

YOU MAKE A START

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

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

LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME

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

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

GO TO MEETINGS

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

Use a copy of the Alcoholics Anonymous Meeting Schedule, District 8. It is available at most meetings, and the South Sound Service Center, at our website <http://aadistrict8.org/> . It list

meetings in the area. Then take in as many meetings as you can. You don't have to speak at a meeting, but if you will introduce yourself as a newcomer, people will get to know you sooner. As one A.A. member says, "The Big Book is your road map, the meetings are your filling stations."

GET A SPONSOR

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

Sponsorship assures a new member that there is at least one person who cares—one person to turn to without embarrassment when doubts, questions or problems linked to alcoholism arise. A sponsor is simply a sober alcoholic who helps the newcomer solve one problem: how to stay sober.

A.A. experience does suggest that it is best for men to sponsor men, women to sponsor women. This custom usually promotes quick understanding and reduces the likelihood of emotional distractions that might take the newcomer's mind off the purpose of A.A.

Your sponsor will listen to you and give you suggestions; tell you what has worked for them; point out trouble spots; and will help you to decide what to do about them. Your sponsor will help you to understand the A.A. program and will guide you along the path to recovery. A sponsor was once a newcomer too, and has tried to use the A.A. program to deal with problems similar to those the newcomer is facing now.

HAVE A HOME GROUP

The home group you choose should be one which you feel that you are a part of. It should be a place where you can get sober, stay sober, a place where you are challenged to keep growing and where you feel you have so many friends you can't

afford to stay away.

When some of us were introduced to A.A. through a particular group we thought we had been assigned to that group and should not go to other meetings. Nothing could be further from the truth. There are many different type of groups and meetings available. Feel free to visit the various groups in your area, and attend as many meetings as you need to.

READ THE BOOKS

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

Alcoholics Anonymous-Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions- Experience, Strength and Hope-Living Sober-Came to Believe-Daily Reflections-As Bill Sees It- A.A. Comes of Age-Pass It On- Dr. Bob And The Good Oldtimers.

These books are A.A. General Service Conference Approved literature. We encourage you to read them...and re-read them. They can be a source of inspiration and understanding. They are the basic source of our program of recovery. They are available at the South Sound Service Center in Tumwater, WA.

INCLUDE THE FAMILY

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

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

OPEN MEETINGS: Take your spouse, significant other, and other members of your family or interested friends to hear the stories of A.A. speakers. Open meetings are listed in the meeting directory.

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

CONFERENCES: Weekend conferences and roundups are held at hotels and conference centers around the state, throughout the year. There are activities and speakers for A.A. and Al-Anon members. You can find out about these conferences in the A.A. Grapevine, and through the Central Office.

AL-ANON FAMILY GROUPS

Al-Anon Family Groups® for members of the alcoholics family hold meetings just as A.A. groups do. They use A.A.'s Twelve Steps to help them understand the alcoholic and to help them improve their own lives.

Al-Anon membership is available to the spouse of the alcoholic and other concerned family members or friends. Although Alcoholics Anonymous does cooperate with Al-Anon they are separate and not affiliated.

ASK YOUR OR SOUTH SOUND SERVICE CENTER

When you need help, and can't reach your sponsor, you can call your Central Office. They will try to help, or will try to find help for you. The phone number is (360) 352-7344, covered by volunteers 24hrs a day.

The South Sound Service Center is your source for meeting directories, A.A. books, pamphlets Grapevine literature and tapes. Some A.A. Literature is available in Spanish and other foreign languages. We have a small lending library with some titles available in braille

The most current, up to date meeting information is always on our website <http://aadistrict8.org/> The latest news and FAQ is there as well.

WHEN YOU TRAVEL OR MOVE

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

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

Check the Internet, search A.A., Alcoholics Anonymous, for the city or town you are interested in. You will often find the current meeting schedules on line.

BE A PART OF...

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

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

MAKING A START IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

A GUIDE FOR THE BEGINNER

SOUTH SOUND SERVICE CENTER

344 Cleveland Ave. SE Suite K

Tumwater, WA 98501-3342

Phone: (360) 352-7344

Website: www.aadistrict8.org