



Why Did They Write The Book Alcoholics Anonymous?

A) ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1) A.A. Approved literature about the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous

a) Alcoholics Anonymous on Alcoholics Anonymous

- 1) "Because this book has become the basic text for our Society and has helped such large numbers of alcoholic men and women to recovery, there exists strong sentiment against any radical changes being made in it." Pg. xi
- 2) "Therefore, the first portion of this volume, describing the A.A. recovery program, has been left largely untouched in the course of revisions made for the second, third, and fourth editions." Pg. xi
- 3) "To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book." Pg. xiii
- 4) "It was now time, the struggling groups thought, to place their message and unique experience before the world. This determination bore fruit in the spring of 1939 by the publication of this volume." Pg. xvii.
- 5) "The fledging society, which had been nameless, now began to be called Alcoholics Anonymous, from the title of its own book." Pg. xvii
- 6) "Yet it is our great hope that all those who have as yet found no answer may begin to find one in the pages of this book and will presently join us on the high road to a new freedom." Pg. xxi
- 7) "The subject presented in this book seems to me to be of paramount importance to those afflicted with alcoholic addiction." Pg. xxvii
- 8) "There was, therefore, a sense of real satisfaction when I was asked to contribute a few words on a subject which is covered in such masterly detail in these pages." Pg. xxvii
- 9) "I earnestly advise every alcoholic to read this book through and though perhaps he came to scoff, he may remain to pray." Pg. xxxii
- 10) "The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer from alcoholism." Pg. 17
- 11) "We hope this volume will inform and comfort those who are, or who may be affected." Pg. 18

12) "We have concluded to publish an anonymous volume setting forth the problem as we see it. We shall bring to task our combined experience and knowledge. This should suggest a useful program for anyone concerned with a drinking problem." Pg. 19

13) "...why it is that all of us became so very ill from drinking." "...how and why in the face of expert opinion to the contrary, we have recovered from a hopeless condition of mind and body." "What do I have to do?" "It is the purpose of this book to answer such questions specifically." Pg. 20

14) "Our hope is that many alcoholic men and women, desperately in need, will see these pages, and we believe that it is only by fully disclosing ourselves and our problems that they will be persuaded to say, 'Yes, I am one of them too; I must have this thing.'" Pg. 29

15) "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." "Well, that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem. That means we have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God." Pg. 45

16) "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." Pg. 104

17) "...how could they be so blind about themselves? What had become of their judgment, their common sense, their will power? Why could they not see that drink meant ruin to them? Why was it, when these dangers were pointed out they agreed, and then got drunk again immediately? "We hope this book has answered some of them." Pgs. 107-108

18) "Being certain he wants to stop, you can go to him with this volume as joyfully as though you had struck oil. He may not share your enthusiasm, but he is practically sure to read the book, and he may go for the program at once." Pg. 113

19) "Since this book was first published, AA has released thousands of alcoholics from asylums and hospitals of every kind. The majority have never returned." Pg. 114

20) "We do not like the thought that the contents of a book or the work of another alcoholic has accomplished in a few weeks that for which we struggled for years." Pg. 118

21) "To return to the subject matter of this book: It contains full suggestions by which the employee may solve his problem." Pgs. 143 - 144

22) "Meanwhile, we are sure a great deal can be accomplished by the use of the book alone." Pg. 144

23) "Our hope is that when this chip of a book is launched on the world tide of alcoholism, defeated drinkers will seize upon it, to follow its suggestions. Many, we are sure will rise to their feet and march on." Pg. 153

24) "Thus we grow. And so can you, though you be but one man with this book in your hand. We believe and hope it contains all you will need to begin." Pg. 163

25) "If you think you are an atheist, an agnostic, a skeptic, or have any other form of intellectual pride which keeps you from accepting what is in this book, I feel sorry for you." Pg. 181

b) Twelve Steps And Twelve Traditions on Alcoholics Anonymous

1) "Nevertheless, the infant Society determined to set down its experience in a book which finally reached the public in April 1939. At this time the recoveries numbered about one hundred. The book was called 'Alcoholics Anonymous,' and from it the Fellowship took its name. In it alcoholism was described from the alcoholic's point of view, the spiritual ideas of the Society were codified for the first time in the Twelve Steps, and the application of these steps to the alcoholic's dilemma was made clear." – Foreword, Pg. 17

2) "The book 'Alcoholics Anonymous,' became the basic text of the Fellowship, and it still is." Foreword, Pg. 17

3) "With the publication of the book 'Alcoholics Anonymous,' in 1939, the pioneering period ended and a prodigious chain reaction set in as recovered alcoholics carried their message to still others." Foreword, Pg. 17

c) Alcoholics Anonymous Comes Of Age on Alcoholics Anonymous, Published 1957

1) "The Cleveland pioneers had proved three essential things: the value of personal sponsorship; the worth of the AA book in indoctrinating newcomers; and finally the tremendous fact that AA, when word of mouth got around, could now soundly grow to great size." – Chap 1, When A.A. Came Of Age, Pg. 22

2) "...for their sobriety depended heavily upon the Big Book..." – Chap 1, When A.A. Came Of Age, Pg. 30

3) "Above all, we would have to put our methods down on paper. A book of experience could carry our message to distant places we could never visit ourselves. Moreover, such a book could prevent the otherwise inevitable garble and distortion that would start as soon as publicity came. It would not only guide alcoholics to recovery, but also become the basis for telling our story to the world and therefore a guide to our public relations as well. These were our reflections and speculations." – Chap 2, The Three Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous: Recovery, Pgs. 144 – 145

4) "...at this point we would have to tell how our recovery from alcoholism worked." – Chap 2, The Three Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous: Recovery, Pg. 159

5) "Actually our group conscience was at work to construct the most acceptable and effective book possible." – Chap 2, The Three Legacies of Alcoholics Anonymous: Recovery, Pg. 163

d) Dr. Bob And The Good Oldtimers on Alcoholics Anonymous, Published 1980

1) "...writing a book of experiences that would carry the message of recovery to other cities and other countries." – Chap. 10, The Co-Founders Face Money Problems, Pg. 123

2) As Dorothy (Snyder) remembered it, however, Bill would write the chapters, have them reviewed by the New York AA's, then send them to Akron. 'We would read them in the Akron meeting. Then we would send back any comments and corrections.'" – Chap. 11, Early Meetings and Big Book Controversies Pg. 152

3) "Clarence (Snyder) said, 'I made the announcement at the Oxford Group that this was the last time the Cleveland bunch was down as a contingent – that we are starting a group in Cleveland that would only be open to alcoholics and their families. Also, that we were taking the name from the book Alcoholics Anonymous.'" – Chap. 12, Cleveland A.A.'s leave the Oxford Group, Pg. 164

4) "After he is defogged, we feel him out, then give him the book and lots of conversation. Our book certainly has been a tremendous help. We also contact the family when he is in the hospital and give them conversation and the book." – Chap. 12, Cleveland A.A.'s leave the Oxford Group, Pg. 168

5) "Then Clarence (Snyder) made me go to the home of one of the newer members every night for three months, and they had nine or ten people talking to me. Then I had to read the Big Book before I went to my first meeting. As a result, I think I had a better understanding of what they were trying to do." – Chap. 12, Cleveland A.A.'s leave the Oxford Group Pg. 169

6) " 'If you do as the Big Book says, then it is the same program that existed when I came in, in 1939.'" – Chap 21, Group concerns and angry rumors, Pg. 261 – 262

e) 'Pass It On' – Bill Wilson and the AA message on Alcoholics Anonymous, Published 1984

1) "By setting forth a clear statement of the recovery program, a book could prevent distortion of the message. It could be sent or carried to alcoholics in distant cities; it could help publicize the movement among non-alcoholics. It might even make money – which could be used to establish an office to handle inquiries, publicity, etc." – Chap. 11, Alcoholics Anonymous, Pg. 190

2) " 'My understanding was that those notes were the result of long thought, after hours of discussion pro and con with everybody who might be interested. That is the way I remember first seeing an outline of the Twelve Steps.'" – Chap. 11, Alcoholics Anonymous, Pg. 193

3) "He would then send copies of the chapters out to Akron to Dr. Bob for checking and criticism, and would himself review the same material with the New York members." – Chap. 11, Alcoholics Anonymous, Pg. 196

4) "He had to set down the actual program for the alcoholic to follow, and he wanted to make it as powerful as possible." – Chap. 11, Alcoholics Anonymous, Pg. 196

5) 'In print, there was no second chance. What was printed on the page might well be the only information the suffering alcoholic would have access to. It had to be powerful – and thorough. As Bill put it, 'There must not be a single loop-hole through which the rationalizing alcoholic could wiggle out.'" – Chap. 11, Alcoholics Anonymous, Pg. 196

6) "It had been completed in a single year, and it presented AA's experience with alcoholism, plus the Twelve Step program, in simple, direct language. Significantly, almost everything the book had to say about alcoholics' problems and their recovery is still applicable today." – Chap. 11, Alcoholics Anonymous, Pg. 206

g) Living Sober on Alcoholics Anonymous, Published 1975,

1) "The Alcoholics Anonymous Steps that summarize its program of recovery are set forth in detail in the books 'Alcoholics Anonymous' and 'Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.'" – Segment 1, Using This Booklet, Pg. 1

2) “Alcoholics Anonymous.” “This is the basic textbook of AA experience. AA as we know it is the outgrowth of this book, which was originally prepared by a hundred or so alcoholics who had learned to stay sober by helping each other. After a few years of sobriety, they recorded what they had done and gave the account this title. Our Fellowship then began to be called by the name ‘Alcoholics Anonymous.’” – Segment 28, Reading The A.A. Message, Pg. 75

3) “In this volume, the original AA experience is spelled out by those who did it first, then wrote about it. It is the primary source book of all basic AA thought for all of us – whether we read or reread it often or seldom. Most members get a copy as soon after coming to AA as they can, so they may take the fundamental AA ideas directly from the source, not hear of them second or third-hand.” – Segment 28, Reading The A.A. Message, Pg. 75

4) “Simply reading the book was enough to sober up some people in AA’s early days, when there were only a few AA groups in the world. It still works that way for some problem drinkers in isolated parts of the world, or for those who live on seagoing vessels.” – Segment 28, Reading The A.A. Message, Pg. 75

5) “Regular readers of the book say that repeated readings reveal many deeper meanings that cannot be grasped at the first hurried glance.” – Segment 28, Reading The A.A. Message Pg. 75

f) The Language of the Heart, Published 1988

1) “And wasn’t there grave danger of our successful methods being badly distorted unless reduced to writing and put in book form? And if we made no written record of what we had found, might not columnists get funny and start deadly ridicule? Caution, we agreed, ought to be observed by all means, but still didn’t we need a book of our own, some publicity?” – Pg. 12: Bill Wilson, The Book Is Born, A.A. Grapevine, October 1945

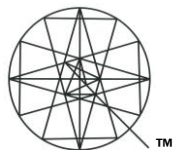
2) “The first written record of AA experience was the book Alcoholics Anonymous. It was addressed to the heart of our foremost problem – release from the alcohol obsession. It contained personal experiences of drinking and recovery and a statement of those divine but ancient principles which have brought us a miraculous regeneration.” – Pg. 21: Bill Wilson, Twelve Suggested Points for A.A. Tradition, A.A. Grapevine, April 1946

3) “Then there was still a third dream. That was to prepare a book of experience – the one we know today as Alcoholics Anonymous. We were sure that unless our recovery experiences were put on paper, our principles and practices would soon be distorted. We might be ridiculed in the press. Besides, did we not owe at least a book to those alcoholics who couldn’t get to our hospitals or who, perchance, weren’t reached right away by our advancing missionaries.” – Pg. 58: Bill Wilson, Lack of Money Proved A.A. Boon, A.A. Grapevine, June 1947

4) “By 1937, some of us realized that AA needed a standard literature. There would have to be a book. Our word-of-mouth program could be garbled, we might be destroyed by dissension over basic principles, and then our public relations would surely go to pot. We’d fall flat on our obligation to the alcoholic who hadn’t yet heard unless we put our knowledge on paper.” Pg. 133: Bill Wilson, Services Make A.A. Tick, A.A. Grapevine, November 1951

5) “Without doubt, that Book (Alcoholics Anonymous) is the backbone of our unity, it has unbelievably simplified our task. The spiritual result, in sobriety, in happiness, and faith, is altogether beyond any reckoning.” Pg. 133: Bill Wilson, Services Make A.A. Tick, A.A. Grapevine, November 1951

6) "It was in 1937 when Dr. Bob and I first began to see what we must do. We knew there would have to be an AA text of principles and methods. Other old-timers agreed. By 1939, with lots of help, we had published the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous. This ended all doubt about AA's methods. The 300,000 Big Books today in circulation constitute the platform of recovery upon which our whole Fellowship stands." - Pg. 167: Bill Wilson, Guardian of A.A.: Our General Service Conference, A.A. Grapevine,



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