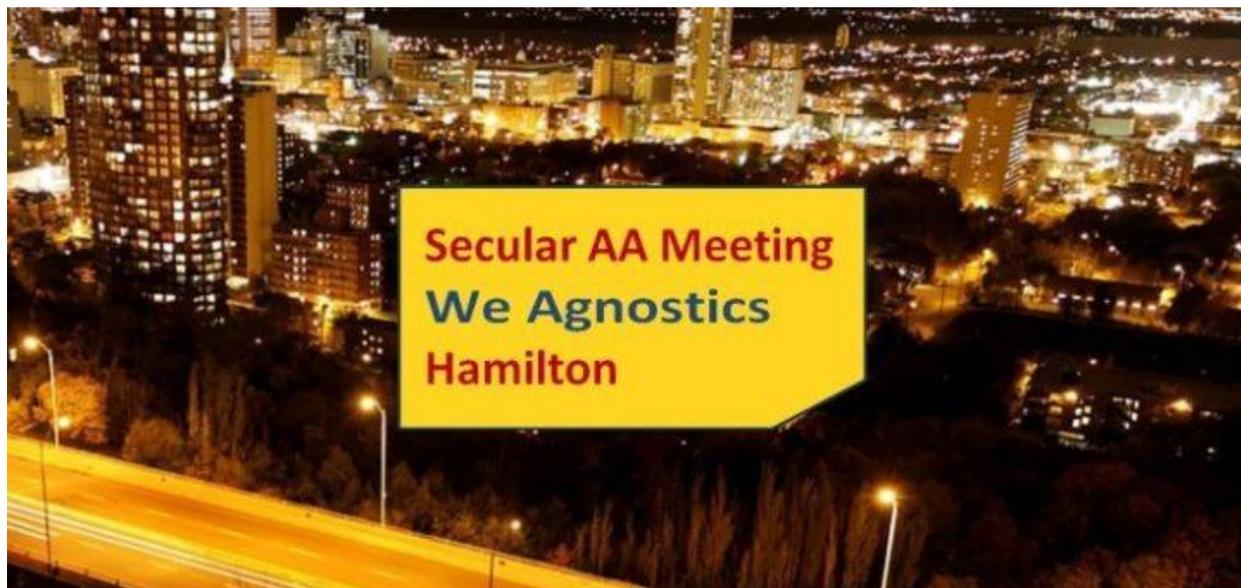


My New Home in Alcoholics Anonymous



By Diane I

I never intended or wanted to be an alcoholic or even a person who drank too much. I was actually afraid of alcohol in high school and didn't start to drink until I was 18. Right from the get go I could not control my drinking no matter how hard I tried. Oh sure there were times when I only had one or two, but that was few and far between and there were no guarantees.

After high school I entered a school of nursing to become a registered nurse. During that time I suffered from depression, low self esteem and many a brutal hangover. Like many women my body did not take well to alcohol and I would often become very ill. Miraculously I graduated as an RN and immediately got married to a man with whom I had nothing in common, except alcohol. At the time I thought I knew what I was doing, but looking back I can see that I got married because I was afraid of being alone and I believed that no one else would want me.

A few years into the marriage I had a little boy. Now I was responsible for another human being! My drinking slowed down a little and I secretly thought that perhaps I was OK since I had started to wonder if I had a drinking problem. However soon my drinking escalated and I felt ashamed and suffered a lot of remorse, especially for my behaviour while I was drinking. I couldn't control my drinking and I never wanted to be that kind of a mother!

On February 15, 1977 I had my last drink and on February 16 I went to my first AA meeting in Sudbury, Ontario. I was 26 and terrified! I had been raised a Christian and believed in most of what I had been taught although I was starting to have doubts. I was desperate to get sober and so at the time the "God stuff" and dogma did not bother me. I did what they told me.

After one year of sobriety I left my marriage and moved. I continued to go to AA meetings and stayed sober one day at a time. I was starting to disagree with much of what I heard at meetings, but was afraid to speak my truth.

At the age of 40 I remarried and moved again. I was still a regular AA member and became the GSR for my group. At a business meeting years ago I suggested that we don't close the meeting with The Lord's Prayer. Not one other person agreed with me. I really had nothing against The Lord's Prayer, I just didn't think it belonged in AA. It wasn't inclusive.

As the years went by I felt more and more disillusioned with all of the God talk and dogma and still felt that I could not say what I really believed out of fear of being judged or "not belonging". By this time my views on religion had changed a lot and I believed I was an atheist or agnostic. Eventually after about 34 years of sobriety I couldn't take it anymore and I stopped going to AA. I had no desire to drink.

About 3 and 1/2 years ago I was on line and discovered that a secular AA meeting called We Agnostics had been started in Hamilton. I had never heard of such a thing! I went to the meeting right away. What a breath of fresh air!! I could finally actually voice what I really believed without fear of being judged or being made to feel that I didn't belong. I heard people talk in a way that I had never heard before in AA. I was with like minded people! I enjoy the sharing and the fellowship because we talk about emotional sobriety and many other topics that you don't hear at traditional AA meetings. It is so inclusive!

I will be forever grateful to traditional AA for my sobriety but I have found my new home at my secular meeting, We Agnostics, in Hamilton, Ontario.

The secular AA We Agnostics meeting was initially launched in Hamilton, Ontario, on February 4, 2016 at the First Unitarian Church. A surprise to those who started it: it became an immediate success, with people like Diane in attendance, opening up, making coffee...

Held every Thursday, there are always some 20 (or more!) people in attendance. A success? Well, you bet! A second We Agnostics meeting was launched on September 10, 2018 and is held at the First Unitarian every Monday.

