



# Coffee Pot Talk

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## NDIAA Newsletter

February 2022

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### Step 2 Prayer

"Heavenly Father, I am having trouble with personal relationships. I can't control my emotional nature. I am prey to misery and depression. I can't make a living. I feel useless. I am full of fear. I am unhappy. I can't seem to be of real help to others. I know in my heart that only you can restore me to sanity if I am just willing to stop doubting your power. I humbly ask that you help me to understand that it is more powerful to believe than not to believe and that you are either everything or nothing.

*There Is A Solution*

### Second Step Perspective...

In the spirit of being honest as I was taught in the program, I did not ask fellows to share their experience for this newsletter. I have decided to share my own perspective on this step. I also have already lined up people to share their experiences for March and April. I was taught in the program that this is about progress not perfection and giving ourselves grace where necessary. Today I choose to give myself grace for "not doing what I had planned, and plan accordingly so it doesn't happen again!

When I was first introduced to the steps I did a lot of work to accept that I was an alcoholic and it was something I would always be. When I think about step two I think about that word sanity often. What exactly is sanity and how long would this process of restoration take? I learned that it is how I choose to interpret it; much like the word "unmanageable" in the first step. When referencing the dictionary "sanity" has a definition of "the ability to think and behave in a normal and rational manner; sound mental health." or "reasonable and rational behavior". When first working the steps I had to then accept that not only was my life unmanageable but I also was not acting in a sane matter in all areas of my life. I was certainly not behaving in a normal and rational manner. My relationships were messy and I struggled significantly with

telling the truth to everyone. Step two helped me to realize that I would come to believe I would be restored to sanity. It does not say “You will be sane again”- it says I will believe that it is possible with the help of a higher power. I grew up in a Catholic household and attended Catholic school for 15 years – I was certain I had an understanding of a higher power. I also could not wrap my head around us calling it a “higher power” and not just “God”. I was only taught to ever refer to this higher power as God. As I worked step 2 for the first time and continually over the course of my sobriety I came to realize it did not matter what I called my higher power. I also learned from others in the room that it was okay to identify with an item, or perhaps nothing at all (I had to understand that agnostic people do exist and that was perfectly okay!). I now believe that my higher power that I choose to call God is working daily in my life to restore me to sanity.

Yours in Service,  
Monica C.



Step 2	Tradition 2	Concept 2
“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”	“ For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”	To insure effective leadership, we should endow each element of A.A.—the Conference, the General Service Board and its service corporations, staffs, committees, and executives—with a traditional “Right of Decision.”



# Literature Spotlight

A query, copied below from the pamphlet, Frequently Asked Questions About A.A. featured in the January 2022 Spotlight on Literature column, caught my attention.

*Does AA have a basic textbook? (there are four: Alcoholics Anonymous, aka “the Big Book”,*

*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, and As Bill Sees It.)*

As Bill Sees It, sub-titled The AA way of life... Selected writings of A.A.’s co-founder,

is among that list, and as such is worthy of our attention for review in the February 2022 column of Spotlight on Literature. According to the website, aa.org, As Bill Sees It is: “A source of comfort and inspiration, (as) this collection of Bill W.’s writings addresses themes such as acceptance, gratitude and spirituality.” I heartily agree.

Numerous A.A. groups and meetings are named As Bill Sees It, including eleven online meetings as listed in the app, **Everything AA**. Many other meetings include a reading from As Bill Sees It as a regular discussion topic. Bill W. encourages these phenomena when he states in the Forward to the book: “It is felt that this material may become an aid to individual meditation and a stimulant to group discussion and may well lead to a still wider reading of all of our literature.”

As Bill Sees It, a pocket-sized text, has 332 titled, brief entries, one to three per page, of some of Bill W.’s most significant writings as they appear in the Big Book, the “Twelve and Twelve,” the Grapevine and other A.A. literature including Bill’s letters. There is no prescribed way to read As Bill Sees It. Reading a page per day could be accomplished in about eleven months. Or a particular topic can be searched and read at leisure. Many A.A. service presentations, including topic discussion A.A. meetings, are researched and written with the aid of this handy text.

A **Discussion and Reading Guide**, that follows the Forward, contains 100 alphabetized cross-referenced topics each with multiple pages of citations. If you are searching for comments on humility, pg vii, of which there are 40, one discovers 19 references to *humility, the need for*, and 21 references to *humility, ways towards*. Turning to page 36, titled, *Humility First* is the entry, “We found many in A.A. who once thought, as we did, that humility was another name for weakness. They helped us to get down to our right size. By their example they showed us that humility and intellect could be compatible, provided we placed humility first. When we begin to do that, we receive the gift of faith, a faith which works. This faith is for you, too.” (Twelve and Twelve page 30)

Some other topics with multiple page references include: *Growth, Higher Power, Inventory, Open Mindedness, Prayer, Rationalization, Responsibility, Service, Tolerance, 12th Stepping, and Will*.

In total, there are approximately 1000 page references cited in **As Bill Sees It**.

The last entry on page 332, written by Bill W., begins with the responsibility pledge which was declared at the 30th anniversary International Convention in 1965. *I am responsible... When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.* A letter from Bill with the salutation, *Dear Friends*, follows in which he states in part: “since 1938, the greatest part of my life has been spent in helping to create, design, manage, and ensure the solvency and effectiveness of AA’s world services.” The closing is signed, *Yours in trust and in affection, Bill*.

**As Bill Sees It** concludes with The Twelve Steps, The Twelve Traditions and The Twelve Concepts.

Love and support in service,

Sheila D.



# Traditions with Aim



## Tradition Two with Me & You

By Aim C.

Tradition Two: “For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

(Short Form, page 562 in the Big Book in Appendix I, or pages 9 & 10 in the 12&12)

The Second Tradition is the only Tradition whose “Short Form” is longer than its “Long Form”. There’s good reasons for this. We will explore those in this article. The underlined portion of the Tradition, shown above, is what makes the Short Form longer. It’s my experience that Bill probably wanted to remind us that God is the ultimate authority. Not our trusted servants. The difference between being servants, not senators. Our leaders, human, can at times, be filled with ego along their journey in service. Whether it is the guy with the coffee pot commitment who has had it for ten years, or the GSR that has never rotated out because “nobody wants it”. Others may be intimidated of asking for the commitment if someone is always in it. We often see that as “their job”. No one owns any service position in our Society. Sometimes we need the courage that comes with seeing no one in the position. Thinking “Well, if no one takes it, maybe I can do it.” As mentioned in later Traditions, it is about the spirit of service versus the spirit of vested authority. We want to encourage the spirit of service as much as we can. Likewise, we wish to avoid the spirit of vested authority as much as humanly possible. Obviously, the best among our trusted servants can succumb to ego. It’s a learning curve we all go through in service.

If the problem is how to maintain our unity, then the way to become unified is through God’s Will as expressed in the Group Conscience. The mechanism utilized to hear God’s Will is our business meetings. So how we conduct ourselves in business meetings is vital to how much we are listening to God and what God says about the matters before us. I can’t hear God’s Will when I’m angry, enraged, sulking, engaging in self-pity, and other like emotions. God’s will need not agree with my will. For a group to thrive, we must learn to listen for His Will in a group conscience decision. We can always revisit an issue again later. Later Traditions remind us that

the Group has the right to be wrong. God sometimes allows us to make the wrong decisions so we remember the lesson with the right decision. The Traditions were forged on these hard learned group life experiences. Our Traditions were written so we would need not repeat the misery of past experiences. An angry majority could be right....but so could a quiet minority. The Second Tradition ties into Concepts Four and Five quite nicely. Allowing participation, minority opinion, and the right of appeal to allow the Second Tradition to come to its fullest bloom. For more information on Concepts Four and Five, check out Appendix VII in your Fourth Edition Big Book on page 574. Or pick up the newest edition of the A.A. Service Manual Combined with the Twelve Concepts, fresh off the Alcoholics Anonymous World Services' presses.

And remember.....Groups that do not live by the Traditions, die by the Traditions. The most important part is the survival of the Group. By doing God's Will and respecting the Traditions, and their teachings, we ensure that the Group will survive to help another sick and suffering alcoholic.

Tradition Two "For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience."  
(Long Form, Big Book page 563 in Appendix I or 12&12 p.189)

## Stone Cold Sober...



During a meeting the other day, an old-timer named Jim W. was mentioned multiple times. None of the people who brought up his name realized that it was the anniversary of his passing. His wife had shared on social media earlier that day, posting a gratitude list she had found in his wallet after he died. The note was a love letter to AA.

I began to think about a phrase I heard from a Maryland speaker, at a Delaware AA convention, some years ago. He talked about how we have all attained our sobriety "on the backs of giants." Since then I've also heard the expression "standing on the shoulders of giants" which in Latin roughly translates to *discovering truth by building on previous discoveries*. Basically, both terms mean that we use the understanding gained by those who have gone before us to make progress. Perhaps this phrase is AA in a nutshell. Our **Responsibility** Statement was written for the 1965 A.A. International Convention in Toronto. It too sets us to be these shoulders: "I am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible." So here is to you my fellows, giants in the making.

Jim was a giant of a man, in stature, spirit, and recovery. As a very young person in the rooms, he helped me enormously. He would give me feedback on how to navigate recovery and AA without it coming across as criticism. When there was a problem brought to him, he would ask, "What step are you on right now?" He had a pillow embroidered with his version of Step 11, that I heard him quote many times. "God's will: nothing more, nothing less, nothing else." His wife Mary still has it on her couch.

There are many other giants in our rooms today and so very many who came before. An older woman with a blue eyeshadow, a man with a crewcut, the person in the cowboy hat, the constant knitter ... many and varied, each of whom allowed me to put a foot on their shoulder to keep myself afloat. They got meetings back on track when they went sideways, they championed newcomers - even the most annoying ones like me - they provided rides, and calls, and sometimes brutal, life-saving honesty. They were in the day-to-day AA trenches, often not holding titles or formal positions, but being the hand of AA, over and over and over again, life after life, story after story, year after year. From them, so many of us got the courage to face another 24 hours without booze, guidance on how to make amends, Big Books, and the experience, strength for which they had rightfully paid their dues. The giants are elder statesmen and stateswomen - and Jim W. was one of the best I've known.

On page 123 of *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, Bill Wilson wrote: "The elder statesman is one who sees the wisdom of the group's decisions, who holds no resentment over his reduced status, whose judgement, fortified by considerable experience, is sound, and who is willing to sit quietly on the side lines patiently awaiting developments. The bleeding deacon is one who remains convinced that the group cannot get along without him, who constantly connives for re-election to office, and who continues to be consumed with self-pity. A few deacons hemorrhage so badly that they get drunk. At times the A.A. landscape seems to be littered with bleeding

forms. Nearly every old-timer in our society has gone through this process in some degree. I have myself. Happily most ... survive and live to become elder statesmen. This the real and enduring leadership of A.A. ... the quiet opinion, the sure knowledge, and the humble example that resolves a crisis. When sorely perplexed, the group inevitably turns to them for advice. They become the voice of the group conscience. They are, in fact, the true voice of Alcoholics Anonymous. They do not drive by mandate; they lead by example." (Please remember friends, that we women - although not mentioned due to the nature of the times this was written - are included).

So every AA meeting, every group coconscious, 12 step call, sponsee conversation, I need to ask myself - where am I falling? Do my words and actions reflect the traditions? Also, because if I am not moving forward - I am moving backward, who surrounds me? Am I choosing healthy meetings? Am I surrounding myself with quality sobriety? Do I seek experience, strength and hope from people who will tell me the truth or people who will tell me what I want to hear? Am I properly sized in my role as sponsor? Years from now, my only goal is - although there may be a laundry list of mistakes made along the way - that someone looks back and says, "She helped me get here" - in spite of her flaws. She took the time, put in the emotional energy, and shared the difficulty. Some days I do better than others, but still, I strive - for I have had excellent examples.

My dear friend Mary W., Jim's wife, gave me permission to talk about Jim in this article and more importantly, to share this very powerful final story with you. When I read it, I began to cry at the grace, humility, and power of my friend's words, and the loss in many of our lives since his funeral. Jim, and those like him, are passing us the torch - are we reaching out to these giants and accepting the challenge to be a candle in the dark?

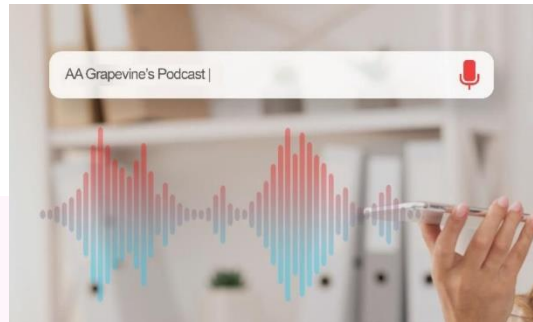
***From friend of AA, Mary W.: Today we remember Jim who passed into eternal life. Soon after his passing, I found a folded piece of paper on which Jim had written his gratitude list. These were his thoughts. "I am grateful for God's love, grace and pursuit of me, for AA, Steps and Traditions ... for all who went before me and carried the message, for those who died who did not die in vain, for those who carried me when I was lost and for the grace to grow and change even today."*** Thank you Jim W. - you were a blessing in my life.

As always, this is just one alcoholic's experience, strength, and hope - take what you like and leave the rest. I wish you faith and patience, faith that it works and the patience to let it.

In fellowship and service,  
*Maria*



## Technically Speaking...



Our new podcast, the **AA Grapevine Half-Hour Variety Hour** can be heard anywhere you listen to podcasts. We release a new episode every Monday. Tune in to hear funny, poignant, and always inspiring “**meeting after the meeting**” conversation about getting sober and staying sober in Alcoholics Anonymous.

Available for free wherever you listen to podcast or you can also find it on our website, at [www.aagrapevine.org/podcast](http://www.aagrapevine.org/podcast).

## **Anniversary Club**

Bill C 5/2/78

Bob A 7/9/90

Bob M 1/17/83

Brendan D 5/3/09

Brenda A 2/23/85

Carel B 4/26/04

Carolyn W 7/15/82

Christopher K 1/03

David C 2/1/94

David G 7/6/99

David F 11/23/07

David K 12/3/72

Debbie H 3/16/91

Doris S 4/80

Doug W 2/28/91

Ed H 1/28/96

Franny C 5/7/96

Fred M 5/5/90

Gail R 6/4/92

Jaime B 8/8/04

Jaffrey H 11/24/96

Janice S 12/25/10

Jason B 4/20/09

Jim S 4/10/88

Kara G 11/8/12

Kathy O 6/11/97

Ken H 11/4/97

Ken P 9/20/83

Kerry O 4/20/08

Laura R 6/21/95

Leslie D 2/20/90

Liza F 1/20/05

Marilyn M 6/26/99

Marie R 9/6/83

Mary Ellen S 1/24/10

Melissa S 6/23/08

Mike M 4/20/91

Nancy V 2/21/05 (deceased)

Patricia K 12/17/87

Patsy M 1/6/88

Phyllis M 3/9/88

Sally C 10/15/95

Shirley U 3/19/76

Stanley B 3/5/79

Suzanne M 4/4

Tenney W 5/15/82

Tom H 7/2/04

Tom McD 1/16/96

Tracy D 2/28/13

Valerie S 2/3/89

Walt A 1/94

Wes J 4/21/75

Wes M 2/1/94

\*\*\* Would you like to celebrate your anniversary, show your fellows how the program works and contribute to your Northern Delaware Intergroup at the same time? The anniversary club is easy to join, Here's how it works... you can email the information below to intergroup at [mainoffice@ndiaa.org](mailto:mainoffice@ndiaa.org). A small donation of \$1 per year sober is all it costs to have your name and anniversary date printed in the newsletter every month for a whole year. \*\*\*

**\*\*If you ever want to submit an article or your two cents ( or even three) to the newsletter please feel free to reach out to me via email at [mon92890@gmail.com](mailto:mon92890@gmail.com)**