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VANCOUVER AREA INTERGROUP

Primary Purpose

FOURTH EDITION OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

PAGES 122-135

[The Family Afterward - \(pp. 122-135\) - Alcoholics Anonymous](#)

The Family Afterward

Our women folk have suggested certain attitudes a wife may take with the husband who is recovering. Perhaps they created the impression that he is to be wrapped in cotton wool and placed on a pedestal. Successful readjustment means the opposite. All members of the family should meet upon the common ground of tolerance, understanding and love. This involves a process of deflation. The alcoholic, his wife, his children, his "in-laws," each one is likely to have fixed ideas about the family's attitude towards himself or herself. Each is interested in having his or her wishes respected. We find the more one member of the family demands that the others concede to him, the more resentful they become. This makes for discord and unhappiness.

And why? Is it not because each wants to play the lead? Is not each trying to arrange the family show to his liking? Is he not unconsciously trying to see what he can take from the family life rather than give?

Cessation of drinking is but the first step away from a highly strained, abnormal condition. A doctor said to us, "Years of living with a alcoholic is almost sure to make any wife or child neurotic. The entire family is, to some extent, ill." Let families realize, as they start their journey, that all will not be fair weather. Each in his turn may be footsore and may straggle.



Inside this Issue:

The Family Afterward.....	1-4
Step Ten & Tradition Ten.....	5
Upcoming Events.....	6
Archives Corner.....	7
Group Contributions.....	8
Shared by Members.....	9

Monthly Business Mtgs.

- ◆ Steering Comm. Mtg. –
10/10/2022 @ 6:00 PM
- ◆ Archives Committee Mtg.-
10/12/2022 @ 5:30 PM
- ◆ District 27 Committee Mtg.
10/15/2022 @ 10 AM&12PM
- ◆ Intergroup Rep Mtg. –
10/17/2022 @ 6:30 PM
- ◆ District 7 GSR Mtg. –
10/20/2022 @ 7:00 PM
- ◆ District 37 GSR Mtg. -
10/25/2022 @ 7:00 PM

Reading Guide for "The Family Afterward"

The family members of alcoholics often suffer terribly until the afflicted individual finally agrees to seek help. Parents, children, spouses, siblings and others all suffer their own pain as they watch a loved one struggle. When the alcoholic enters treatment, the family usually feels some relief. But the family dynamic will not immediately return to normal. Healing the open wounds left by alcoholism will take time and understanding on all sides.

Chapter 9 of *Alcoholics Anonymous* ("The Family Afterward") deals primarily with this issue.

"The Family Afterward" is something of an addendum to Chapter 8 ("To Wives"). While Chapter 8 primarily looked at addiction from a spouse's point of view, "The Family Afterward" opens its discussion to the rest of the family. Some of the issues mentioned in this chapter, such as infidelity, are still primarily spousal issues. Other issues revolve around the changes in the alcoholic who enters recovery and the ways in which families can prevent issues that might arise from these changes. Ultimately, "The Family Afterward" exists to inform families of the experiences they will encounter when their loved one begins a spiritual journey toward sobriety.

Chapter 9 also covers an issue that we've covered multiple times—alcoholism as a family disease. We'll open by discussing this part of the chapter, so that family members may better understand the feelings they're experiencing as they welcome an alcoholic loved one back into their lives. Recovery can turn into a tumultuous time for everyone involved, alcoholics and families alike. Hopefully, "The Family Afterward" will help sympathetic family members learn what they can do to ensure a smoother recovery for both themselves and the alcoholic they love.

A Family Disease

When the alcoholic suffers, the family suffers. Everyone in the household straps in together to ride an emotional roller coaster. When we first step off, we find ourselves still disoriented from the ride. Stepping back onto solid ground, we may stumble over our feet a few times before we manage to walk properly. The same is true when families injured by addiction try to turn over a new leaf. We feel an urgent need to keep moving forward, yet we still find ourselves a bit disoriented. Everyone wants the wounds to heal, yet nobody's quite sure what to say. In the early days of recovery, harmless mentions of past events will sting like barbs. "The Family Afterward" describes such moments:

"Now and then the family will be plagued by spectres from the past, for the drinking career of almost every alcoholic has been marked by escapades, funny, humiliating, shameful or tragic. The first impulse will be to bury these skeletons in a dark closet and padlock the door. The family may be possessed by the idea that future happiness can be based only upon forgetfulness of the past. We think that such a view is self-centered and in direct conflict with the new way of living."

Families that truly wish to heal cannot keep the past behind closed doors. They must instead try embrace acceptance. Families must accept that alcohol took away the person they loved. This person was then replaced with a stranger, who was at times tolerable and at other times quite destructive. But now that the alcoholic has entered recovery, the family can finally get them back. They do so not by hiding from the past, but by confronting it and dealing with it in a healthy manner.

This type of healing requires a great deal of willingness. Families must prove willing to let go of their resentments and forgive their alcoholic loved one, provided that the loved one in question demonstrates true remorse for their actions. The family must also show that they understand the nature of the disease and that healing takes time. Some families find this difficult. After all, they've been patient for so long. Should they really continue waiting for their loved one to get it right? If they truly believe that their loved one can get better in recovery, the answer is yes.

Reading Guide for "The Family Afterward"

Handling Substitute Addictions

Families may outwardly agree to be patient with their loved one's recovery, but it won't always be easy. For many alcoholics, groups such as AA turn into substitute addictions. The family may feel as if they hardly ever see their loved one. They waited so long to have this person back in their lives. Now that their beloved is finally beginning the healing process, they never seem to be around. They fought so hard just to regain this person, and now they feel their loved one is lost again to another obsession.

The frustration will mount even greater if the alcoholic happens to be a bit outspoken about their spiritual growth. Never did they express interest in spirituality before, but now the pendulum has swung quite far to the other side. "The Family Afterward" suggests that families not worry too much about this. In time, the alcoholic will see that they have gone overboard:

"He will perceive that his spiritual growth is lopsided, that for an average man like himself, a spiritual life which does not include his family obligations may not be so perfect after all. If the family will appreciate that dad's current behavior is but a phase of his development, all will be well. In the midst of an understanding and sympathetic family, these vagaries of dad's spiritual infancy will quickly disappear."

"The Family Afterward" notes another problem with newcomers who go overboard on spirituality. Many of them, despite meaning well, still know little about spiritual living. They haven't had enough time to carefully observe those who live by spiritual principles. Instead, they're going by their own definitions, which may sometimes be flawed. "The Family Afterward" suggests one way in which the family might help:

"Whether the family has spiritual convictions or not, they may do well to examine the principles by which the alcoholic member is trying to live. They can hardly fail to approve these simple principles, though the head of the house still fails somewhat in practicing them. Nothing will help the man who is off on a spiritual tangent so much as the wife who adopts a sane spiritual program, making a better practical use of it."

Spiritual principles such as the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions may be meant for alcoholics, but there's a reason that support groups such as Al-Anon make use of them as well. The same principles that benefit alcoholics can also benefit their families. We won't list every single virtuous principle of recovery here, as there are far too many to cover. What we will do, however, is discuss how the broad matter of spiritual living is addressed in Chapter 9.

[Reading Guide for "The Family Afterward"](#)

Spiritual Participation

The primary principle of recovery is humility, and it's a principle that every family member will need. Many think that humility is about seeing our weaknesses, but it's about more than that. By addressing our weaknesses, we find our strengths. And in finding our strengths, we learn to live joyfully. We learn to experience freedom from the bonds of alcoholism, which have cast so many families into dark times. "The Family Afterward" discusses the joy that we find in recovery:

"We have been dealing with alcohol in its worst aspect. But we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life. We try not to indulge in cynicism over the state of the nations, nor do we carry the world's troubles on our shoulders. When we see a man sinking into the mire that is alcoholism, we give him first aid and place what we have at his disposal. For his sake, we do recount and almost relive the horrors of our past. But those of us who have tried to shoulder the entire burden and trouble of others find we are soon overcome by them."

Family members should not shoulder unnecessary burdens. The family gave a lot to get their loved one on the right track. Should this be rewarded with dishonesty or betrayal, the answer is not enabling. In some instances, the family must turn their back on the one they love. Spirituality and understanding might prevent this circumstance, but all families should nevertheless prepare for the possibility. Barring tragic circumstances such as relapse, however, many will find recovery to be a wonderful time. It is a time for healing, which means that it is a time for joy. Families should take advantage of this and embrace the opportunity before them.

"The Family Afterward" ends by citing three popular AA slogans:

*First Things First
Live and Let Live
Easy Does It*

As long as we pay attention to our priorities, try not to be too controlling, and approach life with a bit of tolerance and flexibility, we'll find that spiritual living isn't so difficult. In fact, "The Family Afterward" suggests that it may be the secret to a happy household. Families should therefore try to participate in building spiritual principles when living with a loved one in recovery. Not only will it show support for your loved one's efforts, but it just might make life a lot easier for everyone involved.



AA GRAPEVINE TRADITIONS CHECKLIST

Tradition Ten:

Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

1. Do I ever give the impression that there really is an “AA opinion” on Antabuse? Tranquilizers? Doctors? Psychiatrists? Churches? Hospitals? Jails? Alcohol? The federal or state government? Legalizing marijuana? Vitamins? Al-Anon? Alateen?
2. Can I honestly share my own personal experience concerning any of those without giving the impression I am stating the “AA opinion”?
3. What in AA history gave rise to our Tenth Tradition?
4. Have I had a similar experience in my own AA life?
5. What would AA be without this Tradition? Where would I be?
6. Do I breach this or any of its supporting Traditions in subtle, perhaps unconscious, ways?
7. How can I manifest the spirit of this Tradition in my personal life outside AA? Inside AA?

Upcoming Events

OCTOBER 2022

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

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!

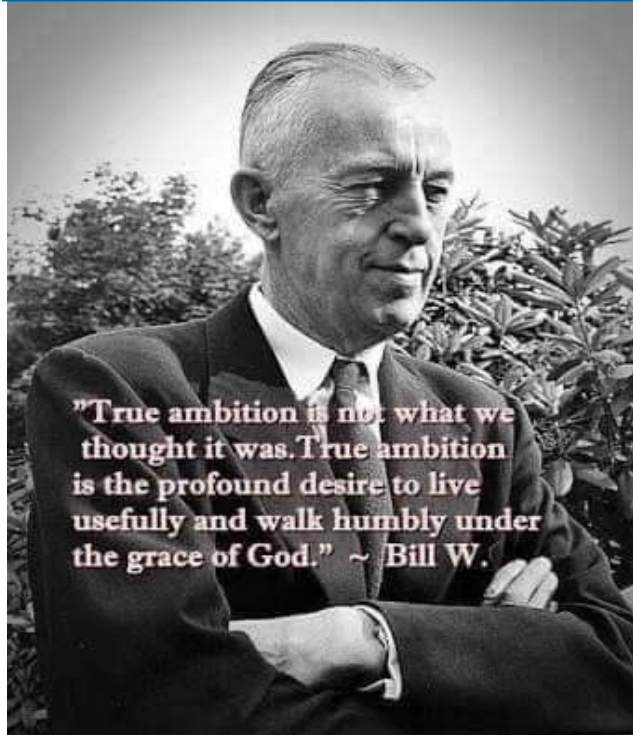
Continued digitization of paper records and audio cassettes, cd's and group histories. This includes storage of "born" digital documents, such as Minutes, Agendas, Financial Reports and event fliers. You can bring your items to the next Archives Committee Meeting, which meets OR call Cindy at (702) 806-6466 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 SEPTEMBER 2022

September 2022	Group Name	Contribution
09/01/2022	Ready & Willing	50.00
09/12/2022	Hockinson AA	111.07
09/12/2022	A New Morning	312.72
09/14/2022	First Shot`	213.04
09/14/2022	Doin' Right On Thursday Night	180.00
09/14/2022	Serenity Sisters	30.00
09/21/2022	Early Birds	200.00
09/21/2022	Rock Bottom Recovery	50.00
09/24/2022	Anchor Point Counseling	10.00
09/28/2022	Wednesday Night Recovery	75.00
09/28/2022	Grays River Grateful	63.56
09/28/2022	Cathlamet Group	125.50
09/30/2022	Castle Rock Survivors	40.00
Individual Contributions		370.00

SHARED BY MEMBERS



Alcohol will take away everything you care about if you allow it to. It's called "spirits" for a reason.. this stuff brings out demons that wouldn't exist without it. It can all seem so innocent but this stuff is a silent killer... That's why I don't drink it anymore. I've indulged one time since July 6th and I regret that slip up. I know it's a social thing and it's not that bad if you can keep it under control. Honestly, My friends drink around me and we still hang out with it making no difference that I'm not. This is a choice that I made out of pure desire to have and live the best life that God has for me. My energy just vibrates at a higher frequency these days and it feels so much better than a hangover and bad decisions. I know there's a lot of people going through this right now, so I have a video coming out on Friday that I think will help you through another day. When you feel weak remember this, you are worth so much more than that shit and you are going to be a better person leaving it in your past. I hope this reaches the right person. —Anonymous Member of AA

RECOVERY BEGINS
WHEN WE STOP
MAKING *excuses* AND
START MAKING
changes.

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)

