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VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP

Primary Purpose

FOURTH EDITION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PAGES 1-16

[Reading Guide for 'Bill's Story' | Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book \(amethystrecovery.org\)](#)

Bill's Story

Those who have read *Alcoholics Anonymous* are already aware that the second chapter (or first, if you don't count "The Doctor's Opinion") is all about AA founder Bill W. In order to help other alcoholics understand how they might recover, he tells the story of his addiction and how he finally learned to stay sober.

Parts of his story are quite harrowing, but many of us have certainly had similar experiences. It is through "Bill's Story" that we are able to learn that the man who started a program that has helped hundreds of thousands of struggling alcoholics began as a man who was just like the rest of us—scared, vulnerable, and uncertain as to how long he might live to see another day.

The Importance Of Bill's Story

This makes "Bill's Story" one of the most important chapters in the Big Book. While it may not focus on direct lessons pertaining to our sobriety, it helps us to realize that we are not alone. Through this chapter, we come to realize that people have been living our stories since the 1930s.

Not that Bill Wilson was by any means the world's first alcoholic. But he just may be the first to have shared his tale of alcoholism in a book designed to help people just like him. And for that, we should be eternally grateful.

For the purposes of breaking down the most important point, we should break down "Bill's Story" into three major sections. By no sheer coincidence, we have chosen to break it down into the same categories that should be used by anyone **telling their story** of addiction and recovery.



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Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Archives Committee Mtg.- 02/09/2022 @ 6:00 PM
- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. - 02/14/2022 @ 6:00 PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. - 02/21/2022 @ 6:30 PM
- ◆ District 27 Committee & Business Mtgs. 02/19/2022 @ 10 AM&12PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. - 02/22/2022 @ 7:00 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. - 02/24/2022 @ 7:00 PM

What It Was Like

“Bill’s Story” wastes no time, beginning with its author’s introduction to liquor upon his return from the First World War. He had been warned before that alcohol could be a dangerous mistress, but he had always failed to heed the warning. The same was true when he later visited Winchester Cathedral in England and discovered a tombstone which read:

*“Here lies a Hampshire Grenadier
Who caught his death
Drinking cold small beer.
A good soldier is ne’er forgot
Whether he dieth by musket
Or by pot.”*

The Early Years

In his early 20s, Bill studied law and performed work for a surety company that introduced him to Wall Street. He also studied business and economics, hoping to work the market himself. At this point, he states in “Bill’s Story” that he was not yet a full-blown alcoholic.

But he often drank before exams and nearly failed his courses because of it. Nonetheless, he felt that he would be okay. **Many successful men drank**, and he was certain that he could be one of them. He and his wife went on a trip to investigate some markets, and Bill landed himself a job on Wall Street.

This is where things began to turn. He made a vast fortune and was successful for a time, but by the late 1920s, he was a perpetual drunk. In an age where it was not uncommon for people to empty out their bottles in the jazz clubs of New York, his friends began to express concern for his drinking habits.

Naturally, he replaced them with other fair-weather friends and began **living his life in isolation** when he ran out of those. He had his wife, his fortune, and a growing appreciation for golf. But aside from these, he found himself with little else.

The Great Depression

Then, *everyone* in his profession found themselves with little else. It was 1929, and the Great Depression was putting an end to Bill’s good run. It is at this point in “Bill’s Story” that we experience a possible resurgence, as Bill states he would not go down without a fight.

He and his wife moved to Canada, and Bill became successful again. But it was short-lived. While he was now working for a friend, that friend could not keep an alcoholic under his employ. Bill was out of money again and seemed to be out of options as well.

. He tried to seek a **geographical cure**, and he contemplated suicide multiple times. He even stole from his wife to fund his habit. Bill notes in this point of “Bill’s Story” that he was beginning to fear for his own sanity.

What Happened

We often say that **addiction is a family disease**, and that is true in “Bill’s Story” as well. With few options, he went to live with his wife’s parents. His wife became the breadwinner, as Bill could not hold down a steady job for the next five years. He did have periods of sobriety, but things steadily became worse as he found that he needed beer and bathtub gin just to eat. He was at that stage that every alcoholic reaches before they reach their tipping point—the stage at which we have to drink just so that we can get to “normal.”

In 1932, “Bill’s Story” notes further losses. With his new home at risk due to mortgage holders and his in-laws’ failing health, he had to devise a plan. The Depression was almost over, but stocks were at a low point. Bill somehow managed to find some buyers, but a bender put that opportunity to rest.

This was the point at which he finally **hit rock bottom**. He was able to see that he was living in a continuous state of loss due to his own actions. But despite his resolve, “Bill’s Story” notes multiple relapses after this decision.

A Fault Sense Of Assurance

As was the case for many of us before we entered AA, of course. We knew that we needed to quit, but figured we could do it our own way. Bill was at a particular disadvantage since there was no AA for him to join. And while he had accepted his unmanageability, he had not accepted his powerlessness. But he did not see it yet, because no one had penned **Step One**. The cycle continued a few more years, with occasional belladonna treatment or hydrotherapy.

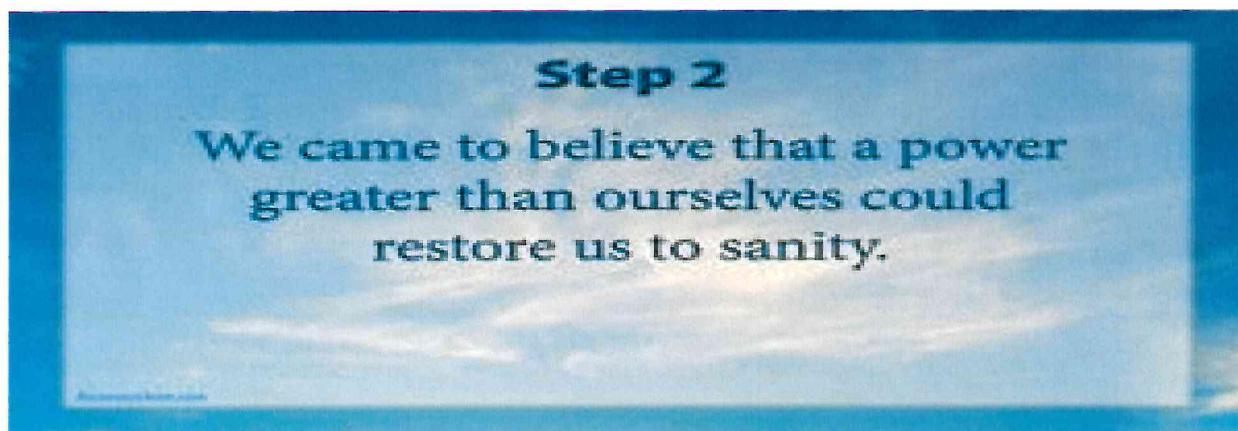
“After a time I returned to the hospital. This was the finish, the curtain, it seemed to me. My weary and despairing wife was informed that it would all end with heart failure during delirium tremens, or I would develop a wet brain, perhaps within a year. She would soon have to give me over to the undertaker or the asylum.”

Things took a turn for the better when Bill was visited by a childhood friend who had found sobriety through spirituality. While he makes no effort in “Bill’s Story” to lie about the fact that he was at first skeptical of this person, he eventually listened to what the man had to say. He realized that spirituality and organized religion were not the same things, that all he needed was the **willingness** to acknowledge a greater force than his own in the world. This formed the basis of **Step Two** and Three. More importantly, it marked Bill’s **sobriety date**. From that point forward, he would drink no more.

What Things Are Like Now

Bill Wilson is no longer among us, but his journey forward from his sobriety date was similar to the journey embarked upon by all who enter recovery. The Twelve Steps may not have existed, but Bill essentially performed them in pursuit of a better life.

He made amends, he learned to **overcome his resentments**, and he embraced **the concept of service work**. And because of his service, things now are better for all of his who enter recovery, for we are able to read “Bill’s Story” in addition to the rest of the Big Book. We are able to follow the example that he has set.



AA GRAPEVINE TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

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.

1. Do I criticize or do I trust and support my group officers, AA committees and office workers? Newcomers? Old-timers?
2. Am I absolutely trustworthy, even in secret, with AA Twelfth Step jobs or other AA responsibilities?
3. Do I look for credit in my AA jobs, praise for my AA ideas?
4. Do I often feel the need to “save face” in group discussions, or can I yield in good spirit to the group conscience and work along with it?
5. Although I have been sober a few years, am I still willing to serve my turn with AA chores?
6. Do I complain about the decisions that my group makes, even though I do not attend the business meetings where these decisions are made?

Financial Statements

	<u>December 2021 \$)</u>	<u>YTD (\$)</u>
<u>Revenue</u>		
Sales	1,851	26,703
Group Contributions	2,124	27,497
Individual Contributions	342	8,791
Misc. Income	36	277
Fundraising	0	550
Total Income	\$4,352	\$64,139

	<u>Expenses</u>	
Cost Of Goods Sold	2,208	18,090
Fundraising Expenses	0	200
Credit Card Machine	44	661
Office Supplies & Misc	362	1,499
Insurance	49	587
Licenses & Fees	70	972
Payroll	1,162	19,865
Taxes	1,871	7,724
Copy Machine	138	2,898
Rent	975	11,662
Utilities	1,667	6,068
Total Expenses	\$8,566	\$72,669
Net Income	\$4,214	\$8,530

December 31,2021 Cash Balances

Main Checking \$14,221

Event Account \$1,400

Prudent Reserve \$12,874

Till Cash \$100

Total Cash Balance \$28,595

Steering Committee Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous Steering Committee meeting of January 10, 2022

Attendance: Steering Committee members: Laurie, Michael, Alex, Kelsey, Phil, Bruce, Dee Leanne, office manager, Robert, webmaster, Greg, district 37

Opening: The meeting was opened at 6:02pm with the Serenity Prayer. Minutes from the December 2021 SC meeting were accepted. Minutes from the December 2021 IG meeting were distributed.

Treasury: It was noted that the transition of information from Laurie to Alex has not yet been completed due to technical issues. Designation of authorized check signers has not yet been completed. Both issues are expected to be resolved within the week. It was noted that the group contributions in the newsletter is not correct.

Hotline: The Twilio system for answering the hotline will be tested this week.

Office: The office is temporarily closed due to Covid exposure. Closure is noted on the website.

Website: It was noted that updates are being handled promptly and the webmaster keeping the office informed.

Old Business: None

New Business/Steering Committee Member 2: Julie resigned her position due to a scheduling conflict with her employment. Nomination will be accepted at the IG meeting.

New Business/Timely IG Meetings: It was noted in some Intergroups the meeting is limited to one hour.
No motion, no action.

Closing: The meeting was closed at 6:24pm with the Serenity Prayer.

Yours in Service,

Phil B.
Recording Secretary

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes

Vancouver Area Intergroup of Alcoholics Anonymous Intergroup Representatives meeting of January 17, 2022

Attendance:

Molly, McGillivray Study Gp	Leanne, office manager	Dusty, Cornerstone
Chris, Cascade Gp	Anthony, Rock Bottom Rcvry	Laurie*, Sober Uppers
Bruce*, B&P	Tony, Men's Fireside	Alex*, Men's Fireside
Dee* (no group identified)	Steve, Over 55	Phil*, R360very
Fayette, Miracles	Michael, Miracles	Connie, Ladies by Lavender
Michael*, Welcome Home	Amy, Steel Sharpens Steel	Leanna, East County Women
Michael, Sunday Solutions	Kelsey*, Cornerstone	Dusty, Cornerstone
Emily, Hotline	Robert, Webmaster	Heidi, Minnehaha

*Steering Committee member

Groups with multiple representatives aware only one may vote on any motions

Opening: The meeting was opened with the Serenity Prayer at 6:30pm. Laurie discussed the rewards of service. Attendees introduced themselves. Minutes from the December 2021 IG meeting were accepted. Minutes from the January 2022 SC meeting were distributed.

Hotline: Emily advised that Twilo has been tested and that it appears to be successful. Twilo sends reminders to volunteers 15 minutes before their shift, logs them in for their shift and has voice mail. Currently there are two volunteer openings. Please go to the Intergroup website for volunteer opportunities. Hotline will have a quarterly meeting January 24th.

Treasury: Issues preventing Alex from logging in remotely have been resolved. The signatures needed to transition to the new checking account signers has been completed and this will be completed at the bank this week.

Office: The office was temporarily closed due to Covid and is now reopened.

Old Business/Iron Horse: Amy reported that Steel Sharpens Steel is its own meeting and is not answerable to Iron Horse. They will be added to the schedule.

New Business/Computer: Laurie reported that the office computer is aged, operates extremely slow and further cleaning it up will not resolve the issue. Robert said he can resolve the issue and will coordinate with Leanne to install a new computer.

New Business/SC Position 2: Julie needed to resign her position due to a scheduling conflict with her employment. Tony was elected to SC Position 2.

Intergroup Rep Meeting Minutes

Continued.....

Group News/New Years Event: The New Years event that was to take place at the Saddle Club was cancelled due to Covid. It is rescheduled for February 4th.

Closing: The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer at 7:08pm.

Yours in Service,
Phil B.
Recording Secretary

Position	Name	Term Expires
Steering Committee Chair	Laurie	12/31/2022
SC Vice Chair	Michael	12/31/2022
Office Manager	Leanne	No defined term
Treasurer	Alex	12/31/2023
Recording Secretary	Phil	12/31/2023
Position 1	Dee	12/31/2022
Position 2	Tony	12/31/2023
Position 3	Kelsey	12/31/2023
Position 4	Bruce	12/31/2022
Hotline	Emily	Self-Governing Committee
Webmaster	Robert	No defined term
Outreach	Amber	No defined term



Upcoming Events

February 2022

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9 Archives Committee Mtg: 6:00 pm	10	11	12
13	14 Steering Committee Mtg.: 6:00 pm	15	16	17	18	19 District 27 Committees Mtg.: 10am-12 pm District 27 Business Mtg.: 12 pm-3 pm
20	21 Intergroup Rep. Mtg. 6:60 pm	22 District 37 Mtg.: 7:00 pm	23	24 District 7 GSR Mtg.: 7 pm	25	26
27	28					

Archives Corner



Vancouver Archives currently serves Districts 7 and 37 of Western Washington AA Area 72. The Archives Committee meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. We would love to have you visit our meeting! There are many service opportunities!

On November 14, 2021, Archivist Penny, and Alt Archivist Harry, set up a display at Central Group, aka Blue Door. Penny spoke of the history of the group which started in 1946 and was the first meeting in Vancouver! She also conducted a moving tribute to Central Group members who have passed. Following are a few photos of the display.



PLEASE donate your group documents to Archives! **Don't throw anything out!** We will digitize your records and physically store and preserve your signs, relics, etc.

Upcoming Events:

- * 02/09/2022 6:00 p.m. - 7:00 p.m. Archives Committee Meeting at Intergroup Office
- 06/24-26/2022 Pacific Northwest Conference at the Heathman Lodge.

Area Archives and Vancouver Archives will have an Archives room separate from the main room, which will allow for a display of more materials.

SHARED BY MEMBERS

Akron AA Newspaper Article the AA 'Miracle Jacket'

While visiting the Akron Intergroup I ran across a late 1930's touching Newspaper Article about a "jacket" (sport coat). I am paraphrasing but it went something like this:



At an AA clubhouse there was a jacket that new members would borrow to wear on a job interview and everyone who wore it got a job!

What the AA members didn't know was the Akron business owners recognized the jacket and knew these men were in the program and were going to be a great employee now that they are sober and in AA.

I am glad the AA members who 12 Stepped me had, and instilled in me, that kind of respect for the Program.



The A.A. Chip or "Birthday" Ceremony

Most meetings give out AA chips, either at the beginning or the end of the meeting. An AA chip is a coin which resembles a Mardi Gras doubloon. The coin is to commemorate time you have sober. The most important chip you will pick up is the 24 Hour or 'A Desire to Stop Drinking Chip.' If you want to stop drinking (or using drugs), you should pick up one of these and put it in your pocket. It symbolizes a commitment you're making to stay sober for 24 hours.

You will see people picking up chips for staying sober longer than one day; even picking up medallions to commemorate staying sober a year, 20 years, 30 years and longer. You may be thinking to yourself that 'people who pick up AA coins to celebrate decades of sobriety are liars because nobody can stay sober that long,' but we assure you that many people embrace the sober life and the thought of drinking or using their drug of choice makes them 'recoil like a moth from a hot flame.'

How Stories Transform Lives

When I first came to AA, I wondered how the hell sitting around in a circle listening to one person talking, and the next person talking and could have anything to do with my stopping drinking? It didn't seem very medical or scientific? Did not seem like any sort of treatment?

How could I get sober this way, listening to other people talking?
It didn't make any sense. Any time I tried to ask a question I was told that we do not ask questions, we simply listen to other recovering alcoholics share what they called their "experience, strength and hope"?

How does this help you recover from one of the most profound disorders known, from chronic alcoholism?

I did not realize that this "experience, strength and hope" in AA parlance, is fundamental in shifting an alcoholic's self schema from a schema that did not accept one's own alcoholism, to a self schema that did, a schema that shifts via the content of these shared stories from a addicted self schema to recovering person self schema.

Over the weeks, months and years I have grown to marvel at the transformative power of this story format and watched people change in front of my very eyes over a short period of time via this process of sharing one's story of alcoholic damage to recovery from alcoholism. I have seen people transformed from dark despair to the luster of hope and health. One of the greatest stories you are ever likely to hear and one I never ever tire of hearing. Through another person sharing their story they seem to be telling your story at the same time. The power of identification is amplified via this sharing. If one views A.A. as a spiritually-based community, one quickly observe s that A.A.is brimming with stories.

The majority of A.A.'s primary text (putatively entitled Alcoholics Anonymous but referred to almost universally as "The Big Book," A.A., 1976) is made up of the stories of its members.

During meetings, successful affiliates tell the story of their recovery. In the course of helping new members through difficult times, sponsors frequently tell parts of their own or others' stories to make the points they feel a neophyte A.A. member needs to hear. Stories are also circulated in A.A. through the organization's magazine, Grapevine.

But the most important story form in Alcoholics Anonymous describes personal accounts of descent into alcoholism and recovery through A.A. In the words of A.A. members, explains "what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now."

Members typically begin telling their story by describing their initial involvement with alcohol, sometimes including a comment about alcoholic parents. Members often describe early experiences with alcohol positively, and frequently mention that they got a special charge out of drinking that others do not experience. As the story progresses, more mention is made of initial problems with alcohol, such as job loss, marital conflict, or friends expressing concern over the speaker's drinking.

Members will typically describe having seen such problems as insignificant and may label themselves as having been grandiose or in denial about the alcohol problem. As problems continue to mount, the story often details attempts to control the drinking problem, such as by avoiding drinking buddies, moving, drinking only wine or beer, and attempting to stay abstinent for set periods of time.

Members will typically describe having seen such problems as insignificant and may label themselves as having been grandiose or in denial about the alcohol problem. As problems continue to mount, the story often details attempts to control the drinking problem, such as by avoid-ing drinking buddies, moving, drinking only wine or beer, and attempting to stay abstinent for set periods of time.

The climax of the story occurs when the problems become too severe to deny any longer. A.A. members call this experience “hitting bottom.” Some examples of hitting bottom that have been related to me include having a psychotic breakdown, being arrested and incarcerated, getting divorced, having convulsions or delirium tremens, attempting suicide, being publicly humiliated due to drinking, having a drinking buddy die, going bankrupt, and being hospitalized for substance abuse or depression. After members relate this traumatic experience, they will then describe how they came into contact with A.A. or an A.A.-oriented treatment facility...storytellers incorporate aspects of the A.A. world view into their own identity and approach to living. Composing and sharing one’s story is a form of self-teaching—a way of incorporating the A.A. world view. This incorporation is gradual for some members and dramatic for others, but it is almost always experienced as a personal transformation.

So before we do the 12 steps we start by accepting step one – We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable – and by listening to and sharing stories which give many examples of this loss of control or powerlessness over drinking. .

Sharing our stories also allows us to start comprehending the insanity of out of control-ness (unmanageability) of our drinking and steps us up for considering step 2 – Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity – through to step three, so the stories not only help us change self schema they set us on the way to treating our alcoholism via the 12 steps. In these stories we accept our alcoholism and the need for personal, emotional and spiritual transformation. The need to be born anew, as a person in recovery.

Reference

1. Humphreys, K. (2000). Community narratives and personal stories in Alcoholics Anonymous. *Journal of community psychology*, 28(5), 495-506.

[personal stories in Alcoholics Anonymous | The Alcoholics Guide to Alcoholism](#)

FRI
FEB 4

FROM
7PM

1970s *Party*

Photo
Booth

Raffle

\$3 Single
\$5 Couple

Food

HOMEGROUP
COLLABO:
AA Meeting 10:00 p.m.

ROCK BOTTOM
CORNERSTONE
HOPE DEALERS

COSTUME CONTEST
MUSIC & DANCING

MATSON
BUILDING

10713 NE 117TH AVE VANCOUVER, WA 98661

THE LIGHTHOUSE

Valentine's Day Party

DANCE

DJ

POTLUCK

PARTY

*Saturday
February 12th
7pm - 11pm*

6415 SE Mill
Plain Blvd

VIRTUAL SPIRITUAL BREAKFAST



Sunday, February 27, 2022
9:00am to 11:00am

Please join us for virtual breakfast with great speakers, fun raffle prizes and fellowship. Friends and family welcome!

WHEN: Sunday, February 27, 2022
9:00am to 11:00am • Room opens at 8:30am
ZOOM INFO: Meeting ID: 891 8445 7551
SUGGESTED DONATION: \$5.00
RAFFLE: \$5 for 6 • \$20 for 30
(Also \$10 for 12 or \$15 for 18)

REGISTER TODAY:

We accept all major credit cards, PayPal, Venmo or checks.
For full details, visit
www.swwashingtonjamboree.org

A SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR SPEAKERS

Tonya S. (Vancouver)
Big Mike C. (Vancouver)
Patty H. (Vancouver)

All proceeds benefit the 2022
SW Washington Jamboree.
If you have raffle items you wish to
donate, please contact Mary P.
(360) 600-6607



JUST STAY
2022 SW WASHINGTON JAMBOREE

www.swwashingtonjamboree.org
swwashingtonjamboree@gmail.com

 SW Washington Jamboree

Vancouver Area Intergroup 2022 Newsletter will be distributed in the first week of each month instead of the middle of the month.

If you would like to share your :

- AA Birthday on the Calendar
- Experience Strength & Hope
- AA related content or topics
- AA Flyers

In the Upcoming Newsletters please feel free to email :

vancaa@vanintgrp.com

You Are Wanted Needed & Loved!

