

# Introduction to AA

Philadelphia Group  
1537 Pine Street

*[Thanks to Barefoot Bill for this text.]*

Alcoholics Anonymous  
New Club House  
219 South 36th Street  
Phone: BAring 9698

Meetings:  
Public - Thursdays  
Members - Mondays  
8:30 P.M.

This pamphlet is an attempt to set forth a few of the rudimentary ideas of A.A. Its purpose is to give the new member a working knowledge, so that he will have some understanding of the purposes, functioning and organization of A.A. What is covered here, we hope will give a prospective member an idea of how to at least start the A.A. program.

However, since the A.A. idea is ever evolving and developing, each new member is strongly advised to circulate freely at meetings and

elsewhere with other members. It is, in fact, only by intimate personal discussion that a full understanding can be attained. All older members are willing and anxious, without obtrusion, to assist new men along this line.

### **I. What do the letters A.A. stand for?**

Alcoholics Anonymous.

### **II. What is A.A.?**

A.A. is a group of people for whom Alcohol has become a major problem in their lives and who, admitting it, have decided to do something about it. They have, on the evidence of their own lives, decided that for them Alcohol is a poison, and are honestly attempting to build a satisfactory mode of living without the use of Alcohol in any form.

### **III. What is an Alcoholic?**

An Alcoholic is any person whose indulgence in Alcohol continuously or periodically results in behavior such as to disrupt his normal relations with his or her work, family or society, and is of such a nature as to cause him or her serious trouble.

An Alcoholic is any person whose mental or physical condition is so affected as to, in fact, seriously jeopardize his or her normal relations with her or his work, family or society. While the actual damage may not have been done, it is merely a matter of time or luck when something serious will occur. Therefore, so far as the necessity of their giving up drinking is concerned they are Alcoholic.

An Alcoholic is any person who experiences an abnormal craving after drinking, and, who finds it necessary to use Alcohol the next day as a medicine or drug to alleviate the very condition which Alcohol itself has created.

An Alcoholic is any person who under any or all of these conditions finds it impossible to discontinue both its constant or periodic use.

#### **IV. Am I an Alcoholic?**

We believe that if any person will with brutal honesty face the questions raised in Paragraph III, he or she can definitely determine whether or not he is an Alcoholic.

#### **V. Is it a disgrace to be Alcoholic?**

While we do not feel it to be a happy state, we do not consider it a disgrace.

Medicine and Psychiatry now both admit that the urge for Alcohol by an Alcoholic is far beyond the indulgence of a whim. That the necessity for Alcohol by an Alcoholic cannot be permanently overcome simply by medical therapy, or by mere will power alone.

Theories are advanced that the cause is a peculiar chemical makeup of the body resulting in a physical allergy, or that it is an emotional instability or immaturity; that it is due to a character deficiency or lack of will power, or to an escapist complex, inferiority complex or numerous other idiosyncrasies. Any one of these may be true in whole or in part.

However, for simplicity, we have chosen to identify it as an allergy resembling the

unfortunate situation of a diabetic with an insatiable, ungovernable desire for sugar.

## **VI. How soon will I be cured?**

If you mean when will you be able to drink in a normal way again, the answer is, never in this life. Overwhelming evidence of medicine and psychiatry is that once a man has stepped over into the classes as described in paragraph III, no person can ever drink normally again.

If, on the other hand, you mean when will you be free from the desire to drink the answer is, that alcoholic type of drinking being a way of life both in thought and action, the rapidity with which you succeed in changing your fundamental outlook on life, determines the time when you will be free. This, in turn, depends almost solely on the degree of sincerity and energy with which you throw yourself into the program. Some get almost instant release; for others it is a matter of weeks, or in rare cases months. Our case histories prove that, if a person definitely decides to give up drinking, and if he is not mentally impaired, no failure is possible, provided he honestly and energetically follows the program.

## **VII. Why can A.A. help me where others could not?**

Because A.A. combines the basic and essential elements of sound Alcoholic therapy. It advises you to seek medical help for your physical deficiencies, if any; a return to your

God for your spiritual well-being; the righting on your part, insofar as it is possible, of all past wrongs in order to relieve your mind of inner conflicts. It furnishes you with social and physical activities for the release of nervous energy and the correction of intravert type of thinking. A.A. offers friendships and understanding such as you have probably not known in years. It gives opportunity for sympathetic mutual discussions to give relief to your complexes, repressions and self-recriminations.

Finally, it gives you an opportunity to help others in the same manner you will be helped.

### **VIII. What do I have in common with such a Group?**

In addition to having a common Alcoholic problem you will find that A.A. is as representative a cross-section of our community life as could be found. Members of the group include representatives of every profession, trade and skill. There are business men, laborers, employee and employer, men and women, young, middle-aged and elderly, scholar and student. It is truly representative of many walks of life, social, economic, political and religious. There is little doubt that you will find types to your liking and in harmony with your tastes.

### **IX. Is A.A. a religious group or movement?**

If admitting that we ourselves nor any

human relationship or agency have been able to help us so far as the drinking problem is concerned, and that we are desperately in need of help from somewhere, and are willing to accept it, if it can be found - if that is religion - the answer is, yes.

A.A. has no dogma, no creed, no ritual.

It does not intrude into a member's conception of the Spiritual. However, we believe that an appeal for help to one's own interpretation of a Higher Power and the acceptance of that help is the indispensable factor in working toward a satisfactory adjustment to life and its problems.

#### **X. Are there dues, fees, etc.?**

There are no dues or initiation fees. A voluntary collection is taken at each meeting to defray current expenses for meeting halls, refreshments, etc. The more fortunate financially contribute \$1.00 monthly.

However, A.A. stresses the fact that there are no salaries of any kind or any financial emoluments to any member, whomsoever.

#### **XI. What form of Government does A.A. Have?**

Each group throughout the country (of which there are approximately 150) selects its own method of conducting its own business affairs. The group by whom this pamphlet is prepared has adopted the following simple procedure. It has an Executive Committee of five, elected by the Group at large at a regular

monthly business meeting. Each member serves for one month, and at the expiration of the month a new Committee is elected.

The Executive Committee elects a Chairman from among their own number who serves at its discretion.

In addition, one member is elected to the House Committee for six months who serves with the Executive committee in order to have continuity in the affairs of the Group. There is also a Treasurer, Secretary, an Entertainment Committee and such other Sub-Committees as may be deemed necessary for the efficient functioning of the Group elected by the Group at large.

## **XII. How do I become a member?**

You become a member of a Group almost automatically. There is no formal initiation or induction. If, after examining yourself honestly and courageously, you admit to yourself you are an Alcoholic, that you sincerely want to stop drinking once and for all, you have only to attend the meetings, make an energetic sincere effort to be guided by the advice and experience of those about you, and try with complete sincerity to live up to its principles, to become a member.

With continued sincerity of purpose, half your battle is won; without it neither A.A. nor anyone else can help you.

### **General Information.**

Any one demonstrating his or her honesty

and sincerity of purpose in his or her desire to stop drinking will have recourse to a list of names, addresses and telephone numbers of the Group who will be glad to furnish advice and assistance.

When you feel the need of advice or companionship, do not hesitate to call on or phone any member on the list. If he or she is occupied, he will assist you in getting in contact with some other member who is available. That is an essential part of each member's work, so don't feel you are imposing.

When you have decided to become a member, make it as much a full time job as possible (regaining your former life of complete sobriety is a twenty-four hour a day job. Get active; ask the committee if there is any work you can do.

Make it your business to meet and know every other member. Do not be afraid of appearing too forward. We always try to know everyone by their first name; you do the same.

Bring your wife, husband or any other close relative you choose, to the meetings. The better informed your relatives are as to the program, the better position they are in to cooperate with you in this important program for your readjustment.

You will at first naturally feel closer to one or two members, but it is important that you broaden your contacts and develop as many

friendships as possible.

Don't act like a "patient" too long, become the "doctor" and get out and get yourself some patients.

Don't ever, at any time, imagine you are being slighted. Time and a little logic will prove to you how wrong you are. Alcoholics are inclined to hyper-sensitivity - so fight this with all your intelligence.

A.A. can and will do for you what it has done for thousands. If you are sincere in your desire to stop drinking, you can. No one can cure you. You must help yourself. A.A. gives you the tools, and shows you how to use them. It is up to you to do the work.

There are meetings nearly every evening during the week in various parts of the Metropolitan area. If you desire any information regarding them or if you wish to get in personal contact with a group, address your communication to:

P.O. Box 4735, Philadelphia, Pa.

At the first meeting you attend be sure to personally give your name, address and telephone number to the Secretary, if you desire to become a member.

A.A. publishes a 400-page book entitled ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, which is obtainable at the Clubhouse or any public library.

We urge every victim of alcohol, friends of

victims, physicians, clergymen, psychiatrists or social workers to read and study this book, as it deserves the careful attention of any one interested in the problem of alcoholism.

This book will give them, as no other treatise known, an inside view of the problem which the alcoholic faces and represents the pooled experiences of 100 men and women who have been victims of alcohol, many of them declared hopeless by the experts, and who have won their freedom and recovered their sanity and self-control.

The unhappiest person in the world is the chronic alcoholic who has an insistent yearning to enjoy life as he once knew it, but cannot picture life without alcohol. He has a heart-breaking obsession that by some miracle of control he will be able to do so.

Some day he will be unable to imagine life either with alcohol or without it, then he will know loneliness such as few do. He will be at the jumping off place. He will wish for the end.

A.A. CAN and DOES show these people a solution to their problem and its greatest recommendation is - IT WORKS!