

Why do we use the Big Book?

Dec 11, 1934 - Bill get sober - 6 months before he meets Bob and AA officially begins - pg. XVI

June 1935 - 3 members - Bill meets Bob and immediately the first person they work with together recovers - they begin working frantically with alcoholics. - pg. XVII

1937 - 3 groups probably under 40 members - pg. XVII

April 1939 - Less than 100 members - Big Book is published. - pg. XVII

By the end of 1939 - 800 +/- members - pg. XVII

March 1941 - 2000 members - pg. XVIII

End of 1941 - 8000 members - pg. XVIII

1950 - 12 traditions confirmed in Cleveland - pg. XIX

1955 - 150,000 members and 6000 groups - pg. XV

After the first 4.5 years of frantic work by the early members AA had less than 100 members and 3 groups. This averages out to less than 1 new member a month across the three groups in three cities.

After the book was published the message was carried so much more effectively that in the next 2 years AA's numbered over 8000. Can I see using the book to carry the message works?

The Basis for the 12 Traditions in the First Edition

Consider if the major points of what would become the organizational directions for 12 traditions are included in the forward to the first edition. Does it seem clear from the other stories in the forwards that the major pushes forward for the program of Alcoholics Anonymous were spurred from the public endorsements of friends of AA via the mass media of the day? Would these statements have been possible without the people making the recommendations being able to know what they were recommending because it was then defined in the book?

Consider if we are all dependent on the public image of the programs we are involved in, and even the public image of 12 step programs in general in order to be able to reach suffering people and carry our spiritual message? How far would any of us get individually if we had to overcome a bad general impression and press coverage of the fellowships we are members of? Haven't the ideas in the traditions been paramount to the growth of 12 step programs from the very beginning? If you are new, or when you were new, how important are the ideas that are in the forward to the first edition in your decision to give this program a try?

The ideas that are in the current form of the 12 traditions that were not present in the forward to the first edition are included in the spiritual program, keep an eye out for these ideas as we go through the book. Some of the ideas that lead to the 12 Traditions: trusting a higher power in all of our affairs, placing the well being of others ahead of our own, not effectively carrying the message leads to more drinking, allowing alcohol to be the great persuader, seeking to be part of something bigger in life, letting our spiritual way of life attract people rather than trying to convince people, seeing argument and judgement make us less helpful, not expressing an opinion about alcohol or anything else as an institution, looking for where other people are right. As we go through the text keep an eye out for these ideas and consider if I am not only applying them to the way I deal with people in the world, but also if I am applying them to how I deal with other people in the program.