

# The Road Back

May/June 2018 - Issue 416



## Step Five

### *There is a Solution....*

*Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed.*

*(Page 25, Fourth Edition, 2001, The Big Book)*



# A word from the Editor

## Step Five

"We beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start"

*(How it Works, Our Big Book)*

The above represents the combined prayer of appeal from the Fellowship of AA to anyone attempting Steps 4 and 5 for the first time. And again "Some of us tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was NIL until we let go absolutely."

"No matter how far down the scale you may have gone" ... we need to "let go absolutely".

We remember that in the first three steps (I can't, He can, Let Him) we need to do just that. As your fellows in recovery and knowing how we also had compromised ourselves, we feel your pain. However the exorcising of our resentments, fears and sexual misconduct needs to be as dispassionate as a surgeon's knife if we are to progress spiritually.

Revisiting Step Three we again are reminded of our decision to "turn it over" to a Power greater than ourselves.

Contrary to the idea that we get out of the 'driving seat' and allow the vehicle to move into a fatalistic out of control scenario, we simply adopt the notion of the role of chauffeur. We get to drive the car and wear the uniform and go where the Higher Power directs! Here we need to co-operate with the Providence of our recovery.

Step Five is a further step towards the implementation of our Step Three decision. It is a daunting one no doubt but a vital one. Experience has taught us and our Big Book cautions us that failure to do this Step invariably leads one back to drinking. Our Big Book also surmises that those who drink again have generally failed to enlarge their spiritual life.

Confession for some may conjure up a psychodrama. However we might remember that we are up against an insidious disease that tells you "you haven't got it!". The notion of confessing our defects with another is an ancient ritual. It is a path towards freedom and inner peace. We need to read the suggestions in the Big Book and the Twelve and Twelve. It is vitally important that we find a 'closed-mouthed' sponsor or professional. And it is preferable that we find someone who is spiritually in tune with the AA programme of recovery. To admit to ourselves is a very sobering exercise but to also admit to God and another human being constitutes the other legs of the three legged stool. The loss of any of the legs leads to collapse.

AA abounds with very colourful imagery. The notion of the balloon rising from the ground as soon as the ballast is cut away is very apt to this Step. Once we "let go and let God" the balloon rises and we get fresher and newer perspectives. We rise to heights and view with awe what we have been missing all along. Such are the Promises of AA.

Remember there is no condemnation or judgement in AA. Our literature states "We cannot be the arbiter of another person's moral conduct". However there is awareness without judgement. Awareness is the first of the "As" of recovery i.e. Awareness, Admission, Acceptance, Action, Adjustment and Appraisal. Constant vigilance is the price of freedom!

The statement viz. "clarity of thought, purity of motive and integrity of action" might be usefully borne in mind.

"The most satisfactory years of your life lie ahead. Thus we find the Fellowship and so will you." (from "A Vision for You", *The Big Book*.)

∞∞∞∞∞∞

# 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.

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

## SUBSCRIPTION RATES

### 1 Subscription = 6 issues per year

Ireland	€ 11.00 per year
U.K.	€ 11.50 per year
Europe	€ 14.20 per year
Other	€ 18.50 per year

### Group Subscription = 10 Subs or more.

Ireland only	€ 5.50 per year
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Group subscriptions are posted to a single address.

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## Step Five

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Photos courtesy of Ken O'S

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.



# From "How it Works"

extract from the Big Book

Chapter 5- page 72 - 76

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## Chapter 6

### INTO ACTION

Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it? We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path. We have admitted certain defects; we have ascertained in a rough way what the trouble is; we have put our finger on the weak items in our personal inventory. Now these are about to be cast out. This requires action on our part, which, when completed, will mean that we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our defects. This brings us to the Fifth Step in the program of recovery mentioned in the preceding chapter.

This is perhaps difficult - especially discussing our defects with another person. We think we have done well enough in admitting these things to ourselves. There is doubt about that. In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further. We will be more reconciled to discussing

ourselves with another person when we see good reasons why we should do so. The best reason first: If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they got drunk. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only *thought* they had lost their egoism and fear; they only *thought* they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else *all* their life story.

More than most people, the alcoholic leads a double life. He is very much the actor. To the outer world he presents his stage character. This is the one he likes his fellows to see. He wants to enjoy a certain reputation, but knows in his heart he doesn't deserve it.



The inconsistency is made worse by the things he does on his sprees. Coming to his senses, he is revolted at certain episodes he vaguely remembers. These memories are a nightmare. He trembles to think someone might have observed him. As fast as he can, he pushes these memories far inside himself. He hopes they will never see the light of day. He is under constant fear and tension - that makes for more drinking.

Psychologists are inclined to agree with us. We have spent thousands of dollars for examinations. We know but few instances where we have given these doctors a fair break. We have seldom told them the whole truth nor have we followed their advice. Unwilling to be honest with these sympathetic men, we were honest with no one else. Small wonder many in the medical profession have a low opinion of alcoholics and their chance for recovery!

We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. Rightly and naturally, we think well before we choose the person or persons with whom to take this intimate and confidential step. Those of us belonging to a religious denomination which requires confession must, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority whose duty it is to receive it. Though we have no religious connection, we may still do well to talk with someone ordained by an established religion. We often find such a person quick to see and understand our problem. Of course, we sometimes

encounter people who do not understand alcoholics.

If we cannot or would rather not do this, we search our acquaintance for a close-mouthed, understanding friend. Perhaps our doctor or psychologist will be the person. It may be one of our own family, but we cannot disclose anything to our wives or our parents which will hurt them and make them unhappy. We have no right to save our own skin at another person's expense. Such parts of our story we tell to someone who will understand, yet be unaffected. The rule is we must be hard on ourself, but always considerate of others.

Notwithstanding the great necessity for discussing ourselves with someone, it may be one is so situated that there is no suitable person available. If that is so, this step may be postponed, only, however, if we hold ourselves in complete readiness to go through with it at the first opportunity. We say this because we are very anxious that we talk to the right person. It is important that he be able to keep a confidence; that he fully understand and approve what we are driving at; that he will not try to change our plan. But we must not use this as a mere excuse to postpone.

When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time. We have a written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk. We explain to our partner what we are about to do and why we have to do it. He should realize that we are engaged upon a life-and-death

errand. Most people approached in this way will be glad to help; they will be honoured by our confidence.

We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past. Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.

Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand?

If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let

God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all - every one? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.

∞∞∞∞

## **‘Unencumbered by Baggage’**

My baggage from the past had accumulated over time. It was a huge burden. I knew I had been moulded personality wise by both hereditary factors and social conditioning but I was powerless to change it.

The ‘grace of surrender’ brought about by crisis alcoholism came to me I can only suppose because of my having a conscience and being the sensitive alcoholic and having an “honest regret for harms done.”

The deeply humiliating experiences of my life and my suicidal drinking I later came to know were all necessary for me to be where I am today.

I certainly “have found much of heaven” as the Big Book says. Active acceptance of my past and also my present have replaced the old conditioning.

The Higher Power programming I found is definitely the “easier softer way”.

*Grateful and Anonymous.*



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

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...

## Lowry the King has Horses Ears

There are I understand a number of variations of this story in Welsh and Turkish. The story appeared in my English Reader in Third class primary If I recall correctly. The great king Labhraidh Loingseach, (king and mythological ancestor of the Leinster people – the Laighin) went as follows:

Lowry was reputed to have had horse's ears. He kept this secret by growing his hair long and wearing a hooded cloak. His hair was cut once a year and whoever was the unfortunate barber to be chosen to cut his hair was never seen again.

One year the only son of a poor widow was chosen to cut the king's hair. The widow pleaded with the king to allow him home to her given her circumstances.

Moved by her pleading, Labhraidh Loingseach agreed on the condition that the young barber never tell a living person of what he sees.

The secret weighed so heavily on the widow's son that after a time he took ill. No one was able to cure him. Finally a wise old druid was called. He told him to whisper his secret to the first tree (a willow) he came upon in the forest. He took the advice and unburdened by his secret he soon became well again.

Sometime later however, Lowry's harpist needed a new harp and used the wood from the very tree that the widow's son had passed his secret to.

One night, during a great feast at Lowry's banqueting hall, the harpist started to play and suddenly the harp sang

“Lowry the king has horse's ears”

The whole assembly fell silent. The king stood up and threw back his hood and exposed his horse's ears.

Obviously everyone was relieved and the fear that gripped their lives was suddenly gone.

As with all mythological fables there is a deeper spiritual symbolism to the story.

My own personal interpretation of the story is that as an alcoholic I was as sick as my secrets. That which caused so much fear to myself and wrought so much emotional pain to those around me became my asset when faced down in the 4th and 5th Steps.

It showed me that even the hardest of hearts can be reached by some level of intervention.

What was a liability in active alcoholism became an asset in recovery when openly shared with another human being. Once out in the open their power over me was no more. Their release was a 'kind of music to my ears'.

Without the threat of fear and “impending doom” a new freedom and a new happiness dawned on my life and for many of those affected by my alcoholism.

*Anonymous*



## The Importance of 4 and 5

It's Friday evening and I'm reading Share magazine because I can't settle to anything. I know the problem is me, my alcoholic head. Fortunately, the desire to drink has been removed from me. But I still have times when I'm more focused on how things in my life are not to my liking rather than focusing on the many blessings I have due to being sober. Then I read "A big city is a great place to be an alcoholic. Nobody notices."

This reminded me of my first visit to AA in London. I was born and brought up in a traditional Northern, working class family and moved to London in my 20's. My mindset was, I was off to sin city to do me some sinning. I had already been in a psychiatric hospital, had ECT, taken drug overdoses and woken up in a wet bed, but that was all behind me. London was a chance to reinvent myself - and also please myself. By 30 years of age I was "tricked" into going to an AA meeting by my alcohol counsellor who I was seeing because I had a problem with alcohol but me an alcoholic - no I was a self diagnosed problem drinker.

By my 40's I was back in an AA meeting. I didn't drink for 2 years but used other substances. Dope was my higher power so I didn't do the steps either and surprise surprise I didn't get well either.

Some 25 years after my first visit I returned to the rooms, completely broken and spiritually bankrupt. Finally I conceded to my innermost self I was an

alcoholic. My first higher power was the Gift of Desperation and I had a willingness, born out of that desperation, to believe. Now nearly 8 years sober I do have a God in my life who does for me what I cannot do for myself which is provide me with a defence from picking up that first drink. With the benefit of hindsight I can see that fear stopped me from doing the programme back in my 40's, particularly Step 4 and 5. The thought of having to share all my dirty little secrets with another human being was too much for my pride and ego to handle. I know today that my secrets keep me sick. Today I am no longer full of the shame and self loathing I came into this Fellowship with. I know that I am not responsible for my illness but I am responsible for my recovery. Its simple really isn't it. Clean house, trust God and help others.

Yet I can still slip back into old ways - irritable, restless and discontent, but guess what those feelings have shifted now. So thank you to Share magazine and to the person who wrote those words in Feb edition. It's helped me this evening.

So thank you.

EVA G

*(With acknowledgement to Share Magazine)*

## *There is a Solution....*

*.... The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.*

*If you are as seriously alcoholic as we were, we believe there is no middle-of-the-road solution. We were in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help. This we did because we honestly wanted to, and were willing to make the effort.*

*(Page 25 and 26, Fourth Edition, 2001, The Big Book)*

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- Theme -

# THE 12 STEPS



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General Service Office, Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park, Swords Road, Dublin 9, D09 H584  
Tel: 00353 1-8420700



## My Step 5

Hi. My names Bill and I'm an alcoholic

My home group is Hanham Hall. Bristol. U.K.

My sobriety date is Oct 6. 1997

There is a lot written in our Big Book about this step. About not missing this vital step, and not leaving anything out. All good advice.

If I read the step it says, "Admitted to God, myself and another human being the exact nature of my wrongs" it may seem to the newcomer, what's the point. What good is it going to do me? Or most usual of all "I can't possibly do that" "never in a million years "

In essence, my Fifth Step, is me reading out my Fourth Step inventory to someone else.

There was no reasoning, explaining, justification or looking for any kind of affirmation.

It was just me and my sponsor, sitting together and me reading out, page after page of my harms, sexual harms resentments and fears.

I did my Step 4 the five column way which included what part of self was involved, what my part was in each thing I'd written down, what character defect was involved on each event etc.

It seems difficult and rather complicated, but once I'd been shown how to complete the columns by my sponsor, it was really quite easy.

In My early months in AA, many fellow members would often frighten me by saying things like "oh just you wait until you get to Step 4 & 5"

Like they were two steps which were somehow frightening, or that I would find doing them really difficult.

Writing down all my past, everything isn't easy, but in early sobriety, I did something that made the process a lot easier.

Instead of this being something to be afraid off, I reasoned that the results on offer were massive compared to a little bit of humility and fear that I was to go through.

The results of doing the Steps were a new life.

And all that was in between me and my new life was writing down things in my life that I'd never dealt with before. Not a bad swap I reasoned.

A few days of soul searching, eating humble pie, getting honest and getting real about my life was such a small price to pay for what I saw in the other members of AA who'd completed the steps. The happiness, freedom, hope, and love I saw in fellow members was something I wanted,

But what really made the difference to me was talking to my sponsor about something that's in the big book called the fourth dimension.

What, I asked, was this fourth dimension?

The answer I got changed my life and propelled me to finishing my Steps with hope, happiness and a sense of freedom.

The fourth dimension was written in our big book by our co-founder Bill. W

He realized that everybody lived their lives on three dimensions, the physical, the spiritual and mental.

But having experienced some sobriety, he was experiencing something that was so

much more fulfilling than the three dimensions.

Bill found within himself a quietness of heart, a place he could go to within himself and be content and happy,

A happiness he'd not know and hope and faith for the future he'd never felt before.

Wow. That's all I've ever wanted. A freedom from all those feelings, to be free at last was all the encouragement I needed to get on with my inventory.

In my Step 5, the one bit of advice that was given to me was this. The one or two things you leave out will be the one or two things you will eventually drink on.

I didn't want to drink again. I really didn't.

Doing my Step five, I like to see as a massive house cleaning process. Stripping out all the old furniture, carpets, rubbish and dirt, ready for a complete makeover.

I know today that my Step 5 will clear out the fear, guilt, shame and remorse of my past, and create a space within me for a Higher Power to move in and do for me what I can't do for myself, and that's to run my life.

If my Higher Power moves in on top of a few things I've left off my list, my HP won't last.

Reading out my Step 5, which for many people can be a frightening experience, shouldn't be. After all, I know everything as I've written it, my HP knows everything, and my sponsors been through everything with me, so he knows everything.

The importance of reading out my Step 5 with another human being came in the immense spiritual significance of the spoken word.

And that combined with the fact that for me it was just 'one alcoholic talking to another'.

That's how AA started and it's how it's still working its wonders today.

Clearing out a space within me, to experience that fourth dimension, to clear out the wreckage of my past and to start the process of healing, which was leading me down a road that I know today as a 'bridge to a normal living' was all on my radar that propelled me in to doing the best and most thorough Step 5 I could.

When I started my Step 5, I did what most of us do, and started by saying

"Before I start, I need to explain something"

I needn't have bothered. Nothing needs explanation, justification or belittling.

I think in my time in recovery, probably one of the most rewarding gifts I've had is to listen to fellow members Step 5's. What a gift to be asked to listen to something that no one will ever hear, has never been spoken and hopefully will guide your sponsee on their road to a changed life.

We are gifted with the choice to do a Step 5, and in Step 10, I get the opportunity to do that house cleaning on a daily basis.

From my earliest memory, which was riddled with anger, fear, resentment and a desire to retaliate, to my last day of drinking, I'd built up a warehouse full of resentments, feelings and fear.

My Step 5 helped to clear out that warehouse and ODAAT has worked for this past 19 years.

If there was one saying I've heard that signifies my Step 5 it's this "I didn't drink because I was a drinker, I drank because I was a feeler"

Yes, I was a drinker, but my warehouse full of feelings was a burden I never want to carry again. And to let go of the pain of the past was part of a journey, the key to which is willingness. I'd unlocked that door of willingness. But only I had the key. After I'd read out my Step 5, changes occurred in my life despite myself. Lifelong resentments disappeared, fears subsided, and I started to rely on my HP

What to do with my written work?

I was given two choices, keep them or burn them. As with the spoken word, there is an immense spiritual entity in fire, and burning my Step 4 would allow all the pain of the past to float up in to the sky, leaving me free to embark on my new life.

I chose to burn the pages and scatter the ashes in our garden. So out of all the pain of the past, flowers now grow.

When Bill W. met Dr Bob, all those years ago, they read the book of James from the Bible every morning, and that's where 'faith without works is dead' comes from.

I put the work in and didn't just rely on faith. I knew AA works and if I'm ever in any doubt, they wrote a chapter in our Big Book entitled "How it works" And the Miracle of a changed life is mine today.

Thanks AA.

Bill. Bristol

## 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.



## The AA Promises

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

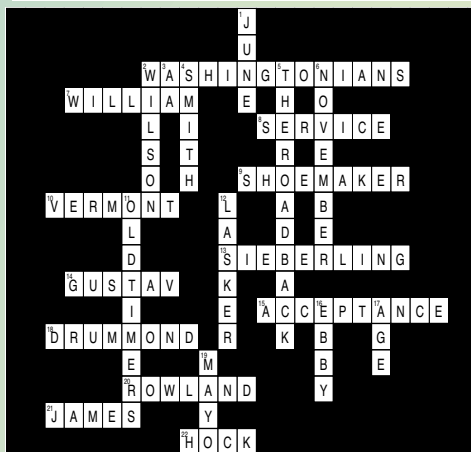
1. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.
2. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.
3. We will comprehend the word serenity.
4. We will know peace.
5. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.
6. That feeling 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.*



## Answers to Crossword 416 on page 22



### Change the Things I Can

Nothing  
Has changed except my attitude  
So everything  
Has changed

### Powerless over Alcohol

The final power  
Is to be  
At home  
With my powerlessness

*Vincent, Raheny*

## Blindfolded

I was traveling on a journey, the Lone Ranger

A journey of the will as a stranger

Got tagged and labelled with a heavy moniker

Of being an out and out absolute head banger

Looking like a wood pecker without a beak

Banking of doors and units over the kitchen sink

Unstable and unable to focus and think

Viewing the damage done and not being able to see  
the drink

That cool clear wash away your troubled powerful  
punch

Taken anytime including breakfast, dinner and Lunch

Cunningly holding onto my heart and caressing my  
soul

Its power is all consuming and has the ultimate control

Can flicker a multitude of switches, baffling me and  
everyone

And when it's finished with me, then all is lost and it  
has won.

*Damian B*

## 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.*

## The Road to Relapse

I came across the following recently in my files. I wrote it when I was living in Bristol, shortly after a relapse in 1979. Fortunately, one day at a time, I haven't had another drink since then. I wanted to share it because it is just as relevant to me today as it was then.

There I was, crying like a baby, begging my wife not to leave me and take our two little daughters with her. I felt absolutely wretched and ghastly. Dim recollections of the night before fleetingly crossed my befogged mind. I vaguely remembered being in a road accident. The rest of the night had taken place in a blackout until the police arrived. I had been drunk, very drunk, and yet I had been in AA for some 21 months.

What had happened? What had gone wrong? It is necessary to go back to a point in time some 10 months before that fateful evening.

I had taken both a Fourth and Fifth Step. When I look back I realize that these were very incomplete exercises. They were incomplete because my Step Four was not very 'searching and fearless' and I withheld certain aspects of myself in Step Five.

Typically alcoholic in my thinking I literally jumped from Step Five to the middle part of Step Twelve. I decided to be fully committed. I went on Twelfth Step calls and participated in telephone duty. I became co--secretary of a group and went to other meetings in search of speakers.

Then I became obsessive about my anonymity. To avoid being recognized

on the telephone I discontinued telephone duty and ceased to be a telephone contact. Still alcoholic in my thinking, I stopped my Twelfth Step work because my family were not seeing very much of me. Then I gave up being co--secretary of my group because I didn't want to rock the family boat by going to other meetings to find speakers. Finally I stopped going to meetings. I had become totally uncommitted. In seven months I had gone from one extreme to the other. How insane!

And then came the ultimate delusion of grandeur: I could go 'it alone'. I felt good. I didn't need to go to meetings. "Keep active". "Keep moving". Buddhist meditation. Yoga. Plenty of reading and exercise. Feeling good. Provoking a row with my wife. Straight to the bottle. Drinking myself into a blackout. Shouting terrible oaths at my wife and children. Driving my car into another car. "My God, it has happened again". Admitted we were powerless over alcohol!

I had gradually and totally dismantled all my defences against the subtle insanity that leads to the taking of the first drink. After my Step Five I had failed to move gradually through the rest of the Programme. I had over-committed myself and then went to the other extreme. It cost me my sobriety.

Fortunately all was not lost. I still wanted my sobriety. I had been taught a lesson. I started going to my present group's meetings. I became committed again, but this time in a much more balanced way, having regard to all areas of my life. The Programme is to be practised in all my affairs.

Things gradually got better again and I



now have a peace of mind that never leaves me for long. I was lucky. It could have been so much worse. I also know that it could happen again if I stop working the Programme.

*GEOFF H, Lancaster Living Sober*

*Compliments of Share Magazine*



## Heard at Meetings

We don't get run over by the train, we  
get hit by the engine (1st. drink).

∞∞

Alcohol helped us to cope with life -  
AA helps us to deal with it.

∞∞

I didn't get into trouble every time I  
drank, but every time

I got in trouble I was drunk.

∞∞

We have to give it away to keep it.

∞∞

The alcoholic's mind is like a bad  
neighborhood, don't go there alone.

∞∞

Poor me, poor me, pour me another  
drink.

∞∞

Cunning, baffling, powerful, and  
patient.

∞∞

If you hang around the barber shop  
long enough, you'll get a haircut.

∞∞

I might have another drunk left in me,  
but do I have another recovery?

∞∞

The elevator to sobriety is broken, take  
the steps.

∞∞

I came, I came to, I came to believe.

∞∞

This is the easier softer way.

(Twelve Steps)

∞∞

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

A woman told me she recognized me from the vegetarian club, but I'd  
never met herbivore.

...

Bought a litre of Tipp-Ex yesterday. Huge mistake.

...

What does a clock do when it's hungry? It goes back four seconds.

...

My wife told me I was a fool to build a car out of spaghetti. You  
should have seen the look on her face when I drove pasta.

...

I tried to catch some fog today but I mist.

...

Just watched a documentary on how ships are kept together. Riveting.

...

Jokes about opticians just get cornea and cornea.

...

When my wife told me I had to stop impersonating a flamingo, I  
decided to put my foot down.

...

How do you approach an angry Welsh cheese? Caerphilly.

...

Did you hear the plum joke? It was pitiful.



### A.A. PREAMBLE®

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 A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. 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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RECOVERY

## 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**

## Some A.A. Acronyms

**ABC:** Acceptance, Belief,  
Change

**AA:** Alive Again

**ASAP:** Always Say A Prayer

**BEST:** Been Enjoying Sobriety  
Today

**CALM:** Creating A Loving Me

**CHANGE:**

Can Help Attract New Gifts  
and Energy



# APPROVED FORTHCOMING MINI 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 MINI CONVENTIONS IN IRELAND

DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
18th-20th May 2018	Galway East Area Convention	Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry, Co. Galway. <b>Theme: Experience, Strength and Hope</b>
25th-27th May 2018	Cork County Convention	Quality Hotel, Redbarn, Youghal, Co. Cork
1st-3rd June 2018	Antrim Area Convention	Drummond Hotel, 2 Main Street, Ballykelly, BT49 9HP. Phone: 028 7722121, Website: <a href="http://www.drummondhotel.com">www.drummondhotel.com</a>
31st August - 2nd September 2018	Tipperary Area Convention	Clonmel Park Hotel, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary. <b>Theme: I am Responsible</b>
18th-21st October 2018	Clare Area Convention	The Auburn Lodge Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare <b>Theme: One Day At A Time</b>
12th-14th October 2018	Donegal Area Convention	Mount Errigal Hotel, Ramelton Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. Phone: 074 22700. Website: <a href="http://www.mounterrighal.com">www.mounterrighal.com</a>
8th-10 March 2019	Sligo/North Leitrim Area Convention	The Clayton Hotel, Clarion Road, Ballytivnan, Sligo, F91 N8EF. <b>Theme: I am Responsible</b>

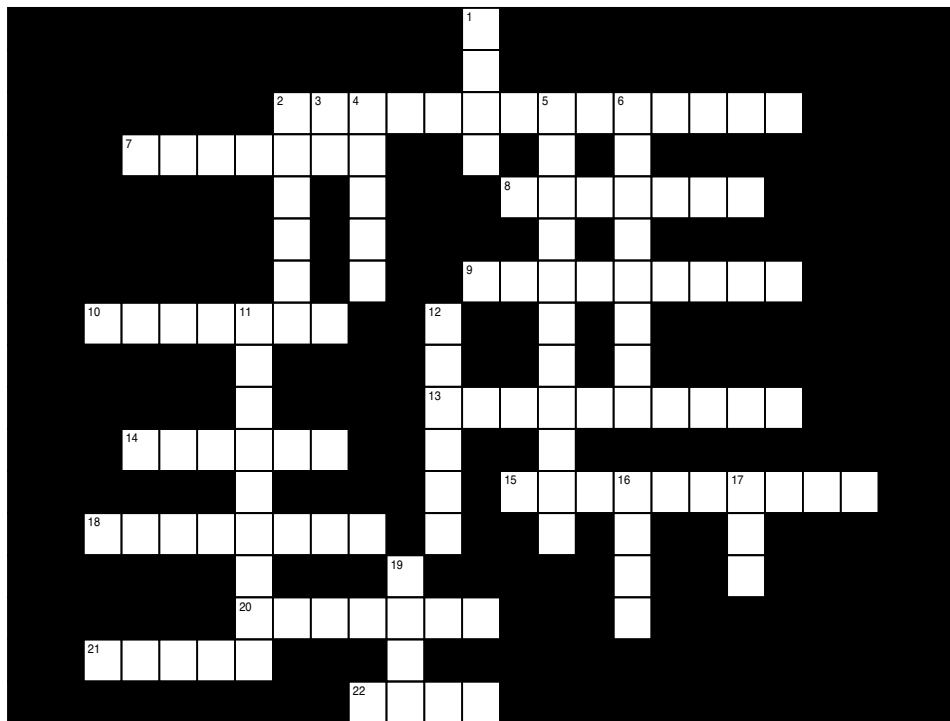
## ONE DAY EVENTS IN IRELAND

DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
27th April 2018 at 20.30	Wexford Area Open Public Meeting	St. Michael's Hall (St. Vincent de Paul), Thomas Street, Wexford Town.
30th May 2018 at 20.00	North Armagh Area Open Public Information Meeting	Craigavon Hub, Brownlow Road, Craigavon, Co. Armagh, BT65 5DL

## FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS ABROAD

DATES	COUNTRY	VENUE/THEME
27th-29th April 2018	6th International Convention. Area 21 - Alicante (Spain)	Hotel Kaktus Albir, Paseo de las Estrellas, 11, El Albir, 03581 - Alfaz del Pi, Alicante (Spain). Tel: + (34) 96 6864830. <a href="http://www.kaktusgrup.com">www.kaktusgrup.com</a>
17th-20th May 2018	24th AA Convention in Greece	Grand Bleu Sea Resort Hotel, Eretria Evia, Greece. <b>Theme: HOPE (Happy Our Programme Exists)</b>
12th-14th October 2018	2nd Biarritz AA Convention in France	Radisson Blu Hotel, Cote des Basques, 64200 Biarritz, France. <b>Theme: A Vision For You</b>
16th-18th November 2018	Costa del Sol Convention 2018 in Spain	IPV Palace Hotel, Fuengirola, Spain

# The Big Challenge Crossword 416



## Across

2. The famous Temperance Society of Baltimore in 1840
7. In the "Doctor's Opinion" what was the doctor's first name?
8. What is AA's Third Legacy?
9. The Episcopalian minister (Rev. Sam ?) who befriended Bill W
10. Bill and Bob were both born in?
13. Henrietta ,,,,,,, answered Bill W's telephone call in 1935
14. What was Carl Jung's mddle or second name?
15. Page 449 in the old edition has become page 417 in the new!
18. Who wrote 'The Greatest Thing in the World' (clue: Henry .....)
20. Who was sent to Carl Jung for treatment ..... H.
21. What was the surname of the author of "Varieties of Religious Experience"
22. What was the surname of AA's first secretary to Bill W.

## Down

1. In what month is Founders' Day
2. Bill's surname was?
3. What was the name of the very first AA Group
4. Enter the missing name Dr. Bob .....
5. What is the name of the second oldest AA magazine in the world?
6. When do we celebrate Gratitude Month
11. Complete the book title "Dr Bob and The Good ...."
12. In 1951, AA was given an award for its wonderful contribution to public health known as the ..... prize.
16. Who did Bill reputedly consider his AA sponsor?
17. Complete the title "AA Comes of ..."
19. In what county in Ireland was Sr Ignatia's born?

**Crossword solution on page 15**





## 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 Six

July - August 2018 – Issue 417



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.

Looking forward to hearing from you.

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

### Step 6

**July/August 2018**

Articles should be submitted by June 1st 2018 for issue 417

### Step Seven

**September/October 2018**

Articles should be submitted by July 31st 2018 for issue 418

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

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

or post to:

Alcoholics Anonymous

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