

Alcoholics Anonymous

An Interpretation of the Twelve Steps

THE DETROIT PAMPHLET

This introduction to the steps was originally published in Detroit as a twenty-page pamphlet when A.A. first began, when the newcomers were gathered in large sessions and allowed to ask questions of a panel of people with longer sobriety - - it is a marvelous example of early old-time A.A. teaching. The original version is still obtainable from Alcoholics Anonymous of Greater Detroit, 380 Hilton Road, Ferndale MI 48220.

The twelve steps are divided up so they can be dealt with in four separate discussion sessions: Admission (Step 1), Spiritual (Steps 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 11), Inventory/Restitution (Steps 4, 8, 9, 10), and Active (Step 12). If the group meets once a week, all twelve steps can then be covered in a month.

An edition with reset type was prepared in 1995 for use in A.A. discussion meetings in northern Indiana, where it proved equally successful in providing worthwhile topics, not only for the newcomers, but for the oldtimers too. After going through the pamphlet several times in a row over a period of three or four months, it was surprising how the apparently simple language led you deeper and deeper into profound spiritual insights. In this discussion-meeting format, the pamphlet was passed around the table, with each person reading a few paragraphs of that week's section of the pamphlet, and then after all of that section had been read, each person in turn around the table was given an opportunity to talk about the topics that had been raised.

Parts of this pamphlet have also been used in recent years for Saturday morning beginners' meetings in Elkhart, Indiana, where the teacher reads from and then talks about the material on one or another of the steps for the newcomers. It seems to many of the oldtimers to work better than anything else they have tried for getting raw beginners into serious thought about the way the program works.

Preface

The following pages contain the basic material for the discussion meetings for alcoholics only. These meetings are held for the purpose of acquainting both old and new members with the twelve steps on which our program is based. So that all twelve steps may be covered in a minimum of time they are divided into four classifications and one evening each week will be devoted to each of the four subdivisions. Thus, in one month, a new man can get the basis of our twelve suggested steps.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - -that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

These steps are divided as follows:

Discussion No. 1	The Admission	Step No. 1
Discussion No. 2	The Spiritual Phase	Steps 2, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 11
Discussion No. 3	The Inventory and Restitution	Steps No. 4, 8, 9 and 10
Discussion No. 4	The Active Work	which is Step No. 12

DISCUSSION No. 1 THE ADMISSION

The material contained herein is merely an outline of the admission phase of the program and is not intended to replace or supplant:

- a. The careful reading and re-reading of the Big Book.
- b. Regular attendance at weekly group meetings.
- c. Study of the program.
- d. Daily practice of the program.
- e. Reading of approved printed material on alcoholism.
- f. Informal discussion with other members.

This meeting covers:

Step No. 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - - that our lives had become unmanageable.

This instruction is not a short-cut to A.A. It is an introduction - - a help - - a brief course in the fundamentals.

In order to determine whether or not a person had drifted from "social drinking" into pathological drinking it is well to check over a list of test questions, which each member may ask himself and answer for himself. We must answer once and for all these three puzzling questions :

What is an alcoholic? Who is an alcoholic? Am I an alcoholic?

To get the right answer the prospective member must start this course of instruction with:

1. A **willingness** to learn. We must not have the attitude that "you've got to show me."
2. An **open mind**. Forget any and all notions we already have. Set our opinions aside.
3. Complete **honesty**. It is possible - - not at all probable - - that we may fool somebody else. But we must be honest with ourselves, and it is a good time to start being honest with others.

Suggested Test Questions

1. Do you require a drink the next morning?
2. Do you prefer a drink alone?
3. Do you lose time from work due to drinking?
4. Is your drinking harming your family in any way?
5. Do you crave a drink at a definite time daily?
6. Do you get the inner shakes unless you continue drinking?
7. Has drinking made you irritable?
8. Does drinking make you careless of your family's welfare?
9. Have you harmed your husband or wife since drinking?
10. Has drinking changed your personality?
11. Does drinking cause you bodily complaints?
12. Does drinking make you restless?
13. Does drinking cause you to have difficulty in sleeping?
14. Has drinking made you more impulsive?
15. Have you less self-control since drinking?
16. Has your initiative decreased since drinking?
17. Has your ambition decreased since drinking?
18. Do you lack perseverance in pursuing a goal since drinking?
19. Do you drink to obtain social ease?
(In shy, timid, self-conscious individuals.)
20. Do you drink for self-encouragement?
(In persons with feelings of inferiority.)
21. Do you drink to relieve marked feelings of inadequacy?
22. Has your sexual potency suffered since drinking?
23. Do you show marked dislikes and hatreds since drinking?
24. Has your jealousy, in general, increased since drinking?
25. Do you show marked moodiness as a result of drinking?
26. Has your efficiency decreased since drinking?

27. Has your drinking made you more sensitive?
28. Are you harder to get along with since drinking?
29. Do you turn to an inferior environment since drinking?
30. Is drinking endangering your health?
31. Is drinking affecting your peace of mind?
32. Is drinking making your home life unhappy?
33. Is drinking jeopardizing your business?
34. Is drinking clouding your reputation?
35. Is drinking disturbing the harmony of your life?

If you have answered **yes** to any **one** of the Test Questions, there is a definite warning that you **may** be alcoholic.

If you answered **yes** to any **two** of the Test Questions, the chances are that you **are** an alcoholic.

If you answer **yes** to **three** or more of the Test Questions you are **definitely an alcoholic**.

NOTE: The Test Questions are not A.A. questions but are the guide used by Johns Hopkins University Hospital in deciding whether a patient is alcoholic or not.

In addition to the Test Questions, we in A.A. would ask even more questions. Here are a few:

36. Have you ever had a complete loss of memory while, or after, drinking?
37. Have you ever felt, when or after drinking, an inability to concentrate?
38. Have you ever felt remorse after drinking?
39. Has a physician ever treated you for drinking?
40. Have you ever been hospitalized for drinking?

Many other questions could be asked, but the foregoing are sufficient for the purpose of this instruction.

Why Does An Alcoholic Drink?

Having decided that we are alcoholics, it is well to consider what competent mental doctors consider as the reasons why an alcoholic drinks:

1. As an escape from situations of life which he cannot face.
2. As evidence of a maladjusted personality (including sexual maladjustments).
3. As a development from social drinking to pathological drinking.
4. As a symptom of a major abnormal mental state.
5. As an escape from incurable physical pain.
6. As a symptom of constitutional inferiority - - a psychopathic personality.

For example, an individual who drinks because he likes alcohol, knows he cannot handle it, but does not care.

7. Many times one cannot determine any great and glaring mechanism as the basis of why the drinker drinks, but the revealing fact may be elicited:

That alcohol is taken to relieve a certain vague restlessness in the individual, incident to friction between his biological and emotional makeup and the ordinary strains of life.

The above reasons are general reasons. Where the individuality or personality of the alcoholic is concerned these reasons may be divided as follows:

1. A self-pampering tendency which manifests itself in refusal to tolerate, even temporarily, unpleasant states of mind such as boredom, sorrow, anger, disappointment, worry, depression, dissatisfaction, and feelings of inferiority and inadequacy.

"I want what I want when I want it" seems to express the attitude of many alcoholics toward life.

2. An instinctive urge for self-expression, unaccompanied by determination to translate the urge into creative action.
3. An abnormal craving for emotional experience which calls for removal of intellectual restraint.

4. Powerful hidden ambitions, without the necessary resolve to take practical steps to attain them, and with resultant discontent, irritability, depression, disgruntledness, and general restlessness.
5. A tendency to flinch from the worries of life and to seek escape from reality by the easiest means available.
6. An unreasonable demand for continuous happiness or excitement.
7. An insistent craving for the feeling of self-confidence, calm, and poise that some obtain temporarily from alcohol.

We Admit

If after carefully considering the foregoing, we admit we are alcoholics, we must realize that, *once a person becomes a pathological drinker, he can never again become a controlled drinker*, and from that point on, is limited to just two alternatives:

1. Total permanent abstinence.
2. Chronic alcoholism with all of the handicaps and penalties it implies.

In other words, we have gone past the point where we had a **choice**. All we have left is a **decision** to make.

We Resolve to Do Something About It

1. **We must change our way of thinking.** (This is such an important matter that it will have to be discussed more fully in a later discussion).
2. We must realize that each morning when we wake, we are potential drunkards for that day.
3. We resolve that we will practice A.A. for the 24 hours of that day.
4. We must study the other eleven steps of the program and practice each and every one.
5. Attend the regular group meeting each week without fail.
6. Firmly believe that by practicing A.A. faithfully each day, we will achieve sobriety.
7. Believe that we can be free from alcohol as a problem.
8. Contact another member **before** taking a drink, not **after**. Tell him what bothers you - - talk it over with him freely.
9. Work the program for ourselves alone - - **not** for our wife, children, friends, or for our job.
10. Be absolutely honest and sincere.
11. Be fully openminded - - no mental reservations.
12. Be fully willing to work the program. Nothing good in life comes without work.

Conclusion

1. Alcoholics are suffering from a threefold disease, not only a physical illness. Fortunately, we in A.A. have learned how it may be controlled. (This will be shown in the next eleven steps of the program.)
2. We can also learn to be **free** from alcohol as a problem.
3. We can achieve a full and happy life without recourse to alcohol.

ASK QUESTIONS

*No question pertaining to drinking, or stopping drinking, is silly or irrelevant. The matter is **too serious**. Any questions we ask may help someone else. This is not a shortcut to A.A., it is an introduction, a help, a brief course in fundamentals. In A.A. we learn by question and answer; we learn by exchanging our thought and our experience with each other. Any question you ask may help someone else. To cover as many questions as possible in the short time available, all answers must be limited to three minutes*

I know that if this program works for me and I am able to maintain a sober, peaceful life, it will not be through any strength of mine, but rather, the Man Upstairs has reached down and given me a helping hand. *Strange as it may seem - - it works.*

DISCUSSION No. 2 THE SPIRITUAL PHASE

The material contained herein is merely an outline of the spiritual phase of the program and is not intended to replace or supplant:

- a. *The careful reading and re-reading of the Big Book.*
- b. *Regular attendance at weekly group meetings.*
- c. *Study of the program.*
- d. *Daily practice of the program.*

- e. Reading of approved printed material on alcoholism.
- f. Informal discussion with other members.

This instruction is not a short-cut to A.A. It is an introduction -- a help -- a brief course in fundamentals.

This meeting covers Steps 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 11. We will take them in order.

Step No. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Our drinking experience has shown:

1. That as we strayed away from the normal *social* side of life, our minds became confused and we strayed away from the normal *mental* side of life.
2. An abnormal *mental* condition is certainly not **sanity** in the accepted sense of the word. We have acquired or developed a **mental disease**. Our study of A.A. shows that:
 - a. In the *mental* or tangible side of life we have lost touch with, or ignored, or have forgotten the **spiritual** values that give us the dignity of *man* as differentiated from the *animal*. We have fallen back upon the **material** things of life and these have failed us. We have been groping in the dark.
 - b. No *human* agency, no *science* or *art* has been able to solve the alcoholic problem, so we turn to the **spiritual** for guidance.

Therefore we "came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." **We must believe with a great FAITH.**

Step No. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

In the first step we learned that we had lost the power of **choice** and had to make a **decision**.

1. What **decision** could we make better than to
 - a. turn our very **will** over to **God**, realizing that our own use of our own will had resulted in trouble.
 - b. As in the Lord's Prayer, you must believe and practice **thy will be done**.
2. **God as we understand Him**.
3. *Religion* is a word we do not use in A.A. We refer to a member's relation to *God* as the **spiritual**. A religion is a form of worship -- not the worship itself.
4. If a man cannot believe in God he can certainly believe in something greater than himself. If he cannot believe in a power greater than himself he is a rather hopeless egotist.

Step No. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

1. There is nothing new in this step. There are many sound reasons for "talking over our troubles out loud with others."
2. The Catholic already has this medium readily available to him in the confessional. But -- the Catholic is at a disadvantage if he thinks his familiarity with confession permits him to think his part of A.A. is thereby automatically taken care of. He must, in confession, seriously consider his problems in relation to his alcoholic thinking.
3. The non-Catholic has the way open to work this step by going to his minister, his doctor, or his friend.
4. Under this step it is not even necessary to go to a priest or minister. Any understanding human being, friend or stranger, will serve the purpose.
5. The purpose and intent of this step is so plain and definite that it needs little explanation. The point is that we **must** do **exactly** what the fifth step says, sooner or later. We must not be in rush to get this step off our chest. Consider it carefully and calmly. Then get about it and do it.
6. "Wongs" do not necessarily mean *crime*. It can well be wrong thinking -- selfishness -- false pride -- egotism -- or any one of a hundred such negative faults.

Step No. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

1. After **admitting** our wrong thinking and wrong actions in step five we now do something more than "admit" or "confess."

2. We now become **ready** and **willing** to have God remove the defects in our **character**.
3. Remember it is **our** character we are working on. Not the other fellow's. Here is a good place to drop the **critical** attitude toward others - - the **superior** attitude toward others.
4. We must clean our mind of wrong thinking - - petty jealousy - - envy - - self pity - - remorse, etc.
5. Here is the place to drop **resentments**, one of the biggest hurdles the alcoholic had to get over.
6. What concerns us here is that we drop all thoughts of **resentment**: anger, hatred, revenge.
7. We turn our **will** over to God and let **his will** direct us how to patiently remove, one by one, all defects in our character.

Step No. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

The meaning of this step is clear: *prayer, humility.*

1. **Prayer** No man can tell another **how** to pray. Each one has, or works out for himself, his own method.
 - If we cannot pray, we just talk to God and tell him our troubles. Meditate (think clearly and cleanly) and ask God to direct our thoughts.
 - Christ said, "ask and ye shall receive." What method is simpler? - - merely *ask*.
 - If you cannot pray, ask God to teach you to pray.
2. **Humility** This simply is the virtue of being ourselves and realizing how small we are in a big world full of its own trouble.
 - Drop all pretense.
 - We must not be Mr. Big Shot - - bragging, boasting.
 - Shed false pride.
 - Tell the simple, plain, unvarnished truth.
 - Act, walk, and talk simply.
 - See the little bit of good that exists in an evil man; forget the little bit of evil that exists in a good man.
 - We must not look down on the very lowest of **God's** creations or man's mistakes.
 - Think clearly, honestly, fairly, generously.
3. The shortcomings we ask **God** to remove are the very defects in character that make us drink - - the same defects we drink to hide or get away from.

Step No. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with GOD as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

1. We pray each night - - *every night* - - a prayer of thanks.
2. We pray each morning - - *every morning* - - for help and guidance.
3. When we are lonely, confused, uncertain - - *we pray*.

Most of us find it well to - -

1. Choose, for each day, a "quiet time" to meditate on the program, on our progress in it.
2. Keep conscious contact with **God** and pray to make that contact closer.
3. Pray that our will be laid aside and that God's will direct us.
4. Pray for calmness - - quiet - - relaxation - - rest.
5. Pray for strength and courage to enable us to do today's work today.
6. Pray for forgiveness for yesterday's errors.
7. Ask for **hope** for better things tomorrow.
8. Pray for what we feel we need. We will not get what we *want* - - we will get what we **need**, what is good for us.

Conclusion

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spiritual side of the program. **Willingness, Honesty, and Open-Mindedness** are the **essentials of recovery**. *But these are indispensable.*

ASK QUESTIONS

*No question pertaining to drinking, or stopping drinking, is silly or irrelevant. The matter is **too serious**. In A.A. we learn by question and answer. We learn by exchanging our thoughts and our experience with each other. Any question you ask may help someone else. To cover as many questions as possible in the short time available, all answers must be limited to three minutes.*

God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference.

DISCUSSION No. 3 INVENTORY & RESTITUTION

The material contained herein is merely an outline of the inventory and restitution steps and is not intended to replace or supplant:

- a. *The careful reading and re-reading of the Big Book.*
- b. *Regular attendance at weekly group meetings.*
- c. *Study of the program.*
- d. *Daily practice of the program.*
- e. *Reading of approved printed matter on alcoholism.*
- f. *Informal discussion with other members.*

This instruction is not a short-cut to A.A. It is an introduction - - a help - - a brief course in fundamentals.

This meeting covers Steps 4, 8, 9, 10. We will take them in order.

Step No. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

The intent and purpose of this step is plain. All alcoholics have a definite need for a good self-analysis - - a sort of self-appraisal. Other people have certainly analyzed us, appraised us, criticized us and even judged us. It might be a good idea to judge ourselves, calmly and honestly. We need inventory because:

1. **Either** our faults, weaknesses, defects of character, are the cause of our drinking,
2. **or** our drinking has weakened our character and led us into all kinds of wrong action, wrong attitudes, wrong viewpoints.

In either event we obviously need an inventory and the only kind of inventory to make is a **good** one. Moreover, the job is up to **us**. **We** created or **we** let develop all the anti-social actions that got **us** in the wrong. So **we** have got to work it out. **We** must make out a list of our faults and then **we** must do something about it.

The inventory must be four things:

1. It must be **honest**. Why waste time fooling ourselves with a phony list? We have fooled ourselves for years, we tried to fool others, and now is a good time to look ourselves squarely in the eye.
2. It must be **searching**. Why skip over a vital matter lightly and quickly? Our trouble is a grave mental disease, confused by screwy thinking. Therefore, we must search diligently and fearlessly to get at the truth of what is wrong with us - - just dig in and search.
3. It must be **fearless**. We must not be afraid we might find things in our heart, mind and soul that we will hate to discover. If we do find such things they may be the root of our trouble.
4. It must be a **moral** inventory.

Some, in error, think the inventory is a lot of unpaid debts, plus a list of unmade apologies. Our trouble lies much deeper.

We will find the root of our trouble lies in *Resentments, False Pride, Envy, Jealousy, Selfishness* and many other things. *Laziness* is an important one. In other words we are making an inventory of our character: our attitude toward others, our very way of living.

We are not preparing a financial statement. We will pay our bills all right, because we cannot even begin to practice A.A. without honesty.

Step No. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Under this step we will make a written* list of those we have harmed. We ask **God** to let his will be done, not **our** will, and ask for the strength and courage to become willing to forget resentments and false pride and make amends to those we have harmed. We must not do this step grudgingly, or as an unpleasant task to be rid of quickly. We must do it **willingly**, fairly, and humbly - - without condescension.

*The original Detroit pamphlet said "a list (mental or written)," but the *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* later made it clear that it needed to be *written*.

Step No. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

This is where we make peace with ourselves by making peace with those we have hurt. The amends we make must be *direct*. We must pay in kind for the hurt we have done them.

- If we have cheated we must make restitution.
- If we have hurt their feelings we must ask forgiveness from them.

The list of harms done may be long but the list of amends is equally long. For every *wrong* we have done, there is a *right* we may do to compensate.

There is only one *exception*. We must develop a sense of justice, a spirit of fairness, an attitude of common sense. If our effort to make amends would create further harm or cause a scandal, we will have to skip the direct amends and clean the matter up under Step Five.

Step No. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

In coming into A.A. we usually will have a pretty big inventory to work on, as in Steps Four, Eight, and Nine. But even after that, we will not be perfect. We have a long way to go. We will continue to make mistakes and will be inclined to do some more wrong thinking and wrong doing. So at intervals, we **continue** to take inventory. Here the purpose is to check on our progress. We certainly cannot be perfect, so the need for regular inventory is apparent.

These inventories are **personal**. We confine the inventory to ourselves. We are the ones who need it. Never mind the other fellow! He too is probably troubled and will have to make his own inventory.

When we make these inventories, probably the best way to start is to go over (one by one) each of the twelve steps, and try to discover just what (in these steps) we are not following.

The businessman **has** to make a physical inventory from time to time. We have to make a personal inventory of ourselves from time to time if we want to recover from a serious mental illness.

Character Defects and Vices

So much for the inventory *steps* - - now look at some of the *things* we would do well to cover in an inventory:

1. Selfishness - - the common vice of all alcoholics.
2. Egotism - - who is without some of it? Self-Importance, Mr. Big.
3. False Pride - - too big to admit a fault or an error.
4. Impatience - - the spoiled child in a grown man.
5. Resentments - - an alcoholic usually is sore at the whole world. Everybody is wrong!
6. Lack of common honesty - - usually fooling ourselves and *trying* to fool others. False pretense, sham.
7. Deceit.
8. Hate - - the outgrowth of anger and resentment.
9. Jealousy - - just *wanting* what the other fellow worked to get.
10. Envy - - a sure-fire cause of discontent and unhappiness.
11. Laziness - - just plain laziness.

And so on through a long list.

**Conversely Our Inventory Could
Show a List of Virtues**

which we very definitely lack and should go to work on to develop such as:

Honesty
Simple Justice
Fairness
Generosity
Truthfulness
Modesty
Humility
Honest Pride in work well done
Simplicity
Patience
Industry (go to work and really *work*)
And so on through a long list.

Then Consider a Few MAJOR Virtues

FAITH - If we have lost faith we must work desperately hard to get it back. Ask God to give us faith in him, our fellow man, and ourselves.

HOPE - If we have lost hope we are dead pigeons. Only those who have been cruelly hurt and in desperate need can know the wonderful sense of security that lies in hope for better things.

TRUST - Since our own self-sufficient conduct of our own life has failed us, we must put our trust in **God**, who has never failed.

ASK QUESTIONS

*No question pertaining to drinking, or stopping drinking, is silly or irrelevant. The matter is **too serious**. In A.A. we learn by question and answer. We learn by exchanging our thought and our experience with each other. Any question we ask may help someone else. To cover as many questions as possible in the short time available, all answers must be limited to three minutes.*

HUMILITY

A state of humility is very difficult to attain, but the goal is well worth the effort, considering the serenity that is achieved.

DISCUSSION No. 4 ACTIVE WORK

The material contained herein is merely an outline of the active working step of the program and is not intended to replace or supplant:

- a. The careful reading and re-reading of the Big Book.*
- b. Regular attendance at weekly group meetings.*
- c. Study of the program.*
- d. Daily practice of the program.*
- e. Reading of approved printed matter on alcoholism.*
- f. Informal discussion with other members.*

Step No. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This step logically separates into three parts:

1. The Spiritual Experience

The terms "spiritual experience" and "spiritual awakening" used here and in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* mean (upon careful reading)

that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many forms.

Do NOT get the impression that these personality changes or spiritual experiences must be in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals. Happily for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous. Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule.

Most of our experiences are what psychologist William James calls "the educational variety" because they develop slowly over a period of time.

Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before he is himself. The new man gradually realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life - - that such a change could hardly have been brought about by *himself alone*. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.

Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problem in the light of our experience can recover provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial.

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spiritual side of the program. **Willingness, Honesty, and Open-Mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.**

2. Carry the Message to Others

This means exactly what it says. Carry the message actively. Bring it to the man who needs it. We do it in many ways:

- a. By attending **every** meeting of our own group.
- b. By making calls when asked.
- c. By speaking at group meetings when asked.
- d. By supporting our group financially to make group meetings possible.
- e. By assisting at meetings when asked.
- f. By setting a good example of complete sobriety.
- g. By owning, and loaning to new men, our own copy of the Big A.A. Book.
- h. By encouraging those who find the way difficult.
- i. By serving as an officer or on group committees or special assignments when asked.
- j. By doing all of the foregoing cheerfully and willingly.
- k. We do any or all of the foregoing *at some sacrifice to ourselves* **with definite thought of developing unselfishness** in our own character.

3. We Practice These Principles in All Our Affairs

This last part of the **Twelfth Step** is the real purpose that all of the twelve steps lead to - - a *new way of life, a design for living*. It shows how to live rightly, think rightly and to achieve happiness. **How do we go about it?**

- a. We resolve to live our life *one day at a time* - - just twenty-four hours.
- b. We pray *each* day for guidance that day.
- c. We pray *each* night - - thanks for that day.
- d. We resolve to keep our heads and to forego any anger, no matter what situation arises.
- e. We are patient.
- f. We keep calm, relaxed.
- g. Now and most important: whatever *little* ordinary situations as well as *big* situations arise, we look at them calmly and fairly, with an open mind, then act on them in exact accordance with the simple true principles that A.A. has taught and will teach us.

In other words, our **sobriety** is only a correction of our worst and most evident faults. Our living each day according to the principles of A.A. will also correct all of our other lesser faults and will gradually eliminate, one by one, all of the defects in our character that cause frictions, discontents, and unhappy rebellious moods that lead right back to our very chief fault of drinking.

ASK QUESTIONS

*No question pertaining to drinking, or stopping drinking, is silly or irrelevant. The matter is **too serious**. In A.A. we learn by question and answer. We learn by exchanging our thought and experience with each other. Any question we ask may help someone else. To cover as many questions as possible in the short time available, all answers must be limited to three minutes.*

Staying on the Beam

Today most commercial flying is done on a radio beam. A directional beam is produced to guide the pilot to his destination, and as long as he keeps on this beam he knows that he is safe, even if he cannot see around him for fog, or get his bearings in any other way.

As soon as he gets off the beam in any direction he is in danger, and he immediately tries to get back on to the beam once more.

Those who believe in the All-ness of God, have a spiritual beam upon which to navigate on the voyage of life. As long as you have peace of mind and some sense of the Presence of God you are on the beam, and you are safe, even if outer things seem to be confused or even very dark; but as soon as you get off the beam you are in danger.

You are off the beam the moment you are angry or resentful or jealous or frightened or depressed; and when such a condition arises you should immediately get back on the beam by turning quietly to God in thought, claiming His Presence, claiming that His Love and Intelligence are with you, and that the promises in the Bible are true today.

If you do this you are back on the beam, even if outer conditions and your own feelings do not change immediately. You are back on the beam and you will reach port in safety.

Keep on the beam and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

- - Emmet Fox

Lest We Forget

I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness I can show to any human being, let me do it NOW. Let me not defer it, or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again. - Stephen Grellet (1773-1855)