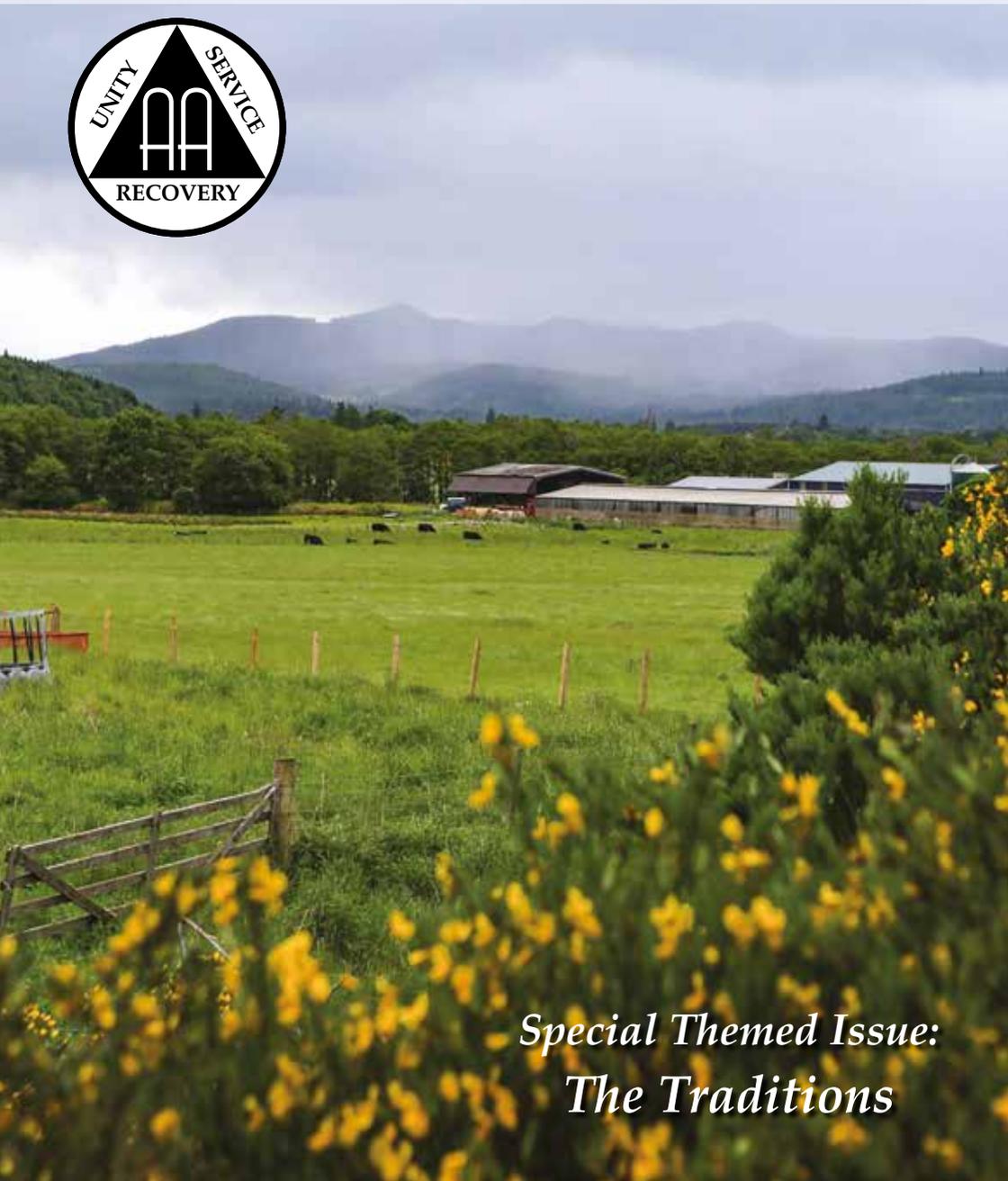


Roundabout

September 2020 £1

Your meeting in print



*Special Themed Issue:
The Traditions*

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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In This Month's Issue

- 2 Sub-Committee Notice Board**
- 3 Editorial**
- 4 Extract From AA Literature**
- 5 Article From The Roundabout Archive**
- 6 Our Traditions**
- 7 The Seventh Tradition**
- 10 We All Lead – Traditionally**
- 11 Back To Basics In Lockdown**
- i-iv AA Conference Approved Books**
- 13 The Roundabout Interview**
- 16 A Message For The Newcomer**
- 17 An Article From Grapevine**
- 19 Grateful To Be Here**
- 21 That Was The Week That Was**
- 23 Subscribe To Roundabout**

Cover picture: courtesy of an AA member.

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email: roundabout@aamail.org

visit: www.aa-roundabout.org.uk

SUB-COMMITTEE NOTICE BOARD

Vacancy for Fellowship Calendar and Diary Editor

The Fellowship Calendar and Diary Production Officer is rotating out of post and we need an enthusiastic person to take on this exciting role, continuing production of this important means of carrying the message. This is a service position for which the candidate must have a minimum of 5 years sobriety and will be required to attend a minimum of two sub-committee meetings per year.

They will be responsible for the preparation and compilation of the Fellowship Calendar and Diary by:

- Sourcing programme materials and quotes.
- Gathering, selecting and evaluating photographs submitted by AA members, with within agreed timescales.
- Supplying all material to printer and liaising with GSO, the Board Trustee and the printer.
- Having some basic photo editing experience and knowledge of Microsoft Office.
- Being familiar with AA's 12 Traditions.

This is a shared post with the ROUNDABOUT magazine. If the Editor comes from England or Wales, he/she will be attached to the SHARE Editorial Team; if from Scotland then he/she will be attached to the ROUNDABOUT Editorial Team. This is a four/five year term.

A detailed description of duties can be sent on appointment.

If you are interested in this service position, please ring the General Service Office for further details and an application form as soon as possible. A letter of recommendation will be required from your intergroup/region.

The closing date for this position is 16 October, 2020.

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 YO1 7NJ

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

Editorial

By 1944 AA had undergone incredible growth. The publication of the Jack Alexander article in 1941 had swelled the membership numbers from 2,000 to 8,000 within a year. With such rapid expansion came various difficulties, challenges and differences of opinions on how AA should conduct itself as an organisation and how it should relate itself to the world.

Groups and individuals were sending in thousands of letters sharing their experiences as well as asking for advice and guidance on a range of matters. Clearly, action had to be taken to ensure the Fellowship would survive and grow.

Beginning in August 1945 and ending in April 1946 a number of essays by Bill W were printed in the *Grapevine*. The essays described the particular challenges the Fellowship was experiencing followed by 'a set of practical guiding principles' for the Fellowship to consider.

It was from these essays that the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous were forged – a set of principles that protects our wonderful Fellowship from 'menaces' within and without AA. The menace without is society, which does not operate along our spiritual guidelines; the menace within is us.

"Our Traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living," co-founder Bill W. said. "And they are to group survival what A.A.'s Twelve Steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind.... Most individuals cannot recover unless there is a group. The group must survive or the individual will not."



Extract from AA Comes Of Age, pages 96-97.

Implicit throughout AA's Traditions is the confession that our fellowship has its sins. We confess that we have character defects as a society and that these defects threaten us continuously. Our Traditions are a guide to better ways of working and living, and they are also an antidote for our various maladies. The Twelve Traditions are to group survival and harmony what AA's Twelve Steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind.

But the Twelve Traditions also point straight at many of our individual defects. By implication they ask each of us to lay aside pride and resentment. They ask for personal as well as group sacrifice. They ask us never to use the AA name in any quest for personal power or money. The Traditions guarantee the equality of all members and the independence of all groups. They show how we may best relate ourselves to each other and to the world outside. They indicate how we can best function in harmony as a great whole. For the sake of the welfare of our entire society, the Traditions ask that every individual and every group and every area in AA shall lay aside all desires, ambitions, and untoward actions that could bring serious division among us or lose for us the confidence of the world at large.

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

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An article taken from The Roundabout Magazine: January 1980

Traditions and Discoveries

Our common welfare should come first, personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity. These few words outline our First Tradition, the principle of it, put into practice being as important as the first step.

Throughout my experience in A.A. I have observed that, united, in purposeful effort and unselfish sharing and caring with each other, brings about a greater understanding of the needs of a recovering alcoholic, with genuine concern for the common welfare of all who declare a desire to stop drinking. We do not create truth but we can discover it, that is, in time and with patient effort.

My first major discovery was, that I didn't need a drink to cope with all the trials and tribulations of living in my new way of life, a day at a time, in fact I had discovered a truth, I didn't need to drink. I discovered I wasn't alone any more, but I felt a greater sense of belonging when I attached myself to one particular group, the truth here was, I belonged in a group, the group was concerned about my personal welfare. In the passing of time, taking more interest in the activities of the Group, shouldering my responsibilities as a Group servant, attending service meetings, keeping myself informed through reading as much A.A. material as was possible, I discovered that to a greater extent A.A. was united. This truth encouraged me to believe that for so long as this state of affairs existed, my personal recovery was assured, that was, if I were truly vigilant and didn't take that first drink.

Most problems, when I discover the truth of them, are usually of my own making. I discover almost daily that the turmoil is not the problem itself but in the effect, it has upon me, the truth lies in strengthening my defences against the defects and so resolve the problem.

A.A.'s First Tradition does not in any way stifle the natural progress and development of the individual, it is the natural talents, flair, imagination, foresight and enthusiasm of the individual that has often motivated the individual Groups in general, and the larger Groups of A.A. as a whole, towards achieving a more tolerant understanding of others, disclosed to us in an atmosphere of truth, the discovery of it can be yours, a step at a time, a tradition at a time, taken a day at a time.

**Ralph
Johnstone Friday Night Group**

Our Traditions

I arrived at my first AA meeting suffering from the horrendous affliction of alcoholism. I was a spiritual and emotional wreck. I was advised to get a sponsor, read the Big Book and take on board the 12 Step Programme. All this I did willingly as I was prepared to do anything to stop the racing brain.

Our AA triangle has three sides, the first being recovery and I was now on that path. Steps One to Five taught me I had to sacrifice my old way of stinking thinking. Done honestly and without fear these Steps gave me a belief in a Higher Power which in time evolved into a faith in a Higher Power. The second side of the triangle is unity – that feeling like I was ‘part of’ something at last and the third side is service – of which I knew very little. In the study of our book the importance of working with others became paramount. My spiritual advisor alerted me to the fact that to have any success with being of service to the Fellowship I would have to gain a working knowledge of our Traditions.

The line from our Big Book ‘The Spiritual life is not a theory we must live it’ hit me really hard. I realised that if I was to have any chance of recovery from this fatal malady I must, with guidance from my Higher Power, live a spiritual life. The Steps had set me on the path to recovery but it was the Traditions which opened my eyes to just how I could improve my spiritual life. Within the Traditions was the guidance on how to give to others what had been freely given to me.

Slowly my thinking changed, often from having penny dropping experiences which dramatically opened my mind. A deeper understanding would come to the fore and from there I was able to go on to help the Fellowship at a deeper level. As I moved along in the service structure my understanding broadened. I could see how the Traditions protect the Fellowship from all sorts of malign influences which are symptoms of the spiritual malady: big shot-ism, self-justification, self-pity and anger.

Like AA’s 12 Step Programme the Traditions are simple but to practise them is not easy. The Traditions helped me to change the way I think, act and behave. In time I also became more confident, enjoyed peace of mind and dare I say it – serenity!

Charlie
Partick Friday

Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting AA as a whole.

You are a member of AA if you say you are...



And where two or more of us are gathered together, we are an AA group if we say we are...



In considering any action - trial..... and error..... have taught us what we can and what we cannot do!

There are two major danger areas. But our course has been charted and the hazards clearly marked. If we steer clear of them, we should have smooth sailing...



AFFILIATION OF AA GROUPS WITH ANYTHING OUTSIDE AA

ANY ACTIVITY THAT WOULD HARM AA AS A WHOLE

The Seventh Tradition

I am in lockdown in my own home and despite the current situation caused by Covid-19 I know it is still important that I carry on my Public Information (PI) service work as best I can.

I continue to keep in touch with my professional contacts outwith the Fellowship – the Third Sector, the NHS, the treatment centres and the homeless units to remind them that Alcoholics Anonymous will continue to be here during and after lockdown. This is a free resource that is fully committed to carrying the message to the frontline staff working daily with the still suffering alcoholic. The team work tirelessly to raise awareness of the issues, whether by delivering presentations to the university student nurses or taking part in Open Meeting Workshops at local doctors' surgeries.

During lockdown I have posted my home group's copies of Roundabout to the local prison as agreed by our group conscience. I've also emailed links to my contacts directing them to the AAGB website where they will find the lists of virtual meetings which are zooming from one end of the nation to the other. AA is still available and welcoming newcomers – it's business as usual despite being virtual.

My ability to be of service to the Fellowship and to pass on what was freely passed to me depends on my continuing personal recovery, practising my Twelve Step Programme, maintaining a good spiritual condition and staying close to my Higher Power, on a daily basis. I keep in regular contact with my sponsor, continue to work with those I am sponsoring as well as with fellow AA members. I have regularly attended my home group meetings online and a variety of other meetings up and down the country. I have also been invited to share at other meetings. All this helps me to stay connected to AA.

It is also vital that I continue to contribute to the Pot as stated in AA's 7th Tradition. I know how vital this money is in supporting the General Service Office, the Northern and Southern Service Offices and all the staff, some of whom are furloughed. These are difficult and challenging times for the whole Fellowship. When lockdown is over and in order to fulfil my primary purpose I'll be helping to prepare information packs which must be readily available for events and organisations. Our contributions to the Pot will allow this to happen. Anonymous YES but not invisible!

Marion M
Inverness Friars Street Tuesday

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*Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our traditions,
ever reminding us to place principles before personalities*

Ours is not a secret society...
we carry the message
anywhere we can –



But we must ever be aware
that self-appointed messiahs
speaking for AA at the public
level can do us great damage!



Let us always remember that anonymity – not taking credit
for our own or others' recovery – is humility at work.

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: carolinedavy@gsgob.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

“When we use the Twelve Traditions to work together in A.A., we are all trying to achieve humility; as individual members, by recognizing our true place in A.A.; as a fellowship, by recognizing A.A.’s true place in the world.”

(The Twelve Traditions Illustrated)



We All Lead – Traditionally

With no CEO, no MD, no regional manager, supervisor or team leader, no rules to be adhered to and no disciplinary procedures to be invoked, how does AA work?

AA is not an organisation in the common sense of the word. Instead, we are a Fellowship of equals who abide by the Traditions of the Fellowship to ensure our growth and survival.

First published in 1946, the Traditions had evolved through experiences, both good and bad, encountered since the first meeting in 1935 and also by learning from the mistakes of other ‘organisations’ that had suffered because of their lack of good judgement. Advice from wise individuals was also accepted.

The primary purpose of AA is at the heart of the Traditions. We focus our time and effort on that rather than being distracted by the things that can divide us and cause friction, i.e. personalities, politics, finance and religion.

As members of AA it is our responsibility and duty to learn and practise these Traditions as set out for us. These founding principles have served us well for many years and will continue to do so.

The future of AA is in our hands. Twelve basic and simple principles, if followed, will ensure the hand of AA is there for our children and grandchildren. It’s up to us not to let them down.

Gerry K
Milnathort Friday

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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'.

Back To Basics In Lockdown

My name is Jeanette. I'm an alcoholic and my sobriety date is 24 November 1997. During the Covid-19 lockdown, I've found myself getting back to basics to maintain my sobriety and by that I mean not just staying away from the first drink but keeping spiritually well.

I'm 77 and have some physical problems which affect my mobility but I find if I'm spiritually in good shape I can handle those challenges and any resultant pain much better. I'm not keen on online meetings so I'm doing what I was told to do right at the beginning – lift the phone and share what's going on in my head. Using the phone is such a basic tool in recovery and keeping in touch with old friends and new is so important for me just now.

Towards the end of 2018, I was at an AA convention in Letterkenny, Ireland and I happened to sit down beside a woman who wasn't long sober. The literature stall hadn't been set up at that point so I went out to my car to get her a 12 Step pack and an Irish *Where to Find*. We shared with each other and exchanged phone numbers.

Recently, at the beginning of the lockdown, over a year later, she contacted me. She'd been scrolling through her phone, found my number and decided to get in touch even though she thought I might not remember her. One of the things she said was that she wasn't comfortable doing online meetings because she came from a small place and was careful to protect her anonymity. As we chatted I looked down and there were copies of the Roundabout magazine with the words 'Your Meeting in Print' staring back at me. I was getting ready to take the centre pages out to pass them on to someone else. I suggested that we do our own version of a 'meeting in print' using texts and that's what we started doing. They are longer texts than the 'Hi', 'Hello' or 'Good night' type.

They are more about how we are living sober, one day at a time. We share how we were feeling. About what is good, bad or indifferent in our lives. We share about living life on life's terms without having to drink. We even speak on the phone sometimes too! The other day I was sharing about how grateful and fortunate I am to have a loving family with a grandson cutting my grass and a granddaughter advising me on hair bands to try to tame my curly hair which is growing wild.

Doing service also helps to keep me well. Working with others is one of the greatest gifts that AA has given me. It helps me so much. I do my turn on the AA Telephone Helpline and let the still-suffering alcoholic know that AA is still functioning in lockdown and is ready to welcome anyone who wants help with their drinking. If I think a caller would be interested in online AA meetings I get hold of one of the young whizz kids in my group to help with that.

During lockdown, just like at any other time, I can't afford to go into doom and gloom thinking, so basic AA suggestions like lifting the phone and doing service are vital to keeping me sober. I've always appreciated the fellowship that happens in our Fellowship and during these strange times, I've appreciated it even more. Just like the woman from Ireland did, I'll scroll through the numbers in my phone and find someone I haven't seen or spoken to for a while and make contact.

Keeping in contact with the God of my understanding is necessary too, remembering to hand over things I can't do anything about to my Higher Power and trying to remember not to take them back again.

Remember, faith not fear is what works. I'm looking forward to seeing you all soon.

Jeanette
Penilee Monday

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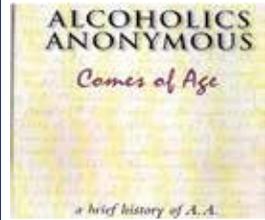


**I am responsible.
When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of AA always to be there.
And for that: I am responsible.**

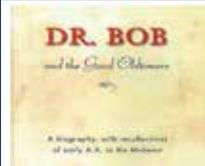
AA Conference Approved Books

New Items and Revised Prices

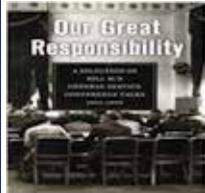
AA Comes of Age Soft Back

	<p>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</p>
Item code 2121	Price £6.00

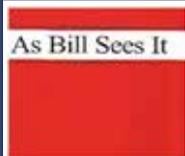
Dr Bob and the Good Oldtimers Soft Back

	<p>Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers Soft Cover A biography, with recollections of early A.A. in the Midwest</p>
Item Code 2181	Price £6.00

Our Great Responsibility Soft Back

	<p>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.</p>
Item Code 6070	Price £6.00

As Bill Sees It

	<p>As Bill Sees It The A.A. Way of Life (selected writings of A.A.'s co-founder).</p>
Item Code 2100	Price £5.00

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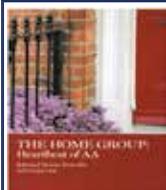
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

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

Item code 2250

Price £5.00

The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA



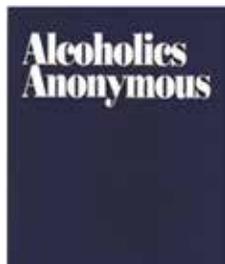
The Home Group: Heartbeat of AA

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 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

Alcoholics Anonymous Soft Back

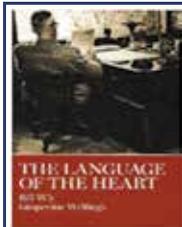


Soft Back 4th Edition of The Big Book

Item Code 2040

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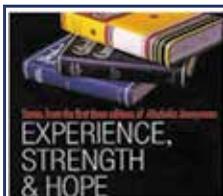
The Language of the Heart



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

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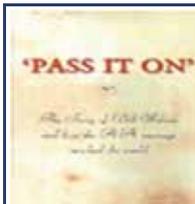
Experience, Strength & Hope



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

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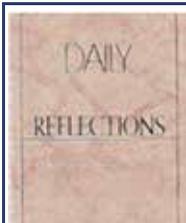
Pass It On



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

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

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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	

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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 Noreen, Kingussie

What brought you to AA?

My first encounter with Alcoholics Anonymous came after having a very public seizure, where the best option I could see was to admit I thought I was an alcoholic. I was in America at the time, I continued drinking whilst I was on holiday and my mum had to persuade the airline I was ok to fly. When we came back, I got in touch with a local lady who was not in AA but she took me to a meeting. I went for a few weeks and then didn't go back. I didn't want to stop drinking and didn't listen to what was going on. It was a way for me to please other people but carry on drinking.

Two months later I found myself in our local psychiatric hospital for the first time. I was just there to 'dry out' and I didn't go to meetings whilst I was there. As soon as I got home I started drinking again and this same cycle continued for just over three years until I hit my 'rock bottom'. A friend then got me into another local facility, where I ended up in hospital with severe alcoholic hepatitis. I was given an opportunity to go to a treatment centre near Peebles for six weeks via the NHS and it was there that I learnt more about Alcoholics Anonymous and the 12 Steps. I got the opportunity to attend meetings in the local area and this gave me a solid foundation within a safe environment. Coming back home six months later I found my local meetings and found too that they could also provide a safe space and that's when I embraced the Fellowship and it embraced me.

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

I knew long before the seizure that my drinking was not normal. It was in a moment of 'clarity' that I knew the 'unacceptable had become acceptable.' I was on my way home from work. I stopped at the shop and bought a couple of cans of gin and tonics and drank them before I got home. My justification for doing that was that I had had a crap day at work and was about to have a crap day at home with my now ex-partner. A few days later I told a friend that this is what I had done and she told me I was really going too far now. I realised then I had a problem with drinking but I didn't want to do anything about it and I certainly didn't want to stop drinking. That's when I started hiding it.

Did you know AA existed?

Yes, I did. From quite a young age I remember being at school and standing outside the paper shop in the queue. Someone pointed out a man across the street and said "Oh, he's going to AA. He goes to AA meetings." I knew this gentleman. I knew there had been trouble at his home and that the family had left him. I certainly

knew about about alcoholics but had the same stereotypical idea of an alcoholic being some hopeless drunk who was homeless and smelly, etc.

How did you contact AA?

It was done directly through the treatment centre once I was there.

What do you remember about your first meeting?

In the first few meetings I remember looking for a 'Big Book'! I kept hearing people saying, "...the Big Book, the Big Book" and I could see this book on the table but it wasn't particularly big – I thought they meant a BIG book! The other thing I remember is thinking "I'm not as bad as that. I don't wake up in the middle of night and pick up a drink. I don't drink in the morning." I don't remember hearing them called 'yets'. Instead I saw them as solutions – because you couldn't sleep at night or night-time drinking being easier as no one else was up, or that's how you stop shaking in the morning so you can go to work.

What was your initial impression of AA?

I was scared and intimidated. I knew I wasn't what they were i.e. sober. I felt much sicker and nervous and felt out of place and thought I was being judged. I didn't go in there sober, I had alcohol in me and didn't feel relaxed. I didn't understand and I don't think my head was anywhere near being open to what was going on.

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

All of the feelings that I just described!

What helped you most in AA?

During that initial time after being in treatment was the realisation that wherever I went, AA was there. It had become part of my thinking, way of living, everyday thoughts, friendships and formed this 'pink cloud' and in some shape or form that cloud is still always with me today.

Was there anything you found hard to do in AA?

The hardest thing was becoming honest. I didn't even really understand what that meant. I'd been trained as a salesperson from an early stage in my career and was incredibly effective at getting people to part with money in a few hours. I did have a degree of integrity though and I knew this as my cancellation rate was low and my sales were solid.

However, I recognised the power of words and questioned my image as a nice Highland lassie. I could gain trust easily and I had abused that in so many ways. That had to be dismantled and built back up again to be used for good – as it should be.

What has AA done for your family?

Help them heal and grow. AA brought me back. It has gifted my family a mother, a sister and daughter. It's brought piece of mind, particularly to my mum. It's given them security because they know I have AA.

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

'This too shall pass', for a few reasons. One because of the first person I heard saying it was a dear friend. When I came back from treatment, he and another member took me under their wing. They both knew my family and they were aware of the disruptions and challenges that were going on, particularly with my kids. One of them would say "Noni, this too shall pass". It still really helps me when there is a crisis. It helps me place myself in the world.

What do you say to a newcomer?

"Welcome!" I feel quite a weight of responsibility speaking to the newcomer. Mainly I tell them to listen, sometimes saying "You've got two ears and one mouth; use them in that proportion."

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

It means as much to me as I get out. The Twelfth Step is really important to me and I believe I get to keep what I have only if I give it away, including to people who are not in AA. If somebody is interested or would like to know what happens to someone who is in recovery, I will share my story. Invariably they will know of someone who potentially has a problem and hopefully my story can help. Also, just turning up and being at meetings, having my hand out if someone needs help.

Has Roundabout played a part in your AA journey?

I started reading it in the treatment centre and in my early years I was an avid reader. It was my wee book I brought home. It was comforting at night if I couldn't sleep or was concerned about things. If I didn't want to pick up the Big Book, I would flick through the Roundabout and I loved to see where people were from. It's an essential service tool.

Anything else you'd like to add?

It was a privilege being asked to do this interview. Being directed to things in my drinking days without doing my usual share was a novel yet lovely experience. Thank you.

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A Message For The Newcomer

This is simply my way of showing my heartfelt gratitude to this Fellowship and the many kind, gracious and unquestioningly caring and loving people that have helped me navigate my route to sobriety. My main message is to the newcomer who has no idea what is behind the door of an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting room – or as it applies just now, inside a Zoom Meeting on a laptop, iPad or smartphone.

As a newcomer I was broken in ways that words could not describe and simply wanted to be fixed. Quite how that was going to be achieved I had no idea but I had become willing to take a leap of faith, push open the door and venture inside to the unknown world of Alcoholics Anonymous. On entering I found myself surrounded by warm, friendly and seemingly happy people. Laughing and chatting, these people, to me, did not seem broken at all.

However, as I stuck around I realised that every single person attending was in fact broken, just like any newcomer. They were all getting fixed a little bit at a time and were all at different stages of repair. How it works? I have not a clue but it does.

I listened to stories that were all so very different in content but the ultimate conclusion was the same – disaster when alcohol was present. The message in the room is: 'Do not take the first drink and the healing will begin.' I listened and as the hours, days, weeks, months and eventually years passed, the unimaginable became more true than I ever actually could have dared to believe.

I am a daughter, a wife, a mother and now a very, very proud grandma to three beautiful little girls and step grandma to a very handsome 12 year old boy. My little family is growing and thriving and I am so blessed to be situated right at the centre of it. I am included, relied on, trusted and never doubted. This unquestionably would not have been the outcome had I not opened that mysterious door of Alcoholics Anonymous.

To everyone that takes the time to read this, I wish you the good fortune that I have found in this Fellowship and thank everyone of you as you are now and always will be, instrumental in my continuing recovery.

Carol B
Nairn Monday

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.

"Now that I've been elected Secretary, I'll show this group some real leadership!"



"There's only one way to do it and I'll tell you what it is..."



"...furthermore, we'll take our money and establish a fund... I'll manage it..."



DOWN, BOY.



"Thank you. Now shall we talk about working the program?"



Article first printed in Grapevine in November 1950

The Traditions...

By: H.S. | Olathe, Kansas

I like them, as is!

AS one of the "little people" in this great AA movement, I would like to put in my two cents worth. In the first place let me state that I have no desire to run anything, steer anything, assert any personal authority--all I want to do, is serve as best I can in my small way.

I am happy to note *The Twelve Traditions* were confirmed at the First International meeting held in Cleveland in July.

I literally cut my eye teeth on *The Twelve Traditions*. You see it was this way: When I came into AA five years ago--each week we alternated discussions of the *Twelve Steps* and *The Twelve Traditions*. Believe me! it was very confusing at first, but I won! I finally managed to sort them out properly. Since that time I have steadfastly maintained that *The Twelve Traditions* are as vitally important as the *Twelve Steps* in our Program of Recovery.

While Bill definitely states these Traditions are merely suggestions for our future – I choose to accept them just as they are written. I have no desire to twist them around to suit my own particular convenience. In all fairness to myself I could not honestly bring myself to do such a thing.

For example: The Second Tradition says "*For group purpose there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as he may express himself in our group conscience.*" I can twist this around any way I care to but I always come up with the same answer, namely "there are no bosses, or brass hats in AA." Maybe I've got a simple mind, but I've an idea there are many AAs who go along with my thinking.

Frankly I am most tolerant of any member's method of living the Program, as long as it has no direct bearing on me. By this I merely mean, if he willfully violates one of *The Traditions* which affects me directly, I believe that I as a member in good standing have a right to question his motives. Here is where I believe our AA prayer is necessary--"Courage to change the things I can."

Bill was s-o-o right when he predicted (page 35 Book of Traditions) that a member who tries to "boss" will find himself passed by at election time. I've just seen it happen.

It is my own personal opinion that if we, as members of AA, attempt to practice the *Twelve Traditions* in conjunction with the *Twelve Steps*, there will be far less 'feudin' and fussin' among our various groups. Thanks for listening!

Service in AA can be very good for our humility...



We are paid off in sobriety, respect and love.

When we have finished one job we may be elected to another...



but ultimately we will make way for newcomers who must have their turn.

Eventually we become "elder statesmen" (if we don't choose to be "bleeding deacons")



AA leadership? The group conscience, aided, advised and abetted by the wisdom, experience and humility of the elder statesman.

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>

Grateful To Be Here

I've been a grateful member of our great Fellowship for many years and finally have got round to sharing a little of my experience, strength and hope with Roundabout. Recently, I'd been clearing out some paperwork at home and came across a diary from 2009. It contained my handwritten thoughts going back to my childhood, my descent into alcoholism and my eventual acceptance that alcohol could no longer play a part in my life. I would like to share a condensed version of my experience in the hope that it is of help to other alcoholics.

I was fortunate to be born into a very loving family in the late 1950's and don't remember the family ever being affected by the illness. I was painfully shy as a child and found it extremely difficult to mix with other children or make friends. I became the victim of bullying at school and really started to believe that I was as worthless as my oppressors were making me out to be.

I lifted my first drink at around 15 years of age and believed then that I had found the solution to all my problems. I fought back against the bullies and very soon gained a reputation for being a bit of a bad lad. By the age of 25, this illness truly had me in its grip and I had already been in trouble with the law, been admitted to hospital on many occasions and had become someone to be avoided owing to my unpredictable behaviour.

By my early thirties, I had become a fall down drunk and my family were now seriously concerned about my welfare. My family actually contacted AA on my behalf and I found myself attending my first meeting in January 1992. I wish that I had stayed from that day on but I ended up having a long and hard road to sobriety.

I continued to drink on occasion for the next three years and then managed to stay dry for another five years. During this period I entered into a relationship with a lady I had known since childhood and we ended up having two children together. We went through a really rough time when our wee girl was seriously ill and I managed to stay sober during this very harrowing time. My wee girl got better and everything looked rosy to people who knew us. I knew then, that I hadn't fully accepted my alcoholism and ended up lifting the first drink again.

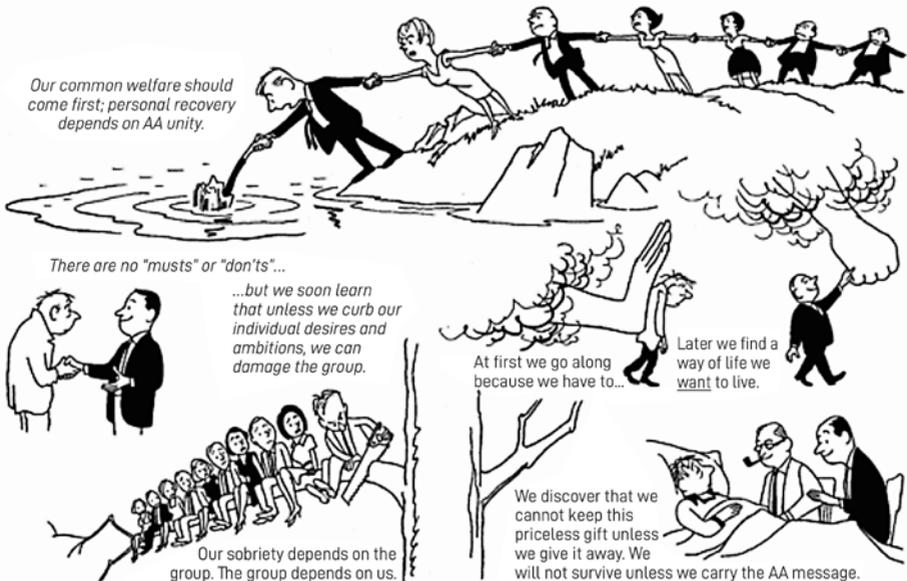
For the next eight years I continued to lift the first drink every few months – the longest dry period being about nine months. Every time I drank, my mental and physical health was deteriorating to the point that I was suicidal. I got through Christmas 2007 and into the New Year without lifting a drink but was in a really bad place mentally and emotionally by the 2nd of January. I knew that I was going to drink again and had all but lost any hope of getting sober.

I awoke on the morning of the 5 January 2008 after yet another bout and knew then that there wasn't another drink left in me. That was the day that I fully accepted that my relationship with alcohol was over and I started my journey into sobriety.

Over 12 years later, my life is so very different from those dark days, thanks to the love and support from our wonderful Fellowship. It's been a very tough journey with some really testing times along the way but it's been a long time since I've thought about using alcohol to help me feel better.

Thanks for reading.

Brian
Renfrew Sunday



That Was The Week That Was

Monday: The unity of AA is incredibly important to me. Without unity I would not have gotten and stayed sober. I needed each and every one of you. Firstly, you passed on to me what you had and in turn I (eventually) passed on to the newcomer what I had. That's why when asked recently what my favourite Tradition is, I immediately answered "Tradition One." Without it we're sunk for 'personal recovery depends upon AA unity.'

Tuesday: I should perhaps explain why I started my week with the above remarks. I've been asked to reflect on the Traditions as I go through my week. I could have swapped Tuesday for Monday and given the explanation first. However, no. I wanted to start my week with reflection on what my sponsor and other members have passed on to me.

Wednesday: Like many of us I can occasionally have problems with authority. Tradition Two works as well for me as it does for AA as a whole. Having a close conscious contact with a Higher Power, seeking to carry out that Power's will for me instead of my own will means I don't have to deal with multiple would be bosses. I only have the One.

Thursday: Today I thought back to when my sponsor first introduced me to the Traditions. Although he passed the message well, I was unable then to grasp just how important these twelve principles are to our Fellowship. Simply put they're the glue that holds us together. With each year that passes I like to think my understanding grows. However, it's still good to acknowledge that there is always something more to learn and understand.

Friday: Ah, Tradition Eleven, what a bone of contention this was when I served as a Public Information Liaison Officer for my local Intergroup. Tasked with raising public awareness (how else otherwise will the newcomer find us and organisations begin to understand us?) I was often challenged with 'attraction rather than promotion'. I embraced the personal anonymity part as, in sobriety, I have never sought the limelight. I'm comfortably a back-room worker. One of the best 'banners' I came across during this three year period was 'Anonymous not Invisible'.

Saturday: Tradition 12 'Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of our traditions...' is arguably the most important Tradition. It protects our Fellowship from within. It protects us from ourselves and our ever-present ego. Do I find it easy to practise this as I live my life in sobriety? No. However, it does get easier as I continue to try to put our Fellowship before self.

Sunday: After being allowed back into the office for two days a light at the end of this Covid-19 crisis has appeared. It felt tremendous but also a little scary. Reflecting on the Traditions this week has also greatly improved my gratitude. My association with the Traditions began as soon as my sponsor had guided me through the Twelve Steps. We then moved on to the Twelve Traditions. Back then I couldn't truly understand their importance yet little by little my understanding of them grows.

**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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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.**

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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

Scan here to read more
about the 12 Traditions.

