

HOW

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HOW

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The Healer ~ Bill Wilson

From Time.com list of 100 most influential people of the 20th century

Second Lieutenant Bill Wilson didn't think twice when the first butler he had ever seen offered him a drink. The 22-year-old soldier didn't think about how alcohol had destroyed his family. He didn't think about the Yankee temperance movement of his childhood or his loving fiancé Lois Burnham or his emerging talent for leadership. He didn't think about anything at all. "I had found the elixir of life," he wrote. Wilson's last drink, 17 years later, when alcohol had destroyed his health and his career, precipitated an epiphany that would change his life and the lives of millions of other alcoholics. Incarcerated for the fourth time at Manhattan's Towns Hospital in 1934, Wilson had a spiritual awakening--a flash of white light, a liberating awareness of God--that led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous and Wilson's revolutionary 12-step program, the successful remedy for alcoholism. The 12 steps have also generated successful programs for eating disorders, gambling, narcotics, debting, sex addiction and people affected by others' addictions. Aldous Huxley called him "the greatest

social architect of our century."

William Griffith Wilson grew up in a quarry town in Vermont. When he was 10, his hard-drinking father headed for Canada, and his mother moved to Boston, leaving the sickly child with her parents. As a soldier, and then as a businessman, Wilson drank to alleviate his depressions and to celebrate his Wall Street success. Married in 1918, he and Lois toured the country on a motorcycle and appeared to be a prosperous, promising young couple. By 1933, however, they were living on charity in her parents' house on Clinton Street in Brooklyn, N.Y. Wilson had become an unemployable drunk who disdained religion and even panhandled for cash.

Inspired by a friend who had stopped drinking, Wilson went to meetings of the Oxford Group, an evangelical society founded in Britain by Pennsylvanian Frank Buchman. And as Wilson underwent a barbiturate-and-belladonna cure called "purge and puke," which was state-of-the-art alcoholism treatment at the time, his brain spun with phrases from Oxford Group meetings, Carl Jung and William James' "Varieties of Reli-

gious Experience," which he read in the hospital. Five sober months later, Wilson went to Akron, Ohio, on business. The deal fell through, and he wanted a drink. He stood in the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel, entranced by the sounds of the bar across the hall. Suddenly he became convinced that by helping another alcoholic, he could save himself.

Through a series of desperate telephone calls, he found Dr. Robert Smith, a skeptical drunk whose family persuaded him to give Wilson 15 minutes. Their meeting lasted for hours. A month later, Dr. Bob had his last drink, and that date, June 10, 1935, is the official birth date of A.A., which is based on the idea that only an alcoholic can help another alcoholic. "Because of our kinship in suffering," Bill wrote, "our channels of contact have always been charged with the language of the heart."

The Burnham house on Clinton Street became a haven for drunks. "My name is Bill W., and I'm an alcoholic," he told assorted houseguests and visitors at meetings. To spread the word, he began writing down his principles

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for sobriety. Each chapter was read by the Clinton Street group and sent to Smith in Akron for more editing. The book had a dozen provisional titles, among them "The Way Out" and "The Empty Glass." Edited to 400 pages, it was finally called "Alcoholics Anonymous," and this became the group's name.

But the book, although well reviewed, wasn't selling. Wilson tried unsuccessfully to make a living as a wire-rope salesman. A.A. had about a hundred members, but many were still drinking. Meanwhile, in 1939, the bank foreclosed on the Clinton Street house, and the couple

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"Therefore nothing can matter more to the future welfare of AA than the manner in which we use the colossus of communication. Used unselfishly and well, the results can surpass present imagination."

Bill W., *Grapevine*, 1960



9 Nine IX

STEP

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

There can only be one consideration which should qualify our desire for a complete disclosure of the damage we have done. That will arise in the occasional situation where to make a full revelation would seriously harm the one to whom we are making amends. Or—quite as important—other people. We cannot, for example, unload a detailed account of extramarital adventuring upon the shoulders of our unsuspecting wife or husband. And even in those cases where such a matter must be discussed, let's try to avoid harming third parties, whoever they may be. It does not lighten our burden when we recklessly make the crosses of others heavier.

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TRADITION

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

1. Do I still try to boss things in AA?
2. Do I resist formal aspects of AA because I fear them as authoritative?
3. Am I mature enough to understand and use all elements of the AA program—even if no one makes me do so—with a sense of personal responsibility?
4. Do I exercise patience and humility in any AA job I take?
5. Am I aware of all those to whom I am responsible in any AA job?
6. Why doesn't every AA group need a constitution and bylaws?
7. Have I learned to step out of an AA job gracefully—and profit thereby—when the time comes?
8. What has rotation to do with anonymity? With humility?

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CONCEPT

"Good service leaders, together with sound and appropriate methods of choosing them, are at all levels indispensable for our future functioning and safety..."

"First let's remember that the base of our service structure rests on the dedication and ability of several thousand General Service Representatives (GSRs), several hundred Area Committee Members, and nearly a hundred Delegates. These are the direct agents of the AA groups; these are the indispensable linkage between our Fellowship and its world service; these are the primary representatives of AA's group conscience. Without their support and activity we could not operate permanently at all."

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began years of homelessness, living as guests in borrowed rooms and at one point staying in temporary quarters above the A.A. clubhouse on 24th Street in Manhattan. In 1940 John D. Rockefeller Jr. held an A.A. dinner and was impressed enough to create a trust to provide Wilson with \$30 a week--but no more. The tycoon felt that money would corrupt the group's spirit.

Then, in March 1941, The Saturday Evening Post published an article on A.A., and suddenly thousands of letters and requests poured in. Attendance at meetings doubled and tripled. Wilson had reached his audience.

In "Twelve Traditions," Wilson set down the suggested bylaws of Alcoholics Anonymous. In them, he created an enduring blueprint for an organization with a maximum of individual freedom and no accumulation of power or money. Public anonymity ensured humility. No contributions were required; no member could contribute more than \$1,000.

Today more than 2 million A.A. members in 150 countries hold meetings in church basements, hospital conference rooms and school gyms, following Wilson's informal structure. Members identify themselves as alcoholics and share their stories; there are no rules or entry

requirements, and many members use only first names.

Wilson believed the key to sobriety was a change of heart. The suggested 12 steps include an admission of powerlessness, a moral inventory, a restitution for harm done, a call to service and a surrender to some personal God. In A.A., God can be anything from a radiator to a patriarch. Influenced by A.A., the American Medical Association has redefined alcoholism as a chronic disease, not a failure of willpower.

As Alcoholics Anonymous grew, Wilson became its principal symbol. He helped create a governing structure for the program,

the General Service Board, and turned over his power. "I have become a pupil of the A.A. movement rather than the teacher," he wrote. A smoker into his 70s, he died of pneumonia and emphysema in Miami, where he went for treatment in 1971. To the end, he clung to the principles and the power of anonymity. He was always Bill W., refusing to take money for counseling and leadership. He turned down many honors, including a degree from Yale. And he declined an offer by Time Magazine to put him on the cover--even with his back turned.

*Time 100, Heroes & Icons,
Susan Cheever, Feature Writer,
June 14, 1999*

TREATMENT: *GROUP COMMITMENTS*

ALCOHOPE

5925 37th St, Vero Beach, FL 32966

CENTER FOR EMOTIONAL & BEHAVIORAL HEALTH (CEBH)

1190 37th St, Vero Beach, FL 32960

TUESDAYS:

Indian River Men's	September 9
South Vero	September 16
Serenity House	September 23
Royal Palm	September 30

SATURDAYS:

Candlelight	September 13
Vero Beach Group	September 20
ODAAT	September 27

CARRY THE AA MESSAGE! For Information, CALL LEE:
567-4759

MONDAYS:

Noontime Recovery	September 8
South Vero	September 15
Friday Young People's	September 22
NEED GROUP COMMITMENT ?	September 29
NEED GROUP COMMITMENT ?	October 6
NEED GROUP COMMITMENT ?	October 13
Safe Harbor Women's	October 20
Vero Beach 12 & 12	October 27
Noontime Recovery	November 3
South Vero	November 10
Friday Young People's	November 17
NEED GROUP COMMITMENT ?	November 24
NEED GROUP COMMITMENT ?	December 1
NEED GROUP COMMITMENT ?	December 8
Safe Harbor Women's	December 15
Vero Beach 12 & 12	December 22
Noontime Recovery	December 29



F Y I . . . and Pass It On!

NEW MEETING
The Source Mission
1872 Commerce Ave
Vero Beach
OPEN DISCUSSION
Thursdays 7PM

NEW AWAKENINGS GROUP
MEETS AT 7:30AM
MONDAY THRU FRIDAY
CHURCH OF CHRIST
3306 20th St
(Route 60 at 33rd Ave)
Vero Beach

NEW MEETING
Newport Club
2536 16th Ave
Outside Room
OPEN DISCUSSION
Mondays 6PM

NOTICE:
The Serenity House meetings at Sebastian
River Junior Women's Club are open to
men AND women.
Mondays 12PM: Open Big Book
Thursdays 12PM: Closed Step Study
SERENITY HOUSE Group
925 US Hwy 1, Sebastian

NEW GROUP: FRIDAY NIGHT BIG BOOK STUDY
Our Savior Lutheran Church
1850 6TH Ave, Vero Beach
FRIDAYS 7:30PM ~ CLOSED BIG BOOK STUDY

NEW MEN'S GROUP
'MAN TO MAN'
Saturday Mornings 9AM
Open Discussion/Non-Smoking
Sebastian Yacht Club
Indian River Drive
Sebastian
For more info call David R.
772-388-9609

SOUTH FLORIDA AREA 15 ASSEMBLY/
QUARTERLY MEETING
Begins Friday, October 10th at 4PM
Ends at 3PM on Sunday, October 12th
Westin Hotel
400 Corporate Drive
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33301
800-228-3000
Rooms: \$89/Night
Saturday Night Banquet = \$25
THERE WILL BE A SPECIAL GSR ASSEMBLY ON
SUNDAY MORNING AT 9AM
This is an important voting meeting for GSRs!
Is your Group represented?

NON AA:

8th ANNUAL ARCHIVES WORKSHOP
Begins Thursday, September 25 at 5PM...
through Sunday, September 28th at 12 Noon
Westin Hotel
400 Corporate Drive Workshop Registration: \$35
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33334 Saturday Night Banquet: \$29
800-228-3000 Rooms from \$89/Night

HELP WANTED
District 6 needs group to volunteer for
Decorating Committee for 2003 Gratitude
Dinner being held November 15th at Vero
Beach Community Center. Call:
Bob K. 567-7983
Danny W. 778-5385



**Financial Reports
Not Available
On-Line.**

**Please see you
Central office
representative.**

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Don't Have One???
It's Simple,
Get One!!

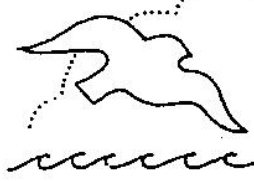


September 2003

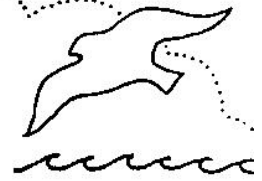
	1	2	3	4	5	6 ?
				1935: Bill W. returns home from his Akron trip and AA begins in New York City	1935: Hank P. takes his last drink before joining New York group as #2 member. He stays sober 4 years and drinks again.	2003: District 6 Workshop regarding Area 15 proposal – 2PM at Newport Club
7	8	9 ?	10	11 ?	12	13
		2003: GSR/DCM sharing session, 6:30PM, followed at 7:30 by District 6 Business Meeting.		2003: Indian River Central Office meeting, 7PM at New-		1941: WHJP in Jacksonville, FL, airs "Spotlight on AA," the first radio
14	15	16	17	18	19	20
		1949: First issue of the AA Grapevine in pocketbook format is pub-	1954: Bill D., AA No. 3 (the		1975: Jack Alexander, noted author of the Saturday Evening Post articles on AA, dies	
21	22	23	24	25	26	27
1938: Bill W. and Hank P. form Works Publishing Company to raise money to write and publish our Big Book			1940: Bill W. makes 12 th Step call on Bobbie V. who will replace Ruth Hock as NY AA office			
28	29	30				
		Sept., 1940: The Journal of Nervous and Mental Diseases reviews the Big Book and says, "Of the inner meaning of alcoholism, there is hardly a word."	Sept., 1938: Fitz M's sister Agnes lends \$1000 to Bill W. and Hank P. to help them get through the Big Book project	Sept., 1940: The AA Bulletin found 9 secure AA groups in NYC, DC, Detroit, Chicago, Philly, Akron, LA and Cleveland	Sept., 1941: Ernie G., AA #4, marries Dr. Bob's daughter, Sue. He was drunk at the time.	1973: The AA Archives at the General Service Office in NYC is formally established



HOW



Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
 855 Centre, Suite 4, Miracle Mile
 P.O. Box 1776
 Vero Beach, FL 32961
 772-562-1114



URL: www.indianriveraa.freesevers.com

E-MAIL: info@indianriveraa.freesevers.com

STEERING COMMITTEE

CHAIR: John H
 CO-CHAIR: Elizabeth T
 TREASURER: Richard E
 SECRETARY: Darcie A

STANDING COMMITTEES

ARCHIVES: Sue L
 WEBSITE COORDINATOR: Dutch VN
 CORRECTIONS WOMEN: Fran H
 Kathy B
 CORRECTIONS MEN: Jake R
 DESK COORDINATOR: Sue L
 HOW EDITORS: Darcie A
 Dutch VN
 LITERATURE: Maureen L
 PUBLIC INFORMATION: Kathy H
 INVENTORY CONTROL: Paul H

STANDING COMMITTEES (Cont'd...)

TELEPHONE COORDINATOR: Bill K
 UNITY CHAIR: Lorrie N
 WHERE & WHEN: Joseph J
 AREA LIAISON DISTRICT 6: Rich K
 FCYPAA LIAISON: Jennifer M

DELEGATES AT LARGE:

Don McC
 Rich K
 Sarah P

Indian River Central Office of Alcoholics Anonymous
 855 Centre, Suite 4, Miracle Mile
 P.O. Box 1776
 Vero Beach, FL 32960

PLACE
 STAMP
 HERE