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SOBER DAZE

October - December 2017 A 12TH District Publication

Building a Strong Foundation

Throughout the years that I have been in AA, I have seen many people come and go. One thing I have learned is not to predict who will and who will not be successful—there is no telling. But what I can see from watching long-timers is that they formed a strong foundation early on.

What do I mean by a “foundation?” A good analogy would be a comparison between two people building their homes. One person decides they will build their house on cement, using first rate materials, taking the time to make sure that they safeguard it from the wind, rain, erosion, and most of all, a catastrophic flood or hurricane. They take their time to make sure the structure is strong so their home will last. The other person decides they will build an almost identical home except they cut corners to save money by building it on sand. They also use inferior, third rate building materials, and since they are in a rush to finish, they hire inferior workers who rush through the project. The result is that, although the two structures look the same on the outside, the one built on sand with inferior materials will not weather a storm and crumbles with the slightest wind. However, the house built on cement with quality materials will keep standing—even through all sorts of weather, it remains solid.

I see many people celebrating their first year of sobriety, but never really forming a strong foundation. It is my opinion that congratulating people on one year should also come with a warning—that this is not a “graduation” and that hopefully they would continue to GROW in the Program, not just think that it is a piece of cake from now on. Yes, it is a wonderful thing to celebrate that first year milestone, but that is the time to double down and be extra vigilant seeing if they have indeed built their Program on popularity or maybe even for someone else. That is the time for a newly sober person to examine their Program, consult with their sponsor, and see if they need to move their “house” off the sand or add some steel beams. Maybe life has been good to them, and they start believing that sobriety itself will somehow protect them, and maybe it will for a while. But at some point in their sobriety, they will encounter a loss, be it a breakup, loss of a job, divorce, or even a death of a loved one and if they have a weak foundation, and have no reserves in the “bank”, it will crumble and they may not make it back. This is what we call, “living life on life’s terms.” The lucky ones will come back and realize where their Program went wrong and learn from the experience—the unlucky ones will NOT come back in, either because of embarrassment, or they just cannot do it. Those are the ones who will die. Building a strong foundation is THAT important—it is literally life or death.

- Marilyn B. (Editor)

Is there and alcoholic in your life?

I have a good friend who of course knows I am in the Program. For a few years she has been troubled about her son’s drinking. He is a classic “functional” drinker because he has a good job, car, is thinking of buying a house, etc.—in short, he has material things and has not lost anything yet. I have known her for years and I do know that alcoholism is on both sides of the family. Her father was a functional alcoholic who went to work every day and would spend every evening in front of the T.V. drinking his beer. Her father-in-law was quite the opposite—non-functional in every way, not being able to provide properly for his family. If someone who does not understand alcoholism was asked which one was an alcoholic, they would, of course most likely choose my friend’s father-in-law. Yet, they are BOTH alcoholic. The point I make is that there is no such thing as a typical alcoholic—it affects everybody in different ways and transcends all socioeconomic groups. Therefore, if you feel that someone in your life is drinking too much, chances are that your gut is correct. So, what can you do when you are worried about a loved one who you think might be an alcoholic? The following are a few options which may be helpful, but ultimately the person themselves, not you, will decide for him or herself whether or not they are alcoholic and want to stop drinking.

What can you do?

You may want to explain that alcoholism is an illness and urge the person to read AA literature and go to an AA meeting. Changes are you will only be planting the seed and, from experience, I suspect that they might not be receptive, or they may even be insulted. Many people will not be ready to give up drinking and often feel that alcohol is necessary to “cope with life.”

When is the right time?

It isn’t easy to know when someone is “ready” and some people never will be. As stated in the Big Book, alcoholics usually fall into four groups. But I must state that not everyone follows this progression—I drank alcoholically from my first drink, at age 16. I was a full-fledged alcoholic from the beginning. Some people jump straight into # 2. So the following is just a guideline and everyone is different. I personally never descending into stage 3, and never lost my home or job—alcoholics sometimes refer to people who stay in stage 2 “high bottom drunks.” This is misleading to think that “functional alcoholics” (people who still have jobs and homes) are any less alcoholic than “low bottom” drunks. It is not a badge of honor to get up on the podium and tell your harrowing story of homelessness and institutionalism versus someone who has a less exciting story. There is no such thing as “a little bit alcoholic” and either you are or you are not.

Different Stages of Alcoholism

1. People who are “heavy drinkers” who only drink to excess occasionally. They still drink socially, but they begin to have some serious consequences such as doing embarrassing things when drunk. But, some of these people may be able to moderate or stop completely.

Faithful Fivers

Charles A	Georgia A	Lisa S
Jim & Billie B	Jimmy H/Tammra N	Linda S
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Bruce/Kathy D	Pat J	Sara/John R
Ted/Michael E	Traylor J	Frank W
Rosanne G	Rosemary M	Kalie & Fred I
Ronnie P	Tony B	

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“Faithful Fivers” are A.A. members who, in gratitude, contribute five dollars a month toward supporting the 12th District Central Office. With this support, the Central Office pays for the printing of this publication and, when you enroll, will make sure it is delivered to your home when the issue comes out.

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Alcoholics Anonymous History—A few key points in AA history

1935 - 1944

An alcoholic from New York has a vision of the way to sobriety and is introduced to a like-minded doctor from Akron. Their first meeting will lead to the creation of a Twelve Step recovery program and a book that will change the lives of millions.

1942 — AA’s Prison Groups

A campaign for prison reform by Clinton T. Duffy, warden of San Quentin Prison in San Francisco, calls for addressing the special needs of inmates who had been drinking when committing a crime. Duffy seeks aid and advice from California A.A. members, leading to the formation of a prison group at San Quentin. The inmates hold their first meeting in 1942.

1973 — Big Book distribution reaches one million

The one millionth copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, A.A.'s Big Book, is presented to President Richard Nixon in a ceremony at the White House.

1975 — *Living Sober* is published

In 1975, A.A. published *Living Sober*, a book of member experiences that describes methods of living without drinking. The material for the book was gathered in the early 1970s from group and individual correspondence of shared experience, then writers compiled it into a book. The book becomes a popular addition to A.A. literature.

2015 — A.A.’s 80th Birthday celebrated in Atlanta, Georgia, July 2 - 5

Over 57,000 A.A. members and guests from 94 countries around the world celebrated A.A.’s 80th birthday in Atlanta, Georgia, with the theme “80 Years – Happy, Joyous and Free!” Nearly 250 scheduled meetings were held in various languages. At the Sunday morning meeting, the 35 millionth copy of the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, was presented to the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine, the religious order of Sister Ignatia, who worked closely with Dr. Bob to sober up thousands of alcoholics in St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio.

2. In this stage, drinkers lack control over their drinking and begin to worry about it. These people often get completely out of control when drinking, and may admit it the next day, vowing to stop or moderate. They are certain that “it will be different the next time.”

Drinkers may begin to employ a number of “control” devices such as drinking only beer, drinking only after 5, trying to limit their drinks, drinking only on weekends, etc. This may help but eventually their defenses break down and their drinking is worse than ever. At this stage some people realize that they must do something and come into AA. But many do not and the progression continues. They usually have not lost everything yet. Many people are “chronic alcoholics” and pretty much stay in this stage until they either get sober or die slowly of cirrhosis of the liver. Some people in this stage are so good at hiding their alcoholism that friends may be surprised when they die of an alcohol related illness.

3. If the excessive drinking continues people enter this stage. These people begin to lose jobs, friends, family, everything they hold dear and ties them to a “normal” life. They usually look for other ways to stay sober such as therapy, hospitalization, medications—everything except stopping drinking. They know they must stop, but cannot. They lose all interest in outside contacts and become increasingly isolated. They are full of self-pity but still will not accept that there is a solution and that it involves sobriety. They do not know what a wonderful life they could have but cannot give up the “crutch” of alcohol, regardless of how many material things they have lost.

4. At this stage, drinkers may seem beyond help. They usually have been in numerous institutions, rehab centers, hospitals, and yet when they get out after having been detoxed, they return to the only comfort that they know—another drink. It becomes a vicious merry-go-round. At this point, they may even suffer from the D.T.s but have almost no capacity to stop. Many of these seem hopeless but they are not beyond help, if they really want to recover.



Bill W's Last Message

Presented at The New York Intergroup Association annual dinner, Oct 10, 1970,
in honor of Bill's upcoming 36th anniversary, Dec. 11, 1970.

Bill was under hospital care for acute emphysema and was unable for the first time to attend the A.A. banquet at which his "last drink anniversary" had been celebrated annually. His greetings were delivered by his wife Lois to the 2,200 A.A. members and guests at the New York Hilton.

William G. 'Bill' Wilson

b. November 26, 1895. d. January 24, 1971
Co-Founder of Alcoholics Anonymous

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 Arabic 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 bestowed 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.

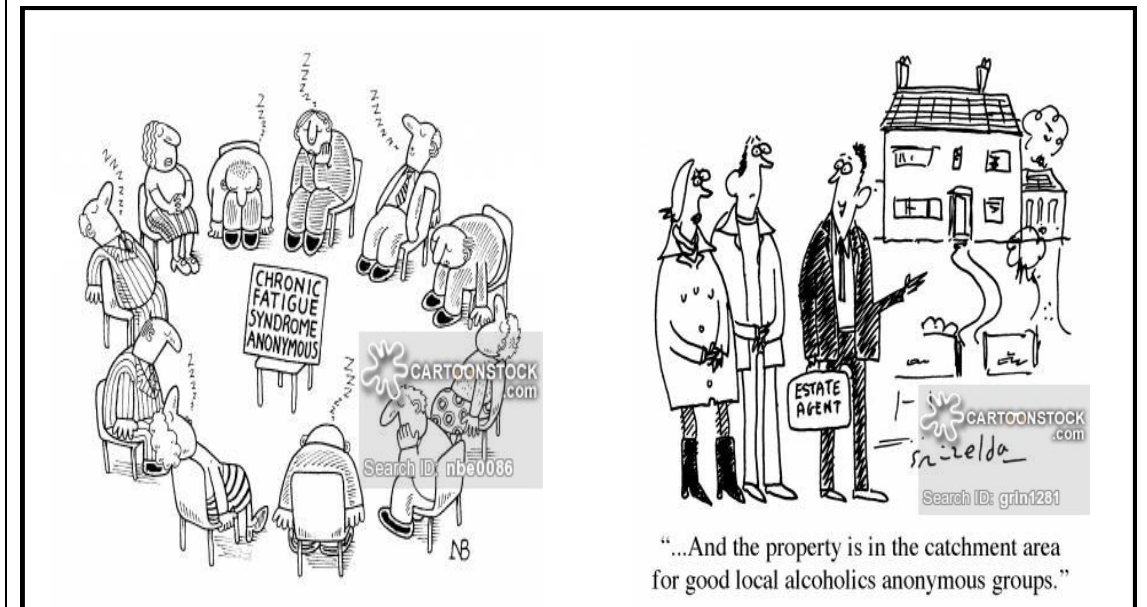
*And so -- once more, I salute you in that spirit and again I thank you for your lives.
May God bless us all now, and forever.*

Big Book History – Did You Know

In May 1938, when Bill W. began work on the first draft of what is now the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, in New York City and Newark, New Jersey, he had been sober about three and a half years. Dr. Bob was sober a few months less than three years, and the other 100 early members who contributed in one way or another to the writing of the book had been sober for periods ranging from a couple of years to a couple of months.

Tips for Sobriety and Serenity – Last 20 Tips

81. Keep it simple
82. Try to become a part of the world you have rejected
83. Watch out for complacency
84. Maintain and spiritual condition
85. Carry the message of AA
86. Have faith
87. Count your blessings
88. Try not to dwell on the faults of others
89. Accept life as it comes
90. Admit and correct your errors today
91. Believe that you are not alone
92. Avoid using the truth to injure others
93. When you are shaky, work with another alcoholic
94. Avoid gossip
95. Work to eliminate self-deception
96. See adversity as opportunity
97. Develop self-restraint
98. Don't fear needed change
99. Let go and let God
100. Take life a day, even a minute at a time



NEW BEGINNING

First Name Sobriety Date

Charles M.	10/10/2013
George C.	10/13/1988
Nina B.	11/1/2010
Daniel S.	11/1/2013
Charles H.	11/15/1992
John P.	12/1/2006
Dave Y.	12/2/1984

NEW PERCEPTIONS

First Name Sobriety Date

Fran M.	10/20/2004
Karen L.	10/23/2010
Sheri L.	11/1/2013
Jesse B.	12/4/2006
Joey S.	12/4/2013
Mike T.	12/16/2005
Ben I	12/16/2016
April P	12/17/2016
Marc H.	12/6/2013
Scott G	12/24/2016

NO NIPPING NOONERS

First Name Sobriety Date

No current info provided	

SOUTHSIDE

Name Sobriety Date

No current info provided	

SUNLIGHT of THE SPIRIT

First Name Sobriety Date

No info	
---------	--

THOMSON

First Name Sobriety Date

No current information	

Too SLEEPY to DRINK

First Name Sobriety Date

No current info provided	

WASHINGTON

First Name Sobriety Date

Ron B.	10/25/2015
Detra M.	11/17/2016
Jennifer S.	12/4/2013
Fino A.	12/27/2015

AA Humor

AA in Heaven - submitted by Carlyn C. of Live & Let Live Group

An old-timer comes home from his home group meeting, gets ready for bed, and is on his knees saying his evening prayers.

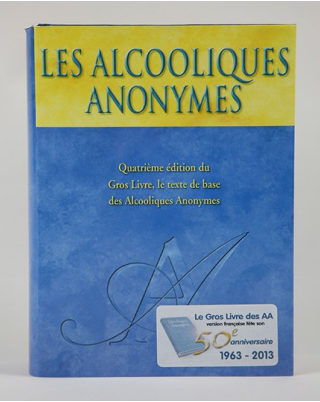
He's in the middle of his "God blesses" saying "God bless the guy who says the same thing no matter what the topic, God bless George, the cake lady, God bless" . . . suddenly he pauses and looks up, then says, "You know God, I wonder if there is AA in heaven. If there isn't AA in heaven, I don't know if I want to go there. These folks are so important to me, I don't want to spend eternity without them."

There's a bolt of lightening and a loud clap of thunder and then the old timer hears a voice saying, "I have good news and bad news. The good news is there is AA in heav-en. The bad news is.....You're speaking tomorrow night."

Watch how you share when asked to be a Speaker at a meeting

A lady first time to AA was listening to a man and wife talk of their former problems with booze. The wife concluded by saying that the year before, thanks to the Man Up-stairs, they had become the proud parents of their first child. The new member, never having heard of God referred to that way, turned to the person next to her and whispered in horror, "Do all the people in AA make such shocking per-sonal confession?"

AA in other countries



Note from Editor

In the spirit of rotation, this will be the last issue of Sober Daze edited by me. I’d like to say that it has been an honor and a pleasure to serve AA in this way. I would like to think that I have provided some thought provoking and interesting articles that have helped, or at least entertained us Alcoholics. I will continue to write articles for this publication and will continue to serve AA in that way as well. David J. will be taking over as editor and I am sure Sober Daze will be in very capable hands. Thank you everybody for your readership and support.

- Marilyn B.

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!!!

EVANS	
First Name	Sobriety Date
Mark Z.	10/01/13
John L.	10/11/87
Rob D.	10/11/06
Frank W.	10/14/97
Charlie J.	11/27/98
Ted E.	12/09/85
Don G.	12/20/69

FIRST STEP	
First Name	Sobriety Date
No current info available	

FOREST HILLS	
First Name	Sobriety Date
Ashley R.	10/1/2014
Drew D.	10/4/2012
Amanda B.	10/7/2009
Linda S.	10/7/2012
Wayne H.	10/7/2015
Joshua M.	10/9/2016
Brian P.	10/10/2010
Maracia J.	10/12/2000
Heather H.	10/18/2010
Stoney C.	10/26/2016
Paul W.	11/1/2003
Christian F.	11/1/2015
Ian O.	11/4/2006
Bill B.	11/5/2009
Tanner B.	11/8/2015
Jody A.	11/11/2012
Mike H.	11/12/2016
Nicholas A.	11/12/2016
Jerry C.	11/13/2014
Daniel G.	11/15/2016
Joan V.	11/16/2015
Travis N.	11/17/2015
Tara O.	11/18/2007
Vicki D.	11/29/2011
Marty C.	12/1/2016
Joy C.	12/3/2013

Elizabeth B.	12/5/2012
Kevin H.	12/7/2013
Will N.	12/7/2015
Todd B.	12/10/2010
Cindy B.	12/10/2012
Rory G.	12/10/2015
Steve B.	12/16/2011
Chris C.	12/18/2013
Michael C.	12/18/2014
Ben S.	12/26/2015

GRATITUDE	
First Name	Sobriety Date
Ellen W.	10/30/1995
Terry C.	10/22/2005
John S.	10/25/2006
Teresa F.	10/21/2013
Jim R.	11/24/1986
Misti C.	11/22/2011
Aaron C.	11/22/2016
Marilyn P.	12/4/2008
Billy D.	12/24/2015
Al V.	12/1/2016

HEPHZIBAH	
First Name	Sobriety Date
Carson	10/11/2012
Mike D.	10/14/2013
Lisa L.	10/23/2015
TJ N.	10/20/1973
Philliop R.	11/1/2014
Fred G.	11/29/1988
Jerry R.	11/7/1997
Paul P.	11/17/1981
Jim A.	11/17/2002
Tommy R.	11/22/2012
Greg B.	11/18/2015

HILL	
First Name	Sobriety Date
Tony B.	10/1/1989
Sean O.	10/1/2016
Jimmy B.	10/5/2007
Corey W.	10/19/2016
George S.	10/25/2015
Dan M.	10/26/2016
Nick L.	10/31/2016
John G.	11/1/2016
Jimmy W.	11/3/2015
Winchester	11/19/2010
Keylor G.	12/1/2004
Chico	12/21/1994
Courtney D.	12/22/2014
Lisa S.	12/31/1991

IN STEP	
First Name	Sobriety Date
Clarence D.	12/1/1993
Tammra N.	12/12/1992
Tim	12/15/2014

MARTINEZ	
First Name	Sobriety Date
Judy S.	11/1/1985
Andy R.	11/6/2008

MID DAY	
First Name	Sobriety Date
Kris Z.	10/4/1984
Ricki H.	10/3/2005
Ruth M.	10/31/2001
Paul B.	10/21/1976
Mary B.	10/1/2013
Leanne G.	no recent dte
Linda S.	10/7/2012
Charlie B.	10/6/2015
Tammy B.	10/15/2016
Doris S.	11/17/1991
Ashley P.	11/15/2016
Frank M.	11/14/2014
Cliff B.	11/17/1980
Mary E.	11/25/2014
Susan H.	11/23/1981
Cathy S.	11/16/1987
John G.	11/1/2016
Tammra N.	12/12/1992

Melvin F.	12/9/1978
Tara S.	12/31/2012
Glenda P.	12/7/2014
Gwen L.	12/14/2015
Marc M.	12/2/2016

NATIONAL HILLS	
First Name	Sobriety Date
No current info available	