

Step 1: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.



Principal: honesty

Process: Admission & surrender

Practice: Tend your own garden

Experience: Powerlessness & hopelessness

I am going to know a new freedom & a new happiness.

The Second Step Considerations Summarized

What is our problem?

(44:1) In the preceding chapters, you have learned something of alcoholism. We hope we have made clear the distinction between the alcoholic and the non-alcoholic. If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if, when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.

(45:1) Lack of power, that was our dilemma. 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?

What is our solution? Vital spiritual experience.

(25:2) The great fact is just this, and nothing less: that we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences, which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows, and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.

(43: 3) Once more: 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.

Example of a spiritual experience Pages 9-16; 56-5; among others.

Sanity and insanity

The AA BB uses the word "sanity" in a very special and technical sense: pp xxvii read "..... they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one." Sanity exists when one can see and act of the truth to drink; insanity is when an alcoholic cannot. Sanity: state of being sane. In full possession of the mental faculties of opinions, plans, sensibility, health.

Do you believe or are you even willing to believe that there is a Power that will solve your problem?

First of the 2nd Step Proposition (47:2) You need ask yourself but one short question. "Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?" As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built.

Solution: lay aside prejudice and to express a willingness to believe.

(46:1) Yes, we of agnostic temperament have had these thoughts and experiences. Let us make haste to reassure you. We found that as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, we commenced to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, which is God.

What is your own conception of God as YOU understand Him?

(46:2) Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another's conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, A Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps. We found that God does not make hard terms with those who seek Him. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding. It is open, we believe, to all men.

(47:1) When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own conception of God. This applies, too, to other spiritual expressions which you find in this book. Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you. At the start, this is all you will need to commence spiritual growth, to effect your first conscious relation with God, as you understand Him. Afterward, you will find yourself accepting many things which now seem entirely out of reach. That is growth, but if you are going to grow, you have to begin somewhere. So use your own conception, however limited it may be.

Problem: Barriers to Spiritual Growth

47:4- 48:0 Besides a seeming inability to accept much on faith, we often found ourselves handicapped by obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice. Many of us have been so touchy that even casual reference to spiritual things made us bristle with antagonism. This sort of thinking had to be abandoned. Though some of us resisted, we found no great difficulty in casting aside such feelings. Faced with alcoholic destruction, we soon became as open minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect alcohol was a great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness. Sometimes this was a tedious process; we hope no one will be prejudiced as long as some of us were.

Is that Power, which the Big Book quite often refers to as God, everything, or, if not, is He nothing?

2nd of the 2nd Step Proposition: 53:2 When we became alcoholics, crushed by a self-imposed crisis we could not postpone or evade, we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn't. What was our choice to be?

Where do we find God? Where are we going to find this Power?

(55:1) Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself.

(55:2) We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were. And we are sure you will find the Great Reality deep down within you. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. It was so with us; why not with you?

Hope

(98: 2) Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well regardless of anyone. No person on this earth can stop his recovery from alcohol, or prevent his being supplied with whatever is good for him. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house.