

# The Road Back

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Sept/Oct 2019 - Issue 424

**HAPPY  
JOYOUS  
FREE**



*We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free. We cannot subscribe to the belief that this life is a vale of tears, though it once was just that for many of us. But it is clear that we made our own misery. God didn't do it. Avoid then, the deliberate manufacture of misery, but if trouble comes, cheerfully capitalize it as an opportunity to demonstrate His omnipotence. (p 133, BB)*

# A Word from the Editor

Happy, Joyous and Free

Religion, it is said, is for those who believe in hell; spirituality is for those who have been there. Happiness is something that the world strives for daily. Through and in AA we have found that happiness is very much a by-product of right living.

We have come to know though spiritual principles that our freedom is found when there is nothing that we really want. Freedom is akin to happiness. The First Promise speaks to us about a 'new' freedom, not an old one. This new found happiness is in a different league. It is not based on wants and desires being satisfied. In our case our needs are met. Our AA program assures us of that.

There are none so blind as those who cannot see and none blinder still than those who won't even look! (Anon). AA tells us 'I cannot hear until I can hear and I cannot see until I can see'. It was hard for us to digest the notion 'that only an act of Providence' could expel our drink obsession. To some degree in our surrender, and that too is a grace in its own right, we helped remove the obstacles to our recovery and so enabled the intervention of this Higher Power in our lives.

Bill W, such a prolific and gifted writer, uses the phrase 'a full and thankful heart'. This for us is just another way of describing the happiness state. Our efforts in full blown alcoholism were completely given over to self gratification. We intoxicated (poisoned) ourselves with not alone the copious amounts of alcohol but its attendant irresponsibility.

In the case of this AA the pub culture

that drew me, was an unbridled theater of banter, slugging and ball hopping. I revelled and delighted in it. For a naive young man it was the greatest show on earth. Life for this impoverished human being began to be perceived through 'rose tinted glasses'.

In the 'asylum' of the pub I became part of a world that poured out an alcohol elixir to my worries and cares. The Big Book captures the ambience in the opening paragraph in Chapter 11, 'A Vision for You' i.e.

**F**OR MOST normal folks, drinking means conviviality, companionship and colorful imagination. It means release from care, boredom and worry. It is joyous intimacy with friends and a feeling that life is good. But not so with us in those last days of heavy drinking. The old pleasures were gone. They were but memories. Never could we recapture the great moments of the past. There was an insistent yearning to enjoy life as we once did and a heartbreaking obsession that some new miracle of control would enable us to do it. There was always one more attempt—and one more failure.

Our early members collectively pleaded with us in Chapter 5; 'we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start'. We hear shared so often at meetings 'don't quit before the miracle happens'.

*Do not spoil what you have by desiring what you have not; remember that what you now have was once among the things only hoped for.*

*Epicurus*

Finally, it is important to note that 'we aren't a glum lot'. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life."

*(pg 132, The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous)*

# The Road Back

# A meeting in print

**A**lcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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Issue 424 September/October 2019

## Happy, Joyous & Free

### Contents

A Word from the Editor	P2
Contents	P3
From AS Bill Sees It	P4
Journey To The Sunlight of The Spirit	P5
Salutation To The Dawn	
& Dr Bob's Prescription	P6
A Full And Thankful Heart	
The New AA Public Info Kit	P7
The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety	P8
Feeling Hope	P10
Giving It Away To Keep IT	P11
A Life Worth Living	P12
All-Ireland 2020 Poster & A Vision for You	P13
The Poem "If" by Rudyard Kipling	P14
The Road Back - Online from 2020	P15
Heard at Meetings	P16
Lorraine's Gratitude	P17
Lord Teach Us To Laugh Again	P18
AA Acronyms, Text Service etc.	P19
Forthcoming Events	P20
The Big Challenge Crossword 424	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.

## As Bill Sees It

# As Bill Sees It

## (The AA Way of Life)

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## Extracts On Happiness

The A.A. Way of Life  
(selected writings of A.A.'s co-founders)

As newcomers, many of us have indulged in spiritual intoxication. Like a gaunt prospector, belt drawn in over the last ounce of food, we saw our pick strike gold. Joy at our release from a lifetime of frustration knew no bounds.

The newcomer feels he has struck something better than gold. He may not see at once that he has barely scratched a limitless lode which will pay dividends only if he mines it for the rest of his life and insists on giving away the entire product.

We think cheerfulness and laughter make for usefulness. Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past. But why shouldn't we laugh? We have recovered, and have helped others to recover. What greater cause could there be for rejoicing than this?

Once this healthy practice has become a habit, it will prove so interesting and profitable that the time it takes won't be missed. For these minutes and often hours spent in self-examination are bound to make all the other hours of our day better and happier. At length, our inventories become a necessity of everyday living, rather than something unusual or set apart.

We see that the sun never sets upon A.A.'s Fellowship; that more than three hundred and fifty thousand of us have now recovered from our malady; that we have everywhere begun to transcend the formidable barriers of race, creed, and nationality. This assurance that so many of us have been able to meet our responsibilities for sobriety and for growth and effectiveness in the troubled world where we live, will surely fill us with the deepest joy and satisfaction.

But, as a people who have nearly always learned the hard way, we shall certainly not congratulate ourselves. We shall perceive these assets to be God's gifts, which have been in part matched by an increasing willingness on our part to find and do His will for us.

As the doubter tries the process of prayer, he should begin to add up the results. If he persists, he will almost surely find more serenity, more tolerance, less fear, and less anger. He will acquire a quiet courage, the kind that isn't tension-ridden. He can look at "failure" and "success" for what these really are. Problems and calamity will begin to mean his instruction, instead of his destruction. He will feel freer and saner.

The idea that he may have been hypnotizing himself by autosuggestion will become laughable. His sense of purpose and of direction will increase. His anxieties will commence to fade. His physical health will be likely to improve. Wonderful and unaccountable things will start to happen. Twisted relations in his family and on the outside will improve surprisingly.

God for it."

When happiness comes, we accept it as a gift, and thank

# Journey to the Sunlight of the Spirit

*An affair with a married man in sobriety gives her the courage to finally face herself and her past*

I was seven years old when my father began an affair with a woman he met in AA. Many years later, they had a child together. My parents were still married; my mother was also in the program. This affair impacted my family homeostasis and both my parents ended up relapsing. The affair was not the cause of their relapse—their lack of working a program was the reason. Despite all this history, I was 14 months sober when I entered an affair with a man I met at my meeting.

Everything about this relationship spoke to my alcoholism, it just didn't manifest in a bottle. It came in the form of a man 14 years my senior riding on a Harley Davidson. In retrospect, something was missing in my program. Externally, I was almost a poster child for AA. I was in service: taking Hospital & Institution meetings into the local rehab and prison had other service positions for my fellowship and had a couple of sponsees. Deep down, I was restless, irritable and discontent. I felt as though I had been a good girl and was not getting my prize. I was sick of my job and felt ready to embark on my career that had been put on hold when I got sober. I was lonely. I was not getting really honest with myself about how I felt about myself in relation to the world. Basically, I had not done a fearless and thorough moral inventory,

and these character defects were coming out in ways that I could not even recognize. I did not even know they were there because I was not being humble enough to look at myself, really look at myself, because it might hurt to see how broken I really was. So I did what any good alcoholic does, distract with a person, place or thing.

Initially, I really believed I was just going for bike rides. Ignoring that gut feeling of curiosity around the appropriateness of riding on a married man's bike. I kept on with my arms wrapped around him tight, with self-will and denial as the fuel that finally brought us to the end of our destination. The fall could have been a lot worse and I am blessed to walk away from it, but I truly believe my Higher Power had me fall down in order to see how low I really was. The only way to know how far down the scale we are is to be down there in the pain, ugliness, and rawness of it all. The moment I willingly entered into this affair was the very same moment my program completely stopped. A fog came over me, and I was absent for a while. The foundation of my program cracked. This is a program of honesty. I was not honest. That crack grew and I fell in.

Through the love, grace, and experience of other strong women I fought, cried and prayed. I prayed for willingness to surrender. I found the courage to end the affair. The moment I ended it, the fog cleared away and I could feel myself within myself. Yes, there I was. A scared girl.

That day shifted something in my sobriety. That was the day that I was given a gift. That day gave me the courage to acknowledge my worth. That day gave me the strength to face all of me, including all my defects. That day gave me the wisdom to humble myself to see my role in things. I had to get brought all the way down, so I could go up. I believe God took me to the depths of my own darkness holding my hand through it all and lifted me up so I could dance in the sunlight of his spirit.

(Minor contextual editing)

Anonymous (*The Grapevine* April 2019)

## Salutation to the Dawn

*Kalidasa, Indian Sanskrit poet and dramatist*

**Look to this day!**

**For it is life, the very life of life.**

**In its brief course**

**Lie all the verities and**

**realities of your existence:**

**The bliss of growth;**

**The glory of action;**

**The splendor of achievement;**

**For yesterday is but a dream,**

**And tomorrow is only a vision;**

**But today, well lived, makes every**

**yesterday a dream of happiness,**

**And every tomorrow a vision of hope.**

**Look well, therefore, to this day!**

R. H. SMITH, M. D.  
2ND NATIONAL BLDG. AKRON, OHIO

TELEPHONE: ME 8523 REG. NO. \_\_\_\_\_

FOR alcoholics

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_ DATE Feb 1937

*Always remember it*

1. Trust God
2. Clean house
3. Help others

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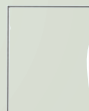


Robert H. Smith, M.D.  
Co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous

During the '40s Dr Bob treated at least 5,000 alcoholics in St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, OH. According to Dick B. he became the "prince of all twelfth-steppers."

Dr Bob was also known for his powerful yet simple spiritual messages for drunks. He captured the simplicity of the 12 Step program when he wrote his 3 point prescription for sobriety which has become an AA classic.

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# A Full and Thankful Heart

One exercise that I practice is to try for a full inventory of my blessings and then for a right acceptance of the many gifts that are mine--both temporal and spiritual. Here I try to achieve a state of joyful gratitude. When such a brand of gratitude is repeatedly affirmed and pondered, it can finally displace the natural tendency to congratulate myself on whatever progress I may have been enabled to make in some areas of living.

I try hard to hold fast to the truth that a full and thankful heart cannot entertain great conceits. When brimming with gratitude, one's heartbeat must surely result in outgoing love, the finest emotion that we can ever know.

*-- As Bill Sees It*



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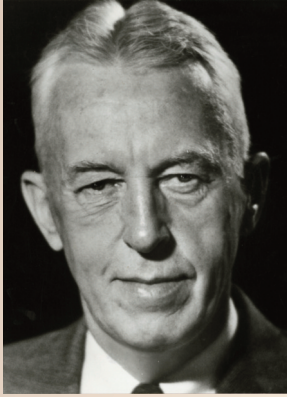
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And for that: I am responsible.

## The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety



*by Bill Wilson*

*Copyright © AA Grapevine, Inc,*

*January 1958*

I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA—the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance—urges quite appropriate to age seventeen—prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven.

Since AA began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up, emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse! Then comes the final agony of

seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy, and good living—well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious—from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream—be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden "Mr. Hyde" becomes our main task.

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones—folks like you and me—commencing to get results. Last autumn [several years back - ed.] depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer..."It's better to comfort than to be the comforted." Here was the formula, all right. But why didn't it work?

Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence - almost absolute dependence - on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams

and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what Grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed, upon any set of circumstances whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing a love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, I could not avail myself of God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependency meant demand—a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words "absolute demand" may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's

creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

Spiritual calculus, you say? Not a bit of it. Watch any AA of six months working with a new Twelfth Step case. If the case says "To the devil with you," the Twelfth Stepper only smiles and turns to another case. He doesn't feel frustrated or rejected. If his next case responds, and in turn starts to give love and attention to other alcoholics, yet gives none back to him, the sponsor is happy about it anyway. He still doesn't feel rejected; instead he rejoices that his one-time prospect is sober and happy. And if his next following case turns out in later time to be his best friend (or romance) then the sponsor is most joyful. But he well knows that his happiness is a by-product—the extra dividend of giving without any demand for a return.

The really stabilizing thing for him was having and offering love to that strange drunk on his doorstep. That was Francis at work, powerful and practical, minus dependency and minus demand.

In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn't a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.

Thus I think it can work out with emotional sobriety. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent unhealthy demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelfth Step ourselves and others into

emotional sobriety.

Of course I haven't offered you a really new idea—only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own "hexes" at depth. Nowadays my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine.

∞∞∞∞∞

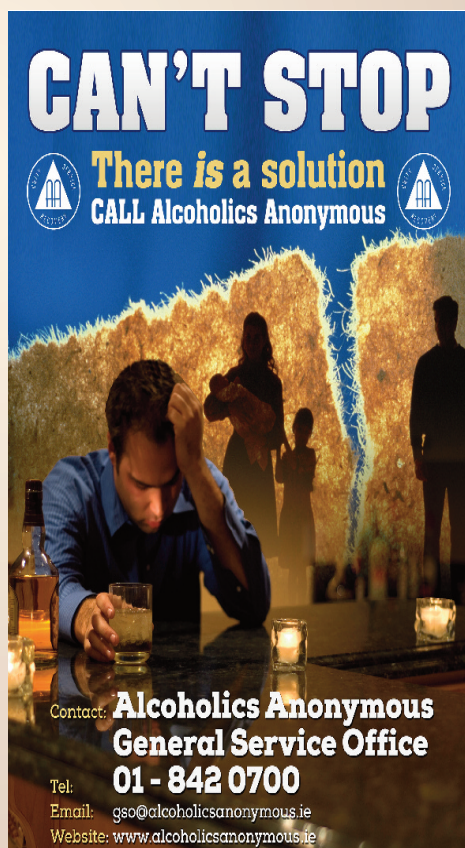
## Feeling Hope

I think Step Nine was the most impactful step I did as I worked through them. Each one is important and has its own place but for me it's only been the practice of inventory taking that has had great impact. Learning to recognize my character defects is work in progress but making amends directly was an enormous event. Not that anyone reacted badly or even particularly looked surprised, but it was the effect it had on me. That clearing away the wreckage of the past was well overdue and I was sick of carrying my 'sorry's' around with me. It was time for action. With my dad it had to be short as our relationship was so bad he could barely stand being in the room with me. I simply said "I'm sorry that communication between us has been so bad" and since then it hasn't been. Such is the power of this programme. My mum cried, my sister raged a bit and the rest were pretty underwhelming except that I felt better. In fact by the time I got to the end of the list I felt like a blank piece of paper and ready to start anew. I'd done everything I could and it was time to move on. I felt HOPE and I'm not prone to that ... I pass on these tips as they have been invaluable: I was warned that my ego would reassert itself at some stage and sure enough before each amend, as I walked towards the person concerned, my head was saying, "You weren't that

bad, you don't need to do this." So I did what my friend Lynn had suggested and prayed for the humility to carry out the amend. It worked. I also made amends to my dead grandparents by writing a letter and sitting by their graves. Reading out where I had failed as a granddaughter. I then burnt the letters and planted flowers over the ashes so that I could see something beautiful grow out of my efforts. It is still The Step that moves me most when I hear others' experiences of it. There is nothing like watching others recover their relationships and it invariably makes me weep with joy.

*CAROL, Norfolk*

*(Kind permission Share Magazine AA UK)*



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# Giving It Away To Keep It

My name is Carol and I am an alcoholic. I should say I am a grateful alcoholic but that would be a lie. I am extremely grateful that I know, and now accept that I am an alcoholic, but being grateful to be one is a different matter.

I have a disease, a disease like no other, in that it can be successfully treated on an hour to hour, day to day basis, with tools as simple as the desire to stop drinking, a conversation, a telephone call or a meeting with good and like-minded friends. This treatment is called the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. What brought me here is of little or no importance. It's safe to say that I was broken, in trouble and needed help. The only thing that matters is that I have not had a drink in four years, ten months and twenty-two days, and as I write this, for today I have not had the desire to drink.

I am a member of the Monday night meeting in Nairn. A meeting of men and women that saved me. I remember walking through the doors to a sea of smiling happy faces making me feel so very welcome. The guy who opened the meeting at that time was actually a very good friend. I knew of his troubles and that he attended AA, however, he had no idea of mine so to say he was surprised to see me there would be an understatement.

I also knew a few others in the room which made my first meeting a little easier. I think most of us would agree that the contents of our first meeting were a little vague. Mine definitely were, but all of it was comforting. After the meeting, I was overwhelmed by the number of people willing to meet me, call me and take me to other meetings. I was taken to several meetings over the next few weeks, all of which gave me a warm feeling of belonging and hopefulness that not only comforted but astounded me.

Anyway, the days went into weeks then months and at around the six month mark my friend who had been opening the Nairn meeting handed me the keys. He said I was ready to take on a role which would get me more involved and be of service to the group.

I was surprised at first, but on reflection I thought "I am here every Monday anyway so I should take my turn and give a little back." That was nearly five years ago and I still open on a Monday night. I love it. Yes, it's a commitment but I am committed to this Fellowship wholeheartedly. I can give a little to those who gave me everything. We have our regular home members but we have welcomed visitors and celebrities from all over the world.

In this Fellowship I have made genuine and good honest friends. Friends for life whose paths I would never have crossed were it not for AA. I take my position very seriously, as it was explained to me that the door has to be open, even if only one other, or no one turns up. To date, that has never happened and our numbers are good. It's safe to say that other than in illness I have never missed a Monday night. I can be relied upon and I like to think that all other openers feel exactly as I do about their position.

I continue to be of service in other ways now as Group Service Representative for my group and on the telephone helpline. This helps those in their personal hour of trouble but also me as their pain is mine. I can identify with them. It reminds me of where I started and where I am just for today. The door was open for me that Monday night in 2013. I will try to keep it open for all those who seek help in the future.

*Carol*

*Nairn AA Monday Night Meeting*

*(With kind permission AA Roundabout Magazine, Scotland)*

# A Life Worth Living

*Even as he battles cancer, he feels grateful for the life he receives in sobriety*

With more than three and a half years of continuous sobriety, I was cruising through life full of gratitude safe in the arms of acceptance of my powerlessness over alcohol. Having honestly completed the 12 Steps with my sponsor, I was thankful and content in my life for the first time after nearly 30 years of being dishonest, duplicitous, and self-centred.

You would find me regularly attending meetings at the beach where I began to feel at home and made many friends. I did service work, chaired meetings, shared my experience, strength, and hope, and several times told my story at treatment centers and homeless shelters. I was living the dream of recovery you might say - happy, joyous, and free.

Then one day I started not feeling so good physically - peculiar, actually. I woke up with headaches, got tired easily, and felt dehydrated. I never said a word about it to my family or my employer, thinking, "This too shall pass." I'm just getting a bit older. It wasn't until a neighbor noticed I was acting weird, did I admit to not feeling great. Then boom! A CT Scan and MRI revealed a massive tumor in my head.

What do you do when you wake up after five hours of brain surgery only to be told by your surgeon that you have a cancerous brain tumor that is aggressive and potentially fatal? If you're an alcoholic like me, you first thank God for being alive, and then you turn your will and care over to him like never before.

Faced with the stark realization that I now have two fatal diseases - alcoholism and brain cancer - I must treat my

alcoholism first if I have any hope of battling the tumor in my brain. I start treating my alcoholism every morning when my eyes flutter open by giving thanks to the God of my understanding for his gift of life for another 24 hours. Then I pray, read my AA literature and go about accomplishing my daily 'to-do list.'

Among the items on that list are thanking my Higher Power for life, telling my family that I love them and meaning it, calling my sponsor, reaching out to other alcoholics if I'm able, and going to a meeting.

After six weeks of radiation and chemotherapy treatments, I feel better but not like my old self. What I do feel is gratitude. I know I am truly blessed despite my condition because AA has given me a life worth living today.

For me Steps 2, 3, and 11 have taken on a new meaning and importance. Sometimes for a brief moment in my prayers, I selfishly ask God to help me understand why I have a brain tumor. But I have turned my will and care over to him; trust him to keep me sane in the face of adversity; and pray for the knowledge of his will for me. I think of what I've learned in the Program from my sponsor, my fellows, and our literature, and I am able to stay sober for another 24 hours.

Through the miracle of life that Alcoholics Anonymous has afforded me, I can honestly say that today I can comprehend the word serenity and know peace. What the future holds in store for me I can't say, but I know who holds my future.

-- Barry P.  
Ponte Vedra Beach, Florida  
Grapevine Online Exclusive  
Published June 2014.



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## *IF.....*

*If you can keep your head when all about you  
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,  
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,  
But make allowance for their doubting too;*

*If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,  
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,  
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,  
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:*

*If you can dream - and not make dreams your master;  
If you can think - and not make thoughts your aim;  
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster  
And treat those two impostors just the same;*

*If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken  
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,  
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,  
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:*

*If you can make one heap of all your winnings  
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,  
And lose, and start again at your beginnings  
And never breathe a word about your loss;*

*If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew  
To serve your turn long after they are gone,  
And so hold on when there is nothing in you  
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'*

*If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,  
'Or walk with Kings - nor lose the common touch,  
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,  
If all men count with you, but none too much;*

*If you can fill the unforgiving minute  
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,  
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,  
And - which is more - you'll be a Man, my son!*

*(Rudyard Kipling 1865-1936)*



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# THE ROAD BACK

## Our Meeting in Print

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to all Members**



**General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous  
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# Heard at Meetings

It is so great to know I don't have  
it all together but together  
we have it all.

oo oo oo oo

You can do the right thing - or you  
can do the thing right!

oo oo oo oo

That God could and would if He  
were sought. (3rd pertinent idea)

oo oo oo oo

Before it was a case of: that I got  
to do ... now I am happy just to get  
to do.

oo oo oo oo

I keep asking myself:

how important is it really?

oo oo oo oo

I came, I came to, I came to  
believe. (Step 2)

oo oo oo oo

One really doesn't have to find God  
- God isn't lost!

oo oo oo oo

Alcoholism has been described as a  
low level search for God.

oo oo oo oo

There is also a beauty in sadness.

oo oo oo oo

I just didn't come home to AA - I  
came home to myself.

oo oo oo oo

The good sober memories allow me  
to live my life twice over.

no oo oo oo

Illegitimi non carborundum

(Don't let the b's get you down)

oo oo oo oo

Those who do not recover are  
people who cannot or will not give  
themselves completely to this simple  
program (Chap, 5)

oo oo oo oo



# Lorraine's Gratitude

I'll be three years sober on 28th August and feel the need to share some of my Experience Strength and Hope. I was actually in a gutter outside the local pub the last time I drank. That was my rock bottom and I had a hangover for three days. I thought I was dying, I begged God for help. I'd known for a long time there was no where else to go. I'd tried lots of avenues, counselling, doctors, swearing off etc. I phoned the AA helpline and was told where the meeting was that day, I took a deep breath and went to it. It wasn't as bad as I was expecting. The people were really friendly, I sat between two ladies the one on the left who I called Mrs Smart, and she was immaculate. She is my sponsor today. All I remembered from that first meeting was the main sharers words were 'no matter what it takes for your sobriety, do it!' Them words went round and round and around in my head for days. And I thought, Yes, I will do it no matter what, even if I have to leave my family for six months I will. I didn't, but I preferred to go to any lengths.

I read as much literature as I could get hold of. My husband and kids (all adults) were horrified I was going to AA at first. After a while they would ask, "Are you going to a meeting tonight?" hoping I was. They probably were ashamed at first in case there friends found out. The way things have changed at home because they've asked me to take some of their friends to AA.

It has been an easy journey I've had my heart aches, lost my mum two years ago. Lost a business, a tenant from hell torched the building (not insured) he was about to be convicted within days. The great news I can Share is that I'm a Grandmother to an adorable little boy (19 months) and

I mind him every Thursday and we go everywhere, train rides, play groups, swimming baths etc. I love the peace and serenity I have today instead of the racing brain, lies, fears and sickness. It's miraculous and I know what love is today, I had no emotion just anger, guilt & shame. Today I am alive. Thank you AA.

*LORRAINE, Liverpool*

*(Kind permission Share Magazine, Nov 2018)*

## A Vision For You

*Big Book page 164*

Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others.

*This is the Great Fact for us.*

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of

*Happy Destiny.*

*May God bless you and keep you--until then.*

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

Some men were swapping stories about their war experiences. One fellow who had been in the Foreign Legion was saying, "There we were, it was night, the odds were 1,000 to 3. We didn't know what to do."

"Well, what did you do?" another asked.

"When morning came, we charged and got all three of them

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

"Now this is the verbal part of your employment test," said the interviewer.

"Can you tell me what gross aggrandized annuity means?"

"Certainly," replied the applicant. "It means I don't get the job."

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

Wanted: Preparer of food. Must be dependable, like the food business, and be willing to get hands dirty.

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

One morning at our small-town newspaper office, one of the editors was struggling to write a headline for the obituary of a woman who was noted for little besides a fondness for crossword puzzles.

"What am I supposed to write?" the editor whined. "She liked puzzles?"

Just then one of our copy editors piped up, "How about, 'Crossword fan is now six down.'" (By James Vlahos)

∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞ ∞

A certain man was infatuated with a young woman, but he was so timid that he never had the courage to speak to her. In fact, he told his therapist that every time he got near her, he felt like nothing more than a tiny pebble.

"Well," his therapist responded, "if you want to get the girl, you'll just have to be a little boulder!"



## Tradition Six

(long form)

Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim.

We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An A.A. group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to A.A., such as clubs or hospitals which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the A.A. name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, A.A. managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside A.A. - and medically supervised. While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An A.A. group can bind itself to no one.

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## 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 More A.A. Acronyms

HALT = Hungry, Angry,  
Lonely, Tired

(Try fix these  
situations  
before you make  
any decisions)

KISS = Keeping It Simple,  
Spiritually

GOD = Good Orderly  
Direction

TIME = Things I Must Earn

YET = You're Eligible Too

NUTS = Not Using The Steps

GIFT = God Is Forever There

FEAR = Feelings Every  
Alcoholic Rejects

FEAR = Failure Expected  
And Received



## APPROVED FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS AND ONE DAY EVENTS



### ALL IRELAND CONVENTION 2020

<b>17th-19th April 2020</b>	63rd All Ireland Convention	Bloomfield House Hotel, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath. <b>Theme: "Courage to Change"</b>
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### FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS IN IRELAND

DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
30th Aug.-1st Sept. 2019	39th Tipperary Area Convention	Clonmel Park Hotel. Tel: 062 6188700. Website: <a href="http://www.clonmelparkhotel.com">www.clonmelparkhotel.com</a> . <b>Theme: Giving Back</b>
11th-13th October 2019	Donegal Area Convention	Mount Errigal Hotel, Ramelton Road, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal, 00353 74912 2700
18th-20th October 2019	Clare Area 30th Annual Convention	Auburn Lodge Hotel, Ennis, Co. Clare: 065 6821247. <b>Theme: A New Freedom</b>
8th-10th November 2019	54th Kerry Area Convention	Brandon Hotel, Princes Street, Tralee, Co. Kerry, <b>Theme: I am Responsible</b>
22nd-24th November 2019	Mayo Area Convention	Hotel Westport, The Demesne, Newport Road, Westport, Co. Mayo, F28 E438

### ONE DAY EVENTS IN IRELAND

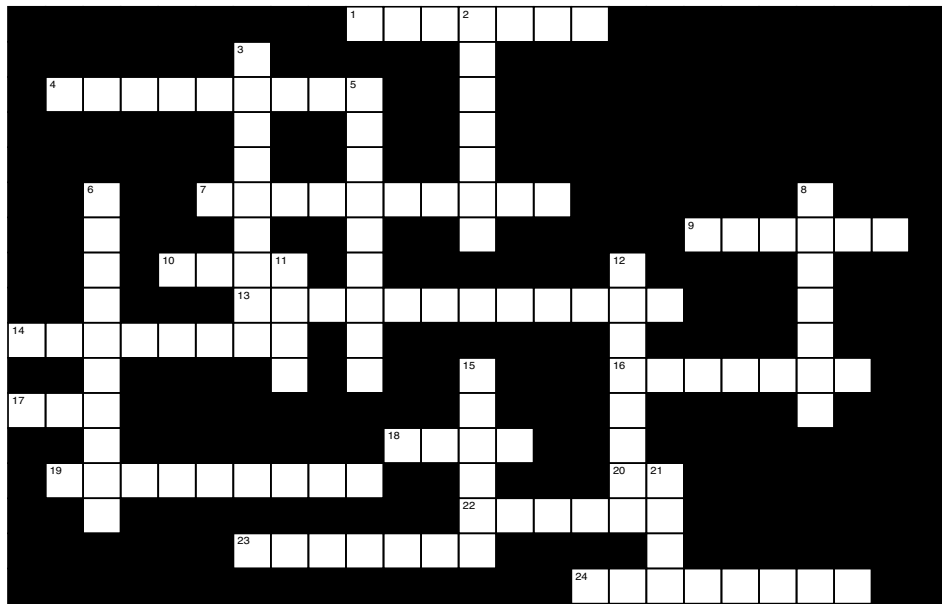
DATES	AREA	VENUE/THEME
2nd September 2019	Galway, Loughrea Groups, Open Public Meeting	Temperance Hall, Loughrea, Co. Galway at 8pm.
15th September 2019	Down Area Day of Gratitude	The Burrendale Hotel, Country Club & Spa, 51 Castlewellan Road, Newcastle, Co. Down, BT33 0JY, 0044 28 4372 2599
3rd November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

### FORTHCOMING CONVENTIONS ABROAD

DATES	COUNTRY	VENUE/THEME
20th-22nd September 2019	2nd Int. AA Ardennes Convention, Belgium	Hotel Vayamundo, 01 Fosse d'Outh 1, 6660 Houffalize
10th-13th October 2019	3rd Annual Biarritz Int. Convention in France	Belambra Club, Anglet-Biarritz, Prom. Des Sources, 64600 Anglet, France
16th-20th October 2019	Costa Brava Convention, Spain	Golden Bahia Hotel & Spa, Ave. Puerto Rico 29, Tossa de Mar, Girona, Spain
2nd-5th July 2020	85th International Convention in Michigan, USA	Detroit, Michigan - see <a href="http://www.aa.org">www.aa.org</a> for details

# The Big Challenge Crossword 424

Test your knowledge of AA literature.



## Across

1. "Relieve me of the ..... of self" (Third Step Prayer)
4. "love and ..... of others is our code" (P 84, BB)
7. "And the Wisdom to know the ....."
9. "when the spiritual ..... is overcome we straighten out mentally and physically" (p 64 BB)
10. "Happy, Joyous and ....."
13. "the most ..... years of your existence lie ahead" (A Vision for You)
14. "we beg of you to be ..... and thorough" (Chap 5)
16. "the central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our ...." (p 25 BB)
17. "That ... is God, May you find Him now" (Chap 5 BB)
18. "but we aren't a ....lot" (p. 132 BB)
19. "we have been rocketed into a fourth....." (p25 BB)
20. "let ...and let God" (AA slogan)
22. "we have found much of ...." (p 25 BB)
23. "a life beyond our ....dreams" (AA anecdote)
24. and we have ceased fighting anyone or ....." (BB p 84)

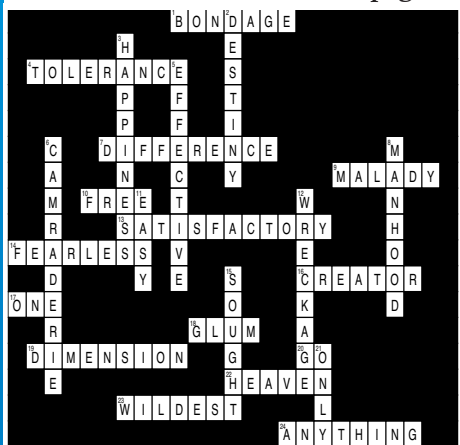
## Down

2. "As you trudge the Road of Happy ...." (Chapter 11, A Vision for You)
3. "We are going to know a new freedom and a new ....." (The Promises)
5. "The alcoholic at times has no..... mental defence against the first drink" (p 43 BB)
6. "'We are like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when ....., joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table.'" (p17 BB)
8. "as fine a specimen of ... as one could wish to meet" (Dr's Opinion, BB)
11. "we relax and take it ...." (p 86 BB)
12. "clear away the..... of your past" (p 164 BB)
15. "that God could and would if He were...." (2nd pertinent idea)
21. "Praying ... for knowledge etc" (11th Step)

**Crossword 420 solution on page 22**

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

## Answers to Crossword 424 on page 21



## 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.*

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

## The Promises

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

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

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

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



## THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

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## THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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

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# Next issue:

## Traditions 1-3

November - December 2019 – Issue 425



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 1-3

Nov/Dec 2019

Articles should be submitted by October 4th 2019 for issue 425

### Traditions 4 - 6

Jan/Feb 2020

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

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

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

or post to:

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