

### STEP FIVE

**“Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”**

One of my favorite sayings is “how free do you wanna be?” This makes me think of those who hesitate when it comes to doing a 4th and 5th step. While some have no problem admitting to God and themselves their past mistakes, bad decisions, and inappropriate behavior, swallowing your pride and admitting to another human being, someone you are looking up to as a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous, that’s where they draw the invisible line and walk away claiming they’re not ready.

Fortunately for us, the person we choose to sit down and have a serious talk with takes this step as an honor and duty. Giving to others what was so freely given to them.

When I did a fifth step with my sponsor, I remember walking away from that experience as though I was walking on sunshine, or free as a bird. A weight had been lifted from my shoulders. My experience with this step was not like a confession that I experienced from my parish priest. This step was done with empathy, shared experiences and even some laughter. My sponsor believed her job was to be a “compassionate mirror” so I could see my part in my past relationships while lovingly and painstakingly leading me to see how my behavior and character defects set the ball rolling in each and every twist and turn in my life.

**The views and opinions expressed herein are those of each individual and do not necessarily represent the opinions or policy of South Jersey Intergroup or AA as a whole.**

Today, I am blessed to be able to hear another women’s fifth step. I would not trade this privilege for anything.

Anonymous

### TRADITION FIVE

**“Each Group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”**

This Tradition is the “why and how” of the survival of Alcoholics Anonymous. We have found a way out and to keep it means to give it away. Because this tradition gives our groups a mission, our members have no question on their purpose. Although the coffee, cakes, celebrations, and fellowship greatly add joy to our sobriety, without our groups’ stated purpose in tradition five, our focus could be easily lost.

The founders of Alcoholics learned from the demise of the Washingtonian movement. This group was successful in helping many alcoholics, but they weighed in on other subjects as well, one of which was slavery. Their primary purpose was not clear and the group did not survive.

In the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Bill W. talks about how carrying the message of Alcoholics Anonymous must be the primary purpose of the group, because it is how the alcoholic stays sober. “My sponsor sold me on one idea, and that was sobriety.” (Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions , page 154. )

Bill tells the story of meeting a suffering alcoholic in Towns Hospital. When approached, he was skeptical at best. Bill expressed the beauty and ease of carrying the message — we don’t have to convince the prospect of anything. We only need to tell them our own experience and how Alcoholics Anonymous worked for us.

This will ensure a day of sobriety for us and if the prospect is willing, maybe he or she will stay sober that day as well.

Anonymous

## Words of Wisdom

Like most alcoholics, I did not think I would end up an alcoholic. Over the years, my life had truly become an unmanageable whirlwind. I no longer lived to drink, I had to drink to live. My life and life for those around me was horrible. Something had to be done and somehow, by the grace of God, I went to detox and had follow-up treatment. Part of my treatment plan was to go to AA meetings. I was skeptical. However, I do have a family member who swore by AA and as of this year will have eight years sober. Thus, I went anyway and to my surprise was welcomed from the start and heard a lot of relatable and helpful information. The program didn't click for me right away, but as I was told, I kept coming back and am so glad I did.

A statement that was said to me early in my sobriety was that "if you choose to drink now, you are making a sober decision to do so". Yikes! That was a pretty powerful statement. It is a statement that stays with me everyday.

For years I was out of control in every aspect of my life. Now on my road to recovery as a sober woman, wife, and mom, I can see things clearly. I can make a decision knowing the consequence. Picking up that first drink would ruin my life and my family. I never want to be in the hell I was in ever again and now with my Higher Power, my AA family, and support of the program I don't have to. I can make the sober decision to stay sober!

Rachel C. Haddonfield 12 and 12

## Beginners Corner

First impressions, good or bad, can sometimes be very defining for persons who are in a vulnerable state of mind. In my case, my first impression of AA has played a very important – and I'm hopeful a lasting – part in my continuing recovery from alcoholism.

At my very first meeting, to which my sister brought

me, a man, who I had not really even noticed, handed her a book to give to me. It was "A.A. Meeting in a Pocket". This tiny little book is filled with so many of AA's wonderful nuggets of inspiration and hope. I immediately made it part of my daily preparation for beginning my new sober life. (My personal favorite is "Just For Today").

It impressed me and has helped me so much each day for these past nine months, and I have taken every opportunity I have to share this little book with those offer my experience, strength and hope.

Early on, my sponsor asked me if I wanted to go to an H&I commitment with her to a local rehab facility. I didn't even know what an "H&I commitment" was, but as nervous and scared as I was, I said "yes" because that's what I was told to do – say yes when asked to serve. I picked up a bundle of these little books and brought them with me to offer to the women we encountered.

They were very well received, so I have since brought a pile with me each time I travel to the rehabs. My hope is that some of these women will find my little "A.A. Meeting in a Pocket" as inspiring as I did, and perhaps be just what they need to stay sober and help others to achieve sobriety.

One of the first things I learned about this amazing program of recovery is that there are no rules, only suggestions. How any one person interprets and implements those suggestions, I think, is one of the reasons this program works for so many different kinds of people from all walks of life, people who would never, under normal circumstances, relate to one another.

Janet R., Haddon Twp.

**Inside This Issue:** ♦ Step Five Tradition Five ♦ ♦  
This Month In AA History ♦ ♦ News and Updates  
♦ ♦ Articles from AA Members ♦ ♦ Letter  
from General Service Office



# DISTRICT 16/17

## SPONSORSHIP

## WORKSHOP

“The fact is that he should work with other people to maintain his own sobriety.”

– A.A., 2001, p. 119

All are invited to attend a ZOOM event sponsored by District 16/17 with special guest/presenter Maria M.

### WORKSHOP OUTLINE:

- Program to begin promptly at 10 am.
- Sponsorship: Transmit what you have as you trudge the road to happy destiny together.
- Know yourself so you can give freely to others.
- It's a journey that can be a great adventure.
- How sponsorship differs from 12<sup>th</sup> step work.
- Question and answer session.
- Program ending 11:30am

**WHEN:** SATURDAY, MAY 30,

2020 10AM TO 11:30 PM EST

**JOINING INFO: ZOOM**

**MEETING ID: 715 106 7989**

**PW: SERENITY**

**CONTACT INFO:**

Marcella P. (856) 404-2652  
mmmsp@aol.com



## **BIARRITZ INTERNATIONAL A.A. CONVENTION**

October 9, 2020 to October 11, 2020

Venue: Le Grand Large , 1 rue Dalbarade, 64200 Biarritz, France

**DURING COVID-19 LOCK-DOWN VENUE HOTEL RESERVATIONS ARE SHUT.**

(Attempts to book dates on the hotel website will show hotel as fully booked.)

- Al-Anon & YPAA participation
- Theme: KEEP IT SIMPLE

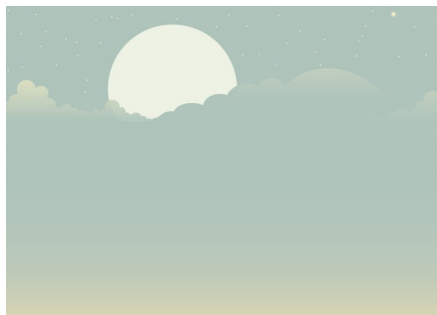
Speakers: Karen Casey, Ph.D., lecturer, and program member since 1974 will be the speaker of note,

Karen will also facilitate a two-hour workshop/presentation on the Saturday afternoon.

Karen is author of recovery reference books "Each Day A New Beginning", "In God's Care", among over 25 other books.

**ALL accommodations HAVE UNOBSTRUCTED OCEAN/SUNSET VIEW**

- Fly direct to Biarritz Airport (BIQ)
- Website: <https://aaconventionbiarritz.com>
- Registration: Pre-Registration (online) €35.00 (after 30 August €42.00)
  - Venue Accommodation from €55.00/night/person (B&B)
  - Alternative Accommodation from €30.00/night/person (B&B)
- Extend your stay at convention discounted tariffs, enjoy tourism in the region



# **Alcoholics Anonymous During A Pandemic...**

## **How one alcoholic stays sober during Covid-19**

On March 15, 2020, I was at work and was told that due to "COVID 19", we may close for a couple of weeks so the building could be cleaned and sanitized. I remember leaving work that evening and heading straight to an AA meeting. AA meetings are my sanctuary for when I am feeling fear, confusion and anxiety. Meetings put things into perspective for me.

My place of business did close and pandemonium seemed to break out in the whole world! The only thing on TV was the news about COVID 19! As panic ensued, everyone began to rush to grocery stores to fill up their cupboards with food and necessities. The world began to go into a type of hysteria that I never experienced before. It was a very alarming time for most people, but for an alcoholic, it could have devastating consequences. However, I have been involved with AA for over a year, and it has given me a very important Survival TOOL KIT to use. AA has taught me to pause, pray and take life day by day (sometimes minute to minute) and under no circumstance take a drink of alcohol. I cannot stress how grateful I am that my Higher Power led me to Alcoholics Anonymous. As a result of my deep roots of AA, I have found myself reading the Big Book more often and saying the different step prayers. I am truly giving all of my fears and worries to my High Power, so he can lead and guide me through this pandemic. I truly feel that I have gotten even closer to my Higher Power with the help of AA during these turbulent times.

Moreover, I am living with 2 other women in sobriety, and what a blessing they are to me. We talk about our

feelings in regards to the pandemic and our sobriety. We meditate on step prayers on YouTube and do different mediation exercises. We go on walks (social distancing, of course). Additionally, almost every night we attend Zoom AA meetings. How awesome is technology at times like this!! What a blessing Zoom AA meetings have become during this pandemic. I have met many different alcoholics from all over the world due to Zoom. While I must admit I am still more of an in-person meeting kind of gal, in a pandemic, Zoom has been a godsend.

In conclusion, I feel my bond with my Higher Power and Alcoholics Anonyms has grown even stronger during this pandemic. I thank my Higher Power and AA from the bottom of my heart for giving me all the different tools that I need to survive this pandemic and not pick up a drink!

Teresa P.





## THIS MONTH IN AA HISTORY

1949 The first AA meetings in Scotland were held in Glasgow and Edinburgh.

1950 Nell Wing became Bill W's secretary.

1951 Al-Anon is founded by Lois W. and Anne B.

5/1/40 Rollie H, Cleveland Indians, first anonymity break on national level.

5/11/35 Bill W makes calls from the Mayflower Hotel and referred to Dr. Bob.

5/12/35 Bill W meets Dr. Bob at the home of Henrietta Seiberling.

5/11/39 First group to officially call itself Alcoholics Anonymous met at Abby G's house in Cleveland. (some sources say 18th)

5/16/41 Ruth Hock finds that Joe W. (or V.), credited with coming up with the name Alcoholics Anonymous, has a "wet brain".

5/17/42 The Dayton Journal Herald published pictures of AA members wearing masks to protect their anonymity.

5/8/43 Akron AA Group celebrates 8th anniversary with 500 present and sober.

5/6/46 The long form of the "Twelve Traditions" was published in the AA Grapevine.

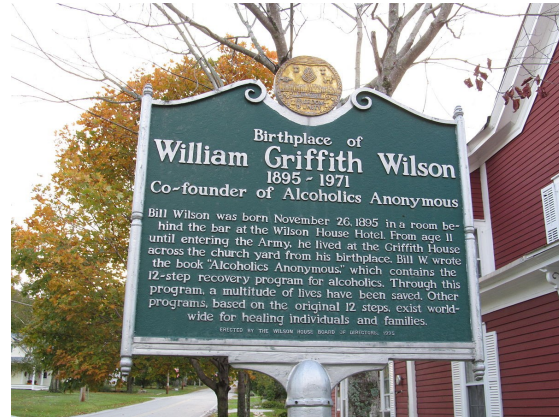
5/18/50 Dr. Bob tells Bill "I reckon we ought to be buried like other folks" after hearing that local AA's want a huge memorial.

5/15/61 Bill W's mother, Dr Emily Strobell, dies

5/8/71 Bill W buried in private ceremony, East

5/18/74 The first World Service Meeting of AA outside North America is held in London.

5/29/80 "Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers" is published.



**"I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."**

## HOPING TO HELP SOMEONE

If you are an alcoholic and addict as I am, the feelings or thoughts of hopelessness and powerlessness become very real. Yet, I think I often miss the real meaning of hopelessness and powerlessness. In our own strength, this is where the truth of those words lie.

I would often get angry because my Higher Power, which I call God, gave me the power, and yet I am powerless. The truth of this lies within belief. When I steady believe in my higher power, who is God, I am very powerful and will not drink or use. The lack of belief and faith are key factors for failure in sobriety, sanity and so many other areas of our lives. It is so very all consuming and when and if you can believe, very empowering.

Also, it is states that ,“faith without works is dead.” I always thought that if I had the faith of a mustard seed that should be enough. Oh no, how wrong I have been, especially as demented and broken as I had become, sometimes even now, as an addict/ alcoholic and survivor of incest.

When 6 years ago I entered the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous, I would hear members saying, “It works if you work it, and you have to do the work.” I thought I was. I worked hard just getting to a meeting; sometimes still do.

So infiltrated with a sick spirit, mind and body, recovery is a continual fight for our lives. For a person as myself and many others as well, anger and sick thinking are debilitating for those who have gone thru many difficult life situations.

So many of us find every excuse in the book to be angry about anything, especially being good at making mountains out of molehills. And so why wouldn't I have the right to be angrier than you? I don't. Life sometimes isn't fair, but what's important is how you handle it.

Congratulations if you've made it and you're reading this. I'm so very proud of you're.

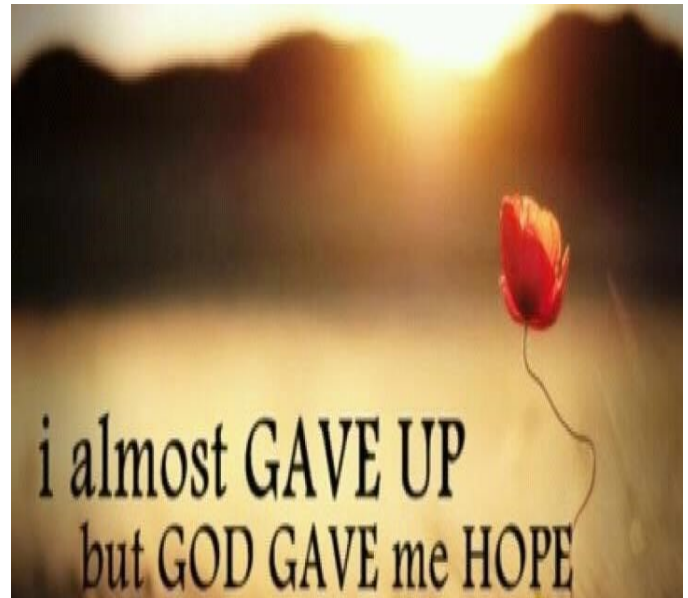
Everyone has their own story, excuse, reason, perception, reality, or dream of the way it was or should be or should have, could have, would have

been. The real truth of all of that is that no matter how much anyone thinks he or she is in control, we are not. God is the only one who is or ever will be.

I hope you find encouragement in these few words. I try to remember it is more helpful to listen to others rather than preach to them. Most importantly, our relationship with a Higher Power determines our outcome.

My God Always Richly Bless You and Yours.

Love, Beth O.



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"These are the facts of our history that show the need at all times for a safe reserve fund in the Foundation. This is the money that guarantees the operation of A.A.'s world services, rain or shine."

—*The Language of the Heart*, page 139

May 12, 2020

Dear Conference members,

With so much happening over these past few weeks – including intense preparations for the 70th General Service Conference, committee meetings, board meetings, and other ongoing work in the office (in a virtual/telework environment) – the landscape across our organization seems to change every day.

Among these shifts have been the realities of our own financial situation. It's no secret that businesses and organizations from every sector have felt the economic impacts of this global health crisis, and we are no different. As a result, due to steep declines over the past two months in revenue from group contributions and literature sales, management and the boards have increased our focus on costs and expenses of office operations.

To that end, on April 22, the General Service Office made a request to the Trustees' Finance and Budgetary Committee and its chair, Leslie Backus, for an emergency drawdown of \$3 million from the Reserve Fund. This request was due to the decrease in book sales and contributions caused by the global pandemic. After a review of the cash flow analysis, the committee agreed to forward the request to the General Service Board. On Thursday, April 30, the General Service Board approved the \$3 million Reserve Fund drawdown. Over the past week the office has begun that process and will continue to access funds as they become liquid in our bank accounts.

The decision was made after reflecting upon the primary principle behind the prudent Reserve Fund that A.A. has maintained for decades: "To provide the financial resources necessary to continue the services of G.S.O. and the Grapevine in the event of emergency or disaster..." (The A.A. Service Manual, page S72). The coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, especially in New York City and the downstate region, is a true public health

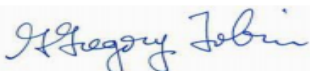
emergency. State and City regulations have restricted the operations of non-essential businesses since March. Our office at 475 Riverside Drive has been shut down to the nonprofit tenants since Friday, March 27, when we moved to 95% telework status for our employees, and there are no immediate indications of when this will change.

Further, the unexpected financial situation brought on by the public health crisis has required several layoffs or temporary furloughs of workers in roles that can no longer be covered by salary continuation. While this has been an incredibly difficult decision, our goal and responsibility is to maintain a sustainable, responsive organization to serve A.A.'s needs and requirements.

In addition to the objectives noted above, we are now focused on providing support for our General Service Conference, which will take place Saturday, May 16 to Tuesday, May 19. We will be utilizing a virtual platform to conduct Conference business, and our team has been demonstrating an "all hands on deck" approach to ensure that the event is successful for the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. While this is not something we envisioned even a few months ago, I am so proud of the resiliency and incredible work that has gone into planning. More discussion and reports on G.S.O. and AA Grapevine finances will be shared with you at the Conference.

This information and all that will be reported at the Conference are intended to be shared with the Fellowship, to keep the groups informed on Seventh Tradition funding of needed services, so that a true group conscience can be achieved in this difficult time for all.

Sincerely, in love and service,



G. Gregory Tobin  
General Manager