

AGNOSTIC READING OF THE BIG BOOK

Episode 1

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(AA without God)



Raw (Unedited) transcript of EP1 - Agnostic AA reading of Big Book - Intro - Preface

Source video:

<https://youtu.be/1edLeypMF3A?si=pRoE1alZXePxZ7Bk>

Related blog post on AgnosticAA.org

<https://www.agnosticaa.org/blog/agnostic-aa-blog-6/ep-1-agnostic-reading-study-of-aa-big-book-18>

Hi my name is Mike Z and what we're going to do in this series is read the AA big book from an agnostic point of view. I'm going to make comments as I go along and speak to you, like you are a newcomer. Sponsor. Rather. Sponsee.

This is, what I do with, new people who are agnostic,

secular, or have some other belief system, that doesn't fit in with traditional, so

Let's see how it goes.

All right. First thing I like to do is we open up the book to the very first inside cover.

And what's on there? Nothin. And, sponsor usually says nothing that I say like a total old timer asshole.

That's what you know about sobriety.

And then we laugh. Because that kind of sponsor is a total tool. However, it kind of breaks the ice. Whatever. So, I had some other little writing here, just my name, etc..

On it. Not that important. Next, we just kind of flip through, so we get to the, title page. If you've got a newer edition, the title page here is going to be blank. And in this space,

we draw a circle with the triangle in it. In our case, we can add, the atomic symbol if we like, to the center.

Now, I didn't have an agnostic sponsor when I was showing this, so I'm just leaving it as is.

But you can go ahead and add your Atomics atomic energy sign, if you like, or whatever else you like in there, or nothing at all. But we do draw in the circle, with the triangle in the center of it. And, then we, write, the bottom recovery, plus the 12 steps, fellowship body and 12 traditions over on the left hand side.

And then unity. And then on the right hand side, we write, service. So the AA logo, it's no longer trademarked. It's really no longer used by the AA organization. However, it's still on all the coins as well as,

In different places. And you will see the AA symbol. At some meetings and groups, etc.. So.

We draw it in, there. And the reason they don't use the logo anymore, is because they were getting into trademark disputes about the logo and,

They decided a organization that that's not fulfilling their primary purpose, getting into lawsuits about the trademark.

So they just gave it up. They stopped using it. But I was shown to draw it in, so that's what I did, and I like it.

Also, it's important on this page, I was shown to me is it says the story of how many thousands of men and women have recovered from alcoholism. That's important.

It does later on say in the book that we are recovered, contingent upon, our spiritual condition, our daily fitness and spiritual fitness, if you will. There's some debate within, the groups and the rooms. You'll hear people say that, you're never really recovered. Other people will boldly say, I am recovered. I land somewhere in between that.

Yeah. I don't drink anymore. And I haven't had a drink for four plus years. However, the, thing with me is I think it's still there. Very much like a bee sting. I'm allergic to be that 50. I became allergic to bees. And, I don't think I'm allergic to bees. I haven't been stung in four years, but I don't need to go get stung by a bee to find out if I'm still allergic.

As we know, alcoholics, maybe they want to go have a drink at some point. Myself? I'm not. I'm okay with, holding to the idea that, I'm never truly recovered. I'm in recovery. It's a lifelong process. It's an approach to life. But I don't need to go get. You know, I don't need to go have another drink.

That's part of my first step, but we'll get into that in a bit. Anyway, that's what I have on this page.

Moving on to the next page is the copyright page. So the copyright, is, you know,

pretty book. Boring.

However, you know, I have underlined 1939, 1955, 1976 and 2001. And if you have a newer edition, the copyright is is even later, I think, the fifth edition is coming out.

I just have that underlined because it shows that this book, this text has been around, you know, a while, you know, and it's helped thousands of people,

so if not millions. So there it adds the fact that it's been around means that it works in some capacity. Does it work for everyone? No. Right. I'm of the, mindset that a a is, good and useful to a certain type of person.

Most agnostics, atheist secular people really can't even get, you know, two minutes into this program because they heard the word God, and then they're out, right? They just can't do it. And I don't blame them. And that's how I was. But I really needed to quit drinking. I didn't have any other solutions at the

time. Maybe.

Had I known about, smart recovery, I would have gone there. Maybe. Had I known about Dharma recovery, I would have gone there since getting into AA and doing the 12 steps without God. I have started exploring those other, communities and modalities of sobriety, and I find value there as well. But that's a different story. This is an agnostic reading of the 12 steps.

Anyway, there's some value here. That's what I have on that page. Next is contents. You can read those if you want, but it's a bit redundant because we're going to read the whole book. This is no reason to read that, in my opinion.

Then we get into the preface. So the preface. This is the fourth edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

The first edition appears in April 1939, and in the following 16 years more than 300,000 copies went into circulation. I have that underlined. The second public edition, published in 1955, reached a total of more than

1,150,500 copies. I have that underlined. The third edition, which came off the press in 1976, achieved a circulation of approximately 19,550,000 in all formats.

I have that underline. So we see the mushrooming effect in the, volume of, individual books that are published. Right? There's a demand, a growing demand. Now, that was in 1976. I don't know how many of the fourth edition, this 2001 version have been published. All right. Because this book has become the basic text of our society.

I have that underlying basic text of our society. You know, this book, is is a can be a text book for how a drunk like me, even though I'm agnostic, can find, a pathway to sobriety. I don't adhere to the book with any kind of dogmatic fervor. It makes me cringe when people are like,

it's in the book.

Deal with the book says,

yeah, yeah, okay, chief. I can see why you've been in sobriety for 30 years. Maybe you should actually read and understand it and try to practice some of the principles. But, you know, you do you. I'll do me and I'll help the people that I can help. Anyway, a lot of good information here.

So. Basic text of our society and has helped such large numbers of alcoholic men and women to recovery. There exist strong sentiment against any radical change being made in it. Therefore, the first person, therefore the first portion of this volume describing the AA recovery program has been left largely untouched in the course of revisions made for the second and third and fourth editions.

The section called The Doctor's Opinion has been kept intact, just as it was originally written in 1939 by the late Doctor William D Self Worth, our society's great medical benefactor. The second printing of the first edition added the appendix

but the chief change was in the section of personal, personal Stories, which was expanded to reflect the Fellowship's growth bill story, Doctor Bob's Nightmare and one other personal history from the

first edition retained intact. Three were edited and one of these was retitled. New versions of two stories were rewritten

with new titles, 30 completely new stories were added, and the story section was divided into three parts under the same heading that are now used in the third edition. In part one, and pioneers of AA was left unchanged and out of the stories in part two, they stopped in time or carried over from the second edition.

Eight new stories were added. In part three, they lost nearly all eight stories or retained five new ones were added. This fourth edition includes the 12 concepts for World Service and revises the three sections of the personal stories as follows. One new story has been added to part one, and two that were originally appeared in part three have been repositioned.

There. Six stories have been deleted. Six of the stories in part two have been carried over, 11 new ones have been added and 11 taken out. Part three now includes 12 new stories, eight were removed in addition to the two that were transferred to part one.

All changes made over the years in the Big Book. AA members. Fond name.

Fond nickname for this volume have had the same purpose to represent the current membership of Alcoholics Anonymous more accurately, and thereby to reach more alcoholics.

If you have a drinking problem, we hope that you may pause and reading one of the 42 personal stories and think, yes, that happened to me. Or more importantly,

yes, I felt like that.

Or most importantly,

yes, I believe this program can work for me.

And from, the my agnostic point of view,

I have those underlined and I agree with it. Oh, here's a tip if you're reading the book yourself, a sponsor suggested to me that anywhere I found there to be something important, I put my initials next to it.

Kind of like signing a contract signing. Lease signing a mortgage, what have you. And I did that, and so there it is. There's my initials.

That was a little dry, but it does show that there's some, some evolution in a, in trying to reflect the current membership. The, the language that we're going to see is a bit archaic and dated and, you know, a mouthful.

But that's why I'm reading it to, to share a modern, agnostic interpretation. Anyway.

That's all I have notated on the preface. And I'll stop there. If you have any comments to that, please do leave a comment. If you want to make a video about it and share it on this channel. Please do that.

Be sure to like and subscribe and, next time we'll read the foreword to the first edition.