

A Declaration of Unity

This we owe to A.A.'s future:

To place our common welfare first;

To keep our Fellowship united.

For on A.A. unity depend our lives,

And the lives of those to come.

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Conference-approved literature

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***PROBLEMS
OTHER THAN
ALCOHOL
(excerpts)***

*by Bill W.,
co-founder of
Alcoholics Anonymous*

The following excerpts from a Grapevine article by A.A.'s co-founder Bill W. represent principles which have been reaffirmed by the members of the A.A. General Service Conferences of 1969, 1970 and 1972.

• “The problem of drug addiction in its several forms lies close to us all. It stirs our deepest interest and sympathy. Many A.A.’s, especially those who have suffered these particular addictions, are now asking, ‘What can we do about drugs—within our Fellowship, and without?’

• “Specifically, here is a list of questions we are often asked:

1 “Can a nonalcoholic pill or drug addict become an A.A. member? No.

2 “Can such a person be brought, as a visitor, to an open A.A. meeting for help and inspiration? Yes.

3 “If so, should these nonalcoholic pill or drug users be led to believe that they have become A.A. members? No.

4 “Can a pill or drug taker, who also has a genuine alcoholic history, become a member of A.A.? Yes.

• “Now there are certain things that A.A. cannot do for anybody, regardless of what our desires or sympathies may be. Our first duty, as a fellowship, is to insure our own survival. Therefore, we have to avoid distractions and multipurpose activity.

• “Sobriety — freedom from alcohol — through the teaching and practice of the Twelve Steps, is the sole purpose of an A.A. group. Groups have repeatedly tried other activities, and they have always failed. It has also been learned that there is no possible way to make nonalcoholics into A.A. members. We have to confine our membership to alcoholics, and we have to confine our A.A. groups to a single purpose. If we don’t stick to these principles, we shall almost surely collapse. And if we collapse, we cannot help anyone.

• “I see no way of making nonalcoholic addicts into A.A. members. Experience says loudly that we can admit no exceptions, even though drug users and alcoholics happen to be first cousins of a sort. If we persist in trying this, I’m afraid it will be hard on the drug user himself, as well as on A.A. We must accept the fact that no nonalcoholic, whatever his affliction, can be converted into an alcoholic . . . and an A.A. member.

• “We cannot give A.A. membership to nonalcoholic addicts. But, like anyone else, they should be able to attend open A.A. meetings, provided, of course, that the groups themselves are willing.”

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**A.A. World Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 459, Grand Central Station
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