

The Road Back

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May/June 2019 - Issue 422

Step Eleven



Meditation is something which can always be further developed. It has no boundaries, either of width or height. Aided by such instruction and example as we can find, it is essentially an individual adventure, something which each one of us works out in his own way. But its object is always the same: to improve our conscious contact with God, with His grace, wisdom, and love. And let's always remember that meditation is in reality intensely practical. One of its first fruits is emotional balance. With it we can broaden and deepen the channel between ourselves and God as we understand Him.

(Twelve & Twelve p 101)

A word from the Editor

It is always chastening for me to remember the insanity of my alcoholism, I held the viewpoint for the longest time that the AA programme doesn't really pay much attention to rebuilding self-esteem. Instead we spend much of our time rehashing the old episodes of our past drinking, notwithstanding it may be a lifetime ago for some oldtimers like me.

My past and in fact our whole AA history I see as being indispensable assets. My drinking story was my ticket to this Fellowship and the way of life I have today. My past is my statement of 'cred' when I am given the opportunity to share at meetings of AA or with a fledgling member. This rock bottom from drinking (and I've had some severe emotional ones since), has been the bedrock of the spiritual life that has been gifted to me today. I find for me that gratitude to the Higher Power for all things is the only 'self esteem' really worth having.

Everything may have been necessary for me to be where I am today, yet I would be loath to revisit most of the sickening behaviours knowing what I know now. Having said that we often hear in the rooms that if we were to throw the problems of our lives onto the meeting table, each of us would invariably be happy to take back our own.

The whole impetus of our program is to be relieved of the 'bondage' of self. I know about being self conscious. I know about being frozen by fear. I know about the symptoms of active alcoholism as described in the questions posed in the pamphlet "Is AA for You". (see website) And I know I don't suffer from these today! Thanks to you and my HP.

In this regard one of my favourite quotes in the whole of AA literature is: 'Nothing pays off like restraint of tongue and pen' (12&12, p.91); 'stop fighting with anyone or anything'; 'quitting the debating society' really trims the sails of the ego in flight, keeps this 'me' notion in check and allows me to ask "how important is it?".

The 'Great Reality' within us is untouchable. It is love itself, it loves and looks for no reward, it expresses itself in an informed group conscience when I'm out of the way and placing 'principles before personalities'. This is the Supreme that we share in fellowship, albeit I may forget it betimes. The sun shines through when the dirt on the window is cleansed.

"The distinguished American psychologist, William James, in his book "Varieties of Religious Experience," indicates a multitude of ways in which men have discovered God. We have no desire to convince anyone that there is only one way by which faith can be acquired. If what we have learned and felt and seen means anything at all, it means that all of us, whatever our race, creed, or color are the children of a living Creator with whom we may form a relationship upon simple and understandable terms as soon as we are willing and honest enough to try. Those having religious affiliations will find here nothing disturbing to their beliefs or ceremonies. There is no friction among us over such matters." (P,28 BB)

In Step Eleven I pray... but I pray ONLY for knowledge of His will for me. Our Big Book states that it is the proper use of the will. And we are cautioned against praying for ourselves only, save that others may be helped. Our Third Step and Seventh Step prayers are about relieving me of the bondage of this 'me', and thus free I am enabled to be of service to "Him who presides over us all".

He allows me to dance spontaneously in life's dance, free from fear and burning self consciousness, free from alcohol and mind altering drugs, and free from all these impediments, I lose myself in the dancing.

It is said that true meditation only happens when the meditator is absent. However it should also be said that there is no 'wrong' way to meditate. Doing it is what matters.

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

SUBSCRIPTION RATES

1 Subscription = 6 issues per year

Ireland	€ 11.00 per year
U.K.	€ 11.50 per year
Europe	€ 14.20 per year
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Group Subscription = 10 Subs or more.

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Issue 422 May/June 2019

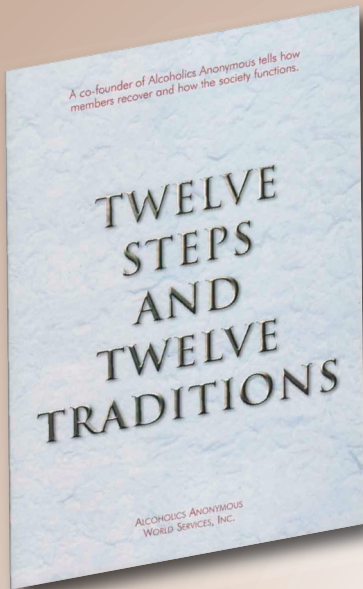
Step Eleven

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Photos courtesy of Ken O'S

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The Twelve and Twelve Extracts

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Step Eleven

“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.”

Meditation and prayer main channels to Higher Power.

Connection between self-examination and meditation and prayer.

An unshakable foundation for life.

How shall we meditate?

Meditation has no boundaries.

An individual adventure.

First result is emotional balance.

What about prayer?

Daily petitions for understanding of God's will
and grace to carry it out.

Actual results of prayer are beyond question.

Rewards of meditation and prayer.

Developing TRUST

I came to this wonderful fellowship, cynical, sceptical, full of doubt and suspicion, unable to **trust** anybody, including myself.

Despite these handicaps, people in the fellowship welcomed me with open arms. Because of the generosity of spirit shown to me by members, I slowly began to comprehend the meaning of fellowship. Gradually the cynic and sceptic began to recede, doubt and suspicion was replaced with a little smidgen of **trust**.

In time, my beautiful, kind and gentle sponsor directed me towards a sentence in the early part of “How it Works” in our Big Book. It stated “if you decide that you want what we have AND you are willing to go to any lengths to get it” then you are ready to take certain steps. Frank stressed the word “decided” and suggested to me that a “clear cut conscious decision” rather than intention, would be of huge benefit to me. I knew members had something that I didn’t have and discussed this with Frank. He directed me towards the twelve promises on pages 83/84 BB. When my sponsor read them slowly to me, I realised this is what I am searching for all my life. A certainty came over me that I wanted to make this decision. I remember it well; Summer 1987 in my private place in the mountains overlooking a beautiful lake

in the valley below. I made my clear cut decision that I wanted what you guys had and that I was willing to go to any lengths to get it. I was immediately overcome by a profound sense of peace. A little more **trust** had come into my life. Frank pointed out to me the benefit of that decision was that for the rest of my time in AA, I would know that I was here because I had decided that’s what I wanted. I am not here because the treatment centre told me to . I am not here for my children. I am not here to get my wife back. I am not even here for my Mammy! I am here because I have decided this is what I want and this fellowship is where I need to be.

My sponsor said, now you are ready to take certain steps, and so I started out on that 12 step recovery programme with help and guidance.

I realised very quickly that I was totally powerless over alcohol. It dominated every fibre of my being. I also recognised that every aspect of my life - emotions, relationships and finance - was completely unmanageable when I ran it. Frank gently suggested to me that perhaps a new manager could help and clearly it would have to be a power greater than myself. I came to believe and more **trust** came into my life. I knew the “God bit” in the third step was going to be difficult for me. I had a lot of unlearning to do from my childhood in order to create space for a new

understanding of God to come into my life. I felt deep down inside me was a divine spark waiting to light up. But I wasn't there yet.

I told my sponsor that I would not be able to turn my will and my life over to God's loving care at that stage. He gently pointed out to me that I wasn't asked to turn my will and my life over. I was just asked to make a decision that I wanted to. Of course, a decision to do something implies future tense. This I could do and another level of **trust** came into my development.

I have always known there was something wrong with me that made me so uncomfortable in this world. Here in my fourth step I discovered the exact nature of my wrongs. I was riddled with defects of character. At last I knew why I didn't fit in. What to do with all these shortcomings? I knew I was powerless, so working on them was futile. I would need at least two lifetimes to get rid of them. This wonderful programme gave me the answer in my sixth and seventh steps. Recognising that I could do nothing about them, I became entirely ready to have God, as I was beginning to understand God, to remove them. At this phase of my recovery, some humility had come into my life and I asked God to remove each and every one of them. After that they were none of my business. As it says in BB Page 68 "we at once commenced to outgrow fear". A

giant leap into more **trust**.

Amends were made and regular inventory taken. Then the Big One – Step Eleven, requiring huge **trust**. This was the culmination of that decision taken back there in step three.

I am asked to improve the conscious contact with God that I am developing, through prayer and meditation. Thank God for the men and women who wrote this step for me. They even tell me how to pray. "Praying only for knowledge of God's will for me and the power to carry that out." There is no greater freedom in life than the practice of this step. As a result I live my life happy – joyous and free.

I often asked the questions, how will I know what God's will is for me? The answer it seems is that God speaks to be through my intuition. In the silence of my daily meditation, the right answer comes. "We intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle us". (12 promises BB).

I have come to rely upon it as I do air and tea!!

When I pass this on to others in my 12 Step work and see **trust** develop in new members, my **trust** also grows further.

I believe that I am growing closer to that goal of unconditional **trust**.

Ed R, Wexford

The Stranger in the Mirror

There's a stranger in the mirror,
And he's staring out at me,
He sees me as I am,
Not as I want me to be.

I have been this way before,
It's a dark and lonely place,
I thought I knew myself so well,
Yet I do not know this stranger's
face.

I wish he'd go away,
This stranger I don't know,
And let me be alone,
Let me choose my way to go.

But the stranger looks at me,
He stares but does not speak,
And I beg to be alone,
In this drunkenness, I seek.

He has a bottle in his hand,
And I'm craving and in terror,
And I am reaching out to him;
To this stranger in the mirror.

Ambrose. Mullingar.



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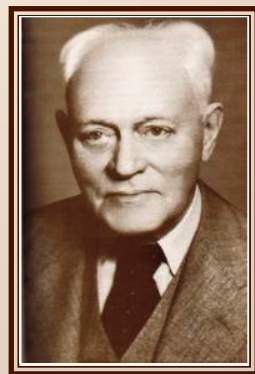
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*"I earnestly advise every alcoholic
to read this book through, and
though perhaps he came to scoff, he
may remain to pray."*



Affectionately known as "Silkey"
- the doctor who loved drunks.

At our AA meeting last night,

we discussed and shared about the alcoholic not wanting to communicate with other people. It is a large factor and ingredient in my alcoholism.

I remember each year around St. Patrick's Day how I came to find Alcoholics Anonymous. I also make myself share about it as I feel that in doing so, I am acknowledging the help of my 'Higher Power'.

It was the night before St. Patrick's Day and I was drinking in a pub called the "Ivey Leaf". It was in Parnell Place Cork. It no longer exists.

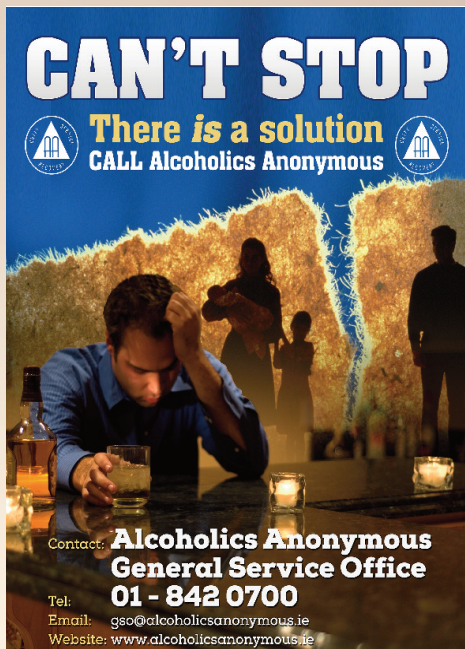
I was the proverbial unwanted 'hanger-on' at the edge of a jolly crowd and somehow, I was included in the rounds. I had pretended to know one of those who had money to spend.

My next memory is of seeing a bunch of shamrock that somebody had left on the counter. Without thinking I put it in my pocket. I do recall at one stage in the night being afraid to leave my place at the counter to go to the toilet in case I was forgotten about when the next round was bought. The fear of being without a drink (refill) kept me standing at the counter while I urinated in my trousers.

Fast forward to the next surviving memory: I woke around 4am on St. Patrick's morning. I discovered that my hand was locked around the bunch of shamrock and I realised that I had prayed to the shamrock before falling asleep.

My prayers were answered and I found myself in Patrick's Hill AA meeting a fortnight after St. Patrick's Day with gratitude.

Anon, Cork



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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 Sweet Spot

Surfing and recovering in AA might not seem to share many similarities, but they do. Nearing my 50th birthday, and having gotten sober at age 15, I've been at both a while.

The recovery lessons I learn from both impress me. To maintain recovery, I need to daily align my will with my Higher Power's. When I do this, as outlined in the Eleventh Step, I line up my emotional and spiritual bodies with my HP's will. In that way, I can handle what comes my way with grace and trust. Safe and secure in that "sweet spot," I go forth with confidence. I'm in the right place at the right time for the right thing to happen.

It's the same with surfing. At my home break, there is a sweet spot where the waves break best. Being a tiny surfer in a big ocean, it's easy to miss that spot. So I line myself up with something. Because of the underwater topography, if I align myself so a particular palm tree on shore is directly in front of a particular trestle, I'll be stoked to be in the sweet spot when the sets come. In the same way, I'll be stoked to have a great day when I stay in that sweet spot with my HP.

Some days it's so easy to stay lined up! One awesome wave after another, I'll paddle back to the lineup and gaze through salt-fringed eyelashes to see another playful peak aiming straight for me.

Cont'd/ p.10



But other days it's not so easy. In the ocean, as in life, a current may draw me out of alignment, and I will find myself way off the mark. Some days require constant paddling, constant work to stay in the sweet spot. On other days, I hang there with bliss and ease. Either way, I need to pay attention and take immediate action if I find myself drifting.

A beach I frequent has two staggered signs that face the sea: "O" and "K." Looking shore-bound from the water, the signs read "OK," but they read "KO," for "Keep Out" if one drifts to the wrong side of the signs. I like to think of these signs as I'm spot-checking my alignment through the day. Generally, my personal signs of drifting from "OK" to "KO" are restlessness, irritability, discontent, and self-centered thinking. If I feel protected and content, I'm in the "OK" zone.

And here's another thing about that sweet spot: I need to line up with an immovable source. If I line up on a person or an expectation, in the water or in recovery, I'm screwed. People have their own life currents to tend to, and these may have nothing to do with me. Their currents are between them and their own HPs. It may be none of my business. I need to take responsibility, to find my own sweet spot, my own "OK" and "KO" signs.

And to find and stay in that sweet spot, I need to balance my paddling with courage and serenity. Being sober takes courage. If I accept things because I lack the courage to change them, I'll paddle in circles. Often the

courage to change a situation, to say what needs to be said, and do what needs to be done is way more appropriate than the serenity of acceptance. My Higher Power wants the best for me, and if something doesn't feel right, my HP may be asking me to paddle with my courage and action muscles. The Big Book says, "As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone." I interpret this figuratively and literally, which means that sometimes I need to seek wisdom to balance my paddling with courage and serenity.

Both AA and the ocean humble and empower me. When I'm on my board in the ocean, I float on a greater power, yet I am part of that great force. In AA, I'm just one individual in a power way greater than me, yet I'm part of that great force!

—Lizabet L., Lake Forest, Calif

What Step Eleven Means To Me

I was raised in an active Christian home but I had dismissed (all) religion and the idea of God as rubbish before I hit my teens because I knew better than everyone else: they were wrong and I was right. So prayer and meditation were both foreign to me when I began recovering - I'd had no use for either of them. My spiritual journey began with my sponsor's suggestion that I used AA as my Higher Power. Powerless and

desperate, that's what I did. Over the days I came to believe in my own concept of God / Higher Power that is beyond AA and that understands me much better than I understand it.

I still feel like a novice at prayer so I keep it simple and stick with the ones in AA. They do the trick: I understand what I'm asking for and, having reaffirmed Step One on a daily basis, I understand why I'm asking for it. In regard to meditation: I took on board suggestions inside and outside the rooms from people who knew better than I do (yes, they do exist after all!) and include it within my daily routine. I still count AA as part of my Higher Power structure (God also works through people). For me, "prayer" includes sharing with other alcoholics and asking for help. "Meditation" includes listening to others and taking on board their wisdom. AA is also important for me because our Fellowship and the broad range of beliefs (including no belief) within it help me to stay connected to the God of my understanding and not fall into my understanding of God, which usually ends up with me believing my own ideas. Going it alone never turned out well for me.

Step Eleven means that One Day At A Time as my life in sobriety unfolds I am connected to the help I need to be the best person I can be just for today. Step Eleven helps me to enjoy and be grateful for all the gifts that come my way. I am able to be present, content and enjoy life. Step Eleven helps me to face any challenges that come my way and to do the next

right thing until they pass. I am able to find the courage I lacked. Step Eleven helps me be there for others and not be consumed by my own concerns. I am able to be a useful member of society. Step Eleven keeps my ego right sized. I am able to take advice and guidance and benefit from the wisdom of other people.

My spiritual journey continues and grows one day a time. Step Eleven is part of my simple programme of action each day I am gifted in recovery. I stay in conscious contact with the power that restores me to sanity, relieves me of the bondage of self, and removes those shortcomings which block my usefulness to my HP and my fellows. When I came to the rooms I felt alone, I felt apart from everything and I felt useless. Today I feel part of the world and I can take a useful part in my life, I can be helpful to others, I have a wonderful sponsor and some amazing sponsees (past and present), I do service, I attend meetings and I do my best to practice the principles of our programme in all my affairs on a daily basis.

My mum has a photo frame on her dressing table with a prayer card inside that reads, "Lord, help me to remember that nothing will happen today that you and I can't handle together." Conscious contact with the God of my understanding means I never face any day alone, and for that I am truly grateful. It's the gift I had no idea I was going to get.

Anonymous

Compliments of AA Share Magazine

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve...

My name is Bill and I'm an alcoholic. To set time aside for anyone or anything is giving the gift of one's presence, one's self, but only when given without reward. It is the awareness that I have something of worth to give in the first place and in the second place having the privilege of sharing that gift, the gift of one's self with another. To be fully present to another, to share one's story... one's experience, strength and hope is indeed a marvel.

The miracle of our meetings, where we share without interrupting others and being able to share ourselves, free of the interruption of others, is a truly remarkable phenomenon.

I am often awed with the memory of the AA members who gave of their time so willingly and selflessly to me. They shared with me, encouraged me and gave me help in finding help for myself in many departments of my life. My work, my finances, my relationships were all in a woeful state of affairs when I arrived beaten and broken to the rooms.

Where did the motive for members to take an interest in me come from? Obviously there was that which I have since come to know: a delight in seeing others grow in recovery and discover the pearl of sobriety. The awareness that we are all One in fellowship. There is a spiritual maxim that when the student is ready the teacher appears. I had begun to become teachable. I had begun to be graced with a new perspective.

I have found many teachers in AA... those that taught me what to do and those who taught me what not to do. I only realize in retrospect how fortunate I was to have members take a genuine interest in my recovery and well-being. This was true fellowship in action although I didn't see it at the time.

The notion in AA that we give it away to keep it beats strong here with this AA. Seized with the 'good news' of recovery I myself have often been over zealous and even accused of being 'messianic'! I don't apologize for my passion for AA and the simple, albeit profound message that it carries, however, through my immersion in the programme I feel like I have been born anew. I am not a religious man... although in some sense there is religion in it, albeit I don't ascribe to a 'rules or rewards' system. In AA I find and concur that the love or service we express is its own reward. I realize I have nothing of originality to share as it has all been said before, but I have come to know, realize and fully accept the intervention of a Providence in my life that has utterly changed me.

The once vitriolic tongue has changed to one of self-restraint; the cynical depraved disposition of old has transformed to a non-judgemental, non-condemnatory, caring one; the irresponsible neglect of family, the prodigal spend-thrift and the moral compromiser have been faced down; and the super ego has been sublimated at depth in what can only be described as a 'Saul to Paul' type of conversion. The one who came to scoff has remained to pray.

The humiliation brought about by this

spiritual malady in me allowed a chink of humility to enter. All that was needed was 'willingness'. All then changed utterly.

The giver needs a receiver as much as a receiver needs a giver to complete the transaction. Each I know blesses the other. Love it is said is its own reward. This notion of giving without an incentive was alien to my way of thinking and acting. AA found me out. It challenged me... words like 'don't let the good become the enemy of the best'... 'be careful that a good motive is not veiling a bad one'. The subterfuge of subconscious motives were exposed for what they were. I could not hear until I could hear, I could not see until I could see.

We used to have a piece in one of our pamphlets in days gone by which described the progression of the disease i.e. 'the man takes the drink, the drink takes the drink and finally the drink takes the man'.

Curiously for me this notion has a type of inverted parallel in recovery i.e. the man takes the programme, the programme takes the programme and finally the programme takes the man. It paraphrases for me what the educational variety of the spiritual awakening is.

The purpose of Step Eleven is to improve my conscious contact with God as I understand Him. The Step suggests acknowledging that this Power does for me what I cannot do for myself. The reservoir of drinking water is available to all. Step Eleven when taken by me is a turning on of the tap to a resource beyond understanding, beyond

description, yet the Power thus tapped rewards me openly.

My first sponsor used to say that Step Eleven was about simply asking and listening. I listen at meetings and I listen inwardly to the literature of AA as I read and also to the inspirational material that the early AAs looked to.

I ask through the routine of prayers I learnt in AA and other fine pieces of wallpaper (poems and prayers that resonated with me) I have found through the years to decorate the inside of this head of mine. When listening I trust. I come to meditation like an innocent, without any preconceived notions... I simply surrender to the process as AA teaches me.

I find that as He sees in secret He rewards me openly. I acknowledge this Power with conscious contact. It has become a habit. AA taught me that if I form good habits they in turn will form me. Spirituality is practicality.

Words that I defied and dismissed out of hand for years I now fully assume as my own i.e. "all praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine".

We are often encouraged in AA to stay with the program .. and wait until the miracle happens. We need to keep on keeping on.

The notion of the Prodigal Son rings true for this alcoholic. I had sunk to a new low... but through the grace of a Higher Power I came home to AA and in doing so came home to my own self.

*Blessed and privileged
Bill, Galway*



“When I am willing to do the right thing I am rewarded with an inner peace no amount of liquor could ever provide. When I am unwilling to do the right thing, I become restless, irritable, and discontent. It is always my choice.”

— Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition —

p.317 (My Chance to Live)

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The Road Back

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The Road Back is published bi-monthly

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Heard at Meetings

To attain peace, I must be seen to
change myself and not other people.

It is easier to protect my feet with
slippers than carpet the surface of the
earth.

∞∞∞∞∞

A Big Book that is falling apart is
generally owned by someone who isn't.

∞∞∞∞∞

The road narrows.

∞∞∞∞∞

Bend the knee before you
bend the elbow.

∞∞∞∞∞

Unease, ill at ease, disease
(total absence of ease)

∞∞∞∞∞

Put this first (AA Sobriety)
and all else will fall into place.

∞∞∞∞∞

A bellyful of drink and a head full of
AA a deadly concoction

∞∞∞∞∞

Daniel didn't go back for his cap
when he escaped from the lion's den!

∞∞∞∞∞

One Higher Power, one AA,
one program

∞∞∞∞∞

A spiritual problem requires
a spiritual solution.

∞∞∞∞∞

Ethyl alcohol is a chemical
solution of spirits...
what I need is a solution
of the Spirit!

∞∞∞∞∞

Becoming willing made
things possible.

∞∞∞∞∞

All AAs are my teachers.
I learn what to do from some
and what not to do from others.

∞∞∞∞∞

We grow or we go.



Reckless Binging

Bit by bit my binges got worse
No doubt about it I was tinged with a curse
I was once right steady and life went well
Then drinking took over and life became hell
Up the creek and battered and through the mill
Happened so often it shatters me still
Compulsively drinking and wasting away
Doing all the wrong things, always going the wrong way
I hoped and I prayed that I could mend my ways
I drank and I smoked every night and day.

I never settled down with a wife of my own
Though lots of lovely ladies through the ages I had known
I kept a loose leaf bible, this is plain to see
If I got away with it it was fine with me
As time went by my drinking got worse
The ladies came second, my drinking came first
It went way too far, it went beyond a joke
I got too fond of the bars, I got too fond of the smoke
I hoped and I prayed that I could mend my ways
I drank and I smoked every night and day.

How it came about I can't explain or narrate it
All I can say is it was all drink related
Why don't you shape up? Friends would ask with accusation
I always replied, you don't know the situation
Oh! I mended my ways many times here and there
But I always went back to where I hadn't a prayer
Drinking, drifting, wasting away
I was out of my mind, what more can I say?
I hoped and I prayed that I could mend my ways
I drank and I smoked every night and day.
I hoped and I prayed that I could mend my ways
And now things are better, and it's thanks to AA

Copyright: James C

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

Teacher poses a maths problem to the children. Suppose there were a dozen sheep and six of them jumped over a fence. How many would there be left?

Johnny answers "none Miss". "You don't know your maths Johnny". And
Johnny replies "And you don't know your sheep Miss.
When one goes they all go!"

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

A customer asks for a half head of cabbage in the supermarket. "We don't sell half heads of cabbage" replies the attendant curtly. "Anyway it only costs 49c for the full head." "I only need a half head. I live on my own and it would only go to waste. Can you please ask your manager if I can have a half head" persists the customer. Attendant goes down the aisle of the supermarket and meets the manager unaware that the said customer is behind him. He says to the manager "there's a miserable, mean low-down auld get at the checkout looking for a half a head of cabbage." Just then he spots the customer behind him. He turns and continues.. "And this nice gentleman is looking for the other half!"

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

A man goes into a pub with newt sitting on his shoulder. "I'll have a pint of beer and Tiny here will have a glass of orange juice." "Why is he called Tiny?" asks the barman. The man replies, 'Because he's my newt!'

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

In which direction do you turn the key on a Georgian desk bureau?
Antique-lock wise.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Did you ever notice that when you blow into a dog's face he gets mad at you, but take him for a drive in the car and he'll stick his head out of the window!

Bill W.

Nov. 26, 1895 — Jan. 24, 1971



Thank God for the drunk who discovered that only a drunk can help a drunk.

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'*

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.

Some A.A. Acronyms

GUT = God's Undeniable Truths

GIFT = God Is Forever There

GOD = Group of Drunks

ISM = I, Self, Me.

SLIP = Sobriety Loses Its Priority

STEPS = Solutions To Every
Problem in Sobriety

TIME = Things I Must Earn

YET = You're Eligible Too



APPROVED FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS AND ONE DAY EVENTS



FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS IN IRELAND

DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
31st May-2nd June 2019	Cork County Area Convention	Riverside Park Hotel, Macroom, West Cork. Tel: 00353 26 20090
31st May-2nd June 2019	Galway East Area Convention	Raheen Woods Hotel, Athenry, Co. Galway. Theme: First Things First
14th-16th June 2019	Antrim Area Convention	Drummond Hotel, Ballykelly, Co. Antrim. 0044 28 7772 2121 Theme: There is a Solution
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

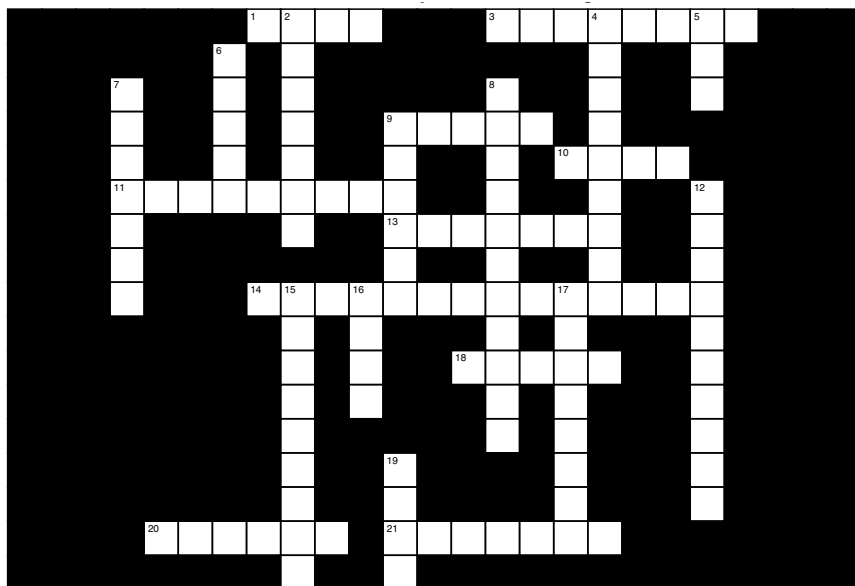
DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
15th September 2019	Down Area Day of Gratitude	The Burrendale Hotel, Country Club & Spa, 51 Castlewellan Road, Newcastle, Co. Down, BT33 0JY, 0044 28 4372 2599
3rd November 2019	Dungannon Group 'A Come & Go Meeting'	Unit 8, Castlevew Buildings, Feeny's Lane, Dungannon, Co. Tyrone, 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
11th May 2019	59th Flemesh Convention, Belgium	Europahal, 7 Generaal Maczekplein, 8700 Tielt, Belgium. Theme: Happy, Sober, Helping
16th-19th May 2019	25th International Convention in Greece	Grand Bleu Beach Resort, Eretria Beach, 34008 Evia Island, Greece
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
2nd-5th July 2020	85th International Convention in Michigan, USA	Detroit, Michigan - see www.aa.org for details

The Big Challenge Crossword 422

Test your knowledge of our literature.



Across

1. "Like a boy whistling in the" (Chapter 6, BB)
3. Name the house in which Bill & Lois lived (now a museum) clue (.....stones)
9. Henry Drummond's classic "The Greatest ... in the World"
10. The first name of the "man on the bed"
11. The hotel in Akron in which Bill W stayed in 1935
13. "..... me of the bondage of self" (Chapter 5, BB)
14. ("pitiful and incomprehensible" Chapter 3 BB)
18. Founders' Day is which date in June
20. The number of AA Concepts
21. The little book that did the rounds in early AA "Stools and"

Crossword 420 solution on page 22

Down

2. "And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone-even" (P84, BB)
4. The three ideas. (Chapter 5, BB)
5. "May you find Him" (Chapter 5, BB)
6. "I earnestly advise every alcoholic to read this book through, and though perhaps he came to he may remain to pray." Dr W D Silkworth (P xxx, BB)
7. Bill and Bob were both from here.
8. We will know how to handle situations (Promise 11)
9. The First of the Four Horseman.(Chapter 6, BB)
12. "they cannot start drinking without developing the of craving. (P xxviii, Doctor's Opinion)
15. "The alcoholic at certain times has no mental defense against the first drink." (P 43, BB)
16. "praying for knowledge of His will for us..." (Step 11)
17. AA also stands for "altered"
19. Bill W's sponsor's first name

Declaration of Unity

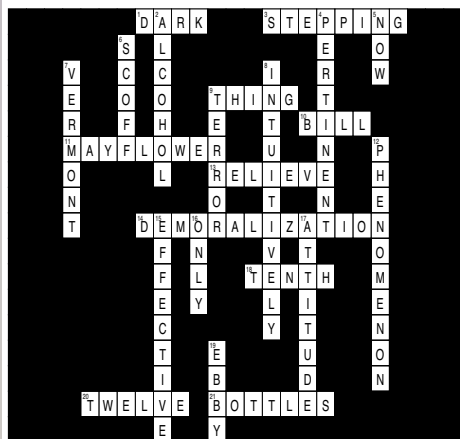
*This we owe to A.A.'s future:
To place our common welfare first;
To keep our fellowship united.
For on A.A. unity depend our lives;
and the lives of those to come.*

Check out the new AA website:

www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

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

Answers to Crossword 422 on page 21



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

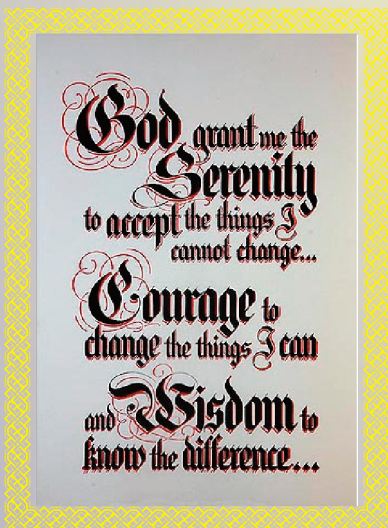
If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through . . .

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.

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

**I can't
He can
Let Him**





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 Twelve

July - August 2019 – Issue 423



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 Twelve

July/August 2019

Articles should be submitted by June 5th 2019 for issue 423

Happy, Joyous & Free Sept/Oct 2019

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

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

roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie

or post to:

Alcoholics Anonymous

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Swords Road

Dublin 9

IRELAND