

Conference 2024

Cover notes for the proposed 'Little Book 2'

Proposed text for a revised 'Little Book'. An internal AA facing booklet.

The aim of the Little Book is to bring together key texts so that AA's can carry a meeting in their pocket. All text used has been previously Conference approved. 'Little Book 2' would supersede the current Little Book.

The text only is set out.

If approved by Conference, the text will be formatted into a booklet which follows the new AA 'Family Guidelines'.

Little Book 2



“Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.”

“When using digital media, AA members are responsible for their own anonymity and that of others. When we post, text or blog, we should assume that we are publishing at the public level. When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may inadvertently break the anonymity of others”.

Understanding Anonymity leaflet

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.

A Declaration of Unity

This we owe to AA's future:
to place our common welfare
to keep our fellowship united;
For on A.A. unity depend our lives,
and the lives of those to come.

The Serenity Prayer

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.

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 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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How it Works / Twelve Steps

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental

disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it — then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with alcohol — cunning, baffling, powerful. Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power — that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

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.

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives
- (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.

(c) That God could and would if He were sought.

Alcoholics Anonymous p58-60

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 might 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 organised; 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.

AA World Services

Just for Today

Just for today I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problem at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appal me if I felt that I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

Just for today I will be happy. Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.

Just for today I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my 'luck' as it comes and fit myself to it.

Just for today I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

Just for today I will exercise my soul in three ways: I will do somebody a good turn and not get found out; if anybody knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least two things I don't want to do - just for exercise. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

Just for today I will be agreeable, I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticise not one bit, not find fault with anything and not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.

Just for today I will have a programme. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself, and relax. During this half hour, sometime, I will try and get a better perspective to my life.

Just for today I will be unafraid. Especially I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful, and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me

Selfishness

Selfishness - self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt.

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help.

3rd Step Prayer

“God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!”

Alcoholics Anonymous p63

7th Step Prayer

“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.

Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.”

Alcoholics Anonymous p76

9th Step Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of

uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realise that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialise if we work for them.

Alcoholics Anonymous p83-84

10th Step Promises

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone – even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we have been placed in a position of neutrality – safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

It is easy to let up on this spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.

11th Step Prayer

“Lord, make me a channel of thy peace - that where there is hatred, I may bring love - that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness - that where there is discord, I may bring harmony - that where there is error, I may bring truth - that where there is doubt, I may bring faith - that where there is despair, I may bring hope - that where there are shadows, I may bring light - that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek to comfort rather than be comforted - to understand, than be understood - to love, than be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p101

Surrender To Win

This is the how and the why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work

When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.

Acceptance

“And acceptance is the answer to *all* my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation - some fact of my life- unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake.”

Alcoholics Anonymous p417

Number One Offender

Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stems all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry. We asked ourselves why we were angry. In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships (including sex) were hurt or threatened. So we were sore. We were "burned up".

Alcoholics Anonymous p64

Without Defence

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 unable, at

certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defence against the first drink.

Alcoholics Anonymous p24

Resentment

"If you have a resentment you want to be free of, if you will pray for the person or the thing you resent you will be free. If you will ask in prayer for everything you want for yourself to be given to them, you will be free. Ask for their health, their prosperity, their happiness, and you will be free. Even when you don't really want it for them and your prayers are only words and you don't mean it, go ahead and do it anyway. Do it every day for two weeks, and you will find you will have come to mean it and want it for them, and you will realise that where you used to feel bitterness and resentment and hatred, you now feel compassionate understanding and love."

"It worked for me then, and it has worked for me many times since, and it will work for me every time I am willing to work it. Sometimes I have to ask first for the willingness, but it too always comes. And because it works for me, it will work for all of us. As another great man says, *"The only real freedom a human being can ever know is doing what you ought to do because you want to do it."*

Alcoholics Anonymous p552

It Works- It Really Does

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are on longer running the

show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves. It works - it really does.

We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.

But this is not all. There is action and more action. "Faith without works is dead."

Alcoholics Anonymous p87-88

Sobriety Insurance

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics..... You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail

Life will take on a new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others in turn, to watch loneliness vanish..... to have a host of friends - this is an experience you must not miss.....

Alcoholics Anonymous p89

Prayer & Meditation

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead..... we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.....

In thinking about our day we may face indecisionHere we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle.....

What used to be a hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind.....

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of these problems.....

"Thy will be done."

Alcoholics Anonymous p86-87

Dr. Bob's Farewell Message

"There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind but have very little to do with our actual A.A. work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service.' We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind."

"Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

"And one more thing: None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us....."

From Dr. Bob's brief remarks on Sunday July 3, 1950, at the
First International AA Convention in Cleveland, Ohio

Bill W's last message

"My thoughts are much occupied these days with gratitude to our Fellowship and for the myriad blessings bestowed upon us by God's Grace.

If I were asked which of these blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, the "Concept of Anonymity."

Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical.

On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes.

A.A. must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we, turn back the clock. However, I deeply believe that the principle of anonymity must remain our primary and enduring safeguard. As long as we accept our sobriety in our traditional spirit of anonymity we will continue to receive God's Grace.

And so—once more, I salute you in that spirit and again I thank you *for your lives*.

May God bless us all now, and forever."

Read by Lois at the annual dinner given by the New York Intergroup Association in honour of Bill's 36th anniversary –
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