

## How to Share in a Meeting

<http://thelastchancetexaco.com/how-to-share-in-a-meeting/>

1. Part of sharing is sharing time. Give others a chance to share. Three minutes is all it should take to carry the message at meeting level. (Humility and Service – Steps 7 & 12)
2. If you share a problem, *also share the solution*. (Hope, Faith, Integrity and Service – Steps 2, 3, 5 and 12)
3. *Sharing IS* carrying the message and that means sharing about a spiritual principle or step. (Hope, Faith and Service – Steps 2, 3 & 12 and Traditions 1, 5 and 11)
4. If God wants you to share someone will call on you. (Faith, Integrity and Humility – Steps 3, 5 and 7)
5. When you have very little to say, then say very little. Do not start by saying, “I really don’t have much to say”, and then ramble for the next 15 minutes. It is selfish and it blocks others from sharing the real message by taking up valuable meeting time. Brevity is the hallmark of efficacy. (Courage, Integrity, Willingness, Humility and Service – Steps 4, 5, 6, 7 and 12)
6. A 12 Step meeting is not group therapy, counseling, church or a garbage dump. This is the place to carry the message of recovery, not spread your disease. *You are there to carry God’s message, not your own*. We are, at best, vessels for the message of a loving Higher Power. (Hope, Faith, Humility, Brotherly Love, Spirituality and Service – Steps 2, 3, 7, 8, 11 and 12 and Traditions 5 and 11)
7. After you share do not get up and walk right out. Set an example for the newcomers. (Willingness, Humility, Brotherly Love and Service – Steps 6, 7, 8 and 12)
8. If you can’t get to the meeting on time you have surrendered your right to share. (Willingness, Humility and Service – Steps 6, 7 and 12 and Tradition 11)
9. A Step or topic meeting is about that Step or topic. *It is not about you*. If you know little or nothing about the Step or topic *then do not share*. (Honesty, Integrity, Humility – Steps 1, 5 and 7)
10. If you share you should also contribute to the 7th Tradition. (Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Brotherly Love, Spirituality and Service – Steps 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 and 12 and Traditions 1 and 7)
11. Do not call on yourself. This is rude. This is not recovery. If you feel powerfully moved to share then politely attract the attention of the chairperson and wait to be recognized. (Honesty, Faith, Integrity, Willingness, Humility, Brotherly Love, Spirituality and Service – Steps 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11 and 12 and Traditions 1, 2, 5, 9, 11 and 12)

This is by no means a comprehensive list of guidelines. “God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.” Furthermore, I have not been able to maintain anything like ‘perfect adherence’ to these principles. I have been able to share the message more effectively when I have been able to stay close to these guidelines and when I ask God to work through me to help the next sick and suffering alcoholic/addict.

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## Giving an AA Talk

I have learned that that which does not come from the heart does not reach the heart & I wish to reach your hearts tonight. I came here to participate in your anniversary, not to perform. I would rather talk about the program than to talk about myself because the message is far more important than the messenger.

AA talks can be, & too often are, a repetition of past or present sorrows. Sketching the background is important, & has its place, but it's merely the foundation of the talk. The best talk, the one that helps the most people to the highest degree, is the one that brings out just how the Program works & just how the speaker follows It. A good talk may be divided into three parts - how sick I was, how I got better, and what helped me to get well. Of these three the emphasis should be on what helped me to get well.

Another good example to follow is Chapter 1 "Bill's Story" in the Big Book. This story is 16 pages and the first eight pages are about what he used to be like, and the second eight pages are about what happened and what he is like now. That's a 50/50 split between the problem and the solution. Too many talks are mostly about the drinking career of the speaker but that doesn't help newcomers very well. We all know how to drink. I believe that we need to emphasize the solution a whole lot more. But of course we need to have worked all the 12 Steps first before we'll have any significant message to carry.

## Barefoot Bill

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### 12 Steps to Delivering an Effective AA Talk

When it comes to carrying THE AA MESSAGE, Dr. Silkworth states in "The Doctor's Opinion" in the Big Book, "The message which can interest and hold these alcoholic people must have depth and weight. In nearly all cases their ideals must be grounded in a power greater than themselves, if they are to re-create their lives." This "message" is most effective when delivered in such a manner that a still suffering alcoholic of whatever description (whether a prospect, newcomer, or veteran member) may have an opportunity to make AN ACCURATE IDENTIFICATION OF THEIR PROBLEM (Depth) and have made known to them A SOLUTION FOR THAT PROBLEM (Weight). In fact, any sober AA can EFFECTIVELY "Carry The Message" when asked to speak at an AA meeting provided they have "TAKEN THE 12 STEPS" of Alcoholics Anonymous and follow a few simple suggestions:

- 1) Dress appropriately, respectfully; be on time, introduce yourself as an alcoholic (only), avoid the use of multiple identification; extend thanks, gratitude.
- 2) Greet the newcomers and invite them into the fellowship of AA, citing something of a positive nature directed towards them from the Big Book which extends a warm welcome to all.
- 3) Share a brief overview of your family background (in a very general way) prior to drinking.
- 4) Describe your first drinking experience whereby you realized the EFFECT PRODUCED BY ALCOHOL.
- 5) Relate pertinent elements of "The Doctor's Opinion" as you share your drinking history/experience.
- 6) Share your drinking history as it exemplifies the progressive nature of the ILLNESS OF ALCOHOLISM as outlined in the Basic Text of AA. (To avoid confusing and/or alienating newcomers, respect AA's "singleness of purpose." Minimize historical accounting of problems other than alcohol; i.e., drug addiction/use/compulsive overeating, the child within, being a "victim," etc., as we want them to PRIMARILY IDENTIFY with the progression of alcoholism.)
- 7) Side-step the use of vulgar and obscene language while sharing as we are a PROGRAM OF ATTRACTION and that is surely a DISTRACTION and it presents a negative community image of our AA WAY OF LIFE to those "outside" who may be visiting with us to learn about alcoholism and Alcoholics Anonymous.
- 8) Describe the events surrounding your HITTING BOTTOM and what led you to AA, to your Home Group and to your Sponsor.
- 9) Share your experience IN A GENERAL WAY of "taking the 12 Steps."
- 10) Mention your experience with service work and working with others and the benefits you realized as a result thereof.
- 11) Share your personal experience RESULTING FROM developing a PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP with God, AS YOU UNDERSTAND GOD.
- 12) Summarize your pitch; invite newcomers to join us on the "Road of Happy Destiny"; thank those who invited you and close on time.

These 12 suggestions were derived from listening to, identifying and outlining the similarities of structure, content and order (of delivery) of the talks of our beloved CARRIERS OF THE AA MESSAGE, and can be reconciled with The Doctor's Opinion and the first 164 pages of the Big Book. Also, it's always a good idea to be genuine and enthusiastic.

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