

# **The Daily Reprive**

Newsletter of Alcoholics Anonymous Singapore

*Came to*  
**Believe**

**Spring 2026**

*Inspire*



# Table of Contents

- 3**     **From the Editor** 
- 5**     **The Alchemy of Staying**
- 7**     **We came to believe:  
I struggled with that idea**
- 10**    **We Were Powerless: An Interview**
- 13**    **A God Wink in Bangkok**
- 14**    **Commanding the Shots**
- 15**    **From that moment, I was All In**
- 16**    **Trust in a power greater than myself**
- 18**    **Finding my higher power in Nature**





# From the Editor

Dear Fellows,

Welcome to the first Daily Reprieve of 2026.

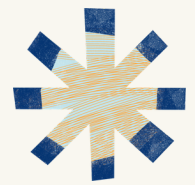
It's a bumper edition and, as you'll see, we are branching out: this edition has interviews and artworks as well as the classic contributed articles from fellow alcoholics in Singapore. I am truly grateful for the service of the growing and passionate Newsletter Group and all our contributors.

Steps Two and Three were on our minds when we agreed on the theme for this newsletter. We took inspiration from the idea that we “*came to believe* that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” We wanted to explore the countless ways that alcoholics experience and begin to trust in a power greater than ourselves and make “a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

Perhaps no topic is more fiercely personal in our fellowship than that of the Higher Power. I am no exception. My interior snark has always had issues with the phrase: “God as we understood Him.” As if we could understand the creator of the universe; I always find myself thinking. As usual though, I am missing the point (and enjoying a nice ego trip fuelled by a sense of intellectual superiority).

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Because, as you will see in this newsletter, people like you and I have come to accept and know a power greater than themselves in an extraordinary variety of ways. And this shared experience has made it possible for people who were powerless over alcohol to stay sober for days, weeks, months, years and decades. If that's not a miracle, I don't know what is.

Saint Augustine — not an alcoholic but someone who sounds like he knew a bit about addiction — famously wrote that one had to believe in order to understand. For me, belief was born in desperation. I asked God to help me because nothing I had tried under my own steam had worked. So I asked, wholeheartedly but more in hope than expectation. Some years later, I still haven't needed to have another drink.

Don't ask me how this worked because I have no idea (there goes intellectual superiority). But I understand that it does work, and that seems to me to be what matters. I have come to believe through the experience of a power greater than myself acting in my own life. And the idea that God would take the time to do that for me is a pretty wild one for this alcoholic.

**The breadth of beautiful reflections reflect the “thousand names of God” but they do have two common factors, I believe.**

Whatever people's conceptions of a power greater than themselves, and however hard they found it to accept the help of such a power, all of the testimonies here reveal a willingness to trust.

Just a little at first, usually, but the door only needs to be an inch open for the light to come in. They also underline the importance of practice. People did not think themselves into coming to believe; they took action.

I hope you find these contributions as inspiring as I did.

Yours in sobriety,  
Adam H  
Singapore, 23 March 2026

**For some, belief is spiritual. For others, it's trust in the group, in routine, in lived experience, or simply in the next right action. There is no single interpretation. Coming to believe doesn't follow a straight line; it unfolds over time, in ways that are deeply personal. We each come to believe in our own way.**

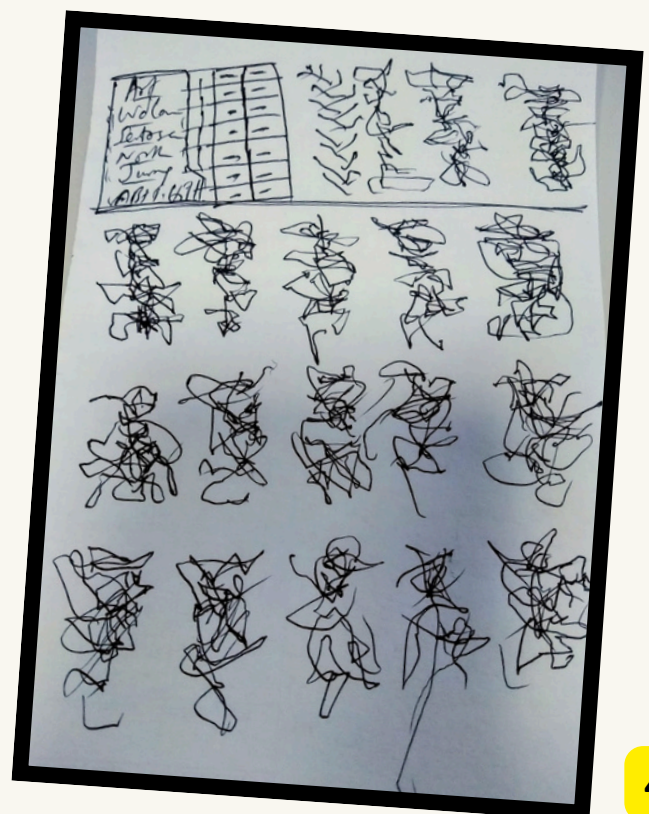


Image: Anonymous

# The Alchemy of Staying

*To “come to believe” may simply mean this: to keep showing up long enough for sanity to begin returning. To allow a power – whether named God, community, art, or love – to work through the steady practices that keep us from picking up the first drink.*

When we talk about Step Two, came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity, it can sound like a lightning bolt moment. A flash of certainty. A choir of angels. For some of us, it's slower, quieter than that.

I recently spoke with an artist in long-term recovery whose journey offers another way of understanding what it means to “come to believe.” Her story unfolds not only in the rooms and Zooms of AA, but in a studio, through layers of paint, ritual, and the steady refusal to pick up a drink.

Born in Seoul in 1979 and now living between Singapore, Seoul, and Los Angeles, she earned her MFA in painting and built an international exhibition career.

But her recovery began somewhere more vulnerable: in art therapy. Addressing ADHD, anxiety, addiction and generational trauma, she found that creative practice gave her a way to metabolise what once felt unbearable. She told me, “I don't think anything in life is possible without staying away from drinking.”

That is belief, embodied.

Like many of us, she struggled at times with the workbook approach to the Steps. The language didn't always land. The format didn't always resonate. But she didn't walk away. Instead, she grounded sobriety in something tangible. Painting and other artistic media became a daily act of surrender and reconstruction.

She layers, edits, removes, embellishes — grids, implosions, explosions — each mark responding to the last.

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Image: Artist Work *Darkest Before Dawn*, 2016-2018 - Sunny C.

# The Alchemy of Staying cont.

It is hard not to hear Step Two in that rhythm: a mind once chaotic slowly finding order. Anxiety processed through repetition. Meaning emerging through practice.

“What does it mean to have a solid foundation?” She wondered aloud. “For me, it is meetings, occupational therapy, a sponsor — and art.” Meetings. Outside help. Sponsorship. Creative ritual. Not either/or. Both/and.

She is part of the sandwich generation, raising a five—year—old son while caring for aging parents. Life is full. Demanding. Beautiful. And sobriety is the quiet axis around which it all turns.

Her exhibitions over the years have carried titles like I Need to Believe, New Belief, Renewed Belief, and even, I Came to Believe.

Long before she could articulate Step Two in a meeting, she was painting her way toward it. That’s something we don’t always say out loud: sometimes we come to believe before we can explain what we believe in.

**For her, belief is less about a fixed theological statement and more about a practice. Show up. Layer by layer. Day by day. Don’t drink. Sit in the meeting even if you’re suspicious. She offers this encouragement to those who struggle with the program at first: “Don’t give up before the miracle happens. You ARE the miracle. And even if you critique the program, an hour spent reviewing and critiquing the program is an hour spent not drinking.”**

*“Don’t give up before the miracle happens. You ARE the miracle. And even if you critique the program, an hour spent reviewing and critiquing the program is an hour spent not drinking.”*

There is humour in that. And wisdom.

Step Two does not require instant certainty. It asks for willingness. For many of us, sanity returns not through a single revelation but through repetition: coffee poured at a meeting, a phone call to a sponsor, a paint and embroidery on canvas, a prayer we’re not sure anyone hears.

In her paintings, she speaks of “vessels” carrying fragile, transient meanings, evolving toward something paradisaical.

That feels like recovery, too. We are vessels: cracked, repaired, layered over. Each day sober becomes another stroke in the composition. Some layers obscure what came before while some reveal it. Together they form a history whose legibility may be in question, but whose beauty is undeniable.

To “come to believe” may simply mean this: to keep showing up long enough for sanity to begin returning. To allow a Power — whether named God, community, art, or love — to work through the steady practices that keep us from picking up the first drink.

Belief, like a painting, is rarely finished. But if we stay, if we layer meetings and therapy and sponsorship and whatever healthy practices anchor us, we may find that what once felt like chaos is becoming, slowly, a kind of grace.

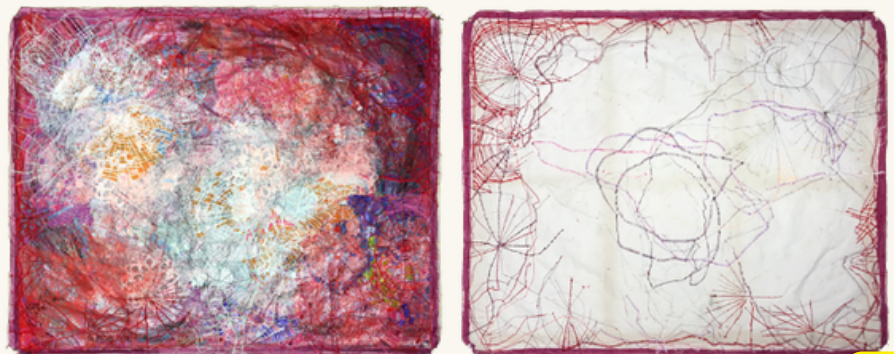


Image: Artist Work *When It Gets Mystical*, 2016-2018 - Sunny C.

*“It really reframed faith in a completely new light for me. Simply put: there is no cost, danger, or risk to coming to believe in a power greater than ourselves.”*

We came to believe. For a long time, I struggled with that idea. Belief felt abstract and intimidating, and prayer felt awkward.

I struggled with overthinking and overanalysing. I had pretty much given up hope, thinking that it just wasn't for me. Here is the story of the unlikely chain of events that eventually led to my coming to believe.

A few months ago, I started watching a new TV show. This show at first seemed like a light, raunchy, mindless comedy. Out of nowhere, however, there was a line that completely rocked me.

For context, the character who said this line was goofy and almost clown—like, and it was during a very lighthearted and laidback scene.

I think that because of this, my "spiritual guard" was down, and I was able to receive the message in a relaxed and receptive state of mind. "Why would you believe in something awful when you could believe in something wonderful!?"

It really reframed faith in a completely new light for me. Simply put: there is no cost, danger, or risk in coming to believe in a power greater than ourselves.

There is everything to gain and nothing to lose, so why would we ever not? It's such a simple concept and one I've heard hundreds of times, but it just took hearing it in this specific way, from this particular angle to really penetrate my walls and make an impact on my coming to believe.

## **We came to believe: I struggled with that idea**

**The show also reframed prayer for me in a similar manner. When one character claims that prayer is “just talking to yourself in the dark” the other responds, “it’s more just about connecting with yourself at the end of each day.”**

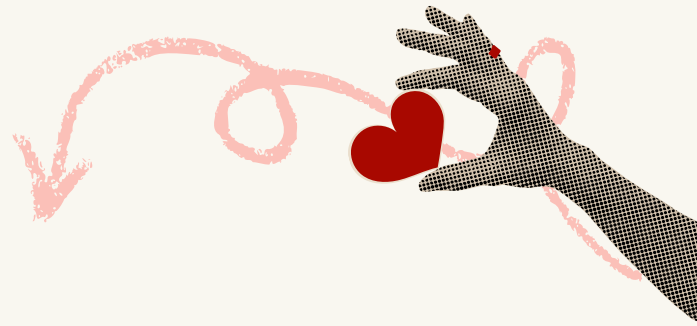
That line really spoke to me. I had recently gotten into journaling prior to that and was really enjoying and experiencing its benefits in my life. When I heard that line, my immediate thought was:

“Wait a minute, that’s exactly like journaling— except I don’t need a pen or a notebook or have to worry about writing or lighting or anything else!”

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## Struggled cont.



Prayer is like a hassle free, less time and energy consuming, easier and better version of journaling with the same results! (Definitely not knocking journaling though, which I still love and strongly advocate for to this day). Anyway, this connection between prayer and journaling really helped to reframe prayer in a new light for me, and I couldn't wait to put it into action. Needless to say, it worked — and my newfound perception of prayer has worked wonders for my coming to believe.

That same week, I went to my home group feeling eager to share these new revelations about faith and prayer. Normally, it's a smaller meeting where everyone has plenty of time to talk. But just my luck, it was a full house, packed with people, all eager to share. I didn't get a chance. I shrugged it off and didn't think much of it.

After the meeting, while standing around in casual post—meeting conversation, something prompted me to mention that I hadn't gotten to share. The fellow I was talking to was genuinely interested and encouraged me to share right then and there. Somewhat sheepishly, I did. After listening, she told me she had just started a weekly prayer meeting with another fellow and invited me to join.

I agreed, honestly, more out of politeness than conviction. I was dubious. But as you can probably guess, I absolutely loved it.

**That weekly prayer meeting has become a highlight of my week. It has helped propel my spiritual life to a place I never thought possible. The accountability alone has been transformative — it acts like a physical bridge to the spiritual, keeping me connected even when I don't feel like it. We share what we're hearing, encourage one another, and discern guidance together. It helps me stay close to my Higher Power when my motivation runs low.**

What amazes me is the chain of events that could only have been possible through my Higher Power's guidance. If I hadn't watched that show that week, if I hadn't missed my share, if I hadn't mentioned it afterward to that specific fellow, if I hadn't received that invitation — I might never have found this prayer group and the fruits it has borne in my spiritual life. I came to believe, and so can you.

Anonymous



# Expect miracles.



Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 60

# We were powerless: An Interview

*AA does not ask you to believe in God; it asks you to believe that you're not God.*

## 1. We were powerless

**Q: What did “coming to believe” mean to you when you first came into the fellowship?**

The first time that I came to AA, I didn't believe that I was an Alcoholic. I came because I was forced to. During that time, something special happened. I was living in Shanghai and I was in the hospital. My sponsor at the time asked if I would visit another woman with her who had an issue with alcohol. I did not believe that I was an alcoholic but I went. I did believe that the woman was an alcoholic: drinking a bottle of whiskey, house smelling of alcohol, functioning alcoholic with a high-pressure job and two little girls that she was taking care of by herself. She was everything that I did not want to be, did not want to become, nor believed I would become.

Shortly after that, I fell out of the program. It took me another four years of trying everything in More About Alcoholism before admitting that I was powerless over alcohol and my life was unmanageable. Then I had this hint, which now I understand is my Higher Power, that I needed to go back to a meeting. A woman was chairing the meeting: peaceful, calm, serene and beautiful — I wanted to have what she had. At the end of the meeting, she came to me and said: “I remember you, you were the one who came to see me at the hospital four years ago”.

Right then, I had seen the miracle of AA. She was the woman that I didn't want to be to becoming the one I wanted to be. And then, I was ready to do whatever I was told after. This woman became my sponsor.

**Q: Was believing, or even willingness to believe, in a Higher Power easy or difficult for you at the start? Why?**

When I came in, I thought that this was a cult! There was God and there were prayers everywhere. I've been raised Catholic but I had a resentment towards God and religion because God had not given me what I had wanted.

I believe Steps Four and Five are miraculous to overcome it. After working Step Four, I realised the role of my own selfishness and inconsideration in my resentment towards religion. So, I made peace with that and, once I did that, I started to believe.

A sentence that I find great is: AA does not ask you to believe in God, it asks you to believe that you're not God. This is an ego deflation program. Just by believing that it's not all about me, we have already taken a big step. Before, I wanted to control everything, but now I have learned that there is a power much bigger than me. That can be anything. I was once told by an atheist fellow that his Higher Power is the Brooklyn Bridge because when he looked at it, he found himself very small and it deflated his ego.

It still took me a long time to use the word God in the AA program because, for me, God was religion and Higher Power was spirituality. Using the word Higher Power helped me in the beginning because Higher Power means anything that is higher than me.

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## 2. Coming to believe

### **Q: What does Coming to Believe in your Higher Power mean to you now?**

It means full surrender. It means that I am not in charge and that everything happens for a reason. There's no mistake in God's world; God will not give you what you can't handle. God is love, Higher Power is love. So even if sometimes, a situation can seem complicated or painful, now at five years I know that surrendering my will and life to the care of God is the only way. Maybe the pain is meant for me to go through because my life needs to change in one way or another. Maybe it's also an opportunity for me to help someone else with the experience of going through that difficulty, sober.

One of the things that really helps me is the daily gratitude list. Because I see God and Higher Power in even small things. It can be little joys like someone holding a door, being able to catch a bus that I was not supposed to, a smile of a child, a dog playing in the garden, the sun after the rain. Coming to believe now for me is more of a feeling of being connected to the universe. It can be whatever you want to call it: creative intelligence, God, Higher Power, Brooklyn Bridge, something that is just magnificent, beautiful and loving.

### **Q: How did you "Come to believe" in your Higher Power? Was it a sudden moment or a process you went through?**

When I first came in, I was told that "came to believe" is a three-words' phrase. "Come" is an action and our program is one of action. So first, just come. You don't need to come to God, you just come to a meeting. Then at some point, you start coming to meetings for a relief, to see fellows, to be of service. Then slowly you come to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity. It took me 15 years to get five years of sobriety, but I always knew deep down that AA is the solution for me because I had tried everything else.

### **Q: How has this faith in your Higher Power changed the way you live your life?**

I will share a recent instance of the change I am experiencing now. We were due for prison service last Saturday and, for some reason, the session did not happen. In the past, I would have been resentful because I would think that I took time away from my children and planned all things around the service. Now, thanks to this faith in a Higher Power, I know that there is a reason that this happened. I could get together with a fellow, go for chocolate and discuss our respective sobriety journey. I could then go back home early to my kids and I thanked God that this happened. Now I feel grateful for everything that happens because my Higher Power doesn't give me what I want, it gives me what I need.

### **Q: How has this faith in your Higher Power changed the way you live your life?**

I was two years sober in the program. Then, a secret emerged from my past. I had wanted to share it earlier, but it would have hurt others and we don't hurt others as per Step Nine. I thank God that I was two years sober when this happened because I probably would not have been able to remain sober any earlier.

At the time, I went into a difficult period with my family. I had nowhere to turn to but my Higher Power. I was praying often, calling many fellows and going to multiple meetings everyday. I was holding on to the program and my Higher Power like my life was being held by a thread.

I was depressed but what helped me was the thinking that this too shall pass and I have no control over how people will react. That was a real moment of surrender. Then, the most wonderful thing that I never anticipated happened which was forgiveness, moving along and keeping my family together.

I wouldn't have been able to go through that time without my Higher Power and the fellowship. It brought me serenity which let me surrender and eventually make amends for the wrongs that I had done.



**Q: Are there still periods when your faith feels shaken? How do you deal with periods when belief felt lessened or absent?**

I think faith is like a muscle we have to build and strengthen. When my faith is shaken then I am not doing enough for it. Like I'm not doing my daily gratitude list, not meditating enough or not praying enough.

There certainly are moments where I feel that there is injustice or I feel resentful towards God, because things are not going my way. But I also know that the contrary of faith is fear so when I'm in fear, then it means that I'm not working enough on my faith. So what can I do? AA is a program of action: I can go down on my knees and pray or write my gratitude list to count my blessings for today. All these make me feel more connected with my Higher Power and regain strength in my faith.

**Q: Is there any person(s) who has helped you in your journey to discover or enhance your belief?**

One of the first set of people to help were those I did a 12 Step workshop with over one weekend. This is where I was introduced to the concept of Two Way Prayer (2WP), which I started doing but am still working on to be consistent with. I also want to mention one of my sponsees here: seeing her grow in the practice of 2WP, seeing how her faith has deepened over the few months of her being consistent and promoting it to other people, is just beautiful.

When one can see faith developing in another, it feels real. Something else that has happened to me, thanks to AA: I went back to my religion; I went back through my children. They did help me by questioning the "whys" in life. I now give Bible study classes to kids, and I learn in the process because one can't teach what one does not get.

Just the other week I was asked to speak out at a church about prayer and reading. There I shared my experience of AA as well. To me it's all related: whether you're Catholic and you call it the Christian God or whether you're an atheist and it is the universe. I would also like to thank my sponsor because she's an atheist but has been sober for 15 years. I asked her what it means to her to turn her will and life over to the care of God? And she said, "I don't know, I just turn it over. As long as it's not about me."

## 3. Progress not perfection

**Q: What would you say to someone who wants recovery but can't connect with the idea of a Higher Power?**

I think that's first of all, this is an ego deflation program because selfishness or self-centredness is the root of our issue. So, as part of the ego deflation, we need to find something that is more powerful than us. If you just reach this point, then you're already off to a good start.

After that, it's practice. So, go down on your knees and pray, write a gratitude list whether you want it or not. Actually, if you don't want it, more reasons to do it because you need to take contrary action. Fake it till you make it. There is another great exercise that I liked, write the job description of your Higher Power. What do you want it to be: loving, caring, cherishing, understanding. Bob often says he had an issue in believing. An old timer told him to turn his will and life over to a chair and you will have much better results than when you handled your life. So whatever works for you: your dog, the Brooklyn Bridge, a chair: as long as you're not in control of your life. Be humble and practice humility.



Keep going.  
Trust the process.  
The Steps work.

# A God Wink in Bangkok

Step Two feels gentle to me. It doesn't demand certainty or perfect faith. It simply says come to believe. It suggests willingness, a soft opening of the mind.

Today, I experienced what my sponsee would call a "God wink."

I had just finished a HIPI (Hospitals, Institutions and Public Information) meeting with another fellow and at the Family Community Centre, carrying the message to more than 15 people from the community. We shared about powerlessness, about hope, about how one alcoholic helping another creates something bigger than both of them.

After the meeting, I went downstairs to grab lunch. Nothing spiritual, just hunger.

And there it was: an Inclusive Café, a social enterprise that trains neurodivergent young adults.

Its name?

## STEPS.



Right after doing Twelfth Steps work, I walk into a café called Steps.

Then I noticed the Wi-Fi.  
Network: steps2  
Password: stepsrocks

I smiled. The newsletter theme for this month...  
And the deadline is three days away.

No, I don't believe God controls Wi-Fi passwords. But Step Two isn't about proof, it's about perception. It's about beginning to see that maybe there is meaning woven into ordinary moments.

Step Two opened the door to restoration. Not instant transformation. Not fireworks. But restoration.

And sometimes restoration looks like small winks:

A perfectly-timed phone call.

A newcomer walking in when you needed to be reminded why you stay.

A café named Steps after carrying the message about the Steps.

**Restoration hasn't come in dramatic flashes. It has come quietly, through meetings, service, connection, and small reminders that I'm not alone. Today's café felt like one of those reminders.**

**Keep going.  
Trust the process.  
The Steps work.**

And maybe a Power greater than myself is restoring me to sanity, one small wink at a time.

# Commanding the Shots

Since moving to Singapore 24 years ago, I had knelt in the pew at the 8am service. First I prayed (demanded) to be able to control my drinking, then I “prayed” to be able to stop. Finally, head always pounding, I stopped praying. Saturday nights merited an extra pour, you see. I was resigned to be a drinker, defeated but still commanding the shots. Bad pun.

When I left my first meeting, on 31 July 2018, the obsession was lifted. I have never wanted to drink since then, which is not the same thing as being afraid to drink. At first, the dingy Damien Hall room was my higher power; all I had to do was show up 24 hours later, or sometimes even six hours later, clean. As sobriety progressed, I thought that anyone who had been sober for any period of time had it all figured out – they held the key to the magic. I lacked the confidence to see that I had it in myself.

During Covid, an online women’s group was making its way through *New Pair of Glasses*. There is one diagram in that book, and it is a circle with a dot. The author uses it to illustrate that God either is, or He isn’t. Applying my keen alcoholic brain to that puzzle, I went through the analytical proof. At this point, my intellect and heart were disconnected. I “knew” one thing but felt and was acting something else. I was still in full throttle control. What I lacked was giving feelings equal weight as intellect, and my intellect was busy rationalizing run-arounds from all my fears.

The book goes on to quote a simple kid’s definition of God: “I feel clean inside and good things happen to me.” This simple test worked for me. No guilt, no conscience, no darkness, no anger, nor any of those dark and negative forces and feelings, and perhaps even love.

Well, maybe.

**Another way to put it that makes sense to me is that God resides “deep within us” — a vague conglomeration of ethics and morals and conscience. This did it. All I had to do was on the wall, those 12 Steps.**

It was around this time that I realised that being Happy was Allowed. I did not have to feel guilty for feeling good. It was not necessary to self—flagellate every single minute of the day. The sky is blue. I was OK just as I was. This is what “practicing these principles in all our affairs” meant. Surrender, inventory, apologise, help someone else. When I am deeply honest with myself and feel clean having done the right thing to the best of my ability, I can hold my head high and look people in the eye, two things I never did with alcohol coursing through my veins. Good things happen to me because “what goes around, comes around.” Very simple. God is acting in my life, because when I do the right thing I am carrying out God’s wishes.

Last Sunday, I was in the very same pew. I felt the presence of God. It had nothing to do with being in a formal church; it simply was early in the day, the building was surrounded by nature, and I had been engaging in an honest conversation with God for an hour. God was running through my veins. I had this very same feeling the next day, at the Monday lunch meeting, in that same dingy room at Damien Hall.



# From that moment, I was all in

Thomas L.

Friday, August 6, 1993. I was out at a bar in San Francisco, drinking beer, alone. I wasn't enjoying my beers. In fact, they were making me feel worse. And I asked myself why I thought that my drinking was the result of a choice. When I got home I called the AA Central Office and got the time and location of a convenient meeting for the morning.

I approached the meeting location with some trepidation. I felt that something irrevocable lay before me— not necessarily that I would never drink again, but that I would have become someone who sought help from AA.

I hesitated. What was my plan? I decided that I would try it for two years and after that I would consider myself free to drink again. But I also felt that my intention obliged me to participate in AA wholeheartedly. I attended more than 90 meetings in the first 90 days and made it a more or less daily practice to attend a meeting for a long time after that. I read the literature. I shared in meetings. I worked with sponsors.

Occasionally, I reflected on the celebration I would have after my two years were up. I could cash in my miles for a first class ticket to a remote destination and get high in the sky. Until, after eight or nine months, I realized my planned celebration could be described by a simple AA term: relapse.

And rather than being a mark of distinction it was a very commonplace occurrence. What WAS exceptional was the sobriety I had already achieved just by going along with it. From that moment, I was all in. I count that as the moment I took the second step fully, in my heart.

A homey AA saying helps me unpack my meaning. I: came; came to; came to believe. That is to say I began by showing up (came) and conforming to the practices of the fellowship. Eventually I noticed that my life had become different (came to). And I recognized the value of it (came to believe).

After I started writing this I ran into someone I knew from before he got sober. He's 40 and has over a year now. I said he was looking good.

"It's the sobriety," he said.

"It agrees with you?" I asked.

"It agrees with me."

I told him that was the second step. More precisely, the recognition that something good is happening is the essential kernel of the second step.

Once you see it, it is easy to believe it. "Believe" is a confusing word. It can mean to accept an arbitrary assertion without thought or inquiry. But it can also mean judgement based on experience.

**In recovery we begin by going along and following suggestions. We take heart from what we hear of the experience of others. Our belief at this point is little more than an intuition that this is worth a try.**

As we have our own experience of recovery—that recognition that something good, however subtle, is happening—our belief becomes more interior. What causes the change? We say "a power greater than ourselves" because we can't fully explain it. I try to resist the urge to define it beyond that. The belief developed in the experience of recovery gives me the courage to go deeper into the unexplored land of sobriety.



BELIEVE

An illustration at the top of the page shows a globe with a colorful, abstract pattern. A blue hand is positioned at the top, and a yellow hand is at the bottom, both appearing to hold or support the globe. The background is white with some faint, colorful shapes.

# Trust in a power greater than myself

Carmel

Alcohol, once my best pal, had deserted me and brought me to my knees. After a hellish stay at a rehabilitation facility, alcohol no longer camouflaged what I feared to countenance; a shambolic, miserable existence, and a gaping hole in my soul.

Then I entered the AA program. I started to attend meetings in person and online. I also found an AA fellow who was willing to be my sponsor. She led me through the AA literature, and I saw how the insanity of endlessly repetitive drinking episodes left me a life of devastation, and deep emotional wounds still festering. I had to admit I was utterly powerless. My life had become unmanageable.

As I reached the end of myself, I understood the inherent insanity in how desperately and resolutely I clung to my belief in self-sufficiency. The program challenged me to be brutally honest, and to trust in a power greater than myself.

Recovery from the abysmal mess demanded persistent hard work on the steps, based upon a "simple reliance" (p52, Alcoholics Anonymous) on God, or Spirit.

I began to see how reason is fallible and incomplete, and often distorted to prop up a veneer, carefully crafted to conceal my brokenness within.

I decided to surrender to this greater power, or God.

**In AA, I saw how different members are living their daily recovery, while retrospectively offering insight into how finding a new power and purpose is key to spiritual transformation. Gradually, I started to experience a new energy and optimism.**

I am finding the courage to believe in what I never thought or saw possible. My very own conception of God, although fuzzy and incomplete, sufficed. I allow myself to creatively imagine what this "realm of spirit" (p46, Alcoholics Anonymous) is, and how to connect with it. An intellectual curiosity with a heartfelt earnestness to find a new way to live becomes my motivation to keep going. My willingness to receive help beyond my once vaunted self-sufficiency is lighting up pieces of the puzzle.

I am learning how my fear of uncertainty and distaste for intimacy are a hindrance and not a help in coming to believe. Having healthy connections with people and things have always been frighteningly difficult. My alienation kept me yearning for companionship yet finding closeness abhorrent at the same time.

Nevertheless, the AA fellows continue to believe in me. They see in me an "inner resource" (p568, Appendix II, Alcoholics Anonymous) I never knew existed. Their compassion and acceptance are genuine, because they have personally experienced the mayhem caused by the same cunning and crippling disease.

The weeks grow into months, and I remain open to new perspectives, and committed to honest self-examination. The trickery and guile of my mind still deceive me on occasion and threaten to sabotage my recovery. I am better at catching my cynicism and criticism at play in my search for my higher power, as Herbert Spencer so fittingly described as a sure way to "everlasting ignorance" (p568, Appendix II, Alcoholics Anonymous).

Deliberate self-examination, with prayer and meditation, provide me a way to God ( p. 98, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions). It encourages an authentic, inquiring posture, and tolerance for the unknown. I am more mindful of the fear of the unfamiliar, or of what I had relied on most — alcohol, a survival strategy, a panacea for all agony, upended by something unfamiliar. Today, I see myself actively partaking in something greater. I continue to work my daily recovery with gratitude. Thank you, fellows!



**“What we really have is  
a daily reprieve  
contingent on the  
maintenance of our  
spiritual condition.”**

Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 85

# Finding my Higher Power in Nature

## Voices of AA #6



In this issue, we speak with a fellow who has found her Higher Power in nature. Through her journey in recovery, she has discovered healing not just within, but in the world around her. She now shares this connection by organizing nature walks for other fellows, creating space for reflection and fellowship. Her story offers a gentle reminder that spirituality can take many forms. And sometimes, peace can be found just by stepping outside.

She shares here the last line of an essay titled “Of Power and Time” by Mary Oliver and how it inspired her awakening.

**“The most regretful people on earth are those who felt the call to creative work, who felt their own creative power restive and uprising, and gave to it neither power nor time.” - Mary Oliver**



This is the single sentence that finally landed and bloomed in my sot of a heart and invited me to want sobriety for myself, not to please others. I was reading while sitting alone enjoying a second beer with my journal open to a page that had been empty for months.

I read the line (not for the first time), but like arriving at the third movement in lectio divina, something shifted as I looked back and forth from a nearly drained pint of beer, to the stark white page of my journal and then back to Oliver’s closing sentence of her essay “Of Power and Time” in Upstream.

Knowing in a new way that I spent more time drinking or thinking about drinking than I did writing or thinking about writing (even though I talked endlessly about not having enough time to write), the question was formed for me: To what am I willing to give my power and time, the drink or the page?

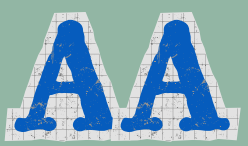
It took a few more months of walking around with that clear and pressing question, but eventually, and for at least another 24 hours, I chose and choose the page.

**Use the QR code below to listen to the full interview and other Voices of AA.**



*I started the [11th-step] nature walks because many people nodded when I shared my Higher Power is Nature and that I find the concept of God difficult. ...If you want to explore nature as your Higher Power, go in the open, be still, let something larger than you hold you, slowly and notice that you are being held.*

CREATE



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