

The
Daily Reprieve

By
Singapore AA
members

July to September 2012

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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AM I AN ALCOHOLIC – AA CHECKLIST

Dear Fellows in Sobriety,

This issue of our Newsletter focuses on Steps 7, 8 and 9. These are all working steps, and not for the faint of heart!! We are asked to use the tools we've developed in the previous steps to move forward and deepen our recovery.

Step Seven requires humility in its most positive and healthy form. This doesn't mean being humbled by shame and defeat the way many of us were before coming into the rooms.

There are so many ways to define the kind of humility we seek, but this one works for me: The quality by which a person, considering his own defects, has a modest opinion of himself and willingly submits his will to the will of his Higher Power. (If any of you have a favourite definition of humility, please send it in to the newsletter and we'll publish them next issue!) Finding that state of mind, and honestly asking to have our shortcomings removed with an open heart, has proved much more difficult than I first imagined.

In Step Eight we make "a list of all persons we had harmed". Doesn't sound too hard, right? Except that to be "willing to make amends to them all", we must first sincerely forgive any and all wrongs others may have done us, and focus only on *the harm we have done them*. Luckily, we have our willingness and humility to help us here!! (Not to mention our HP and sponsors.)

And then Step Nine, the Step all newcomers dread, making "direct amends to such people". While it's true that actually facing another human being and apologizing for my poor treatment of him is not what I would consider 'fun', it is also true that I have always walked away from the experience with a lighter heart and a lighter burden. It works!

So, best wishes for happy, healthy recovery during the next couple of months, and we hope to see you at the Singapore Roundup in September!

Claire

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An AA Story

I have always been a drinker, being Irish it would be strange not to drink. I started at 16 and for years had a great time drinking normally. Unlike some of my friends, I never felt like drinking the day after a binge the night before. So I would have never considered myself a problem drinker. I never blacked out or drank to falling over. Somehow I would always manage to make it home and wake up in my own bed with full recollection of the night before.

My drinking started to change when I was about 26. Over the course of the years the people I became friends with all seemed to have lives that revolved around alcohol and as a result I found myself drinking more and more, but without any noticeable consequences at first. I did start using drugs around this time and I think that hastened the spiral that would eventually lead me to my rock bottom.

Life was going fine with lots of good times. I really was having a ball and then, after many years of trying, my husband and I were delighted to discover I was pregnant. For those 9 months I had no problem staying sober, I didn't even imagine then that I could have a drinking problem. Staying away from it while I was pregnant just reinforced that.

But not long after my son was born I was back to my old ways, and suddenly it wasn't so much fun to be hungover and trying to look after a very young baby. The cracks began to appear. I was tired all the time and knew I needed to cut down on the booze but couldn't. Instead of going out which was becoming expensive, I started to drink at home, no need for baby sitters! I was working from home at the time, and soon I was drinking during the day just to deal with the pressure of looking after a baby and trying to work at the same time.

My relationship with my husband started to seriously deteriorate. We were having terrible rows. I was just so angry all the time, I was seething with it and everyone was to blame for the way I was feeling. I was avoiding people, terrified that they would be able to see through me. I was in constant anxiety about my son, that something terrible was going to happen to him. Now I know I was suffering from fear and paranoia.

One day I was alone at home and I had been trying to stay away from the booze for a few days. I found myself desperately wanting a drink. I was lying on the bed upstairs gripping the bedclothes. My son was sleeping in his cot and I had to leave the house and get what I needed, but didn't want to. I suddenly realised at that point that I wanted something to change. How had I turned into this person that needed a drink this badly and would leave her baby alone to get it? I remember staring at the ceiling and begging God to help me. I managed to find a local rehab on the internet and call them. My husband came home from work to take me. The counsellor there suggested I go to an AA meeting, as being admitted for treatment wasn't an option, we didn't have the finances.

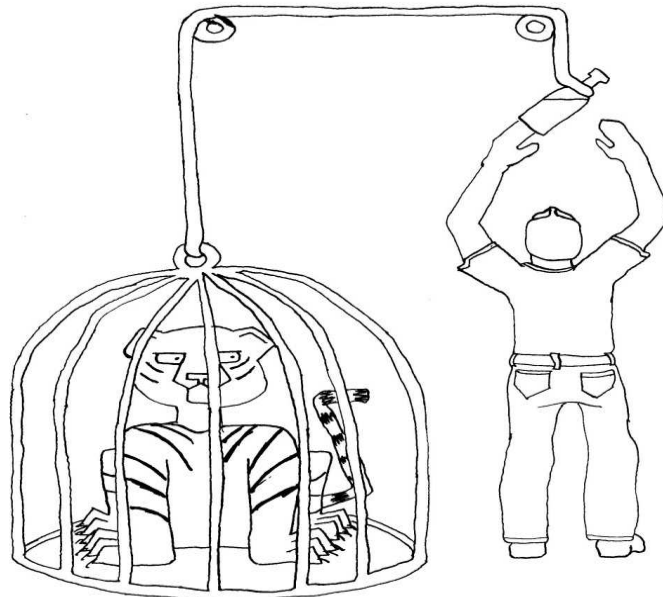
I loved AA from the very first meeting, although I still wasn't convinced I was an alcoholic. I felt totally at home amongst all these people. I recognised myself in all their stories, that was 5 years ago. I wish I could say that I walked into my first meeting and never drank again but that's not the way it was for me. I have had so many relapses. I would get a few months sober and then have a

bender. Each time that happened I would ask my Higher Power to help me and I always went back to meetings. I believe my HP gave me the courage to keep going back. Slowly the times in between my relapsing got longer and longer. I knew I loved being sober and my life got so much better and happier when I wasn't drinking. It's now been a year and nine months since my last drink.

When I started doing the steps and worked through all the mess and baggage I had gathered over the years, I finally began to feel some peace. I had burned so many bridges and could see how it was no one else's fault but my own. Making amends was crucial if I was going to stay sober. When I made amends with my Mum I was amazed how she forgave me and how I have since forgiven her, now we are so close. I am forever grateful to my HP for that.

Having humility is still a work in progress but I'm getting better at it, or is it not very humble to say that?! These days I stick very close to my HP, there is no quality to my sobriety without that. The spiritual side of things keeps me grounded and reminds me to be vigilant of my defects, which are always there. I must remember to surrender everyday and be grateful for the amazing life, family and friends I have today, thanks to AA.

-Anonymous



The insanity of that first drink...

“When I do good, I feel good. When I do bad, I feel bad. That’s my religion.” Abraham Lincoln

The Seventh Tradition Check List: Practice These Principles

Tradition Seven: Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions

1. Honestly now, do I do all I can to help AA (my group, my central office, my GSO) remain self-supporting? Could I put a little more into the basket on behalf of the new guy who can't afford it yet? How generous was I when tanked in a barroom?
2. Should the Grapevine sell advertising space to book publishers and drug companies, so it could make a big profit and become a bigger magazine, in full color, at a cheaper price per copy?
3. If GSO runs short of funds some year, wouldn't it be okay to let the government subsidize AA groups in hospitals and prisons?
4. Is it more important to get a big AA collection from a few people, or a smaller collection in which more members participate?
5. Is a group treasurer's report unimportant AA business? How does the treasurer feel about it?
6. How important in my recovery is the feeling of self-respect, rather than the feeling of being always under obligation for charity received?

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Courage to Change – The 11th AA Bali Roundup

The 11th AA Bali Roundup was an amazing time with a huge turn out this year. I've been to six of them so far, so for me it was a time to reconnect with friends from different parts of the world: Friends from Thailand, Vietnam, Australia, Malaysia, Hong Kong, USA and of course Bali.

As I registered and got my name tag it felt like a High School reunion with everyone standing around waiting for the next meeting. Hugs everywhere and smiles as new friends were met. I loved the two Speakers from the USA, husband and wife.

Hearing them talk about what it was like and what happened, then the miracle of the program happening to them. One speaker touched on a point I have been thinking about a lot. He said that we get sober and start to enjoy a new life. BUT, then the good things that come into our lives start to become what we use to 'hang' ourselves with.

It was a strong reminder that getting sober isn't enough. Staying sober is all about the actions I take TODAY! I've seen so many members get some time... 2 years, 5 years and then they come to one meeting a week, stop doing service and sponsoring people. Their lives start to unravel and next thing you know they disappear from the rooms. They are there as a stark reminder for me. Stay in the centre of AA!

The Women's Meeting was really amazing for me, as I had come to the Roundup with a resentment,

and that old Self Seeking attitude started to rear its ugly head. After a quick sms with my sponsor (who told me to be vulnerable) I shared the ugly truth about myself, plus the solution, and felt such relief! It was like a trickledown effect, because almost every share after that was about being Open and Honest. What a powerful Program we have in AA. A new way to live. No longer in our defects and fears, but in God's will!

As the Serenity Prayer goes, it takes Courage to change the things I can. This program of ours is not for half- hearted people. As the Big Book says, "half measures availed us nothing."

Anyway it was great to enjoy the Recovery and Fellowship. I attended Yoga every morning by the sea, and breakfast with different members. At the Dinner and Dance, I laughed so much! The dancing got my knees a bit sore the next day but it was worth it!

The whole experience was refreshing and recharging! Kudos to the guys who organize it every year so we can all hang out together. All us Alkies having a good time, sober by the beach. Who would have thought it!!

Sharmini

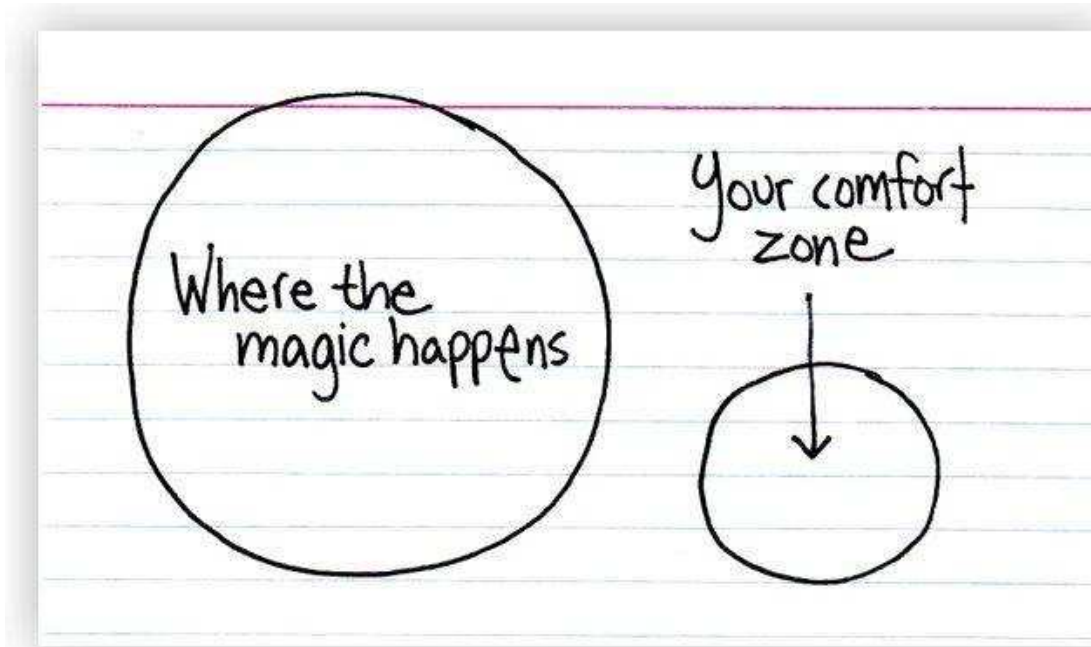
***"Love is what we are born with, fear is what we come to learn here" Marianne Williamson,
founder of the Peace alliance***

The Eighth Tradition Check List: Practice These Principles

Tradition Eight: Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

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

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An AA Meeting at the Institute of Mental Health

I got in early, about an hour before our meeting at the I.M.H. I waited by the hawker stand and looked around at some of the patients. I slowly began to 'get out of myself'.

One lady, who was a patient, asked if she could sit next to me with her meal tray and said that she was hungry and needed to eat. But she didn't like the plastic forks and became irritable and walked off. I sat there thinking about how it must be for her on a daily basis. I thought about her problems and realised that there are others who suffer with different problems than mine, and they also need to work on getting well.

As the time for the meeting approached, we walked over to the addictions unit. I was nervous as they let us into the locked doors to the room.

There we met about eight members. They had their hospital clothes on and sat down. As one of the members read the preamble, I was thinking about what it must be like for them. Towards the end of my drinking, my sister told me that this may be where I needed to go and get help. Although I had not experienced it, it may well have been me sitting there too.

As members shared their experience, strength and hope, they asked many questions about recovery and how AA works. My experience of visiting I.M.H. that day has made me realise that the disease of addiction is powerful and that some people may not make it. It has made me think about other people and the painful experiences they have to go through.

Sharing my experience has made me feel good about having done something for someone else. It has also made me feel more connected to the fellowship, as being there together with other members

and participating in carrying the message creates a common bond that reminds me that the program is a WE program, and that I can always reach out to someone for help.

Above all, the members at the ward gave me the strength to carry on doing what I am doing. They gave me hope.

I am grateful for the experience I received from being able to be of service- and I hope to make it a regular commitment whenever I am in Singapore.

Thank you for letting me share my experience with you.

Shivni

“When you are content to be simply yourself and don’t compare or compete, everybody will respect you.” Lao Tzu

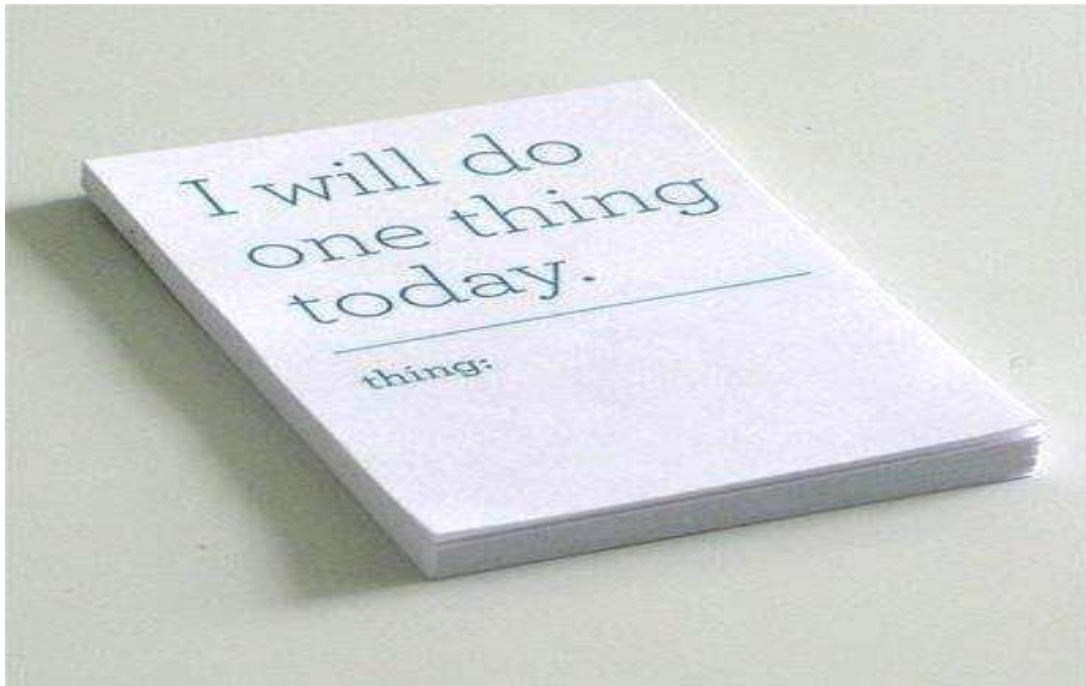
“If it is not right, do not do it. If it is not true, do not say it.” Marcus Aurelius

The Ninth Tradition Check List: Practice These Principles

Tradition Nine: AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

1. Do I still try to boss things in AA?
2. Do I resist formal aspects of AA because I fear them as authoritative?
3. Am I mature enough to understand and use all elements of the AA program—even if no one makes me do so—with a sense of personal responsibility?
4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any AA job I take?
5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any AA job?
6. Why doesn’t every AA group need a constitution and bylaws?
7. Have I learned to step out of an AA job gracefully—and profit thereby—when the time comes?
8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?

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A Singapore Commitment

I came to AA, close to 16 years ago, to stop drinking, but found a new way to live instead,... without alcohol. It gave me a new way of thinking, which replaced the drinking. It started soon, with a sponsor that poured me into service early, but with baby steps and nothing more than I could handle. So within a year and a half, following several panel guest appearances, I was asked to chair a panel at a Hospital's behavioural health unit on Saturday mornings... and have continued doing it for over 14 years.

My most recent trip to Singapore was for 2 months, rather than the normal 4-5 week variety, to visit my 17 nieces and nephews. 2 years ago, I was here for almost 6 weeks and felt a bit empty without the weekly commitment, though made my regular Damien Hall meetings and customary 1-2 Sunday morning men's stag meeting. What commitment could I make, on an 8 week visit that might give me the needed fix over that period of time? Then said to myself... you'll do just fine for 8 weeks without being the centre of attention.

A week after we arrived, my wife took her sister-in-law (Siew), who had suffered a stroke 15 months earlier, for a haircut. Later, since my wife needed to prepare dinner, she asked me to take Siew (in a wheel chair) to the park to exercise. I found Siew (who's a loving and caring person) hadn't been too well looked after since her 6 weeks of rehab had ended, with a husband gone 80% of the time and 2 grown kids who were too busy to roll her down stairs to the park. So, it became a new commitment every morning that was available to me.

After a week and a half, we used the *walker* to get to the park, which had been previously been used

inside the home only. After a few more days, we left the wheel chair behind. And another few days later she made her first walker trip to the coffee shop, in the block next to hers... after 15 months. We've also graduated to the bus stop, with the walker, which is twice the distance as to the coffee shop. This 6th week, we're attempting a journey of 3 blocks to the closest/ least complicated provision store nearby.

AA contributes to so many and I just love being a tool for AA's generosity for those in need, even though in this case Siew's handicap is neither alcohol nor her thinking. Yes, as with so many of our AA gifts, it's sometimes hard to realize the beauty of its magic. I arrived and received this gift and I already know Siew is enjoying her newly found freedom. And the journey is still unfolding, who knows what we will accomplish before my departure 2 weeks from today?

-Anonymous

“A “no” uttered with the deepest conviction is better and greater than a “yes” merely uttered to please, or what is worse, to avoid trouble.” Mahatma Ghandi

“Without meditation it is not possible to control and master the mind. Thus, meditation is essential to immerse the mind in supreme consciousness.” Sai Baba

New Singapore Round-Up on 29th September, 2012

Kicking off at 9:30am and open to all AA's, Al-Anon's, NA's, and their families (Singapore, Malaysia, and visitors). Come and go at any time throughout the day.

Schedule

9:30am - 11:00am	Welcome Kick Off Meeting + Sobriety Countdown
11:30am - 12:30pm	Room One: Step 1 Workshop Room Two: Al-ANON Meeting
12:30pm – 2:00pm	Lunch (on your own)
2:30pm - 3:30pm	Room One: Women's Meeting Room Two: Men's Meeting
3:30pm - 4:30pm	Room One: Living Sober Room Two: Step 11 Workshop/"Growing Up in Sobriety"
-- BREAK --	
6:00pm - 7:30pm	Speaker Meeting (big with everyone) and closing

FOR THOSE LOOKING TO DO SERVICE - We still need lots of help!

To Volunteer: Get in touch with Stephanie B at: letsmakeflims@yahoo.com or call +65 8482 0829 and give your first name, contact info, and either a task you think you'd like to do OR an amount of time (e.g., 1 hour per week) that you think you can help.

We are still looking for people to:

- Call venues and get quotes on rental (you only have to do 2!)
- Research catering options
- Plan a fun table for the Social Room
- Help with marketing/spreading the word

NEXT PLANNING MEETING: 4pm on Saturday, July 7th at the Chevron House Starbucks (Ground Floor), Raffles MRT, building across from where the Raffles Daybreak Meetings and the Saturday Women's Group are held. Call +65 8482 082 if you get lost.

Thanks so much and hope to hear from you!! -Stephanie

**2nd Annual Kuala Lumpur International
Roundup with AI Anon participation**

7th, 8th and 9th September 2012

"HOW IT WORKS"

We are moving this year to the [Shah Village Hotel Resort](#)

Petaling Jaya, Kuala Lumpur.Malaysia

[Get directions to the Roundup resort](#)

For more info, please go to: <http://www.aamalaysia.org/2ndroundup.html>

Answer YES or NO to the following questions

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

Call +65 6475 0890 for further assistance

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