

Article 9b

Anne Ripley Smith, wife of Dr. Bob, Mother and Co-Founder of A.A.

Pioneer A.A.'s Most Ignored, Forgotten, yet Critically Important Resource

by Dick B.

Part Two**Quotations From the Original Journal kept by Anne Smith**

As we said in the first part of this series on Anne Smith, it is virtually impossible today for AAs to see, enjoy, and utilize the original journal that Dr. Bob's wife assembled and used from 1933 to 1939. We have set out many portions of it in our title *Anne Smith's Journal, 1933-1939*, 3rd ed. Those quotes were used to illustrate how much of Anne's language can still be found in A.A. itself.

Here we want to introduce you to some specific segments that illustrate the diversity, practicality, and love that can be found in the comments of this wonderful woman of early A.A.—a non-alcoholic, yet perhaps its most articulate teacher. For it was Bill Wilson himself who said that during his stay at the Smith home in the summer of 1935, it was Anne Smith and Henrietta Seiberling who gave him and Dr. Bob a much needed spiritual infusion.

“GENERAL PRINCIPLES [From page 2 as numbered by GSO]

1. A general experience of God is the first essential, the beginning. We can't give away what we haven't got. We must have a genuine contact with God in our present experience. Not an experience of the past, but an experience in the present - - - actually genuine.
2. When we have that, witnessing to it is natural, just as we wish to share a beautiful sunset. We must be in such close touch with God that the whole sharing is guided. The person with a genuine experience of God and with no technique will make fewer mistakes than one with lots of technique, and no sense of God. Under guidance, you are almost a spectator of what is happening. Your sharing is not strained, it is not tense.
3. We must clearly see and understand our own experience and carefully articulate it, so as to be ready to know what to say or use parts of it, when the need comes to share with others, in order to help them.
4. Act only on prayer and under guidance. Prayer is real, and prepares the way for people.
5. Share with people - don't preach, don't argue. Don't talk up nor down to people. Talk to them, and share in terms of their own experiences, speak on their level.

6. Proceed with imagination and real faith - expect things to happen. If you EXPECT things to happen, they DO happen. This is based on FAITH IN GOD, not on our own strength. A negative attitude toward ourselves or others cuts off God's power; it is evidence of lack of faith in His power. If you go into a situation admitting defeat, of course you lose."

[Comment: Those who are familiar with A.A.'s Big Book will quickly recognize the large number of ideas in the foregoing half-page of quotes that correspond to language Bill Wilson used in A.A.'s basic text. Thus on pages 18-19 of the Third Edition of A.A.'s Big Book, Bill talks presenting no "Holier Than Thou" attitude, nor lectures, but rather a sharing of experience. Bill even refers to a Bible expression in saying, "many take up their beds and walk again" (John 5:8: "Jesus saith unto him, Rise, take up thy bed, and walk. And immediately the man was made whole, and took up his bed, and walked: and on the same day was the sabbath.")). See also, the Big Book's comments about being "beyond human aid" (p. 24). About "the loving and powerful hand of God" (p. 18). About contact with "that Power, which is God" (p. 46). About "consciousness of the Presence of God" (pp. 51, 63). About "All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. We never apologize for God" (p. 68). About "we ask God what we should do about each specific matter" (p. 69) About "God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him." There are many more examples.]

"THE FIVE C'S (From page 4, as numbered by GSO)

3. Conviction.

Try to bring a person to a decision to "surrender as much of himself as he knows to as much of God as he knows. Stay with him until he makes a decision and says it aloud.

4. Conversion.

This is the turning to God, the decision, the surrender."

"WHAT SURRENDER MEANS (From page 42, as numbered by GSO)

Surrender is a complete handing over of our wills to God, a reckless abandon of ourselves, all that we have, all that we think, that we are, everything we held dear, to God to do what he likes with. . ."

[Comment: Again, just look at the Big Book Third Edition: "We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon" (p. 59). "3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*" (p. 59)]

- "(a) What are the conditions of receiving God's guidance? (From page 38, as numbered by GSO)**

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We must be in such relationship with God that He can guide us; He will not force Himself on us. The Sons of God are those who are guided by the Spirit of God. If we are wholly surrendered we can absolutely count on guidance. Constant renewal of consecration is necessary. Surrender is not an attitude attained; it is an attitude maintained. The major condition is being absolutely willing and looking for God's direction in all things. We cannot receive guidance if we hold back an area, an habit, a plan. We must be alert to His direction in Every thing; little things, as well as big ones such as career and marriage”

[Comment: Anne had her eye on passages in the Good Book that were familiar to our pioneer AAs. See 1 Corinthians 1:17-24; 2:9-16; 3:11, 16; 12:3-13; 2 Timothy 1:14; James 1:5-8; 1 John 2:27, 4:1-6, 13; 5:1-5].

“8. LET ALL YOUR READING BE GUIDED (From page 16, as numbered by GSO)

What does God want me to read? A newly surrendered person is like a convalescent after an operation. He needs a carefully balanced diet of nourishing and easily assimilated food. Reading is an essential part of the Christian's diet. It is important that he read that which can be assimilated and will be nourishing. If you do not know what books to read see some one who is surrendered and who is mature in the Groups. Biographies, or stories of changed lives are very helpful for the young Christian. *“Life Changers”* by Begbie; *“Children of the Second Birth”* Shoemaker; *“New Lives for Old,”* Reynolds; *“For Sinners Only,”* Russell; *“Twice Born Men,”* by Begbie, story of the Salvation Army in London Slums; *“Twice Born Ministers,”* Shoemaker; and others.

Books like, *“He That Cometh,”* Allen; *“Conversion of the Church,”* Shoemaker; all of E. Stanley Jones' books are very good. Some have found Fosdick's little books, *“The Meaning of Prayer,”* and *“The Manhood of the Master”* helpful. One should by all means read at least one book on the life of Christ a year for a while. More would be better. *“The Life of Christ,”* Stalker; *“Jesus of Nazareth,”* Barton; *“The Jesus of History,”* Glover; *“The Man Christ Jesus,”* Speer, are all good. See your ministers for others if you desire. But get those biographies of the Master which bring out his humanity. An understanding of the Cross and its meaning for life is absolutely essential. The best popular interpretation I know is, *“If I be lifted Up,”* by Shoemaker. It is a group of lenten sermons. Christ ought to be as real to us as our nearest and best friend.

Of course the Bible ought to be the main Source Book of all. No day ought to pass without reading in it. Read until some passage comes that “hits” you. Then pause and meditate over its meaning for your life. Begin reading the Bible with the Book of Acts and follow up with the Gospels and then the Epistles of Paul. Let “Revelation” alone for a while. The Psalms ought also be read and the Prophets.”

[Comment: Early AAs read all these items. I found them in Dr. Bob's library (See Dick B., *Dr.*
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Bob and His Library). I found them in Henrietta Seiberling's reading (See Dick B., *The Akron Genesis of Alcoholics Anonymous and The Books Early AAs Read for Spiritual Growth*, 7th ed). I found them in Clarence Snyder's library as shown to me by his wife Grace in Florida (See Dick B., *That Amazing Grace and The Books Early AAs Read*, supra). And I found many mentioned in *DR. BOB and the Good Oldtimers* and in early A.A. pamphlets and articles. Anne was the Bible student, the teacher, and the one who conducted the Morning Watch at the Smith home. It is therefore not surprising to see the language on page 87 of the Big Book, 3rd ed.: "There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer." And when I see communications from people that say "A.A. is not for Christians *only*" or Lois Wilson's remark that "not all drunks are Christians," or hear someone in a meeting talk about excluding all but Conference Approved books from meetings and discussions, I bemoan the lack of knowledge of our own history and of the Big Book itself that exists today. There is no index of forbidden books in Alcoholics Anonymous, and there never was one. Dr. Bob was an avowed Bible student, Christian, and member of Protestant churches. But he read, recommended, circulated, and studied the works of Roman Catholic writers, of Confucius, of "new thought" writers like Trine and Fox, and the Bible itself. He went to Roman Catholic retreats, Bible and tooth brush in hand. And he seems never to have spoken ill of any religion or denomination—an example today's AAs would do well to observe.]

'Barriers to a full surrender. (From page 18, as numbered by GSO)

1. Is there anything I won't give up?
2. Is there an apology I won't make?
3. Is there any defeat in my whole life, I refuse to count as sin?
4. Any person I don't like to meet?
5. Any restitution I won't make?
6. Is there any guidance I have had but refused to follow?
7. Is there anything I won't share? Let my surrender be wholesale.
8. Narrow vision, rigidity, a staleness in your relationship with Christ.
9. Telling a lie.
10. If you are sore in yourself, do you work it off on somebody else.
11. Intellectual doubts arise out of an attitude of mind.
12. You can't ask forgiveness from someone you don't believe in.
13. Ideas about self - holding on to my own judgment of things, people, common sense and reason.
14. "You can't use a fine needle to do rough darning"—Are you willing to take any amount of trouble to win others that Christ has taken to win you?
15. Each confession a fresh humiliation breaks down another barrier. You can get to the place where you have nothing left to defend - that is release. You can go naked to God"

[Comment: There are hundreds of similar guides, observations, challenges, and ideas in Anne's 64 pages, plus those we still need to find. You can see many discussed in my title, *Anne Smith's*

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Journal, 1933-1939, 3rd ed. You will be surprised, as so many are each day, to see just how much of Anne's thinking and teaching underlies our fellowship ideas. And do you see any mention of "higher power," or of "acceptance," or of "things happen for a reason," or "there are no coincidences in A.A." Whatever you think of such expressions, they should certainly be balanced against an understanding of what some of us now "**old school A.A.**" Let's learn what we *were* and how successful we *were* before we start inventing new gods, new philosophies, and new interpretations of "reality." The Big Book and the chatter in meetings, if not accompanied by our history, could be likened to a conversation with Thomas Jefferson without a knowledge of the Declaration of Independence.]

Our Great Opportunity Today

What a great and unusual day it could be in Twelve Step Fellowships if we actually saw a copy of *Anne Smith's Journal* –mine or hers–on the literature table at a meeting. What a great and unusual day if someone read just one page from the real, the original, the un-edited Anne Smith's *Journal* at an A.A. meeting on the 4th week of every month. What a great and unusual day if A. A. World Services started publishing the real history of early A.A. instead of the diverse opinions of thousands who haven't a clue where we came from. What an opportunity to change the failing treatment ideas to the early "Program" by just reading at a treatment program what that early program was, as exemplified by Anne's *Journal*. What a great and unusual day if speakers and International Conventions and other Conferences began talking about something other than their own experience, strength, and hope. One can read the Book of Acts, as Anne suggested, and see plenty of victorious experience, strength, and hope that was based on belief in, and reliance upon, the power of God. The lame walked. The dead were raised. The sick were healed. That's what early A.A. was really about. In fact, if you look at the 12 times the word "Creator" is used in our Big Book today, and if you realize that the word "God" with a capital "G" is set forth–by name or by explicit reference–over 400 times in today's Big Book, you might be hesitant about questioning the literature that gave rise to the very "Power" (the power of Almighty God, our Creator), Whose kindness, healing, and forgiveness put Alcoholics Anonymous on the map as a viable life-changing society that really had an answer to the "drug problem."

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