



NAIGSO-AA

Four Directions Newsletter



Native American Indian General Service Office of Alcoholics Anonymous

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Subject: Fwd: 1804 American Indian Shawnee Prophet named "The Open Door": Initiated Recovering Alcoholic's Program predating Alcoholics Anonymous by 125 years

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From: "jose greco" <mrjosegreco@gmail.com>

Subject: Fwd: 1804 American Indian Shawnee Prophet named "The Open Door": Initiated Recovering Alcoholic's Program predating Alcoholics Anonymous by 125 years
Just thought you'd find this Interesting, I'm 70 so I know all about "Tippy Canoe & Tyler Too", we had all that stuff high school. Interesting parallels between AA and the "Open Door", after 40 years still find it amusing how we AAers view our program as totally unique, instead of the wonderful melange which makes it distinctive among all successful spiritual programs.

Love and Respect. Jose

(Tecumseh's Vision on YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-eKft8CB6AM>**)**

1805 Shawnee Alcoholism Recovery Program under [Prophet "Open Door"](#)

President Jefferson with Henry Harrison Uses Fort "[FactorySystem](#)" to make Shawnee dependent on Trade

1805 villages depleted of men disease ridden, [Lalawethika brother of Tecumseh](#) a failed hunter and medicine man becomes violent husband and alcoholic became depressed and hopeless falls into a fire,

Thought to be dead but recovers, wakes up and reports his [magnificent powerful vision](#):





- **“I Died” I was carried in a dream by the Master of Life down into the Spirit World, until we came to a parting of the ways**
- **To the Right Led the Road To Paradise open only to the virtuous few**
- **To the Left I saw an army of forsaken souls stumbling on toward three dark houses, fearful dwellings of punishment and pain**

I saw unrepentant drunkards forced to swallow molten lead and when they drank it their bowels were seized with an exquisite burning

- **At the last house their torment was inexpressible, I heard their screams crying pitifully, roaring like the falls of a great river**

Lalawethika recovers from his vision with a message of healing of revitalization of restoration similar to [1762 Prophet Neolin](#), a message for people who have lost their way, like he lost his way. He is now a reformed individual with a new name, *Tenskwatawa*, or The Open Door, his message; *“Indian people can make themselves whole again, by rejecting the worst influences the White people have brought to them”*

Tenskwatawa is instantly reformed by his vision. No longer drinking, he tells his people; *“If you want to save yourselves, you have to have a personal revolution in your lives.”*
“My children, the Great Spirit bides me to say to you thus, you must not dress like the whites you must not get drunk. It displeases The Great Spirit”

It gives people a new hope, a new direction, opportunity to remake and restore themselves by reviving their Indian culture and identity.

Tenskwatawa’s instant conversion and message appeal to many other tribes who were also having problems with drinking and emulating white culture. Tenskwatawa’s vision was accepted as meaningful for all Indians. As a recovered alcoholic he was able to relate to the many Indians, regardless of tribes, whose young men heard his siren call of renewal and flocked to their village, and used him as a pathway to grace and an ***Open Door to Salvation***.

“The world is now broken and must be repaired”, he told his followers. Tenskwatawa drew followers from everywhere and his most ardent admirer was his brother Tecumseh, who was amazed and surprised at his brother’s conversion and his ability to help others who now referred to Tenskwatawa as The Prophet. New members are instructed to keep their anonymity from the Whites, and have two villagers from each village come to The Open Door for instruction, to help their villages deal with the wounded warriors of the nations.

Defiantly, Open Door and Brother Tecumseh established a center in Western Ohio, on the White side of treaty land, to act as a center for all the tribes to receive general services by a committee and one President.

Two very different images of “Ten-squat-a-way

(Tenskwatawa)





Editor's note: Many stories abound in Indian country about our prophets. But sadly, very little is taught to our children or any students seeking *the truth of American history*. The above story is very similar to the "Code of Handsome Lake; the Seneca Prophet" by Arthur C. Parker. The vision of Handsome Lake occurred in 1799. Jose, thank you for this wonderful addition to our newsletter. It may prompt others to investigate the wisdoms of Native Americans and help to alleviate that "which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation." (Herbert Spencer; BB p.568, 4th Edition)

*Tecumseh, brother of
Tenskwatawa,
the Shawnee Prophet*



*Cornplanter, brother of
Handsome Lake,
the Seneca Prophet*

Neolin (meaning *the enlightened* in Algonquian) was a prophet of the Lenni Lenape (also known as *Delaware*) from the area of Muskingum County, Ohio. His dates of birth and death are unknown.

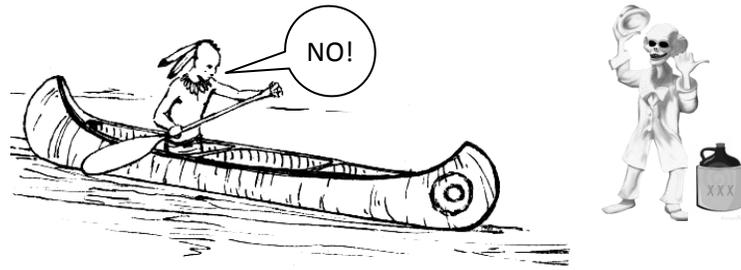
Inspired by a religious vision in 1761, Neolin proclaimed that Native Americans needed to reject the goods and lifestyles of the European settlers and return to a more traditional lifestyle, specifically rejecting alcohol, materialism, and polygamy. Neolin's most famous follower was Pontiac.

Many of Neolin's followers felt that he was the reincarnation of Winabojo, the great teacher of the mythic past.

The Trout, also called Maya-Ga-Wy, was an Ottawa prophet on the scene in the early 1800s. He was noted for having carried on the legacy of Neolin and Pontiac, advocating the return to traditional ways as a means of combating European domination. His beliefs were rather extreme, not only condemning alcohol and the fur trade, but also the consumption of bread ("food of the Whites") and the wearing of hats.

I encourage everyone to look into the **truth** of our Native American history and offer these names as a start to investigation of our pasts. I think you will find it amazing how many of our spiritual leaders, sachems, chiefs, and prophets recognized that; ***"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol--that our lives had become unmanageable."*** (12 & 12, p.21)





Hey! Which way you goin'?

Okay,...we have paddled down the river of denial (not a river in Egypt) long enough, haven't we? Even our ancestors 500 years ago saw the poisonous firewater was not for us Indians. So. what kept us from admitting we had a problem with alcohol and that our lives were unmanageable? Wasn't it because our own pride and ego had usurped the very power of the Great Spirit that dwells in all of us? It was hard enough for us to admit that the strangers from across the Great Waters had lulled us into complacency by presenting us with pretty ribbons, tools made of iron, and the liquid mind-changer which fogged our minds, put our spirits to sleep, and created a lust to seek for an "easier softer way" which ardent spirits had deceived our minds to believe. We had been fools! Isn't that what alcohol makes of us?

We have just completed our journey from the North direction which represents the physical element of life. There we learned from the three gifts of cleansing, rest and renewal, and purity. We have learned in the throes of alcoholism we must cleanse our physical bodies of the toxins which have poisoned us. Perhaps that was in a treatment facility where we detoxed and were then offered a time to rest and renew our strength because we have abused our bodies and have become weak. After this period of cleansing the body and time for rest and renewal, we have returned to a more original state of being, that which our Creator had designed for us right from the start. But this is only a beginning of the work we must do on our recovery. A brief interlude from the cold of Winter was nice. But, now that we have been warmed and fed, we begin to think of our old ways and that *maybe* just one drink will be okay, or that *maybe* we are not powerless over alcohol and it wasn't so bad out there. After all, it's Spring... and the sun is shining...and warm...***Stinking thinking!***

Thank our Creator for awakening our spirits to a better path...the path to recovery along the Red Road. Step two tells us that we, "***Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.***" (12&12, p.25) We fail to see that our H.P. had delivered us from death on probably more than one occasion. Now our minds have gotten out of the foxhole prayers and we have questioned, "What's God got to do with it?" How soon we forget the insanity from which we have just been saved. There is no humility in "the intellectually self-sufficient man or woman....far too smart for our own good...loved having people call us precocious...Knowledge was all powerful...Intellect could conquer nature....The god of intellect displaced the God of our fathers." (12&12, p.29)





Or, in the case of Native Americans, the Creator of the Universe (Hot'ye Nokta') which we forsook in pursuit of the 4 mind-changers the Seneca Prophet spoke of. Our leaders throughout the ages have attempted to show us, by their own example that, **"humility and intellect could be compatible, provided we placed humility first."** (12&12, p.30) But our own ferocious pride and ego (Edging God Out) kept us from believing that there was any power greater than our personal selves. *"When we encountered AA, the fallacy of our defiance was revealed. At no time had we asked what God's will was for us; instead we had been telling Him what it ought to be. No man, we saw, could believe in God and defy Him, too. **Belief mean reliance, not defiance.**"* (12&12 p.31) *"Few indeed are the practicing alcoholics who have any idea how irrational they are, or seeing their irrationality, can bear to face it. Some will be willing to term themselves "problem drinkers," but cannot endure the suggestion that they are in fact mentally ill...."Sanity" is defined as "soundness of mind." Yet no alcoholic, soberly analyzing his destructive behavior,...can claim "soundness of mind" for himself....True humility and an open mind can lead us to faith, and every AA meeting is an assurance that God will restore us to sanity if we rightly relate ourselves to Him."* (12&12 pp.32-33)

So... **Hey! Which way you goin'?**...The gates of insanity and death? Or, to recovery, sobriety, and a life of peace and serenity? *"We found the Great Reality deep down within us....If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice, enables you to search diligently within yourself, then, if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway. With this attitude you cannot fail. The consciousness of your belief is sure to come to you....Even so has God restored us all to our right minds....He has come to all who have honestly sought Him."* (BB, pp. 55 & 57) Each of us is endowed by our Creator with a free, self-will; step three will determine how you will use that will. It is always our choice!...Jamie T-H(Ush'ka Waso')

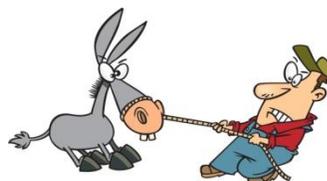


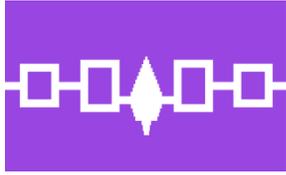
Three frogs On A Log....

There were three frogs on a log. One frog made a decision to jump into the pond. How many frogs were left on the log?

If you said two...you would be wrong! Why? Because...the frog simply "made a decision". It doesn't say he took any action and actually jumped into the pond.

So it is with Step Three; **"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him."** The first two steps were conclusions and *"did not require action; they required only acceptance."* (12&12, p.34) But step three requires action to *"cut away the self-will which has always blocked the entry of God."*





The gifts of the East direction of the Golden Eagle, the element of air, and the mind are;

1. **Clarity**-the ability to see things clearly and without a foggy mind. The way I have been taught is that this is represented by the hummingbird, bringer of joy and harmony. We are full of joy to be able to see the world around us with a sober mind and seek to bring and share this joy with others who have lost their way.

2. **Wisdom**-the ability to use our minds in a wiser way. Now that we can see clearly our path we will make wiser decisions concerning the way we would go. This is represented by the owl, a mystical bird, which flies silently in the night and can hear and catch the little mouse in a completely dark room. But it must sit quietly and listen to the spirits around it and not act too hastily or it will miss its target and perhaps hit an unseen wall.

3. **Illumination or enlightenment**-the “Aha!!” moments when sobriety all comes together and finally makes sense. This is portrayed by the tiny firefly which illuminates the evening with its fairy-like, on-and-off flickering dance in the night skies. It is beheld with wonder in the eyes of a child.

And so it is with us alcoholics; we have returned to that place designed for us by our Creator right from the beginning. We have been reborn in the spirit. And like a child, we must learn the rules of life all over again. The Big Book tells us we were selfish and self-centered, concerned only with ourselves, our resentments and self-pity. It suggests that our troubles were of our own making and that us alcoholics are an extreme example of self-will run riot....though, like a child, we do not think so. But, when we quit playing God, we began to find that God is a much better employer than our current state of self-employment. *“More and more we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow, or the hereafter. **We were reborn.**”* (BB, p.63)



“Take it easy. The hoop you have to jump through is a lot wider than you think. At least I’ve found it so.” (12&12, p.26)



Is this not true of us Native Americans? Were we not living in peace and harmony prior to our intoxication? Were we not empowered by the spiritual paths of our ancestors, prophets and leaders? Did we not believe without question the truth that was held in our old ways, traditions and beliefs? So, what happened? Why did some of us **choose** to go down the path of Hanisee'ono, the Evil One?

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.” (BB, p.59) May you find God now.

Yes, we must never forget that alcohol is much more cunning, baffling and powerful than I could ever have thought it to be. It lied to me, deceived me, and cheated me from sharing with others the sunlight of the Spirit which dwells in every one of us. I walked away from, and left the spirit of, the Creator of my understanding behind, for the obsession of the mind called alcoholism. But thanks to the grace of my Creator and AA I have been restored to physical health, restored to sanity, and reborn in the Spirit...*Ush`ka Waso`*



Hello,

My name is Art Clear. I wanted to send some things that I have found along the way in my journey. Maybe you might use some in the Spring Newsletter, or maybe it will just inspire other thoughts that you might have. Either way, it is the giving that helps me, and I do honor NAI fellowship.

I am the coordinator for the AA meeting that meets on Mondays at our local county jail. We talk about the steps and read from the AA books.

I am also personally involved with Native American AA meetings and conferences in Cherokee, NC that I attend. I was asked to be a speaker there two years ago that was a great honor. I am so happy I was able to record my message that was inspired by the wonderful weekend that we had. I was also honored to carry a flag at our annual Pow Wow in the area. I am in contact with the Native American Indian-AA website, and I host a monthly talking circle with friends who follow Native American spirituality at the local detox unit at the treatment center for the past year. We read from the Elders Meditation Daily Readings book and the NAI daily readings. Although I am not American Indian, I see the truth and the benefit of the talking circle, native spirituality and interconnectedness, and have learned from the deeper explanations in the Medicine Wheel and the 12 steps DVD set that I got about a year ago from a friend in Michigan. It was recorded at the Idaho State Penitentiary with Don Coyhis with the Indian Copyright in the early 90's.

Here are a few things I wanted to share.....

"Each soul must meet the morning sun, the new, sweet earth, and the great silence alone."
Charles Alexander Eastman, Ohiyesa, Santee Sioux. (Elders meditation daily reading)

On the other hand--strange as it may seem to those who do not understand--once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules.

Big Book, pg. xxvii

"The Doctor's Opinion"

Maybe there are as many definitions of spiritual awakening as there are people who have had them. But certainly, each genuine one has something in common with all the others. And these things which they have in common are not too hard to understand. When a man or woman has a spiritual awakening, the most important meaning of it is that he has now become able to do, feel, and believe that which he could not do before on his unaided strength and resources alone. He has been granted a gift which amounts to a new state of consciousness and being. He has been set on a path which tells him he is really going somewhere, that life is not a dead end, not something to be endured or mastered. In a very real sense he has been transformed, because he has laid hold of a source of strength which, in one way or another, he had hitherto denied himself. He finds himself in possession of a degree of honesty, tolerance, unselfishness, peace of mind, and love of which he had thought himself quite incapable. What he has received is a free gift, and yet usually, at least in some small part, he has made himself ready to receive it.

Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, pg. 107

(This is my own writings, Art Clear)

This is my own 3rd step that I wrote after sitting with my higher power. The green string in the photo has a special meaning to me all on its own, it was my first higher power, you may hear about someday.

My Declaration reads....

I refuse to allow my flesh and my emotions to control my course of action. I will hold steady to my need to discover myself, to grow in my spiritual, emotional, and physical journey to a healthy way of living. I will continue to turn over my problems, my worries, my hopes, my tears, my wishes, and my expectations to God for He alone can know the plan for my life. I will continue to praise Him for His Grace, His patience, and His unconditional love for me, that with every step I take, He will be there and I will never be alone. Art Clear.

"Life is like a path...and we all have to walk the path...As we walk...we'll find experiences like little scraps of paper in front of us along the way. We must pick up those pieces of

scrap paper and put them in our pocket... Then, one day, we will have enough scraps of papers to put together and see what they say... Read the information and take it to heart." Frank Davis (quoting his mother) Pawnee

(This is my own writing...Art Clear)

I spoke at detox last night in Alliquippa. I got a little emotional talking about my higher power taking from me all those bad thoughts I had about myself and those things I did in my addiction to alcohol. It was inspiring they said, and I could tell the creator was touching others in the room, giving them hope realizing that they could become free. I am grateful for the experience. A nineteen year old girl with the light in her eyes and a smile that explained without words that she was just inspired by the spirit that has guided me to find peace and happiness on my journey. Just wanted to share some of that positive energy with you. One girl said I had 18 months and now I have to start over. I asked her to explain to the others who never had any recovery experience what they could expect after a year. She started getting out of herself as she said, "I had an apartment, a good job, I was always going places with folks in recovery and that only took a few months." The other girls now looked at her. "You girls can do it too," she told them. I looked her in the eyes and told her I am just an older guy with 22yrs, you have a message that you can share that they can relate to. You are not starting over, you are picking up where you left off. Her whole demeanor had changed before us as she remembered what she used to experience. We all need reminded that we are not limited by our senses of what we can see or touch or predict, we have a much greater spirit within that says we can do so much more than we imagine. Our abilities are limitless with the spirit of our creator. Art Clear

We think it no concern of ours what religious bodies our members identify themselves with as individuals. This should be an entirely personal affair which each one decides for himself in the light of past associations, or his present choice. Page 28 BB. This faith is for you, too."

Another crowd of A.A.'s says: "We were plumb disgusted with religion and all its works. The Bible, we said, was full of nonsense; we could cite it chapter and verse, and we couldn't see the Beatitudes for the 'begats.' In spots its morality was impossibly good; in others it seemed impossibly bad. But it was the morality of the religionists themselves that really got us down. We gloated over the hypocrisy, bigotry, and crushing self-righteousness that clung to so many 'believers' even in their Sunday best. How we loved to shout the damaging fact that millions of the 'good men of religion' were still killing one another off in the name of God. This all meant, of course, that we had substituted negative for positive thinking. After we came to A.A., we had to recognize that this trait had been an ego-feeding proposition. In belaboring the sins of some religious people, we could feel superior to all of them. Moreover, we could avoid looking at some of our own shortcomings. Self-righteousness, the very thing that we had contemptuously condemned in others, was our own besetting evil. This phony form of respectability was our undoing, so far as faith want concerned. But finally, driven to A.A., we learned better. "As psychiatrists have often observed, defiance is the outstanding characteristic of many an alcoholic. So it's not strange that lots of us have had our day at defying God Himself. Sometimes it's because

God has not delivered us the good things of life which we specified, as a greedy child makes an impossible list for Santa Claus. More often, though, we had met up with some major calamity, and to our way of thinking lost out because God deserted us....12&12 Page 30.

Thank you,
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[Isn't this supposed to reflect the nature of an AA meeting?](#)

FALL GATHERING



STRENGTH

KINDNESS

HONESTY

SHARING



May 11th -14th, 2017

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PRE-REGISTRATION: \$45PERSON (kids 10 and under are FREE, 11-17 \$20). Price includes food & tent/camper site for three (3) nights **Begin early registration Feb 1st. EARLY REGISTRATION ENDS May 2nd \$50** at the GATE

NAME(S): _____

ADDRESS: _____

EMAIL(S): _____ / _____

PHONE #: H) _____ (C) _____ (C) _____

In Party: _____ Amount Enclosed: _____ **FIRESIDE CIRCLE**

Cut & Mail Registration Form by May 2nd with Checks Made Payable to: Fireside /Spring 2017

C/O Herb Wachacha, PO Box 2015 Cherokee, NC 28719



The Ultimate Weapon

By: Sarahi A.

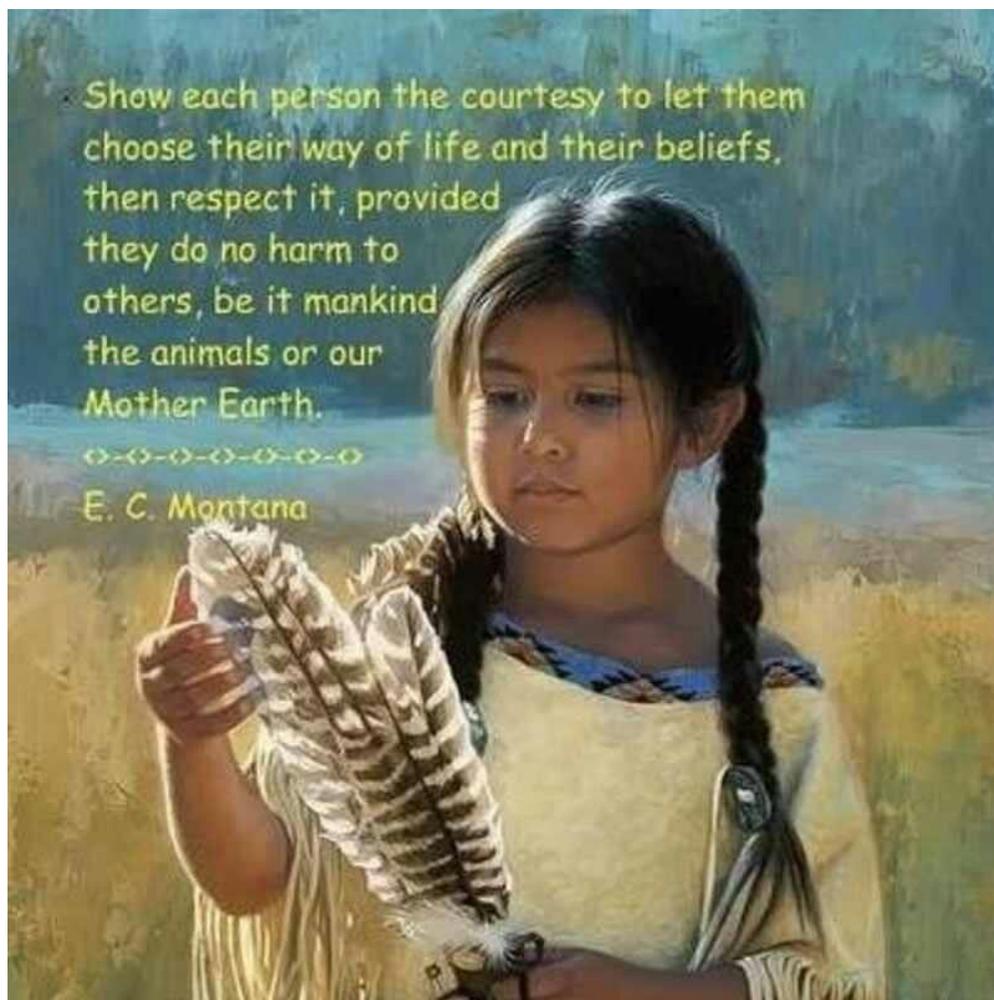
The spring equinox begins with the renewal of the spirit. We begin with Step One, renewing and becoming the walking acceptance of our powerlessness. It is so empowering and cleansing in itself and connected with the beginning of all things beautiful to come; the blossoming of the flower in the soul; the end of hibernation and slumber of the insubstantial morals in which we used to live within. We thus begin the embodiment of liberation, strength, and humility. In the 12 & 12, Step One (pg.107) is explained as an amazing paradox. Since getting sober there have been many unexplainable twists, but in all my days I would've never guessed that the desire to use mood altering substances could be lifted! Literature talks about it in a very introspective way, "Then, and only then, do we become as open-minded to conviction and as willing to listen as the dying can be. We stand ready to do anything which will lift the merciless obsession from us." (12 & 12, pg.24). Working Step One, for me, meant crushing the denial of my problem that led me to blossom. I went through the photosynthesis journey. I took the carbon dioxide (my alcoholism) and found the solution (Alcoholics Anonymous) and I got Chlorophyll. Chlorophyll is vital for photosynthesis to happen; it is the H.O.W of AA. It's the honesty to stick to the fact that I have a problem, the open mindedness to accept, and the willingness to carry out. This chemical reaction is found to not only help plants form, but to fight diseases like cancer, but in my case, Alcoholism.

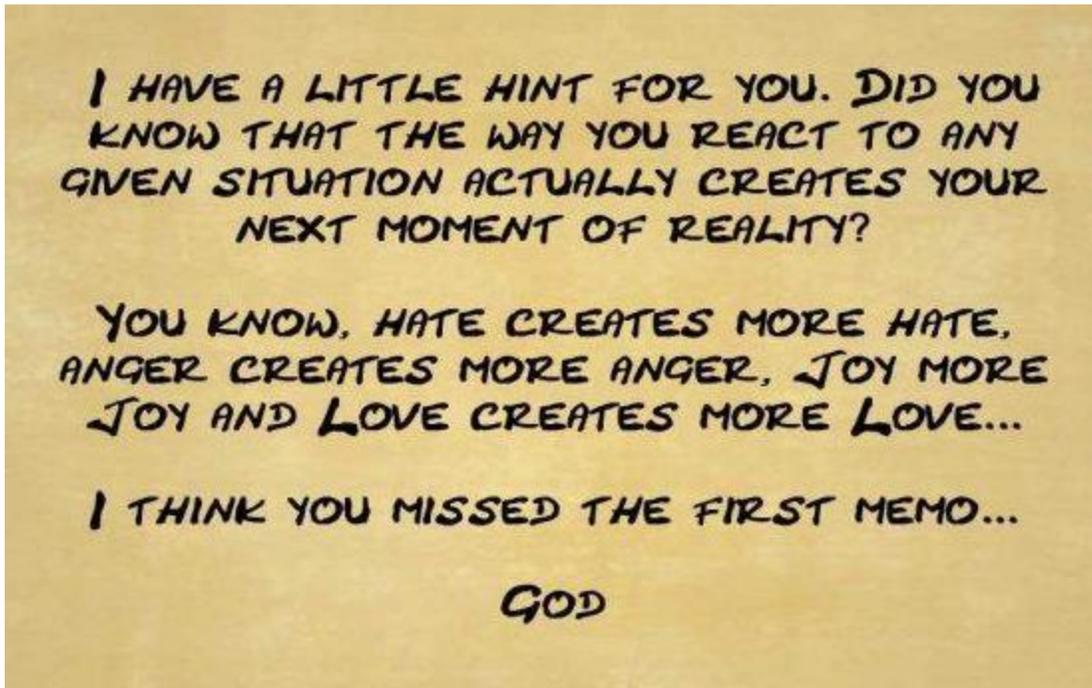
So it is, that the journey continued with Step Two. I did not always have trust in the program or in the spirit of the universe either. The most interesting aspect about this step was that *all* that I had to do was let the sun (the spirit of the universe) do its work. I just had to believe that I could blossom and be beautiful. As soon as I realized and let go it was as if my soul had finally found and caught up to the beat of my heart, to the beat of nature.

It seemed like all my life I had searched for something and I began to trust my spirit. I remember being on the phone one night with my mother and I was crying to her and pouring out my feelings of hollow destruction. She then told me about the emptiness derived from having a distanced relationship with God; she also mentioned she filled that void with God and suggested that I do also. At first, her words did not bring much change, but only the acknowledgement of my weariness. It wasn't, until I worked my Step 3 that I began to understand those words she had said to me that night. So, it is the greatest aspect that Step 3 is letting go of control and placing myself in active faith. Kahlil Gibran says, "Love gives naught but itself and takes naught from itself. Love possesses not, nor would it be possessed: For love is sufficient unto love. When you love, you should not say, 'God is in my heart,' but rather 'I am in the heart of God.' And think not you can direct the course of love, if it finds you worthy, directs your course." (Gibran). I remember that my voice was desperate and cried out for a solution, *any* solution. But that night I found out something more; today I believe that that was The Spirit of the Universe reaching through the realms to speak to me. To give me sunlight and the sweet, comforting warmth of

faith. A flower also requires love and attention from the caretaker to become the beautiful flower it was destined to be. So it is through the love of the Spirit of the Universe that I am here. I cannot explain in words the great transcendental feeling that I get when I walk and grow more each day with the universe knowing that if I do the footwork and ask for help, I will be given whatever is needed for me to carry on. I was reborn and taken hostage by unconditional endearment.

I find that Steps 1, 2, and 3 are the dream team of foundations for the spring and for practically every single circumstance in my life! These steps were the soil that contributed to my growth; it was the water when I needed to be watered. I find that they are the ultimate weapons and tools that we have in AA.





Censorship In AA Meetings

Newcomers and other group members often identify with drug misuse/addiction as part of, or a consequence of, their alcoholism. It's very common in the 21st Century for people with alcohol problems to also have addictions to other drugs, and AA members sharing their experiences fully may often be providing valuable help to others in the group.

Nowhere in the Twelve Steps or Twelve Traditions does it state that drug misuse should not be mentioned in meetings, whilst members are sharing their experience, strength and hope with each other. In fact, **Tradition One, clearly states that AA members are free to:**

“think, talk and act as they wish. No AA can compel another to do anything; nobody can be punished or expelled. Our Twelve Steps to recovery are suggestions; the Twelve Traditions which guarantee A.A.’s unity contain not a single “Don’t.” They repeatedly say “We ought...” but never “You must!”





Any surrender of personal behavior, wishes, attitudes, opinions or language by an individual in order to promote group unity, is purely a voluntary decision. The literature suggests that group members practice tolerance, acceptance, kindness and love, and therefore members ought to refrain from being critical and judgmental towards others in the fellowship. Censorship of speech is not a principle of AA.

Tradition Three states that: “The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking”. It’s often stated in the fellowship that “you are a member of AA if you say you are“. This tradition came about due to the experiences of the early AA groups trying to impose a multitude of qualifying rules and regulations upon their members – born of fear and prejudice.

Tradition Three is an attempt to be fully inclusive to all who suffer from alcoholism, regardless of differences and the various other difficulties that alcoholics struggle with; such as, co-occurring disorders and other addictions. It’s unrealistic to expect AA members not to mention their various other life problems; particularly when sharing in the context of “applying these principles in all our affairs”, as suggested in Step Twelve.

Drug addiction is detailed in the literature of AA. In the book Alcoholics Anonymous (Big Book), drug use is mentioned as part of the alcoholic’s experience or illness. Examples are in the chapter ‘Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict’, written by member Paul O, and also in chapter two, ‘There is a Solution’ p.22, in relation to the description of the so called ‘real alcoholic’. Bill W describes at length the alcoholic’s tendency to misuse other drugs in his 1945 Grapevine article entitled ‘Those Goof Balls’, p.103 – 105, ‘The Language Of The Heart’.

Wilson clarifies his position on drug addicts, who also have a problem with alcohol, being welcome in the AA fellowship in his Grapevine article entitled, ‘Problems Other Than Alcohol’, p.222 – 225, ‘The Language Of The Heart’. He also suggests that addicts who don’t have problems with alcohol cannot qualify for AA membership, and would be better served by other groups (NA etc).



In consideration of the common experience of overlapping alcohol and drug misuse within the fellowship of AA, I would suggest that it is unreasonable to try and censor members from talking about drug use as part of their experience as an alcoholic. However, members who primarily identify themselves as drug addicts, but also accept they have problems with alcohol, should be respectful of AA's primary focus upon alcoholism and avoid excessive talk of other drug misuse and its accompanying language.

Ideally, in relation to our differences we need to practice being open minded, tolerant and understanding; particularly with newer members and those attending meetings from treatment settings, who do not understand AA 's traditions and practices fully yet.

The term balance is often mentioned in the fellowship of AA, and my viewpoint is that this healthy principle should be applied to this emotive (for some people) issue. Being absolutist in relation to the mentioning of drug problems by members is extreme and unhelpful to many. Unfortunately, this dogmatic attitude is adopted by some literalists in AA, and for me is against the inclusive principle of Tradition Three, and a rather strict interpretation of Tradition's Five and Ten.

I feel that a middle path is best, which allows members to be true to themselves and their history, but is mindful in regard to AA's primary focus upon the illness of alcoholism – addiction to the drug, alcohol. Realistically, alcoholism is a complex condition and involves strong relationships with other human difficulties that are valid to talk about in AA meetings.

Society is always evolving, and in order to stay relevant, so must the AA fellowship. Language and 'traditions' that were appropriate in the 1930's and 40's are not always so fitting in 2016. Increasingly, in today's society, attitudes are changing with the help of developments in the scientific understanding of addiction; with alcoholism and drug addiction being viewed in the same way, brought about by the same causes and conditions. Modern treatment agencies are increasingly merging their alcohol and drug services; and in terms of the various Twelve Step groups, AA, CA, NA, etc, the solution is the same – application of the 12 Steps.



Use of non-conference approved literature in meetings

Question: My group sometimes reads from The Original Manuscript of The Big Book because many of us favor the more forceful language it uses. Some have objected to doing this because they say only AA approved books can be used in meetings. Is it OK to read from non-AA books in meetings?

Answer: Yes, it is OK to read from "non-AA" literature in an AA meeting unless your group decides to use "conference approved" literature only. **Groups are under no obligation to adopt such a restriction.**

When talking about whether a book is "AA approved" the question is often this: "Is the book General Service Conference approved literature?" **Conference approval is only considered for books published by AA World Service in NY (AAWS). It serves as a way of saying that AAWS has put together a book and the General Service Conference has approved it. AAWS organizes the General Service Conference.**

The list of books with conference approval is not a list of what may or may not be used in meetings but a list of literature the conference feels accurately reflects AA's basic message. Some groups independently decide that they will only use Conference Approved Literature, but there is no requirement that a group limit itself to a list. Each AA group is the highest authority in AA and can use any literature it wants to.

In 1978 the AA General Service Office described what "Conference Approved" means in their Box 4-5-9 newsletter (Volume 23, No 4). Here the General Service Office said:

It (Conference Approved) does not mean the Conference disapproves of any other publications. Many local A.A. central offices publish their own meeting lists. A.A. as a whole does not oppose these, any more than A.A. disapproves of the Bible or any other publications from any source that A.A.'s find useful.

What any A.A. member reads is no business of G.S.O., or of the Conference, naturally.

The General Service Conference has also dealt with the meaning of the term "Conference Approved" in a "Conference Approved" pamphlet (SM F-29) called: Conference-Approved Literature. Here it is explained this way:

"Conference-approved" -- What It Means to You

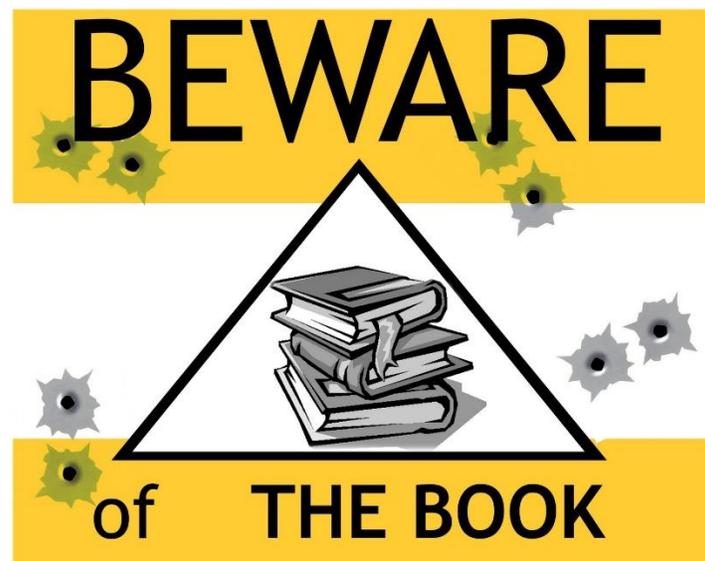
The term has no relation to material not published by G.S.O. It does not imply Conference disapproval of other material about A.A. A great deal of literature helpful to alcoholics is published by others, and A.A. does not try to tell any individual member what he or she may or may not read.

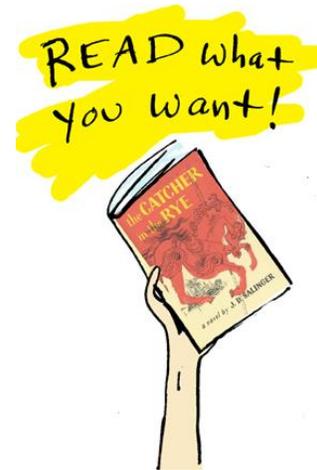
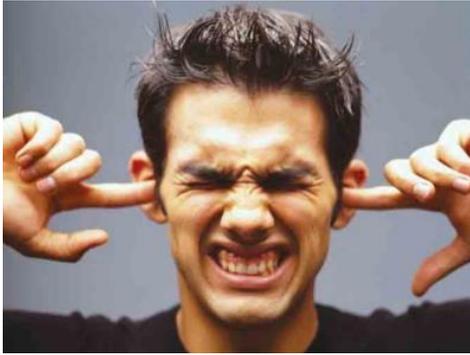
Books like the Original Manuscript and the First Edition of the Big Book are not Conference Approved Literature since there was no conference at the time they were published.

An odd side effect of a group that limits itself to conference approved literature would be that if the rule were rigorously followed, the group would not allow someone to read from Dr. Bob's personal copy of the Big Book because, as a First Edition, it would lack conference approval.

Regional newsletters and literature also lack conference approval but are widely used in meetings. Since 1954 the Hazelden published "Twenty Four Hours a Day" (ISBN 9780894860126) has been very widely used in AA meetings and has never been considered for conference approval.

The first AA group in Akron, Ohio (still going today) continues to display the Bible that AA's founders read from in the earliest meetings. What would have been fine literature for AA founder's to read in a meeting would spark outrage in some groups today.



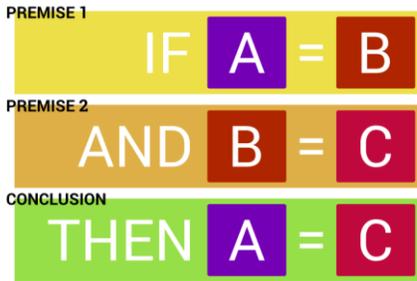


“Contempt Prior to Investigation”...an editorial

The articles above remind me of the fears I experienced before AA. The fear of my secrets being exposed; the fear of rejection if I dared think differently than the self-proclaimed AA police, kings, emperors and gurus who want power and control over everything read and spoken in AA meetings; the fear of being judged by my peers, by my clergy, by my tribe, and even those closest to me whom I love so dearly. But then I found freedom from the bondage of self, and also freedom from those old hateful indoctrinations I was taught from the time I was a child; prejudice, racism, sexism, hellfire and damnation if I did not follow this way or that way.

Toward the back of the Big Book (pg. 544, 4th edition) is where we find that story begins by referring to this young girl as having “symptoms of a deeper trouble” having an emotional illness that required her to get down to “causes and conditions”. And, while she acknowledged her restlessness, anxiety, fear, and insecurity, she blamed all these on the behaviors of others. Her only security was that of a materialistic and capitalistic nature and she soon found when she even had these, it did not fill that god-sized hole that could only be filled by a spiritual hunger. She states, *“I realize now that this phase of my development had been arrested by my obsession with self, and my egocentricity had reached such proportions that adjustment to anything outside my personal control was impossible for me.”* (BB pg. 547)

I want to incorporate into this article an observation made by one of her AA friends who stated she, *“had always been interested in mankind—I was just taking them one man at a time.”* (BB pg. 548) I raise this because every woman or girl I ever sponsored who had relapsed, relapsed into a relationship just prior to their relapse. It was obvious they were not putting their recovery (and God) first but were still seeking the easier softer ways declared by mankind. And this woman’s third time was a charm which ended her into jail and institutions.



Her brilliant observation that many AA's fail to see, even many years into their sobriety or dry drunks, was this: *"It was here I realized for the first time that as a practicing alcoholic, I had no rights. Society can do anything it chooses to do with me when I am drunk, and I can't lift a finger to stop it, for I forfeit my rights through the simple expedient of becoming a menace to myself and to the people around me. With a deep shame came the knowledge too that I had lived with no sense of social obligation nor had I known the meaning of moral responsibility to my fellow man."* (BB pg. 549)

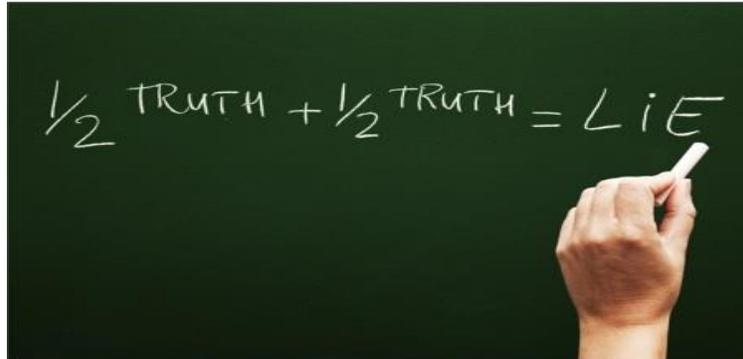
It is here we should remember our obligation as AA members to our 3rd Tradition which states "The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking." The chapter goes on to discuss the H.O.W. of the program. The suggestion is to **study the book** and **apply the principles** in our daily lives to keep us sober.

One of my favorite aspects of this chapter is her dictionary definition; *"Rationalization is giving a socially acceptable reason for socially unacceptable behavior, and socially unacceptable behavior is a form of insanity."* (BB pg. 550) Then it speaks to us as having a purpose. How long have we wallowed in self-deprecation and pity that we indeed had no purpose and may as well be dead. Here we find our purpose is to serve God and the people about us and believe in the infallibility of the principles of this program. Ah yes! And then the admonition, *"happy are ye who know these things and do them." For the only problems I have now are those I create when I break out in a rash of self-will.*" (BB pg. 551)

Logic must then ask the question; If I believe in the infallibility of this programs principles, then why do I have such a dire need to control what is read or said in an AA meeting? And of course, if we are rigorously honest, we must look at ourselves in the mirror and wonder why we fear the words of a different book, or the language of another member. It really has no place in AA and never existed for the first 50-plus years of our founding. So why do we need to focus our magnificent magnifying minds on such restrictions which actually exclude some of us and can certainly be perceived as a threat and intimidation to the newcomer who has not had the benefit of our own years of exposure to the principles of this program?

I think it is a good time in our history to dispel the myths of "approved literature" and be truly open-minded and as willing as the dying can be to outside schools of thought. And, to be perfectly honest, it was not just AA that helped and kept me sober. No. It was also the schools of thought of Confucius, Buddha, Jesus, Ghandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and the myriad other sources of TRUTH which I found outside of AA, not the least of

which are the wisdoms of our ancient elders, ancestors, and prophets. Being open-minded leaves no room for being close-minded to the Sunlight of the Spirit. I must walk my path as it is designed for me and encourage others to walk theirs without the fear of censorship, judgment, intimidation, or retaliation. Because the truth is this; when you censor me, you are trying to control me. And that is in opposition to everything the books of AA teach us.

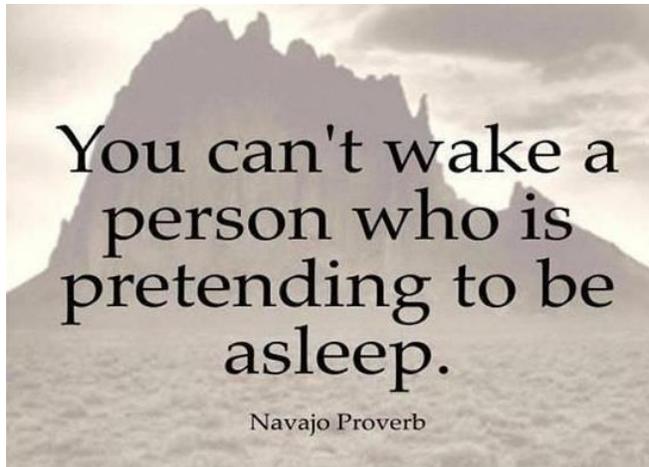


I can go to an AA meeting and hear a room full of opinions and not one word from the Big Book or the 12 and 12. When I leave that type of meeting I feel unfulfilled and malaise of the Spirit. I am disappointed that I have not heard one word of solution and nothing but whining problems. How can I carry a message of recovery and hope to other alcoholics when I don't know what the message of recovery is? And yes, I find the answers, solutions, and the messages in the Big Book and 12 and 12, **but I must also consider the wisdom of our pasts and its teachers without bias or prejudice.** It is time to stop the censorship in AA. It does not enhance our program but limits it and its members. Our author in Freedom from Bondage says, *"The only real freedom a human being can ever know is doing what you ought to do because you want to do it."* (BB pg. 552) My passion for this program may keep me out of those meetings where I am censored and cannot express my experience, strength, and hope. But no one can deny me the ability to study and follow the principles I am taught through rigorous study of the Big Book and 12 and 12. That is the only way I can carry an accurate message to others.

The Big Book speaks about the Spiritual Experience on page 568, *"Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of facing his problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance and belligerent denial."*

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness are the essentials of the program. But these are indispensable."

So, stop sweating the small stuff and remember what Herbert Spencer said, *"There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation."* (BB pg.568, 4th ed.) Ush`ka Waso'



Have you had a Spiritual awakening as a result of these steps? If so, please take the time to share your stories with us here at the NAIGSO-AA.org. The next edition will be out in time for the Summer solstice in June and I hope I will receive many more contributions for publishing. I want to thank those authors who have shared with us in this issue and invite them to continue being a part of our newsletter.

Don't pretend to be asleep when the gifts of recovery are being presented. And don't reject a teaching just because it does not correspond to that which you are familiar. If give you a gift with a red ribbon, will you deny the gift because the ribbon is not yellow? Be open minded to other schools of thought that might enhance the quality of your own recovery.





HISTORICAL TRIVIA

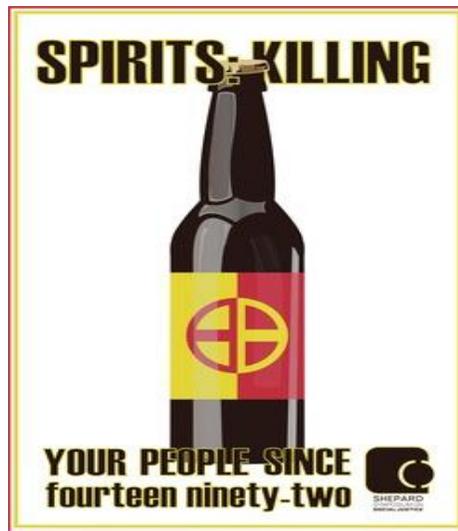
Very interesting history and origin of everyday words and phrases that are very old but still used in the English language of today. The world is in a constant state of change and that includes our language.

Did you know the saying "God willing and the Creeks don't rise" was in reference to the Creek Indians and not a body of water? It was written by Benjamin Hawkins in the late 18th century. He was a politician and Indian diplomat. While in the south, Hawkins was requested by the President of the U.S. to return to Washington. In his response, he was said to write, "God willing and the Creeks don't rise." Because he capitalized the word "Creeks" it is deduced that he was referring to the Creek Indian tribe and not a body of water.

In George Washington's days, there were no cameras. One's image was either sculpted or painted. Some paintings of George Washington showed him standing behind a desk with one arm behind his back while others showed both legs and both arms. Prices charged by painters were not based on how many people were to be painted, but by how many limbs were to be painted. Arms and legs are 'limbs,' therefore painting them would cost the buyer more. Hence the expression, 'Okay, but it'll cost you an arm and a leg.' (Artists know hands and arms are more difficult to paint)

Early politicians required feedback from the public to determine what the people considered important. Since there were no telephones, TV's or radios, the politicians sent their assistants to local taverns, pubs, and bars. They were told to 'go sip some Ale and listen to people's conversations and political concerns. Many assistants were dispatched at different times. 'You go sip here' and 'You go sip there.' The two words 'go sip' were eventually combined when referring to the local opinion and, thus we have the term 'gossip.'

At local taverns, pubs, and bars, people drank from pint and quart-sized containers. A bar maid's job was to keep an eye on the customers and keep the drinks coming. She had to pay close attention and remember who was drinking in 'pints' and who was drinking in 'quarts,' hence the phrase 'minding your 'P's and Q's'.



Hypocrisy.....History seems to repeat itself. Either that or else humans are slow to learn. (The latter, I think!) In the modern language of today we remind people that, if they are going to “talk the talk, then they need to walk the walk”. I have to look at myself on a daily basis and ask if I am turning my will and life over to the care of God as I understand God and striving for the perfect objective which is of God. Doing less than this is not satisfactory to me. Unless I challenge myself to do a little better each day than what I am actually doing is resting on my laurels. This puts me in danger of a relapse...physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual relapse. It is easy for me to see the defects and shortcomings of others long before I have to admit the awful truth that I am not paying attention to my own spiritual program. ‘Mote and plank’worried about the speck in my brother’s or sister’s eye before I remove the huge plank in my own. Another great Teacher reiterated the words of a wise man 700 years before his own time, **“This people honors me with their lips, but their heart is far away from me. But in vain do they worship me, teaching as their doctrines the precepts of men.”**

Am I walking the walk of my recovery or just talking to make myself look better than you? Am I following after the perfect objective which is God? Or, am I following the lies, deceptions, and prideful egos of man and the easier softer way? Am I being a good teacher or a producer of chaos? Today I must remember the 6 words found on every AA coin, “To thine own self be true.” Our spiritual path is our own choice.

The God of each our own understanding. Is one greater than the other?

THE GOLDEN RULE

BAHA'I FAITH
Lay not on any soul a load that you would not wish to be laid upon you, and desire not for anyone the things you would not desire for yourself
Baha'u'llah, Cleanings

HINDUISM
This is the sum of duty: do not do to others what would cause pain if done to you
Mahabharata 5:1517

BUDDHISM
Treat not others in ways that you yourself would find hurtful
Udana-Varga 5:18

CONFUCIANISM
One word which sums up the basis of all good conduct... loving kindness. Do not do to others what you do not want done to yourself
Confucius, Analects 15:23

ISLAM
Not one of you truly believes until you wish for others what you wish for yourself
The Prophet Muhammad, Hadith

TAOISM
Regard your neighbour's gain as your own gain, and your neighbour's loss as your own loss
T'ai Shang Kan Ying P'ien, 213-218

JUDAISM
What is hateful to you, do not do to your neighbour. This is the whole Torah; all the rest is commentary
Hillel, Talmud, Shabbat 31a

SIKHISM
I am a stranger to no one; and no one is a stranger to me. Indeed, I am a friend to all
Guru Granth Sahib, pg. 1299

JAINISM
One should treat all creatures in the world as one would like to be treated
Mahavira, Sutracritanga

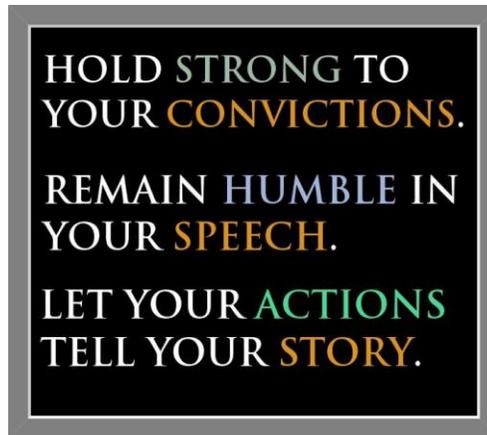
CHRISTIANITY
In everything, do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets
Jesus, Matthew 7:12

ZOROASTRIANISM
Do not do unto others whatever is injurious to yourself
Shayast-na-Shayast 13:29

NATIVE SPIRITUALITY
We are as much alive as we keep the earth alive
Chief Dan George

UNITARIANISM
We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part
Unitarian principle

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Who am I to determine what transcends your spirit or the direction of your journey?

So, I choose to read “How it Works” by eliminating the male vernacular of God as a ‘he’, ‘him’ or ‘his’ and replace it with the word ‘God’. This more accurately represents my own, personal Native American belief system that the Creator of the Universe, Hotye’ Nok’ta is all and everything, both male and female, and neither. I have chosen this way because it is true to my own convictions and I think represents a more generic God that can apply to everyone in AA or anywhere else. I work with adolescent girls who struggle with male figures; the result of heinous acts perpetrated against very fragile and youthful female spirits. It is easier for them as newcomers because they are still discovering much about themselves which they had been robbed of at a very tender age. I love each one as my own daughters and work hard at educating them within the leaves of our two AA books. Some of these girls recite “How it Works” and transpose it just as I do, but without my instruction or encouragement to do so.

The “AA police” (always an older male never a female) feel it necessary to scold and intimidate these girls with reprimands that, “We don’t read it that way here,” and “If you can’t read it right then you will no longer be allowed to read “How it Works”. Naturally the girls are humiliated in front of the group and angered that they can’t refer to “God as we understood God”, not ‘Him’.

Nit-picking about these things and trying to make someone else conform to your way of thinking/believing is not in line with the Spiritual principles of AA. Despite all the bickering, people like me will continue to follow the Path which brings us more into alignment with the god of each our own understanding. Nor was it what our founders had in mind when they started this mildly anarchistic fellowship. Let’s stop the criticisms and censorship...it avails us nothing...and actually discourages newcomers from returning....Peace...Jamie T-H

