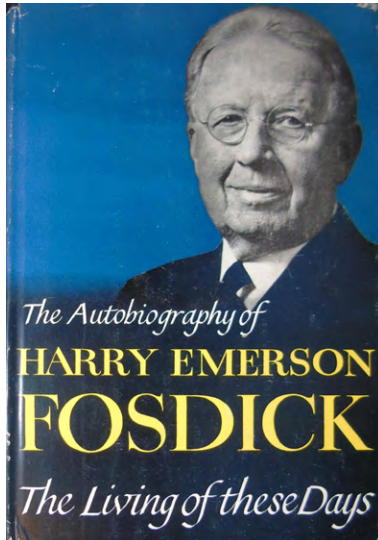


## Why Have an AA Meeting?

One of AA's early supporters, the minister Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, related this recommendation of AA



meetings for those trying to help alcoholics in their communities. In his autobiography, *The Living of These Days* (Harper, 1956), Dr. Fosdick wrote:

Alcoholics Anonymous, grown to its present astonishing strength, is a godsend to us ministers. How can we understand an alcoholic — his compulsive desire for liquor, the hopeless captivity against which he futilely contends, one determined decision after another to stop drinking ending in collapse? When we talk to an alcoholic, he knows that never having been in his place we cannot understand his plight. But when an ex-alcoholic, who has been in the depths himself and has taken the Twelve Steps to freedom, talks to an alcoholic, amazing results can follow and have followed in countless thousands of lives.

The meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous are the only place, so far

as I know, where Roman Catholics, Jews, all kinds of Protestants, and even agnostics get together harmoniously... They do not talk theology. Many of them would say that they know nothing about it. What they do know is that in their utter helplessness they were introduced to a Power, greater than themselves, in contact with whom they found a strong resource which made possible a victory that had seemed incredible. I have listened to many learned arguments about God, but for honest-to-goodness experiential evidence of God ... give me a good meeting of AA!

As noted by Dr. Fosdick, the connection of one alcoholic with another "who has been in the depths himself and has taken the Twelve Steps to freedom," can help to forge a healing bond. Attendance at AA meetings, whether they be in church basements, community centers, prisons, treatment centers, or online, is how AA members most frequently share the experience, strength, and hope that connects

one with another in recovery.

AA is a program for a new way of life without alcohol — a program that is working successfully for millions of people throughout the world, and in all walks of life. Most AA members understand alcoholism to be a progressive illness, which can never be cured, but which, like some other illnesses, can be arrested — by learning to stay away from the first drink, one day at a time.

The first and most important step in the AA program of recovery is an admission by the individual with a drinking problem that they are powerless over alcohol, and that life has become unmanageable. It is often helpful for them to talk with an AA member because it may make it easier to understand the nature of the illness, and to accept help.

If you are interested in finding resources for those in your community who may have a problem with alcohol, AA is here to help. For more information about AA or about AA in your community, visit [www.aa.org](http://www.aa.org) or contact the CPC coordinator at [cpc@aa.org](mailto:cpc@aa.org). ■

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