

Roundabout

November 2020 £1

Your meeting in print



*Special Themed Issue:
Unity*



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.

© 1947 A.A. The Grapevine, Inc.
Reprinted with permission

In This Month's Issue

- 2 Sub-Committee Notice Board**
- 3 Editorial**
- 4 Extract From AA Literature**
- 6 Unity**
- 8 Guided By A Power**
- 10 Unity Helps Me Find My Rightful Place**
- 12 I Am Never Alone**
- i-iv AA Conference Approved Books**
- 13 The Roundabout Interview**
- 16 From An Oldtimer**
- 17 Dear Roundabout...**
- 18 Article From The Grapevine Archives**
- 20 The Power Of The Programme**
- 21 That Was The Week That Was**
- 23 Subscribe To Roundabout**

Cover picture: Looking across Loch Carron to Attadale – courtesy of an AA member.

Roundabout is the copyright of General Service Board, Alcoholics Anonymous Great Britain Ltd.

email: roundabout@aamail.org

visit: www.aa-roundabout.org.uk

SUB-COMMITTEE NOTICE BOARD

ROUNDABOUT 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 Responsibilites

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. Duties include: An ability to read with scrutiny each article submitted, to ascertain that it is appropriate and relevant and interesting to the Fellowship. 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 0141 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: **18 December 2020**.

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

Terri S – Board Trustee for Roundabout

Roundabout is published by the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous (GB) Ltd. and is the official journal of Alcoholics Anonymous in Scotland, though views expressed in the articles are not necessarily those of Alcoholics Anonymous. All articles, cartoons and contents of Roundabout are copyright material of the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous and Roundabout.

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 Y01 7NJ

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

Editorial

After focusing on the Legacy of Recovery last month, November's issue of Roundabout is based loosely around the second Legacy – Unity.

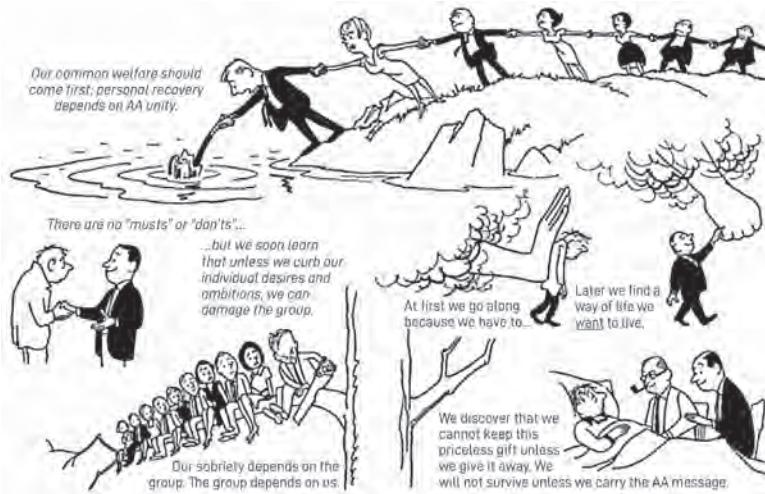
For the first few years after I arrived in the Fellowship the Traditions, to me, were just what was on the other scroll in the meetings I went to. When I listened to the top table the person would sometimes accidentally point to the Traditions before realising their mistake. They would quickly pivot in their seat and point to the Twelve Steps and continue on with their share. I did not appreciate their importance, at all.

During this time I would sometimes get to a lunchtime meeting where once a month a speaker was asked to share on a Tradition. I used to sit and listen in awe as the speaker would explain the history behind the particular Tradition and its relevance to the Fellowship today. I listened as if to a history lesson.

It wasn't until I went into service for Roundabout that one of those regular speakers said to me "Kate, if you're going to do service for AA, do your service the AA way. Read the long form of the Traditions in the 12 and 12, read AA Comes of Age and become familiar with the Service Structure Handbooks." Much like the cartoon on page 20 of this month's magazine he was encouraging me to 'circle my wagon'. Instead, I bristled. Did he not know the proofreading expertise that I was going to bring to Roundabout?!

That was in November 2015. Now I can squirm and laugh in equal measure at my childish response. Now I can understand that the way we preserve the gift of sobriety for the alcoholics of the future is through Unity and that Unity is achieved by having a working knowledge of the Twelve Traditions.

Now I smile as I catch myself starting to say to others "Do your service the AA way...". Now my wagon is circled.



Taken from Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions p133

Tradition One

*"Our common welfare should come first;
personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity."*

The unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat, our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God, His gift to us would be spent aimlessly. Back again in their cave, alcoholics would reproach us and say, "What a great thing A.A. might have been!"

"Does this mean," some will anxiously ask, "that in A.A. the individual doesn't count for much? Is he to be dominated by his group and swallowed up in it?"

We may certainly answer this question with a loud "No!" We believe there isn't a fellowship on earth which lavishes more devoted care upon its individual members; surely there is none which more jealously guards the individual's right to think, talk, and act as he wishes. No A.A. can compel another to do anything; nobody can be punished or expelled. Our Twelve Steps to recovery are suggestions; the Twelve Traditions which guarantee A.A.'s unity contain not a single "Don't." They repeatedly say "We ought..." but never "You must!"

To many minds all this liberty for the individual spells sheer anarchy. Every newcomer, every friend who looks at A.A. for the first time is greatly puzzled.

They see liberty verging on license, yet they recognize at once that A.A. has an irresistible strength of purpose and action. "How," they ask, "can such a crowd of anarchists function at all? How can they possibly place their common welfare first? What in Heaven's name holds them together?"

Those who look closely soon have the key to this strange paradox. The A.A. member has to conform to the principles of recovery. His life actually depends upon obedience to spiritual principles. If he deviates too far, the penalty is sure and swift; he sickens and dies. At first he goes along because he must, but later he discovers a way of life he really wants to live. Moreover, he finds he cannot keep this priceless gift unless he gives it away. Neither he nor anybody else can survive unless he carries the A.A. message. The moment this Twelfth Step work forms a group, another discovery is made – that most individuals cannot recover unless there *is* a group. Realization dawns that he is but a small part of a great whole; that no personal sacrifice is too great for preservation of the fellowship. He learns that the clamour of desires and ambitions within him must be silenced whenever these could damage the group. It becomes plain that the group must survive or the individual will not.

So at the outset, how best to live and work together as groups became the prime question. In the world about us we saw personalities destroying whole peoples. The struggle for wealth, power, and prestige was tearing humanity apart as never before. If strong people were stalemated in the search for peace and harmony, what was to become of our erratic band of alcoholics? As we had once struggled and prayed for individual recovery, just so earnestly did we commence to quest for the principles through which A.A. itself might survive. On anvils of experience, the structure of our society was hammered out.

Countless times, in as many cities and hamlets, we reenacted the story of Eddie Rickenbacker and his courageous company when their plane crashed in the Pacific. Like us, they had suddenly found themselves saved from death, but still floating upon a perilous sea. How well *they* saw that their common welfare came first. None might become selfish of water or bread. Each needed to consider the others, and in abiding faith they knew they must find their real strength. And this they did find, in measure to transcend all the defects of their frail craft, every test of uncertainty, pain, fear, and despair, and even the death of one.

Thus has it been with A.A. By faith and by works we have been able to build upon the lessons of an incredible experience. These live today in the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous, which – God willing – shall sustain us in unity for so long as He may need us.



**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.**

Unity

The year 2020 will go down in history as the year the world stopped. All of a sudden major events including the AA World Convention were cancelled. People fled to their homes and major decisions were made to preserve health and well-being. Members of Alcoholics Anonymous were not exempt. Like the rest of the population we were faced with the grim reality that there would be no in-person meetings for several months and no real opportunities for fellowship. Life began to take on a new meaning not just for us but for everyone.

As alcoholics, one tendency we have is to self-isolate. Despite being a fairly extroverted, outgoing and even popular person during my drinking days I eventually succumbed to great feelings of loneliness, disconnection and fear. Instead of feeling 'a part of' I always felt 'apart from'. At the height of my drinking career I was living in the largest and most multicultural city in Canada, attending a large university yet I felt empty and hollow. There were people around me constantly but I did not know how to really interact with them or how to be my real self.

By the end of my drinking I was living alone in a one bedroom flat with my curtains drawn, my door locked, an old takeaway on my kitchen table and my head constantly pounding. I was at the jumping off place and I genuinely wished for the end.

Had something like lockdown occurred during this time of my life I cannot say with certainty where I would be today. Alcoholism is a lonely disease and it feeds off disconnection. It sadly has resulted in many losing their lives in this time and I must not forget the stark reality that many were not as fortunate as me since I am still here to read this edition. Alcoholism is a deadly disease.

When the in-person meetings started to close I was faced with two choices which at the time were not easy for me to face: I could either adapt to the present climate or I could retreat from the Fellowship altogether. I'm thankful I chose the first option. Logging on to Zoom daily to attend meetings from all over the world was an eye-opening experience. It really brought the AA world together reminding me that I am but one small part of the whole.

I remember going to meetings not just in Canada and Scotland but even listening to speakers from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Israel, Malaysia, Iceland and many other places. I was so excited to log in to hear these speakers because I thought they would provide a whole new outlook on recovery. What I discovered is that all of them said exactly the same thing. The disease of alcoholism is universal and it doesn't matter where someone is from because at the core we are all alike. I wonder how our founders would feel today to know that 'people who usually would not mix' now includes thousands around the world spanning different cultures, religious beliefs, and countries. This is the great reality for me – that when I joined this Fellowship I literally gained friends everywhere.

I also love how in AA, as long as there are two or more people, we are a meeting. A one-on-one with a sponsor can be a meeting just as a huge convention is one. Since lockdown I have been to meetings of three, 30 and 300 and it matters not. The message, the welcome, the fellowship and the banter all remain the same.

I know that soon in-person meetings may start up again but I hope that even when they do, we don't lose out on the new unity we have developed by sharing our common burdens with each other in this new way. It isn't always easy to adapt but I am thankful that AA members remained flexible and were willing to grow into new technologies. Alone we are separate, together we are one.

Deborah
Inverness



"I've discovered I'm unique – just like everyone else!"

Guided By A Power

My name is Sean and I am an alcoholic. I first came to AA in Manchester in 1966 and I went to meetings there for 10 or 12 months. I was told if I went back to drinking it would only get worse but I didn't listen. I went back out and believe me it was worse than ever – I ended up in HMP Hull in 1969.

One night I walked into the smoker and a Scottish bloke was knocking balls about so I asked him "Did you want a game?" We set the balls up and he said "I can't give you very long because I have to go to classes." I looked at the clock and it was 6.10pm. I said "All the classes finish at 6pm." He replied "Not mine."

After a while he said "I go to AA." I said "I went to AA for a while," but just then the officer called him for his 'class' and I carried on knocking the balls about. He was talking to the officer and I don't know what he said but he came over to me and asked "Would you like to go to the meeting?" I said "Yes" and I went that Monday. It was the most positive thing I have done in my whole life and I kept going to the meetings while I was in prison.

On the day of my release the officer said "There's somebody waiting for you outside," and it was a man who attended the meetings in prison every Monday night. I do believe that a Power guided me to the snooker hall to meet that Scotsman in 1969. I was sober 51 years on 19 August 2020.

Sean K
Dalkey Dublin

Submit your article to roundabout@aamail.org

IT'S EASIER THAN EVER NOW TO SEND US AN ARTICLE

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'.



A year's worth of AA inspiration, one day at a time

**2021
Fellowship
Diaries &
Calendars
NOW
AVAILABLE**



Produced by members for members, the 2021 Fellowship pocket diary and wall calendar are full of Fellowship inspiration, with quotes from AA literature on every page.

Once again, the calendar features stunning photographs from AA members across the country – vivid reminders of the gifts sobriety gives us.

Both the calendar and the diary represent great value at £4.95 each including postage. To order, please complete the form below and send it with your payment to: Fellowship calendar/diary, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ.

In order to make payments direct through your bank please use the following information: Sort code: 40-47-31 Account no.: 63930408

Once you have instructed your bank to make payment, email – name, address and how many copies of calendars and/or diaries to: carolinédavy@gsogb.org.uk
This will enable us to match the payment when it arrives.

FELLOWSHIP CALENDAR/DIARY ORDER FORM

Please use BLOCK CAPITALS to help us get your details correct – thank you!

Please send me calendars at £4.95 each Please send me diaries at £4.95 each

I enclose a cheque postal order BACs payment

made payable to 'General Service Office' for £.....

My name

My address.....

..... Post Code

Points To Ponder

'The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous symbolize the sacrificial character of our life together and they are the greatest force for unity that we know'.

(AA Comes of Age, Unity: The Second Legacy, pg 97)



Unity Helps Me Find My Rightful Place

My name is Betty and I'm an alcoholic. We in AA are very blessed people because we need never to be alone anymore. I arrived at Alcoholics Anonymous in October 1977. Other people also came to the Fellowship about the same time as me but for whatever reason they didn't stay very long. The cunning, baffling and powerful disease probably took them out again. Some of them burned to death in their own beds due to cigarettes and drinking, some took their own lives and some went to prison. By the Grace of God I have managed to remain in AA.

At that time I was in awe of the sober people in the Fellowship. I had fear in my life but I wanted to be like them. There were people with all kinds of occupations or none, different faiths and cultures yet all seeming to get on pretty well together. They were united for their primary purpose to stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety. The 1st Tradition in the 12 x 12 book tells us that without Unity, AA dies.

I worked in an Accident Emergency department all of my life as a nurse. Going out to the helicopter pads and bringing in injured patients was normal for me. Mondays were always busy after the drunken weekends. I have seen many trauma cases and have been part of the team that treats those patients. The violence that people inflict on others can be devastating and life changing for them and their families.

Gunshot wounds, throats cut, facial and body slashings, eye injuries, murders... to name but a few and I have washed many dead bodies. This does not include the cardiac arrests, abdominal problems, fractured bones and babies born. The list goes on. I haven't missed much and it has been a privilege to be with the sick and dying.

I was part of a team of skilled people with the same aim in mind... to save a person's life. When a seriously traumatised person arrives in a hospital department the team go into action and follow the same protocol as best they

can, together. If there was no team working for the same aim the patient would die. Everyone who is on a team is an important person and there is no time for huffs or resentments.

To me, the members of AA are just like the doctors and nurses that I worked with all my life. We all have spiritual gifts but if we don't work as a team and use them we lose them and the patient may die.

When a newcomer arrives he is offered friendship and fellowship. It is suggested that he joins a group and finds a sponsor then someone, usually a temporary sponsor, will take him about meetings until he finds his own way. It is this unity of action that saves lives. When I came to AA I was the patient and every member united to help me and to save my life. All I was asked to do was the same in return.

An AA group's spiritual unity is like love. There are no bosses. Instead, the informed group conscience is helpful as it lets all members know what decisions need to be taken. Voting must include all members' points of view. Of course there are emergencies just like an accident department where an on the spot decision has to be taken such as we witnessed earlier this year. Group closures due to the pandemic were unavoidable and we have to continue to comply with the Government as the Traditions tell us we should.

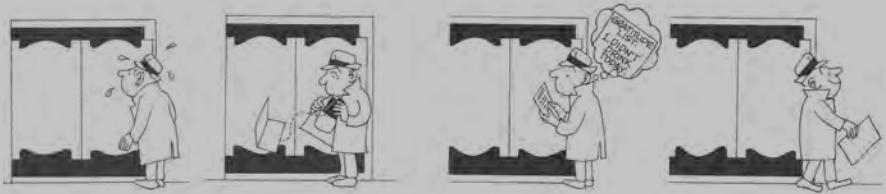
Leaders in AA are important especially when you are the new person and need to ask questions. Service workers are important and some have special skills and will teach you if you are interested. But most of all, because of Unity, lives are saved. There is nothing more beautiful than to watch someone get well or a prisoner turn his life around with the help of the Programme and a good sponsor.

At home I also have family group meetings with my children. There are no bosses there either. We are united. Through unity in AA, my work and in my home I have found my rightful place. God is truly in charge.

There was a statement on the wall of a hospital that I once worked in which said 'Arise take up your bed and walk.' This is also found in AA literature. How uplifting when you see that miracle happen in our Fellowship.

Nurse Betty
Rebos Wednesday





I Am Never Alone

My name is Jim and I'm an alcoholic and a grateful member of the Giffnock Friday night group. I am also a member of the Penilee Internet group every day at 11am. I have been sober for over two years. When I came back to the Fellowship I had a desire not to drink but also a desire not to die. I had been drinking alcoholically for 10 months after my wife passed away.

When I came back to the Fellowship and sat down at my first meeting (again), I knew what I had to do: get to lots of meetings, join a group and find a sponsor to take me through the Programme again as what was relevant the first time was not relevant now. I have worked hard to stay sober and I now have a life worth living. My family now have one less problem in their lives – me! They don't worry about what I am doing and are so happy to have their father and grandfather back in their lives.

I was progressing very well and then Coronavirus arrived. I went to my last meeting and worried what the future held – how would I manage not to lift the first drink without meetings? I was afraid and then the Zoom meetings came along.

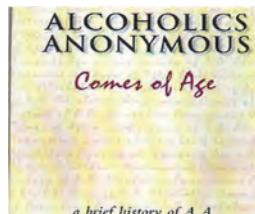
It took me a while to work them out but I got there. Suddenly my world changed and I knew I wouldn't lift the first drink. After four months in lockdown I got used to being alone in the house, something I had struggled with since my wife passed away. I had also been too scared to go to my caravan before the virus as they only have meetings on a Wednesday, Thursday and Friday in Dunoon. I had needed meetings every day but now thanks to Zoom I can go to my caravan anytime knowing I have insurance. I really am never alone. I am at peace with the world and at peace with myself. I hope all this makes sense – my day at a time has improved a thousand times over.

Jim
Giffnock Friday

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.

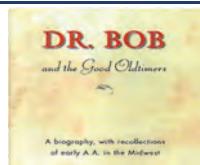
Written when nearly half a century had gone by since AA's historic 1955 Convention in St. Louis, when the founding members passed on to the entire Fellowship the responsibility for the Three Legacies

a brief history of A.A.

Item code 2121

Price £6.00

Dr Bob and the Good Oldtimers Soft Back



Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers Soft Cover

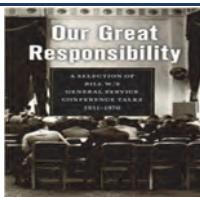
A biography, with recollections of early A.A. in the Midwest

*A biography, with recollections
of early A.A. in the Midwest*

Item Code 2181

Price £6.00

Our Great Responsibility Soft Back



Our Great Responsibility

A selection of Bill W's General Service Conference Talks, 1951 - 1970. 270 pages, softcover with over 60 black & white and colour images. Derived from original audio recordings.

Item Code 6070

Price £6.00

As Bill Sees It



As Bill Sees It

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

Item Code 2100

Price £5.00

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions Pocket Size

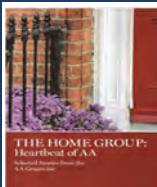


Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

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

Item code 2250 Price £5.00

The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA

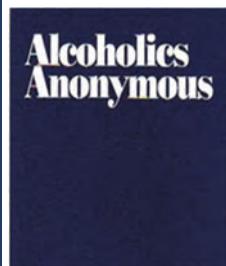


The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA

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 Bills 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

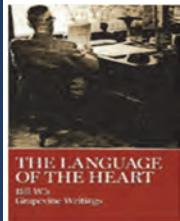
Alcoholics Anonymous Soft Back



Soft Back 4th Edition of The Big Book

Item Code 2040 Price £7.00

The Language of the Heart



The Language of the Heart
Bill W's Grapevine writings.

Item code 2220 Price £7.00

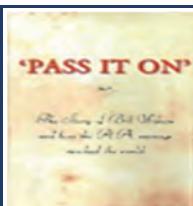
Experience, Strength & Hope



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

Item Code 2210 Price £7.00

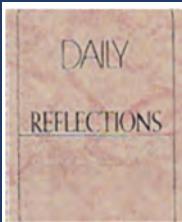
Pass It On



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

Item Code 2200 Price £8.00

Daily Reflections



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

Item Code 2260 Price £5.00

TO ORDER ANY OF THESE BOOKS PLEASE COMPLETE THE FORM BELOW OR SCAN THE QR CODE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE PAGE WHICH WILL TAKE YOU DIRECT TO THE ONLINE LITERATURE SHOP

ITEM	CODE	QUANTITY	PRICE EACH	TOTAL PRICE
AA Comes of Age	2121		6.00	
Dr Bob & the Good Oldtimers	2181		6.00	
Our Great Responsibility	6070		6.00	
As Bill Sees It	2100		5.00	
Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions Pocket Size	2250		5.00	
The Home Group	2230		5.00	
Alcoholics Anonymous Hard Back	2020		8.00	
Alcoholics Anonymous Soft Back	2040		7.00	
Language of the Heart	2220		7.00	
Experience, Strength & Hope	2210		7.00	
Pass It On	2200		8.00	
Daily Reflections	2260		5.00	

TOTAL PAID £ _____

Name: _____

Address: _____

Postcode _____

Please send with cheque/PO to General Service Office, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ



Shop | Alcoholics Anonymous – Great Britain

Using the camera on your smart phone, point the lens at this QR code and it will show you a link to the website.

How to Shop with AA. Use the category links to find the various sections from our literature order form. Use the link and buttons to view the item or to add purchases to your shopping cart.

The Roundabout Interview

Many thanks to Zara, Kirkcaldy 12 Step Online, Tuesday

What brought you to AA?

I was sick and tired of being sick and tired. I was physically, emotionally and spiritually depleted in so many ways and all my options had run out. My life had become unmanageable. Everything in my life was just one big lie and a cover-up. My relationships were non-existent. I thought I was in control but I wasn't. I just barely had the job, the house and the marriage. I thought I could control my drinking but I couldn't.

Did you know about AA?

Yes, I did. My father was a heavy drinker; I have no right to call him an alcoholic as he never said he was. But I went to Al-Anon as a little girl. I had seen AA advertised in the local newspaper, I looked at it and thought "No, that's not for me!" It's strange but the first thing I did when I hit rock bottom was remember the advert I had seen. That's how I got the number to phone.

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

Oh yes! I couldn't say no to the first drink. My personality changed as soon as I picked up that first drink.

Do you remember your first meeting?

Yes. I remember seeing happy people, laughing and joking and somebody welcoming me at the door. I was so nervous. I remember a candle burning and they asked me to light one. I'll never forget that candle. I didn't want to do it but I was the person with the least sobriety and it was to signify coming from the dark into the light. It had no religious connotation. It just showed that I was coming from the pit of despair into hope and light. That has stayed with me for many years.

When you first came into AA, what made a difference to you?

I wanted what those people had. They looked happy, joyous and free. I identified with what the share was about. I didn't feel this huge burden any longer. I can't explain it but I knew I was in the right place. There was serenity around me and I hadn't felt that for many years.

Was there anything you found hard to do in AA?

Oh yes absolutely. Getting honest and taking responsibility for my own actions. I thought I had found this wonderful thing and I thought "Oh good, I've arrived,

now everybody can keep ME sober!" I soon found out that was not going to happen and I had to step up or step out. It was quite painful. My ego was inflated and my self-pity so large that I had no balance. I decided I was going to try it my way. I went out again, tried it my way and it didn't work. Nothing changed. Three months later I came back and that time the seed was planted.

I'm grateful for the patience of those old-timers. I must have tried some people's tolerance. But I came back with a different attitude. I listened. I became teachable. Taking responsibility for my own actions was still hard but the Steps helped me with that.

How do you feel that you have changed?

I love other people more, without expectations. I've learned to love myself in sobriety and laugh at myself. It's not about the material things. I've been given this gift of a new life. Relationships have been restored and I've changed how I respond to things. That's the only real power I have – choosing how I respond to what's happening around me. I now have a relationship with a God of my understanding. I go over my Steps on a daily basis. I recognise that God drives the bus. That makes me feel at ease. I learn every day and I want to remain teachable. I don't know everything.

What has AA done for your family?

That seed was planted long before I came to the rooms. I went to Al-Anon as a little girl. There, the Serenity Prayer was planted in my head. I listened, then, to families of alcoholics. Then I grew up to become an alcoholic. AA has restored my relationships with my family. It has also brought me acceptance. You know, I always expected my family to change, when it was me who really needed to do that. I've learned to apologise, not only in words but in my actions as well. There is trust in my family. It's not about what they are doing, it's about how I choose to react or not react. My old behaviour would have been, if they did something to upset me "Don't you ever come back here! Don't you know who I am?" Now my intention is not to hurt or injure others. I might be thinking that but I don't say it.

Family is the hardest to deal with. That is where my biggest lessons have come from. I have learned boundaries and I'm not afraid to say, "I need five minutes" and not feel guilty about that decision. I can remove myself, hand it over and then walk back in to the situation. Because of this Programme, my relationship with my mother has come full circle.

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

Well, it's quite straightforward. It can be something as simple as welcoming a newcomer at the door or making a cup of tea for someone. In the beginning

I was told exactly what to do. "Okay Zara, tea duty. Empty the ashtrays." I had a resentment immediately but I still did it. I was desperate to be liked, to feel part of. It was the best thing I ever did. It was the start of building new relationships with other people. There's a camaraderie in washing the dishes. I would hear stories and get invited to other meetings.

I learned about giving it away for the right reasons. As a newcomer I was handing out the Big Book before I had even read it. I couldn't give away what I didn't have. I was doing the Two Step waltz: Step One then Step Twelve. I had to work on myself first. Then I learned to put the action in and leave the results up to God.

You can find out what you are good at in AA. We have a choice of many activities and commitments. My core is at meetings and helping the newcomer. I recently moved and a new neighbour confided a problem with alcohol. We have been having mini-meetings over the fences and this person is now several months sober. I'm never going to be recovered. I will always need this Programme. I'm grateful for the teaching and the learning.

Do you want to say anything about the lockdown and COVID?

The Programme has kept me sober. The garden has helped me as well as projects with family. Zoom is wonderful for connecting with people from everywhere. The tools we have: Zoom meetings, telephone, FaceTime etc.. keep us all connected. I know that I am not alone even though I am not seeing the people I usually see. This Programme has saved my life and I am grateful.

- o - o - O - o - o -

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>

From An Old-timer

Roundabout always encourages members who are young in the Fellowship to share their experience, strength and hope with us all. I take great delight from reading these articles and hope and pray that they all stay. At meetings I love to meet people young in sobriety as I firmly believe today that my primary purpose on earth is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety. I need everyone who comes through the doors to share thereby reminding me of what it was like, what happened and what it is like now.

Often, newcomers can help newcomers a lot more than I can as I am sure it is just as difficult today as it was when I came in to envisage long term sobriety. Having never heard of AA before I arrived when I found out that the two men who 12-Stepped me were 18 months and just over five years sober I struggled to understand how anyone could achieve that.

When I heard the saying 'Stay away from one drink for one day for one's self' I dismissed it as rubbish. I thought I was far superior to those poor souls even though at that stage of my life suicide looked a better alternative than going on as things were. I also now know that as well as causing all the trouble in my life at that time my drinking was also causing a lot more trouble in other people's lives. I went to my first Highland Gathering in March 1975 after being released from the hospital in the January and there I heard an Al-Anon speaker share what she had to suffer and put up with and it made me cringe. I am a member of a 12 x 12 group and whenever we come to Steps Eight and Nine I still cringe thinking of what others had to endure.

Today is a beautiful sunny day. I am at home with my wife in a very contented, peaceful home for which I give thanks on a daily basis. Today I have read my 24 hour book and my Daily Reflections and turned my will and my life over to God. Now I have to work for the rest of this day only, at continuing to live a sober life in accordance with all that AA has taught me.

If you are early in sobriety or are currently struggling please don't pick up that first drink. Come to meetings and tell us about your concerns. Drink will not solve anything in your life but AA will. Early in my sobriety an old timer said to me "May sobriety be your constant companion." This I wish for you all, one day at a time.

Douglas
Inverness Step & Traditions Online Sunday

Who-o-o Me?



Dear Roundabout...

I am an alcoholic and there have been no face-to-face meetings for a while now. Thank you very much for making sure I can receive the magazine through the AA website. Thanks also to my group members who have been tremendously supportive of me. All those 'yets' which I heard about in the beginning happened to me because I didn't listen. Unfortunately I was no longer putting my sobriety first.

It's a must that I put sobriety before my family and it's now worked miracles for me. I have not had a drink since 3 January this year. I do what is suggested such as taking it 'One day at a time' and not lifting the first drink and I always keep money in my pocket for a phone call as that's what I have been told to do.

Allison

IT'S EASY TO DOWNLOAD ROUNDABOUT

Visit our national website at:

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

and navigate through AA Members Area > Fellowship Magazines >

Roundabout Magazine > Find out more.

Choose the month you're interested in > Find out more >

Download full PDF.

Just Another Bozo on the Bus

By: Anonymous

Celebrating the ways we are all exactly alike

I was shaking inside and dismayed that showing up late wouldn't relieve me of having to talk to somebody. So I kept my eyes on the floor and sat down at the pushed-together tables where an odd assortment of strangers were chatting with one another. I felt nothing in common with them. They didn't seem to have much in common with one another. The restless, wild-eyed guy next to me introduced himself by first name and stuck out his hand. I followed suit, the practiced chameleon. Then my first AA meeting started. I was just curious. I'd come to see what there was to learn. I wanted to get my drinking under control, make it fun again, make it work the way it used to. Or something. I wasn't sure. The thing was, I wasn't alcoholic. Everyone else who spoke said they were, so I didn't want to let on.

Problem was, they went around the table introducing themselves one by one. They obviously knew one another. I didn't get why they all had to do the drill. But I was just visiting and thought it ill-mannered to question or argue. So when my turn came, I said it too: "My name is----, and I am an alcoholic."

My very next thought was: But I'm not like you.

And so I wasn't, either--and in some perilous respects. I drank on and off for the next eighteen months while I was still "visiting" AA and different from everybody else. My life got worse, the illness progressed, and on the eve of destruction, I finally surrendered. But conditionally.

"All right," I told the man I asked to be my sponsor. "Maybe I am like you in some ways. I can't stop drinking, and my life is a train wreck." But I wanted him to know that, even so, I was still different in some important ways. He chuckled, shook his head, and suggested I give myself a break and just listen for a while.

The story of my sobriety, particularly the transforming effect of the Twelve Steps, is one of a growing realization, then the embracing and celebrating of all the ways that I was and am exactly like others in AA. Stories from the Big Book still remind me of this, as surely as the latest issue of the Grapevine. I accept today that differences of work, relationships, love, hopes, ethnicity, accomplishments, property, personality, etc.--all of which I still cherish--are dependent on my willingness to embrace the much more obvious ways I am exactly like others who share at AA meetings.

That experience of being “the same as,” of being “one among many,” of being “just another bozo on the bus” is critical to the maintenance of my spiritual condition. It is also congruent with AA’s Tradition One that emphasizes both the individual’s right “to think, talk, and act as he wishes,” and the critical necessity of group behavior that strengthens the unity of our Fellowship.

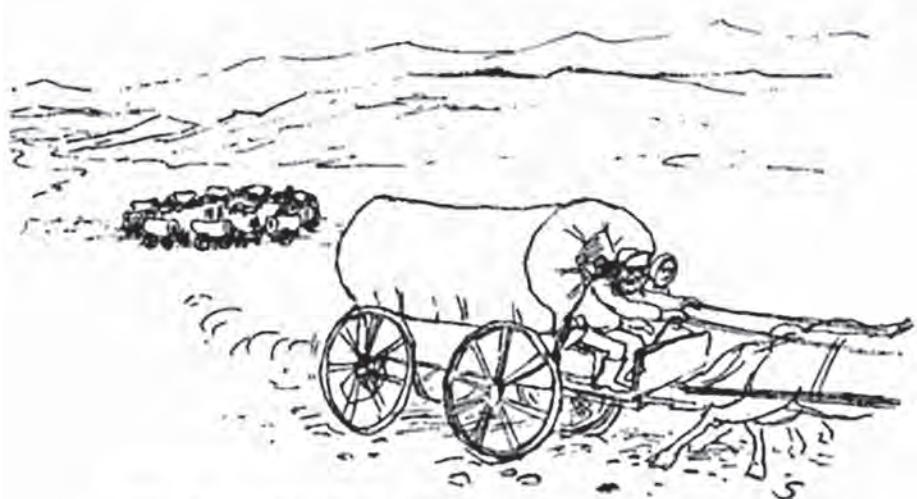
So I’ve been feeling uneasy at our weekly Step and Tradition study meeting (based on reading the “Twelve and Twelve”) when visitors identify themselves as “AA fundamentalists” and argue (albeit civilly) for the version of the Steps presented in our Big Book, as though it were more effective or correct or “fundamental” than the more broadly suggestive language of the “Twelve and Twelve.”

Identifying oneself as “an AA fundamentalist” is relatively new in my area. But world politics being what they are, “fundamentalist” now bears a disturbing undercurrent of difference, separatism, judgmentalism, arrogance, and contempt for others. Detaching those news media connotations from the intentions of AAs who apply the word to themselves, I am still dismayed that good-hearted, long-time AA members identify themselves as something different from, other than, or apart from other AA members, as though there might be some level of sobriety, comprehension, or vision available only to those who study and embrace the same views.

That we interpret and apply AA literature and principles differently in our lives is a given--a simple fact acknowledged and protected by our Traditions. We have all embarked upon what Bill W. called “the broad highway.” And there is much evidence in our Big Book that Bill understood “the Road of Happy Destiny” to be very broad indeed. On the closing page, after all, he wrote, “Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.”

By this and other writings, I believe Bill’s vision of the AA Fellowship – like individual sobriety – was that it is, and always will be, a work in progress. The Steps and Traditions were intended not as scripture, but as guides to action to address the changing needs and circumstances of the individuals and groups applying them.

I hope that, over time, those AA members who gravitate to one of our publications rather than another no longer find it necessary or meaningful to distinguish themselves from those of us who study and apply ourselves more broadly, or for that matter, from those among us who don’t or can’t read at all. “Identify, don’t compare,” my sponsor told me. “Look for a way in, not for a way out.” “This is a we-based program.” “We can do what, on my own unaided will, I cannot.” Nowhere in AA literature have I ever seen any reference to “AA fundamentalists.” Nowhere. But I have read and often heard, “Keep it simple.”



"Who does he think he is, telling me to put my wagon in a circle?!"

The Power Of The Programme

Lockdown has in many ways left me feeling imprisoned in my own home, which has left me little option but to embrace the power of the Programme.

While this is in no way the same as actually being in prison fortunately, it's the closest I've come.

Being forced to stay home with nothing but my sick head for company has forced me to take actions to avoid going back to the bottle. I've had to use this time to look inwardly at my defects and flaws and address them daily.

If I had no Programme I would be in trouble.

Craig
Bowling Young In Sobriety Tuesday

- o - o - O - o - o -

That Was The Week That Was

Monday: The theme of this month's magazine is unity. I will endeavour to focus on this as I live through my week. Focusing on what unity means to me and my life in this current climate of disunity and fear as the virus continues to create havoc in my life and the lives of many others may serve me well.

Tuesday: Already the theme is serving me well. A while back I remembered reading a message from Bill W on the second Legacy. Before I found it I had to re-read many pages of As Bill Sees It. 'The unity of A.A. is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God'.

Wednesday: I believe what Bill said can serve us well in these troubled times. I have sadly witnessed some arguments, disagreements and fall outs in the last few weeks within our Fellowship. Re-open groups, keep them closed, create hybrid meetings, focus on the online meetings and on it goes. Let us not lose each other. It's a timely reminder to me that I have to try harder to display love and tolerance. Someone I have come to know through service is fond of saying "it's okay to disagree but it's not okay to be disagreeable." Wise words.

Thursday: Since the end of March I have been working from home. After the novelty wore off (about six weeks in) I began to loathe it. The isolation and what I perceived to be an intrusion into my personal space left me ill at ease. Then about a month ago I was thrown a lifeline. Blended working. I am currently permitted to go into the office a couple of days a week. Today was one of those days. All I'll say is that after witnessing disunity because of talk of redundancy, I'm now counting home working as one of the many blessings in my life.

Friday: I was at the optician today. This has never hit my 'Things I love to do' list. It's now on my 'Don't want to experience that again any time soon' list. I struggle with wearing a mask but I follow the guidelines and wear one when necessary. I had a mask on for over an hour and I wasn't worth a button by the end of it. However, this was followed by lunch with a fellow AA'er and I've survived to live another day.

Saturday: I'm missing my family again. Just as I feel online meetings are no replacement for the live show neither are those online meetings a replacement for having the family over for fun, love, companionship and lunch. I need to remind myself I was blessed to have the grandchildren on holiday with me for a week in September.

Sunday: The power of true unity is phenomenal. Just look at us individually and as a Fellowship! We can only accomplish so much on our own, however together we have created a future of hope. By focusing on our singleness of purpose we live through adversity. We need unity for survival; our own survival and that of our Fellowship.

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

**Why not take out a subscription to Roundabout today?
This could be for yourself or as a birthday gift for a friend.
Subscription form is on page 23 of this issue.
Please support your Roundabout.**

THE MAGNIFICENT OBSESSION

**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.**

SUBSCRIBE TO ROUNDABOUT

For £1 per copy including UK delivery

Annual overseas subscription and postage, including Eire – £22.50

Annual international subscription – £35.00

Roundabout is mailed in a plain envelope to protect anonymity

In order to make payments direct through your bank please use the following information:

Sort code: **40-47-31**

Account no.: **63930408**

Overseas payment details – HSBC

IBAN: GB74HBUK40473163930408 BIC: HBUKGB4B

Once you have instructed your bank to make payment

email – name, address and how many copies to: carolineldavy@gsogb.org.uk
this will enable us to match the payment when it arrives.

Please complete this form and send it with your payment to:

General Service Office, Alcoholic Anonymous,
PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

If this order is for a group subscription THE GROUP NAME MUST BE INCLUDED even if posted to a private address. The group name will not appear on the envelope.

Please send copies of **ROUNDABOUT** each month for:

(PLEASE TICK APPROPRIATE BOXES)

One Year **Six Months** **New Subscription** **Renewal**

Made payable to 'General Service Office' for £.....

SEND TO (BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE):

GROUP NAME/DAY GROUP NO.

NAME
.....

ADDRESS
.....

POSTCODE

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

Scan here to submit your
article to Roundabout

