

*This is more than a book designed to transmit information. It's a book capable of transmitting an experience sufficient to enable me to recover. Do I need more than knowledge to stay sober for good?*

## **PREFACE**

**READ** *The Preface*

### **The Basic Text ...**

**XI : 2**

**L1.** ...this book is the basic text for our Society<sup>1</sup>.

*'Text' noun; a book or other written or printed work, regarded in terms of its content rather than its physical form. Also; a written work chosen or set as a subject of study.*

*'Basic' adjective; forming an essential foundation or starting point; fundamental.*

**L5.** ...the first portion of this volume, describing the A.A. recovery program.

*This tells me where in this book I will find the A.A. recovery program, the first portion is upto page 164, after which we find the Personal Stories.*

**XI : 3**

**L4.** ...the section of personal stories..

*This paragraph shows how the chapter Bill's Story, pg. 1-16, though it is found at the start of the book, forms part of the section personal stories, and not part of the A.A recovery program. This doesn't mean it can't be helpful, we may use the first half of his story to consider if we thought, felt or drank like him just as we do with other personal stories, it is also a good format to write our own story when we get to the end of the Steps, and it is part of A.A.history.*

**XII : 3**

**L1.** All changes have had the same purpose: to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby to reach more alcoholics.

*We have added to this Stepwork-book our personal stories for this same purpose, at the end of this work-book we invite you to add yours as well.*

**L2.** ...the Big Book (A.A. members' fond nickname for this volume).

*The story goes that the early members chose to print it on extra thick paper so that the alcoholic would feel that they got something worth their money, hence the book became so impressively big that this nickname was soon doing the rounds, and it stuck.*

**L5.** If you have a drinking problem, we hope that you may pause in reading one of the personal stories and think: "Yes, that happened to me"; or, more important, "Yes, I've felt like that"; or, most important, "Yes, I believe this program can work for me, too."

*This describes how we read the book, pausing and asking ourselves the questions; "Did this happen to me"; or, more important, "Have I felt like that?"; or, most important, "Do I believe this program can work for me, too."*

---

<sup>1</sup> 'Society' noun; community, fellowship, organisation.

## FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION

### READ Foreword

#### ***We have recovered...***

#### **XIII : 1**

- L1. WE, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are people who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.

*This shows who we are, that we have recovered, and what we have recovered from.*

- L4. To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book.

- L8. ...this account of our experiences.

*We use our personal experiences to help everyone to better understand the alcoholic. Do I understand the alcoholic?*

- L9. ...the alcoholic is a very sick person.

*Do I comprehend that the alcoholic is a very sick person, that alcoholism is an illness?*

- L11. ...way of living...

*Not our way of quitting drinking, "our way of living", to live sober and satisfied.*

#### **XIII : 2**

- L1. It is important that we remain anonymous ...

*An early motive to remain anonymous and a reason for our Fellowship's name.*

- L7. ... our alcoholic work is an avocation<sup>2</sup>.

*'the alcoholic work' in question meant; the work with others as it is described in the chapter 'Working With Others'.*

#### **XIII : 3**

- L1. When writing or speaking publicly<sup>3</sup> about alcoholism, we omit our personal names, designating ourselves instead as "a member of Alcoholics Anonymous."

*See also Tradition 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.*

#### **XIII : 5**

- L1. ...not an organization in the conventional sense of the word.

*Tradition 8; Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional...  
Tradition 9; A.A. as such, ought never be organized...*

#### **XIV : Continuing from XIII:5**

- L1. There are no fees or dues whatsoever.

*Tradition 7; Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.*

- L2. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking.

*In Tradition 3 the word 'honest' is omitted.*

---

<sup>2</sup> 'Avocation' noun; a minor occupation.

<sup>3</sup> 'Publicly' adverb; so as to be seen by other people; in public.

- L3.** We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone.

*Tradition 10: Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.*

- L5.** We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted.

*Tradition 4: Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.*

## **FOREWORD TO SECOND EDITION**

### **READ XV:1 - XV:3**

#### **A wholesale miracle...**

#### **XV : 2**

*This paragraph talks about the growth in A.A. since the first printing in 1939 and the presentation in 1955 of our second edition...*

- L5.** ... recovered alcoholics. Not "recovering".

- L14.** 'Augury' noun; similar; prediction.

### **READ XV:3 - XVII:5**

#### **The flying-blind period...**

#### **XV : 3**

*From here upto the end of page XIII it talks about the origin of A.A. up until the first publication of this book, a period referred to as our 'flying blind' period.*

- L1.** 1935...the first A.A. group.

*Two alcoholics together may call themselves an A.A. group.*

- L3.** New York stockbroker; *Bill W.*

- L4.** Akron physician; *Dr. Bob S.*

- L5.** ...the broker had been relieved of his drinking obsession by a sudden spiritual experience...

*This was to become the solution to our drinking problem as we see it in A.A., a spiritual experience, more about this later.*

### **XVI : Continuing from XV:3**

- L1.** ...an alcoholic friend; *Ebby T. The old school friend that comes to Bill in his story on pg.8*

- L2.** ...the Oxford Groups; *A non-denomination First Century Christian Fellowship.*  
*[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxford\\_Group](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oxford_Group)*

- L4.** *Dr. William D. Silkworth...whose story of the early days of our Society appears in the next pages. See chapter; the Doctor's Opinion*

- L10.** Tenets; *principles.*

*Moral inventory (became Step 4), confession of personality defects (became Step 5), restitution to those harmed (became step 9), helpfulness to others (became step 12), and belief in and dependence upon God (Steps 1-12)*

### **XVI : 1**

- L2.** ... the broker had worked hard on the theory that only an alcoholic could help an alcoholic, but he *had succeeded only in keeping sober himself.*

*He tried to convince others by talking about his spiritual experience. This didn't work.*

- L7. ...He realized that in order to save himself he must carry his message to another alcoholic.

*The emphasis changed, the alcoholic, to save themselves, must carry their message to another alcoholic.*

**XVI : 2**

- L1. This physician (Dr. Bob S.) had repeatedly tried spiritual means to resolve his alcoholic dilemma but had failed.

*He gained the necessary willingness to pursue the solution when he learned about the problem and its hopelessness. Willingness is indispensable.*

- L2. He sobered, never to drink again.

*When the broker, instead of talking about his spiritual experience, gave the physician the doctor's description of alcoholism and its hopelessness, it worked.*

- L3. ...This seemed to prove that one alcoholic could affect another as no nonalcoholic could.

*The broker's theory was confirmed.*

**XVII : Continuing from XVI:2**

- L1. ...It also indicated that strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent recovery.

*The 'work' in A.A. is not the Steps, it's working with others. The alcoholic, to save themselves, must carry their message to another.*

**XVII : 1**

- L3. ...A.A. number three; *Bill D. Story on pg.182*

**XVII : 4**

- L4. 1939, the publication of this volume. A membership of about 100 people, a fledgling society, which had been nameless, now began to be called Alcoholics Anonymous, from the title of its own book. The flying blind period ended.

*To know more about this period: The Writing of the Big Book, the creation of A.A. by William H. Schaberg*

**READ XVII:5 - XIX:3**

***Its pioneering time...***

**XVII : 5**

*From here upto page XIV:2 it talks about the growth of A.A. after the publication of the Big Book up until 1941 when the mushrooming process was in full swing, when a fearsome and exciting period referred to as our 'adolescent' period began. A.A. was beset by problems on every side and in every group.*

**XIX : Continued from XVIII:2**

- L5. A.A.'s had to hang together or die separately. We had to unify our Fellowship or pass off the scene.

*Tradition 1: Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.*

**XIX : 1**

- L2. The principles by which the A.A. groups and A.A. as a whole could survive and function effectively.

*This paragraph outlines the Twelve Traditions. To see them in full go to page 564.*

**XIX : 2**

- L3.** Though none of these principles has the force of rules or laws, they have become widely accepted, confirmed internationally by 1950, and today the remarkable unity of A.A. is one of the greatest assets that our Society has.

**READ XIX:3 - End.**

**Wide acceptance...**

**XIX : 3**

*From here upto page XIV:2 it talks about the growth of A.A. after the publication of the Big Book up until 1941 when the mushrooming process was in full swing, when a fearsome and exciting period referred to as our 'adolescent' period began. A.A. was beset by problems on every side and in every group.*

**XX : Continued from XIX:3**

- L3.** Two principal reasons for public acceptance: the large number of recoveries, and reunited homes.

*Sharing about recovery and our reunited homes and friendships make an impression.*

**XX : 1**

- L1.** Another reason for wide acceptance of A.A. was the ministrations<sup>4</sup> of friends—friends in medicine, religion, and press, together with innumerable others who became our able and persistent advocates.

*It is important that we are friendly towards societies of medicine, religion, press and others, they are able to assist and support us. They recommend us, provide space for meetings and help us in numerous ways.*

**XX : 2**

- L1.** Alcoholics Anonymous is not a religious organization. Neither does A.A. take any particular medical point of view, we cooperate.

*Read tradition 6, the long form, and Tradition 10.*

**XX : 3**

- L1.** Alcohol being no respecter of persons, we are an accurate cross section of society.

*A.A. counts people of all walks of life.*

- L2.** By personal religious affiliation, we include Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Hindus and a sprinkling of Moslems and Buddhists.

*We can be alcoholic and all of these things. We can be all of these things, and alcoholic. We do not have to be or become any of these things.*

**XXI : Continued from XX:4**

- L5.** Upon therapy for the alcoholic themselves, we surely have no monopoly.

*We do not claim to have the only way.*

- L6.** ...our great hope...

*Have I as of yet found no answer?*

*Am I willing to believe I may find one in the pages of this book and join on the way to a new freedom?*

---

<sup>4</sup> 'Ministration' noun; the provision of assistance or care.

## **FOREWORD TO THIRD EDITION**

**READ** *The Foreword*

### ***A.A. at its core...***

**XXII : 1**

1976, 21 years after the second edition, A.A. membership was estimated at 1.000.000, 28.000 groups in over 90 countries.

**XXII : 2**

More and more people, a wider and wider range.  
More women, more young people, many teens.

*A.A.'s diversity is one of its many great assets.*

**XXII : 3**

The basic principles of the A.A. program, hold good for individuals with many different lifestyles and nationalities. They all trace the exact same path to recovery that was blazed by the earliest members of A.A.

*Which is described precisely in this book.*

**XXII : 4**

...this Fellowship, at its core, remains simple and personal. Recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope.

*This describes A.A. at its core.*

## **FOREWORD TO FOURTH EDITION**

**READ** *The Foreword*

### ***Experience, strength, and hope...***

**XXIII : 1**

November 2001, 25 years after the Third Edition, A.A. membership was estimated at 2 million or more, nearly 100.800 groups in approximately 150 countries around the world.

**XXIII : 2**

Literature has played a major role in A.A.'s growth.

*Carrying the message in writing is effective, it has the ability to reach many alcoholics.*

**XXIII: 3**

The message of recovery has reached even larger numbers of people, it has also touched the lives of a vastly greater variety of suffering alcoholics still.

*A.A. continues to grow.*

**XXIV: 1**

In any meeting, anywhere, A.A.'s share experience, strength, and hope with each other, in order to stay sober and help other alcoholics. A.A.'s speak the language of the heart in all its simplicity.

*This describes what we share at meetings, the language we speak, and the simplicity of it all.*

**End of the General information** \_ *Preface and Forewords*

*Start with PART I : The Doctor's Opinion*