

BETTER TIMES



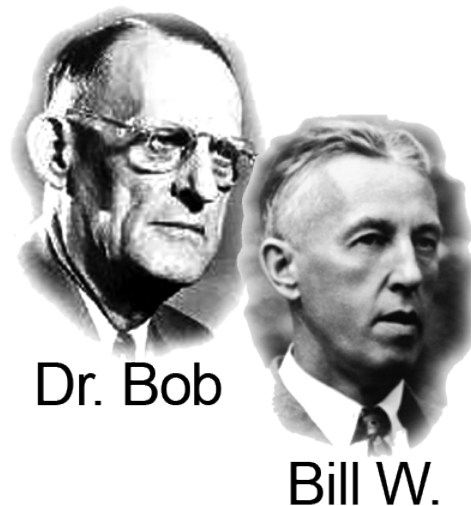
Produced monthly by AA members in the Greater Toronto Area

May 2019

Dr. Bob's Farewell Talk

My good friends in A.A. and of A.A.,

... I get a big thrill out of looking over a vast sea of faces like this with a feeling that possibly some small thing I did a number of years ago played an infinitely small part in making this meeting possible. I also get quite a thrill when I think that we all had the same problem. We all did the same things. We all get the same results in proportion to our zeal and enthusiasm and stick-to-itiveness. If you will pardon the injection of a personal note at this time, let me say that I have been in bed five of the last seven months and my strength hasn't returned as I would like, so my remarks of necessity will be very brief.



There are two or three things that flashed into my mind on which it would be fitting to lay a little emphasis. One is the simplicity of our program. Let's not louse it all up with Freudian complexes and things that are interesting to the scientific mind, but have very little to do with our actual A.A. work. Our Twelve Steps, when simmered down to the last, resolve themselves into the words "love" and "service." We understand what love is, and we understand what service is. So let's bear those two things in mind.

Let us also remember to guard that erring member the tongue, and if we must use it, let's use it with kindness and consideration and tolerance.

And one more thing: None of us would be here today if somebody hadn't taken time to explain things to us, to give us a little pat on the back, to take us to a meeting or two, to do numerous little kind and thoughtful acts in our behalf. So let us never get such a degree of smug complacency that we're not willing to extend, or attempt to extend, to our less fortunate brothers that help which has been so beneficial to us.

Thank you very much.

** From Dr. Bob's brief remarks on Sunday, July 30, 1950, at the First International A.A. Convention in Cleveland, Ohio.*

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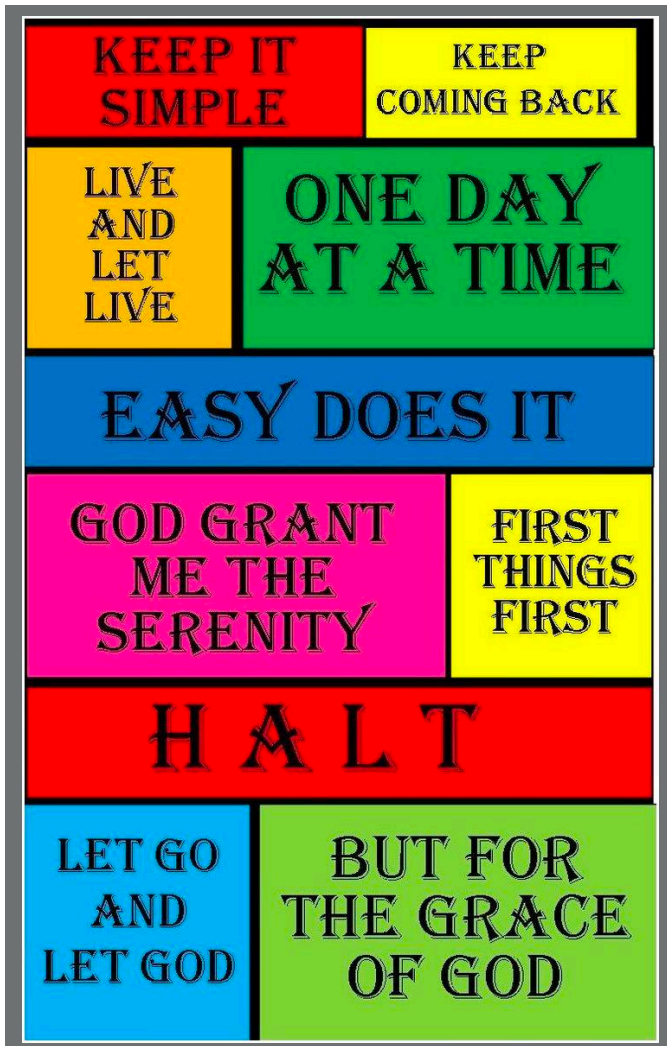
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Opinions expressed in BETTER TIMES are those of the authors and don't necessarily reflect those of the Greater Toronto Area Intergroup. The editorial staff reserve the right to edit submitted articles for length, content and grammar in accordance with layout and quality purposes.

Submit group news, medallions, other event notices, letters to the editor or articles to BETTER TIMES before the 7th of the month prior to the month of issue. Submissions should be 200 to 500 words and may be made online at www.aatoronto.org or emailed to bettertimes@aatoronto.org.

Just Some Thoughts...



Bill W. considered each step to be a spiritual principle in and of itself. However, particularly in the 12 & 12, he outlined the spiritual principles behind each step. Some of them seem like common sense, but understand going into the exercise that reading these principles and actually practicing them in your day-to-day lives are two entirely different things (and that the latter requires vigilance and willingness).

1. HONESTY – Fairness and straight forwardness of conduct; adherence to the facts.
2. HOPE – To expect with desire; something on which hopes are centered.
3. FAITH – Complete confidence; belief and trust.
4. COURAGE – Firmness of mind and will in the face of extreme difficulty; mental or moral strength to withstand fear.
5. INTEGRITY – The quality or state of being complete or undivided; soundness.
6. WILLINGNESS – Prompt to act or respond; accepted and done of choice or without reluctance.
7. HUMILITY – Not proud or haughty; not arrogant or assertive; a clear and concise understanding of what we are, followed by a sincere desire to become what we can be.
8. LOVE – Unselfish concern that freely accepts another in loyalty and seeks his good to hold dear.
9. DISCIPLINE – Training that corrects, molds, or perfects the mental faculties or moral character; to bring under control; to train or develop by instruction.
10. PATIENCE/PERSEVERANCE – Steadfast despite opposition or adversity; able or willing to bear; to persist in an understanding in spite of counter influences.
11. AWARENESS – Alive and alert; vigilance in observing.
12. SERVICE – A helpful act; contribution to the welfare of others; useful labor that does not produce a tangible commodity.

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Step 5

After taking in-depth inventory of your thoughts and actions you mustn't keep them bottled up

Talking to someone can help vent feelings of guilt and/or shame

The old saying is that “*confession is good for the soul*”, and this is especially true for addicts and alcoholics



from the archives - did you know?

1. that from Dec. 1934 to May 1935 Bill W. works with alcoholics, but fails to sober any of them?
2. that on May 10, 1935 a business deal brought Bill W. to Akron, he attended the annual stockholders meeting of the National Rubber Machinery Company in an attempt to take over the company & lost the proxy fight? Bill remained behind at the Mayflower Hotel very discouraged and afraid he might drink.
3. that on May 11, 1935 Bill realized he needed another alcoholic, he made telephone calls in the Mayflower Hotel to members of the clergy? Rev. Walter Tunks referred Bill to Norman Sheppard who then referred Bill to Henrietta Seiberling, an Oxford Group adherent. Henrietta met Bill at her house & arranged a meeting the next day at the Seiberling Estate with Dr. Bob & his wife Anne.
4. that on May 12, 1935 Mother's Day Bill W. first met Dr. Bob at Henrietta Seiberling's home in Akron, Ohio? Dr. Bob was too hung over and planned to talk to Bill for 15 minutes. Bill told Bob of his experiences with alcoholism & recovery. Bob then opened up & they talked for over five hours.
5. that on May 18, 1939 led by Clarence S. the Cleveland, OH group met separately from Akron (and the Oxford Group) at the home of Abe G.? There were 16 members present. This was the first group to call itself Alcoholics Anonymous. The Clevelanders still sent their most difficult cases to Dr. Bob in Akron for treatment.
6. that in May 1938 Bill W. & other AA members began writing the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous?
7. that on May 22, 1940 Works Publishing Inc. is established (forerunner to AAWS) for Big Book & other literature?
8. that on May 8, 1941 Ethel M., the first female member in Akron, OH sobered up? Ethel spoke at the ORC in 1953.
9. that on May 8, 1946 the Kingsway Group started? Today, it is the oldest group in the GTA.
10. that on May 3, 1980 the 1st Information AA Day was held in Toronto? A combined effort of Toronto Intergroup & the 6 Districts in & around Toronto.
11. that on May 8, 1971 Bill W. is buried in a small private ceremony in East Dorset, Vermont?
12. that in May 1946 the long form Twelve Traditions (12 Points Assure Our Future prior name 12 Traditions) are published in the AA Grapevine?
13. that in May 1940 first anonymity break at the national level? Rollie H. catcher of the Cleveland Indians just caught Bob Feller's no-hitter, revealed been sober in AA one year, caused lot of publicity.
14. that in May 1949 Bill W. presented a talk to the American Psychiatric Association's 105th Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada?
15. that on May 1, 1944 the 30 Vesey St. Office was moved to 415 Lexington Ave., NY near the Grand Central Terminal? The new mailing address was P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Annex.
16. that in May 1941 Ruth Hock (Bill W.'s secretary) learns that Joe V. credited with thinking up the name "Alcoholics Anonymous" has a "wet brain"?
17. that in May 1938 Bill & Lois visit Bill R. in Hackettstown, NJ? It was Hackettstown Courier Post that ran the first newspaper article on AA.
18. that in May 1942 The Journal - Herald (Dayton, OH) runs huge story on AA with photos of members in Halloween Masks to protect anonymity?
19. that in May 1980 Dr. Bob and the Good Old-Timers, AA World Services, Inc.'s biography of AA's co-founder and a history of early AA in the Midwest, is published?
20. that on May 1, 1939 Bill & Lois leave 182 Clinton Street home? From 1939-1940 Bill & Lois moved 51 times.

The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety - By Bill W.

I think that many oldsters who have put our AA “booze cure” to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA—the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance—urges quite appropriate to age seventeen—prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven.

Since AA began, I’ve taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up, emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse! Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy, and good living—well, that’s not only the neurotic’s problem, it’s the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs. Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That’s the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it’s a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious—from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream—be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden “Mr. Hyde” becomes our main task.

I’ve recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones—folks like you and me—commencing to get results. Last autumn [several years back - ed.] depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I’ve had with depressions, it wasn’t a bright prospect. I kept asking myself, “Why can’t the Twelve Steps work to release depression?” By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer...“It’s better to comfort than to be the comforted.” Here was the formula, all right. But why didn’t it work?

Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence - almost absolute dependence - on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn’t a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away. Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what Grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed, upon any set of circumstances whatsoever. Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing a love appropriate to each relation of life. Plainly, I could not avail myself of God’s love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me. And I couldn’t possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies. For my dependency meant demand—a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words “absolute demand” may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.

(Continued on Page 7)

Upcoming Medallions

● Don R.	25	Traditional Group	May 3
● Carolyn C.	25	Keep it Simple (Scarborough)	May 5
● Farid I.	15	Prince Edward Group	May 6
● Cathy D.	20	Beaches Group	May 7
● Karen W.	30	Prince Edward Group	May 20
● Anya H.	1	Spirit of the BB Group	May 26
● Ken L.	40	5th Trad. Scarborough	May 28
● Susan R.	20	St. Clements	May 29



**DISTRICT 18 & DISTRICT 22
PRESENTS:**

14th ANNUAL EAST TORONTO ARCHIVES BREAKFAST

SUNDAY MAY 5th, 2019

**QSSIS BANQUET HALL
3474 KINGSTON RD.
(Just West of Markham Rd.)**

AGENDA

**9:00 am-10:00 am - Coffee & Fellowship
10:00 am-11:00 am - Buffet Breakfast
11:00 am-12:00 pm - Open Meeting
12:00 pm-12:30 pm - Prizes & Closing**

**AMPLE FREE PARKING AVAILABLE
FULLY ACCESSIBLE & SIGNERS WELCOME**

TICKETS ARE AVAILABLE UNTIL WEDNESDAY MAY 1st, 2019

TICKET PRICE \$20.00

TICKETS ARE NOT AVAILABLE AT THE DOOR

**FOR MORE INFORMATION & TICKETS PLEASE CONTACT YOUR
GSR OR**

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Tom S. 416-750-9026 John M. 416-277-4285**

The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety - By Bill W.



This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

Spiritual calculus, you say? Not a bit of it. Watch any AA of six months working with a new Twelfth Step case. If the case says "To the devil with you," the Twelfth Stepper only smiles and turns to another case. He doesn't feel frustrated or rejected. If his next case responds, and in turn starts to give love and attention to other alcoholics, yet gives none back to him, the sponsor is happy about it anyway. He still doesn't feel rejected; instead he rejoices that his one-time prospect is sober and happy. And if his next following case turns out in later time to be his best friend (or romance) then the sponsor is most joyful. But he well knows that his happiness is a by-product—the extra dividend of giving without any demand for a return. The really stabilizing thing for him was having and offering love to that strange drunk on his

doorstep. That was Francis at work, powerful and practical, minus dependency and minus demand.

In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn't a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.

Thus I think it can work out with emotional sobriety. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent unhealthy demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelfth Step ourselves and others into emotional sobriety.

Of course I haven't offered you a really new idea—only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own "hexes" at depth. Nowadays my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine.

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A.A.® Guidelines

Internet - from G.S.O., Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

GUARDING ANONYMITY ONLINE

Modern communication in A.A. is flowing from one alcoholic to another in ways that are high-tech, relatively open-ended and evolving quickly. Protecting anonymity is a major concern for members, who are accessing the Internet in ever-growing numbers.

As Bill W. noted, "Anonymity has two attributes essential to our individual and collective survival; the spiritual and the practical. On the spiritual level, anonymity demands the greatest discipline of which we are capable; on the practical level anonymity has brought protection for the newcomer, respect and support of the world outside, and security from those of us who would use A.A. for sick and selfish purposes."

When we use digital media, we are responsible for our own anonymity and for protecting that of others. When we post, text, or blog, we should consider whether we are publishing at the public level. When we break our anonymity in these forums, we may inadvertently break the anonymity of others.

When it comes to the Twelfth Tradition this has proven to be something that only the individual can answer because of its foundation in humility. The following questions have proven useful tools for evaluating if our actions may or may not be in conflict with the principle described in Tradition Twelve.

- **Is my posting about the message or the messenger?**
- **Am I carrying the A.A. message in the hopes of helping someone else, or simply "shouting from the rooftops"?**
- **Am I taking my story and affiliating it with political causes?**
- **Am I being extra cautious about not identifying other members as A.A. members in photographs or statements?**
- **Am I avoiding the temptation to incite controversy with caustic argument or bully others who disagree with me?**
- **Am I providing helpful links to my local A.A. website, aa.org, or the aagrapevine.org?**

As long as individuals do not identify themselves as A.A. members, there is no conflict of interest. However, someone identifying themselves as an A.A. member using their full name and/or a likeness, such as a full-face photograph, would be contrary to the spirit of the Eleventh Tradition, which states in the Long Form that, "...our [last] names and pictures as A.A. members ought not be broadcast, filmed or publicly printed."

TORONTO MEN'S MEETING IS 70 YRS OLD!

Together, Ben W., Ed H., Peter T. and Ralph R. have just under two centuries of sobriety. So it's been more than a few 24s since the four men showed up at Alcoholics Anonymous. Even so, each clearly remembers the first time he attended the Toronto Sunday Morning Men's Meeting.

"When I started going to the men's meeting it lifted me right up," recalls Ben W. of the Thorncliffe Park group, who will celebrate 57 years of sobriety this year. On Apr. 24, the TSMMM will mark 70 years of service, a landmark that will be celebrated at a meeting on Sunday Apr. 28 at 10:30 a.m. – all welcome, including women – at Edwards Gardens at Leslie St. and Lawrence Ave. Edwards Gardens is the seventh location to host the Men's Meeting. And though smaller, perhaps, than in its heydays in the 1970s, '80s and '90s, it still offers traditional AA recovery. As the sobriety of its old-timers suggests. The first meeting was held at AA headquarters at 1170 Yonge St., just a week after the Toronto Maple Leafs won their third straight Stanley Cup in 1949. That was less than 15 years after AA founders Bill Wilson and Bob Smith met in Akron, Ohio, and only six years after the first AA meeting in Canada. Since then, it's been held in a Yonge St. restaurant, the YMCA on Eglinton Ave. E., Leaside Memorial Gardens, the York Reception Centre, the Thorncliffe Banquet Hall and, now, Edwards Gardens. Over that time, it's won a crucial place in the recovery of generations of alcoholics.

"It had a certain power to it," agreed Ralph R., a member of the SOS group with 43 years of sobriety. It was "the camaraderie," said Ed H. of the Pine Hills Group, who in February celebrated 47 years. Peter T. joined the Hill Group a week soon after taking his last drink in April 1970. Days later, he was taken to the Men's Meeting at the Y.

"I think I must have liked the 'locker room' atmosphere of the place," Peter recalled. "We didn't meet in a changing room, of course, but in a pleasant space where we made coffee and set up chairs. And we didn't trade smutty stories or swear. As a matter of fact, I seem to recall one occasion on which we voted down that kind of thing. I think what made us so comfortable was that in the absence of women we were less inhibited about revealing the enormity of our own character defects."

Over the years, the TSMMM became famous for its vast selection of books and recovery paraphernalia, for recording and retailing tapes and CDs of speakers, and as a magnet for clients from the Renascent recovery house.

Mike C., of the North Toronto group, recalled that he was told soon after reaching AA in 1994 that he should attend the Men's Meeting if he wanted "contented sobriety." He started showing up early on Sundays to help set out 300 chairs for the meeting. In February, he celebrated 25 years. When Peter T. returned to Toronto after living for years in eastern Ontario, one of the first things he did was check "on the current whereabouts of the Sunday Morning Men's Meeting," he said.

Peter was delighted to learn it was only a 20-minute walk from his new apartment. "I was home again." Over 70 years, over more than 3,600 Sunday meetings, thousands of sober men know just what he means.

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Over 70 years, over more than 3,600 Sunday meetings, thousands of sober men know just what he means. It was in the closed meetings that I made the spiritual connection with the members of my group that let them function as my higher power. I don't believe in God, but I believe in the commitment that I made to my group. Unlike the other people in my life, even my ex, my AA group didn't judge me as weak, or morally unfit; they saw I had just been too stubborn to admit I was an alcoholic. And when I finally walked in a little over five years ago and said "My name is Kevin and I'm an alcoholic," they welcomed me.

And when they saw I was honest in that admission, humble enough to take instruction and enthusiastic about being involved, they accepted me into their hearts as well. This was the first of my "new covenants" in sobriety. When I get a fleeting thought nowadays about drinking, I think about my group and how it would disappoint them if I were to relapse, and that's enough to dismiss the thought.

I often say that open meetings are for celebration: cheering for the people as they hit milestones like six months or 10 years, listening to the speaker's story of fall and redemption, seeing old friends. The closed meetings are where the work gets done.

*****The Sunday Morning Men's Meeting - 10:30am at Edward's Gardens at 755 Lawrence Ave East in North York***