



SHARING FROM BEHIND THE WALLS

A.A. General Service Office, Box 459, Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

Spring/Summer 2025

Dear A.A. Friends,

Let's open our meeting with a moment of silence, followed by the A.A. Preamble:

"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."*

Maybe It's Time to Change

"I've been in a detention facility for over three years. I'll be going to prison once I'm done fighting my case. Yesterday, an advocate for A.A. came to see me. He left me some books and pamphlets; that's how I got the information and address for the Correspondence Service. Like I mentioned to the older gentleman yesterday, I know I have an alcohol problem, I just never took staying sober seriously. Alcohol plays a significant part in why I'm here right now. After the visit with the A.A. advocate, I began to think... 'Maybe it wouldn't hurt to talk or write with someone from A.A. Maybe I'd be able to correspond with someone who's a bit younger and comes from a similar background.' You never know: one thing can change everything." — Inocencio D., Pacific Region

Sending Gratitude and Prayers

"Greetings from the Sunshine State to you all in the Big Apple. My name is James, and I'm a grateful recovering alcoholic and addict. I wish to first and foremost express my humility and gratitude for the life-altering experience, strength, and hope of the Fellowship in our program. I've been actively attending our 12 Step meetings here at my facility since October 2021 — approximately 11 months after I got clean at age 31, when, through God's glory and will, quarantine

restrictions were lifted, and we got our meetings back in full swing. I happily pass out chips at our meeting, and as of January 2025, I have completed Step 4 (which was one of my goals for the new year). I am currently on Step 5. Upon my release I will be attending 90 meetings in 90 days. This is recommended as an active and critical part of the continuum of my sobriety and lifelong recovery. Pride comes before the fall, and an ego fueled by arrogance proved to be a great barrier in my life. It took the divestment of everything, including my voice, for me to come to the realization that humility is something that can only be acquired, and my pride is something only I can give away. I close this letter with my unconditional love, hope, and encouragement for you folks up there in the Big Apple, along with my gratitude and prayers."

— James W., Southeast Region

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Doing the Program the Right Way

"I have been sober for about 20 years, and I just got into A.A. I would like to do the Program the right way, just like the Big Book describes it. When I used to drink, I was a mean person (always fighting), and I would want to drink for two or three days straight. I lived for the weekend and would spend all my money on beer for my friends and me. But now I'm sitting in prison. I've been here for 17 or 18 years, and even though I've been clean the whole time, I would like to be ready if I ever get the urge for a drink." — Edward M., Pacific Region

By God's Grace

"My name is Steven, and I am an alcoholic. By God's grace, I've been sober since September 24, 2018, and for that I'm very grateful. Through the Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS) I've been connected with another alcoholic named Ken

from the Southeast. He has been very resourceful and a great encouragement to me.” — **Steven T., Southwest Region**

A Sweet Relief

“My weeks consist mostly of personal readings of the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book and one hourly meeting every two weeks. It is a sweet relief to know that you all have the reading materials in multiple forms for us inside. For this I am grateful! Thanks to all of you at the General Service Office and this awesome program, I will continue to stay sober 24 hours/one day at a time.” — **Jeffrey I., Southwest Region**

Please Send More A.A. Information!

“When I was in County a year ago, the trustee had the A.A. book sitting on a table right outside my cell. The red is what caught my eye first, and then the gold lettering in cursive. I’ve been an alcoholic since 2018, and I’ve always wanted to go to a meeting but never have. I stared at the book for two minutes and the trustee came back, so I started asking about A.A. When I was staring at the book, something told me there was something important within it. I asked the chaplain for a copy, and the next day he sent me a brand-new one! Reading hasn’t ever been my favorite thing to do because I’ve got really bad ADHD, but I ended up reading the whole thing in three days! I even found myself ‘LOL-ing’ because I could relate to most of the stories. In the beginning, drinking was fun — I even made my own moonshine — but in the end, it ruined my life — literally. As with all alcoholics, it took something major to happen, and even then, I still didn’t stop. It just got worse. Here in federal prison, I stumbled across *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*. I read it twice to fully grasp it. Even though I’ve never been to a meeting, I know I’m going to get to the ‘90 meetings in 90 days’ first thing when I get released in 2027. I’ve thought about every single bad decision I’ve made in my life, and the main thing I want to do is teach my kids that the road of alcohol and drugs is a terrible life. But if I can share my knowledge with other people as a sponsor, that would be just as good. Please send some more information on the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. Thank you!” — **Alex G., Southwest Region**

Experienced that Psychic Change

“I have 264 days clean and sober, thanks to God and Alcoholics Anonymous. I’ve been in and out of the rooms for over 10 years, but I’d never experienced the psychic change necessary until this time around. I have a Big Book that’s never far from my reach, and I recently started listening to the recovery-based podcasts that they now (thankfully) offer on the tablets. My family purchased a *Grapevine* subscription for me, which should be arriving next month.” — **Peter G., Northeast Region**

Requesting Info on A.A. and GSR Position

“In December 2024, at the weekly Thursday night open meeting of the Knucklehead Group of Alcoholics Anonymous, at a Group Conscience meeting, I was nominated and subsequently elected to be the General Service Representative (GSR). I will be serving in this position for a short while and would like to be made aware of the full responsibilities of the job. Also, if it is at all possible, could I request any pamphlets or packets that contain information pertaining to Alcoholics Anonymous?” — **Jeremiah G., Southwest Region**

Thanks for What You’ve Already Done

“I would like to start off by saying thanks for my Big Book and the other stuff you sent me. I have read the book twice so far and learned a lot. I am working on the Fourth Step by myself. They do not have meetings here. I took a 90-day drug program from September to December last year, and the guy who ran it printed out information on Steps 4 through 12 for me. Thanks for what you’ve already done for me. The Big Book really helps me to understand things. I’m in a cell alone for 21 hours a day, so all I do is read it.” — **Harold H., Southeast Region**

Someone to Share With

“I was just reading through *It Sure Beats Sitting in a Cell*. Unfortunately, I’m sitting in a cell in Vermont but am thankful to have come across this Corrections Correspondence Service. I attend A.A. meetings weekly, and I’m very thankful for A.A. In my teens I found myself in the rooms of A.A. while I watched my father get sober. That was about 34 years ago, give or take a few. I’m 46 and my father got sober when I was 13 or 14 years old. He is still sober today, thank God and A.A. I’m sober myself, coming up on six months. I’m looking for someone to write to. I find anything I can do to stay busy in a positive way helps me be better able to work on staying sober. So, I’m asking for someone to write and share back and forth their experience, strength, and hope.”

— **Russell S., Northeast Region**

Need Santa Ana, California, A.A. Contacts

“I’m attending A.A. meetings on a regular basis. I’m even working the 12 Steps with Max, my sponsor. I got set up with him back in January 2024. Although it took a while for us to hook up (due to health issues I was having), the wait was well worth it. We have developed such a trusting bond that I feel comfortable sharing very personal things from my past with him without any worries. I wouldn’t trade him for the world. The reason I’m writing (other than giving you all an update about my sponsor) is I’m in the middle of getting ready for the parole board in January 2027 and need a list of places in Santa Ana, California, where A.A. meetings are being held and the name of a contact person that I can submit along with the address of

where I'll be staying. I'm asking for this because I'm trying to do the right thing for a change. You know, set up contacts in the community so that I can make my transition from insider to outside A.A. meetings as easy as possible. This is something I've *never* done before, and I'm finally willing to put my trust in a Higher Power, God." — Kevin N., Pacific Region

Please Send Info on Corrections Correspondence

"I have over five years of recovery and still study and read my A.A. Big Book, but there's nothing like working/talking with another alcoholic. If you could send me more information about your Corrections Correspondence Service, I would be very thankful. Until then, keep it one day at a time." —

Carl W., Southeast Region

Hoping for Meeting Literature to Share

"I'd like to start by saying that I'm really excited to be writing to the A.A. General Service Office. Having never done this before, I am a little nervous. I love the A.A. Big Book and have been taking the Program seriously (sponsor, working the Steps) since 2019. Before that, I was just simply 'in the rooms.' But yes, I've been working the Program for about five years now, and I enjoy it.

The reason I am writing is because I was hoping to receive a little bit of A.A. literature, especially something I could share with the guys/brothers here. Maybe a proper meeting format so we can do our own in-house meetings and not have to wait for Tuesdays. Most of us have our own Fourth Edition Big Books, but a proper meeting format would be helpful. I enjoy closing the meetings with the last part of page 164, 'A Vision for You,' but any information and/or advice (on how to conduct a meeting) that you could send us would be helpful and appreciated." — Sean A., Southwest Region

Finally Reaching Out

"I have been an alcoholic for a long time. From a very young age I started drinking and smoking cigarettes. When I was 7 years old, I stole a box of cigarettes, a bottle of wine, and a beer from my dad. I blamed it on my cousin, and to this day I've never 'fessed up. I sit in prison with nothing to do but hopelessly wonder why I didn't reach out sooner. At the age of 19, when I tried reaching out to my parents, they had already molded an idea of me that I couldn't possibly be that bad, but look where I'm at now. After repeated times in and out of jail, prison, detox, and rehabs, I know one thing for certain, that without Alcoholics Anonymous, I would not be alive." —

Jose Luis R., Pacific Region

A.A. Family, Please Keep Writing to Me

"I want to thank you, my family, for writing to me. I received my second letter from you guys — thank you. I also wanted to

share with you my holiday thoughts on drinking, which I also shared with my in-house A.A. meeting. I was sharing that in a way it was a good thing that I was in here for my holidays: If not, I would have had lots of chances to drink. I thank God; I was given a real good chance by being incarcerated. I haven't had any cravings. I now wait for my A.A. family to write me, and I keep my mind on working out, drinking lots of water, and eating healthy. My sobriety date is 9/23/23." — Eduardo A., Northeast Region

We Need A.A. Stuff! (And We're Still Grateful)

"I am the current General Service Representative here at this correctional facility. We need A.A. pamphlets (any and all) to use at our meetings. We would also love a copy of the new A.A. Big Book that we keep hearing so much about. We all appreciate you. The Program has saved my life and my future. I am ever so grateful for any and all help you're able to provide, as is every man with this Fellowship." — Sean B., Pacific Region

Will Be Glad to Correspond

"I am in need of a sponsor to help me work the Steps. God put it on my heart to write you about this. I currently have my own A.A. book and am blessed to have it. I think my big mistake in the past was not working the Steps with a sponsor, which brings me back to my main reason for writing: I heard there is a way to start some correspondence with other A.A.s to get a sponsor. If you can help me in this, I'll be grateful. I'm in a program block, so anything you send could also be used by the other men in here. Thank you for your time for reading this."

— Sean W., Southeast Region

Yes! Found the Big Book!

"I'm currently serving yet another sentence at an Ohio correctional facility. I'd been to A.A. meetings on the streets because I was made to through treatment centers and sober living houses, etc. I'd been given the Big Book several times and had never read past the 'Doctor's Opinion.' I'm now almost completely done with it and have been going to meetings here on Monday and Tuesday nights voluntarily. Everything in this book makes me wish I'd read it much earlier, but at least I've found it now! Thank you for your time in this matter." — Samantha W., East Central Region

Would Like to Hear from You

"Thank you for the A.A. literature and the helping hand of A.A. The A.A. members who come in don't do sponsorship or walk people through the Steps personally, but they told me I can write the General Service Office and ask if an alcoholic on the outside could write to me. This way I can actually write out and share my Step work and let go of some of the baggage I've been carrying around for years and years. Thank you, and I

hope you're having a wonderful sober day and life." —
Michael M., Pacific Region

Wanted: Big Book and a Sponsor

"I'm in prison for an incident that happened when my ex-boyfriend and I were together. We'd both just gotten sober, and sadly, a fight happened. I realize now there is so much more to just getting clean and sober. I honestly admit I'm powerless over alcohol and that my life has become unmanageable. I look forward to getting and reading the A.A. Big Book and getting linked with an LGBTQ A.A. sponsor and working the Steps and sharing the gifts of serenity, courage, and hope." — Josiah T., Pacific Region

Best Christmas Gift – Big Book

"It took my coming to prison with a 'double decade' sentence for me to finally read the Big Book. I was married to a 30-year-sober woman who took me to every meeting under the sun ('Just Us Pickles,' 'The Sahara Club,' to name a couple). I thought I had it all figured out; I thought I was a 'spiritual giant.' I have been completely awakened to the significance of the truths in that book. Wow. Wow! I don't think our creator could've given me a better gift than this little book, for it's December 25th today! What really stuck out is the part about being an actor always trying to run the show. Alcohol led me down a path of the greatest destruction that one could ever believe. It turned me into a monster." — Dana L., Southeast Region

Alcoholics Anonymous Announces the Release of the *Plain Language Big Book*

Alcoholics Anonymous (A.A.) has announced the publication of the *Plain Language Big Book: A Tool for Reading Alcoholics Anonymous*, a new resource designed to make the Twelve Step recovery program more accessible to individuals who may encounter difficulties comprehending the language of the original text *Alcoholics Anonymous*, which was first published in 1939. Commonly known as the "Big Book," the original edition serves as the cornerstone of A.A.'s Twelve Step recovery program from alcoholism. The *Plain Language Big Book* retains the foundational ideas and spiritual messages of the original but presents them in simpler, more contemporary language. This new edition is designed to assist those who may have reading challenges or lack regular engagement with other A.A.

members who can explain the program. The creation of the *Plain Language Big Book* responds to a need expressed by many in the A.A. community to make the lifesaving message of A.A. more accessible. Developed collaboratively by A.A. members and publishing professionals, this edition serves as a *vital tool for individuals seeking understanding of the core tenets of the A.A. program*.

The *Plain Language Big Book* has been published with the support of the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, as expressed in a vote of A.A.'s 2024 General Service Conference.

Digital Literature Behind the Walls

Contracts with various vendors have enabled A.A.W.S. and AA Grapevine literature to be available on tablets found in the various correctional settings in the United States. This is a new service that continues to expand. The available literature has expanded to have newsletters such as *Box 4-5-9* and *Sharing from Behind the Walls*, along with the addition of the *Plain Language Big Book*. Please request a Tablet Literature list from the Corrections desk when writing for listed literature if you have access to Tablets and need more information on available literature.

Corrections Correspondence Service (CCS)

This service is for incarcerated alcoholics who have at least six more months to serve. We randomly match an outside A.A. from another region with members of the same gender identity. We do not provide letters of reference to parole boards, lawyers or court officials. We do not assign sponsors; however, once you make contact, an outside A.A. member may be willing to sponsor you. If you have an interest in sharing about your experiences as they relate to sobriety and problems with alcohol, then please write and request a form. We appreciate your patience.

Prerelease Contact

This service is for incarcerated alcoholics who have a release date scheduled three to six months away. We do not assign sponsors; however, once you have transitioned from "inside" A.A. to "outside" A.A., someone may be willing to sponsor you. We try to arrange for an outside A.A. in your home community to temporarily write to you just prior to your release. You can request a form, or write to us, providing your release date and destination (address, city, state, phone number).