

# THE JOURNEY AT THE BEACH

F E B R U A R Y 2 0 2 1

**Tradition Two** • “For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.”

**Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions page 132**

## ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATIONS

*“To thine own self be true”*

NAME	YEARS	SOBRIETY DATE	CELEBRATING	WHERE	WHEN
Pat G	45	02/03/76	02/26/21	Happy Joyous and Free • Zoom	10 am
Matt P	22	02/07/99	02/08/21	Happy Hour • Zoom	6 pm
Laura P	8	02/19/13	02/24/21	Promises • Zoom	7 pm
Poe H	30	02/01/91		Happy, Joyous and Free	10 am
Christine P	25	02/02/96		Happy, Joyous and Free	10 am
Nancy C	33	02/19/88	02/26/21	Happy, Joyous and Free • Zoom	10 am
Larry L	17	03/14/04		Happy Risers • Atlantic Club	9 am

Please submit all anniversary information to Carla H at [info@ocaa.org](mailto:info@ocaa.org) by the 28<sup>th</sup> of the preceding month of the anniversary. Include your name, sobriety date, celebration date, where and when. The newsletter is printed on the first Tuesday of every month, so if your sobriety date falls early in the month, we may put your announcement in the prior month’s newsletter. Thanks!

**Step Two** • “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

**Twelve Steps and twelve Traditions page 25**

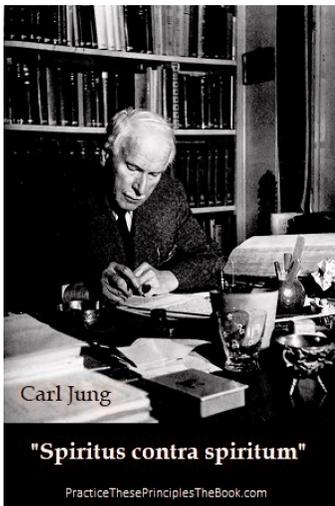
**Second Step Prayer** • Heavenly Father, I am having trouble with personal relationships. I can’t control my emotional nature. I am prey to misery and depression. I can’t make a living. I feel useless. I am full of fear. I am unhappy. I can’t seem to be of real help to others. I know in my heart that only you can restore me to sanity if I am just willing to stop doubting your power. I humbly ask that you help me to understand that it is more powerful to believe than not to believe and that you are either everything or nothing.

**Alcoholics Anonymous, pages 52:2, 52:3, 53:1, 53:2**  
[http://friendsofbillw.net/twelve\\_step\\_prayers](http://friendsofbillw.net/twelve_step_prayers)

# THE JOURNEY AT THE BEACH

## A Spiritual Awakening

Alcoholics Anonymous was founded on the idea that there was a certain type of alcoholic whose only hope of recovery was a spiritual awakening. The story behind this is told in the Big Book (pp. 26-29), Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age (pp. 58 - 71), Pass It On (pp. 111-125), and The Language of the Heart (pp. 274 - 286).



It begins with Rowland H., the “certain American businessman” who, as the Big Book tells it, had everything going for him. Except that he couldn’t stop drinking. And there was nobody who could help him. After years of treatment, the best sanatoriums and psychiatrists had failed him. Desperate, Rowland traveled abroad and went under the care of psychiatrist Carl Jung. To no avail. Acknowledging his own failure to help him, the Swiss doctor informed Rowland that he had never seen a single case like his recover.

Taken aback, Rowland asked if there were no exceptions. Yes, responded Jung. Every once in a while, here and there, “alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences.” These “appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which once were the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them.” That’s exactly the kind of change his treatment had tried to bring about, explained Jung, “but I have never been successful with an alcoholic of your description” (Big Book, p. 27).

Being a good church member, Rowland expressed his sense of relief to the doctor, who proceeded to explain that, “while his religious convictions were good, in his case they did not spell the necessary vital spiritual experience.” If they had, he would have recovered.

Rowland returned home, joined a grassroots evangelical movement called the Oxford Group, had a spiritual experience, and stopped drinking. He then carried this message to Ebby T., who also joined the Group, had his own experience, and also stopped drinking. Ebby then carried the message to Bill W., another desperate drunk who had also been declared hopeless by his psychiatrist, Dr. William D. Silkworth (“The Doctor’s Opinion,” Big Book, pp. xxiii - xxiv). Bill had his own spiritual experience and stopped drinking. Ebby then brought Bill a copy of psychologist William James’ Varieties of Religious Experience, the book which would help Bill make sense of what had happened to him and to Ebby and Rowland. Through the Oxford Group connection, Bill would later bring the message of a spiritual awakening to Dr. Bob, himself a member of the Group.

This, in a nutshell, is the historical background of how the concept of a spiritual awakening led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous. “In the wake of my spiritual experience,” Bill wrote to Dr. Jung many years later, “there came a vision of a society of alcoholics, each identifying with and transmitting his experience to the next—chain style. If each sufferer were to carry the news of the scientific hopelessness of alcoholism to each new prospect, he might be able to lay every newcomer wide open to a transforming spiritual experience. This concept proved to be the foundation of such success as Alcoholics Anonymous has since achieved” (The Language of the Heart, p. 279).

“There is a solution,” declares the Big Book in the chapter by that name (p. 25), and that solution is the transforming spiritual experience Bill writes Dr. Jung about. That’s the foundational principle and cornerstone of the AA program and its 12 Steps. Our admission of powerlessness over alcohol is the first in a series of Steps which, as Step 12 declares, result in such an experience or awakening: “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps. . .”

Why does working the Steps result in a spiritual awakening? Because of the nature of the principles embedded in them: “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” (12&12, p. 15). The result flows from the practice.

As plain and practical as the concept is, it obviously raises many questions.

*[Quote: Latin, "Spirit against spirits," from Carl Jung's letter to Bill W., explaining the alcoholic's need for a spiritual experience, "spirits" referring of course to those of the distilled kind.]*

[http://practicetheseprinciples.thebook.com/spiritual-awakening\\_546.html](http://practicetheseprinciples.thebook.com/spiritual-awakening_546.html)

# THE JOURNEY AT THE BEACH

## Many Paths To Spirituality

Many of us came to rely on a “Higher Power,” whether it was the collective power of A.A., the A.A. group itself, or some other entity, concept or being that helped us to stay sober.

*“My sponsor encouraged me to choose my own conception of a higher power. It didn’t need a gender, or a name, or any human attributes — it just had to be ‘a power greater than myself.’ It was then that I realized that the Fellowship, though comprised of human beings, represented a power greater than anything human. Even more surprisingly, by taking the Steps in my own clumsy way, supported by the unconditional love of my fellow alcoholics, I had discovered a quiet, inner voice — a God within.”*

There were many other ideas and approaches, too, that helped us move forward in staying sober and understanding how the A.A. program could work best for us.

*“By incorporating basic Buddhist practices with my A.A. practices — regular meetings, doing service, working with newcomers, living the Steps and reading A.A. literature — I have discovered an awesome way to improve my conscious contact with the God of my understanding and live life on life’s terms in relative serenity. I still have anxieties, anger and all the rest of the emotions that come with life, but, bit by bit, I am able to manage them.”*

Many of us come from different belief systems and cultures, yet there has always been plenty of latitude in A.A. for members to practice whatever belief works best for them.

*“I am a Sioux/Blackfoot woman. I have been sober in A.A. for many years. Many of us believe in the Great Spirit, and it was a great relief to find out I could believe in a higher power of my choice. I didn’t have to give up any part of my beliefs when I joined A.A. I could live in the white man’s world, but also retain all of my people’s Native traditions, customs and ceremonies. In fact, A.A. made my beliefs stronger. My joining A.A. didn’t restrict me, it gave me more freedom.”*

The spirit of tolerance is strong in A.A., and members of all faiths and traditions find common ground in our program of recovery.

*“I’m a devout, lifelong Catholic. That is an integral part of my experience, strength and hope. I call my higher power God and do not feel I should have to qualify that every time I speak at a meeting. I’m perfectly okay with others referring to Buddha, Mohammed, Yahweh, or whatever name they call their higher power. “I’m uncomfortable, though, with anyone citing the Bible, the Koran, the Talmud, or any non-A.A. literature as the truth in an A.A. meeting. But I certainly give them the right to refer to or even quote (briefly) from any of these texts if it’s part of their A.A. experience. “In my eighteen years of recovery, I have heard plenty of inappropriate talk about religion, and I probably will again.... But so far I haven’t found it necessary to take a drink over any of it, and more than once, it has caused me to experience unexpected spiritual growth.”*

And that’s the point, isn’t it? For many of us, sobriety was a gift — freely given and freely received. Yet we have to do our part in maintaining it.

*“I’m still an agnostic. But I have discovered that the program will work for anyone who will let it. I didn’t have to find a way to make it work. It will work perfectly well on its own, provided I’m willing to do some work myself. “The first thing I had to do was resign from the debating society. That didn’t mean I started agreeing with everything I heard. It means only that I listened without arguing, used what I could use, and filed the rest for future reference. “The second thing I did was become an active member of my home group, which happened to be my sponsor’s home group. (I’d gotten a sponsor immediately. I already knew that was one thing I’d better do right away.) I saw that whatever else spirituality might consist of, it had to include being of maximum service to my fellow alcoholics, whether or not they were still suffering.”*

In working the program, we came to a better understanding of spirituality and the part it plays in our recovery.

*“When I first came to A.A., I thought that religion and spirituality were the same thing. But I’ve come to realize that religion means being committed to a practice of belief, and being spiritual means actively living life through a life-giving force. I believe this is any power greater than myself, whether I choose to call it God, Allah, Higher Power, Creative Intelligence, or the Power of Good. “I don’t have a specific religious faith that I practice or church that I go to. Matter of fact, I haven’t been in a sanctuary for some time. But I do try to practice the principles of the A.A. program. Through this, I believe that my higher power lives within and through me, and that is my sanctuary.”*

As A.A. has grown and taken root literally around the world, cutting across lines of gender, race, language and religion, the Fellowship has kept its doors open to alcoholics of all beliefs, supported by two basic principles found in A.A.’s Traditions: that A.A. has but one primary purpose — that of carrying the message to the alcoholic who still suffers, and the recognition that the only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

*“My sponsor was well versed in A.A.’s Twelve Steps, Traditions and Concepts. He had a substantial service history and talked to me about the 36 principles upon which A.A. was founded. It is these principles that I would ultimately turn my life and my will over to. “This God — ‘good orderly direction’ — as represented by the two million or so alcoholics who are members of this global Fellowship, is what I have accepted. “Living inside of the Steps, the ongoing efforts to promote the unity spoken of in the Traditions, and the discipline we find in applying the Concepts in the way we do business, both internally and with the world at large — these are the things that have provided me with a power greater than myself. “A.A., I believe, is truly universal, and this conscience that has changed the lives of so many, and continues saving the lives of so many more is worthy of my devotion. I have never seen or felt anything more spiritual than what I witness when I see the transformation that takes place as people begin to live this way of life.”*

[https://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/p-84\\_manypathstospirituality.pdf](https://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/p-84_manypathstospirituality.pdf)



# THE JOURNEY AT THE BEACH

## Virtual Meetings

**District 32** and the **Ocean City Area Fellowship Intergroup** meet every first Tuesday of the month at the Atlantic Club, 11827 Ocean Gateway, Ocean City, MD 21843 (Route 50 Westbound). For now, we will meet via Zoom. Contact [info@ocaa.org](mailto:info@ocaa.org) for a link if you would like to attend.

**Next meeting is** **March 2nd**  
**General Service Reps** **5:30 pm**  
**Intergroup Reps** **6:00 pm**

**Meetings** • Groups are slowly reopening in-person meetings in accordance with Mayor Hogan's guidelines. Please visit the [Meetings Page](#) for the latest updates. Listed below are Virtual Meetings taking place in the Ocean City Intergroup. Visit Ocean City Fellowship Intergroup of AA's website at [ocaa.org/update](http://ocaa.org/update) for real time revisions to the following schedule.

### Monday

- **6 pm Happy Hour** via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89390852132> Dial in: +1 (301)-715-8592 Meeting ID: 893 9085 2132 Password: 494142

### Tuesday

- **Noon Happy Joyous and Free Women's** group reads "As Bill Sees It" via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86421946835?pwd=cytBUmJLVndrMVhRQVQycFhhWHh0Zz09> Dial in: +1 (301)-715-8592 Meeting ID: 864 2194 6835 Password: 010397

### Wednesday

- **7 pm The Promises** via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/217995249?pwd=cXlZK2lCanRtY2pqOE9hSG4rNG9HUT09> Dial in: +1 301 715 8592 Meeting ID: 217 995 249 Password: 382990
- **7 pm Al-Anon • Bayside Beginning Ocean Pines** via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82512805793?pwd=VjJsOUt4anJcTlYyOjBRWhTZDI2QT09> Dial in: +1 (301)-715-8592 Meeting ID: 825 1280 5793 Password: 058548
- **8 pm Free To Be Women's** group via Zoom: <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/358229631> Dial in: +1 (301)-715-8592 Meeting ID: 358 229 631 Password: 9S1PSg

### Thursday

- **7 pm Primary Purpose** group Big Book Study Meeting via <https://ppgmd.org>

### Friday

- **10 am Happy, Joyous and Free Women's** group via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/84631768850?pwd=S0F3a2xtRWN5WE9QMFlrbCtDRmRZQT09> Dial in: +1 (301)-715-8592 Meeting ID: 846 3176 8850 Password: 313033

### Saturday

- **7 pm Saturday Night Live!** Apr 11, 2020 via Zoom <https://us04web.zoom.us/j/954508347?pwd=TDJ0UnNuYmZlYm9Ed1pHQmxEWHR0Zz09> Dial in: +1 (301)-715-8592 Meeting ID: 954 508 347 Password: 646266

### Sunday

- **8 pm CDA (Chemical Dependents Anonymous) • Step To It!** via Zoom <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/86011984838?pwd=RHdSaTdJSUhpNk5tUE0zcUloZnJmUT09> Dial in: +1 (301)-715-8592 Meeting ID: 860 1198 4838 Password: 611310

## OCAA Phone Schedule 410-600-5219

February - Fresh Air    March - Happy Hour    April - Positive Attitude    May - Happy Risers