6. "we..... to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it"
8. Must A.A.s spend their waking hours dreadfully.....their sins of omission and commission? (Step 10, 12&12)
9. "Do we owe an ....." (Chapter 6, BB)
11. "When we retire at night we ..... review our day" (Chapter 6, BB)
14. "were we resentful, selfish, ..... or afraid?" (Chapter 6, BB)
17. "Before we begin, we ask God to direct our ....." (Chapter 6, BB)
18. "and a real desire to learn and grow by this means is a ..... for us" (Step 10, 12&12)
20. "But we must be careful not to drift into worry, ... or morbid reflection" (Chapter 6, BB)

## Down

1. The type of inventory we are asked to take. (Step 10)
2. After making our review we ask God's ..... (Chapter 6, BB)
3. "we ..... and take it easy" (Chapter 6, BB)
4. "by ..... that we are today sober only by the grace of God" (Step 10, 12&12)
6. Can we stay sober, keep in emotional balance, and live to good purpose under all....?" (Step 10, 12&12)
7. "that pain was the ..... of all spiritual progress" (Step 10, 12&12)
10. "Our first ..... will be the development of self restraint" ( Step 10, 12&12)
12. Our Third Legacy
13. "and until he patiently and persistently tries to correct what is....." (P.88, 12&12)
15. "I want the hand of AA .... to be there" (AA Declaration of Responsibility)
16. "What could .. have done better?" (Chapter 6, Into Action)
19. We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's .....conduct. (Chapter 5, BB)



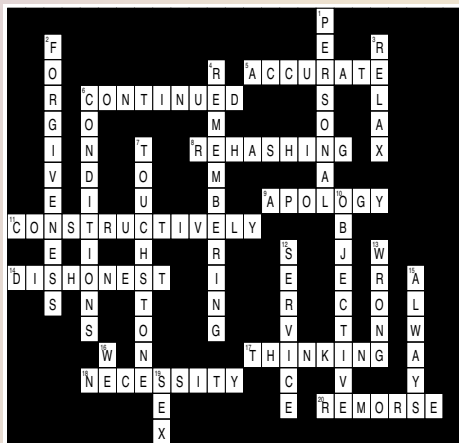
**Check out the new AA website:**

**[www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie](http://www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie)**

**(mobile friendly and useful meeting finder until technical problems with our meeting finder app are resolved)**

**Crossword 420 solution on page 22**

## Answers to Crossword 421 on page 21



*(The Promises appear after Step Nine  
in the Big Book)*

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.

**When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.**

**(P. 85 Big Book)**

*Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th edition, pp. 83-84,  
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## 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: Step Eleven

May - June 2019 – Issue 422



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:

## Step Eleven

May/June 2019

Articles should be submitted by April 5th 2019 for issue 422

## Step Twelve

July/August 2019

Articles should be submitted by June 7th 2019 for issue 423

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

[roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie](mailto:roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie)

or post to:

Alcoholics Anonymous

Unit 2, Block C

Santry Business Park

Swords Road

Dublin 9

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