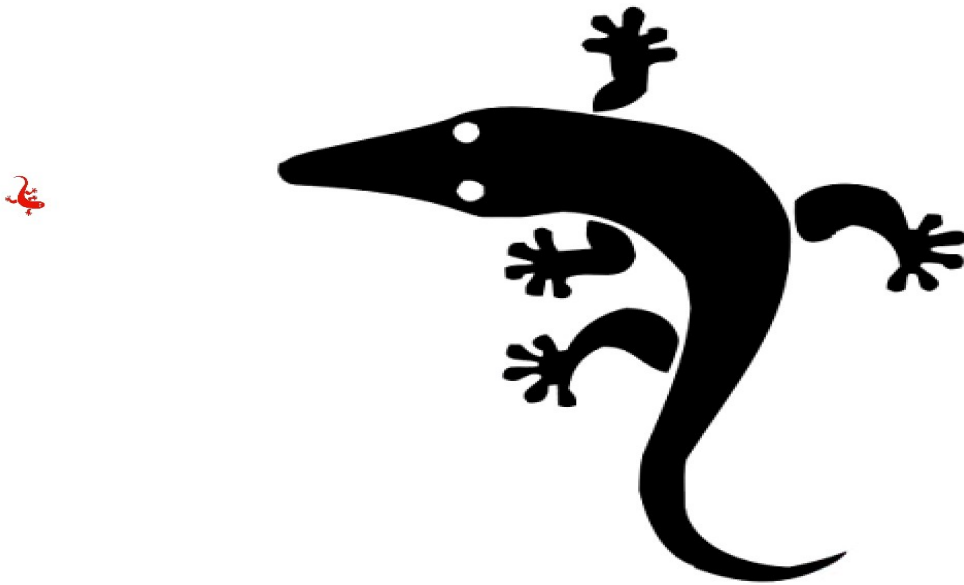


# The Daily Reprieve



By  
Singapore A.A. members  
April – June 2015



## 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.

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For further assistance, call (+65)6475 0890 or email us at: [help@Singaporeaa.org](mailto:help@Singaporeaa.org)  
To contribute to the Daily Reprieve, please send your article or Announcement to:  
[newsletter@Singaporeaa.org](mailto:newsletter@Singaporeaa.org) See details and meeting schedules at: [www.Singaporeaa.org](http://www.Singaporeaa.org)

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of the Daily Reprieve. I hope you enjoy reading it as much I enjoyed helping to make it happen. This Newsletter would not be possible without your contributions. This edition has a number of contributions from local members, past and present, and visitors including “Living Sober”, “Meditation”, “A disease of the body, a problem of the mind”, “The Hand of AA Always to be There” and “Lesson Learned” .

A special mention goes to our new Feature - History of AA. In this series of articles, the Daily Reprieve will meet and speak to Members who will share about the early years of the Singapore Fellowship. Please come forward and help the newer members celebrate your journey. If you would like to be part of this amazing Feature please send us a note at [newsletter@singaporeaa.org](mailto:newsletter@singaporeaa.org) and we will contact you.

Wally P’s “Back to Basics” articles continue with Step Eleven. Back to the Basics of Recovery, is the original action program used with newcomers by the first members of A.A.

Singapore Events Committee continues to organise monthly events for its members. Details of the next event and how you can find out more about these fun-filled and sometimes even educational occasions is included below. The Singapore Round Up held in late January was by all accounts a resounding success and another Round Up is being planned for early 2016. Volunteers are needed to help with the organisation, if you are interested please send a note to [events@singaporeaa.org](mailto:events@singaporeaa.org)

As I have said before, this is YOUR newsletter and is only made possible by YOUR contributions, so I ask that if you enjoyed reading it, you put pen to paper, or hands to keyboard and send something through to [newsletter@singaporeaa.org](mailto:newsletter@singaporeaa.org). Please don't feel that you have to wait until the next edition is announced, we are always open and appreciate any contributions.

It will not be long now until many of our members start their annual Summer pilgrimages home to their families and loved ones and we wish them peaceful and joyous journeys. To those who remain, we will see you in The Rooms to continue on our own journeys of sobriety.

Michelle K

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in articles submitted to the Daily Reprieve are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Alcoholics Anonymous.
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## History of Singapore AA - Part One

On the official AA Timeline, in the year 1958, this entry appears:

### **Signing on in Singapore**

**Dick D., who regularly corresponds with G.S.O. New York, writes in March 1958 that the Singapore group, founded in 1957, now has 12 members and two likely prospects.**

(copied from the G.S.O. timeline at: [www.aa.org/pages/en\\_US/aa-timeline](http://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/aa-timeline))

In this series of articles, the Daily Reprieve will share what we can find about the early years of our Fellowship. Facts, photos, stories, memories (even the fuzzy ones) will be lovingly presented. If you have any of these to share, please come forward! Let's celebrate our journey and the people that walked this path before us.

The earliest first-person account I have is from a member who joined the Singapore Fellowship in 1976:

After 5 weeks in a UK treatment centre and a month of London meetings, she arrived in Singapore looking for AA support. At the time there were 3 meetings a week, MWF evenings, each at a different location (Monday - Wesley Methodist Church on Fort Canning Rd., Wednesday – Church of Sts. Peter and Paul on Queen St. and Friday - YMCA on Stamford Rd). Not long after, both the Methodist Church and the YMCA were closed for renovation and Queen St. became AA Headquarters in a room that was shared with the Church Funeral committee! Meetings at that time had 6-12 members, with numbers swelling when a U.S. Navy ship was in town.

Of course, with only 3 meetings per week, no one talked about doing 90 meetings in 90 days! There was less formality and members knew each other's families and met socially at their homes. Al-Anon was quite strong in Singapore right from the beginning, and ACOA (Adult Children of Alcoholics) also had meetings here.

Andrew S., who got sober here in 1982, believes that the first Singaporean to achieve long-term sobriety in AA was Victor S. who joined in 1963. Big Book studies were held at his house in Serangoon. Before him, the fellowship consisted mainly of expats who came to work or visit.

Andrew shares, "Now we enter the modern era of Singapore AA. 1982 was a vintage year as the baby boomers came of age and got sober. The three meetings at Queen St. rapidly became eight per week. Sponsorship and the Steps were all the rage! We had Step meetings, Big Book Studies and a few breakaway meetings started to appear in other locations. I founded the Novena meeting during that time, originally as a Step Workshop. We had just installed a telephone at Queen St. and there was a programme on TV about alcoholism and AA. The phone rang off the hook! A few of the people who called in then are still sober. 12<sup>th</sup> stepping was popular too, as we went all over Singapore trying to sober up everyone who called.

In 1983 we were invited to hold a meeting at Bushey Park Welfare Home for Destitute and Vagrant Men (later moved to Woody Lodge). About 20 of us went along to the amazement of the 350 inmates who had no idea what it was all about. The numbers dwindled, but a few of us kept this Sunday evening meeting going for 17 years. (AA received a Presidential Award for Community Service, but nobody would go to collect it and it was finally sent to a member's house.)"

"We organized the first AA Convention to celebrate 25 years of AA in Singapore. It was held over a weekend at St. Ignatius Church and was a huge success with about 50 attendees, some from other countries in the region. All the local members were present, and Al-Anon was also part of the proceedings. There were wonderful shares by old-timers and lots of small break-out discussions.

Soon after that we held a residential retreat at the Catholic seminary in Punggol, when it was still a seaside village. Two speakers were flown in from Australia to run it, a priest named Frank F. and Trevor H. It was a life-changing event for many of us."

As we all know, the Singapore fellowship has grown and blossomed. These stories of a common past make it clear that ours is a plant with deep roots that has been lovingly nurtured for over 50 years. I personally am incredibly grateful for that. Now let's hear your stories and anecdotes!! Send them to: [newsletter@singaporeaa.org](mailto:newsletter@singaporeaa.org)

To be continued...

Claire H.

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**Happiness is not something ready made. It comes from your own actions. ~ Dalai Lama**

**When it rains look for rainbows, when it is dark look for stars. ~ Unknown**

**To complain is always nonacceptance of what is. It invariably carries an unconscious negative charge. When you complain, you make yourself into a victim. When you speak out, you are in your power. So change the situation by taking action or by speaking out if necessary or possible; leave the situation or accept it. All else is madness. ~ Eckhart Tolle**

## Back to the Basics of Recovery

### Who is Wally P?

*Wally P. is an archivist, historian and author who, for more than twenty-three years, has been studying the origins and growth of the Twelve-step movement. He is the caretaker for the personal archives of Dr. Bob and Anne Smith.*

*Wally conducts history presentations and recovery workshops, including “Back to the Basics of Recovery” in which he takes attendees through all Twelve Steps in four, one-hour sessions. More than 500,000 have taken the Steps using this powerful, time-tested, and highly successful “original” program of action.*

### Step Eleven

by Wally P.

***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.***

According to the “Big Book” authors, we rely on prayer and meditation to enhance our relationship with the “One who has all power.” This relationship was established with our surrender (Steps One, Two and Three) and strengthened with our inventories and amends (Steps Four through Ten). We are now ready to “grow in understanding and effectiveness” by practicing Step Eleven on a daily basis for the rest of our lives.

Prayer and meditation have been described by some A.A. pioneers as two-way prayer. It works much like a telephone. Prayer is the transmitter. This is how we talk to the “Power greater than ourselves.” Meditation is the receiver. This is how the Power communicates with us.

One-way prayer is talking into the telephone but hanging up before receiving a reply. Two-way prayer involves both talking and listening.

We listen to receive guidance. We listen for answers to our questions. We listen for direction to overcome our difficulties. We listen to know God better.



Listening is an integral part of the recovery process. In Steps One through Ten, we remove the blocks that limit our ability to listen. In Step Eleven, we expand our listening skills and in Step Twelve we listen as we work with others.

On three occasions, the “Big Book” authors provide us with a test we can use to tell the difference between what I like to call the “voice of addiction” and the “voice of recovery.” The “voice of addiction” is all about “selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.” The “voice of recovery” has to do with unselfishness, honesty, forgiveness, and faith.

The question we need to ask ourselves is, “Which voice are we listening to? Are we listening to the voice that takes us to that “bitter morass of self-pity, . . . loneliness and despair,” or are we listening to the voice that directs us on “the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe?” It is the “voice of addiction” that deceives us into thinking that “somehow, someday (we) will control and enjoy (our) drinking.” It is the “voice of recovery” that gives us insight “into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed.”

The importance of receiving guidance through two-way prayer is mentioned throughout the “Big Book.” Here are just a few of the references.

In the second paragraph on page 70, the “Big Book” authors suggest we ask for guidance when we pray:

“. . . We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for GUIDANCE in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing.”

In the second paragraph on page 85, the authors state that we become “God-conscious” as we follow guidance:

“Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and DIRECTION (GUIDANCE) from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed DIRECTIONS (GUIDANCE), we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense.”

On page 56, the “Big Book” authors provide an example of the life-changing effects of listening to guidance. This is how “Our Southern Friend,” Fitz M., came to believe:

“. . . Then, like a thunderbolt, a great thought came. It crowded out all else:

*“Who are you to say there is no God?”*

“. . . In a few seconds he was overwhelmed by a conviction of the Presence of God. It poured over and through him with the certainty and majesty of a great tide at flood. The barriers he had built through the years were swept away. He stood in the Presence of Infinite Power and Love.”

In the late 1930's, John Batterson, a personal friend of Dr. Bob's, wrote a short essay titled, “How to Listen to God.” It is one of the clearest set of instructions on meditation I have come across in my archival research. The pamphlet predates the “Big Book” and, as such, can be considered a source document for our Eleventh Step.

The author opens with this profound statement:

“These are a few simple suggestions for people who are willing to make an experiment. You can discover for yourself the most important and practical thing any human being can ever learn—how to be in touch with God.

“All that is needed is the ***willingness to try it honestly***. Every person who has done this consistently and sincerely has found that it really works.”

Then, the author provides guidelines for conducting two-way prayer. They are:

- “1. To be quiet and still,
2. To listen,
3. To (record the thoughts, feelings and images) that come,
4. To test the thoughts (feelings and images) to be sure they come from God,
5. To obey.”

As Bill W. writes in his story, “I was to sit quietly” and “I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within.” The test Bill W. and John Batterson are referring to is the same one we use in Steps Four, Ten and Eleven to distinguish between the “voice of addiction” and the “voice of recovery.”

In the section of the pamphlet titled, “Results,” the author again emphasizes the importance of listening:

“Every person who has tried this honestly finds that a wisdom, not their own, comes into their mind and that a Power greater than human power begins to operate in their lives. It is an endless adventure.”

The pamphlet, in its entirety, can be found on the [www.aabacktobasics.org](http://www.aabacktobasics.org) website.

At the top of page 86, the “Big Book” authors state, “It would be easy to be vague about this matter (of prayer and meditation). Yet, we believe we can make some definite and valuable suggestions.” And, definite and valuable suggestions they do make. Basically, they instruct us on what we are to do at night, in the morning, and throughout the day.

At night, we review the day’s activities. In the first paragraph on page 86, the authors write:

“When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? . . . After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.”

This paragraph contains the third reference to the A.A. test for self-will, which the “Big Book” authors have previously described in Steps Four (page 67) and Ten (page 84), our inventory steps. Here, they suggest we use this same test to separate self-will from God’s will during our periods of prayer and meditation.

In order for the messages we receive to be considered self-will, they only have to pass one of the four characteristics of resentment, fear, selfishness OR dishonesty. Conversely, to be considered God’s will, they must pass all four characteristics of forgiveness, faith, unselfishness AND honesty.

In the second paragraph on page 86, the “Big Book” authors provide us with directions for conducting a morning “quiet time”:

“On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.”

If we ask God to direct our thinking, doesn’t it stand to reason that our next thoughts, feelings or mental images just might be of a spiritual nature? What do we do with these messages? We write them down. Why? So we won’t forget them.

After we “sit quietly,” we examine our written record using the test we just described. We then share our guidance with others who are committed to the process. We do this because not all of the information we receive is Spirit based. As the “Big Book” authors write on page 87:

“ . . . Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it.”

Here is where our sponsor or sharing partner can be very helpful. What does another person who is practicing two-way prayer think about the guidance we have received? As stated in the “How to Listen to God” pamphlet, “More light comes in through two windows than one.”

In the third paragraph on page 86, the “Big Book” authors reveal how the “One who has all power” replies to our requests for help:

“In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. . . . We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while.”

According to the authors, this “Infinite Power” communicates with us through “inspiration, an intuitive thought, or a decision.” This is an amazing revelation. Now we know how our questions are going to be answered.

In the first paragraph on page 87, the authors suggest we end our “quiet time” with a prayer:

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

If we ask for guidance, we will receive it. In addition, we will be given the courage and strength to carry it out.

The “Big Book” authors then explain what we are to do anytime we become troubled or confused. We relax and ask for guidance. Starting with the third paragraph on page 87, the authors tell us:

“As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day ‘Thy will be done.’ ”

Over the years, I have written many “to-do lists” during my morning meditations. Sometimes, I have received thoughts, feelings and mental images that can be considered interesting or insightful. Occasionally, I have received guidance that has been life-changing or even lifesaving.

For me, the key to the process is practice, practice, practice. By taking the time to get quiet and listen, I have experienced many of the promises on page 88. When I commit to a regular “quiet time,” I find myself “in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions.”

In various archival collections throughout the United States and Canada, I found guidance written on stationary, envelopes, assorted scraps of paper, and in journals and notebooks of various shapes and sizes. This guidance kept many of our A.A. pioneers sober, one day at a time, for the rest of their lives. It proved to them beyond the shadow of a doubt that, “It works—it really does.”

In the next article, I will describe how the A.A. old-timers carried our lifesaving message of recovery to others.

### **Meditation**

When I first arrived in the rooms, the idea of meditation seemed too hard. I thought that meditation was just another midlife crisis cliché – not something that would stop me drinking, raging and depressing – in that order.

However, in early recovery, the gift of desperation was generous and bountiful and I turned to meditation as a drowning man clutches at driftwood.

I started with just three minutes a day, listening to a guided meditation on my iPhone on my way to a meeting. By day two I was hooked. It was gentle, calming and easy. With the OCD gusto that only an addict can muster, I started to read about it, learn about and do it. I acted as if my life depended on it – which in fact, it did.

As the sober days accumulated, I started to learn that meditation could actually address some of my worst defects of character!

Of all the meditations, the one that proved to be a weapon of mass destruction against my shortcomings was the Loving Kindness Meditation. Now that one really made the difference!

This meditation is easy to explain but requires some resilience to execute.

First, find a quiet place where you can be undisturbed for 10 minutes. Sit upright, in a dignified manner, your head placed over your spine, your feet flat on the floor and your hands resting in your lap, palms upward. Notice your breathing and breathe fully from the belly (diaphragm) not the chest.

Then, call gently to your mind, one at a time, four people, in the following order: someone you love unconditionally (a child, a spouse, a partner or pet); a great friend; a person you feel neutral about (a barista, an acquaintance or a friend of a friend); and someone who really gets up your nose.

Starting with the person you love unconditionally. See their face clearly in your mind, see them smile and say slowly, gently and compassionately: "I wish you well, I wish you happiness, I wish you free from suffering". Say it three times - slowly.

Then call the great friend to mind and do the same.

By now, you will be bathed in the warm glow of connection and love. Focus on that warmth. Breathe into it. Feel it, see it, smell it, taste it.

Now call the neutral person to mind and do the same – keeping hold of that warm glow. Say the same three things, thrice.

Finally, gently call the irritating person to mind and recite the same mantra – slowly and deliberately. Hang in there. Don't lose the glow!

When I did this, I was somewhat deflated that the annoying person still annoyed me. But I persevered with the meditation for a week – and something truly miraculous happened - I was not annoyed any more when I thought about them.

I continued to persevere with the meditation and by the second week, the annoyance had been replaced with compassion. I finally understood the statement that the grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. Not bad for 10 minutes work!

It took me another year before I could add myself into the group of four people I brought to my mind and to wish myself well, happiness and free from suffering. It was in finding loving kindness for myself that I really started to hit pay dirt - in all my affairs.

The Big Book had been right – I was my worse enemy!

Andrew

### **Lesson Learned**

A few years ago I was rowing on a competitive women's team, and learned one of my most important life lessons. Whenever we were out practicing (which was every day) and someone would make a mistake, immediately everyone would start coaching the person to "keep going, let that thought go, forget it, think about the next stroke" and so on until she got the negative thoughts out of her head.

We did that because if *she* couldn't get it together, none of us could keep things in sync and we would all flounder in the water. We all do enough bad self-talk to sink a ship, so it's important to think, and say positive affirmations to ourselves, and to others, in order to re-program our brains, and our hearts.

This thought came to me today, as I was standing in the parking lot of my Sat. morning meeting, listening to a woman I've known for 15 years, make an amend to me. She told me that she had been bad-mouthing, and gossiping about me because of an incident that happened at Christmas. She didn't even know the details of the event.

I told her that I had been taught long ago that "what other people think about me is none of my business", but that character assassination hurts both the person who tells the tale, and the one it's pointed at. None of us are immune, and we all usually have some opinion about what others are doing, and how they could do it better if they just listened to our advice. We just don't need to share it.

My guess is that this happens more often than not, and usually among people with some time in sobriety, which is why our Founders felt it was so important, that they made it a point to "place principles before personalities".

I wonder what a newcomer would think if they overheard such a conversation. Hopefully, that we all keep learning our life lessons no matter how long we've been around, and a bigger lesson of Live

and Let Live, as one of the old slogans teaches us. Forgiveness is the key, Gratitude is the attitude. We need to stick together or all of us will perish.

Blessings from Sacramento, CA,

Tricia C

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**Life is like a book. When something goes wrong, don't close the book, just turn the page** ~  
*Unknown*

**Carry out random acts of kindness with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you** ~ *Princess Diana*

**Nothing is impossible. The word itself says "I'm Possible"** ~ *Audrey Hepburn*

**A mind is like a parachute. It does not work if it is not open** ~ *Frank Zappa*

***The beauty you see in me is a reflection of you*** ~ *Rumi*

**Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting.** *Bernard Meltzer*

## **Singapore Intergroup News**

The Singapore Intergroup is the Service office that has been established to carry out certain functions common to all A.A. Groups in the Singapore community. Operating under the guidelines of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts, the Singapore Intergroup is maintained, supervised and supported by the local Singapore A.A. groups. The primary purpose of Singapore Intergroup is to aid the individual A.A. groups in their common purpose to carry the A.A. message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

### **Intergroup Minutes for Spring 2015**

#### **General**

The meeting was attended by Intergroup members, members of various committees, meeting reps and was open to anyone from the fellowship.



## **Meeting Updates**

Attendance at Damien meetings has been lower recently, and will be monitored. Boat Quay meetings continue to have 15 – 20 people on average. Saturday afternoon meeting at We Care is now close and attendance on Sunday remains low. TGIF is well attended, as is Novena. World Peace Café meeting continues to attract members and Mana Mana also continues to have good attendance on Saturday and Sunday. New Primary Purpose Meeting at Church of St Bernadette is increasing in numbers.

## **Communications**

- New additions to the phone crew.
- Investigating best option for the long time fixed line that just forwards to the pre-paid phone.
- Emails are quiet

## **Literature**

- Group literature chair to arrange order of required books
- Preparing large order for HIPI
- Starter packs will be provided to new groups.

## **Website**

- Feedback on website is positive
- Looking to revamp meeting list areas so select members can edit and all can print.

## **Newsletter**

- Request members to contribute to the newsletter, email address for contributions is [newsletter@singaporeaa.org](mailto:newsletter@singaporeaa.org)

## **Meeting lists**

- Previous print run was 600, new list to be printed with 300 copies and will be distributed

## **HIPI**

- A member has volunteered to do it to do or is it to assist somebody? assist with a workshop for Concepts 4,5 and 6
- HIPI member reviewing an IMH bridge gap function
- A workshop is being planned for Singapore Corrections departments
- A male volunteer is required to go to Mongolia in July to work Steps

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## **Events and Social Committees**

- Currently doing one meeting per month and planning the events.

## **Round-Up**

- The Round Up was successful and it has been agreed that another will be organised
- Considering ticket for full event
- All good work was acknowledged and 2016 Round-up sub com will begin investigations and planning.

Next meeting scheduled for 9<sup>th</sup> May at 11.15 at Boomerang.

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**Focus on the solution, not the problem. Follow your heart not your ego, Trust God not people.~**

*Wilson Kanadi*

**Action may not always bring happiness, but there is no happiness without action ~ William James**

**Everything in your life is a reflection of a choice you have made. If you want a different result, make a different choice ~ Unknown**

**Forgiving someone may cost you your pride, but not forgiving them will cost you your freedom ~**

*Charles F. Glassman,*

## **Surrender**

Master the lessons of your present circumstances.

We do not move forward by resisting what is undesirable in our life today. We move forward, we grow, we change by acceptance.

Avoidance is not the key; surrender opens the door.

Listen to this truth: We are each in our present circumstances for a reason. There is a lesson, a valuable lesson that must be learned before we can move forward.

Something important is being worked out in us, and in those around us. We may not be able to identify it today; but we can know that it is important. We can know it is good.

Overcome not by force, overcome by surrender. The battle is fought, and won, inside ourselves. We must go through it until we learn, until we accept, until we become grateful, until we are set free.

Today, I will be open to the lessons of my present circumstances. I do not have to label, know, or understand what I'm learning; I will see clearly in time. For today, trust and gratitude are sufficient.

© Melody Beattie, 1990, *The Language of Letting Go, Hazeden Meditation Series*

## **Living Sober**

I'm the type of Alkie that could sit and talk for at least a few days straight. I could moan and complain on countless topics or be quite compassionate about and sell countless others. The gift and the blessing in my life is that not only have I been 100% sober for quite a few 24 hours but that also not a single thought (the obsession) that taking a drink or using a mind altering substance has occurred in almost as many 24 hours. During the one time that the obsession did occur back in my early days, the HP or Life or God or whatever circumstance saved my hide as I was too stubborn to pick up the phone and make a call. That is Grace!!!

Now the strangest thing is I have realised, probably for the first time, in recent months that the person I was when I walked back into my first AA meeting those 24 hours ago could not stay sober no matter what.

However that person thought they were making a decision on whether or not they would be stopping drinking now or not. That person thought they were finally deciding to get sober. They did not realise that they could never get sober. That was a delusion. That person would continue to drink at certain times until they were locked up or die. That person had to die or in other words the thinking had to be totally re-wired to escape from the obsession.

Luckily that person surrendered to the HP or Life or the Absolute or 12 Step Program or whatever you want to describe it as and that person disappeared (at least 90% disappeared, the old me would always drink again ;-).

Another thing, the person that walked into the rooms all those 24 hours ago would talk and talk a lot and do and do much less. Probably a ratio of 98% talk to 2% do (maybe I'm being too harsh on myself but maybe not ;-)

The person that is here today is not the person that walked into the rooms that much is for absolutely certain. Don't trust me, ask my partner or my friends though they will have a different

perspective on how much I've changed than I do (they will say yea seems a little better and chuckle maybe say ya honest now at least ;-)

The person that is here today followed a path that created the new experiences that removed the old person and left a new entity that thinks differently. The person that is here today at least has a better ratio of talk to do and at least worked the 12 steps as if it were the only thing in life that was important so that they could honestly see what the 12 steps deliver before talking like they were doing them and not actually doing them.

The person that is here today is extremely grateful every day and cherishes life in a way that the old person could not have done. The old person could not even stay in the day. The old person spent almost all of their time thinking about the past or fearing the future.

The person that is here today did very thorough and honest step work from 1 to 9 and follows the directions of steps 10, 11, and 12 daily in order to ensure they are on the beam.

God Bless Alcoholics Anonymous for allowing me to die before I die. What is left is a new person content with what is happening one day at a time.

I will die an alcoholic. But one day at a time with the 12 step program as my guide I can die a grateful alcoholic and not of alcoholism.

Anonymous

### **Some AA Humour**

A newcomer asked his sponsor about the difference between a non-alcoholic, a potential-alcoholic and the hopeless-alcoholic, explaining that he was confused by this terminology in the Big Book. So the sponsor took the new comer to the raunchiest bar in town. Upon arriving, they stopped out back and sifted through the dumpster for flies. This seemed strange to the sponsee , but he did not question the old-timer. When they had collected enough dead fliest they entered the bar. Soon a fight broke out and everyone in the bar rushed over to watch it, except for the two AA's. The sponsor began dropping flies into the beers at the bar. When the fight broke up every one returned to their seats. One mane picked up his beer, noticed the fly, and promptly asked the bartender for another draft. "That" said the sponsor "is what we call a non-alcoholic.". A second man sat down, noticed the fly in his drink, tossed it aside and drank his beer anyway. "That's what we call a potential-alcoholic", said the sponsor. The newcomer then said : "If that's only a potential-alcoholic, then what the hell is a hopeless-alcoholic?" Before he could finish a third man sat down at the bar, picked the fly out of his beer, held it up to his face, and yelled "SPIT IT OUT YOU SON OF A BITCH!!! SPIT IT OUT!!!"



"Honestly honey. It looked like an AA meeting. There were drunks everywhere."—Roberto Z. Antioch, Calif.



"You know that wearing a smoking jacket does not make you a classy drunk!"

### **A disease of the body, a problem of the mind**

If I had to explain to somewhat what alcoholism means to me today, I'd use the statement in the book, 'a disease of the body, a problem of the mind.' Two complementary conditions that work together to make a potent cocktail of denial, delusion, destruction and despair. I didn't want to accept I had either condition at the start. My problem wasn't my drinking. It was you. It was my wife. It was my job. It was my lot in life. I had the best of intentions for the world. If everything would go my way, I'd not need to drink. Alcohol wasn't my problem. It was my solution. Over 20 years ago, my younger self explained what it's like to drink to someone who had never drunk before. "It's like walking into a quiet room." And for most of my drinking time, alcohol was my quiet room. Somewhere I could go when things got out of control in my life.

But over the years, my inability to control my drinking took on greater proportions. I'd want it all the time. Every occasion was an opportunity to drink. Then I couldn't control the frequency and time I wanted to drink. I'd drink in the mornings. I'd tell myself I could handle just one more. Then I'd stop to care what happened with just one more. I'd do stupid things while under the influence. I

started to black out and forget what I'd done. There are occasions to this day I still don't know what happened.

In hindsight I can see the two conditions were ever present in my past. The inability to control my drinking once I started. The overwhelming desire to start drinking anywhere, anyhow, anytime, *any-why*. Having had some sobriety, it's so clear to me now. My experience says I am a person who consistently:

1. Physically responds to alcohol by craving more
2. Defaults to a belief that my drinking is controllable

That's my condition as it relates to alcohol. I can relate, when the Big Book says, 'the idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death.'

I've found in recovery that owning up and accepting my disease of the body and problem of the mind was a huge first step. Nobody does like to say they have a disease. I certainly don't, and even today, when I speak of my alcoholism as a disease, it still makes me uncomfortable. It makes me feel dirty and somehow broken. The terminology used in the Big Book (phenomenon, allergy, etc) makes the condition sound a bit less than scientific. Thankfully, I'm not a doctor, so I don't have to understand. I avoid "heaty" foods even though I don't understand traditional Chinese medicine. What's key for me is that it's not my fault I can't control my drinking.

I also accept the fact that, even though I can't control my own drinking, I'll still try, if left to my own devices. That's why it's a miracle for me that I would even consider relying on something other than my own devices. My self-reliance, my self-will, my "die hard trying" attitude – these things have served a purpose in my life in the past, but did not work with my drinking. I kept trying the same way expecting a different outcome. This belief and my behavior I now recognize as delusion and insanity. I couldn't see it in the early months. I probably couldn't see it because I tended to think only about me. It wasn't until a few months sober when I caught a glimpse of what a "power greater than myself" could be.

I am grateful for the parade of people in my recovery who kept telling—and showing--me the same thing in hundreds of different ways. Most of the messages were lost. One early message did stick. A member told me this is a 'we' program. I wasn't sure what that meant, but it implied it wasn't about me. That was enough to spark some open-ness and willingness to try something different than my way.

It takes a person like me a lot of energy to let go. I'm too smart or clever to believe someone else has a better idea. This initial small measure of open-ness that I was given lasted about a day. Was limited to one or two actions. I constantly challenged it. Perhaps that's why letting go and open-ness are so exhausting for me. But taking an action like going to a meeting or talking to a fellow helped me not pick up a drink today. I didn't understand it but I tried it. And that bit of faith turned to belief. For this alcoholic, the belief that I had a problem; that I didn't have a solution, and that someone in the program could become the foundation for my Step 1. This disease doesn't go away. I've done enough research and damage that I'm convinced I physically crave more after the first drink. The problem with the mind doesn't go away either. Every day I am learning that the problem with my mind manifests itself in different ways well beyond the belief I can control my drinking.

I am grateful to experience my life sober. The obsession is lifted most days. If I stay sober, I break the vicious cycle of trying to control my drinking and failing miserably. If I stay sober today I have a shot at doing something greater than what I could imagine on my own. It's through the people of this Program, my friends, that I realize that in letting go of me I'm able to find the 'we'.

Tony L

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**The moment we begin to fear the opinions of others and hesitate to tell the truth that is in us, and from motives of policy are silent when we should speak, the divine floods of light and life no longer flow into our souls** ~ *Elizabeth Cady Stanton*

## **The Hand of AA Always To Be There**

My journey through alcoholism and the attempt to become a recovering alcoholic has been, in my view, astonishingly slow and the longest, predictable novel ever to be written. I thought I became an alcoholic when I moved to Singapore. I blamed everyone but myself for the circumstances that thankfully guided me straight into rehab. I came out of rehab and into the rooms of AA. I found an amazing sponsor. And because I hadn't had a drink in a few months, I was cured and stopped going to meetings. Everyone can guess how that chapter ended.

It took me numerous relapses to finally come to a conclusion that many alcoholics "get" the first time- that alcoholism is not just about drinking. It's a disease of the mind and spirit as well. And as a disease, must be treated on a daily basis. This did not keep me sober, however. All of what the big books says has been true for me. One of the biggest lessons I am still trying to learn is the idea of surrender over my own self will run riot. My sponsor kept me at step 3 for a long time- almost a year. I thought I should be moving faster than that because I went to meetings every day. But was I

willing to do anything it takes? NO. My excuse, for example, for not writing as suggested on a daily basis was that I went to meetings every day. Wasn't that enough?

It was only 4 continual years of relapsing when I reached (I hope) my rock bottom. I had doctors, I had resources to find a solution outside the rooms, but truly, AA was the only place I could go. On day 10, I distinctly remember sharing at a meeting that I couldn't endure another minute of the pain, obsession, anxiety, discontent I was feeling, and if I didn't feel better in 20 days, I would kill myself. Fellows surrounded me. People took phone calls. People called me. People sat with me in doctor's appointments, they sat and listened and gave suggestions. I don't know what happened, but that 20 days became a year.

I wish that was the happy ending you are all looking for – but alas – it is not. I finally wanted what many people in the rooms had. But getting what they had took effort and action, and I did a lot of the actions, and eventually discovered after a good year of sobriety that I had built a bit of a “fellowship”. Had I put “the program” as the first priority of my life? No. The old saying -“half measures availed nothing” -continue to pop up in my road to recovery.

During that year, my life got better and better. I felt better. I forgot about the utter desperate state I had been in the year before, and, surprise - I relapsed. What saved me was the fellowship. Within 36 hours of locking myself in my room to drink, two fellows showed up at my door, cleaned me up, and picked me up the next day for a meeting. I have a great affinity for the Singapore fellowship, and this fellowship has saved my life more than once. I came to rely on the Singapore fellowship.

Now, almost in my third or fourth time at 11<sup>th</sup> months sobriety, I have moved from Singapore. In my new country, I started going to meetings and didn't like them. I was offended that at the end of a meeting after sharing that I was a new comer, no one gave me a list of phone numbers. I felt closer to a drink. After a few meetings, I finally did meet a few people, and these fellows passed my number to others. I found a morning meeting that I actually liked. I reached out to fellows for help.

And yesterday, when I planned to take a drink, I called ten or more people. I had never, ever, already decided to drink and made a call first. I did. I made many calls. One wise new friend said to me that if I can make it through this day, because I had taken an action I had never taken before, I would be opening up a new chapter in my sobriety story. I would not be successful if I tried to control it on my own, so surrender and prayer and taking all of the suggestions given to me were the tools I needed to make it through the night.

Today, I went to the new country's 7 am meeting. I shared and cried for the first time here. I found that no matter where I am, AA is always here for me. It's the only place I can go where my disease is



understood by everyone in that room, no matter where that room is. I have found a home, no matter where the location. That home is AA.

Anonymous

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**The greatest gift you can give someone is your time, because when you dedicate your time, you are offering part of your life that you will never get back** ~ *Rick Warren*

**Holding on to anger is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die** ~ *Budhha*

**Humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less. Humility is thinking more of others** ~ *C.S. Lewis*

**You are never too old to set another goal or dream a new dream** ~ *C.S. Lewis*

**Happiness is not always about getting what you want. It is about being happy and grateful for what you receive** ~ *unknown*

## **Alconyms - Inspiring & Insightful Recovery Catchphrases**

Thanks to another fellow for this editions's sayings and the rather catchy new heading of Alconyms. We would like to keep this as a regular feature and, therefore, appreciate all contributions. Please send these to [newsletter@singaporeaa.org](mailto:newsletter@singaporeaa.org) for this regular feature.

**FINE** - Frustrated, Insecure, **N**eurotic, **E**motional

**FEAR** - Face Everything **A**nd **R**ecover

**NUTS** - **N**ot **U**sing **T**he **S**teps

**EGO** - Edging **G**od **O**ut

**DENIAL** - Don't Even **N**otice **I** Am Lying

**HALT** - Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired

**HOPE** - Happy **O**ur **P**rogram **E**xists

**HOW** - Honesty, **O**pen-mindedness, **W**illingness

**SPONSOR** - Sober **P**erson **O**ffering **N**ewcomers **S**uggestions **O**n **R**ecovery

**GOD** - Good **O**rdery **D**irection

**BIG BOOK** - Believing In **G**od **B**eats **O**ur **O**ld Knowledge.

**SLIP** - Sobriety Losing Its Priority.

**ACTION** - Any Change To Improve Our Nature.

**PROGRAM** - People Relying On God Relaying A Message.

**STEPS** - Solutions To Every Problem Sober

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**Be thankful for every day. For it has a season, a reason and is always a blessing** ~ Vicki Reece

**Let your dreams be bigger than your fears and your actions louder than your words** ~  
*Unknown*

**Worrying is like walking with an umbrella waiting for it to rain** ~ Wiz Khalifa.

**What you are supposed to do when you don't like a thing is change it. If you can't change it,  
change the way you think about it. Don't complain** ~ Maya Angelou

**I opened two gifts this morning, they were my eyes** ~ Unknown

## **Singapore Social and Events Committee**

### ***Social Committee***

Alcoholics Anonymous Singapore holds monthly events. Details in relation to these social events can be obtained by sending an email to [sociaalcom@gmail.com](mailto:sociaalcom@gmail.com). The next event will take place on 30<sup>th</sup> May at Hort Park.

### ***Event Committee***

The Events Committee are in discussion in relation to holding a similar Round Up to the 2015 event. Further details and request will be included in the next edition of the Dially Reprieve. In the meantime thank you to one of our members who has provided the following article on the 2015 Round Up. If you would like to assist with next Round Up, the Event Committee are looking for volunteers, and you can express your interest in doing some great Service work by sending an email to [events@singaporeaa.com](mailto:events@singaporeaa.com)

## **Keep It Simple Singapore – January 30 to February 1 2015**

The last weekend of January saw the second ever Singapore AA Roundup – “KISS” – Keep It Simple Singapore! The event was billed with two international speakers together with participation from Al-Anon to be held at the SAF yacht club near Changi. It all kicked off on the Friday evening with a talk by one of the international speakers, Lorraine L from Glasgow, followed by local speaker Sharmini W. The evening concluded with dinner and musical entertainment from Tom W regaling everyone with Jonny Cash numbers. Attendance was good for the evening. I did not attend this, but I was told it was a great evening.

Saturday saw a slew of shares and attendees from various parts of the world. There were jewellery and AA literature for sale, adding to contributions towards the event. All speakers had great messages from Bali, Glasgow and Singapore to New York. I personally found the talk by the Al-Anon speaker to be very powerful. It was great to get a doctor’s view of working with alcoholics.

Sunday was dedicated to a Big Book workshop with the international speaker Kevin H, from New York. This was titled “The Big Book in a New York Minute”. Kevin led us through the Big Book from step 1 to step 12, choosing selected passages from the text whilst adding in his experience in working these steps with others. I found this very insightful and was delighted to work through steps again.

For this alcoholic, the roundup was a truly wonderful experience and great to see the fruit of all the hard work others had put in to making this such a special event. I came away with renewed vigour to get down and do some work. This reminded me of the first roundup I attended in Dubai when I was 5 months sober. What an experience that was.

I wish to thank all those that were involved in ensuring a great event, including all those that attended and volunteered to share or talk at the roundup. Will Singapore have another roundup next year, definitely...See you then.

Anonymous....

## Upcoming A.A. Events, Conventions and Round Up's

36<sup>th</sup> AA Round Up – Korea – First things First

Seoul, Korea

22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2015

<http://www.aainkorea.org/3events/3events.html>

Bali International Round Up - The 4<sup>th</sup> Dimension

Bali, Indonesia

12<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> June 2015

<http://www.baliroundup.org>

International Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous – 80 Years - Happy, Joyous and Free

Atlanta, Georgia, United States

2<sup>nd</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> July 2015

[http://www.aa.org/pages/en\\_US/2015-international-convention-of-alcoholics-anonymous](http://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/2015-international-convention-of-alcoholics-anonymous)

The 29th AA Netherlands Round Up - One Day at a Time

Elspeet, Netherlands

21<sup>st</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> August 2015

<http://www.aa-netherlands.org/roundup2015>

7<sup>th</sup> Annual Hong Kong International Convention – Willing to Grow

Hong Kong

6<sup>th</sup> – 8<sup>th</sup> November 2015

<http://www.hkconvention.org/#!convention/c4nz>

53rd New Zealand Convention of Alcoholics Anonymous – The Next Frontier

Waitangi, New Zealand

22<sup>nd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2016

<http://www.aaconvention.org.nz>

1<sup>st</sup> Australasian Convention – Carry the Message

Suva, Fiji

24<sup>th</sup> March – 27<sup>th</sup> March

<http://aanatcon.org.au>

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**The smile on my face does not mean my life is perfect. It means that despite challenges, I choose to be happy and focus on my blessings – *Unknown***

**Just because a person smiles a lot, does not mean their life is perfect Their smile is because of hope and strength ~ *Unknown***

## Singapore A.A. Weekly Meeting Schedule

(please see website for directions)

<b>Monday</b>	07.15 - 08.00 AM	Men's Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Marina Bay City Gallery</a>
	07.30 - 08.30 AM	Big Book Study	Closed	<a href="#">Circular Road</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Open	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Big Book Study	Open	<a href="#">East Coast</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	07:15 - 08:15 PM	Big Book Study	Closed	<a href="#">World Peace Cafe</a>
	08:05 - 09:05 PM	Beginners Meeting	Open	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
<b>Tuesday</b>	07:30 - 08:30 AM	Speaker Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Circular Road</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Big Book	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	07:00 - 08:30 PM	11th Step Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Novena Medical Centre</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Open Topics	Open	<a href="#">NAMS Clinic, IMH</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Big Book Study	Open	<a href="#">St. Bernadette Church</a>
<b>Wednesday</b>	07.30 - 08.30 AM	Just for Today	Closed	<a href="#">Circular Road</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Living Sober	Open	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Living Sober	Open	<a href="#">East Coast</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Speaker Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	08:15 - 09:15 PM	Women's Step Study	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
<b>Thursday</b>	07:30 - 08:30 AM	12 & 12	Closed	<a href="#">Circular Road</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Step Study	Closed	<a href="#">East Coast</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	12 & 12	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	07:30 - 08:30 PM	Speakers Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">World Peace Cafe</a>
<b>Friday</b>	07.15 - 08.00 AM	Mens Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Marina Bay City Gallery</a>
	07:30 - 08:30 AM	Beginners Meeting	Open	<a href="#">Circular Road</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	12 & 12	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Step 11 Meeting	Open	<a href="#">East Coast</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Living Sober	Open	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Topics Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">8 Shenton Way</a>
<b>Saturday</b>	08:00 - 09:00 AM	Big Book Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Mana Mana Beach Club</a>
	08:30 - 09:30 AM	Gratitude Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Circular Road</a>
	10:00 - 11:00 AM	Women's Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Circular Road</a>
	04:30 - 05:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	07:00 - 08:30 PM	Saturday Night Live	Open	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
<b>Sunday</b>	08:15 - 09:15 AM	Men's Meeting	Open	<a href="#">Starbucks 313 Orchard</a>
	08:00 - 09:00 AM	Beginners Meeting	Open	<a href="#">Mana Mana Beach Club</a>
	10:00 - 11:00 AM	LGBT Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Oogachaga</a>
	11:00 - 12:00 PM	Step Meeting	cancel led	<a href="#">We Care - Eunos</a>
	06:30 - 07:45 PM	Big Book	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>

## **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. 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

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+65 9053 1764 for further assistance  
Or email us at [help@Singaporeaa.org](mailto:help@Singaporeaa.org)