

Speakeasy



Alcoholics Anonymous All South Bay Central Office Newsletter

Summer Issue 2020

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The Speakeasy is published by the All South Bay Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous. Opinions expressed are those of the writers/contributors and not of Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole or of Central Office. We welcome and need your input, opinions, humor and comments. Send them today.

1939 Book Review of Alcoholics Anonymous

(Reprinted for educational purposes within public domain)

This extraordinary book deserves the careful attention of anyone interested in the problem of alcoholism. Whether as victims, friends of victims, physicians, clergymen, psychiatrists, or social workers, and there are many such, this book will give them, as no other treatise known to this reviewer will, an inside view of the problem which the alcoholic faces. Gothic cathedral windows are not the sole things which can be truly seen only from within. Alcoholism is another. All outside views are clouded and unsure. Only one who has been an alcoholic and has escaped the thrall of it can interpret the experience.

This book represents the pooled experience of one hundred men and women who have been the victims of alcoholism—many of them declared hopeless by the experts—and who have won their freedom and recovered their sanity and self-control. Their stories are detailed and circumstantial, packed with human interest. In America today the disease of alcoholism is increasing. Liquor has been an easy escape from depression. As an English officer in India, reprovved for his excessive drinking, lifted his glass and said, "This is the swiftest road out of India," so many Americans have been using hard liquor as a means of flight from their troubles until to their dismay they discover that, free to begin, they are not free to stop. One hundred men and women, in this volume, report their experience of enslavement and then of liberation.

This book is not in the least sensational. It is notable for its sanity, restraint, and freedom from overemphasis and fanaticism. It is a sober, careful, tolerant,

sympathetic treatment of the alcoholic's problem and of the successful techniques by which its co-authors have won their freedom. The group sponsoring this book began with two or three ex-alcoholics, who discovered one another through a kindred experience. From this personal kinship a movement started, ex-alcoholic working for alcoholics without fanfare or advertisement, and the movement has spread from one city to another. This book presents the practical experience of this group and describes the methods they employ.

The core of their whole procedure is religious. They are convinced that for the hopeless alcoholic there is only one way out—the expulsion of his obsession by a Power greater than himself. Let it be said at once that there is nothing partisan or sectarian about this religious experience. Agnostics and atheists, along with Catholics, Jews, and Protestants, tell their story of discovering the Power greater than themselves. "WHO ARE YOU TO SAY THAT THERE IS NO GOD," one atheist in this group heard a voice say when, hospitalized from alcoholism, he faced the utter hopelessness of his condition. Nowhere is the tolerance and open-mindedness of the book more evident than in its treatment of this central matter on which the cure of all these men and women has depended. They are not partisans of any particular form or organized religion, although they strongly recommend that some religious fellowship be found by their participants. By religion they mean an experience which they personally know and which has saved them from their slavery, when psychiatry and medicine had failed. They agree that each man must have his own

way of conceiving God, but of God Himself they are utterly sure, and their stories of victory in consequence are a notable addition to William James' Varieties of Religious Experience.

Altogether, the book has the accent of reality and is written with unusual intelligence and skill, humor and modesty mitigating what could easily have been a strident and harrowing tale.

[Dr. Fosdick went on to write in his autobiography]

...The meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous are the only place, so far as I know, where Roman Catholics, Jews, all kinds of Protestants, and even agnostics get together harmoniously on a religious basis. They do not talk theology. Many of them would say that they know nothing about it. What they do know is that in their utter helplessness they were introduced to a Power, greater than themselves, in contact with whom they found a strong resource which made possible a victory that had seemed incredible. I have listened to many learned arguments about God, but for honest-to-goodness experiential evidence of God, His power personally appropriated and His reality indubitably assured, give me a good meeting of A.A.!

—Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick

[Source: *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*]

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| Step, Tradition & Concept | | |
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| 4 | <p>Step</p> <p>“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”</p> <p>Tradition</p> <p>“Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.”</p> <p>Concept</p> <p>“At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional ‘Right of Participation,’ allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.”</p> | <p>All South Bay Central Office 1411 Marcelina Ave Torrance, CA 90501 Open 7 a.m. to 10 p.m., M-F 9 a.m.—7 p.m. Sat & Sun Web site: www.southbayaa.org Email: info@southbayaa.org Phone: (310) 618-1180</p> |
| | | <p>Board of Directors 4th Tuesday of the month 6:30 p.m. 1411 Marcelina Ave Torrance, CA Phone: (310) 618-1180</p> |
| 5 | <p>Step</p> <p>“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”</p> <p>Tradition</p> <p>“Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.”</p> <p>Concept</p> <p>“Throughout our structure, a traditional ‘Right of Appeal’ ought to prevail, so that minority opinion will be heard and personal grievances receive careful consideration.”</p> | <p>Intergroup 4th Tuesday of the month 7:30 p.m. 1411 Marcelina Ave Torrance, CA Phone: (310) 618-1180</p> |
| | | <p>District 1 2nd Thursday of the month 7:30 p.m. Kiwanis Club 2525 Valley Drive (at Gould) Hermosa Beach, CA Phone: (310) 740-2963</p> <p>Newcomer’s Orientation: 7:00 p.m.</p> |
| 6 | <p>Step</p> <p>“Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”</p> <p>Tradition</p> <p>“An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.”</p> <p>Concept</p> <p>“The Conference recognizes that the chief initiative and active responsibility in most world service matters should be exercised by the trustee members of the Conference acting as the General Service Board.”</p> | <p>District 3 2nd Tuesday of the month 7:30 p.m. Wayside Methodist Church 25904 Cayuga Ave Lomita, CA Phone: (310) 971-8847</p> |
| | | <p>Hospitals & Institutions 3rd Tuesday of the month 7:00 p.m. South Bay Alano Club 702 11th Place Hermosa Beach, CA Phone: (310) 707-5606</p> <p>Newcomer’s orientation 6:30 p.m.</p> |
| <p>Step Two</p> <p><i>“The minute I stopped arguing, I could begin to see and feel. Right there, Step Two gently and very gradually began to infiltrate my life. I can’t say upon what occasion or upon what day I came to believe in a Power greater than myself, but I certainly have that belief now...” (TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS, p. 27)</i></p> | | <p>The General Service Office P.O. Box 459 Grand Central Station, NY 10163 Phone: (212) 870-3400</p> |

ASBCO Spotlight Profile: Rob D., Office Manager

I was raised in the Northeast and went to college in the Midwest and after school I worked in Manhattan in the advertising business. Eventually, I got into the healthcare industry and that's what brought me to the West Coast. I've been in the for profit and not-for-profit healthcare business for many years. I became the assistant to the chief operating officer in a corporate office and that led to a long-term stint with a big bio-tech company. I worked in the research and development side of the shop in the global development operations group which was responsible for standing up clinical research globally. That company has a very robust pipeline of research going on. My job was to globetrot around the world to stand up new studies and to fix what was broken operationally with existing studies. It was very rewarding work and in the 25 plus years I spent in the healthcare and life sciences arena, I took great satisfaction in the notion that there was a patient at the end of the work that I was doing. And that was the reward. In healthcare, it was about improving the life and the health or well-being of the patients that we served. And in the life sciences and pharmaceutical industry, it was about getting the drug that people needed to improve the quality of their life. My company made drugs for critically-ill patients. That was the career side. In the middle of all of that I discovered that I have a major, major problem with alcohol and I was in and out of the rooms of Alcoholics Anonymous trying to figure out my drinking problem. Finally, I picked up my fourth and final newcomer chip on March 27, 1993 in a small little club called the Triangle Club in West Palm Beach, Florida. I did so in front of a group of people that would not have suspected that I was out and about drinking again. It was the best day and the worst day of my life. It was the first time I was truly, truly honest with myself and I was ready to surrender. But it was really difficult because I had to cope with having been so untruthful and deceitful—living a lie with my fellows in the program. But it's the best thing I ever did.

So, I got sober in 1993 and moved for work in 1994 to Northern California. Then

I moved to Southern California in 1996 and I've been here ever since.

The last 27 years of my life have been a real gift and I live a life that has been second to none. Everything that I am and everything that I have is a direct result of the gifts that have been so freely given to me in Alcoholics Anonymous. Not only have I enjoyed a very rewarding career that I'm very proud of but I've also been able to serve in this program in a lot of different capacities: from starting up an informal golf league and setting up golf tournaments for fundraisers to serving in different meeting groups. But the biggest joy that I get out of AA today is in sponsoring other men because I get to watch them and to help them discover purpose and meaning and direction in their lives. Watching all of that clarity unfold for them is the gift of this program. To watch guys who came from a state of hopeless despair recognize that there is hope in a way that they never realized in their entire lives is the gift of this program. I've been supported and sponsored by a couple of guys who have taken me under their wings and kept me honest and true. They are a gift in my life as well.

Today, I sponsor five guys. One of them is long distance in San Mateo, California. The other four guys I work with are local, varying degrees of age and demographics and varying degrees of sobriety. Each one of them is very unique. I was taught that to truly get the full measure of benefit of working the Twelve Steps one should read the first 164 pages of the Big Book as a starting point—to be able to describe

and play back to my Sponsor what I get out of that, what I hear and what I feel, what I read, and what I perceived from that reading. So then, when I work each and every Step, I have some context and we have some reference points as we go through that process. I found that to be tremendously beneficial. So that's what I do with my guys.

"When the student is ready, the teacher appears," is something my Mom always said to me. A few months ago I was asked to bring the program into a local men's sober living house and that has been immensely beneficial and rewarding for me. I run a Wednesday night Big Book Study there. I love doing that, in addition to my Sponsorship obligations. I always want to be teachable in this program. I want to keep my ears open.

A wise man once came along and told me, "You have to learn to listen so that you can listen to learn." If I do those things I'll be a better version of myself, I'll be a better sponsor, and I'll be a better steward of the Fifth Tradition—get the message out and pass it on. This program is everything to me. It's time for me to make the ultimate move of serving in this program and my career has prepared me well; getting physicians, lawyers, and Ph.D. scientists on the same page was good preparation for getting alcoholics on the same page.

I'm happily retired. Today, I put first things first and I'm glad to serve as the new Office Manager at All South Bay Central Office.

—Rob D., Redondo Beach (27 years)

Got a story to tell?

We are looking for 250 to 750- word articles (about 1-2 pages typed, single-spaced). Share your experience, strength and hope. Tell us how your meeting got started or send stories about your personal triumphs/struggles in sobriety. Humor is welcome!

We welcome your contributions via **E-mail: speakeasy.asbco@gmail.com**

Go Paperless and get the *Speakeasy* Online at: **www.southbayaa.org**

ASBCO Bulletin Board

Positively Negative

We drank for happiness and became unhappy.

We drank for joy and became miserable.

We drank for sociability and became argumentative.

We drank for sophistication and became obnoxious.

We drank for friendship and made enemies.

We drank for sleep and awakened without rest.

We drank for strength and felt weak.

We drank “medicinally” and acquired health problems.

We drank for relaxation and got the shakes.

We drank for bravery and became afraid.

We drank for confidence and became doubtful.

We drank to make conversation easier and slurred our speech.

We drank to feel heavenly and ended up feeling like hell.

We drank to forget and were forever haunted.

We drank for freedom and became slaves.

We drank to erase problems and saw them multiply.

We drank to cope with life and invited death.

Could **You** Possibly Have A Drinking Problem?

Call or Visit

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Torrance (310) 618-1180

We Drank Too

SOUTHBAYAA.ORG

We Care

The Annual South Bay Round Up is Online this year!

36th Annual South Bay Family Round Up

- ◆ Theme: “Keep on Trudging”
- ◆ Dates: September 4-6, 2020
- ◆ Place: Zoom

To register go to www.southbayroundup.org

