

THE ROAD BACK



includes Service News

**JUL - SEP 2025
ISSUE NO. 450**



STEP 3

Editorial

Hello again and welcome to this edition of Road Back. The theme for this edition is Step Three, "made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him."

Step Three is a decision that calls for action. We make the decision then start our work on the recovery journey with the rest of the steps while bearing in mind that in Step Twelve it states, "having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps." In our Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions it states, "it is only by action that we can cut away the self-will which always has blocked the entry of God-or, if you like, a higher power-into our lives." Our Big Book leaves us in no doubt with these words, "we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must or it kills us."

So, in this issue, we hope that our readers will enjoy What our members have shared of their experience on Step Three. We are privileged people in our uniqueness as the program of recovery never changes but it fits all like a glove, even though we can view 'God' or 'a higher power' from different individual perspectives.

In the previous issue (449) we included a story in the Irish language. If possible, we would like to publish one Irish language story per edition and to do this we ask our Irish speaking members to put pen to paper, or fingers on keyboard and submit your article to the Road Back editor.

For all others, we would love to hear your experience, strength and hope shared. The theme for our next edition will be "WHO ME." It is always interesting to hear your thoughts from your early days when you were confronted with the word ALCOHOLIC.

Once again, I will say your story could be the story that changes someone's life forever.

The Road Back, Editorial Team



Contents



It's Part Of The Journey.....	4
Drinking For Two.....	5
From My Very First Taste Of Alcohol I Loved It.....	9
Step Three.....	11
Keep Coming Back.....	12
Step 3.....	13
Heard At Meetings.....	14
Service News.....	15 - 18
Irish Overseas.....	19
Jon B's Story.....	21
Step Three.....	22
Third Step.....	24
Humour.....	25
Q&A With Paula.....	26
Poem - Day By Day.....	28
All Ireland Convention 2026 Poster.....	29
New Literature - Plain Language Big Book.....	30
The Twelve Steps and Traditions.....	31

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, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

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

The Road Back is published by
The General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous of Ireland,
Unit 2, Block C, Santry Business Park,
Swords Road, Dublin 9, D09 H584 Ireland.
Telephone (01) 842 0700 | Website www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie





IT'S PART OF THE JOURNEY

Five years ago, at the start of the pandemic, I chose to get sober. It was the hardest decision I've ever made, and the best one. Isolation, fear, and uncertainty made those early days even tougher, but they also pushed me to face myself honestly. That storm became the beginning of real change.

Your belief helped carry me through. This milestone is a reminder that no matter how lost you feel, there is always hope and a way forward.

Glen

In the early years, transformation came quickly. For the first time in a long time, I felt genuinely proud. Small wins meant everything, and that sense of progress helped carry me through when things got tough.

Since then, I've let go of what no longer served me. I've made mistakes, learned hard lessons, and rebuilt. I've learned to set boundaries with others and with myself. I've grown, healed, and become closer to God and my family.

Now, at five years, I feel more grounded. There's still work to do, but I no longer fear it. I welcome growth, knowing it's part of the journey.

To everyone who stood by me, I thank you.

THE ONLY PROOF I
NEED THAT GOD IS
REAL IS THE FACT
THAT I'M STILL
ALIVE WHEN I
SHOULDN'T BE.

DRINKING FOR TWO

I was brewed in an environment primed for alcoholism. Hailing from a fun loving musical Irish family and living a mere stones throw from the pub, after the bell for last orders rang, our home became a haven for the revellers and local barflies. My mom would play the accordion while my dad did his best Frank Sinatra impression, often stumbling over his words and into furniture.

I remember being both mesmerised and unsettled by how this strange liquid seemed to change my parent's personalities. Sometimes, in the mischievous spirit of childhood, my sister and I would sneak sips of the grown-up's drinks when no one was looking.

The youngest of three daughters, I have memories of being paraded around the living room to show off my Irish dancing skills. The room alight with clapping and applause as the drunks ruffled my hair with exaggerated praise, telling me how wonderful I was. My sisters would sing songs, and everyone would join in but even in those moments of festivity, there was a lingering sense of unease that I could not understand. My dad's eyes would turn glassy, and he would sit me on his knee and grin foolishly. All I wanted was the warmth of bedtime stories and a sense of security.

My mom barely drank in those days. At these shindigs she would only have a small glass of sherry. My dad did enough drinking for two. During the week, she was a kind, caring, wonderful mother. Having grown up in the west of Ireland in one of the infamous Magdeline Laundries, she had escaped to London at the age of 16 and qualified as a nurse. As someone who was shown so little love herself, I always admired for capacity and desire for nurturing others.

She was a beautiful woman, but life has a way of shifting its tune, and as the years marched

on, the music and sing songs in our home gave way to shouting matches, as mom and dad's drinking escalated. Alcohol became less a source of joy and more a trigger for chaos. I will never forget the nights spent hiding in my wardrobe, my sister's hands covering my ears to block out the rows. My mom would often emerge from her room in the morning with mysterious black eyes.

My dad suffered with depression from an early age, and it always seemed like he was carrying an unbearable burden. He had such a gentle heart, but after a few glasses of whiskey, he morphed into someone I hardly recognised, intense and intimidating. Beneath the shadow of his pain, he was a kind man, but his drinking spiralled out of control, becoming a force that consumed him. Time after time he was admitted to psychiatric wards and detox units. My hope would dare to soar and then spectacularly shatter as he walked out of the hospital and straight into the arms of the nearest pub.

My mom was lost in her own battle. She spent her days confined to bed, drinking whatever she could get her hands on. Watching her decline was agonizing, like witnessing a car crash in slow motion. I could not understand why she could not see that alcohol was the root of her suffering, why she would not hear my desperate pleas for her to stop. It broke my heart to see them both unravel before my eyes, leaving me feeling scared and helpless, longing for them to find peace.

Given the weight of these experiences, one might think I would be mindful of my own drinking but strangely, that was not the case. Somehow, I felt untouchable, as if witnessing the havoc alcohol could cause somehow shielded me from its grip. I thought it would never happen to me, that I would never go down that road, but at the tender age thirteen,



a boy handed me a can of cider at a Halloween bonfire, and just like that, the entire world tilted. My adolescent worries melted away. It was like finding a secret door in your house where you could escape if the world got too heavy to hold.

At seventeen, I found myself dating the lead singer of a rock band who had just secured a record deal. My home life at the time was turbulent and I loved the rock-n-roll lifestyle of hedonistic escapism. The band were touring around the country, and I felt like I was living the dream. While they were rehearsing on stage, I would prop myself at the bar and get the party started.

What began as innocent fun slowly spiralled into something far more sinister. My drinking turned me into a wild card, one minute I would be the life of the party, the next I would be drowning in sorrow, swinging like an emotional pendulum.

Deep down, my self-esteem was in tatters, weighed down by the misguided notion that if my parents really loved me, they would stop drinking. Alcohol became my stage for melodrama, tears flowed, tables overturned and unhinged chaos ensued. I would pick fights with my boyfriend, pushing him away just to see if he would fight to get me back. I had no conception of a healthy relationship. He soon grew weary of my theatrics, and when we broke up, it felt like another shove into the dark chasm of my growing alcoholism.

I could not keep a job, and friends were drifting away faster than I could apologise for my drunken antics. I was desperately unhappy and aching lonely. What once felt electric now felt empty and terrifying.

At twenty-one, tragedy struck. I came home one day to find my mom slumped across her bed. There were empty bottles on the staircase, and I knew she was drunk as usual. I

stood in her room yelling at her and telling her how much she had let me down. She did not reply, and I put my hand on her back to shake her awake, but I was shocked when I felt how cold she was. I noticed blood on the carpet and saw that her face was covered in blood too. I later found out that her head hanging over the edge of the bed had caused blood to rush to her face. The funeral Director strongly advised having a closed casket as her face was blackened from the blood stains and stated she "no longer looked human."

I will never forget going to mortuary to see her one last time. I stood by the ice-cold slab and muttered the words, mom, what have you done to yourself. My heart was broken.

After finding her and calling an ambulance, I headed straight to the pub and started drinking heavily. In retrospect, the absurdity is staggering, raising a glass to the very thing that had killed the woman I loved so dearly. And the insanity did not stop there. Shortly afterwards, my dad met his own tragic end when he was found in a laneway after a fall on his way home from the pub. It had been raining that night, and he was wearing short sleeves. He was found by a milkman on his morning rounds, but it was too late. Pneumonia was the official cause of death, but I know it my heart what the true culprit was. If the grim reaper had lowered his dramatic cape, alcoholism would have been smirking underneath.

John Lennon once said, "Life is what happens when you're busy making other plans," and I believe the same goes for alcoholism. No one sets out to decimate their life, but somewhere between "a quiet pint" and "what the hell happened?" alcoholism creeps in and flips the script.

I did not plan on ruining relationships, losing jobs, and causing mayhem but habits in time become necessities and intentions do not stand a chance against the pull of alcoholic obsession.

Following the harrowing deaths of my parents, I thought I had built up an immunity to the perils of alcohol. I had seen the devastation it caused up close and personal. I knew I occasionally overindulged but convinced myself I had it all under control despite my external and internal worlds crumbling.

Nights blurred into mornings, and the bottle became both my prison and my escape. It was suffocating, yet I clung to the naive hope that if I ever got pregnant, I would magically transform and stop drinking altogether. I thought my maternal instincts would kick in and the love for my child would be enough for me to find peace and to never seek joy in a bottle again. I thought I would raise my child in a stable home where he would never have to hide in a wardrobe or find my body cold.

And then, one day, there they were, two blue stripes on the pregnancy test, staring back at me like a lifeline. I thought, "This is it. The war is over. Freedom is finally mine." But my illness, as it turns out, had other plans. I found myself standing in an off-licence, wrapped in an oversized coat, in a feeble attempt to hide my burgeoning bump as I clung to a bottle of wine. My partner had left, telling me he would not stand by me and that I could not take care of myself never mind a baby. My heart, already battered, felt as though it had shattered into pieces I could never mend.

It was during the Covid lockdown, a time when the world was in a deep slumber. I would perch on the window ledge of my apartment, drinking cans, staring out at the eerily empty streets below. The loneliness was suffocating, yet amidst the despair, there was a tiny flicker of hope within me. Something told me that this little baby was going to change everything. From the very beginning, I knew he was a boy, I could feel it deep in my soul. And somehow, I knew he was extraordinary, destined to bring light to a life that had grown so dark.

Miraculously, my little baby came into this world unscathed and my heart burst with love but only a few weeks after his birth, I found myself with a glass in my hand bewildered and terrified.

A mother's love, as deep and unconditional as it is, could not compete with the grip of alcohol's hold. It was only then that I truly began to understand the pain my own mother must have carried. Her drinking was not a sign that she loved us any less, it was the result of a battle she could not win against a force far beyond her control. When King Alcohol steps into the ring, it is not a fair fight.

Gone were the days of ease, comfort, and fun. Those old friends had packed up and left without saying goodbye. One morning, bleary eyed and heavy hearted, I leaned over to find an empty co-sleeper where my baby had been sleeping. I did not know where he was. It was the worst moment of my life, and I had a lot of contenders for that title by this time. I went into the living room and saw his little basinet beside the radiator. With a pounding heart, I looked inside and saw two big eyes gazing back at me. I believe that moment was my window of sheer Grace. Something deep within me knew it was finally over.

Shaking, I called an ambulance and spent a few nights in hospital going through withdrawal. I will never know if I was hallucinating or not, but a presence that felt like my dad whispered to me, you are fading away, it's over now. I was petrified and called out for the nurse. She recommended I go to a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous as soon as I was discharged. As it was during Covid and there were no physical meetings, she gave me a link to an online meeting.

I did not know what to expect, but deep down, I knew I had no other choice. If I drank again, I would surely lose my life and leave my precious baby without a mother. As I sat

with that thought, memories started flooding back, teachers and employers who once told me I was bright and full of potential, if I could only stop holding myself back. My dad's words echoed in my heart, he had always said I had a kind and tender soul. I knew, despite everything, there was still goodness in me, buried beneath the weight of alcoholism. So, with hope and fear intertwined, I decided to give this AA thing a shot.

The meeting opened with a reading from The Big Book called The Doctors Opinion. A beautiful woman was talking about her drinking experiences and how she had once been a regular patient in the A&E department going through withdrawal, but how she is now 8 years sober and recently qualified as a nurse. I remember her chuckling to herself as she said, I am now the one at the side of the bed dispensing the pills instead of guzzling them! I was mesmerised, how on earth had she done it! My only experience of alcoholism was that people drank themselves into an early grave or alcohol pushed them off a cliff!

I was soon to find out as she gave me her number and she became my sponsor. We met each week over Zoom and read through the Big Book line by line, black ink on white pages, keeping it simple. She suggested I do certain things like pray in the morning and give thanks at night and to have an open mind and trust the process. She assured me I did not need to follow any religion or believe in any specific God, that I just needed to accept that I am an alcoholic who cannot help herself and to ask a power greater than me to give me a helping hand.

The Beatles once sang "and now my life has changed in oh so many ways" and I echo that sentiment.

Four years ago, my world felt like it was sinking under the weight of self-pity, but I have turned my pain into purpose. I now use my journey to

lend a hand to others battling the same illness. The Big Book did not just offer me recovery, it handed me a lifeline, a roadmap to freedom from chronic alcoholism. Within the walls of AA, I have found treasures that I have yet to find anywhere else; wisdom, support, camaraderie, and a love so genuine it feels like home.

Every day brings growth and discovery, and along the way, I unearthed an inner strength I never knew I had. I have formed a bond with a Higher Power, something mysterious and inexplicable, yet undeniably loving and mighty. I am taking my first steps on a spiritual path, guided by the footprints of wise wanderers who have shared their wisdom and hope along the way. We shone a light for each other and for those yet to find us.

Now, life is beautiful in ways I never dared to dream. My son is thriving, I have landed a job I love where I am respected and trusted, but the real gem is the quiet peace I have found within, a gentle compass that steers me through each day.

All credit to the Man upstairs, the wisdom of The Big Book, and the extraordinary fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Dorinda

**One day you will tell
your story of how you
overcame what you
went through and it will
be someone else's
survival guide.**

FROM MY VERY FIRST TASTE OF ALCOHOL I LOVED IT

I found it exciting, exhilarating and I looked forward to the next time I could take another drink. The effect was instant. Everything changed.

I felt more comfortable within myself, it gave me confidence and I felt I could conquer the world. It took away my fear and anxiety. I assumed that everyone had this experience with alcohol so didn't think that my experience was unique to me. I am not sure that I ever drank socially. I always appeared to be the one who didn't want to stop. I never wanted the session to end. As I got older I only liked socialising with people who drank like me.

It wasn't very long before drink started to cause me issues, while this was very obvious to my family and friends, I refused to think that there was anything wrong with my drinking. I just got drunk because I was too tired, too stressed, to fat, to thin, any reason bar the understanding of powerlessness. Besides, I was married, had a full time job, was a mother to two children whom I fed daily, bathed nightly and read endless books to them each night. How could I do all of that if I had a drink problem?!

But I did and after many years of swearing off on solemn oath to never over indulge again, I kept that promise until I drank again... and I always drank again. I couldn't stay stopped.

Eventually I was given a proposition by my husband to stop drinking or our marriage was over. This shocked me as I stupidly didn't think I had an issue with alcohol. I believed that you had to drink bottles of spirits daily and have lost your job, your house, your family etc and none of that had happened to me. I never had a huge capacity for alcohol, but when I drank I drank to drunkenness all of the time.

Eventually I realised that my husband was serious and I felt that I had to make an effort for a couple of months to control my drinking, with no success.

It was suggested that I go to AA by an addiction counsellor whom my husband encouraged me to go and see. I went to a few meetings to keep my husband off my back, thoroughly believing that I would do this for a few weeks and everything would calm down and I could go back to my beloved bottles of wine.

But somehow, I stayed. Albeit I was last into the meetings and first out! I was yet to come to understand the Spirit of the Fellowship aspect of AA. I didn't really listen to the speakers as I still didn't believe I was alcoholic. At my usual one meeting per week, after about seven / eight months reluctantly turning up, I heard a man speak about his thinking. He said he didn't have a drinking problem any more, but he did have a thinking problem. This statement hit me like a ton of bricks.

I for once totally understood what he was speaking about. I too had that washing machine head of which this man spoke. This was the first time I "Identified" in AA. So I continued to go to this one meeting per week and thought I was cured.

After some time, I got over my fear and ventured to a few more meetings more local to where I lived. I continued in this vein for the next seven years. Not drinking, attending meetings but no more.

After a meeting one Saturday morning, I was approached by a member who attended some of the meetings I went too. They asked me what step I was on. I told them I hadn't done the steps. They wanted to know why I



hadn't started the work. I was a bit nervous of them as they were quite assertive and asked me "How free do you want to be?" "Are you serious about your recovery?" "Do you want to do these steps?" I answered " Yes" to all these questions out of fear. They told me to call to their house the following Wednesday at 8pm and they would take me through the book.

And so started my authentic journey of recovery. I discovered many things about myself of which I had no idea. Through working the steps of AA with my Sponsor my life changed immeasurably. I was brought through the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous line by line. My sponsor was never easy on me as they recognised how undisciplined I was, how I lied, how manipulative I was. They took me to a place whereby I eventually surrendered and accepted that I needed to recognise my defects of character and work towards living a more truthful life.

My Sponsor gave me more than I could ever have imagined in terms of my recovery and how I live my life today. There was nothing easy about going through the Steps but I could not live without them in my life today. Despite my fears that it wouldn't work for me, I live my life today safe in the knowledge that I am

being guided by a Power greater than myself. Daily Prayer, Meditation and Self Examination are the mainstay of every 24 hour period for me.

One of the greatest gifts in my recovery was to work with other women and to " Pass it On" as Bill W suggested. In particular working with the wonderful women in the Dochas has been a truly humbling experience for me. There are weekly AA meetings in the prison where we get to share our recovery with these amazing women and they in turn share with us. It is a privilege to listen to them.

I seek the guidance of the HP on a daily basis. I am willing, with the HP's help to keep my side of the street clean. I try to do something for someone else every day as this stops me thinking about myself all of the time! I have a framework of how to live my life today and everyday. The HP has blessed me with the people whom I have become very close to in AA. They are trusted true friends today and hopefully they will be in my life until I take my last breath.

Beyond grateful one day at a time.

Anon

"Why don't you choose your own conception of God?"



Bill W. and Ebby T.

That statement hit me hard. It melted the icy intellectual mountain in whose shadow I had lived and shivered many years.

I stood in the sunlight at last. It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a power greater than myself.

Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning.

Big Book p12



UNITY | SERVICE | RECOVERY



When I came into AA almost 14 yrs ago I had no belief in anything, myself, God or AA and if I'm honest nor did I have an honest desire to stop drinking. My back was against the wall as I was unable to manage the progression of my drinking. Alcohol had encroached into my life to a degree I was no longer able to hide. If I'm honest at that time for me the major problem was that my family, who probably had concerns for quite a while, had enough evidence to confront and in a supportive way try to help.

As alcoholics we know you can't help someone who is still plotting and scheming as to how to get away with continuing to drink. When the socially acceptable glasses of wine are no longer an option it all goes underground and for me this resulted in rapid progression.

In 2012, I reluctantly agreed to go into treatment as I couldn't stop drinking and needed to be removed from it. Following that 8-week programme I didn't have any alcohol for 2 years and 2 months. I went to regular AA meetings, I talked a good enough talk (or so I thought) those in the know were probably thinking this isn't going to end well! I didn't feel I needed a sponsor or a God or a programme. I wasn't drinking so that was good enough. I remember someone saying "when you have enough pain you will move on" I was never going to learn from other people's mistakes I had too much defiance and ego, but I didn't

argue I agreed with you all but knew I'd do it my way.

Inevitably I drank again and those who told me you start back were you left off were right. I was as bad as ever and worse very quickly. That drink lasted 18 months, during that time I had periods not drinking physically and a 12-week period in a treatment centre but mentally I was in a very bad place. I have three children two of them young adults then and I would say and mean I would die for them, but I couldn't stop drinking for them even though I knew I was breaking their hearts.

On Christmas Eve 2015 I was suicidal and totally convinced I was never going to get sober and everyone would be better off without me as I was torturing them. I was in a wee back bedroom in my home I got on my knees and prayed I really begged for help. I now see I had been given the gift of desperation, I was willing to ask for help from a power at that time greater than alcohol as alcohol was the power in my life.

I went back to a lady I had asked to sponsor me; we started the programme. I was willing to do whatever I needed to get into proper recovery. I quickly realised I had lost the obsession to drink. There was no longer the daily debate in my head I had no desire to drink. For me this was the turning point as I knew I hadn't removed that obsession but that my prayer that

desperate Christmas Eve had been answered. I don't think I could have moved forward in AA recovery without that willingness to believe which I had resisted for so long. I was able to approach Step 3 with an open mind and heart and hand over my will and my life to a power I will never fully understand but I believe in.

I don't analyse who or what that power is. I am not involved in any organised religion though I sometimes find myself using prayers I was taught as a child, in those early weeks and months I daily said the Padre Pio novena because it was a copy that belonged to my mum and mattered to her.

Today my contact with my higher power is

more about removal of those defects that are holding me back and stealing my peace of mind. I focus on my gratitude and pray for the health and happiness of my loved ones and those still suffering in and out of the rooms. I do service in my own group and attend regular AA meetings. Both physical and on zoom.

Life is good but of course there are difficult days, I find if I keep in contact with my higher power I can get through the tough days and enjoy the many good days. I was told a grateful alcoholic need never drink and I hope to stay grateful and sober a day at a time and thank my God for our Fellowship

Brenda



I was pretty sick and confused in my early sobriety, and so kept everything really simple when it came to the question of God, I paraphrased the third step this way, whoever it is up there who took care of me as I staggered from bar room to bar room, who guided me while I drove home in a blacked – out condition, who stopped me from seriously injuring my wife and children, who kept me from killing

myself when I was dangerously out of control, please continue with this daily care, because now I'm aware of the intercession and I'm truly grateful for it.

Today my even shorter version of the third step: Keep taking care of me, Lord, because I appreciate it now.

Gary

MIND THE STEP

STEP 3

Step Three (made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him) is undoubtedly the key which opens the door to a new way of living. When I first came to AA and heard people share about God I wanted to run, thinking this is some kind of religious cult or something like that. Having been brought up in a family where prayer was front and centre of everyday life I wanted to get away from all that. Looking back now many years later I can see how the prayers of my late father and mother had saved me from many a bad situation, there had to be a power of some kind looking after me.

Before I look at Step three it is very important to have a good understanding of Step One and Step Two. I am without doubt completely powerless over alcohol which means if I take alcohol of any kind I have no control over how much I will take or how long it will last or what will happen as a result. It dictates the terms. Once I accept that and come to terms with the fact that I will never have success as a drinker the obsession for alcohol is gone but I now have to get on with the business of living. My life is unmanageable drunk or sober when I try to run it. I only have to look at the catalogue of disasters in my life before coming to this program. The very low self-esteem, the pride and ego had weaved a web of fear which had rendered me a flop and a failure from an early age. Discovering alcohol made me feel

normal where I could sing and dance and join in conversations and the world looked different under the influence of alcohol. Alcoholism is the disease that I suffer from, the alcohol is in the bottle (it can't do me any harm in the bottle) the "ISM" is in me. I, self and me constitutes my totally unmanageable life for which I need to have a higher power to take care of all my needs. AA takes me to this power through its recovery program which embraces all creeds, classes believers, nonbelievers, this works for anyone all I have to do is let go of my old life and hand it over in step three to my God of my understanding.

I know God is working in my life because I don't have the worries and stress I used to have, in fact I now see worry as a complete waste of good energy. We had a new church built here back in the eighties, I remember going in to see it and hanging on the wall beside the altar was a huge picture which bore the words BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD. When I can be still and be at peace with me and let the day unfold then I am practicing step three. My higher power is my new manager all I have to do is leave everything in his hands.

**Aidan
Dromore, Co Tyrone**

Heard at Meetings

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

The
Serenity
to accept
the things
I cannot
change

Easy
does it
BUT
Do it!

This program
saved my
life and any
program that
can do that
must be a
good one!

One way to
guard against
feelings of
hate is to
give regard

If you have
to see,
then see
the good in
others!

Let's talk about Public Information (PI)

What is Public Information Work and Why Should AAs do it?

"In all public relationships, AA's sole objective is to help the still suffering alcoholic. We believe that our experience should be made available freely to all who express sincere interest".

The AA Programme works when an active alcoholic wants help and an AA member is available to give that help. Somewhere in the background there has probably been the help of a doctor, an alcoholism agency or facility, a relative or an employer. Someone who knew about AA and how to find us.

From the beginning AA has depended on good community relations to keep those "helping hands" informed and ready.

What is Cooperation with the Professional Community?

Cooperation with the Professional Community (CPC) is carrying the message to the sick alcoholic, through third parties. Professionals often meet the alcoholic in places where AA is not present. Through professional people, we reach alcoholics who might otherwise never find the Programme.

What is a "Professional"?

A family doctor, clergy, a law enforcement or court official, a nurse, an educator, a social worker, an addiction counsellor - anyone who deals with alcoholics in the course of work. Many of these people are in daily contact with the active alcoholic and do not know what to do about it.

Many professionals consider AA to be a vital resource for alcoholics who want help.

Cooperating with professionals means informing them about AA, what it is, what it can do and what it cannot do. When there is a good working relationship between AA members and the community, everyone benefits especially the still-suffering alcoholic.

Those AA members who do PI/CPC service cooperate but are not affiliated with these professionals; we have our separate functions. AA simply has a message to carry about the AA programme of recovery for alcoholics, a programme that has worked for hundreds of thousands who wanted it.

Committee members need to be thoroughly familiar with the AA programme and to be able to provide accurate information about the Fellowship. Additionally, an understanding of all the Traditions, and a firm grasp of the anonymity Traditions are especially vital. The pamphlet 'Understanding Anonymity' and the 'Anonymity Wallet Card' are useful in making the AA anonymity principle clear to the public. (Remember, it is not a break of Tradition 11 when you privately identify yourself as an AA member with non-AA members encountered in the course of PI/CPC work).

Setting Up a PI Committee

"A Public Information Committee shall be elected by the Group Conscience of the relevant Group, Area, or Intergroup and the Committee shall always be accountable to the conscience of the Group, Area or Intergroup that elected them, and report to them on a regular basis. It is recommended that the members of the Public Information Committee should have at least two years continuous sobriety in AA. For this very important and sensitive area of AA activity it is vital that we utilise the best available people from amongst the AA Groups in the Area or Intergroups. Sound sobriety,

a good understanding of the AA Traditions, a good AA judgement, willingness to accept Group Conscience and a record of dedicated service in AA are qualities we should look for when selecting PI Committee members.

Whether you are a PI/CPC representative for your Group, Area, or a member of a Committee trying to get started, do not get discouraged if you find it to be a slow process. Study your Service Handbook and the pamphlets suggested for use in PI. Then set some goals and list projects you would like to work on in the next few months. Many in this type of service work have found it very helpful to try to complete one project before moving on to the next, especially when it is just you or your committee is very small.

Enquire from your GSR if there is an Area PI/CPC Committee representative who may be able to help you get started. Make contact with other group PI/CPC Representatives in your area and share experience, as well as work on local, and area projects, together. This could be the beginning of a PI/CPC Committee in your area. If you are the Area PI/CPC Representative, encourage your groups to send a PI/ CPC Representative to your monthly meetings. A committee can be formed from these representatives.

Once a committee is formed, it is a good idea to decide in advance who is going to do what, in order to avoid friction or duplication of effort. Meetings provide a chance for continuous sharing. Try to meet once a month as this promotes consistency. Coordination between PI/CPC and Hospitals, Treatment Centres and other related facilities is important.

Public Information Projects

- Be sure every library has at least one Conference approved book, e.g. the Big Book, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, or Living

Sober.

- Hold an Open Public meeting.
- Let the Fellowship know how to reach out to the hearing impaired.
- Contact schools, colleges, Garda/Police PSNI stations, doctors' surgeries, hospitals, convalescent homes etc.
- List Open AA meetings in the newspapers in the area.
- Respond to non-AA speaking requests in the area.
- Place Public Service Announcements with radio, newspaper and other local media.

AA Group Public Information Committee

The group PI Committee is made up of the chairperson and other interested group members.

Responsibilities include:

- Meet regularly, usually monthly, if numbers permit.
 - Organise Open Meetings
 - Provide Garda/Police PSNI Stations, doctors' surgeries, libraries, churches and other public areas with AA posters.
 - Learn all they can about the PI literature.
 - Share the lessons learned with other groups in the area.
 - Identify professional bodies, including schools and colleges that would benefit by learning more about AA.
 - Provide information about AA to those who have contact with alcoholics through their profession such as health care professionals, educators, members of the clergy, lawyers, social workers, as well as those working in the field of alcoholism.
 - Assist PI Committees in other groups by supplying speakers for Open Meetings.
- AA Group Public Information Chair
- We suggest a two-year commitment.
 - Attend Area PI Committee meetings. This helps with coordination and ensures that you are not duplicating work done by other groups.

- Supply a PI report to their own group conscience meeting.
- The chair should have some experience in PI work and strong knowledge of the Traditions and in particular what anonymity means in relation to AA.
- Provide the group treasurer with a rough estimate of annual expenses for budgeting purposes and provide Treasurer with copies of all receipts related to group PI work.
- Prior approval of Group Conscience is required before incurring any expenses and receipts for same ought to be returned to the Treasurer.
- Attends Area PI Workshops and Committee Meetings.
- Strives to inform and encourage members who may be the next Group PI Chair. This provides continuity.
- We suggest that the chairperson has no other service obligations, as this commitment is very time-consuming.

AA Area Public Information Committee

The Area PI Committee is made up of the PI representative of each group in the area.

Responsibilities include:

- Meet regularly if numbers permit.
- Coordinate the rotation between groups of Open Meetings and other PI work.
- Supply an Area PI report to their own area meeting for circulation to the groups with the Area minutes.
- Hold PI workshops.
- Be familiar with PI literature.
- Share experiences with other groups.

AA Area Public Information Chair

- The position is a two-year commitment.
- The chair should have experience in group level PI work.
- The chair should have some experience in PI work and strong knowledge of the Traditions and in particular what anonymity means in relation to AA.
- Should be comfortable working with media.

- Inform groups who have not yet got someone to carry out the PI function about how to do this within their own group.
- Should create and maintain a list of speakers who have experience in PI work.
- Prior approval of Group Conscience is required before incurring any expenses and receipts for same ought to be returned to the Treasurer.
- Serves as a resource for Group PI Committees in carrying the AA message to the still-suffering alcoholic by informing the general public, media, schools, industry, doctors, clergy, judges and social workers, etc. about what the programme has to offer.
- Distribute AA posters (posters should include the venue, date and time of the PI Meeting) and other PI literature to the groups.
- Attends all Area and Intergroup Workshops and Committee Meetings related to PI work.
- It is suggested that the chairperson has no other service obligations.

AA Intergroup Public Information Committee

The Intergroup Public Information Committee is made up of the PI Chair, PI Treasurer, PI Secretary, and the PI Chairpersons of other areas within your Intergroup.

Responsibilities include:

- Attending Intergroup PI Committee meetings which are responsible for the coordinating PI within the Intergroup.
- Be familiar with PI literature.
- Agree the structure of the PI workshops, which inform members about Public Information and how it is implemented.
- Assist areas to establish PI committees.
- Area and Intergroup PI reports ought to be collated for distribution among Committee members.

AA Intergroup Public Information Chair

- The position is a two-year commitment.
- The chair should have experience in PI work and service structure.
- Responsible for allocating PI requests from

GSO to relevant areas.

- Responsible for media relations at regional level.
- Communicates with PI chairs from other Intergroups.
- The Chairperson should have experience in PI work and strong knowledge of the Traditions and in particular what anonymity means in relation to AA.
- Prior approval of Group Conscience is required before incurring any expenses and receipts for same ought to be returned to the Treasurer.
- Serves as a resource for Area PI Committees.
- Attends PI workshops where possible.
- Inform and encourage Public Information Committee members who may be interested the being available for the next Intergroup PI Chair. This provides continuity.
- It is suggested that the chairperson has no other service obligations.

Don't forget AA approved posters are available free of charge and can be ordered from GSO online shop. The only cost for your group, area, intergroup will be postage.

In the next issue we will cover 'Sponsoring AA Members into PI Service' 'Purpose of PI Service' 'Points for PI Volunteers to Remember'

Conference 2026

A gentle reminder that the closing date for motions to Conference has changed this year. Motions should be received by the Board Secretary no later than November 1st, through the Structure.

General Secretary

After many years of deliberation, and due in part to our ever increasing governance responsibilities, the General Service Board made a decision last year to appoint a new General Secretary, similar to other countries. This will be a full time salaried position, based in the General Service Office. This decision was ratified by an Extraordinary General Meeting of GSBAA clg., in February 2025. This position will be advertised in the future. You can obtain more information about this new role from your GSCDs at your local Area committee meeting.



IMPORTANT REMINDER

If you are leaving this publication in a public place such as a treatment centre, prison or doctors surgery - please be sure to remove the centre pages beforehand.

IRISH OVERSEAS

My name is Martin and I am an alcoholic.

I was born and raised in the North East coast of Ireland, but was unable to find work after university due to the aftermath of the 2008 recession, and made the short hop over the Irish Sea to the North West of England, breaking my mother's heart in the process. On leaving Ireland, I can confirm my five (or any length of) year plan did not include becoming an alcoholic.

Going back to my beginning on earth, I was born into a two-parent family as the only child. I was a very sensitive kid, who took my emotional support teddy (Winnie the Pooh, if you're asking) with me on holidays far longer than I would care to admit. As far back as I can remember I have had an active imagination, and a strong inclination to avoid reality: a combination which allowed me to escape into a fantasy world whenever I needed.

My schooling was Catholic, which instilled me with a strong faith right-up to and maybe even a year or two into the commencement of my drinking years. Aged 14 or 15 I had my first drink outside the confines of family events, and though I can't say it lit me up as I sometimes hear from other alcoholics, I did drink myself into a blackout on my first taste of freedom with alcohol. I had the allergy to alcohol right from the off. If only I would have known then what I know now...nothing would have changed, it took all the pain of my journey into active alcoholism to be granted the awareness and desire to change.

My early years of drinking were characterised by 'one-off' binges at the weekend, often being

sick, blacking out, and eventually passing out. Aged around 16 I discovered weed, and this did instantly light me up and caused me to mitch off from school, as well as Mass, to smoke it. At this point my faith in a God left me and though I did return to it in desperation, I never followed it with any conviction or belief from then until I entered recovery. I struggled through my last two years at school but somehow crammed enough in those final months to qualify for University. In honesty, I chose my degree course based on a teacher's recommendation, as I had no idea at all of who I was or what I wanted to do (save for wanting to party and delay entering the workforce).

At university the same patterns reemerged, smoking weed daily, bingeing on alcohol two to three times a week. I failed my second year of university twice, and had my first taste of alcohol poisoning. This stopped me drinking for all of a week. I do remember some friends who were heavy drinkers themselves being concerned by my level of drunkenness on multiple occasions, though I only ever heard of this second-hand. Here, I believe, the mental obsession was beginning to take hold. Upon eventually completing university, I took a year off before pursuing a career. Unfortunately, I wasn't able to 'find myself', but I did enjoy a period of guilt free drinking and using, finding just enough part-time work to afford to keep up my habits. I became exhausted by this lifestyle, and found a job in England. My hometown, my family, my friends, so I thought, were the shackles around my ankles, and this move was what I needed to straighten out. The time had come to show the world that I was misunderstood and really was a somebody.

That 'somebody' instantly found the only pub in the small village. I had digs in and within my first week ended up in a lock-in, reciting Eminem on top of the bar. Nothing changed. In fact, since I was now on a full-time salary, this increased my ability to fund drinking and led to more partying than when I was back home. The next few years were marked by multiple geographicals across cities in England, a number of girlfriends I hoped might save me, testing different drinks (including gluten-free) in an effort to limit the consequences, switching friend groups (ok, drinking buddies at best) and even a few failed attempts at therapy. The grand result of all this was that I continually got worse, I developed a cocaine habit which allowed my binges to continue for multiple days, regularly starting on Thursday and returning home Sunday. My attempt to manage my own addiction had gone so well that I made my first appearance at an AA meeting at age 29, following a family member's advice.

Unfortunately, I did not get sober from my first meeting. I had no comprehension that I had just been introduced to what, I today believe is the best thing in my life.

The main share told their story, and far from identifying I considered it tragic and it reassured me I could not possibly be an alcoholic. Though I was moved by how their life had changed for the better. After a few meetings, I stopped attending - safe in the knowledge that I was not an alcoholic.

Over the next few years my illness got progressively worse, as I am sure I would have heard in the meetings I attended had I the capacity to listen at the time. I was hospitalised on multiple occasions, lost my driving license and came very close to losing my career, which remarkably was going quite well. Sensing the wheels were coming off, but far from conceding to alcoholism, I attempted a 'one-year-no-beer' support group. Having completed 60 days without too much struggle,

I felt confident in my ability and transitioned to the softer 90-day programme. Four days later I returned to drinking in my old fashion. Eventually after another one of my sprees, I had the now familiar feeling of wanting to take my own life. However, this time felt different. I couldn't feel the love of my parents 'preventing' me, I felt very close to taking my own life and realised I was in real trouble. I found myself back at AA, this time no one had to tell me, I went of my own volition.

I muddled through my first year, managing to get some sobriety time, but I was fighting the programme and feeling incapable of fully accepting to my inner-most self that I was an alcoholic. Humbled and baffled by two more drinking sprees, I then got to a position at two and half months sober, where I didn't want to drink, but I couldn't live in my head. I fell asleep during a meeting and upon awakening, I heard three people from different backgrounds share exactly how my head works. The penny dropped. I got full acceptance of being an alcoholic.

At six months sober, I came to another jumping off place, not wanting to drink but not wanting to live. I became willing to believe through trusting what I saw in others in AA, that a Power Greater than me could restore me to sanity. I thought, given my rejection of my Catholic upbringing, that the word God would be the reason I would struggle with AA's spiritual programme. However, it was actually coming to terms with the fact that I could live a life worth living, without my solution, alcohol. Today, through the spiritual awakening as a result of doing the 12 steps, I have a Higher Power of my own understanding which I choose to call God. This Power is at work in my life, and over any significant period of time the connection has grown and become more prominent, as my gratitude for life grows. I may not have come into AA to scoff, but I certainly did not come to pray. Remarkably to me though, having a relationship with a Higher Power, and seeing it take hold in others is the central source of joy, peace and fulfilment in my life today. I love

AA, and nowadays I am happy to declare that to anybody.

As I write this, God willing, I am approaching my fourth sobriety birthday in August. Though I have found the journey to live a life in sobriety challenging, I love my life today. I have a home group where I do service, I attend other AA meetings regularly, and I have the joy of being able to sponsor other alcoholics. I stay connected and whilst not perfect, I am growing spiritually. Most of my friends today are in recovery, with whom I travel, hike, attend football matches and gigs, all without

ever wanting or needing a drink. I came into AA wanting to stop drinking, but I have been given infinitely more. Though there has been painful experiences and rough patches, over any substantial period of time it gets better. I am eternally grateful to the fellowship, to the God of my understanding, and though I used to hate when people said this, I truly believe today the best is yet to come.

Good day or night and God bless you on your journey.

Martin

JON B'S STORY

I can remember very well approaching Step 3 in the program. At the time I felt that it seemed uncomfortably religious, but I was sold on the idea of the AA 12 Steps so put aside the prejudice I held and did it with my Sponsor anyway. I had no feeling of elation or any other spiritual reaction when it was done, only a sense of relief. It was not until I did Steps 4,5,8 & 9 did I begin to see the significance of what had happened previously. The decision to formally turn my will and life over to the care of God as I understood him had opened the door sufficiently for my God to have influence on my life and to give me the courage for the steps that lay ahead of me. Never was this clearer than when I did my Ninth Step amends because as the saying goes "The power behind me is greater than the obstacle in front of me" It was at this time that I truly realised the power of Step 3. I would like to think that in the days that have followed that my God continues to have a strong voice within me through the Step 3 prayer.

I feel very grateful to AA that I could choose my own conception of God and in the years that have followed, God to me has been expressed

either vocally or just in my mind in some of the following ways:

- My Father in heaven
- Higher Power
- God
- G.O.D. - Good Orderly Direction
- G.O.D. - Group Of Drunks (An AA Meeting)
- Spirit of the universe

There are of course a multitude of other expressions of this on what is AA's broad spiritual highway.

As far as God's will for me I try to keep things really simple. The starting point is to stay sober and live my best life asking for the help and strength not to live how I used to. Beyond that I thank AA for another wonderful saying, that being "Do the next right thing" As living like that things seem to work out as they should. Any day started with the 3rd Step prayer is usually a day well lived. That tells me all I need to know about this step.

Jon B



STEP THREE

Hi everyone, this is my story of how I got to Step 3 and what doing it to the best of my ability has done for me.

I came into AA after drink had me completely beaten, people all around me could see it and did try to help but to no avail, the only one who could not see that I was in trouble was me. There were all the usual problems money, job, relationships and most importantly my family was being hurt mentally and physically, the list goes on and on. I got arrested for violence in the home but thankfully my family stuck by me as did my employer. On discharge from the hospital, I joined my local group. I listened to people talking about the program. So, I knew I would need to do it, so I got the perfect person to take me through the program and that was "Myself" and I also cherry picked at the steps, a recipe for a disaster.

Finally, after several years, everything went pear-shape, marriage failed, financially in deep trouble. I could not handle it and I was on the verge of taking a drink, thank God I didn't, my group was on that night I went to a meeting, and everything came out, and they said we all know. It was at this point I asked a person to help me with the program.

Steps One and Two were completed fairly quickly. I had surrendered, I knew alcohol had beaten me and I had a life that was unmanageable in every way, Step 2 was hard after all I am an intelligent person, so I am not stupid or insane. It was then pointed out to me that I had managed to be treated in a mental

asylum not once but twice and also along with some other personal things. So, we had arrived at Step 3, I was told to read and study the pages about the step. Step Three was done in my house but as we were starting I was asked to kneel down by my sponsor and say the Step 3 prayer. I can remember hoping no one would see me, today I look back and laugh.

God, I offer myself to Thee - To build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life."

I was then asked to give my views and thoughts on my higher power, as I understood him. I went on to say when things were bad, I would pray to God for help to get me out of whatever trouble I was in. Then I would put him back in the shoe box until the next time and so the vicious circle continued. It was pointed out to me that I was the type of person that wanted to be in control of things and that this step involves making a decision to turn one's will and life over to the care of a higher power and this could be hard for me given my controlling nature.

We sat down and talked about the following how it had affected our lives


- How has acting on my own self-will affected my life and others?
- How can I take action to turn it over to the care of God?
- What is the difference between my will and God's will?
- How is my God working in my life?
- Does my current concept of a God working in my life need to change?
- How may my life be changed if I make the decision to "turn it over?"
- Am I unwilling to do things in my recovery that are being suggested?

At the end of our meeting I left with a different feeling within, a feeling that all was going to be okay. However, I knew that this came with a price, that would be I would be doing Gods will, not mine as my will had been unsuccessful

and left me with an unmanageable and powerless life. I knew I would be alright as I had the willingness to do what was needed and surrender my will and life to the care off my God.

What is it like today, I have good days I have bad days, that is life, but with the program of recovery and my higher power (who I call God) I will be able to live my life to the fullness the way I always wanted it. Don't get me wrong I am not perfect, I will take my life and will back, it happens, but it is usually not for too long. I have a good conscious contact with my god from the moment I get up to the moment I go to sleep and sometimes many times in between. How, do I do that I talk to God as a very good friend who guides me, keeps me safe and is always there for me.

Anon

¹ **surrender** 

verb | sur·ren·der | \sə-'ren-dər\

Simple Definition of SURRENDER
Popularity: Top 20% of words

: to agree to stop fighting, hiding, resisting, etc., because you know that you will not win or succeed

: to give the control or use of (something) to someone else

: to allow something (such as a habit or desire) to influence or control you



THIRD STEP

I came into Alcoholics Anonymous first time in 1991 but truly believed I was not an alcoholic. It took many years of denial and suffering to come to my knees and realise I was an alcoholic. I attended meetings looking for help but only when I was drunk.

I knew something was wrong with me but thought I could manage my own life and tried and failed many times to control my drinking.

In the last two years of my drinking the emotional and physical pain was unbearable and it was only when I cried out to god please help me one February morning after a blackout that I felt a change come over me. My first thought on waking was I've got to get back to AA. I had an unexpected visitor to my home the next day who happened to be in the fellowship and I just couldn't believe it. They had called thinking a relative was at my house, I told her I needed to get back to AA and the feeling inside me was so strong that this was no coincidence.

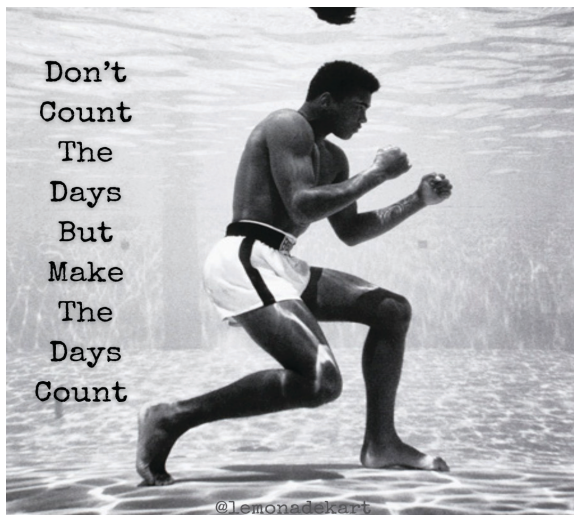
I went with her to a meeting that night fourteen years ago and the obsession to drink was removed that night I knew I was being helped by a power greater than myself from then up until now.

Many things have happened for me to be able to trust my higher power and believe I'm not in control and when I finally conceded to my innermost self I was alcoholic and powerless the miracles happen.

My experience was I had to suffer pain and emotional turmoil before I could accept a good in my life. There was nowhere left to go or try as I had exhausted every avenue to control my drinking and had to get to the stage of helplessness and stop denying and blaming others for my situation.

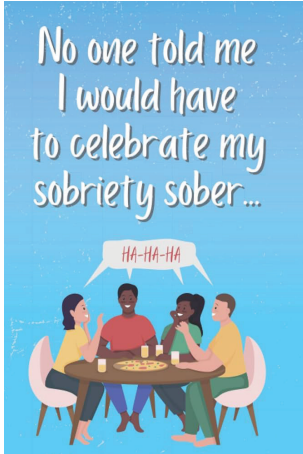
I'm a very grateful member of Alcoholics Anonymous and the miracles keep happening to convince me I'm being looked after.

Moira, Larne Group



HUMOUR

“My spiritual awakening has involved three major leaps: Save Me, Help Me, and Use Me.”



This is a picture of the big book of Alcoholics Anonymous.....On the left it has all of the pages ripped out that refer to God and or higher power and on the right it's in its entirety.....Any questions about what the program is really about???



QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

WITH PAULA

How long have you been sober?

12 years.

What brought you to the fellowship?

I began drinking when I was sixteen. In my twenties my family raised concerns about my drinking. They seen that my drinking was not normal but at that time I didn't see any problem with my drinking. My uncle died young from alcoholism so my mother knew (before I did) , that my drinking was not normal. I know that sounds insane because when I look back, I never had control of my drinking from the first to the last drink I took. From the first drink I took I loved the effect and wanted more, even though it tasted rotten. I loved how it took away the feelings of dis –ease within me. I always felt like I never fitted in – not good enough, self conscious, backward and felt awkward especially in social situations. Alcohol freed me from all those feelings and inhibitions.

At this time I had a cousin who had recovered in the fellowship and my Mum had asked him to speak to me about my drinking. He came with his Big Book and chatted to me about

his journey and recovery. I agreed to go to a meeting with him the next evening. The next evening he was unwell but I went ahead to first meeting on my own.

Was there anything you found off putting when you first came into meetings?

I don't recall a lot about my first meeting. I remember the secretary and everyone welcoming me. I probably wasn't that interested because I didn't believe I was an alcoholic, therefore I was different to "these" people. I didn't take it seriously at all. I know now that I had not reached my rock bottom. I didn't have the desire to stop drinking and I had no clue that I was an alcoholic or even what that meant.

I was a wreck and wasn't keen on sharing in the early days but as time passed, I learned the importance of sharing as my way of contributing to the meeting and also felt the benefit of sharing with another alcoholic because they understood me. That gave me hope.

What slogan is your favourite?

Keep coming back. When I tried to stop drinking, I became a binge drinker with periods on and off alcohol. I had many trips in and out of AA. Many times after these binges I did not want to go back to AA with the guilt, shame and despair I felt. However I knew without AA, I didn't stand a chance and I was afraid I was going to die. I know today that continuing to go back to meetings saved my life.

Does your family feel the ripple effect of sobriety?

Absolutely. Alcoholism is a family disease and recovery ripples in the same way. My family tried for years to help me and at times had to take a step back from me for their own sanity. My siblings had also their own children who needed them. My parents were at their wits end. My drinking left a trail of destruction, caused a lot of hurt and brought a lot of shame to my family.

Through AA 12 steps recovery programme, I was able to see how selfish I was in my thinking and my actions. I became willing to change and was able to make amends to all those I had hurt. In doing so, relationships were mended and became better than they had ever been before. I will be eternally grateful for the deeper relationship I gained with my parents. Today I have a great relationship with all my family and they are extremely proud of me.

I also feel very grateful that today I also have my own little family. Another gift of sobriety. Every day I thank God for being blessed with my two beautiful children. Sobriety has given me the life I used to dream of.

Has the ability to do your job improved?

My sobriety enabled me to embark on a career change. At the end of my drinking I had no job and was unemployable because I was so

unreliable. When I stopped drinking I went back to study and obtained First Class Honours in Social Work. I would never have achieved this without using the programme to live one day at a time, trust in my Higher Power and God providing me with courage to change and keep on going despite the fear. Before I got sober I never believed I could do anything like this. If I can do it, so can you.

Is just taking what is on offer enough or do you feel you need to give back?

I feel very strongly that we have a duty to give back. The only thing asked of me is to give back what was freely given to me. If others hadn't given back then I wouldn't have got sober. I could never repay AA for the life it has given me and I feel very passionate about protecting AA. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety. It is totally wrong on so many levels to take the message outside of AA and attempt to parcel it up to sell as something else, other than what they learned in the rooms of AA. It concerns me to see a rising number of ego driven alcoholics using our message for their own gain, with zero consideration for AA or the vulnerable still suffering alcoholic.

What is your message to the newcomer?

Give it an honest try. Listen and identify with others, do not compare. Please, please keep coming back, no matter what. Even if you take a drink, come back. Everyone will be glad to see you back, despite what your head might try to tell you.

Honestly, I never lived until I got sober. Active alcoholism was just a hopeless existence. If I had died from alcoholism, I would have died without ever having lived.

DAY BY DAY

**Enjoy the calm and the
peace of today,
Knowing that
everything's ok,
Just for today,
And in a silent way,
Embrace all surroundings of
this new day,
And pray...for the help that
is always there,
So you won't stray...
into nowhere.
Day by beautiful day.**





WE DO RECOVER

Killarney 2026

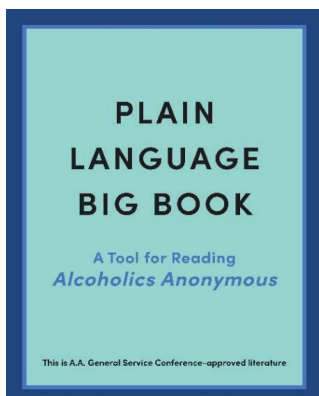


Alcoholics Anonymous 69th All Ireland Convention

Celebrating 80 Years of Alcoholics Anonymous in Ireland

Gleneagle Hotel Killarney, Co. Kerry, V93 V6WF
17th, 18th, 19th April 2026





Plain Language Big Book: A Tool for Reading Alcoholics Anonymous

Available in English only.

The *Plain Language Big Book* was written to help readers better understand the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* — fondly called “the Big Book” by A.A. members. This new book describes A.A.’s Twelve Step program in simpler language than the original Big Book, which was first published in 1939.

The *Plain Language Big Book* presents in simpler language:

- The ideas contained in the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*
- Specific A.A.-related words and phrases used in the original Big Book that may be dated or unfamiliar to readers
- The core content of the original Big Book without member stories

This book is General Service Conference-approved literature.

Data extracted from AA World Services website aa.org



The Twelve Traditions

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 non-professional, 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

The Twelve Steps

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.



The Road Back Editorial Team would love to hear your stories, snippets of AA humour, amusing anecdotes overheard at meetings, maybe you have some AA cartoons.

Email articles to roadback@alcoholicsanonymous.ie or post to the General Service Office.



Up to date information on forthcoming AA Events can be viewed on our website www.alcoholicsanonymous.ie