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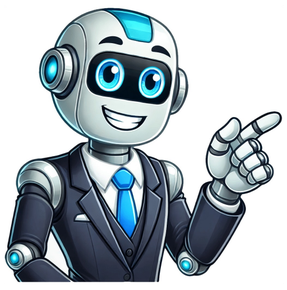

Prayer for the day aa

The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves. ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, p. 25 This truly is a fact in my life today, and a real miracle. I always believed in God, but could never put that belief meaningfully into my life. Today, because of Alcoholics Anonymous, I now trust and rely on God, as I understand Him; I am sober today because of that! Learning to trust and rely on God was something I could never have done alone. I now believe in miracles because I am one! An Alcoholics Anonymous morning prayer can be a transformative way to begin your day, grounding you in hope, humility, and strength as you navigate recovery from alcohol addiction.Rooted in AA's 12-step program, these prayers help members connect with a Higher Power, fostering resilience against daily challenges.Whether you're new to AA or a long-time member, starting your morning with a prayer aligns your spirit with the principles of sobriety.In this guide, we share seven powerful AA morning prayers, including the classic prayer from The Big Book, along with variations for personal growth.We'll also explore insights from The Big Book on prayer and meditation, practical tips to make prayer a daily habit, and the profound impact of this practice on recovery. Let's begin your journey to a sober, purposeful day.The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous offers timeless guidance on prayer and meditation, emphasizing their role in recovery. On page 87, it advises:"Make no requests in prayer for yourself only.""Never pray for your own selfish ends.""Select and memorize a few set prayers that emphasize the principles of The Steps.""Ask a priest, minister, or rabbi about helpful books and prayers.""Be quick to see where religious people are right.""Make use of what religious people have to offer."These suggestions, detailed in The Big Book (available at aa.org), encourage a selfless approach, focusing on spiritual growth over personal gain. They also highlight community wisdom—whether from AA or religious traditions—in selecting prayers aligned with the 12 steps.For morning prayers, this means choosing words that reinforce humility and service, setting a mindful tone. By following this guidance, AA members can craft a practice that supports long-term sobriety.Here are seven AA-inspired morning prayers, each designed to start your day with purpose and peace.The Big Book Morning Prayer (Page 86)Text: "God, direct my thinking today so that it be divorced of self-pity, dishonesty, self-will, self-seeking, and fear. Inspire my decisions and intuitions. Help me relax and take it easy. Free me from doubt and indecision. Guide me through this day and show me my next step. Give me what I need to face any problems. Amen."Meaning: This prayer seeks clarity and freedom from negative traits, aligning your day with sobriety.Serenity Prayer (Short Version)Text: "God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference. Amen."Meaning: A foundational AA prayer, it fosters acceptance and courage to face the day.Prayer for Strength and SobrietyText: "Higher Power, grant me strength to resist temptation today. Keep me sober and focused on my recovery. Guide my actions so I may serve others. Amen."Meaning: A direct plea for resilience, ideal for challenging mornings.Gratitude Morning PrayerText: "Thank you, Higher Power, for another sober day. Fill me with gratitude and let it guide my actions. Help me be kind to all I meet. Amen."Meaning: Focuses on gratitude, a key AA principle, to start the day positively.Prayer for Guidance and ServiceText: "Higher Power, show me your will today. Lead me away from selfishness and toward service. Let me be a channel of your peace. Amen."Meaning: Emphasizes service and alignment with a higher purpose.Third Step Prayer (Morning Adaptation)Text: "God, I offer myself to you this morning. Build with me and do with me as you will. Relieve me of self-bondage so I may serve others. Amen."Meaning: Surrenders the day to a Higher Power, echoing Step 3's commitment.Prayer for Community and ConnectionText: "Higher Power, bless my AA community today. Help me support others as they support me. Guide us toward sobriety and peace together. Amen."Meaning: Strengthens the fellowship aspect of AA, fostering connection.These prayers can be personalized—replace "God" or "Higher Power" with terms like "Creator" or "inner strength" to suit your beliefs.Incorporating an AA morning prayer into your daily routine can solidify your commitment to recovery. Here's how to make it a meaningful practice:Set a Consistent Time and Place: Choose a quiet spot and a specific time (e.g., 7 AM) to pray each morning. Consistency builds habit.Prepare Your Mind: Take a few deep breaths to center yourself. Reflect on your sobriety goals for the day.Recite with Intention: Read one of the prayers aloud or silently, focusing on each line. For example, in the Big Book prayer, pause after "divorced of self-pity" to release negative emotions.Journal Your Reflections: Write down any insights or challenges (e.g., fears you want to surrender). This ties into Step 4's inventory process.Connect with Support: Share your prayer experience with a sponsor or AA group for encouragement.Apply the Prayer's Message: Let the prayer guide your actions—practice gratitude, seek guidance, or serve others throughout the day.Tips: Pair with meditation or a gratitude list to deepen the practice. If prayer feels new, start with the Serenity Prayer for its simplicity.Overcoming Challenges: If you doubt a Higher Power, focus on the AA community's collective strength as your guide. Consistency matters more than perfection.This daily ritual can take just 5-10 minutes but profoundly impacts your mindset, preparing you for a sober day.Morning prayer holds deep significance in Alcoholics Anonymous, serving as more than a ritual—it's a cornerstone of recovery. It helps members connect with a Higher Power, reinforcing their commitment to sobriety each day.According to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (niaaa.nih.gov), spiritual practices like prayer improve resilience in addiction recovery. This practice aligns with AA's 12-step principles, particularly Steps 3 and 11, providing a moment to release self-pity and fear, replacing them with courage and clarity.For many, morning prayer offers comfort during struggles, echoing the "one day at a time" philosophy. It fosters discipline and spiritual growth, ensuring members remain focused on service—a core AA value. Whether recited alone or in a meeting, it strengthens both personal recovery and fellowship.An Alcoholics Anonymous morning prayer is a powerful way to start your day with hope and strength in recovery.These prayers, rooted in AA's 12-step wisdom, guide you toward sobriety and peace. Whether using the Big Book prayer or a personal adaptation, this daily practice fosters spiritual growth.Begin today: choose a prayer, find a quiet moment, and let it shape your day. For more support, explore our recovery prayers at Morning Prayers or visit aa.org to find a local meeting.Take this step toward a sober, fulfilling life—one prayer at a time. Lord, make me a channel of Thy peace; that where there is hatred, I may bring love; that where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness; that where there is discord, I may bring harmony; that where there is error, I may bring truth; that where there is doubt, I may bring faith; that where there is despair, I may bring hope; that where there are shadows, I may bring light. that where there is sadness, I may bring joy. Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort, than to be comforted; to understand, than to be understood; to love, than to be loved. For it is by self forgetting, that one finds. It is by forgiving, that one is forgiven. It is by dying, that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen. The AA Morning Prayer is a powerful way to begin each day with intention, humility, and surrender, inviting God's presence to provide strength and guidance throughout your journey of recovery. In Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), starting the day with prayer is an important practice, as it centers your thoughts on God's support and helps you set a positive tone for the day. By praying in the morning, you are opening yourself up to God's will, recognizing that His strength is what empowers you to remain sober and walk the path of healing.Psalm 121:1-2 (NIV) encourages us to seek help from God:"I lift up my eyes to the mountains—where does my help come from? My help comes from the Lord, the Maker of heaven and earth."Acknowledging that our strength comes from God allows us to navigate each day's challenges with a sense of peace, hope, and reliance on His guidance. The AA Morning Prayer embodies this dependence on God, helping those in recovery find the courage and strength they need to live a sober and meaningful life, one day at a time.This prayer is a way to ask God for the serenity to accept things you cannot change, the courage to make healthy choices, and the wisdom to live in alignment with His will. As you pray, trust that God is walking beside you, providing His grace to help you through every moment of your recovery journey.ALSO READ: 3AM Prayer for Thanksgiving Day – Start with Gratitude and Peace God,I offer myself to You today,To build with me and to do with me as You will.Grant me the strength to stay sober and the courage to walk in Your truth.Relieve me of the bondage of self,So I may better do Your will and help others."Cast all your anxiety on Him because He cares for you." (1 Peter 5:7, NIV)Help me to be aware of my weaknesses,And fill me with the serenity, courage, and wisdom to face each challenge.May my thoughts, words, and actions bring You honor today.In Jesus' name, Amen. (Image credit: JbKlutse / Prayer Prompt)I declare that God's strength is helping me stay sober today.I affirm that I am walking in God's grace, one day at a time.I stand in faith, believing that God is with me, guiding my steps towards recovery and healing.Philippians 4:13 (NIV): "I can do all this through Him who gives me strength."Matthew 11:28 (NIV): "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest."2 Corinthians 12:9 (NIV): "But He said to me, 'My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.' Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ's power may rest on me."Each morning, before starting your day, take a quiet moment to pray the AA Morning Prayer. Reflect on God's strength and guidance, and allow Him to fill your heart with courage for the day ahead. Share this prayer with a fellow member of AA, a loved one, or someone else walking on the path to recovery. Leave a comment below with "Amen" if you are committed to staying sober today and trusting in God's strength.May this AA Morning Prayer bring you peace, strength, and hope as you walk the path of recovery. Remember, God is with you every step of the way, giving you the grace and courage you need to overcome. Share — copy and redistribute the material in any medium or format for any purpose, even commercially. Adapt — remix, transform, and build upon the material for any purpose, even commercially. The licensor cannot revoke these freedoms as long as you follow the license terms. Attribution — You must give appropriate credit , provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made . You may do so in any reasonable manner, but not in any way that suggests the licensor endorses you or your use. ShareAlike — If you remix, transform, or build upon the material, you must distribute your contributions under the same license as the original. No additional restrictions — You may not apply legal terms or technological measures that legally restrict others from doing anything the license permits. You do not have to comply with the license for elements of the material in the public domain or where your use is permitted by an applicable exception or limitation . No warranties are given. The license may not give you all of the permissions necessary for your intended use. For example, other rights such as publicity, privacy, or moral rights may limit how you use the material. Sobriety-focused mutual help fellowship Alcoholics AnonymousNicknameAAFormation1935; 90 years ago (1935)FoundersBill WilsonDr. Bob SmithFounded atAkron, OhioTypeMutual aid addiction recovery twelve-step programHeadquartersNew York, New YorkMembership1,967,613 (2021)Websiteaa.org Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a global, peer-led mutual-aid fellowship focused on an abstinence-based recovery model from alcoholism through its spiritually inclined twelve-step program.[1] AA's Twelve Traditions, besides emphasizing anonymity, stress lack of hierarchy, staying non-promotional, and non-professional, while also unaffiliated, non-denominational, apolitical and free to all.[1][2][3] As of 2021[update], AA estimated it is active in 180 countries with an estimated membership of nearly two million—73% in the United States and Canada.[4][5] AA traces its origins to a 1935 meeting between Bill Wilson (commonly referred to as Bill W.) and Dr. Bob Smith (Dr. Bob), two individuals seeking to address their shared struggles with alcoholism. Their collaboration, influenced by the Christian revivalist Oxford Group, evolved into a mutual support group that eventually became AA. In 1939, the fellowship published Alcoholics Anonymous: The Story of How More than One Hundred Men Have Recovered from Alcoholism, colloquially known as the "Big Book". This publication introduced the twelve-step program and provided the basis for the organization's name. Later editions of the book expanded its subtitle to reflect the inclusion of "Thousands of Men and Women".[6] The Twelve Steps outline a suggested program of ongoing drug rehabilitation and self-improvement. A key component involves seeking alignment or divining with a personally defined concept of "God as we understood Him".[a] The steps begin with an acknowledgment of powerlessness over alcohol and the unmanageability of life due to alcoholism. Subsequent steps emphasize rigorous honesty, including the completion of a "searching and fearless moral inventory", acknowledgment of "character defects", sharing the inventory with a trusted person, making amends to individuals harmed, and engaging in regular prayer or meditation to seek "conscious contact with God" and guidance in following divine will. The final step, the 12th, focuses on maintaining the principles of recovery, sharing the message with other alcoholics,[7] and participating in "12th Step work," such as peer sponsorship, organizing meetings, and outreach to institutions like hospitals and prisons.[8] AA meetings differ in format, with variations including personal storytelling, readings from the Big Book, and open discussions. While certain meetings may cater to specific demographic groups, attendance is generally open to anyone with a desire to stop drinking alcohol. The organization is self-supporting through member donations and literature sales. Its operations follow an "inverted pyramid" structure, allowing local groups significant autonomy. AA does not accept external funding or contributions. Empirical evidence supports AA's efficacy. A 2020 Cochrane review found that manualized AA and Twelve-Step Facilitation (TSF) therapy demonstrated higher rates of continuous abstinence compared to alternative treatments, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, with added healthcare cost savings over time.[9][b] Criticism of AA has addressed various aspects of its program and operations. Concerns have been raised about its overall success rate, the perceived religious nature of its approach, and allegations of cult-like elements. Additional critiques include reports of "thirteenth-stepping," where senior members engage romantically with newer members, and legal challenges related to safety and the religious content of court-mandated participation in AA programs. Main article: History of Alcoholics Anonymous Rowland Hazard's journey from Carl Jung's psychiatric treatment to spiritual conversion through the Oxford Group played a pivotal role in shaping the foundations of Alcoholics Anonymous, influencing its principles of recovery.[10] In 1926, Hazard went to Zurich, Switzerland, to seek treatment for alcoholism with psychiatrist Carl Jung. When Hazard ended treatment with Jung after about a year, and came back to the US, he soon resumed drinking, and returned to Jung in Zurich for further treatment. Jung told Hazard that his case was nearly hopeless (as with other alcoholics) and that his only hope might be a "spiritual conversion" with a "religious group".[11][12][13][14] Back in America, Hazard went to the Oxford Group, whose teachings were eventually the source of such AA concepts as "meetings" and "sharing" (public confession), making "restitution", "rigorous honesty" and "surrendering one's will and life to God's care". He became converted to a lifetime of sobriety while on a train ride from New York to Detroit after reading For Sinners Only, by Oxford Group member AJ Russell.[15][16] Hazard underwent a spiritual conversion" with the help of the Group and began to experience the liberation from drink that he was seeking. Members of the group introduced Hazard to Ebby Thacher, whom Hazard brought to the Calvary Rescue Mission, directed by Oxford Group leader Sam Shoemaker.[17] In keeping with the Oxford Group teaching that a new convert must win other converts to preserve his own conversion experience, Thacher contacted his old friend Bill Wilson, whom he knew had a drinking problem.[18][19] Thacher approached Wilson, saying that he had "got religion", was sober, and that Wilson could do the same if he set aside objections and instead formed a personal idea of God, "another power" or "higher power".[20][21]Sobriety token or "chip", given for specified lengths of sobriety. On the back is the Serenity Prayer. Here green is for six months of sobriety; purple is for nine months.Feeling a "kinship of common suffering", Wilson attended his first group gathering, although he was drunk. Within days, Wilson admitted himself to the Charles B. Towns Hospital after drinking four beers on the way—the last alcohol he ever drank. Under the care of Dr. William Duncan Silkworth, an early benefactor of AA, Wilson's detox included the deliriant belladonna.[22] At the hospital, a despairing Wilson experienced a bright flash of light, which he felt to be God revealing himself.[23] Following his hospital discharge, Wilson joined the Oxford Group and tried to recruit other alcoholics to the group. These early efforts to help others kept him sober, but were ineffective in getting anyone else to join the group. Dr. Silkworth suggested that Wilson place less stress on religion (as required by The Oxford Group) and more on the science of treating alcoholism. Bill W. would later write: "The early AA got its ideas of self-examination, acknowledgment of character defects, restitution for harm done, and working with others straight from the Oxford Group and directly from Sam Shoemaker, their former leader in America, and from nowhere else".[24] According to Mercadante, however, the AA concept of powerlessness over alcohol departs significantly from Oxford Group belief. According to AA, alcoholism cannot be cured, whereas the Oxford Group stressed the possibility of complete victory over sin.[25] Robert Smith's House in Akron In 1935, AA began in Akron, Ohio, as the outcome of a meeting between Wilson—who became known as "Bill W." in AA circles—and Dr. Robert Smith, an Akron surgeon, who would become Wilson's first recruitment success. On a business trip by Bill W. to Akron, he was introduced to the surgeon, who despite connections with the Oxford Group, was unable to stay sober.[26] Bill W. explained that alcoholism affects the mind, emotions, and body, a concept he had learned from Dr. Silkworth at Towns Hospital in New York, where he had been a patient multiple times. Convinced by these insights, Dr. Bob took his last alcoholic drink on 10 June 1935 and never drank again. This date is regarded by AA as its inception.[27] Bill W. and Dr. Bob started working with alcoholics at Akron's City Hospital.[26] One patient, who soon achieved sobriety, joined them and together, the three men formed the foundation of what would later become known as Alcoholics Anonymous.[26] In late 1935, a new group of alcoholics began forming in New York, followed by another in Cleveland in 1939. Over the course of four years, these three initial groups helped around 100 people achieve sobriety.[26] In early 1939, the fellowship published its foundational text, Alcoholics Anonymous, which outlined AA's philosophy; introduced the Twelve Steps; and included the case histories of 30 individuals who had achieved recovery. The Twelve Steps were influenced by the Oxford Group's six steps and various readings, including William James's The Varieties of Religious Experience.[28] This publication marked a significant milestone in AA's development.[26] The first meeting outside the Oxford Group was held at Dr. Bob's house with 80 members in attendance. Dr. Bob began the meeting in his dining room by identifying himself as an alcoholic, and placing his foot on the dining room table, read the Sermon on the Mount from the Gospel of Matthew.[29] The first female member, Florence Rankin, joined AA in March 1937,[30][31] and the first non-Protestant member, a Roman Catholic, joined in 1939.[32] The first Black AA group commenced in 1945 in Washington, D.C., founded by Jim S., an African-American physician from Virginia.[33][34] Alcoholics Anonymous material on walls at The Wilson House, 378 Village Street in downtown East Dorset, Vermont. In 1938, Dr. Bob and Bill created The Alcoholic Foundation in New York, bringing in friends of John D. Rockefeller Jr. as board members. Although they sought to raise significant funds, Rockefeller advised that large contributions might jeopardize the Fellowship. The foundation opened a small office in New York, funded primarily by AA members, to handle inquiries and distribute the Alcoholics Anonymous book. The next year, Rockefeller organized a dinner to promote AA, which further increased the number of inquiries.[35] The office became effective. Each request received a personal reply and a pamphlet, enhancing interest in the book. Consequently, many new AA groups were established, and by the end of 1940, membership had grown to 2,000.[26] In 1939, media coverage, particularly from The Cleveland Plain Dealer, generated a surge of interest and requests for help.[36] The Cleveland group, although small, successfully assisted many alcoholics, quickly growing from 20 to around 500 members.[26] A subsequent article in Liberty magazine resulted in a flood of requests for assistance, further expanding AA's reach.[37] In 1941, The Saturday Evening Post published an article about AA, sparking a surge in inquires, and AA membership tripled over the next year.[38] AA-related interviews on American radio and favorable articles in US magazines led to increased book sales and membership.[39] As the growing fellowship faced disputes over structure, purpose, authority, and publicity, Bill W. began promoting the Twelve Traditions.[40] He first introduced his ideas on these in an April 1946 article for The Grapevine, titled "Twelve Suggested Points for AA Tradition",[40] aiming to preserve the organization's unity and purpose as AA expanded. He described the input he received as a "welter of exciting and fearsome experience" which greatly influenced the development of the Traditions.[40] From December 1947 to November 1948, The Grapevine published the Traditions individually, and in 1950, the First International Convention in Cleveland officially adopted them.[40] In 1951, AA's headquarters in New York expanded its activities, including public relations, support for new groups, services to hospitals and prisons, and cooperation with agencies in the field of alcoholism. It also published standard AA literature and oversaw translations, while the AA Grapevine gained substantial circulation. Despite these essential services, they were managed by a disconnected board of trustees, primarily linked to Bill and Dr. Bob.[26] Recognizing the need for accountability, delegates from across the US and Canada were convened, leading to the first meeting of the AA General Service Conference in 1951.[41] This successful gathering established direct oversight of AA's trusteeship by the fellowship itself, ensuring the organization's future governance. At the 1955 conference in St. Louis, Missouri, Bill W. relinquished stewardship of AA to the General Service Conference,[42] as AA had grown to millions of members internationally.[43] An AA meeting The World Service Meeting (WSM), established in 1969, is a biennial international forum at which AA delegates from around the world exchange ideas and experiences about carrying the message of recovery. Held in various cities around the world, the WSM focuses on sharing strategies to help alcoholics in different countries and languages.[44] Today, AA is present in approximately 180 nations worldwide. By 2018, AA had 2,087,840 members and 120,300 AA groups worldwide.[43] There are AA meetings in Beijing, China.[45] In July 2024, AA launched its first UK-wide advertising campaign with a unique approach—no logos, phone numbers, or links—focusing on subtle messaging like "You Are Not Alone" and "Alcohol Isn't the Answer". The campaign, created by The Raised Eyebrow Society, aims to attract people struggling with alcohol without violating AA's principles of anonymity and non-promotion.[46] AA will celebrate its 100th anniversary meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana, in 2035. The international convention is anticipated to attract tens of thousands of attendees to the Indiana Convention Center and Lucas Oil Stadium.[47] Alcoholics Anonymous publishes several books, reports, pamphlets, and other media, including a periodical known as the AA Grapevine.[48] Two books are used primarily: Alcoholics Anonymous (the "Big Book") and, expounding on the big book in regard to its subject, Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. As with all AA literature, the texts are freely available on AA.org. Plaque at site of Calumet Building in Newark where much of the text for the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous was written In 1939, Bill W. and other members wrote the book initially titled Alcoholics Anonymous: The Story of How More than One Hundred Men Have Recovered from Alcoholism,[49] from which AA drew its name, informally known as the "Big Book". The second edition of the Big Book was released in 1955, the third in 1976, and the fourth in 2001. The first part of the book, which details the program, has remained largely intact since the 1939 edition, with minor statistical updates and edits. The second part contains personal stories that are updated with every edition to reflect current AA membership, resulting in earlier stories being removed—these were published separately in 2003 in the book Experience, Strength, and Hope.[50] The Big Book suggests a twelve-step program in which members admit that they are powerless over alcohol and need help from a "higher power". It offers guidance and strength through prayer and meditation from God or a higher power of their own understanding; take a moral inventory with care to include resentments; list and become ready to remove character defects; list and make amends to those harmed; continue to take a moral inventory, pray, meditate, and try to help other alcoholics recover. The second half of the book, "Personal Stories" (subject to additions, removal, and retitling in subsequent editions), is made of AA members' redemptive autobiographical sketches.[51] AA's Big Book calls alcoholism "an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer". Ernest Kurtz says this is "The closest the book Alcoholics Anonymous comes to a definition of alcoholism".[52] Somewhat divergently in his introduction to The Big Book, non-member and early benefactor William Silkworth said those unable to moderate their drinking suffer from an allergy. In presenting the doctor's postulate, AA said "The doctor's theory that we have an allergy to alcohol interests us. As laymen, our opinion as to its soundness may, of course, mean little. But as ex-problem drinkers, we can say that his explanation makes good sense. It explains many things for which we cannot otherwise account".[53] AA later acknowledged that "alcoholism is not a true allergy, the experts now inform us".[54] The "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" is a book published in 1953 that serves as a key text for AA. Written by AA co-founder Bill W., it provides detailed explanations of the Twelve Steps and the Twelve Traditions. The book is commonly used in AA meetings and individual study, offering a framework for understanding the organization's approach to recovery and community. The story of Eddie Rickenbacker "and his courageous company" appears in the book. It pertains to when his plane crashed in the Pacific and is used in the closing remarks of Tradition One: "Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon AA unity".[55] The Grapevine, established in June 1944 by six AA members in New York, became AA's national journal by 1945 and later its international journal.[56] Supported by Bill W., the magazine featured first-person stories, AA news, and discussions on key topics like women in AA and veterans returning from war.[56] Initially intended as a resource for alcoholics worldwide, the Grapevine evolved into a unifying publication for the AA community, chronicling the Fellowship's growth, including the creation of the General Service Structure and publication of later editions of the Big Book. The Twelve Traditions were introduced to AA by Bill W. in April 1946 through an article titled "Twelve Suggested Points for AA Tradition". The AA Preamble, inspired by the foreword of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, was written by one of the Grapevine's early editors Tom. Y. and first appeared in the June 1947 issue.[57][58] In 1986, the Grapevine was reaffirmed as AA's international journal by the General Service Conference.[56] See also: Twelve-step program § Twelve Steps Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps exhibit at AA Intergroup in Akron, Ohio. AA's program extends beyond abstaining from alcohol.[59] Its goal is to effect enough change in the alcoholic's thinking "to bring about recovery from alcoholism"[60] through "an entire psychic change," or spiritual awakening.[61] A spiritual awakening is meant to be achieved by taking the Twelve Steps,[62] and sobriety is furthered by volunteering for AA[63] and regular AA meeting attendance[64] or contact with AA members.[62] Taking AA's 12 steps are a "suggested", but not required, "program of recovery"—also called a "spiritual solution". They start with members admitting to being "powerless over alcohol" (which the Big Book calls an "Illness" or "malady", but never a "disease''), and out of control—for which on going divining and following the will an unspecified 'higher power' ("God, as we understood Him") could restore them to "sanity". In the steps members acknowledge and make amends and seek to correct personal character defects aided by their higher power for guidance. Those "having achieved a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps" are suggested to carry AA's message to other alcoholics. This is often done through meetings of AA groups as well as with members taking on sponsees, although the Big Book makes no mention of the latter term. While taking care to avoid becoming affiliated, some AA members perform outreach to hospitals, treatment centers and correctional facilities.[65] Members are encouraged to find an experienced fellow alcoholic, called a sponsor, to help them understand and follow the AA program. The sponsor should preferably have experienced all twelve of the steps, be the same sex as the sponsored person, and refrain from imposing personal views on the sponsored person.[63] Following the helper therapy principle, sponsors in AA may benefit from their relationship with their charges, as "helping behaviors" correlate with increased abstinence and lower probabilities of binge drinking.[66] The Twelve Traditions provide essential guidelines—not rules—that help AA groups navigate their relationships both internally and with the outside world. These traditions ensure that membership is open to anyone seeking to stop drinking, with no dues or fees required. These Traditions foster an altruistic, unaffiliated, non-coercive, and non-hierarchical organization, limiting AA's mission to helping alcoholics at a non-professional level while avoiding publicity. To prioritize recovery, the traditions discourage hierarchies, dogma, public controversies, property acquisition, and outside contributions. Members are advised against using AA for personal gain or public prestige, and anonymity is emphasized, particularly in media, with no prescribed consequences for breaches.[67] AA meetings serve as a space where individuals discuss recovery from alcoholism, with flexibility in how meetings are conducted. While AA offers pamphlets suggesting formats,[68] groups have the autonomy to organize their meetings according to their preferences, as long as their decisions do not impact other groups or AA as a whole.[67] Despite cultural differences influencing certain rituals, many elements of AA meetings remain consistent worldwide. AA meetings encompass a variety of formats, each designed to serve different needs. Open meetings are accessible to anyone, including non-alcoholics who can attend as observers. In contrast, closed meetings are reserved for individuals who identify as having a desire to stop drinking, a declaration that cannot be questioned by other members.[67] Speaker meetings feature one or more members who share their personal stories of recovery, fostering connection and understanding among participants.[69] Big Book meetings focus on reading and discussing passages from AA's foundational text, while sharing meetings provide an open platform for members to speak freely and share their experiences, with or without a predetermined topic.[70] AA meetings are gatherings where recovery from alcoholism is discussed. One perspective sees them as "quasi-ritualized therapeutic sessions run by and for, alcoholics".[71] In recent years, online meetings have become popular, allowing members to connect virtually through platforms like Zoom and What's App. Offline or in-person meetings, often referred to as "brick and mortar" meetings, take place in physical locations, and some groups host hybrid meetings, enabling participants to attend either in person or virtually. Inclusivity is a core principle of AA meetings, which welcome all alcoholics, though some are tailored to specific demographics such as gender, age, profession, or cultural background. Since the mid-1970s, several 'agnostic' or 'no-prayer' AA groups have begun across the US, Canada, and other parts of the world, which hold meetings that adhere to a tradition allowing alcoholics to freely express their doubts or disbelief that spirituality will help their recovery, and these meetings forgo the use of opening or closing prayers.[72][73] Meetings in the United States are held in a variety of languages including Armenian, English, Farsi, Finnish, French, Japanese, Korean, Russian, and Spanish.[74]Headquarters of Alcohólicos Anónimos in Montevideo, Uruguay At some point during the meeting, a basket is passed around for voluntary contributions. AA's 7th tradition requires that groups be "self-supporting, declining outside contributions".[67] The Serenity Prayer is commonly used in AA meetings as a tool for reflection and guidance. It was called the AA prayer in the 1940s.[75] Often recited at meetings, it emphasizes the concepts of acceptance, courage, and wisdom, which align with the principles of the AA program. The prayer encourages individuals to accept things they cannot change, to find the courage to make changes where possible, and to seek the wisdom to distinguish between the two. Building for Spanish-speaking AA group in Westlake neighborhood, Los Angeles Sobriety coins, also known as sobriety chips, are tokens given to members of AA to signify the duration of their sobriety. While the chip system is common, it is not universally adopted across all AA groups. The tradition began with Sister Ignatia in Akron, Ohio, who distributed medallions to newly released patients as reminders to avoid drinking.[76] The actual sobriety chip as known today is believed to have originated in 1942 in Indianapolis, gaining popularity as various AA groups adopted the practice.[77] Typically, different colored chips represent milestones of sobriety within the first year, with tokens awarded for 24 hours, 30 days, 60 days, 90 days, and beyond, culminating in a bronze chip for one year of sobriety. AA members celebrate Founders Day on the weekend closest to 10 June, marking the anniversary of the organization with thousands of attendees engaging in tours of historical sites, sharing recovery stories, and participating in related activities in Akron, Ohio.[78] Main article: Twelve Traditions A regional service center for Alcoholics Anonymous AA describes itself as "not organized in the formal or political sense"[43] and has been referred to as a "benign anarchy," borrowing a phrase from anarchy theorist Peter Kropotkin.[79] The Twelve Traditions guide the functioning of individual AA groups, while the Twelve Concepts for World Service outline how the organization operates on a global scale.[80] Each AA group is self-governing, with AA World Services acting only in an advisory capacity. This "inverted pyramid" style of governance has been key to the organization's resilience and adaptability. In Ireland, Shane Butler noted that AA's lack of top-level leadership might make it seem unsustainable, but its structure has proven extremely robust since its establishment there in 1946.[81] AA's 21-member Board of Trustees includes seven "nonalcoholic friends of the fellowship," though the organization is primarily served and run by alcoholics. Members who accept service positions, termed "trusted servants," hold these roles for limited terms, typically ranging from three months to two years, depending on the position and group vote. This approach ensures regular rotation and participation from a broad spectrum of members, maintaining AA's commitment to shared responsibility and leadership.[43] AA is entirely self-supporting, relying on voluntary contributions from its members to cover expenses.[43] Contributions to the General Service Office (GSO) are limited to $5,000 per member per year.[82] In addition to these contributions, more than 50% of AA's income comes from the sale of AA literature, such as books and pamphlets.[83] This practice aligns with AA's Seventh Tradition, which emphasizes financial independence by not accepting donations from outside individuals or organizations. The Central Office is also fully self-supporting through the sale of literature and member contributions. The Eighth Tradition permits AA to employ "special workers" for roles that require specific expertise or full-time responsibilities, such as administrative tasks.[67] However, these paid roles do not involve working directly with alcoholics in need of help, a function known as the "Twelfth Step". Calls from alcoholics seeking assistance are always passed on to sober AA members who have volunteered to handle them, ensuring the program remains grounded in its peer-to-peer support model.[84] The AA Central Office coordinates activities such as printing literature, responding to public inquiries, and organizing conferences. It operates independently but ensures alignment with the core principles of the organization. Other International General Service Offices—such as those in Australia, Costa Rica, and Russia—function independently of AA World Services in New York, reflecting AA's decentralized and autonomous structure.[85] Many AA meetings take place in treatment facilities. Carrying the message of AA into hospitals was how the co-founders of AA first remained sober. They discovered great value in working with alcoholics who are still suffering, and that even if the alcoholic they were working with did not stay sober, they did.[86][87][88] Bill W. wrote, "Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics".[89] Bill Wilson visited Towns Hospital in New York City in an attempt to help the alcoholics who were patients there in 1934. At St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, Ohio, Smith worked with still more alcoholics. In 1939, a New York mental institution, Rockland State Hospital, was one of the first institutions to allow AA hospital groups. Service to corrections and treatment facilities used to be combined until the General Service Conference, in 1977, voted to dissolve its Institutions Committee and form two separate committees, one for treatment facilities, and one for correctional facilities.[90] In the United States and Canada, AA meetings are held in hundreds of correctional facilities. The AA General Service Office has published a workbook with detailed recommendations for methods of approaching correctional-facility officials with the intent of developing an in-prison AA program.[91] In addition, AA publishes a variety of pamphlets specifically for the incarcerated alcoholic.[92] Additionally, the AA General Service Office provides a pamphlet with guidelines for members working with incarcerated alcoholics.[93] AA group in Pátzcuaro, Michoacán, Mexico AA's New York General Service Office survey of over 6,000 members in Canada and the United States concluded that, in North America, AA members who responded to the survey were 62% male and 38% female. The survey found that 89% of AA members were white.[94] Average member sobriety is slightly under 10 years with 36% sober more than ten years, 13% sober from five to ten years, 24% sober from one to five years, and 27% sober less than one year.[94] Before coming to AA, 63% of members received some type of treatment or counseling, such as medical, psychological, or spiritual. After coming to AA, 59% received outside treatment or counseling. Of those members, 84% said that outside help played an important part in their recovery.[94] The same survey showed that AA received 32% of its membership from other members, another 32% from treatment facilities, 30% were self-motivated to attend AA, 12% of its membership from court-ordered attendance, and only 1% of AA members decided to join based on information obtained from the Internet. People taking the survey were allowed to select multiple answers for what motivated them to join AA.[94] A 2024 study found that Black, Hispanic, and younger adults are less likely to attend AA meetings compared to white and older adults, with these disparities remaining consistent over time.[95] Several metrics are used to evaluate the success of AA including abstinence, reduced drinking intensity, reduced alcohol-related consequences, addiction severity, and healthcare costs.[9] Because of the anonymous and voluntary nature of AA meetings, it has been difficult to perform random trials with them. However, environmental and quasi-experiment studies suggest that AA can help alcoholics make positive changes.[96][97][98] Until recently, ethical and operational issues had prevented robust randomized controlled trials from being conducted comparing 12-step programs directly to other approaches.[99] There have been numerous studies on the effectiveness of AA. A 2006 study by Rudolf H. Moos and Bernice S. Moos saw a 67% success rate 16 years later for the 24.9% of alcoholics who ended up, on their own, undergoing a lot of AA treatment.[100][101] However, this may be influenced by self-selection bias.[102][103] Project MATCH, a 1990s multi-site study, found AA to be more effective than no treatment.[104] Other studies link increased AA attendance with higher spirituality and reduced alcohol consumption.[105][106][107] A 2020 Cochrane review concluded that AA is more effective than other treatments, such as MET and CBT, in terms of abstinence rates. It also noted similar success in reducing drinking and alcohol-related problems, though this conclusion was based on moderate-certainty evidence.[108][109] The review found that AA participation via AA twelve step facilitation (AA/TSF) had sustained remission rates 20-60% above other well-established treatments. Additionally, 4 of the 5 economic studies in the review found that AA/TSF lowered healthcare costs considerably.[c][9][111] Nick Heather, an addiction researcher, critiqued the review, arguing it may have a sample bias and that it failed to measure outcomes like quality of life or alcohol dependence, which are important for evaluating recovery.[112][113] The authors responded, stating their review showed AA is at least as effective as other treatments and more cost-effective.[113][114] The authors also noted the lack of quality-of-life measures was due to the limitations of the reviewed studies.[113] A 2020 systematic review indicated that manualized AA and Twelve-Step Facilitation (TSF) therapy yields more healthcare cost savings and leads to higher continuous abstinence rates.[b][9][115] A longitudinal study suggests that LifeRing and SMART Recovery fared worse than AA across several outcomes, however, the effects are insignificant when controlling for the baseline alcohol goal of total abstinence.[116] More recent studies employing randomized and blinded trials have shown 12-step programs provide similar benefit compared to motivational enhancement therapy (MET) and cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), and were more effective in producing continuous abstinence and remission compared to these approaches.[117] The 2001–2002 National Epidemiological Survey on Alcoholism and Related Conditions (NESARC) found that 3.4% of respondents had attended a 12-step meeting. Of those, 988 had ceased attending, 348 continued attending, and 105 were newcomers. These figures help to understand engagement and disengagement patterns within AA.[118] Although AA claims that spirituality is the primary mechanism for achieving change and recovery, there is growing evidence that suggests this is only true for a minority of AA attendees with a high addiction severity.[119][120] Instead, AA's beneficial effects are carried predominantly by social, cognitive and affective mechanisms.[121] However, atheist and agnostic people are less likely to initiate and sustain AA attendance in comparison to spiritual and religious people.[120] The effectiveness of AA, compared to other methods and treatments, has been challenged over the years.[122] Lance Dodes, in The Sober Truth, claims only five to eight percent of the people who go to one or more AA meetings achieve sobriety.[123] Dodes opposes the idea that a social network is needed to overcome substance abuse.[124] Dodes' assertion that AA is ineffective has been criticized.[125][126][127][128] Some other experts claim that the book's conclusion that "[12-step] approaches are almost completely ineffective and even harmful in treating substance use disorders" is wrong.[129][130] In a 2015 article for The Atlantic, Gabrielle Glaser criticized the domin

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You'll find that while wording varies, the essential meaning remains the same. In the context of the 12 Step program, the terms "God" and "Higher Power" are often used interchangeably, reflecting the program's spiritual but non-denominational approach, which allows members to interpret these concepts according to their own beliefs. The Serenity Prayer The Serenity Prayer is the best-known AA prayer often recited at the beginning and end of each 12 Step meeting[1]. God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. The prayer emphasizes the core AA principle of acceptance. In order to change something, you must first accept its reality – to "accept the things I cannot change." What things can you not change? For example, you can't change things you've done in the past. You can't change other people. Remember that while there may be things you can't immediately change, you may be able to take steps toward making positive change. That's where the next part of the prayer comes in: "the courage to change the things I can." What can you do today that is a step toward making the changes you want in your life? If you believe those steps will be difficult, this prayer helps you summon the courage you need to do it. It can be hard to assess what is yours to change and what is not. That's what the last part of the prayer addresses: "the wisdom to know the difference." Often this wisdom comes from looking at a situation as if you were a third party who is objective and reasonable. What would a reasonable person do? What would they accept as something they couldn't change, and what would they see as something they could take steps to change, even if it requires some courage to do it? The First Step Prayer Step One: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable. The prayer for this step helps sweep away the denial that you may have about your situation to see it in a clear-eyed way. Higher Power, I adm