

2203 Fairmount Avenue, Ste. A
Vancouver, WA 98661

Vancouveraa.org
vanintgrp@gmail.com
(360) 694-3870

VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP Primary Purpose

FOURTH EDITION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

PAGES 104-121

[Chapter 8 - To Wives* - \(pp. 104-121\) - Alcoholics Anonymous](#)

To Wives*

* Written in 1939, when there were few women in A.A., this chapter assumes that the alcoholic in the home is the husband.

With few exceptions, our book thus far has spoken of men. But what we have said applies quite as much to women. Our activities in behalf of women who drink are on the increase. There is every evidence that women regain their health as readily as men if they try our suggestions.

But for every man who drinks others are involved - the wife who trembles in fear of the next debauch; the mother and father who see their son wasting away.

Among us are wives, relatives and friends whose problem has been solved, as well as some who have not yet found a happy solution. We want the wives of Alcoholics Anonymous to address the wives of men who drink too much. What they say will apply to nearly everyone bound by ties of blood or affection to an alcoholic.

As wives of Alcoholics Anonymous, we would like you to feel that we understand as perhaps few can. We want to analyze mistakes we have made. We want to leave you with the feeling that no situation is too difficult and no unhappiness too great to be overcome.

We have traveled a rocky road, there is no mistake about that. We have had long rendezvous with hurt pride, frustration, self-pity, misunderstanding and fear. These are not pleasant companions.



Inside this Issue:

To Wives*	1-4
Step Nine & Tradition Nine.....	5
Upcoming Events.....	6
Archives Corner.....	7
Group Contributions.....	8
Shared by Members.....	9

Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. –
09/12/2022 @ 6:00 PM
- ◆ Archives Committee Mtg.-
09/14/2022 @ 5:30 PM
- ◆ District 27 Committee Mtg.
09/17/2022 @ 10 AM&12PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. –
09/19/2022 @ 6:30 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. –
09/22/2022 @ 7:00 PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. -
09/27/2022 @ 7:00 PM

Aside from alcoholics themselves, nobody suffers more than those forced to watch a loved one suffer. They sometimes blame themselves for their loved one's disease, especially if they can identify past enabling behaviors. Such people experience constant fear, depression, self-pity, and quite often resentments. They lie on behalf of their beloved alcoholic. And when they aren't trying to protect their loved one, they're praying for this person to get better. At other times, they may lash out due to frustration. Chapter 8 of *Alcoholics Anonymous* ("To Wives") speaks directly to those who understand such struggles.

"To Wives" doesn't address wives alone, acknowledging that many husbands, parents, and other family members are all too familiar with the pain of watching a loved one struggle against the crippling disease of addiction. Such people often suffer from isolation due to the fear of inviting friends over to witness a potential substance-fueled outburst. They often lack financial security, especially when the addict or alcohol shares fiscal responsibilities within the household. But more than anything, they must contend with constant disappointment when their loved one tells them that they are absolutely done using—only to resume their habits within a few weeks or even mere days.

Many spouses in particular struggled with distrust, especially when the addict or alcoholic was guilty of infidelity. A fair number of those to whom "To Wives" is dedicated find that they even start drinking or doing drugs themselves out of sheer desperation to either mask their emotions or relate to their addicted loved one. But this behavior never felt quite right. So how do the loved ones of addicts and alcoholics cope with the disease and foster an environment of recovery? There's no perfect answer, but "To Wives" covers a number of themes that just might help. We suggest reading the chapter in its entirety, but you'll find some of the more important points below.

Identifying Addiction in Four Categories

Some who read "To Wives" might be put off by the following passage:

"Try not to condemn your alcoholic husband no matter what he says or does. He is just another very sick, unreasonable person. Treat him, when you can, as though he had pneumonia. When he angers you, remember that he is very ill."

This puts some people off because they fail to see the number of qualifiers used in these sentences. "To Wives" isn't saying that you should tolerate an angry and abusive Hyde simply because a loving Jekyll might be somewhere underneath. The message is a bit more complicated than that. In fact, the chapter clearly states that truly ill-intentioned addicts and alcoholics should not be enabled. If you truly feel that there is no better person underneath the drunken stupor, it's best to remove yourself and your family from the path of destruction. But how do you know whether the addict in your life is truly good inside? There may be no perfect answer, but you can at least identify which of four categories describes them best and go from there.

The first category is the heavy drinker. Heavy drinkers sometimes learn to use moderately, or even stop altogether. When they first start, they don't quite fit the description of a true alcoholic. Some only drink in certain situations, such as business conventions or dinner parties. But when they start, it's difficult for them to stop. Even if they don't drink every day, their drinking tends to have a negative impact on the family bank account.

The second category extends beyond the heavy drinker to those who cannot moderate at all. This is not to say that they never try to stay sober for various periods of time. But they continue drinking, losing friends and possibly even business in the process. Even drinkers of this sort may be worried about their own habits, but they remain convinced that they can moderate. They feel awful about their alcohol abuse, and profess that they wish to stop. Nevertheless, they usually hop back off the wagon within a short time. Some people in this category might be functioning alcoholics, but they are most certainly in trouble if they don't seek help.

The third category tends to spring from the second. "To Wives" notes that these people often lose the majority of their friends, and perhaps even spend some time in the hospital. There is still some hope for this person, especially when they hit rock bottom and realize how desperately they must cease their alcohol abuse. But until they reach this point, their alcohol abuse will continue to reap major consequences for alcoholic and family alike.

The fourth category of alcoholics is the most tragic. These people can be violent, and often come across as quite mentally ill. These are the people who may suffer from delirium tremens or other major symptoms of alcoholism. When they call the family from jail, it might be tempting to simply leave them there. In some cases, this might even be the right course of action. The ill-intentioned husbands mentioned in "To Wives" often fit this category. But many good people descend to this point in their alcoholism as well. Only the family can determine whether or not alcoholics in this category deserve the tolerance required of anyone who chooses to let such alcoholics continue playing an active role in their lives.

It's not always easy to determine precisely which of these categories suits your situation best. Nonetheless, anyone reading "To Wives" should give the matter some thought. After all, you need to know which category describes your loved one's situation before deciding how to move forward.

Appropriately Handling Each Category

The heavy drinker may not be an alcoholic—but if they are, then getting them to stop can prove surprisingly difficult. Not only will this person fail to see the problem with their drinking, but you might even enjoy their company when they're somewhat moderated. The key here is to be patient. Don't push the subject too strongly, or your loved one may use this as an excuse to drink even more. But if the subject comes up naturally, perhaps mention the AA Big Book and the chapter on alcoholism. Don't accuse your loved one of being an alcoholic, but rather suggest that they read up on the subject. Perhaps your loved one truly can learn to moderate. If not, hope that their research into alcoholism will lead them toward this premise. When it does, you can move forward from there. If your loved one fits into the second category of the four above, you should again wait until after a serious binge to approach the topic. When doing so, don't pressure them to give up alcohol for *your* sake. Instead, ask whether or not they think that *they* might like to break the cycle of their self-destructive habits. Again, you might try showing your loved one a copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous*, or at least the chapters defining alcoholism ("There Is a Solution" and "More About Alcoholism"). Even if they struggle with a substance other than alcohol, they might see some similar behaviors in their own habits. If they don't accept your help, drop the matter for the time being. They may come back to it on their own. If they don't, then you must decide how to move forward from here. The third category in "To Wives" might actually present an easier solution. This is because alcoholics in this category often find themselves wishing that they could stop. Because of this, it won't take as long for your loved one to bring up the topic. You can then present them with a copy of the Big Book, or even suggest considering treatment. If you feel that you have reason to worry about your loved one's reaction to this suggestion, you might allow someone from outside of your household to bring up the topic.

Loved ones in the fourth category can be quite similar to those in the third, with some exceptions. "To Wives" notes that some people in this category are tragically beyond help. Still, many can and will recover if they see the need to do so. Things become more complicated when co-occurring disorders accompany your loved one's addiction, but even people with other mental illnesses have recovered in the past. The only time that you should leave your loved one's side is when they make it clear that they will never show any interest in recovery. If they become dangerous to you or the rest of your family, do not sit idly by and wait for them to change.

Whether or not your loved one chooses to enter recovery, things do not end there. Wives, parents and other family members suffer greatly when exposed to alcoholism and addiction. For this reason, "To Wives" discusses the need for some family members to make a new life for themselves. But those able to stick by their loved one's side may still experience some difficulties in recovery. These are covered below.

Continuing Your Support During Recovery

For those with loved ones who truly want to recover, a bit of patience goes a long way. Do not demonize this person when discussing them with the rest of the family. Don't embarrass them or cause undue harm to their reputation, as they are sick and simply need help. Instead, try to embrace the spiritual principles of recovery. "To Wives" notes that a transformation by one family member sometimes inspires the alcoholic in their lives. Seeking self-improvement as a loved one seeks sobriety just might bring you closer together than ever before. But if your improvements do little to sway the habits of an angry and abusive loved one, then you may need to pack a bag and get out. Patience isn't worth sacrificing your own safety.

If your loved one does enter recovery, try not to resent the time they spend away from the family. It may be disappointing to get someone back only to feel as if you're losing them again, but "To Wives" states:

"You have been starving for his companionship, yet he spends long hours helping other men and their families. You feel he should now be yours. The fact is that he should work with other people to maintain his own sobriety. Sometimes he will be so interested that he becomes really neglectful. Your house is filled with strangers. You may not like some of them. He gets stirred up about their troubles, but not at all about yours. It will do little good if you point that out and urge more attention for yourself. We find it a real mistake to dampen his enthusiasm for alcoholic work."

The solution is, once again, to pursue the same principles you wish for your loved one. If the person is your spouse, try talking to other spouses in groups such as Al-Anon. As for parents with alcoholic children, you'll find many fellow parents in these groups as well. These groups will also help you overcome the pain felt after years of struggle. Sometimes you won't trust your loved one, or you might find old resentments bubbling back to the surface. The people in these support groups know precisely how you feel.

**Have a problem with alcohol? There is a solution.
A.A. has a simple program that works.
It's based on one alcoholic helping another.**



AA GRAPEVINE TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

Tradition Nine:

AA, as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

1. Do I try to “boss” things in AA?
2. Do I ever resist formal aspects of AA because I see them as authoritative?
3. Do I try to understand and use all elements of the AA program—even if no one makes me do so—with a sense of personal responsibility?
4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any AA job I take?
5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any AA job?
6. Why doesn’t every AA group need a constitution and bylaws?
7. Have I learned to step out of an AA job gracefully—and profit thereby—when the time comes?
8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?

Upcoming Events

SEPTEMBER 2022

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

ARCHIVES CORNER



The Vancouver Archives Committee meets on the 2nd Wednesday of each month from 5:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. at Intergroup and all are welcome!

THANK YOU Districts 7 and 37 for your support of the Vancouver Archives Committee and our Vancouver Intergroup Office, which has graciously hosted our meetings, work parties AND has allowed us to use their scanner in digitizing our paper records, such as Primary Purpose Newsletters and Group Minutes, Financials and fliers!

Ongoing projects:

Grapevine Project: We will be refurbishing our expansive collection of Grapevine binders, by replacing steel rods that have rusted repairs as needed. This is long overdue and the Districts have supported a budget which now makes this possible. If you are available to participate, we look forward to having you and your sponsees join us!

Work Party 10/15/22 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m. at Intergroup!

Continued digitization of paper records and audio cassettes, cd's and group histories. This includes storage of "born" digital documents, such as Minutes, Agendas, Financial Reports and event fliers. You can bring your items to the next Archives Committee Meeting, which meets OR call Cindy at (702) 806-6466 and I can meet you, and give you a receipt for your items, which can be digitized, where applicable, and permanently store in the Vancouver Archives Repository, which is secure and climate controlled. You can also email electronic records to us for digitization!

Contact Cindy M. with any questions or comments at: dist7archives@area72aa.org or call/text: (702) 806-6466

GROUP CONTRIBUTIONS AUGUST 2022

August 2022	Group Name	Contribution
08/01/2022	East County Women's Group	100.00
08/01/2022	Minnehaha	150.00
08/03/2022	Fresh Start	240.60
08/03/2022	Cascade Group	285.00
08/08/2022	Sunday Solutions	10.49
08/08/2022	Ready And Willing	50.00
08/08/2022	First Shot	174.20
08/08/2022	The Lighthouse	50.00
08/08/2022	Wayfarers	78.09
08/09/2022	A New Morning	53.09
08/15/2022	Friday Night Happy Hour	100.00
08/15/2022	Hockinson AA	152.40
08/17/2022	S.O.T.S.	200.00
08/18/2022	Eastside Brown Baggers	320.00
08/26/2022	Around Town RoundTable	286.72
08/29/2022	Chapter 9 Couples	25.00
08/30/2022	Lifeline Connections	32.09
08/30/2022	Ready and Willing	50.00
08/31/2022	Men's Fireside	150.00
Individual Contributions		320.00

SHARED BY MEMBERS

Did you know that???

Bill Wilson wrote a letter about the use of The Lord's Prayer at A.A. Meetings

April 14, 1959

Dear Russ,

Am right sorry for my delay in answering. Lois and I were a long time out of the country and this was followed by an attack of the marathon type of flu that has been around here in New York. We are okay now, however, but I did want to explain my delay.

Now about the business of adding the Lord's Prayer to each A.A. meeting. This practice probably came from the Oxford Groups who were influential in the early days of A.A. You have probably noted in AA. Comes of Age what the connection of these people in A.A. really was. I think saying the Lord's Prayer was a custom of theirs following the close of each meeting. Therefore it quite easily got shifted into a general custom among us.

Of course there will always be those who seem to be offended by the introduction of any prayer whatever into an ordinary A.A. gathering. Also, it is sometimes complained that the Lord's Prayer is a Christian document. Nevertheless this Prayer is of such widespread use and recognition that the arguments of its Christian origin seems to be a little farfetched. It is also true that most A.A.s believe in some kind of God and that communication and strength is obtainable through His grace. Since this is the general consensus it seems only right that at least the Serenity Prayer and the Lord's Prayer be used in connection with our meetings. It does not seem necessary to defer to the feelings of our agnostic and atheist newcomers to the extent of completely hiding our light under a bushel.

However, around here, the leader of the meeting usually asks those to join him in the Lord's Prayer who feel that they would care to do so. The worst that happens to the objectors is that they have to listen to it. This is doubtless a salutary exercise in tolerance at their stage of progress.

So that's the sum of the Lord's Prayer business as I recall it. Your letter made me wonder in just what connection you raise the question.

Meanwhile, please know just how much Lois and I treasure the friendship of you both. May Providence let our paths presently cross one of these days.

Devotedly yours,

Bill Wilson

WGW/ni Mr. Russ

From the A.A. Archives in New York

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 :

vanintgrp@gmail.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)

