

# Making a Start in Alcoholics Anonymous

## A Guide for the Newcomer

*Come join us in Alcoholics Anonymous and find recovery from the ILLNESS OF ALCOHOLISM*

### **MAKING A START**

You have made a decision. You've taken *Step One* and said to yourself: "Yes, I am one of those people who is powerless over alcohol. I can't stop drinking and I want help." You have discovered as it says in the *Big Book*, that alcohol is "cunning, baffling, and powerful."

To stop drinking and stay stopped, there are a few simple principles that you may want to apply to your life. These principles are *AA's program of recovery*. They can work for you as effectively as they have worked for others.

Following are some suggestions, which we feel will be of help to you on your path to recovery.

### **LIVING ONE DAY AT A TIME**

Alcoholics Anonymous is a way of living "one day at a time." We break life into small pieces that we can handle. We don't plan to stay sober forever, but just ONE DAY or ONE HOUR, or whatever length of time is necessary for us to stay sober TODAY. We do our jobs One Task At A Time and solve our problems One Problem At A Time. We clean up our past One Mess At A Time, we become willing to turn our lives over to the care of a Power Greater Than Ourselves.

### **GOING TO MEETINGS**

Every day in the Manatee and Sarasota area there are meetings morning, noon, and night. There are sunrise meetings, lunch meetings, after work meetings, evening meetings, and late night meetings. And each one can be found in a comprehensive meeting list called the *Where & When*. See the link *Meetings* on this website. These lists are available at almost every meeting in the area and they are free. Take in as many meetings as you can.

### **GETTING A SPONSOR**

A few members may tell you that they got sober without the aid of a sponsor, and they may be telling the truth. However, our AA experience tells us that you will have a much better chance with a sponsor than without one. In AA you will probably find that your sponsor is a vital part of your recovery program.

Your sponsor will listen to you and give you suggestions; tell you what works for him/her, point out trouble spots and help you decide what to do about them. In other words, your sponsor helps you to understand the AA program and guides you along your path to recovery.

Through sponsor can't solve all your problems. They do help you to face up to them honestly and courageously using the AA program in finding the solution.

If you don't know anyone or have been embarrassed to ask, a group secretary may be able to help you find a temporary sponsor.

### **HAVE A HOME GROUP**

When some of us were introduced to AA through a particular group, we thought we had been assigned to that group and should not go to other meetings. Nothing could be further from the truth. Feel free to visit various groups. But sooner or later, it is suggested that we settle down to a regular meeting that we want to consider our *Home Group*. Just as we are members of AA if we say we are, so are we members of an AA group if we say we are – and we keep coming back, (The AA Group pamphlet – P16)

However, having a Home Group should not keep you from going to other meetings. Attend as many meetings as you feel the need for, and a couple more! The Home Group you choose should be one in which you feel comfortable because it is where you are most likely to get sober and stay sober.

Your Home Group ought to be the place where you are challenged to keep growing and where you feel you have so many friends you don't want to stay away!

## **READING THE BOOKS**

As soon as you can, we suggest that you read these important books, which explain the AA program of recovery and methods AA members have used for not drinking:

- **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS (The Big Book)**
- **12 STEPS AND 12 TRADITIONS**
- **LIVING SOBER**
- **DAILY REFLECTIONS**

These books are AA General Service Conference approved literature. We suggest that you read them and reread them. They can be a constant source of inspiration and understanding. Many of us begin our "quiet times" by reading a paragraph or chapter from one of them. They are the basic source of our program of recovery and are indispensable.

Other AA literature is available and can be found on literature tables at most AA meetings. We feel it can be helpful as you travel the road to happy sobriety.

There are also two excellent periodicals that most of us read. One is the AA *Grapevine*, which is published every month and is filled with helpful articles for the alcoholic who wants to get well and stay that way. The other is a monthly newsletter published here by your Intergroup. Inside can be found articles written by members in our area, and a calendar of upcoming AA functions and events.

You can arrange to have the AA *Grapevine* mailed to you regularly. Ask your group secretary or Central Office for details. Information for contacting Central Office can be found on this website.

## **INCLUDING THE FAMILY**

It is said that the practicing alcoholic affects the lives of at least five other people and that alcoholism is a family illness. We find that the family that gets sick together can often recover together. The best way to do this is to share your recovery program with them.

Following are some of the AA activities you can share with your family.

**OPEN MEETINGS:** Take your spouse, other members of your family and interested friends to hear the stories of AA speakers; and to share in the fellowship of other AA families. Open meetings are designated in the Intergroup meeting listings.

**SOCIAL EVENTS:** Special suppers, dances, picnics, and other social activities are regularly sponsored by groups for AA members and their families.

**AA CONFERENCES:** Weekend conferences and roundups at resorts and hotels are held throughout North America and other parts of the world. These events offer activities for AA members and their families.

For family members and friends of alcoholics who desire help there are other programs available including Al-Anon and Alateen. Help can also be sought through other agencies.

## **NEED HELP**

When you need help and can't reach your sponsor you can:

- **Go to a meeting \***
- **Call another AA member**
- **Call AA HELP LINE (941) 951-6810**

If you need some AA literature and can't find it, ask your group secretary, group literature person, or phone the AA Central Office (941) 351-4818.

Much like your sponsor, group secretaries, in fact any AA member will try to help you in every way they can along your journey of recovery.

## **WHEN TRAVELING**

Just as you find friends in meetings locally, you will also find helpful members in almost every city and town in the United States, Canada, and most parts of the world.

Whenever you travel, pick up an AA directory for the Central Office for the area you are planning to visit. The directory will provide you with a listing of meetings and contact phone numbers.

Look in the phone book in most cities under Alcoholics Anonymous and you will find either an answering service or an AA Central Office that will help you make contact with an AA member. You are never very far from an AA meeting.

## **WELCOME TO AA**

So now you have a start. And, if you are like most of us, we think you will find these suggestions will help you on your journey to a comfortable, happy, sobriety. With sobriety other exciting experiences are:

- 1 - A new freedom in your life.***
- 2 - A new courage in your life.***
- 3 - The enjoyment of a new way of living.***

Remember that you never have to be alone if you use the tools that AA has to offer you. The program of Alcoholics Anonymous wants to provide support and guidance to all alcoholics who reach out for help. Our very survival requires that we must carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

## **WE NEED EACH OTHER**

Join our fellowship, participate in our program of recovery and enjoy your newly found sobriety

**24 Hour Help Line - (941) 951-6810**