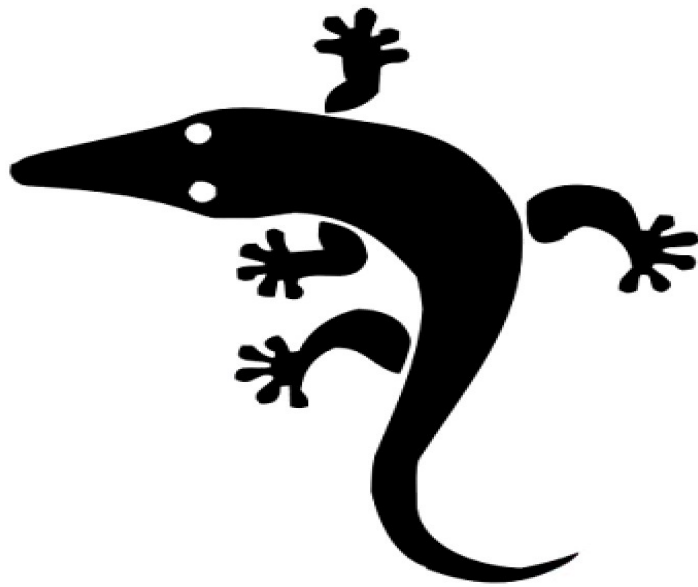


# The Daily Reprieve



By  
Singapore AA members  
May 2014 to July 2014



## The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
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. 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.

**“I am responsible . . .When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,  
I want the hand of A.A. always to be there.  
And for that: I am responsible.”**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BACK TO THE BASIS OF RECOVERY – STEP THREE

THE PARABLE OF THE CRACKED POT

12 SYMPTOMS OF SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

A NEW BEGINNING IN LIFE

HOW A HELPFUL NEIGHBOUR SET THIS ALCOHOLIC ON THE ROAD TO RECOVERY

I STARTED DRINKING EARLY IN LIFE

GOSPEL TEMPERANCE RAILROAD MAP

BACK TO THE BASIS OF RECOVERY – STEP FOUR

JUST FOR TODAY

SINGAPORE INTERGROUP NEWS – MAY 2014 UPDATE

MY EXPERIENCE IN P.I. & H.I.

BACK TO THE BASIS OF RECOVERY – STEP FOUR (CONT.)

UPCOMING EVENTS

MEETING SCHEDULE

AM I AN ALCOHOLIC – AA CHECKLIST

**For further assistance, call (+65)6475 0890 or email us at: [help@singaporeaa.org](mailto:help@singaporeaa.org)  
To contribute to the Daily Reprieve, please send your article or announcement to:  
[newsletter@singaporeaa.org](mailto:newsletter@singaporeaa.org)  
See details and meeting schedules at: [www.singaporeaa.org](http://www.singaporeaa.org)**

Dear Fellows in Sobriety,

In this issue, we will be continuing our look back to the beginnings of our Program with Wally P's "Back to Basics" articles on Steps 3 and 4. Entitled "Back to the Basics of Recovery," this is the original action program used with newcomers by the first members of AA.

Local members' contributions this month include "A New Beginning in Life," which tells the story of hitting bottom and the miracle of finding hope in AA. In "I Started Drinking Early in Life" tells the story of an alcoholic who knew she had a problem for decades before an overseas move to Singapore finally brought her into the rooms.

From Great Britain, Annie shares about finding her way into AA with the help of a caring neighbour and the telephone service of the fellowship in "How a Helpful Neighbour Set this Alcoholic on the Road to Recovery."

And, as she steps down from her service position with P.I & H.I (Public Information and Hospital Information), Doreen shares the wisdom and experience she gained from her time on that important community outreach committee.

This newsletter is my last issue as Editor of the Daily Reprieve. Thank you to Michelle K. for taking over this position. I'm sure she will grow our Newsletter in new and interesting directions! It has been a wonderful service position during the last year and a half, and as Doreen reminds us in her article: **Service Strengthens Sobriety!**

Warmest regards,

Claire

Disclaimer: The views and opinions expressed in articles submitted to the Daily Reprieve are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of Alcoholics Anonymous.
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## **Who is Wally P?**

*Wally P. is an archivist, historian and author who, for more than twenty-three years, has been studying the origins and growth of the Twelve-step movement. He is the caretaker for the personal archives of Dr. Bob and Anne Smith.*

*Wally conducts history presentations and recovery workshops, including “Back to the Basics of Recovery” in which he takes attendees through all Twelve Steps in four, one-hour sessions. More than 500,000 have taken the Steps using this powerful, time-tested, and highly successful “original” program of action.*

## **Back to the Basics of Recovery**

### **Step Three**

**by Wally P.**

***Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.***

In this article, we will examine the third part of the surrender process, which is to move from a “life run on self will” to a life guided by “the vision of God’s will.” We do this by turning our ego-centric lives over to the “Power greater than ourselves” that resides inside each and every one of us.

One of the earliest references to “God as we understood Him” comes to us from Reverend Sam Shoemaker, the pastor of the Calvary Episcopal Church in New York City. This is where Bill W., one of the co-founders of A.A., attended meetings from 1934-1937. At the time, Sam was one of the leaders of the Oxford Group, the organization from which A.A. evolved. He was the man Bill W. described as the teacher of “the principles and attitudes that afterward came to full flower in A.A.’s Twelve Steps for recovery.”

When talking about self-will vs. God’s will, Sam would say, “Surrender as much of yourself as you know to as much of God as you understand.” Bill W. And others picked up on this concept. Instead of relying upon a God of somebody else’s understanding, they started relying upon a God of their own understanding, hence God as we understood Him.

Some of the key paragraphs the A.A. pioneers used to explain and take the Third Step are:

A life run on self-will: pg. 60: 4 (1-8)

Selfishness blocks us from God's will: pg. 62: 1 (1-8) and pg. 62: 2: (1-8)

A life guided by God's will: pg. 62: 3 (1-4, 6-8) and pg. 63: (1-4)

Third Step prayer: pg. 63:2 (2-8)

On pages 62 and 63 the "Big Book" authors explain how to become God directed. But, first they tell us that being self-directed keeps us separated from the spiritual solution to our difficulties. In the fourth paragraph on page 60, they explain that, when we live on self-will, we are like actors trying to control every detail of a play:

"The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. . . . Each (of us) is like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his (or her) own way."

In the first paragraph on page 62, the authors declare that it is our selfishness that gets us into trouble. We must take responsibility for our preoccupation with ourselves and lack of concern for others:

"Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. . . . (W)e invariably find that sometime in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt. . . . Above everything, we . . . must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without (God's) aid."

Then in the third paragraph on page 62, the authors tell us what happens once we rid ourselves of this selfishness:

"This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. . . . Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.

Although they say the wording is optional, the "Big Book" authors do provide us with a prayer we can use to take the Third Step. The prayer is in the middle of page 63, starting with the second line in the second paragraph:

". . . 'God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I

would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!' ”

Once we have internalized the Third Step prayer, we have completed the surrender process. But as the “Big Book” authors write on the following page, this surrender “could have little permanent effect unless **AT ONCE** followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us.”

In the next article, we will examine some specific difficulties that have kept us blocked from the Power greater than ourselves. We will determine what these blocks are by making an inventory.

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### **The Parable of A Cracked Pot**

A water bearer in India had two large pots, each hung on each end of a pole which he carried across his neck. One of the pots had a crack in it, and while the other pot was perfect and always delivered a full portion of water at the end of the long walk from the stream to the master's house, the cracked pot arrived only half full.

For a full two years this went on daily, with the bearer delivering only one and a half pots full of water to his master's house. Of course, the perfect pot was proud of its accomplishments, perfect to the end for which it was made.

But the poor cracked pot was ashamed of its own imperfection, and miserable that what it had been made to do.

After two years of what it perceived to be a bitter failure, it spoke to the water bearer one day by the stream. "I am ashamed of myself, and I want to apologize to you."

"Why?" asked the bearer. "What are you ashamed of?" "I have been able, for these past two years, to deliver only half my load because this crack in my side causes water to leak out all the way back to your master's house. Because of my flaws you have to do all of this work, and you don't get full value from your efforts," the pot said.

The water bearer felt sorry for the old cracked pot, and in his compassion he said, "As we return to the master's house, I want you to notice the beautiful flowers along the path." Indeed, as they went up the hill, the old cracked pot took notice of the sun warming the beautiful wild flowers on the side of the path, and this cheered it up a bit.



But at the end of the trail, it still felt bad because it had leaked out half its load, and so again it apologized to the bearer for its failure. The bearer said to the pot, "Did you notice that there were flowers only on your side of the path, but not on the other pot's side? That's because I have always known about your flaw, and I put it to good use. I planted flower seeds on your side of the path, and every day while we walk back from the stream, you've watered them. For two years I have been able to pick these beautiful flowers to decorate my master's table.

Without you being just the way you are, he would not have this beauty to grace his house."

The moral of the story:

Each of us has our own unique flaws. We're all cracked pots. In this world, nothing goes to waste. You may think like the cracked pot that you are inefficient or useless in certain areas of your life, but somehow these flaws can turn out to be a blessing in disguise. Remember, nobody is perfect.

~Unknown

## **12 Symptoms of Spiritual Awakening**

1. An increased tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
2. Frequent attacks of smiling.
3. Feelings of being connected with others and nature.
4. Frequent overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
5. A tendency to think and act spontaneously rather than from fears based on past experience.
6. An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
7. A loss of ability to worry.
8. A loss of interest in conflict.
9. A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
10. A loss of interest in judging others.
11. A loss of interest in judging self.
12. Gaining the ability to love without expecting anything in return.

## **A NEW BEGINNING IN LIFE**

Alcohol nearly ended my life. It was my best friend for the longest time and it ended up being my worst enemy. I had my first drink when I was nineteen, my friends and I shared a huge jug of bourbon coke at a pub and we danced the night away under the warming stimulus of drinks. I had always been awkward, painfully shy and hypersensitive. I never felt attractive as I was overweight, my hair was an impossible mess and my face was covered in acne.

Drinking took away my usual self consciousness and anxiety. When I drank, I felt like I could be someone others want to hang out with. I could be funny and enjoy myself without being constantly worrying if anyone likes me. Alcohol temporarily relieved me from the loneliness of being the uncomfortable outsider, I became someone who could fit in and be accepted. Alcohol started to be a good friend.

Drinking continued as I grew into adulthood. Growing up as the youngest daughter in a traditional family who favored sons over daughters, I had always yearned for approval from my parents. I tried to excel in all my endeavors especially my studies as it was a gauge my dad used to assess us. I feared to failing and when I succeeded, I feared losing the success. I lived in perpetual fear that I couldn't live up to expectations, that I was 'less' than other people. Nevertheless, outwardly I portrayed a confident and successful image while inwardly, I was insecure and utterly miserable. I drowned my pain and fears with drink, using it as a way to shut out voices of restraint and criticism. Drinking was a speedy way to oblivion: when I drank I could escape from my prison of loneliness and insecurity.

It soon got worse. My constant heightened anxiety led to chronic insomnia. I was diagnosed with general anxiety disorder and had to rely heavily on sleeping pills and anti-depressants. I drank and took medication to function under heavy stress, desperately trying to maintain an outwardly successful façade while I was dying slowly inside. By this time, I took anti-depressants like candy and a handful of sleeping pills every night mixed with alcohol. This continued until I vomited blood one morning and lost consciousness. Despite this brush with death, I did not stop using alcohol, I couldn't stop.

I started to have panic attacks in the night, as my overactive mind was filled with unceasing voices of fear and rejection. I felt like I was going mad, I needed to drink so I could sleep and I needed more and more alcohol. All this time I was trying to hide my drinking obsession. I hid bottles in my wardrobe, toilet, couch, storeroom, corridors, flower pot and any corner I could find. I was terrified that my stash would be discovered and my supply would run out. I began sneaking wine into the office and would get drunk during lunch. I was starting to lose

control altogether. When I wasn't drinking, I was thinking about my next drink, I was utterly and hopelessly fixated. I tried to convince myself that I was fine, just troubled.

I started to miss work and would stay at home drinking for a week or more. I would find all plausible excuses as to why I missed work, but the truth was coming to light. The facade I had created was crumbling. I couldn't hide my drinking anymore and my lies were coming to light - I was asked to leave. After losing my job, I went into deeper depression with shame, guilt and failure. Even then, I didn't realize that I had a drinking problem. I hated what I had become and I blamed my failures on everyone but myself. Drinking became my solution to escape from the reality. When I was drunk, nothing mattered.

Drinking was no longer a pleasure but a necessity that precedes everything else in my life. I was covered in bruises which came from falling down and stumbling in my drunken stupor. My liver was badly inflamed due to excessive drinking and the doctor warned me that my liver would be completely destroyed in a year if I continued drinking but that didn't stop me. I wanted to stop but I simply could not stop based on my own efforts. I relapsed so many times that I lost count, berating myself every time I failed. Alcohol has truly become my master. I was a human wreck, hell bent on destruction and I continued to drink. Anything or anyone who stood in my path has to be eradicated. Nothing worked on me, whether it was tears, threats or humiliation.

I had been in all major hospitals in the country for rehabilitation, I had seen so many doctors but I could only stay sober for less than a week. I had been in the asylum and jailed because of my drinking but that didn't stop me from continuing. I gradually gave up, drinking to die as I did not have the guts to commit suicide despite trying. Finally my husband called AA and on the same evening, trembling and dazed, I went to my first meeting. It was the first time I heard that alcoholism is a disease; we who are afflicted are men and women who have lost control of drinking and whose lives have become unmanageable.

I didn't believe it initially but I had no choice, other than being doomed to a slow painful alcoholic death. Hence with the desperation of a drowning woman, I started to go to meetings. I was flabbergasted to learn that these confident, joyful and good-looking people were once hopeless and doomed alcoholics who had reached the end of their rope. They shared what I could not put into words, experiences of such horror that only a true alcoholic can understand. I grasp onto the hope that I will one day be like them, as they showed me that it is possible to recover when all the doctors told me I had no hope.

Now, I have found a wonderful sponsor and I am working on my step work. Though the challenges in life still exist and I still face difficulties, I am no longer alone and helpless. With the loving support of my new friends who are there 24/7 for me, and an increasing reliance on my Higher Power, I am learning anew to face life with courage and serenity. I look

forward to my new beginning in life, there will be good and bad times but I will be alive to face life with joy, hope and strength. Looking back on what I had become, only a miracle could save me from the pits of hell and a miracle has happened to me!

- Anonymous

## **How a helpful neighbour set this alcoholic on the road to recovery**

My name is Annie, I'm an Alcoholic.

My first drink led to my first blackout. Alcohol took away the shyness, paralysing self-consciousness. It gave me a warm and happy new feeling that freed me up to do anything. I danced at parties, yelled in the street, sang on buses, hitch-hiked across London, talked to strangers, no fear of anything. I loved it. I thought it helped me to be the real me. I didn't want to do anything that didn't involve drinking: cinema - boring, walks - you must be joking! I learned early to have a few drinks from my mum's cupboard before I went out, filling miniature bottles to take with me. I thought everybody did it! I look back at my teens and see that I have no idea what my family were doing, no memory of spending any time with them.

I went to Spain for 6 months – my university days are still a black hole full of twinkly lights – and was hospitalised with alcohol poisoning. Came back and got married to a heavy drinker, workaholic, who took care of the boring stuff – bills, housework etc. I was a charming wife – he never knew what he was coming home to. We had two beautiful children and drinking to party was no longer an option – my secret drinking started. Hiding bottles, trying to hide the fact that I'd had a drink, sneaking extra drinks whenever we had company, stealing money for drink, making any excuse to buy a bottle. And it got worse. I started to feel ashamed – a quick burn that another drink would fix. My daughter's diary at school on open day – every weekend we went to this pub or that pub...the rows that would flare up and the way I turned from happy smiley to hell-cat with a couple of drinks.

I managed to divorce my husband for HIS unreasonable behaviour and found somebody else who drank like me. I was in big trouble now. Desperately unhappy, life in chaos, coming to on the kitchen floor in the morning, trying to get kids to school, house being repossessed. I saw counsellors, psychologists - blaming my childhood, my mother, my husband – anybody and everything. I was in trouble. But if only I could sort out the money (I borrowed and begged from anybody who stood still long enough). If I could only find the right man. If only I had a different upbringing. If only I got the right job. I'd be OK then. I kept trying to manage all this - with the same outcome – drunk and in a worse mess. I wore an old wax jacket – bottle up each sleeve and a half in the inside pocket, hadn't cut my hair for years. One day a

group of kids sitting on the wall at the end of my street shouted 'ALKIE' at me. I was furious, burning with shame – if only they knew what sort of life I had!

I had one 'friend' left. A neighbour who brought food for the kids, gave me money. She told me one Sunday morning that I had to do something or she'd have to walk away. She just couldn't watch it any more. I don't know what it was that pushed me to make the phone call to AA. Thank God for those AA members in service, people at the end of the phone 24/7 to handle calls from people like me, with nowhere left to go, no more excuses.

Within a couple of hours, two members of Alcoholics Anonymous were in my living room, curtains drawn, vodka tears and snot running. They were not interested in my problems. They told me about the way they drank and I knew they were like me. I'd never admitted it to anybody. They told me about alcoholism, the physical allergy which meant that once I had one drink I was unable to stop. The mental obsession which meant that I couldn't leave it alone, no matter how bad it got. The spiritual malady which led to the terrible dark loneliness and terror. These people told me that they had found a way to stop drinking in AA and that their lives had changed for the better and they were happy. I don't know why but I believed them. I did as they suggested. I went to a meeting near me, started going to others, started working the Steps. After a short time, the desire to drink left me and has not returned. My life has changed in ways that are beyond belief. I have faith in the future and I'm no longer ashamed of my past. I'm so grateful for the chance to live free from the obsession with alcohol.

- Annie

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## **I Started Drinking Early in Life**

I started drinking early in life, and became a regular drinker as a young adult. I was a daily drinker, and wished I wasn't. I even went to an AA meeting as an experiment, but shortly afterwards I persuaded myself that I was OK, and didn't bring my big book with me when we moved overseas. I had functioned this way for almost 2 decades, but when I moved my family to Singapore in 2009, the pressure of the move really caused my alcoholism to blossom.

I had always been able to keep it together at work, but now I was really struggling. Our financial worries mounted and my resentments piled up. I felt alone and estranged, and bitterly angry about the responsibilities I was carrying, and the cost of living in Singapore was way higher than we had planned for. I blamed my husband and children, and drank to make it stop. My husband pointed out that I seemed to have an increasing problem with

drinking. He couldn't understand why I drank so much. I would wake up at night, go to the kitchen and drink so I could fall back asleep, and of course he noticed these types of things. Our home was very stressed.

By early 2010 I was desperately unhappy, and looked up AA online. Early Saturday morning I went to the 10 AM women's meeting. It was a great experience, but I had more drinking to do. By the following week, I decided to try a little controlled drinking. That always gets a laugh when I tell the story in the rooms, but I thought it would work.

Quickly I realized that I was utterly hopeless and miserable again, so I went to meetings and sat quietly in the corner. Though I was attracted to AA, I was too jittery and anxious to ask anyone to be my sponsor. I was sure they would say no. Then a miracle happened after the Wednesday night women's meeting at Damien. As usual, I sat through the meeting without sharing. After the meeting, a lovely woman introduced herself and asked if I had a sponsor. I said, "No." And she said gently, "Well, next week I'm going to ask if you have a sponsor, and I'm going to want you to say yes."

For the next few days I worried, because I really wanted to go back to that meeting, but I knew she would ask me. There was a Saturday speaker event at Damien. I heard one of the women speakers and at the end, she was giving out her phone number. A couple hours later, I called her and asked her to be my sponsor. She said yes, gave me some basic instructions, and we arranged to meet. The walls came down quickly after that. Once we started doing step work, I experienced so much relief and I started to build a relationship with a Higher Power. In the beginning my Higher Power was simply AA.

Early sobriety is a turbulent time. There were lots of times that I cried, and I couldn't see how things would get better. I really had to take it one day at a time. But by taking little steps, a phone call here, meetings there, I built a program with the help of all the great women in the program here. And little by little, things did get better. One morning I got up early to go to the 7:30 AM meeting, and my 6 year old son woke up too. He was thrilled to have some alone time with me, and we watched the sun come up.

I was able to see how beautiful he is, and how lucky I am to have my family. I no longer run from responsibilities. Life has challenges, but overcoming them is part of the fun. My family is thriving, and I draw a lot of strength from the fact that I'm able to support them and keep them stable. These responsibilities are not so scary. There's always a next right action, and tools of the program to use when life gets choppy.

I'm approaching my 3 year anniversary. I'm able to give back to the program that has given so much to me. I can share during meetings, and put my hand out to newcomers,

congratulate chip takers. It's very easy for me to remember when I first came in, desperate and frightened, and I'm glad I can reassure people that it does get better. It did for me.

-Anonymous

**Meister Eckhart** (c. 1260 - c. 1327)

*German theologian, philosopher and mystic*

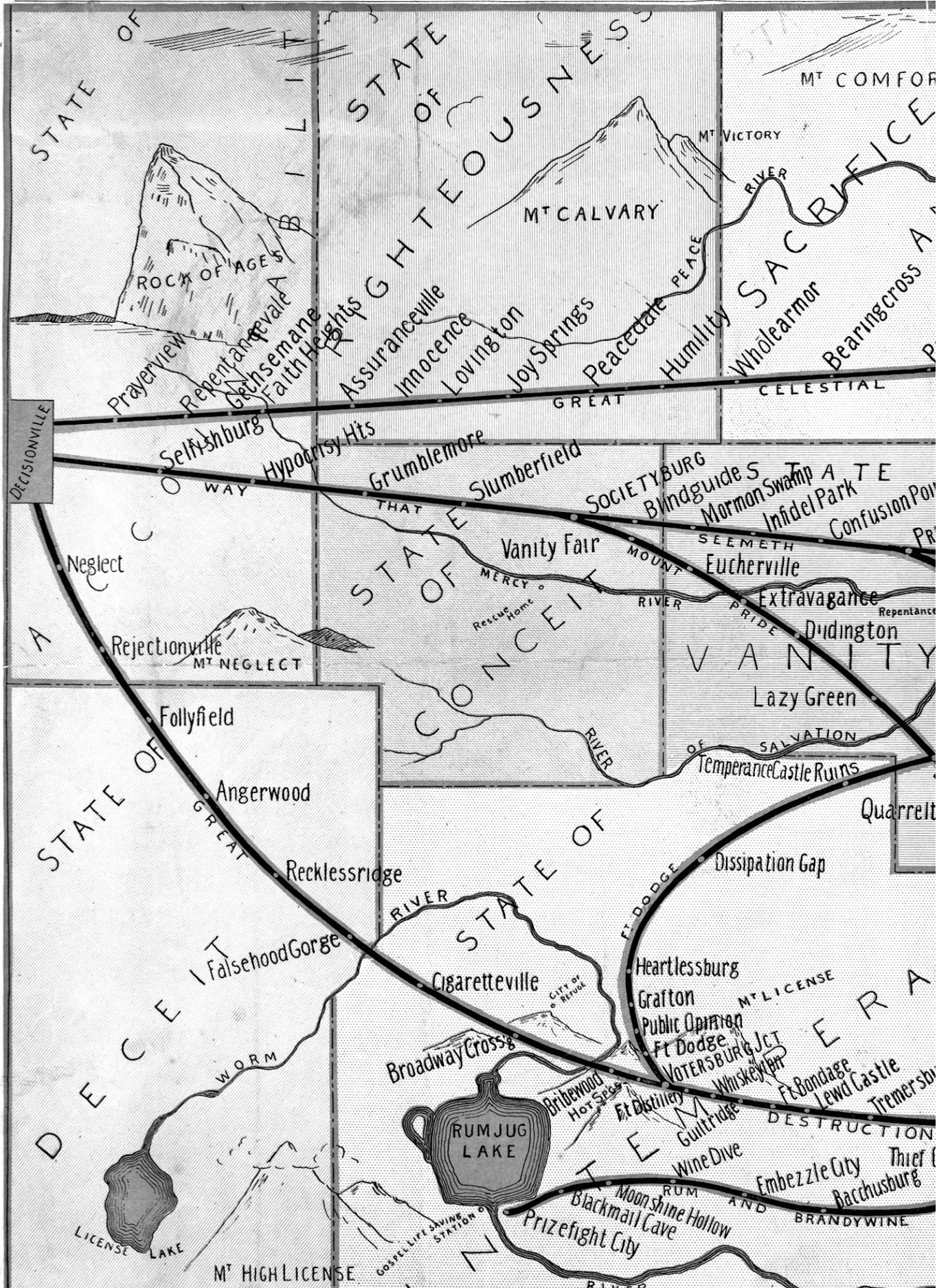
**To be full of things is to be empty of God. To be empty of things is to be full of God.**

**There exists only the present instant... a Now which always and without end is itself new. There is no yesterday nor any tomorrow, but only Now, as it was a thousand years ago and as it will be a thousand years hence.**

**The price of inaction is far greater than the cost of making a mistake.**

**If the only prayer you ever say in your entire life is thank you, it will be enough.**

# GOSPEL TEMPERANCE







## **Back to the Basics of Recovery**

### **Step Four – The Assets and Liabilities Checklist**

**by Wally P.**

***Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.***

In the past three articles, we have been through the Surrender process as practiced by the A.A. pioneers during the 1940's. The sponsor read a few key passages either from the “Big Book” or from a typed sheet of these passages, and together the sponsor and the newcomer took the first three Steps.

The sponsor read the “Big Book” passages to the newcomer because, in most cases, the newcomer didn't have a book. The “Big Book” cost the equivalent of \$95.00 today; so the book was not only big, it was expensive. Many groups had to pass the basket for weeks and sometimes months, to come up with enough money to buy one book. Key passages from this book were typed up, mimeographed, and distributed to home group members. They used these carefully selected passages when working with newcomers. Please keep this in mind as we proceed through the Steps as they were taken during A.A.'s early days.

We are now ready to start the Sharing process (Steps 4, 5, 6 and 7) by taking the Fourth Step. Many people today are unfamiliar with the assets and liabilities checklist used by the A.A. pioneers to take newcomers through this step. This “commercial inventory” is described on page 64 of the “Big Book” and consists of Resentment, Fear, Selfishness, Dishonesty, Inconsideration, Jealousy, Suspicion, and Bitterness. These liabilities are found on pages 64, 68 and 69 of our “basic text.”

Why assets and liabilities? Many early A.A.'s were business people and they readily identified with the “commercial inventory” represented by the equation for double-entry bookkeeping:  $Assets = Liabilities + Owner Equity$ .

Why didn't the pioneers use the example on page 65? They didn't know how to. The “three-column inventory” didn't come into general use until the 1970's when several writers published inventory guides based on the columns.

Where did the assets and liabilities checklist come from? It came from the Oxford Group, the organization from which A.A. evolved. Oxford Group members (including Bill W. and Dr. Bob) used it to take people through the Steps before the “Big Book” was written. The assets they used were Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love and the liabilities were Dishonesty,

Resentment, Selfishness, and Fear. These same four liabilities are part of the “commercial inventory” in the “Big Book.”

In June 1946, *The A.A. Grapevine* published a list of assets and liabilities. The “Little Red Book,” released in the fall of 1946, used an assets and liabilities checklist, as did the step guide titled, “Highroad to Happiness” which was circulated throughout A.A. in the 1950’s.

When the “Twelve and Twelve” was published in 1952, the authors made no reference to a three-column inventory during their description of the Fourth Step. They did refer to, in great detail, the assets and liabilities checklist. On page 42, they state:

“. . . Nearly every serious emotional problem can be seen as a case of misdirected instinct. When that happens, our great natural **ASSETS**, the instincts, have turned into physical and mental **LIABILITIES**.

“Step Four is our vigorous and painstaking effort to discover what these **LIABILITIES** in each of us have been, and are.”

On page 49 of the “Twelve and Twelve,” the authors present the seven deadly sins plus fear as the liabilities to inventory. These eight liabilities are quite similar to the ones found in our “basic text.”

In the “Big Book,” the introduction to the Fourth Step starts at the bottom of page 63:

“Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us.”

This is a very important paragraph. The “Big Book” authors tell us we are to take the Fourth Step immediately after the Third Step prayer. There is no waiting period between the Surrender and Sharing Steps.

In the first paragraph on page 64, the authors describe the assets and liabilities checklist.

“Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. *This was Step Four.* A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking a commercial inventory is a fact-finding and fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret.”

Whether you use the assets and liabilities checklist on page 64 or the three-column example on page 65, please sit down with the newcomer and fill out the inventory sheet or sheets together. This is how it was done in the early days. The A.A. pioneers knew this was a very stressful and uncertain time for the newcomer and they didn't want him or her to relapse over this "fact finding and fact facing process." That's why the sponsor and the newcomer worked the Fourth Step as "partners." In subsequent articles, I will show how the sponsor and the newcomer made amends together, practiced two-way prayer together, and worked with the next newcomer together.

## **JUST FOR TODAY**

*Just for today I will try to live through this day only & not tackle my whole life problem at once. I can do something for twelve hours that would appal me if I felt that I had to keep it up for a lifetime.*

*Just for today I will be happy. Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be.*

*Just for today I will adjust myself to what is & not try to adjust everything else to my desires. I will take my "luck" as it comes & fit myself into it.*

*Just for today I will try to strengthen my mind. I will study; I will learn something useful; I will not be a mental loafer; I will read something that requires effort, thought & concentration.*

*Just for today I will exercise my soul in three ways: I will do somebody a good turn & not get found out; if anybody knows of it, it will not count; I will do at least two things I don't want to do—just for exercise.*

*I will not show anyone that my feelings are hurt; they may be hurt, but today I will not show it.*

*Just for today I will be agreeable. I will look as good as I can, dress becomingly, talk low, act courteously, criticize not one bit, not find fault with anything & not try to improve or regulate anybody except myself.*

*Just for today I will have a program. I may not follow it exactly, but I will have it. I will save myself from two pests: hurry & indecision.*

*Just for today I will have a quiet half hour all by myself & relax. During this half hour, sometime, I will try to get a better perspective on my life.*

*Just for today I will be unafraid. I will enjoy that which is beautiful & will believe that as I give to the world, so the world will give to me*

## **Singapore Intergroup News - May 2014 Update**

The Singapore Intergroup is the Service office that has been established to carry out certain functions common to all AA Groups in the Singapore community. Operating under the guidelines of AA's Twelve Traditions and Twelve Concepts, the Singapore Intergroup is maintained, supervised and supported by the local Singapore AA groups. The primary purpose of Singapore Intergroup is to aid the individual AA groups in their common purpose to carry the AA message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

### **Treasurer's Report**

- Clarified that New York GSO will take contributions but would encourage us to spend locally, and, that
- NY GSO suggested we should not send money to poorer groups/countries, but could send literature on a limited, provisional basis

### **Community Outreach**

- Investigated public announcements for radio. It is possible to obtain a CD with public announcements for radio – Group decided to get this when a literature order is made
- Explored whether we should make local radio announcements in other languages – it was pointed out that there are no Chinese speaking meetings – suggested that we start a Chinese speaking meeting to be held on Tuesday nights – noted that we have a lot of Chinese Big Books
- A member pointed out that Public Service Announcements were available from World Service to be published in newspapers
- A member with expertise in advertising agreed to support Outreach and HI&PI
- Will compose a written policy regarding the roles and responsibilities of volunteers for 12 step calls on the 12 step call list.
- No other action or changes regarding the volunteers for the call lists at present.

### **Literature**

- Preparing to place a large order but needs to hear from several groups regarding their needs before he can place it.
- Discussed obtaining Big Books in Tamil and Hindi
- HI&PI – Discussed getting hardbound copies of Big Books for libraries. Living Sober was also suggested for the libraries. Will order these.
- Suggested that we support new groups with approximately 20 Big Books with idea that they could pay us back later.
- Reported that we sent 4 x Big Books and 4 x Living Sober to Sri Lanka recently

- Suggested that we order approximately 20 AA. Service Manuals and Twelve Concepts for World Service (note: available in single booklet)
- Intergroup passed that chips/medallions should be ordered centrally through the literature person to save money especially on shipping: thanks to Literature Coordinator for volunteering.
- All groups should send their literature and chip requests on a quarterly basis

### **Website**

- Running well
- Needs to include info for Bali Roundup which will be added
- Needs to be updated for new meetings as discussed. Will investigate whether new meetings need to be added.
- Will add the This is an Open Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, Anonymity Statement, This is a Closed Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous

### **Newsletter**

- All members are encouraged to submit articles, quotes, cartoons, etc to the AA Singapore Newsletter. It is our “meeting in print” and is also used in our outreach programs. Please send your submission to: newsletter@singaporeaa.org
- The current Coordinator will step down after this issue. Another member has volunteered to take on this position.

### **Meeting lists**

- Suggestion that additional copies be printed and distributed to the concierges of local hotels – A member of HI&PI has agreed to help distribute
- Agreed that we should do a reprint of 200 copies
- Literature Coordinator offered to distribute meeting lists to the various meetings and HI&PI along with literature as sometimes IG reps do not attend IG meetings and meeting lists do not reach their destination

### **HI&PI**

- Reported research had been done on Workshops for Traditions and Concepts – World services has lots of recommended reading – publicize and coordinate through intergroup whether particular groups would like a workshop or “road show” on Traditions, Concepts, and/or 12 Step Calls – Work with the Events Committee on setting up quarterly workshops focused on traditions and concepts
- Reported that power point presentations are available to help educate medical professionals, counselors, and students with a free workshop available on-line
- There will be local addiction events, as in the past, where AA will man an informational booth – will work with Events committee in coordinating this
- GSO has a “Bridge the Gap” program for persons recently released from prison or institutions whereby AA members agree to take the person to 6 AA meetings – will investigate whether we should do this with respect to prisons or IMH

## **Events and Social Committees**

- Two committees – Events Committee for big things like Round-ups, Social Committee for picnics, bowling etc. There is a need for more people on both committees.
- The social committee has an email address: socialcom@gmail.com which can be used for RSVP or questions regarding social events

## **Policy regarding Open/Closed Meetings**

- The April 2014 open letter from Intergroup to Singapore AA was read discussing the policies for the conduct of Open and Closed AA meetings.
- The policy involves a formal statement to be read at Open Meetings including a formal “Anonymity Statement”
- There is also a “This is a Closed Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous” Statement.

## **My experience in P.I.& H.I.**

Hello my name is Doreen I am an alcoholic.

I have just stepped down from my position working with Intergroup as Chair of the Public Information and Hospital Information committee. I had not done any thing like this before, but I wanted something new in my life and Public information is all about carrying the message to the still suffering alcoholic.

When I first started, I got all the workshop books on Public information and I also asked a very good friend in New Zealand to guide me through it all.

She is known as ‘the guru’ down there .We faithfully kept in touch through email. I first of all sent out 10 letters to international schools with her guidance as to how to go about this .At that time, I only got a reply back from one school, and we have continued to do talks at that school each year.

Then, with local members’ help we started talks at IMH hospital in the locked wards. They are also on -going today.

I next got in touch with local libraries about donating Big Books there. But this one proved more difficult than I had first anticipated and is still an on –going project.

We did a workshop for medical professionals, which was very successful and this led to a talk at a counselling college. There I met a woman who helped to organise many talks to

all different medical people. Also through a member who introduced me to a local hospital, we went on-site and gave a talk to doctors, nurses and other medical professionals working with patients who have addictions. This led to a talk to social workers in the field of addiction at yet another hospital.

And I have been involved with so much more outreach: meeting with students who have chosen to study about alcoholism, newspaper and magazine reporters with whom I always use an alias, a live radio station, and many others.

I would just like to point out I have used WE all throughout my share, because without MEMBERS helping me out doing all this public information none of it would have been possible. It is a WE program of recovery.

When I first started coming round AA, it was suggested to “get involved, stay involved and mind your own business”. This has worked for me and continues to work for me today.

It so warmed my heart to see all the new members volunteering to get involved with P. &I. at Intergroup.

What I have been given from being involved with working with the public and other members and carrying the message as best I can is:

- Confidence by talking to all these members of the public.
- Friendships with new people in my life inside and outside AA.
- It certainly opened my mind to lots of new things in my life.
- I have learned a lot about me.
- I am capable of doing things that I certainly would not of tried before.

This is just a few points, but the most important thing out if it all is that it has kept me sober and also enhanced my sobriety big time. More than I could ever have dreamed of.

Remember the 3 S' - **Service Strengthens Sobriety**

So give it a try. What have you got to lose eh?

-Doreen

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**I may not have gone where I intended to go, but I think I have ended up where I intended to be.” ~ Douglas Adams**

**Don't confuse your path with your destination. Just because it is stormy now doesn't mean that you are not headed for sunshine ~ Unknown**



Live without pretending, love without depending, listen without defending. Speak without offending ~ Drake

If we don't take personal responsibility for our own life, then we can't expect much to change. Reaching out is not the action of a weak person, but an act of commitment, spiritual trust and love ~ David Cunliffe



"I'm lying here because I slipped on the First Step." —Loren B., Bozeman, Mont

When "I" is  
replaced by "we"  
even *illness*  
becomes  
*wellness*

## Back to the Basics of Recovery Step Four (Continued)

by Wally P.

*Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

In the last article, we examined the assets and liabilities checklist used by the A.A. pioneers to take newcomers through the Fourth Step during the early days of the fellowship. Together, the sponsor and newcomer determined what was blocking the newcomer from a spiritual solution to his or her problems and together they compiled an amends list that was used to help overcome these problems.

This is how Bill W. took the Steps when he was at Town's Hospital in December of 1934. On page 13 of the "Big Book," Bill describes the inventory and amends process his high school friend Ebby guided him through.

“. . . I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch.

“My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies. We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment.”

Bill doesn't say, "My schoolmate visited me and I read him my inventory of shortcomings." He also doesn't say, "I made a list of people . . ." Rather, Bill writes, "WE made a list of people . . ." So, together Bill and Ebby discussed Bill's "problems and deficiencies" and together they made an amends list.

As previously explained, the assets and liabilities checklist was used throughout the 1940's and 1950's. There is no mention of the "three-column inventory" in the book, ***Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions***, written thirteen years after the "Big Book." The eight liabilities listed in the "Twelve and Twelve" are: pride, greed, lust, anger, gluttony, envy, sloth and fear. These are very close to the eight liabilities listed in Chapter 5 of the "Big Book." Dr. Bob also used eight liabilities to take newcomers through the Steps (page 263: selfishness, conceit, jealousy, carelessness, intolerance, ill-temper, sarcasm and resentment) as did the authors of the "Little Red Book," which was written in 1946 (resentment, dishonesty, self-pity, jealousy, criticism, intolerance, fear and anger).

We will now go through the "commercial inventory" as described in the "Big Book." In the

second paragraph on page 64, the authors ask us to look at the liabilities side of our checklist first:

“. . . First, we searched out the flaws (liabilities) in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.”

On pages 64-69, the “Big Book” authors list the “common manifestations” that prevent us from developing an intimate and personal relationship with “the One who has all power.” In the third paragraph on page 64, they ask us to look at our resentments:

“Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. . . . In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry.”

The “Big Book” authors describe the fear inventory at the top of page 68:

“We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them.”

Then on page 69, the authors present us with a list of harms that consist of selfishness, dishonesty, inconsideration, jealousy, suspicion, and bitterness:

“We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? Where were we at fault, what should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it.”

Please note the word WE is used throughout these pages. Nowhere does it say the newcomer makes a “solitary self-appraisal.”

The “Big Book” authors ask us to look at our assets as well as our liabilities. On page 124, they write:

“. . . We grow by our willingness to face and rectify errors (liabilities) and convert them into assets.”

The “Big Book” authors also list assets throughout Chapters Five. They tell us that we overcome resentment with forgiveness. On page 66, they write:

“. . . We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. . . . We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend.”

According to the authors, we overcome fear with faith. On page 68, they explain:

“. . . The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. . . . We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.”

We overcome harms with amends. On page 69, the authors' state:

“. . . We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing.”

In the next article, we will describe some of the duties and responsibilities of the “partners” as they share a Fourth Step inventory.

*Wally P. is an archivist, historian and author who, for more than twenty-three years, has been studying the origins and growth of the Twelve-step movement. He is the caretaker for the personal archives of Dr. Bob and Anne Smith.*

*Wally conducts history presentations and recovery workshops, including “Back to the Basics of Recovery” in which he takes attendees through all Twelve Steps in four, one-hour sessions. More than 500,000 have taken the Steps using this powerful, time-tested, and highly successful “original” program of action.*

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### **Some Upcoming A.A. Events in the Region**

- Bali Round-Up << A New Freedom>> 13 to 15 June 2014, <http://www.baliroundup.org>
- Bangalore - 50<sup>th</sup> National Convention 14-17 August 2014, <http://aabangalore2014.in/>
- Angeles City, Philippines 19<sup>th</sup> International Fall Roundup << Keeping it Simple >> 10 to 12 October 2014, <http://roundupangelescity.blogspot.sg>

**Singapore A.A. Weekly Meeting Schedule: please see website for directions**

<b>Monday</b>	07.15 - 08.00 AM	Men's Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">MBFC</a>
	07.30 - 08.30 AM	Big Book Study	Closed	<a href="#">Boat Quay</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Open	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Big Book Study	Open	<a href="#">East Coast</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	08:05 - 09:05 PM	Beginners Meeting	Open	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
<b>Tuesday</b>	07:30 - 08:30 AM	Daily Reflections	Closed	<a href="#">Boat Quay</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Big Book	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	07:00 - 08:30 PM	11th Step Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Novena Church</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Open Topics	Open	<a href="#">NAMS Clinic, IMH</a>
<b>Wednesday</b>	07.30 - 08.30 AM	As Bill Sees It	Closed	<a href="#">Boat Quay</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Open	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Living Sober	Open	<a href="#">East Coast</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Speaker Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	08:15 - 09:15 PM	Women's Step Study	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
<b>Thursday</b>	07:30 - 08:30 AM	12 & 12	Closed	<a href="#">Boat Quay</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Step Study	Closed	<a href="#">East Coast</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	12 & 12	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	07:30 - 08:30 PM	Topics Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">98B Duxton Road</a>
	08:10 - 09:00 PM	Big Book	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
<b>Friday</b>	07.15 - 08.00 AM	Mens Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">MBFC</a>
	07:30 - 08:30 AM	Beginners Meeting	Open	<a href="#">Boat Quay</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	12 & 12	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	12:30 - 01:30 PM	Step 11 Meeting	Open	<a href="#">East Coast</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Living Sober	Open	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	07:00 - 08:00 PM	Topics Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">The Flying Hog, Duxton Rd</a>
<b>Saturday</b>	08:00 - 09:00 AM	Big Book Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Mana Mana Beach Club</a>
	08:30 - 09:30 AM	Gratitude Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Boat Quay</a>
	10:00 - 11:00 AM	Women's Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Boat Quay</a>
	04:30 - 05:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
	04:30 - 05:30 PM	Daily Reflections	Closed	<a href="#">11 Kampong Bugis</a>
	07:00 - 08:30 PM	Saturday Night Live	Open	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>
<b>Sunday</b>	08:00 - 09:00 AM	Men's Meeting	Open	<a href="#">Coffee Bean-Orchard</a>
	08:00 - 09:00 AM	Beginners Meeting	Open	<a href="#">Mana Mana Beach Club</a>
	09:00 - 10:00 AM	LGBT Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">Rainbow Meeting</a>
	11:00 - 12:00	Step Meeting	Closed	<a href="#">11 Kampong Bugis</a>
	06:30 - 07:45 PM	Big Book	Closed	<a href="#">Damien Hall</a>

## Do you have a problem with alcohol?

If we answered YES to four or more questions, we were in deep trouble with our drinking. See how you do. Remember, there is no disgrace in facing up to the fact that you have a problem.

### **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. A.A. said: "Just try not to drink today." (If you do not drink today, you cannot get drunk today.)

Yes  No

### **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 got into, and how we stopped. We will be glad to help you, if you want us to.

Yes  No

### **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.

Yes  No

### **4 - Have you had to have an eye-opener upon awakening 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."

Yes  No

### **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.

Yes  No

### **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.

Yes  No

**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.

Yes  No

**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 someplace else to get more.

Yes  No

**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 into A.A., we found out that once we started to drink, we couldn't stop.

Yes  No

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

Many of us admit now that we "called in sick" lots of times when the truth was that we were hung-over or on a drunk.

Yes  No

**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.

Yes  No

**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.

Yes  No

+65 6475 0890 for further assistance  
Or email us at [help@singaporeaa.org](mailto:help@singaporeaa.org)