

Picky! Picky! Picky!

There are some expressions I hear frequently in A.A. meetings that bother me. Part of the problem is on my side of the street, because it's a spiritual axiom (Bill W. writes) that any time we're troubled, there's something wrong with us. I admit it. At least I will not critique anything in the Big Book or the Twelve and Twelve! I will focus on five other ideas we've all heard at meetings – probably heard so often that they seem to be part of A.A.'s message.

(1) “I try to turn things over to God.”

Sorry, but I don't “get” that. The third step says we decide to turn things over to the care of God which is different. When I take my car to the garage, I don't hand over the title to the mechanic. He or she does care and repair. Perhaps there are saints who can turn their wills and lives over to God, who can be enfolded in God (whatever that means). Besides, we are not saints! As A.A. members we remain distinct individuals. We don't turn ourselves over in any way that would diminish our identities or responsibilities. On the contrary, we let go of our own thoughts and actions so that, with God's care and repair, we become more responsible, have healthier identities, and am more effective in carrying the message.

(2) “God doesn't give me more than I can handle.”

First, if this is true, why do we ask for God's help? Second, there's that risky first-person singular pronoun, “I.” The eleventh step has a critical adverb: ...praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry it out.” (Emphasis added) Praying for what I want is off the table. I may have good intentions, for example, that my Aunt Sarah, dying of cancer, go quickly and be spared further suffering. But what I want and can handle is beside the point. The step is to pray for knowledge of God's will, not to ask that God fulfil my will. Maybe one could put it positively in this way: “God doesn't give me more than God can handle.” Or more fully, “God doesn't give me more than God can handle through me when He gives me knowledge of His will and the power to carry it out.

(3) “We'll love you until you learn to love yourself.”

I kinda get this one. There's a lot of love in the fellowship. The Big Book says, “Love and tolerance of others is our code.” OK. My problem is that to a newcomer – indeed to anyone outside the fellowship – this saying could sound controlling: “We're going to make you feel something, and we're going to keep at you until you show the results we want.” I understand nobody in the fellowship means it that way, but think how it sounds from the outside. Second, most alcoholics tend to be defiant, and this saying is almost an invitation to defiance. Third, this saying simply misses the mark. Most newcomers aren't looking for love; they are looking for a way out of a crisis; relief from family problems, a reprieve from a judicial sentence, or an alternative to suicide. They may feel incapable of love or of being loved, so they cannot connect with the offer. Fourth, how many long-time members can attest to their success with love? Sure, we all feel the warmth and yes, the love of the fellowship if we stick around. I'm not a Grinch; my guess is that this saying makes a lot more sense once one has been in the rooms for a while.

LIFELINE

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF
CENTRAL OFFICE OF SALT LAKE CITY, INC.

We welcome your correspondence and will publish your material, space permitting, if it meets editorial criteria. *Share your experience, strength and hope with another alcoholic.* For a free subscription or to submit articles, suggestions or contributions, contact Central Office of Salt Lake City:

CENTRAL OFFICE OF SALT LAKE CITY, INC.
80 West Louise Avenue
Salt Lake City, Utah 84115
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**CENTRAL OFFICE
STATEMENT OF PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Central Office is to provide the basic services listed, to include, but not limited to:

- To carry the A.A. message and help those individuals who suffer from alcoholism;
- to maintain a 24-hour Twelve-Step phone service;
- to answer phone inquiries as needed;
- to compile, update and print meeting lists;
- to maintain A.A.-approved literature for sale to members and the public;
- and to print and distribute a newsletter.

Specifically excluded shall be the operation of any club, clubhouse or drying-out place, and acts in violation of the Twelve Traditions of A.A.

“Let us never be a closed corporation; let us never deny our experience, for whatever it may be worth, to the world around us. Let our individual members heed the call to every field of human endeavor. Let them carry the experience and spirit of A.A. into all these affairs, for whatever good they may accomplish. For not only has God saved us from alcoholism; the world has recieved us back into its citizenship.”

A.A. Comes of Age, pp. 232-233

Suiting up and Showing Up

**Groups Represented At the
Central Office Reps Meeting for:**

August 2008

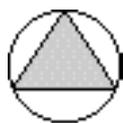
AN A.A. GROUP	FLYIN' HIGH
ACLOSEDGROUP	BOUNTIFULCOMMUNITY
NOT A GLUM LOT	SPIRITUAL QUEST
YOUNG AND ALIVE	NOMADIC LUNCH
BIGUGLIES	A WAY OUT
CAME TO BELIEVE	SERENITY VIEW
AFTERNOONERS	COME AS YOU ARE
OFF THE CUFF	12O'CLOCK HIGH
HILLCREST GROUP	EYEOPENER
10 TH STEP GROUP	AS BILL SEES IT
974 GROUP	WE CARE
EARLY FRIENDSHIP	FOOTHILL GROUP
UNITY LUNCH	BOGIRISH
BY THE BOOK	LIVING IN SOBRIETY
SATURDAY SPEAKERS	BREAKFAST CLUB
GARDEN VARIETY	
CANDLELIGHT	
YOUNG AND ALIVE	

Is Your Group Represented?

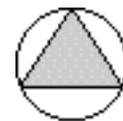
The next C.O. Reps Meeting is the second Tuesday of the month at 7:00 P.M. at Central Office, 80 West Louise Ave. (2860 South)

Please visit our website for meeting information.
www.saltlakeaa.org

To reduce our costs, Central Office would like to update our mailing list for the **LIFELINE**. If you have moved please contact C.O. at 484-7871
Thank you.



Upcoming Events,
and Schedule Changes



September 5th — 7th; **Women's Big Book Retreat**, Provo Canyon UT.

Contact Patti I.-801-541-9901

September 19th — 21st; **CC+H2O, Men's Spiritual Retreat**, Lava Hot Springs, ID.

Info: James B. @ 801.232.1514 or email joheeb@gmail.com

Rick N. @ 801.301.1058 or rick@selectcomfortsystem.com

November 27th — 30th; **42nd Las Vegas Roundup**, Las Vegas, NV.

contact: www.lasvegasroundup.org

January 8th — 11th, 2009; **19th Annual River Roundup**, Laughlin, NV.

River Cities Intergroup @ www.rcco-aa.org

February 12th — 15th, 2009; **45th International Women's Conference**, Salt Lake City, UT

New Meetings:

The **Journey to Freedom** meeting is at 9160 South 300 West. (the office building next to Standard Plumbing in Sandy) It is an open meeting that starts at 7:30 p.m. on Tuesday.

The **Grantsville Good News** is meeting at 151 Cooley Street (the V.F.W.) in Grantsville on Tuesday at 7:00 p.m. This is an open meeting.

The **Jaywalkers Roundtable Open Meeting** will begin on Wed., September 17th at 19 Mary Grace Manor, 3050 So., between W. Temple and Main St., @ 7pm.

Special Events:

The **Backstreet Club** in Bountiful is having their 5th Annual Cell to Well 9.5 mile/15 k walk-run September 13th, 2008. For more info about this event call the Backstreet Club @ 397-0450

The Spiritual Alibi

Our first attempts at inventories are apt to prove very unrealistic. I used to be a champ at un-realistic self appraisal. On certain occasions, I wanted to look only at the part of my life which seemed good. Then I would greatly exaggerate whatever virtues I supposed I had attained. Next I would congratulate myself on the grand job I was doing in A.A.

Naturally this generated a terrible hankering for still more "accomplishments," and still more approval. I was falling straight back into the pattern of my drinking days. Here were the same old goals—power, fame, and applause. Besides, I had the best alibi known—the spiritual alibi. The fact that I really did have a spiritual objective made this utter nonsense seem perfectly right.

As Bill Sees It, page193

CONGRATULATIONS TO OUR BIRTHDAYS!

~ AA INSIDE THE WALLS ~

When was the first time a Judge sent an alcoholic to our care rather than jail?

Actually, it was before AA was even founded. In August, 1934, Rowland H and Cebra G persuaded a Vermont court judge to parole Ebby T into their custody. Ebby had first met Rowland only shortly before. In the fall, Rowland took Ebby to NYC where he sobered up with the help of the Oxford Group at the Calvary Mission.

Shortly after that, in late November, Ebby T, while staying at the Calvary Mission and working with the Oxford Group, heard about Bill's problems with drinking. Ebby visited Bill at 182 Clinton St and shared his recovery experience 'one alcoholic talking to another.' A few days later, Ebby returned with Shep C. They spoke to Bill about the Oxford Group.

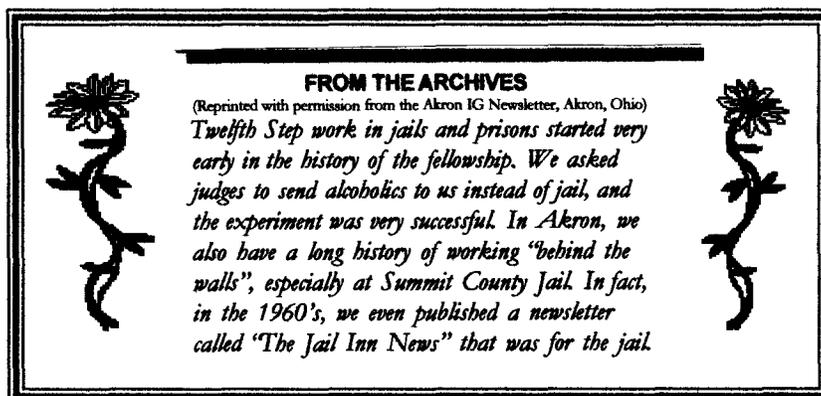
On Dec. 7, Bill decided to investigate the Oxford Group Mission on 23rd St. He showed up drunk with a drinking companion found along the way (Alec the Finn). Bill kept interrupting the service wanting to speak. On the verge of being ejected, Ebby came by and fed Bill a plate of beans. Bill later joined the penitents and drunkenly "testified" at the meeting.

On Dec. 11, Bill (age 39) decided to go back to Towns Hospital and had his last drink (four bottles of beer purchased on the way). On Dec. 14, Ebby visited Bill at Towns Hospital and told him more about the Oxford Group principles. After Ebby left, Bill fell into a deep depression (his "deflation at depth") and had a profound spiritual experience after crying out "If there be a God, will he show himself." Dr. Silkworth later assured Bill he was not crazy and told him to hang on to what he had found. In a lighter vein, Bill and others would later refer to this as his "white flash" or "hot flash" experience.

Here is the question...one of those "slender threads" of our history. If that judge says no and sends Ebby T. to jail, does Bill get sober? Does Bill come to Akron and meet Bob? Are any of us sober?

(Reprinted with permission from the Akron IG Newsletter, Akron, Ohio)

Improve the quality of your sobriety and get out of yourself! Central Office needs volunteers for service work. We need people for 12-Step calls, stuffing envelopes, answering the telephone, et cetera. If you are interested contact Central Office at 484-7871.



(Picky, from page one)

(4) “Everybody has a different bottom.”

The circumstances of everybody’s bottom are different (the who, what and when). But the meaning of everyone’s bottom is the same, we have felt a helplessness and hopelessness that breaks through our denial. Sometimes that helplessness and hopelessness is experienced in a hospital emergency room; sometimes it’s in a motel when all that’s left is a bottle and a pistol. Whatever the circumstances, it is clear to me that I can’t go on. It’s the end of the road. A.A.’s language is “deflation of ego.” The ego, the “I” who thought I was doing OK, finally realizes that it’s knocking on death’s door. It’s important that this common meaning among all our”bottoms” be affirmed, because it’s one of the major points on which we establish identification with another alcoholic ... we hear about their bottom and discover there’s someone else who understands. Then healing can begin.

(5) “ What happens is going to happen. Everything always works out.”

I will make a confession> When people say “everything is just the way it’s meant to be,” I have trouble keeping my serenity. Bill W. makes a remark on spirituality that we can have our heads in the clouds, so long as we keep our feet on the ground. I’m just appealing to common sense. Was the destruction of the World Trade Center OK? Is it OK that 8% of humanity metabolizes alcohol unusually, most often with deadly results? If a friend is drunk all the time, is there no point carrying the message because he’s “exactly where he’s supposed to be?” Land-o Goshen! Seems to me that a big part of the program is to change things for the better, always with the major and necessary qualifications that we pray first for knowledge of God’s will in this matter, and act, to the best of our ability, only as agents of his will, having turned our own wills and lives over to God’s care.

This was found in my in-box at Central Office.
Thank you, whoever you are. Martia S.

Pass It On

Contributions to the
Lifeline

Making Pancakes

Six-year old Brandon decided one Saturday morning to fix his parents pancakes. He found a big bowl and a spoon, pulled a chair to the counter, opened the cupboard and pulled out the heavy flour canister, spilling it on the floor.

He scooped some of the flour into the bowl with his hands, mixed in most of a cup of milk and then added some sugar, leaving a floury trail on the floor which by now had a few tracks left by his kitten.

Brandon was covered with flour and getting frustrated. He wanted this to be something very good for his Mom and Dad, but it was getting very bad

(Making Pancakes, from page 5)

He didn't know what to do next-whether to put it all into the oven or on the stove, and he didn't know how the stove worked! Suddenly, he saw his kitten licking from the bowl of mix and reached to push her away, knocking the egg carton to the floor.. Frantically, he tried to clean up this monumental mess but slipped on the eggs getting his pajamas white and sticky.

And just then he saw his Dad standing at the door. Big crocodile tears welled up in Brandon's eyes. All he wanted to do was something good, but he'd made a terrible mess. He was sure a scolding was coming, maybe even a spanking. But his father just watched him.

Then walking through the mess Dad picked up his crying son, hugged him and loved him, getting his own pajamas white and sticky in the process!

That's how God deals with us. We try to do something good in life but sometimes it turns into a mess. Our marriage gets all sticky or we insult a friend, or we can't stand our job, or our health goes sour.

Sometimes, we just stand there in tears because we can't think of anything else to do. That's when God picks us up and loves us and forgives us, even though some of our mess gets all over Him.

But just because we might mess up, we can't stop trying to 'make pancakes' for God or for others. Sooner or later, we'll get it right, and then they'll be glad we tried. . . .

I was thinking and I wondered if I had any wounds needing to be healed, friendships that need rekindling or three words needing to be said. Sometimes, 'I love you' can heal & bless! Remind everyone of your friends that you love them. Even if you think they don't love you. — you would be amazed at what those three little words, a smile, and reminder like this can do.

Just in case I haven't told you lately. . . .I LOVE YOU!!!

Suppose one morning you were called to God; do all your friends know you love them?

Send this to everyone you love, and send it back to the person who sent it to you. . . .And, never stop 'making pancakes'.

Jan B., via email

“Never talk down to an alcoholic from any moral or spiritual hilltop; simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools for his inspection. Show him how they worked with you. Offer him friendship and fellowship.”

As Bill Sees It, pg 192.

September 2008

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 5:30-10:30 NNS 11-12a Jeff R	2 12-9:30a Jeff R 5:30-10p 10 th Step 10-12a Vivian	3 5:30-7p Afternooners 7-12a Todd K	4 12-7a Todd K 5:30-12a Denise G	5 12-7a Denise G 7-9:30a Andrea 6-12a Grtr Krns	6 2-6p Andrea 6-12a Darlene B
7 9-12 pm OPEN 12-6p An AA Grp 7-9p 974 Grp 9-11p Dave W	8 5:30-10:30 NNS 11-12a Jeff R	9 12-9:30a Jeff R 5:30-10p 10 th Step 10-12a Vivian	10 5:30-7p Afternooners 7-12a Todd K	11 12-7a Todd K 6:30-10p Hillcrest	12 7-9:30a Andrea 6:30-12a Basic Young Peoples	13 3-7p Its in The Book 7-12a Darlene B
14 9-12 pm OPEN 12-6p An AA Grp 6-11p Melissa B	15 5:30-10:30 NNS 11-12a Jeff R	16 12-9:30a Jeff R 5:30-10p 10 th Step 10-12a Vivian	17 5:30-7p Afternooners 7-12a Todd K	18 12-7a Todd K 5:30-12a John S	19 7-9:30a Andrea 6:30-12a Non Smoking Sbrty Hr	20 2-7p OPEN 7-12a Magna Friendly Bunch
21 9-12 pm OPEN 12-6p An AA Grp 6-8p OPEN 8-11p Dave W	22 5:30-10:30 NNS 11-12a Jeff R	23 12-9:30a Jeff R 5:30-10p 10 th Step 10-12a Vivian	24 5:30-7p Afternooners 7-12a Todd K	25 12-7a Todd K 5:30-12a Dave S	26 7-9:30a Andrea 5-10p Honey's Breakfast Bunch	27 2-6p Billy S. 6-10p Grapevine 10-12a OPEN
28 9-12 pm OPEN 12-6p An AA Grp 6-8p OPEN 8-11p Dave W	29 5:30-10:30 NNS 11-12a Jeff R	30 12-9:30a Jeff R 5:30-10p 10 th Step 10-12a Vivian				