

Regmaker

YOUR MEETING IN PRINT

GSO20

Issue 2

January to March 2020

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Contributions are welcomed and will be used at the editor's discretion.

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***Regmaker* - Editorial Policy**

The *Regmaker* magazine, often called our “meeting in print”, publishes articles that reflect the full diversity of experience and opinion found within the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. No one viewpoint or philosophy dominates its pages, and in determining editorial comment, the editors rely on the principles of the Twelve Traditions.

The heart of the *Regmaker* is in the shared experience of individual AA members working in the AA programme and applying the spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps. Yet what works for one individual or AA group, may not work for another. For this reason, from issue to issue, articles may be published that appear to contradict each other. Seeking neither to gloss over difficult issues, nor to present such issues in a harmful or contentious manner, the *Regmaker* tries to embody the widest possible view of the AA Fellowship.

It is the *Regmaker* editors' right to accept or reject material for publication. Articles are evaluated by the Publications Committee and while some editing is done for purposes of clarity, styling and length, the editors encourage all writers to express their own experience in their own way.

Articles are not intended to be statements of AA policy, nor does publication of any article constitute endorsement by either Alcoholics Anonymous or the *Regmaker*. Articles are invited, although no payment can be made nor can material be returned.

Responsibility Declaration

I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of AA always to be there...and for that:
I am responsible

Editor's Note

AAs have long been aware of what a deadly roadblock to recovery talk of God can be to newcomers.

In a 1961 Grapevine article called "The Dilemma of No Faith, "Bill W. wonders how many we lose because of their "dire conviction that, if they go near AA, they will be pressured to conform to some particular brand of faith or theology."

I remain grateful today that regardless of ones faith (or lack thereof), religion (or lack thereof) or any kind of persuasion each AA member has the right and is encouraged to choose their own concept of a higher power.

Each AA member - and we remember that to be a member we only need a desire to stop drinking—however flawed and inconsistent—can also witness for themselves at a physical, emotional and metaphysical level the transformation that is demonstrated through working the 12 steps. This is a truly miraculous programme and the stories contained herein are a wonderful testament to this.

Remember, your group can purchase a number of subscriptions to Regmaker and sell them at a group level, or individuals can subscribe themselves and details are on the back cover.

A GRATEFUL ALCOHOLIC

NIKKI – JWRA

Today, I'm an incredibly grateful alcoholic. I appreciate the support I have in AA both physically and in spirit. The support, laughter, love and caring has carried me through some of my tough days; life on life's terms, and I've been able to share my joy and celebrate my milestones in AA.

I say I am a grateful alcoholic because I truly believe that I would not be living the amazing life I am now if I wasn't an alcoholic. AA has given me a great set of tools, a way of living, and the ability to cope with life on life's terms. There have been dark periods. There have been periods when I was so stressed that I swore down the phone at my boss, waving my hand over my head, and said I'd had it up to here. Rather a bit pointless on the phone, but he got the gist of my frustration at having to get out of bed and work on a plan at past 9pm.

The magic of that day is not only that I did not storm off in search of something to drink, but also that I was able to share my feelings, instead of bottling them up. Even better, we both apologised to each other. I couldn't have done any of that just more than a year ago.

Just more than a year ago, I was full of anger. I was that road rage person. I threw pens at cars that cut me off in traffic. I swore, I hooted. I once, apparently, beat up a McDonald's security guard after losing my cool over a wrong order; there is CCTV footage - there was a lawyer involved.

Some have told me that I still had that anger in early recovery. Some of it lingers still. Most of it has been replaced by acceptance, and serenity. I once had to call my ex, at my little person's behest, to fetch her from a restaurant where we were eating because of this anger. Well, she was eating, I'd stopped doing that ages before then and was down to a mere 50kg. Just more than a year ago, my colleagues didn't know whether they would have Dr Jekyll or Mr Hyde pitch up at work meetings. It took me



four months of recovery to realise that I was mere weeks away from losing it all before I made a decision – or a decision was made for me – to go into treatment. It took me four months of recovery to realise that my boss

And that what this meant was that I'd be without a job. It took me four months of recovery to realise that my ex was on the verge of insisting on supervised visits with my little person. And that was confirmed to me recently when I made an amend to his girlfriend, who I actually happen to like quite a lot as a person.

It took me four months for the penny to drop that, even if a supervised visit with a social worker was at 7am, I wouldn't make it to the meeting sober. I had hit rock bottom, and kept digging. I went off and got a TLB and dug further. I couldn't get out of bed without a drink, which turned into "just one more, no-one will notice" and that resulted in me either cancelling meetings, dialling in, or pitching up obviously drunk, and thinking no-one could tell.

I was that person who arrived as the bottle store was opening. In my PJs. I'd lost so much self-respect I didn't even bother rotating bottle stores anymore.

The inevitable was fast approaching: I would have lost my job, the friends I had left and – most painfully – my little person. Then I would have lost what was left of me. It's not like I hadn't tried. I'd sobered up several times.

I gave up all booze, and smokes, the moment I saw two pink lines on the test. Then I went through a really awful period and alcohol became my only solution. It was my lifeline. It blotted out the world for just long enough. And then it controlled my life.

My now ex sent me to AA, so I went to prove I wasn't an



Really—she didn't! Eventually, I became a tad concerned as to how much I was drinking, because I just couldn't control it. And it was getting expensive to keep replacing tyres and mags because of "dogs running across the road". So, I tried

counting my drinks, keeping a beer journal (which I found recently) and, desperately, went on Antabuse. I do not recommend drinking on Antabuse.

Finally, I became that person who drank alone. Because it was cheaper because there were fewer car repairs involved and beer in pubs is sold at inflated prices. Anyway, no one would talk to me in pubs anymore.

None of that stuck, because there were missing ingredients: I wasn't working any programme, I refused to admit that I was powerless, I was half-heartedly trying to do this my myself, and I hadn't had a spiritual awakening. The day I went into treatment is, as far as I am concerned, a God incident. It was a few days after that 'talking to' at work. I'd gone to Dros for lunch and two beers – it's always two – and left the car at the carwash. At about 7pm, I realised I could escape being in trouble the next day by going into rehab. Genius solution. My poor ex mother-in-law kindly drove me all over while I Googled and phoned. I



And boy was I stroppy when I signed in. Amending contracts left, right and centre, insisting I was just there for 14 days to sober up and learn to drink like a normal person. They laughed at me. Now, I fully understand why. Of course, the contract couldn't be binding anyway,

because I was drunk... that didn't occur to me until months later. I'm still a tad stroppy and insist that my way is the right way. Progress, not perfection. I woke up the next morning and thought that I'd made the stupidest drunk decision of my life.

I think it goes without saying that it was the best decision ever. And it wasn't mine.

In treatment, I found I found two things that are inextricably interlinked and cannot be separated: God and recovery. I have changed so much over the past year, that I am almost unrecognisable to myself. I actually love myself now. I like myself. I am proud of my achievements. I am an asset at work, and an actual mom to my little person, Nats.

walking the dog, washing the dishes together, baking together. These things sound small but they are huge to me. It was such a blessing to be fully present at her prizegiving this year.

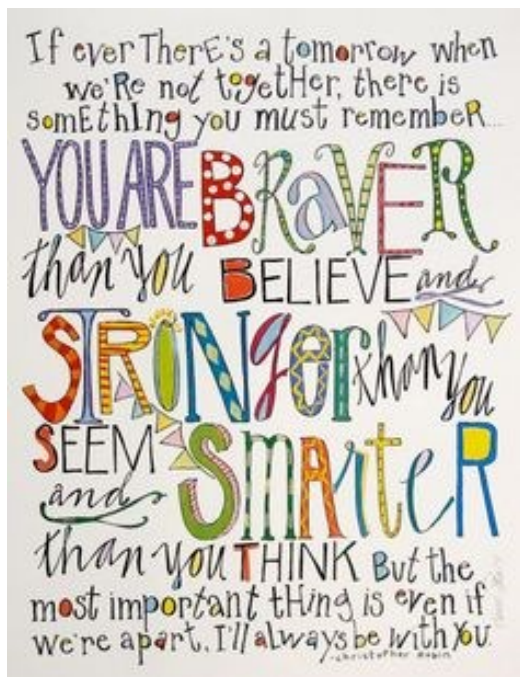
This curse ends with me.

My ex and I can have proper conversations. He doesn't understand any of this but supports me as much as he can. And I've made my amend to him, thanks to another God incident.

Rifts between my colleagues and I are healing. Many are work friends now. People who I care about, and who care about me. There are more rifts to fix, and that will happen when the time is right. God's time, not mine. I am not in control. And the fact that people actually care about me and will offer to spend time with me when I can't stand being in my own skin, or listen to me for an hour because I am lonely, no longer totally floors me. I am worthy.

I have developed boundaries and, while I don't always put them up in a nice way, they are there. I won't be stood up for a date and meekly accept a rearrangement. I am worth more than





I now understand what it means to show up: that's beyond just being physically present somewhere. And I am really enjoying the work I do; that hasn't changed, I have. If anything, work has become harder recently, and been incredibly stressful, to the point where colleagues have been amazed at the miracle of my sobriety. But I no longer have the sort of crippling panic attacks that feel like heart attacks at 2am.

Yes, I have panic attacks – life isn't all hundreds and thousands and Mary Poppins – but now I have the tools to deal with them.

I am a go-to person for solutions, for an ear, for just being around. I can genuinely hug and be hugged – it seems to be an AA requirement – whereas before hugging me was no different to hugging an ironing board.

I also have emotions now. I can cry, I can laugh, I am really happy, deep down, more often than not. None of that was the case before, I drank to make those feelings go away.

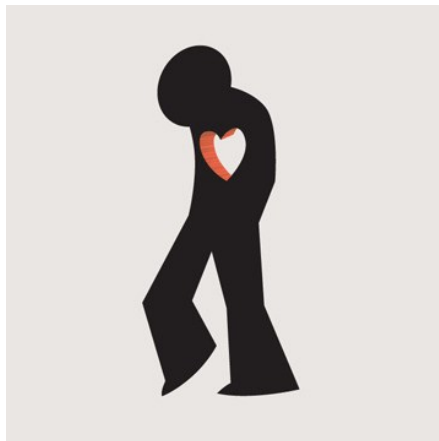
My parents are proud of me; I think my dad's proudest

My stepmom kindly, and without saying a word embroidered me a saying for my wall:

"Always remember you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, smarter than you think and loved more than you know." It is one of my most prized possessions.

I no longer need to fill the hole in my soul with alcohol. I have found my way back to my higher power – God. Because there is no booze between us now. The thought of any booze makes me want to vomit. Today, I am a grateful alcoholic. Grateful to have this programme, grateful to have found my way back to God, and grateful for the amazing people who have either come into my life or are now a real part of it. I am living an amazing life, simply by virtue of the fact that I am **living** it.

Alcoholism is progressive, but so is recovery. One day at a time.



My Story **Portia, Edinburgh**

My journey with alcohol began in my childhood days, my elders drank and whenever there were family gatherings at home they did not pay much attention to us children when we sipped on their left overs. My grandfather actually used to leave sips of beer for us to finish, bitter as it was I used to finish up because of respect for my grandfather. My mother used to drink too, it was something that I got used to that there would be fights at home, she would leave my sister and I for days and my grandparents used

to take care of us. Because there would be alcohol at home when there were gatherings, I grew up believing that I needed to drink when I went out to social gatherings with my friends, so I did. The after effects used to be so bad but I

HAPPY
joyous
FREE

BILL W.

gatherings with my friends, so I did. The after effects used to be so bad but I stuck it out because I thought that was what alcohol was supposed to do. I was an occasional drinker until my life became a mess. I was married and had three beautiful girls from the marriage. I was a wife and a mother carrying the baggage from my upbringing and the challenges I came across as a young adult that left me with invisible scars. My marriage was not a fairytale; there were happy times but those were much less than the unhappiness. The marriage ended and I was forced to be a single parent because my ex-husband chose to be an absent father.

I drank to escape from my reality, I drank to comfort myself. I drank for different reasons and when there was not reason, I created a reason to drink. I drank and ended up in places I did not know, my morals and self-respect were compromised. I became a nuisance to people I used to drink with, I did shocking things. I blamed my mother for my messed up life and despised her. If only she was there playing her role in my life then I wouldn't be facing such challenges. I would wander the streets at night whenever I ran out of alcohol in my fridge in search for a tavern where I can buy, and would leave my kids by themselves at night. I remember one Monday they missed school because I did not return

home the previous night because of my drinking. My kids were scared of me, I could see the fear and sadness on their faces but I continued to drink because I had problems and they too had to understand that mommy has problems. I manipulated my family members so that they would not be on my case, yes I would see concern written all over their faces when I drank but I continued to drink because drinking comforted me.

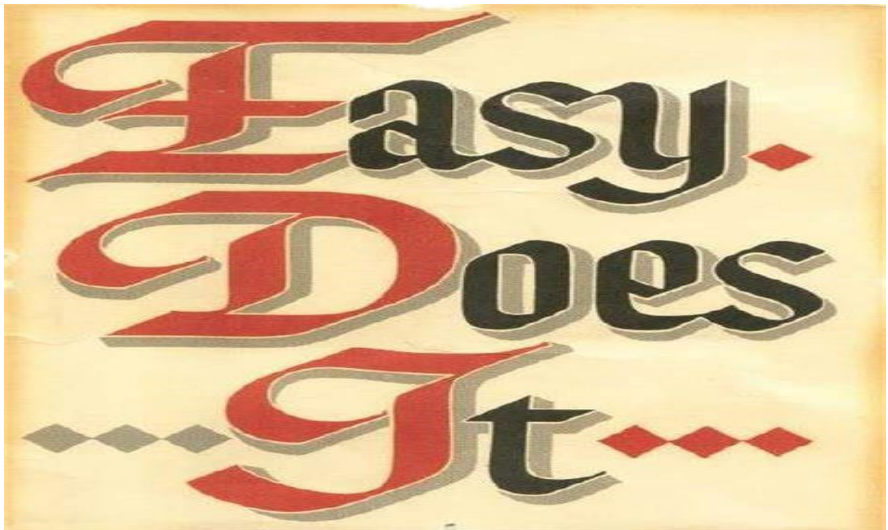
Shame made me hide my drinking from my friends. I did not think that my drinking had become a problem but I hated the things I did when drunk so I preferred drinking alone or I would drink before meeting them so that they wouldn't notice how much I drank...so I thought.

I was now at a place where I hated myself. I felt so helpless, ashamed; suicide was my solution but the courage to carry that out was just absent. I contacted Lifeline and poured my heart out to them about my messed up life, they asked me to try AA but still I was convinced that my drinking was not a problem. I went on to SANCA and still the social worker suggested AA.

I gave AA a try. I went to a meeting after not drinking for two weeks, well the AA Soweto Group, WhatsApp chat group was my strength for those 2 weeks. The messages, phone calls and daily interactions gave me hope and I found myself counting down the days to my first meeting.

My first meeting was on the 14th of August 2016 at AA Soweto Group, today I believe God was there because I felt weight being lifted off my shoulders. I was welcomed with warm hugs by bubbly and friendly people.

I sat and listened to this guy sharing his story, I could not hold back my tears from the identification. He was telling my story. He was sharing his story while explaining what alcoholism is and how it affects the mind, body and soul. From that day on attending meetings gave me life. I was introduced to my then temporary sponsor, and then I decided to stick with her because I clicked with her. She has been helping me a lot with learning about the AA Fellowship and most importantly helping me with the 12 Steps to Recovery. For me fellowshiping is good but working the program is the best. I need both.



Fellowshipping relates to the meetings that I attend regularly, the coffee, helping another alcoholic to find what I have found, the guidance and chats I have with other alcoholics in the program, doing service, fellowshipping is like my safety net. The 12 Steps to recovery is the Program that is helping me to overcome my drinking problem and has helped me to find a power greater than myself that will help leave a peaceful and joyful life. I feel that the steps were structured in a way that each one you do lifts you up, brings awareness, growth and changes something in you because that is what I felt with each step that I did.

Today I am reborn! I am growing spiritually! My sobriety date is the 31st of July 2016. Life is so much better. I am still learning and I believe I will never stop learning. I am a better human being than I used to be, I am no longer scared of looking at the woman in the mirror that is looking back at me. Today this woman is not only looking back at me but she is smiling back at me. Life is life and it has a lot of challenges but it's much easier now facing the challenges using the tools that were freely given to me in AA. I honestly admitted that I am powerless over alcohol and one day at a time my life is changing into something so beautiful.



LIFE IS BEAUTIFUL.

STEP 2 : “CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY”

Bob S

The Big Book infers that a vital spiritual experience is necessary for alcoholics to face and be rid of the obsession to drink. (p. 27)

Yet, paradoxically, we are told that belief in God was not necessary to accomplish this miracle—we need only become willing to believe. (p. 46) Indeed, I found that it wasn't necessary to define God before doing the Twelve Steps, but I began to see the result of my willingness to believe several months afterward.

I experienced a release from that deadly mental obsession that had plagued me for nearly thirty years! My willingness to believe came **before** doing the Twelve Steps, but my belief came **afterwards**.

The evidence was indisputable—I had been released! I had experienced a “*personality change sufficient to recover from alcoholism*.” I had been in AA for about a year before the release took place (The Big Book uses the word recovered), so in AA Program language I had *had* a spiritual awakening (slow) rather than a spiritual experience (sudden) as mentioned in Appendix II. (p. 567)

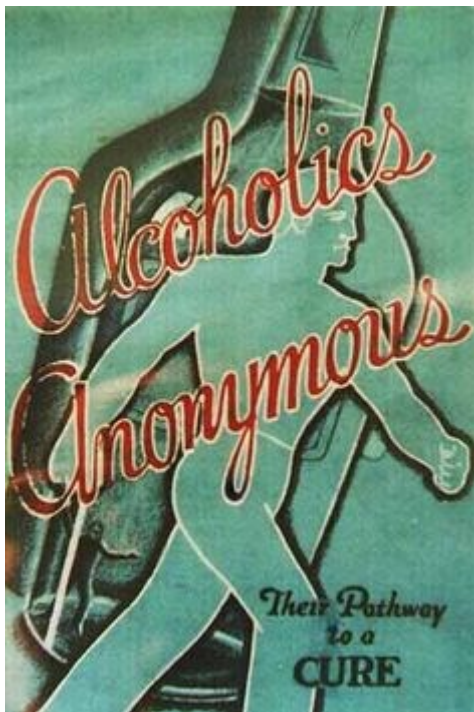
The Big Book does **not** say that I must understand God, but it speaks of: “*God as we understood Him*,” in Steps 3 and 11. This simply means that we each may entertain our different views of a higher power.

Although I may not understand God, I can see His **results**, i.e.: We have over two million sober alcoholics in AA and most all of us claim that God saved them from an alcoholic pit. (Including me!)

Reverend Sam Shoemaker, Bill Wilson's Oxford Group mentor, stated: "*Step two is not theological, it is evidential.*" The evidence is around the AA tables!

As I study the Big Book, I realize that certain words are used in a special and technical context not to be found in dictionaries. One of these words is "sanity." Sanity, in Big Book speak, is when an alcoholic can see and act on the truth in the matter of drink. Alcoholic insanity is when they cannot. Two examples: **Alcoholic insanity:** Jim pouring whisky into milk: "*plain insanity*" (p. 37) **Alcoholic Sanity:** Fitz Mayo who "*couldn't drink even if he would.*" (p. 57)

Someone wrote: "*The better I understand God, the less I know God.*" Came to believe is a decision of the heart, rather than of a conclusion of the mind."



ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance is the answer to all my
problems today.

When I am disturbed, it is because I find
some person, place, thing or situation –
some fact of my life – unacceptable to
me, and I can find no serenity until I
accept that person, place, thing or
situation as being exactly the way it is
supposed to be at this moment.

Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in
God's world by mistake. Until I accept
myself, my situation and my life
completely on life's terms, I cannot be
happy.

I need to concentrate not so much on
what happens in the world as on what
needs to be changed in me and in my
attitudes!

The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety

By Bill Wilson

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I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA—the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God. Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance—urges quite appropriate to age seventeen—prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven.

Since AA began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up, emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse! Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy, and good living—well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious—from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream—be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want!

How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden "Mr. Hyde" becomes our main task.

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones—folks like you and me—commencing to get results. Last autumn [several years back - ed.] depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer..."It's better to comfort than to be the comforted." Here was the formula, all right. But why didn't it work?

Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence - almost absolute dependence - on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what Grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed, upon any set of circumstances whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing a love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, I could not avail myself of God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependency meant demand—a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words "absolute demand" may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

Spiritual calculus, you say? Not a bit of it. Watch any AA of six months working with a new Twelfth Step case. If the case says "To the devil with you," the Twelfth Stepper only smiles and turns to another case. He doesn't feel frustrated or rejected. If his next case responds, and in turn starts to give love and attention to other alcoholics, yet gives none back to him, the sponsor is happy about it anyway.

Of course I haven't offered you a really new idea—only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own "hexes" at depth. Nowadays my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine.

Step 1 and I

By Terry

Big Meeting in the Sky, 30 years 'sober

Step 1 of the 12 Step Fellowship requires us to admit our powerlessness over our alcoholism because our lives have become unmanageable. When I came to the Fellowship and began working the 1st Step, a total transformation occurred in my life.

I began to feel alive again. No longer did I have to live in chaos and negativity. My life had undoubtedly changed for the better, and for that I am forever grateful to the 12 Step program. Before coming to the Fellowship, I lived a destructive lifestyle full of lies, anger, hopelessness and guilt. I felt separated from my true essence, and I knew that I couldn't go on living in this manner. I discovered the 1st Step of the program, which began my progressive journey of recovery.

I finally admitted my disease of alcoholism and became willing to follow the simple guidelines of this proven program. I learned that I had to become honest with myself, my disease, and with my complete powerlessness. I had to surrender my will, my drinking patterns, and my self-centeredness to begin anew. I was finally tired of always feeling inadequate and unworthy; and, most of all, I was tired of living a meaningless existence separated from God. I came to realize that surrender, acceptance, honesty, open-mindedness, willingness, and trust were essential for the process of recovery to begin. I have found that surrender is the foundation that all other spiritual principles and

and growth derive from. Daily, I had to surrender my powerlessness and unmanageability to set the stage for personal growth to transpire.

As I practiced applying these spiritual principles, I gained a new freedom and peace that I had never dreamed possible. I honestly started working and applying the 1st Step to my daily life. I discovered that I wasn't alone in this fight for ongoing recovery. I didn't have to face this by myself. The loving 12 Step Fellowship had my back. I was filled with hope, and a true desire for change. As my recovery progressed, I began to feel alive like never before. I began to learn how the program works. I noticed that other members were living happy, successful lifestyles; and if they could do it, then I knew that I could too. I dedicated my life to grow spiritually, mentally, physically, and re-align myself with my Higher Power. I obtained the drive and strength necessary to continually move forward in my recovery. My journey commenced, and I haven't stopped growing since I began working the 1st Step.

After applying the 1st Step of the program, I learned to focus my attention upon the truth. No longer did I have to deceive myself. I was positively driven to emerge victorious in the battles I faced as I began to live life on life's terms. With clarity of mind, I could now align my energies toward righteousness. It became apparent that concentrating my mind on doing right brought me continuous success. I learned to rid myself of all degrading, impure and negative

negative traits that would hinder my forward progress. I was compelled toward righteousness. I had finally awakened from my booze-induced haze that I for so long couldn't live without. Total abstinence was priority. As I embarked on this journey, my obtainable horizons expanded, providing me with endless opportunities for further growth and achievement.

To successfully complete Step 1, I had to be totally honest with my alcoholism and myself. I had to adhere to the suggested guidelines in order to stay sober one more day. I had to be credible for my actions, and how I carried myself. I had to be straightforward in order to fully receive the direction I needed to remain sober and serene. As I was open and sincere on my journey, I gained the strength and knowledge necessary for fastidious allegiance with truth and uprightness. I gradually became genuine and forthright in my search for personal freedom. I honestly applied the suggestions offered in the program to better my life, and all aspects of my being. My inner spirit awakened, finally emerging to assist me in my journey. My true essence came forth, overcoming all obstacles that held me in check for so long during my drinking, and self-centered existence. Displaying acts of candor and decency became admirable traits.

My new, positive moral values ascended beyond the limitations of my past. Righteousness took the wheel, steering me towards an unknown land full of opportunities and chances to excel. After working Step 1, I began to notice the positive changes that were taking place. All of this had occurred in my life because I became truly honest in all aspects of life.

In my opinion, to obtain willingness is to be favorably disposed in mind; to be ready, and prompt to do the necessary tasks to enhance our well-being. I had to display the willingness, and desire for change in order for me to follow through in action to achieve positive change. I could not be reluctant, but eager and without delay to do what is necessary to remain in recovery. With enthusiasm I ventured into the realm of life, and all that it entailed. Another positive attribute of Step 1 for me was the process of acceptance. With a consenting mind I stepped forward, unafraid of failure, but courageous in nature.

I have received with favor the many facets of my disease. I have come to understand that I am alcoholic and I have learned about my disease, knowing that I have the ability to make the required changes that are necessary to move onward in my recovery. I have learned to adjust and coexist with reality. I have endured the trials I've encountered, always remaining in hopeful expectancy and anticipation that good will prevail. Remaining long-suffering and uncomplaining I have marched on, ready to battle the perils of life, while armored with the spiritual principles of the 12 Step program.

During the first stages of my recovery, it was very difficult for me to set aside my pride and self-centeredness. Through patience and diligence, I learned the importance of acting with humility. I think that being humble is to be free from pride and arrogance. Humility is the act of submission. It is to have a consistent mildness of temper, while lacking conceit. I have found that acting with humility for me is to be subservient, to be obedient and compliant with Spiritual Principles

I accept responsibility and take charge of my recovery. Open-mindedness and willingness enabled me to apply the spiritual principles of the program, and provided me with the tools necessary to honestly work the 1st Step. The 1st Step allowed me the opportunity to stray away from my selfishness, and learn to become God-centered. I found that when I became less self-centered it encouraged me to adopt new, healthy ways of living without the insanity of obsession and compulsive behavior. No longer does fear, doubt, isolation, confusion and the feeling of separation from life have to control me. In recovery, I have strived to regain the sanity that I lost in my drinking.

"Don't leave before the miracle happens. . . "

When I came to the Fellowship, I always heard the familiar slogans: "Let go and let God," "Keep coming back," "Easy does it," "One day at a time," and "Don't leave before the miracle happens." These sayings made a lot of sense, especially in the first stages of recovery. Through these simple suggestions, I discovered new ways to adjust to life on life's terms. Through time, I started to reclaim control and hope, while obtaining the ability to detour around temptation, isolation, seclusion, and alienation. Strength of mind and spirit enabled me to attain the power to live. By observing and listening to the experience, strength, and hope of other recovering alcoholics is an indication that miracles do happen to those who devote their energies and focus towards ongoing recovery. Acting responsibly severs the course of insanity that controlled us. Remember, if nothing changes, then nothing changes.

As I moved forward, I became aware of my triggers and many of the situations that could ultimately initiate my demise. I learned to attempt to steer clear of all circumstances that might hinder my further growth, and spiritual advancement.

I can be assured that by NOT practicing spiritual principles, I will be cut off from further growth. Applying spiritual principles has been able to seize unsound patterns of self-absorption and intemperance. This has had many more positive results. During my active alcoholism, my spirit seemed inaccessible. I had separated myself from all life. I discovered that the 12 Steps were full of practical advice and suggestions that can help me to get out of my own head and recognize my disease of alcoholism.

I learned that by removing my destructive thought patterns, behaviors, and qualities that promoted my insanity, I could uncover my true nature, get to know myself, and become a power for good. A sense of meaning and purpose was finally reachable through the uplifting process of spiritual growth, awareness, enlightenment, understanding, and personal freedom.

My experience has shown me that : commitment together with action leads to transformation and conversion from impure to responsible. Positive expectations overcome misery and anguish. Faith in my Higher Power will do for me what I couldn't do for myself.

It has brought me assurance and hope that the impossible is possible.

"It must never be forgotten that the purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous is to sober up alcoholics. There is no religious or spiritual requirement for membership.

No demands are made on anyone.

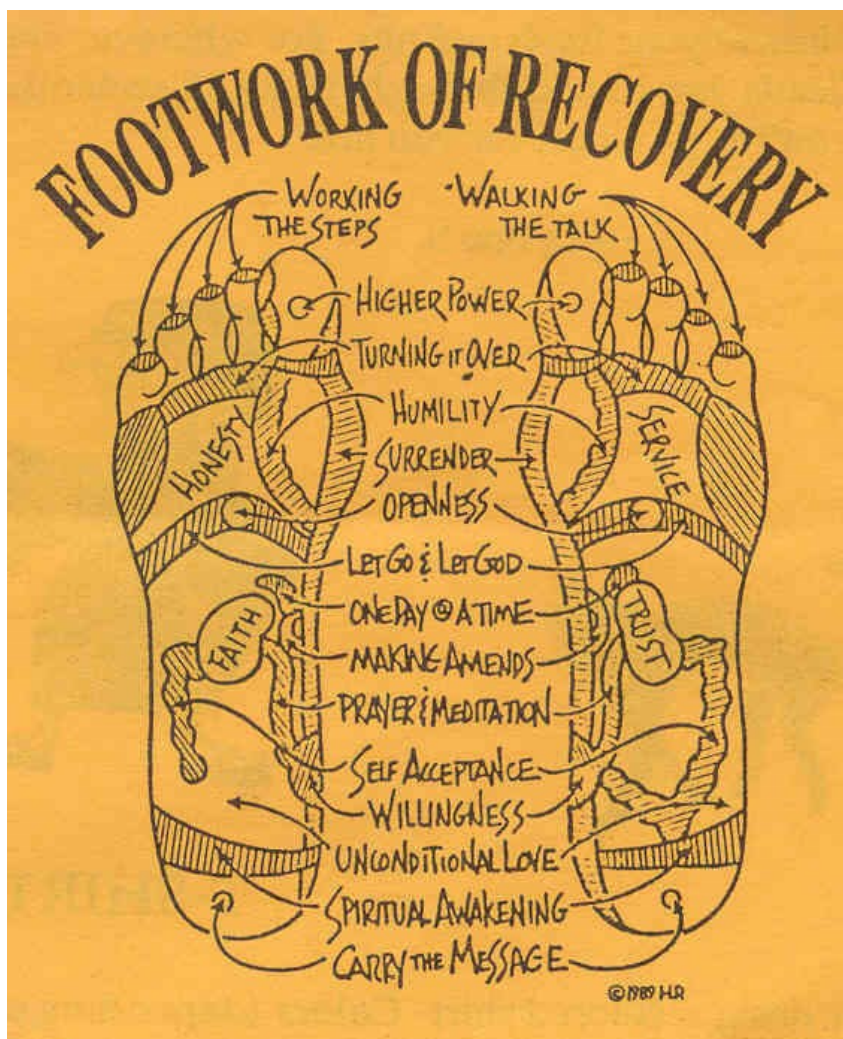
An experience is offered which members may accept or reject. That is up to them. "

Bill W.

**Just For
today...**

**I
will not
be in
charge.**





If
 we are
 painstaking
 about this phase
 of our development,
 we will be amazed
 before we are half way
 through. We are going to
 know a new freedom and a
 new happiness. We will not
 regret the past nor wish to shut
 the door on it. We will comprehend
 the word serenity and we will know peace.
 No matter how far down the scale we
 have gone, we will see how our experience
 can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness
 and self-pity will disappear, we will lose interest
 in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.
 Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude
 and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and
 of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively
 know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.
 We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we
 did not do for ourselves. Are these extravagant promises?
 think not. They are being fulfilled among us - sometimes
 ; sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for

Guidelines for writing *Regmaker* articles

Welcome to the pages of the *Regmaker*, where we hope you'll feel at home. The *Regmaker* is *your* magazine and nearly half of every issue is written by AA members who have never written before.

With a little willingness and a desire to share, AA members have been submitting their personal stories, their sorrows and joys, their ups and downs and in between to the *Regmaker* for many years.

Without your written experiences and opinions, the magazine cannot continue to be an effective tool for sober living and a vital, accurate picture of the Fellowship as a whole. So, if you've hesitated – thinking you can't do it – why not consider joining AA's meeting in print? You might just keep coming back!

As you plan your article, keeping in mind AA's singleness of purpose, you might want to leaf through a few old issues to get an idea of the sort of articles most often published. Then close the magazine and do your own thing! Say what *you* want to say, not what you think *we'll* publish. And don't be timid about branching out; a change of pace is great as long as it relates to AA experience.

FORMAT – If possible, articles should be typed. If you don't have a computer, don't worry about it. Just write clearly and legibly. If you quote from AA literature, please give the correct name of the source, along with the page number.

LENGTH - Maybe you heard a one-liner in a meeting that you'd like to pass along, maybe you just want to relate one short but sweet incident, or maybe you really want to go in-depth on a particular subject – no matter how short or long, the important thing is that you say what you want to say. The average contribution varies from one to five typed pages, but if the editors feel that much cutting is needed, we will seek your permission. Editing is normally very slight.

WE DO NOT PUBLISH - personal prayers, event flyers/announcements, tributes to individual AA's, drama, anything not related to Alcoholics Anonymous (such as articles about the field of alcoholism treatment, legislation, medical advances etc.).

WHERE TO SEND IT - Send your completed article to GSO via e-mail on gso@aasouthafrica.org.za or post to Box 11416, Randhart, 1457

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