

BETTER TIMES

Produced monthly by AA members in the Greater Toronto Area

Sept. 2018



WHEN MY SOBRIETY NEEDED A TOW TRUCK

About five months ago, my life hit a pothole. It was deep and damaging but never once did I think that it would de-rail me because I had not thought of taking a drink in almost 20 years.

It just never occurred to me that this was the “thing” that might take me out. It was meant to be a joyous and liberating experience... I had retired. I had been waiting for the better part of my sobriety for this moment. Freedom, dreams fulfilled, bucket list items to check off, sleeping till noon should I so choose. I had saved and sacrificed so that one day I would be able to travel and cook, read all the books I had not had time for,

watch some of the shows people had been gushing about and possibly take on a more hefty service position at my home group.

The day arrived. I had parties at both my work and with family & friends, booze-free events that had me filled with gratitude. I woke up the next morning and the size of the pit in my stomach was indescribable. I had not felt this lost

and purposeless since I was drinking back in my late 30s. I shrugged it off as simply needing to settle into my new routine. The problem was that I had no routine. I know now that almost all alcoholics require routine of some kind. Daily tasks and “Good Orderly Direction” were paramount to my life no matter how much sobriety I had under my belt.

I began to sleep in and as a result, I lost my morning meditation and prayer habit, one I’d had for years. I was missing my twice-weekly morning meetings in lieu of a coffee and the news. Speaking of the news, I began to watch it continuously.

(Continued on page 7)

Word search

Butterflies

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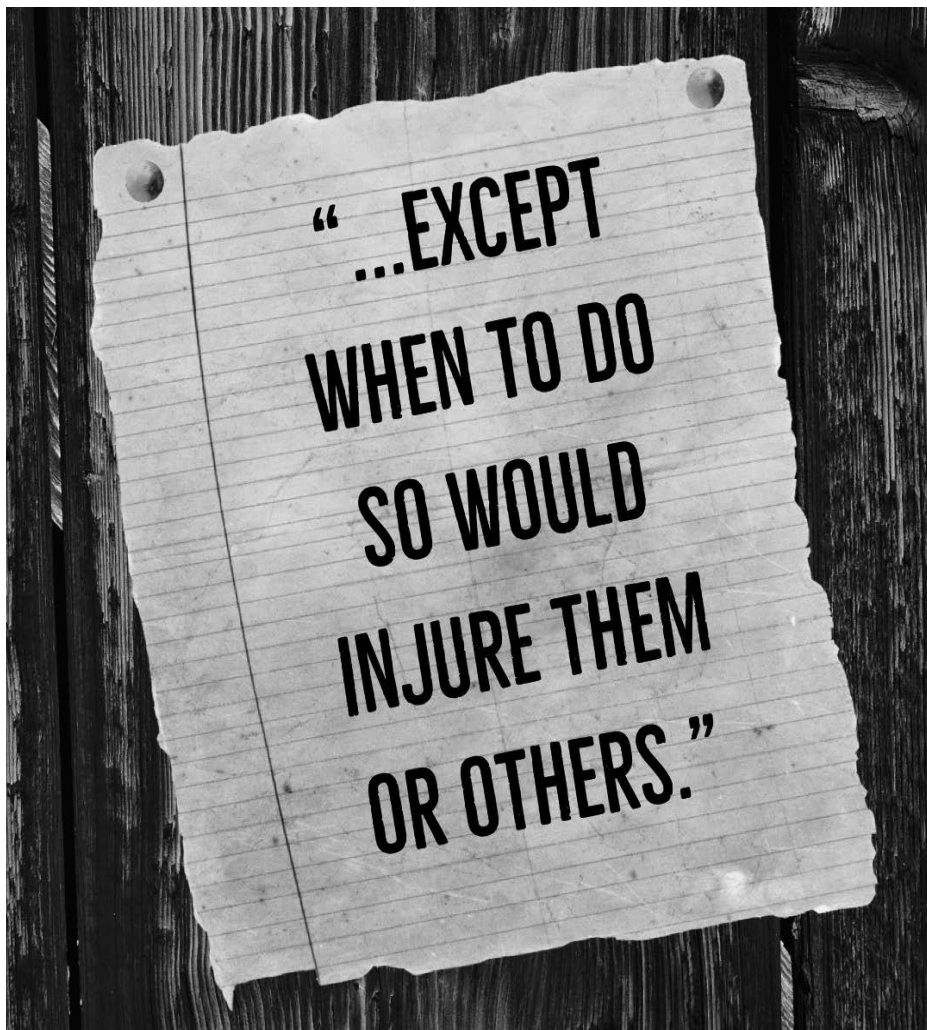
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VICEROY
WINGS

Opinions expressed in BETTER TIMES are those of the authors and don't necessarily reflect those of the Greater Toronto Area Intergruop. 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.

From the Editor



These words to the left as included in a powerful adjunct in Step 9's instructions made me stop and think when I first did this step in year one of sobriety. How could I clear the wreckage of the past if there were certain people or institutions that this step suggests I NOT make amends to? Would my work not be incomplete? Further investigation of this "clause" with the help of my sponsor revealed the wonderful world of the Living Amend.

When we are unable to go directly to someone and try to put things right because it may interfere, disrupt or otherwise distress the other party, we must not do it. Step 9 is not about making us "feel good", it is about doing the right thing. Clearing our slate at the expense of others does not work. A living amend can work as an alternative. In other words, when a situation presents itself that is similar to the amend in question, we can correct the pattern and behave in a way that would honour the person to whom we are unable to make reparations and in so doing keep our promise to try and not behave the way we used to any more. Your sponsor will explain further when you are facing Step Nine.

This program in its design leaves no stone unturned! It is really a miracle!

Maija P.

*Mon Dieu
Donnez-moi la Sérénité
d'accepter les choses
que je ne puis changer
le Courage
de changer les choses
que je peux et la Sagesse
à en connaître
la différence.*

*Deus Concede-me,
Serenidade para aceitar as
coisas que eu não posso
modificar,*

*Coragem para modificar
aquelas que posso,*

*E Sabedoria para distinguir
umas das outras.*

*Signore concedimi la
*** Serenità
di accettare le cose che
non posso cambiare
il Coraggio ***
di cambiare quelle che
posso
la Saggazza ***
di conoscere la differenza*



From the Archives

Recent items donated to the GTA Archives
as reported by the GTA Archivist Eddy G.:

- The AA Service Manual and Twelve Concepts for World Service by Bill W., 2008-09
- Alcoholics Anonymous Membership Survey 1996 & 2014
- Three "Serenity" Western Australia booklets, Jan. 2012, Feb. 2012 & July 2014
- Two copies of The 12-Step Call pamphlet by Durham Region AA Public Information
- Two District 34 Quince East Meeting books, April 2018. Donated by the Liverpool group.
- A Manual for AA, Akron, OH
- Second Reader for AA pamphlet, Akron, OH
- A Guide to the Twelve Steps of AA pamphlet, Akron, OH
- Spiritual Milestones in AA pamphlet, Akron, OH
- AA Speakers Manual, Akron, OH. Donated by Lynn E. (Fifth Tradition group)
- 1980 International Convention New Orleans Souvenir Metal Coin.
- Toronto Meeting Book, July 1988. Donated by Jean H. (St. Clements group).
- Toronto Star obituary clipping for Tom Gilchrist (North Toronto group), July 22, 2002
- Toronto Sun obituary clipping for Pat Bogue (White Oaks group).
- Technics Reel to Reel Recorder/Player. Donated by Mark C. (Welcome group)

DID YOU KNOW

- In Sept. 1935, Bill W. returned home from his Akron trip and AA began in New York City.
- On Sept. 21, 1938, Bill W. & Hank P. form Works Publishing Co. raise money to write & publish Alcoholics Anonymous, AA's Big Book.
- In Sept. 1940, the Journal of Nervous & Mental Disease reviewed the AA Big Book and said: "of the inner meaning of alcoholism there is hardly a word."
- In Sept. 1948, the first issue of the AA Grapevine in pocketbook format is published. In this issue of the Grapevine, the Serenity Prayer was printed for the first time.

Medallions

•	Deirdre B.	35	Rexdale	Aug. 30
•	Maire O.	30	Morning Discussion	Sept. 1
•	Sheri G.	5	Anniversary	Sept. 5
•	Michael G.	20	St. Andrew's	Sept. 8
•	Dave A.	20	Keep It Simple	Sept. 9
•	Doug W.	10	Erin Mills	Sept. 10
•	Julie W.	1	Sisters in Sobriety	Sept 12
•	Hayley W.	1	East York	Sept. 25
•	Nevera W.	1	East York	Sept. 25

Hamilton & Districts 50th Annual Autumn Leaf Roundup

NEW DJ
& DANCE

Friday & Saturday
September 21st - 22nd, 2018

"Remember
When..."

autumnleafroundup.org

The Grand Olympia Banquet Hall
660 Barton St. at Fruitland
Stoney Creek, ON. L8E 5L6

Full Al-Anon Program

Early Bird Prices Available Till - August 15th 2018

Friday Opening
AA Speaker
Rich B.
From
Ocean City
Maryland



Closing AA
Banquet Speaker
Lyle P.
From
Stockbridge
Georgia

70 YEARS THE HILL GROUP

Anniversary Celebration

8:30PM - 9:30PM

October 25th

Timothy Eaton Memorial Church

- On Sept. 22, 1944, Dr. George Little transferred the distribution rights he had obtained in Aug. 1942 for the sale of the Big Book in Canada to the Toronto AA Club.

**DID
KN**

History of AA slogans



Many of these slogans, as with other practices in AA, were simply passed along verbally to other members, so it's impossible to know who started using them first. It's possible that some of the slogans may have originally stemmed from a part of the Oxford Group Movement language but it could also be that they originated from Bill, Dr. Bob and the early members.

Members have always inquired about the origins of various slogans and it has always been difficult to narrow them down. In our research, we discovered a letter written by former GSO Archivist, Frank M., dated 1989, who responded to a similar question that was posed to him. This was Frank's response: "Your interest in the origins of 'One day at a time' is shared by many of us. Like hand-holding, however, it's difficult to pin-point the exact moment." That's the problem we find with most of our AA slogans, unfortunately!

We do know, however, that many slogans commonly heard have been around since the early days of the Fellowship.

In December of 1958, Ruth Hock (non-alcoholic), who was AA's first secretary, wrote a response to a similar question concerning different slogans. In her reply, Ruth wrote:

"...Bill [W.] and I first worked together in January 1936 when he had been sober just a little over one year and at that time 'Easy does it,' 'Live and let live' and 'First things first' were part of the daily conversation. They were also used in the very first drafts of the book but probably only Bill himself could tell you where he picked them up..."

"As far as I'm concerned, all of the above were introduced into AA by Bill W. himself, although not original with him.

"Some of these could have been used in Oxford Group meetings but there is no way to know for sure."

In addition to Ruth's response, page 220 of Bill W.'s biography, *Pass It On*, also addresses this topic:

"Some 'AA saws' were also used as long ago as the late 1930s: 'First things first,' 'Easy does it,' 'Live and let live.' Because these appear in the first edition of the Big Book (at the end of the chapter on 'The Family Afterward'), it's probable that the use of the slogans originated with Bill and that he brought them with him from Vermont – old saws with new teeth."

From aa.org



- On Sept. 17, 1957, Bill Wilson wrote: "It is highly important that the factual material be placed in our files in such a way there can be no substantial distortion."
- In Sept. 1973, Nell Wing, Bill's secretary, became the first archivist at GSO in New York.

When my sobriety needed a tow truck

(Continued from front page)

It was streaming on my TV from morning to night and it started to weigh on me. School shootings, bus accidents, weather events, politics, social media and even the fluctuating price of gas became my obsessions. These hourly distractions replaced my book list, my

travel plans, service elections came and went and I simply said to myself "you are just too busy right now... later, the time will be right."

My career had been quite stressful but extremely fulfilling and, in a way, a form of daily service that I had taken for granted. I was a woman with a purpose

and was thrilled every time I could assist a client with surmounting a challenge or accomplishing a goal. Helping them, helped me but I didn't know that I had defined myself by my job for so long, when the job stopped, I was feeling like the hole in the donut... the only thing my brain kept telling me was "Just have a drink!" I stood at the crossroads... (To be continued in October issue)

Juliette C., Toronto

Blessing of AA service

I found a strong feeling of security to be surrounded by AA members at my first Area Assembly. Some of these members had been sober 20 or 30 years and were still willing to travel all over the place — sometimes over 100 miles — to participate in AA's important service structure. Even more, it was the joy and enthusiasm penetrating the rooms. I, at once, decided to become part of all this!

Starting at the near bottom, so to speak, my first position was that of an Intergroup representative in West Los Angeles. I will never forget that there was a hot issue in the air, so when time came to vote, I did so for several different groups (I was sure they would have been for it!). However, I was informed, with great kindness, that I could only vote for my home group. A bit embarrassed, but better informed, I became willing to learn what I was doing

before acting out.

My sobriety was conveniently enhanced by this lesson in humility!

Moving back to my hometown of Richmond, Indiana, I became a General Service Representative for the AZ-UR group that met in our local club. Our district meetings met about 10 times a year, which I enjoyed a lot. I took over the committee for printing the district's meeting schedule, which was more difficult than I had allowed for but it gave me a feeling of being part of something. More mistakes only added to my still-needed humility!

A few years later, I became a District Committee Member, which placed me in the exciting before-mentioned rooms. It was, of course, my duty to report the essential decisions and upcoming events

back to the District Meetings. Thank God for personal computers because after telling the news, I could simply copy the essentials and hand them to the GSRs so they could read said information to their specific groups.

My current service positions, these last years, have been the District's Archive Chairperson. It is great fun displaying AA stuff all over the place and discussing the fascinating history of AA. I am also editor of our District newsletter, which is printed only four times a year, but that is also a great pleasure.

I will never be smart enough to be a GSO Delegate, but then who is the most important person in AA, anyway?

Answer: The coffee maker.

Bob S, Richmond, IN

Closed meetings are where the work gets done



I've been reading on the internet that some newcomers don't like going to closed meetings and only prefer open meetings. Perhaps it's the relative anonymity an open meeting affords; you don't have to offer anything up but your name. You can get up and leave at any time; no one will stop you. All that inner turmoil and pain can stay safely locked inside.

But I think avoiding closed meetings reduces the program's power. My experience was just going to speaker meetings helped me not drink, but didn't address the issues. They just "put the plug in the jug," as the old-timers say. I had to go to the closed rooms to do that.

My group's closed meeting splits

into three rooms: Big Book study and two Step rooms, one where we read the step first and then share and another where we just dive right in. For me, that's where the real work was done. That's where I began to understand how the steps really worked and how much I had missed when I just read through them. That's where I was able to share (it was really hard; I ended up in tears a lot) and get the awful feelings and the guilt and the pain out. I had to do that to erase them.

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.

Kevin B., North Toronto