



# The Awakening

August 25, 2005

A publication of the Sunset Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

## Meetings and the Big Book

*Over the years both AA meetings and The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous have continued to evolve. With over 25 million copies in print, the book is now in its Fourth Edition. Below is an excerpt from a preamble used at meetings in 1940, with the last three paragraphs pointing out the relationship between meetings and the Big Book:*

“We are gathered here because we are faced with the fact that we are powerless over alcohol and unable to do anything about it without the help of a Power greater than ourselves.

We feel that each person's religious views, if any, are his own affair. The simple purpose of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is to show what may be done to enlist the aid of a Power greater than ourselves regardless of what our individual conception of that Power may be.

In order to form a habit of depending upon and referring all we do to that Power, we must at first apply ourselves with some diligence. By often repeating these acts, they become habitual and the help rendered becomes natural to us.

...There is a vast amount of fun in the A.A. fellowship. Some people might be shocked at our seeming worldliness and levity but just underneath there lies a deadly earnestness and a full realization that we must put first things first and with each of us the first thing is our alcoholic problem. To drink is to die. Faith must work twenty-four hours a day in and through us or we perish.

In order to set our tone for this meeting I ask that we bow our heads in a few moments of silent prayer and meditation. I wish to remind you that whatever is said at this meeting expresses our own individual opinion as of today and as of up to this moment.

We do not speak for A.A. as a whole and you are free to agree or disagree as you see fit, in fact, it is suggested that you pay no attention to anything which might not be reconciled with what is in the A.A. Big Book.

If you don't have a Big Book, it's time you bought you one. Read it, study it, live with it, loan it, scatter it, and then learn from it what it means to be an A.A.”

*The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous is available at this meeting for our cost, \$6.25. If you are unable to pay, we can easily make arrangements for you to leave with a copy.*

## A Simple Program All or Nothing?

Acceptance and faith are capable of producing 100 per cent sobriety. In fact, they usually do; and they must, else we could have no life at all. But the moment we carry these attitudes into our emotional problems, we find that only relative results are possible. Nobody can, for example, become completely free from fear, anger, and pride Hence, in this life we shall attain nothing like perfect humility and love. So we shall have to settle, respecting most of our problems, for a very gradual progress, punctuated sometimes by heavy setbacks. Our old-time attitude of "all or nothing" will have to be abandoned.

-- Bill W. , *The Grapevine*, March 1962



### The Sunset Group

Thursdays at 7:00 pm  
Jewish Community Center  
13164 Burbank Boulevard  
Sherman Oaks, California

**September 1**

*Ronald W. of Los Angeles*

**September 8**

*Bill N. of Spring Lake, N.J.*

**September 15**

*Kenna M. of Pasadena*

**September 22**

*Todd L. of Long Beach*

**September 29**

*Will B. of Las Vegas*

**October 6**

*Sharon B. of W. Los Angeles*

**October 13**

*Facility closed for holiday*

**October 20**

*Scott R. of Los Angeles*

**October 27**

*Mike S. of Riverside*

**November 3**

*Michaeline F. of Escondido*

**November 10**

*Don M. of Studio City*

**November 17**

*Candice M. of Long Beach*



## September Begins a Sunrise of the Spirit

Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve on the Agenda

The Sunrise Group begins study of steps Ten through Twelve with an exciting slate of speakers in September and October. These are meetings you won't want to miss as these sessions will bring some of the most exciting and inspiring speakers around!

Here are some thoughts on the steps from the *12 & 12* and *The Big Book*:

**STEP 10:** Today's spot check finds its chief application to situations which arise in each day's march. The consideration of long-standing difficulties had better be postponed, when possible, to times deliberately set aside for that purpose. The quick inventory is aimed at our daily ups and downs, especially those where people or new events throw us off balance and tempt us to make mistakes. (*12 & 12*, p. 90-91)

When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code.

-- *The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*, p.84

**STEP 11:** We discover that we do receive guidance for our lives to just about the extent that we stop making demands upon God to give it to us on order and on our terms. Almost any experienced A.A. will tell how his affairs have taken remarkable and unexpected turns for the better as he tried to improve his conscious contact with God. He will also report that out of every season of grief or suffering, when the hand of God seemed heavy or even unjust, new lessons for living were learned, new resources of courage were uncovered, and that finally, inescapably, the conviction came that God does "move in a mysterious way His wonders to perform." (*12 & 12*, p. 104-105)

**STEP 12:** Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our *twelfth suggestion*: Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when other fail. Remember they are very ill.

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends -- this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.

-- *The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*, p. 80

### The Origin of the Serenity Prayer

"In 1941, a news clipping was called to our attention by a New York member. In an obituary notice from a local paper, there appeared these words: "God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

Never had we seen so much A.A. in so few words. With amazing speed the Serenity Prayer came into general use." (BILL W. A.A. *COMES OF AGE*, P. 196)

The prayer was immediately printed onto cards and distributed to soldiers in World War II. It is generally acknowledged to be the creation of the great theologian-intellectual Dr. Reinhold Niebuhr, although he offered that there were similar versions "spooking around". The next verse in Niebuhr's version seems also very much part of AA:

*Living one day at a time; enjoying one moment at a time;  
accepting hardships as the pathway to peace*

Whatever its origin, this simple prayer has been a hallmark of AA meetings around the world for more than 60 years.



### SUNRISE GROUP

Saturday Mornings  
8:15 am  
above Jerry's Deli and PINZ  
Bowling Alley  
12655 Ventura Blvd  
Studio City, CA

### Service: Its Own Reward

"And what about my time? Isn't a donation of my time and services just as important as my donation of cash? What if my home group had money for coffee, rent, and literature for jail meetings but no one to take the meetings in? And what about public information, treatment facilities, phone answering, and all the other varieties of Twelfth Step work? These all require more than just money; they require contributions of time and service. I need to be as willing to give my time as I am to give my money, for it seems that when AA service is the most inconvenient I receive the greatest rewards."

The Home Group:  
Heartbeat Of AA, pg. 117