

Freethinkers in AA: Purpose

Agnostic and freethinkers Alcoholics Anonymous groups endeavor to maintain a tradition of free expression, and conduct meetings where alcoholics may feel free to express any doubts or disbeliefs they may have, and to share their own personal forms of spiritual experience, their search for it, or their rejection of it. In keeping with A.A. tradition, we do not endorse or oppose any form of religion or theism. Our only wish is to assure suffering alcoholics that they can find sobriety in A.A. without having to accept anyone else's beliefs, or having to deny their own.

Who We Are

• *New to the Freethinkers Group?*

Some of us have been in A.A. for a long time, with many years of solid recovery, but could no longer deal with the “god-talk” at traditional meetings and/or were no longer willing to publically “fake it till you make it” or “act as if” with regards to religion.

• *New to A.A. and new to Freethinkers?*

Some of us are new to A.A., have a secular belief system (or are questioning our “faith”), and were lucky enough to initially find a home at Freethinkers in AA. Or for far too many, some have walked in the doors of “traditional/religious” A.A. meetings, heard the “god-talk” and walked right back out the door (perhaps doing so numerous times).

Freethinkers in A.A. is an open meeting for those seeking help with their own problems with alcohol, as well as our supporters, individuals dealing with other addictions and others interested in how our program works. Our members share a common desire to embrace A.A. without the religious ideas and practices found at more “traditional” A.A. meetings.

A Secular Version of the 12 Steps

On page 164 of the Big Book, Bill Wilson (one of the founders of A.A.) wrote: *“Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know but a little,” and in the Forward to Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, he wrote: “A.A.’s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which, if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.”*

With that in mind, here is a secular version, suggested as a program of recovery. Note that it is stated in the present tense to remind us that it needs to be a continuing and present process.

1. I concede to my innermost self that I am alcoholic—that on my own I am powerless to confront and resolve my addictions.
2. I learn to trust and hope that a new course of action, practice of these Twelve Steps in a supportive fellowship, can and will restore me to sanity.
3. I make a daily decision to turn my will and my life over to this 12 step process and development of the inner resources they help me find and follow.
4. I learn how to take a searching, fearless, and honest inventory of myself, my thoughts, beliefs, emotions and actions.
5. I admit to myself and to another person what I learn about myself, sharing my life story— withholding nothing.
6. I become willing to let go of anything and everything holding me back.
7. I use whatever personal power and resources I find to help me confront self-limiting liabilities and defenses when they crop up.

8. I list all persons I have harmed, and become willing to make things right.
9. I make things right with all I have harmed, wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. I continue to take personal inventory and when I am wrong promptly admit it.
11. I seek through meditation and self-examination to increase awareness of my deepest thoughts and feelings, seeking only for the knowledge of what is right and the power to carry that out.
12. Awakening through the practice of these Steps to the spiritual and non-material in my life, I try to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all of my affairs.

Bill also wrote: “There are few absolutes inherent in the Twelve Steps. Most Steps are open to interpretation, based on the experience and outlook of the individual. Consequently, the individual is free to start the steps at whatever point he can, or will.”

Additional Resources

Many of the “standard” A.A. tools and resources (attending meetings for fellowship, slogans, getting a sponsor, connecting individually with others in the program, etc.) are time-tested and effective. We also recognize that much conference approved A.A. literature & practices present barriers to those who don’t believe in a god (or for some, even a higher power). We encourage you to visit our website for additional information and resources (links to other websites, secular articles & stories, book suggestions, etc.):

www.FreethinkersInAA.org