

GETTING STARTED IN A.A.

You Make A Start

Do you want to keep on drinking? Or have you decided that alcohol is taking the best from you and that your life has become miserable? If your answer is “yes”, then you are ready for A.A., and we will be glad to help you.

We have a way of staying stopped that has worked for countless thousands. It can work for you. Our way of staying stopped may not be what you expect, but it works. Here are the things you need to know to get started.

DON'T TAKE THE FIRST DRINK

Which drink usually puts you far beyond where you want to go? The third? The eleventh? The seventeenth? If only we knew how to stop just before that one! The first drink starts a process which we call the “cycle of craving” that we are unable to stop in time. We are usually sure that “just one more” will be enough. Then, one more. Then one more. If you don't take the first drink, you can't possibly get drunk because the “cycle of craving” won't get started. The first drink is the most deadly because it leads to all the others. So you need not avoid the ninth or thirteenth drinks, only the first.

LIVE ONE DAY AT A TIME

How we handle the next office party, or Jane's wedding next month is really unimportant right now. By then we may have already drunk ourselves to death or into in institution.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a “one day at a time” way of living. We try to break life into small manageable pieces. We avoid the first drink, one day at a time. We try to give most of our worries to someone wiser than ourselves, to a Higher Power, in whatever form we view that which is a power greater than ourselves.

We ask for help from other AA members, our sponsors, and the Higher Power of our choice. We learn to take suggestions and ask for their help.

GO TO MEETINGS

There are many A.A. meetings at most times of the day. Get a directory of meetings in your area. They are available at most meetings, on our website at www.aadelta.org, and from our phone answering services listed below. Take in as many different meetings as you possibly can. If you happen to dislike a particular meeting, find one you do like, and go to it regularly. Shop around for the meetings that you like the best.

READ THE BOOKS

The only authority in the A.A. program is the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*, also called “The Big Book”. The first 164 pages describe the disease of alcoholism and our way of cleaning up our lives and living sober. The second half gives many personal stories. Some of us didn't like the style of writing, but we read the book anyway. Some of us were so fuzzy minded that we couldn't retain what we read, but we continued to read the book anyway.

The *Twelve Steps And Twelve Traditions* is the companion to the Big Book. It outlines the Steps and Traditions of the program in detail, and explains why they are essential to our individual sobriety and our fellowship's unity. There are many other A.A. approved books that are also helpful, but these two are the essential primers.

GET A SPONSOR

There are some who got sober without a sponsor, and most of them later admitted that life would have gotten better faster if they had had a sponsor. Our experience tells us that we have a much better chance with a sponsor than without .

Ask a few people how they got their sponsors or read the pamphlet “Questions and Answers on Sponsorship”. Most A.A. members will be pleased to be asked.

Your sponsor will listen to you and give you suggestions, tell you what works for them, point out trouble spots, and make suggestions as to what to do about them. In other words, your sponsor helps you to understand the A.A. program and guides you along the path to recovery. You can usually count on sponsors to do their part and encourage you to do yours.

CHOOSE A HOME GROUP

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 farther from the truth. Feel free to visit various groups, but attend regular meetings at the group you choose to consider your “Home Group”.

Having a home group should not keep you from going to other meetings. It's useful to attend as many meetings as you feel you need, and then some. There are many types of groups available, and they differ in content and style. There are groups that focus on discussion, or on literature. There are groups for men, for women, and for all members.

The home group you choose is the one in which you feel the most “at home”. It's the group where you can challenge yourself to grow, where you can build and maintain sober, long-lasting friendships.

KEEP IT SIMPLE

