

# ANONYMOUS

## Dr. Bob & Bill W. were co-founders of A.A.

My good friends in A.A. and of A.A.,

... I get a big thrill out of looking over a vast sea of faces like this with a feeling that possibly some small thing I did a number of years ago played an infinitely small part in making this meeting possible. I also get quite a thrill when I think that we all had the same problem. We all did the same things. We all get the same results in proportion to our zeal and enthusiasm and stick-to-itiveness. If you will pardon the injection of a personal note at this time, let me say that I have been in bed five of the last seven months and my strength hasn't returned as I would like, so my remarks of necessity will be very brief.

There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual A.A. work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words "love" and "service." We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind.

Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

And one more thing: None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us.

Thank you very much. *Dr. Bob's July 30, 1950, at the First International A.A. Convention in Cleveland.*

## Responsibility Is Our Theme

Bill W spoke at the General Service Conference held in New York City in April, 1965. The Conference theme was "Responsibility To Those We Serve." AA was thirty years old. Bill was 70 years old. It was a period of reflection for him.

"We old-timers are a vanishing breed," he said of the early members of AA. "The greater part of us have gone out into the sunset of this world."

He expressed the hope that the disappearing early AAers had left the members of the day a heritage sufficient to their needs, one which could be "enlarged and enriched."

Bill was preparing for the 30th Anniversary International Convention to be held later that year in July in Toronto. Much of the spirit of the Conference would also prevail at the Convention, where the theme would be, simply, "Responsibility," and Bill would repeat much of this speech.

Bill looked back over the years; he did a bit of an inventory of AA's history, "the better to reveal the areas in which we can improve ourselves."

"Without much doubt, a million alcoholics have approached AA during the last thirty years," he said. Estimating that "350,000 of us are now recovered from our malady" through the fellowship of AA, he continued, "So we can very soberly ask ourselves what became of the 600,000 who did not stay." (Page 2)

## INSIDE OUR JUNE ISSUE

- 1) My good friends in A.A. and of A.A.
- 1) Responsibility Is Our Theme (Part 1)
- 2) Lighten Up (Rule 62)
- 3-4) Responsibility Is Our Theme (Part 2)
- 4-5) Bill's Last message
- 5-6) A Day at the Beach
- 7) Commitments, Traditions
- 7-10) What Are Enemies of Peace of Mind?

### **Just so you know**

A sponsor took great pains to explain to a newcomer that in AA the terms pride, greed, anger, envy, lust, gluttony and sloth are generally known as the Seven Deadly Sins, not the Bill of Rights.-- Paul C.

### **Clear country skies**

While meditating in the country, a poet noticed a farmer looking at him curiously.

“Ah,” said the poet, “perhaps you, too, have seen the golden-red fingers of dawn speeding across the eastern sky, tethered stained superfluous islets floating in a lake of wine in the west, the ragged clouds at midnight, blotting out the shuddering moon?”

“Uh, no,” replied the farmer, “not lately. I’ve been on the wagon for more than a year.” —*Bob M.*

### **The breathalyzer**

When I first came around, I told my sponsor that I drank vodka because you couldn’t smell it on my breath, and that I ate mints just in case.

My sponsor asked me if I knew what vodka and breath mints smelled like. I said, “No, what?” He said, “Vodka and breath mints.” —*Ken K.*

### **Where are your feet?**

Sponsor: “I never really grasped the AA program until I stopped hanging out in the Shoe Row.”

Newcomer: “What’s the Shoe Row?”

Sponsor: “It’s the back row of the meeting that’s filled with loafers, slippers and sneakers.” --Paul C.

### **Piece of cake**

Drunk #1: I can’t remember... what’s the name of that thing you blow at and make a wish?

Drunk #2: A breathalyzer? --M.M.

### **Heard at a meeting**

“I never repeat gossip, so you better listen the first time!”--Lynne D.

### **Miles to nowhere**

Three tipsy friends were sitting in the bar of a railway station waiting for a train. When the train arrived, they decided to have one last quick one before departure. This, of course, made them late for boarding.

Just as the train was pulling out, the three made a dash for it. Only two of them made it. The third fellow staggered back to the bar, laughing his head off. The bartender, curious about his good humor, asked how he could be so happy, having just missed his train.

“I did miss it” said the drunk, “but the funny thing is, the other guys only came to see me off.”-- J. S.

### **Half-full answer**

When I was a teenager, my friends and I got into my father’s liquor cabinet and drank half a fifth of Kentucky bourbon.

Instead of filling it back up with water, I thought it’d be safer to take the risk that he wouldn’t remember, rather than offend his taste. He just might think he drank it.

But the next day my father called me and said, “Son, why is my bottle of bourbon half empty?”

The only answer I could think to say was, “Because you’re a pessimist.”-- *Mark B.*

---

## Responsibility Is Our Theme

No doubt some alcoholics “cannot be reached because they are not hurt enough, others because they are hurt too much. Many sufferers have mental and emotional complications that seem to foreclose their chances,” Bill acknowledged.

But what about all the others?

“How much and how often did we fail them?” he asked.

“Our very first concern should be with those sufferers that we are still unable to reach.”

He had some sense of the failings of the fellowship he had helped launch and which he still clearly revered. One of the themes for his talk was one he had broached before: a growing rigidity in AA.

He referred directly to a contingent within the fellowship which, often unwittingly, made it difficult for an increasingly large number of people to feel comfortable in the rooms of AA. “It is a historical fact,” he said, “that practically all groupings of men and women tend to become dogmatic. Their beliefs and practices harden and sometimes freeze. This is a natural and almost inevitable process.”

He discussed some of the ways that this rigidity could harm the fellowship.

“In no circumstances should we feel that Alcoholics Anonymous is the know-all and do-all of alcoholism,” Bill said, referring to the work of other organizations in the United States and Canada engaged in research, alcohol education and rehabilitation.

“Research has already come up with significant and helpful findings. And research will do far more.”

“Those engaged in education are carrying the message that alcoholism is an illness, that something can be done about it.”

Bill then talked about the growth of rehabilitation facilities in North America and the number of alcoholics treated by these agencies. “True, their approach is often different from our own,” he said.

“But what does that matter,” he asked, “when the greater part of them are or could be entirely willing to cooperate with AA?”

“Too often, I believe, we have deprecated and even derided these projects of our friends.”

“So we should very seriously ask ourselves how many alcoholics have gone on drinking simply because we have failed to cooperate in good spirit with all these other agencies whether they be good, bad or indifferent. Assuredly no alcoholic should go mad or die simply because he did not come straight to AA in the first place.”

Bill was of the view that hardened or frozen beliefs and practices were dangerous in AA. “Simply because we have convictions that work very well for us, it becomes quite easy to assume that we have all of the truth.”

“Whenever this brand of arrogance develops,” he warned, “we are sure to become aggressive. We demand agreement with us. We play God.”

“This isn’t good dogma. This is very bad dogma. It could be especially destructive for us of AA to indulge in this sort of thing.”

Bill defended the right of all AAers to have their own beliefs and to be able to freely express them.

“All people must necessarily rally to the call of their own particular convictions and we of AA are no exception.” Moreover, he continued, “all people should have the right to voice their convictions.”

Bill then returned to the subject of those who had come into AA but not stayed. “Newcomers are approaching us at the rate of tens of thousands yearly. They represent almost every belief and attitude imaginable.”

“We have atheists and agnostics,” he said. “We have people of nearly every race, culture and religion.”

And then Bill got to the heart of his message of responsibility.

*In AA we are supposed to be bound together in the kinship of a universal suffering. Therefore the full liberty to practice any creed or principle or therapy should be a first consideration. Hence let us not pressure anyone with individual or even collective views. Let us instead accord to each other the respect that is due to every human being as he tries to make his way towards the light. Let us always try to be inclusive rather than exclusive. Let us remember that each alcoholic among us is a member of AA, so long as he or she so declares.*

Towards the end of his address, Bill commented on how difficult it has been for AA to grow at important moments in its history. “Our fears and reluctances and rebellions have been extreme each time we have been faced with great turning points in this society,” he said.

“Let us never fear needed change,” he concluded. “Once a need becomes clearly apparent in an individual, a Group, or in AA as a whole, it has long since been found out that we cannot afford to sit still and look the other way.”

## Bill's Last Message

My dear friends,

Recently an A.A. member sent me an unusual greeting which I would like to extend to you. He told me it was an ancient Arabian salutation. Perhaps we have no Arabian groups, but it still seems a fitting expression of how I feel for each of you. It says, “I salute you and thank you for your life.”

My thoughts are much occupied these days with gratitude to our Fellowship and for the myriad blessings be-

stowed upon us by God's Grace.

If I were asked which of these blessings I felt was most responsible for our growth as a fellowship and most vital to our continuity, I would say, the "Concept of Anonymity."

Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical.

On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level, anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes.

A.A. must and will continue to change with the passing years. We cannot, nor should we, turn back the clock. However, I deeply believe that the principle of anonymity must remain our primary and enduring safeguard. As long as we accept our sobriety in our traditional spirit of anonymity we will continue to receive God's Grace.

And so—once more, I salute you in that spirit and again I thank you *for your lives*.  
May God bless us all now, and forever.

## A day at the beach

One summer vacation, my husband and I rented a home on the beach for one week in Destin, Florida. We took our two college-age daughters and one of them brought her new fiancé. And of course, we brought our furry babies, our three dogs. Our plan was to relax and get to know the young man our daughter had chosen to marry.

In the past, vacations, sun and sand always coincided with drinking—a lot of drinking! I felt so relieved to be sober for 10 months and not have to worry about controlling my drinking around this man my daughter had chosen to marry. But I also was aware that I might be subjected to some triggers. There would be booze in the house, so I knew I'd have to be extra cautious.

One afternoon, I had a real Step One moment. We were all on the beach enjoying our day, when I decided to walk up the hill to the house to grab some sandwiches for everyone. While I was in the kitchen, a nice-looking bottle of chilled vodka caught my eye. The sweat on the outside made it look so refreshing.

In an instant, I thought, a quick shot, no one would know. Just one! The house is empty. One shot could ease my tensions; it could heighten my vacation euphoria; I could talk more easily to my son-in-law to be; I'd feel prettier, younger and more

### *The Sixth Concept states:*

VII. The Charter and Bylaws of the General Service Board are legal instruments, empowering the trustees to manage and conduct world service affairs. The Conference Charter is not a legal document; it relies upon tradition and the A.A. purse for final effectiveness.

comfortable in my bikini!

Suddenly, my eyes bounced up. I could see out the huge picture window looking out at the blue sea. I could see my whole family, playing in the sand on the beach. There was my family that I love so much, the ones who would get my anger and hostile tongue after multiple drinks. I never had just one shot, one drink, I realized. It felt too good once I put vodka into my body. I can't control myself after the first one—certainly not anymore. Not in the past few years. I always failed, over and over. My body reacts differently than other people's. I was now at that moment the Big Book talks about—that mental blank spot, the moment of decision. Standing there in the kitchen, I knew for sure I was an alcoholic.

I'm grateful. God moved my eyes that day. I am sure of this.

## **Fellowship- Things to Do- LOCAL**

**Wed. May 17, 8pm- 9pm, Cherry Hill, SJIG Intergroup Meeting: St. Bartholomew's Church, 1989 Rt. 70 E (Marlton Pike East), See AASJ.org for Zoom Meeting info**

**Sat May 20, 7PM Millville, Bill's awakening group, at Church of the Nazarene ,2201 East Main Street**

**Sun., May 21, 10AM -1PM, Elmer, Spring Assembly Area 45, Elmer Grange, 532 Daretown Road, All members of A.A. are encouraged to participate. Hybrid. Zoom ID: 890 6412 2331 PW: SNJAA45**

**Sun., May 21, 6:30pm, Blackwood, Sunday Night Big Book, St John's Episcopal, 1730 Old Black Horse Pike**

**Mon May 22, 6PM, Mount Laurel Masonville Anniv., United Methodist Ch., 200 Masonville/Centerton Rd.**

**Sat. May 27, 11am -3PM, Wildwood Spring Fling Speaker Jam BBQ @ the 12 Step House, 113 W Oak Ave. Speakers start at 1pm, BBQ lunch to follow till 2pm then 2 more speakers. FFF.**

**Fri. June 16, 6:30pm - 8:30pm, Moorestown, Barber Group Anniv., Moorestown Trinity Episcopal Church, 207 W. Main Street**

**Mon. June 19, 6PM Palmyra Group 31<sup>st</sup> Anniversary, Epworth United Methodist, 501 Morgan Ave.**

**Sat. June 24, 2-4PM, Burlington Area Service 'How It Works', St. Mary's Guild Hall, 145 W Broad St., See SNJAA.org for Zoom Info**

## Need a new Commitment?

### The 12-Step List is looking for you!

What is the 12 STEP LIST? It's a list of Sober People willing to go a step further, when someone calls the AA Hot Line and needs help.

Many times, the Answering Service Volunteers who are answering the "hotline" are receiving phone calls from individuals who may be returning home from a rehab facility and are trying to locate someone to connect with in their home community, or a caller just had a family intervention and is looking for help getting started with the program, often callers need rides to meetings.

The Volunteer who is answering the Hotline will take the callers information, then look on the 12 Step List for someone near that caller's home (or at least in the caller's area). The Answering Service Volunteer will reach out to Volunteers on the 12-step list until they have contacted someone.

The Answering Service Volunteer who answered the call will provide the 12-step Volunteer with the caller's information. It's **NEVER the other way around! CALLERS ARE NEVER PROVIDED WITH 12 STEP VOLUNTEERS CONTACT INFORMATION EVER!**

The 12-Step list is restricted to the Current Members of the Answering Service Committee. This list is NOT distributed!

If you are interested in Volunteering for the 12-Step list please send an email to

Answeringservice@aaaj.org Or, if you wish, you can call the current Chairperson for the Answering Committee, Pete, at (609)332-8259. If Pete does not pick up, PLEASE leave your name and number in your message! Pete always calls back!

We need your town, first name, last initial, phone number, and your availability (can be as general as anytime, or as specific as you wish Sat & sun only 5pm-9pm only) Thank you for your service!

### **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.

#### **Tradition Six:**

An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

1. Should my fellow group members and I go out and raise money to endow several AA beds in our local hospital?
2. Is it good for a group to lease a small building?
3. Are all the officers and members of our local club for AAs familiar with "[Guidelines on Clubs](#)"?
4. Should the secretary of our group serve on the mayor's advisory committee on alcoholism?
5. Some alcoholics will stay around AA only if we have a TV and card room. If this is what is required to carry the message to them, should we have these facilities

## What Are the Enemies of Peace of Mind?

To us alcoholics, I believe that "peace of mind" is the paramount prerequisite to continued sobriety. During our drinking years, we did not, and could not enjoy "peace of mind." In the battle for sobriety, we have four definite enemies of "peace of mind" which require constant daily combat.

*LYING* is the enemy No. 1 of "peace of mind" and in connection with all alcoholics. Lying represents one of the chief germs of the disease, because we lied about everything when in most cases the truth would have been better; we lied to get out of the house, on the pretext of going to the store for groceries, but what we really wanted was another drink. We lied about where we had been, a last minute meeting had been called after business hours, which was the cause of our being late for dinner, but the meeting was actually with the bartender. We lied about money matters to our wives in order to hold out a few extra dollars for what we

believed our much needed stimulant. Therefore under such prevarication it is understandable that we had no "peace of mind."

*RESENTMENT* is enemy No. 2 of "peace of mind" because with a heart full of bitterness, jealousy and resentment, there is certainly no "peace of mind." We hated our neighbor because he was a pious, church-going, prohibitioner, who had on numerous occasions seen us come home in a condition much the worse for liquor, and maybe he had even offered words of condolence to our wives, which heaped more searing coals upon our fire of hate. We resented with fervor, and a sickening jealousy, the successes of our superiors, even the promotion of our associates, and sometimes said to ourselves, "Why didn't I get that promotion instead of him?" and immediately set out to drown what we felt to be our troubles. And so, living in the cloak of resentment, it is again quite understandable that we had no "peace of mind."

*INTOLERANCE* is enemy No. 3 of "peace of mind." It is the inability of an individual to cope with the smallest irritation. If we should make an error we excuse ourselves with the thought that it is human nature to err, but just let some one else make a comparable error and what happens? You know, we blow up --and did we make any effort to help the erring person? No! We were intolerant and couldn't understand how any one could be so dumb, and if we happened to be in a position of authority, we were more than likely to let off our super dynamic, egocentric, self-esteemed, arrogant, alcoholic steam, by firing the poor erring individual, not giving two hoots what happened to

him or his family. So here again, we had no "peace of mind."

*SELFISHNESS* is enemy No. 4 of "peace of mind." Looking back, how many times have the children gone to bed without milk, simply because the alcoholic needed the last 50 cents in the house for a half pint of "rot gut?" How many times have the lights been cut off, the gas cut off, credit at the grocery discontinued, and many other necessities of life been denied our families, because of that unquenchable thirst of selfishness? In short, every alcoholic, at some time during his drinking career has gone through this nightmare, and could any one mean to say that we could have "peace of mind" under these conditions?

There are many more enemies of "peace of mind", but these four seem to be the outstanding. Some readers might want to change their arrangement, but regardless of arrangement, we must agree, they are all important enemies of "peace of mind":

1. *LYING*: 2. *RESENTMENT*: 3. *INTOLERANCE*: 4. *SELFISHNESS*.

Perhaps as a new-member of A.A. you may ask, "What do the enemies of 'peace of mind' have to do with my sobriety? After all, the only thing I am interested in right now is sobriety."

This is a very natural, and very good question, and helps firmly to establish the fact, even more solidly, that you are definitely an alcoholic! . . . Without "peace of mind" we will not now, and never experience continued sobriety. We will not now, and never experience "peace of mind" until we start getting rid of the enemies of "peace of mind."



How are we to eradicate these enemies?

*TRUTH.* Let us substitute truth for lying. This is a lethal weapon against our enemy No. 1, and truth is the first step in obtaining, and retaining "peace of mind." Now we are able to face our fellow-man, our neighbor, our friend, our loved ones, with an open heart and mind. We have nothing to cover up, or hide, behind the enemy of "peace of mind" any longer. We are free once more, and have also gained in self-respect and self-confidence, because now we are on the first step to genuine "peace of mind."

*LOVE, RESPECT, PRIDE* (in the success of others). These we must substitute for resentment. America is the land of the free and remember, our neighbor is privileged to be a church-goer, a prohibitioner, or anything else he desires, because he is to be respected. An expression of pride at the successes of our superiors, or associates, will always reflect most favorably upon the expressor. How many times have we held resentment for the ones we love the most? But that was because they didn't understand our illness and were constantly attempting to make us quit drinking.

Do you want to see the wife brighten up, and bend over backward to do things for you? Then substitute love for that resentment. The very small expression of appreciation toward a loved one will change a clouded picture to one of sunshine and brightness. Just a word of praise makes the little wife feel a whole lot more like doing the very things she always has, and always will do for us. This game of substituting love for resentment

works both ways, girls, so let's not have it a one sided affair. Remember, the old man likes to hear words of praise and encouragement, too. And now we have taken our second step toward "peace of mind".

*TOLERANCE.* We shall substitute this for intolerance. Courtesy, kindness, and helpfulness toward others. The small irritations which once caused us to be intolerant are merely problems of the other fellow. We may be able to help him by exercising patience and tolerance. In so doing we are building better and stronger foundations for our own character thus making the ease with which we maintain our sobriety, a pillar of strength in our very lives. At this point, being tolerant does not mean that we turn into spineless, wishy-washy jelly fish. We must season tolerance with a fixed determination of firmness. Here is a very fine line which must be guarded against crossing because a fixed determination of firmness unseasoned with tolerance can surely back-fire into critical narrow-mindedness. The success of your tolerance in obtaining, and maintaining "peace of mind" is a big factor in the maintaining of sobriety.

*UNSELFISHNESS.* Here substituted for selfishness, which involves first the practice of giving, and doing for others: your fellow man, your friends, neighbors and family. It is even possible to experience a spiritual awakening, mentioned in our A.A. 12 steps, in the practice of unselfishness, because you will recall that, "It is more blessed to give than to receive." And now that we are living in a new world of truth, love, tolerance, and unselfishness, we find it quite pleasant to be able to meet each new day, and the problems it presents, because we have a new and better understanding of normal life and a sane and sober capability to cope with any and all conditions that arise.

There is only one road to joy, happiness, success, prosperity, and "peace of mind" (for the alcoholic) and that is sobriety. If you really want sobriety more than anything else in this world, you can have it and it doesn't cost you one cent. Alcoholics Anonymous stands ready and willing to teach you, and guide you along this road to joy, happiness, success, prosperity, and "peace of mind

## 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., and/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:**

South Jersey Intergroup Association, Inc. PO Box 2514  
Cherry Hill, NJ 08035

Office/Literature Sales: 1-856-486-4446

Email: [Info@aasj.org](mailto:Info@aasj.org) Website: [www.aasj.org](http://www.aasj.org) 24-Hour  
Hotline 1-856-486-4444

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. Our monthly meeting is held on the second Wednesday of each month at the InterGroup Office in Pennsauken and is open to all members of the A.A. Fellowship.**