

## The Circle and the Triangle



*"The circle stands for the whole world of A.A., and the triangle stands for A.A.'s Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. Within our wonderful new world, we have found freedom from our fatal obsession. That we have chosen this particular symbol is perhaps no accident. The priests and seers of antiquity regarded the circle enclosing the triangle as a means of warding off spirits of evil, and A.A.'s circle and triangle of Recovery, Unity, and Service has certainly meant all of that to us and much more." (Bill W., Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age, Bill W.'s 1955 speech)*

*However, in the early 1990s, A.A.W.S. decided to begin eliminating the use of the Circle and Triangle symbol on its literature, letterhead and other material. It had become too costly and too controversial for AA to try to continue to defend its rights to this symbol. It was "officially" and "legally" phased out after the 1994 General Service Conference resolved that the logo be discontinued on all Conference-approved literature. However, the symbol is still associated with Alcoholics Anonymous (and other kinds of 12-Step recovery fellowships) and has a special meaning for AA members all over the world.*

***The symbol of the circle and triangle is an ancient spiritual symbol meaning mind, body, and spirit together as one.***

*In AA, this symbol represents the three parts of our program (recovery, unity, service) which are the solutions to the three-part disease of alcoholism (physical, mental and spiritual). The circle surrounding the triangle represents Alcoholics Anonymous as a whole. The equilateral triangle is the strongest construction structure known to us. Because all three sides are equal, the triangle represents the balance required among all 36 principles in order for us to stay sober.*

*So the solution to our alcoholism is found in the Three Legacies (Recovery, Unity and Service) passed down to us by our co-founders, Dr. Bob, Bill W. and the first pioneers of AA. Each legacy has twelve guiding spiritual principles. A total of 36 guiding principles. Each of spiritual principles are contained in the Big Book of*

*Alcoholics Anonymous (Recovery, Unity, Service), the Twelve and Twelve (Recovery and Unity), and the General Service Manual (Service).*

***The following is an explanation of each of the Legacies and it's Spiritual Principles:***

- **Recovery/Mind/The Individual (Mental Obsession)**

✓ The Set of Twelve Spiritual Principles (the 12 Steps), used to recover from alcoholism, are found in the first part of the Big Book, ending on page 164 and in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.

✓ The 12 Steps are known as Recovery and it is the entire foundation of our program. Thus it is the bottom of the triangle, holding up Unity and Service. The physical compulsion and the mental obsession are removed when we have completed the 12 Steps. Then comes the promise, we have recovered from a “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body”. Unity and Service cannot be a part of our lives unless we are practicing these principles in all our affairs. We cannot give away what we do not have ourselves.

✓ So in order to determine whether we are in fit spiritual condition, we do a nightly inventory as part of Step 11 (BB 86:1):

*"When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken."*

- **Unity/Body/The AA Group (Physical)**

✓ The 12 spiritual principles used within the fellowship are the 12 Traditions found in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions and the Appendix of the Big Book (Fourth Edition).

✓ The second Legacy, Unity (Body) suggests we join a home group and participate in the meetings. In early sobriety, meetings and fellowship with recovered alcoholics can help to keep a newcomer sober until they have completed their steps and found a higher power. The fellowship of AA is the group members and is fondly referred to as “the meeting before the meeting, the AA meeting, and the meeting after the meeting.”

More importantly, however, the group and its members are responsible for making sure that the door to the meeting is open and there for the newcomer.

✓ Do I have a group that I am committed to and involved with? When I am participating in AA and Group Conscious meetings, do I follow the 12 Traditions?

*"I am responsible. When anyone, anywhere reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA to be there. And for that: I am responsible."*

- Service/Spirituality/The AA Organization (Spiritual Malady)

✓ Service in AA is based in the 12 spiritual principles known as the 12 Concepts, which are found in the General Service Manual and the Appendix of the Big Book (Fourth Edition).

✓ "12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry the message to another alcoholic and to practice these principles in all our affairs." (BB 60:1) "PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE shows that nothing so much insures immunity from drinking than intense work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our TWELFTH SUGGESTION: Carry this message to other alcoholics!" (BB 89:1)

✓ The current service structure put in place by Bill W. And Dr. Bob allow recovered alcoholics to have resources at their disposal in order to help another alcoholic achieve sobriety.

✓ Am I working with other alcoholics taking them through the twelve steps? Am I practicing all of the spiritual principles inside and outside AA? Am I restless, irritable or discontent? If AA is the 12 Steps, the fellowship, and working with others, where am I with my program?