

The Road Back



Nov/Dec 2019 - Issue 425



A.A.'s Twelve Traditions apply to the life of the Fellowship itself. They outline the means by which A.A. maintains its unity and relates itself to the world about it, the way it lives and grows. (Twelve & Twelve)

A Word from the Editor

We are a most fortunate lot that our Twelve Traditions were as inspired as our Twelve Steps. The very notion of naming them 'Traditions' and not Rules or Regulations was particularly enlightened and was tailored to suit the rebellious and defiant spirits among us.

We realize that our program is suggested only. However when it comes to the Traditions we are all, each and everyone of us, charged with custody of this unique set of principles that has held our Fellowship together for the past 84 years. They are the glue that keeps the Fellowship together. Our Traditions have, it is said, been hammered out on the anvil of experience. Therefore their credibility cannot be questioned. They weren't plucked from the sky. They run contrary, for the most part, to any conventions or mores that heretofore existed. They are rigorous in their lack of sanctions, suspensions, expulsions, and excommunications. No member can govern or stand in authority over another. They are simple yet quite awesome in their intent and order. Owing to these principles, AA has come to be known as the benign anarchy!

Our Traditions have stood the test of time and protected the Fellowship from the enemy within moreso than the enemy without. Most civilisations have died from within. They became corrupt, weak or lost sight of their ideal. And indeed our Traditions are as spiritual as the AA program itself.

Most of us fully embrace recovery when we come to the Program and quickly learn to commit the Twelve Steps to memory and then study and practise them. However, the majority, it would be fair to say, have only a passing acquaintance with the Traditions and merely refer to Traditions Seven and Twelve in the course of the AA meeting

itself. Tradition Three would also be widely known.

The time given over to the memorizing and study of the Traditions, the architectural framework for our Group and Fellowship, is anecdotally very scant indeed.

It begins with each of us as individual members. The importance of each member having a home group where the traditions are observed cannot be over-emphasised

It would make a substantial and positive difference to our Fellowship if the Traditions were given the same attention and application as in earlier years. Not to do so into the future is to put AA's effectiveness, even survival, at risk.

It is not our aim here to be controversial, however, when as a Fellowship we fail to meet the spirit of our Traditions and see evidence of them being broken at regular intervals, then we need to wake up to our responsibility. Our aim is to be thought-provoking only.

If, as a Fellowship, we fail to educate ourselves as to the import of our Traditions then we run the gauntlet of a dangerous type of complacency. In fact a fragmented Fellowship sets itself up for self-sabotage. We may find that our Declaration of Responsibility (see page 5) is consigned to the scrap heap for without a Fellowship maintained and sustained by its Traditions, we will have no message to offer the alcoholic who is as yet unborn.

We need to maintain and sustain our Traditions for they are the bedrock of our Fellowship and our sobriety. As our Big Book states: 'Constant vigilance is the price of freedom'.

oooooooo

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.

Our Singleness of Purpose

THIS IS A CLOSED MEETING
OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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.

(The 1987 General Service Conference made this statement available as an A.A. service piece for those groups who wish to use it.)

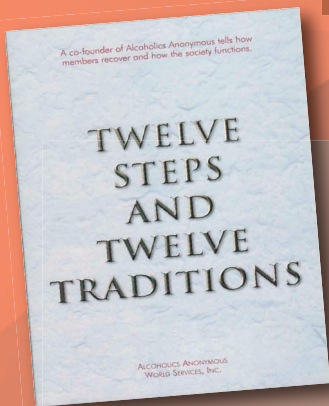
Issue 425 November/December 2019

Traditions 1-3 & Other Sharings Contents

A Word from the Editor	P2
Contents, Preamble & Singleness of Purpose	P3
The Twelve & Twelve Extracts	P4
We Are All In This Together	P5
Traditions Checklist (1-3)	P6
Tradition Two	P6
The New AA Public Info Kit & Declaration of Responsibility	P7
Tradition One, Bill W (From The Archives)	P8
The Way of Tears	P9
How AA Works Through Its Traditions	P10
My Soul Has A Hat	P11
Service Keeps Me Sober	P12
All-Ireland 2020 Poster & It Can Be Done	P13
Sharing My Clouds	P14
The Road Back is going Online	P15
Heard at Meetings	P16
The Only Requirement & Traditions 1-3	P17
Lord Teach Us To Laugh Again	P18
AA Acronyms, Text Service etc.	P19
Forthcoming Events	P20
The Big Challenge Crossword 425	P21
Crossword Solution & The 12 Promises	P22
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions	P23
Next Issue and Requests for Articles	Back Cover

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.



The Twelve and Twelve Extracts

Copyright Permission from AA World Services

Tradition One

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

Without unity, A.A. dies. Individual liberty, yet great unity.

Key to paradox: each A.A.'s life depends on obedience to spiritual principles. The group must survive or the individual will not. Common welfare comes first. How best to live and work together as groups.

Tradition Two

“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.”

Where does A.A. get its direction? Sole authority in A.A. is loving God as He may express Himself in the group conscience. Formation of a group. Growing pains. Rotating committees are servants of the group. Leaders do not govern, they serve. Does A.A. have a real leadership? “Elder statesmen” and “bleeding deacons.” The group conscience speaks.

Tradition Three

“The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.”

Early intolerance based on fear. To take away any alcoholic's chance an A.A. was sometimes to pronounce his death sentence. Membership regulations abandoned. Two examples of experience. Any alcoholic is a member of A.A. when he says so.

WE ARE ALL IN THIS TOGETHER

Traditions One, Two and Three

AA's first three Traditions clearly demonstrate that we all come from, and are part of, one collective and unifying consciousness.

The unifying principle behind all of the first three Traditions is of Oneness with each other and with that healing energy that brings and holds us together.

In early sobriety we recognise that true joy is harder to access and hold on to than the anger and fear we bring with us.

However, through our program, sense of community and deep resonance in our sharing, we begin to see that our souls need and can feed on a different level than anger and fear : that of union and contentment.

This is the core attraction of the meetings and fellowship, and the first three Traditions strengthen this.

Matter and Spirit are forever bound together, and that cyclical wholeness, shown in the unifying principle of the first Tradition better enables us to appreciate our lives and each other.

We are all, in our pain and diversity, part of a great and unifying whole.

If we can accept that in each of us there is an innate and accessible goodness, then we can stay together in unity, directed by an enforced and enlightened desire for wholeness and sobriety, both as individuals and as a fellowship.

The first three Traditions copper fasten our deep desire for union with each

other and a Higher Power.

The human ego resists any notion of universal belonging because it takes away it's notions of specialness, superiority and separateness. The core of our program is reduction of those characteristics of the ego. You are No Longer Alone.

Finally, the embracing of the principle of Unity, not being separate or special, all being equal, helps our belief and connection with an Ultimate Authority other than ourselves.

The all inclusiveness of the third Tradition is the foundation for a fellowship based on Love and Service to others.

John Mc M. Mayo.

We all know that, in recovery, we need to stick together like passengers rescued from a sinking ship; equally we know that we cannot stay together on the journey without daily help from a Higher Power

Anon

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.**

TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

Copyright © The Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

PRACTISE THESE PRINCIPLES ...

TRADITION ONE

OUR COMMON WELFARE SHOULD COME FIRST; PERSONAL RECOVERY DEPENDS UPON AA UNITY.

Am I, in my group, a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other member's inventories?

Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as 'just for the sake of discussion', plunge into argument?

Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?

Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?

Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in this or that aspect of AA?

Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?

Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?

Do I spout platitudes about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?

Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?

Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving the help of the Fellowship?

TRADITION TWO

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.

Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, AA committees, and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?

Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with AA Twelfth Step jobs or other AA responsibility?

Do I look for credit in my AA jobs? Praise for my AA ideas?

Do I have to save face in group discussion, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work cheerfully along with it? Although I have been sober a few years, am I willing to serve my turn at AA chores?

In group discussions, do I sound off about matters on which I have no experience and little knowledge?

TRADITION THREE

THE ONLY REQUIREMENT FOR AA MEMBERSHIP IS A DESIRE TO STOP DRINKING.

In my mind, do I prejudge some new AA members as losers?

Is there some kind of alcoholic whom I privately do not want in my AA group?

Do I set myself up as a judge of whether a newcomer is sincere or phony?

Do I let language, religion (or lack of it), race, education, age, or other such things interfere with my carrying the message?

Am I over impressed by a celebrity? By a doctor, a clergyman, and ex-convict? Or can I just treat this new member simply and naturally as one more sick human, like the rest of us? When someone turns up at AA needing information or help (even if he can't ask for it aloud), does it really matter to me what he does for a living? Where he lives? What his domestic arrangements are? Whether he had been to AA before? What his other problems are?

oooooo

Tradition Two

"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."

I am still amazed after four years in recovery that AA not only survives but it thrives in an era far flung from its start in the 1930's, a different era with very different standards and values dictated by the times. I spend my free time studying Alcoholics Anonymous principles, Steps and Traditions, I have a deep love for everything AA.

Tradition two states that our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern and that a loving God is the one ultimate authority, my Higher Power or God like me is unique as is every member of AA. The idea that a bunch of sick people with an illness that centres in the mind can run a successful recovery programme is to me a miracle. If you gave the idea of Alcoholics Anonymous to any right minded business man and asked if he wished to invest in your venture I doubt if the answer would be a resounding yes. The reason being that the idea of thousands of groups running themselves and being self-supporting, with only group voted people to fill the roles relevant to keeping a meeting going is absurd. **BUT IT WORKS!**

Alcoholics in recovery have a common purpose and this purpose guides us to keep our meetings running, each position is filled with new people at the end of their terms; new alcoholics take the position and keep the cogs turning and the machine oiled. We as a whole vote a person in as secretary to guide our meeting, we vote a treasurer in to ensure our bills are paid, and we vote a tea person in to ensure a hot cup of tea is waiting for those in need. Our leaders are trusted to fill the role to the best of their ability, we as a group can only have our say, we can offer guidance and support but only a group can decide on change.

When I have spoken to newcomers and explained how a meeting works and the processes involved I am often asked, "So who is in charge?" My response is always the same, no one is.

We are a group of people who volunteer to do these service positions, we are guided by the group and by those who came before us. If this is not the work and guidance of a higher power I personally am not sure what is.

ROBERT, Letchworth (Compliments of Share Magazine, AA, UK.)

AA PUBLIC INFORMATION KIT



GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC INFORMATION

Approved by General Service Conference
of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland

Carrying the Message

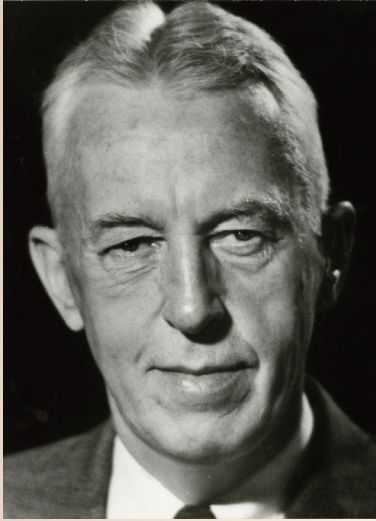
**A complete Binder for use in
Public Information.**

€26.36

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

please visit our website
www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

Tradition One



Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity. - from the December 1947 Grapevine

Our whole AA program is securely founded on the principle of humility--that is to say, perspective. Which implies, among other things, that we relate ourselves rightly to God and to our fellows; that we each see ourselves as we really are--"a small part of a great whole." Seeing our fellows thus, we shall enjoy group harmony. That is why AA Tradition can confidently state, "Our common welfare comes first."

"Does this mean," some will ask, "that in AA the individual doesn't count too much? Is he to be swallowed up, dominated by the group?"

No, it doesn't seem to work out that way. Perhaps there is no society on earth more solicitous of personal welfare, more careful to grant the individual the greatest possible liberty of belief and action. Alcoholics Anonymous has no "musts." Few AA groups impose

penalties on anyone for non-conformity. We do suggest, but we don't discipline. Instead, compliance or noncompliance with any principle of AA is a matter for the conscience of the individual; he is the judge of his own conduct. Those words of old time, "judge not," we observe most literally.

"But," some will argue, "if AA has no authority to govern its individual members or groups, how shall it ever be sure that the common welfare does come first? How is it possible to be governed without a government? If everyone can do as he pleases, how can you have aught but anarchy?"

The answer seems to be that we AAs cannot really do as we please, though there is no constituted human authority to restrain us. Actually, our common welfare is protected by powerful safeguards. The moment any action seriously threatens the common welfare, group opinion mobilizes to remind us; our conscience begins to complain. If one persists, he may become so disturbed as to get drunk; alcohol gives him a beating. Group opinion shows him that he is off the beam, his own conscience tells him that he is dead wrong, and, if he goes too far, Barleycorn brings him real conviction.

So it is we learn that in matters deeply affecting the group as a whole, "our common welfare comes first." Rebellion ceases and cooperation begins because it must: we have disciplined ourselves.

Eventually, of course, we cooperate because we really wish to; we see that without substantial unity there can be no AA, and that without AA there can be little lasting recovery for anyone. We gladly set aside personal ambitions whenever these might harm AA. We humbly confess that we are but "a small part of a great whole."

-- Bill W.

The Way Of Tears

Since the earliest of years,
Mine is the way of tears,
And, for the world,
I would not change it.

In sadness and in grief,
In gratefulness and joy,
In doubt and disbelief,
In laughter and in love,
The waters of relief
Will flow from earnest eyes,
Oftentimes in trickles,
Touching times in torrents,
But ever shed in freedom;
For I have cut the bonds
Of a westernised philosophy
Brought forth of spiritual apathy,
That says men should not cry
But bear a false façade,
And over-weepy women
Merely foster self-indulgence.
But the world in this millennium
Is surely not a blueprint
For the optimal society.
So, when it says 'no tears'
Or 'circumscribe your crying'
Or 'not thyself indulge,'
I just tell it what to do
With its cockeyed sense of values,
But it steadfastly refuses,
And persists in rapt denial.

Then I take me to a place
Where I can weep in solitude,
And let the waters flow and cleanse
All hurt and deprivation,
And let the waters complement
All mirth and joy and friendship,
And the let the waters celebrate
My life as it's transformed
By the power of your love,
And I am wrapped in wonder,
In the mystery of each moment.

In the trauma and the turmoil,
In the sacred and the sensual,
In the earthbound and the ecstasy -
The real and the ethereal
And oft the two in tandem,
Mine is the way of tears
Since the earliest of years,
And, for the world,
I would not change it.

(From *The Jasmine Touch* by Ken O'S)

How AA Works Through Its Traditions -

One alcoholic's sense of the Traditions

To me the AA Traditions are a mind boggling set of principles. Membership may be costly but there are no dues or fees. We operate on a self-supporting principle when it comes to funding so we are not beholden to anyone. To become a member I don't need anyone to propose me or second me. The simple and only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. It doesn't even ask for an honest desire. I came for all the wrong reasons but eventually stayed for the right one.

AA is not a religious organization yet its recovery program as outlined in its Twelve Steps and its Twelve Traditions are sets of principles that are distinctly spiritual in their nature.

As an alcoholic when I declare myself a member I am a member of an AA Group and Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole.

There are no bosses in AA, albeit we do have 'elder statesmen' and also 'bleeding deacons'. No member can be placed in a position of superiority over another, however, there are different types of trusted servants but all have the same common purpose i.e. to carry AA's message to the still suffering alcoholic.

AA does not own property or assets lest issues over property, money and prestige divert it from its primary purpose. AA is not organized per se, yet it ironically succeeds in running its affairs in a business like manner.

No one in AA can hog a position as the principle of rotation applies across the board.

AA's know that if they don't hang together then unfortunately they may well hang separately. Therefore AA unity is paramount. AA's tune in to a loving God and ask themselves the acid question in all they do... is this a loving decision or action or an unloving one?

AA sticks to its knitting. It has only one purpose. It has no constitution or bye laws. It's a kind of benign anarchy. The normal Joe or Josephine Soap find our movement

altogether incredulous.

AA co-operates with its friends but doesn't affiliate with them or endorse them. AA's cherish their autonomy and personal anonymity. However each individual member may or may not choose to break their personal anonymity below the level of Press and Media.

AA cannot impose punishment or sanction on its members. Punitive measures are prohibited and no one can be expelled.

AA is non-professional. It cannot accept fees for its services to AA members or when carrying its message to the general public. However AA pays its own way and cannot accept money from outside sources or payment in kind.

AA has no opinion, good, bad nor indifferent on outside issues. Thus it avoids controversy. It doesn't get involved. It knows that for a fight to happen at least two need to be involved. AA refuses to fight so there is no contest.

AA doesn't solicit membership. It doesn't promote itself, however it makes its life giving message available through a policy of attraction to both the recovering and the active alcoholic. It's not a temperance society. It doesn't give out merit badges for those who recruit the most number of members. There are no honours in AA, however there are privileges i.e. the privilege of being a member; the privilege of being of service and of being available if required for Twelve Step work both within the AA Group and Structure and outside of it.

AA's anonymity is its most cherished possession. There are no plaudits or grandstanding ovations for services rendered. All is done below the radar, quietly and unobtrusively and any credit that may come is passed to the AA Group, AA as a whole and that loving God we talk about in Tradition Two.

AA's Traditions are truly a remarkable and inspired set of principles.

Anonymous, The West

MY SOUL HAS A HAT

I counted my years
& realized that I have
Less time to live by,
Than I have lived so far.

I feel like a child who won a pack of candies:
at first he ate them with pleasure
But when he realized that there was little left,
he began to taste them intensely.

I have no time for endless meetings
where the statutes, rules, procedures &
internal regulations are discussed,
knowing that nothing will be done.

I no longer have the patience
To stand absurd people who,
despite their chronological age,
have not grown up.

My time is too short:
I want the essence,
my spirit is in a hurry.
I do not have much candy
In the package anymore.

I want to live next to humans,
very realistic people who know
How to laugh at their mistakes,
Who are not inflated by their own

triumphs

And who take responsibility for their
actions.

In this way, human dignity is defended
and we live in truth and honesty.

It is the essentials that make life useful.

I want to surround myself with people
who know how to touch the hearts of
those whom hard strokes of life
have learned to grow with sweet touches
of the soul.

Yes, I'm in a hurry.

I'm in a hurry to live with the intensity
that only maturity can give.

I do not intend to waste any of the
remaining desserts.

I am sure they will be exquisite,
much more than those eaten so far.

My goal is to reach the end satisfied
and at peace with my loved ones and my
conscience.

We have two lives

And the second begins when you realize
you only have one.

*Mario de Andrade (San Paolo 1893-1945)
poet, novelist, essayist and musicologist.*

Service keeps me sober

When I came into the fellowship, I had no idea what AA was about. I knew nothing of the programme of recovery, how it works, nor of the steps and traditions and the wonderful fellowship that was about to love me back to life.

After a sobering night in a police cell, where I hit rock bottom, I called out to God for help, promising that I would change, though I did not yet know how. The next morning, the police sergeant released me, giving me the keys to the kingdom. He said, "I don't know if this is a Christmas party gone wrong, or a habit in your life, but either way these people can help". A profound statement. No mention of the more common "You're not a nice person to be around when you are drunk, you drink too much, you are an alki, a wino, you are always drinking".

I took the piece of paper held out to me, with the website and phone number for Alcoholics Anonymous circled in pen. I managed to get myself home, looked up the website and found my nearest meeting, three nights from then. Fear of my looming court case and the thought that I was now a criminal and could lose my job, kept me off the drink until then.

A female greeter welcomed me and asked if it was my first meeting, to which I said yes. She brought me into a room full of people chatting and greeting each other with hugs. I was made welcome by the tea lady and she sat me down behind her. That night I heard about the gift of desperation which had brought me to my first meeting, the surrender as I realised I was powerless over alcohol and that my life had become unmanageable but more importantly I heard hope, these people were living life

on life's terms without the need to lift a drink. I wept as I identified myself as one of them, I had found my tribe.

Thank goodness for all those who do service, who keep the rooms open and are there for the newcomer. I was quickly pressed into service from my third meeting, helping set up the room, put out the chairs, arrange the literature and hang the scrolls. I graduated to tea making and eventually to female greeter. This was all in my first six months. I heard words of wisdom from the group secretary encouraging volunteers to wash up at the end of the meeting, "If your hands are in the sink, you can't take a drink!" In my first year I found a sponsor who took me through the steps of recovery, a life changing experience, and who also suggested I do as much service as possible. Subsequently I became secretary for a spell at my home group and did speaker as often as I could. I then became GSR and attended Area and Intergroup, observing as much as possible. Group conscience became a place where I found a voice, and learned to live and let live and allow others the right to be wrong, including me. I have been a prison sponsor for the last two years and am currently the Public Information Chairperson for my Area. My goal is to ensure the public know about AA, as the police officers did at my rock bottom.

I am almost six yrs sober and delighted to have two wonderful sponsees, who have taught me as much as I have passed on of my experience, strength and hope. Service is what keeps me sober and trudging the Road to happy destiny. I was told "You need to give it away to keep it!" Do you?

Anon

∞∞∞∞∞



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

63rd All Ireland CONVENTION

“Courage to Change”

**Friday, Saturday, Sunday
17th – 19th April 2020**

**BLOOMFIELD HOUSE HOTEL,
MULLINGAR, CO. WESTMEATH**

RESERVATIONS (044) 93 40894

It Can be Done

It can be done. I came to A.A. in 1985. I wasn't sober. I was tormented and demented. I kept going to meetings even though I was on and off the drink. I got lots of meetings and with time and despite myself I got sober. I used my kids as my Higher Power plus I had to get help.

Now, a day at a time since 1991, I haven't taken a drink. I could not stay sober without the meetings. The Treatment Centre got me sober. The meetings will keep me sober. It can be done. In hard times I say to myself

'What are you going to do about it?' I didn't get AA, AA got me.

I go to concerts, conventions plus I went back to school and done well. I am also a grandad, I'm not a victim anymore. When I knew better, I did better. I was asked one time 'Billy, how does this programme work.?' I wasn't smart with my answer. I know how it does work. For me there are not always answers but there is always someone to show it can be done. Without help it would be too much.

Bill W. Galway

Sharing my Clouds

*I am going for a walk,
But I don't know where I'm going,
You see, I am feeling kind of sad,
And I don't like to have it showing.
There are some things that I hide;
Some things I cannot share,
So I try to find a secret place,
And leave my secrets there.*

*There are demons on my shoulders,
There are dark clouds in my head,
And I try to bring them far from home,
and leave them here instead.
I have caused a lot of suffering,
Done things I so regret,
And like the saying goes;
You forgive, but can't forget.
Hear how the wind is sighing,*

*Hear the tinkling of the stream,
Breathe the air so cool and scented,
Feel at peace and feel serene.
The rain is pearly teardrops,
Dancing on the leaves,
And the dark clouds in my head,
Are dispersing on the breeze.*

*I am walking home in sunshine,
The warmth upon my skin,
And with every step I take,
I feel alive again.
When the clouds return,
(and be sure, they always do)
I will take a little walk,
And share my thoughts with you.*

Ambrose. Mullingar.



Available
on the AA
Website
Jan 2020



www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie

THE ROAD BACK

Our Meeting in Print

**Free Complimentary Online
Copy from January 2020
to all Members**



**General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park,
Swords Road, Dublin 9, D09 H584**

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

Heard at Meetings

I am aware of my sh##isms today.

00 00 00 00

'To err is human... to forgive Divine.'

00 00 00 00

'Before I place the key in my door I
say the Serenity Prayer for I never
know what lurks behind it.'

00 00 00 00

'Memory and anticipation invariably
rob me of my Serenity'

00 00 00 00

'Be still and know...'

00 00 00 00

'My problems arise when I either do
what I know I shouldn't have done
or fail to do what I should have
done.'

00 00 00 00

'Meetings are a small price to pay
for the nice clean life I have today'

00 00 00 00

'This program saved my life and any
program that could do that must be
a good one'

'I need to learn to forgive myself
too'

00 00 00 00

'I need routine and regimen for I
suffer from indiscipline'

00 00 00 00

'Easy Does It BUT Do It'

00 00 00 00

'Blow blow thou Winter wind, thou
art not so unkind as man's
ingratitude'
(Shakespeare's King Lear)

00 00 00 00

'And forgive us our trespasses as
we forgive those who trespass
against us'

00 00 00 00

'The Serenity to accept the things
I cannot change'

00 00 00 00



The Only Requirement

Inebriation, nice vocals for what is
being sought

Sucking the cocktail spout with
grandiose thoughts

Dreaming of all our aspirations, aims
and double doubts

On and off the wagon thinking
nobody really cares

All legless lies but in reality,
nightmares

Tripped out of your box or on cloud
nine

Off your trolley or feeling like you are
dying

Out of your head or dead to the world

Trying to find a way and being blotto
to all you are told

On the skids and drunk as a skunk

No wash all beard no face and no look

Nothing working in the mad as a
hatter head

Need to turn off the lights before
going under the bed

Already done blacked out and no
wonder

All washed up comatose and pulled
asunder

A bender of colourful descriptions
falling into a prison

The key about to be thrown away

And being locked into alcoholism

Damian B. 2019

Traditions 1 - 3

(The Long Form)

***Our A.A. experience has taught
us that:***

**One — Each member of Alcoholics
Anonymous is but a small part of
a great whole. A.A. must continue
to live or most of us will surely
die. Hence our common welfare
comes first. But individual welfare
follows close afterward.**

**Two — For our group purpose
there is but one ultimate
authority — a loving God as He
may express Himself in our group
conscience.**

**Three — Our membership ought to
include all who suffer from
alcoholism. Hence we may refuse
none who wish to recover. Nor
ought A.A. membership ever
depend upon money or
conformity. Any two or three
alcoholics gathered together for
sobriety may call themselves an
A.A. group, provided that, as a
group, they have no other
affiliation.**

00 00 00 00

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

An old lady on the bus kept offering peanuts to the driver.
'Why don't you eat them yourself?' he inquired. 'It's that I don't have the
teeth for them anymore' 'Well why do you buy them so?' asked the driver.
'Well it's just that I like to lick the chocolate on them' she said.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

It was the last night of the Convention. Everyone was dancing, lights
dimmed. Strains of the Viennese Waltz filling the night air. Men in shining
sombre tailored suits and sober smiles. Women in flowing dresses of silk and
chiffon.

Round and round and round like butterflies sailing silently on the soul of
serenity.

Up in the gallery Anna M. sat with her mother Julia, taking it all in. 'Anna
darling those are gorgeous boys and girls. They couldn't be alcoholics.'

'Mammy! you give that lot a drink and they'll be bleeding murder ya.'

(Vincent, Raheny)

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

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

Seeing the Leaning Tower.

"Lookah"

"Whah"

"It's Crookah"

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

(Vincent, Raheny)

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

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

The Big Book

The Man in the Glass

when you get what you want in your struggle for self
and the world makes you king for a day
just go to a mirror and look at yourself
and see what THAT man has to say.

for it isn't your father or mother or wife
whose judgement upon you must pass
the fellow whose verdict counts most in your life
is the one staring back from the glass

some people may think you a straight-shooting chum
and call you a wonderful guy
but the man in the glass says you're only a bum
if you can't look him straight in the eye

he's the fellow to please, never mind all the rest
for he's with you clear up to the end
and you've passed your most dangerous difficult test
if the man in the glass is your friend

you may fool the whole world down the pathway of life
and get pats on your back as you pass
but your final reward will be heartache and tears
if you've cheated the man in the glass.

Anon

Some More A.A. Acronyms

AA = Absolute Abstinence

AA = Attitude Adjustment

FINE = Feeling Insecure
Numb & Empty

GUT = God's Undeniable
Truths

GIFT = God Is Forever
There

HALT = Hope, Acceptance,
Love & Tolerance

ISM = Incredibly Short
Memory

Resentment

Resentment is like taking
poison and waiting for the
other person to die.

Submitted By Vincent Raheny

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



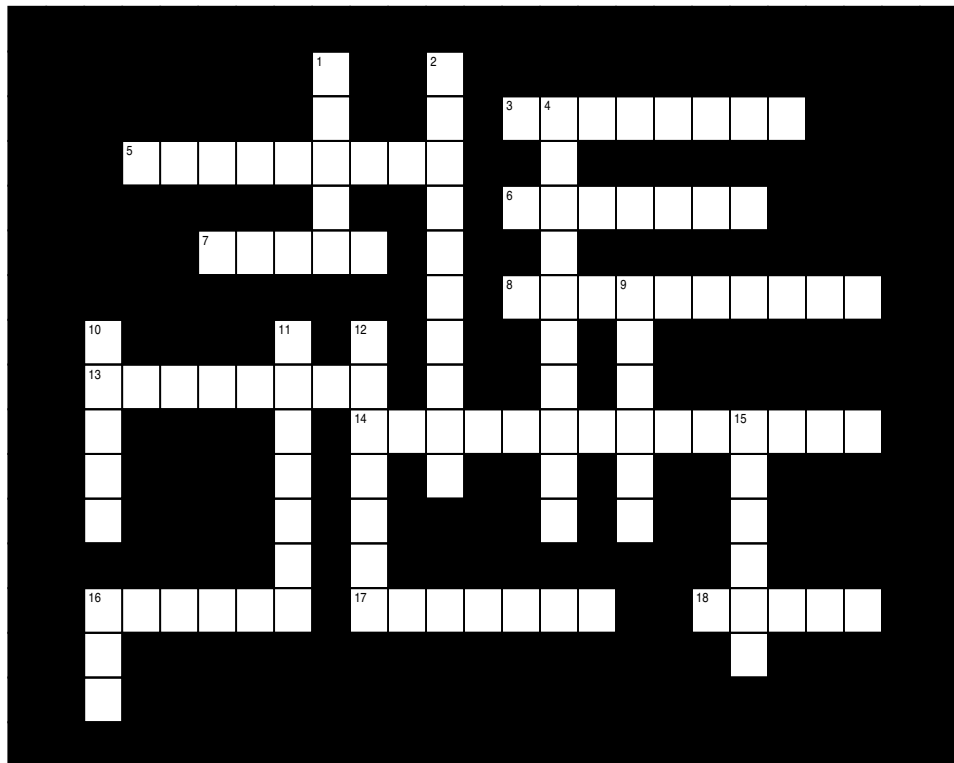
APPROVED FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS AND ONE DAY EVENTS



ALL IRELAND CONVENTION 2020		
17th-19th April 2020	63rd All Ireland Convention	Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. Theme: "Courage to Change"
FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS IN IRELAND		
DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
8th-10th November 2019	54th Kerry Area Convention	Brandon Hotel, Princes Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry, Theme: I am Responsible
22nd-24th November 2019	Mayo Area Convention	Hotel Westport, The Demesne, Newport Road, Westport, Co. Mayo, F28 E438 Theme: Joyous, Happy & Free
7th-9th February 2020	Limerick Area 40th Convention	Castletroy Park Hotel, Limerick City (00353 61 335566) Early Bird Meeting: Thursday 6th February 2020 at 20.30 Theme: The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA
21st-23rd February 2020	Wexford Area Convention	Clayton Whites Hotel, Wexford Theme: A New Freedom
6th-8th March 2020	Cork City Area Groups Convention	Blarney Woollen Mills Hotel, Blarney, Co. Cork (00353 214385011) Theme: How it Works
ONE DAY EVENTS IN IRELAND		
DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
3rd November 2019	Dungannon Group 'A Come & Go Meeting'	Unit 8, Castlevue 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
16th November 2019	Cork City Area Service Workshop	South Parish Community Centre, Rutland Street, Cork City. Starts at 7.30pm
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
9th November 2019	Latvian AA - 31st Anniversary	Baložu City Cultural Centre, 4 Skolas iela (12km from Riga Centre, 4km from Riga City border) Theme: Pass it on!
22nd-24th November 2019	Costa del Sol Convention, Spain	IPV Palace Hotel, Fuengirola, Spain. Theme: Happy, Joyous and Free
24th Jan. - 26th Jan. 2020	Fuerteventura 11th Annual Convention	Occidental Lanzarote Mar Hotel, Avinda del Mar 5, Costa Tequise, 35508, Lanzarote. Theme: Live & Let Live
31st Jan. - 2nd Feb. 2020	Belgium. North Sea Convention 2020	Hotel Vayamundo, Zeedijk 290-330, 8400 Oostende, Belgium
13th-15th March 2020	14th Int. Convention, Malta	Seashells Resort, Suncrest Hotel, Qwara, Malta. Theme: A Vision For You
2nd-5th July 2020	85th International Convention in Michigan, USA	Detroit, Michigan - see www.aa.org for details

The Big Challenge Crossword 425

Test your knowledge of AA literature.



Across

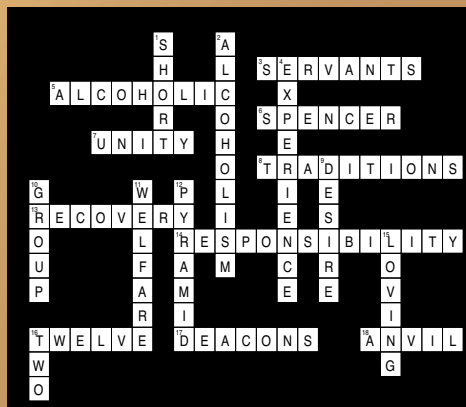
3. Our leader are but trusted
5. Any is a member of AA when he says so.
6. Big Book, Appendix II last word. Herbert
7. The first of AA's Three Concepts.
8. As members of AA we are all custodians of the Steps and
13. Personal depends upon AA unity.
14. One of AA's Declarations
16. The number of AA Traditions
17. 'Elder Statesmen' and 'Bleeding
18. Our Traditions were hammered out on the of experience.

Down

1. The more popular known format in which our Traditions is available
2. Our membership ought to include all who suffer from
4. Our AA ... has taught us that: (preceding sentence to the 12 Traditions)
9. The only requirement for membership is a to stop drinking.
10. The AA Home, the heartbeat of AA.
11. This common element comes first in this Tradition
12. Our Structure is shaped like an inverted
15. The kind of God that expresses Himself in our Group Conscience
16. Minimum membership to form an AA Group

Crossword 425 solution on page 22

www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie



Declaration of Unity

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



The Promises

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

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

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

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



THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

Copyright A.A. World Services, Inc.



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.

Copyright A.A. World Services, Inc.

Next issue:

Traditions 4-6

January - February 2020 – Issue 426

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:

Traditions 4-6

Jan/Feb 2020

Articles should be submitted by December 6th 2019 for issue 426

Traditions 7-9

Mar/Apr 2020

Articles should be submitted by February 7th 2020 for issue 427

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

roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie

or post to:

Alcoholics Anonymous

Unit 2, Block C

Santry Business Park

Swords Road

Dublin 9

IRELAND