

EXPERIENCE, STRENGTH AND HOPE

Hispanic Women in A.A.



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS® is a fellowship of people who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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**Hispanic Women
in A.A.**

Do you have a drinking problem?

It can be difficult for many of us to admit and accept that we have a problem with alcohol. Sometimes alcohol seems like the solution to our problems, the only thing making life bearable. But if, when we look honestly at our lives, we see that problems seem to occur when we drink — problems at home or on the job, problems with our health, with our families, even with our social lives — it is more than likely that we have a drinking problem.

In Alcoholics Anonymous, we have learned that anyone, anywhere, regardless of their personal circumstance or the language that they speak, can suffer from the disease of alcoholism. We have also learned that anyone who wants to stop drinking can find help and recovery in Alcoholics Anonymous.

A.A. is not a religious organization

Alcoholics Anonymous has only one requirement for membership, and that is the desire to stop drinking. There is room in A.A. for people of all shades of belief and non-belief.

You are not alone

The stories that follow share the experience, strength and hope of a wide variety of Hispanic women, all of whom are alcoholics who have found sobriety and a new way of life in Alcoholics Anonymous. These stories represent their experience, strength and hope.

It doesn't matter whether you are 16 or 60, rich or poor, with a job or without, undocumented or not, business owner or stay-at-home mom, with school education or not, living in a homeless shelter or on the street, a devoted member of a church, a patient in a treatment facility, or a person in custody. Help is available, but you must make the decision to ask for it.

If you think you have a drinking problem, you may identify with the experiences shared in these stories. We hope you will discover, as these women did, that you are welcome in Alcoholics Anonymous, and that you, too, can find a new freedom and a new happiness in this spiritual way of life.

ESTHER

“My life was a puzzle”

When they asked me why I drank I had several answers, but in fact I did not know. I attended A.A. meetings as a punishment for having driven a car with booze on my breath. Hard to imagine that before me stood an opportunity that was going to change my life! I made every effort; I attended meetings every day and I did not drink for six months. I was sure I would never go back to drinking alcohol. I still don't know what happened, but I can tell you with all certainty that when I said yes to that first drink, the rest of the day went blank. When I woke up the next day, I could not believe that I had gotten drunk again. It was painful to recognize my weakness: I was unable to say no to that drink of alcohol. Sadly, I realized that I had spent 20 years wanting to control my drinking, and at that moment I admitted that I was an alcoholic.

My name is Esther and today I don't drink. I was born in Mexico, where every street has its history or legend. I grew up with Mexican folklore, customs, fiestas and the dances of the day. Of course, alcohol was always around. I didn't think there was anything wrong with alcohol because I saw the grownups having fun and being loving when they drank. A couple of times I saw fights that folks dismissed, saying, “That's what happens with drinking.” It was part of daily life. In high school, I started to drink. It was difficult facing the unknown. I didn't know what to do. I got lost in the mob of students and needed help to get along in that environment. Alcohol helped me to be who I thought I wanted to be.

From the beginning I was seeking the effects: I liked how it transformed me into a happy, brave and sociable girl. I didn't know that alcoholism is

a progressive disease, nor did I know that it was going to cause me needless problems. My parents always wanted the best for me. We were very poor and sometimes we didn't have anything to eat, and they would make sacrifices in order to provide us with what we needed and to send us to school. I never wanted to make my family or my friends feel ashamed, angry or sad, but I was completely unable to control my drinking. I didn't know how to look them in the eyes and ask for help and sometimes I didn't go home because I knew I'd be punished. I didn't finish school because I couldn't learn, and this was extremely frustrating. The bitterness of not having graduated stayed with me for many years. I had little groundwork to prepare me to face life. All I had was alcohol, frustration, bitterness and sadness, and lots of loneliness. And it seemed this would continue for the rest of my life.

When I started to work the Twelve Steps, I began gradually to know myself: it was as if I were finding out for the first time who I really was. My life was a puzzle that I began to put together with the glue that A.A.'s love offered me. It surprises me still to go on discovering the roots of the reasons I drank, and why I thought and felt this way.

Thanks to the program I have begun to change, little by little. I was inspired listening to the stories of A.A. members who came to the meetings. But there were hardly any women in the closest groups. Someone gave me a pamphlet about women in A.A. I enjoyed the stories, but I was unable to relate. Then in my group, my very considerate fellow members started to bring me A.A. magazines and literature from Mexico. I read the stories of Spanish-speaking women whose culture was my culture, and I immediately identified with them.

I felt like I knew them and that they knew me, and soon A.A. felt like home. I realized that I could understand the program better in Spanish with Hispanic women, and this was highly important at the beginning of my recovery. It gave me a firm basis to understand my problem and to believe that I could stay sober.

In my home group more women have stayed sober now, and we have served at our intergroup office and in general service, thanks to other women who were there to welcome and support us. As a member of A.A., my intention is to see

that other women find out about A.A. and recover from alcoholism, and to assure them that they can live life fully — for themselves and all who are at their side.

ZORAIDA

“Everything seemed perfect on the outside”

I grew up watching Sarita Montiel and Pedro Infante movies with my mom in a small New York apartment, surrounded by family members and close family friends. My uncles, aunts, cousins and grandfather all lived in the same apartment complex in Manhattan. Since we were so many, we were constantly celebrating birthdays, anniversaries, holidays and other festivities with lots of music, dancing, food and liquor — there was always liquor. My family was a close-knit unit linked by the many hidden family secrets we did not dare acknowledge or speak about to anyone, even each other.

My father’s alcoholism was one of those secrets. As a little girl, I remember that my father would leave and sometimes come back home two or three days later. Sometimes he would stagger in at three or four in the morning with toys and candy. Other times he would storm in angrily, drag my brothers out of bed and beat them. I was in a constant state of fear and anxiety, so I learned to stay quiet and pretend every aspect of my family home was perfect, like one of those old romantic movies I grew up watching, all the while shutting down and looking for ways to escape... and I was only five years old.

Eventually we moved across the country to a different city in hopes of a better life and more opportunity. There, we had to settle into a new neighborhood and build a new home. It didn’t take long before the heavy drinking started again. My father eventually found the rooms of A.A. and began to practice the A.A. program at home. My family life changed drastically. I now know that my father was my first exposure to A.A., well before I even started drinking.

I started drinking heavily in my 30s after graduating from a prestigious university, buying the home of my dreams, and starting a business with

my now ex-husband. Once again, everything seemed perfect on the outside, while I was wilting away and empty on the inside. I somehow injured my back and needed surgery. One surgery, two surgeries and finally three back surgeries later, I was so devastated that I could not stop drinking. In my depression, all of those feelings of fear, anger, insecurity, helplessness and confusion I had bottled up as a little girl seemed to have exploded inside of me. I was going crazy and my only cure was King Alcohol. Day after day, I kept my empty bottles hidden around the house and in my car. I hated the feeling of anxiety that came over me in between drinks. I tried to stop drinking on my own by rationing my liquor. I remember buying seven bottles and convincing myself that I would allow myself one bottle the first day. Then, the next day I would allow myself three-quarters of a bottle. The following day, I would only drink half a bottle. This was supposed to continue until finally I would be down to a shot, and then I would be done with drinking. That never worked for long. I would almost always drink all seven bottles as fast as I could and tell myself that I would try to quit tomorrow.

When I was 36, my father died of cancer, and I felt guilty about drinking through his illness and being unable to stop. So I drowned my guilt in the bottle and drank harder. Four years later, after spending three days lying on a yoga mat in my guestroom, drinking all the alcohol in my home, I was so desperate for a drink that I looked everywhere for something to quench my thirst and drank anything I could find with alcohol in it. After drinking all the mouthwash, my last drink was one and a half bottles of rubbing alcohol. Sometime at the end of that third day, I understood that something had to change or I was going to die. I realized I couldn't do it myself. I went to the emergency room in the back of an ambulance and told the doctor I needed help. After detox he put me back into the ambulance and sent me to a treatment center, where I eventually attended my first A.A. meeting.

Even though I knew I needed help, it took me time to learn to open up and find my voice. Today, as a result of working the Steps with my sponsor, I live a full life. Most importantly, I've learned to make peace with my past and focus on today. After eight years of sobriety, I am still amazed at the joy, peace and love that continue to grow

within me. I am finally free from the obsession to drink and have the necessary tools to live my life to the fullest.

NANCY

“I lived on the run”

I’m Nancy. I’m a professional. A mother. A Latina and an alcoholic.

I always thought I had it under control — my life and all the rest. This knowledge made me think that I was above everyone else. No one could teach me anything I didn’t know, even in the midst of my alcoholic suffering. I came into the Fellowship when I was 29 years old, weighing 95 pounds and feeling an extreme loneliness even when I was surrounded by other people. And I could not stop drinking; I drank every day. I couldn’t bear a whole day without a drink. Anxiety and fear overpowered me until I could have another drink.

I arrived thinking that I didn’t have problems with alcohol, that I could control my drinking. It was the problems I was having in my life that made me go to A.A. I wanted to do the program my way, to be the exception to the rule, but it didn’t work. I was on my fourth husband; I’d left my children in Mexico with their father. I’d fallen into prostitution, and I was using drugs continuously and drinking every day. My relations with my family were the worst: no one trusted me. My lack of respect toward my family was at its peak. I lived on the run, as if I were fleeing something, trying to escape what my behavior had created. Loneliness, anxiety and despair ruled my daily life.

But the Fellowship was tolerant with me: they accepted me in spite of my actions, and gave me love and understanding. I was fighting with everyone to be able to do things my way. I sought “normality” to the brink of madness and death. I refused to be abnormal! Inside me I felt I was perfect! A chronic spiritual blindness kept me from seeing my mistakes, and where and how I had gone wrong. I only saw other people’s mistakes. It took me three years in the program to fall apart, but ultimately the Steps helped me to see myself and the Traditions showed me my place in the

group and with my fellow members. Sponsorship taught me the basic principles of obedience and discipline.

I must add that I started out as an atheist; I didn't believe in a Higher Power. My sponsor told me I was going to need one, however, so I started looking. Of course, in my arrogance I could not find one! It took me six years before I could believe in a Higher Power and I began to understand that power through another woman, a woman who came to the group destroyed by life, another lonely woman crushed by her own monsters. I saw myself in her. I saw what my life would be like if I didn't change course, and I asked for help: "There is One who has all power — that one is God. May you find him now!"

Something has happened since then. I'm happy and I'm free. I trust, I believe ... and I create. Guided by my sponsor, I started a group for women called "To Believe Is to Create," and every day the miracle happens. I'm living sober. I work the Steps in all my affairs, and the results are quick to come. Many people now trust me, but best of all I live with guidance, direction. I leave everything in the hands of my Higher Power.

DORIS

"I could not stand happy people"

My husband screamed at me that he could no longer bear having an alcoholic wife. I told him that ugly word didn't apply to me, that I only had to learn to control my drinking. And for the next few years I dedicated myself to attempting to moderate the amount and the frequency of my alcohol consumption so that people would stop complaining about me. I had to conceal the way I managed to get money to buy my bottles. I had to hide the bottles I bought, hide the empties, hide the way I disposed of them, and, most importantly, I had to hide myself from the whole world so no one would know I was a drunk.

This was all so exhausting, but I didn't know of any other way to survive. My tequila was the only thing that helped me when I felt sad, angry, frustrated, stressed, anxious and suffering from all the other emotions that a person who is losing control of her life feels.

During my final months as a drinker, one bottle of tequila a day was no longer enough to ease the pain or to fill the emptiness I felt inside. My body needed to drink in order to function because only by drinking all day long could I stop the sweating and the shaking of my hands. Alcohol had ceased helping me emotionally and now only helped me get on with my day. Even then I didn't think I was an alcoholic because I'd heard the stories of other people and I wasn't like them. I had never been arrested by the police and never had any traffic accidents; my husband hadn't divorced me; the government hadn't taken my kids away; I'd never called attention to myself at work — in other words, I still had everything. It wasn't possible that I was an alcoholic. But then why did I want to kill myself?

I came to A.A. ten years ago, but I only have seven years of sobriety, thanks to my Higher Power. It was really hard for me to stay sober during those first three years, for a number of reasons. The first and most important reason was my refusing to accept that I was an alcoholic. The only thing I wanted and desired with all my heart was to be able to enjoy my tequila like a normal person. Truth is, I clicked onto www.aa.org to find strategies to be able to go back to drinking and enjoying my tequila as I used to. Never did I imagine that this website was going to change my life forever!

I first went to an English-speaking meeting where I found a group of happy people who laughed uproariously. This bothered me quite a bit because I could not stand happy people, since I felt as if I were experiencing a living death. They gave me literature; they sent me texts when I stopped going to meetings; they sent me flyers announcing A.A. events to motivate me; and when I finally returned to the meetings, nobody judged me. I couldn't believe that I was starting to feel as much at home with these strange folks as with my own family. I learned that the difference is that in A.A. we have all suffered the same pain and sorrow, and this is something that my blood kin could not understand. I started going to some women's meetings, and I was impressed by the unity the group maintained and by how I could relate to the sharing about their recovery as women, wives, mothers, daughters. Their life was my life!

I remember once I made a comment about how at times I felt like I couldn't relate to their stories because my childhood was so different.

Although I had been born in this country, my parents brought us up with Hispanic culture. That was when the group told me that there was a community of Spanish-speaking groups and that I should try attending the meetings and see what happened. I found a group of women very different from me but at the same time we were so alike. I learned so much from them! It was there I found my first sponsor, who helped me to work the Steps and the program. She said to me, "Ask yourself what kind of woman you want to be. But more importantly, what kind of woman in Alcoholics Anonymous do you want to be?"

Today I feel happy, joyous and free. I am a member of a women's group that does service work in the central office and in the district. We work with the goal of helping to carry the message of hope to all who still suffer in the group and outside, especially to the Hispanic woman. I have a sponsee and a sponsor, and my sponsor has her sponsor. United we shall continue along this road.

DIANA

"Too ashamed to seek help"

I was born in New York City and raised in the Bronx. Both my parents were Hispanic and promised that their children would not suffer as they did from the stigma of being Hispanic. They lied to others about their heritage and spoke Spanish only behind closed doors.

My father was an explosive, violent drunk. Mom was complacent and too terrified to upset her abusive husband. I was the only daughter and the younger of the two children. I was taught early on that, as a female, my life had no value other than getting married, having children, and satisfying and obeying a husband. Hit and yelled at almost every day as far back as I can remember, I became a lonely daydreamer. I was the target of both parents when they wanted to alleviate their frustrations. My world was almost surreal as I lived my days in hiding, frightened and feeling too worthless to make a sound. To escape the violence and get my needs met, I quickly learned to manipulate others.

I could not speak Spanish in my youth — English is my first language — but I understood

the meaning of tone and volume. I remember alcoholic family events where fights broke out. Male relatives made lewd, insinuating remarks to and about women and often became physically violent. The women in my family were no better. I swore I would never become like them or have anything to do with them. Determined to escape, I pursued my education. It was my ticket to a better life.

I was rebellious and detested my parents, and I was already completely burned out by the time I picked up my first drink at 17 at the home of a boyfriend's family. Their custom was to have wine with their family dinners. With that very first sip, I had the sensation that all was right with the world, and for the first time in my life, I experienced the absence of fear.

I was 25 when I started living abroad and learned to speak Spanish. Even though I managed to escape my family by putting an ocean between us, the "lessons" of my past became a horrible and, again, daily reality. I did not associate any of my problems with alcoholism — at the time, I did not know what alcoholism was.

Everything I swore I would never do became my truth. I had been brought up in a world of secrets, distrust and shame, never telling anybody what really went on at home or in my heart. All my important relationships were with men as abusive as my father because, deep down, I believed that was what I deserved. I became as terrified and submissive as my mother.

During my drinking days I did not lose anything material. I became even more ambitious, believing that having everything material was vital to my life and survival. I was also convinced that the solution lay in the accumulation of knowledge. I read psychology, philosophy and self-help books, believing that they would help me control the attitudes of others and solve my personal problems.

If I drank too much one night, I had no doubt that discipline was the answer to such a simple problem. As a professional dancer I had no problem with discipline. Over time, no matter how much I promised not to drink, I could not stop. I hid bottles and became a daily closet drinker, drinking alone after completing all my obligations so nobody would see me as a falling-down drunk. I had to maintain appearances at all cost. I was too ashamed to ask for help or to even admit I had a problem.

I drank for 39 years, until one day I could no longer find a reason to get out of bed. It was the day I called A.A. for help — although my then-drunk, coke-snorting future ex-husband was totally against it.

I was living in one of the most beautiful areas of Spain, and I was well dressed — God forbid anyone should think that I was “one of those” drunken women who lost their looks, homes, husbands. I walked into my first meeting at 56 years old as a shut-down, wrapped-in-shame, closed ball of fear — right into the arms of hope, love and understanding. I knew from the start this was where I belonged. I wept with relief.

It was here that I learned the most valuable lessons in life. I came in with the emotional resources of a troubled 17-year-old. My first insight to my life being unmanageable was to hear about it from somebody else. I was told to identify and not to compare, and also to get a female sponsor to help me with the Twelve Steps, which was my very first experience completely trusting another human being. I had no sense of “family” until I came to A.A. and saw what working together meant and felt like. Throughout my active drinking life, I tried to stop drinking alone, thinking I could discipline my alcoholic obsession. It was in A.A. where I learned that “getting over” my alcoholism was futile, and that to drink was to die. It also never occurred to me to turn to a Higher Power. I learned in the rooms of A.A. how to tap into a Higher Power, which made the program available to me even though, at the beginning of recovery, I did not believe in God.

So much has changed in my life since surrendering myself to this program. It’s been 12 years now, and I’ve never taken another drink. I am free of the alcoholic obsession, and, because of that, today I have choices. A.A. has given me the only good life I’ve ever known, and I can hardly wait to see what happens next!

ERICKA

“I can’t have that first drink”

Looking at the ceiling, I wondered why my mother abandoned me, and why my father took my favorite dress — he said he was going to exchange it and never came back. Time passed

and my loneliness grew. I came to the United States when I was 12 years old. I had a resentment toward my mother, and I became rebellious. I hated her for abandoning me. I started doing whatever I wanted, and at the age of 15, I had my first child. I began to suffer in destructive relationships, and I was thinking about suicide. My son was not a reason for living, and that made me feel guilty.

At the age of 19, I started drinking and going out with people who were a bad influence — who led me to join the gangs. I did not want to be a member or a part of anything that could harm another human being, but to defend a friend of mine, the gangs gave me two options: get involved or die. With no one to turn to or to talk to about my problems, I joined them, and that became the biggest problem I've ever had. They committed a crime, and I was sent to prison for one year for something that I did not do.

After getting out of jail, I decided that I would never go back to the gangs. However, without realizing it, I was drowning all my frustrations in alcohol. I did not know that my alcoholism was progressing, and I got my first DUI and a three-year probation. When I was about to finish my probation, I got another one, and this time it was a felony. The court sent me to Alcoholics Anonymous. My battle with alcoholism was very hard; the insidiousness of the disease was so great. I had many relapses, but the perseverance and support of the Fellowship helped me a lot.

My life started to change, and thanks to my growth, I now have a good relationship with my mother. I even found my daughter's father. Although things are still not quite right, I can say that being in A.A. has helped me to be a stronger, more mature, prudent woman. Now I think before doing things. I try to repair damage. And when I can, I give my children advice. I try to be an example as a sober mom.

I may have many problems in life, but in A.A. I've learned that I must never think that alcohol could be the solution to those problems. And whatever happens, I can't have that first drink. My life is better without drinking, and although I may have a million challenges, there is never a reason to drink.

Before A.A. I did not have the tools to make important changes in my life. Alcoholics

Anonymous is the best thing that has ever happened to me.

MABEL

“Living my life to the fullest”

My name is Mabel, and I’m a woman and an alcoholic. I’m Hispanic, gay and an immigrant to this country. That’s how I started my catharsis — or my participation in the groups whose meetings I attend. In this brief period of many 24-hours-at-a-time, I have already come to know a number of groups, thanks to living my A.A. program. But what I want to share with you in particular is the time between 2017 and 2018 and all that the A.A. program did for me then.

In February of 2017, during my annual gynecological check-up, my doctor discovered cancer cells, which alarmed me. I had to undergo a series of tests to determine my general state of health. There were a multitude of hospital visits and exams, and I had no financial assistance, as I had no health insurance at the time. As a result of all these tests, it was recommended that I have a complete hysterectomy — there were some 28 fibroid tumors in my uterus and another large mass in this area. So, on February 18, 2018, after a year of many physical, mental, economic and spiritual sacrifices, I underwent the operation. It was precisely then that I began to see the miracles that the A.A. program had brought to me, because from day one of this experience, I felt no fear: I had the serenity I needed to sort things out. I had the acceptance to not want to change what I could not change; I had the courage to undergo major surgery in a foreign country where I didn’t speak the language well and where I had no family (except for my wife) or close friends to help me; and I had the wisdom to know the difference between what I could not do and what I had to prioritize at this moment in my life.

It was at this moment that acceptance of my health situation entered into play (Step One); when I could reaffirm my belief in a Higher Power that never had deserted me (Step Two); and when I could step back and decide that God, as I understood God, was working within me (Step Three). Fearlessly I continued to take my personal inventory, as I have done every day since (Step Four). I

continued to admit the exact nature of my defects and still continue working on them (Steps Five and Six). And, likewise, I continued to ask God to keep freeing me from my defects and from my fear, and that he get me through the operation successfully (Seventh Step). I started to draw closer to my family, my friends and my fellow members, which improved my social relations (Steps Eight and Nine). At this point in my experience, I felt acceptance and great faith that I would come out of this well. Every day of post-op was a physical, mental and spiritual challenge that I could bear only because I practiced Steps Ten and Eleven. And today, several months later, I'm practicing Step Twelve, telling all of you about my experience of enlightenment.

Today I am healthy and cancer-free, again living my life to the fullest and more enamored than ever of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and of my support groups and friends, wherever they are in the world, who have always been with me and who have supported me.

Thanks to this Fellowship, since I first declared that I was an alcoholic in my home group in Venezuela 12 years ago and thus became a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, I have never been alone. And since then I have continued to stand by my decision and say that I belong to the finest Fellowship of people in the world. And for this I am grateful to God and to Alcoholics Anonymous, and I hope to be able to continue growing and helping other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

KARLA

"I needed to forgive myself"

My journey and my growth have been slow and steady. I haven't been bored in A.A. even though I thought I would be. My life has changed tremendously, and that's because I listened, asked and investigated what A.A. was about.

My first A.A. meetings were all in English, until the day I discovered Spanish-speaking meetings. I was about six months into my sobriety and was going to meetings at least three times a day because it was the only place I felt safe.

For a while I was attending both English- and Spanish-speaking meetings, and the time final-

ly came for me to choose a home group where I could be fully involved and do service. At first, I was reluctant to stay at the Spanish-speaking meetings because they were so different from the English-speaking ones, but the experiences I heard in the Spanish-speaking meetings really hit home.

Another thing that caught my attention was the fact that there were hardly any women in the Spanish-speaking meetings. I couldn't understand why there were so few women, but I soon discovered why. The primary objective of A.A. is the same for Spanish speakers and English speakers, but for some reason it isn't as culturally acceptable for Hispanic women to be alcoholics. Nevertheless, I chose the Spanish-speaking meeting as my home group.

My sponsor and I had a long conversation, and in the end she gave me her blessing but suggested I continue to attend women's meetings with the English-speaking groups, which I did. I don't know where I'd be without all of the wonderful women I've had to guide me through my recovery.

In my new home group, it was suggested by an oldtimer that I find a sponsor within that group. Unfortunately for me, there were no women sponsors available, because there were no women. So, I finally made the decision to choose a male sponsor. I strongly suggest you don't do this, unless it's truly necessary. Women need to talk to other women — it's crucial in recovery. I continued to have a female sponsor in the English-speaking groups. But I'm really grateful that the male sponsor I chose guided me through the process of recovery. He was a little stern at times but I needed that.

The good thing about my home group was that we all felt like family. Members listened to me and in the beginning that was necessary. In my last drunk, I hit my mother and I couldn't find forgiveness, but the more I talked about this the easier it became.

Spanish-speaking meetings often have a distinct personality and my home group definitely had its own. It was difficult to adapt to the cultural differences and the machismo, and to learn to coexist with so many men. But my sponsor made sure I understood that I had to have boundaries, and that I respected myself. I had to do a lot of self-examination. I lived through some unwelcome

experiences, but I was determined to stay because I deserved the same opportunity to be a member as the rest of the group.

Finally, the day came when I “turned one” in A.A. At my home group, we celebrate sobriety birthdays by dedicating the entire meeting to the person celebrating. The members of the group give you their blessings or suggestions, and then the family gets an opportunity to share. That day I realized that my mother had forgiven me a long time ago. Just as one of the oldtimers had told me. Now I needed to forgive myself.

My sponsor invested a lot of time in me, and always told me where I was wrong when I couldn't see it. I never thought a man could have guided me in my process, but he did, and today, thanks to him, I have some time in the program, as well as the opportunity to share with many different women.

Despite all the tribulations I went through in my home group, today I know my God had a plan for me. There are other women in the group now, and I've made myself available to help them through the process of recovery. I have a few sponsees, and I'm so grateful for the opportunity to work with other women.

EHRA

“How easy it was to drink”

As the first born of six — three girls and three boys — my life as an army brat was okay. My father was an army medic; he did two tours in Vietnam and provided for us to the best of his ability. Being very proud of his Puerto Rican heritage, he made sure that he connected with other Spanish-speaking families wherever he was stationed. My mother was submissive and obedient, and kept the household in order.

There were gatherings with these other families where the men drank rum and coke or beer and played dominos, while the women cooked in the kitchens and watched over the children. I have fond memories of those times in many countries and states.

At around 12 years of age, this timid, shy and insecure girl had her first rum and coke, then

became ill and threw up. Not immediately drawn to alcohol, I chose to explore the flesh, seeking “love” — totally unaware of what this would entail.

Easily lured by my volleyball coach, I became pregnant just after graduating high school in May; we married in August of that same year. My daughter was born in March and we were divorced in April two years later. He had his own problems with alcohol and drugs, which led him to make bad choices that endangered our lives while we were living in New York. I returned to Puerto Rico and started college in August of that year.

A few years later, I graduated college in June, gave birth to my son in September, and began my first nursing job in November. My mother supported my children, thus providing me with the freedom to seek out “love,” as I still had no self-respect. On occasions, I’d drink, which helped with the guilt and shame but didn’t change my behavior.

Two years later, I relocated without my children and began to explore the nightlife of Miami — its bars, nightclubs and lounges. How easy it was to drink, to have men buy me drinks and then dance the night away totally intoxicated. God must have had my back, for I always made it safely home. I made several attempts to stop: I’d go cold turkey or switch drinks, or I’d stay sober for a time and then start up all over again.

This continued, and since I could always show up for work on Mondays it wasn’t a problem. If there was a man in my life who drank too, keeping them “happy” blinded me to their alcoholism, and I permitted and accepted the behaviors that went along with active drinking. Drinking made me fierce, strong and fearless, and took away my feelings of unworthiness, guilt and shame.

Seeking solace outside myself, I sought another mind-altering substance besides drinking. I remember making the decision to seek this substance — going to any lengths — and not regretting my decision. This love affair and my downward spiral into active alcoholism and drug addiction began, against my will. It controlled my entire life — my thoughts, my actions and my inaction. I lied, stole and cheated on my partner at that time. My employer had me placed on “time and attendance certification” due to my absences. I was unavailable to my children, family and friends

for gatherings, birthdays and major holidays. The only person that mattered was me, myself and I: número uno.

One morning I woke up and got ready for work. I reflected on the prior months and there I was: scared and contemplating suicide. Too afraid to kill myself but wanting things to change, I made a call instead — to my first detox and rehab center, where I discovered that I had a disease: alcoholism. There I also learned that it's a three-fold disease — of body, mind and spirit — and that there is a solution, a way of life, that can be found in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

It took me another year or so to finally surrender, to accept my alcoholism and to start my recovery process. But I kept coming back to meetings, making calls and reaching out, and I was always welcomed. Making the connection with fellow Spanish-speaking people has been challenging and rewarding. There are several Spanish-speaking groups nearby that hold meetings and conventions and continue to share the message of hope. I've witnessed how difficult it can be for Spanish-speaking women to come and stay in recovery, but it can be done, a day at a time.

Trusting God, cleaning house and helping others is how I remain sober and in recovery.

SANDRA

“Service is my life”

My name is Sandra and I am an alcoholic. I came to A.A. after making many promises to myself not to drink anymore. I used to go home and blame my children for our misfortune. I would cry bitterly, telling them that because of the father they had, I was unhappy; that because I had six children, I did not have the opportunity to rebuild my life. The next day, hungover, trembling and suffering from a headache, the last thing I wanted to think about was that my children had to eat and go to school. I put all the responsibility on my oldest daughter.

So, the years went by, until one day I had to go to the hospital for a kidney problem. The urologist told me that, upon leaving the hospital, I had to go someplace to recover from my alcoholism. He gave me a card that read “Alcoholics

Anonymous.” I never realized that there was an A.A. group in my town. I asked a friend where the group was located and he offered to take me.

When we arrived, the room was full of people and I was shaking. I kept waiting for someone to give me some random medicine and send me on my way. But it never happened, and I stayed. One day passed, then another, and then another. I started to help clean the rooms afterward, and after two months I was helping to coordinate the meeting.

After eight months, the group sent me to the intergroup/central office as a Public Information (PI) representative, and there I met a man who helped me by giving me my first Big Book. He later became my sponsor. I served by going to the local radio station to carry the A.A. message — “Alcoholics Anonymous is the answer.” Participating in that service helped me to grow. I really enjoyed helping. I was curious about the many women who called the radio station asking for information. That made me realize that, compared to other people’s problems, my problems were small, and the resentment toward my children began to vanish.

I went to three Forums, and there I met women who inspired me. I became a general service representative, or GSR. Later, I was elected to serve in Public Information at the Central American Convention in Mexico, Belize and Panama. Two months after the convention was held, I moved to the United States. The first thing I did was find a group.

In that year I married an Anglo man. He was very supportive of me going to meetings. I also found a home group. They sent me to the district as the GSR. For me, the service was very easy and I read a lot, but years passed and inside me there was a lot of emptiness. Something was not working.

I did a lot of service work to pass the time, but I had not done the Twelve Steps. I did not have that spiritual peace. My sponsor asked me about my Steps. He said, “How do you practice the First Step?” I replied, “I only know the heading, but I don’t understand it.” So, he said to me, “Leave the service work you are doing. Return to your group and we will start working the Steps.”

I was a C.P.C. (Cooperation with the Professional Community) coordinator, and I told him

that he was crazy. “What would they say about me?” So, he told me to continue my service, but that I had to start working the Steps. Step One was the most difficult and Step Two helped me the most, but I was stuck at Step Three. I did not believe in anything or anyone. The Big Book mentioned a Higher Power, which did not interest me. I doubted everything. My sponsor told me to believe in myself, but that was even worse. How many times had I promised to change but hadn’t? I couldn’t handle myself, and I had even failed my children.

I started writing about the Steps. I said I was practicing them, but I kept fighting in groups and playing the victim. A while later, when I was about to enter the election for DCM (district committee member), I received the news that my first son had disappeared in a lagoon in my home country. I immediately went back to my country, willing to do anything to find him, but I returned defeated. I felt dead inside. I saw a doctor who prescribed pills that I took for two years. One day, my sponsor arrived at my house and told me that it was time to return to my group, to start serving. He said that I was not gaining anything by isolating. He said that I had to work on my First Step: to accept the things I could not change.

With great pain, I clung to a Higher Power and one day I fell to the ground on my knees and implored, “God, if you exist, give me back my life.” From that moment, I began to believe in a God that I do not question — I only accept his will. The pain stayed inside of me, but I could start to bear it. I continued working the Steps. I continued serving and I always tried to grow spiritually. It was not easy, but I did it. Despite having disagreements with other members, working the Twelve Steps has helped me to grow spiritually. Service is my life: I managed to be DCM, and now I am DCMC (district committee member chair) of my district.

I learned that staying in the problem hurts me much more when I let my ignorance prevail, so I always work the Twelve Steps. My sponsor passed away, but he left me the legacy of service and a phrase: “People will hurt me if I allow it.”

Now, I try to constantly practice Steps Eight and Nine with my children — repairing damage, asking for forgiveness and working continuously on my progress. I want to be a delegate of my area, and today I can proudly say that I can let go

and let God. I realized how I put up walls and I now I know how to take them down.

I have a home group, “El Nuevo Camino.” I feel that every day I enjoy my life more. My children are my greatest treasure, my home is my responsibility, and Alcoholics Anonymous is my new world. The Steps are the parameters by which I get the best results. I have 29 years sober in A.A., and the last nine years I have lived my life to the fullest. I thank God and A.A., and to my sponsor, wherever you are, thank you for teaching me to conduct myself better by practicing the Twelve Steps.

CONSUELO

“I now have tools”

This story begins when I was a child, when I tried the rum punch the guests had left in their glasses on the table during a party. I liked it a lot because it tickled my mouth, and I drank all that I could. Even as a teenager, I used to go to parties and drink a cocktail made with gin that made me feel dizzy because it gave me the courage to hang out with the boys who took me out dancing, and they liked me.

When I met my first husband, what I most enjoyed about him was that, along with drinking a lot, he also smoked marijuana — these huge joints — and I shared booze and drugs with him. Later, he was involved in a tragic traffic accident. Although he didn’t suffer any physical consequences from it, he started drinking much more. He became aggressive and refused any psychological help. We got divorced, and I was drinking a lot then, too — I would completely lose any notion of what I was doing. One night I went to a party and I drank and I drank ... and when I woke up the next day, I didn’t know where I was or how I had gotten there. It turned out some friends had taken me from the party to their house.

Years passed and I kept drinking more and more. I also did cocaine for a while and tried mushrooms and downers. I got married again and continued drinking, smoking weed, getting drunk, having tremendous blackouts.

My husband would tell me about the things I did while I was drunk and I could not believe it.

He was angry, but I was irresponsible and clueless, and I didn't care what he said. So, nothing changed. My best friend told me that I was a lousy drunk, but I didn't pay any attention to her either; I thought I was going to quit drinking whenever I liked, but it wasn't true; already I couldn't stop.

One morning I woke up with a huge bruise on my thigh, still dressed in my clothes from the day before, and shaking. At that point I got worried. I had gone to a dinner outside the city with a friend and I had gotten seriously drunk. There were lots of people associated with my job at this party and my behavior was a total disaster. Then I drove home drunk and put my life and the life of my friend (and of anyone who had crossed my path) in danger. It wasn't the first time I'd driven drunk on the highway, but it was the last.

My friend asked me if I thought I had a problem with alcohol. And, for the first time, I acknowledged that I did. I understood that if I admitted I was an alcoholic, I was going to have to stop drinking, and I didn't want to. But that day I suddenly grasped the dimensions of my actions. I was alarmed and ashamed, and disappointed in myself. I felt like a person who had lost all self-esteem. I went to an A.A. group that the woman recommended (her husband had died of alcoholism) and from that day until today, I have not had a drink, and I quit smoking marijuana.

That was 12 years ago. I've seen people who have had to work much harder than I to follow the program, to get a sponsor and pay attention to her, to do service work, to practice the Steps and the Traditions, and to read the literature. I've also seen many who arrived at the group and soon left. But God has been kind to me. Not only did God save me from the perils I'd earlier exposed myself to, but he also helped me to find the program, to try to improve my life, to never let go of his hand and to ask for the strength to do his will and not mine. Little by little, I'm coming to know myself. I try to think and to act differently — to be less egotistical and more tolerant and honest. It's taken a lot, because I am a rebellious and flawed individual, but I now have tools, because I have discovered this program, which over the past nearly nine decades has saved so many and which has brought me only blessings.

Today I haven't had a drink; I haven't used any drugs; and no one is telling me what I did

last night: I already know. And when I make a mistake, I try to amend my ways. I'm no longer ashamed to look my husband in the eyes. I have a sponsor who has given me her full support. I have a home group. I'm walking a spiritual path, thanks to God. I hope that every person who suffers because of this disease will find their own path.

GABRIELA

“A weight had been taken off me”

My name is Gabriela and I'm an alcoholic. I arrived at an A.A. group “by accident.” I remember it clearly: I saw a lot of men and women talking, smiling... I was accompanying my brother, who was a member of that group; everyone greeted me and welcomed me with lots of love. I felt something I had never felt before.

The meeting started and a female member stayed by my side the entire time — it was all new for me. I sat down and listened as one person after another spoke without fear, without shame; instead, they shared their experiences with love. I remember that I cried during the entire meeting. I didn't want to cry but the tears came uncontrollably. I couldn't believe how these people were saying what I was feeling and thinking. When the meeting was over, I felt different, as if a weight had been taken off me, as if I had come out from underneath the black cloud where I had been living.

Even so, after some time passed, I couldn't accept the idea of saying, “I'm an alcoholic.” Alcohol helped me channel all of my emotions so that I couldn't feel the pain of the loss of three pregnancies; alcohol helped me tolerate my life, which I didn't like. I couldn't imagine my life without alcohol. I changed from alcohol to pills, and I started skipping work, wasting money, clinging to people. It was total craziness. With a lot of effort, however, I found a sponsor and started practicing the Steps, and that craziness has been disappearing little by little.

Today, thanks to doing service and having a formal sponsor, my life has completely changed. Today I can say, “I'm an alcoholic,” and it's difficult, but not impossible. I'm a member of this beautiful Fellowship and I'm ready.

“I started listening”

Before A.A., I lived a very sad life. Loneliness and drinking were my companions. I loved — or rather, I needed — to drink. It was an extraordinarily powerful but temporary “medicine.” I would anxiously wait to have my bottle. I would leave work and think about how I was going to drink. I tried to control it, but I knew that one drink or one beer was never going to be enough. I needed it; I wanted that elixir. I needed to let off steam. My life was so unmanageable, full of emotions and frustrations.

If I wasn’t working, it was hard for me to say no to alcohol. A call, a “sign,” and there I was again with the bottle.

I got into a relationship with an addict. He was good to me, but he had a tremendous addiction problem. I was always trying to solve other people’s problems, without paying attention to my own, which were many. I hid my drinking from my work. I lived a life of confinement, and my escape was alcohol and the hope of fixing others.

My boyfriend went to rehab, and he was asked if there was anyone at home who was drinking. That surprised me. What ... is that a problem? Uh oh. I remember it like it was today. Then I went to Al-Anon, and I heard how they talked about alcoholism and the alcoholic. I thought, “Oh God, that’s me!” But I had not yet conceded to the idea of quitting drinking.

By the grace of God, while looking for an Al-Anon meeting, I came to A.A. They told me to stay — “A meeting is a meeting,” they said — and I kept coming. I started listening to the stories and identifying. I started counting days, and I got a sponsor. Time passed, and I started the Steps. They read me the Big Book. I learned to work the Twelve Steps, and I started practicing Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve. They invited me to do service work, which has been so important to me. I continue identifying with others. And with God holding my hand, I keep growing, sharing and, especially, learning.

“Alcoholics Anonymous works”

I started drinking when I was 17 years old. I came to Alcoholics Anonymous at the age of 25 and, reflecting on my past, I realize now that I didn't want to stop drinking. What I really wanted was to relieve the stress of the problems I was having at home — which during those years were getting worse by the day because, without knowing it, I was starting to have blackouts and I was becoming more and more aggressive.

For example, in one incident, during a drunken argument, I threw a heavy glass ashtray at my husband and instead hit my eight-year-old daughter, who was walking across the room. I could only weep, totally drunk, while my sister and brother-in-law took her to the hospital, where doctors sewed up the wound with several stitches. When I sobered up and saw her wounded face, I promised that I would never drink again. I even remember putting the empty bottle in a glass cabinet so I wouldn't forget that I'd drunk it. But, within a few days I started drinking again. When my daughter saw me, she reminded me of my promise and I told her that I wasn't going to get drunk, just have a few drinks. Of course, it didn't turn out that way: I just continued my alcoholic career.

I know now that I was sincere when I promised my daughter that I was going to stop drinking. I simply did not yet know that alcoholism is a disease and that the first drink would set off a craving in me to have another and to keep on drinking — that it was like a monster that kept telling me, “Drink, drink, drink.” And even more so, I did not really want to quit drinking. So, I spent a few days in A.A. drinking and others not drinking, but I kept attending meetings.

At one point I had to travel to my hometown because my grandmother, who raised me, had fallen ill and I went to visit her. During this time I stopped going to meetings for eight months and continued my alcoholic life, but now it wasn't the same because every time something bad happened during one of my benders, I remembered what my fellow members had told me: “If you haven't lost your family or your job, and if you haven't been locked up in jail or confined in a hospital, it is only a matter of time and booze, and all of that

will eventually happen because this is a progressive, incurable disease.”

So, at the end of those eight months, I returned to my group and I understood that now at last I fulfilled the requirement. Now I *did* want to stop drinking. I admitted that I was an alcoholic, and I understood that Alcoholics Anonymous works even if the person doesn't want it to.

I'm now 66 years old. I have spent 31 of those years in A.A. I have two daughters and a son, four granddaughters and one grandson. My husband and I have stayed together. I attend the meetings of my group regularly. I do service work. I feel happy to be within the circle of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Just for today — and forever.

MARIA

“We are all over the world”

I was born in a small town in Mexico. I was 40 days old when my mother left. My grandfather raised me. He was a neurotic person — bitter and also very violent. I was abused at the age of five. Despite everything, they gave me a good education.

I took my first drink at the age of 11, and at 15 I stopped and did not have contact with alcohol for many years. I married an active alcoholic and had three children. I loved him but I hated him for the life he gave me. One day I took my three children, packed a suitcase and moved to the United States.

I always wanted to be an artist. Shortly after arriving, I became fully involved in show business and entertainment. I started drinking to give myself courage, and before I realized it, I was drinking every day. Success and fame came, and I thought my children lived well because they lacked nothing. However, they lacked their mother. I do not know at what point alcohol ceased to be what encouraged me, when it became a desperate need. I became aggressive. I ended up insulting my audiences. They started canceling my contracts and soon I was broke. Nobody gave me work. I made promises to my children that I would never drink again. Yet, when I had the glass in my hand, I felt an urge to continue drinking until passing out.

I became a chronic alcoholic. I only cared about drinking. I had nightmares. I dreamed I saw monsters and animals. I felt that they were watching me, that they were looking for me. I constantly moved from house to house, dragging my children with me; I would leave them with anyone to go find work and return the next day. Then, I would drink again. It was a vicious cycle.

I couldn't stop drinking and it was getting worse. I had no house, no car, no money. I went to live with my brother who also drank, and I made the mistake of leaving my children with him, without thinking about the consequences. One day I returned to the house and my brother was not there, nor were the children. A neighbor told me that child protective services had come because of a complaint, and that they had taken him to jail and my children to a foster home.

I went drinking, and that night I entered a church to fight with God. The police came and took me to a psychiatric hospital. When I got out of there, months later, I went to church and I stopped drinking. My brother was sentenced to prison for life; he had abused my children and other children as well. I dedicated myself body and soul to get my children back. Five years passed and I finally had a life, a house, and a job, and my children were with me.

One day I went to eat with co-workers and they offered me a beer. I drank it without knowing that I was an alcoholic. When I made that contact with alcohol, the obsession to drink was triggered. I fell into a continuous eight-month binge. They fired me from work. I lost my house and I almost lost my children again. Finally, the police gave me a DUI, and that's how I arrived in A.A., with a court card, completely defeated, lost, and about to collapse.

Today, I have 27 years of sobriety. I haven't had a single drop of alcohol. In Alcoholics Anonymous I found God (my Higher Power) and today I live a full life. I married a recovering alcoholic 15 years ago, and I am happy with my three children, 17 grandchildren and a great grandchild.

In order to stay sober, I practice a series of new habits. I go to my group every day. I don't hang out with active alcoholics. I haven't stopped serving since I arrived. I rely on my Higher Power and continue to discover wonders in the world of Alcoholics Anonymous. I take great care of

my emotions and my illness. I always read, stay informed and learn. Chapter Five in the Big Book says that we are not saints and we don't need to be. We only seek constant progress and not spiritual perfection.

We are currently starting meetings for Hispanic women, to help those who are suffering in the clutches of alcohol. If you are reading these stories and alcohol is already dominating you, find an A.A. group. We are all over the world. If you feel uncomfortable around men, look for a group of women. But go, and you will live a useful and happy life. You deserve it.

How it works

A.A. provides a pathway that can lead to recovery. By listening to the many sober members in A.A. share frankly and openly about their alcoholism, we come to recognize that we, too, are suffering from the same disease. Utilizing the Twelve Steps of A.A. and the A.A. principles we come to rely on, we discover new ways of living. If we are willing to be honest about our drinking and earnestly apply what we learn about ourselves in A.A., our chances at recovery are good.

While A.A. may not have the solution to all our problems, by following the simple suggestions of the A.A. program, we can find a solution to our drinking problem and a way to live life one day at a time without alcohol.

Where to find A.A.

There are A.A. groups in large cities, rural areas and villages throughout the world. Many A.A. central offices or intergroups have websites where information about local A.A. meetings can be found — in Spanish and in English, as well as many other languages. To find a telephone number or web address for A.A. almost anywhere in the United States or Canada you can use the “A.A. Near You” section on the A.A. website: www.aa.org. You can also find a meeting by downloading the “Meeting Guide” at no cost on your smartphone. These resources can help direct you to a meeting in your community. Additionally, information about local meetings can often be obtained in hospital emergency rooms, churches, community centers, from doctors and nurses, the clergy, counselors, media outlets, police officials, and alcoholism facilities that are familiar with our program.

Each A.A. group endeavors to provide a safe meeting place for all attendees and to encourage a secure and nurturing environment. In A.A., the shared experience, strength and hope of sober alcoholics is the lifeline to sobriety; our common suffering and our common solution transcend most difficulties, helping us to create the conditions in which to carry A.A.’s message of hope and recovery to the still-suffering alcoholic.

If you cannot locate a group in your area, please contact us by writing to the A.A. General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163, or by calling the main number: (212) 870-3400. We can help put you in touch with the group nearest you. You can also find information on the A.A. General Service Office website in Spanish: www.aa.org.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

THE TWELVE TRADITIONS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.

2. 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.

3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.

4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.

5. Each group has but one primary purpose — to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.

7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.

8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.

9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.

11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.

12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

A.A. PUBLICATIONS Below is a partial listing of A.A. publications. Complete order forms are available from the General Service Office of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163. Telephone: (212) 870-3400. Website: aa.org

BOOKS

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS
DAILY REFLECTIONS
AS BILL SEES IT
OUR GREAT RESPONSIBILITY
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS COMES OF AGE
DR. BOB AND THE GOOD OLDTIMERS
'PASS IT ON'

BOOKLETS

LIVING SOBER
CAME TO BELIEVE
A.A. IN PRISON: INMATE TO INMATE

PAMPHLETS

Experience, Strength and Hope:

WOMEN IN A.A.
A.A. FOR THE BLACK AND AFRICAN-AMERICAN ALCOHOLIC
A.A. FOR THE NATIVE NORTH AMERICAN
YOUNG PEOPLE AND A.A.
A.A. FOR THE OLDER ALCOHOLIC — NEVER TOO LATE
LGBTQ ALCOHOLICS IN A.A.
THE "GOD" WORD: AGNOSTIC AND ATHEIST MEMBERS IN A.A.
A.A. FOR ALCOHOLICS WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES —
AND THEIR SPONSORS
ACCESS TO A.A.: MEMBERS SHARE ON OVERCOMING BARRIERS
A.A. AND THE ARMED SERVICES
DO YOU THINK YOU'RE DIFFERENT?
MANY PATHS TO SPIRITUALITY
HISPANIC WOMEN IN A.A.
MEMO TO AN INMATE
IT SURE BEATS SITTING IN A CELL
(An illustrated pamphlet for inmates)

About A.A.:

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT A.A.
IS A.A. FOR ME?
IS A.A. FOR YOU?
A NEWCOMER ASKS
IS THERE AN ALCOHOLIC IN YOUR LIFE?
THIS IS A.A.
QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ON SPONSORSHIP
THE A.A. GROUP
PROBLEMS OTHER THAN ALCOHOL
THE A.A. MEMBER—MEDICATIONS AND OTHER DRUGS
SELF-SUPPORT: WHERE MONEY AND SPIRITUALITY MIX
EXPERIENCE HAS TAUGHT US:
AN INTRODUCTION TO OUR TWELVE TRADITIONS
THE TWELVE STEPS ILLUSTRATED
THE TWELVE CONCEPTS ILLUSTRATED
THE TWELVE TRADITIONS ILLUSTRATED
HOW A.A. MEMBERS COOPERATE WITH PROFESSIONALS
A.A. IN CORRECTIONAL FACILITIES
A.A. IN TREATMENT SETTINGS
BRIDGING THE GAP
A.A. TRADITION—HOW IT DEVELOPED
LET'S BE FRIENDLY WITH OUR FRIENDS
UNDERSTANDING ANONYMITY

For Professionals:

A.A. IN YOUR COMMUNITY
A BRIEF GUIDE TO A.A.
IF YOU ARE A PROFESSIONAL
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AS A RESOURCE
FOR THE HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONAL
A MESSAGE TO CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS
IS THERE A PROBLEM DRINKER IN THE WORKPLACE?
FAITH LEADERS ASK ABOUT A.A.
A.A. MEMBERSHIP SURVEY
A MEMBER'S-EYE VIEW OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

VIDEOS (available on aa.org)

A.A. VIDEOS FOR YOUNG PEOPLE
HOPE: ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS
A NEW FREEDOM
CARRYING THE MESSAGE BEHIND THESE WALLS

For Professionals:

A.A. VIDEO FOR HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONALS
A.A. VIDEO FOR LEGAL AND CORRECTIONS PROFESSIONALS
A.A. VIDEO FOR EMPLOYMENT/HUMAN RESOURCES PROFESSIONALS

PERIODICALS

AA GRAPEVINE (monthly)
LA VIÑA (bimonthly, in Spanish)

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.

I AM RESPONSIBLE...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: **I am responsible.**

This is A.A. General Service
Conference-approved literature.

