

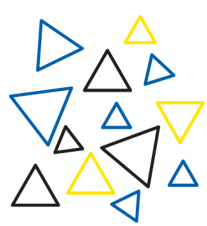
GROUPVINE



January
2025

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A.A. Newsletter
Volume 132



Step 1
"We admitted we were
powerless over alcohol
-that our lives had
become **unmanageable**."



Embracing this step was not easy when I first entered the program. I grappled with conflicting identities: "I'm Naomi, and I'm an alcoholic," "I'm Naomi, and I have a desire to stop drinking," and, at times, even the defiant "I'm Naomi, and I am NOT an alcoholic—I was just told to be here." My hesitation stemmed largely from the fear of the stigma surrounding alcoholism. The label seemed heavy, as though it would define me as broken, flawed, or irreparable. However, five years post-treatment, I confidently affirm, "Hi, I'm Naomi, and I'm an alcoholic." I have come to realize that identifying as an alcoholic does not signify brokenness or a permanent state of chaos. Rather, it marks a starting point for transformation—a new life grounded in gratitude, accountability, and hope.

Hitting Rock Bottom: My Turning Point.

Accepting Step One

Was a non-negotiable because my attempts at "controlled drinking" had continually failed. My rock bottom came in September 2022. I found myself sitting in the front seat of my car, bottle in hand, engine running, parked outside a Walgreens, overwhelmed with tears after losing my job. That moment was both devastating and humiliating. It forced me to confront the countless ways alcohol had taken hold of my life.

Upon deeper reflection, I recognized the long trail of unmanageability that led me there. Between November 2019 and September 2022, drinking had become my coping mechanism for numbing emotions, escaping pain, and avoiding accountability. I began hiding alcohol—placing bottles in the back of our basement refrigerator, sneaking into the laundry room to drink quickly, and discarding empty containers in the dumpster at work. While this behavior might seem inconsequential to some, for me, it was evidence of a life spiraling further out of control. It was enough for me to admit: I could no longer manage my life alone. I needed help.

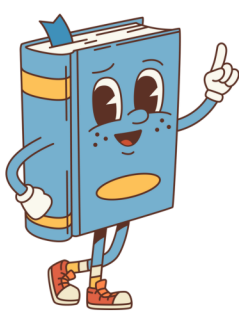
Embracing Recovery: Sobriety as a Lifelong Journey

Today, I am sober. I acknowledge that I can never drink again—under any circumstances. This truth is not a punishment but a freedom, a guidepost that allows me to build a healthier, more fulfilling life. However, sobriety extends beyond mere abstinence. It is a mental, emotional, and spiritual process that requires constant commitment. Without the support of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA), my meetings, the fellowship of my recovery community, and my higher power—God—I know I cannot maintain true sobriety.

Being physically sober without tending to my spiritual and emotional well-being would leave me vulnerable to relapse. AA reminds me that recovery is not a destination but an ongoing journey. Each day is an opportunity to live with purpose, gratitude, and humility—one step at a time.

'The Walk' Step Meeting:
Held every Sunday
through Sunday, April 13th
Naperville Riverfront
(meet at the Gazebo !)

Located at the corner
Mill and Jackson Street
For further information
see flyer/calendar events
on the D43 website.



Vancouver 2025
Language of the Heart
International
Convention:
Alcoholics Anonymous

July 3-6 2025
Vancouver | British
Columbia, Canada



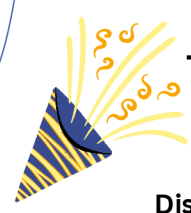
A.A. members in District 43 of Northern Illinois publish this newsletter. Admissions are to keep members informed of local events, service activities and to share experiences and strength in recovery from alcoholism, and its impact on our families. Ideas are those of the authors and not necessarily those of A.A. PLEASE SEND US any articles, ideas, or questions to groupvineeditor@gmail.com. Comments are most welcomed and encouraged!



**HAPPY
NEW YEAR**

Volume 132
January
2025

**SAVE the
DATES!**



“In the late stages of our drinking, the will to resist has fled. Yet when we admit complete defeat and when we become entirely ready to try A.A. principles, our obsession leaves us and we enter a new dimension -- freedom under a God as we understand him.”

W, Bill. As Bill Sees It. New York: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, 1967, p. 283.

**January 15th
District 43 Monthly
Business meeting.**

7-8 p.m.
(Third Wednesday of each month)

ZOOM MEETING ID:
96566590236
P.W: 932879

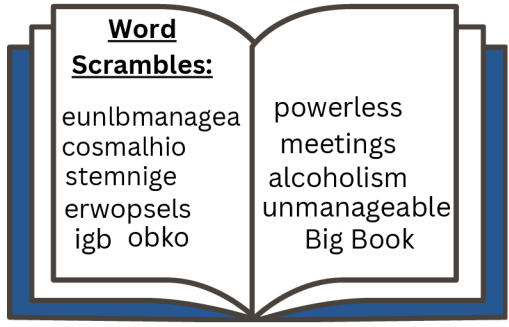
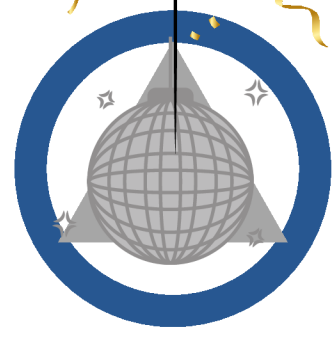
All are welcome to attend!

**January 25th
District 43:
Speaker Event**

6-9 pm

The doors open at 6:00 pm. fellowship, snacks, and sweet treats.

Speakers begin at 7:00 pm. Raffle



Step One

When I take Step 1, I'm really recognizing two things as being true in my life. The first is that once I pick up a drink, I'll have little to no control over how much I will drink. In fact, I don't seem to have much control of anything once I get started. Normal drinkers seem aware that there is indeed some loss of control once you have had a couple drinks. Not me. When I drank, it made me feel like I was gaining control. Drinking does something magical for me – it makes me feel better, no matter what is going on around me. And I like feeling better, so once that feeling is triggered by a few drinks, I will keep chasing it. Thus, I have the total opposite reaction of a normal drinker – once I take a drink, I'm on a mission. That's a problem.

The second thing I'm recognizing in Step 1 is that I also have a complete inability not to take that first drink. I can't not start. In the face of whatever problems I have in my life, even those caused by my drinking, I'll choose to give it another try. Of and by myself, I will more than likely drink again. I'm powerless to stay away from it. That's an even bigger problem. Living in this alcoholic trap of not being able to control it, nor stay off it, was my admission ticket to AA. For those of us in AA, I believe it's safe to say that we all got here because of this dilemma whether we realize it or not. In my case, I came to AA not really realizing the true nature of my alcoholism. I knew I had a problem, and I had seemingly run out of options and ideas, however, I stuck to the deep-seeded idea that it was up to me to figure out how to fix it. It was only after attending many meetings over nearly seven months that I truly admitted the 2nd part of Step 1. Through a few conversations with another man in AA I started to see the full extent of my powerlessness. There is a great line in chapter one of our book 12 Steps and 12 Traditions- "our sponsor's relentlessly deepening our dilemma", that reflects our conversations. He did deepen my dilemma by illustrating how unmanageable my life really was. He impressed upon me that what I really needed was to surrender, to let go of trying to figure it out on my own. He drew the comparison of my life being a failing business and had me conclude that it was time to fire the manager. He said that I didn't have the power to fix my alcoholism, and I needed to find that power outside of myself. In Chapter 5 of our Big Book, we read, "But there is One who has all power – that one is God, May you find Him now!". Like one of the many paradoxes in AA, it was only in this admission of defeat, that I started to feel some hope that my life could actually get better. Step 1 opened the door for me to access that power, to connect with God.

Today with 37 years of sobriety, I need to try and maintain this same level of humility in my life-to know who and what I am and not to try to pretend to be something I'm not. The longer we stay sober, I've found this can be difficult to do, particularly when our lives have gotten better, we have some degree of material success, and our relationships straighten out. We can start to think that we are the cause of this success. We can start to lose our humility. I believe one of the reasons I have stayed sober and not completely succumbed to my own self-centered nature is that my sponsors have always pushed me into service and to work with other alcoholics. I've also continued to be sponsored by men who led by example and were willing to check my ego when I needed it. That's helped me to stay somewhat right-sized and mostly live in reality.

The life I have today truly springs from the admission we all make in Step 1. Today, Step one isn't so much that I'm giving up power in my life, it's recognizing that I never really had it in the first place.

Erik L.