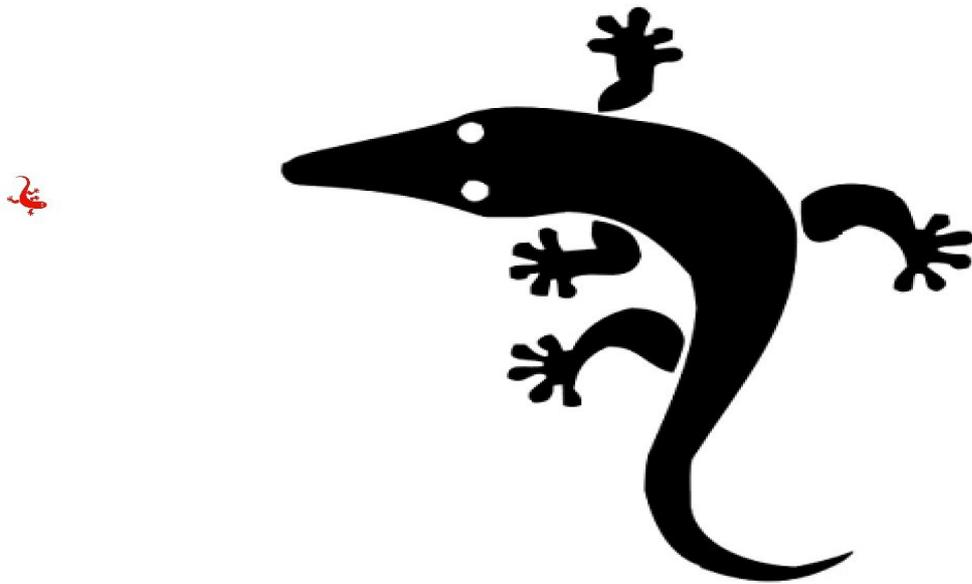


The Daily Reprieve



By

Singapore AA members

December 2013 to January 2014

THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

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.

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

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For further assistance, call (+65)6475 0890 or email us at: help@singaporeaa.org

To contribute to the Daily Reprieve, please send your article or announcement to:

newsletter@singaporeaa.org

See details and meeting schedules at: www.singaporeaa.org

Dear Friends in Recovery,

It has been a busy time for A.A. Singapore. The Back-to-Basics weekend with Wally P. was a huge success and we have two articles on it here in the Newsletter. Speaking of which, this is a good place to thank the organizers of this wonderful event:

An ENORMOUS thank you to Intergroup members Jonathan, Angela, Paul, and Nirmalo for organizing the venue, welcome and logistics. Thank you to Arnold and the Women from the Saturday morning meeting who helped with food and beverage (including Tanya, Ann, Jess, Helen and Anjali). Everything was great and very much appreciated!

The following Saturday, A.A. was present at the **National Addictions Awareness Day** at Yew Tee Square. This was a great opportunity to reach out to healthcare professionals and neighbourhood residents. More on this event inside.

We are lucky to have contributions in this issue from 5 members who share freely of their experience, strength and hope. Thank you to each of them for taking the time to do this service.

We wrap up the year with tips on enjoying sober holidays, and end our series on the 12 Concepts for World Service.

Finally, I would like to thank Jason who has been doing lay-out for the Newsletter for the last two years. He will be moving on soon and will be sorely missed! If you are interested in a service position with the Newsletter, please join us to lay out the next issue 😊.

Wishing you a very happy, serene and sober Holiday Season.

Claire

My “Super Awesome” Life as a Practicing Alcoholic

Ok, I don't drink or do drugs anymore. But when I did, I liked to stay up late at night fantasizing that I was cool. From my euphoric, substance-induced state, I could convince myself that I knew all the coolest bands; movies, and people. And therefore, by association, I was cool. If my friends fell short of the mark, I dramatized the best parts of their lives to make them more interesting to others. It was fun.

My friend Josh, another active alcoholic; was part of a band that played the same bar in the Mission (San Francisco) from when it was cool until it wasn't very cool; and then it got new owners and became cool again. A la James Murphy, he “was there”. (*There* usually being the floor of a men's bathroom). Of course, to other people I said he was a “music genius” - I only hung out with geniuses, really - and claimed he had introduced me to Jimi Tenor, who I actually found by accident on Youtube.

Sergio, Fabian, and Dave lived in Lower Haight and would trade socially-acceptable Loser jobs amongst themselves, back and forth; such as American Apparel Stylist and Essential Oil Mixologist at Aveda.

They taped the fattest Sharpies they could find to the walls of their apartment, encouraging people to adorn their living space with unique streams of consciousness. Nothing says Home quite like walls with statements screaming “Why Are We Here!??”, “I Am Not Afraid of Truth”, and “Death Before Honor”, which they made special care to point out due to a member of the String Cheese Incident having scrawled it several summers ago following an unfortunate brush with an angry fan.

Night after night, after even worse night, we would camp out at someone's place over a few bottles of something, listening to the same pretentious music and talking about all the things we wanted to do but never would, like make an album, or learn Arabic, or start a blog.

None of this matters now. I have blocked all of them on Facebook. However, I am fascinated to recollect the fears running rampant in my life during that time; craftily disguised as nostalgia and creative ambition. It wasn't enough to be there, at some “cool” person's house; doing shots served on a record album from a chair shaped like a hand. I wanted to belong. And I never did.

Alcoholic friendships: So easy to make, so disappointing to maintain. It's difficult to master loneliness in loud, crowded, rooms but most of us did. Maybe it wasn't the best, but even if we tried, we couldn't really pinpoint an alternative we'd trade it for.

What we, and most kids like us failed to realize is, Nobody Wakes Up Cool. Or a Success. Or Popular. Or Talented. All of these things — yes, ALL of them — are conceptualized and worked for. We kept waiting for something magic to happen; it never did. We wanted someone to recognize us; take notice of our gifts and our beauty, and transform us into something better. Everyone who mocked would be sorry. We'd win awards and conduct interviews. While we waited, others picked goals; which they tried, failed at, and tried again. Other people got better. We stayed the same.

Instead of changing our net value (or cool factor) as human beings, we decided to climb the shorter mountain: changing how cool *people thought* we were; which was far easier (especially given Sergio's American Apparel discount). It could be accomplished in a much shorter period of time. We got drunk in the right places, told the right stories, and took the right Instagram photos.

If in my continued years of sobriety, I ever forget what a shitty and stupid existence this was, I pull out Jimi Tenor. I do it to remind myself what it felt like to be young, and full of alcohol-induced hopes and dreams. I held so tightly to the belief that what I KNEW would get me somewhere; that all those hours at Amoeba listening to records on my lunch break could be somehow cashed out for a better life *vis a vis* an interesting man, connection with a stranger, or soundtrack to the perfect film. But it never did. What I knew just made me more and more of what I already was — a very selfish person.

There may not be a prize for knowing who Jimi Tenor is. There is however, a definite one for suiting up and showing up; for working the 12 steps, and for getting sober: it's having a fighting chance at finally DOING all the things you used to stay up late talking about. At three years sober I inch a little bit closer every day.

As for being cool and what other people are thinking about me; that stuff's just none of my business.

By Stephanie B.

****Note:** All the names in this story have been changed.

Enjoy A Sober Holiday Season

NOT DRINKING WHEN EVERYONE ELSE IS CAN BE VERY DIFFICULT, BUT WITH SOME PLANNING AND DETERMINATION IT CAN BE DONE



What You Need: A desire to quit drinking

Time Required: All day

- 1. If you are unsure if non-alcoholic beverages will be available, bring your own.**
- 2. Stay away from the bar area.**
- 3. If offered a drink, just say, 'No, thank you.' You do not have to explain.**
- 4. If there is food available, be sure to eat, so that you are not hungry.**
- 5. If you feel that you are becoming tempted to drink, leave early.**
- 6. Stay busy. Talk to others, dance, etc. Don't give yourself time to think about the fact that you are not drinking**
- 7. Don't drink, no matter what!**

TIPS:

1. If others at the event are drinking, chances are they will never know that you only have cola in your glass.
2. If you are new to sobriety and are concerned about attending an event where alcohol will be served, arrive late and leave early.
3. Take a sober friend or sponsor, or have their phone number and call them if you need to.
4. You are probably not the only one at the party who is clean and sober. Find the winners and hang out with them.
5. Don't think about trying the Non-alcoholic beer, and yes, the Egg Nog is spiked.
6. If someone has told you that you are "co-dependent" don't end up going home with the one who wears the lampshade or dances on the table. Allow

them the dignity of learning from their own mistakes, don't "rescue" them from hitting bottom, and run as fast as you can in the opposite direction.

By Buddy T.

My Story

As a young adult my mother would tell me stories of when they first moved to Alaska in the 70's and how drunks scattered the town. The saloons were seedy with hard working miners, fishermen, and pioneers coming to seek the dream of Alaska. With the dream seeking also came a deep dependency on booze to fuel those desires and numb the loneliness one can feel so far up north. I would always judge the town alcoholics and laugh at them and console myself that I was better than that.

The first real encounter I had with alcohol was when I was 14 and just finished my freshmen year of high school. My best friend is from a prominent Alaskan family and his mother was throwing one of her famous parties. This time it was even more special because she was turning 40 – and they had really turned out a fun bash. Kids weren't invited, but of course we were hanging out around the house watching the glamorous people arrive and party it up. We all decided to sneak a bottle of champagne down to the nearby park and join in on the festivities by drinking it! Having never drank before, we couldn't sort out how to open a champagne bottle so I desperately broke it on the curb of a sidewalk and we began passing it around taking swigs from the jagged edges. It's a wonder no one cut their lips off!

While my friends all took baby sips, once that bubbly liquid gold hit my tongue I found I had an insatiable thirst. I drank almost the whole bottle by myself! Of course my little adolescent body couldn't handle much so I could barely stand; but I do remember all the details of the night. There was a drunken Alaskan Native who wandered by us in the park (a typical scene in Alaska), and he walks up to us and laughingly points to me saying “she's drunker than I am!” I'll never forget that because it was true and would be the foreshadowing comment to the rest of my drinking career.

There was a peppering of other incidences, but I made sure to stay at friend's houses if I drank in high school. It wasn't until my sophomore year of college that my serious drinking career took off. I had moved to New Orleans where there were drive-through daiquiri shops and no one cared if you were underage – boy the leashes were off! The Big Easy is known for Mardi Gras, jazz and partying, and we took full advantage by finding ladies nights for free drinks almost every night of the week. Many nights I would fall into bed in a near state of unconsciousness only to wake up and do it all over again. I was young, free and wild with some oats to sow.

Fast forward a few years and I found myself back in Alaska after finishing college and spending a few years in Colorado. Life wasn't as carefree, and I had no choice but to notice my life had spun out of control. I briefly decided to stop drinking and even went to a few AA meetings. Listening to the speakers I couldn't relate – they had all given up the fight against alcohol and I simply wasn't ready to throw in the towel. I clearly remember hearing one woman talk about waking up in a gutter and thinking “well, that's never happened to me so I don't belong here”. I woke up in my bed, and although I couldn't remember the nights prior at least I had a roof over my head.

After spending a year and a half back in Alaska working, I decided it was time to go international. My best friend (the one mentioned earlier) and I moved to China together to take on Asia, travel and get some adventures under our belt. It was there that I met my future husband and we moved to Singapore together. It has been here that the drinking got progressively worse and hard to ignore. My drinking had no border constraints and seemed to follow me wherever I went. In Singapore I found friends who also enjoyed heavy drinking and was able to mask my issue to myself. These boozy, expensive nights often ended in me yelling at my husband. I continued to wake up with a sense of impending doom. But try as I might, I couldn't seem to stop. The more I limited my drinking the worse it got.

After countless bad nights I had hit rock bottom. It's been a 10 year run of hard drinking but I couldn't run away anymore. The people around me only had to hold up a mirror for me to see that alcohol made all the decisions for me. I tried to play the game and always lost – alcohol was my ruler. Broken and defeated I decided to try AA again. This time was different. I could relate to the stories people told and knew this was where I belonged. The first meeting I attended I was nearly in tears the whole time. One of the fellowship members took me out for coffee afterwards, quite literally throwing me a life ring. I didn't feel so alone anymore. It's been in these rooms that I've slowly started to piece back together who I am. Each wine bottle I opened over those years had taken a piece of me with it – and I knew there would be some work required to get what I lost back.

I'm not going to pretend that life has been all roses since starting the program. Feeling emotions for the first time in years is an exhausting business. Looking back I realize I was a coward using drinking to prop up my deflated sense of self. I now have to face each day with honesty and clarity.

Each 24 hours gives a new and different challenge. The difference now is that I have a set of tools to deal with each day instead of the sharp blade of self-torture I used to use. The people in the fellowship have given me hope, and I've now started building my relationship with my higher power. I'm thankful to be experiencing every moment of life instead of passively letting time flow by. Simple things like meeting a friend for coffee, or going to the market to buy vegetables have taken on a new found pleasure. My husband and friends are also so thankful that I'm now present in life. I do often fear that I've become boring, but from what everyone says I'm livelier than ever.

I'll be moving again soon, but this time is different. I won't be packing fear into in my suitcase this time. God has blessed me with another chance at life. Even though no matter where I go in the world I'll never be able to leave the disease of alcoholism, I'm comforted to know I don't have to feel alone. The AA community has given me a support system and courage to face live with fresh vigour and happiness. I finally feel at peace.

Sharon



"Maybe a dunking booth for Al-anons? They'd love it."

—Jimmy O., Dallas, Texas

Three Types of Drinkers



The Big Book discusses three distinctly different types of drinkers on page 20 and 21: *the moderate drinker*, the *hard drinker*, and the *real alcoholic*.

I suppose that I was once a *moderate drinker*, because in my early drinking days, I could “*take it or leave it alone*” (p. 20). I could force myself home from the bar before closing time with youthful willpower . . . but, the phenomenon of craving held strong, yet controllable. I have seldom, if ever, really wanted to quit drinking once started. I doubt that I have ever possessed a normal reaction to alcohol, but at that youthful time I could make use of self-will and self-knowledge. I was then a *moderate drinker* – albeit barely.

But by the time I was nineteen, I found myself in the drunk-tank three times in one year, causing the judge to remand me to ninety-days in the Indiana penal farm; but luckily the sheriff knew my father and I was let off the hook. At his point I would consider myself a *hard drinker* because I would stop drinking for months at a time using strong self-will and self-knowledge. I seemed to have a choice before taking that first drink, although once started I often couldn’t stop for days. So, through my early twenties, I believe I was a *hard drinker*.

But at some point in my late twenties I became what the Big Book describes as a *real alcoholic*; that is to say, I had no choice before the first drink. The term alcoholic insanity fit me perfectly. As Joe McQ. used to say: “*I couldn’t stop when I started, but when I stopped I couldn’t stop starting.*” By mid-thirties I would not dare drink during the work week, but I did anyway and, of course, got fired again. I had lost all choice before that first drink. Self-will and self-knowledge no longer worked because there was something wrong inside my head. I had progressed to the stage of a *real alcoholic*. To sum up:

- ⌚ The *moderate drinker* can use self-will and self-knowledge.
- ⌚ The *hard drinker* can also use self-will and self-knowledge.
- ⌚ The *real alcoholic* cannot use self-will and self-knowledge.

The Big Book uses the phrase *real alcoholic* seven times; I believe it is obvious that Bill had a specific idea in mind when he wrote that expression. I can easily see that alcoholism is a progressive disease.

The Alcoholics Anonymous Concepts of World Service

The Twelve Concepts for World Service were written by A.A.'s co-founder Bill W., and were adopted by the General Service Conference of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1962. The Concepts are an interpretation of A.A.'s world service structure as it emerged through A.A.'s early history and experience. The short forms Concepts 10 to 12 read:

10. Every service responsibility should be matched by an equal service authority, with the scope of such authority well defined.

The scope of such authority is to be always well defined whether by tradition, by resolution, by specific job description or by appropriate charters and bylaws. Our service structure cannot function effectively and harmoniously unless, at every level, each operational responsibility is matched by a corresponding authority to discharge it.

This requires that authority must be delegated at every level — and that the responsibility and authority of every entity are well defined and clearly understood. As we have seen (Concept I) “final responsibility and ultimate authority” reside with the A.A. groups, and they delegate this authority to the Conference (Concept II).

The Conference, in turn, delegates to the General Service Board the authority to manage A.A.'s affairs (Concept III) in its behalf. The board is in authority over its subsidiary operating conditions — A.A. World Services, Inc. and The A.A. Grapevine, Inc. — but it delegates to the directors of those corporations the authority necessary to run these service entities. The directors are in authority over the executives of the corporations, but delegate to these officers the authority needed to carry out their administrative responsibilities. And finally, the executives delegate to the G.S.O. and Grapevine staff members and other employees the authority necessary to carry out their important service jobs.

11. The trustees should always have the best possible committees, corporate service directors, executives, staffs, and consultants. Composition, qualifications, inductions procedures, and rights and duties will always be matters of serious concern.

Therefore, the composition of these underlying committees and service boards, the personal qualifications of their members, the manner of their induction into service, the systems of their rotation, the way in which they are related to each other, the special rights and duties of our executives, staffs and consultants, together with a proper basis for the financial compensation of these special workers, will always be matters for serious care and concern.

12. The Conference shall observe the spirit of A.A. 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 perform acts of government, and that, like the Society it serves, it will always remain democratic in thought and action.

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"We should always realize that change does not necessarily spell progress. We are sure that each new group of workers in world service will be tempted to try all sorts of innovations that may often produce little more than a painful repetition of earlier mistakes ... And if mistaken departures are nevertheless made, these Concepts may then provide a ready means of safe return to an operating balance that might otherwise take years of floundering to rediscover."

*AA Co-Founder, Bill W., September 1990, from: "The Twelve Concepts" AA Grapevine
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'Just as a candle cannot burn without fire, men cannot live without a spiritual life.'
Buddha

'Spiritual relationship is far more precious than physical. Physical relationship divorced from that of the spiritual is like a body without a soul.'
Mahatma Gandhi

As part of the recent Back-to-Basics workshop held at Damien Hall, Wally P. from Tucson, Arizona led us through all 12 Steps in four 1-hour sessions. The article below is reprinted with permission from Wally's website (www.aabacktobasics.org) and explains the purpose and origins of working quickly, and often, through our 12 Step program.

Should You Do All 12 Steps in A Single Month?

Melissa, in her seventh year of recovery, was “struggling but just about two weeks sober” when a friend took her to her first Back to Basics meeting in the basement of a Los Angeles church. “I didn’t know what I was in for,” she recalls. “At the time, I didn’t really know about AA. I knew virtually nothing about the steps to sobriety as outlined in AA's Big Book. But in less than a month, a sponsor sped me through all 12 steps and I felt a lot better. Since then I've gone through them twice more, and I have a lot more insight into how and why they work. But in the beginning, all I knew was that they were working, and that was enough for me.”

Back in the '40s, when Bill W. and Dr. Bob first published AA's Big Book, they encouraged their fellow alcoholics to speed through all 12 steps during their first 30 days of sobriety. "Most alcoholics don't respond well to over-thinking," Bill said. Finding a Higher Power, admitting all your flaws and apologizing to everyone you've hurt during your wasted past is often a painful process for even the most committed “Big Bookers,” who sometime take months or years to complete the steps. But in ensuing years, Bill W.'s basic prescription has fallen out of favor with the AA establishment. Indeed, it was practically forgotten until an Alcoholics Anonymous archivist named Wally P, who was writing a history of the AA Intergroup and Central offices in the 1940s, stumbled across notes that AA-er's had taken at some early meetings. “As I was writing that story, I kept running across the Beginners’ Meetings that were being conducted in the earliest days of AA,” he remembers. “I knew nothing about them, but I kept copies of those notes. And after I wrote the Intergroup book, those notes formed the basis of *Back to Basics*, which was published in 1997.”

As Wally explains, *Back to Basics* is a re-enactment of Bill W.'s early vision for the fellowship. “The format is basically a one-hour session a week for four weeks in which people take all 12 steps. It’s not a step study because the book says the steps we ‘took,’ not the steps we sat around and talked about. We don’t just ‘study’ the steps—we take them.”

While some newcomers may find the process a bit overwhelming, Melissa says that *Back to Basics* was exactly what she needed. “I really had no idea what was going on, but each week my mind became clearer,” she explains. “We started with steps one through three, then we did four and five, and then we made our amends list and went out and did our amends. After that, we went through ten, eleven and twelve. It wasn't always easy, but I thought if [AA co-founder] Dr. Bob could do 12 steps in one day, I could do them in one month.”

“In the 1970s, a lot of people forgot how to do the steps, especially in a group—even though fellowship is one of the reasons AA has historically been so successful,” says Wally. “Back in the 1940s, people who came to AA had a 50-75% rate of recovery. The success rates have gone down ever since. But since *Back to Basics* came out in 1997, over 500,000 people have been through the program. Hundreds of thousands more have accessed it via Narcotics Anonymous, Cocaine Anonymous, Sex Addicts Anonymous, and other 12-step groups.”

“I was first introduced to the book when I was 12 years sober,” says Steven F., an enthusiastic proponent of *Back to Basics*. “Before that, I had a pretty good life in AA. I was getting all the ‘promises,’ but there was something missing in my life, and I didn’t really know what it was. Then one day I turned up at this meeting, and someone handed me a book that laid out a 30-day path to recovery. At that time, the whole concept was very controversial in most AA circles. Even now, most of what you hear in the rooms is people’s opinions. Everyone has different ideas about how quickly or slowly you're supposed to work the steps. The prevailing idea these days is that you work the steps when you’re ready. But when I started reading this book, I began to realize that back in AA's earliest days, there was a much greater sense of urgency and a greater rate of success.”

“I like to look at it in terms of a hospital,” says Wally. “If someone comes into the emergency room, bleeding profusely as the result of being in a knife fight, the doctor doesn’t give you a book and send you home. He puts on a tourniquet. Then someone else sutures up the wound and someone else gets you ready to go home. As I see it, *Back to Basics* is the tourniquet. You then go home and take the steps again and again and again.”

When Steven was deciding that he would see how effective the Back to Basics tourniquet was, he asked a couple of people if they would go through it with him. “These guys didn’t know each other but they had all been in and out for years,” he recalls. “Before Back to Basics, nobody had ever told them how simple this program was. But this time, they did the work and they did it quickly, and the next month they did it again, and what was most miraculous was that all three guys were sober and working with others within 90 days. And 14 years later, those guys are all still sober today.”

Louise—a personal assistant from San Francisco who still looks like the punk rocker she once was—discovered Back to Basics late in her life, but the experience forever altered her recovery. “It was like that feeling when you first go to AA and you realize that you don’t have to do it by yourself,” she says about her first Back to Basics foray. “There is so much energy when people come together. Though I had worked the steps already, I thought it was good to go through them over and over because as you stay sober, more stuff comes up. It’s like why people go to church every Sunday—it really reinforces how you can use the steps on a daily basis in your life.”

For Wally, seeing Back to Basics grow from a book about the fellowship into a program for recovery has been one of the great joys of his own sobriety. And the rewards keep coming: a Virginia prison program recently implemented the Back to Basics structure. “They started with 12 sober beds in a sober pod and now they have 400 sober beds in a sober prison,” Wally marvels. “I call it shock therapy—it’s a diversion program. You have to sign an agreement when you have one year left on your sentence that you will participate in four sessions a week, wherein you go through the steps each week for 26 weeks, followed by a 26-week “Big Book” study. When you are released, you know as much about recovery as anyone. Then, as part of the contract, you have to come back to the prison for a year after your release to sponsor other men. Since the program began, the recidivism rate at that prison was lowered from 70 to 15%.”

Louise has seen similar changes in her life—but she admits that real change happens only for the willing. “I think it goes back to the idea that if somebody’s ready, everything will work and if they’re not ready, nothing will work,” she says. “I saw a lot of people come in that were desperate and I could see how working the steps so quickly gave them relief, but I also could tell who was there to get sober and who was doing it for another reason—the courts or somebody else or maybe they did want to get sober but hadn’t really surrendered. It’s kind of hard to hide that stuff when you’re doing it in a group. It’s easier to hide in the rooms—you can mask it—but when you’re intensely going through this process with a group of people, it’s difficult to hide how committed you are.”

According to Steven, that's what makes Back to Basics so effective. “It’s a very powerful meeting,” he says. “You hear the 12 steps in the way that AA's founders intended them to be heard. People forget that like most diseases, alcoholism has several stages. Some people who enter the program are still at stage one—they can’t stop drinking but it’s easier for them to surrender. But you also meet many people who are struggling through stage four of this illness—and they need a much quicker solution. Either way, it all comes back to one simple fact: AA doesn't simply teach you how to stop drinking; it teaches you how to live your life.

- Kristen McG.

We Love a Good One-Liner!

1. Directions to AA: Just go straight to hell and make a u-turn
2. Being a part of something is more important than being the center of attention
3. AA is the only place where you can walk into a room full of strangers and reminisce
4. AA romance.... the odds are good... but the goods are odd
5. AA: Look for a way in; not for a way out
6. We are not reformed drunks, but informed alcoholics

7. AA has no fixed address -- you can take it with you
8. An AA group will be judged by the worst behaviour of its members
9. Before I came to AA I was dead, but did not know enough to lie down
10. In AA there are no losers -- just slow winners
11. Alcoholic (as defined by self): A piece of crap that the universe revolves around
12. Alcoholic: Someone who refuses to give up a life of failure without a fight



"He calls it 'meditation'."



"If you can see me, I'm the least of your problems."—Suzanne S., Vernon, Texas

Thank You AA, A Poem by KJ

When I walked into the rooms of AA, I never quite expected it to be this way.

Don't pick up that first drink I was told, then your life, only you can behold.

Keep coming back was another line, that kept me away from that bottle of wine.

Although sometimes I felt like crying, all of this was worth not dying.

The next thing was, get a sponsor, so I chose one, that wouldn't take my nonsense.

After that, please work the steps, there are 12 of them to accept.

Then I heard a booming voice, from up above, there came a choice.

My life has changed now for the best, everyday has been a helpful test.

On the days that I feel really odd, I fall to my knees and I pray to God.

When I walked into this AA room, I never knew it could relieve the gloom.

Now I'm sober for almost a year, there's a skip in my walk and a sacred tear.

Although it seemed in the early days, that I had no hope and seemed all a blaze.

Once I had hit my rock bottom, only then could I truly blossom.

I was quick to anger and all alone, now a heart full of love and a happy home.

My faith is strong and in that I trust, all of my life can now adjust.

When you all looked at me and said it will work, I believed every word and now I can smirk.

I take pride in my Big book and all of my chips, it saved my life as I came to grips.

For you I am grateful, every single one, you have helped me on a journey that is beyond the sun.

So here is my Thank you to all of you, a girl full of hope and a dream come true.

Wally P. Weekend, 15-17 November, Damien Centre, Singapore

In lieu of an annual celebration this year, Singapore A.A. was offered the opportunity to host Wally P., A.A. Archivist from Tucson Arizona, for a weekend of talks, workshops and guided prayer and meditation. As a fan of workshops, I made a point to set this in my diary.

I knew nothing of this gentleman and had not even heard his name before. As a result, I had no expectations. My plan was to simply suit up and show up and I eagerly looked forward to a weekend that would take me away from the hustle and bustle of everyday life.

The weekend began on Friday 15th November with Wally giving a talk on what A.A. was like in the 1940s. For me, this was fascinating as Wally brought us back to the pioneering days of the fellowship, when there were success rates of 50-70%.

Saturday 15th November marked the big ‘workshop’ day and, by now, I had a small inkling of what lay ahead. I knew it was a steps workshop, but was not aware of how it would all unfold. I can only talk of my own experience in taking part in the workshop. In a word, or two, I found it a game changer! Wally worked 40 plus people through all the 12 steps in a day. In fact, he set a record as he ran the workshop in a shorter time than he had ever done. Fellows had worked hard to ensure that we were all well catered for.

Sunday the 17th saw yet again a very healthy turnout from the fellowship as Wally guided us through quiet time and two way prayer. He showed us how the fellowship had drawn from the Oxford Group techniques to pray and listen to God, or the “indwelling spirit”. I feel like we were given more tools to put in the spiritual tool kit. The two way prayer does not need as much time as some formal meditation techniques. Powerful stuff.

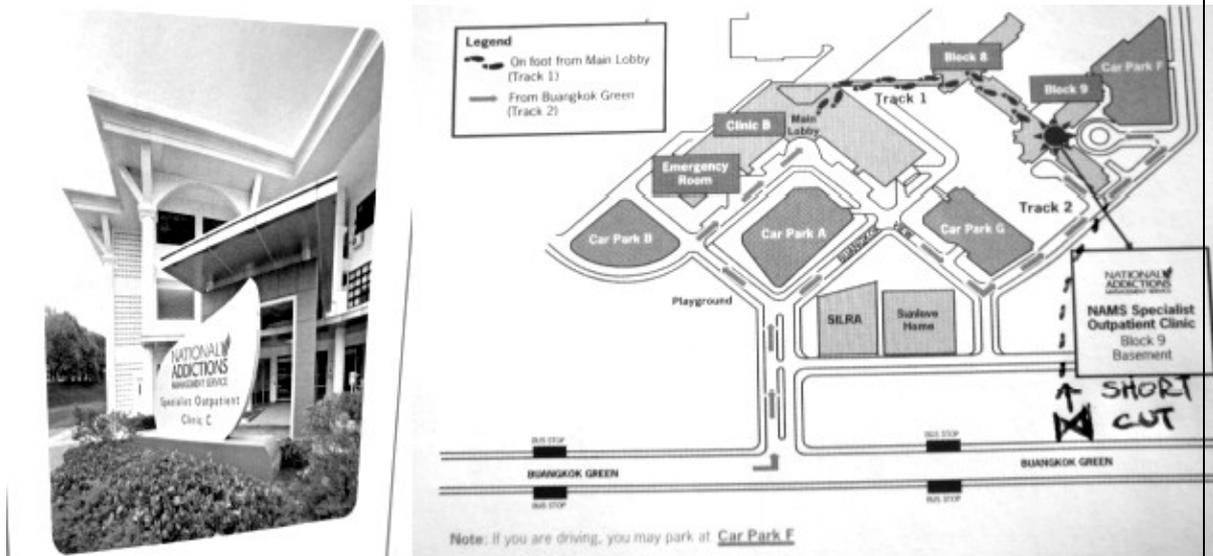
This was a great weekend and I am very grateful to those who reached out to Wally and made it all happen. I am also very grateful to the service of the many fellows who secured a great location, provided meals and tasty snacks and kept us stocked with tea and coffee.

In the end, I came away with the understanding that there is no one way to do the steps and that maybe the only ‘wrong’ way is to ...not do them! As Wally says, “do the steps quickly and often”!

Simon A.

NEW OPEN A.A. MEETING AT INSTITUTE OF MENTAL HEALTH (IMH)

A new open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous has started at the National Addiction Management Services (NAMS) clinic within the Institute of Mental Health (IMH). The meeting is open and is attended by IMH patients in the outpatient program as well as IMH doctors, counsellors and students. If you'd like to be of service and carry the message to the only institution in Singapore that takes care of people like us, please attend this meeting on Tuesdays at 7pm. Details are below.



- * *By taxi, stop at main lobby and walk toward canteen and follow walkway toward BLK 9. Take lift to basement.*
- * *By bus, stop at bus stop near a small gate and follow short cut that lead to BLK 9*
- * *Bus service to IMH- 43,109,156,159,161,325*
- * *Nearest MRT- Bus No. 43 from Buangkok MRT (3 stops), Bus No. 325 from Hougang MRT(10 stops), Bus No. 101, 109 from Serangoon MRT (17 stops)*

'You have to grow from the inside out. None can teach you, none can make you spiritual. There is no other teacher but your own soul.'

Swami Vivekananda

'Maturity is the ability to think, speak and act your feelings within the bounds of dignity. The measure of your maturity is how spiritual you become during the midst of your frustrations.'

Samuel Ullman

Upcoming A.A. Events in the Region

**49th Australian National Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous at
Adelaide, South Australia: 17 to 21 April 2014**

<http://www.aaconventionadelaide2014.org/welcome.html>

51st New Zealand Annual Convention at Dunedin:

17 to 19 January 2014 www.aaconvention.org.nz

Thailand Annual AA Round Up, Pattaya: 21 to 23 February 2014

<http://thailandroundup.weebly.com/>

Check Specific Country AA websites for more info.

Alcoholics Anonymous was present at the **National Addictions Awareness Day** fair held on 23rd November at Yew Tee Square Plaza. Simon and Kevin organized a team of members to man our table, and stocked it with all the pertinent literature: Big Books, Living Sober, pamphlets, meetings lists and copies of a recent Newsletter. The Health Minister, Mr. Gan Kim Yong was present and passed by to ask a few questions about the Program. Targeted mainly at professionals in the addiction field, there were also local passersby interested in the topic. Thanks to all the members who gave their time to spread the word!

Singapore A.A. Weekly Meeting Schedule: please see website for directions

Monday	07.15 - 08.00 AM	Men's Meeting	Closed	Marina Bay Financial Centre - Tower 3
	07.30 - 08.30 AM	Big Book Study	Closed	Boat Quay
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Open	Damien Hall
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Big Book Study	Open	East Coast
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	Damien Hall
Tuesday	08:05 - 09:05 PM	Beginners Meeting	Open	Damien Hall
	07:30 - 08:30 AM	Daily Reflections	Closed	Boat Quay
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Big Book	Closed	Damien Hall
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	Damien Hall
	07:00 - 08:30 PM	11th Step Meeting	Closed	Novena Church
Wednesday	07.30 - 08.30 AM	As Bill Sees It	Closed	Boat Quay
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Open	Damien Hall
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Living Sober	Open	East Coast
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Speaker Meeting	Closed	Damien Hall
	08:15 - 09:15 PM	Women's Step Study	Closed	Damien Hall
Thursday	07:30 - 08:30 AM	12 & 12	Closed	Boat Quay
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	Damien Hall
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	12 & 12	Closed	Damien Hall
	07:30 - 08:30 PM	Topics Meeting	Closed	98B Duxton Road
	08:05 - 09:05 PM	Big Book	Closed	Damien Hall
Friday	07.15 - 08.00 AM	Mens Meeting	Closed	MB Financial Ctr - Tower 3
	07:30 - 08:30 AM	Beginners Meeting	Open	Boat Quay
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	12 & 12	Closed	Damien Hall
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Step 11 Meeting	Open	East Coast
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Living Sober	Open	Damien Hall
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Topics Meeting	Closed	The Flying Hog, Duxton Road
Saturday	08:00 - 09:00 AM	Mana Mana Big Book Meeting	Closed	Mana Mana Beach Club
	08:30 - 09:30 AM	Gratitude Meeting	Closed	Boat Quay
	10:00 - 11:00 AM	Women's Meeting	Closed	Boat Quay
	04:30 - 05:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	Damien Hall
	04:30 - 05:30 PM	Lavender Mtg-Daily Reflections	Closed	11 Kampong Bugis
	07:00 - 08:30 PM	Saturday Night Live	Open	Damien Hall
Sunday	08:00 - 09:00 AM	Sunday Men's Meeting	Open	Coffee Bean-Orchard Road
	09:00 - 10:00 AM	LGBT Meeting	Closed	Rainbow Meeting
	06:30 - 07:45 PM	Big Book	Closed	Damien Hall

Do you have a problem with alcohol?

If we answered YES to four or more questions, we were in deep trouble with our drinking. See how you do. Remember, there is no disgrace in facing up to the fact that you have a problem.

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. A.A. said: "Just try not to drink today." (If you do not drink today, you cannot get drunk today.)

Yes No

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 got into, and how we stopped. We will be glad to help you, if you want us to.

Yes No

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.

Yes No

4 - Have you had to have an eye-opener upon awakening 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."

Yes No

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.

Yes No

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.

Yes No

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.

Yes No

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.

Yes No

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 into A.A., we found out that once we started to drink, we couldn't stop.

Yes No

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

Many of us admit now that we "called in sick" lots of times when the truth was that we were hung-over or on a drunk.

Yes No

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.

Yes No

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.

Yes No

+65 6475 0890 for further assistance
Or email us at help@singaporeaa.org