

Welcome to the District 6 Alcoholics Anonymous meeting. We represent the _____ group. My name is _____ and I am an alcoholic.

Please join me in a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer:

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.

This is the preamble of Alcoholics Anonymous:

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting with our own contributions. A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization, or institution, does not wish to engage in any controversy, neither endorses nor opposes any causes. Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics achieve sobriety.

This is an open meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. Open meetings are for anyone. Closed meetings are for people who have a desire to stop drinking. We are glad you are here, especially the newcomers. In keeping with our singleness of purpose and the 3rd Tradition - "The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking," - we ask all who participate to confine their discussion to their problems with alcohol.

Ask a friend to read "How It Works."

Read "Bridging the Gap."

Read "Why We are Here." (Optional)

Set the format for the meeting. Options: Speaker meeting, Big Book or other literature meeting, or set a topic for discussion, etc.

Read "The Promises."

Close with the Lord's Prayer.

HOW IT WORKS

(Pages 58-60, *Alcoholics Anonymous*)

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it — then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with alcohol — cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power — that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Many of us exclaimed, “What an order! I can’t go through with it.” Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.
- (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.
- (c) That God could and would if He were sought.

A.A. BRIDGING THE GAP

Getting back into the real world isn't always easy for an alcoholic. Many of us had never been sober on the outside of a treatment center, and we admitted that the first days out were a little frightening. Sometimes, we didn't know if we would stay sober. Even new members of A.A. usually know that they can't make it alone. The dilemma for some of us was that we weren't sure we could make it in A.A., either. We said things to ourselves like "Where will I find a meeting I can be comfortable in?" Or, "Who will I be able to trust?" Lots of alcoholics thought like this. We did.

Many of us who made the transition to sober and happy lives in our communities still remember the first days on our own. It was hard to know what to do. Now we see that we can help the new people getting out. The primary purpose of A.A. Bridging the Gap is to introduce newly released residents of treatment centers or hospitals to A.A. on the outside. You can get in touch with us by calling us at (772) 49SOBER and please, don't wait until your last week there.

A.A. Bridging the Gap is an organization of alcoholics helping other alcoholics. We are part of Alcoholics Anonymous. We are not connected with any other group or institution. The only thing we want from this work is the satisfaction of helping another alcoholic.

Being alcoholics ourselves, we know that the people you will meet in your first days out could make a difference. We hope that we will hear from you.

WHY WE ARE HERE

We who have come to this facility to share our experience, strength and hope with you today are members of Alcoholic Anonymous. In our capacity as A.A. members, we have no affiliation with this facility or any other institution. We are simply sober alcoholics who wish to help you achieve and maintain sobriety in A.A.. Because the single most important aspect of A.A. recovery is *one alcoholic relating to another alcoholic*, the focus of this meeting will stay on the disease of alcoholism.

Many of us, in the beginning, felt we were not truly alcoholics because we used other substances or had mental problems. However, those of us who remained in A.A. did so because we discovered that regardless of our other problems, when examining our past we found that *we could not drink safely*. We encourage you to listen to our experiences, to try to connect the trouble in your life with the symptoms of alcoholism, and then decide for yourself whether you are an alcoholic. If you decide that you are, we look forward to having you join us on our road to a happy and enthusiastic life of sobriety.

THE PROMISES

(Pages 83-84, *Alcoholics Anonymous*)

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly.

They will always materialize if we work for them.