



Newsletter

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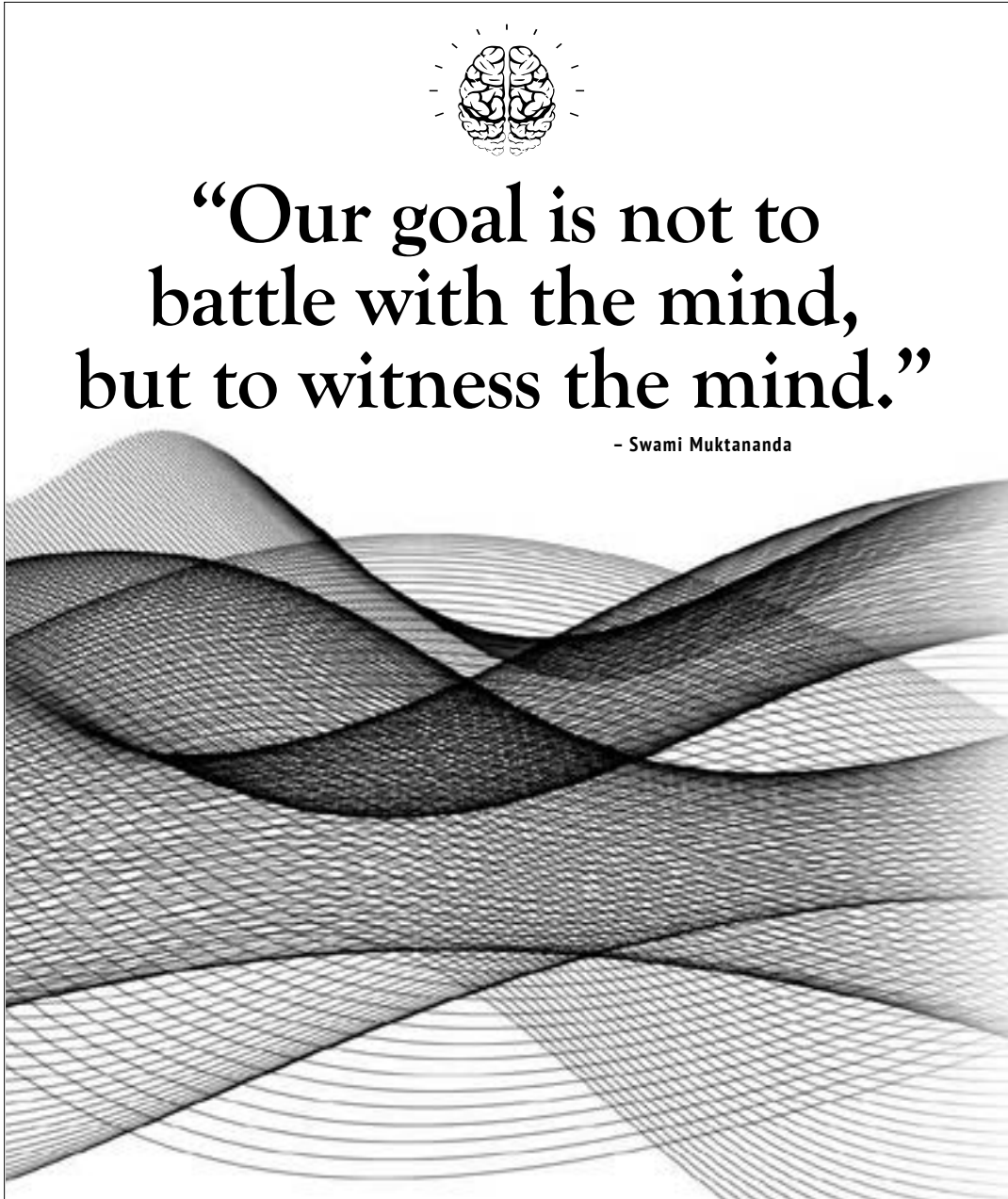
S A N D H I L L S I N T E R G R O U P

The **MEDITATION** Issue



“Our goal is not to
battle with the mind,
but to witness the mind.”

- Swami Muktananda



MEDITATION 101 | THE FOUR AGREEMENTS | LITTLE KNOWN FACTS
OUR OWN CAMERON | HERE ARE THE STEPS WE TOOK
MEETING SPOTLIGHT: THE VASS GROUP

Meditation 101: Techniques, Benefits, and a Beginner's How-to

Meditation is an approach to training the mind, similar to the way that fitness is an approach to training the body. But many meditation techniques exist — so how do you learn how to meditate?

"In Buddhist tradition, the word 'meditation' is equivalent to a word like 'sports' in the U.S. It's a family of activities, not a single thing," University of Wisconsin neuroscience lab director Richard J. Davidson, Ph.D., told *The New York Times*. And different meditation practices require different mental skills.

It's extremely difficult for a beginner to sit for hours and think of nothing or have an "empty mind." In general, the easiest way to begin meditating is by focusing on the breath — an example of one of the most common approaches to meditation: concentration.

Concentration meditation: Concentration meditation involves focusing on a single point. This could entail following the breath, repeating a single word or mantra, staring at a candle flame, listening to a repetitive gong, or counting beads on a mala. Since focusing the mind is challenging, a beginner might meditate for only a few minutes and then work up to longer durations.

In this form of meditation, you simply refocus your awareness on the chosen object of attention each time you notice your mind wandering. Rather than pursuing random thoughts, you simply let them go. Through this process, your ability to concentrate improves.

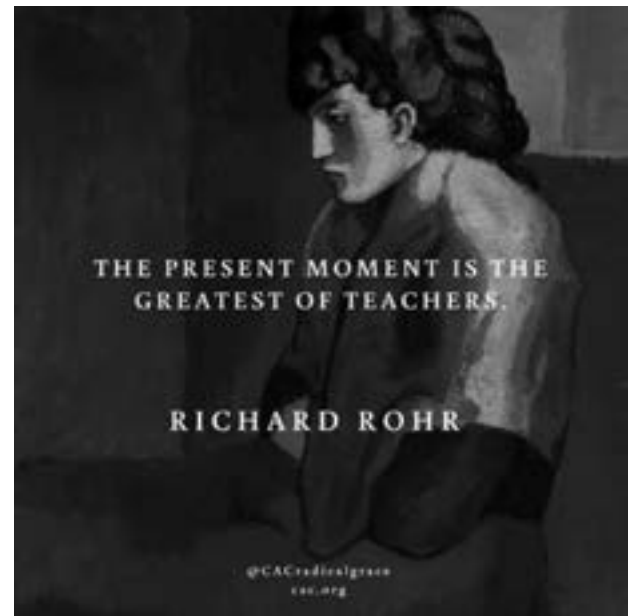
Mindfulness meditation: Mindfulness meditation encourages the practitioner to observe wandering thoughts as they drift through the mind. The intention is not to get involved with the thoughts or to judge them, but simply to be aware of each mental note as it arises.

Through mindfulness meditation, you can see how your thoughts and feelings tend to move in particular patterns. Over time, you can become more aware of the human tendency to quickly judge an experience as good or bad, pleasant or unpleasant. With practice, an inner balance develops.

In some schools of meditation, students practice a combination of concentration and mindfulness. Many disciplines call for stillness — to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the teacher.

Other meditation techniques: There are various other meditation techniques. For example, a daily meditation practice among Buddhist monks focuses directly on the cultivation of compassion. This involves envisioning negative events and recasting them in a positive light by transforming them through compassion. There are also moving meditation techniques, such as tai chi, qigong, and walking meditation.

Benefits of meditation: If relaxation is not the goal of meditation, it is often a result. In the 1970s, Herbert Benson, MD, a researcher at Harvard University Medical School, coined the term "relaxation response" after conducting research on people who practiced transcendental meditation. The relaxation response, in Benson's words, is "an opposite, involuntary response that causes a reduction in



the activity of the sympathetic nervous system." Since then, studies on the relaxation response have documented the following short-term benefits to the nervous system:

- Lower blood pressure
- Improved blood circulation
- Lower heart rate
- Less perspiration
- Slower respiratory rate
- Less anxiety
- Lower blood cortisol levels
- More feelings of well-being
- Less stress
- Deeper relaxation

The Four Agreements:

1. Be impeccable with your word.
2. Don't take anything personally.
3. Don't make assumptions.
4. Always do your best.

Much of suffering is self-created and that most of the time, individuals have the ability to transform themselves and the negative thoughts they may have about situations occurring within their life. By making a personal pact with these four agreements, an individual is able to dramatically impact the amount of happiness they feel in their lives, regardless of external circumstances.

Contemporary researchers are now exploring whether a consistent meditation practice yields long-term benefits, and noting positive effects on brain and immune function among meditators. Yet it's worth repeating that the purpose of meditation is not to achieve benefits. To put it as an Eastern philosopher may say, the goal of meditation is no goal. It's simply to be present.

In Buddhist philosophy, the ultimate benefit of meditation is liberation of the mind from attachment to things it cannot control, such as external circumstances or strong internal emotions. The liberated or "enlightened" practitioner no longer needlessly follows desires or clings to experiences, but instead maintains a calm mind and sense of inner harmony.

How to meditate: Simple meditation for beginners: This meditation exercise is an excellent introduction to meditation techniques. Sit or lie comfortably. Make no effort to control the breath; simply breathe naturally. Focus your attention on the breath and on how the body moves with each inhalation and exhalation. Notice the movement of your body as you breathe. Observe your chest, shoulders, rib cage, and belly. Simply focus your attention on your breath without controlling its pace or intensity. If your mind wanders, return your focus back to your breath. Maintain this meditation practice for two to three minutes to start, and then try it for longer periods.

<https://www.gaiam.com/blogs/discover/meditation-101-techniques-benefits-and-a-beginner-s-how-to>

The most beautiful people we know are the those who have know defeat, know suffering, know struggle, know loss and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness and a deep loving concern. *Beautiful people do not just happen.* - E. K. R



Little Known Facts of Alcoholics Anonymous

The following article tells the story of Ian McE - the first person to achieve sobriety through the AA program in New Zealand. It was written in May of 2003 by Bill H., longtime AA member, now deceased.

Prior to 1945 some alcoholics in New Zealand were committed for years to Rotoroa Island, where the only treatment for alcoholism was abstinence. Ian McE was one of these. He spent a year on the island and within two months of returning to civilization he was back drinking again.

(There are many people of Scottish ancestry in New Zealand and the names of Ian, Ewen and Alistair are quite common. You will notice, too, that the usage of Mc or Mac and initial

is common to anonymity in New Zealand, whereas in the US he would probably be called simply Ian M.)

After making the rounds of his favorite pubs one day in Newlson, Ian McE walked out of a pub and up to a local psychiatric hospital. He wanted admission but the superintendent of the hospital was not too keen on the idea and telephoned Ian's wife asking her, "What should I do?" She replied, "If you can get him, grab him."

One day while he was in the reading room of the hospital he picked up a copy of **Readers Digest** and read an article called "*Maybe You Can Do It Too*" by Edward McGoldrick. He was an alcoholic who had recovered with the help of an organization called Alcoholics Anonymous.

In his own words Ian said, "I was able to identify with Mr. McGoldrick from this article as I had never identified before. Of course I had been told that I was just a drunk for years and years and the idea of the disease concept of alcoholism was unknown in New Zealand at the time. I was able to see that I was exactly like him. I drank like he did, I thought like he did and he had recovered and he recommended that anybody in this situation who was wanting help to get in touch with Alcoholics Anonymous. So this I did."

Ian wrote directly to the address of AA in New York which was given in the article. His letter was sent from Richmond, Nelson (my home group when I am in New Zealand) 3, January, 1946. In this letter Ian took the first step of his own recovery and Alcoholics Anonymous in New Zealand was born. Bobbie B, secretary of the GSO of AA in New York replied to his letter on 1, March, 1946 and there began a remarkable 10 year correspondence which helped to keep Ian sober while AA in New Zealand grew slowly around him.

Much of Ian's contact with other alcoholics who were seeking recovery was through correspondence. New Zealand has vast areas of wilderness and in those days many towns in the South Island were connected by unpaved roads and winding thru mountain passes. A trip to the North Island was a ferry ride of several hours. Ian's sponsor was over 10,000 miles away and long distance telephone calls were prohibitively expensive.

By April, 1947, Ian had made contact with two possible members. They were both to slip badly later and it was not until February, 1948 that there were five members, all "on solid ground" and plans were being made to form the first group in New Zealand.

Our own Cameron, NC is the final resting place for one of AA's original 40!

In 1938, Clarence Snyder sought out Dr. Bob in Akron, Ohio. After a rocky start, he was able to get, and stay sober for 46 years. He originated "Cleveland's Group." His story "Home Brewmeister" is in the 1st, 2nd and 3rd editions of the Big Book. Clarence married Grace Snipes Moore of Cameron, NC in 1971. They resided in Florida until his death in 1983. His body was shipped to Cameron and, according to Lewis F. of the Vass Group, a memorial service was held at the Cameron Presbyterian Church and he was buried there in the Snipes family plot.

His gravestone is easy to find and proudly states, "HE LED THE WAY IN AA." Clarence was a very colorful, often controversial, member of AA. For a fascinating read, go to <https://www.aacle.org/clarence-snyder-home-brewmeister/>. Mitchel K, who spent many years with the Snyder's, has written a very informative biography of Clarence. He states that Nell Wing, Bill W's secretary, commented that Clarence was "probably the one man responsible for sponsorship as we know it today." Thanks, Clarence!

"Here are the steps we took" by Clarence Snyder

It was Dr. Bob Smith who sponsored Clarence Snyder into this simple program. Clarence repeated this approach with other alcoholics in Cleveland where he achieved a 75-93 percent recovery rate. Here is the approach the A.A. pioneers used to carry the message to the person who suffers from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.

"Here are the steps we took as a program of recovery."

Before beginning the steps the sponsor must first qualify the person who has requested to follow the path. Find out if they really are alcoholic and, just as important, if YOU feel that they willing and ready to go to any lengths to change their lives and not drink forever. (Page 142, Big Book: "Will he take every necessary step, submit to anything to get well, to stop drinking forever?")

Ask your prospect 3 qualifying questions:

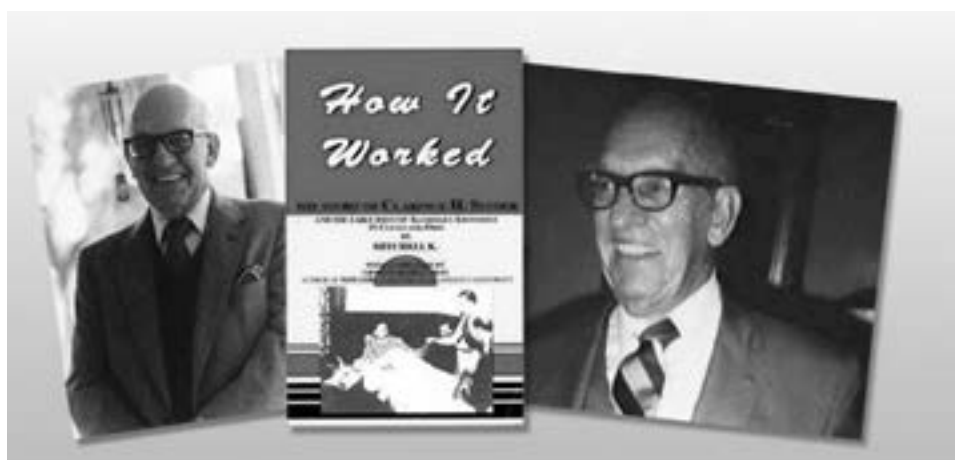
- Do you think you have a drinking (using or obsessive-compulsive acting-out) problem?
- Do you want to do anything about the problem?
- What are you willing to do about it?

If you get the answers: (1) yes, (2) yes, and (3) anything, and you feel that the person is ready to follow directions without question, you both are ready to continue all the way.

If you feel that they are not ready, tell them so and go on to the next person. (Page 96, Big Book: "To spend too much time on any one situation is to deny some other alcoholic an opportunity to live and be happy.") The program and your own recovery are not dependent upon winning friends and influencing people.

If you feel that they are ready, then you start. There are five phases to the Steps:

STEP 1: ADMISSION



STEPS 2 and 3: SUBMISSION

STEPS 4, 5, 6, and 7: CONFESSION

STEPS 8 and 9: RESTITUTION

STEPS 10, 11 and 12: THE LIVING STEPS, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

Now it is your responsibility to give this message to others as you have received it. Not changed, watered down, or how others may want it in their lives. If they want what you have, they must do what you did. It is now your legacy to hand down, AS IT WAS GIVEN TO YOU — NO OTHER WAY! It is recommended that two people work with the newcomer through the steps whenever possible, so that both may learn as well as give.

12 New Chapters 365 New Chances

1. Do one thing at a time
2. Do it slowly and deliberately
 3. Do it completely
 4. Do less
5. Put space between things
6. Develop rituals
7. Designate time for certain things
8. Devote time to sitting
9. Smile and serve others
10. Make cleaning and cooking meditation
11. Think about what is necessary
12. Live simply



most people
barely know
themselves.

so what does
it matter
what they think
of you?

JmStorm

“The Comfort Zone”



Life gives you plenty of time to do what ever you want to do if you stay in the present moment.

MEETING SPOTLIGHT

The Vass Group

The Vass Group was founded in 1983 when a local minister invited three AA members who lived in Vass to start a meeting in his church, the First Baptist Church of Vass. The three had been attending the Central Carolina Group in Sanford and called on them to help form the Vass Group. Now, 36 years later, many of their members still attend our meetings each Wednesday evening at 8 pm. Our members sign up to chair meetings on a weekly basis and are responsible for choosing the discussion leader for that night. Our format is a closed discussion based on the topic brought up by these guest speakers. This is a popular part of our meetings since it is always a surprise who that person will be and often brings in members of other groups who share their AA journeys and then present the topic of their choosing. Like all AA groups Vass has an attendance of members ranging from the first day of sobriety to many years. Our doors are open to all and we would love to have you come visit and perhaps even join our happy family. If you're looking for a fairly small group where you can feel comfortable sharing your views then Vass may be just the answer for you.



Send us your meeting history, news and announcements and we'll feature it in an up-coming newsletter.

Please send to:

SandhillsNews@gmail.com



Sandhills Intergroup

The Sandhills Intergroup is a central office established to aid groups and meetings in Moore County carry the AA message to alcoholics who still suffer.

We provide:

Answering service **(910) 420-0575** - General AA questions and meeting information are provided. In case of an emergency please dial 911.

Website - **www.MooreCountyAA.org**

Newsletter

Visit our website and subscribe for FREE!

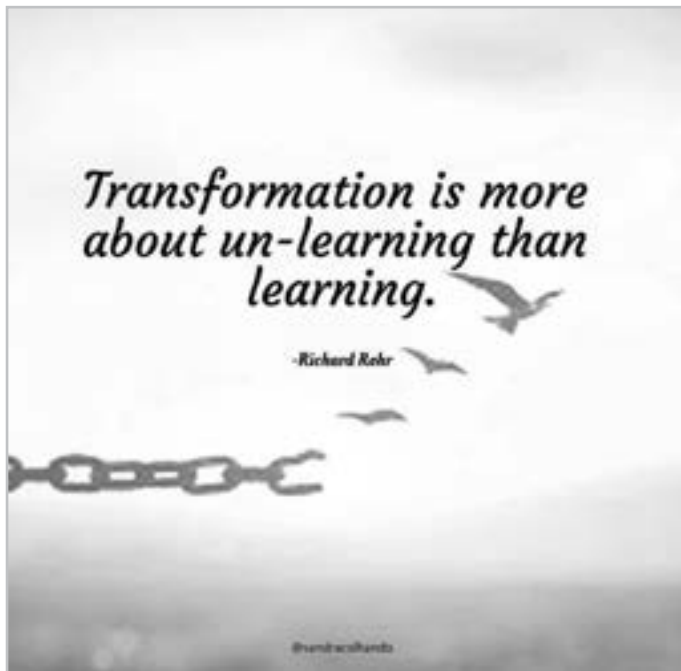
Recorded Speakers

Visit our website and hear inspiring stories from AA members!

We are funded solely by the AA groups in our county and we **NEED, ASK** and **THANK YOU** for your contributions and input.

Visit our website for the current **MEETING SCHEDULE**
www.MooreCountyAA.org

Have a question? Answers are a phone call away (910) 420-0575



JOIN SANDHILLS INTERGROUP

Opportunities for Everyone!
Meet people and learn new skills:

- ◆ Web Design & Email
- ◆ Telephone Support
- ◆ Public Outreach
- ◆ Recorded Speakers

We meet at 9am the first Saturday of each month at 504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen.

All AA'ers Welcome!

EMAIL

moorecountyyaa@gmail.com

Events

2020 AA International Convention @ COBO Center

July 2 - 5, 2020

1 Washington Blvd | Detroit, MI 48226

To register visit:

<https://www.xpressreg.net/register/ICAA0720/landing.asp>

Spring Into Action Conference

February 1, 2020 - 10am - 6pm

New Hope Baptist Church

3007 Beechtree Drive, Sanford, NC 27330

AA District 52

AA District 52 comprises **Moore, Hoke, Richmond, Lee and Scotland Counties**. Visit their website: www.aanc52.org

District 52 business meeting schedule:

February 2, 2020 - 2-4 pm 504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen

April 5, 2020 - 2-4 pm 504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen

June 7, 2020 - 2-4 pm 504 Wilder Ave, Aberdeen

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