

A.A. PREAMBLE©

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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A Suggested Format for Conducting an A.A. Meeting

1. Good Evening ladies and gentlemen. This is the regular meeting of the _____ group of Alcoholics Anonymous. My name is _____ and I am an alcoholic and your Secretary.

2. Let us open the meeting with a moment of silence to do with as you wish followed by the Serenity Prayer:

**God,
Grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can, and
Wisdom to know the difference.**

3. Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

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Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

4. _____ will now read "How it Works" from Chapter 5 of the A.A. Big Book.
(note: Some groups ask other members to read the Steps and/or Traditions)

5. *If it is the custom of the group:*

- *Ask any new members to introduce themselves by their first name only--a new member is anyone who has a desire to stop drinking and is within their first thirty days in AA.*
- *Ask any visitors to introduce themselves and say where they are from.*

6. *Introduce the Chairperson or Speaker for the meeting. If yours is a discussion type meeting, the Secretary conducts the discussion.*

7. *Thank the Speaker or Chairperson as well as any others who read.*

8. *Make regular announcements about group business, events and announcements from The Point newsletter, and information about the availability of literature. Ask for announcements from the floor.*

9. *Pass the basket(s). The secretary can say something like:*

We have no dues or fees in A.A. We are entirely self-supporting, declining outside contributions. This self-support includes our rent for this room, the coffee and refreshments, and contributions to our Central Office, the New York Office and to General Service. The pink can is for loose change and supports the Hospitals & Institutions Committee. H&I takes meetings into many facilities where members are not able to attend outside meetings.

10. *Close the meeting in the manner determined by the group conscience.*

(NOTE: Make every effort to open and close the meeting on time. This format is suggested only)

The Birth of A.A. and Its Growth in the U.S./Canada

A.A. had its beginnings in 1935 at Akron, Ohio, as the outcome of a meeting between Bill W., a New York stockbroker, and Dr. Bob S., an Akron surgeon. Both had been hopeless alcoholics. Prior to that time, Bill and Dr. Bob had each been in contact with the Oxford Group, a mostly nonalcoholic fellowship that emphasized universal spiritual values in daily living. In that period, the Oxford Groups in America were headed by the noted Episcopal clergyman, Dr. Samuel Shoemaker. Under this spiritual influence, and with the help of an old-time friend, Ebby T., Bill had gotten sober and had then maintained his recovery by working with other alcoholics, though none of these had actually recovered. Meanwhile, Dr. Bob's Oxford Group membership at Akron had not helped him enough to achieve sobriety. When Dr. Bob and Bill finally met, the effect on the doctor was immediate. This time, he found himself face to face with a fellow sufferer who had made good. Bill emphasized that alcoholism was a malady of mind, emotions and body. This all-important fact he had learned from Dr. William D. Silkworth of Towns Hospital in New York, where Bill had often been a patient. Though a physician, Dr. Bob had not known alcoholism to be a disease. Responding to Bill's convincing ideas, he soon got sober, never to drink again. The founding spark of A.A. had been struck.

Both men immediately set to work with alcoholics at Akron's City Hospital, where one patient quickly achieved complete sobriety. Though the name Alcoholics Anonymous had not yet been coined, these three men actually made up the nucleus of the first A.A. group. In the fall of 1935, a second group of alcoholics slowly took shape in New York. A third appeared at Cleveland in 1939. It had taken over four years to produce 100 sober alcoholics in the three founding groups.

Early in 1939, the Fellowship published its basic textbook, *Alcoholics Anonymous*. The text, written by Bill, explained A.A.'s philosophy and methods, the core of which was the now well-known Twelve Steps of recovery.

The book was also reinforced by case histories of some thirty recovered members. From this point, A.A.'s development was rapid.

Also in 1939, the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* carried a series of articles about A.A., supported by warm editorials. The Cleveland group of only twenty members was deluged by countless pleas for help. Alcoholics sober only a few weeks were set to work on brand-new cases. This was a new departure, and the results were fantastic. A few months later, Cleveland's membership had expanded to 500. For the first time, it was

shown that sobriety could be mass-produced.

Meanwhile, in New York, Dr. Bob and Bill had in 1938 organized an over-all trusteeship for the budding Fellowship. Friends of John D. Rockefeller Jr. became board members alongside a contingent of A.A.s. This board was named The Alcoholic Foundation. However, all efforts to raise large amounts of money failed, because Mr. Rockefeller had wisely concluded that great sums might spoil the infant society. Nevertheless, the foundation managed to open a tiny office in New York to handle inquiries and to distribute the A.A. book — an enterprise which, by the way, had been mostly financed by the A.A.s themselves.

The book and the new office were quickly put to use. An article about A.A. was carried by Liberty magazine in the fall of 1939, resulting in some 800 urgent calls for help. In 1940, Mr. Rockefeller gave a dinner for many of his prominent New York friends to publicize A.A. This brought yet another flood of pleas. Each inquiry received a personal letter and a small pamphlet. Attention was also drawn to the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, which soon moved into brisk circulation. Aided by mail from New York, and by A.A. travelers from already-established centers, many new groups came alive. At the year's end, the membership stood at 2,000.

Then, in March 1941, the *Saturday Evening Post* featured an excellent article about A.A., and the response was enormous. By the close of that year, the membership had jumped to 6,000, and the number of groups multiplied in proportion. Spreading across the U.S. and Canada, the Fellowship mushroomed.

By 1950, 100,000 recovered alcoholics could be found worldwide. Spectacular though this was, the period 1940-1950 was nonetheless one of great uncertainty. The crucial question was whether all those mercurial alcoholics could live and work together in groups. Could they hold together and function effectively? This was the unsolved problem. Corresponding with thousands of groups about their problems became a chief occupation of the New York headquarters.

By 1946, however, it had already become possible to draw sound conclusions about the kinds of attitude, practice and function that would best suit A.A.'s purpose. Those principles, which had emerged from strenuous group experience, were codified by Bill in what are today the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. By 1950, the earlier chaos had largely disappeared. A successful formula for A.A. unity and functioning had been achieved and put into practice. (See Page 9.)

During this hectic ten-year period, Dr. Bob devoted himself to the question of hospital care for alcoholics, and to their indoctrination with A.A. principles. Large numbers of alcoholics flocked to Akron to receive hospital care at St. Thomas, a Catholic hospital. Dr. Bob became a member of its staff. Subsequently, he and the remarkable Sister M. Ignatia, also of the staff, cared for and brought A.A. to some 5,000 sufferers. After Dr. Bob's death in 1950, Sister Ignatia continued to work at Cleveland's Charity Hospital, where she was assisted by the local groups and where 10,000 more sufferers first found A.A. This set a fine example of hospitalization wherein A.A. could cooperate with both medicine and religion.

In this same year of 1950, A.A. held its first International Convention at Cleveland. There, Dr. Bob made his last appearance and keyed his final talk to the need of keeping A.A. simple. Together with all present, he saw the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous enthusiastically adopted for the permanent use of the A.A. Fellowship throughout the world. (He died on November 16, 1950.)

The following year witnessed still another significant event. The New York office had greatly expanded its activities, and these now consisted of public relations, advice to new groups, services to hospitals, prisons, Loners, and Internationalists, and cooperation with other agencies in the alcoholism field. The headquarters was also publishing "standard" A.A. books and pamphlets, and it supervised their translation into other tongues. Our international magazine, the A.A. Grapevine, had achieved a large circulation. These and many other activities had become indispensable for A.A. as a whole.

Nevertheless, these vital services were still in the hands of an isolated board of trustees, whose only link to the Fellowship had been Bill and Dr. Bob. As the co-founders had foreseen years earlier, it became absolutely necessary to link A.A.'s world trusteeship (now the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous) with the Fellowship that it served. Delegates from all states and provinces of the U.S. and Canada were forthwith called in. Thus composed, this body for world service first met in 1951. Despite earlier misgivings, the gathering was a great success. For the first time, the remote trusteeship became directly accountable to A.A. as a whole. The A.A. General Service Conference had been created, and A.A.'s over-all functioning was thereby assured for the future.

A second International Convention was held in St. Louis in 1955 to celebrate the

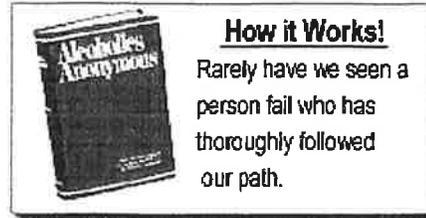
Fellowship's 20th anniversary. The General Service Conference had by then completely proved its worth. Here, on behalf of A.A.'s old-timers, Bill turned the future care and custody of A.A. over to the Conference and its trustees. At this moment, the Fellowship went on its own; A.A. had come of age.

Had it not been for A.A.'s early friends, Alcoholics Anonymous might never have come into being. And without its host of well-wishers who have since given of their time and effort — particularly those friends of medicine, religion, and world communications — A.A. could never have grown and prospered. The Fellowship here records its constant gratitude.

It was on January 24, 1971, that Bill, a victim of pneumonia, died in Miami Beach, Florida, where — seven months earlier — he had delivered at the 35th Anniversary International Convention what proved to be his last words to fellow A.A.s: "God bless you and Alcoholics Anonymous forever."

Since then, A.A. has become truly global, and this has revealed that A.A.'s way of life can today transcend most barriers of race, creed and language. A World Service Meeting, started in 1969, has been held biennially since 1972. Its locations alternate between New York and overseas. It has met in London, England; Helsinki, Finland; San Juan del Rio, Mexico; Guatemala City, Guatemala; Munich, Germany; Cartagena, Colombia; Auckland, New Zealand; and Oviedo, Spain.

Chapter 5 How It Works



Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average.

There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it – then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. Thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with alcohol, cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

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.

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." 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.

Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventure before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.
- (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.
- (c) That God could and would if He were sought.

12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
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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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THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

(SHORT FORM)

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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Glossary of AA Terms

The Language of Alcoholics Anonymous

When people first attend Alcoholics Anonymous they can be bit confused by the terminology used. It can even seem like the regular members are speaking a different language. There are a lot of words that have special meaning for this group. Luckily, it does not usually take long to become familiar with the terminology used. The most common words used in these meetings include:

AA Meetings

An important aspect of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is regular attendance at meetings. This is where members can discuss their concerns and get support. It is also where they learn how to apply the 12 program to their lives. Nobody graduates from AA, so lifelong attendance is recommended.

AA Member

There is no application process or membership fee associated with joining AA. It is up to the individual to decide if they are a member or not.

Abstinence

Abstinence means not doing something that is considered pleasurable. In AA, it means never going near alcohol again.

Anniversary

This is the date when people stop drinking. Many members like to celebrate this date each year. It is also referred to as their AA birthday.

Anonymity

AA is based on a foundation that puts an emphasis on anonymity. This is not only to protect the privacy of the individual members but also the organization itself. No member is allowed to speak on behalf of the group in the media.

Big Book

The Big Book is the most important piece of literature used by the group. It contains full details of the 12 Step program. It is common to hear readings from the book at meetings. Some members can recite passages without even looking at the text.

Big Book Study Meeting

These are meetings where the focus is on studying the Big Book.

Big Book Thumpers

This is an unflattering term for those members who seem to be always quoting from the Big Book. They tend to be quite outspoken in their views of how other people should be 'working the program'. The evangelical approach of big book thumpers can be off putting to some people.

Bill W.

Bill Wilson is one of the founding members of AA. Alcoholism almost destroyed his sanity, but he managed to quit with the help of a Christian group. He was on the verge of relapsing, but instead he tried to help another alcoholic. This meeting with Dr Bob is considered to be the birth of Alcoholics Anonymous. Asking other people if they are *a friend of Bill W.* is a subtle way of finding out if they are a member of the fellowship.

Blackout

One of the most worrying symptoms of alcohol abuse is the blackout. This is where excessive alcohol intake leads to memory loss. Many alcoholics will have done things they deeply regret while in the midst of one of these blackouts. Not every alcoholic will experience this type of amnesia. Some will even forget that they experienced it.

Breaking Anonymity

Most members will tell close friends and family that they are a member of the fellowship. They might also break their anonymity in order to help a struggling alcoholic. It is never acceptable to break anonymity if it is going to harm another member or the group as a whole.

Carry the Message

The primary purpose of AA meetings is to *carry the message* to suffering alcoholics. Those who have completed the 12 Steps are also encouraged to do all they can to help those who are still struggling with their addiction.

Character Defects

Giving up alcohol does not mean that people will become perfect overnight. They are certain to still have a number of character defects. These are imperfections in their personality and behavior that get in the way of finding complete happiness. People are not expected to completely eradicate their character defects. However, they should work towards eliminating those that interfere with their sobriety and relationships the most.

Chips

Chips are a type of medal that is given to people for achieving a certain length of sobriety. Newcomers who have not yet managed to get sober may be awarded a *desire chip* if they express the wish to stay sober for the next 24 hours. There are also usually chips for achieving sobriety for 1 day, 1 month, ninety days, six months, 1 year, and every year after that. These chips have no real monetary value but they can be a prize possession for many members.

Closed meetings

Some AA meetings are open to the public while some are not. The closed meeting is only open to individuals who are trying to recover from an alcohol addiction. Those individuals who are worried about their privacy may prefer to stick to this type of meeting.

Conference Approved Literature

This refers to books, pamphlets, audio, and video material that has been approved by the Alcoholics Anonymous General Service Office. There are many resources available that are not GSO approved. This does not mean that such resources are deficient. It only means that they should not be taken as representing the views of the organization.

Conscious Contact

This refers to how members will try to come in closer contact with their higher power. The hope is that such contact will mean that they will be able to manage life far more successfully. It means living a more spiritual life.

Controlled Drinking

This is something that is not recommended in Alcoholics Anonymous. Once the individual has lost control they can never get it back. Most members will have attempted to control their drinking before coming to AA. The insanity that they can regain this control is a common excuse for relapse.

Cross Talk

Cross talk is where one member speaks directly to another member during the middle of a meeting – usually to offer advice. This type of communication is not encouraged. The purpose of sharing at meetings is to discuss things from a personal point of view and not to lecture other people.

Daily Inventory

Members never complete the Twelve Steps. Instead they are expected to make the program a part of their life from that point on. Part of this involves looking back at the end of the day to see how things could be improved.

Daily Reprieve

AA does not believe that it is possible to cure alcoholics. All that is possible is a daily reprieve dependent on the individual doing the right things. If people fail to follow the program, they may be at risk of returning to their addiction.

Denial

Denial is a common defense mechanism. People will use it when they do not wish to face reality. Denial is common in addiction. If people begin to use this coping mechanism in recovery, it may be a sign that they are on the slippery slope to relapse.

Discussion Meeting

This is a type of meeting where members discuss a specific topic. When members are sharing, they need to avoid rambling too far away from the theme of the meeting.

Disease model

The Disease Model of Alcoholism is favored by AA. It views the condition as a progressive disease and not a moral failing. It is also seen as an incurable condition.

Dr Bob

Dr Bob Smith is another of the founding members of AA.

Drunk Dream

Sometimes members will have dreams where they are back drinking alcohol again. This is considered perfectly normal. If it is occurring too regularly it may be a sign that people need to put more effort into their recovery.

Dry Drunk Syndrome

Sometimes people will give up their alcohol addiction but not make any other changes to their life. In the meetings they talk about *people who haven't touched alcohol in years but have not yet managed to become sober*. Dry drunks tend to be full of negativity and resentment. Their family and friends may find them as hard to be around as when they were in the midst of addiction. Some people will experience this syndrome for a short period while others will remain like this for the long term.

Enabling

Enabling is when loved ones try to protect the alcoholic from the damage they are causing. Such efforts are done out of compassion, but they may be damaging if they prevent the individual from hitting rock bottom. If the individual is allowed to experience the full brunt of their actions then this can help them see beyond denial.

Fellowship

A fellowship refers to a group of people who share similar goals. Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship where the common goal is to stay sober.

Geographical Cure

This is when people try to escape their alcoholism by moving to a new location. Such attempts are unlikely to be successful because the individual will take their addiction with them.

Grandiosity

This is when people have an inflated sense of their own importance. Grandiosity can prevent people from benefiting from the AA meetings. A sense of humility and open-mindedness is required in order to learn from other people.

Gratitude List

Negative thinking can be dangerous for people who are recovering from an addiction. A gratitude list is where people write down all the good things in their life. Looking at such a list can encourage positivity.

Group Conscious

AA is a democratic fellowship. If there are any important decisions to be made that will affect a group then there needs to be a vote. This is usually held before the regular meeting and all members get to have their say.

HALT

HALT is an acronym for; hunger, anger, lonely, and tired. These are common relapse triggers that need to be avoided.

High Bottom Drunk

Many people manage to escape their alcohol addiction before they cause too much damage to their life. Such individuals are referred to as *high bottom drunks*.

Higher Power

A vital element of the AA program is accepting that some higher power can help the individual defeat their addiction. For many people, this higher power is thought of as God. This is why non-believers can feel comfortable with AA. There is no rule that says that people need to have God as their higher power. They may decide to choose the *power of the group* to be their higher power instead.

Hitting Rock Bottom

Hitting rock bottom does not mean that the individual needs to lose everything in order to become sober. They just have to reach a point where they've had enough. Some people will hit rock bottom without causing too much damage to their life. It is up to each individual to decide when they've had enough.

Home Group

Most AA members will have one group that they attend most frequently. This is referred to as their *home group*. It is beneficial to have one regular group because it makes it possible to build relationships with other members.

Low Bottom Drunk

Some individuals have to lose plenty in life before they are finally ready to admit defeat. Such people are sometimes referred to as *low bottom drunks*.

Ninety in Ninety

This refers to the advice that new members attend ninety meetings in ninety days. This will allow them time to build a good foundation in the program. It will also ensure that they have adequate support during the treacherous early months of sobriety.

Old Timer

This is a member who has many years of sobriety. Such individuals can be resource to turn to for inspiration and advice.

Open Meeting

This is a meeting that is open to the general public. If people are concerned about protecting their anonymity, they might want to avoid open meetings.

Oxford Group

The Oxford Group was an evangelical Christian movement that inspired the founding members of AA. Much of the 12 Step program came directly from this group. AA split from the Oxford Group to make it open to people of all religious backgrounds.

Pink Cloud

Early sobriety can be an emotional rollercoaster. The pink cloud refers to a period when members can feel overwhelmingly happy. Such high feelings may be dangerous if people become overconfident about their recovery. The individual can also feel a sense of disappointment when the pink cloud ends.

Preamble

This is read at the start of AA meetings and outlines the primary purpose of the group: helping people stay sober.

Promises

On page 83 of the Big Book is a list of promises that outline what people can expect if they faithfully follow the program. Included is the chance to develop serenity.

Recovering Alcoholic

Alcoholics are never *cured*, they are only *recovering*.

Relapse

This occurs when people return to active alcoholism.

Rule 62

This is a reminder to members that they should not take themselves too seriously.

Serenity

Those who manage to fully incorporate the 12 Step program into their life may reach a stage known as *serenity*. This means that no matter what is happening in their life they will almost always experience a sense of inner peace. It can take decades before members begin to experience lasting serenity.

Service

Helping other people in recovery is a great way to strengthen sobriety. There are many opportunities for service within AA.

Sharing

This is when people talk at the meetings.

Shotgun Sobriety

This is when people stay sober out of fear rather than because they are *working a good program*.

Slip

When a person slips, they drink alcohol but automatically realize they have made a mistake. If they get help right away they can avoid a full-blown relapse.

Slippery Places

This refers to any venue where the individual will feel tempted to drink alcohol. Members are advised to not spend too much time around drinking establishments. A common saying in the meetings is *if you visit a barber shop regularly enough you will eventually get your hair cut*.

Sobriety

Sobriety means more than just staying sober. It also means living a good life and doing the right things.

Sponsor

A sponsor is an experienced member who will be able to provide support and advice on a one to one basis.

Sponsee

A sponsee is a member who benefits from the wisdom of a sponsor.

Step Study Meeting

This is meeting where the main focus is studying the program. Members share about their experience of *working the step* under discussion.

Stinking Thinking

Negative thinking can be dangerous for people in recovery. They may start to believe that staying sober is not really so wonderful. *Stinking thinking* can easily lead to relapse.

The Grapevine

This is a popular AA magazine.

Thirteenth Stepping

This is where more experienced members of the group take sexual advantage of vulnerable new members.

Threefold Illness

This refers to the fact that alcoholism is considered to be a mental, physical and spiritual condition.

Twelve Steps

This is the AA program in the form of steps that members should take.

Twelve Traditions

These are the guidelines for how the meetings should be managed and how the organization functions.

Two Stepper

This refers to those members who attend meetings but do not follow the AA program.

Over 400 A.A. Recovery Slogans

- 1) Easy does it.
- 2) First things first.
- 3) Live and let live.
- 4) But for the grace of God.
- 5) Think think think.
- 6) One day at time.
- 7) Let go and let God.
- 8) K.I.S.S.—Keep It Simple Stupid.
- 9) Act as if.
- 10) This, too, shall pass.
- 11) Expect miracles.
- 12) I can't, He can, I think I'll let Him (Steps 1,2,3).
- 13) If it works, don't fix it.
- 14) Keep coming back, it works if you work it.
- 15) Stick with the winners.
- 16) Keep on trudgin.'
- 17) Sobriety is a journey, not a destination.
- 18) Faith without works is dead.
- 19) Poor me, poor me, pour me another drink.
- 20) To thine own self be true.
- 21) I came; I came to; I came to believe (Steps 1,2,3).
- 22) Live in the NOW.
- 23) If God seems far away, who moved?
- 24) Turn it over.
- 25) A.A.= Altered Attitudes
- 26) Nothing is so bad, a drink won't make it worse.
- 27) We are only as sick as our secrets.
- 28) There are no coincidences in A.A..
- 29) Be part of the solution, not the problem.
- 30) Sponsors: have one use one be one.
- 31) I can't handle it God; you take over.
- 32) Keep an open mind.
- 33) It works it really does! (page 88 in the Big Book)
- 34) Willingness is the key.
- 35) More will be revealed.
- 36) You will intuitively know.
- 37) You will be amazed.
- 38) No pain, no gain.
- 39) Go for it.
- 40) Keep the plug in the jug.
- 41) Do it sober.
- 42) Let it begin with me.
- 43) Just for today.
- 44) Sober `n` crazy.
- 45) Pass it on.
- 46) It's in the book.

- 47) You either are or you aren't.
- 48) Before you say I can't, say I'll try.
- 49) Don't quit before the miracle happens.
- 50) Some of us are sicker than others.
- 51) We're all here because we're not all there.
- 52) Alcoholism is an equal opportunity destroyer.
- 53) Practice an attitude of gratitude.
- 54) The road to sobriety is a simple journey for confused people with a complicated disease.
- 55) Another friend of Bill W.'s.
- 56) God is never late.
- 57) Have a good day, unless of course you have made other plans.
- 58) Decisions aren't forever.
- 59) It takes time.
- 60) 90 meetings in 90 days.
- 61) You are not alone.
- 62) Where you go, there you are.
- 63) Don't drink, read the Big Book, and go to meetings.
- 64) Use the 24-hour plan.
- 65) Make use of the telephone therapy.
- 66) Stay sober for yourself.
- 67) Look for the similarities rather than differences.
- 68) Remember your last drunk.
- 69) Remember that alcoholism is incurable, progressive, and fatal.
- 70) Try not to place conditions on your sobriety.
- 71) When all else fails, follow directions.
- 72) Count your blessings.
- 73) Share your happiness.
- 74) Respect the anonymity of others.
- 75) Share your pain.
- 76) Let go of old ideas.
- 77) Try to replace guilt with gratitude.
- 78) What goes around, comes around.
- 79) Change is a process, not an event.
- 80) Take the cotton out of your ears and put it in your mouth.
- 81) Call your sponsor before, not after, you take the first drink.
- 82) Sick and tired of being sick and tired.
- 83) It's the first drink that gets you drunk.
- 84) To keep it, you have to give it away.
- 85) Man's extremity is God's opportunity.
- 86) The price for serenity and sanity is self-sacrifice.
- 87) One alcoholic talking to another one equals one.
- 88) Take what you can use and leave the rest.
- 89) What if.....
- 90) Yeah but.....
- 91) If only.....
- 92) Help is only a phone call away.
- 93) Around A.A. or in A.A.?
- 94) You can't give away what you don't have.

- 95) One drink is too many and thousand not enough.
- 96) Half measures availed us nothing.
- 97) Anger is but one letter away from danger.
- 98) Courage to change.
- 99) Easy does it, but DO it.
- 100) Bring the body and the mind will follow.
- 101) Accept your admission.
- 102) Remember when!
- 103) Tighten up (financially).
- 104) We A.A.'s are 'gifted' people.
- 105) There are 12 steps in the ladder of complete sobriety
- 106) Fear is the darkroom where negatives are developed.
- 107) Before engaging your mouth, put your mind in gear.
- 108) I want what I want when I want it.
- 109) There is no chemical solution to a spiritual problem.
- 110) A.A. is not something you join, it's a way of life.
- 111) We can be positive that our drinking was negative.
- 112) Spirituality is the ability to get our minds off ourselves.
- 113) Faith is spelled a-c-t-i-o-n.
- 114) Take the mess to your sponsor, take the message to the meeting.
- 115) If I think, I won't drink. If I drink, I can't think.
- 116) Stay in the main tent, and out of the sideshow.
- 117) The first step in overcoming mistakes is to admit them.
- 118) Formula for failure: try to please everyone.
- 119) Sorrow is looking back worry is looking around.
- 120) Willpower=our willingness to use a Higher Power.
- 121) A. A. is an education without graduation.
- 122) When your head begins to swell your mind stops growing.
- 123) A journey of a 1,000 miles begins with the first step.
- 124) G.O.D.=Good Orderly Direction.
- 125) Be as enthusiastic about A.A. as you were about your drinking.
- 126) You received without cost, now give without charge.
- 127) Humility is our acceptance of ourselves.
- 128) Trying to pray is praying.
- 129) Get it ---give it---grow in it.
- 130) Faith is not belief without proof but trust without reservation.
- 131) We're responsible for the effort not the outcome.
- 132) This is a selfish program.
- 133) E.G.O.=Edging God Out.
- 134) Keep your sobriety first to make it last.
- 135) I drank: too much---too often---too long.
- 136) A.A. will work if you want it to work.
- 137) Minds are like parachutes---they won't work unless they're open.
- 138) What you hear and see here, stays here.
- 139) Alcoholism is the only disease that tells you you're all right.
- 140) If you turn it over and don't let go of it, you will be upside down.
- 141) An A.A. meeting is where losers get together to talk about their winnings.
- 142) A.A. is a school in which we are all learners and all teachers.

- 143) God taught us to laugh again but God please don't let us forget that we once cried.
- 144) Serenity is not freedom from the storm but peace amid the storm.
- 145) A.A. may not solve all your problems but it is willing to share them.
- 146) It isn't the load that weighs us down—it's the way we carry it.
- 147) Principles before personalities
- 148) When you do all the talking you only learn what you already know.
- 149) The 7t's —Take Time to Think The Thing Through.
- 150) There are none too dumb for the A.A. program but many are too smart.
- 151) We all have another drunk left in us but we don't know if we have another recovery in us.
- 152) To be forgiven we must forgive.
- 153) When we surrender to our Higher Power, the journey begins.
- 154) The person with the most sobriety at a meeting is the one who got up earliest that morning.
- 155) Knowledge of the answers never made anyone slip—it was failing to practice the answers known.
- 156) H.A.L.T.=Don't get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely or Tired.
- 157) F.E.A.R.=Frustration, Ego, Anxiety, Resentment.
- 158) The 12 Steps tell us how it works; the 12 Traditions tell us why it works.
- 159) Without A.A., it's Amen.
- 160) If faith without works is dead; then willingness without action is fantasy.
- 161) When a person tries to control their drinking they have already lost control.
- 162) The task ahead of us is never as great as the Power behind us.
- 163) Seven days without an A.A. meeting makes one weak.
- 164) You are not required to like it, you're only required to DO it.
- 165) When wallowing in your self-pity, get off the cross, we need the wood.
- 166) In A.A. we don't carry the alcoholic; we carry the message.
- 167) The results are in God's hands.
- 168) We are not human beings having spiritual experiences; we are spiritual beings having human experiences.
- 169) Remember nothing is going to happen today that you and God can't handle.
- 170) Your Turn in the barrel.
- 171) Don't watch the slippers, watch those who don't slip...watch them go through difficulties and pull through.
- 172) If we knew which drink was going to cause wet brain; we would stop just before it.
- 173) It's a shame we can't forget our troubles the same way we forget our blessings.
- 174) Be careful what you pray for; you're liable to get it.
- 175) The time to attend a meeting is when you least feel like going.
- 176) I've been sober and I've been drunk. Sober's better.
- 177) A.A. is the highest priced club in the world. If you have paid the dues, why not enjoy the benefits?
- 178) The first step is the only step a person can work perfectly.
- 179) The will of God will never take you where the grace of God will not protect you.
- 180) Your Big Book is your sponsor too.
- 181) A.A. never opened the gates of heaven to let me in, A.A. did open the gates of hell to let me out.
- 182) The only thing we take from this world when we leave is what we gave away.
- 183) Time wasted in getting even can never be used in getting ahead.
- 184) Some A.A.'s are so successful that they turn out to be almost as good as they used to think they were when they were drinking.
- 185) Sobriety delivers everything alcohol promised.
- 186) Possibilities and miracles are one in the same.
- 187) Get out of the driver's seat and let God.

- 188) H.O.W.=Honesty, Open-mindedness, Willingness.
- 189) Taking others inventory (when you should be taking your own).
- 190) First we stayed sober because we have to...then we stay sober because we are willing to...then we stay sober because we want to.
- 191) Slogans are wisdom written in shorthand.
- 192) Active alcoholics don't have relationships; they take hostages.
- 193) Everyday is a gift that's why we call it the present.
- 194) If you find a path with no obstacles, it probably doesn't lead anywhere.
- 195) Every recovery from alcoholism began with one sober hour.
- 196) Each and every alcoholic, sober or not, teaches us valuable lessons about ourselves and recovery.
- 197) We had to quit playing God.
- 198) Don't compare---identify.
- 199) Don't intellectualize---utilize.
- 200) RULE 62: don't take yourself seriously.
- 201) A.A. has a wrench to fit every nut that walks through the door.
- 202) Living in the here and now.
- 203) How does one become an old-timer? Don't drink and don't die.
- 204) A.A. spoils your drinking
- 205) Faith is our greatest gift; its sharing with others our greatest responsibility.
- 206) If you want to drink, that is your business...if you want to quit and can't, that is A.A.'s business.
- 207) In a bar, we got sympathy----as long as our money lasted. In A.A., we get understanding for nothing.
- 208) My worst day in sobriety is better than my best day drunk.
- 209) The elevator is broken-----use the Steps.
- 210) Let it begin with me.
- 211) When all else fails, the directions are in the Big Book.
- 212) Trust God, clean house, help others.
- 213) Anonymity is so important it's half of our name.
- 214) If we don't grow, we gotta go.
- 215) All you need to start your own A.A. meeting is a resentment and a coffee pot.
- 216) Religion is for those who fear Hell, spirituality is for those who have been there.
- 217) Intolerance= Contempt, prior to investigation.
- 218) When you are a sponsor, you get out of yourself. If I serve, I will be served.
- 219) Why recovery never ends: the disease is alcoholism, not alcoholWASm.
- 220) The A.A. way of life is meant to be bread for daily use, not cake for special occasions.
- 221) The smartest thing an A.A. member can say is, help.
- 222) You are exactly where you are supposed to be.
- 223) God will never give you more than you can handle.
- 224) Slow but sure.
- 225) A coincidence is a miracle in which God chooses to remain anonymous.
- 226) There is no such thing, as a bad meeting.
- 227) Give time time.
- 228) I can do something for 24 hours that would appall me if I had to keep it up for a LIFETIME.
- 229) The lesson I must learn is simply that my control is limited to my own behavior, my own attitudes.
- 230) A.A. works for people who believe in God. A.A. works for people who don't believe in God. A.A. NEVER works for people who believe they ARE God.
- 231) Just for today I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle my whole life problems at once.

- 232) There are two days in every week which we have no control over—yesterday and tomorrow. Today is the only day we can change.
- 233) It is not the experience of today that drives people mad, it is remorse of yesterday and the dread of tomorrow.
- 234) A drug is a drug.
- 235) Pain is the touchstone of spiritual growth.
- 236) God has no grand kids.
- 237) There is a God and I'm not it.
- 238) The road to resentment is paved with expectation.
- 239) Be nice to newcomers one day they may be your sponsor.
- 240) Denial is not a river in Egypt, but you can drown in it.
- 241) Guilt is the gift that keeps on giving.
- 242) The flip side to forgiveness is resentments.
- 243) There is no magic in recovery only miracles.
- 244) Fear is the absences of faith.
- 245) Courage is faith that has said its prayers.
- 246) Depression is anger toward inward.
- 247) Alcoholics heal from the outside in, but feel from the inside out.
- 248) 3 A's in A.A.—affection/attention/appreciation
- 249) If it is meant to be, I can't stop it. If it isn't God's will, I can't make it happen.
- 250) There are A.A. members who make things happen there are A.A. members who watch things happen there are A.A. members who DON'T KNOW anything happened
- 251) Don't drink, don't think and go to meetings.
- 252) A.A. is the last stop on the train.
- 253) One is too many, a thousand is not enough.
- 254) To be of maximum service to others.
- 255) We'll love you, until you learn to love yourself.
- 256) When you run out of quarters for your a--kicking machine, I've got an extra roll for you to use.
- 257) Try to be grateful and resentful at the same time, you can't serve two masters.
- 258) Write a gratitude list and count your blessings.
- 259) You can always tell an alcoholic, but you can't tell him much.
- 260) Faith chases away fear.
- 261) Take other people's inventory until you can take your own.
- 262) Pain before sobriety and pain before serenity.
- 263) Unity, recovery, and service.
- 264) If you want to hide something from an alcoholic, hide it in the Big Book, because that's where he'll find it.
- 265) Sobriety, then serenity.
- 266) Live life on life's terms.
- 267) She came through the back door of A.A. (Alanon).
- 268) When we couldn't dominate, control, or manipulate, we would ask for terms and conditions.
- 269) People who are wrapped up in themselves make a very small package indeed...
- 270) The bottle, big house, or the box.
- 271) Death, insanity, or recovery.
- 272) We have a choice.
- 273) We don't get run over by the train, we get hit by the engine (1st. drink).
- 274) If you wonder if you're an alcoholic, you probably are.
- 275) Instant a--hole, just add alcohol.

- 276) I didn't get into trouble every time I drank, but every time I got in trouble I was drunk.
- 277) Insanity is defined as doing the same thing over, and over again, expecting different results.
- 278) We are without defense against the first drink, our defense must come from a power greater than ourselves.
- 279) Success means getting your BUT out of the way.
- 280) Newcomer is someone with less than five years sobriety.
- 281) The easier softer way is one through twelve.
- 282) Don't work my program, or your program, work THE program.
- 283) If you want what we have and you're willing to go to any lengths to get it
- 284) Ask us how we did it, then do what we did.
- 285) Qualifications for me to help you, one) you have to need it, two) you have to want it, three) you have to ask for it, four) you have to ask me.
- 286) The alcoholic's mind is like a bad neighborhood, don't go there alone.
- 287) Faith without works is dead.
- 288) Get to the meeting early and go to the meeting after the meeting.
- 289) The definition of an alcoholic; an egomaniac with an inferiority complex.
- 290) Cunning, baffling, powerful, and patient.
- 291) When the pain of staying sober becomes less than the pain of getting drunk, you'll stay sober.
- 292) None of us came here on a winning streak.
- 293) The farther I get from my last drink, the closer I get to my next drunk.
- 294) This, too, shall pass.
- 295) Where do I find sobriety? Twelve steps past any lengths.
- 296) How does it work? It works just fine.
- 297) If you hang around the barber shop long enough, you'll get a haircut.
- 298) Don't hang around wet places and wet faces.
- 299) Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic.
- 300) I might have another drunk left in me, but do I have another recovery?
- 301) Short version of the Serenity Prayer: Lighten up.
- 302) You don't have to wait till the basement to get off the down elevator.
- 303) Those that don't go to meetings aren't present to find out what happen to them what doesn't go to meetings.
- 304) F.E.A.R.= False Evidence Appearing Real.
- 305) F.E.A.R.=False Expectations Appearing Real.
- 306) F.E.A.R.=Face Everything and Recover.
- 307) F.E.A.R.=F--- Everything And Run.
- 308) F.I.N.E.=F---ked-up, insecure, neurotic, and emotional
- 309) G.O.D.=Group of Drunks.
- 310) In A.A. I get an owner's manual to go with my new life.
- 311) N.U.T.S.=Not Using the Steps
- 312) Y.E.T.=You eventually, too
- 313) When you sober up a horse thief, all you have is a sober horse thief.
- 314) First things first
- 315) If you can't remember your last drink, maybe you haven't had it.
- 316) If you want to stay sober, make the coffee.
- 317) If you fly with crows, you get shot at.
- 318) Analysis is paralysis.
- 31) A.A. isn't a religion, we can't open the gates of Heaven and let you in, but we can open the gates of Hell and let you out.

- 320) I got sick of being sick and tired.
- 321) It's easy to talk the talk, but you have to walk the walk.
- 322) Life starts when you stop.
- 323) You have to give it away in order to keep it.
- 324) Fake it till you make it.
- 325) It's a selfish program.
- 326) Today there's still a monkey on my back. He's just sleeping. He's real easy to wake up.
- 327) Fear alone won't keep me sober, but for a newcomer, it's not a bad place to start.
- 328) I've been here a few 24 hours.
- 329) H.I.T.-Hang In There.
- 330) Under every dress there's a slip
- 331) You have to go to these meetings until you want to.
- 332) Don't let unpleasant people rent space in your head.
- 333) Daniel didn't go back to the lion's den to get his hat.
- 334) If you stick with the bunch, you'll get peeled.
- 335) It gets better.
- 336) The doors swing both ways.
- 337) You have to put in the time.
- 338) Try it for 90 days, and if you don't like it, we'll gladly refund your misery.
- 339) Don't drink, don't think, and don't get married.
- 340) Some people drink normally, and I normally drink.
- 341) A slip is a premeditated drunk.
- 342) A.A. is the easier, softer way.
- 343) Go to meetings when you want to, and go to meetings when you don't want to.
- 344) It's been a good meeting so far.
- 345) None of us got here form drinking too much coffee.
- 346) We have a disease that tells us we don't have a disease.
- 347) We have a living problem, not a drinking problem.
- 348) We have a thinking problem, not a drinking problem.
- 349) If you don't want to slip, stay away from slippery places.
- 350) The mind is like a parachute, it works better when it's open
- 351) Pain is the touchstone of progress.
- 352) My daily sobriety is contingent on my spiritual condition.
- 353) Yesterday is a cancelled check, tomorrow is a promissory note, only today is cash in the bank.
- 354) F.A.I.T.H.: Fantastic Adventure in Trusting Him.
- 355) Sorrow shared is halved; joy shared is doubled.
- 356) There is pain in recovery. Misery is optional.
- 357) Lead us not into temptation. I can find it myself.
- 358) A treatment center is where you go and pay \$15,000 to find out that A.A. meetings are free.
- 359) Ask an alcoholic what time it is and he'll tell you how to build a clock.
- 360) Please be patient—God isn't finished with me yet.
- 361) I am unique, just like everybody else.
- 362) Reality is for people who can't handle drugs.
- 363) My best friend became my worst enemy.
- 364) When my insides match my outside, I'm practicing a good program.
- 365) Today I soak up A.A. the way I used to soak up alcohol.
- 366) When I drank, I was committing suicide on the installment plan.
- 367) My Higher Power was: To Whom It May Concern.

- 368) My first Higher Power was Howard, as in Our Father, who art in Heaven, Howard be thy name.
- 369) I'll always have another drunk in me, but I'm not sure I'll have another recovery.
- 370) Chairman at meeting asks: Anybody from out of town? Out of state? Out of their minds?
- 371) A winner is a loser who keeps trying.
- 372) I don't always know what God's will is for me, but I always know what it's not.
- 373) I didn't get sober to be miserable.
- 374) I didn't experiment with alcohol and drugs. I was in advanced research and development.
- 375) Are you walking towards a drink or away from one?
- 376) God could and would if He were sought.
- 377) I love you, God loves you, and there's nothing you can do about it.
- 378) Today I have more solutions than problems.
- 379) If God is your co-pilot, switch seats.
- 380) I did my drinking from Park Avenue to park bench.
- 381) Don't go in your head alone. It's a dangerous neighborhood.
- 382) With a stomach full of A.A., you won't have room for a beer.
- 383) Listen like only the dying can.
- 384) If your ass falls off, put it in a paper bag and take it to a meeting.
- 385) There's safety in numbers. One through twelve.
- 386) An ounce of prevention is worth a gallon of relapse.
- 387) My disease is doing pushups, getting stronger—just waiting for me to slip.
- 388) A.A. is a simple program for complicated people.
- 389) My best thinking got me here.
- 390) I am a walking miracle.
- 391) Don't romance the drink.
- 392) When I start wondering if everything's okay, it's probably not.
- 393) If hanging around A.A. doesn't work, try hanging out inside A.A.
- 394) Before I got into A.A., I was dying for a drink.
- 395) God grant me patience. Right now.
- 396) My sponsor says I'm trying. Very trying.
- 397) 20/20: Come 20 minutes before the meeting, stay 20 minutes after.
- 398) Don't try to clear away the wreckage of the future.
- 399) When the student is ready, the teacher appears.
- 400) You can't speed up your recovery, but you sure can slow it down.
- 401) Every drink I drank got me here. Every drink I don't drink keeps me here.
- 402) It takes time to get your brains out of hock.
- 403) Stand by the coffee pots. It's a good way to meet people.
- 404) People who think they know it all are very irritating to those of us who do.
- 405) It don't matter how your jackass got in a ditch, just get him out.
- 406) Don't drink or use between breaths.
- 407) Always remember the insanity...Be thankful for the pain...But most of all be thankful for the days that remain.
- 408) Three suggestions for making an A.A. speech:
- 1).BE INTERESTING
 - 2).BE BRIEF
 - 3).BE SEATED
- 409-417) The A.A. Paradoxes:
- From weakness(adversity)comes strength.
- We forgive to be forgiven.

- We give it away to keep it.
- We suffer to get well.
- We surrender to win.
- We die to live.
- From darkness comes light.
- From dependence we found independence.