

## YOU MAKE A START

You have made a decision. You've taken Step One and said to yourself, "Yes, I'm one of those people who is powerless over alcohol. My life has become unmanageable. I can't stop drinking and I want help." You have discovered, as it says in the Big book, that alcohol is cunning, baffling and powerful.

In order to stop drinking, and stay stopped, there are a few simple principles that you will need to apply to your life. These principles are AA's program of recovery. They can work for you as effectively as they have worked for others. Following are some suggestions which we feel will be of help to you on your path to recovery.

## LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME

Alcoholics Anonymous is a "one day at a time" way of living. We try to break life into small pieces we can handle. We stay sober one day at a time, or when necessary, one hour at a time. We do our jobs one task at a time, We solve our problems one problem at a time. We clean up our past, one mess at a time. And we conscientiously try to turn our lives and our will over to the care of the Higher Power as we understand Him.

In learning to apply the AA principles to our lives, we ask for help from other AA members, from our sponsors, and from our Higher Power, whom most of us come to depend upon for our recovery.

## GO TO MEETINGS

All over the Greater Milwaukee area, every day of the year, afternoons, mornings, evenings and even late at night, there is help in the form of meetings for you and for every alcoholic who wants help.

Use the handy directory the "When and Where" which you can get at most of the meeting literature tables. It lists meeting in the area. Every member should have a copy of this directory. Then take in as many meetings as you can. As one AA members says, The Big Book is your road map, the meetings are your filling stations."

## GET A SPONSOR

A few members may tell you that they got sober without the aid of a sponsor, and they may be telling the truth. However, our AA experience tells us that you will have a much better chance with a sponsor than without one. In AA you will probably find that your sponsor is a vital part of your program of recovery.

Your sponsor will listen to you and give you suggestions; tell you what works for them; point out trouble spots and help you decide what to do about them. In other words, your sponsor helps you to understand the AA program and guides you along the path of recovery.

Though sponsors can't solve all your problems they help you to face up to them with honesty and courage, and find ways to solve them by using the AA program.

You can usually count on sponsors to do their part, and to encourage you to do yours.

## HAVE A HOME GROUP

When some of us were introduced to AA through a particular group, we thought we had been assigned to that group and should not go to other meetings. Nothing could be further from the truth. Feel free to visit various groups. But sooner or later you should settle down to a regular meeting that you want to consider your "home group."

However, having a home group should not keep you from going to other meetings. Attend as many meetings as you feel the need for. And then a couple more!

There are many different types of groups available. The home group you choose should be one in which you can get sober, stay sober, and feel that you are a part of.

Your home group ought to be the place where you are challenged to keep growing and where you feel you have so many friends you can't afford to stay away!

## READ THE BOOKS

As soon as you can, we suggest that you read these important books which explain the AA program of recovery, our history and Traditions:

*The Big Book "ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS"*

*"12 STEPS AND 12 TRADITIONS"*

*"A.A. COMES OF AGE"*

*"AS BILL SEES IT" (The AA Way of Life)*

*"DR. BOB AND THE GOOD OLD TIMERS".*

These books are AA General Service Conference Approved literature. We suggest that you read them.. and reread them. They can be a constant source of inspiration and understanding. Many of us begin our "Quiet Times" by reading a paragraph or chapter from one of them. They are the basic source of our program of recovery.

The listed readings above and other AA literature is available and can be found on the literature tables at most AA meetings or at the Greater Milwaukee Central Office, 7429 W. Greenfield Ave., West Allis, WI 53214. Call 414-771-9119 for more information. We feel it can be helpful as you travel the road to happy sobriety.

There are also two excellent periodicals that most of us read. One is the AA "Grapevine," which is published every month in New York and is filled with helpful articles for the alcoholic who wants to get well and stay that way.

The other is "Between-Us," the Greater Milwaukee Central Office monthly publication which is read by members all over the United States. "Between-Us" consists of thoughtful articles and information for the alcoholic in the Greater Milwaukee Area.

You can arrange to have these helpful publication mailed to you regularly. Ask your group secretary or the AA Central Office for details.

## INCLUDE THE FAMILY

It is said that the average practicing alcoholic affects the lives of at least five other people and that alcoholism is a family illness. We find that the family that gets sick together can often recover together. The best way to do this is to share your program of recovery with them.

Following are some of the AA activities you can share with your family.

*OPEN MEETINGS:* Take your spouse, other members of your family and interested friends to hear the stories of AA speakers, and to share in the fellowship of other AA families. Open meetings are listed in the Greater Milwaukee Central Office meeting directory the "When & Where".

*SOCIAL EVENTS:* Special suppers, dances, picnics and other social activities are regularly sponsored by groups for AA members and their families.

*AA CONFERENCES:* Weekend conferences at resorts and hotels are held throughout the year and offer activities for AA members and their families. Often, Al-Anon and Alateen meetings are held at the same time. "Between-Us" and "Grapevine" publish notices of these conferences.

The Al-Anon Family Groups, designed for members of the alcoholic family, hold "closed" meetings just as AA groups do. They use AA's twelve steps of recovery to help them understand the alcoholic and to adjust and improve their own lives.

Al-Anon membership is available to the spouse of the alcoholic or other concerned persons. The Al-Anon Family Groups have their own organization, separate from AA.

### **ASK YOUR GROUP SECRETARY OR CENTRAL OFFICE**

When you need help and can't reach your sponsor, call your Greater Milwaukee Central Office. They will try to help, or will find help for you.

If you need some AA literature and can't find it, ask your group secretary. If you are moving or visiting another area and need to locate a new AA group, call your Central Office for meetings and addresses. If you'd like to get your spouse in contact with Al-Anon, ask your secretary. If you need a Big Book, AA pamphlets or the phone number of another group member, ask your secretary.

Much like your sponsor, group secretaries will help you in every way they can. And if the secretary is unable to help, or is not available, remember you can always call the Central Office: (414) 771-9119.

### **WHEN YOU TRAVEL**

Just as you found friends in meetings everywhere in the Milwaukee area, you will also find helpful members in almost every city and town in the United States and most parts of the free world.

Whenever you travel, take U.S., Canadian or International directories with you. They contain group listings, meeting nights and names of AA's whom you can phone to keep in touch or help you get to a meeting when you are away from home. Copies of these directories are available at the Greater Milwaukee Central Office. All groups which register with the General Service Office in New York automatically receive new directories each year.

Look in the phone book in most cities under "Alcoholics Anonymous" and you will find either an answering service or an AA Central Office that will help you make an AA contact. You are never very far from an AA meeting.

### **BE A PART OF**

So now you've made a start. And if you are like most of us, we think you will find these suggestions will be of help on your journey to a comfortable happy sobriety.

Remember that you never have to be alone if you use the tools that AA has to offer you. The program of Alcoholics Anonymous wants to provide support and guidance to all alcoholics who reach out for help. Our very survival requires that we must carry the message to the alcoholic who still suffers. We need you. Join us, participate, and become a part of our program of recovery.

**ACKNOWLEDGMENT:** We wish to thank the Chicago Central Office for their contribution.



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**MAKING A  
START IN  
ALCOHOLICS  
ANONYMOUS**

## **A Guide for the Beginner**

This pamphlet has been prepared by the:

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