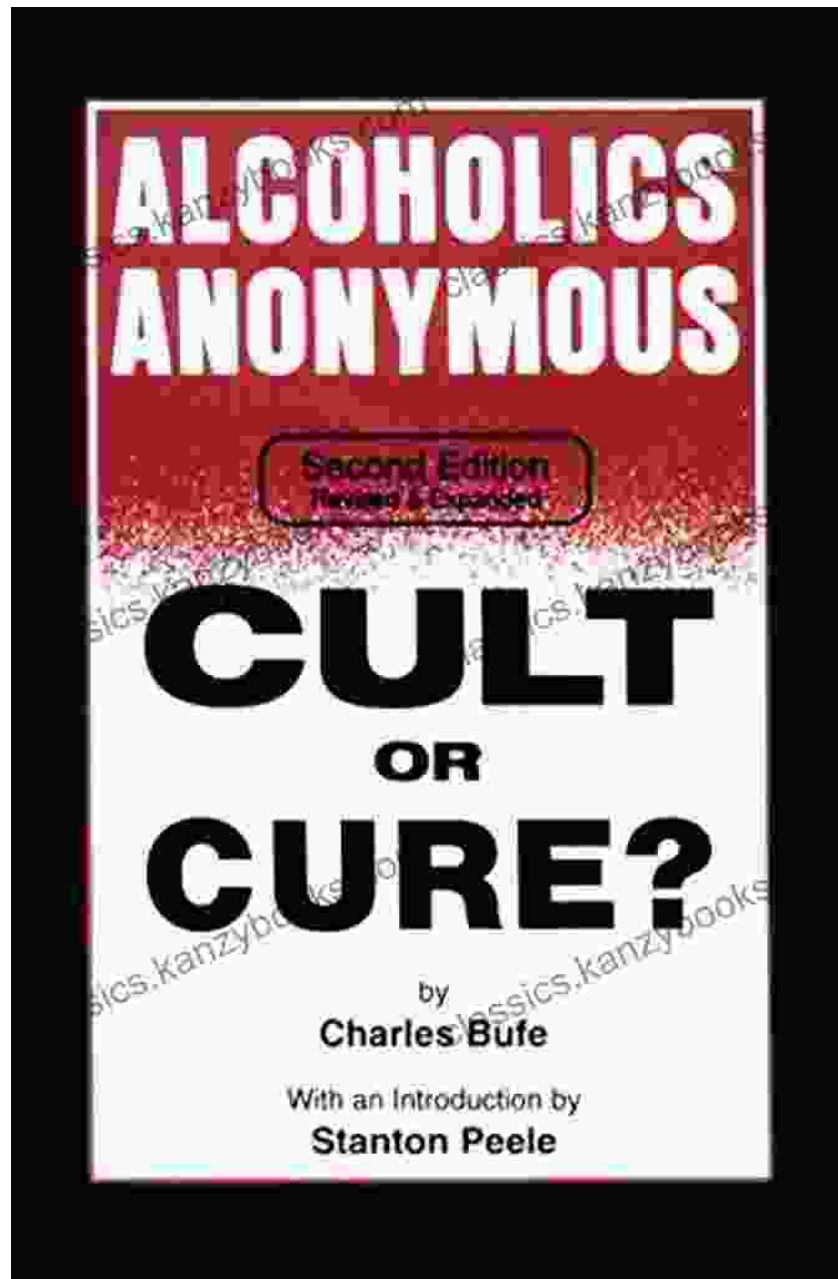
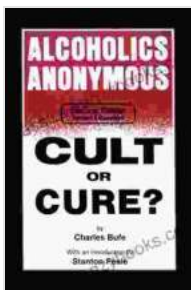


# **Alcoholics Anonymous: Cult or Cure? Examining the Controversial History of a Sobriety Movement**



Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is a worldwide fellowship of individuals who support each other in their recovery from alcoholism. With over 2 million

members, AA is one of the most well-known and successful organizations dedicated to helping people overcome addiction to alcohol.



### **Alcoholics Anonymous: Cult or Cure?** by Charles Bufe

★★★★☆ 4.3 out of 5

- Language : English
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- Screen Reader : Supported
- Enhanced typesetting : Enabled
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- Lending : Enabled



However, AA has also been the subject of controversy over the years, with some critics labeling it a cult. This article will delve into the history of AA, its methods, and the arguments both for and against the criticism that it is a cult. By examining the evidence and exploring different perspectives, we aim to provide a balanced understanding of this complex organization.

### **The History of Alcoholics Anonymous**

AA was founded in 1935 by Bill Wilson, a New York stockbroker, and Robert Smith, an Ohio physician. Both men had struggled with severe alcohol addictions before they met, and they found that sharing their experiences and supporting each other helped them stay sober.

AA's original purpose was to provide a safe and anonymous environment where alcoholics could come together to share their struggles and learn from each other's experiences. The program emphasizes the importance of

honesty, humility, and spiritual enlightenment, and it relies heavily on the support of other members.

## **The AA Program**

The AA program is based on 12 steps, which are a series of principles designed to guide individuals through the recovery process. These steps include admitting powerlessness over alcohol, making a decision to rely on a higher power, and making amends to those they have wronged. AA also encourages members to attend regular meetings, find a sponsor, and work with other members on their recovery.

AA emphasizes the importance of complete abstinence from alcohol and does not endorse any methods of treatment that involve the use of medication. Members are also encouraged to live a life based on spiritual principles, and they are often encouraged to pray and seek guidance from a higher power.

## **Criticism of Alcoholics Anonymous**

AA has been criticized by some for its religious overtones, its emphasis on abstinence, and its lack of professional oversight. Critics argue that the program is too dogmatic and that it may not be suitable for everyone who struggles with alcohol addiction.

Some critics have also accused AA of being a cult, arguing that it uses manipulative techniques to keep members dependent on the organization. They point to the emphasis on anonymity, the requirement to find a sponsor, and the potential for members to become isolated from their friends and family as evidence of this.

## **Arguments in Support of Alcoholics Anonymous**

Despite these criticisms, AA has been credited with saving countless lives. Many members report that AA has helped them to achieve long-term sobriety, improve their relationships, and live more fulfilling lives.

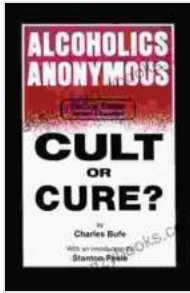
Research has also shown that AA is an effective treatment for alcohol addiction. A study published in the journal *Alcoholism: Clinical and Experimental Research* found that AA membership was associated with a reduced risk of relapse, improved social functioning, and better mental health outcomes.

## **Is Alcoholics Anonymous a Cult or a Cure?**

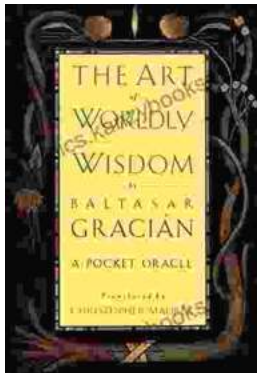
Whether or not Alcoholics Anonymous is a cult is a matter of debate. Some people may find AA's religious overtones and its emphasis on abstinence to be off-putting, while others may find these aspects of the program to be helpful.

Ultimately, the decision of whether or not to join AA is a personal one. It is important to weigh the potential benefits of the program against the potential risks before making a decision.

Alcoholics Anonymous is a complex and controversial organization that has helped countless people overcome alcohol addiction. While some critics may label it a cult, there is evidence to suggest that AA is an effective treatment for alcohol addiction. The decision of whether or not to join AA is a personal one, and it is important to weigh the potential benefits against the potential risks before making a decision.



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