

# ANONYMOUS

## Fellowship Things to Do- LOCAL

Sat. Dec. 24 Freehold, 7am- 10pm, New Attitude Club, Christmas Eve Alcathon, 45 Throckmorton St.  
 Sun. Dec. 25 Millville, 8am –10pm, Christmas ALCATHON, Church of the Nazarene, 2201 E. Main St.  
 Sat. Dec 31, Lawrenceville, 6:30pm- 12:30am, Presbyterian Church, 2268 Main St., Music DJ Andy  
 Sat. Dec 31, Lambertville, 7pm on, Sober New Year's Eve., \$15, St. Johns School, 49 Bridge St.,  
 Sat. Dec. 31, Linwood, 6pm- 1am, Cape-Atlantic NYE Party, Our Lady of Sorrows, 724 Maple Ave.\$15  
 Sat. Dec. 31 Doylestown, PA, 7pm-1am, NYE Party, St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 301 N Main St.,  
 Sat. Dec 31 Sewell, New Year's Eve Party at the New Kiss Club, 1960 Delsea Dr., 9pm- 1am, \$10  
 Sun. Jan. 1 Burlington, 8am – 6pm, New Years Day Alcathon, St. Mary's Guild Hall, 145 W Broad St.  
 Sun. Jan 1 Groveville, 8am- 5pm, New Years Day Alcathon, Raymond Dwier Center, 392 Church St.,  
 Sun. Jan 8, Pemberton, 9am- 10am, Convention Committee Meeting, 449 Club, 6 Pemberton St.  
 Sat. Jan 14, Burlington, 1pm- 2:30pm, Corrections Workshop, St. Mary's Guild Hall, 145 W Broad St.  
 Wed. Jan 18, Cherry Hill, 8pm- 9pm, SJIG Intergroup Meeting: St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church  
 (St. Bart's), 1989 Rt 70 E (Marlton Pike East), Zoom Meeting ID: 424-122-113, Password: 276748  
 Thurs.-Sun. Feb. 23-26, Albany, NY NERAASA, visit snjaa.org – info., 660 Albany-Shaker Rd.

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**Bill W: I got speculating with myself about the early days of AA and about the meaning of them in terms of the Grace of God.**

I've read somewhere that if a grain of wheat which has been stored for centuries in a dry place is exposed to the right **soil** and the right **climate** and to enough **light** it will manifest life and it will unfold and grow.

Well, I think it's that way with AA. I remember years back to when we first began to get publicity and the first very large occasion was a piece done in the Saturday Evening Post which all at once produced us about 6000 members. This was in 1941 and by then a number of medics had become close friends, some of them psychiatrists and these fellows allowed their names to be used. A rather audacious step in those days, I assure you. Their names were used in the Post article. I make this point because when later asked to testify on another occasion **they refused to do it**. And these were the circumstances.

The first gal that got sober in AA is one known to many of you as Marty, still very much of a going concern in the Education Field of Alcoholism. Marty was the most difficult case. God knows we're all complex, but Marty was really a champ. And she had been under the care of a Dr. Foster Kennedy, a man of very high reputation, at that time a worldwide renowned neurologist. And he watched Marty as she was planted in the new soil. He watched her receive this life. While he was tremendously impressed, he came to some meetings, and soon he sent more psychiatrists to attend.

He asked me, Bill, would it be possible to have two or three of the psychiatrists in institutions who have seen recovery of very grim cases, people that you say are friends of yours and who have testified for you in the Post-piece? Couldn't we get a group of these to come to the Academy of Medicine and explain what they have seen? Well, we thought this was just great because in those days there were a very few friends of AA in Medicine, indeed so showing these people by reason of Dr. Kennedy, well, what could be better?

So one by one, we went to these psychiatrists who had provided input and we asked, would they come to the academy? And we suppose they would. After all, some of the glory of success could brush off on them. You know, they were friends anyhow, and they proved it, so why not? **And not a one would do it.** And when pressed for their reasons for not doing it, each one of them separately said the same thing. In effect, each said; look, Bill, you folks have added up to in one column more of the resources which have been separately applied to alcoholics than anyone else.

For example, you have this kinship in suffering. You have possibilities of communication that others don't have. You have a form of self-examination or analysis. You have a great new outgoing interest. You reduce guilt by restitution and you have this great compelling interest in helping others. And then there is a religious factor and then there is this factor of the hopelessness so far as the resources of the individual are concerned. And now this is a formidable list of forces.

But we still can't come to the academy. Well, why not? I said. They said we see an AA sometimes in weeks, in a few months shifts in motivation that even the sum of these forces couldn't begin to account for because we all too well understand the difficulties of this subtle compulsion. And the sum of them won't add up to the speed of these transformations in these very grim cases. So for us, there is an unknown factor at work in AA and among ourselves, being scientists, we call it the **X factor**.

We believe you people call it the grace of God. And which psychiatrist shall go to the Academy of Medicine to explain the grace of God? No one can. And we simply aren't going.

So I think it is just as futile as ever for any of us to presume to explain this **Matter of Grace** around which our entire galaxy of principles and activities are animated. We can't do that, but we can examine this matter of the soil and this matter of planting and this matter of illumination which for some reason or other we have made ourselves ready. Clearly God's grace has been available through the centuries, some might have asked; why haven't alcoholics recovered more often?

Why hasn't religion been more successful numerically at least? Why hasn't medicine been more successful? How is it that layman seemed to be doing this thing? So I would like to tell a story depicting at least as it seems to me what **the soil** is and what **the climate** is and what **daylight is**. These things of which we have been placed in such treasured possessions. There is no doubt that in an ordinary sense of time, AA began in the office of a psychiatrist and we might be mindful of this when we criticize people in this profession. Of course, for most of us the origin of AA is 2000 years old, for some of us perhaps older but I'm speaking of the situation in an immediate sense how was it started.

To say this too is a matter of conjecturing? But here's how it seems to me- there was a certain businessman of great attainment. He's cut down by his drinking, he runs the gamut of treatments in this country and this would be in the year about 1932 when he was just about at the end of his tether. So he went abroad on and became a patient of Dr. Carl Jung and as all of you know Jung was one of the

founding fathers of the art 'I prefer art instead of science' of psychiatry. Jung and Freud were the two founding fathers. But out these only Jung seem to think that man is something more than \$2 worth of chemicals a bundle of instincts and an uncertain intellect. Jung surmised man had something beyond this- that man has soul.

Our traveler had found a truly great human being. Great indeed! As events fell out, he placed himself under that dear man's tutelage for a whole year becoming more and more confident. The hidden springs of this baleful compulsion to drink were being understood and removed. He began to feel freer. There was no drinking while he was under treatment.

At the end of the year, he left Jung's care and in one month he was tight and the bender was terrific. So in infinite despair, he came back to Jung and said is there anything now for me? You were my court of last resort. And this great man said, Roland, I thought for a time after you first came that you might be one of those rare alcoholic cases in which my art has been helpful. Otherwise, I should not have encouraged you to stay. But, alas, I'm advised to conclude that you are not and that there is nothing that I have to offer you. My art has failed you.

I need not say that coming from a man of his Eminence; this was a statement of beautiful humility. And the whole destiny of AA, you and me and all of us has since hung on that sentence. So then Roland found that agony was added to despair and he cried out, but is there nothing else? And this was the answer he got; Rowan time out of mind Alcoholics have recovered here and there, now and then through religious experiences. Spiritual experiences let us say, are very truly through conversions, a naughty word for us these days. We don't use it for obvious reasons.

But, said the doctor, this benign lightning seldom strike and no one can say where or when it will. So I simply would advise you to place yourself in a religious atmosphere, remembering the hopelessness of your doing anything about it on your own, remaining resources alone and cooperating with your associates, placing yourself upon the care of whatever God there may be.

So, Roland aligned himself with the Oxford Groups of that time- a rather evangelical movement, rather aggressive. It was nondenominational, however, and it used simple common denominators to all religions, simple moral principles. It called upon its members to admit that they could not solve the life problem on their own. It called upon them for self-examination. It called upon them for restitution. It called upon them for a kind of giving in the Franciscan manner the kind of giving that demands no return in money, power, and prestige. He was to live in the losing of oneself in the lives of others.

Such was the nature of the crowd with which he became associated. And for some years he had no more trouble. At the time, in the groups, there were a few alcoholic sober. There is still an old friend who never became an AA but sobered up in the Oxford groups. So Roland returned to America and the groups here in those days were headed by an Episcopal clergyman called Sam Schumacher.

In his congregation and among the groups were two or three other alcoholic friends that had a summer place near Bennington, Vermont. And these friends, one of them son of a local judge and himself an alcoholic described the plight of a boy who was a school time chum of mine, Ebby Thatcher. Ebby had deteriorating horribly. There were summer folks in the town above Manchester.

Ebby had run his car into the side of a farmer's house and pushed the wall of the kitchen in. The door was still opened. Ebby stuck his head out of the car toward the poor woman cowering in the corner

who hadn't been hit. He said, hey, what about a cup of coffee? Well, the town fathers had had it. They were going to commit Ebby for alcoholic insanity. So the judge's son and Roland asked for and received responsibility for picking up the man who was to become my sponsor.

Meanwhile, I had gone the route with which you are all familiar. I had sobered up the summer before, scared to death by the verdict of my doctor, Dr. Silkworth. He is the one we have since named the Little Doctor who loved Drunks. And he must have them, because in his lifetime he dealt with thousands of them in various drying out hospitals. He had an idea that this thing was an illness having several components spiritual illness, moral illness, and also a physical illness, which is perhaps oversimplifying. He was apt to describe an alcoholic as a person condemned by a compulsion to drink against his own interests, to drink in spite of his perfect willingness to stop, and that this drinking was coupled to an increasing sensitivity of the body which, if the drinking went on, guaranteed his insanity and one day his death.

So this sort of sentence I had received at long last, by my doctor, Dr. Silkworth. So you see, the **soil** was under preparation. We were beginning to learn a little more. Ebby and my other friend Roland had received **the light** but I got drunk in about two months, even in spite of this sentence that I would have to be locked up or go nuts maybe within a year. And then my friend Ebby, who had been brought to New York from Vermont, who had unaccountably sobered up for the time being in the groups, came to visit me.

But I, too, was in great despair. Despair is a primary ingredient indeed of this sort in the medical jargon. We might call it deflation at depth. Some deflation! So Ebby came to see me, and he spoke of this list of moral, you might say clichés, nothing so new about that. I was in favor of honesty. I was in favor of helping other people. I was in favor of practically everything he had to say, except one thing I was not in favor of God. For I had received one of these magnificent modern schoolings, scientific schooling that assured me there was no God. Through a series of stages, I could be traced back to a single piece of ooze in prehistoric seas. This was my faith, and science was my God.

So along comes Ebby. He had my respect. And here was my doctor saying science can't fix my alcoholism. Medicine can't do it. Psychology can't do it. Religion sometimes but how could I find religion? So I felt trapped. In other words, I was gripped in the trap which we every day construct for the drunk who approaches us. I couldn't get the spiritual angle. As you know, the newcomer, like me, is being caught in this trap. When you and I talk to another alcoholic and we identify ourselves as having been denizens of this strange world and having emerged and we describe this malady in the terms of science. It forces the sense of hopelessness on us and we are finally deflated to depth.

Then we learn that now we have accepted our personal hopelessness, there still isn't any hope because we cannot go through with the God business. And this was the awful void into which I was cast by my friend Ebby. Bringing on the one side all of this bad news, but on the other side the vision of his own release. That was the word he used. He didn't say he was on water wagon. The obsession had just left him as soon as he became willing to try on the basis of these principles, and indeed, as he became willing to appeal to whatever God there might be.

This was reducing the theological requirements an awful lot. Well, I went on drinking about three weeks and in no waking hour could I forget the face of my friend. A spectacular release as I looked out through a haze of gin into his face as he pitched this synthesis at me. A conversion experience is not

for me. I'm an obstinate Vermonter. People would say to me, have faith. I believe I'd have faith if I could have it, but I can't. But anyhow, I'll go and get faith.

So I went to the hospital. I must have had a little optimism because I came in with a bag of beer. I tried to share it on the subway up. I was waving a bottle. Dr. Silkworth came out and I yelled at him. This time, Doc, I've got it. He said, I'm afraid you have Bill. You better get upstairs and go to bed. He looked very sad, for he loved me. So I went upstairs and went to bed. I was there fearing the DTs. So in about three days, I was in the clear. But the more sober I got the more awful the despair, the depression.

I think it was the morning, the third or fourth day that my friend Abby showed up in the doorway. My feeling was ambivalent at once. I said to myself, well, this is the time he's going to pour on the evangelism. And on the other hand, I was thinking he should be looking for a job. Why is he up here at 11:00 in the morning seeing me? He doesn't work for some preacher. Abby knew my prejudices. So he waited for me to ask him again for that neat little formula through which he had achieved release and dutifully, he went through it.

You got honest with yourself, with another person, in confidence. You made restitution, you helped others and you prayed to God as you understood God. I think he might have even used that phrase. Without much more ado, he was strong but no pressure. And again, I couldn't bring myself to consider God. And as soon as I was alone again, the despair deepened until the last of this frightful stubborn self-will momentarily was apparently crushed.

Then, like a child crying out in the dark, I said, if there is a father, if there is a God. Show himself. The place lit up in a great glow of wondrous white light. And then I began to have images in the mind's eye, so to speak. One came in which I seemed to see myself standing on a mountain and a great clean wind was blowing. And this blowing at first went around and then it seemed to go through me. This was ecstasy redoubled.

I found myself exclaiming- I am free. So this is the God of the preachers. Little by little the feeling subsided. I found myself in a new world of consciousness. One of the earliest reflections in this world of great peace which came over me was the world is always well with God. I am a part of this cosmic flesh. Even evil in God's hands can be transmitted into good. So I had been deflated at deaths by a fellow sufferer who used the scientific verdict to deflate me. Who used his ability to communicate through our kinship of common suffering and who made the example of a person who practiced what he preached.

God knows the light is great. Now, I ventured this assertion to anyone who has had a spiritual awakening or experience. Certainly it is not for me to bicker with theologians. But let me say I prefer to think that there is no essential difference between what happened to me and what happened to each AA, except the time.

Going back to those psychiatrists who said we can't create this tremendous shift in motivation despite all our resources. Well, in my case, the shift was sudden but the fruits have been the same as any successful AA. One of the most terrible compulsions and obsessions known has been expelled from us almost wholesale through this happy synthesis of medicine, religion, and our own experience in suffering, in recovery, and sharing the grace of this experience- one with the next.

Well, you may say, not every one of us has drawn through the experience of ecstasy or any light shining. Okay, maybe this is how I look at it, you go to an AA meeting and somebody gets up and this happens all the time, and they say, now, folks, I ain't got the spiritual angle. I'm making the group my higher power. I ain't got spiritual angle the way Bill experienced it.

Well, he looks different in other respects, but, you know, now, this guy will get up there and tell a story of losing this compulsion and if it's being cleared out of him and it being removed. They are motivated in many other ways just like I was. If you compare the changes in a matter of months or six months or a year to my sudden change its exactly the same- just a matter of the time element.

## **Alcoholics Anonymous Step 1: Admit Powerlessness**

### **What Is Step 1?**

"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable."

### **What Is the Purpose of Alcoholics Anonymous Step 1?**

Step 1 is about letting go. You admit you have a problem and begin to seek out assistance. It isn't easy, but admitting powerlessness allows you to break the cycle of alcoholism that you've been stuck in. Alcoholics Anonymous believes that admitting you can't control your alcohol use is a necessary first step on the path to recovery.

### **How Do You Complete Alcoholics Anonymous Step 1?**

Accept that something is wrong in your life and that you no longer have control. You must accept complete defeat before building a new life. Embrace the truth and want to make an honest change. Understand that recovery can't be done alone, acknowledge that you need help.

### **What Are Some Tips for Completing Step 1?**

Abstain from alcohol and/or drugs: Alcoholics Anonymous believes you need to be abstinent to attain recovery. Abandon pride and seek humility: Once you admit your problems and flaws, you will find modesty and humbleness. You can't admit embrace powerlessness if you're still holding on to your pride.

### **What Are Some Myths About This Step?**

Powerlessness means you're weak: Admitting powerlessness is a crucial step on the pathway to independence and strength. It requires honesty and courage to accept that alcohol and/or drugs have taken over your life.

You have to hit rock bottom before you're able to find support: It doesn't require a major life event to open your eyes to your alcoholism. Sometimes all it requires is a realization that alcohol is causing you more pain than the pain you aim to escape from.

### **Perspectives on Step 1**

Powerlessness. I never really liked the feel of that word. I mean, who wants to feel powerless? But when it comes to Step 1, I've come to know the POWER in it.

Yes, Step 1 was tough for me at first because I did not want to think that my alcoholism, attitude, and actions caused my life to become unmanageable. To me, that felt a lot like defeat. But I had hit my rock bottom due to a tidal wave of emotions that sunk my ship. My life was a mess, and I had no idea how to contend with the internal rubble. So, finally, after about a mil-

lion tears, I humbled myself. I became vulnerable. I realized that I was really powerless over alcoholism and my emotional life was out of control.

### **Springboard to Recovery**

The good news is that my admission of powerlessness was the springboard to my recovery. I guess I'd been living in some sort of alternate reality for much of my life. I stuffed my emotions beginning in childhood and let them stay buried because I did not want to feel the pain associated with them. I leaned on alcohol for years. In my mid-30s, I encountered a traumatic event, the emotional dam broke, and all the feelings I'd stuffed for decades flooded out, a freaking tidal wave of grief, depression, anxiety, fear, and more.

Step 1 made me realize: I'd spent a good part of my life trying to control others so that I would feel safe and secure. My self-will tended to lead me to trouble.

### **Foundation for the Other Steps**

Step 1 is the foundation for all of the other steps. This is the step where I own my reality. The step I run to when I'm feeling Insecure, Angry, Triggered, and Alone. I ditch the victim mentality, take a step back and take responsibility for my life and my emotions.

This step reminds me of how miserable my life was when I was in active alcoholism. When things are feeling out of control, I remind myself that "I am powerless over my alcoholism and I need some help." I surrender. Step 1 is my surrendering step, my honesty step. It's the foundation step that cultivates my continued healing, serenity, and joy. The first step might have been my toughest, but I'm so grateful I took it!

## **TRADITIONS CHECKLIST- from the A.A. Grapevine**

These questions were originally published in the AA Grapevine in conjunction with a series on the Twelve Traditions that began in November 1969 and ran through September 1971. While they were originally intended primarily for individual use, many AA groups have since used them as a basis for wider discussion.

### **Practice These Principles....**

**Tradition One: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity.**

1. Am I in my group a healing, mending, integrating person, or am I divisive? What about gossip and taking other members' inventories?
2. Am I a peacemaker? Or do I, with pious preludes such as "just for the sake of discussion," plunge into argument?
3. Am I gentle with those who rub me the wrong way, or am I abrasive?
4. Do I make competitive AA remarks, such as comparing one group with another or contrasting AA in one place with AA in another?
5. Do I put down some AA activities as if I were superior for not participating in that aspect of AA?
6. Am I informed about AA as a whole? Do I support, in every way I can, AA as a whole, or just the parts I understand and approve of?
7. Am I as considerate of AA members as I want them to be of me?
8. Do I spout about love while indulging in and secretly justifying behavior that bristles with hostility?
9. Do I go to enough AA meetings or read enough AA literature to really keep in touch?
10. Do I share with AA all of me, the bad and the good, accepting as well as giving?

## Editorial Policy

Anonymous South Jersey is a monthly newsletter published by and for members of South Jersey. Opinions expressed herein are NOT to be attributed to AA as a whole, nor does publication of information imply any endorsement by either AA or South Jersey Intergroup. Quotations and artwork from AA literature are printed with permission from AA World Services, Inc., or the AA Grapevine, Inc.

Contributions from readers are encouraged—you can write about your experience, strength and hope in general, or you can focus on one of the steps or traditions. You can also write about something that touched you at a meeting, something that bothered you at a meeting, or some service commitment you especially enjoy. Submissions are edited for space and clarity. Contact information is required and anonymity is respected.

Due to space limitations, we are unable to publish flyers for events in this newsletter. However, we are happy to include your gathering in the general list of fellowship announcements.

**Please send your submissions to [newsletter@aasj.org](mailto:newsletter@aasj.org).**

### **CONTACT INFORMATION FOR SJ INTERGROUP:**

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SJIG holds its monthly meetings on the third Wednesday of the month at 8 pm at  
St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church 1989 Route 70 East, Cherry Hill, NJ

**InterGroup Steering Committee: consists of the panel of elected InterGroup Officers, InterGroup Committee Chairpersons/Co-Chairpersons, and a Representative from the Board of Trustees.**

If you wish to be  
gentle with others,  
first be gentle  
with **yourself.**

If you care about the relationship, cool  
down before you speak. Because when  
you blurt, you hurt.

- UNKNOWN





I WANT HAPPINESS!



I WANT HAPPINESS!



FIRST REMOVE 'I', THAT'S EGO. THEN REMOVE 'WANT', THAT'S DESIRE.



NOW ALL YOU'RE LEFT WITH IS...

HAPPINESS!



# CALMING 5 MINUTE OCEAN MEDITATION



*If possible, start by lying flat on the floor on your back.*

- STEP 1:** Relax your body by breathing deeply into your stomach a few times.
- STEP 2:** Now, imagine lying at the bottom of the ocean. There is nothing around you except sand and seashells.
- STEP 3:** Focus on each area of your body from your toes to the top of your head, relaxing each in turn.
- STEP 4:** Each time you have a worry, concern or thought, simply imagine it as an air bubble and watch it float upwards and away from you.
- STEP 5:** Repeat this process until you feel calm, relaxed and ready to continue with your day.

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# CALMING 5 MINUTE RIVER MEDITATION

*If you're feeling overwhelmed, stop for five minutes. Find a quiet spot, sit down and place your feet on the floor.*

- STEP 1:** Start by simply focusing on your breath for a few moments.
- STEP 2:** Close your eyes and imagine your thoughts, tasks, "to do's" etc as a river raging around you.
- STEP 3:** Slowly begin to make the river calmer and calmer until it is a quiet, gently flowing stream.
- STEP 4:** Once it is a gentle stream, imagine it getting smaller and trickling into a beautiful, quiet, still pond.
- STEP 5:** Now you are ready to continue with your day - one thing at a time.

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## Twelve Tips on Keeping Your Holiday Season Sober and Joyous

Holiday parties without liquid spirits may still seem a dreary prospect to new A.A.s. But many of us have enjoyed the happiest holidays of our lives sober—an idea we would never have dreamed of, wanted, or believed possible when drinking. Here are some tips for having an all-round ball without a drop of alcohol.



**1** Line up extra A.A. activities for the holiday season. Arrange to take newcomers to meetings, answer the phones at a clubhouse or central office, speak, help with dishes, or visit the alcoholic ward at a hospital.



**2** Be host to A.A. friends, especially newcomers. If you don't have a place where you can throw a formal party, take one person to a diner and spring for the coffee.



**3** Keep your A.A. telephone list with you all the time. If a drinking urge or panic comes—postpone everything else until you've called an A.A.



**4** Find out about the special holiday parties, meetings, or other celebra-

tions given by groups in your area, and go. If you're timid, take someone newer than you are.



**5** Skip any drinking occasion you are nervous about. Remember how clever you were at excuses when drinking? Now put the talent to good use. No office party is as important as saving your life.



**6** If you have to go to a drinking party and can't take an A.A. with you, keep some candy handy.



**7** Don't think you have to stay late. Plan in advance an "important date" you have to keep.



**8** Worship in your own way.



**9** Don't sit around brooding. Catch up on those books, museums, walks, and letters.



**10** Don't start now getting worked up about all those holiday temptations. Remember—"one day at a time."



**11** Enjoy the true beauty of holiday love and joy. Maybe you cannot give material gifts—but this year, you can give love.



**12** "Having had a . . ." No need to spell out the Twelfth Step here, since you already know it.

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# Happy Holidays