

Roundabout

July 2020 £1

Your meeting in print



*Special Themed Issue:
The AA Slogans*

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.



Preamble

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, 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.

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email: roundabout@aamail.org

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SUB-COMMITTEE NOTICE BOARD

ROUNABOUT SUB-COMMITTEE – VACANCIES

The Roundabout Sub-Committee of the Roundabout magazine invites applicants from all Regions of Scotland to join the Editorial Team as Proof Readers for a service period of four years. There are currently two vacancies.

Role Responsibilities

As a Proof Reader your primary duties will be to read the articles sent to Roundabout magazine by the Fellowship to ensure that they meet the criteria for publication including: An ability to read with scrutiny each article submitted, to ascertain that it is appropriate and relevant and interesting to the Fellowship. Have an ability to amend any grammatical or spelling errors. Edit the articles to a manageable length for publication. Have an understanding of the AA Steps, Traditions, Concepts and Guidelines along with an awareness of Conference-approved literature.

Role Requirements

A minimum of five years continuous sobriety. A high standard of English literacy. A proficiency in computer technology. A desire and ability to work as part of a team. Service as a Roundabout Liaison Officer at group, intergroup or regional level would be advantageous. Flexibility to adapt and assist with other roles within the Editorial Team, as appropriate, and delegated by the Editor.

Applications should be endorsed by intergroup or region and accompanied by a letter of support. Current application forms can be accessed and downloaded from the Roundabout vacancy page or document library of the AA website or by contacting admin.nothernserviceoffice@gsogb.org.uk or phone 041 226 2214.

Applications should be forwarded by email to Jenny.Pryke@gsogb.org.uk or posted to Jenny Pryke at The General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous, (Great Britain) Limited, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York, YO1 7NJ.

The closing date for applications is 18th July 2020.

If you are interested in becoming a proof reader and joining the Editorial team and would like to discuss it further, in the first instance, please contact the Roundabout Trustee at: trustee.highlandsregion@gsogb.org.uk

Terri S – Board Trustee for Roundabout

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The Editor invites the submission of articles and letters which should be sent to:

ROUNDABOUT

**Northern Service Office
Alcoholics Anonymous
50 Wellington Street
Glasgow G2 6HJ
Tel: 0141 226 2214
or by e-mail to:
roundabout@aamail.org**

Articles and letters will be attributed to 'Anonymous' if the writer wishes, but the original submission to the Editor should include name, address and telephone number (these details will not be published).

The Editor cannot guarantee to publish all materials submitted or return contributed matter. Payment for any submissions cannot be made. **Roundabout does not publish poetry or obituaries.** Contributors are asked to accept these conditions.

Payments and administrative enquiries should be sent to:

**AA ROUNDABOUT
Alcoholics Anonymous
P.O. Box 1
10 Toft Green
York YO1 7NJ**

Telephone enquiries can be made between 10am and 2pm
Monday to Friday on 01904 644026

Editorial

The AA slogans are the chosen theme for this month's Roundabout. Apart from newcomers who have found Alcoholics Anonymous online during the Covid-19 lockdown, most of us can remember when we first saw the slogans. It was as we tried to steady our nerves as well as our shaking hands before that first meeting began.

These snippets of wisdom are tips on *how* to actually change if we want what is on offer in AA and they are short enough and memorable enough to penetrate even the most befuddled of minds.

Whilst derision and contempt is the first reaction to the slogans for some, the longer we stick around, the harder we listen and the more we get into action, the more we come to fully appreciate the profundity of their meaning. My initial, contemptuous reaction to the slogans serve as a timely reminder of how close-minded I was. I particularly bristled at 'Keep It Simple' but now know that my best days in recovery are when I keep things as simple as possible.

The cartoons within this month's magazine deserve a very special mention. Back in 1980 they were introduced in the following way:

'In this issue we introduce Who-o-o Me, the owl who has a slogan ready for every occasion. Our slogans are, in a way, condensed A.A. wisdom and we hope that this feathery character will be appearing regularly with an "instant" A.A. message.'

For the next year or so readers of Roundabout would often see the Who-o-o Me owl grasping one of the slogans in his beak and all of us on the editorial team hope you get as much pleasure from seeing these newly digitalised cartoons as we have.

We would especially like to ask the Fellowship if anyone can recall **Ron D** who was responsible for the cartoons. If anyone has any information please email the editor at: roundabout@aamail.org

Taken from *PASS IT ON*, P220.

Some “A.A. saws” were also used as long ago as the late 1930’s: “First Things First,” “Easy Does It,” “Live and Let Live.” Because these appear in the first edition of the Big Book (at the end of the chapter on “The Family Afterward”) it’s probable that the use of the slogans originated with Bill and that he brought them with him from Vermont – old saws with new teeth.

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Taken from the chapter: *The Family Afterwards in Alcoholics Anonymous*, p135-149.

We have three little mottoes which are apropos. Here they are: “FIRST THINGS FIRST” “LIVE AND LET LIVE” and “ EASY DOES IT.”

The Roundabout Sub-committee hope to continue with themed editions for the remainder of this year.

August: Came To Believe

September: The Traditions

October: Unity

November: Recovery

December: Service

We look forward to receiving your articles based on these themes.

An article taken from The Roundabout Magazine: May 1981

“STUPID SAYINGS” WHICH BECAME PART OF HIS LIFE

When I first came to the Fellowship I used to hear other members speak of the Slogans as if they meant an awful lot to them in the running of their lives, and I, who was still sick physically, mentally and spiritually thought that they were talking a lot of rubbish. Sayings such as “Think, Think, Think”, “Let Go Let God”, “Easy does it”, “Live and Let Live” But for the Grace of God” etc. etc. were, to my way of thinking meant for children and “Holy Rollers”.

After being in the Fellowship for a few days, to my amazement and that of my Family’s and Friends, by staying around and doing what was suggested to me, such as staying away from that first drink, doing many meetings and keeping sober company, I gradually came to believe that the “stupid sayings” as I had called them and thought them to be, became important because I now realise that for all the time which I had spent drinking (40 years) I had been going about getting into all kinds of trouble with family, money, work and friends. I realised that in all that time I had been going about without the Grace of God whom I had discarded many years before, thinking that I by myself could do everything without the help of anyone, far less the help of God.

I am thankful today for the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, as it showed me that no one, not even me, with my big ego can get along in this world without help, from a Higher Power which I choose to call God. Every day of my life now I ask Him very sincerely to give me Grace and Serenity to get through that day.

At meetings I am the type of person who wants to say just how I feel but when it comes to my turn to speak the words just don’t seem to come out. I know however, what is in my heart and I hope that if I stick around long enough, one day at a time, someday I will be able to say the things I would like to say, and to really show my gratitude to a Fellowship which is second to none.

May you all find the Grace and Serenity which I am enjoying at the moment.

Brickie Jimmy
Clydebank Friday



The AA Slogans

When I first got to AA there were sayings all over the walls of the meeting room. Still in a haze from my last drunken spree I failed to see the point of them. Their relevance has become clearer the longer I've stuck around and they now hold a much deeper meaning for me.

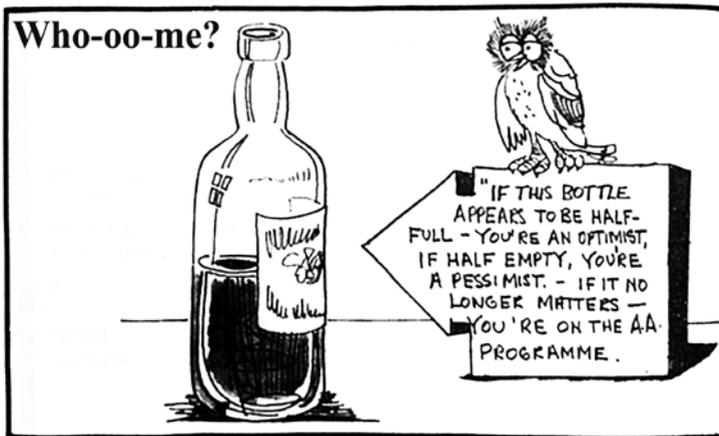
'One Day At A Time'. We all have 24 hours in the day. No more, no less. The issue I have is staying present in that time frame. I have the tendency to project, worrying about the days, weeks and months ahead. Being where I am today, is exactly where I should be and this slogan helps remind me of that important fact.

Being an alcoholic I can also be guilty of over complicating most things in my life. In my case 'Keep it Simple' reminds me that my over thinking and fantasizing are to be kept in check. If I forget to keep things simple my life becomes difficult very quickly.

'Nothing changes if nothing changes!' What does that even mean? At first it made no sense to me at all. Now though, I understand it. Unchecked, I have a tendency to worry about everything from not having money for booze to the melting polar ice caps and now, this global pandemic. That worry is all born from fear. A fear that I won't get what I want, need or deserve, that I will die or the world will end before everyone realises I am a legend! Unchecked, I become so pessimistic that I forget that it is by simply changing the way I react to situations, instead of expecting the world to sing my tune, that ensures life remains great.

This is my experience of just a few of the slogans which were used long before I got here and will be here long after I've gone.

Craig C
Young In Sobriety Tuesday



The End Of Isolation

I celebrated 39 years of continuous sobriety in AA on Easter Sunday. I am now in isolation like lots of folk and was just thinking of how we isolated ourselves for those last years of our drinking. We didn't even know we had a 'dis-ease' or illness. Nobody understood us because we didn't understand ourselves. It's a lonely road at the end, if we are fortunate enough to get there through our Higher Power.

I was very fortunate that someone took me to my first meeting. At the time I had been relieved from my homeless state by the Salvation Army in Greenock. I was detoxing and needed a safe place to get my head together but didn't stay there long as I don't like taking orders. Which alcoholic does? Since that Sunday afternoon at two o'clock I have not had to drink through being restored to sanity. The right time, people and place had arrived for me. Without you and the Programme I'm sure I would have been a lost cause. Thank you AA and all the folk in it who passed on the information I needed. Whatever we want to call it, I had got it but I didn't know. All these years later, I certainly know now, alright.

A lot has happened since then. I got my daughters back in my life after 20 and 30 years. I have two sons who would never walk by me. I have a few health issues but who hasn't? The worst one among them remains alcoholism. Other folk the same as me get on with it by sharing and caring for one another. Encouragement is everything, especially when feeling you're the only one. So thank you one and all.

May your Higher Power be with you all. God bless!

Michael
Greenock St Laurence's Saturday

The Path Was Always There

Alcohol took away my route. It stole direction from me and took away the way markers. I'd lost the hill cairns and wandered aimlessly. The road had narrowed until I could not see the point of anything. I had no purpose, no hope, no belief in a destination or departure point. My boots grew dusty; forgotten, with worn laces. No carry pack sat ready for an unexpected adventure. No flask warmed for tea or sandwiches prepared. All maps and compass were long forgotten. Sadness and regret for walks once taken and mountains once climbed was all I had.

Then, slowly and gently, after finding AA the light began to get back in. A new foundation to a new path to tread was shown to me and, shakily at first, I built my own. The path was not laid in a neat linear pattern and I didn't always clearly see the way ahead but I had a spark of hope. First an AA door marked the way followed by a smile, a welcome and a lovely, shaky cup of tea. That was the first mountain path boulder laid down. A phone number exchanged gave me a second and then a 24 hour chip the third. From the honest stories shared I got identification, hope and belief. The boulders were laid where they fitted best with smaller ones gently placed or dropped in between. I didn't always see who brought them but I felt the ground get steadier beneath me.

One day I looked down and I had on my boots with brand new laces, bright and strong. The pack was ready with a flask of hot tea and cheese sandwiches and a route was planned. I started slowly at first with short outings or meanders along known paths. Fleeting at first, my gratitude began to build and as my confidence grew it became steadier. I could lift my head and look along the path and see the mountains I wanted to climb and the adventures I wanted to take.

I think in hindsight the path was always there. It was just hidden from me for a while until my sight cleared and the light got in. Today, in these strange times of worldwide powerlessness we all have the potential to slightly lose our path. I know for certain it's essential for me to remember those early faltering days and to draw on my gratitude and believe deeply that the way will become clearer, just as it did once before.

Jane

Portobello Seaside Sunday

Submit your article to roundabout@aamail.org

Points To Ponder

“Live! Be concerned with your own living.
In our opinion, staying sober opens up the way to life
and happiness. It is worth sacrificing many a grudge
or argument....”

(Living Sober, pg 12)



Slogans, Sayings And Acronyms

If like me, you are inundated with profound and inspirational quotes on your social media platforms then perhaps you may identify with my comparisons between these and the similar positive and encouraging slogans, signs and acronyms of our amazing AA Fellowship. Hopefully, unlike me initially, you will recognise whilst our slogans are comforting and motivating, they require action to bring their substance into reality.

My original understanding of the purpose of the slogans was that they existed simply to make the meeting rooms look more attractive and positive. Indeed, I remember asking at one meeting if I could buy them at one of the major newsagents!

Fortunately, I had asked an ‘old timer’ who then explained these objects and sayings came from the experiences of the many who had set the path for us to follow. He changed my blinkered view that they were ‘moving’ and ‘poignant’ quotes into the belief these were the very foundations for growth and they required my active engagement. He told me when working with others I should try to explain their purpose and meaning and not just ‘parrot’ the slogan, sign or acronym.

I subsequently applied, and keep on applying, the first one he explained to me: ‘Keep it Simple’ which through experience and challenge I have come to believe underpins my life. I am the obstacle to the simplicity of this Programme. That is it. Full stop. I do not apply the acronym of KISS because it’s not stupidity that causes me problems, it’s usually lack of honesty, open- mindedness or willingness. There are far too many signs, slogans and acronyms to address in this one piece so picking out my favourites I will start with ‘Think, Think Think’. Think of what it was like, Think of what happened and Think of what it’s like now was the simple message I received.

‘Live and Let Live’. It was pointed out to me that this was one of the most used yet hardest to follow slogans in the Fellowship. It’s easy to say but hard to follow as it translates to allowing people to be who they are.

When I started to understand and tried to apply these sayings to my life it created a condition of 'nosiness' as I needed to find out how these statements were formed. I imagined all sorts of spiritual and wondrous beginnings for them when in fact the consensus is they were used and repeated so often they became embedded in our literature by default. So, no mystery or mystique surrounding our often life-changing slogans; just lasting evidence of the experience of others gathered from a source of life events.

I would however like to keep my absolute favourite until the end and that is 'First Things First' which for me is the most empowering and principled sign in AA. It alludes to the primary purpose we all have in recovery and that is to always remember that our primary purpose is sobriety. It has to be the be all and end all of our journey. To keep all the positive things I now have in my life requires I never forget, 'First Things First'.

Martin B

Dunfermline Canmore Afternoon Thursday



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Visit our national website at:

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>

and navigate through AA Members Area > Fellowship Magazines >
Roundabout Magazine > Roundabout Flyer > this link.

Type your
article directly into the blank field then click 'Submit Article'.

One Day At A Time

My name is Diana and I'm an alcoholic. I found these words very easy to say but actually accepting that I really was an alcoholic was something completely alien to me. I had a good job, a loving husband, a nice home, I dressed well, ate well and went on good holidays. I even had a good relationship with my family and my husband's. As my alcoholism progressed, that was all to change though. Today I completely accept that, one day at a time, I am an alcoholic in recovery.

I have always said that I would submit a letter to Roundabout but like many others I kept putting it off. These strange times that we have all found ourselves living in have given me both the time and the inspiration.

Three times in my life I have found myself with free time. The first was at the end of my drinking career when I lost my job, my life and my sanity. That was the time when I didn't care if I lived or died. The only thing that was important to me then was my next drink. I now know that I had hit my spiritual rock bottom. I wasn't living. I was existing. I had no feelings and no emotions. That was not a good time in my life.

The second occasion I had time on my hands is when the miracle happened. I had put the drink down and left it down. I started my journey of recovery. It took two visits to a local residential treatment centre but I really wanted what I heard people talking about in AA meetings: life. A life without alcohol.

Following my time in hospital I had a 'pink cloud' summer. I started getting my home in order, rebuilding relationships, recovering my health and my sanity. I spent a lot of time with AA members. It was a time of peace and serenity but it had to end. I couldn't be inactive forever. I started working and life remained good.

Now, for the third time I'm in 'lockdown' but for me it's not a prison. I am grateful to have a Programme of Recovery to fall back on in these uncertain times. I am furloughed from work but have kept physically and mentally busy. This is not a 'pink cloud' time; this is reality. It has brought out the best in the majority of people I know and hopefully we can all come out of this pandemic stronger. Today, I am grateful that I am *only* an alcoholic. Keep safe. Keep sane. Keep sober, One Day At A Time.

Diana

Hawick Friday and Sunday

Going Through The Steps Again

My name is Julie and I am an alcoholic. In the past year, a few months before lockdown and Covid-19 was even in our lives I had started to feel a little flat about AA. I felt flat about meetings, who was there, my Higher Power and even my sobriety. I didn't want to drink, that obsession was removed in 2012, ODAAT, but my enthusiasm was dwindling.

I know today that all these thoughts and feelings were warning signs. I decided to visit more meetings around Ayrshire and to meet new people. I picked up AA literature for the first time in years, started to enjoy reading about my illness again and doing this made me want to go through the 12 Steps for a second time.

I joined a new group, a Step meeting, to give me the guidance I was looking for. I have many good friends in AA and it didn't take me long to identify a friend to guide me through the Steps for the second time.

I have had a Higher Power in my life for a while now and making these changes has greatly enhanced my spiritual side and my relationship with my Higher Power. Now, I am again enthusiastic about my AA journey. I feel revitalised. I know today that this was, of course, my Higher Power guiding me in the right direction.

I am eternally grateful to AA, the Fellowship, the people and the Programme for helping me to be the best version of myself I can be, One Day At A Time.

Julie

Drybridge 12 Steps and 12 Traditions

Submit your article to roundabout@aamail.org

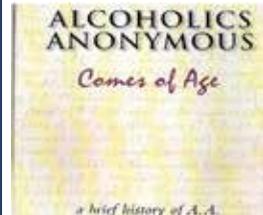


**I am responsible.
When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of AA always to be there.
And for that: I am responsible.**

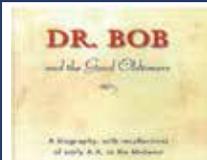
AA Conference Approved Books

New Items and Revised Prices

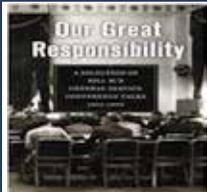
AA Comes of Age Soft Back

	AA Comes Of Age: a brief history of A.A. Written when nearly half a century had gone by since AA's historic 1955 Convention in St. Louis, when the founding members passed on to the entire Fellowship the responsibility for the Three Legacies
Item code 2121	Price £6.00

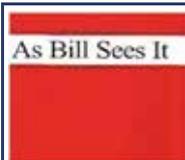
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	As Bill Sees It The A.A. Way of Life (selected writings of A.A.'s co-founder).
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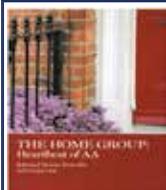
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

How members of Alcoholics Anonymous recover and how the society functions.

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The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA



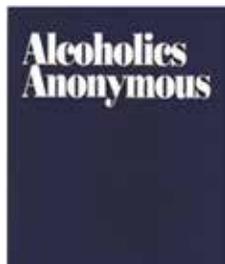
The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA

Selected Stories from the AA Grapevine.

Item Code 2230

Price £5.00

Alcoholics Anonymous Fourth Edition (2001) Hard Back



This is the Big Book

Rumour has it that at Bill's suggestion the first edition was printed on very heavy paper to make it look bigger, thicker and therefore seem to be better value for money! Hence the 'Big Book' nickname.

Often described as the basic textbook of our Fellowship the first 164 pages describe our recovery program and have hardly changed since that first edition. The personal stories contained at the back of the book are changed from one edition to the next to reflect changing social situations.

Item Code 2020

Price £8.00

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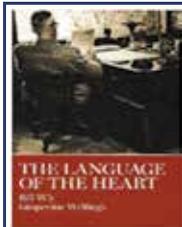


Soft Back 4th Edition of The Big Book

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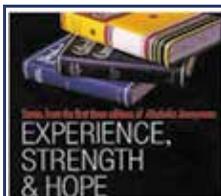
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The Language of the Heart
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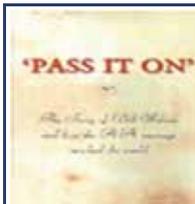
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Experience, Strength & Hope
Stories from the first three editions of Alcoholics Anonymous

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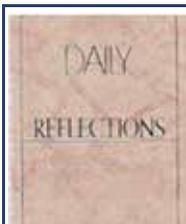
Pass It On



Pass It On
The Story of Bill Wilson and how the A.A. message reached the world.

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Daily Reflections
This is a book of reflections by A.A. members for A.A. members.

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The Roundabout Interview

Many thanks to Ranald, Wick, Caithness

What brought you to AA?

A series of ambulances. I had seven hospital admissions in two years because of my drinking. After the last one I was supposed to get a train straight from the hospital in Inverness to a treatment centre but my feet took me into a bar. I drank as if with a death wish, got ejected from the bar, got more drink, injured myself again and eventually my son-in-law drove up from Dundee to take me to the rehab south of Edinburgh. Physically I was skeletal; I had sores all over my body and head and due to the brain and nerve damage caused by my drinking I was unable to read or write – me who was on sick leave from my job as a head teacher. Mentally I had lost all connection with reality and most frighteningly, even with all my university qualifications, I didn't have a clue what was wrong with me. I was delusional, was being swept along at high speed by the illness of alcoholism and had no insight whatsoever into my condition.

Was there one thing that made you realise you had a problem with drink?

I was 13 the first time I drank purposefully rather than experimentally and had a blackout. Immediately I was scared as I didn't want to be like family members who were problem drinkers. I can remember at preschool age stamping my foot in a tantrum saying "Alcoholics are bad, I will never be one!" While still young I came up with what I thought was a logical, clever plan. I would moderate my drinking by taking drugs. That worked for a while, until it didn't. I knew my drinking was problematic but I didn't see that it was down to me, it was the situation I was in. Aged 19 I removed myself from the problem inflicted on me by the big, evil city and took off to the Scottish Highlands. That decision, like most I made, was based on subconscious fear. Once in the wilderness this kicked in big style. I treated my withdrawal-induced paranoia with more alcohol and my drinking went up to a new level.

Did you know that AA existed?

Yes. In the 1950's AA meetings were held in my family home but I formed a cast-iron opinion that it didn't work when one of the attendees started drinking again. In my mind, I had clear evidence that AA was useless and that false belief aided and abetted my denial.

How did you contact AA?

I didn't. The rehab I was in told me I had to go otherwise I'd be put out. I didn't want to go to meetings but after much protest I accepted it. I didn't want to leave there, and although that desire was based on fear, something was starting to

happen. That I didn't walk out nor do anything to get myself put out shows the beginning of what was to become a psychic change, a complete change in my thinking.

What do you remember about your first meeting?

The speaker had a flat, monotonous voice. I fell asleep and slid off my chair on to the floor. He looked down and said "Nice you're getting a bit of peace in here, son". I was almost 51.

What was your initial impression of AA?

Strange people speaking a foreign language. My overall impression was felt rather than thought, sensory rather than intellectual. Relaxing enough to fall asleep showed that my body knew more than my head. I had been a chronic insomniac since the start of my drinking, surviving on adrenalin and chemicals.

Was there anything you didn't like about AA at first?

There was nothing I liked. I'd been miserable for so many years all I could see was doom and gloom.

What helped you most in AA?

Role models. People who were working the Programme in their lives. I was told as a newcomer not to associate with people like me but rather with those who have found a new way of living. The rigid, structured discipline of the rehab helped too. I was taken through the first five Steps by staff who were all in recovery. There were many occasions when the right person said the right thing at the right time for me.

Was there anything you found hard to do in AA?

I thought daily about drinking for a long time. When I went home there was little solid recovery local to me and I was driving 600 miles a week to get to meetings. The only time I felt safe for almost two years was in a meeting, once the Preamble had been read. My nerves were shot to pieces. I was jumping at the sight of my own shadow on the ground and living in a war zone in my head. I didn't find any of it easy over the first two to three years.

How do you feel you have changed?

My brother had committed suicide and I promised my children that I wouldn't. However, I decided that drinking myself to death wasn't suicide and I'd be doing them a favour. I had a genuine desire not to live. During my 21 weeks in rehab something changed that I wasn't aware of at the time, nor did I understand. It was my Higher Power coming into my life. I started to live again. Going to meetings and living the Steps meant that I slowly moved from running on fear to having an unshakeable faith that whatever happens in my life I will grow from it.

I mentally place any problem in the cup of my hands then physically turn them upside down as I give it to God. If I need to deal with it God will give it back to me, otherwise I let it go. I no longer have that desperate need to be in control and always right. I am now honest and trustworthy, I no longer hate the man in the mirror and, top of the list, I have peace in my life.

What has AA done for your family?

It gave my three children their father back and has given eight new souls a grandfather.

Do you have a favourite AA slogan or phrase, and why?

It's not old behaviour if I'm still doing it. This reminds me I have to practise the principles of AA in all my affairs and that all my old habits must be up for review. It reminds me that alcohol is only mentioned in the first half of Step One and the other eleven and a half apply to the nooks and crannies of me and my old behaviour, which meant I needed to drink daily. I have to check my motives because 'half measures availed us nothing'.

What do you say to a newcomer?

Keep coming back, stick with the winners and win with the stickers.

What does 'putting back into AA' mean to you?

It means active involvement in service whether at group, intergroup, region, sub-committee or Conference level and it's all been good for me. Early on I kept meetings open even though I usually sat by myself. I read the literature, prayed that someone would come and learned to curb my resentments. Service has taught me a lot about myself, the global nature of AA and its structure.

Has Roundabout played a part in your AA journey?

Yes, from the very start. Once I was able to read again, I read it in rehab. At that time it was more real to me than the Big Book. At my small home group we often use Roundabout articles as a starting point for our meeting. Roundabout is so important that I was happy to get involved in keeping it going by joining the team who produce it.

Anything else you'd like to add?

I would like to express my gratitude to the AA member who somehow managed to put my rambling thoughts into good, orderly detail! This interview was partly conducted on the phone due to the Covid-19 lockdown but AA survives and thrives as we have the luxury of meetings online available 24/7 around the world. I can be in the company of and share with old and new friends from New Zealand, the USA and elsewhere. We are truly blessed.



There But For The Grace Of God

When I came into the Fellowship I hated everyone and everything – God included. After all wasn't it you, you and yes, even you, God, who had caused me to be living this sad and miserable existence?

I had fallen out with God big style and there was definitely no chance of making Him my Higher Power. After all, where was He when I was down on my luck and wanting to die on a daily basis?

I was sharing from a top table one day and was describing a horrendous and potentially dangerous position I had put myself in one evening on a bender. A fellow member came up to me at the break and said "Your Higher Power must have been there that day." The realisation came to me that even when I had turned my back on God, He didn't get miffed or resentful. He just carried on doing what He does best – loving and looking after me.

Time to eat humble pie. It was my illness which caused all the bad things in my life. Not you. You just simply picked up the pieces and handed them back in stages when you knew I was able to deal with sorting through the mess and devastation I had caused. I treated you so badly yet you still had the compassion to gift me with a desire to stop drinking. God, if you will have me – would you be my Higher Power because, There But For The Grace Of God.

Tere
Peebles

Article first printed in Grapevine in October 1988

The Slogans

By: Wes W. | Chicago, Illinois
They don't get no respect

I have attended several meetings over the last year where I heard our slogans being put down. At one meeting in particular, someone with eight years of sobriety told a newcomer that people were going to throw a lot of dumb cliches at her, and she was to "pay no attention to them." Among the specific slogans being put down was, it gets better.

Her comment caused me to look back and reflect upon my earliest sobriety. At my first AA meeting, the big message that got through to me was, "Go to meetings, don't pick up the first drink, and it gets better!"

Early in my sobriety, when I returned to work, I found myself thrust into several drinking situations. Did I remember the Steps in those early days? Sorry to say, I didn't. They were too foreign to me at the time. In addition, I was intellectualizing them rather than taking them. I did, however, remember a lot of the slogans that were tossed around at the nightly meetings I was attending. I remembered that it's the first drink that gets you drunk, and as a result of remembering that, I didn't pick up the first drink.

I started accumulating dry time. I must have had a grand total of thirty days, and more and more of the slogans were guiding me in my daily life. By this time, I had taken the First Step and accepted my powerlessness over alcohol and the unmanageability of my life.

I had joined AA to quit drinking forever! This became more than I could handle, so I started telling myself that it would be okay to drink when I retired. I was 45 at the time! That became far more than I could handle, so I started thinking about an early retirement! Then it dawned on me. I only had to stay away from that first drink, one day at a time! I didn't have to worry about forever, or even tomorrow. I only had to stay away from that drink for one day at a time!

I became an old-timer with sixty days of sobriety, when the Second Step took me. I realized that there was a power greater than myself. The unconditional love, concern, and advice I was getting at meetings was a power greater than myself and was helping restore me to sanity. That restoration was a slow process, but those guides to a sober life helped immeasurably. I saw one of the "winners" relapse – a man in my home group with seven years of sobriety – and I was

devastated! What helped me through that time was that I learned that there but for the grace of God go I! I accepted his relapse and went on with my program.

By now I knew that winners had one thing in common. They practiced the Twelve Steps of the program, and I wanted what they had. I had lost touch with God over my years of drinking and couldn't accept his existence. I wanted the Third Step so badly that I resorted to having a Christian school principal give me God lessons. Needless to say, it didn't work! I wanted God in my life so badly that I started having a gut reaction. I feared that I'd accumulate forty years sobriety while agonizing over the Third Step! I backed off. When it came to my seeking of the Third Step, I took the winners' advice: Easy does it! You know what? God found me! Again, one of our guides to life saved my sanity and my sobriety!

Life was getting better and better. The Steps of the program were more and more important in my life. Was there still room for the slogans? Yes, there sure was. When seeing people getting drunk around me, such as my immediate superior at my place of employment, I stopped worrying about it because the slogans taught me to live and let live.

After my first anniversary, I changed home groups. One of the old-timers in my new home group would frequently include think, think, think in his comments and would bemoan the fact that there were no longer meetings about that slogan. He would usually bring it up at anger or resentment meetings. It registered with me. In tough or stressful situations, I will actually count the thinks while confronting whatever is going on, and I will not act until after the third think!

There have been times when I considered drinking again. What stopped me? There's nothing so bad that a drink won't make worse! Think the drink through!

In the interest of brevity, I am skipping over many of the other slogans I've learned and their positive influence on me and on my program. However, I know that, even with my unshakable belief that developed in our Twelve Steps, I couldn't have made it without these wise, tried-and-true guides to life.

Have you noticed that some members call the slogans, "the AA cliches"? Do you know what a cliché is? It is a trite, worn-out phrase. Does that apply to any of the slogans you've heard mentioned at meetings? I don't think so, and I am hoping that some readers of this article who call our slogans clichés might reconsider. After all, it was the slogans that got me (and I assume others) on the path that led to the Twelve Steps and a wonderful and loving relationship with God.

Let's treat the slogans, our guides to a sober life, with the respect they deserve. Like the Twelve Steps, they work!

Now I Can Laugh

The famous artist Pablo Picasso had his 'Blue period' when his paintings predominantly used the colours blue and blue-green. I was a 'drinks' artist and I had my 'Wine Box' period.

That was when I crossed the line into secret drinking. During a family holiday I discovered that a line-up of wine boxes – red, white and rose – was a perfect way to disguise how much I was drinking. A quick slurp here and there when no-one was looking was the perfect top-up and there were no glass bottles to show the levels dropping. A quick lift and swirl of each box would show when it was getting empty. The trick was to replace it with precisely the same brand. That took enormous skill in knowing which outlets sold which brands.

There was an added bonus. I could carefully rip up the evidence of the empty wine box and place it discretely in to the dustbin. Thankfully, cardboard doesn't chink. The only stunt I hadn't tried was removing the full contents of each box to hide them between the linen in the airing cupboard. That was an extremely neat trick which I heard many years later from a sober friend in AA. Clearly, he had been far more resourceful and inventive than I had been.

It took me nearly 20 years to find sobriety in AA. There I learned that alcoholism was a progressive illness, which mirrored my experience precisely. I had progressed from my 'Wine Box' period to my 'Company Expense Account Drinking' period and on to my 'Vodka Drinking in Public Lavatories' period. Thank God for AA and for saving me from that Hell. I can look back now and laugh but it wasn't funny at the time.

Anon

National Helpline Number

0800 9177 650

email

help@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk

AA website

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>

AA service website

<https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/members>

Who-oo-me?



Beyond My Wildest Dreams

It's Sunday afternoon and I've just cut the grass in my small back garden so that my wife can sit out and have her lunch in peace while I am upstairs writing this. A big thank you to all our group members for setting up Zoom and WhatsApp groups allowing us to have our weekly meeting which has attracted 25 people to it on Saturday morning. I am classed as high-risk, health wise, so since the lockdown started six or seven weeks ago I have only travelled about two miles in my car so that my wife can purchase our groceries. I was instructed not to leave the car and I can take orders now, sometimes.

Today I am most grateful to Alcoholics Anonymous for my life. What would it have been like? I was headed towards becoming a lonely old man with a wet brain or even death but my God sent me to AA and I'm very grateful that he did. Today I have a loving wife, children and lots of grandchildren who care for us. They even go to the shops for us now and again for our fruit and veg.

Beyond my wildest dreams is my life today and even in this lockdown I count my blessings. Finally, another big thank you to my group for all you do.

Auldyin
Grangemouth Saturday Fellowship

That Was The Week That Was

Monday: ‘One Day at a Time’ – I think many would agree that understanding and being able to live by this slogan is a true blessing. I received a call from a distressed team member after we had all received an email from work confirming that we would be continuing to work from home until at least 31st July. She reckoned she wouldn’t be able to cope. She knows I’m in the Fellowship and I suggested she try living one day at a time. She replied “It’s okay for all of you, you all know how to do that!”

Tuesday: Did I honestly believe we would still be in lockdown when I came to write this month’s article? No! Has it been as challenging as I thought it would be? No! However, there have been challenges. Strange as it may seem I had to take on board our slogan ‘Easy Does It’. Working from home, 37.5 hours per week, I seemed to think I had lots of time to do lots of things. Trying to cram everything in began to leave me feeling stressed, frustrated and resentful. In reality I had only gained 10 hours each week – my travel time to and from work. Whilst I’m doing a little extra around the house and garden I’m also now taking it easy.

Wednesday: Having been asked to share at a Zoom meeting in Ontario tonight I was a bit apprehensive. After a chat with a friend she suggested I ‘Keep it Simple’ and of course she was correct. Take away ‘Ontario’ and the bottom line was I had been asked to share at a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, something I have done many times before. All went well. It was just AA with a different accent.

Thursday: ‘Let Go, Let God’. Pre-lockdown I had my routine where my first communication with God, apart from a brief “Hello” over my first cuppa, was in my car driving to work. Accepting my powerlessness over people, places and things and handing over to my Higher Power each day was part of the ‘in car’ chat. I realised I had become lackadaisical in my daily conscious contact with God. Now I’ve made it part of my new routine and life is a lot simpler again.

Friday: My daughter brought my two grandchildren over and the sun was shining. I felt truly blessed. We had lots of fun and also some adult conversation. My daughter was telling me about a fracas in a neighbour’s garden that erupted after a barbeque and several hours drinking. ‘There but for the Grace of God...’

Saturday: I was asked to share at a Zoom meeting tonight and was to be one of three speakers. It was in Scotland and I was calm and looking forward to it until I logged on to find the other speakers were from Las Vegas and Los Angeles. I needn’t have worried. We were all carrying one message – the message of recovery as given to us in the 12 Step Recovery Programme.

Sunday: Oh boy, have I been trying my best this weekend with ‘Live and Let Live’. Why do my neighbours think I not only want to hear their music but hear it at full volume? I’m still struggling with the message behind the slogan as I type this tonight.

**God Bless
CWG**

AN INVITATION TO YOUNG MEMBERS and MEMBERS YOUNG IN SOBRIETY

Roundabout would like to hear from young people who are living sober thanks to AA. What are the challenges? What are the benefits? Send your experiences to the email address below so that other young people who may have a problem can benefit from your experience.

Roundabout would also like to remind Fellowship members that they should never consider themselves 'not long enough sober' to contribute to our magazine. If you are sober today and grateful for that then please write and share.

roundabout@aamail.org

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Sobriety is the most important thing in your life without exception. You may believe that your job or your home life or some other things come first but consider: if you do not get sober and stay sober, the chances are you won't have a job, a family, sanity or even life. If you are convinced that everything in life depends on your sobriety, you have just so much more chance of getting sober and staying sober. If you put other things first, you are only hurting your chances.

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THE TWELVE CONCEPTS OF WORLD SERVICE

1. Final responsibility and ultimate authority for AA world services should always reside in the collective conscience of our whole Fellowship.
2. The General Service Conference of AA has become, for nearly every practical purpose, the active voice and the effective conscience of our whole Society in its world affairs.
3. To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of AA – the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees and executives – with a traditional “Right of Decision.”
4. At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional “Right of Participation”, allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.
5. Throughout our structure, a traditional “Right of Appeal” ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.
6. The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.
7. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the AA purse for final effectiveness.
8. The trustees are the principal planners and administrators of overall policy and finance. They have custodial oversight of the separately incorporated and constantly active services, exercising this through their ability to elect all the directors of these entities.
9. Good service leadership at all levels is indispensable for our future functioning and safety. Primary world service leadership, once exercised by the founders, must necessarily be assumed by the trustees.
10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.
11. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, induction procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.
12. The Conference shall observe the spirit of AA tradition, taking care that it never becomes the seat of perilous wealth or power; that sufficient operating funds and reserve be its prudent financial principle; that it place none of its members in a position of unqualified authority over others; that it reach all important decisions by discussion, vote and, wherever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

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 centres 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.

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

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