

## **Preamble Suicide Anonymous**

Suicide Anonymous is a fellowship in which we share our experience, strength and hope with each other that we may solve our common problem and help others recover from suicidal preoccupation.

The only qualification for membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of suicidal ideation and behavior.

Membership is open to all who want it. There are no dues or fees for SA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

To counter the destructive consequences of suicidal preoccupation we draw on four major resources.

- 1) Our willingness to stop acting out in our own personal bottom line behaviors on a daily basis.
- 2) Our capacity to reach out for the supportive fellowship within SA.
- 3) Our practice of the Twelve Step program of recovery to achieve sobriety.
- 4) Our developing a relationship with a power greater than ourselves which can guide and sustain us in recovery.

We need to protect with special care the anonymity of every SA member. Additionally, we try to avoid drawing undue attention to SA.

As a fellowship SA has no opinion on outside issues and seeks no controversy. SA is not affiliated with any other organizations, movements or causes.

## The Problem

We came from a variety of backgrounds. Most of us had experienced a crippling depression. We felt inadequate, unworthy, alone and afraid. Our insides never matched what we saw on the outsides of others. As our feelings of helplessness and worthlessness grew, dying seemed our only relief. Suicide became our option.

At first fleeting, thoughts of suicide began to grow until, as our mental state deteriorated, they filled our days. Some felt trapped by intensely painful circumstances. We tuned out with suicidal fantasy and preoccupation.

Many of us became true addicts. Others were survivors of suicide. The problem we faced was the same. The pursuit of the perfect suicide, the trance-like effect induced by ruminating about death became the drug we used to cope with our unbearable pain. We lost the sense that suicide was taboo or forbidden and began to view it as an acceptable alternative, a personal privilege. Many times we came to the brink of action, retreating with hearts pounding, exhilarated by the illusion that we were God-like in the power we held over our own lives. Some of us retreated from that decision, hoping it was not our sole choice, only to tire and decide we could no longer endure the pain.

Many of us made an attempt or attempts to end our life, only to awaken sickened by the realization that our best efforts had failed. This increased our guilt, self-hatred, remorse, emptiness, and pain. Morning after promises to stop these fantasies of death were made to our desperate families and friends.

But suicidal fantasies killed any chance for true life. Soon the seduction of suicide again overtook us and before long we were caught up in the fantasy of death, believing this would give us the eternal peace we craved. Instead we were victimized by internal turmoil and overwhelming humiliation. Alone we were powerless and our most sincere promises to stop this deadly preoccupation had become fantasies themselves.

## The Solution

For most of us the knowledge that others shared our obsession with suicidal thoughts and actions was surprising and a relief. We had struggled and made promises to stop but could not. As we attended the SA meetings and heard the stories and shared the pain of our fellows we began to understand that we were not alone. We felt safe in sharing our own pain and helplessness in our addiction. We came to believe that there was hope and to trust the guidance we were offered.

Our spiritual bankruptcy was such that we needed desperately to learn how to fill the hole left in our souls. We learned that there were steps we could take to begin to do this and that these steps would teach us how to live our lives with serenity and peace.

We became willing to surrender. We came to believe. We turned our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

These steps initiated our emergence from the soulsickness of the past into the promised freedom of today. One day at a time, sometimes one hour at a time, we learned to lean on the guidance of our Higher Power. Our lives are not ours but His. By working the steps we learned to live and not just endure each day.

One day we realized that the promises not only can come true, but are true for us today. We were not perfect but progressing. As our faith grew, and the bond of fellowship among us grew, we were healing. The promises were there for us.

## SA Traditions

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon SA unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority – a loving God as this Power may be expressed through our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for SA membership is a desire to stop living out a pattern of suicidal ideation and behavior. Any two or more persons gathering together for this reason may call themselves an SA group, provided that as a group they have no other affiliation.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or SA as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to those who still suffer from suicidal ideation and behavior.
6. An SA group or SA as a whole ought never endorse, finance or lend the SA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property or prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every SA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. SA should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. SA as such ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. SA has no opinion on outside issues; hence the SA name ought never be brought into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, T.V., film and other public media. We need guard with special care the anonymity of all fellow SA members.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

## **Suicide Anonymous Bottom Line – Definition**

Bottom line behavior is any self-destructive, suicidal or emotional act which, once engaged in, results in worsening self destructive consequences. Each person defines his/her own bottom-line behavior. Staying away from this behavior defines your sobriety.

### **Examples:**

1. I will not attempt suicide – will call group member before acting on suicidal impulse.
2. I will not “stockpile” drugs, weapons, ropes or other tools for suicide – will call group member if I feel the need to do so.
3. I will not allow myself to fantasize about the relief I believe suicide will give me – will call for support.
4. I will call for support if I find myself starting to make a plan.
5. I will call for support if I begin to feel trapped, angry or afraid.

## Promises

### Big Book of AA – page 83

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us – sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

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# **“Alcoholics Anonymous”**

## **Chapter 5**

### **How it Works**

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it - then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with suicide – cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is one who has all power – that one is God. May you find him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked his protection and care with complete abandon.

(Turn over)

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery.

- 1) We admitted we were powerless over suicidal preoccupation – that our lives had become unmanageable.
- 2) Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- 3) Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.
- 4) Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- 5) Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- 6) Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- 7) Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.
- 8) Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- 9) Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- 10) Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- 11) Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.
- 12) Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to those who still suffer and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Many of us exclaimed, “What an Order! I can’t go through with it.” Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

Our description of the problem, the solution, and our personal experiences before and after make clear three pertinent ideas;

- a. That we were suicidal and could not manage our own lives.
- b. That probably no human power could have relieved our suicidal preoccupation.
- c. That God could and would if he were sought.

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