

How do we make spirituality practical? How do we make it simple enough to actually apply so that we don't fail & then beat ourselves up? I once had the habit of the simpler it was the more complicated I made it. For instance, do they really mean that we are supposed to love & have compassion toward everybody? If they do, they've never met some of the people in my homegroup. If I'm supposed to love everybody then they've never driven in some of the traffic I've driven in. So how do we actually practice these principles in ALL of our affairs? It's easy to be a light amongst lights but how can you become a light in the darkness? Here's a deep, deep teaching and I'll break it down so that it will have meaning for you. This is the powerful spiritual message & please sing it with me:

Row, row, row your boat  
gentle down the stream.  
Merrily, merrily, merrily, merrily  
life is but a dream.

Row, Row, Row

We need to participate by taking the daily actions & disciplines necessary to move toward spiritual growth. Why did it have to say "row" three times? Life continues to give us opportunities to grow & learn. Repetition is the mother of skill, and the more you do something the better you are at it. It says it three times so we don't forget – keep taking the actions necessary to move toward spiritual growth. For those of us who would prefer to put an outboard motor on your boat, please remember that you shouldn't be afraid of the work. You won't progress without doing the work. Step 10 says, "We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the MAINTENANCE of our spiritual condition." Sometimes in the process of rowing we get lost in the wrong direction – just keep rowing. Someone once said that a rudder is worthless unless the boat is moving. Sometimes in the process of rowing we get splashed in the face by other passing boats – just keep rowing. Also, in the process of rowing make sure that you pay attention. We shouldn't get so distracted by the doing & the outcome that we don't enjoy and embrace the process. Rowing isn't only about getting to where you're going. Rowing is learning to enjoy the process, keeping in mind that the little things matter. Don't be afraid to do the work. Don't compare your inner work to the work that anybody else is doing. Keep your eyes straight in front of you & pay attention. Remember that you are surrounded by angels.

Your Boat

Row YOUR boat, not someone else's. Get out of other people's boats & get away from trying to control other people's boats. Would you rather be right or would you rather have peace? Get rid of the need to be right. Fill YOUR cup before you start giving it away, trying to help others. Row YOUR boat – YOUR mind, YOUR heart, YOUR life, YOUR consciousness, YOUR spirit. The Big Book says, "you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with God is right, and THEN great things will come to pass for you and countless others." You can't give from an almost empty cup. If you don't keep your cup full by making daily spiritual growth a priority, you won't have anything to share with the world. If we tap into that part within us that is of our Higher Power, we begin to master OUR OWN darkness, OUR OWN mind, OUR OWN habits, OUR OWN defects, and you are GUARANTEED to get to where you are rowing and you are GUARANTEED to contribute positively to others. Heal yourself and you simultaneously offer healing to all the other passengers. Work on YOUR boat & be an example for others. Remain aware of how you treat your boat and of all those your rowing touches.

Gently

This is God's little joke: If you're rowing GENTLY down the stream, are YOU really moving the boat? No. You're just not interfering. But it's important to do SOMETHING, because a gentle occupation keeps your ego gently occupied. Gentleness - which combines peace, love, and harmlessness - is the core of this song and of a spiritual path. Look for the good in everybody & everything. See difficult people & difficult situations as spiritual opportunities for growth. Even when you try to row UP stream in the wrong direction, if you're rowing gently, you still are swept in the right direction. The more gently I treat MYSELF when I make mistakes, the easier it is to treat others gently when THEY make mistakes.

## Down

Going down the stream is the serenity of accepting God's direction or God's will in life. Don't anticipate. Don't expect. Don't waste time preparing yourself. Above all, don't tell the river (or life) what MUST be on the shore around the bend when you get there. Develop the sense of letting the shore come to you, of letting today's events come to you. LET it happen instead of MAKING it happen. In other words, when you stay in the present, you flow with the river & follow your Heart.

## The Stream

The stream knows where to go because the stream is Love & Truth. God is carrying you piggyback all the way Home. You don't travel on money, your wits, health, good looks, or success. You travel on God. And notice that a stream is always moving and changing. Where you are is exactly where you need to be. Learn the lesson by LIVING what we know to be true. Information without application is worthless. Like the Big Book says, "Both you and the new man must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress. If you persist, remarkable things will happen. When we look back, we realize that the things which came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands were better than anything we could have planned. Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances!" Anything at all that God has in mind for me is better than anything at all that I will EVER have in mind for me.

## Merrily, Merrily, Merrily, Merrily

Notice that you get four merrilies for every three times you row. That's a 33.3 percent return! A spiritual path is just learning what makes you truly happy. Enjoying life includes PRACTICING love, PRACTICING honesty, PRACTICING forgiveness. Be your own best friend. The Big Book says, "But we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life." Be SO happy that you are annoying!

## Life Is But A Dream

Life is BUT a dream - it's merely a dream. If you loathe the dream, or fight it, or worship it, your mind remains locked on it. But when you dream gently, when you FLOAT in the dream, and when you take the dream as it comes - remembering that your boat is in it but that you are not - then you infuse the dream with many merrilies. Merrilies are the spiritually awake state! Thus will you flow into the vast ocean of God's great merriment, where you are free even of rowing, and the smile of God is your smile forever. Too much of my life was lived not based in reality, internally fighting against the people & situations in my life. I was always blaming "them." This is living in the dream. The 12 & 12 says, "It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us." This is waking up from the dream. A well lived life is about perspective & I've found that we can change our perspective at any time. A great man once said, "In my world nothing EVER goes wrong." What could you not accept, if you but knew that everything that happens, all events, past, present and to come, are gently planned by One Whose only purpose is your good?

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