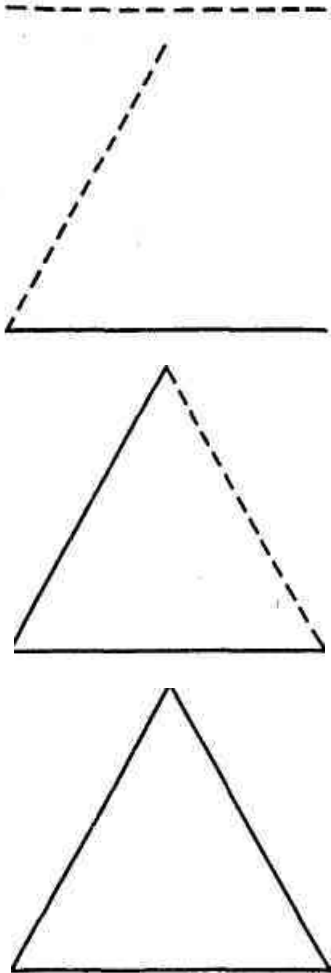


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WHY IS THE TRIANGLE THE SYMBOL OF AA?



SYMBOLISM is a very important tool in the field of communications today. Almost every corporation, business enterprise or service organization is trying to project a symbol—a visual "image" of itself

For example, the Rock of Gibraltar is the symbol of the Prudential Life Insurance Company. The bell is the symbol of the Telephone Company. A red cross on a white background is the symbol of the American Red Cross, and so on.

If you stop to think about it, I believe you will agree that AA too has a symbol: the triangle.

The 1955 Conference in St. Louis adopted the triangle as AA's symbol of Recovery, Unity and Service. The base of the triangle represents our First Legacy — The Twelve Steps of Recovery. The left arm of the triangle represents our Second Legacy—The Twelve Traditions. And the right arm of the triangle represents our Third Legacy of Service. The official trademark of

AA Publishing Company literature is the triangle within a circle which represents the world.

Symbolism doesn't just happen. There is usually a reason for its existence. If we go back to the days before AA we find our very first triangle. Here Ebby T. suggests a novel idea to Bill W. His idea is that perhaps one alcoholic might be able to stay sober by working with another alcoholic. Bill W. thought about this and discussed it with Dr. Silkworth, the little doctor who loved drunks. Then Bill W. went out to Akron and met Dr. Bob. They teamed up together to make their first AA call on Bill D., "the man on the bed" in the Akron hospital. Thus, the first human triangle consisting of Bill W., Dr. Bob and Bill D. was formed.

Just stop to think about the symbolism of the triangle for a moment and what this means to you and me. The chances are that when you came into AA you had a sponsor. Chances are that since becoming sober you have helped to sponsor someone else. So here is your very own living triangle: your sponsor, you and your "pigeon."

It is easy to understand how AA works when you think of yourself as the base of your own triangle, supported on one side by your sponsor, and helping to support your pigeon on the other side. Perhaps you are the base of a dozen or more triangles.

As a sober alcoholic I am grateful to be an integral part of my own personal triangle. I am also grateful that my personal triangle draws upon the strength of many thousands of triangles—all joined firmly together among the 250,000 members of AA who belong to some 7,000 groups all over the world.

The North American groups elect eighty-three delegates to represent them each year at AA's annual General Service Conference. So we have another triangle consisting of 250,000 members, several thousand group representatives and the eighty-three Delegates to the Conference.

Also represented at the General Service Conference is still another triangle of about 100 people. The eighty-three Delegates form its base. The six staff members of the General Service office, plus two Directors of the AA Publishing Company and two Directors of the Grapevine plus Bill W. and Hank G. are the second arm of the triangle. The third arm is represented by the fifteen members of the Board of Trustees.

The triangle is, then—in many ways—the symbol of AA. And the delightful part of it all is that every time a sick new member comes into AA he or she immediately joins hands with two other members who lend their strength in helping him or her to succeed in our program of Recovery, Unity and Service.

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