

A photograph of a modern building with a spiral staircase. The staircase has three distinct sections with different colored railings: orange at the top, yellow in the middle, and green at the bottom. The building is light-colored with rectangular panels and windows. The title 'Regmaker' is written in a large, white, serif font across the top of the image.

Regmaker

APRIL - JUNE 2020

Your Meeting in Print

Editorial

What a time it has been! Since our last Regmaker our country entered lockdown and all AA meetings, in over 120 countries, were unable to meet in person for the first time in AA's history.

I have heard it said AA looks after AA. Within almost no time many groups around the world and in South Africa went virtual.

Those lucky enough with the means to access Wifi could move on to the Zoom platform with an opportunity to see and hear our fellows. Others made meetings available via the WhatsApp platform.

The Grapevine made its publications free of charge, as did the Regmaker for its previous edition and this one. many people have remarked that for all the economic and human devastation the COVID-19 pandemic has brought with it many miracles. the miracle of AA's being able to get 'extra' plugged in to AA all over the world through the accessibility of virtual meetings.

The opportunity for many of us to share at meetings in many global locations and also listen to shares from fellows in those same global locations. it has been an opportunity and privilege to see AA working in the same way all over the world.

It has been remarkable to see so many examples of the miracle and healing of the 12 step process - precisely as outlined in the big book.

Hearing the AA preamble read in many accents and many foreign lands and seeing and hearing the consistent joy and gratitude makes me think that Dr Bob and Bill W are so proud of this incredible programme that is even stronger than ever and has not just withstood but blossomed in these very unusual and extraordinary times.

We have included a lot of lovely articles from the Grapevine due to a lack of South African material - please do look on page 14 for how to write an article for Regmaker and we look forward to publishing more South Africa stories next time!

Enjoy this free edition of Regmaker and please send us your comments and suggestions!

Yours in Service,
The Regmaker Team

Regmaker

Your Meeting In Print

Your Meeting in Print

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, 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. AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any cause. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

The opinions expressed in Regmaker are not necessarily those of the editor, the publisher or A.A. as a whole. They are the opinions of the writer at the time of writing.

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Humility

Dr Bob's statement on his desk about humility.

Humility is;

"Perpetual quietness of heart. It is to have no trouble. It is never to be fretted or vexed, irritable or sore; to wonder at nothing that is done to me, to feel nothing done against me.

"It is to be at rest when nobody praises me, and when I am blamed or despised, it is to have a blessed home in myself where I can go in and shut the door and pray to my Father in secret and be at peace, as in a deep sea of calmness, when all around and about is seeming trouble."

Dr Bob, a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Just for Today

Just for today I will try to live through this day only, and not tackle all my problems at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appall me if I felt that I had to keep it up for a lifetime.

Just for today I will be happy. This assumes to be true what Abraham Lincoln said, that most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.

Just for today I will adjust myself to what is, and not try to adjust everything to my own desires. I will take my luck as it comes, and fit myself to it.

Just for today I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study. I will learn something useful. I will not be a mental loafer. I will read something that requires effort, thought and concentration.

Just for today I will exercise my soul in three ways: I will do somebody a good turn, and not get found out; if anybody knows of it, it will not count. I will do at least two things I don't want to do just for exercise. I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.

Just for today I will be agreeable. I will look as well as I can, dress becomingly, keep my voice low, be courteous, criticize not one bit. I won't find fault with anything, nor try to improve or regulate anybody but myself.

Just for today I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry and indecision.

Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself and relax. During this half hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective of my life.

Just for today I will be unafraid. Especially I will not be afraid to enjoy what is beautiful and to believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me.

**“Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions.”
p.64**

**“Adversity truly introduces us to ourselves.”
p.530**

“Those events that once made me feel ashamed and disgraced now allow me to share with others how to become a useful member of the human race.” p.492

**“Many of us felt that we had plenty of character. There was a tremendous urge to cease forever. Yet we found it impossible. This is the baffling feature of alcoholism as we know it – this utter inability to leave it alone, no matter how great the necessity or the wish.”
p.34**

Tradition 2

Richard W, Green Door

My name is Richard and I am an alcoholic. My sobriety date is 6th August 2017 and

I have been sober for 931 days. I have a sponsor who has a sponsor and at present I too am a sponsor. At 931 days sober I am new to the program and recovery. I am learning all the time how best to live in this world and how to fulfil the will of my Higher Power which I have recently learnt is for me to be happy, joyous and free by loving all and everything.

I am in absolute awe of the genius of both the steps and the traditions. Bill W categorically states that ours is a disease of self, which I understand to be Ego and that the Steps are a step by step process to rid me of my ego or at least right size it. That this aim and the steps tie in to so many spiritual principles and teachings never cease to amaze me. Be it Rohr, Tolle, Chopra or any other spiritual teacher I can see the parallels in these steps and traditions.

Bill was also wise enough to know that at times these steps may not be enough to fully do the job of ridding or right sizing ego's like mine. He therefore needed to devise a plan that would last for ever and would protect me from people like myself and AA as an organisation from its own members who by our very nature suffer from ego related issues manifesting in a disease of self.

The way he achieved this, imagining how the future would likely turn out if left to the likes of me, was to devise a plan to safeguard AA is nothing short of incredible, for if AA does not survive we will almost certainly all perish.

**... I am not General
Manager of the World**

**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.**

So Tradition 2 states: 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. In each group there is only 1 authority, a loving God as I understand Him or Her.

To me this is firstly an exercise in humility. By acknowledging a power greater than myself I am accepting that which I now know to be true and that is that I am not in fact God, or as my therapist calls me, General Manager of the World. By making it clear to me that I am not God or in fact GM of the world ensures that I know and appreciate that I have no right to judge, direct, criticize or in any way look down on any one of my fellows.

Further, when I'm humble I am teachable, I listen and I create the space for others to voice their opinions and thoughts. This is crucial for group survival. For me, the Tradition also clearly states that our group leader is a Loving God. My vision of this loving God is of one who is open minded, caring, non-judgmental, forgiving, kind, compassionate, considerate and most of all loving. For He or She, is all of these things to me, one who is so undeserving.

And so, if my God is all of these things to me, then I cannot be anything but the same to others. The tradition refers to group purpose and group conscience. This implies strength in unity, which is one of our very corner stones.

Strength in Unity

Our survival depends on Unity.

Nowhere are there better examples of group conscience prevailing than in the naming of The Big Book or in the writing of the 12 Steps.

In the case of the 12 Steps, Bill W had been inspired to write the steps as he felt they were intended : " "I relaxed and asked for guidance," he recalled later. "With a speed that was astonishing...I completed the first draft." When he numbered the steps he had written, there were twelve. Bill was resistant that these be changed.

The group's conscience however felt otherwise as the following excerpt from AA Comes of Age illustrates:

Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern!

Servant leadership I believe to be the most noble leadership and yet it is so lacking in today's world. Without getting political, it is extremely evident who are servant leaders and who are simply in it for themselves. Servant leadership implies an out flow or out pouring, or an expression of giving rather than in inflow towards self and ego. A servant leader leads by example and by leading in a way that is always for the benefit of others. This is in direct opposition to any leadership style or method that is geared towards personal gain. Again I see a lesson in humility. Me, myself and I need to be set aside.

Being a servant is also what I am told to be in step 12. This final step is to keep me sober physically and emotionally. It is critical to my long term happiness, which I believe to be God's will for me, and it also plays a vital role in ensuring the survival of the group. For if I am in service, for the right or no motive then I am being humble and my ego is out of the way and cannot disrupt the group.

Pretty simple really.

"Just before the manuscript was finished an event of great significance for our future took place. At the time it looked like just another battle over the book. The scene was Henry's office in Newark, where most of the writing had been done. Present were Fritz, Henry, our grand little secretary Ruth and myself. We were still arguing about the 12 steps. All this time I had refused to budge on these steps. I would not change a word of the original draft, in which you will remember, I had constantly used the word God and in one place the expression "on our knees" was used. Praying to God on one's knees was still a big affront to Henry. He argued, he begged, he threatened. He quoted Jimmy to back him up. He was positive we would scare of alcoholics by the thousands when they read those 12 Steps. Little by little both Fritz and Ruth came to see merit in his contentions. Though at first I would have none of it, we finally began to talk about the possibility of a compromise. Who first actually suggested the actual compromise words I do not know, but they are words well known throughout the length and breadth of AA today: In step 2 we decided to describe God as a power greater than ourselves, in steps 3 and 11 we inserted the words "God, as we understood him." From step 7 we deleted the expression "on our knees". And as a lead in sentence to all the Steps we wrote these words: "Here are the steps we took which are suggested as a program of recovery. AA's 12 Steps were to be suggestions only. Such were the final concessions to those of little or no faith; this was the great contribution of our atheists and agnostics. They had widened our gateway so that all who suffer might pass through, regardless of their belief or lack of belief."

Hope after Step One

Bob S Richmond, Indiana

The Big Book tells us that alcoholics drink because they are "restless, irritable and discontented" (xxvi)

Well, that wasn't me!

I even drank when everything was hunky dory. I recall a time, back in the 1950s, arriving home from a joyous visit with my lovely girlfriend at a nearby college and not having drank a drop.

I was as exuberantly happy that a young man might be! However, I became "boiled as an owl" that night before the bars closed.

Happy or otherwise, there was a mental obsession that decided when or if I would drink—the Big Book tells us: "Alcoholics have lost choice in the matter of drink." (p. 24).

So long as that demon (I refer to is as a drunken monkey) remains active in my noggin, I am sure to drink again.

This episode took place during the 1950s when I still had sufficient willpower to choose to go home directly after 'motel-time' was announced at the bar. However, that was not to be the case as years passed. The Big Book tells us that real alcoholics have a progressive physical condition (allergy) which destroys their ability to control how much they drink after they once start.

During the 1960s, I became an avid attendee of Los Angeles theater where they offer cocktails during intermission.

Yet, I had learned, through torturous experience, that if I drank just one of those tempting devils, I was doomed to think of little else till I got to the nearest bar. My expensive evening at the theater would be ruined! Positive proof e that the good doctor Silkworth rightly described the physical allergy. (p. xxviii)

So, I was powerless over alcohol both before and after my first drink, and though I have been sober for a fairly long time, if I imbibe just one shot of whiskey this evening, I may not be able to stop drinking for several days.

My physical allergy landed me in several drunk tanks, through twenty-eight years of inebriated living and lost more jobs for not showing up than I can remember.

However, that doesn't amount to a hill of beans so long as I don't take that first drink—and this won't be necessary so long as I remain in a "fit spiritual condition." (p. 85)

I trust God will keep me safe from that drunken monkey so long as I live in accordance with the Twelve Steps.

Wiped Out

Rick A, El Paso Texas

My drinking career may seem short to some. It lasted about twelve years, starting when I was fourteen. I could buy anything, anywhere because I was six feet four inches tall and weighed 200 pounds. I was every father's nightmare of his daughter's date.

I can't tell you what I was like at the end. I have no memory of it. A year of my life has been completely wiped out. I can only tell you what it did to me.

When I came out of intensive care, I weighed only 130 pounds. I was in a wheelchair. It wasn't a car accident that put me there; I had crawled into a bottle and almost killed myself.

From what I've been able to find out, the doctors think I drank for about two months, day and night. The alcohol level in my body was toxic enough to cause me to quit breathing four or five times.

My internal organs (liver, etc.) had shut down. My body wasn't functioning. That and the alcohol poisoning are what put me in the wheelchair. My vocal cords were paralyzed, my voice only a whisper. My memory was shot to hell. After a year in the wheelchair, I was able to start using forearm crutches.

I used them for four months before I could walk on my own. My voice is back and I'm able to shout with the best of them. The memory is still bad but I deal with it. I have used the stubbornness that kept me drinking to aid in my recovery. I have a lot of tangible things that I can look at and say, "Things are better."

I'm not going to say that it is all better. Even with everything I've been through, it will cross my mind to drink again. I'm not sure that this desire will ever leave me. I call it a gut reaction.

I did it a day at a time...

The old-timers that I've met at the meetings are split over whether it will ever go away. Right now I work on realizing that what I can control is my reaction to that thought. I also look at meetings as getting together with friends; that way it isn't a chore. It is something that I want to do.

I don't know if I can risk a relapse; I came very close to death with my last drink. Now there are people around me who will help me, and maybe I've helped them. Bad things will still happen; that is life. But I get to live it. That's something I took for granted at one time and almost lost. In November I had my two-year anniversary. It doesn't sound like much but at the beginning I didn't think it was possible. I did it a day at a time as it was suggested.

It has worked so far so I don't plan on changing it.

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The Rose

Annie E, Oklahoma

In January, I celebrated my seventh birthday in Alcoholics Anonymous. As I look back over the year, I realize it was the very best year ever in my sobriety, for it was linked inextricably with the Seventh Step and the absolute necessity for me to keep on changing. As Dr. Silkworth states in the Big Book, unless the alcoholic can “experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.”

Frequently last year, I was confronted with the pain of change. One day last week, I found myself confronted with yet another painful defect. At first, I did what I usually do at such times. I tried to rationalize the defect away, then tried to blame it on somebody else and finally began to say to myself, “This I shall never give up.” That’s when I knew I was in real trouble. At about this time, I went to a meeting that was on exactly what I needed to hear—Step Seven. As I listened to my friends share their practical experience with this Step, I became increasingly aware that I didn’t want to give up this particular defect because I was afraid—afraid of what might become of me, afraid of what God might change me into. What if I didn’t like it? As I heard one of my friends refer to the “psychic change,” my fear and defiance increased. But I began to listen more carefully. When my turn came to talk, I found myself sharing with the group my first real understanding of the Seventh Step. It had occurred during my third year of sobriety. I had been figuring out Steps Six and Seven and working hard on them for over a year and had gotten absolutely nowhere.

My sponsor, realizing that I was stuck, asked me to speak on these Steps at a Friday night meeting. I spent the rest of that week in a state of semi-panic, realizing that I knew all the words but had been unable to practice the Steps due to my inordinate fear of change. Early Friday morning when I arrived at the high school where I taught, I was met at the back door by two boys who were in my eleventh grade class.

They were both grinning from ear to ear with a great surprise they had planned. All of my students had been attending an arts festival that week and were enjoying the challenge of finding a “poem” to bring back to English class in order to earn extra credit. I had received all sorts of “poems”—from weeds and wild flowers to a sublime strawberry crepe, whipped cream and all! These two students were eager to walk me to class to show me their “poem” before everybody else arrived. When we arrived in the classroom, I saw a huge yellow helium balloon on my desk. The boys had tied the string inside a small vase that sat on my desk, and the balloon floated there like a bright, happy exclamation mark. On the balloon they had written some sort of ridiculous poem which they knew would make me laugh.

Then one of the students, Larry, pulled a long florist’s pin from behind his back and held it out toward me. “Pop it, Mrs. E.,” he said. I recoiled. I couldn’t. I hate to pop balloons. It scares me, and I usually scream. “Pop it, Mrs. E.” Larry was insistent. I continued to refuse, giving all sorts of great excuses and reasons. “Pop it, Mrs. E.” I laughed, I teased, I cajoled. But one of Larry’s greatest assets was his stubborn persistence, and I knew we would stand there forever or at least until I popped the balloon. Finally I took the pin, put one hand over an ear, closed my eyes, held my breath, and popped the balloon. I didn’t scream. I opened my eyes. Concealed inside the now disintegrated balloon was a long-stemmed red rose. I have no idea how they put it inside the balloon. I felt my eyes fill with joy, and I hugged Larry. At last I understood the Seventh Step. I am so full of hot air, I am afraid to let God pop my balloon of pride and fear. I am afraid of what I will find. But that day, God showed me—an American Beauty rose.

That night as I shared the story with a roomful of drunks, I looked at all of them and realized I was looking at God’s garden of roses. Again I wept for joy. **I realized that I, too, am part of His garden.** I have really learned only one thing since that day. I will not see my own rose. I must trust God for that as I continue to practice Steps Six and Seven. But my faith in this process of change increases as I look upon my fellow drunks and watch them blossom. I trust they are a reflection of what happens to me when I let go and let God.

Freedom from Fear

James W, Rhode Island

The second-to-last paragraph of Step Seven in the “Twelve and Twelve” was the wake-up call I needed as I reluctantly began my first journey through the Steps.

Finally I had found, in one sentence, the sum total of my active alcoholic life:

“The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear—primarily fear that we would lose something we already possessed or would fail to get something we demanded.”

From the day I picked up my first drink, continuing through early sobriety, fear ruled my life twenty-four hours a day.

To discover that my fears were based on the selfish notion that I deserved the best that life could give me—all the while trampling on other peoples' rights and feelings—saved my sanity and life.

I realized that the fear of losing people, places, or things was not only a waste of time; it caused a multitude of resentments.

My life is far from perfect, of course, but after a few twenty-four hours of sobriety and freedom from fear, I have hope and gratitude.

When I remember to work the program daily, I am able to replace fear with hope.

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Traumatic Recovery

Bonnie J, Boise Id

“Hijacked” by alcohol for most of her life, she had found “an entire psychic change” in AA

Hijacked—the word describes my state of living for over three decades. Repetitive traumas, proverbial terror, sexual abuse, abandonment, shame. A loathing of my very existence. An obsession great enough to keep me reaching for one more drink instead of a blade or a bullet.

The wish that I could act differently, feel differently, would always fall apart right about the same time that I was asked to be responsible.

From orphanage, foster homes, juvenile detentions, detox, jail, homelessness, probation (and repeated failure at that) to prison, halfway houses, three-quarter way houses. That’s what my first 35 years of life looked like. And I was sure I would die that way. In the prison yard—just a number—or a corpse found on the side of the road.

Even in light of this, I was quite frankly incapable of living any other way—and I thought myself unworthy of a different life. I had choices, the way I saw it: to drink myself into oblivion or to die.

Through years in institutions, AA carried the message to me. I was mandated to meetings to get my slips signed. I had a number of people willing to help me, and I received the Big Book many times through the years. But I never read it and never called.

But finally the thought came to me that maybe I had punished myself enough for things that were not my fault, and maybe I needed to take responsibility for the things that I was doing.

With that thought, something changed.

I called the hotline and was taken to a meeting, carrying my garbage bag that contained all that I possessed.

I asked for help—something I hadn’t done since I was eight years old.

I took direction and followed suggestions. I walked through fear and feelings of loss, shame, and grief and you taught me how to stay sober. I was diagnosed with PTSD and found help for that. This program has transformed me and continues to do so. I know today that I am not the same person inside and out that I used to be.

When I read in “The Doctor’s Opinion” about having an entire psychic change, I felt hope like never before. That such a change is possible, that it is still happening and that my life is on a different plane is beyond remarkable to me. Thank you AA and Grapevine for carrying the message to me.

**I asked for help -
something I hadn't
done since I was 8
years old.**

Online Sobriety

Barb C, Endicott, N.Y.

She hated computers, but finding AA online forums gave her the courage to return to the program after a long relapse

My story begins in 1991 when I was first introduced to AA. I went to meetings, had a number of sponsors, and actually made it to more than a year of sobriety, but it turned out I wasn't done drinking yet.

Fast forward to the year 2006. My husband and I got our first computer. I didn't like computers at all! I thought that they were going to ruin the world. (Actually, that's still in question.) By this time, I was drinking on a daily basis. I had stopped working a few years earlier, due to other health problems. I had my days and nights mixed up. I drank until 4:30 AM and didn't get out of bed until after 1:00 PM most of the time.

My selfishness and self-loathing were taking over—I didn't care if I got out of bed or if I would ever wake up again. Mentally and spiritually I was hitting bottom. But I was still not done the drinking.

But even with my drinking, I was starting to learn and figure out things on the computer. I discovered online forums of people writing back and forth on whatever subjects interested them. I first joined a cat site, since I have always loved animals, cats especially. It was ok for a while but I didn't feel like I fit in with the people on there. Then I joined a paranormal site. There were a lot of interesting things to read on that site, but the people were a bit strange so that wasn't for me either.

One day, I decided to see if Alcoholics Anonymous was on the computer. Yep, there it was. So, I drank and read, drank and read. I actually found somewhere or another online of an audio recording of Bill W speaking at a convention somewhere.

I cried listening to that and remembering how it was when I was in AA years before. Then I ended up finding other websites, with recovering alcoholics involved in forums and online meetings. For nine months, I wrote back and forth with these people, while drinking my rum and cokes. They kept telling me to go back to AA, and I kept saying: "No, I'm scared, it didn't work for me."

Eventually, in the summer of 2007, I did get the courage to go back to AA. I struggled that whole year and kept drinking every couple of weeks. I couldn't get a month under my belt. But I kept hearing over and over:

"Keep coming back"

and "Don't give up before the miracle." In January 2008, I picked up a white chip and I haven't had a drink since.

I have a home group and a sponsor, and I've held a few service positions. I truly believe my Higher Power reached out to me through the computer even though I didn't understand it at the time. Today I still go on my forums with my AA friends from all over the US and the world. Some of the people who helped me so many years ago to get the courage to go back to AA are still there. I owe my life to them and Alcoholics Anonymous. So I guess computers aren't that bad after all. I wouldn't be sober today if I didn't have one.

A Full Heart

Joe R, North Little Rock, ARK

Tonight he left the hospital concerned, exhausted and grief-stricken. But most of all, he felt joy

One evening a while back, a sponsee of mine relapsed. In spite of all his efforts, he was unable to stay sober. As things worsened and he was going in and out of consciousness, his family took him to the emergency room.

Once he was medically stable, he was admitted into the hospital to detox. Unfortunately, I was unable to be there with him and his family because my grandfather had passed away the day before and I had to leave town. I kept my own sponsor and other group members informed as my sponsee's situation changed.

When I was heading back to town, my sponsor and I made plans to visit my sponsee. It was his third day of detox. My sponsor also mentioned that several group members might join us. As we would be visiting him late on a Sunday evening, I didn't anticipate many members showing up.

The weekend had been long and difficult, especially after burying my last grandparent. After I got back, I dropped my wife at home and drove to the hospital.

On the way there, I was overcome with deep gratitude for the opportunity to see my friend. My Grandpa had lived a full life of 91 years and undoubtedly touched more lives than just mine.

And it made me think that as members of AA, we have been given the gift of sharing our experience and having the ability to touch life after life.

I pulled into the hospital, parked and walked into the waiting room. As I turned the corner, to my surprise I was met by 11—11!—of my fellow home group members. I was speechless. We all rode the elevator up, and after getting a few suspicious looks from the staff we were allowed in. A staff person told us that no patient had ever received so many visitors at once.

Our beaten-up friend was sitting alone at the back of the room. When he saw me round the corner, he stood up to greet me. Then the rest of our group began to enter and our friend was overcome with emotion.

Speechless, he wept on my shoulder. Each home group member then began to share the hopelessness and suffering they endured, but also the unending peace and joy they've been given through AA.

The power of the Fellowship in the room that night consumed each one of us. We were able to be instruments of our loving God, offering the hand that we were once offered ourselves. The experience was incredibly moving. I had a cry ball in my throat and had to fight back tears.

I walked out of the hospital alone because I stayed a bit longer than everyone else. As the cold night air hit my face, my tears began to flow. My heart was full that night. Even though I had laid my grandfather to rest that morning, by evening, I had participated in a rebirth.

A Lifetime Supply C, Kathmandu, Nepal

Coming into AA and finding the acceptance and love I'd sought in a bottle was a relief beyond description, but reading the Steps was a shock.

Fortunately for me, my home group did not hammer the Steps into newcomers. Rather, they talked a lot about the Slogans and the need to not drink a day at a time. I needed that.

During a discussion of Step Seven, I made the statement, "If my shortcomings and character defects are removed, there will be nothing left!"

I need not have feared. What I've learned since then is that I have more than a lifetime's supply of character defects.

My Higher Power and I can't get rid of them all in my allotted time on this earth. More importantly, I've learned that if I simply let go of a character defect—release it—my Higher Power will replace it with a character asset.

As I release anger I find that I am friendlier. As I release hate I become more loving. As I release fear I become more secure.

I don't have to go out looking for friendliness, love, security or any other trait that I desire. I just have to give up the feelings that are manifestations of my character defects and the good

automatically flows into my life.

And I used to think that I would become hollow without my character defects!

So, how does it work? Daily. On a daily basis I choose not to drink—or to fear, hate, be angry or indulge in any other defect that's raising its ugly head.

They're all there waiting, and when given a chance they charge into the centre of my life and try to take over.

But when I work Step Seven I find that my life is filled with good, and people actually like to be around me—something they never did in my drinking days.

**"If my shortcomings
and character defects
are removed, there will
be nothing left!"**

Ham on Rye

A businessman working on his Seventh Step complained to his sponsor, "I don't get it.

I prayed for humility and the Board of Directors forced me out. So I became vice president of another big operation. I prayed for humility again and got fired from that job, too!

What should I do?"

The sponsor said, "Pray for something else."

Prayer of St Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace! That where there is hatred, I may bring love.
That where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness. That where there is discord,
I may bring harmony. That where there is error, I may bring truth.
That where there is doubt, I may bring faith. That where there is despair, I may bring hope.
That where there are shadows, I may bring light.
That where there is sadness, I may bring joy.
Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort, than to be comforted.
To understand, than to be understood.
To love, than to be loved.
For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.

Guidelines|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 betweens 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



How to buy the Regmaker

Regmaker Subscriptions

R50.00 for Regmaker for a year – delivered to you.

Your subscription will entitle you to receive Regmaker for one full year. The subscriber will receive a minimum of 4 issues per year, but in the event of additional issues being printed, these will be supplied at no extra cost to the subscriber. The subscriber will also receive one free back copy of Reg-maker. (This applies to the first year only.) The subscription will run for 12 months as from the date entered on your application. To initiate your sub-scription, please enter all the necessary details in the space provided be-low and sign where indicated. Return these details, together with proof of payment to GSO and your copies of Regmaker will be delivered to you.

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The Twelve Steps

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.

The Twelve Traditions

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.

***"God, grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change,
the courage to change the things I can,
and the wisdom to know the difference."***

***"God, skenk my die gemoedskalmte
Om te aanvaar wat ek nie kan verander
nie,
Moed om te verander wat ek kan
En wysheid om die verskil te ken."***

