



# SHARING FROM BEHIND THE WALLS

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

Spring 2022

Dear A.A. Friends,

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

**A**lcoholics 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." \*

## A.A. Meetings Are Cool

"We had a meeting today in building 118. *Daily Reflections*, *As Bill Sees It*, and the Lord's Prayer. Anonymously, I can say 'Hi' to two other A.A. members. I need my literature and Steps today. I have outside A.A. sponsors from Georgia and Pennsylvania. A.A. meetings are cool, and I am so thankful to be alive. The A.A. meeting we had today was great, but the volunteers who came in were super great. In fellowship." — John C., East Central Region

"My sobriety date is July 19, 2021. At the age of 13, I had my first drink with some older fellows. Of course, that was the day my life changed. I chased that same buzz for 25 years. It cost me my house, my car and my family. I am currently serving an 11-year sentence as a result of using drugs and alcohol. I never saw myself as an alcoholic because I was in denial. I got myself in trouble, and now I am sitting here sharing a room with 28 other men just like me. In October 2017 I got involved in the A.A. program. I thought the people were crazy, saying 'Easy does it. One day at a time.' Little did I know that once the seed was planted, it would change me forever. I went in and out of the program until I finally hit rock bottom. All alone, walking the streets, on the run, I called a man from the A.A.

program who had always had my back through thick and thin. He picked up my calls many times — no judgment for my wrongdoing or decisions. That is when my life came together, and I decided to change. I am not going to say that it was easy, but with help from the A.A. program I have learned to cope with my problems One day at a time!" — Torryan H., Southeast Region

"The items you sent were more than appreciated and were put to good use right away. Thank you very much. Due to Covid-19, our Area chairperson has not been able to be here but notified us that as soon as possible they will be back. So many life changes happen here, and it is amazing to see mine included. It has all been possible because of the A.A. program materials. We are all grateful for your service." — Christopher G., East Central Region

"Hello, from the Southeast Region! I am currently in jail awaiting the next action in my case. I am facing life in prison, and I have been in solitary confinement for nearly two years. They said it was a mistake, then they just placed me in solitary confinement again. I have not spoken to my children since the day I was arrested. Sounds bad, right? But then again, I think

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about this man in an A.A. meeting on the outside 15 years ago (it was a candlelight meeting). He shared his story of how grateful he was to be at the meeting and to be in recovery. This meeting gave him somewhere to go. His son had just died of an overdose earlier that day. If he could stay sober (after going through that), so could I. Someone I know offered me drugs here in jail. She is long gone now, but I am still thinking about the drugs. Other women were brewing alcohol. Thank God they all bonded out too. All their pressure made me see solitary

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confinement as a gift. Once I get sentenced, I should be able to be placed in the general population and will be able to attend A.A. meetings here in the facility. Thanks for letting me share.” — **Bec N., Southeast Region**

“Thank you so much for sending me the pamphlets through the mail. I am in a Texas facility for a DWI. It is not my first. We were on lockdown, but we were able to have a Christmas dinner. My life has been a struggle throughout, but I did have some A.A. friends in a Houston group. They have always been there for me. My mother passed away on December 23, 2021. I should be out soon. As long as I stay positive, and through the grace of God, I will stay sober and away from alcohol. God be with you all.” — **James R., Southwest Region**

### **This Time Feels Different**

“Happy Holidays! I am Chris, and I am an alcoholic. I am 37 years old. Something feels different this time. Undoubtedly, I feel at peace like I have not felt before. Looking back and realizing so many moments where timing and events seemed to be pointing me in the right way to go — subtle things, but even the big events seem small in the bigger picture. Spiritual experiences have been part of my life since I was a boy. Now I can appreciate the spirit; I don’t need an explanation. I can just be. When I leave prison to reintegrate into freedom in society, I hope to keep it going one day at a time. Until then, I will continue living A.A. here. We have a Friday meeting at this facility, and I just went to my first one last week. The chairperson even distributed ‘Twelve and Twelves’ and Big Books — priceless gifts, really. Today I am open-minded, working on honesty daily, and willing to see life as a gift. Even if life is not perfect, it is still worth it. I work daily to change. Even when I feel weak, there is still hope.” — **Chris M., East Central Region**

“Hello, my name is Enrique. I am a 36-year-old male, serving 45 years-to-life. I am currently housed in a California prison, and I am 13 years into my sentence. I can say alcohol and drugs contributed to me living a criminal lifestyle. Alcohol always made me feel braver — it made me feel like I could do anything. I used to like the feeling it gave me. But with time, I realized that alcohol only led me to getting in trouble or doing stupid things. Four years ago, I joined the A.A. group here in the prison. I was able to relate to other people in

the group. Yes, all of us came from different backgrounds and different paths of life, but all of us had the same problem, addiction to alcohol. I have been sober for two years now, and I feel great, even though sometimes I do get cravings to drink. Since the Covid-19 pandemic started, all classes and group meetings have been canceled. Luckily, I have my A.A. book to fall back on. I would like someone to help me stay on the wagon. I hope to hear from you.” — **Enrique I., Pacific Region**

“I want to say thank you for all your help, and for placing me in the Corrections Correspondence Service. I recently received a letter from a gentleman from Arizona. We began corresponding — what a blessing. Holidays can be especially difficult in prison, and I pray I will never take my family, friends and, especially, my sobriety for granted again when I return home. I hope you had a wonderful New Year’s. God bless you and our Fellowship in recovery.” — **Michael D., Northeast Region**

### **Willingness to Change**

“My name is Jesse and I identify as an alcoholic. I am currently incarcerated in Kentucky, and I enrolled in a substance abuse program. They have A.A. meetings, but they are voluntary. I started going to them and knew that I was supposed to be there. I met a couple of people in the group who inspired me. Through the grace of God, my willingness to change could be seen, and as much as I would love to take credit for the change, I know it wasn’t me. I prayed for the courage to walk up to one of the guys I mentioned and asked for help with the Twelve Steps. He immediately agreed (lol). God is great! We went in a room and talked and, long story short, I worked my First Step! He also gave me the inspiration to write this letter. I am not even sure what I am asking for; I think it is just to be heard. I know that I have seen the effects of the A.A. Fellowship, and I would love to be part of it, if that is possible. Thank you for your time.” — **Jesse O., Southeast Region**

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“My name is Manny. I am an alcoholic and true believer in my Higher Power, whom I choose to be God. I cannot really say when I became an alcoholic. What I do know is that I have been running away from fear of people knowing me, causing me to not open my heart and let them in. As I look out my cell window, I see the elementary and junior high schools I went to. My life as a child went by in the blink of an eye. One thing I do remember is I loved to run on the cross-country tracks. It

felt like I could just run so fast; I could lose myself and never be found. Then, alcohol got involved in my life, where getting lost became my main objective. I was no longer running from fear but attacking it until I woke up. I am 60 years old now, and I have been in jail more than 16 times for drinking. Now I'm going on my third time in prison. Because of my Higher Power I am free. I have put my hands up in surrender; I am sick and tired of being sick and tired. I am letting go and letting God be my driver. Today I am grateful, free from bondage to alcohol." — **Manny G., East Central Region**

"My name is Marco, and I am an alcoholic. I began drinking when I was 12 years old and then made a lot of bad choices. Now I am serving a long sentence in prison, trying my best to change. I felt very grateful when I received your information for this Corrections Correspondence Service. It has been a long time since the last A.A. meeting I attended. I have been waiting on a list for one, but sometimes things can go slow here. Hopefully, someone on the outside will write to me soon. I want to get a sponsor and work the A.A. Twelve Steps. I appreciate your time and dedication to all of us in need of your services. Very grateful." — **Marco B., Pacific Region**

"Thank you for the package of A.A. literature. It came in right on time, when I was reflecting on how to stay focused on my recovery. You know the deal: My head caused me many problems. I wish I had a nutcracker to see the content of what kind of nut I am — I guess I am a good nut. God loves me unconditionally. He gave me the gift of grace and recovery through A.A., from your hearts to mine. I have to remember to give it all away — to stay out of self and help somebody. Many blessings of heaven came. May there be rain and tears of love and hope for all of you. Sincerely." — **Tony F., Pacific Region**

## Finding Peace Within

"Let me start by saying, Happy New Year! My name is Heather. I am currently incarcerated in Missouri. Let me tell you a little about myself. I am 44 years old. I started drinking and getting high when I was 13 years old. I have lived a very chaotic lifestyle, full of alcohol, drugs and criminal activities. I have lost my kids, employment, home, cars, anything I have ever had. I lost self-respect. This is my sixth time in prison. I am doing a long-term treatment, and my expected release date is August 25, 2022. In the four months that I have been in this treatment, I have started to love myself. I no longer see my past mistakes as failures; I see them as stepping-stones to get to where I need to go. Reading the A.A. Big Book has

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helped me so much. I now realize that when I started loving and respecting myself, other things started to fall into place. Even though I am in prison physically, I have peace within myself. It is an awesome feeling." — **Heather F., West Central Region**

"I am writing from a prison cell in Missouri. I am an alcoholic, sober now since September 2, 2021. Grateful to be sober and to have a copy of the Big Book that I read daily. It has been like a lifesaver that prevented me from drowning. I also have zero ability to contact local A.A. offices. I am writing to you in New York just like they did in the old days. I have not worked through the Steps with a sponsor yet, but I have incorporated the principles into my daily life, especially prayer and meditation. I talk about the program with anyone willing to listen. I have done the Third Step (say the prayer daily) and did a mini-inventory of my grosser handicaps; I shared it with a man here. I am willing to make friends. I had a spiritual experience. I did this to follow the clear-cut instructions in the book. As a result, I feel more a part of A.A. than I did before, more willing to be honest and willing to do anything to stay sober." — **Jason B., Southwest Region**

"If we, as servants in life, just take one moment of our time to say the kindest things to a person and reach their hearts, what a wonderful change it could make in a person's day. The beautiful thing about roses is that they come in many different colors. And they come with different meanings to them, which shows their vast range of worth. I have no doubt that I am about to experience the value of true loyalty. I have unlocked my heart of many poetic thoughts in this year 2022 to help brighten the coordination of many flowers. I have put together an artwork called 'The Value of Listening.' The statement is really simple. People hear, but they don't take the time to actively listen. Share this with your colleagues and friends, even family members. Just like any other artwork, this one requires focus. How can you build any relationships at work, home, or personally with others if you cannot understand their worth? Please take the time and listen to what people are really saying from the heart. That is what I am focused on this 2022. Respectfully." — **Kenny H., Northeast Region**

## **Corrections Correspondence Service (C.C.S.)**

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 men writing to men and women writing to women. 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).

**If you are receiving this newsletter and you would like to have an A.A. member write to you and share their experience, strength and hope, please fill out and mail in the attached form.**