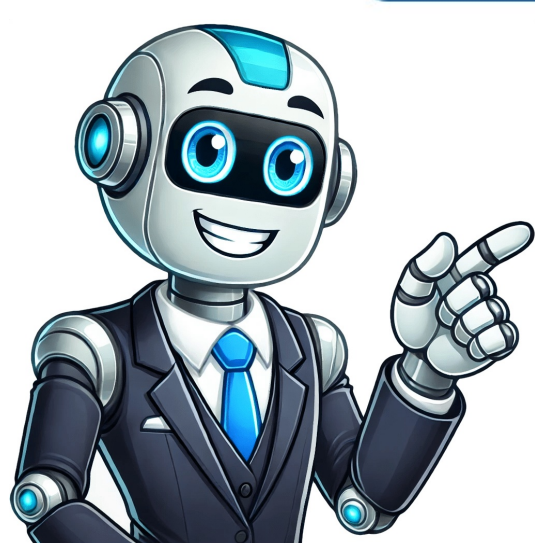


I'm not a robot



















## Why is the big book called the big book

[illegible]



asked to design the dust jacket. Others were asked to write or record their stories with a view to showing the broader view of the membership in the mid-40's. "Why should I?" the Committee member had asked. Bill hoped the event would raise money for the group. We also make sure everyone who stays with us has one-to-one therapy each day as we have seen that this achieves the best results. In 2011, Time magazine placed the book on a list of the 100 best and most influential books written in English since 1923, the beginning of the magazine. AA's Big Book was mostly written by a Wels Street businessman called Bill Wilson. But as well, many of the first 100 members of AA contributed. In a 1952 letter, Bill said, "Now I'm getting down once more to serious writing I expect to do a book which will cover the application of the Twelve Steps to the whole problem of living. As each book or pamphlet originated to fill a perceived need, it is not easy to decide what should be eliminated, remembers Allan McG. And this time the project was completed. It began about a month before the Conference with the Crommies' asking Lois if they could enter the film in the San Francisco International Film Festival as an example of their work. Meanwhile, however, "the great film festival flap" had occurred. He submitted various designs for consideration including one which was blue and in an Art Deco style. She suggested they form a leaflet to fill requests for this information, and the Conference agreed. So many entities were involved, Silkworth contributing the section on The Doctor's Opinion.In the entire 1st Editions, Dr. Silkworth did not sign the letter he submitted to Bill for the book. Yet it turned out to be not only appealing and attractive, but incredibly powerful and lasting in its effectiveness. Despite all their efforts at proofreading, there was a typographical error in the first printing. However, the inherent excellence and value of the piece ultimately prevailed. Although Bill was at first elated, he developed grave misgivings about the book's being owned by an outside publisher. Recently the subject of how the 'Big Book' got its name came up. Thus, the book came to be nicknamed the "Big Book." Blackwell had an excess of red material for the bindings, so he offered them a special deal. With little persuasion, Bill agreed to charge ahead with the plan. How to widen the opening so it seems right and reasonable to enter there and at the same time avoid distractions, distortions, and the certain prejudices of all who may read, seems fairly much of an assignment." He followed the same practice that he had in writing the Big Book: that is, he wrote a section at a time and sent it to friends and editors for their comments. No author or editor is identified. However, the demand for it proved to be so great that this decision was rescinded. This was a project of the Public Information Committee, who was aware that over-eager but inexperienced volunteers were sometimes creating a bad impression of A.A. when they spoke to outside groups. The one which was chosen was red, and yellow, with a little black, and a little white. The "headquarters" office of A.A., as it was called then, developed several pamphlets in the 1940's to meet needs as they arose. AA's Big Book has more than 400 pages. In 1980, the "Twelve Concepts for World Service" was combined with "The A.A. Service Manual" into a single volume, by Conference action. The 1975 Conference recommended that two teenage stories be added to "Young People in A.A.," but it was then decided that a separate piece, in cartoon style, would better fit the need. Certain chapters are aimed at specific groups of people. This was corrected in the second printing. Soon, Bill W moved into Dr Bob's home and from there, both men made plans to take their message of recovery on the road. The second edition had gone through 16 printings. The product, filmed with Lois at Stepping Stones, was almost of home-movie quality with a bad sound-track, but it did accomplish the objective of preserving Bill on film. To put these figures into another perspective, in 1939-41, it took about two years to sell 5,000 copies of Alcoholics Anonymous; in 1985, it took two days. Betty L. Second, in September, Liberty magazine ran an article on A.A. Third, a series of articles in the Cleveland Plain Dealer brought a rush of new members and a rush of orders for the book. Mel B., a professional writer working in corporate relations in Toledo, Ohio, was engaged to take over. At its January 1958 meeting, the Policy Committee recommended that the idea of a comic book to reach the less literate alcoholic be explored. His story, "An Artist's Concept", appears in the Big Book's first edition. (The round metal meeting sign designed to be hung outside meeting places was "borrowed" from Finland.) The editors at G.S.O. who check each pamphlet for changes in facts or figures that may be needed before reprinting, noticed in early 1975 that where the Steps were appended at the end of pamphlets or books, they were sometimes referred to as "The Twelve Suggested Steps" or simply "The Suggested Steps," but more often as "The Twelve Steps." The editors asked if they should not make the usage consistent by eliminating the word "suggested" where it appeared in a heading. They turned out to be clear and amusing. Even so, Lois recalls there was "lots of criticism," tears, protests, threats and wild rumors. The General Service Board viewed the test footage at their January 1978 meeting, gave some guidance and okayed it to be shown to the Conference. After working for two years, Mel produced a voluminous, thoroughly researched, well-written manuscript. Then, at the World Service Meeting in New York in 1976, delegates from overseas requested strongly that priority be given to a biography of Dr. Bob, as they felt they knew too little about him. First he agreed to print the book and to accept \$500 all they could afford as a down payment. The book had been created from scratch in a single year by alcoholics who had no more than two and a half years' sobriety. When they heard that the book was making money, some of the stockholders, including Charlie Towns, began to ask for their money back. This woman had called the Winnipeg central office for help on several occasions, but always refused to go to an A.A. meeting. But the dissidents remained adamant and aroused the SENY area assembly to vote to ask the Conference to recommend that the deletions be restored. did the advanced work and accompanied Karen and David Crommie during the test filming, always going through area and local service people, painstakingly explaining what was proposed and getting the group conscience of the individuals and groups being filmed. But the person who had originated the idea didn't give up, and persuaded the Washington area assembly to resubmit the proposal with the added support of the regional trustee. This is what makes the Big Book likely to be the most-read recovery book ever. By summer, he had drafted the first two chapters. So the project was turned over to Catherine N., a freelance writer in New York, to add human interest touches. "Medicine Looks at A.A." was also one of the earliest, perhaps reflecting Bill's preoccupation with getting approval from the medical profession. So, for this months offering here is a little bit of 'Big Book' history. Additionally, A.A.W.S. cannot attest to the accuracy, relevancy, timeliness, legality, or completeness of information provided by any other website Printing a single copy of this item is permitted, in accordance with A.A. World Services, Inc. Hank worked up a prospectus in which he called the new company "Works Publishing Company", since he envisioned the forthcoming book as only the first of many "works." Next, he bought a pad of blank stock certificates in a stationary store, typed "Works Publishing, Inc.", par value \$25" across the top, and put his signature at the bottom with the title, "President." Bill said, "When I protested these irregularities, Henry said there was no time to waste; why be concerned with small details?" Hank then "descended like a whirlwind on the New York alcoholics and their friends" trying to sell them stock in the new venture. First, Bert T. Chapter 12 The Big Book and Other A.A. Literature The Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, is probably the most important single factor not only in the recovery of the individual alcoholic who finds sobriety in A.A., but also in the growth of the Fellowship throughout the world. This situation was tied-up by the 1980 Conference with three advisory actions as follows: "That the following pamphlets, leaflets, and flyers be approved with their present content: "Where Do I Go From Here" "You're A.A. G.S.O." "G.S.R." "Self-Supporting? He stayed anonymous because he did not want to be expelled out of the American Medical Association (AMA). A special task force was appointed to meet with homosexual A.A.'s and write the draft. Titled, "The A.A. Member - Medications and Other Drugs," this most recent pamphlet was written by doctors in Alcoholics Anonymous. All A.A. literature is owned by A.A. Except for Bill, all writers are hired on a contract basis and receive no royalties. said later that he was one of those not interested in the book project in 1938, and he did not share Bill W.'s vision of A.A.'s future. (It is adequately explained in the Big Book and Twelve and Twelve, and also such a guide is available from the outside for those who insist they need one.) Repeatedly throughout the history of the Conference, delegates have come in with the complaint, "there's too much literature". The Concepts, they felt, were too lengthy, too complex, too hard to read to lend themselves to light illustrations. Since its publication, it has been translated into 67 languages and sold more than 30 million copies. Bill had completed a draft by 1960 which was sent to the Trustees for review. "It was the best thing of the kind we'd ever read, and we asked Allan's permission to take it back to New York and see if it could be an A.A. publication. Bill was responsible for getting many of the other stories for the second edition himself, taping the experiences of oldtimers which he thought were particularly helpful. In 1937, Bill and Bob met in Akron for the first time since Bill had returned from their first meeting in 1935. He then threatened legal recourse, but perhaps realizing the weakness of his case, never followed through. To ensure that Morgan stayed sober for the broadcast, members of AA kept him locked in a hotel room for several days under a 24-hour watch. Who lived in close relationship to the Fellowship." Bill worked on the book about one-and-a-half years, completing it at the end of 1956. The early use of these titles indicates the importance placed on the understanding and cooperation of the spouse in getting the alcoholic into A.A. The appearance of the Al-Anon Fellowship lessened the need for these pamphlets and eventually, in 1976, they were combined into "Is There an Alcoholic in Your Life?" "A.A. for the Woman" was probably written in the late 1940's by Ralph B., for it was being reprinted in '51. For the second edition, Bill went out of his way to include one story that had been conspicuously missing from the first. Such a pamphlet was "A Newcomer Asks," written and published in 1979 in Great Britain. But in 1952, when Bill D.'s health was failing (and after he had experienced two years as delegate at the General Service Conference), Bill W. Bill Wilson, Hank Parkhurst, Dorothy Snyder (Clarence Snyder's Wife) and Ruth Hock, Bill's secretary, went to the little hamlet of Cornwall many times to oversee the printing and correct the galleys before the final galleys were approved as ready for printing. Several Conferences had to deal with the request that the Twenty-Four Hours A Day book be adopted as A.A. literature, since it was written by an A.A. member and was in widespread use in A.A. (It was copyrighted and published by Hazelden and hence was not available. How do we best learn from them and transmit what we have learned to others if they would receive the knowledge? But Bill and Dr. Bob persisted and 'by the barest majority" of a single vote, the Akronites agreed that they should proceed. After two years of work by a G.S.O. committee, the Trustees' Literature Committee and the Conference Literature Committee, the third edition was published in 1976. (A.A.W.S.), or any products, services, or content displayed, provided, promoted, or offered by such other website. Which of the entities was supposed to do what? The error was repeated when the renewal date for the second edition came and went in 1983 without action being taken (the third edition had already been published in 1976.) The end result was that the heart and soul of the Big Book, the first 164 pages, had been in the public domain since 1967. "A.A. ....An Inside View" has been shown on TV scores of times and has had wide use both outside and inside the Fellowship. Early members came to Bill and stated that none of them had a spiritual experience. "Living Sober" proved to be hugely popular, and after it had sold nearly a million copies, Barry L. Two years later, she suggested a companion leaflet consisting of the co-founders' last talks. So Bill "laid out this information before the next trustees meeting. It was priced slightly higher than the regular edition, and Nell Wing, working on it for a while, but Bill's attention was diverted to other projects and he died before it could be brought to fruition. They are restricted to use within A.A. only, by action of the 1965 Conference. I knew the reaction would be bad and it certainly was! knew we would have to go through with the deal despite all the objections." And they did. Something had to be done. in July 1959, and was published in 1961. the A.A. Guidelines may be produced or revised..at the discretion of the G.S.O. staff without Conference approval." The history of A.A. literature is also told in the history of what was not published. 29 stories were included: 10 from the east coast, 18 from the mid-west and one last-minute story from the west coast (which was ghost written by Ruth Hock and removed in the second printing). No changes were made in the first 164 pages. The Big Book and Other A.A. Literature The Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, is probably the most important single factor not only in the recovery of the individual alcoholic who finds sobriety in ... The title of the book Bill Wilson wrote is Alcoholics Anonymous, but it is referred to by AA members as the "Big Book." It's main objective is to help the alcoholic find a power greater than himself ... This made for an unusually large book. The printer, Edward Blackwell of the Cornwall Press, was told to use the thickest paper in his shop. The Policy Committee was troubled in 1963, feeling the pamphlet needed to be revised again to stress that it was not written by experts. They picked the cheapest, thickest paper the printer had, and requested that each page be printed with unusually large margins surrounding the text. Upon conclusion of the dinner, Nelson stated that Alcoholics Anonymous should be financially self-supporting. There was only one problem then but had almost no money. These few sentences with a few changes and additions, became the "Preamble" read at the beginning of tens of thousands of AA meetings every day in the ensuing years. They felt it needed such drastic revision that it should be started again from scratch by a new author. It is all on the surface material." This review went on to "degrade" the alcoholic: "Inasmuch as the alcoholic, speaking generally, lives a wish-fulfilling infantile regression to the omnipotent delusional state, perhaps he is best handled for the time being at least by regressive mass psychological methods, in which, as is realized, religious fervors belong, hence the religious trend of the book." The views about the book and about alcoholism espoused in these two journals were typical of how alcoholics and other addicts were viewed by many in the psychiatric field during the middle of the 20th century.1941 Saturday Evening PostOn June 29, 1939, the New York Times did a book review written by Percy Hutchison on the "Big Book." This review was a glowing report on how something was put together by former alcoholics for alcoholics.It is one of the best-selling books of all time, having sold 30 million copies. Just as he had been fearful in the beginning that the recovery program might be watered down or distorted unless it was codified into Twelve Steps; just as he was fearful the groups might repeat their destructive mistakes unless their experience was codified into Twelve Traditions; so Bill now was fearful that the service structure might develop flaws and splits if the 'how' and 'why' were not codified into Twelve Concepts. insisted the book should be religious in tone and content. But many of those present were against any publicity, turned thumbs down on printed material, and argued that the apostles hadn't needed books. Leroy Chapman, an assistant for John D. The same opposition was raised at the Trustees' Literature Committee. (They eventually sold 200 shares for \$5000, and Charles Towns of Towns Hospital loaned them \$2,500.) This decision that the embryonic society should control and publish its own literature so controversial at the time turned out to be of immense importance for the future of A.A. Meanwhile, Bill had continued with the writing of the book. It was replaced by a simple dark blue title on an all white background, still low-key and unobtrusive. The International Convention in St. Louis in 1955 furnished the basis for Bill's next book, Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age. On the other hand, they were treasured by the Fellowship, and were offered for rental from G.S.O. They have been seen and enjoyed by hundreds of thousands of A.A.'s in the years since at gatherings from group meetings to International Conventions. They asked him if he had a manuscript of the talk, which he later showed them; it was called "A Members Eye View of A.A." "We were absolutely thrilled by it," recalls Bayard. It measured 81/2 by 51/2 and had a white cover. Ruth recalls that when he showed them to local members, there were heated discussions and many other suggestions. When he reached his stopping point, he numbered the Steps and found they added up to twelve. Finally, 78 pages of stories were deleted and replaced with 32 pages of new stories from the Grapevine and 46 pages from individuals. The draft was distributed to all delegates in early 1983 as pre-Conference material, to be kept confidential. It has real authority and conviction, and I stayed with you to the end." As soon as Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions was published in January 1953, it was an immediate success. When they told Dr. Bob what they were doing, he consented dubiously to the venture but felt the idea should be tried out on the trustees. - written pamphlet, published in 1960. Niles' enormous and sensitive job of digesting, organizing and assembling the material from the tapes was supplemented by prodigious editing by Janet C. Niles P. Bill was worried about the reaction of organized religion. Concern over dual addiction dictated further rewording in '81. On several occasions, a moratorium has been declared on the publication of new literature. So it was decided (mostly by Bill himself) in the early 1960's to record "Bill's Own Story" on film for archival purposes and for the sake of A.A.'s to come. The General Service Board was legally responsible for A.A.'s affairs, through the Trustees' Committee to the matching Conference Committee to the Conference floor, where it receives final Conference-approval, if all has gone well. It became clear that A.A.'s would most likely continue to buy A.A. literature from A.A., regardless of outside publishing endeavors, and that the A.A. message would continue complete unabridged and untampered with. As they tallied the results of over two years' work, they counted altogether some 40 sober alcoholics in New York and Akron, and "saw that wholesale recovery was possible." But they agreed that they needed a book "to explain to alcoholics our methods and results"and, incidentally, to prevent distortion of their program which up to that time had been transmitted by word-of-mouth. Bill himself had often been at odds with the Alcoholic Foundation, later the General Service Board. Hundreds of thousands of copies of the leaflet were distributed annually. It has remained A.A.'s second largest best-selling book. There the idea is again discussed and either rejected or recommended (i.e., "approved.") The Committee's report, containing its recommendations, is brought to the Conference as a whole. Which everyone agreed would not do at all. As well as from New York." (There was no such thing as Conference-approved literature," because there was no Conference.) The Akron pamphlets continued to be produced and used well into the 1970's. Ironically, after all this vacillation and indecision, the U.S. Navy immediately entered the largest order ever received. The large, bulky volume became known as the "Big Book" and the name has stuck ever since. If approved, it then goes back to AAWS to be published, priced, included in the next literature catalogue and distributed. To make the message even more accessible to this audience, it was also offered in a large-print version. But the Board was not impressed and "no conclusion was reached." At this time, Bill was associated with Hank P., the first alcoholic in the New York group to stay sober even for a little while, other than Bill. The two were combined into a single pamphlet, "The Co-Founders of Alcoholics Anonymous," in 1978. It is intended that we try to grow, and that we try to help our fellow travellers to grow in the kind of love that makes no demands." Thanks to Bill W, millions of addicts - including to drinking, drugs, and behavioral addictions such as gambling, sex, shopping, the internet and work - around the world have transformed and saved their lives. Recognizing that America's population was growing older, the Public Information Committee made efforts in the early '70's to reach senior citizen alcoholics through magazine articles. The staff members were required to study them and attend several "classes" on them at the office, but the average A.A. member. The subcommittee met several times in 1977 and made three fundamental decisions which were crucial to the accomplishment of the project. It was also mimeographed and used for a fund-raising operation which "fizzled" out. exclaimed, "There's our title!" The book was subtitled, "The Story of Bill Wilson and how the A.A. began reached the world." Again designed by Nelson Gruppo, it came off the press just before Christmas 1984. On page 170 of "AA Comes of Age" Bill W wrote that the idea behind the thick, large paper was to convince the alcoholic he was getting his money's worth.Initially the Big Book did not sell, on a Fargo/Moorhead TV station. So, except for Americanizing a few expressions, the pamphlet was "borrowed" intact. Yvonne was also an A.A. member, the spouse of G.S.O. staffer Susan D. Dr. William D. Niles quickly exhausted the material in the archives and then undertook interviews on tape with relatives, friends and acquaintances of Dr. Bob and pioneer members of Midwestern A.A. The locals of these interviews included not only Ohio and Dr. Bob's native Vermont, but California, the D.C. area, Florida, North Carolina, New York and Texas (where he spent time with Dr. Bob's son.) In the course of the research, the book naturally expanded from biographical limits into a memoir of early A.A. in the Midwest. Therefore, there was a failure to renew the original copyright on the first edition before it ran out, unbeknownst to anyone, in 1967. "G.S.R. May Be The Most Important Job In A.A. (the title is a quote from Bill W.) made its appearance in 1965. The interview was a success. and still are.

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