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VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP

Primary Purpose

FOURTH EDITION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

PAGES 44-57

[Chapter 4 - We Agnostics - \(pp. 44-57\) \(aa.org\)](#)

We Agnostics

In the preceding chapters you have learned something of alcoholism. We hope we have made clear the distinction between the alcoholic and the non-alcoholic. If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.

To one who feels he is an atheist or agnostic such an experience seems impossible, but to continue as he is means disaster, especially if he is an alcoholic of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.

But it isn't so difficult. About half our original fellowship were of exactly that type. At first some of us tried to avoid the issue, hoping against hope we were not true alcoholics. But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life or else. Perhaps it is going to be that way with you. But cheer up, something like half of us thought we were atheists or agnostics. Our experience shows that you need not be disconcerted.

If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could will these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn't there. Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly.

Lack of power, that was our dilemma. we had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power?



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Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. –
05/09/2022 @ 6:00 PM
- ◆ Archives Committee Mtg.-
05/11/2022 @ 5:30 PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. –
05/16/2022 @ 6:30 PM
- ◆ District 27 Committee Mtg.
05/21/2022 @ 10 AM&12PM
- ◆ District 27 Business Mtgs.
05/21/2022 @12PM-3PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. –
05/24/2022 @ 7:00 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. -
05/26/2022 @ 7:00 PM

The Need for Spirituality

One of the first pages of “We Agnostics” includes the following passage:

“If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could will these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn’t there. Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly.”

It boils down to a lack of control, one which we have fought very hard to ignore. This is why Step Three requires a surrendering of the will. Yes, we may have very decent morals and a wonderful comprehension of standard ethics. But over the course of our addictions, we began to place less value on these ideals. We ignored our own moral compass, as sturdy as it had seemed up to that point, for the sake of weaseling one more fix into our daily schedule. We forsook our families, friends, careers and other obligations for the sake of prolonging our substance abuse. But no matter how often we sacrificed our own morals, values and ethics, those of us for whom “We Agnostics” was written were dedicated to the idea that we alone could solve our problems.

There are various reasons for why we may have felt this way. Perhaps we were indoctrinated to believe a version of God that did not meet our own moral standards. Perhaps we looked at the world and its many wars and decided that religion was to blame for all of it. We never looked at the many people who practiced religion with love and respect for their fellows, because we considered them to be the rare exceptions. We wanted none of this God concept, so we decided to view it in the most cynical way possible.

But “We Agnostics” is not saying that you must take up arms and join the Crusades. In fact, “We Agnostics” does not attempt to sway your religious beliefs one way or the other. It is about spirituality, and nothing more. If we continue to harbor our former prejudice against religious people, however, we may find a spiritual solution quite difficult to seek. There is a form of the Serenity Prayer that mentions accepting the world as it is, not as we would have it. This is the backbone of true faith and spirituality—acceptance. If we are to accept our disease and learn to overcome it, we must accept that we are not the ones running the show. Whether you embrace religion or science in reaching this conclusion is no one’s business but yours. Simply have faith that there are greater forces in the world, and endeavor to become one with them rather than constantly fighting against them. Otherwise, you will forever be locked in a battle that simply cannot be won.

“As We Understood Him”

Some who read “We Agnostics” will not perceive it as being quite as open and accepting as we have made it out to be. This is because “We Agnostics” includes terms such as “Creative Intelligence,” which would appear not to gel with the notion that we are allowed to accept the greater scientific universe as the Higher Power of our choosing. The Big Book would advise you, however, not to be too perturbed by these references.

“Besides a seeming inability to accept much on faith, we often found ourselves handicapped by obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice. Many of us have been so touchy that even casual reference to spiritual things made us bristle with antagonism. This sort of thinking had to be abandoned. Though some of us resisted, we found no great difficulty in casting aside such feelings. Faced with alcoholic destruction, we soon became as open minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect alcohol was a great persuader.”

There’s a common question asked of those in recovery when they find themselves taking a particularly obstinate view. “Do you want to be right, or do you want to be sober?” This question is of great annoyance to those of us who would prefer to be both, but really think about what the question is truly asking. Do you want your views to be so overpowering that you would succumb to emotional disturbance simply because you did not agree with something that was said? Bill is using “We Agnostics” to demonstrate how he overcame his own struggles with spirituality. Your path may not be the same as his, and this is okay. You do not have to take his view of a Higher Power, but we should still respect the fact that his view kept him sober until the end of his days. Just as you would like others to respect your own spiritual views, so too must you respect theirs. Do not shift uncomfortably whenever someone says that God or Jesus is keeping them sober. Unless they begin following you around day and night in an attempt to convert you, they have done you no wrong.

In other words, we must develop our own understanding of the spiritual and what it means to us without looking down on anyone else’s perception. We are reminded in “We Agnostics” that many long-held scientific beliefs have been proven wrong upon more research, and some scientifically accepted information regarding our universe has technically never been proven. If cold, hard fact can occasionally fail us, then who are we to question anyone’s spiritual beliefs? We must find what works for us and accept that it may not be the same thing that works for others. The moment we begin judging others for what they believe, our faith has been replaced by pride. If we truly wish to let go of our character defects and lead a sober lifestyle full of grace and humility, this sort of false pride will get us nowhere.

Spiritual Awakenings

Spend enough time in the rooms and you'll start to hear a lot about "spiritual awakenings" – almost as much as you'll hear about their opposite, "rock bottom!"

The phrase might make you think about lightning bolts, angels, or rainbows in the clouds.

And while a spiritual awakening might involve some – or even all – of those, the actual experience of it can be much simpler.

The Big Book of AA describes a "spiritual experience" or "awakening" as plainly as "the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery." If you really think about it, transforming from an obsessed addict into a clean and sober person IS pretty miraculous.

While some people have "sudden and spectacular upheavals," the book says, most "develop slowly over a period of time."

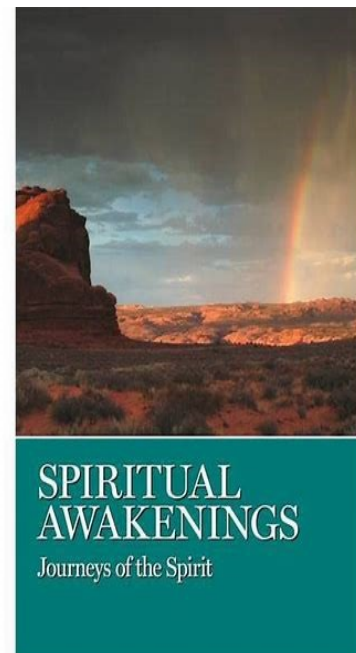
If you're not sure whether you've had one, the Big Book explains that a spiritual experience involves the discovery of an "unsuspected inner resource," the ability to "identify with a power greater than" yourself.

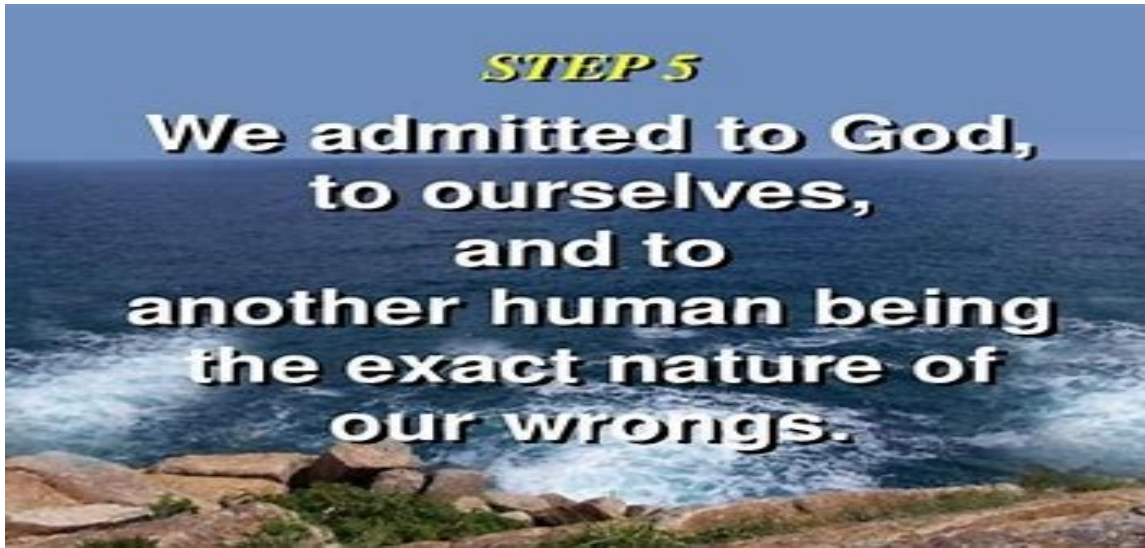
Some people call that "God-consciousness," but it doesn't have to be a religious matter.

Basically, it means that your life is now guided by something BESIDES alcohol.

Is a spiritual experience in the cards for you? If you work the steps, it's pretty much guaranteed.

But it's important not to get too caught up in waiting for your big "a-ha moment" or wondering whether you've already had a spiritual awakening and just missed it. If you stay honest, open-minded, willing, and work the steps, spiritual experiences could become a way of life for you, one day at a time.





AA GRAPEVINE TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

Tradition Five:

Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

1. Am I willing to firmly explain to newcomers the limitations of AA help, even though they may get mad at me for not giving them a loan? Or dating advice? Or help with a job?
2. Have I ever imposed on any AA member for a special favor or consideration simply because I am a fellow alcoholic?
3. Am I willing to Twelfth-Step the next newcomer without regard to who or what is in it for me?
4. Do I help my group in every way to fulfill our primary purpose?
5. Do I remember that AA long-timers, too, can be alcoholics who still suffer? Do I try both to help them and to learn from them?
6. Does our group ever use money from the basket for dinners or events or for memorials for members who have passed on?

Upcoming Events

May 2022						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Steering Committee Mtg.: 6:00 pm	10	11 Archives Committee Mtg: 6:00 pm	12	13	14
15	16 Intergroup Rep. Mtg. 6:60 pm	17	18	19	20	21 District 27 Committees Mtg.: 10am-12 pm District 27 Business Mtg.: 12pm-3pm
22	23	24 District 37 Mtg.: 7:00 pm	25	26 District 7 GSR Mtg.: 7 pm	27	28
29	30	31				

ARCHIVES CORNER MAY 2022



Your Vancouver Archives, serves Districts 7 and 37 of Western Washington Area 72.

We need your group history for the 2022 Pacific Northwest Conference (PNC) on Zoom! Archives will have a Zoom breakout room with a video display of our local group history! SHARE YOUR GROUP HISTORY through books, letters, fliers, reports, coffee mugs, fliers, anything that represents your group through the years. Sharing our history is vital for our future generations in carrying the message! You can bring your items to the next Archives Committee Meeting, which meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 5:30 p.m. at the Intergroup Office OR call Cindy at (702) 806-6466 and I can meet you, and give you a receipt for the temporary display of your items, which will be returned upon completion of our video. We can also permanently house your historical items in our Vancouver Archives Repository, which is secure and climate controlled.

Current Projects:

- PNC planning. Possible Zoom break-out room for local display.
- Refurbishing Grapevine binders that have developed rust.
- Continued digitization of audio cassettes, cd's and group history. This includes storage of "born" digital documents, such as Minutes, Agendas, Financial Reports and event fliers.

Email to: dist7archives@area72aa.org

Upcoming Events:

- 05/11/22 5:30-6:30 p.m. Archives Committee Meeting at Intergroup Office.
- 06/24-26/2022 Pacific Northwest Conference will be via Zoom.

Our Area 72 is hosting this year!

Contact Cindy M. with any questions or comments at:

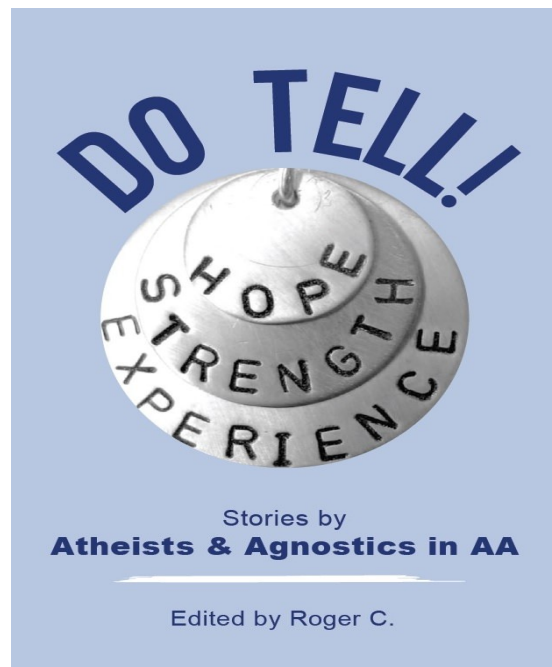
dist7archives@area72aa.org or call/text: (702) 806-6466

In Service, Vancouver AA Archives Committee

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS APRIL 2022

April 2022	Group Name	Contribution
04/04/2022	East County Women's Group	100.00
04/04/2022	East County Women's Group	100.00
04/06/2022	12 & 12 Study Group	50.00 ***PAYPAL***
04/06/2022	SOTS Kelso	100.00
04/07/2022	Name in the Hat	209.40
04/07/2022	Ready & Willing	50.00
04/12/2022	She Who Remembers	40.00
04/12/2022	Ridgefield AA	170.00
04/12/2022	The Lighthouse	50.00
04/12/2022	Camas Early Birds	250.00
04/12/2022	A New Morning	276.19
04/14/2022	First Shot	197.40
4/18/2022	Cornerstone Group	50.00
04/18/2022	Over 55	193.00
04/21/2022	Carson AA Spirit of the Gorge	250.00
04/22/2022	Westside Group	57.20
04/22/2022	Birds of a Feather	150.00
04/24/2022	Welcome Home	45.85 *** PAYPAL***
04/24/2022	Anchor Point Counseling Center	10.00 ***PAYPAL***
04/25/2022	Women's Fireside	42.00
04/25/2022	Women's Daily Supplemental	8.00
04/26/2022	McGillivray Study Group	32.00
04/26/2022	Camas Group	34.63
04/28/2022	PAYPAL DEPOSIT	194.99
04/29/2022	Ready & Willing	50.00
04/29/2022	Primary Purpose of Camas & Washougal	20.00
Individual Contributions		670.00

SHARED BY MEMBERS



There are a total of thirty stories in *Do Tell!* And they are very personal and honest stories. All unique, all different. The stories in the book alternate between those by women and those by men and so we discover - if we did not appreciate this already - that the factors involved in addiction and recovery are often quite different in the lives of men and women.

The stories are all by AA members who do not believe that an interventionist deity - a God - had anything at all to do with their recovery from alcoholism. As readers will discover, many struggled mightily “in the rooms” with the idea of God or a Higher Power, wanting to fit in, as Alcoholics Anonymous was their last hope.

Some were nonbelievers from the very beginning. Others, as the life-saving “personality change” in recovery took effect over time, abandoned a belief in God. Most felt unable to be honest at meetings. They often felt dismissed and rejected in the rooms of traditional AA. But they stayed, as so many do not. And survived. And are here today to share their stories.



Please join us for
our annual
Chili Cookoff!

to benefit the 2022
SW Washington Jamboree

AWARDS FOR BEST CHILI CATEGORIES



Spicy!



Traditional!



Unique!

Best Overall Chili Wins Trophy!



It's that time of year again! Join us for a night of fun, food and fellowship. Bring your best, super-secret, blue ribbon worthy chili. Please bring your favorite corn bread to share. Our speakers will be "on fire for recovery!" We will also have raffle items and a 50/50 drawing.

Free "Special" Raffle Ticket for all pre-registrations! Potluck items are welcome and encouraged. Cornbread/desserts or other food donations!

WHEN: Saturday, May 21st, 2022 • 5 to 8pm • Speakers at 6pm

WHERE: St. John Lutheran Church • 11005 NE Hwy 99, Vancouver, WA. 98686

ADMISSION: Adults \$5.00 • Kids under 12 free

SIGN UP TO PARTICIPATE: Contact Peter V. (360) 910-4219

SPEAKERS: Max M., Kelsey S., Cynthia M.



JUST STAY
FOR SW WASHINGTON JAMBOREE

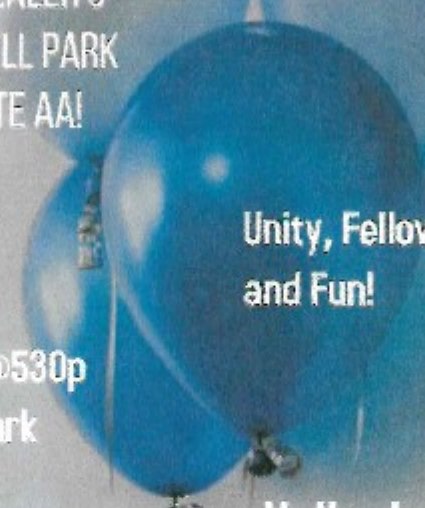
*Please visit our
website for pre-
registration and
payment*



<www.swwashingtonjamboree.org>



SW Washington Jamboree



JOIN HOPE DEALER'S
AT HAZEL DELL PARK
TO CELEBRATE AA!

Unity, Fellowship
and Fun!

Meeting is @530p
Hazel Dell Park

Volleyball

HAPPY
BIRTHDAY
ALCOHOLIC'S
ANONYMOUS!

Raffle and 50/50

June 10th
2300 NE 68th ST
Vancouver, WA 98665

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!

****** The Primary Purpose will no longer include the Financial Reports or the Meeting Minutes from either the Steering Committee Meeting or the Intergroups Rep Meeting. Reports and Minutes can now be found on the website under the documents tab.******

[Documents | Vancouver Intergroup Alcoholics Anonymous \(vancouveraa.org\)](http://vancouveraa.org)

