

THE DAILY REPRIEVE



BY SINGAPORE AA MEMBERS
JULY - AUGUST - SEPTEMBER 2011

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.



D.E.N.I.A.L. - DON'T EVEN KNOW I AM LYING

The Daily Reprieve, Issue 5
June, 2011

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EDITORIAL POLICY NOTE

WELCOME TO ANOTHER EDITION OF OUR NEWSLETTER, THE ‘DAILY REPRIEVE’.

I HOPE YOU all are enjoying another season of recovery (the only kind we have in Singapore!) When I first read that Step Six was the one which “separated the men from the boys,” I was confused. To me, in my first year of recovery, this seemed like the good part of the Twelve steps! Every newcomer looks with worry at the big points “FOUR” and “NINE” on the wall, a certain queasy feeling in her stomach. But who doesn’t want to get rid of all her character defects, and become a better person? When the Twelve and Twelve talked about us clinging to these defects I was genuinely baffled—all the more so when they put it in the context of the Seven Deadly Sins. I don’t really think anyone wants to be prideful, or angry. Or, at least, I didn’t think so.

I was breezing along. And, indeed, I made a lot of progress working my steps for the first time, and was a much happier person at the end of that first year. Then it turned out I had to do it all over again. I was less dismayed than I might have been. I had seen the good results, and surely I hadn’t gotten into nearly as much trouble in the last year as I had in the preceding 35. It was going to be a cakewalk. Unsurprisingly, it turned out that, as much as I had tried, I had not dug deep enough in my first Step Four, and there was a lot more work to be done. More surprisingly to me, I hadn’t been right about what character defects I had, or which were the most glaring.

Astonishingly, when I was honest and reflective, I realized it was true: I didn’t want to give up some of these defects. Or at least not all the way... Was I going to swear off smugness and superiority for good, even when I was totally in the right? Was I going to stop gently nudging people to behave the way I knew was best for them? (Known to everyone else in my life as “being manipulative.”)

Since then I have seen honest and willing sponsees, who have worked fearlessly on their Step Four’s, run aground at Step Six. These women were more honest than I was, because they saw their own faults more clearly, and recognized more easily that AA was asking them to take a big part of what they had lived with as “their personality” for good or ill (and let’s grant it was mostly ill), and chuck it in the trash. I had been like a blind person dancing along the edge of a precipice—it’s easy! These sponsees saw what was being asked and, quite humanly, balked. (But not forever.)

So don’t let the fact that Step Six seems to merit only a single sentence in the Big Book (a place where 25-page stories about ordering sandwiches at lunch-

counters are pretty thick on the ground) trick you into thinking Steps Six and Seven are easy, or less serious than the other steps. A person who fails here will not be able to make honest amends in Step Nine, nor will he find much comfort in Step Eleven. Each step demands much from us, but for me one of the hardest things to see was that I had been wrong about myself even when I was critical and tore myself down. Even in the depths of my despair, I had been telling myself I was worthless for reasons that weren't even the right reasons! I was surprised and upset to learn that I hadn't even been managing to do self-loathing properly. But there you are, AA life is full of surprises.

There are only so many of us here in Singapore. If we listen to only the loudest voices, who are quick to submit their stories, we will quickly run out of material. In the rare meeting chaired by Indian Michael, things sometimes go quiet. Instead of waiting patiently as the seconds tick by, he will say, "So-and-So, it looks like you have something to share with the meeting!" We all laugh, but aren't those dragged-out-of-you shares often the best at the meeting? Don't we wonder, why was he staying silent, when all that was inside? I'm wondering the same thing, people, so get those stories in here before I start calling on you in the letter to the Editor. This is service work yo can do anytime, anyplace; service work that may help a fellow alcoholic when he is at his most alone in the dark night of the soul. Write something, already!

Finally, please note the current address for submissions to the newsletter:

dailyreprievesingapore@gmail.com

Yours,
Belle

WE'RE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE OUR CHARACTER DEFECTS

WHEN I FIRST entered AA on 8th June 1992, I was a DEFECT looking for a CHARACTER. My life was totally unmanageable and I had made a complete mess of it. I soon discovered that because of my Pride, Ego, Grandiosity, Anger, Resentment and many more defects, I could not accept and live life on life's terms, so I drank Alcohol to kill the pain.

I then discovered that there was no pain in my fantasy world and so I kept on drinking to avoid that pain. What was I going to do to live a better life? I had to acknowledge the fact that I was allowing my Defects of Character to control my life and the consequences were always painful.

I had not only damaged myself Spiritually, Mentally and Physically, but had caused sometimes irreparable damage to other people, especially those close to me and those who really LOVED me. When I had completed my Steps 4 & 5 with my sponsor, I threw myself 100% into Steps 6 & 7 because I was feeling good that I had been able to really confess my wrong doings and I wanted to continue getting better, as I knew I was still a sick man. (Just for the record, Steps 6, 7, 8 and 9 are sometimes termed "the forgotten steps" because some AAs jump over them.)

So I spoke with my Sponsor, John the Camera was his AA name, and he told me to get my list from Step 4. (It does say in the Big Book that we return to our list, and we can't return to the list if we've destroyed it, so I was glad that I had held on to mine!) I started to work on the Defect instead of letting it work on me. My Defect came from my EGO, and the EGO tells me that if I allow the defect to work on me it will give me pleasure because the EGO always looks for ways to give us excitement (which is why I drank over my unmanageable life).

I continued to refer to my list of defects and was told by my sponsor to list the 7 DEADLY SINS. Well, what a surprise! I saw myself in every one of them and noticed that PRIDE was No. 1 on the list. Of course, we all know that PRIDE is the Alkies' No 1 offender.

Working my way through these was painful, but the reward was awesome. I knew then that if I kept sharing these defects with my Sponsor, or close friend in AA, and didn't keep them to myself, that I would be on the road to spiritual recovery.

Then I realised that after becoming aware of these defects Step 10 helps me remove them on a daily basis. I was not so stupid as to believe that they would not

return! And I was correct. But I was able to Pray and Meditate as suggested in Step 11 and ask my Higher power to remove them again and again.

Today my Life is still unmanageable drunk or sober. That is why I have to keep coming back to meetings: to keep up the maintenance of my sobriety. And I know that my DEFECTS OF CHARACTER will only stop working on me when I am dead, because they will die with me. I am much better today than I was 20 years ago at dealing with them, as I know now WHAT NOT TO DO, which is more important than knowing WHAT TO DO.

HUMBLY ASKED HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS

In Step 7 the word Shortcomings meant the same thing to me as Defects. Bill W. said himself, when asked this, that he didn't want to use the same word twice. I then studied this concept and came up with this:

My SHORTCOMINGS are looking for the DEFECTS in other people and gloating on them. That works for me as it is easy for me to understand, and as long as I have these SHORTCOMINGS, my life will remain unmanageable. So I try not to be Judgmental about People, Places and Things and I also make sure not to give them the power to destroy me. When these situations arise I remember the things I was taught by those who came before me and those are:

LEAVE IT ALONE AND IT WILL LEAVE YOU ALONE

Then

I MOVE A MUSCLE AND CHANGE A THOUGHT

Because

I AM WHAT I THINK NOT WHAT I THINK I AM

I suggest that when your Defects or Shortcomings enter your head and try to mess with your emotions, try these. They work for me and I have not had to go back out and experiment to prove them wrong.

Peace be with you all.
God Bless

Des C.

AA MONTHLY DINNER

1ST SATURDAY OF EVERY MONTH

LOOK ON
SOCIAL CLUB PIN-UP BOARD
FOR MORE DETAILS



SOCIAL EVENTS UPDATE

WE ARE PLEASED to tell you all that our first social event was a success!! For those who may not be aware, it was our Family Day Picnic at Pasir Ris Park on Sat 29th May.

Thanks to all who made it with their families. Although it was a little hot, the kids had fun in the enormous playground and it was lovely to speak to fellow members and meet their respective partners.

So after the success of our first social event, we are now planning a monthly dinner. This will take place the first Saturday of every month and will be held at Yum Cha in Chinatown.

All the details will be posted on our very own notice board in Damien Hall and flyers will be handed out at other meetings too.

Please feel free to bring your partners along. No kids though this time! But don't worry, we'll be organizing another family day soon, so watch this space for updates.

EVERYONE SEEMS TO STRESS “GET A SPONSOR, GET A SPONSOR” AND VERY FEW STRESS “GET A SPONSEE”. I BELIEVE “GET A SPONSEE” IS EQUALLY IMPORTANT.

I HAD BEEN in the program 15 years before I got my first sponsee. Many excuses such as, “I don’t know the program well enough, I don’t have time for a sponsee since I’m a single mother and won’t be able to provide enough time for a sponsee”. Other excuses included, “my story is not the same as hers” or “she deserves a better sponsor” (e.g. I’m not good enough for her). The list can go on and on.

Truth be told, I was using the Sponsorship tool but not giving back. I’ve had at least 3 sponsors - all wonderful, all willing to give. But for some reason, maybe perfectionism or fear, I could never get myself to be a sponsor. I would do other service, but not sponsorship.

It was my first year in France. I was lonely without my program, friends, sponsor and family. It was difficult, as French wine had definitely been one of my favorites. I spent many days in self pity and isolation mode. Fortunately, Willingness (Step 7) provided me with the opportunity to get the nerve to get a sponsee.

With a sponsee, I was able to shift the focus on someone else. I listened to her problems instead of focusing on my own. And for some reason, my self-pity disappeared and my problems lessened.

Then, when sharing the tools, I started using them as well. First the slogans:

Let go and let God

One Day at a Time

This too shall pass

Keep the focus on yourself

Put it on the Shelf

Does it have to be said, does it have to
be said by me, does it have to be said by me now.

HALT (Hungry, Angry, Lonely, Tired) etc.

Then the literature, then the prayers: Serenity prayer, third step prayer. Then the steps. It all started coming back. And each time I shared my experience, strength and hope with her and allayed her fears, I was also telling myself the same things. In time, my fears lessened and I began feeling again that I will be taken care of wherever I am, as long as I don't drink, go to the meetings and do the steps.

My sponsee has left France. She just sent me a gratitude prayer and I understand her gratitude, as I felt the same way about all my sponsors. I hope one day she has the willingness to be a sponsor and experience the gratitude that I feel having her in my life.

If you don't have a sponsee, be willing! It's another wonderful tool of the program.

Anna,
Paris AA

PRINCIPLES FOR LIVING A DAY AT A TIME

MY NAME IS Jim and I am a very grateful recovering alcoholic. My AA birthday is the 27th November 1989 and I have been blessed with continuous sobriety one day at a time, thanks to the Grace of God, good sponsorship, attending meetings on a regular basis and trying to live the Principles one day at a time.

So why keep the Principles a secret since they are an excellent way to solve our living problems? Unfortunately GSO does not have much material accumulated on this subject. Well, perhaps the secret can be shared, although my research went to Singapore and then USA/Canada.

First of all, I could find no definitive listing of the Twelve Spiritual Principles. So I started off by attempting to list the principles that have come into my life as a result of working the Steps to the best of my ability. (See below.) My research (action) gave me the reward of realising that perhaps I have made a little progress in travelling the road of recovery. Compared with a tape by Rod L. at a Texas State Convention, (brought back to Palm Beach by John S. (Ennis P.'s sponsor) in 1951), there was a fairly good alignment. Of course there is no 'perfect' answer. Like the road of recovery, the exercise has been fun and hopefully being able to share the result in print with my fellow travellers adds something extra. The following are the Official AA references I used in making my list:

Willingness, Honesty and Open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery. – From the Appendix on Spiritual Experience.

AA's Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole. – From the Forward to the 12 and 12.

Humility – Indeed the attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of each of AA's Twelve Steps, for without some degree of humility, no alcoholic can stay sober at all. – From page 76 in the 12 and 12. Courtesy, Kindness, Justice and Love are the keynotes by which we may come into harmony with practically anybody. – From 10th Step page 95 in the 12 and 12.

So my hope is, if this article is published, the readers of our wonderful meeting in print will first of all enjoy, then perhaps reflect. For myself, once again action on my recovery has led to further rewards.

Yours in Fellowship,
Jim
(Singapore and Inverurie)

JIM'S PRINCIPLES OF THE 12 STEPS

1. **Honesty** (After many years of denial, recovery can begin with one simple admission of being powerless over alcohol) **and Surrender**. (Capitulation to hopelessness.) [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated HONESTY and ACCEPTANCE.]
2. **Hope** (Step 2 is the mirror image or opposite of Step 1. In Step 1 we admit that alcohol is our higher power, and that our lives are unmanageable. In Step 2, we find a different Higher Power who we hope will bring about a return to sanity in the management of our lives) **and Faith**. (It seems to be a spiritual truth that before a higher power can begin to operate; you must first believe that it can.) [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated HOPE.]
3. **Surrender**, (A lifetime of self-will run riot can come to a screeching halt, and change forever, by making a simple decision to turn it all over to a higher power) **Faith and Commitment** (The key word in Step 3 is decision). [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated FAITH.]
4. **Courage**, (Firmness of mind in the face of extreme difficulty; mental or moral strength to withstand fear) **Honesty** (An inventory of self) **and Soul Searching**. (There is a saying in the 12-step program that recovery is a process, not an event. The same can be said for this step—more will surely be revealed.) [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated COURAGE]
5. **Truth** (Candid confession to God and another human being.) **and Integrity** (The quality or state of being, complete or undivided; soundness). [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated INTEGRITY.]
6. **WILLINGNESS** (Choosing to abandon defects of character) **and Acceptance**. (The key to Step 6 is acceptance - accepting character defects exactly as they are and becoming entirely willing to let them go.) [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated WILLINGNESS.]

7. **Humility.** (Standing naked before God, with nothing to hide, and asking that our flaws - in His eyes - be removed.) [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated HUMILITY.]

8. **Reflection** (Whom have we harmed? Are we ready to make amends?) **and Willingness.** (Making a list of those harmed before coming into recovery may sound simple. Becoming willing to actually make those amends is the difficult part.) [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated JUSTICE.]

9. **Amendment** (Making direct amends/restitution/correction, etc.) **and Forgiveness.** (Making amends may seem like a bitter pill to swallow, but for those serious about recovery it can be great medicine for the spirit and soul.) [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated GOOD JUDGMENT – SELF-DISCIPLINE.]

10. **Discipline,** (Training that corrects, moulds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character; to bring under control; to train or develop by instruction) **Vigilance** (Exercising self-discovery, honesty, abandonment, humility, reflection and amendment on a momentary, daily, and periodic basis.) **and Maintenance.** (Nobody likes to admit to being wrong. But it is absolutely necessary to maintain spiritual progress in recovery.) [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated PERSEVERANCE.]

11. **Patience/Perseverance** (Steadfast despite opposition, difficulty or adversity, willing to bear, to persist in an undertaking in spite of other influences) **and Making Contact.** (The purpose of Step 11 is to discover the plan God has for our lives and to become as one with our Higher Power.) [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated AWARENESS.]

12. **Service.** (Awakening into sober usefulness.) [Rod L. Tape 1951 stated LOVE and SERVICE.]

DO I HAVE PEACE OF MIND TODAY?

MY JOURNEY IN AA started nearly 5 years ago in Singapore. I don't count the 2 or 3 months in 1998 in the USA where I was first introduced to the program, because I was drinking and going to meetings. On second thought, it may have some relevance in the sense that after those 2 or 3 months I moved to Singapore and completely relapsed for what would become 7 plus years! It was suggested to me by a psychologist that maybe I had a drinking problem and that I should check out AA. I went to the meetings quite wholeheartedly, I remember, because down deep I knew there was something wrong.

Just married a few months before to a beautiful local woman, the future looked so bright: I could imagine that my new life with her in the USA or in Asia would be just great. This was on the outside, but down deep there was no peace of mind! Just before the 1st meeting with the counselor I was creating so much havoc and nonsense with my wife that we were still not able to live together all of this long distance and over the telephone which was costing us a small fortune!

I had heard about Alcoholism (but not AA), and surely wasn't an alcoholic because I didn't have a liver problem (can't spell the disease), I never killed anyone and I had never been to prison! So how could I be an alcoholic? I don't blame me. It's damn difficult to see when I'm wrong. I can see when you're wrong! That's easy.

I landed in Singapore in November of 1999 and did lots of investigating. I got myself into this great program on July 11th 2006. Today, if I want a little peace of mind, I come to a meeting. If I want a lot of peace of mind, I come to meetings, do the steps and talk to my sponsor. I feel really great most of the time and I know that one day, when I want complete peace of mind, there is a recipe I can follow (my recipe, not everyone's): Daily prayer and meditation, attend meetings, do service and be honest with my sponsor or another person and myself on a daily basis.

Thanks to this program of AA I have learned that it's mostly my willingness (the wish) to do these things. I just "want change" and then it happens, I don't do much myself. So if you are new, try it, and if you are coming back, try it again, but this time let go.

Thank you for
allowing me to share,

Patrick

EDITORIAL POLICY OF THE DAILY REPRIEVE:

THE DAILY REPRIEVE IS THE Singapore newsletter of Alcoholics Anonymous produced by the Intergroup Newsletter Committee. The articles printed in *The Daily Reprieve* are contributed by individual AA members and are not the opinions or policy of AA as a whole. There is no payment for contributions, and this newsletter is produced in good faith in the spirit of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA 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 AA membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An AA group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. AA, 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 AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

The AA Responsibility Pledge



**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**