

The Oldest Tool in Public Information's Toolbox

On or about December 11th 1934, Bill W., a New York stockbroker took his last drink, and began a Spiritual journey of discovery. This ultimately led him to and through the principles that are now permanently etched in the annals and lives of Alcoholics Anonymous and its members.

On December 18th 1934, Bill left the hospital inspired to reach out to other alcoholics to stay sober himself. Bill knew the value of our Spiritual Principles in his recovery well before they were documented Steps for us to go by; particularly Step 12 for this discussion. As Bill refined the message he carried, success finally manifested after a May 12th 1935 meeting with an Akron Physician, affectionally known as Dr Bob. Dr. Bob was to drink one last time before successfully laying hold of our Spiritual Principles on June 10th 1935. This date therefore, has been fixed forever in our history as the day AA was founded. So how did Bill and Dr Bob ever come to meet in the first place? Let me tell you the rest of the story...

May 11th 1935 found Bill in a quandary (the day before his meeting with Dr. Bob). Having come from a failed business venture, head in hand, alone in an unfamiliar place, away from home, in Ohio, there he stood in Akron's Mayflower Hotel lobby. There he heard the chatter, glasses clinking, and laughter billowing out of the open door of the hotel bar. The way Bill saw it, he had two choices; to enter the bar for the infamous "one drink" or, to find a fellow alcoholic who may, or may not, want an answer to his drinking problem. Previous experience said he would not find someone who actually wanted what he had to offer, having failed to reach anyone the last 6 months following his stay in Town's Hospital. Hadn't these unsuccessful efforts kept him sober, nevertheless? Yes, they certainly had...

In an act of desperation, Bill made his way to the hotel phone booth hoping to find another alcoholic to reach out to. There he began dialing the numbers displayed on the church directory located inside. One such call put him in touch with Dr. Walter Tunks, a minister affiliated with the Oxford Group. Because Henrietta Seiberling was already working with alcoholics within the Oxford Group, Dr Tunks gave Bill her number. She, in turn, set up an occasion to have Dr Bob, his wife, and Bill over the following day. Dr. Bob was to meet with Bill, albeit for 15 minutes per the good doctor's agreement with his wife. Hours later that iconic day, Dr Bob emerged, filled with hope for his malady, and just as important, Bill remained sober yet another day.

So, there you have it... What made this miraculous outcome possible? With spirituality from Dr. Carl Jung to Roland Hazard, from Roland Hazard to Ebby, from Ebby to Bill, the allergy and obsession from Dr William D. Silkworth, from Bill to Dr. Bob, and from Bill & Dr. Bob to the rest of the world; it is the first, the oldest, and the most valuable tool in the

Public Information toolbox; *Word of Mouth*; it works! It works when we let our families, friends, associates, and others know that we are willing to talk to anyone wanting help with their alcoholism. Yet so few do employ *Word of Mouth*. Why is that? The hope was that via the survey, the Public Information Committee would be able to identify opportunities, and being in possession of this information, would be able to provide some simple and viable suggestions pertaining to the *Word of Mouth* aspect of the 12th Step. (Please note: Our prospective suggestions would have been, in no way, intended to replace the valuable wealth of information and experience that a sponsor brings to the table). Having said that, *Word of Mouth* is truly, “The Oldest Tool in Public Information’s Toolbox.” It is the very first tool that had been successful in the pulling of an alcoholic from the torment-filled quicksand that so many of us had been trapped in upon arriving here. The fact of the matter is, the powerful tool of *Word of Mouth* is responsible for the very formation of this wonderful and miraculous fellowship; our beloved fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.

After all, if you really take a moment to think about it... Haven’t we all taken a seat on the Public Information Committee? Yes... Indeed, we have; since the day we first walked through the doors of Alcoholics Anonymous.