

THE MIXER

THE AUSTRALIAN MAGAZINE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

ANDY'S STORY

My name is Andy and I am an alcoholic. Deep down, I have known this from the very start of my journey but what a wrestle it has been to come to accept and begin enjoying this way of life - it is definitely the easier softer way.

I recall my first drunk was an accident of all things, childish ignorance really. I was about 14, at a mate's place. His older sister was having a house party and there was a lot of underage drinking going on. Naturally, when I was dared to take a shot of scotch, I said "yeah sure I could do 3" (thinking I was bulletproof and it wouldn't affect me). Ten minutes later, I felt complete. It felt very easy to be around people, talk with strangers with ease and comfort, all the anxieties and nerves left me and it was like a sunburst of bliss. I didn't drink anymore that night but when I woke in the morning, I was a little foggy about what happened, but like any 14 year old kid, shook it off like it was nothing. Looking back this was my first positive effect of what alcohol could do for me, and to be honest is really the feeling I chased throughout my later teens and into early adulthood.

In growing up in an all-boys school, I remember feeling that the cool kids were the drinking, pot smoking types and the rest were the sporty academic types. Funny how I never felt like I belonged in either group, because I was too sporty to be a cool kid, but too "off-tap" to be in the academic crew.

During school years, particularly in the 12th grade, my focus was the weekend party (happening a lot) and just passing the year. As soon as I turned 18, I was drinking every day, to my parent's concern. Throughout TAFE, uni and then working, the constant in my life was the drinking and it was always the closest relationship I have ever had. I hated going a day without booze in some form and was not fussy about what I drank, so long as it was a sellable alcoholic beverage. Quantity before quality was my motto. I would prefer to black out than run out. Things escalated a lot once I started using drugs also. Drugs were not my primary addiction but still part of my story. I experimented consistently through them, hopping along from pot, to mushrooms, LSD, and eventually amphetamines which offered me the perfect storm in that they opened my capacity for longer drinking sessions. Booze has always been my constant, and as time went on I knew I was an alcoholic. But I was very lost, and I knew I needed help.

TO CONTACT THE ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS HELPLINE
ANYWHERE IN AUSTRALIA PHONE 1300222222.

CONTENTS	
1-3	ANDY'S STORY
2	CONTENTS; STATEMENT OF PURPOSE
3-5	A CONVERSATION WITH A WOMAN MEMBER IN AREA SERVICE
5	STEP ZERO
6	SERVICE RANGERS
6-7	SURRENDER & ACCEPTANCE
7-9	THE EXTERNALS ARE GREAT SO WHY AREN'T I HAPPY?
9-11	THE PACKAGE DEAL
11	STEPS 8 & 9: CHANGE. HEARD AROUND THE TRAPS
12	GENERAL EDITOR'S NOTE. AA PREAMBLE

I remember being drunk at 11am one morning and calling the local hospital counselling service, and a person asked me to attend a free one-on-one session; this is when I started to see that another way could be possible. I was referred to an outpatient detox (I relapsed within 2 days) and then onto a long-term rehab a few months later after much hesitation and "last times". It was such a painful and humiliating time, constantly being found out for lying and deception.

On reflection, I wanted badly to tell my story and just get over it. The most potent thing I remember from rehab was an old detox worker (Trevor from Albany) telling me, "Just look after today mate". I never had a problem with a higher power, which helped me embrace the program, and I just stuck to the "One Day at a Time" mantra from then on - that was October 19, 2001.

I did everything that was asked of me, got a sponsor and worked the Steps and based myself in another fellowship, as I felt that was the place for me at the time; I have since discovered that I belong in AA.

My life had improved immensely working with others and being part of a few different groups over the years, and I saw the benefits of the recovery life. Unfortunately, my emotional sobriety was not intact and I started to put other things before my recovery and

The Mixer Statement of Purpose

The Mixer, for "people who normally would not mix" (Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 17), is a forum for AA members in Australia to share their experience, strength and hope with each other, that they may stay sober and help others to recover from alcoholism.

Stories are collected by a volunteer Editor in each Area, thus ensuring a voice for all AA members around Australia; and these Area Editors form an editorial group conscience for the magazine, together with the General Editor and technical and design team.

We, the editors and other volunteers contributing service to *The Mixer*, try to practice the AA principles in our work, being guided by the 12 Steps, 12 Traditions and 12 Concepts. All contributions present the views of the contributors, and do not represent the AA Fellowship as a whole.

The Mixer can be accessed online at our website:
www.aamixer.com.

You can subscribe or contribute by contacting us by email at:
editor@aamixer.com.

For any members wishing to contribute service as part of *The Mixer* team, you can also contact us at the above email address.

gradually wandered away, thinking I knew best and that I didn't need this program anymore. Unconnected from a higher power and my group/sober friends, I was removed from the reminding fact that I was an alcoholic, and in big trouble. The pain got too much, and without honesty in my life as I once had, I drank at 11 years, and THAT was the most humiliating experience, personally, I can recall in my entire life. That bust lasted 3 years, it was the most scared I have ever been in my entire life, with severe personality changes while drunk and complete transformation of reality. I felt like I was 19 again - lying, being caught out, deception and the old fears, they were traumatising. I was in agony and I was now 38. I made a decision then to completely give myself to the program and accept this way of life for good.

I leaned on my experience from previously and asked for help, and was soon in a regular meeting routine; I felt such relief and felt so much unity in AA that I found a sponsor who was strong and took me through the Big Book. I did my first proper 100% thorough Steps 4 & 5, no more secrets, and this is where I found the most peace. Working one-on-one with another alcoholic and establishing that connection with my higher power, having a tight morning routine, and doing all suggestions 100%.

Cultivating faith, making amends and being a father are my current areas of focus, they naturally lead me to Step 12, then back to Step 1. Such an amazing journey.

Now at 2 years and 7 months sober, I feel so grateful for the beautiful friends and family I have in my recovery, along with a willingness to remain a life member of this fellowship, one day at a time. All the promises mentioned in our literature are slowly coming true for me. Life is grand, if I live these steps every day, share my total truth with my inner circle, and help the next guy coming through the doors. This is a formula for living that far exceeds my expectations every day. I know God definitely has a plan for me and I have so much faith in the process now. That is the real gift for a man like me.

A CONVERSATION WITH A WOMAN MEMBER IN AREA SERVICE

Tell me something about your journey of sobriety, from early attendance at AA meetings to where you are now?

I knew about AA (from watching a film, in childhood). And then, on and off over the years, I might bump into someone involved in AA or met/heard of people of going to AA successfully.

At my first meeting, felt like people were looking at me, from the doors of AA. But I went in, I walked through the door and secretary was at the door and he welcomed me in. Without knowing, my first meeting was a beginners' meeting. About a dozen people were there. That suited me – small group, beginners' information.

When I first came in, the first major thing that happened to me was connecting with other people and realising I wasn't alone. That was like a big weight was lifted off my shoulders – I could barely admit to myself my drinking problem, let alone to another

person. And I didn't know how to explain it, anyway. Suddenly other people knew what I was living through.

I got the exact introduction I needed to have, at my first meeting: talk about the planets lined up! I left that meeting stunned by the whole 'thing'. Luckily, they gave me reading material, which I read through when I got home. Going to bed, I suddenly realised I hadn't had a drink all day.

The next day I realised I needed a daily meeting, and kept that up for 9 months (I drank daily, at night, so I reasoned I'd attend a meeting each night). I rang a member during the day when the cravings got too intrusive. 'Don't pick up the first drink' was enough info for me, from a woman member, to counter the cravings. Even ringing and leaving a message on her machine helped this alcoholic.

ID meetings helped me a lot. My head was a doubting head; even not drinking, craving, identifying with alcoholics' stories at each meeting, my head would doubt my alcoholism. 'The evidence is in' I'd say to myself. The committee meeting in the head was a problem: 'You can't do this, you won't succeed'. Off I'd go to an ID meeting and hear my own story and share mine. Then I had some information to use to counter-attack when my head set up the doubts again.

Do you ever get a craving these days?

Over the years, I've had drinking dreams. Sometimes on the odd occasion...I might drive past a pub and see people in the beer garden, looking happy. The taste never goes away fully. It reminds me I'm an alcoholic. I don't feel resentment against those drinkers, but I know I can't drink like they do.

A woman at meetings talks about the 'ism' doing push-ups in the corner. That weird thinking; sometimes it still occurs. Today, I never use the term 'recovered' - to my mind that implies I'm cured. I always see my life in AA as one in which I'm recovering. That's why I do meetings regularly and do a bit of service.

In your days of sobriety, what range of service positions have you held?

I've maintained service positions, in any group: secretary, treasurers, rep at District, or Assembly, the local 12-step office – various events would include fund-raisers, selling raffle tickets for various events.

What's your current service position? What are you learning from it?

Now I'm involved in a local Inter-group. I'm currently secretary, maintaining the group correspondence. I think one of the things about service positions is that it makes you feel more a part of AA, i.e more broadly than your group.

You hear more about what's going on; and you come across people with a heap of knowledge about the Fellowship. So, you learn better about how things are done and structure. It helps to understand better what you're a part of.

I do a phone line as well, six hours per month. It feels good when you get a call from people want to know what might help. It's practical to be there to respond, I get a good feeling from offering help. My first contact with AA was through a phone call. The fact that the person who answered could tell me the address for a meeting was a life-

saver. The person I spoke to wasn't intrusive but knew I needed to be connected with [AA]. Having a member answer a call is really important – I remember that.

What advice would you give to newcomers about the value of AA service?

For a newcomer, well, I tend to try and encourage them taking on a small job in the group. Start there, start small. The first 12 months of Fellowship is a huge task. It's life changing and it aint easy. I suggest to them that they bring the milk next week, or collect the cups after the meeting. I explain it as: you're part of the meeting, not just coming and going, if you help with something.

What's the value to an AA member who takes on a service role?

Take it on because it gives you broader experience. You work out how it all fits together, sobriety and service. You learn a lot and pick up skills you didn't know you had. My final comment is this: when members do start getting active in service they have to balance it. They have to look after their own sobriety, and sometimes over-working in a service has negative outcomes. People have lives and jobs and families. The more service we all do, the more fellowship we all get and the more difference AA can make.

(Reprinted with the kind permission of the author and editor of a local Area newsletter)

STEP ZERO

In a couple of recent meetings, I've been one of the last to share. I always find this an advantage as, by this time in any meeting, I've usually had my thinking shaped and clarified by earlier member offerings. One thing that popped into my head during while I shared (I forget the reading) was that, whilst we might each have very different drinking stories, they all seem quite similar right at the end – i.e. just before we enter the rooms. I sometimes refer to this as "Step Zero!"

So many members at this particular meeting shared about drinking in isolation, behind people's backs, feeling crammed full of guilt, shame and remorse. Gone were the myriad of pathways that led them to this final miserable phase of addiction. They'd been replaced by the same shared elements. A bottle, time, and absolute aloneness. No wonder the rooms work so well for so many of us in our first days and months. What a situational contrast! I remember that sudden, unfamiliar, yet exhilarating feeling of belonging, coupled with the return of something I hadn't had in quite a while; hope.

And I suspect that's where the stories start to become divergent again. In my case, the sober 'honeymoon period' that so many members said wouldn't last is over halfway through its 6th year. And sure, I have my bad days and moments, but in truth they pass and I default back to the same state of mind and mood. Gratitude. I'm an alcoholic with a program, a higher power and no desire to drink today. How incredible is that?

And how different from Step Zero!

(Derek, Sobriety in the City Group)

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SERVICE RANGERS

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to share on an area that I feel very passionate about and that has helped me grow in my own recovery. I have been a Service Ranger for the 12 Step Office in Prahran for the past 8 months. This commitment has involved me going to many different meetings Victoria-wide spreading announcements and updates that help inform members about the 12 Step Office.

When I first became a Service Ranger I did not know what to expect and I was quite fresh into the concept of service in AA.

What it has done for me over time is made me feel more a part of AA than I ever have before - having a purpose when I go to meetings and being part of a group that makes a difference in AA. Making announcements and staying close to the office has kept me engaged, learning new things and getting outside of my comfort zone regularly. I was very anxious and fearful when coming into the program, however making the announcements has given me the opportunity to build my character through doing something I have previously had a lot of fear around. Which was public speaking. It got me to become more courageous, build my faith and allow me to tap into the spirit of the program.

The illness I suffer from is centred in my mind. If selfishness and self-centeredness is the root of all my troubles, then I must take selfless and altruistic actions to combat that. The 12 Step Office and the Service Ranger commitment has given me a platform to do that. I am forever grateful, and I hope this article does some justice to the peace of mind I have been so freely given. Thank God and AA for all those members who have contributed to making the office what it is today. It's has truly done for me what I could never do for myself.

(Tom D., Alcoholics Anonymous)

SURRENDER & ACCEPTANCE.

My name is Danielle and I have been a sober member of AA for 5 years. For many years, I was unwilling to admit I was an Alcoholic. I broke promises to my husband to cease or control my drinking. I didn't want to be different to others because that meant I was less than them. One time I stopped drinking for 6 months but when I started again, I drank more than ever.

I couldn't imagine my life without alcohol even though I knew it was killing me. This pushed me to rock bottom. I felt hopeless. I had to feel hopeless to fully accept without reservation that my drinking had progressed into alcoholism. By the time I stopped, I had no reservation, no lurking notion that someday, I would be immune to alcohol. I was an alcoholic and always will be.

Although I fully conceded to myself that I was alcoholic, I had to be humiliated to tell anyone else. I surrendered my pride, shame, reputation and the need for others' approval. Then I was free to go to AA and say I was an alcoholic.

After joining AA, there was more to surrender. I let go absolutely. I started surrendering old ideas such as thinking I could stay sober by doing a soft version of AA. I learned that I couldn't just go to meetings. I needed to get a sponsor to take me through the steps. I surrendered my Will and I agreed to go to any lengths when taking the STEPS, because I wanted what they had. **I took the STEPS.** Step 1: I surrendered & admitted that I was powerless over alcohol. I accepted that Alcohol had power over me. Step 2: I accepted that there is a Power greater than me that could free me from Alcohol and restore me to sanity. Step 3: I decided to turn my Will over to God and accepted that God would help me with my alcoholism. When I accept situations as they are, not as I wish them to be, I get serenity and peace of mind.

TOTAL ACCEPTANCE.

I was gravely affected although I only drank alcoholically without control for about 7 years, and I didn't drink the great quantities that others did. In AA, I learned that females have the potential to turn into real alcoholics within a few years and I have accepted that this is what happened to me. Whenever I doubt that I'm an alcoholic, I reflect on this. It stops my mind twisting into thinking I have different drinking patterns so maybe I'm cured.

Today I am an alcoholic. Tomorrow I am still an alcoholic. Temporary setbacks aren't ok. I accept that I have an incurable illness that lives in me forever. It can kill me unless I keep vigilant & acknowledge this on a daily basis.

"The only requirement to join AA is a desire to stop drinking" (Tradition 3). There are no physical, mental, moral, religious or financial entry criteria. I was surprised that so many members accepted me. I learned that in AA, we are all in a lifeboat together, recovering from alcoholism. We need one other and accept one another. Because of my drinking experience and because God has given me sobriety, I can be uniquely useful to other alcoholics. I want AA to be there when an alcoholic reaches out for help and for that, I gratefully accept responsibility and immunity from drinking just for today.

(Danielle, Wollongong Tue BBS group)

THE EXTERNALS ARE GREAT SO WHY AREN'T I HAPPY?

(Thoughts on the spiritual malady in established sobriety)

There is a line in our Big Book [p. 61] which has jumped out at me over the years like a patient old friend. It says, 'Is he not the victim of the delusion that he can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this life if only he manages well?'. It has jumped out at me specifically over my 15 years of sobriety at times when externally things have looked great, yet I've been unhappy.

I'll share some experience with getting caught in the spiritual malady at times in sobriety and tools that have released me out of self and back into the fellowship of the spirit. 15 plus years ago I was poured in the doors of AA with the common laundry list of problems, and in the first 12 months I was desperate enough to abandon myself under a sponsor to AA's program of action and way of life. Not surprisingly when I did what the

first 100 did I got what the first 100 got!!! An amazing spiritual awakening by which I could think, do and feel things I couldn't do before under my own power. I'd recovered from alcoholism and for this once atheist it was clear that something outside my power (GOD) had enabled that change. A complete game changer. The lights were on!

Does that mean the last 15 years have been spent in sober bliss? Wouldn't that be great!? Unfortunately I found out that Steps 10 and 11 aren't optional extras or 'try' steps. They are for me a daily requirement to grow my spiritual awakening. I didn't groove strong habits around 10/11 in the first 2 years and I've had times when the spiritual malady has returned and I've spent weeks or months living in a similar mindset to when I drank.

Because ego never completely dies in an alcoholic, the times I've been lax with 10 and 11 have coincided with obsessional ideas coming to my mind which logically look like answers to my malcontent. Mine have ranged from different dream jobs, reaching financial milestones, finding Miss Right, marrying Miss Right, having kids, getting a nice house, getting another one, etc. I don't think any of these are a problem if they come as a by-product of spiritual fitness but the heart breaking thing I've found with the spiritual malady is this:

I have a bit of get up and go and so often I've reached the current elusive goal only to find a few seconds of elation before it fades away like a harbour in the desert. Over the years these sometimes brief sometimes not so brief 'asleep at the wheel' periods have bought me back to my truth that if I'm not right sized and god centred through a vigorous program of action, genuine happiness can elude me regardless of what externals I cobble together or my length of sobriety.

So how have I pulled out of these jags? Well the good news is it's not that hard. Mine usually start with yet another surrender of my thinking and actions to God and this happens when enough living in the future and pain tell me I'm playing God again. I start re-grooving the suggested way of living our Big Book has laid out for us since 1939. Morning prayer and meditation become vital again, not 'nice to have'. I get more honest with my sponsor more often again, which has at times been through major tenth steps. Through these I get the painful but wonderful secret ingredient of joyous sobriety - ego deflation at depth and being right sized in the world. I'm all of a sudden more effective with guys I sponsor and other new men. In my sobriety it feels like a strong regular 10/11 lay a platform for a more effective Step 12. I can't transmit something I haven't got. I then redouble my efforts around the daily reprieve from alcoholism and try to make the spot checks and nightly reviews plus honest sharing of them part of my AA way of life to avoid that cunning malady.

What I've loved about getting out of a dry jag and back on the AA beam is that the job I was bitching about becomes a great job. The wife that wasn't appreciative of me becomes an amazing wife I'm bloody lucky to have. The friends in AA that 'weren't doing it right' now look incredibly patient and tolerant. In essence I've once again received a new pair of glasses by accessing God through our program of action, and it's a great feeling.

My opinion (and it's just that) is that every single day on this earth is littered with goodies beyond my conception that are mine to experience. The problem is that when I'm not vigilant with resentments, fears and sex conduct, my instincts are quickly threatened and I can be blocked off from that joy by a cloak of self. That cuts me off from you and God and the here and the now and I'm back 'asleep at the wheel'. I've had my share of that in sobriety, so that's been my 'persuader' to do regular spot check inventory and nightly reviews and to have my time listening for God's guidance in meditation every day.

Alcoholism doesn't have days off, and today I ask God to help me not to either, so I can stay fully present and awake to the amazing life I've been given.

(By Tim O, Spirit of Freedom Group, Gold Coast, QLD)

THE PACKAGE DEAL

Imagine that you – Jimmy - have inherited an enormous legacy. It's worth gazillions, and it's made up of all sorts of different valuable items, such as stocks and shares, foreign currencies, investments, jewellery, and properties. It's well known in your family that this has been left to you. Your family is made up of good people. They all want to help you. They're all as rich as Croesus – who ever that was! – And they are all pleased that you will be set for life, after what seemed like a very shaky start. Surprisingly in today's world, nobody wants to take your good fortune. Yes! That's certainly unusual, but this is a fairy-tale!

Of course you'd wonder why they just didn't help you themselves, but as it happens, for reasons unknown, the way they understand their own fortunes precludes that.

Ok, so now it looks as if your fortunes have changed, and you will have enough money to do whatever you want. A nice place to live. Great cars. Private schools for your kids. Luxury holidays. Lots of opportunities for contact with your loving family, many of whom live overseas in the far-flung corners of the world. All sorts of things of which you had previously only dreamed.

A few weeks later, you go to the reading of the Will. You show up, all bright eyed and bushy tailed. There are some family members there to support you. Your benefactor certainly had the gift of the gab. Everyone knew that about him, and the Will is mighty long. The lawyer drones on and on and on and on!

It's hard to focus, and you don't understand the language or terminology. It's all quite outside your experience or comprehension. Eventually, even while trying to take it all in, you lose concentration, and miss quite a few clauses, as you daydream of untold luxuries.

But Uncle Billy and Auntie Maude are there too. They are a pair of seemingly astute business people. They too inherited a fortune. They are nodding sagely and it seems all in order to them. They appear to be taking notice.

Eventually the Reading is finished. Everybody shakes hands and goes off to the Ritz for high tea and celebration.

“Good old Uncle Dicky! Fancy the old codger leaving his fortune to you, Jimmy!”

“You’re a lucky lad! But I guess you’ve really cleaned up your act lately, and your Uncle Dicky always had a soft spot for you.”

“How are you going to manage your new found fortune? How will you manage your business affairs?”

“Well Uncle Billy, Auntie Maude. I started some business courses after I heard about the Will. I guess I’ll just keep on going there and studying for a while, until I get a handle on the documents. It’s all so new to me, but I want to learn!”

“Ahh Jimmy! You don’t need to bother about all that stuff. It’s too complicated, and it can get really political. Stay out of it and enjoy what you’ve got. Maudie and I have never studied our documents, and we’re just fine!”

“Mmmmm. But Uncle Billy, I want to be able to be familiar with it all, so I can pass it on when the time comes. I’m pretty sure that the best way for me to help as many family members as I can, is to study the documents and make the inheritance grow. I haven’t even met many of them, yet. I do realise that if I keep giving it away without investing it somehow, eventually there will be nothing left to give. Not for me personally you understand, but for the generations to come. I didn’t hear all that the lawyer had to say. It was too hard for me to take in all at once. However, I really feel that I’ve got a handle on this first document, and it’s marvellous. That makes me happy, but look at all that there is here to study and read up on.

“Jimmy! You don’t need to do that!” Uncle Billy sounded a bit tetchy. “Be content with what you have! Anyway, how would it look if you, ya young whippersnapper, came along and knew more than me about the documents of inheritance? It might make me look silly, and how would Maudie feel about that? No, just leave that complicated stuff alone! There are plenty of boffins out there who know all about it! They are forever getting together at their stupid meetings and rallies. Anyway, it’s all political. I’m not sure how, but that’s what I was told. Listen to your old Uncle Billy. Stick with me and Maudie and you’ll be all right!”

“Ok, Uncle Billy, but what about all these documents? Look at this one. I can see it’s all about the family history. I’m interested in that. I really am! Maybe you’re right, Uncle Billy. After all, you’ve been doing this stuff much longer than I have, and you’re doing all right, aren’t you? It does look hard. Maybe too hard for me at the moment. Maybe I’ll wait a few years and then take another look at it....But I don’t understand why it would be so bad to study the other stack of documents regarding my inheritance!” “That’s the boy!” said Uncle Billy, as Auntie Maude looked on smilingly, as she nodded. “Keep it simple!”

“But Uncle Billy, Auntie Maude, I’ve heard Auntie Janet and Uncle Arthur talking about how much fun they get out of all the knowledge that came with their inheritance. I think I want that, too. I don’t want to be stuck in my ivory tower, counting and hoarding my fortune, when there are so many people out there who need it as much as I did!”

“I think I will go over and pay them a visit. Maybe they can explain it all well enough for me to understand. Anyway I know they won't try to talk me out of knowing something. They will encourage me. Thanks Uncle Billy. Auntie Maude. See you around! I have to go do this!”

How many of you reading this have been told things like: “There's no need to bother with the Traditions”. Or “Concepts? What Concepts?” And other well intended comments directed at maybe protecting newer members, or perhaps in fear of exposing our own lack?

We in AA have been given the keys to the kingdom. How can it be ok to deprive members of their full inheritance? The full triangle of Recovery, Unity and Service. The package deal.

Maybe we don't all have to “do” service, but perhaps it's a good idea to support those who are doing more, and to make a concerted effort to put a positive spin on it.

(CB)

STEPS 8 AND 9: HONESTY AND CHANGE

These steps, for me, hinge on that word, ‘amends’, which appears in both steps: what does it mean to ‘make amends’? When I first came across these steps, I went to my mother and said I was ‘sorry’! That was my old behaviour: make a big mess while drunk and then, when I had sobered up and felt terrible about it all, say sorry.

And then I talked with my sponsor, and he said, it is about changing our behaviours – and then it made sense. In Steps 4 and 5, I identify and share about my negative behaviours and how they have impacted on others. In Step 6, I feel the necessity for change: after sharing and becoming clearly conscious about those behaviours that need changing, I realise at depth how necessary those changes are, and also my powerlessness - I can't ‘wish or will them away’ no matter how hard I try. In Step 7, I seek to find how to change, I learn new behaviours that will replace those old bad habits. I create a new design for living sober. Once I have learned what the new behaviours are, I am ready to start putting them into practice. I make a list of people, places, institutions etc.: where and with whom I need to start putting that design into action, into practice. And it is a practice that I begin in Step 9, the practice of living sober. The great Promise is my new way of behaving, of sober living.

(Brad S.)

HEARD AROUND THE TRAPS

“We come to expect Wonders, but the Wonders that come are not what we expected” - Jaffa June, Sydney

“If you are an alcoholic and you are at a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, then all is fundamentally well” - John, Woolloomooloo

“If you can stay sober for one day, you are the champion of yourself!” - (vale) Brian, ex-GSO

GENERAL EDITOR'S NOTE

If you are reading this Issue of *The Mixer* and are an AA member, we would like to hear your story! You could contribute your drinking and sobriety story, write an essay on a Step, Tradition or Concept, share a saying you have heard around meetings, share about your service in your home group, local intergroup or Area, or contribute a poem, drawing or photo expressing your experience, strength and hope in sobriety. You might also hear a great share at a meeting that you think might be worth sharing in print with the Fellowship around Australia (and the world - *The Mixer* is being downloaded in many countries including the US, Canada, Sweden, Israel, Austria, The Netherlands, Croatia, China, Indonesia, Singapore, France, Pakistan, Russia, Malaysia, Egypt, Libya, Argentina, Switzerland, Azerbaijan, Japan, and the Philippines): we have found that a direct approach is the best way to encourage members to share their story in print, just approach the member and ask if they would like to contribute to our national magazine. For many of us, reading the stories in the Big Book helped to bring us into the Fellowship and sobriety; it is important that we continue to share our experience, strength and hope in print, so that new generations can hear our message of sobriety in the 'language of the heart', in the language of our time and place. Contributions can be sent to the email address at the bottom of the page.

AA PREAMBLE ©

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 membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through 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 to achieve sobriety.

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