

August 2020

£1

The Fellowship's  
RECOVERY MAGAZINE

# share

Produced for members  
by members

Our Meeting Between Meetings



# Trudging the road...

## THE TWELVE STEPS

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

## THE TWELVE TRADITIONS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA 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 AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every AA 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. AA, 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 AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.



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The Journal of Alcoholics Anonymous  
in England & Wales

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ISSN 1460 5228

# share

our meeting in print

**AUGUST 2020**

**In this issue...**

Step Eight Would Injure Them Or Others	4
Step Eight A Surge In Personal Growth	6
Isolating And Not Alone	8
Starting My Journey... Part Two And Becoming Willing To Believe	11
Change Everything	13
<hr/>	
AA AND PRISON	
Rigorously Honest	14
Helping Others	15
<hr/>	
Breaking ADD	18
Loners-Internationalists Meeting	21
Coping With Life On Life's Terms	22
You Are Here	23
And Then There Was Technology	24
Half Measures Aailed Us Nothing	26
The Share Interview: With Suki K From Budapest, Hungary	28

Editorial	3
AA Conference Approved Books New Items and Revised Prices	i
Literature Order Form	iv
<b>shareback</b> : Letters	31



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## the 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 AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

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

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

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# editorial

Dear Reader

**W**ELCOME to our August edition. Working through our Programme of recovery we have reached Step Eight and having worked at the previous seven Steps we may now have the courage to start writing that list helped by looking back at our Step Four. *“Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past.”* (BB p.76) This is totally different to the times in the past when we may have said, so many times, “Sorry” only to repeat our insane behaviour the very next day. We are embarking on the job of keeping our side of the street clean which will be a lifetime’s work. But in doing this work we will have the support and guidance of our Fellows, sponsor and our HP. We are no longer alone.

Online AA meetings have taken off since the lockdown in March. There have been online meetings for some time especially in Europe, but the Fellowship has grabbed hold of this new communication tool and now we can visit meetings all over the country and around the world. Groups are holding workshops to share best practice on making the most of this online tool and I have been amazed and delighted at the resourcefulness of AA members using this new technology and for encouraging members who are unfamiliar with online and quite untech to have a go and join in.

June 2022 will see the Fellowship celebrating 75 years of AA in the UK with an AA convention in Leeds. As part of this planned celebration our Regions have been helping to gather their own history. This is to be printed in a booklet to be given to each delegate attending the convention. Full details are available on the convention’s website – <https://www.aa75.co.uk/>

\*\*\*\* \* \* \* \*

## NEXT MONTH: STEP NINE

*We invite articles on your experience, strength and hope. This month we are particularly looking for those on Steps and Traditions Ten and Eleven for the October and November 2020 issues.*



## STEP EIGHT:

*“Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all”*

# STEP EIGHT WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS

IN 1973 I attempted to murder my then wife (the mother of my two daughters) and was sentenced to seven years in prison. Whilst I was in prison my wife divorced me and moved away from the area where we had lived and took our two daughters with her. I was released from prison in 1977 and started attending AA meetings but failed to grasp and develop a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty and picked up the first drink again a year later. Three years later I took my last drink and was then entirely ready to want what AA really has to offer.

The names on my Step Eight had resulted from the left column on my Step Four which was lengthy. My former wife and our two daughters' names were, of course, included on my list. It was not until I was twelve years sober that I decided to approach these

particular 'delicate' amends and with guidance from my sponsor we looked at them and decided to first try to locate my two daughters. Not knowing where they had moved to, I contacted an agency and asked if they could help. They agreed to do so and requested copies of my daughters' birth certificates which I was able to obtain where their births had been registered. Several months passed before I heard back from the agency and their reply was a letter informing me that they had completed their inquiries and had contacted my daughters who did not want to have contact with me. I relayed the contents of the letter to my sponsor who told me to bring it with me when I visited him that coming weekend.

When I arrived at my sponsor's he read the letter and told me that he had been giving the matter a great deal of thought since my phone

call. He told me that, on reflection, there was a great deal of detail that we had overlooked and which, therefore, we had not considered. We had not taken into account the fact that my two daughters were very young when I had attempted to murder their mum. We had not taken into account the fact that they had moved away with their mum and might still live with her or near to where she lives and we had not taken into account that they are likely to be in contact with their mum. We had not considered that when they received letters from the agency, they would probably contact their mum and inform her that their dad was trying to trace them. Such news could fill their mum with fear and apprehension and cause her stomach to churn

*“If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes.”*

(BB p.76)

over. She wasn’t to know that I was no longer the insane alcoholic who tried to murder her twenty years ago and she had no way of knowing that I wasn’t just using

my daughters to find her to finish her off!

It was these revelations that brought me face to face with the enormity of what I had done in 1973 and it hit me like a ton of

bricks. Step Nine says, “...except when to do so would injure them or others.”. Today, I understand that to mean mental, emotional or physical harm. Those three amends remain on my Step Eight list but my experience is that the best amends can sometimes be not to make amends but to remain willing to do so should the right circumstances occur.

ANONYMOUS



## 75th Anniversary of AA in Great Britain

The 75th AA Convention to be held in Leeds in June 2022 will include a booklet for all delegates featuring the history of our Regions.

Good progress has been made on this project and most of the 16 Regions that make up AA in Great Britain have responded enthusiastically to requests for their regions history. The Fellowship would like to take this opportunity to thank all those responsible for producing their excellent Regional Histories.

**The deadline for your history has been extended to 31 July 2020 for the receipt of your Regional Histories.**

We are very grateful to you for your cooperation with this project and thank you in advance.

# STEP EIGHT A SURGE IN PERSONAL GROWTH

**A**T the time of writing this I am coming up to 22 months sober, so when this is published (hopefully), I will be in the middle of my third sober summer. No more sitting in my flat on a scorching day drinking on my own, or meeting friends in pub gardens and not fully being present because all I could do was obsess about my next drink – where, what, how much? I never thought I'd say that I'm happy, joyous and free from those dark, lonely and terrifying times of being in active alcoholism. I have stuck close to the Programme throughout my recovery – regular meetings, inventory, prayer, calling other Fellows and for me most importantly being honest and trying to be the person that I know I am.

So, why choose Step Eight to write about. Simple answer, because I found it the hardest to go through. The reality of my drinking, the preparation of having to face those who I'd hurt, the type of pain I put them through, the shame I felt and to start clearing away the wreckage of my past. I mean, who

in their right mind would WANT to do that! But I knew I needed to. When first looking at the Steps in early recovery, I questioned why Steps Eight and Nine were not at the top of the list. Surely, I would just get sober and apologise to people for my behaviour. I came to realise that there was work to do on myself before reaching this stage.

*“We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go...”*

(BB p.78)

From reading my Step Five, it was clear to me whose lives I had impacted due to my alcoholism. Reluctantly, I started to write my list which caused me pain and upset. I quickly realised that for years I had taken away the peace of mind of the people who are closest to me. My sponsor suggested living in the other person's shoes for a day and then noting down the feelings that they would have felt. Words such as infuriation, embarrassment, shock, helplessness, confusion, anger/rage, to name a few, flowed onto the paper. Often smudged by the tears that rolled down my face, when realising the destruction my illness had caused. Whilst finding this process painful, I also found

it freeing, humbling and crucial in order to make my amends. If I was to thoroughly clear away the wreckage from the past, I had to understand what it had been like for my nearest and dearest. I owed them that!

During Step Eight, I had a surge of personal growth, uncomfortable and painful at times, but also a time to reflect on how far I'd come since working the steps of AA. I had to be brave, honest,

self-reflective and I had to dig deep. Which I managed to do and I am incredibly proud of myself for this. Since the start of my recovery, my life has done a complete U-turn and I am massively grateful to the Fellowship and Steps for allowing me to become the person I am today. I don't hate myself anymore. Ok, there are still times where I might not like my actions, but I'm a work in progress!

MELLISA

## TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

### Tradition Eight



**Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers.**

1. Is my own behaviour accurately described by the Traditions? If not, what needs changing?
2. When I worry about any particular Tradition, do I realise how it affects others?
3. Do I sometimes try to get some reward – even if not money – for my personal AA efforts?
4. Do I try and sound in AA like an expert on alcoholism? On recovery? On medicine? On sociology? On AA itself? On psychology? On spiritual matters? Or, heaven help me, even on humility?
5. Do I make an effort to understand what AA employees do? What workers in other alcoholism agencies do? Can I distinguish clearly among them?
6. In my own AA life, have I any experiences which illustrate the wisdom of this Tradition?
7. Have I paid enough attention to the book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions? To the pamphlet AA Tradition – How it developed?

# ISOLATING AND NOT ALONE

ONE of the things I value the most about being in recovery during this time of COVID-19 uncertainty is that those of us in Twelve Step Programmes are already well-acquainted with concepts such as surrender, powerlessness, acceptance, turning it over, fear and isolation. That doesn't mean that we don't have to face things on a daily basis but rather that we already have tools and resources which others may not yet have discovered, for which I am grateful.

There's much talk of 'social isolation' and 'social distancing' these days, language which is anathema to recovery since isolation is often caused by addiction and addiction leads to isolation, addiction often being referred to as a disease of isolation. They breed and feed each other. I come from the position that connection is the opposite of addiction and now more than ever, we need to connect with one another since social isolation can be sobriety's worst nightmare.

My own journey into addiction and then into recovery was preceded by a strong sense of isolation from others – the feeling of not fitting in at an early age and shape-shifting

to try to win approval and love. Isolation was a coping mechanism, a survival skill, for a long time. I was 'brought up' – whatever that means – in an alcoholic home and whilst the cause of death of my mother was officially alcoholism, it might as easily have been described as isolation. I used to believe that isolation meant being on my own,

*“...we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing...” (BB p.79)*

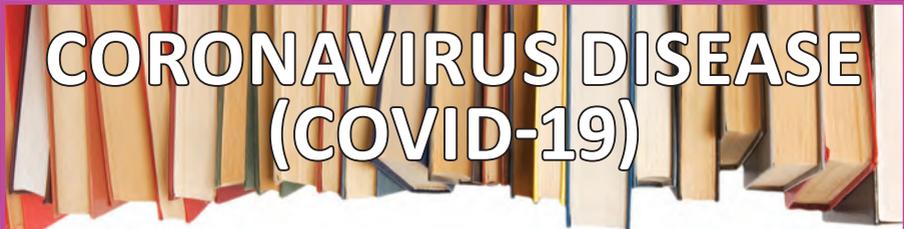
something I couldn't manage well as I did not like myself very much and had no true sense of self. In my active addiction I surrounded myself with people and very often found myself feeling alone and isolated in a room full of people and not understanding why. Cunning and baffling. Through time in recovery I have come to understand the difference between isolation and being alone and for this alcoholic it has meant learning to enjoy my own company. One of the key tenets of AA is that 'acceptance is the solution'; I did not realise that self-acceptance is fundamental to this.

So today we are advised to physically isolate from others for everyone's well-being. But that doesn't mean we don't connect. We can attend on-line meetings – no real substitute for face to face

ones, but I'm so grateful for the technology I often rail against as we can hide behind it and this damages connection. And we can pick up the 'phone, connect with our Higher Power, connect with ourselves through working the Steps, remain open and curious, and do good for others as suggested in our Programme. I'm also a big fan of body work since it is said that 'our issues are in our tissues'. I've found that the best contradiction to isolation is to embrace connection; this situation forces me to do so. The phrases I used to hate such as 'one day at a time', 'let go and let G-D', 'do the next right thing', 'keep it simple' etc, are more pertinent

than ever. We have a fundamental human need to connect through interacting with others. For me, it stops me being in my head, reminds me of the bigger picture and is a conscious investment in a better world. Our lives degrade if we allow a pandemic of loneliness to take over.

But I'm not always good at it. When I feel powerless, lacking, spiritually unwell – some would say with the disease on me – I can forget the importance of connecting. I become fearful of showing you my vulnerability and want to hide. After all, my head invites me to believe that isolation will protect me from getting hurt and that if I isolate I won't have



## CORONAVIRUS DISEASE (COVID-19)

**Alcoholics Anonymous UK is constantly updating  
information on our AA UK Website**

[www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Coronavirus-News](http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Coronavirus-News)

This includes:

General guidance about Covid19

Help and guidance about  
On-Line meetings

Links to On-Line AA meetings

Link to update meeting details

Guidance about On-Line  
Anonymity

Links to Share and Roundabout  
On-Line

Help for Newcomers

Tradition Seven

Literature orders

Other websites claiming to be  
connected to AA

GSO requests that we avoid calling the London, York or Glasgow office for general enquiries but rather email to: [gso@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk](mailto:gso@alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk)

to feel the shame that you will know I have feelings. But the very thing I want to protect myself from is a by-product of so doing, in that it increases fear and hurt. That's why I need you and the Rooms of recovery, so that I don't have to do life alone. After all, isolation is at the same time both self-centred and self-abandoning, and I can't have a relationship with you or my Higher Power if I'm disconnected from myself, or to put it another way, I can't have a relationship with someone whose feet are firmly planted in the air. So, I need grounding and the solution is in fellowship and healthy relationships with myself, others and my Higher Power. The more I do this, the less the disease of isolation – and its close cousin, shame – can infect me.

I've had the good fortune to work with people in prisons. It is reported that those incarcerated are handling the current events far better than those of us on the

outside since they have already had taken away many freedoms we take for granted and are overly familiar with isolation. At the same time the evidence is that people who feel socially isolated experience increased mental health issues. I am grateful for the freedoms I have and don't want isolation to imprison me, so I practice the tools I have learned on a daily basis to the best of my ability. Something all spiritual programmes have in common is a request to stay in the present and this helps me not to project or take inventory of the possible future.

In another Twelve Step Programme I work, it is suggested that the healing begins when we risk moving out of isolation. Today I am choosing not to isolate, but instead filling myself with recovery and self-care tools, rather than to isolate and risk emotional and other relapse.

*ALEX R, Stroud, Gloucestershire*



## *Hints and Tips for a Sober Christmas and New Year*

The Share Team would love our readers to share their own Hints and Tips about staying sober over Christmas and The New Year.

- What is your experience?
- What works for you?
- What would you suggest for a newcomer?

Send your Hints and Tips to: [AAShare@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:AAShare@gsogb.org.uk)

Or post them to: The Editor, SHARE, General Service Office, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ

Deadline Friday, 4th October 2019. For publication in our December issue.

# STARTING MY JOURNEY... PART TWO AND BECOMING WILLING TO BELIEVE

*(This is the second part of this article. Part One is printed in July 2020 SHARE.)*

... **S**O, the day came for me to leave rehab. I was more anxious to leave than I had been to arrive. But I was glad to be home and realised pretty quickly that rehab had been about me being 'reset' and put back to my 'factory settings'. In order for me to continue my sobriety I needed to get to meetings and find a sponsor, and do some work. I gave myself a day off but on the second day, I went to my first AA meeting on the 'outside'. I didn't really talk at this meeting but one person came straight up to me and introduced herself, she gave me her number, asked for mine and suggested I joined another couple of meetings later in the week. Blimey I thought, this is all a bit full on, I'm not sure I want to give a lot of people my phone number. I was scared, but this wonderful lady texted me in the days that followed and as she suggested I went to her home group. I did and I felt immediately welcomed there. I was asked if I would do a reading. I sat down next to another lovely lady and we chatted and found we had some things in common.

A few days later my GP rang to tell me I had to self-isolate for twelve weeks because of an illness I had had over Christmas. I panicked. How was I going to move forward with the Programme now? The lady I had met at my first meeting put me into a social media group and I thought, "Oh come on throw it out there Sarah, ask for a sponsor, what's the worst that can happen?" So I did, one person kindly rang me and said they couldn't be a sponsor but would always be at the end of the phone for me, then another lady said she was willing to take me on temporarily. She suggested we video call and chat about it. So we arranged a time, and lo and behold if it wasn't the lady who I had sat next to at the second meeting I'd gone to.

I am so grateful; she is now my temporary sponsor and I feel very safe and secure in her hands. Whilst we were working through Step Two something pretty huge dawned on us at the same time. Up until this point I had accepted that my HP in rehab was my group, my peers, the people who I opened up to for seven hours a day every

day for the preceding month. I was saying to my sponsor maybe my home group will become my HP, but then I said, "Aren't these coincidences crazy?" I knew I needed to go to rehab, some funds appear from nowhere, I chose a great facility, my counsellor was the best one for me, my group was the right one for me, I met a lady at my first outside meeting, she ushered me to her home group, I sat next to you and then you amazingly agreed to become my sponsor without knowing we had met." "They are not coincidences." she said, "That is your Higher Power working for you." I think I knew deep down something special had been happening, but I had no comprehension of what that was.

*"...we are not to be the hasty and foolish martyr..."*  
(BB p.79)

We both shed a tear at this stage. I felt completely overwhelmed.

So in a rather long and convoluted way, I just wanted to say, even at this early stage of my recovery I am beginning to realise that it may be that "...a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." (Part of Step Two). I think so far, my HP has done a sterling job, and I am very thankful that I have been given the opportunity to accept the Programme into my life, along with my friends from rehab, my new AA friends, and my sponsor. Thank you all for making me so welcome and for allowing me to carry on my journey in such great company.

SARAH



## Short is Sweet

We would like to thank our contributors for the amazing number of articles over the last few months – the response has been wonderful.

We really appreciate all the experience, strength and hope expressed in your articles and would like to re-iterate 'Short is Sweet'.

Articles over 1,000 words will not be considered for publication.

Often most articles rated by our team and put forward for publication are less than 500 words.

# CHANGE EVERYTHING

**B**EING continuously told that the Programme is about change and when enquiring on what do I change, old timers informed me, “Everything.” I was beginning to see this was true.

I had admitted – change. Turned to AA and asked for help – change. Placed faith in the God of my understanding – change. Completed a fearless and thorough moral inventory of myself – change. Acknowledged my defects, shortcomings, sins – change. Each of the Twelve Steps contains a doing verb which enables me to change.

The AA Programme offers a solution to my alcoholism – it enables me to have a daily reprieve contingent on my fit spiritual condition, it’s a Programme of action and Step Seven begins with ‘Humbly’, a word I had never taken notice of in my drinking days of self-centeredness, self-justification and fear. Steps Six and Seven are only a couple of short paragraphs in the Big Book, but my sponsor referred to them as the engine room of the Programme and that they are about change, so we also read Steps Six and Seven in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

Humbly was described to me as thinking of others before myself; wow, this was a new concept for

me and one I still have to practice on a daily basis. “*Never was there enough of what we thought we wanted.*” (12&12 p.72). I now had a new master and needed to start trusting and following God’s will. So, I not only needed to pray for my shortcomings to be removed but I needed to start acting with tolerance, patience, kindness and love. A tall order for this alcoholic and for most of the time this meant saying nothing rather than saying something judgemental, controlling or negative. Practicing these principles over time, I have learnt that my shortcomings will never be fully removed, unlike the obsession to drink which has been removed and never returned, one day at a time. They have been diluted and reduced and every now and then, I can automatically say something loving and kind: change! It works if you work it.

MICHELLE, Plymouth

## DECLARATION OF UNITY

**This we owe to AA’s future.  
To place our common  
welfare first; to keep our  
Fellowship united; for on AA  
unity depend our lives and  
the lives of those to come.**

# AA AND PRISON



## RIGOROUSLY HONEST

**L**IKE many other recovering alcoholics before me I have learned that I have more than just one characteristic of self-deception – the dreaded self-will which will return and eventually run riot.

I began my AA journey nearly 18 years ago and whilst I haven't had a drink in that time, I have learned the true importance of 'being rigorously honest', in all my affairs. Before I came to prison, I attended my weekly AA home group without fail, noticing that I always felt better and at peace with the world around me after each meeting. However, there was always a nagging feeling of self-doubt that began to creep in not long after. Was I being honest? Was I being fearless and opening up to those around me? The answer of course was a resounding, "No!". Warning signs were there – fear, anxiety, guilt, shame and the constant sense of loneliness. Then one day a member of the Fellowship said, "Our secrets are our weakness.". It was a comment directed solely at me. I knew that although I was sober, I was not being honest and by not being honest I was not working the Twelve-Step Programme.

Not long after, I was arrested and incarcerated. My inability to be honest resulted in the loss of everything I held dear – family, friends and any sense of self-respect. I was once more broken and lost, full of guilt as I had been all those years ago. It was the worst of times where suicide seemed to be the most comforting option. Thankfully, and something I will always be grateful to the Fellowship for, the prison meetings themselves are the most honest meetings I have known, where no-one is judged on their past mistakes. There is a communal understanding and acceptance of how destructive addiction in any form can be. The generosity of our AA Fellowship visitors is truly humbling and fills not only me, but all the other men with genuine hope for the future and is a living proof of the power of the Fellowship.

As for me the importance of the Twelve Steps has never been clearer. By accepting the part and making the commitment to change I have found a new freedom bizarrely in the most unlikely setting – a prison! AA, the Twelve Steps and the Promises (which are read at every meeting) have given me a second chance to start over and live life on life's terms.

Gratitude plays a huge part in my recovery, for without the help, support, bravery and kindness of other AA members I would be lost. I continue to be extremely grateful to those members of the Fellowship who give their time so freely and who encourage me on the path to recovery. In turn I hope that when I leave the

confines of prison, I can freely give that which has been given to me – the experience, strength and hope that embodies the true spirit of alcoholics in recovery, fellowship and AA. God most definitely is doing for me what I could not do myself and for that I am a grateful alcoholic.

JOHN D, Wales

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## HELPING OTHERS

I HAD a short stay in HMP this year (for failing to comply with a rehabilitation requirement last year, 2019). I have done previous sentences in the past – this was only a month and a half but looking back, very powerful. For the last four years I have been in and out of AA, always going back to drink and prison.

On the first week I met a fellow friend from AA who I knew from the Rooms in Birmingham, who had just got seven years. We used to talk and started going to meetings, he was the first person who saw it in me that I could do this, one day at a time. I have kept in contact with him and two other prisoners since I have got out. The one meeting we went to on a Tuesday evening, two of the prisoners had a fight on the way to the meeting – we broke it up and went to the meeting. The chair said to us, “It doesn’t

*“Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead.” (BB p.83)*

matter that you are late boys, and the meeting is on resentment.” I said that was appropriate and the argument was settled in the meeting with no falling out.

On my release, I was sent to a bail hostel which was set up for most to fail. While I was there, I started attending meetings, got a sponsor and got on with the Steps. My initial plan was to go to a day house in Coventry which I was accepted to in early April – the people of Birmingham Fellowship and Coventry really helped me through the first few weeks. The Twelve Step Fellowship supported me inside and on leaving – in the future the day house in Coventry wants to start a Programme – meeting people from the gate on release and have asked me for help with it. Helping others is the best place for me and helps safeguard us.

MIKE H. Coventry

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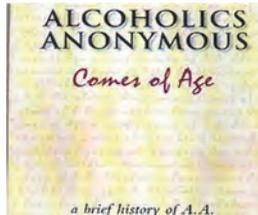
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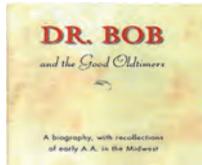
# AA Conference Approved Books

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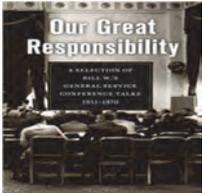
### AA Comes of Age Soft Back

	<b>AA Comes Of Age: a brief history of A.A.</b> 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
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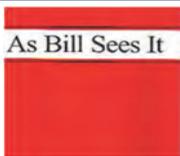
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### Our Great Responsibility Soft Back

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	<b>As Bill Sees It</b> The A.A. Way of Life (selected writings of A.A.'s co-founder).
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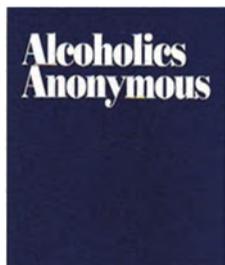


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Selected Stories from the AA Grapevine.

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## 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

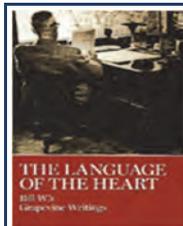
## Alcoholics Anonymous Soft Back



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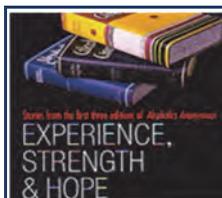
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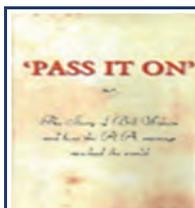
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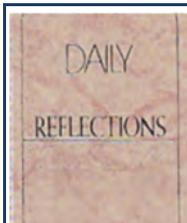
## Pass It On



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

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

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Our Great Responsibility	6070		6.00	
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Pass It On	2200		8.00	
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# AA GB 75th Anniversary Convention 10-12 June 2022 Leeds Direct Arena

**Website <https://www.aa75.co.uk/>**

## **Early Bird Registration Now Open**

Our convention will be a time for AA members, from GB and beyond together with AI-Anon Family Groups, family and visitors to celebrate AA 75 years at this event with big meetings being held in the large theatre style stadium and other meetings and activities will take place throughout the weekend within the arena complex.

We know many are excited about the 75th Anniversary Convention, please keep checking the website for updates and some random facts as they become available.

A photograph of the Leeds Direct Arena at night, illuminated with blue and white lights. The arena's facade is a complex, geometric structure of hexagons and pentagons.

Email address: [info@aa75.co.uk](mailto:info@aa75.co.uk)

# BREAKING ADD

ONE of the comments I hear expressed most often in AA is that of fellow alcoholics who felt *different* from other people growing up – like a slightly bemused bystander watching life happen from the side-lines, not quite understanding the subtle rules and boundaries that others in society just seem to navigate with relative ease. This was certainly the case for me. In many ways I had an idyllic childhood – I grew up in rural Germany on an Army base, where I spent long summer days exploring the surrounding forests, lakes and farm tracks, and from as far back as I remember I was drawn to the peace and solitude of nature. I didn't really fit in at school, hated sitting in a classroom and only had a small circle of friends, but we were an inseparable band of misfits. Fast forward some years and this deeply-felt connection with the great outdoors led me to attempt to take a degree in Landscape Architecture, after barely just scraping the required grades at school. It was at University that two real problems arose in my life. My drinking escalated, and I found it almost impossible to motivate myself to study. The two played off each other – the more I drank, the more behind I got, which led to increasing anxiety, which led to drinking more.

*“First, we take a look backwards and try to discover where we have been at fault...”*

(12&12 p.79)

I was always the peacemaker as a kid yet I began to get into fights. One time I was leaving a bar, much the worse for wear, and was set on by a group of six or seven local lads who beat me unconscious and stamped on my head, just for the hell of it. It was a time of real fear – fear of the world, of failing my studies, of violence. This sense of fear carried with me for many years afterwards. I had a string of disastrous relationships, always ended by the other person, never me. My grades tanked and I ended up failing my course, having to swallow my pride and resit the first year as everyone else progressed. It was a kick up the backside I needed though and by God's grace I managed to *finally* complete my studies.

My first job saw me moving to a tiny one-bedroom flat in Cambridge. Living on my own was like lighting a touch paper on my drinking – the stress of the job, living alone, boredom and fear led me to drinking ever more heavily, alone, to the point of blackout most evenings.

It was here I hit a first rock bottom, waking up one morning utterly paranoid that the police were going to arrest me for things that I *might* have done whilst drunk. I was convinced that my life would be ruined – that I would bring shame on my family and my friends

wouldn't want to know me. This persisted for a year and it got so bad that I thought long and hard about ending things. Looking back, it was an utterly miserable, lonely, fearful and confusing existence.

I moved to London to get married and we settled down and started a family. It's hard to say, but I hated parenthood in the early years – it seemed to suck all the energy out of me and I resented it. The kids grew older and I mellowed a bit into fatherhood, but work was a constant challenge. I managed, somehow, to have a couple of promotions which saw me in a fairly senior role. I was now dealing with staff problems, sizeable budgets and targets, a wave of redundancies and plummeting morale. I just wasn't good at what I was doing any more and it took

its toll on me; spurred on by booze I suffered a breakdown aged 44, when my wife walked in to our bedroom to find me lying in the foetal position at the end of the bed, crying my eyes out, unable to get up and go to work. This proved to be the turning point in my life.

My wife coerced me into going and seeing a counsellor, although I felt so desperate for change that it didn't take much persuasion on her part. My counsellor forced me to face up to my drinking, and after taking stock of the amount of alcohol I was consuming I realised I had a serious problem. That night I called the AA Telephone Service and a lady on the end of the phone recommended I get to a meeting. I took her advice and the next day I rather timidly entered the Rooms, hovering at the back and trying to



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make sense of what it was all about and whether I was, indeed, an alcoholic.

That was almost three years ago, and in this time I have seen profound change in my life. I have completed the Steps, am able to give back to the Fellowship and, occasionally, not put myself first. I am utterly convinced of the presence of a loving God and have experienced the AA Promises begin to come true.

I have also been diagnosed with Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD), and realise now that my problems at school and university were not that I was simply lazy, thick or had a terrible memory, but rather that my brain was simply wired

differently to most people. My sense of feeling different as a child now has some context, and many people with ADD turn to abusing alcohol or drugs to cope with the 'washing machine head' so often symptomatic of the condition. It's thought that up to 25% of people facing the challenges of addiction may have ADD/ADHD and getting treatment for it has been another huge help in my life.

By the grace of God and with the remarkable love, patience, self-sacrifice and kindness of some truly wonderful AA members, men and women, I have not had a drink in this time, nor have I felt the need to.

DAVE T.

## Tradition 7

In view of current circumstances if members wish to make contributions directly to GSO please find details below.

Members can make their contribution direct to GSO by bank transfer see below.

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# LONERS- INTERNATIONALISTS MEETING

**A**NOTHER source for AA members who for whatever reason are in some kind of isolation, is Loner's Internationalists Meeting (LIM), sponsored by World Services New York.

This link was formed many years ago by a seafaring member Captain Jack, who quickly recognised that for some there was little or no chance of getting face to face contact with other alcoholics seeking to stay sober (some managed to get their sobriety entirely through the Big Book). There was a man in Pakistan who never had face to face contact with another alcoholic but managed to enjoy over 30 years of happy sobriety through LIM.

There are some people who do manage to get to live meetings and they can become LIM sponsors. I was one myself for many years

and enjoyed corresponding with a variety of members around the world. At one time I was corresponding with a Pilipino priest Bobby S – part of his relationship with the outside world was one sheet of A4 paper a month, together with a postage stamp and envelope.

It would be nice if this additional resource was published especially for the many who may never again enjoy face to face meetings with other members.

Kind regards

CYRIL H

## INFORMATION FOOTNOTE

Information leaflet

[https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/smf-123\\_en.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/smf-123_en.pdf)

Contact form [https://www.aa.org/pages/en\\_US/contact-loners-internationalists-meeting-lim-desk](https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/contact-loners-internationalists-meeting-lim-desk)



**SHARE is now available online on the AA Website.**

The link is: <https://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk/Members/Coronavirus-News>

You can then find a link to download the magazine – **Our Meeting Between Meetings** – needed now more than ever!

# COPING WITH LIFE ON LIFE'S TERMS

WOULD just like to thank everyone for my continued sobriety of eleven plus years. I think at times I can get so caught up with all that's around me but my anchor, my AA way of life and my HP have always pulled me back and kept me focused.

The last three years have been probably my hardest in sobriety. Actually, I am thankful I got to this place in my sobriety journey, to be able to walk through caring for someone so dear to me with dementia and terminal cancer. I was able to do this day by day. With grace. I put that down to all the people who laid a foundation in my mind and those messages and inner changes that had been worked in me before I got to this place.

I was someone that could not tolerate pain. It's what kept me boozing so long, I hated being uncomfortable with self, life and emotions. I am now no longer a full-time carer, working through my grief and reconstructing a new life. Moments of joy were peppered through the whole situation. I kept hearing your messages and they kept me going on the right path. Over this period, I've recognised the ism within – more than ever my character defects.

*“What real harm, therefore, had we done?”*

*(12&12 p.81)*

I see when I'm not helping myself. I am extremely grateful that during it all I have had a peace, a centre – a place within that kept me going. In the darkest times, I still noticed beauty in nature and in people. The right people always seem to come when they are

needed. I realised with more conviction there is something at work in my life. I was someone that could not stop drinking at one time, an alcoholic of the hopeless variety. How does a change like that come about? By sincerely asking the powers that be to help me, then reaching out with an open mind.

I'm glad I now have in me what I was going to the bottle for.

*ZEKI, London*



*“I didn't care what litter box I woke up in.”*

*Litterbox Eric P.*

# YOU ARE HERE

**M**Y daily journey in sobriety was like a huge map with a gigantic arrow containing the words 'YOU ARE HERE'.

That was how my sobriety felt. I was in a certain place at a certain time. If I wanted to get from A to B, I'd have to make certain moves. I was using public transport during my early days.

My drink driving was so serious, it merited a three-year driving ban – for a first offence. I was signed off work because of my drinking. When I returned to work, my daily commute of more than 90 minutes took me via the London Underground. I'd stand on the station platform checking the route. If I was at King's Cross and needed to get to White City, I'd have to change at Oxford Circus. However, I could have been anywhere – any bus station, train station or tourist office in Cardiff, Glasgow, Newcastle or Plymouth.

That was how I visualised my daily journey in AA. Doing the next right thing, in the right way. When I lost my licence, I was still very drunk and continued that way for another year. I was either in a daze, drunk, hungover, angry or resentful. When the compulsion to drink finally left

I became grateful. Grateful to be sober, for having a clear head and not needing or wanting to drink. I stuck close to AA, attending as many meetings as I could, getting a sponsor and working through the Steps.

*“A quiet, objective view will be our steadfast aim.”*

*(12&12 p.84)*

I then became grateful for the excellent public transport network at my disposal. I used buses and trains to get to as many meetings as I could. I was sober for nearly a year when fellow members discovered I hadn't a car, nor driving licence. That was when they began offering lifts, but I still insisted I would get myself to meetings. I nevertheless gratefully accepted the offer of lifts home afterwards. They would enable me to get to bed earlier, which was a great help – my morning train to work left at 05:30. Eventually, I became grateful for a good working knowledge of public transport. I could get on a train almost anywhere in London without having to check the map.

However, I still kept that diagram in my head – the image of the network of lines and stations as well as that enormous arrow – YOU ARE HERE.

ANON

## STOP PRESS!!!

GSO York have decided to make back copies of **SHARE** magazine freely available to prisons by applying to GSO via your Region.

# AND THEN THERE WAS TECHNOLOGY

IRONICALLY, I came to the Rooms in early 2018 to support my then partner as he had a drink problem. I was mesmerised by what I heard – how the Programme was helping and had helped folk. Sadly he wasn't impressed and after a couple of meetings didn't return. It wasn't until June that year I came into the Rooms for myself.

I read the Steps and Traditions, attended for a few weeks then was put off by something someone said and in any case I could do it alone – how wrong I was. I learnt my lesson big style, returned in November and have never left the Rooms since. It's been a topsy-turvy time. Moments of grandeur, lying, blaming and being deceitful – the list goes on. I had three sponsors, reached Step Four then started again. Thankfully with another sponsor I am at Step Eight. Step Nine is going to be challenging as there are some people I need to make amends to face-to-face who don't have video conferencing. I'm going to talk to my sponsor about this.

Where am I going with this story you may ask? Well it's this. The Rooms have been a lifeline in

more ways than one to me. I was suspended from work for four months and was allowed to return in April of last year with a provision that I kept going to the meetings, provided I had no more episodes of sickness for the same reason, there would be no disciplinary action and a timescale of a year.

My HP certainly has been with

me as that year came to fruition yesterday, Easter Monday. It couldn't have been more appropriate.

I have found a whole new world of friends who understand my illness. The meetings are places where I can go and say how I feel.

I get encouragement (instead of criticism),

support, understanding, peace and comfort knowing that what is said is genuine and from the heart.

Working full-time and having a dog, I haven't attended many meetings outside Sunderland, although when I have, I've felt the same friendly greeting and warmth of friendship.

The prospect of no meetings terrified me along with isolation. I work in the NHS and although I have health issues to me it was a no brainer – work/isolation, virus/death by alcoholism. Then

*“...and third...we consider how... we may develop the best possible relations with every human being we know.”*

*(12&12 p.79)*

along came video conferencing. Alien to a lot of us. I'm not one for picking up technology very easily. My grandson shows me what to do on my tablet and my son on a laptop. The latter seems stupid as I use a computer all day at work but take away my mouse (although I now know I can use one with a laptop - I'm learning!!) and I am lost. Like my addiction to alcohol, I am addicted to video conferencing My church has just gone with the flow as have the meetings I go to in Sunderland - even have a quiz night on a Saturday (I'm always the one with the booby prize, but hey someone has to be last!). A good friend gave me the link to meetings he goes to and knows of in London and I've been visiting them. I've made

new friends and contacts and enjoy the experience of listening to folk in the wider world - it's just totally mind blowing for me. I can't remember the last time I actually watched a programme right through on TV - if I'm not using video conferencing then I'm either on the phone or messaging friends. Lola my Labrador is enjoying me visiting meetings using video conferencing as she gets more cuddles when I sit still for longer than usual so she snuggles up beside me. I've heard a lot of people say they can't wait to be back in the Rooms and see folk properly face to face, share a packet of biscuits, celebrate birthdays with a buffet - I feel the same but by the same token I'll really miss video conferencing.

## SHARE is our story, share yours

**There are many AA members who are unable to go to meetings; the housebound, some single parents with children, those in the armed services, on oil rigs, in prisons or hospitals, who rely on SHARE for their meeting between meetings - and sometimes instead of one. Please take the time to write and share your experience, strength and hope with them.**

Whether you are a newcomer, old-timer, or just an ordinary member we would like to hear your story just like at any other meeting. Not only that but putting pen to paper can enhance your own sobriety and that of the whole Fellowship.

You don't need to be a polished author. Spelling and grammar will all be amended if necessary. You can write just a few lines or more, up to about a 1,000 words, but we do not publish poetry or obituaries.



Each issue of SHARE always features that month's corresponding Step and Tradition (January Step/Tradition 1 through to December Step/Tradition 12). We need your article at least two months before the relevant topic is due to appear, for example, for Step or Tradition Three (March) by mid-January, and so a.

*Send your contribution to:* The Editor, SHARE, General Service Office, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ Or e-mail your article to: [AAShare@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:AAShare@gsogb.org.uk)

Whatever your HP is, it has brought something along to help us through this lockdown. I don't think since AA started has there ever been anything like this. During the war there were restrictions and blackouts but folk still socialised, communities looked after each other. Back doors were never shut – the door always open if you needed company. It

makes you wonder about Mother Nature. You don't know what you've missed until it's taken away from you. All kinds of values are being learnt during this time. Stay safe and well – we are never in total isolation; our HP is always by our side.

Best wishes

CAROL-ANN, Sunderland

# HALF MEASURES AVAILED US NOTHING

THESE words at this moment at almost 19 years of sobriety keep bouncing around my head.

Because my mind has decided that I am now going through a challenging period. Events are happening in my life, where I feel fear is a justified response. And my current job has failed to offer me the security I hoped it would, and not for the first time I might add (what is it they say about insanity?). I am spending much of my time wanting to focus on and discuss and get rid of these issues. It is hard not to try and 'fix' these events in order to wrest satisfaction and happiness from this world.

But there is another voice, clamouring for attention in my

'washing machine' head, which says, "If you had been working a better Programme you would be dealing with this situation much better. In fact, you could have avoided this situation all together.". And there is some (rather large) element of truth to those thoughts. My AA service

*"...next we make a vigorous attempt to repair the damage we have done..."*

(12&12 p.79)

life leaves a lot to be desired. I will show up, as long as it's not too inconvenient. My attendance to my home group can be infrequent. I have one sponsee... again in theory. I am not really working with

a sponsor. I call him from time to time but have avoided any situation which may lead him to make suggestions. I know these are easily rectified. To wallow in guilt is not what God wants of

me. Instead, with gratitude for the Programme and a little humility I can just get back on the beam. However selfish my intentions to redouble my efforts with this Programme are, it doesn't matter because it will free me of that self-centered fear. And from there maybe gratitude can take the place of fear.

What gives me hope is, *"Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon."* (BB p.59). What other choice do I have? Will I try to compromise? Will I allow

fear, pride and resentment to guide my decisions? Will I try to surrender just enough to get what I think I need? Or do I ask for His care and protection with complete abandon? It is that more than anything else that is important. It is not how many people I sponsor, how much service I do, but simply that I let go absolutely and abandon myself to His care and protection.

What more could I want as I stand at yet another turning point? God has not let me down in the last 19 years!

MARC

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN SHARE

- Big Book or BB** An informal name for the book Alcoholics Anonymous, the Fellowship's basic text.
- 12&12** The book Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. How members recover through our Programme of recovery and how the Fellowship functions.
- The Preamble** The short description of A.A. that is often read out at the start of meetings. It provides newcomers with a basic description of A.A. while also serving as a reminder to other members of what AA is and what it is not.
- The Fellowship** A term for the society of A.A.
- Higher Power** Many members believe in some sort of God... but also many are atheist or agnostic...we have a simple idea that there is a power greater than ourselves as individuals.

# SHARE INTERVIEW

WITH SUKI K FROM  
BUDAPEST, HUNGARY



**Q** What brought you to AA?

**A** I had a very bad car accident, somehow lacerating my ankle, and was admitted to hospital in Chicago. That's very scary when you are a woman travelling alone. In New York, my ankle became infected and I was admitted to hospital five times! It was summertime and I sat at an outside table, drinking what was to be my last glass of wine. People were laughing, kissing, eating, celebrating, and they were just fine. I looked around and said, "I want to have what they have. I want to be happy."

I rang the AA hotline, told them where I was and they guided me to my first meeting in the Holy Name Church. And that was my first, well second, meeting in AA.

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

**A** Life was getting really dangerous. I was getting in trouble with the police in

Australia, having car accidents, getting into the Sydney underworld – drugs, gangs & everything. My health showed signs of defects, shaking hands, unclear yellowy eyes, hair falling out, nails and skin black and falling away. My mother and I were not in communication but I rang her up from hospital and said, "Mum, I've had an accident. She said, "Did you drink last night?" That's all she said. And I said, "Yes," and she just went silent. I had thought she was going to get over on a plane to rescue me. That really struck a chord with me, because I'm an only child.

**Q** How did you know about AA?

**A** At 27 I was living in Sydney and felt it was time I changed my life because everything was a chaos, in absolute destructive order. I would go out, wanting to party and have fun, but the fun would turn into tragedy,

every time. I did therapy and my psychologist suggested going to a meeting. Mortified, I went out and drank more. Finally, I went to my first AA meeting in Double Bay. I couldn't stand it so I drank for another five years.

**Q** How did you contact AA? What do you remember of your first meeting?

**A** I looked up on the internet, searching - 'Alcoholics Anonymous, hotline New York.' The AA hotline, came up first so I called them, a lady answered and that's how I got the number

**Q** So really you had two first meetings. What was the difference between them?

**A** The first meeting my ego took over. My contact stank of cigarette smoke and, although a smoker too, I started judging him immediately. I checked everybody's shoes and the room, thinking, *"This is not for me, it's hideous and disgusting. How have I come to this place? I don't want to be here."*

The second time I was overseas and felt very alone. I was really desperate. After hitting that rock bottom in Chicago, I would do anything. I was so damaged, mentally, spiritually, physically. I couldn't do any more. I was kaput, broken at 32.

**Q** What made the NY meeting so attractive?

**A** The people were amazing. I felt like I found a group that really were kind and enthusiastic about life, and I wanted that. I loved the after-meeting. They wouldn't let me go. It was, *"Come on Miss Sydney, you're coming with me. Let's go to the diner."* I really felt connected by their Fellowship.

**Q** Was there anything you didn't like when you came at first?

**A** The God thing, definitely. I thought AA was a cult at first. When I worked the Steps with my first sponsor, I was told that a Higher Power can be anything that you feel. You can create it for yourself: you can make it *your* Higher Power.

What got me too was thinking, *"Do I have to do this forever?"* I thought you could do the Steps and graduate! To-day I always put AA in my life first. It's taken me a long time to get there, but I have to ground myself in it, to be able to do everything else in my life.

**Q** Do you have a favourite AA slogan or phrase? And why?

**A** First Things First always resonates with me because I tend to put 20 things first and it never works. I start getting nervous, anxious, irritable and discontent. I have to Keep It Simple too. I love to overcomplicate things, and do everything too fast. When I came into AA I spoke too quickly and no one understood me when I shared. One lady

said, “*I didn’t understand a word you said but keep coming back.*” I was so resentful about that, but I look back and I go, “*I get it!*”

**Q** What, in particular, made a difference to you?

**A** That I learned about Suki for the first time in my life. I knew myself as this great, caring, always smiling little girl; a dancer, a performer. I lost that thru drinking. 11½ years ago I found out who I really was. I learnt grace, to become a woman, to have respect. Humility was the biggest thing I had to learn. I still have to learn it sometimes. Ego deflation too. I’m little and I always had this big ego. But being brash never gained me any respect.

**Q** Was there anything you found difficult to do in AA?

**A** I found it hard to keep going back to meetings. And I overdid service. Like I volunteered for every service position. Then I was a constant people pleaser. The overload pushed me into being sober by myself. I didn’t go to meetings and I sponsored myself. I wasn’t drinking, but I was not doing the Programme. So finding a balance was really difficult for me.

**Q** What has AA done for your family?

**A** Firstly, AA’s given me a sober family. My son’s an AA baby. My husband is not one of us, but knows what AA is about. It’s definitely helped me as a

mother. For example, when I am upset or angry with my son, I will promptly admit it and make amends. I’m honest with my husband.

My Mum and I have the best relationship today. We’re best friends. Being so far away from her has maybe even brought us closer, because we are not seeing each other all the time. We’ve both changed a lot. I am grateful, very grateful to AA

**Q** What does ‘putting back into AA’ mean to you?

**A** Service, service, service. Recovery. The Steps. Sharing, connecting. Sharing your story. Helping newcomers, that’s my big Number 1.

**Q** What do you say to a newcomer?

**A** I used to be really scared of the newcomer until I got more into sobriety. To-day I just go straight to them. I’m kind. I give them a smile. *Is this your first meeting?* Or whatever. I love to help them out. Because I know what it’s like. It’s scary. I used to shake and fiddle with my hands all the time and my sponsor would laugh and say, “*Put your hands underneath your bottom and sit there.*”

**Q** Anything else you’d like to add?

**A** Keep coming back. This Programme will change your life. Sobriety is the best thing you can do for yourself and others. You will breathe again. You will live again; you will feel again.

# shareback

If you have identified with anything in SHARE, or wish to express a personal opinion based on your experience, share it with us. Write a letter of not more than 300 words and enclosing a contact name and address (not for publication) to:

**Share Back, PO Box 1, 10 Toft Green, York YO1 7NJ.**  
or **E Mail [AAShare@gsogb.org.uk](mailto:AAShare@gsogb.org.uk)**

## UNITY IN ISOLATION

MY name is Adele and I am an alcoholic. "Your strength is my strength."

Never has the word 'unity' meant so much to me and my Fellowship friends as it does now with the Covid-19 isolation. Perhaps I feel more grateful than ever, having the spiritual tools to live one day at a time. When we were initially directed to stay indoors and save lives, I did question just how I was going to manage without going to my meetings. It has been three years since I needed to take a drink, but keeping close to the people who have helped me along the way on my journey has been vital to my ongoing recovery.

And then someone talked about Online meetings and mobile phone groups. I am such a technophobe that I began by slipping into negative thoughts. However, my husband helped me to connect to meetings, and I found them to be a lifeline. After a few baby steps to key in the weird graphics and numbers, some very

precious and familiar faces popped up on the screen.

I had to learn when to talk and when to shut up, but then that has always been a work in progress where I'm concerned. I've even been able to celebrate my three years of sobriety in captivity. The irony is that I am free now despite the restrictions of isolation. So, now at meetings, your strength is my strength, and I truly hope that mine is yours. This Fellowship is amazing, and even this virus hasn't stopped us being together. For this I am truly grateful.

*ADELE, Sandhurst Newcomers*

## POWER OF THE PROGRAMME

*GRATEFUL for my peace, I find myself crying in the morning with gratitude - sometimes with, "How the hell did I survive, living the way I did? How did I not take my own life, living in my head?"*

*Compared to how I feel now, I can't believe it sometimes. Full of gratitude to be sober, to embrace my Higher*

*Power, for the Fellowship, for the message, for wanting it as much as I do. I used to feel empty, I used to feel like, "I'm sure this is not how it's meant to be." Sounds a bit full of ego but I used to think, "I've not been given life to feel this bad." so, I always put on a brave face, pretended strength.*

*Now I know my gut instincts were right, there is more and it's this, right now. Have a beautiful day.*

KARINA

## COUNT YOUR MISTAKES AS PROGRESS

MORNING readings are not only a daily reflection – they are a daily education. Once, I made a spectacle of myself. Now, I view life through spectacles that change each day.

One reading has particular significance, *"Our spiritual and emotional growth in A.A. does not depend so deeply upon success as it does upon our failures and setbacks. If you will bear this in mind, I think that your slip will have the effect of kicking you upstairs, instead of down."* (As Bill Sees It p.184 –

origin: LETTER, 1958). It reminds me of a notice I read the morning after my final drunk. It read, "Count Your Mistakes as Progress".

I thought someone was having a laugh at me. Progress? I was in a worse state than ever. However, that was the lesson that I was to learn, gradually and slowly, one day at a time. I'd been told by long standing members of AA, "If you don't pick up the first drink, you can't get drunk." That, I believed, was a gross insult to my intelligence. I always thought it was the last drink that was the problem. Everyone could have one or two, I thought. But that's where I was to be proved wrong.

*"The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so-called will power becomes practically nonexistent.... We are without defense against the first drink."* (BB p.24). The old saying says we learn from our mistakes. In that respect, I did – I haven't made that mistake again. I hope I never will – 'One Day at a Time'. I counted that mistake as progress – huge.

ANON



# THE TWELVE CONCEPTS

## for 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 ensure 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 recognise 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 over-all 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 whenever possible, by substantial unanimity; that its actions never be personally punitive nor an incitement to public controversy; that it never performs acts of government and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.



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