

Schematic Outline of the first 103 pages of the Big Book

I. *The Doctor's Opinion*

- A. First letter (xxiii-xxiv 3rd; xxv-xxvi 4th): You may rely absolutely on anything they say about themselves.
- B. The authors summarize the second letter (xxiv-xxv 3rd; xxvi-xxvii 4th)—[T]he body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind. . . . In our belief, any picture of the alcoholic which leaves out this physical factor is incomplete.
- C. Second letter (xxv-xxx 3rd; xxvii-xxxii 4th): [T]hey cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates these people

II. Chapter 1: *Bill's Story*

- A. Bill's decline into the horrors of alcoholism
 - 1. Alcohol is the high part of life (1-5)
 - 2. Alcohol becomes a necessity (5-7)
- B. The kind doctor explains the physical craving and the mental obsession; but self-knowledge doesn't work (7)
- C. Bill reaches the bottom—Bill's Step 1 (8)
- D. Ebby tells Bill about the religious solution and expands it to create the spiritual solution, open to all—Bill's Step 2 (9-12)
- E. Bill takes Steps 3 through 9 (13)
- F. Bill has a spiritual experience (14)
- G. Bill works Steps 10 through 12 (14-16)

III. Chapter 2: *There is a Solution*

- A. We have solved the drink problem and are united by a common solution (the Twelve Steps) (17)
- B. Alcoholism is an illness which has not been solved by professionals but alcoholics can be reached through fellow-suffers (18-19)
- C. This book is our attempt to provide the solution to all your problems by telling you what we did (19-20)

- D. The summary of the alcoholic problem:
 - 1. The physical craving overwhelms the alcoholic; once he starts drinking, he cannot stop (21-22)
 - 2. The mental obsession tells him that he does not have the physical reaction, so that he can go back to drinking even when sober: Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body. (22-25)
- E. There is a solution—deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. (25-26) (And note footnotes leading us to the Appendix on "Spiritual Experience", 56-570 3rd, 567-568,4th.)
- F. Rowland Hazzard's encounter with Dr. Jung—spiritual experiences, or huge emotional displacements and rearrangements are necessary, but cannot usually be reached through religion for the true alcoholic (26-28)
- G. This book contains clear-cut directions . . . showing how we recovered. (28-29)

IV. Chapter 3: *More about Alcoholism*

- A. The mental obsession in general: The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. (30)
- B. We must smash the delusion that we will ever become physically normal—the craving will always hit us if we drink alcohol (30-32)
 - 1. The man of thirty—his falling victim first, to the mental obsession, and then, to the physical craving, after twenty-five years of sobriety (32-33)
- C. Will-power is not sufficient for the alcoholic; we'll give examples so you can see whether you are an alcoholic (33-35)
 - 1. Jim—the car salesman who had a bad day; who had knowledge about himself but gave it all up for the foolish idea that he could take whiskey if only he mixed it with milk! (35-37)
 - 2. The jay-walker, who knows the danger but can't stop (37-39)
 - 3. Fred—the accountant who had a good day; who had self-knowledge and knew the problem, but decided that it would be nice to have a couple of cocktails with dinner. (39-42)
- D. Summary: The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power. (43)

V. Chapter 4: *We Agnostics*

- A. We need a spiritual experience to conquer the illness; although this may appear to pose difficulties for the agnostic or atheist, don't worry (44)
- B. Will-power isn't enough; we don't have enough power to overcome alcoholism: We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a *Power greater than ourselves*. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power? Well, that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem. (44-46)
- C. All we need is willingness to believe (46-48)
- D. Why believe in a Power greater than yourself? (48)
 - 1. Practically speaking, we believe in theories if they are grounded in fact—if they explain facts
 - a. Our theory is that a spiritual experience solves our problem; and
 - b. The fact is that we have solved our problem: the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of [our] lives (48-51)
 - 2. Practically speaking, a willingness to change our belief system leads to being able to do things that are thought to be impossible (Galileo, the Wright brothers, our experience) (51-52)
 - 3. Clearly self-sufficiency and logic don't work as a theory (52-53)
- E. The choice is clear: God either is, or He isn't. What was our choice to be? We are squarely confronted with the question of faith. (53)
 - 1. Faith is necessary to reach our solution (53)
 - 2. We already have some faith—in our reasoning, our ability to think (53-54)
 - 3. We are already worshippers, worshipping people, money, ourselves, the sunset, the sea, a flower; loving others (54)
 - 4. Everything really important to us has nothing to do with reason—it is all faith (54-55)
- F. Deep down inside us is God; it may be obscured but the idea of God is there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. (55)
- G. Fitz's story: "Our Southern Friend"—Who are you to say there is no God? (55-57)

VI. Chapter 5: *How It Works*

- A. Our path works if we are honest; the way is hard and requires complete dedication; but you can draw on God's power to help you; and half measures will avail you nothing (58-59)
- B. The Twelve Steps (59-60)
- C. If we are convinced that we are alcoholic, that human power cannot relieve us, and that God can, then we're ready to take Step 3 (60)
- D. Step 3
 - 1. Turn our *will* over to God: any life run on self-will can hardly be a success; we're like actors in a play who want to be the directors; we are selfish in that we want *our* way, whether it's for the worst or the best of reasons (60-62)
 - 2. Turn our *life* over to God: decide that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. (62-63)
 - 3. The promises as we take the steps—to have a new Employer (63)
 - 4. The Step 3 prayer (to be taken with an understanding person) (63)
- E. Step 4—the beginning of our inventory—the fact-finding (searching) and fact-facing (fearless) examination of what is blocking us from the sunlight of the spirit; being convinced that our selfishness (self-centredness, self-pity, self-delusion, fear) is at the heart of our problem, we considered its common manifestations (63-64)
 - 1. Resentment—the Past did not go my way (64-67)—see form for details
 - 2. Fear—the Future won't go my way (67-68)—see form for details
 - 3. Sex Conduct—those relationships in which physical attraction was mixed in are the tests by which we try to shape a sane and sound ideal for all relationships (68-70)—see form for details
 - 4. If we have written all this down, we have made an inventory of [our] grosser handicaps (71)

VII. Chapter 6: *Into Action*

- A. Step 5
 - 1. Why we need to do Step 5
 - a. We need objectivity to make certain that we know what has been blocking us from God (72)
 - b. We have to be honest with another person (72-74)

2. That person must be able to keep a confidence, understand and approve of what we're doing, and won't change our plan (74-76)
3. Action of Step 5
 - a. We must explain to that person why this is so important to us (75)
 - b. We tell that person every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past (75)
 - c. If we've been thorough, there are promises (75)
 - d. We then go home and meditate, asking God whether we have omitted anything (75)

B. Step 6

1. Are we ready to have God remove those things which are blocking us from God? (76)

C. Step 7

1. The Step 7 prayer

D. Steps 8 and 9

1. We have a list and we must remove those things which have blocked us by sweeping away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. We have to do this (76-77)

2. Direct Amends

- a. Making the amends when there is no harm done

- (1) Eyeball to eyeball (77-78)
- (2) Restitution (example of money) (78)
- (3) Taking consequences for our past actions (example of criminal offence) (78-79)

- b. Making the amends when harm may be done

- (1) Restitution (example of unpaid alimony and harm to new family) (79)
- (2) Taking consequences for our past actions (example of denial of loan and harm to partner and family) (80)
- (3) Eyeball to eyeball (example of infidelity and harm to the person to whom we make amends) (80-82)

3. Living Amends—the period of reconstruction, where saying sorry isn't enough (82-83)
4. Amends we cannot make; it's okay so long as we're ready to make them (83)
5. The promises halfway through Step 9 (83-84)

E. Step 10

1. The continuation of the inventory process—Steps 4 through 9—whenever needed (84)
2. The promises at the end of Step 9 and the beginning of Step 10—Sanity is reached at last! We are neutral to alcohol—we no longer have the mental obsession (84-85)

F. Step 11

1. Retiring at night—reviewing our day and doing an inventory process (Steps 4 through 9) in our meditation (86)
2. Awakening in the morning—previewing our day and asking God to free us from self-will (86-87)
3. As we go through the day—reminding ourselves we're no longer in charge (87-88)

VIII. Chapter 7: *Working with Others*

A. Step 12: carrying the message

B. Find a prospect, find out all you can, and see if he wants to see you (89-91)

C. First meeting

1. Talk generally, lead into drinking stories, qualify (91)
2. Describe self as an alcoholic, describe the physical craving and the mental obsession, and the hopelessness (91-92)
3. Offer your solution, and explain the spiritual aspect of it (92-94)
4. Outline the programme of action (94)
5. Give him a copy of the Big Book and encourage him to read it, but don't spend much more time with him, and don't push him (94-96)

D. Second meeting

1. If he wants to go through the Twelve Steps, sponsor him, offer to be with him in Step 3 and to hear his Step 5 (96)

E. Sponsorship

1. Help him, but not at your expense and not in a way that makes him dependent upon you (96-98)
2. Help his family, if you can (98-100)

F. Our freedom—what we can do—how we can be near alcohol with no problem, so long as we are spiritually fit (100-102)

G. Our job description: to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others (102-103)