

Dear Friends,

Welcome to the latest edition of The Daily Reprieve. In this issue you will find many powerful and practical contributions related to our theme, “Defense Against the First Drink”. In time-honored newsletter tradition, the ‘Four Simons’ have graced yet another issue with their combined literary efforts :) :).

There are two contributions from Odaat (keynote speaker and workshop leader from our most recent Roundup and grandsponsor to the masses), an extended essay from a fellow sharing their renewed commitment to the program, poetry, information about the upcoming Roundup in Sri Lanka, and much more.

At the back of the newsletter you can find updates on service opportunities, updated meetings list, roundups in the region, and more practical information. As always, we welcome any stories, tips, artwork, poetry or other contributions! You can contact us at newsletter@singaporeaa.org.

I wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for allowing me to be of service on the Newsletter Committee. It has been a real joy working with Eric and Lisa this past year, and a warm welcome to the newest committee members, Mark L. and Holly!

In Service,

Marnie, Eric, Lisa, Mark L.

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in the articles submitted to the Daily Reprieve are those of the contributor, and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Alcoholics Anonymous.

IN THIS ISSUE ...

- Letter From the Editors
- Table of Contents
- The Power of Surrender
- How to Defend Against the First Drink : Anon
- Pain is in the Resistance
- Better With You Than Anybody Else
- When Craving Becomes Higher Power
- Brighter Than Any Light & Safer Than Any Known Way
- How to Defend Against the First Drink : The Simons 1&2
- Resentment is Still The Number One Offender
- Self Care – The Essential Minefield
- Just for Today – Defence Against the First Drink
- How to Defend Against the First Drink : The Simons 3&4
- Join Us On The Firing Line
- Upcoming A.A. Events, Conventions and Roundups
- Singapore Service Opportunities
- The Twelve Steps
- The Twelve Traditions
- Do You Have A Problem With Alcohol?
- Singapore A.A. Weekly Meeting Schedule



For further assistance, call +65 6475-0890 or email: help@singaporeaa.org
To contribute to the Daily Reprieve, please email: newsletter@singaporeaa.org
For the latest A.A. meeting schedule, please visit: www.singaporeaa.org



The Power of Surrender.

The 10 months of sobriety before my relapse were the most amazing months of my entire remembered life. Something shook me from inside when I first relapsed and I found myself begging... begging for help, accepting my surrender though I dreaded it the most. I was scared of the dark days of my alcoholic life which I started experiencing when I relapsed and that too in an even more worsened state. Thankfully I knew deep down that after 10 months of sobriety, there is only one place that could help and who I could reach out to. I confessed and finally conceded defeat to a thing which, sub-consciously, I had believed I could still control.

When I first came to AA I was helpless and I wanted to use the magic, the tools and the psychological edge that this program gives you to fight something which was destroying my life progressively. However, sub-consciously, I still could not accept my surrender or truly understand my mental disease. I could not connect to the fellowship of AA. I was trying to give my will power a psychological edge by using AA tools and believed that this is how it works. I went through the steps and I did it religiously but in a scholarly way, not really understanding the reasoning or rationale behind it.

At the end of 9 months, I started losing my psychological edge by neglecting the fellowship and again beginning this delusion of not accepting the disease. An alcoholic is deemed to fall when he (or she) cannot understand the deep connection he has to a higher power. That connection which redefines our purpose of life. AA is a way of life - to live together as a suffering alcoholic for a greater purpose.

The relapse happened suddenly, when I was stressed about my sister's marriage. She had left to go back to the US after a week's visit to SG. I was feeling uneasy and edgy. I was feeling myself pulled by alcohol and a voice told me it was about time I proved to myself that I could defeat the alcohol by having just one drinking session. I used the alibi of my Sister to yield to alcohol after a 10 month stint of sobriety. I told myself that I won't drink tomorrow but sooner than later I realised that the state of my disease had deteriorated further and I was back in that dark place. A place which lasted for 3 days.

When I returned to AA with desperation by staying close to my sponsor and fellowship, I was grappling with a crazy number of searching questions of my being which were bothering me since my alcoholic problem began. I had the most stressful 3 days of sobriety after relapse – a fearful search of the core problem to reason out why it happened.



For the first time, I was getting disturbed sleep in sobriety. On the 3rd day of regained sobriety I flew to Delhi to meet my family and attend my friend's wedding. When I reached and met my parents, I confessed to them about my relapse and then kept questioning myself in front of them and listening to their responses in search of a solution to that thing which is killing me from within.

The same evening I went to my Grandmom's place where I had spent my childhood days. I was reliving memories of my childhood with my Grandmom who talked about my Grandfather. She was delighted that I could leave alcohol for 10 months. She told that my grandfather had 7 brothers and all of them were teetotalers, vegetarian and believers in God. My Grandfather was the only one who was a chronic alcoholic, smoker and tobacco eater for his entire life till he passed away at the age of 89. And then she said that when he was passing away, she asked who is your closest grandchild out of 8, and he said "Ankit is my most loving grandchild." She got emotional. She then said "Please be good for him. We all love you."

The time I spent during the same evening with my Uncle who's a suffering alcoholic gave me an opportunity to analyse an alcoholic because I could relate to him. I wanted to convince him that he should quit and enjoy the sober life which I had experienced in those 10 months. He was drunk even at that time and I could see his life was so wasted and he was still unable to understand. But his journey is different and I will help him in my own way when I'm ready myself.

When I hit the bed after just 2 hours of sleep and travel the night before, I could not gather sleep even till 5 in the morning despite being completely exhausted.. I was still looking for an answer. That was the peak of my mind's struggle - another level of uneasiness I had never experienced before. I managed to sleep after putting on 10 mins of headspace meditation app. I finally slept.

I woke up in 5 hours and that was the moment when I felt released, relieved and easy. It felt like some sub-conscious release or some connection showing me the door to my solution. I had finally found the “answer”.



I surrendered that I was powerless over alcohol... that I have a psychological condition.. that I have a mental disease.. and AA is the fellowship of suffering alcoholics who understand and feel the pain of this disease... I am ill. And for the very first time I could relive my alcoholic days in my mind as a third person looking at myself and wondering “this man is unwell and he doesn’t even realise!”

Then I could empathise with each of my fellow AA members who are together with strength and hope. We all have a common thing and we need each other to live at a different spiritual level. God has given us this opportunity to get closer to him, her or it. I felt connected and I could feel that I was on a different tangent altogether. My mind felt so relaxed after this realisation which finally sunk inside me. I couldn’t stop sharing this with other fellow AA members who have supported me until now and who have held my hand to show me the path to AA’s door. First thing, I called my sponsor and shared this overwhelming experience of connection with a HP and with the fellowship. He was thrilled and could completely understand me. He gave me amazing direction to lock this feeling by writing it, doing a gratitude list, meditation and prayer, reading the big book from foreword starting with doctor’s opinion and staying connected by sharing my experience. I kept doing it with some of the members who were showing me the door into AA right up until the last mile before I could have possibly faltered. I felt elated, free, happy and connected.

I shared my experience with my parents, my Wife, my Sister and my closest Friend (who knew that I had this disease before I knew it) so they understand that I am surrendered. I can’t wait to hit a meeting tomorrow at my home place, the place where I was born, New Delhi. I am most grateful to my HP, to the fellowship and AA members for giving me this new life, of strength and hope, and helping me understand. My sharing brought happiness and relief in other members and they welcomed me on board. My path now is to start the programme in a completely different manner now that I have truly surrendered. This was a simple realisation yet the most powerful one for me. Thanks for letting me share.

~Anonymous

HOW TO DEFEND AGAINST THE FIRST DRINK:

1. GO TO THE MEETING
2. DON'T' KEEP SECRETS (TALK TO SPONSOR OR ANY AA MEMBER)
3. WATCH FOR A RESENTMENT (WRITE IT DOWN, DO A SPOT CHECK INVENTORY WHENEVER RESENTFUL)
4. DO THE 12 STEPS PROGRAM WITH A SPONSOR
5. DEVELOP, BELIEVE IN AND BUILD A CONNECTION WITH YOUR HIGHER POWER
6. HELP OTHERS, ESPECIALLY WHEN SELF OBSESSED
7. SLEEP WHEN TIRED, EAT WHEN HUNGRY, PAUSE WHEN ANGRY
8. MEDITATE AND PRAY DAILY
9. WHEN EVERY ELSE FAILS – PRAY TO YOUR HIGHER POWER TO RELIEVE YOU FROM OBSESSION OVER THAT FIRST DRINK.

~Anonymous



Pain is in the Resistance.

The alcoholic, at certain times, has no effective mental defensive against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he n or any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power. p43 BB.

Honesty with myself and God was the key that opened the door of willingness to ask my higher power for his protection and care with complete abandon. I never could and never will be able to walk through my journey of sobriety without my higher Power - I am reminded, I shouldn't still be here..... I owe it all to you, I offer myself to you completely and I ask you to mould me into the way you intended me to be in your world; to help others and to live in your Grace.

Your surrounding love, light, peace, serenity and wholeness are within me. You reside in me and I ask you to let that presence glow as a warm and safe light that will allow me to help others. You have carried me with love, grace, hope and light and I ask you to hold my hand and keep me close to you always.

I pray to never forget the biggest gift you have ever given me, *the gift of Desperation. That's when you knew my time had come and I needed a power that was greater than myself beyond any other.*

Through the desperation of a depraved, broken, vacuous, hopeless, unmanageable and enduring hell that I had created and had become my "life" I have found this miracle you have freely given me and I have found you. Thank you for always being with me. Now and forever it shall be the truest form of trust, faith, and freedom that you grant me with a daily reprieve.

I have been given the ability to trust, to accept, to love and to live in honesty - through complete honesty I have found a freedom. A freedom that I only found in the rooms with others who share the same incredible journey. It is the only place that I can really be "me" with love and acceptance - warts and all!



I am no longer alone, lost, afraid or run by my self destructive will when I'm connected to you. Fear can be diminished by my faith as I find you day by day-in each thing I see and when I am going at the pace you have set for me. When my heart is open and I am honest and willing to go to any lengths. When my mind is quiet and I am present.

I can feel your presence and you only ever send me lessons that have helped me grow in patience, humility, gratitude, open mindedness and acceptance.

Please keep me close always and guide me to live for you and as you see my destiny.

Help me not to be afraid, self seeking, dishonest, jealous, judgmental, selfish, resentful or self pitying. But to live to serve others, to help, to understand, to love, to forgive, to show hope and light and unity.

Thy will be done - not mine.

I love you Higher Power.

You are the only defence I have against that first drink.

~Kate

BETTER WITH YOU

I was 8 years old
the first time I had a taste of stout
Pap was often away in the army,
and he would say to Mom
"Better with me, than anybody else."

I was 13 years old
when sipping wine became a norm
at dinner parties, with family and friends
my parents would say to them
"Better with us, than anybody else."

I was 18 years old
when tequila shots and blackouts were a weekly affair
how I thought these were the best days of my life/
and, I would say to my peers
"Better with you, than anybody else."

I was 22 years old
when I moved overseas for school,
where a beer at lunch with classmates
quickly evolved to bottles of wine on my own at night
lonely, I would say to the bottle
"Better with you, than anybody else."



THAN ANYBODY ELSE

I was 24 years old
when heading straight for the bar after work
and drinking till 4 in the morning was my life
emotionally bankrupt, and depressed and yet
when they said "You have a problem"
I would think, "what do they know,
I'm better than everybody else."

I am now 29 years old
and it has been 395 days since my last drink.
I stumbled into the rooms for my using
and I am staying.
Staying to learn how to live
"Keep coming back," they say, and I say,
"Better with you, than anybody else."

~Anonymous



He lay down with both the knees close to his face. It appears he doesn't want to see anyone but in reality he doesn't want anyone to see him. He was the worst guy he ever knew in his life.

When craving becomes higher power.

How could he love anyone when he can't love him?

The astounding confusion.

4 Year's in recovery with a strong recovery message, couple of sponsees, working with sponsor and regular commitments couldn't help him with serenity. There is a narrow space between being alright and having peace but the energy and effort required to cross the space can't be rationally measured. It takes a leap fully forced by surrender. But whom to surrender? What to surrender? How does it look like when one surrenders? Is it like he never tried surrendering?

From his experience he realised - though surrendering means same throughout sobriety, it will be felt differently at different depths of rock bottom. On his final defeat, laying at an extremely new rock bottom, he crawled into himself having just enough energy to say 'I can't fight anymore with anyone and anything, help me God!'

Several lines from numerous recovery materials flashed through his short term memory and there arrived Two simple statements. Surrender to Gods will, Do not fight addiction.



There he stood bewildered but with a firmness to know what was going wrong despite the strong willingness to quit execution of his will.

When he was fighting the cravings by using any substances, he was not surrendering to God's recovery plan. In that moment of clarity both craving and Higher Power united for his recovery - just for the days he will surrender: One day at a time.

So what exactly he surrenders? His ideas, emotions and attitudes. Yep all three of them in one go. His ideas about what he is and what others are. His emotions to people, places and situations. His attitude and outlook upon life. Precisely because in all of the above his size is huge, at least bigger than his real size.

To whom he surrenders?

He can only surrender to the one fighting against him or chasing him. Was the higher power fighting against him? No, absolutely not. The higher powers ideas for his well being was fighting against his idea that would lead him to an isolated life either behind the bars or away from normal human beings.

How does life after surrender looks like?

The initial hours, days, weeks and sometimes months involves a strong physical withdrawal accompanied before or after by a mental obsession.

This pain often manifest itself as a feeling having an intention to finish him. All his panic response system awakens and tells

him to follow the one life saving act - continue the substance use.

But if he choose not to fight the feeling, if he choose to consider and accept the feeling as a gift from higher power to grant him permanent freedom from the obsession of the addiction then he has hope. A big hope. The first couple of days will be a continual sequence of two responses:

1. I surrender - Thy will not mine be done
2. Let go of the stones on your shoulder so that you can swim faster to the other shore.

Has he never tried it before? Of course yes. Every time he says to the higher power that the pain is too much and he will try the next day. He never understood that the disease is eating his days one day at a time. He couldn't comprehend that the feelings during recovery are God's plan. The moment he realise that the mental malady is God's plan, then he realises that God is not doing that to punish him but to enable his memory with clear idea on why he shouldn't take the first pinch, first drink, first chats again.

Later in his life, these experiences in the first few weeks had to occur with sufficient force as a defence against the first use. And as said in the big book, the defence comes only from a power greater than himself.

~Odaat



Brighter Than Any Light and Safer Than Any Known Way.

It was early days, about three months in, and I had to travel for work. My record for staying sober when travelling was abysmal. The flights (*its neither here nor there, no one can see, ill sleep it off before we land, its the only time I have 7 hours to myself*), the airports, the hotels or the old haunts of my hometown. Often a complete disaster.

I called my sponsor to tell her about the trip, and to tell her not to worry. For I had *A Plan!* It was a really good one! I laid out the details of exactly how I would stay sober, how I would bring hubby and baby, take a day time flight, seat myself in the window, read AA literature, make sure hubby stayed awake, eat carbohydrates, drink herbal tea.

“That’s all very good. But none of this is going to stop you from drinking.”

I was aghast. *“Why not?”*

*“Don’t you see? Nothing can get between you and a drink if you decide you want one. I could sit next to you also and that wouldn’t stop you. And we can’t all be there all the time to protect you. The only thing that will come between you and the first drink is your higher power. You are going to have to find your higher power, and **SOON.**”*

Oh! This was not good. I realised she was right. Whilst I liked the helpful and practical life skills I was learning in the program, it was utterly futile without spirituality and a relationship with my higher power.

I spent years trying to stop - experimenting and wishing that so many things, good and bad, would be my defence against picking up again.

These are just some of the things I thought - I hoped - would stop me:

- the colour coded Relapse Prevention Plan I clutched as I walked out the door of rehab.
- the threat of going back to worse and worse rehabs for longer and longer periods
- the Antabuse I started swapping for vitamin B pills as I grew restless, irritable and discontent
- the anti craving drugs, the one that blocked the receptors, the ones that prevent 'emotional hijacking', the stabilisers, the blue ones
- the written warnings from work, the humiliation of colleagues avoiding me, the snide remarks I overheard about myself
- the list of *things I'd lost* that the therapist made me carry around in my purse
- the shock of the first signs of my body crumbling, the hallucinations, eye sight failing, foul smell coming off my skin each day, cracked red face
- the greed and spite and desire to get revenge on all my of my nemeses, *I'll make them sorry!*
- the move to a Muslim country where booze was illegal
- carrying around the letters from erstwhile housemates about what it was like to live with me, from strangers who had the pleasure of sitting next to me on a plane, and later from myself, to me, in moments of desperation
- waking up to tubes in my arms, my mum's sad and stressed eyes, her looking helpless and broken in a chair next to my hospital bed
- the threat of losing my partner, whom I loved
- the beautiful gurgling healthy baby that needed me to feed and love her
- the ashrams, the energy healers, the yogā, the boxing, the sporting events to train for
- the interesting and random diagnoses from the psychiatrists over the years (*ah yes, that's my story! Now that I know what's wrong with me I don't need to drink anymore!*)
- the new jobs, possibilities and opportunities that came when I stopped for a few months, the feeling of the world opening up again, that life could be so so so good if I just didn't drink, the threat of pulling it all down all over again... (*You could lose all of this! Again! Surely that's the best reason never to drink again!!*)



NONE of that offered any defence against the first drink for me, not the happy stuff, not the dark stuff, nothing. It was all illusory crap, delusional or more attempts to get sober on will power alone.

It seems that the obsession has been lifted recently but there are times the thought crosses my mind, appealingly, and when it happens my *one and only defence* is my higher power. I've discovered that I have to surrender every day to stay close to my higher power.

I once heard a minister in a meeting say: *put your hand in the hand of God, and the path will be brighter than any light and safer than any known way.* Today I visualise this frequently, as it is the only defence I have.

~ Caitlin



AGAINST THE FIRST DRINK: HOW TO DEFEND

Before I came to AA, I had no defence against the first drink. Mine was the classic "rubber arm", although to be honest, the twisting was usually done by my own good self.

But after I joined and started working the steps, things started to change. As much as anything, not taking a drink became something worth working for.

My recovery was something I wanted to hold on to.

The step 5 promises say, „the feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will come often strongly“, and this was true for me. But as my sponsor pointed out at the time, this is both a promise and a warning, ‘often’ being another way to say, ‘not always’. No, we were not there yet.

Protection from the first drink only fully came for me at Step 10. The wreckage of my past kept me insulated from my Higher Power. I cleared that wreckage away in Step 9, and then committed to correct any new mistakes on a daily basis in Step 10.

As the step 10 promises say (and this is also true for me) „we feel as though we had placed in a position of neutrality, safe and protected ... the problem has been removed“. But the very same paragraph holds another warning – „this is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition“.

~ Simon C

HOW TO DEFEND AGAINST THE FIRST DRINK:

Before AA I had no defence against the first drink, I sought to drink as a priority. It was the thought underpinning all other thoughts and actions.

I later learned that drink was my anaesthetic for a life I simply could not manage.

After over two years of trying to work the AA program I haphazardly discovered I was utterly defenceless against that first drink and I learned painfully that the only way I could stay sober was to regularly attend meetings, call another alcoholic and work with a sponsor. There I found some defence, some useful diversions, but a drink would often seem like a good idea! it often became my only idea! The obsession was alive in me, and I needed to go further.

The 12 steps were the solution and my obsession to drink was lifted. I accepted my helplessness and I came to rely on a power greater than myself. As I grow spiritually my defence grows stronger and my protection today is built on a foundation of practicing spiritual principles in all of my affairs - which beats chaining myself to a radiator every day! Life with a defence can be joyful and it works if I work it.

~ Simon La



Resentment

Is still the number one offender



Resentment has always been my favourite tool to feel justified. I periodically love playing the incident in my mind's court so that I can feel the experience of winning a case. This gave a high, highly addictive enough to stop facing the reality and just create a fantasy win in my mind.

Thus distortion of the reality produced a false spiritual high.

Squandering Worthwhile Hours.

Today I made an amend and it means much more than clearing my past as in step 4. This amend cleared an error of mine, which appeared completely right while I was making it. It was against a senior person at work, who I know can cause damage to my image, future engagements with him and his team.

Yet I couldn't stop myself from doing it where I mocked and insulted the guidance he gave. Even today the guidance didn't help but I was not even able to appreciate the fact that he helped. Instead I used the fault in the situation as a sword to stab his self esteem. My attempt to step on him worked and he retaliated.

After that, without any surprise we stopped talking and continued disagreeing. Realising the wrong I made, I tried to make it up by offering a lot of help most of which was not even required. I didn't make the amend then, as I was afraid of what he might think and how he is going to respond. The troubles I once made, kept rolling itself on, gathering more troubles along the way. The resentment kept on increasing and I wrote it

down repeatedly in my step 10 but still it couldn't pass me. I prayed for that person and reached a stage where I was not faking it anymore , lol.

Still the whole cycle of resentment , wanted or unwanted help followed again by resentment continued.

Today, more than a year after that incident, I met this person and got some courage to ask for 2 minutes.

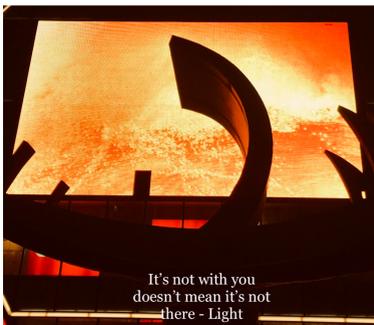
In the past, I had a lot of fears for making the amends but none of them appeared while I started the talk this time.

I apologised to him and specifically told him the incident. I clearly told him that my act did not show any respect to him and his contributions and help towards me. Finally I asked him how to make it right, that if there was anything I could do now to set it right.

This person tried to recollect the incident and has a vague clue about it. I want to write another page about my assumptions about his thoughts - but I leave it to my HP. He told me not to worry about it and that things between us will be fine.

I walked away and looked back and felt like I dropped a really heavy bag I was carrying around. I thanked god for granting me the courage. Later that day there was a couple of occasions involving him where I would usually stress and resent. But surprisingly I felt nothing this time and I was able to find right way of doing things with that person and his team. The most beneficial item was - I stopped engaging myself from finding faults and blames aimed at that person and team.

Saved an enormous amount of time.



~Odaat



Self Care – The Essential Minefield.

I've found this one of the hardest areas to understand. One of my earlier learnings in AA was the idea of 'the next right thing', trying to feel into what the right course of action was when a challenging situation (or person!) was in front of me. This AA maxim was fundamental to my early recovery and allowed me to handle really difficult situations much better than I'd been able to before.

Things as simple as letting others ahead of me in a taxi queue, paying a fair price for something, doing a decent job when asked etc. became more second nature to me and my overall well being improved as a result. The better I felt the more good I could do and so a virtuous cycle would (sometimes!) merrily spin.

But when it came to my own needs the wheels would wobble and sometimes come right off. At some level I was (and remain) deeply suspicious of my own motives. Years of acting selfishly and putting myself first now leaves me with real uncertainty.

Simple things like asking for time for myself away from the family, time to do some exercise, to rest, to meditate, time for a little Facebook (!) all these things seem selfish and reminiscent of my behaviour in the dark days.

Recently I found myself totally strung out as I'd started to skip things that are really important for me, my AA meetings, exercise and staying in touch with family and friends overseas. I'd recently started a new job and this had also created new pressures. After an argument at home I was able to talk these things out openly. My partner was surprised that things had built up so much and it became clear to me that I needed to understand better the things that sustain me and to respond to these, to take action. Further than this I needed to be able to communicate these things honestly and clearly and be prepared to hear the needs of those in my family too and find a happier balance.

Knowing how to look after oneself is rarely a well-honed skill for newly recovered AAs but it's a really important one to develop. This minefield was one I had to cross, however deadly and impossible it seemed. Now I know a few routes through the field, though the mines remain there, and this helps put a little more distance between me and that next drink.

~Mark L



Just For Today – Defence Against the First Drink.

I always tell myself that it doesn't matter how far I am from my last drink - it's how close am I to my next one? (And to be honest; I am always no more than an arm's length from complete disaster.) Therefore, I have a few things that I would like to share that help me with not taking that first one.

It is super important for me to do some sort of daily meditation or prayer every morning. (It doesn't have to be a serious guru-style enlightening moment where you almost start levitating!) just a quick, honest and earnest prayer to whatever Higher Power there is, asking to help keep you sober...and then to keep quiet for a few minutes is a great start. It's also a very good idea to read the Daily Reading as that will set the tone for the rest of my day.

But life happens and often we can find ourselves in difficult situations where we want to escape to a place where we don't have to deal with it all - my default was to always believe that I was not strong enough to deal with it, and a drink would then give me 'courage'. I want to say...this is bullish*, because I am strong enough to deal with anything that life throws at me. Now I don't resist the situation, but instead accept the difficulty with a mindset of 'I can handle this!'. .

In my early days of sobriety, I did crave alcohol - and that scared the living hell out of me, because all I wanted was a drink. I would then call my sponsor, because to reach out to someone - meant that I was handing it over to something bigger than myself. There is immense power in one alcoholic helping another alcoholic...so my suggestion is to allow yourself to be helped.

We sometimes forget how powerful the phrase "JUST FOR TODAY" is. Because if I didn't take a drink, just for today - it alleviates the situation immediately.

I try and pause and take a breath...before I do anything - I just pause and think about what the results would be before I make a certain decision. I can suggest that you ask yourself, as I do many times each day, "Is this the next right thing to do?"



With just over three years and four months of sobriety and working through the steps a second time, my best ever solution to not taking that first drink - is to reach out to someone else instead. This is an immediate solution to the problem and has gotten me out of trouble on countless occasions.

I am thankful for the fact that above all, I do have a defense against that first drink - and that is what keeps me going. It's a power greater than me, that caused me to have some sort of a shift and it guarantees that if I don't take that first drink - I can't get drunk. Simple as that.

~Adrian



Ways To Handle The Urge (or any disturbance).

The list of things we can do to help us when we feel like a drink is pretty long...

The way I look at it is if I just start doing the things on this list and keep going there's a good chance the feeling will go away. In practice, I've never had to do more than 3 or 4 of the things on the list before I get 'back on the beam', but if I had to do them all....twice .. I would!

- Pray
- Call a fellow
- Text a fellow or an AA WhatsApp group
- Read the Big Book or other AA literature
- Meditate
- Call my sponsor
- Step 4 (especially good for anger, arguments and resentments)
- Step 10 (good at the end of the day, or the start)
- Step 9 (i often find making a quick amends prevents further harm and brings back some balance)
- Pause - especially good if I'm feeling like confronting someone or emailing or texting them
- Pray for the person who is the focus of your pain or anger
- Step 3 prayer
- Step 7 prayer
- Step 11 prayer
- Listen to a speaker tape
- Go to a Meeting
- Write a gratitude list - especially good when I'm feeling sorry for myself
- Service - think of a way to help someone then help them
- Go to an outreach (reach out!) meeting (Angsana, We Care, IMH etc.)
- Reach out to a newcomer
- Go Back to the start of the list ;-)

~ Mark L

HOW TO DEFEND AGAINST THE FIRST DRINK:

I remember being told in my first A.A. meeting that "the bomb is in the first drink." It had to be explained to me about the nature of the disease of alcoholism (the physical allergy and the mental obsession) and that when I put alcohol in my body, it fuels the physical allergy, I experience the phenomenon of craving and I just can't stop drinking until I pass out. I was told that „if I don't pick up the first drink, I cannot get drunk“, and the program of Alcoholics Anonymous addresses my mental compulsion to drink.

When I think of defence against the first drink, I am drawn to the Step 12 promise, „having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps“. My understanding of that spiritual awakening is that the obsession to drink has been lifted from me. But I know that this is only a daily reprieve and as my sponsor says, "I can't get full on yesterday's hamburger." There is work I need to do on a daily basis for the obsession to drink to remain lifted from me.

But what to do if I have not had the obsession to drink lifted from me yet? Or what if the thought of a drink come to me or the obsession returns. Everything is possible, I am an alcoholic after all and I was told that alcoholics get thirsty. That is what we do. I have been given some very powerful tools to use. Firstly, I like to remain in the middle of the life raft of A.A. which means regular meeting attendance, reaching out to other members and having some regular service commitments. I was told that if I have the thought of a drink to 'play the video forward' and remember that it never was just one drink and I can reel off countless debacles in my binges where I ended up physically and mentally thanks to drink. I was also told that when these dangerous thoughts of a drink appear to ask my higher power to remove them and to look to see where I can be of service.

Page 89 of the Big Book tells me about the importance of Step 12 and carrying the message, "Practical experience shows that nothing will so much

insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail." This has definitely been my experience.

I have found that writing gratitude lists also helps me with remembering where I am today and that it is still wonderful waking up without a hangover. This path that we walk as we trudge the road of happy destiny together reminds me that we are the lucky ones.

~ Simon A

HOW TO DEFEND AGAINST THE FIRST DRINK:

Even the long-sober among us confess to dark thoughts. My mind goes to the solace of drink and drugs when I get hungry lonely or thirsty. Or when I allow resentment at a person or situation to cloud my mind. But the thing is, that the place I used to go to feel in control does not exist. It stopped working for me a long time before I finally surrendered, and were I to go out again I would quickly be in isolation and pain.

Battling addiction is exhausting. It exhausted me. If I were to take up arms again I would be quickly overwhelmed. And after decades of spiralling ever downward, I have found recovery, where I am not alone any more: as long as I show up and remain open to my Higher Power I can thrive, slowly at first but with a growing joy.

And if this is not enough, I ask myself "Simon do you have another recovery in you?" Relapsing is easy: it's what we do, after all! How easy would it be to shuffle back into the rooms, beaten again? Perhaps impossible.

So few of us find our way into AA. We are the lucky few. This is a gift I pray to keep.

~ Simon Lit





Join Us On The Firing Line.

Over the three years I have been sober, my life has gotten so much better.

Career, family, and health have all improved. Today, I live happy, joyous, and free, which is a way of living I have never experienced before. I have found a close group of AA buddies that I hang with and I have my homegroup where I feel comfortable and safe. It would be easy to sit back, relax, and enjoy the new life AA has given me... and this is exactly the kind of complacent attitude that would be most dangerous for me.

There are two quotes I want to share:

"...let them stand with us a while on the firing line. see the tragedies, the despairing wives, the little children; let the solving of these problems become a part of their daily work... We feel, after many years of experience, that we have found nothing which has contributed more to the rehabilitation of these men than the altruistic movement..."

The Doctor's Opinion, page xxviii

"Your job now is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others, so never hesitate to go anywhere if you can be helpful. You should not hesitate to visit the most sordid spot on earth on such an errand. Keep on the firing line of life with these motives and God will keep you unharmed."

Working With Others, page 102

Bill W. did not stay sober by sitting in the hotel lobby waiting for a suffering alcoholic to come to him. He got on his feet and went directly to the hospital to seek out another alcoholic.

I am the kind of alcoholic that needs to be in the middle of the action, directly on the firing line, if I am to stay sober. I see the firing line as the opportunities that allow me to be of maximum service to the wettest



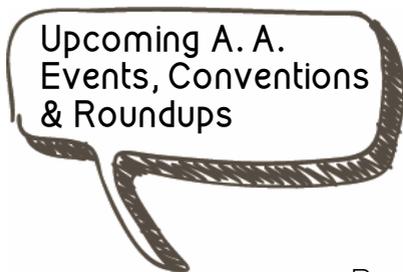
alcoholics. I see the firing line as: manning the AA hotline and carrying the message to AA meetings at the places with the most suffering alcoholics. Here in Singapore, those meetings are: Institute of Mental Health (Saturday), National Addictions Management Services (Tuesday), Angsana Halfway House (Friday), and We Care (Sunday). Just across the border, there is a new monthly meeting in Johor Bahru.

When I am on the firing line, I can see and experience the most direct, tragic consequences of alcoholism. When I am on the firing line, I get a buzz, knowing that I am being of maximum service to God and those about me.

I recently made a commitment to add the Tuesday Night 7p.m. NAMS meeting to my weekly schedule and have started working with a new sponsee there--a local Singaporean gentleman currently living in the halfway house.

Getting out of my comfort zone, adding a new weekly meeting, and working with a new sponsee have rejuvenated my recovery. Only by being on the firing line, can I keep my sobriety, and thus, continue to enjoy the blessings recovery has given me.

~Eric C.



Upcoming A. A.
Events, Conventions
& Roundups

AA Bali Roundup 2018

8-10 June 2018

Prama Hotel Sanur, Bali, Indonesia

<http://www.aabali.org/bali-roundup/>

Sri Lanka AA Roundup

18 August 2018

St. Paul's Milagiriya Church,

Colombo, Sri Lanka

<http://www.aameetingsrilanka.org/round-up-2018.html>

RYUKYPAA Convention of Young People of AA

13-14 October 2018

Tenbusu Naha 3-2-10 Makishi

Naha, Okinawa, Japan

<http://licypaa.org/event/ryukypaa-okinawa-convention-of-young-people-in-alcoholics-anonymous/>

12 Step Okinawa Roundup

19-21 October 2018

Okuma Recreation Center, Okinawa, Japan

www.12stepokinawa.com

Sydney Boomerang Roundup

19-21 October 2018

Sydney Masonic Convention Centre, 66 Goulburn

Street, Sydney

<http://www.boomerangroundup.com/>

Service Opportunities

HIFI Committee

The Hospitals & Institutions, Public Information Committee is looking for volunteers to help at IMH during working hours and male volunteers for a prison outreach program. Please contact hi.pi.aa@outlook.com for details.

Communications Committee

The Communications Committee is looking for volunteers to help with the 12th step go to list. Please contact help@singaporeaa.org.

Social Committee

A.A. Singapore holds regular social events. The Social Committee is looking for additional volunteers to help organize functions. For more information on the next function or to help provide your support, please contact socialsingapore@yahoo.com.

Roundup Committee

The A.A. Singapore Roundup Committee is looking for volunteers to help organize the 2018 roundup. Please contact events@singaporeaa.com.

Newsletter Committee

The A.A. Singapore Newsletter Committee is looking for volunteers to help us publish this publication you are reading right now. Please contact newsletter@singaporeaa.org.

Asia-Oceania Service Representative

A sub-group has been formed to look into possibilities of hosting a Round up in a regional country, with less developed fellowship, as part of a Regional Outreach program to help carry the message. The group is looking for volunteers to assist with preparing a proposal to present to Intergroup.



The Twelve Steps.

1. 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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The Twelve Traditions.

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups, or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized, but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues, hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based upon attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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Do you have a problem with alcohol?

1. Have you ever decided to stop drinking for a week or so, but only lasted for a couple of days?

Most of us in A.A. made all kinds of promises to ourselves and to our families. We could not keep them. Then we came to A.A. which said “Just try not to drink today.” (If you do not drink today, you can not get drunk today.

2. Do you wish people would mind their own business about your drinking – stop telling you what to do?

In A.A. we do not tell anyone to do anything. We just talk about our own drinking, the trouble we get into, and how we stopped. We will be glad to help you, if you want us to.

3. Have you ever switched from one kind of drink to another in the hope that this would keep you from getting drunk?

We tried all kinds of ways. We made our drinks weak. Or just drank beer. Or we did not drink cocktails. Or only drank on weekends. You name it, we tried it. But if we drank anything with alcohol in it, we usually got drunk eventually.

4. Have you had to have an eye-opener upon waking during the past year?

Do you need a drink to get started, or to stop shaking? This is a pretty sure sign that you are not drinking “socially”.

5. Do you envy people who can drink without getting into trouble?

At one time or another, most of us have wondered why we were not like most people, who really can take it or leave it.

6. Have you had problems connected with drinking during the past year?

Be honest! Doctors say that if you have a problem with alcohol and keep on drinking, it will get worse – never better. Eventually you will die or end up in an institution for the rest of your life. The only hope is to stop drinking.

7. Has your drinking caused trouble at home ?

Before we came into A.A. most of us said that it was the people or problems at home that made us drink. We could not see that our drinking just made everything worse. It never solved problems anywhere or anytime.

8. Do you ever try to get “extra” drinks at a party because you do not get enough ?

Most of us used to have a “few” before we started out if we thought it was going to be that kind of party. And if drinks were not served fast enough, we would go some place else to get more.

9. Do you tell yourself you can stop drinking any time you want to, even though you keep getting drunk when you don’t mean to ?

Many of us kidded ourselves into thinking that we drank because we wanted to. After we came to A.A. we found that once we started to drink, we couldn’t stop.

10. Have you missed days of work or school because of drinking ?

Man of us admit now that we “called in sick” lots of times when the truth was that we were hungover or on a drunk.

11. Do you have “blackouts” ?

A “blackout” is when we have been drinking hours or days which we cannot remember. When we came to A.A. we found out that this is a pretty sure sign of alcoholic drinking.

12. Have you ever felt that your life would be better if you did not drink ?

Many of us started to drink because drinking made life seem better, at least for a while. By the time we got into A.A. we felt trapped. We were drinking to live and living to drink. We were sick and tired of being sick and tired.

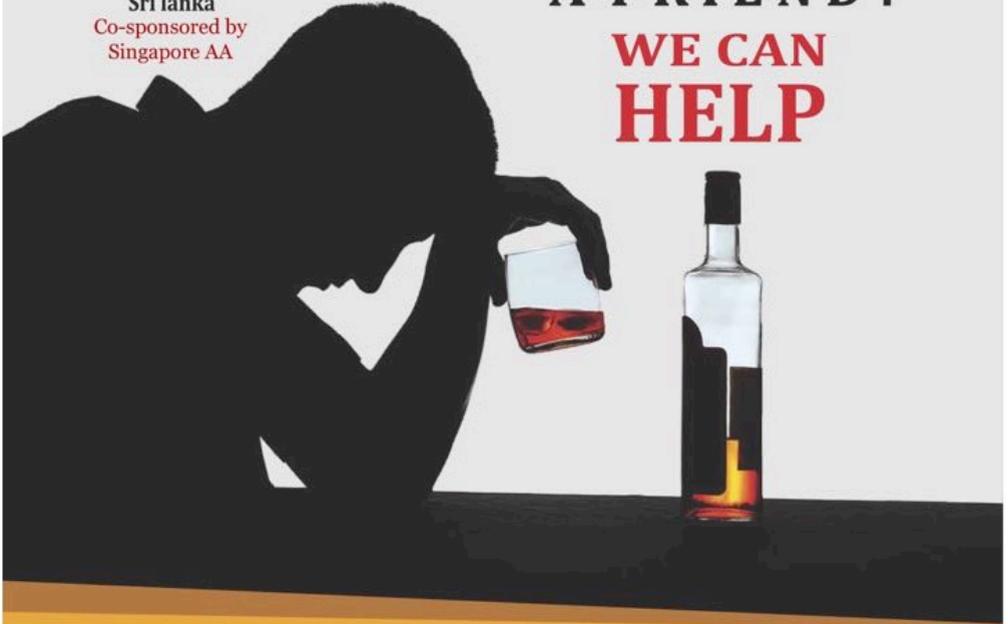
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Alcoholics Anonymous,
Sri Lanka
Co-sponsored by
Singapore AA

IS ALCOHOL A PROBLEM
FOR YOU OR ANYONE
IN YOUR FAMILY OR
A FRIEND?

**WE CAN
HELP**



Do you control your drinking or does your drinking control you? Join us and learn about **the steps we took in the recovery program** from alcoholism as we share our experience, strength & hope

St. Paul's Milagiriya Church (Seminar Hall)
No: 299 Galle Road, Bambalapitiya, Colombo 04
18th August 2018 (Saturday)
9.30am to 4.30pm

THIS IS A FREE EVENT (REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED)

Interested in attending from Singapore?
Contact Mike (96798414) or Bosco (96278583)
for more details or visit:
www.aameetingsrilanka.org/round-up-2018

Singapore A.A. Weekly Meeting Schedule

Please see website for directions (www.singaporeaa.org/meeting.html)

Meetings are subject to change. Please see website to avoid disappointment

Monday	7:15 - 8:00 AM 7:30 - 8:30 AM 12:30 - 1:30 PM 12:30 - 1:30 PM 7:00 - 8:00 PM 7:15 - 8:15 PM 7:30 - 8:30 PM 8:05 - 9:05 PM	Men's Meeting Big Book Study Big Book Study Daily Reflections Daily Reflections Big Book Study Gay Men's Meeting Beginner's Meeting	Customs House Circular Road Holy Family Damien Hall Damien Hall World Peace Café Little India Damien Hall
Tuesday	7:30 - 8:30 AM 12:30 - 1:30 PM 7:00 - 8:30 PM 7:00 - 8:00 PM 7:00 - 8:00 PM 8:15 - 9:00 PM	Speaker Meeting Big Book Study 11th Step Meeting Daily Reflections Open Topics Meeting Ask the Speaker	Circular Road Damien Hall St. Bernadette Damien Hall NAMS Clinic, IMH Novena Medical
Wednesday	7:15 - 8:00 AM 7:30 - 8:30 AM 12:30 - 1:30 PM 12:30 - 1:30 PM 12:30 - 1:30 PM 7:00 - 8:00 PM	Men's Meeting As Bill Sees It Big Book Study (French) Living Sober Living Sober Speaker Meeting	Customs House Circular Road Circular Road Holy Family Damien Hall Damien Hall
Thursday	7:30 - 8:30 AM 12:30 - 1:30 PM 7:00 - 8:00 PM 7:30 - 8:30 PM	12 & 12 Daily Reflections 12 & 12 Speaker Meeting	Circular Road Damien Hall Damien Hall World Peace Café
Friday	7:15 - 8:00 AM 7:30 - 8:30 AM 12:30 - 1:30 PM 12:30 - 1:30 PM 7:00 - 8:00 PM 7:00 - 8:00 PM	Men's Meeting Beginners Meeting 12 & 12 12 & 12 Happy Hour Higher Power Speaker Meeting	Customs House Circular Road Holy Family Damien Hall Oogachaga Damien Hall
Saturday	8:00 - 9:00 AM* 8:30 - 9:30 AM 10:00 - 11:00 AM 4:30 - 5:30 PM 8:00 - 9:00 PM	Big Book Study Gratitude Meeting Women's Meeting Daily Reflections Young People's Meeting	Coastal Rhythm Circular Road Circular Road Damien Hall Novena Medical
Sunday	8:00 - 9:00 AM* 8:15 - 9:15 AM 10:00 - 11:00 AM 5:00 - 6:00 PM 6:30 - 7:30 PM	Beginners Meeting Men's Meeting Rainbow Meeting Big Book Study Big Book Study	Coastal Rhythm 313 Somerset Oogachaga We Care Damien Hall

* Note: Meeting starts at 8:30 on public holidays