



# 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 TRANSFORMATION Issue

**“Those who have imagination  
without learning have  
wings but no feet.”**

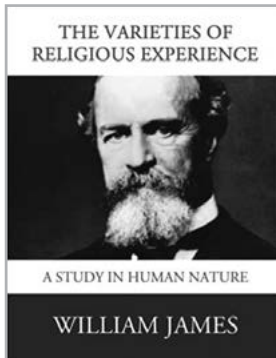
—Joseph Joubert



WHO IS WILLIAM JAMES AND WHY DOES HE MATTER TO ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS?  
12 PROMISES OF AA | WHAT TO SAY INSTEAD | THANK YOU FROM A NEWCOMER  
HAPPY NEW YEAR! | WHAT AA MEANS TO ME  
INSPIRATION FROM THE ROOMS | MY LIFE AND RECOVERY | MY STORY

# Who is William James and Why Does He Matter to Alcoholics Anonymous?

William James (1842–1910) was considered the founder of American psychology, establishing the first psychology department at Harvard University. His book, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, was given to



Bill Wilson by Ebby T (a friend and member of the Oxford movement) while Bill was hospitalized at Towns Hospital. The day after his spiritual experiences while detoxing, Bill started reading. "By nightfall", he wrote later, **"This Harvard professor, long in his grave, had, without anyone knowing it, become a founder of Alcoholics Anonymous."** (*My First Forty Years*, Bill W., p.

151). Dr. Bob, in Akron was also a big fan of the book.

The second Appendix, quoting William James was added to the 2nd edition of the Big Book. Below is a relevant excerpt:

"In the first few chapters a number of sudden revolutionary changes are described. Though it was not our intention to create such an impression, many alcoholics have nevertheless concluded that in order to recover they must acquire an immediate and overwhelming "God-consciousness" followed at once by a vast change in feeling and outlook.

Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule. Most of our experiences are what the psychologist William James calls the **"educational variety"** because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before he is himself. He finally realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone. What often takes place in a few months could hardly be accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have **tapped an unsuspected inner resource** which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves."

James was described as **"The Pragmatic Philosopher"**, his belief was that a belief or idea has value only if it works, that it changes our world or our belief. Anything that does not do so should be cast

aside. Persons such as myself, who have no theistic beliefs (secularists, humanists, agnostics, atheists and freethinkers) can find a spiritual truth that works us for using the principles found in the appendix and the ideas of William James, and despite the religious overtones we encounter, remain sober, loyal, dedicated and productive AA members using those principles.

- Wayne M.

## 12 Promises of AA

**Promise One:** We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

**Promise Two:** We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

**Promise Three:** We will comprehend the word serenity.

**Promise Four:** We will know peace.

**Promise Five:** No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

**Promise Six:** That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

**Promise Seven:** We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

**Promise Eight:** Self-seeking will slip away.

**Promise Nine:** Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

**Promise Ten:** Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us.

**Promise Eleven:** We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

**Promise Twelve:** We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

# What To Say Instead

1. *Instead of:* "I have to do that."  
*Say: "I get to do that."*
2. *Instead of:* "I can't do that."  
*Say: "I can try that."*
3. *Instead of:* "I should do that."  
*Say: "I will do that." OR "I won't do that."*
4. *Instead of:* "Why is this happening to me?"  
*Say: "What am I learning from this?"*
5. *Instead of:* "I never should have..."  
*Say: "Because I did that, I now know X."*
6. *Instead of:* "I failed."  
*Say: "This attempt didn't work."*
7. *Instead of:* "If only I had done X."  
*Say: Nothing!!*
8. *Instead of:* "This is too complicated."  
*Say: "I don't understand this right now."*
9. *Instead of:* "It's not fair."  
*Say: "I can deal with it anyway!"*
10. *Instead of:* "It's never going to change."  
*Say: "I can change the way I approach this."*
11. *Instead of:* "Never" or "Always"  
**Avoid all absolutes!**

## Thank You from a Newcomer

I don't have much more than a month of sobriety but during this month, I have grown tremendously! I attribute this growth to my higher power, whom I choose to call God, a great Sponsor, step work, and practicing these principles in all my affairs. Each morning when I wake, I ask God to help me to do His will and not my will, remove me out of the way, and use me to help others! A month ago I was a totally different person. I was spiritually dead, hopeless, and had hit my bottom.

I really want to thank the wonderful people at the Wilder Building who have welcomed me into the fellowship and who have loved me when I did not love myself. This program is such a wonderful program! It is truly a gift and those of us who have made it into the rooms of AA are truly the Chosen Ones. We get another chance at life and in order to keep what we have, we must give it away.

- McKenzie J.  
Sober Date: 10/19/22

Don't go  
through  
life.  
Grow  
through  
life.

- Eric Butterworth

# Happy New Year!

Being an Alcoholic was the best thing that ever happened to me. I realized I had a problem with drugs but was in total denial of my alcoholism. It took me a couple of months in the rooms to finally surrender to the fact that I not only had a little drug problem, but that alcohol was a major issue as well. I didn't want to accept that I was an Alcoholic because if I said I was one of you, that meant I could never drink again and just how on earth was I going to have any fun if I didn't drink? My life revolved around people who drank, bars, and events with booze. My whole life since 13 now at 41, I knew nothing else. Who didn't drink at events, where do you go to besides bars? How would I ever meet anyone fun if they didn't drink?

God and AA gave me that answer. I admitted on December 22nd, 1998, saying those words I'm an Alcoholic. Then 8 days sober I was at an NA New Year's Eve dance - yep trying to dance sober feeling totally uncomfortable. They did the Sober Countdown, and I was the newest one there. They surrounded me, gave me an NA book, and put a Toga sheet over me and everyone signed it with well wishes. It was so fun, and I still have that sheet 24 years later.

From there I found Conventions, the International one in 2010 in San Antonio, TX 50,000 sober AA people! We were everywhere in that city, the river boats filled with us laughing, hanging with the Polish section in the arena, going to Bill and Bob Play, and hearing the Serenity Prayer recited by all us miracles in one big auditorium. And then there was The International Women's Conference in Honolulu, HI complete with sober Hawaiian ladies dressed in traditional Costume. We made real orchid Leis and even saw warrior dancers twirling flames, that drove the ladies wild after a weekend with just women.

I joined up with a sober travel group and after a cruise to Cozumel was hooked and have since gone on numerous trips all over the world with the AA Tribe. AA is so amazing in different countries, Venice hearing the 200 churches bells go off during the meeting outside in a convent courtyard, Amsterdam meeting in the row houses of the canals. We saw Phantom of the Opera in London, in Brazil saying Lord's Prayer under Christ the Redeemer Statue, Glow Worm caves in New Zealand, Gay Pride parade and Drag show with music from Australia Symphony at the Sydney Opera House. The list goes on and on.... All because I said "Yes" to being an Alcoholic.

It's not all fun and games being sober but being a lady that was afraid I would never have fun again this all sure helped. The fellowship is so important to me and to know that "We are not a Glum Lot" is an understatement. I gladly traded all that misery for so much more. Today I try to give back that laughter and love that has truly filled my spirit in so many ways. To know that all that pain and suffering can stop if I just do what is suggested, surrender, work the steps with a sponsor, be of service, act in love and kindness towards others, and carry the message to others sounds like a lot. But one day at a time it has helped me see why I drank, find out who I am today, let me honestly look at myself, and change. The promises really can come true if we surrender and do the work one day at a time starting with Today.

*Thankfully sober alcoholic,  
Susie D.*

NO  
OR  
W

# What AA Means to Me

- AA offers a clear and solid 12-step program to help me manage my life and relationships better.
- AA offers me a room full of people who understand and accept me as I am.
- AA offers me recovering alcoholics who give me unconditional love and support regardless of how long I've known them.
- AA offers me a warm place and a cup of coffee or tea.
- AA offers me hope for a better day and future.
- AA offers me a Higher Power that I define in whatever way I choose.
- AA people believed in me when I didn't know how.
- AA people truly loved me until I learned to love myself.
- AA is available to me anywhere in the world.
- AA offers me a peace I never thought possible.
- AA offers me ways to forgive myself and others.
- AA is free, anonymous, and non-judgmental.
- AA offers me tremendous strength, hope, and experience at every meeting.

Before coming into AA, I didn't want to live, yet I was too afraid to die. I felt alone and lost. I am one of the lucky ones. Way too many people have died from alcoholism, including several in my immediate family. I've heard it said that some of us die so others can live. The only AA requirement is a desire to stop drinking. The AA program, people, principles, promises, and Higher Power help us to do the rest.

People think of alcoholics as those people who are homeless or on the street. Some of us were. Yet, many of us were somewhat functional alcoholics and could afford to drink, despite the cost to ourselves, our families, and our friends. AA promised me a better life, and I now have a happy, meaningful, and purposeful life. I owe AA so much more than I can ever repay. I am humbled to be a member of AA. I am beyond blessed for the life I now live. I give all the credit to this beautiful, life-enhancing AA program that requires nothing but a desire to stay sober.

*-Kathy K.*

# Inspiration From the Rooms

Every day AAers in Moore County go to the Wilder Building or other meeting places to share their experience, strength and hope about dealing with their disease of Alcoholism. It is through these meetings that AAers find the courage and willingness to continue to heal and to become a person who actively lives the 12 Step program in all they do in Life. They openly share their grief and pain and look for solutions on how to deal with the daily struggles that affect all of us. Read what AAers had to say recently and receive some encouragement for the New Year ahead.

"I realize that being a Martyr or a Victim only pushes people and family away from me. I will end up alone if I continue this destructive behavior. This program has become a lifeline for me as I learn to deal with life on life's terms, without drinking."

"Why do I keep going to meetings? I have a disease that makes me want to forget that I am an alcoholic. When I come here I feel I am with my family, my tribe. You guys "get" me and support me and give me hugs when I need them."

"I was in so much pain that I had to make a choice. Either die or be my own best friend."

"Living the AA 12 Steps has truly made me happy, joyous, and FREE. I was very skeptical at first, but my Sponsor told me to just keep coming back, so I did. And for me, the Promises really have come true."

"All I had to do was listen to the others in the room. I felt sicker than them, but I stayed. Addiction had taken over my brain. Slowly I came to believe that trusting in the 12 Steps meant strength, not weakness."

"My program is a mosaic of other people's journeys. You take what you need, and leave the rest. I come here every week to get my medicine."

"Prior to coming here I was just barely existing and obsessed with alcohol. Where is it? Where will I get it? How will I live without my friend, alcohol? But after months of coming here, I'm starting to feel like I'm living, really living. This room is filled with unconditional love and respect for ME."

*- Anonymous*

Energy  
 Higher power  
 Good orderly direction  
 Spiritual guide  
 Divine presense  
 The Creator  
 Spirituality  
 Power greater than ourselves  
 Social connection  
 Group consciousness  
 Collective consciousness  
 Science  
 Awake  
 The cosmos  
 Nature  
 Present moment  
 The pause  
 Meaning  
 Purpose  
 The mystery  
 Love  
 Grace  
 Forgiveness  
 Serenity

Peace  
 God of your understanding  
 Devotion  
 Faith  
 Passion  
 Dedication  
 Prayer  
 Belief  
 Spiritual reading  
 Journaling  
 Doing the next right thing  
 The fellowship  
 True-self  
 Ego-work  
 Self-esteem  
 Positivity  
 -----  
 She  
 They  
 The Universe  
 It  
 Ze  
 Xe  
 Per



## My Life and Recovery

My name is Joe and I'm a recovering alcoholic. I had my last drink of alcohol on Friday, October 27, 2006. I had a spiritual experience that I hope never to forget about because if I do I will be doomed to repeat the past and I could very well die from this disease called alcoholism. I believe I was born an alcoholic from day one. Alcoholism runs on both side of my family. I believe this all started after I saw my uncle get shot in front of me by my grandfather. My grandfather was intoxicated at the time he shot my uncle. After this happened I vowed never to be like that but that never came true. I began to drink socially by 21 years old and after my grandmother passed away I drank a bit more. Then my uncle who was shot by my grandfather passed away and he was like a father figure to me and I lost my ability to control my drinking or to cope with the death of a loved one. I also was suffering from depression and the only thing that could relieve that was to drink.

My drinking career ended when I drank my self to death one night. I could not stop drinking to save my life and it nearly killed me. I was unconscious for 8 hours or more. I was rushed to the hospital and was flatlining. The emergency staff broke two ammonia capsules and I was still unresponsive. Then someone did a sternum rub and I was barely resonsive to that. In the middle of all this somewhere I died and went immediately to Heaven before the judgment seat of God and I was sent straight to hell. It was the most horrific experience I ever had and I will never forget those screams and the enormous heat that I felt while falling in an everlasting hell. I then came to in the emergency room in the ICU section hooked up to everyhting you could imagine. I vowed to never take another drink as long as I lived and that I would do whatever God would have me to do. Today I have over five years sobriety. I am thankful for every drop of alcohol that it took in order for me to see that I have a serious disease and that it wants to kill me. So then if I take this disease serious then I will take the solution serious and will do whatever it takes to stay sober. All that an alcoholic needs to do is be willing to do the 12 steps and learn to trust God, clean house, help others and trust the process. This is my story, my name is Joe and I am an alcoholic.

*- Joseph R.*

# My Story

I was drinking every day, earlier and earlier in the day until I fell asleep or passed out depending on the day. I found myself thinking it would be better not to be here than live like this. I was isolated, not really talking to people about the hell I was going through, just going to work coming home and drowning my sorrows, so it was all less overwhelming. Then I had the thought that instead of just going on and hopefully dying soon, that I could try to get more help first. I was in therapy (and still am to this day), but I needed something else. To quit drinking was not on my list of what I needed at that time. I thought that once my life got better I wouldn't need to drink so much.

**“I am not religious, but I learned AA is not religious although people in meetings can sound that way, sometimes a lot. That is because they are religious and their religion helps them stay sober, not because AA is trying to get me to believe in a God or any God.”**

**I was an atheist and the only thing I hadn't really looked into was if there was a point to living beyond what I had experienced so far. I mean why bother with all this overwhelming stuff of life at all? I looked into it and found that spiritual principles were real to me and were a way I could heal.** Then I admitted to my therapist I was drinking every day and my road to sobriety began. I was able to see that I hadn't tried sobriety yet, as a way to feel better and like life was worth living.

I bit the bullet and went to a meeting. I saw the 12 steps, heard what people shared, and saw the spiritual principles I had been learning about. **I chose not to interpret what I was hearing in a cynical way, because AA was so accessible, meetings all the time, that if I was cynical about what I was hearing or reading, then AA would not be there and my chances of getting and staying sober without daily connection to sober alcoholics would be non-existent.** I could not do this on my own.

I needed to find people I could trust who were not judging me, but wanted to help me, not preach at me. They were in the rooms, I just needed to talk with people and find the one's I could trust. I thought one day I might be able to help someone else.

The key to the first months was just listening to the words, reading sobriety literature, mainly other's stories, and not judging but taking what I needed and leaving the rest. I am not religious, but I learned AA is not religious although people in meetings can sound that way, sometimes a lot. That is because they are religious and their religion helps them stay sober, not because AA is trying to get me to believe in a God or any God. Other people's opinions are not for me if they are not truly helpful to my sobriety (although they may be helpful for someone else's sobriety).

I kept searching for the sober people I could connect with and stayed with the women. I got a sponsor once I found someone who was willing to sponsor and then I really felt like I was getting in the middle of the boat. Just don't drink today. Do whatever you need to stay away from the first drink today. I did a lot of crafting and relaxing and gradually was able to do more and more 'adulting.' **I found I could not force it. I needed to stay in a positive state of mind, not judging myself, knowing that I was loved and cared for and that my life had a healthy path if I would just surrender and stop trying to run the show, ask for help, and stay sober just for today.** I learned to pause and pray, then wait until it was the right time to proceed, to just let it happen instead of forcing things because I should do them (for those things that could wait). I learned to tell my sponsor or others I trusted with some time in sobriety, what was really bothering me so that it would be cut in half. Over time, less and less people, places, and things bother me. **Really working a sobriety program every day has helped me to heal so much. I don't want to go back.**

- KLC

# 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](http://www.MooreCountyAA.org)

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

# WANTED!

## YOUR STORY

*The Sandhills Intergroup Newsletter wants to hear from*

# YOU!

We want to hear your stories,  
inspirational messages and words of wisdom.  
Your experience, strength and hope is needed  
to build a better newsletter for all AA'ers.  
Our next issue will be published May 2023.

**Send submissions to:**  
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All AA'ers Welcome!

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AA District 52 comprises Moore, Hoke, Richmond, Lee and Scotland Counties. Visit their website: [www.aanc52.org](http://www.aanc52.org)

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