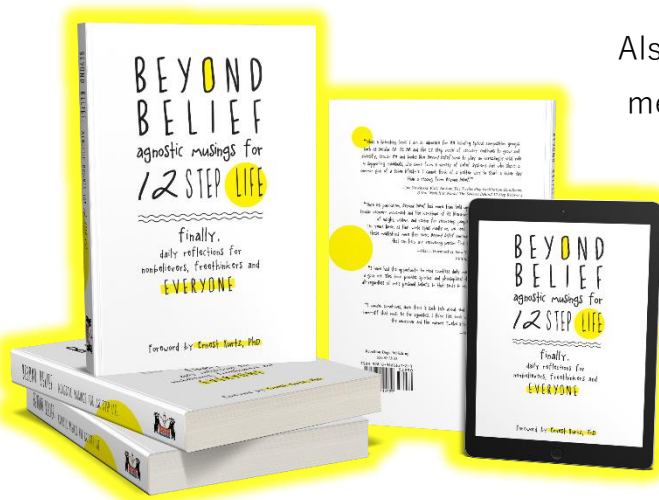




Happy 10th anniversary of *Beyond Belief: Agnostic Musings for 12 Step Life – Oct 2023 BLOG*

What a decade we're having! Maybe you are new around these parts—welcome. Maybe you remember January 2013—thanks for sticking around. Ten years ago, *Beyond Belief: Agnostic Musings for 12 Step Life* was published. A 2nd printing in 2014 included a Foreword by author/historian Ernie Kurtz. Now, on the 10th anniversary, we offer a 3rd Printing. Now available, a hardcover, at your request, has been added to the paperback and eBook offerings. A new Preface was required—it's been quite the decade and Rebellion Dogs just had to say something about it. We offer you this hot-off-the-press 2023 "3rd Printing Preface" as our blog.



Also new, we started offering some merch ideas—mugs T-shirts, hoodies—and many of you came up with new ideas that we have, or will soon, added new items as requested. Keep the conversation going. Rebellion dogs our ever sip of coffee on our Merch and Gift page.

Read about the decade in review in our new Preface and thanks to all, new to recovery, here for decades or lurkers, still sober-curious, you've inspired a lot of what's been great in this contemporary era of recovery from addiction.

Preface

Beyond Belief: Agnostic Musings for 12 Step Life marks the third decade of Century 21 with this third printing, 10-year anniversary offering. Has this decade of recovery been the best ever for the newly recovery-curious and people with long-term recovery? I think so. A growing diversity of people with process and/or substance use disorders are greeted today by emerging resources including medicine, research, and the evolution of peer-to-peer support. Technology offers more connection with others—when we want connection. For those of us with months, years or decades of recovery, life has a way of *keeping it real* with turning points and emotional challenges. Much about *the problem* and *the solution* remains the same through the decades, but changes—mostly positive—are worth appreciating.

The Origin Story

As the new millennium began gathering speed, the idea for *Beyond Belief* began to take shape. A closet agnostic for a lot of my recovery, I had stayed clean and sober without the white light experience of an intervening God who grants sobriety, serenity, or anything Bill W-ish. We hear “fake it until you make it,” in the rooms, and that’s what I did. Decades into faking it, I hadn’t made it, if that is defined as finding or feeling the presence of God. I felt like an imposter in 12 Step meetings. Then came the internet. I found a community of nonbelievers in recovery.

Demographics are changing; fewer people subscribe to the belief that recovery depends upon on a prayer-answering, sobriety-granting higher power. Are atheists, agnostics, and freethinkers still a minority in 12 Step culture? Today, your answer to that question may depend on your geographic location or the meetings you attend, but nontheists are no longer the odd one out in 12 Step rooms. Some have their own irreligious 12 Step or other recovery groups.¹ Other nonbelievers fit their way into the mainstream fellowship, discretely, apologetically, or loud and proud.

Online or face to face, fewer of us are inclined to feign *belief* in order to feel *belonging*, with the variety of meetings and communities now available. There is no shortage of daily meditation books for addicts whose worldview involves a deity. But when I went looking for a daily reflection book that wasn’t rooted in monotheistic traditions, I couldn’t find one. So I wrote one, drawing on philosophy, religion, comedy, science, and the folk wisdom of 12 & 12 rooms. Four years later, the first edition of *Beyond Belief* was complete. This book speaks in an agnostic voice. Nonbelievers have something to add to the recovery conversation. There is no bias against faith in deities. *Some of my best friends believe in God.* I don’t consider them absurd; they don’t see me as inferior. Nontheists are not intellectual holdouts. Nontheists are not more

evolved. Beliefs are like favorite colors. If I like green and you like yellow that shouldn't interfere with our discussion of addiction and recovery.

The Big Book's chapter "We Agnostics" draws a line in the sand: "God either is or He isn't. What was our choice to be?" (*Alcoholics Anonymous*, 53) Nature abhors a vacuum; a state of nothing is hard to imagine. Binary thinking fit the autocratic world of 1939. But in a democratic, pluralist society, all-or-nothing thinking is a cognitive distortion—a philosophical assumption that everything is right or wrong, good or evil, superior or inferior. In this millennium, people can hold opposing views and be equals in the same community. Our Traditions lovingly and tolerantly make room for more than one truth. That's a good thing, because the only problem with the truth is that there are so many versions of it.

If you believe in God and I do not, we both *let go*. And then, I don't know. Maybe God scoops up our will, puts His hand on our shoulders and guides us in the right direction. I don't think so; but maybe. The *action* in the Step that we both take is *letting go*. The theology of what happens next is an interesting discussion but irrelevant to getting sober and living well, a la 12 Steps. Unity is not about uniformity of beliefs; it's about a common purpose. Firm on principles, our methods stay flexible.

In the mid-1970s, when I got clean and sober, an Alcoholics Anonymous advertisement regularly ran in my local newspaper: "If you want to drink and can, that's your business. If you want to quit and can't, that's our business. Call AA." What it conveyed to me was that if I wanted to drink, AA had nothing for me beyond warm regards. If I had no problem quitting by myself, AA would mind its own business. But if I wanted to quit and could not stay stopped, AA was one way that worked. Our creed includes some common beliefs:

- (1) Addiction is an incurable, progressive disorder.
- (2) One day at a time, we can stay sober.
- (3) Self-reliance was insufficient for us to get and/or stay sober.
- (4) Honesty, open-mindedness, self-evaluation, a willingness to make amends and help others are tools to get and stay clean and sober (recovery).

Some consider these tenets facts. Some concede that these tenets don't hold up as facts when subjected to scientific scrutiny. Nonetheless, as facts or ideas, they are our creed. These ideas are true for us, and we feel it in our guts. Alcoholics Anonymous started as a conversation between two amateurs who couldn't make it on their own. Others joined the conversation. They

weren't experts, either. Since 1935, there hasn't been a generally recognized expert on addiction, prevention, or recovery inside AA. As far as I know, none of the other 500 organizations² that have taken the 12 Step tenets and run with them have produced an expert either. I have friends in, and/or have earned my own seat in substance-based, process-based (food, sex/intimacy, tech, gambling, hoarding, spending/debt, etc.), and codependency-based 12 & 12 fellowships. I am at home at and attend SMART Recovery, Refuge Recovery, LifeRing. I call myself a qualified member in many of these meetings. In other cases, I have gone to meetings to support a friend, or to satisfy my own curiosity. I have read and learned new things from each group's literature.

When referring to the Steps and Traditions, this book uses an addiction-generic, faith-neutral translation of Steps adopted by some 12 & 12 agnostic/freethinker groups. The Steps are not sacred. Many members with a variety of worldviews interpret, omit, or replace Steps in a way that works effectively for them. The agnostic interpretation of the 12 Steps used in this book is not poetry and these Steps aren't universally embraced, not even by every agnostic or atheist 12 Step member. I find in these agnostic Steps the essence of what the original Steps ask of us. They reflect the thought and action required to combat the destructive control of addiction and learn the artful balancing act of living clean and sober. Every member decides how to interpret, work, or dismiss each Step. The variation used in this book is designed to not leave anyone out of the conversation. The notion of taking artistic liberty with the program offends some adherents to 12 Step, 12 Tradition orthodoxy. Bill Wilson was quite clear about the inherent liberty that groups and their members enjoy. Buddhists replaced the word "God" with "good" so that the practice of the Steps could be compatible with their non-theistic belief. Bill wrote, "To some of us, the idea of substituting 'good' for 'God' in the Twelve Steps will seem like a watering down of A.A.'s message. But here we must remember that A.A.'s Steps are suggestions only. A belief in them as they stand is not at all a requirement for membership among us. This liberty has made A.A. available to thousands who never would have tried at all had we insisted on the Twelve Steps just as written."³

Much of the language for the new millennium hasn't been crafted yet. The words "atheist" and "nonbeliever" describe someone by what they are not. "Freethinker" as a description of non-theists might seem to suggest that all religious people have rigid viewpoints, which isn't fair or true. Language lags behind culture. For example, all of us believe women and men have an equal right to vote. We no longer use the word "suffragist" to describe ourselves. One day, none of us will have to describe ourselves by what we do not believe.

Today, the recovery community is far more culturally diverse and globally connected than it was when this book first came out. Our understanding of addiction and recovery has expanded with our growing experience. Naturally, language evolves, too. Terms like “John Barleycorn or patriarchal phrases like “This is the Step [Six] that separates the men from the boys,” sound goofy to today’s reader.⁴ In time, the language in this book will sound just as dated.

Some of the newest fellowships are devoted to Century 21 problems. Who, in the mid-1980s, conceived of addiction to online gaming? OLGA, OLG-Anon, ITAA (Internet and Technology Addicts) are new millennium fellowships presenting the age-old Steps in a contemporary language. Each new fellowship speaks the language of the day. In newer fellowships, there is less emphasis placed on God and the use of masculine pronouns is not universal.

Since our 2013 first printing, we have enjoyed the full gamut of one-to-five-star reviews—love it! Online, in person, by email, text, or social media, Rebellion Dogs has received thousands of comments and heartfelt thanks for *Beyond Belief*: “This is the Xth year I’ve been starting my day with your book,” or “Our group uses *Beyond Belief* to kick off our meetings,” or “A treatment counselor reads from this book daily in group,” and, “I believe in God but I don’t find anything disagreeable about *Beyond Belief*.” My favorite is, “What you wrote this morning really touched me.”

Readers tell me about some pretty tattered books; I have asked for, and some of you have sent Rebellion Dogs pictures of your haggard and well-loved book. The third printing of *Beyond Belief: Agnostic Musings for 12 Step Life* includes a hardcover option that some have requested, along with the paperback and eBook. An audio book will be coming; stay tuned. In the first 10 years, demand and word-of-mouth increased each year. Over 10 years, more than 27,000 copies of *Beyond Belief* found their way to coffee tables, reading nooks, smartphones, and computers. People are finding the book online, on meeting literature tables, at indie booksellers and national chains, and some central offices and club houses. As far as Big Publishing is concerned, *Beyond Belief* remains a niche reading choice. If maximizing sales was our motivation, we would have put out another devotional for believers; they do love their prayer and meditation readers. The point of publishing this book in 2013 was to offer an alternative to the norm, available to whomever needed/wanted it, whomever may otherwise have felt left out of the conversation.

Rebellion Dogs looks back in awe with where we have come since this book launched. With the 12 Step meeting no longer the only “last house on the block,” LifeRing, SMART Recovery, and Women for Sobriety communities have flourished. She Recovers (since 2011), Refuge Recovery

(2010) and later, Recovery Dharma, were part of this Century 21 seachange; Rebellion Dogs is one small part of a much greater whole. In the last decade, these peer-to-peer alternatives to Steps and Traditions are now on the radar for researchers and treatment providers.

More and More Has Been Revealed

A broad and growing body of empirical data validates the folk wisdom of mutual aid, starting with AA. Harvard Medical School, Stanford University Medical Centers, and the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction teamed up for the 2020 Cochrane Library Systemic Review, filtering the most stringent, longitudinal scientific trials. A hybrid approach of professional treatment and the 12 Steps called Twelve Step Facilitation (TSF) has its treatment outcome rates compared to leading evidence-based interventions for alcohol (and other drug) use disorder: Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and Motivational Enhancement Therapy (MET).

This study of more than 10,000 participants found that “There is high quality evidence that manualized AA/TSF interventions are more effective than other established treatments, such as CBT, for increasing abstinence.” Uninterrupted abstinence is the most celebrated result of 12 Step engagement, in the rooms (online and in person). From an addiction medicine point of view, AA is more than chips and medallions. Also measuring reduction in the severity of, and frequency of, inebriety, AA was found to be as or more helpful than comparable interventions in terms of life and health improvements, even when long term sobriety is not achieved. Specifically, while the TSF intervention resulted in twice as many patients remaining abstinent one year post-treatment, those who did drink also reported significantly more sober days and fewer drinks when they did drink. In addition, the study authors concluded that TSF probably produces substantial healthcare cost savings among people with alcohol use disorder.

When people in recovery are asked about what helps them stay sober, many offer a “yes/and” response rather than “either/or.” In the last decade, Life in Recovery Surveys (USA: 2013,⁵ UK: 2015,⁶ Australia: 2015,⁷ Canada: 2017⁸) reveal multiple activities—more so than one vs. another—are helping people with addiction find recovery. These surveys show that mutual aid, clinical and therapeutic interventions, and community/family/employment support are complementary strategies that help people on their recovery path.

As far as comparing efficacy, expect more scientific evidence to include non-12 Step peer support. A 2018 study compared the efficacy of Women for Sobriety, Life Ring, SMART Recovery, and 12 Step groups for people with Alcohol Use Disorder and found that while no group has

found in peer support groups that are not based in the 12 Steps.⁹ For some, one works, the other does not; for many, a combination therapy proves most helpful.

In 2014, the first International Conference of Secular AA (then called We Agnostics and Freethinkers International AA Convention) brought *heathens* in AA and establishment AA together for three days in Santa Monica. Secular AA members were some of the early adapters to online (Zoom, message boards, and social media) communities. Atheist and agnostic meetings were growing in urban centers; the next step was to provide secular meetings to anyone with Wi-Fi and meeting links.

When COVID-19 hit in 2020, millennial-era tech fostered more growth for underrepresented populations in the recovery community. The AA Meeting App and many central office WordPress meeting lists added filters, including “meeting type.” Along with discussion, text-based, speaker, LGBTQIA+, Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC), and young people’s, *secular* became a meeting category, helping to match freethinkers with secular meetings and likeminded members. The dozens of agnostic/atheist AA meetings available at the end of 2010 became, a decade later, hundreds of AA meetings each day. Other 12 Step fellowships offer special composition groups online or in person. Alternatives to 12 Step meetings have grown in popularity because of online meetings as well.

Beyond Belief served as a rare breath of irreligious fresh air in 12 Step literature offerings when it came out in 2013; now it’s part of a respectable, ever-growing body of work. At Rebellion Dogs Radio, we showcase new authors and their non-theistic approach to mutual aid. Our Reading Room webpage has a regular influx of new titles to browse. Many can now fill an entire row of their bookshelf with narratives about proven, secular 12 Step experiences. Great Britain brought the world the leaflet *The “God” Word: Agnostics and Atheists in AA* (2016). *The AA Grapevine* published 50 years of atheist and agnostic stories in *One Big Tent* (2018). *Living Clean* (Narcotics Anonymous 2012) embraces atheism as a NA path: “Our differences really can help us along the way, instead of creating barriers between us. Many of our members have been clean for years as atheists talking about atheism as a legitimate path in recovery.”⁷ NA has fast-forwarded from 1991’s *Just for Today*, which for some was a little heavy on God talk, to *A Spiritual Principle a Day* (2022), which reads so much more *this century*.¹⁰

In 2020, the Great Britain General Service Conference conducted its quinquennial membership survey and asked questions that members, the public and referring professionals want to know about AA today. The survey probed members on preferences for meeting format: online, in

person or phone-in AA? How many meetings do members go to? Who feels included and who feels left out of the Zoom AA experience? Our General Service Office asked about the members' worldview. People who self-identify as believing in a higher power were asked, "Is your higher power religious or secular?" Sixty-five percent of respondents said "secular," 35 percent answered "religious;" and six percent said "both." From conception to reporting, Rebellion Dogs Publishing offers links to statistics and interviews about this membership survey from Great Britain GSO. ¹¹

Efforts to eliminate secular AA and skirmishes over whether no-God AA is "*real*" AA persist in some local central offices and committees. More often than not, the ire of discrimination creates awareness and discussion, fostering the unintended consequence of a proliferation of this freethinker brand in the local community.

Rebellion Dogs website is part of a community with a Rebellious Links page to blogs, podcasts, meeting lists, social media communities and recovery things to do. We cover what's new in addiction medicine, academic enquiry, review treatment conferences, and interview news makers and thought leaders from around the world.

Generation Next & the Future of Stewardship

About 2025, the first of Generation X old-timers will celebrate their 60th birthdays. These stewards of recovery were labeled by demographers as educated, individualistic and flaunting an unabashed disdain for structure and authority. In North America alone, people born between 1965 and 1980 number 51 million. Gen X faced our age-old addiction problem with a changed attitude.

After Gen X comes a tidal wave of 75 million North American Millennials (Gen Y), born from 1981 to 1996. In 2025, the older millennials will have 44 candles on their vegan birthday cake. This generation was wired to the internet before getting wired to substances. Millennial stewards will lead with collaboration, work/life balance, open-mindedness, empathy, creativity, technology, and optimism.

Gen Z, born 1997-2012, are today's youth in recovery. They were zoomers before Zoom was a brand. Should public-service announcements directed at youth depict recovery meetings online? Do ya think? OMG, LMAO, Emoji. Spectrum disorders, poly-substance use disorder, codependency, medically (or plant-based) assisted recovery, harm reduction, safe supply—none of this qualifies as an "outside issue" for many of today's youth. Gen Z are the true online

natives; tech, diversity, neurodivergence, financial prudence, and progressive politics are what's chill.

Generation Alpha, born between the mid-2010s to the mid- 2020s, will be stewards of recovery communities later this century. The emerging bleeding deacon will be the multi-tasking, gadget-dependent, silver-haired web-surfer. Our world is *becoming*, is in flux; so too are our leaders/servants who will pioneer the next phase of our recovery community.

My generation may be diagnosed with *hardening of the attitudes*. Followers fill the void left by peer-to-peer's pioneers. Followers tend to vote to keep what the pioneers crafted unchanged, over the uncertainty of embracing change. I was raised in recovery in the early post-founder era of AA. In my recovery journey, I've seen the Alcoholics Anonymous population double from fewer than 500,000 in the mid-1970s to one million in the 1980s, and double again in the 1990s. Through AA's traditional way of "counting noses," this two-million-member mark has remained +/-10 percent since then.¹²

As this tenth anniversary edition of *Beyond Belief* goes to print, 12 Step fellowships are reconsidering the way members/groups are tallied. There have always been loners who had no physical meeting; before the internet, snail-mail and phone-based AA groups connected people with substance use disorders and other addictions. In the 21st century, online message boards and more sophisticated communities like InTheRooms.com meet a need. Virtual peer-to-peer meetings have helped reach the housebound, or introverted, or people who are otherwise disinclined to join a room of strangers in person to explore sobriety. While some newer fellowships have always been online, the 2020 worldwide pandemic protocol changed the definition of meetings, the nature of connection, and the scope of each group's community in unprecedented ways.

Some Zoom groups served the same face-to-face members that the community center, clubhouse, or the basement of a house of worship previously served; online meetings were a temporary measure until face-to-face resumed. Some groups became global in membership, transformed by online access to a previously local meeting space. New groups started, never having a geographically limited scope. Some members today have never been to, or certainly didn't find recovery in, a face-to-face setting. Social media provides the outreach and member-to-member communication that the group rep and local newsletter previously managed.

Once brick-and-mortar groups serving local constituents was the norm; each was added to geographic districts and areas for fellowshipwide service, communication, and accounting purposes. Now, we have an online Intergroup¹³ and districts within Areas that cater to a membership around the globe instead of just across town. Including virtual membership and meetings will be normalized this decade throughout the greater peerto-peer recovery community.

Smaller, newer fellowships grow, widening the gateway of recovery community. Technically, AA population is an outside issue to other fellowships. Yet as the granddaddy of Twelve Steppery, we all share a connection to AA. Is AA more likely to sustain the same membership indefinitely? Will we increase or decrease in population? Stay tuned. Flourishing depends on the delicate balancing act of sticking to our principles while adapting to our environment. We could grow; alternately, we could stall and shrink. Imagine if we celebrated the 100th anniversary of the 12 Steps with the few thousand faithful members huddled around the carefully preserved 164 pages of the Big Book. Like other change-resistant cultures such as the Amish or Mennonites, the world would view us as charming, harmless, and irrelevant.

“AA will always have its traditionalists, fundamentalists and its relativists.”¹⁴ All three camps will look at stewardship differently. Anonymity means something different to most members with 21st Century dry dates than it does to baby-boomer old-timers. Is a YouTube Recovery channel an anonymity *violation*? Your age and your answer may be related. Spiritual lingo, rituals and what defines “outside issues” are all subject to review by Generation Next. Answers will be enacted via the spirit of rotation.

Worldview Demographics Shifting

When *Beyond Belief* first went to print, a survey conducted by Pew Forum on Religion & Public Life (2012) foreshadowed, “‘Nones’ are on the rise.” In America, people who are irreligious had shot from obscurity to 20 percent. Christians were in decline. Religions that were on the rise had deities in some cases, nontheistic in other cases. But they don’t use the title, “God (as you understand Him).” Belief in higher powers has dropped in a decade from over 90 percent to 81.¹⁵ Between 20 and 30 percent of Americans have no religious affiliation, but some of these unchurched do believe in gods.

Outside of the U.S., the population of the irreligious grows with every census. New Zealand, Australia, Canada, and the United Kingdom report 25 percent or more who do not believe in a higher power/god. Europe ranges widely from one percent to 40, while most countries report declining theistic belief.¹⁶

In 2021 census reports, non-U.S., mostly English-speaking countries see their Judeo-Christian demographic dropping, from the 90 percent of the praise-be-to-the-glory-of-God days to now, where 36-53 percent hold supernatural beliefs. Of course, it depends on how researchers ask the questions. We find atheist Christians and nonreligious people who pray to gods. One Pew Research report forgoes belief and labels, opting for behaviors and attitudes. “About Three-in-Ten U.S. Adults Are Now Religiously Unaffiliated” shows that fewer than half pray or view religion as very important.¹⁷

It turns out that anticipating at least a niche appetite for a secular daily reflection book 10 years ago left us with room to grow. Newcomers are more likely to want recovery community and new coping mechanisms without supernatural talk and rituals. Supporting this more contemporary approach, a growing number of long-time 12 Step regulars are now apostates—no longer holding the same worldview or speaking the same theistic language of their early recovery. Others, unapologetically theistic, chose to separate their unshaken devotion from a practical—not supernatural—recovery practice.

Using Pronouns: She/He/They/Them/Me/We/Thou

Daily musings in this book are written in the *we* voice. I know—only obnoxious people talk this way in meetings. However, this is the customary style used in self-help writing. There are imperfections in the English language that become more pronounced using this *we* voice. Technically, “God of our understanding” should be “Gods of our understanding.” If two people believe in God, the God of one’s understanding is a different one than the other’s—hence, *Gods*. “Clearing away the wreckage on our side of the street” would be more grammatically correct as “our sides of the street” but nobody talks that way. “Our drug of choice” should be “our drugs of choice” and “our inner child” should be “our inner children” to be consistent with the plural “our.”

“Don’t include *me* in your *we*!” I relate. Anyone trying to speak for everyone can expect pushback. As an editorial turning point, there was no way to both be grammatically correct and avoid sounding awkward. Most daily reflection books use the authorial plural, so *we do too*, despite the ambiguity.

Our third printing celebrates inclusivity and the ongoing evolution of language. While we won’t replace the “he” or “she” of classic literature or song lyric that we quote from, we have amended our commentary to them/ they, which I suppose is consistent with “we sought,” “our addiction,” and the trending to plurals. This book aims to include anyone who wants to be part of the

community. They/they does not imply any universality of experience or belief. Experience is an individual journey.

While there was no intention to change the content of *Beyond Belief*, life happens, things change, and we have updated accordingly. In some cases, our source quotes for daily reflections come from literature that has been updated, such as those from Overeaters Anonymous or Workaholics Anonymous, so we quote what is reflected in the most recent pamphlets/sources available. In some cases, the language and science of neurobiology or relevant demographic statistics has been amended since our first publication in 2013; again, we have updated links, statistics, and language to represent the latest data available.

Each of the 365 pages is a continuation of an ongoing discussion in the rooms. I dare not take ownership of any of these ideas or interpretations. I have been in recovery meetings, pondering the questions of the universe, for so long that I cannot distinguish original thought from ideas drawn from the wisdom of meetings and coffee shops. I have been studying 12 Step books and attending meetings, conferences, Step studies, service meetings, and retreats for over 17,000 24-hour periods. It's safe to say that this book captures neither originality nor expertise. The days reflect lessons learned in and out of the rooms and questions that continue to amuse or perplex me.

I don't hope for or expect bobble-headed agreement with every thesis, every day. Agree, disagree, be inspired, disturbed, or skeptical. Please treat these pages as part of an ongoing, evolving dialogue. I didn't start this conversation; I joined in. Let's keep it going. We're all in this together.

1 Secular AA, <https://aasecular.org>

2 According to Alcoholics Anonymous Public Information at the General Service Office in 2019, AA has authorized about 500 fellowships/organizations to use the 12 Steps for their own purposes.

3 *Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*, 81.

4 *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, 63

5 U.S. Life in Recovery Survey 2013: <https://facesandvoicesofrecovery.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/22Life-in-Recovery22-Report-on-the-Survey-Findings.pdf>

6 UK Life In Recovery Survey 2015 <https://shura.shu.ac.uk/12200/1/FINAL%20UK%20Life%20in%20Recovery%20Survey%202015%20report.pdf>

7 Australian Life In Recovery Survey 2015 https://www.rec-path.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/10/2015_au_life_in_recovery_survey.pdf

8 Canadian Centre for Substance Use and Addiction Life in Recovery from Addiction 2017 Survey <https://www.ccsa.ca/sites/default/files/2019-04/CCSA-Life-in-Recovery-from-Addiction-Report-2017-en.pdf>

9 Zemore SE, Kaskutas LA, Mericle A, Hemberg J. Comparison of 12-step groups to mutual help alternatives for AUD in a large, national study: Differences in membership characteristics and group participation, cohesion, and satisfaction. *J Subst Abuse Treat*. 2017 Feb;73:16-26. doi: 10.1016/j.jsat.2016.10.004. Epub 2016 Oct 6. PMID: 28017180; PMCID: PMC5193234.

10 Narcotics Anonymous, *Living Clean: The Journey Continues*. Van Nuys: NA Word Service, 2012. 55, 56.

11 <https://rebelliondogspublishing.com/rebellious-radio/blog/7101399/a-non-alcoholic-trustee-of-the-aa-generale-service-board-of-great-britain-talk-about-the-2020-membersh>

12 Arthur S. et al, "Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) Recovery Outcome Rates": AA's worldwide population in 1991 was 2,047,250. The low point over 20 years was 1,790,169 in 1995 and the high point, 2,215,239 in 2002; Box 4-5-9: The AA population is 1,967,613 @ January 2022 according to *The Seventy-Second Annual Meeting of the General Service Conference of AA "A.A. Comes of Age 2.0: Unified in Love and Service 2022" Final Report*, p. 107.

13 <https://aa-intergroup.org/>

14 Kurtz, *Not God: A History of Alcoholics Anonymous*, Note 67: February 6, 1961, letter from Bill W. to Howard E., "As time passes our book literature has a tendency to get more and more frozen, a tendency for conversion into something like dogma, a human trait I am afraid we can do little about. We may as well face the fact that AA will always have its fundamentalists, its absolutists, and its relativists."

15 <https://news.gallup.com/poll/393737/belief-god-dips-new-low.aspx>

16 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_the_European_Union#References

17 The Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life, 2012 "Nones on the Rise." UPDATED "The Global God Divide," Pew 2020 <https://www.pewresearch.org/global/2020/07/20/the-global-god-divide/> YouGov "How Religious are British People" <https://yougov.co.uk/topics/society/articles-reports/2020/12/29/how-religious-are-british-people> Belief in God declining in Canada <https://lethbridgenewsnow.com/2020/12/22/u-of-istudy-belief-in-god-declining-in-canada-but-majority-do-hold-faith/>