

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of The Daily Reprieve.

We are glad to be here, blessed with contributions from various members of our fellowship, with pieces that remind us to practice the principles of AA in all our affairs, in order to truly commit to the program as a way of life to others that highlight how this program is indeed a "design for living."

Bob S. shares a piece on "Seeds of Sobriety VIA Step Ten- living AA" which talks about the daily discipline of doing a daily 10th step, and the benefits, insights and change it has brought to his sobriety. And we also have some AA Fun Facts in store for you!

A big thank you to everyone who wrote in. We love reading what this program has and does for you and we know it will for all our readers!

As always in the back of the newsletter, you can find updates on available service positions throughout AA Singapore, the weekly meeting list, round-ups around the region and more.

Please send your articles, artwork, tips, stories... songs... to:
newsletter@singaporeaa.org.

x

Holly, Eric and Mark

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the articles submitted to the Daily Reprieve are those of the contributor, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Alcoholics Anonymous.

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For further assistance, call +65 6475-0890 or email: help@singaporeaa.org
To contribute to the Daily Reprieve, please email: newsletter@singaporeaa.org
For the latest A.A. meeting schedule, please visit: www.singaporeaa.org



Quotes from the AA Universe on How We Can Live

People will do anything, no matter how absurd, in order to avoid facing their own souls. One does not become enlightened by imagining figures of light, but by making the darkness conscious.

~Dr Carl Jung

"Yes, there is. Exceptions to cases such as yours (Roland) have been occurring since early times. Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences. To me these are phenomena. They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them. In fact, I have been trying to produce some such emotional rearrangement within you. With many individuals the methods which I employed are successful, but I have never been successful with an alcoholic of your description."

~Dr Carl Jung

"It is one of the most beautiful compensations of this life, that no man can sincerely try to help another without helping himself."

~Ralph Waldo Emerson

"We make a living by what we get, we make a life by what we give."

~Winston Churchill

"Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves."

~Sir James Barrie

Quotes from the AA Universe on How We Can Live (cont.)

"Cling to the thought that, in God's hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have--the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert misery and death for them."

~AA, 2001, p. 124

"The more I shared secrets that I thought were so awful, the more people were drawn to me and I to them. I found some serenity when I got out of the driver's seat, I found God working in my life."

~[Author Unknown]

"I sought my soul, but my soul I could not see. I sought my God, but my God eluded me. I sought my brother and I found all three."

~Martin Luther King Jr.



What Does the Big Book Say About AA as a Way of Life?

The big book and the personal stories have over 400 references to "life". Having come into AA to solve a drinking problem many of us suspect quite quickly that there may be more to this AA business than abstinence. In this edition we talk about how AA can be a way of life, a way to live. Here are some of the ways the AA literature helps us see the possibility of a new way of living.

There is a solution

"A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, "a design for living" that really works." p 28

What Does the Big Book Say About AA as a Way of Life? (cont.)

Working with Others

“Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends – this is an experience you must not miss.” p 89

The Wife Who Drank at Home

“AA gives alcoholics direction into a way of life without the need for alcohol.” p 300

My Chance to Live

“The program is a plan for a lifetime of daily living.” p 317

It Might Have Been Worse

“The A.A. way of life is the way we always should have tried to live. “Grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.” These thoughts become part of our daily lives.” P 357

Keys to the Kingdom

“AA is not a plan for recovery that can be finished and done with. It is a way of life, and the challenge contained in its principles are great enough to keep any human being striving for as long as he or she lives.” p 275

He Lived Only to drink

“The rewards of sobriety are bountiful and as progressive as the disease they counteract. Certainly among these rewards for me are release from the prison of uniqueness, and the realization that participation in the A.A. way of life is a blessing and a privilege beyond estimate—a blessing to live a life free from the pain and degradation of drinking and filled with the joy of useful, sober living, and a privilege to grow in sobriety one day at a time and bring the message of hope as it was brought to me.” p 451

~Mark L



Glue Rat Brings Local Alcoholic Closer to God

Recently a denizen of the local rooms of AA told us a most astonishing and edifying tale. He was seated at his regular spot in a certain Boat Quay establishment a fortnight ago when from the ceiling fell a glue-covered rat.

The hapless rodent hit the floor and stuck there, unable to move due to the viscid goo in its hide.

Unschooling in the pitiless methods of local rodent trappers, the incredulous AA had no idea how this lugubrious lachrymose had come to be covered in glue or lodged in the ceiling of an otherwise salubrious public house.

Our man knew only one thing for certain: This glue rat was a divine emissary. His hypothesis was later confirmed by an old timer who declared emphatically that the rat had carried a message from god!

But what was the message?

Was a rat who had escaped from a deadly trap only to find itself unable to advance due to the same pernicious pitch that had ensnared him a metaphor for an AA unable to complete his step 4 inventory or step 9 amends?

Or was it telling him to pray more fervently for removal of his tackiest character defects?

As of this publication, the question continues to confound our hero's unbefogged mind. Only time and meditation may reveal the answer.

~Anonymous

SEEDS OF SOBRIETY VIA STEP TEN – Living AA



"Every moment of every day, God spreads winged seeds of sobriety over the desperate souls of every alcoholic when they ask for help. However, seeds that come to rest in soil of selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear fail to germinate and are lost. Fortunately, Step Ten teaches us how to maintain the sort of fertile spiritual soil into which God's seeds will cultivate joyous and continual sobriety.

The Step Ten directions (p. 84) tells us to continually watch for those new mistakes mentioned above—this sometimes needs happen before exiting bed in the morning. If one of those "grosser handicaps" are taking space in my noodle, then a prayer is in order. It is time to reflect on the Big Book directions how to face and be rid of selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear.

As I go through the day, I need to be aware of and utilize the important "face and be rid of" tools found in Steps Four Through Nine. When a new or old resentment crops up I need to remember the five-part spiritual Prayer on page 67 and considering whether I was at fault. When stupid and irrational fears crop up I need remember the fear prayer on page 68. When I feel myself veering toward selfishness and/or dishonesty I need to remember as how this is often my dismal nature. What to do? Where is my Big Book? After all, I must keep in a fit spiritual condition if seeds of sobriety are to bloom into a joyous and God filled day.

My Big Book tells me that when selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear crop, I am to ask God at once to remove them. Then I need to discuss them with someone immediately. If I have harmed someone, I am to make amends quickly. Who said there was no timetable in the Big Book? However, after all, God gave us brains to use, so you probably shouldn't wake up your sponsor at three in the morning for some trivial and unnecessary reason.

If I continue to cultivate my spiritual ground of being, Step Ten promises that my sanity will grow to where I will be able to see and act on the truth in the matter of drink. It even informs me that my mental obsession will be removed! (p. 85) But the prerequisite is that I maintain a fit spiritual condition. I must continue to thank God for continually planting His seeds of sobriety in me throughout each day for the rest of my life.

~Bob S.



The AA Way of Life

I'm writing this on my way back from Siem Reap to Singapore after a serene and blissful long weekend spent in Cambodia. After being in the program for more than a year now and having recently completed my 86/90 post a 3 day bender, my mind was gradually settling in with a new-found self and a novel way of life, which is the constantly evolving "AA way of life". What could have just been yet another weekend getaway trip after arduously toiling for the past few months at work, there was perhaps something deeper in store for me this time.

Evolving through the program, I had sincerely embarked myself to a journey of being of service to others and helping others achieve sobriety post my relapse about 4 months ago. I had planned this vacation to spend alone time with my Wife and earnestly search further on the spirituality path coupled by visiting the ancient Angkor Wat and nearby Temples and spend some time within those haloed shrines to discover myself and my disease of alcoholism.

For the first time, I was not controlling others to stick to the plan/timetable and let things take its own course since I have handed over my life's thread to my Higher Power (HP). What I would have never imagined to do in my past drinking days, culminated this time, when we managed to wake up at 4 am and commence the Angkor Wat sunrise tour which would last till about mid day. By the time we reached Angkor Wat, it was just about the sun rise time and I stood by the edge of a beautifully adorned still pond with few lotus flowers peeping up, a clear mesmerising reflection of the majestic temple shimmering right through the backdrop of sunrise. The site was breathtaking and I spent some time recollecting the mystical wonders which have and are happening in my life during sobriety.

I was trying to think through hard about those miraculous connections felt in the past few months, as it tends to get lost in the wilderness of the worldly affairs that keeps us distracted from constantly seeking a deeper essence or meaning of life. I recalled the tools of the program and reminded myself of my true purpose of life - to stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety. This clearly links to "getting into Action" and "being of service" which I have realised with the passage of time, helps to recreate layering of positivity in my mind and makes it slightly easier to be of service compared to the previous day. Again, a gentle reminder of ODAAT- one day at a time.

The AA Way of Life (cont.)

Though the temples visit was somewhat tiring, however, imagining myself appreciating ancient art and culture was bit of a surprise to me as well. Moments of irritation with the tour guide used to get swept away with those inner beautiful thoughts about what future perhaps beckons. Something good was happening and I could sense it. There was no real rush of anything and things kept falling into place as we moved to the next day. All this while, I kept thinking about how grateful I was to sobriety and AA that I was able to look through so many new things, differently and some of the old things/memories abruptly appeared to be novel. I also feel fortunate to have found a very affectionate and understanding life partner, my Wife, who appreciates my AA way of life and embraces this path and at the same time I feel lucky to be able to articulate her thoughts in our journey of togetherness. I had recently started doing yoga because of my Wife and have realised some spiritual power in the process of yoga- again trying to know your mind and body better through yoga.

The next day we wanted to visit rural neighbourhoods of Siem reap and so we decided to rent a quad bike. While the quad biking seemed adventurous, there came a beautiful opportunity of being of service to the poor kids who would walk miles to come to village school to study. I quickly checked with my tour operator if we could do something for the kids. He said yes, you can gift them small noodles pack as a kind gesture. We bought two big boxes of noodles and distributed to all the 60 kids present in the school that time. Few packs which were left got distributed to some of the kids who sang a song or recited a poem or who could run the fastest- instilling some form of communication or connection with the innocent kids. Each and every kid greeted us with a “namaskar” and an innocent smile on each of their faces displaying tacit happiness emanating cuz of this distribution. This rather small incident reminded me that how even a small gesture of service can bring so much peace into our minds. That one hour connection made with the poor village kids held me spellbound and kept me wondering how simple things can be so impactful to others and to oneself.

During my alcoholic days, it was all about me and my “virtual” happiness. I know as a matter of fact that if I was still drinking, forget about giving anything, even such a thought of exploring rural areas wouldn't have occurred to me. I shared this experience with my close family members and few of the AA members. Each one of them had a positive feeling about the whole thing. This small act of serving the poor made me happier than before and perhaps I could feel some connection deep within.

The AA Way of Life (cont.)

Many thoughts pondered over me during this trip in search of the true meaning or purpose of my life. Maybe I'm part of the big show on earth which is already on auto pilot mode over which we perceive to have full control but in eventuality there was absolutely nothing in our control.

The design of life is in a way to keep oneself intact in the worldly journey of pleasure and pain while the real path is to develop consciousness within your inner self and a connection with one's Guardian or a HP to guide you to the path of spirituality. The path to bliss, peace, happiness and serenity is perhaps hidden somewhere deep within, which does not get an opportunity to be explored due to convulsions in worldly emotions, individual character defects, lack of service and absence of empathy towards others.

Our spirituality gets terribly corroded by the presence of alcohol which serves best to mask us from our true journey/purpose in life - to be grateful and content at the same time. By the act of service and selflessness, we are giving ourselves a great opportunity to make better use of our lives and which ultimately provides inner peace. I'm slowly and gradually becoming a firm believer of "karma" or "getting into action" as is reinforced that by doing simple karmas, my mind and body gets some sort of relief. It's so amazing how every religion or spiritual sects are teaching the same thing in their own way. It's amazing! And it leads to a HP.

The journey experienced so far is evolving beautifully through working the AA way of life and the fellowship which seems different at different stages of sobriety. AA way of life is pure and simple - which is gradually paving the way to understand the ultimate truth of life. I sometimes get a rather strange feeling that this disease of alcoholism is indeed a blessing in disguise as it has opened up new windows of happiness in my life through the fellowship - that today I'm able to feel some spiritual connection that was horribly masked by alcohol before.

~Ankit, Alcoholic.



AA – The Small Things Matter

When I see a sobriety I like in someone else, in a fellow AA in the rooms, it's often when that person exhibits a sense of calm and peace. Sometimes this seems unattainable and I wonder about their powers of levitation! Do they have a hotline to God?! Before you all start wondering who I'm talking about there are very few such fellows! But I do see this in many of us at times. And the longer people work the programme the more of this I can see in them. This is one of the AA promises I can see in real life, tangibly – seeing the change in others - it tells me I'm in the right place and reminds me that the programme is the key to a better way of living.

I'm not yet the kind of person who can change either fast or much. I grow in increments, little by little. I've never woken up and thought, "Wow today I'm so much better than I was before!" Luckily, I've yet to have a dramatic set back, a big trigger that sends me back out. But over a day or even an hour I know I can do things that move me a little further away from (or a little closer!) to a drink.

For me it is how I live in the small things, the everyday things, that determine how much peace I have in my life.

How small? Well embarrassingly, tiny-ly small in most cases.

For example.....

Thresholds – by which I mean gates, doors, lifts, escalators, MRT gantries, the Starbucks queue, my position in traffic etc. i.e. any place where other people and I will meet and have to make a decision about who crosses that threshold first, initiating a complex negotiation.

Each time this happens I have a choice. I can consciously decide to let someone else go through ahead of me, or I open the door, hold the lift etc. or, I can decide to go first, or not open the door for them or let the lift door close. I'm sure you can guess which one of these leaves me feeling good and which makes me think I'm probably still a total d*ck. And yet the right thing to do sometimes comes to me only after a considerable amount of internal debate and analysis of the situation (the other person's speed and gait, gender, facial expression, mobile phone position (hand or pocket) etc., as well as my own mood, sense of entitlement, busyness, speed, etc.

AA – The Small Things Matter (cont.)

Luckily I usually do the right thing (my HP shows up this way quite a bit). And it doesn't really matter that I didn't automatically do the right thing. That I had to think about it, that I struggled with it. That I nearly didn't do it. It just matters that I did it.

I've got a ton of these – basically every time my own plans and those of other people meet. My default position remains “me first!”.

One of the first things I learned in AA was this “concept” of doing the next right thing (I believe this is second nature to many non-alkies!). Having learned this concept in AA I thought it might be useful if I ever felt the urge to murder someone ;-)) little did I know it would help me negotiate the hundreds of simple moments of life when I meet the rest of the world and have a choice whether to think of them or stay in my own head.

~Mark L



What's on Offer

There's quite a bit on offer in AA, and the program is open enough for a variety of different approaches. Some people find themselves only minimally engaged, some are completely immersed. I've personally found that I like my life a lot more when it's not just got AA at its core, but when AA is instead a large, substantial part of my life. I think this is relatively easy, if you let it be, as there's quite a diverse set of folk in the program, even here in Singapore. There are all sorts of people, and if you happen to not click with a few, that's fine, there are others around. Go find them.

I am biased, but I have found that the people of AA are the kindest I've ever met. Since most have worked the steps, what you get is a group of people who, by definition, have had a spiritual experience (or more than one) and that are leading a spiritual life. Plus they're worldly and humble, and what experiences and stories! Not to mention a keen sense of humour, yet a gentleness to it. It's quite a crowd. Sure, each of us has our quirks and failings. But that's OK, if we didn't we wouldn't be here today.

AA has given me so much. I'm always wishing I had more hours in the day, not just to give back to AA, but to appreciate the life that has been gifted to me because of this program. But I also know that it's the finite, transient nature of the moment that creates the framework for me to appreciate it. Without those limitations I am lost...which is also a way for me to see AA. Without the structure and guidance of the program and the people in it, I am lost.

~AA fellow



Redesigning My Life

One of many phrases I heard when I first came into the rooms of AA that didn't make much sense to me was that the programme was “a design for living”. Apart from the fact it sounded like an advertising tagline for a well known Swedish furniture store, I couldn't really understand what it had to do with AA. I'd started going to meetings because I wanted to do something about my drinking not to redesign my life.

Ah but hold on, my life was dominated by drinking, a remarkable amount of my waking hours were spent either recovering from drinking, thinking about when/how I was going to drink that day, and well actually drinking. The reality was my lifestyle was well overdue a radical redesign.

I am not sure what the actual strict definition of AA's design for living is, which could well be due to my gnat-like attention span, but what I am going to describe here what it means to me in terms of how my life has changed.

One of the “problems” with suddenly stopping drinking on the 25th January 2017 was that it left me with a vast amount of time I had no idea what to do with.

The most immediate change to my lifestyle that AA gave, apart from the obvious not drinking, was attending meetings most weekday mornings at 7-30am. This was a pretty radical change for a self-confessed night owl and something I felt would help reinstall some much needed discipline in my life.

In my welcome pack I'd also been given the marvelous little book “Living Sober”. Essentially a Dummies' Guide to how to live a sober life this book provided some much needed advice about how enjoy a sober life now that I'd decided drinking myself to death was a really rather a bad idea.

From the basics of simply not drinking, and enjoying doing things without drinking, subtle changes occurred as some of what I heard in meetings and over coffee slowly sank in through a process I'd describe as being akin to osmosis.

Redesigning My Life (cont.)

Much of this revolved around the concept that we alcoholics cannot afford the luxury of being angry and “restraint of pen and tongue”. Through this I've learned to be a calmer person, less quick to react angrily, and quick to apologise when I do. These are behaviours I'd once considered a sign of weakness, but now I find make life whole lot easier to deal with on a daily basis. I've also learned to try and be more grateful to people, and to try and be of service.

Outwardly my life has changed little – I still do the same job, I'm married to the same person and live in the same place - but mentally I'd describe it as having shifted a few degrees. A seemingly small shift that has had major impact on my perspective on life and how lived it.

The life redesign is still very much a work in progress with AA having proved to be about a lot more than simply not drinking.

~Marcus



Practicing the Principles in All My Affairs

If I truly want to commit to Alcoholics Anonymous as a way of life, I need to practice these principles in all my affairs. But what exactly does that mean? Step 12 states that “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.” This is essentially a three step, step. In order for me practice these principles in all my affairs (i.e. stop acting like a jerk), I need to have had some type of spiritual awakening.

In my personal experience, this awakening can happen both gradually and suddenly. But it is quite unlikely if I do not have some type of Higher Power (“HP”). The ‘spiritual stuff’ has always been my greatest struggle within the AA program; I have a tendency to try and overthink things, and have a great deal of difficulty trusting that things will work out. There are so many different things that can cut me off from my HP and the end result is a bitter life for myself and everyone around me. Carrying the message to other alcoholics has always been easier. I can identify with their struggle, and am happy to help them any way I can. But what about the rest of the ‘normal’ humans...

I remember being two years into AA, had already worked most of the steps including most of my amends, but was absolutely miserable and in pain. I had a sponsor, commitments, was doing service and could not figure out what the problem was. Why am I doing all these things if I am still going to be in pain? And if I am in pain, I have a tendency to carry that pain with me everywhere, and release upon those closest to me. The AA life was better than being drunk, but far from good.

My sponsor asked me flat out: “Do you believe you are powerless over alcohol and your life is unmanageable?” I agreed with that 100%, no issues. “Do you believe a higher power can restore you to sanity?” I honestly did not believe, so I said no. He chuckled a bit and explained to me the predicament I was in. I was basically powerless and insane, and did not believe I could be restored to sanity.

Practicing the Principles in All My Affairs (cont.)

That was the first time I truly realized that for me it wasn't about believing or not believing, it was purely a matter of desperation and trying to be happy. There are many others out there who have a hard time with the spiritual side, and I honestly get it. My decision to turn to a Higher Power was selfish (not dissimilar to most other decisions I make) but turned out to be the point at which I really started to enjoy sobriety.

So what does this have to do with "Practicing the Principles in All My Affairs"? EVERYTHING. If I do not believe in a higher power, it makes it very difficult to turn over my will, and ask he/she/it to remove my shortcomings. And I have a lot of shortcomings. These shortcomings make it so hard for me to live, work and survive in 'normal' society. When I am obviously wrong, although I may not admit it, I know I am wrong and will (eventually) take responsibility and work to improve. But a combination of my fears and character defects make acting appropriate in most situations difficult. It is much easier for me to point out all of the things that are wrong with the world and to make excuses for why I acted or reacted a certain way.

Let's assume I have a tremendous amount of self-restraint and self-awareness (which I do not), and I can white knuckle through life practicing these principles in all my affairs (treating people respectfully and with patience, love even if I do not want to). Am I actually happy? If not, why am I trying so hard? What about the situations where I may actually be right? Not everything I do in my daily life is wrong and not everything that is done to me and around me is right. I can think of many situations whereby a person can simply be a victim, alcoholic or not. If something horrible happened to someone I loved (i.e. death of a child), and I become disturbed, I am not really buying the 'my side of the street' argument (despite how hard it is sold in meetings). In situations such as these, I have absolutely no confidence in my ability to practice these principles without help from a Higher Power.

Practicing the Principles in All My Affairs (cont.)

Thankfully my life is not that bleak nor that black and white. My experience has been that most difficult situations or conflicts have culpability on all ends. It is also my experience that I am usually at least 51% wrong, if not much more. If I have turned over my will to a Higher Power, honestly asked for my shortcomings to be removed and have what I believe is a spiritual awakening, it doesn't matter even if I am 0% wrong. I have made a commitment to try and be a better person. This is the easiest way for me to show gratitude to HP for everything he / she / it has done for me, and (based up my experience) gives me the best chance of being happy.

After all, why did I decide to get sober if not to enjoy whatever life I have left!

~Anon AA



AA AS A WAY OF LIFE

1 year 8 months ago, I'd never imagine myself here today. AA to me was what I used to see in the movies – they didn't look like people that I could relate to, and all I knew was that a) they sat around in a room talking and b) they could never have another drink again. My brain could not process HOW it was possible to live life without alcohol and I couldn't understand how sitting in a room, talking to strangers would help.

When I was drinking, my world was very small, yet I had a know-it-all attitude. With work, I had the discipline and was always able to achieve my goals when I set my mind to it. However, when it came to my drinking, I kept trying to apply the same discipline, but I simply could not do it. Short of rehabs and hospitalisation, I tried supplements, therapy, hypnosis tapes and even white knuckling it and lasting 14 months. But once I started on my first drink, the result was always the same – I wanted more!

It was through sheer desperation that I was able to surrender and admit that I did not know everything, and I needed help. Walking into my first AA meeting has been the best gift that I have given myself. Today, I cannot imagine my life without AA.

I've realised AA is not solely about meetings. It is a combination of a few things that we've been told to do. Today I know my best chance of staying sober is when I put to practice the tools that AA have given me for learning to live life on life's terms without a drink and when I embrace the fellowship, the meetings, step work with my sponsor as part of everyday life.

In my experience, recovery became harder from month 13 as the layers start peeling. I was suddenly experiencing a range of emotions which seem too intense because I no longer could mask it by turning to alcohol for an immediate relief. But with the tools of the program there are now alternatives! While I learn to sit with the feelings, I also have a bunch of things I could do – call my sponsor, meet and talk to friends, pray, go to more meetings, do service, just cry and cry and cry.

AA AS A WAY OF LIFE (cont.)

Moving into my second year in recovery has not been easy but I have found myself leaning closer on my higher power. And I am starting to have a curiosity about myself, genuinely wanting to know and understand myself better. And through my recovery, it has been the practice of these 5 key lessons that has changed my life.

1) Take Contrary Action

Do the opposite of what feels comfortable – that's when you grow

2) Surrender and Handover

Being responsible for the action without trying to control the outcome

3) Pray for willingness

when 1 & 2 is hard to do, just keep praying for the willingness.

4) Think of others, help others

Be of service and be helpful and thoughtful to others as it really does make you happy (who knew?!)

5) There are no shortcuts

As the layers start peeling, we are meant to go through new experiences that will help us grow.

There is hard work involved but nothing worth having comes easy.

~C



A.A As A Way of Life

What was my “my way of life” like before I came to A.A.? I remember I was drinking at a bar when a friend came in and said, “oh man, my wife told me this morning that she is leaving me.”, I answered “let me get you a beer”. Or if a colleague was with me and he said, “I just lost my job. I don’t know what I am going to do.” And, I would say, “come, have a beer...”

It seemed to me that the solution to anything was a drink. That was my “way of life”. And yet, over time, that solution stopped working for me. And in the end, when I was brought to my knees, it was destroying me and those around me.

Today I have been sober for some time; what is A.A. as a “way of life”? I am reminded that, when I read the steps backwards, in step 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”. I am told that all the steps are designed to cause a spiritual awakening. Thus, I am to seek a spiritual awakening through working the 12 steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. I am aware that a spiritual awakening is demonstrated in the tenth step promises, in that the obsession to drink has been lifted from me. And today, the solution to my problems is not to reach for a drink.

But there is more to this A.A. way of life.

To live an “A.A. way of life”, I need to practice steps ten to twelve daily. And of course, step ten includes steps four through to nine. Step twelve tells me to carry the message of A.A. to other alcoholics and practice the A.A. principles in all of my affairs. I need to keep these spiritual awakenings coming to help me to change from my default hard wiring of selfish and self-centred to a God-centred way. Prayer, meditation and service to others help me with this, together with pain. Well, it seems I can only grow at the speed of pain...

A.A As A Way of Life (cont.)

Chuck C distilled our problems down to 'one' problem. That being, when I am at dis-ease (or tired, irritable and discontented, in other words whenever I am disturbed), I have conscious separation from my higher power. And there is one solution to whatever my problem might be (whether it be disguised as selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, fear, blah blah). And that is to regain my conscious contact with my higher power.

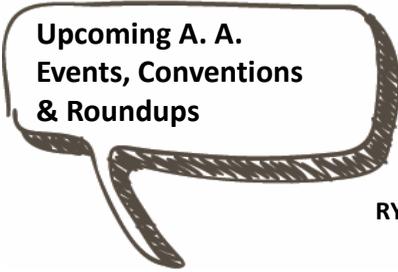
DR Bob said, "let's keep it simple" and "love and service". When I am in dis-ease, step ten tells me to ask God at once to remove this dis-ease. Then, through counsel to make amends or forgive the person. Then I am to help someone.

I find that one of the best tools I have learned in the rooms of A.A. is that of restraint of tongue and pen. I know that whenever I practice it, it always works. And, whenever I do not practice it, it shows me why it is the easier softer way to practice it. I have also learned through A.A. to have gratitude. Through practicing gratitude, I am more open today to being grateful for the many things in my life I would otherwise have taken for granted.

Do I practice these steps to perfection? Certainly not. However, I am grateful I remain teachable. And, although I feel more complete today thanks to A.A. and my higher power, I do not feel complete enough to no longer need A.A. or my higher power. A design for living they tell me.

~Simon





**Upcoming A. A.
Events, Conventions
& Roundups**

RYUKYPAA Convention of Young People of AA

13-14 October 2018

Tenbusu Naha 3-2-10 Makishi

Naha, Okinawa, Japan

<http://12stepokinawa.com/?p=1177>

12 Step Okinawa Roundup

19-21 October 2018

Okuma Beach, Okinawa, Japan

<http://www.12stepokinawa.com/>

Dubai Back to Basics Workshop

19-20 October 2018

Grand Excelsior Hotel, Dubai, UAE

<http://www.aauae.net/index.php/events/list-of-events>

Sydney Boomerang Roundup 2018

19-21 October 2018

Sydney Masonic Conference Centre, Sydney, Australia

<https://aa.org.au/event/2018-sydney-boomerang-round-up/>

AA Hong Kong International Convention

3~4 November 2018

The HUB Hong Kong, 150-158 Lockhart Road

Wanchai, Hong Kong

<https://www.aaconvention.hk>

AA Singapore Roundup 2019

9-10 March 2019

Damien Hall, Blessed Sacrament Church

1 Commonwealth Drive, Singapore

<http://www.singaporeaa.org/>

AA Bali Roundup 2019

7-9 June 2019

Prama Hotel Sanur, Bali, Indonesia

<http://www.aabali.org/bali-roundup/>

Service Opportunities

HIFI Committee

The Hospitals & Institutions, Public Information Committee is looking for volunteers to help at IMH during working hours and male volunteers for a prison outreach program. Please contact hi.pi.aa@outlook.com for details.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is looking for volunteers to help with the 12th step go to list. Please contact help@singaporeaa.org.

Social Committee

A.A. Singapore holds regular social events. The Social Committee is looking for additional volunteers to help organize functions. For more information on the next function or to help provide your support, please contact socialsingapore@yahoo.com.

Roundup Committee

The A.A. Singapore Roundup Committee is looking for volunteers to help organize the 2019 roundup. Please contact events@singaporeaa.com.

Newsletter Committee

The A.A. Singapore Newsletter Committee is looking for volunteers to help us publish this publication you are reading right now. Please contact newsletter@singaporeaa.org.

Asia-Oceania Service Representative

A sub-group has been formed to look into possibilities of hosting a Round up in a regional country, with less developed fellowship, as part of a Regional Outreach program to help carry the message. The group is looking for volunteers to assist with preparing a proposal to present to Intergrupp.



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 A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups, or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based upon 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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Do you have a problem with alcohol?

1. Have you ever decided to stop drinking for a week or so, but only lasted for a couple of days?

Most of us in A.A. made all kinds of promises to ourselves and to our families. We could not keep them. Then we came to A.A. which said “Just try not to drink today.” (If you do not drink today, you can not get drunk today.)

2. Do you wish people would mind their own business about your drinking – stop telling you what to do?

In A.A. we do not tell anyone to do anything. We just talk about our own drinking, the trouble we get into, and how we stopped. We will be glad to help you, if you want us to.

3. Have you ever switched from one kind of drink to another in the hope that this would keep you from getting drunk?

We tried all kinds of ways. We made our drinks weak. Or just drank beer. Or we did not drink cocktails. Or only drank on weekends. You name it, we tried it. But if we drank anything with alcohol in it, we usually got drunk eventually.

4. Have you had to have an eye-opener upon wakening during the past year?

Do you need a drink to get started, or to stop shaking? This is a pretty sure sign that you are not drinking “socially”.

5. Do you envy people who can drink without getting into trouble?

At one time or another, most of us have wondered why we were not like most people, who really can take it or leave it.

6. Have you had problems connected with drinking during the past year?

Be honest! Doctors say that if you have a problem with alcohol and keep on drinking, it will get worse – never better. Eventually you will die or end up in an institution for the rest of your life. The only hope is to stop drinking.

7. Has your drinking caused trouble at home?

Before we came into A.A. most of us said that it was the people or problems at home that made us drink. We could not see that our drinking just made everything worse. It never solved problems anywhere or anytime.

8. Do you ever try to get “extra” drinks at a party because you do not get enough?

Most of us used to have a “few” before we started out if we thought it was going to be that kind of party. And if drinks were not served fast enough, we would go some place else to get more.

9. Do you tell yourself you can stop drinking any time you want to, even though you keep getting drunk when you don’t mean to?

Many of us kidded ourselves into thinking that we drank because we wanted to. After we came to A.A. we found that once we started to drink, we couldn’t stop.

10. Have you missed days of work or school because of drinking?

Man of us admit now that we “called in sick” lots of times when the truth was that we were hungover or on a drunk.

11. Do you have “blackouts”?

A “blackout” is when we have been drinking hours or days which we cannot remember. When we came to A.A. we found out that this is a pretty sure sign of alcoholic drinking.

12. Have you ever felt that your life would be better if you did not drink?

Many of us started to drink because drinking made life seem better, at least for a while. By the time we got into A.A. we felt trapped. We were drinking to live and living to drink. We were sick and tired of being sick and tired.

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**SATURDAY MARCH 9TH (10-5PM)
SUNDAY MARCH 10TH (10-4PM)**

AA ROUND UP
SINGAPORE
2019

DAMIEN HALL
1 COMMONWEALTH DRIVE,
BLESSED SACRAMENT CHURCH
TICKET: \$25 (MEAL INCLUDED)



**A JOURNEY OF
MIRACLES**

SPEAKER: GIL FROM BALI

Singapore AA weekly meeting schedule

Please see website for directions (<http://singaporeaa.org/meetings.html>)

Meetings are subject to change, please see website to avoid disappointment

Monday	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Big Book Study	Circular Road
	12:30 - 1:30 PM	Big Book Study	Holy Family
	12:30 - 1:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Damien Hall
	7:00 - 8:00 PM	Daily Reflections	Damien Hall
	7:15 - 8:15 PM	Big Book Study	World Peace Café
	7:30 - 8:30 PM	Gay Men's Meeting	Little India
	8:05 - 9:05 PM	Beginner's Meeting	Damien Hall
Tuesday	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Speaker Meeting	Circular Road
	12:30 - 1:30 PM	Big Book Study	Damien Hall
	7:00 - 8:30 PM	11th Step Meeting	St. Bernadette
	7:00 - 8:00 PM	Daily Reflections	Damien Hall
	7:00 - 8:00 PM	Open Topics Meeting	NAMS Clinic, IMH
	8:15 - 9:00 PM	Ask the Speaker	Novena Medical
Wednesday	7:30 - 8:30 AM	As Bill Sees It	Circular Road
	12:30 - 1:30 PM	Big Book Study (French)	Circular Road
	12:30 - 1:30 PM	Living Sober	Holy Family
	12:30 - 1:30 PM	Living Sober	Damien Hall
	7:00 - 8:00 PM	Speaker Meeting	Damien Hall
Thursday	7:30 - 8:30 AM	12 & 12	Circular Road
	12:30 - 1:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Damien Hall
	7:00 - 8:00 PM	12 & 12	Damien Hall
	7:30 - 8:30 PM	Speaker Meeting	World Peace Café
Friday	7:30 - 8:30 AM	Beginners Meeting	Circular Road
	12:30 - 1:30 PM	12 & 12	Holy Family
	12:30 - 1:30 PM	12 & 12	Damien Hall
	7:00 - 8:00 PM	Happy Hour Higher Power	Oogachaga
	7:00 - 8:00 PM	Speaker Meeting	Damien Hall
Saturday	8:00 - 9:00 AM*	Big Book Study	Coastal Rhythm
	8:30 - 9:30 AM	Gratitude Meeting	Circular Road
	10:00 - 11:00 AM	Women's Meeting	Circular Road
	4:30 - 5:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Damien Hall
	8:00 - 9:00 PM	Young People's Meeting	Novena Medical
Sunday	8:00 - 9:00 AM*	Beginners Meeting	Coastal Rhythm
	8:15 - 9:15 AM	Men's Meeting	313 Somerset
	10:00 - 11:00 AM	Rainbow Meeting	Oogachaga
	5:00 - 6:00 PM	Big Book Study	We Care
	6:30 - 7:30 PM	Big Book Study	Damien Hall

*Note – Meeting starts at 8:30am on public holidays