

A Suggested Format for Conducting an A.A. Meeting on the Phone

1. Welcome, Ladies and Gentlemen. This is the regular (what day and time is it?) Recovery Bridge Community meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. My name is _____, I am alcoholic and your secretary for today's meeting.
2. This meeting is an **"open"** meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. Open A.A. meetings are held so that **all** those interested in the Alcoholics Anonymous program of recovery from alcoholism find a warm welcome, and a place to come to listen and observe.

With the welcome that you find, we ask that you respect our tradition of anonymity. The anonymity of the members of Alcoholics Anonymous, like our sobriety, is a treasured possession.

We ask the help of our guests – especially those representing the press or broadcast media – in protecting the anonymity of all alcoholics present or mentioned here today.

We hope that you hear something at this meeting which you can take away with you and use. We respectfully request, however, that you eliminate any mention of names in reference to members of Alcoholics Anonymous.

3. Today's meeting will be conducted in the same format as other in-person meetings that are held in church basements and hospital conference rooms in many North American cities and towns. The conventional format starts with:
 - A moment of silence, which is followed by ...
 - The Serenity Prayer, which is followed by ...
 - The Preamble. (pause) We will then ...
 - Read a portion of Chapter 5, titled "How It Works", from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. (pause) This is followed by ...
 - Introductions of those attending, including ...
 - A special invitation to new members that they introduce themselves so that we may get to know them.
 - At this point, we will read a few pages from A.A. conference-approved literature, and when the literature reading portion of the meeting concludes ...
 - We will read the 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.
 - Then, there will be a brief 7th Tradition announcement. (pause)
 - The next ten-twelve minutes are reserved to allow you to share on today's literature reading or anything else that may be on your mind. (pause)
 - As we bring this meeting to a close, there will be an opportunity to make AA-related announcements.
 - And in closing, we read The Promises
 - Followed by a Closing Prayer.

A complete and downloadable copy of the format and content of today's meeting is available in PDF format from our web site: <http://www.RecoveryBridge.com/RBResources/RBMeetingFormat.pdf>

(pause)

4. Let us open the meeting with a moment of silence to do with as you wish followed by the Serenity Prayer. (wait 5 seconds)

"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference"

5. Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women 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 to help other alcoholics achieve sobriety.
6. As is the custom of this group, I will now read a section from chapter five of the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, titled **"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 alcohol — 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.

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

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — 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 alcoholics, 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 alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.
- b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.
- c) That God could and would if He were sought.

(pause)

That concludes our opening reading from "How It Works."

7. It is also a custom of this group to go around our virtual conference room here, and introduce ourselves by our first name only, indicating the city or town and state in which we each reside. We also invite new members to introduce themselves at this time so that we may get to know you, and possibly exchange phone numbers and/or e-mail addresses. A new member is anyone who has a desire to stop drinking, and is within their first thirty days of sobriety.

(those attending to introduce themselves)

New members may want to post any questions that they may have on our Yahoo Group forum, [[speak slowly](#)] **AAMeetingsOnThePhone** (yes, that's all one word with no spaces, AAMeetingsOnThePhone). Our Yahoo Group forum can be found at <http://groups.yahoo.com/> . A note about our group forum can be found on the Discussion Forum page of our web site, and in our newsletter. Members are encouraged to initiate contact with new members through this Yahoo Group: AAMeetingsOnThePhone.

8. This is a literature meeting, and today we will read _____. [The secretary either reads or asks a participating member to read the A.A. conference-approved literature chosen for today's meeting.]

(pause)

(read the literature selection)

And, this concludes the literature reading portion of our meeting. We now read the 12 Traditions of A.A., and then make a brief 7th Tradition Announcement before beginning the discussion part of the meeting.

(pause)

9. The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority--a loving God as he may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose--to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn 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 and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

(pause)

10. The short form of the Seventh Tradition of Alcoholics Anonymous states that "Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions." In this A.A. group, we have no dues or fees. We are entirely self-supporting. You have the opportunity to contribute to the self-support of this meeting on the Home Page and 7th Tradition page of our web site.

Self-support for this meeting includes fees for the telephone and Internet services that we use, and the other services that support the conference call form of A.A. meeting. The remainder of our contributions are distributed in the usual way: 60% to the San Francisco Central Office, 30% to the General Service Organization in New York, 5% to the California Northern Coastal Area, and 5% to San Francisco General Service.

A current Treasurer's Report for the A.A. meetings held at The Recovery Bridge Community is available for viewing on the Seventh Tradition of our web site at <http://www.RecoveryBridge.org/>.

(pause)

11. The next ten minutes are reserved to allow you to share on today's literature reading or anything else that may be on your mind. We do ask you to keep your shares short (2.5-3.0 minutes) to allow 3-5 people to share. We (those attending this meeting) ask you to wrap up your sharing after 3.0 minutes to allow others the opportunity their experience, strength and hope.

So, the meeting is now open for sharing ... who's first?

(sharing)

12. Thank you all for attending, particularly those who shared.
13. This is the time during the meeting to make any announcements about group business, and to ask for any A.A. related announcements from those attending today's meeting.
- a. First, we ask you to frequently check our web site: www.RecoveryBridge.org for announcements of coming events. Currently the web site announces a number of 30-minute A.A. meetings that will be held at different times in the late afternoon and early evening Monday through Friday.
 - b. I also want to remind you of the Recovery Bridge forum, AAMeetingsOnThePhone, available at Yahoo Groups.
 - c. Are there any other announcements from those attending today's meeting?
14. We will close the meeting first with a reading of The Promises from pages 83-84 from the book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, followed by a closing prayer (e.g., The Serenity Prayer, The Lord's Prayer, the Third Step Prayer, the Seventh Step Prayer, or the Eleventh Step Prayer). Does anyone have a preference?

The Promises -- "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 of 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."

- a. "God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference"
- b. Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen
- c. "I Am Responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help. I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And, for that: I am responsible."

- d. "God, I offer myself to Thee -- to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!"
- e. From the story "Acceptance Was the Answer" which can be found on page 417 of the Fourth Edition of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* - "And acceptance is the answer to *all* my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation – some fact of my life – unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy. I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and my attitudes."
- f. "My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen."
- g. "Lord, make me a channel of thy peace -
That where there is hatred, I may bring love -
That where there is wrong, I may bring the spirit of forgiveness -
That where there is discord, I may bring harmony -
That where there is error, I may bring truth -
That where there is doubt, I may bring faith -
That where there are shadows, I may bring light –
That where there is sadness, I may bring joy.

"Lord, grant that I may seek rather
To comfort than to be comforted;
To understand, than to be understood;
To love, than to be loved.

"For it is by self-forgetting that one finds.
It is by forgiving that one is forgiven.
It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life.
Amen."