

Here's How

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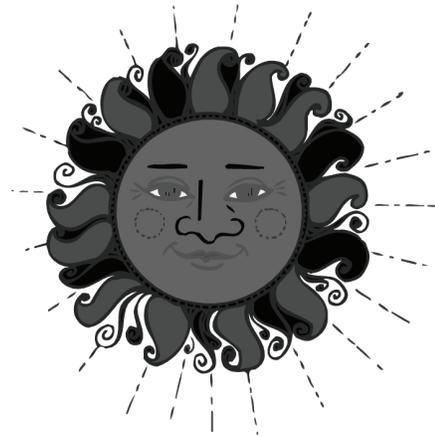
Bridging the Gap

Service has indeed been the secret for this alcoholic. After finally conceding to my innermost self that I am just an alcoholic, I came to believe that I could be restored to sanity. Thank God there is a spiritual solution in Alcoholics Anonymous. Action and more action are called for. Honesty and continued efforts on the steps have provided the miracle I had hoped for when I came to AA in 1978. I did not stop drinking until 1980.

So what's my problem? I did not surrender completely and let go absolutely until many years after the drinking stopped. Bill W. suggested persistent efforts on the steps but I hadn't let go of old ideas. They were almost my handmaidens into oblivion. Desperation has been the greatest gift I've been given. Love and tolerance of others has been a gift but the desperation has led me to become honest with others and myself. After my husband of thirty-eight or so years filed for divorce, I hit another bottom big time. I felt useless. The pain was incredibly deep. The events included a brief stay in jail after being removed from a meeting where I was disruptive (had hoped to make someone who was dying laugh) followed by my last visit to a Psych Unit and being told while there that he had filed. Much earlier in sobriety I had asked God to help me not to attempt suicide again and He has helped me.

But I learned to study the Big Book, 12 & 12 and History of AA again as if my life depended on it. Indeed, freedom is not free. I became a GSR again and then became a corrections person who carried the message to jails. It was certainly inconvenient but dying of untreated alcoholism isn't what I had in mind. I eventually became Corrections chair at our district and would venture to say that if there were a prize for the district that earned the most for the Pink Can,

we would have won (Pink Can funds are collected for purchase of Big Books for correctional facilities). Since we rotated, I somehow became involved in Area service. Being in service led me to study the Traditions and even the Concepts! I was amazed that our Big Book said God gave us brains to use!



Public information was next. Boy was that fun. I thought of all types of ways we could encourage people to come to us. Trouble was that I was still quite sensitive and did not suffer well, so I stepped away from service. My old fear of not being good enough resurfaced, it had been there all along, bondage of self. One person in particular hated me and would not stop with his hatred. By the Grace of God, I read about the challenges Bill and Bob had, especially Bill, who had detractors and wrote The Next Frontier about emotional sobriety. So, more change was required if I was to be "Happy, Joyous and Free" as well as being useful in AA. It works. It really does! I now have another position in our Area. Hopefully I'm useful. Thank God! More change!

Anonymous

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I Am at a Turning Point...

The Spiritual Awakening

My name is Rich and I'm an alcoholic. My sobriety date is September 8, 1991. This was not my first time in AA, originally I came in 1982. I was in trouble with the law. I was 20 years old. Needless to say, I didn't stay. I compared my way right out as most of the experiences that were talked about at that first meeting by the other members hadn't happened to me yet. I was too young, smart, cool and clever. Booze isn't going to rule me, so I thought.

By 1987, I had a three-year-old daughter with my now wife Denise. I was in and out of trouble but still managed to work and make good money. The same thoughts consumed me, "I can't be an alcoholic, they live on the streets of downtown Chicago." I had "stuff." I also found myself in more legal trouble. I had been arrested driving on a revoked license and was drunk. The Courts don't look too kindly on that.

I was sentenced to some time at County and also to treatment, which required AA meetings. I jumped through the hoops. I went to a lot of meetings. After it was all said and done, I stayed sober about six months or so. I convinced myself that these people just don't have anything else to do on the meeting nights. I had to be there to please the judge. I drank again. I thought I had done AA. I thought it wouldn't work for me. My life was a battle of ups and downs. Getting in and out of trouble.



So what happened? In the summer of 1991, my wife's brother, Bob, got in some trouble. He asked if I could be his "support" person for his treatment at the New day Center at Hinsdale hospital. So I did. I was in this room with other family members of people in treatment there. Why their stories had such an affect on me? I don't know. It's a God thing. But, what they described was me. I thought I should be in the other room with the treatment people, because they were talking about me there.

Part of his "program" was AA meetings. He asked if I'd go with him. One day we heard from speakers at a Sunday breakfast meeting who came from my now home group, Lemont Oaks. One of the the guys talked to us afterward and said, "You gotta come to the Oaks tomorrow!" His enthusiasm with sobriety and this group was highly apparent. I came home and told my wife about this guy and what he said.

The next day my wife's brother called and said he wasn't going to make the meeting. I hung up and my wife asked, "What's wrong?" I told her Bob didn't want to go to the meeting. She said, "why don't you go?" My response was, "I don't have to." She said "uh, yeah, I think you do."

I went alone. I walked into the gymnasium where some 400 people gathered. The place was bright, there was laughter, people looked good. I couldn't, at that moment, think all these people just didn't have nothing else to do on Monday night. Something was happening there. I was approached and greeted by, too many to count, people and made to feel welcome. The importance of them approaching me, as a new guy in the room, can't be overstated. It was salvation as I was not apt to approach anyone.

I started taking direction from people I didn't know or necessarily trust. How does that happen? I started letting them get to know me as I was able to get to know them. I got involved. I didn't pick up that next drink. It's not to say that the compulsion to drink was removed right away. It wasn't, but I sensed these folks had tapped into a power that allowed them to live without the need to drink.

I haven't, thankfully, had a thought of drinking in over 20 years. But, the truth of the matter is that I still need AA as much today as I did then. Three meetings a week, sponsored and sponsoring. AA is like having diabetes. I start missing doses and I'm going to die.

Thank you Alcoholics Anonymous for a life that's worth living.

Rich G.

75th ALL CHICAGO OPEN

SEPT 20, 2014

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

1 year of sobriety suggested for Ushers

2 years of sobriety required for 7th tradition collectors

Please just show up to
volunteer to:

UIC Pavilion
525 S Racine Ave @ Harrison
Chicago IL 60607

Notice: New dry run
date & time

Get Involved

Help us celebrate our
historical 75th AA in
Chicago birthday

We need you!

**You must be available at the UIC Pavilion on
both days:**

Wednesday, Sept 17, 2014 @ 6:00 – 7:00 pm

Saturday, Sept 20, 2014 @ 4:00 – 8:00 pm

For more information please contact:

Ushers: Adonis C. 312-788-4638 or Michelle K. 708-254-4391

7th Tradition Collectors: David H. 847-420-5246 or Robert J. 773-752-2440

Something Old, Something New, Somethings Reprinted that Are Now Blue!

Hello from the Chicago Area Service Office Bookstore! I am your alcoholic clerk and special worker, Laura H, here to tell you about a few new items and features we have to offer you in our store!

The first item we want to let you know about is that we now have on-line ordering available through our website, www.chicagoaa.org! Simply click on the bookstore tab on the site and begin shopping. All on-line orders are to be paid for with a credit or debit card and are to be shipped. If you are with a group, club or institution that is on account and/or place orders to be picked up, you will need to call the store directly at 312-346-8451, fax us at 312-346-1477, or e-mail us at Bookstore@chicagoaa.org to place your order. Please allow twenty-four hours to process orders if possible!

As for literature, we have several publications that we are excited about!

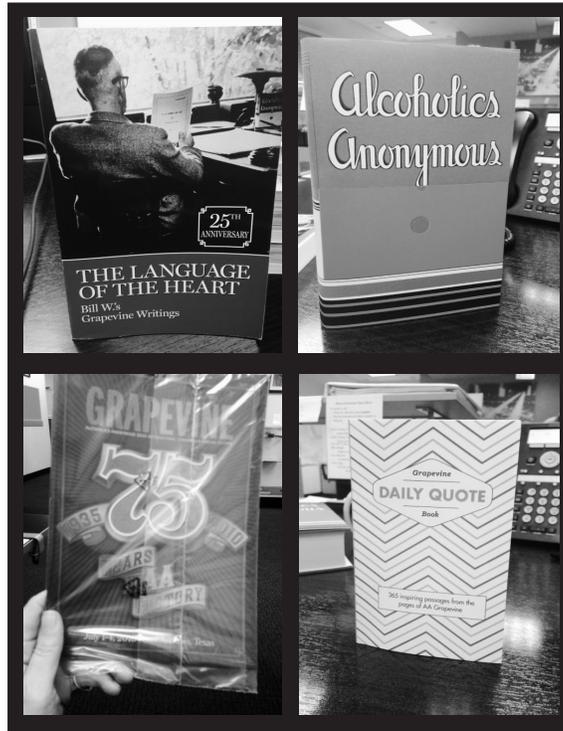
In honor of the Seventy-Fifth Anniversary of AA, from Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. we have a facsimile edition of the very first printing of Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as "the Big Book!" It is a beautiful, hard-bound book with the original red and yellow cover, printed on the original thick paper that helped give the book its nickname! The personal stories in the book are the stories from the first edition. This book is \$12.00, item number B-0.

Also from G.S.O., we have a large-print, abridged version of the Big Book available for \$6.00, item number B-24. This is a large print version of Alcoholics Anonymous, without the personal stories in the back. It's great for commuting, vacations and bedside reading!

And from the AA Grapevine comes the Grapevine Daily Quote Book: 365 Inspiring Passages from the pages of A.A. Grapevine! This is only the second; conference approved daily reader, after Daily Reflections. AA Grapevine describes this as, "...a pocket-sized book that captures the first 365 days of the Grapevine Daily Quote, which first appeared in June 2012. The quotes contributed by AA members, with many written by AA's co-founders, were selected by the

Grapevine staff. All of these passages first appeared in the pages of Grapevine as part of members' stories and other submissions, and many of them can now be found in Grapevine's themed book anthologies. Each page offers an inspiring passage of experience, strength and hope to bring into your daily life." This book is \$10.99, item number GV32.

If you are interested in anniversary editions of books, AA Grapevine has a soft-cover, 25th edition of Language of the Heart, a collection of Bill W.'s Grapevine writings. This Item number GV11 is \$12.99



There is also a Special Convention Edition of the AA Grapevine Magazine from the 2010 World Conference in San Antonio Texas. This item is \$4.00, order number GV24.

AA Grapevine continues to be a prolific publisher of conference approved, member-generated, essay collections.

Please visit our store in person and on-line to find out about all the great alcoholism recovery-related books and pamphlets we have and continue to bring you, both conference and non-conference approved. We also have a great assortment of t-shirts, coins, key-chains and other miscellaneous gift items.

And a reminder to our members, if there is a book or

publication that you feel would be a good fit in our bookstore, contact The Literature Committee via our website, www.chicagoaa.org or e-mail Bookstore@chicagoaa.org and submit your title for review. Perhaps we'll carry what has been helpful to your sobriety in the CASO Bookstore!

The CASO Bookstore is located within The Chicago Area Service Office at 180 N. Wabash, suite 305, Chicago, IL, 60601. The Bookstore is open 8-5:30, Monday through Friday; we accept Cash, Check, Visa, Mastercard, Amex and Discover. Our direct phone number is 312-346-8451, fax is 312-346-1477. E-mail us at Bookstore@chicagoaa.org. Order from us on-line at chicagoaa.org under the Bookstore tab (credit card and shipped orders only).

We hope to see you soon! Thank you for allowing me to serve you!

Laura H.
CASO Bookstore Clerk



ALL CHICAGO OPEN

SEPTEMBER 20, 2014

* Doors open: 5 p.m. * Concession & Literature: 5-6:45 p.m. *

Meeting starts at 7 P.M.

*** Dance at Pavilion to follow ***

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

- Special seating for old timers with 20+ years of sobriety.
- Simultaneous Spanish and Polish interpretation with an FM pocket radio and earphones. (Interpretación simultanea al español por radios portatiles FM con audifonos. Zabezpiecza równoczesne tłumaczenie hiszpańskie i polskiego radia UKF kieszeni i słuchawki)
- Meeting will be signed for the hearing impaired.
- A suggested \$5 7th tradition contribution—if you have it wonderful! If not please keep coming back

*The annual celebration of the
first AA meeting in Chicago
Held September 20th 1939*

UIC Pavilion

525 S Racine at Harrison

Chicago, IL 60607

(This is a non-smoking facility)

Parking: cars- \$10.00 Buses- \$20.00

(prices subject to change w/out notice)

Directions:

From the NORTH, take the Kennedy (I90/I94) to the Eisenhower (I-290), exit immediately on Morgan St. south to Harrison, then west to Racine.

From the SOUTH, take the Dan Ryan (I-94) to Taylor/Eisenhower (I-290), south on Racine.

From the EAST, exit the Eisenhower on Ashland, south to Harrison, then east to Racine.



Celebrating
75 Years
1939-2014

Reading How It Works

Most of the AA meetings I go to begin with a reading of the AA Preamble and How It Works. The following applies to both documents. The purpose of these being read at the beginning is to inform the reason for the meeting, remind attendees what each of us should concentrate on for the next hour or so, and most significantly, to inform newcomers the true purpose of what AA meetings are for, to recover from a devastating illness that not only causes pain to ourselves and others but may even be fatal.

I have been to meetings where conversations are going on when the readings are being done because some feel they know what it is all about, or getting coffee and cookies, or running to the rest rooms. And some think that the reading of How It Works should be skipped because it is redundant to them. Many don't realize how important it is for newcomers, especially first timers, to hear what can be gained, to help them concentrate on the AA program during the meeting, listening to the lead and comments, and learn the recovery process.

To my disappointment many people choose to read How It Works, either picking it up when they come in or telling the secretary (yes, that's the person who leads the meeting) that they will read How It Works to the group. Actually the secretary should choose who they wish to read at the beginning of the meeting, many times an individual's first time at the meeting.

Very often the reader will rush through reading How It Works as quickly as they can to get it over with or to demonstrate their skill for reading and often slur or mispronounce the words. Some even change the context to their more beneficial translation of what has been printed in Alcoholics Anonymous, known as the Big Book.

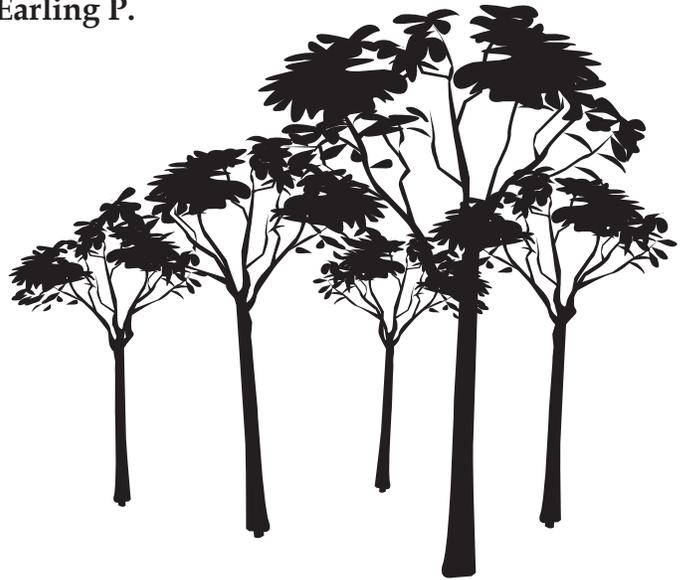
Many years ago, when I first started going to meetings to recover from alcoholism and abuse, I was one guilty of these actions when I read How It Works to the group. Wow, I could get through it in 2 ½ minutes so we could get business done and improve the lead and comment time of the meeting.

When I listen at meetings today, many years later, or when I am given the privilege to read How It Works, I feel that it should be read clearly and in a manner that expresses the purpose of why I and others, long timers, beginners, or first timers, have come to an AA meeting today. For myself I believe it is to learn to change my behavior in life outside of the meetings, to continue my recovery from alcoholism, and to help others in their recovery.

This can be better done in the reading of and listening to How It Works as read in a voice that speaks the words specifically in terms of an individual saying the sentences in a manner of being spoken, rather than having the words read in a rush by someone making their own point, that is, showing how great they can read a page or just to get it over with in a hurry.

Forgive me, but this is my opinion which has been developed from my attendance of AA meetings during the time I have been coming to meetings and maintaining sobriety a day at a time.

Earling P.



I Am at a Turning Point Each and Every Day

My path has been a lonely one but I am here because of a common bond. I know I can no longer travel alone, and that honesty, trust, and love for one another is the path to freedom. I am willing to begin this journey each day and not be afraid of failure. I can face my addiction and let it go. First, let us know these things; that our lives matter because we are born with potential, that we are not victims of circumstances, that to be free we must master our own habits, that we can be part of something greater than ourselves and thereby find the greater part of ourselves. Then, let us do these things; humble ourselves to learning, learn to be learners, out of respect for our own potential and out of respect for those who teach us. Let us take courage against our fears and be steady in our efforts. Let us help each other and draw strength from each other, for the one who falls low can bring us all down, unless we help him or her rise, because the one who rises high can take us all higher, if we strive together and build a future that is better than our past.

Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous

August 22nd-24th, 2014

Illinois State Conference

Hosted by Area 19

Celebrating 75 years of
Recovery, Unity,
and Service

2014

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Al-Anon

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Meditation
Childcare

SPEAKERS:

Tim R., Hinsdale, IL (AA)
Debbie D., Concord, CA (AA)
Coleen R., Palatine, IL (AFG)
David B., Chicago, IL (AFG)
And more...

AFG: Al-Anon Family Group

LOCATION:

Crowne Plaza Chicago O'Hare
5440 N. River Rd.
Rosemont, IL 60018
Free Parking
Metra and CTA accessible

Online Registration This Year!

www.ChicagoAA.org/2014ISC



Call the Special Needs Chairperson
no later than August 8th, 2014
if a sign language interpreter or any
other translator is needed.
Laura S. 312-719-3399



QUESTIONS? Contact:
2014ISCinChicago@gmail.com

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Are you willing to volunteer
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Please make checks payable to
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Mailing Address:
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180 N Wabash Ave., Suite 305
Chicago, IL 60601

Please Check where appropriate
 AA Al-Anon
 Alateen Guest

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www.ChicagoAA.org/2014ISC

Registration Only _____ \$20

Registration & Banquet _____ \$60

Deadline 8/8/14

Vegetarian -----

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