

OBSESSION - ① IDEA THAT OUTWEIGHS ALL OTHERS

② TO PRE OCCUPY MINDS OF ABNORMALS
③ A PERSISTENT DISTURBING PRE OCCUPATION w/ AN IDEA

ILLUSION - A MISCONCEPTION, Chapter 3
A MISMAKING IDEA

MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM

DELUSION - A ~~PEERS~~ PERSISTENT BELIEF IN SOME THING FALSE

DEFECTION

~~W~~ MOST OF US HAVE BEEN UNWILLING TO ADMIT WE WERE REAL ALCOHOLICS. NO PERSON LIKES TO THINK HE IS BODILY AND MENTALLY DIFFERENT FROM HIS FELLOWS. THEREFORE, IT IS NOT SURPRISING THAT OUR DRINKING CAREERS HAVE BEEN CHARACTERIZED BY COUNTLESS VAIN ATTEMPTS TO PROVE WE COULD DRINK LIKE OTHER PEOPLE. THE IDEA THAT SOMEHOW, SOMEDAY HE WILL CONTROL AND ENJOY HIS DRINKING IS THE GREAT OBSESSION OF EVERY ABNORMAL DRINKER. THE PERSISTENCE OF THIS ILLUSION IS ASTONISHING.

1st 190
PEOPLE IN THE
BOOK

Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death. We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.

Now I'm sober

We alcoholics are men and women who have lost the ability to control our drinking. We know that no real alcoholic ever recovers control. All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals—usually brief—were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. We are convinced we are men that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better. & even not drinking who society now

DO I DO THINGS I PROMISED I WOULDN'T?

MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM

our kind like other ~~men~~ ^{people}. We have tried every imaginable remedy. In some instances there has been brief recovery, followed always by a still worse relapse. Physicians who are familiar with alcoholism agree there is no such thing as making a normal drinker out of an alcoholic. Science may one day accomplish this, but it hasn't done so yet.

Despite all we can say, many who are real alcoholics are not going to believe they are in that class. By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule. Therefore nonalcoholic. If anyone who is showing inability to control his drinking can do the right-about-face and drink like a gentleman, our hats are off to him. Heaven knows, we have tried hard enough and long enough to drink like other people!

Here are some of the methods we have tried: Drinking beer only, limiting the number of drinks, never drinking alone, never drinking in the morning, drinking only at home, never having it in the house, never drinking during business hours, drinking only at parties, switching from scotch to brandy, drinking only natural wines, agreeing to resign if ever drunk on the job, taking a trip, not taking a trip, swearing off forever (with and without a solemn oath), taking more physical exercise, reading inspirational books, going to health farms and sanitariums, accepting voluntary commitment to asylums—we could increase the list ad infinitum.

We do not like to pronounce any individual as alcoholic, but you can quickly diagnose yourself. Step over to the nearest barroom and try some controlled drinking. Try to drink and stop abruptly. Try it

2 DRINKS A DAY
for 30 DAYS

A LITTLE TEST

SELF DIAGNOSIS

more than once. It will not take long for you to decide, if you are honest with yourself about it. It may be worth a bad case of jitters if you get a full knowledge of your condition.

Though there is no way of proving it, we believe that early in our drinking careers most of us could have stopped drinking. But the difficulty is that few alcoholics have enough desire to stop while there is yet time. We have heard of a few instances where people, who showed definite signs of alcoholism, were able to stop for a long period because of an overpowering desire to do so. Here is one.

A man of thirty was doing a great deal of spree drinking. He was very nervous in the morning after these bouts and quieted himself with more liquor. He was ambitious to succeed in business, but saw that he would get nowhere if he drank at all. Once he started, he had no ^{ALCOHOL} control whatever. He made ^{POWERS} up his mind that until he had been successful in business and had retired, he would not touch another drop. An exceptional man, he remained bone dry for twenty-five years and retired at the age of fifty-five, after a successful and happy business career. Then he fell victim to a belief which practically every alcoholic has—that his long period of sobriety and self-discipline had qualified him to drink as other men. Out came his carpet slippers and a bottle. In two months he was in a hospital, puzzled and humiliated. He tried to regulate his drinking for a while, making several trips to the hospital meantime. Then, gathering all his forces, he attempted to stop altogether and found he could not. Every means of solving his problem which

HE COULDN'T DO WHAT HE DID 25 YRS AGO

HE WANTS TO STOP BUT CAN'T

money could buy was at his disposal. Every attempt failed. Though a robust man at retirement, he went to pieces quickly and was dead within four years.

This case contains a powerful lesson. Most of us have believed that if we remained sober for a long stretch, we could thereafter drink normally. But here is a man who at fifty-five years found he was just where he had left off at thirty. We have seen the truth demonstrated again and again: "Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic." Commencing to drink after a period of sobriety, we are in a short time as bad as ever. If we are planning to stop drinking, there must be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol.

Young people may be encouraged by this man's experience to think that they can stop, as he did, on their own will power. We doubt if many of them can do it, because none will really want to stop, and hardly one of them, because of the peculiar mental twist already acquired, will find he can win out. Several of our crowd, men of thirty or less, had been drinking only a few years, but they found themselves as helpless as those who had been drinking twenty years.

To be gravely affected, one does not necessarily have to drink a long time nor take the quantities some of us have. This is particularly true of women. Potential female alcoholics often turn into the real thing and are gone beyond recall in a few years. Certain drinkers, who would be greatly insulted if called alcoholics, are astonished at their inability to stop. We, who are familiar with the symptoms, see large numbers of potential alcoholics among young

How much How long DOESN'T MATTER

Chronic Fatigue Depression

people everywhere. But try and get them to see it!*

As we look back, we feel we had gone on drinking many years beyond the point where we could quit on our will power. ^QIf anyone questions whether he has entered this dangerous area, let him try leaving liquor alone for one year. ^QIf he is a real alcoholic and very far advanced, there is scant chance of success. In the early days of our drinking we occasionally remained sober for a year or more, becoming serious drinkers again later. Though you may be able to stop for a considerable period, you may yet be a potential alcoholic. ^QWe think few, to whom this book will appeal, can stay dry anything like a year. Some will be drunk the day after making their resolutions; most of them within a few weeks. *ALCOHOLICS*

For those who are unable to drink moderately the question is how to stop altogether. ^{embellish} We are assuming, of course, that the reader desires to stop. ^{Humorist} Whether such a person can quit upon a nonspiritual basis depends upon the extent to which he has already lost the power to choose whether he will drink or not. ^QMany of us felt that we had plenty of character. ^{I want to stop} There was a tremendous urge to cease forever. Yet we found it impossible. This is the baffling feature of alcoholism as we know it—this utter inability to leave it alone, no matter how great the necessity or the wish. ^Q *ALCOHOLICS*

How then shall we help our readers determine, to their own satisfaction, whether they are one of us? ^{TEST} The experiment of quitting for a period of time will be helpful, but we think we can render an even greater service to alcoholic sufferers and perhaps to the medi-

*True when this book was first published. But a 1998 U.S./Canada membership survey showed that about one-eighth of A.A.'s were thirty and under.

cal fraternity. So we shall describe some of the mental states that precede a relapse into drinking, for obviously this is the crux of the problem. *MENTAL OBSESSION*

What sort of thinking dominates an alcoholic who repeats time after time the desperate experiment of the first drink? Friends who have reasoned with him after a spree which has brought him to the point of divorce or bankruptcy are mystified when he walks directly into a saloon. ^QWhy does he? Of what is he thinking? *HE'S NOT, MENTALLY OBSESSED, NO DEFENSE*

Our first example is a friend we shall call Jim. This man has a charming wife and family. ^QHe inherited a lucrative automobile agency. He had a commendable World War record. ^QHe is a good salesman. ^QEverybody likes him. ^QHe is an intelligent man, normal so far as we can see, except for a nervous disposition. He did no drinking until he was thirty-five. In a few years he became so violent when intoxicated that he had to be committed. On leaving the asylum he came into contact with us. *STEP 1*

^{STEP 2} We told him what we knew of alcoholism and the answer we had found. He made a beginning. His family was re-assembled, and he began to work as a salesman for the business he had lost through drinking. All went well for a time, ^{WAS NEVER DETAIL} but he failed to enlarge his spiritual life. ^QTo his consternation, he found himself drunk half a dozen times in rapid succession. On each of these occasions we ^{6 TIMES} worked with him, reviewing carefully what had happened. ^QHe agreed he was a real alcoholic and in a serious condition. He knew he faced another trip to the asylum if he kept on. Moreover, he would lose his family for whom he had a deep affection. *STEP 3*

KNOWLEDGE, SUFFICIENT REASON, THREAT OF DEATH, LOVE OF WIFE + SON FAMILY

WILL THIS MAKE ME HAPPY ENOUGH NOT TO DRINK?

*HOW FAR GONE AM I?
DID I LOSE THE POWER?
CAN'T STOP NO MATTER WHAT?
DO I HAVE A DEFENSE?*

TEST

STEP 1

HE TOOK 15+3 STEPS AND DRANK

RESTLESS
IRRITABLE
DISCONTENTED

ALCOHOLIC INSANITY
ONLY OCCURS SOBER

PHYSICAL

Yet he got drunk again. We asked him to tell us exactly how it happened. This is his story: "I came to work on Tuesday morning. I remember I felt irritated that I had to be a salesman for a concern I once owned. I had a few words with the boss, but nothing serious. Then I decided to drive into the country and see one of my prospects for a car. On the way I felt hungry so I stopped at a roadside place where they have a bar. I had no intention of drinking. I just thought I would get a sandwich. I also had the notion that I might find a customer for a car at this place, which was familiar for I had been going to it for years. I had eaten there many times during the months I was sober. I sat down at a table and ordered a sandwich and a glass of milk. Still no thought of drinking. I ordered another sandwich and decided to have another glass of milk. ^{THEY SAW MY GLASS QUICKLY} "Suddenly the thought crossed my mind that if I were to put an ounce of whiskey in my milk it couldn't hurt me on a full stomach. I ordered a whiskey and poured it into the milk. I vaguely sensed I was not being any too smart, but felt reassured as I was taking the whiskey on a full stomach. The experiment went so well that I ordered another whiskey and poured it into more milk. That didn't seem to bother me so I tried another."

→ Thus started one more journey to the asylum for Jim. Here was the threat of commitment, the loss of family and position, to say nothing of that intense mental and physical suffering which drinking always caused him. He had much knowledge about himself as an alcoholic. Yet all reasons for not drinking were

Where is my MENTAL DEFENSE?

easily pushed aside in favor of the foolish idea that he could take whiskey if only he mixed it with milk!

Whatever the precise definition of the word may be, we call this plain insanity. How can such a lack of proportion, of the ability to think straight, be called anything else?

You may think this an extreme case. To us it is not far-fetched, for this kind of thinking has been characteristic of every single one of us. We have sometimes reflected more than Jim did upon the consequences. But there was always the curious mental phenomenon that parallel with our sound reasoning there inevitably ran some insanely trivial excuse for taking the first drink. Our sound reasoning failed to hold us in check. The insane idea won out. Next day we would ask ourselves, in all earnestness and sincerity, how it could have happened. ^{WE CAN'T EXPLAIN THIS CARELESS MENTAL PHENOMENON}

In some circumstances we have gone out deliberately to get drunk, feeling ourselves justified by nervousness, anger, worry, depression, jealousy or the like. But even in this type of beginning we are obliged to admit that our justification for a spree was ^{USUALLY} insufficient in the light of what ^{ALWAYS} happened. We now see that when we began to drink deliberately, instead of casually, there was little serious or effective thought during the period of premeditation of what the terrific consequences might be. ^{ILLUSION, DELUSION, 0856350}

Our behavior is as absurd and incomprehensible with respect to the first drink as that of an individual with a passion, say, for jay-walking. He gets a thrill out of skipping in front of fast-moving vehicles. He enjoys himself for a few years in spite of friendly warnings. Up to this point you would label him as a foolish

I JUST
DRINK

How CAN MY MIND
HOLD ITSELF IN CHECK?

DOES MY MIND
WORK LIKE THIS
EXAMPLE 7

KNOWLEDGE

chap having queer ideas of fun. Luck then deserts him and he is slightly injured several times in succession. You would expect him, if he were normal, to cut it out. Presently he is hit again and this time has a fractured skull. Within a week after leaving the hospital a fast-moving trolley car breaks his arm. He tells you he has decided to stop jay-walking for good, but in a few weeks he breaks both legs.

On through the years this conduct continues, accompanied by his continual promises to be careful or to keep off the streets altogether. Finally, he can no longer work, his wife gets a divorce and he is held up to ridicule. He tries every known means to get the jay-walking idea out of his head. He shuts himself up in an asylum, hoping to mend his ways. But the day he comes out he races in front of a fire engine, which breaks his back. Such a man would be crazy, wouldn't he? YES OR NO?

You may think our illustration is too ridiculous. But is it? We, who have been through the wringer, have to admit if we substituted alcoholism for jay-walking, the illustration would fit us exactly. However intelligent we may have been in other respects, where alcohol has been involved, we have been strangely insane. It's strong language—but isn't it true?

Some of you are thinking: "Yes, what you tell us is true, but it doesn't fully apply." We admit we have some of these symptoms, but we have not gone to the extremes you fellows did, nor are we likely to, for we understand ourselves so well after what you have told us that such things cannot happen again. We have not lost everything in life through drinking and we

certainly do not intend to. Thanks for the information."

That may be true of certain nonalcoholic people who, though drinking foolishly and heavily at the present time, are able to stop or moderate, because their brains and bodies have not been damaged as ours were. But the actual or potential alcoholic, with hardly an exception, will be absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge. This is a point we wish to emphasize and re-emphasize, to smash home upon our alcoholic readers as it has been revealed to us out of bitter experience. Let us take another illustration.

Fred is partner in a well known accounting firm. His income is good, he has a fine home, is happily married and the father of promising children of college age. He has so attractive a personality that he makes friends with everyone. If ever there was a successful business man, it is Fred. To all appearance he is a stable, well balanced individual. Yet, he is alcoholic. We first saw Fred about a year ago in a hospital where he had gone to recover from a bad case of jitters. It was his first experience of this kind, and he was much ashamed of it. Far from admitting he was an alcoholic, he told himself he came to the hospital to rest his nerves. The doctor intimated strongly that he might be worse than he realized. For a few days he was depressed about his condition. He made up his mind to quit drinking altogether. It never occurred to him that perhaps he could not do so, in spite of his character and standing. Fred would not believe himself an alcoholic, much less accept a spiritual remedy for his problem. We told him what

EGO/DELUSION

REJECTED STEP 1 + STEP 2

EXAMPLE Pg 20

DEFENSELESS - NO CHOICE
CAN NOT STOP

NO CHOICE
AM I LIKE THIS
KNOW?

we knew about alcoholism. He was interested and conceded that he had some of the symptoms, but he was a long way from admitting that he could do nothing about it himself. He was positive that this humiliating experience, plus the knowledge he had acquired, would keep him sober the rest of his life. Self-knowledge would fix it.)

KEEP ME SOBER
JUST BEING SOBER DOESN'T

We heard no more of Fred for a while. One day we were told that he was back in the hospital. This time he was quite shaky. He soon indicated he was anxious to see us. The story he told is most instructive, for there was a chap absolutely convinced he had to stop drinking, who had no excuse for drinking, who exhibited splendid judgment and determination in all his other concerns, yet was flat on his back nevertheless.

Let him tell you about it: "I was much impressed with what you fellows said about alcoholism, and I frankly did not believe it would be possible for me to drink again. I rather appreciated your ideas about the subtle insanity which precedes the first drink, but I was confident it could not happen to me after what I had learned. I reasoned I was not so far advanced as most of you fellows, that I had been usually successful in licking my other personal problems, and that I would therefore be successful where you men failed. I felt I had every right to be self-confident, that it would be only a matter of exercising my will power and keeping on guard."

"In this frame of mind, I went about my business and for a time all was well. I had no trouble refusing drinks, and began to wonder if I had not been making too hard work of a simple matter. One day I went to Washington to present some accounting evidence to

THE FEEL I WENT THROUGH
SO HOW MUCH DO MY FEELINGS REALLY MATTER?

a government bureau. I had been out of town before during this particular dry spell, so there was nothing new about that. Physically, I felt fine. Neither did I have any pressing problems or worries. My business came off well, I was pleased and knew my partners would be too. It was the end of a perfect day, not a cloud on the horizon.

BUYING THE LIE

"I went to my hotel and leisurely dressed for dinner. As I crossed the threshold of the dining room, the thought came to mind that it would be nice to have a couple of cocktails with dinner. That was all. Nothing more. I ordered a cocktail and my meal. Then I ordered another cocktail. After dinner I decided to take a walk. When I returned to the hotel it struck me a highball would be fine before going to bed, so I stepped into the bar and had one. I remember having several more that night and plenty next morning. I have a shadowy recollection of being in an airplane bound for New York, and of finding a friendly taxicab driver at the landing field instead of my wife. The driver escorted me about for several days. I know little of where I went or what I said and did. Then came the hospital with unbearable mental and physical suffering.

LOOK

"As soon as I regained my ability to think, I went carefully over that evening in Washington. Not only had I been off guard, I had made no fight whatever against the first drink. This time I had not thought of the consequences at all. I had commenced to drink as carelessly as though the cocktails were ginger ale. I now remembered what my alcoholic friends had told me, how they prophesied that if I had an alcoholic mind, the time and place would come—I would drink

MY SAVED UP MIND WAS IN
TROUBLE - NOW I WILL USE IT TO
FIGURE OUT WHAT HAPPENED

IS THIS WHY I CAN'T CHOOSE NOT TO DRINK WHEN I WANT?

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

EXPLAIN THIS TO YOURSELF?

again. They had said that though I did raise a defense, it would one day give way before some trivial reason for having a drink. Well, just that did happen and more, for what I had learned of alcoholism did not occur to me at all. I knew from that moment that I had an alcoholic mind. I saw that will power and self-knowledge would not help in those strange mental blank spots. I had never been able to understand people who said that a problem had them hopelessly defeated. I knew then. It was a crushing blow.

WANTS TO STOP BUT CANT

"Two of the members of Alcoholics Anonymous came to see me. They grinned, which I didn't like so much, and then asked me if I thought myself alcoholic and if I were really licked this time. I had to concede both propositions. They piled on me heaps of evidence to the effect that an alcoholic mentality, such as I had exhibited in Washington, was a hopeless condition. They cited cases out of their own experience by the dozen. This process snuffed out the last flicker of conviction that I could do the job myself.

WHAT WE DO TO RECOVER, NO MORE NO LESS
SET ASIDE PRAYER

Then they outlined the spiritual answer and program of action which a hundred of them had followed successfully. Though I had been only a nominal churchman, their proposals were not, intellectually, hard to swallow. But the program of action, though entirely sensible, was pretty drastic. It meant I would have to throw several lifelong conceptions out of the window. That was not easy. But the moment I made up my mind to go through with the process, I had the curious feeling that my alcoholic condition was relieved, as in fact it proved to be.

"Quite as important was the discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems. I have since

PROMISE THIS IS NOT JUST ABOUT DRINKING

COULD NOT DO ANYTHING BUT THE THIS HAPPENED

MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISMS

been brought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before. My old manner of life was by no means a bad one, but I would not exchange its best moments for the worst I have now. I would not go back to it even if I could."

NO CHOICE

Fred's story speaks for itself. We hope it strikes home to thousands like him. He had felt only the first nip of the wringer. Most alcoholics have to be pretty badly mangled before they really commence to solve their problems.

Many doctors and psychiatrists agree with our conclusions. One of these men, staff member of a world-renowned hospital, recently made this statement to some of us: "What you say about the general hopelessness of the average alcoholic's plight is, in my opinion, correct. As to two of you men, whose stories I have heard, there is no doubt in my mind that you were 100% hopeless, apart from divine help. Had you offered yourselves as patients at this hospital, I would not have taken you, if I had been able to avoid it. People like you are too heartbreaking. Though not a religious person, I have profound respect for the spiritual approach in such cases as yours. For most cases, there is virtually no other solution."

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. Some think Beyond Human Power

Summary of pg 23-43

- IS THIS ACCEPTABLE TO ME SO FAR?
- DO I NEED AN ENTIRE PSYCHIC CHANGE?
- IS MY OWN POWER GOOD ENOUGH?
- IF I HAVE RESERVATIONS AT THIS POINT, IT MEANS I HAVE RESERVATIONS IN MY ALCOHOLIC

DPS OPINION + 43 pages TO LOOK AT THIS

I MUST SEE MY INSANITY IN STEP 2 BEFORE I UNDERSTAND MY NEED FOR SHANTY IN STEP 2 Chapter 4 "WHAT OUR LIVES BECAME AVAILABLE"

WE AGNOSTICS 1st 1/2 STEP 2 ENDS

FINAL CHECK LIST FOR MENTAL + PHYSICAL

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. CAN I DO IT MYSELF MY WAY?

THEN I DON'T NEED A HIGHER POWER

THE STEPS IN THIS BOOK

To one who feels he is an atheist or agnostic such an experience seems impossible, but to continue as he is means disaster. Especially if he is an alcoholic of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face. IS THIS A MATTER OF CHOICE? But it isn't so difficult. About half our original fellowship were of exactly that type. At first some of us tried to avoid the issue, hoping against hope we were not true alcoholics. But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life—or else. Perhaps it is going to be that way with you. But cheer up, something like half of us thought we were atheists or agnostics. Our experience shows that you need not be disconcerted. If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us

ATHEIST - THERE IS NO GOD AGNOSTIC - DOESN'T KNOW IF GOD WILL WORK FOR THEM

JUST THIS BOOK AND THIS PROCESS (CAN'T SHARE ME. I NEED POWER TO BRING IT ON, POWER I DON'T HAVE)

WE AGNOSTICS

Look at my experience would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could wish these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn't there. Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly. CAN I SUCCESSFULLY RUN MY LIFE?

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? pg 55

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 problems. That means we have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God. Here difficulty arises with agnostics. Many times we talk to a new man and watch his hope rise as we discuss his alcoholic problems and explain our fellowship. But his face falls when we speak of spiritual matters, especially when we mention God, for we have re-opened a subject which our man thought he had neatly evaded or entirely ignored. OR GAVE UP ON ENTIRELY?

OLD IDEAS We know how he feels. We have shared his honest doubt and prejudice. Some of us have been violently anti-religious. To others, the word "God" brought up a particular idea of Him with which someone had tried to impress them during childhood. Perhaps we rejected this particular conception because it seemed inadequate. With that rejection we imagined we had abandoned the God idea entirely. We were bothered by UNMANAGEABILITY PREVENTS ME FROM FINDING THIS POWER ON MY OWN

WHAT IS THIS BOOK FOR?

I JUST CAN'T BE MORAL, HAPPY NO MORE THEN WHAT

with the thought that faith and dependence upon a Power beyond ourselves was somewhat weak, even cowardly. We look upon this world of warring individuals, warring theological systems, and inexplicable calamity, with deep skepticism. We looked askance at many individuals who claimed to be godly. How could a Supreme Being have anything to do with it all? And who could comprehend a Supreme Being anyhow? Yet, in other moments, we found ourselves thinking, when enchanted by a starlit night, "Who, then, made all this?" There was a feeling of awe and wonder, but it was fleeting and soon lost.

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. Do not have to understand it.

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 too hard terms with those who seek Him. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all men.

When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean our 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 was all we needed to commence spiritual growth, to effect our first conscious relation with God as we understood Him. Afterward, we found ourselves accepting many things which then seemed entirely out of reach. That was growth, but if we wished to grow we had to begin somewhere. So we used our own conception, however limited it was. *IS MY CONCEPTION LIMITED*

We needed to ask ourselves 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.*

That was great news to us, for we had assumed we could not make use of spiritual principles unless we accepted many things on faith which seemed difficult to believe. When people presented us with spiritual approaches, how frequently did we all say, "I wish I had what that man has. I'm sure it would work if I could only believe as he believes. But I cannot accept as surely true the many articles of faith which are so plain to him." So it was comforting to learn that we could commence at a simpler level.

Besides a *SEEKING* inability to accept much on faith.

* Please be sure to read Appendix II on "Spiritual Experience."

CAME TO BELIEVE - NOT INSTANT ANSWERS

WHAT'S WRONG?

WE ARE SILENT HERE

PROMISE TO GET RESULTS

GOD IS NOT HIDING

PROVIDED I TAKE THE REST OF THE STEPS?

HONESTY OPEN MINDS WILLINGNESS

TRUST IN MY WAY!!

ASK QUESTION TO MEMBERS

1ST STEP IS THE FOUNDATION

BEFORE I AM SOLICITOUS

I CAN USE "I'MS POWER"

I'm in for some pain

SOONER OR LATER

Why is there such a problem to believe

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 else will be prejudiced for as long as some of us were.

The reader may still ask why he should believe in a Power greater than himself. We think there are good reasons. Let us have a look at some of them.

The practical individual of today is a stickler for facts and results. Nevertheless, the twentieth century readily accepts theories of all kinds, provided they are firmly grounded in fact. We have numerous theories, for example, about electricity. Everybody believes them without a murmur of doubt. Why this ready acceptance? Simply because it is impossible to explain what we see, feel, direct, and use, without a reasonable assumption as a starting point. ^{THAT GOD CAN + WILL INFLUENCE MY} Everybody nowadays, believes in scores of assumption-life

tions for which there is good evidence, but no perfect visual proof. And does not science demonstrate that visual proof is the weakest proof? It is being constantly revealed, as mankind studies the material world, that outward appearances are not inward reality at all. To illustrate:

I BETTER GET SOME THING PRACTICAL FROM THE STEPS
SOME THING I CAN SEE + FEEL IN MY LIFE.
THE PROSAC STEEL GIRDER IS A MASS OF ELECTRONS WHIRLING AROUND EACH OTHER AT INCREDIBLE SPEED. THOSE TINY BODIES ARE GOVERNED BY PRECISE LAWS, AND THESE LAWS HOLD TRUE THROUGHOUT THE MATERIAL WORLD. SCIENCE TELLS US SO. WE HAVE NO REASON TO DOUBT IT. WHEN, HOWEVER, THE PERFECTLY LOGICAL ASSUMPTION IS SUGGESTED THAT UNDERNEATH THE MATERIAL WORLD AND LIFE AS WE SEE IT, THERE IS AN ALL POWERFUL, GUIDING, CREATIVE INTELLIGENCE, RIGHT THERE OUR PERVERSE STREAK COMES TO THE SURFACE AND WE LABORIOUSLY SET OUT TO CONVINCE OURSELVES IT ISN'T SO. WE READ WORDY BOOKS AND INDULGE IN WINDY ARGUMENTS, THINKING WE BELIEVE THIS UNIVERSE NEEDS NO GOD TO EXPLAIN IT. WERE OUR CONTENTIONS TRUE, IT WOULD FOLLOW THAT LIFE ORIGINATED OUT OF NOTHING, MEANS NOTHING, AND PROCEEDS NOWHERE.

I'm NOT THREATENED BY ATOMS.
DOES GOD THREATEN ME TOO?

ing around each other at incredible speed. Those tiny bodies are governed by precise laws, and these laws hold true throughout the material world. Science tells us so. We have no reason to doubt it. When, however, the perfectly logical assumption is suggested that underneath the material world and life as we see it, there is an All Powerful, Guiding, Creative Intelligence, right there our perverse streak comes to the surface and we laboriously set out to convince ourselves it isn't so. We read wordy books and indulge in windy arguments, thinking we believe this universe needs no God to explain it. Were our contentions true, it would follow that life originated out of nothing, means nothing, and proceeds nowhere.

Instead of regarding ourselves as intelligent agents, spearheads of God's ever advancing Creation, we agnostics and atheists chose to believe that our human intelligence was the last word, the alpha and the omega, the beginning and end of all. Rather vain of us, wasn't it?

We, who have traveled this dubious path, beg you to lay aside prejudice, even against organized religion. We have learned that whatever the human frailties of various faiths may be, those faiths have given purpose and direction to millions. People of faith have a logical idea of what life is all about. Actually, we used to have no reasonable conception whatever. We used to amuse ourselves by cynically dissecting spiritual beliefs and practices when we might have observed that many spiritually-minded persons of all races, colors, and creeds were demonstrating a degree of stability, happiness and usefulness which we should have sought ourselves. DO I HAVE HAPPINESS, USEFULNESS
OR STABILITY?

What I think I believe
AM I so POWERFUL?

SOUR GRAPES - IT I THINK IT'S OUT OF MY REACH
MY EGO WILL TELL ME I DON'T WANT IT

I ALWAYS ZERO IN ON WHATS WRONG

DO I HAVE THIS?

HAD TO DIE TO LIVE?

50 ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

Instead, we looked at the human defects of these people, and sometimes used their shortcomings as a basis of wholesale condemnation. We talked of intolerance, while we were intolerant ourselves. We missed the reality and the beauty of the forest because we were diverted by the ugliness of some of its trees. We never gave the spiritual side of life a fair hearing.

In our personal stories you will find a wide variation in the way each teller approaches and conceives of the Power which is greater than himself. Whether we agree with a particular approach or conception seems to make little difference. Experience has taught us that these are matters about which, for our purpose, we need not be worried. They are questions for each individual to settle for himself.

On one proposition, however, these men and women are strikingly agreed. ~~Every~~ ^{ALL} one of them has gained access to, and believes in, a Power greater than himself. This Power has in each case accomplished the miraculous, the humanly impossible. As a celebrated American statesman put it, "Let's look at the record."

Here are thousands of men and women, worldly indeed. They flatly declare that since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain ^{new} attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking. In the face of collapse and despair, in the face of the total failure of their human resources, they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them. This happened soon after they wholeheartedly met a few simple requirements. Once con-

* LAY ASIDE PREJUDICE - THINK HONESTLY - SEARCH DILIGENTLY WITHIN MYSELF - I CAN FIND GOD

WHAT IT WAS LIKE

WHAT HAPPENED

ALL I THINK I KNOW

51 WE AGNOSTICS

LITTLE OF POWER fused and baffled by the seeming futility of existence. They show the underlying reasons why they were making heavy going of life. Leaving aside the drink question, they tell why living was so unsatisfactory. They show how the change came over them. When many hundreds of people are able to say that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith. ^{NOT THE BELIEF IN GOD}

This world of ours has made more material progress in the last century than in all the millenniums which went before. Almost everyone knows the reason. Students of ancient history tell us that the intellect of men in those days was equal to the best of today. Yet in ancient times material progress was painfully slow. The spirit of modern scientific inquiry, research and invention was almost unknown. In the realm of the material, men's minds were fettered by superstition, tradition, and all sorts of fixed ideas. Some of the contemporaries of Columbus thought a round earth preposterous. Others came near putting Galileo to death for his astronomical heresies.

We asked ourselves this: Are not some of us just as biased and unreasonable about the realm of the spirit ^{as} ~~as~~ ^{as} were the ancients about the realm of the material? Even in the present century, American newspapers were afraid to print an account of the Wright brothers' first successful flight at Kitty Hawk. Had not all efforts at flight failed before? Did not Professor Langley's flying machine go to the bottom of the Potomac River? Was it not true that the best mathematical minds had proved man could never fly? Had not people said God had reserved this privilege to the

THE SHOW - EVEN SOBER

PROBLEM

birds? Only thirty years later the conquest of the air was almost an old story and airplane travel was in full swing.

But in most fields our generation has witnessed complete liberation of our thinking. Show any Longshoreman a Sunday supplement describing a proposal to explore the moon by means of a rocket and he will say, "I bet they do it—maybe not so long either." Is not our age characterized by the ease with which we discard old ideas for new, by the complete readiness with which we throw away the theory or gadget which does not work for something new which does?

We had to ask ourselves why we shouldn't apply to our human problems this same readiness to change our point of view. We were having trouble with personal relationships, we couldn't control our emotional natures, we were a prey to misery and depression, we couldn't make a living, we had a feeling of uselessness, we were full of fear, we were unhappy, we couldn't seem to be of real help to other people—was not a basic solution of these bedevilements more important than whether we should see newsreels of lunar flight? Of course it was. *A Guide for Today*

When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did.

The Wright brothers' almost childish faith that they could build a machine which would fly was the main-spring of their accomplishment. Without that, nothing could have happened. We agnostics and atheists were sticking to the idea that self-sufficiency would solve our problems. When others showed us that "God-suf-

iciency" worked with them, we began to feel like those who had insisted the Wrights would never fly.

Logic is great stuff. We liked it. We still like it. It is not by chance we were given the power to reason, to examine the evidence of our senses, and to draw conclusions. That is one of man's magnificent attributes. We agnostically inclined would not feel satisfied with a proposal which does not lend itself to reasonable approach and interpretation. Hence we are at pains to tell why we think our ^{of} ^{call} ^{of} ^{it} ^{is} present faith is reasonable, why we think it more sane and logical to believe than not to believe, why we say our former thinking was soft and mushy when we threw up our hands in doubt and said, "We don't know." *I don't have the answer?*

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?

Arrived at this point, we were squarely confronted with the question of faith. We couldn't duck the issue. Some of us had already walked far over the Bridge of Reason toward the desired shore of faith. The outlines and the promise of the New Land had brought lustre to tired eyes and fresh courage to flagging spirits. Friendly hands had stretched out in welcome. We were grateful that Reason had brought us so far. But somehow, we couldn't quite step ashore. Perhaps we had been leaning too heavily on Reason that last mile and we did not like to lose our support.

That was natural, but let us think a little more closely. Without knowing it, had we not been brought to where we stood by a certain kind of faith? For did

WILLING TO BELIEVE
ANTI PROMISES

WE WERE WRONG AGAIN

② Unhappy
ALCOHOLICS
Some Set Dialogue
My Name

Set Aside
Prayer

CAN I LET GO BEFORE I UNDERSTAND IT?

NO! HAVE LEFT TO FIGURE OUT

LO + HAVE
Doubt?

we not believe in our own reasoning? Did we not have confidence in our ability to think? What was that but a sort of faith? ^{YES} Yes, we had been faithful, ^{RIGHTLY} objectively faithful to the God of Reason. So, in one way or another, we discovered that faith had been involved all the time!

We found, too, that we had been worshippers. What a state of mental goose-flesh that used to bring on! Had we not variegously worshipped people, sentiment, things, money, and ourselves? And then, with a better motive, had we not worshipfully beheld the sunset, the sea, or a flower? Who of us had not loved something or somebody? How much did these feelings, these loves, these worships, have to do with pure reason? Little or nothing, ^{JUST EXPLAIN IT} we saw at last. Were not these things the tissue out of which our lives were constructed? Did not these feelings, after all, determine the course of our existence? It was impossible to say we had no capacity for faith, or love, or worship. In one form or another we had been living by faith and little else.

Imagine life without faith! Were nothing left but pure reason, it wouldn't be life. But we believed in life—of course we did. We could not prove life in the sense that you can prove a straight line is the shortest distance between two points, yet, there it was. Could we still say the whole thing was nothing but a mass of electrons, created out of nothing, meaning nothing, whirling on to a destiny of nothingness? Of course we couldn't. The electrons themselves seemed more intelligent than that. At least, so the chemist said.

Hence, we saw that reason isn't everything. Neither is reason, as most of us use it, entirely dependable,

CAN I PROVE GOD OR LIFE?

AM I DRIVEN BY THESE THINGS?

ALL I EVER RELIED ON

though it emanate from our best minds. What about people who proved that man could never fly?

Yet we had been seeing another kind of flight, a spiritual liberation from this world, people who rose above their problems. They said God made these things possible, and we only smiled. We had seen spiritual release, but liked to tell ourselves it wasn't true.

IF LACK OF POWER IS THE PROBLEM
THIS IS WHERE TO LOOK

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 cantanity, 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.

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. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. It was so with us.

We can only clear the ground a bit. If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice, enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then, if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway. With this attitude you cannot fail. The consciousness of your belief is sure to come to you. ^{PROVISE}

In this book you will read the experience of a man who thought he was an atheist. His story is so interesting that some of it should be told now. His change of heart was dramatic, convincing, and moving.

STEP 2 471742
Pg 56, Pg 27

Our friend was a minister's son. He attended church school, where he became rebellious at what he thought an overdose of religious education. For years thereafter he was dogged by trouble and frustration. Business failure, insanity, fatal illness, suicide—these calamities in his immediate family embittered and depressed him. Post-war disillusionment, even more serious alcoholism, impending mental and physical collapse, brought him to the point of self-destruction. STEP 1

One night, when confined in a hospital, he was approached by an alcoholic who had known a spiritual experience. Our friend's ^{DISGUST}gorge rose as he bitterly cried out: "If there is a God, He certainly hasn't done anything for me!" But later, alone in his room, he asked himself this question: "Is it possible that all the religious people I have known are wrong?" While pondering the answer he felt as though he lived in hell. Then, like a thunderbolt, a great thought came. It crowded out all else: IT WOULD THAT SHOWS ME

"Who are you to say there is no God?" THERE IS A

This man recounts that he tumbled out of bed to his knees. In a few seconds he was overwhelmed by a conviction of the Presence of God. It poured over and through him with the certainty and majesty of a great tide at flood. The barriers he had built through the years were swept away. He stood in the Presence of Infinite Power and Love. He had stepped from bridge to shore. For the first time, he lived in conscious companionship with his Creator.

Thus was our friend's cornerstone fixed in place. No later vicissitude ^{DEATH} has shaken it. His alcoholic problem was taken away. That very night, years ago, it dis-

gone

HE CAN'T DRINK
NO CHOICE

appeared. Save for a few brief moments of temptation the thought of drink has never returned; and at such times a great revulsion has risen up in him. ^{FROM WITHIN HIS MIND}Seemingly he could not drink even if he would. God had restored his sanity. pg 43 I WOULD NOT GO BACK EVEN IF I COULD

What is this but a miracle of healing? Yet its elements are simple. Circumstances made him willing to believe. He humbly offered himself to his Maker—then he knew.

Even so has God restored us all to our right minds. To this man, the revelation was sudden. Some of us grow into it more slowly. But He has come to all who have honestly sought Him.

When we drew near to Him He disclosed Himself to us!

- STEP 1 BEAT ME INTO A STATE OF
RENEWALNESS

- STEP 2 IS NOT ABOUT KNOWLEDGE OR
UNDERSTANDING OF GOD, BUT SEEMINGLY
NEED FOR POWER

- HAVE I FACED THE FACT I MUST
LIVE ON A SPIRITUAL BASIS?
pg 44

① WHERE DOES COME FROM?
② OPEN Minded DESPERATE

Chapter 5

HOW IT WORKS

REARELY HAVE we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it—then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely. SET ASIDE PRAYERS Remember that we deal with alcohol—cunning, baff-

NOT HOW MUCH
I DRANK

How TO SPEAK

IF GOD HAS ALL THE POWER, WHERE IS
HOW IT WORKS MYNE? 59

fling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

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.

BEFORE I DRANK?

if the rest of the world would only behave; the outlaw safe cracker who thinks society has wronged him; and the alcoholic who has lost all and is locked up. Whatever our protestations, are not most of us concerned with ourselves, our resentments, or our self-pity?

Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us seemingly without provocation but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt. PEOPLE DO NOT HURT US WHAT WE DO NOT LET THEM DO

HOPE

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us. GOD makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help.

WILL I DIE?

CAN NOT HACK AT A WHEEL

This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father and we are His children. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.

DO I GET HURT BE TELLING WHAT I THINK I WANT?

3RD STEP DECISION

3RD STEP PROMISES

HOW IT WORKS

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When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.

We were now at Step Three. Many of us said to our Maker, as we understood Him: "God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!" We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him.

We found it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as our wife, best friend, or spiritual adviser. But it is better to meet God alone than with one who might misunderstand. The wording was, of course, quite optional so long as we expressed the idea, voicing it without reservation. This was only a beginning, though if honestly and humbly made, an effect, sometimes a very great one, was felt at once.

Now Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning.

which many of us had never attempted. ^QThough our ^{3rd Step} decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions.

Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. *This was Step Four.* A business which takes no regular inventory usually ^{somehow} goes broke. Taking a ^{personal} commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret. If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values.

We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up, ^Qwhich caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations. *Where Does Self Come out of?*

Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. ^QWhen the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. ^QWe listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry. We asked ourselves why we were angry. In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships

(including sex) were hurt or threatened. So we were sore. We were "burned up."

On our grudge list we set opposite each name our injuries. Was it our self-esteem, our security, our ambitions, our personal, or sex relations, which had been interfered with?

We were usually as definite as this example:

<i>I'm resentful at:</i>	<i>The Cause</i>	<i>Affects me:</i>
Mr. Brown	His attention to my wife.	Sex relations, Self-esteem, <u>fear</u>
	Told my wife of my mistress.	Sex relations, Self-esteem, <u>fear</u>
	Brown may get my job at the office.	Security, Self-esteem, <u>fear</u>
Mrs. Jones	She's a nut—she snubbed me. She committed her husband for drinking.	Personal relationship, Self-esteem, <u>fear</u>
	He's my friend.	
	She's a gossip.	
My employer	Unreasonable—Unjust — Overbearing — Threatens to fire me for drinking and padding my expense account.	Self-esteem, <u>fear</u> , Security
My wife	Misunderstands and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name.	<u>Pride</u> —Personal sex relations—Security, <u>fear</u>
	We went back through our lives. ^Q Nothing counted but <u>thoroughness</u> and <u>honesty</u> . ^Q When we were finished we considered it carefully. ^Q The first thing ap-	

parent was that this world ^Q and its people were often quite wrong. To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got. ^Q The usual outcome was that people continued to wrong us and we stayed sore. Sometimes it was remorse and then we were sore at ourselves. ^Q But the more we fought and tried to have our own way, the worse matters got. ^Q As in war, the victor only *seemed* to win. Our moments of triumph were short-lived. *NOT JUST ME*

It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worth while. But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die.

If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be the dubious luxury of normal men, but for alcoholics these things are poison. *COLUMNS 1-3*

We turned back to the list, for it held the key to the future. We were prepared to look at it from an entirely different angle. ^Q We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. *2nd Column* In that state, the wrong-doing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill. How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol.

This was our course: We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick.

COLUMN 2

Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too.

PRAYER
We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves: "This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. They will be done."

4th STEP PROMISE
We avoid retaliation or argument. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. We cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one.

4th COLUMN
Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where ^Q had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. Where ^Q were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other man's. When we saw our faults we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.

Notice that the word "fear" is bracketed alongside the difficulties with Mr. Brown, Mrs. Jones, the employer, and the wife. This short word somehow touches about every aspect of our lives. ^Q It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. ^Q It set in motion trains of circumstances which brought us misfortune we felt we didn't deserve. ^Q But did not we, ourselves, set the ball rolling? Sometimes

we think fear ought to be classed with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble.

We reviewed our fears thoroughly. ^Q We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. ^Q We asked ourselves why we had them. Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? Self-reliance was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough. Some of us once had great self-confidence, but it didn't fully solve the fear problem, or any other. When it made us cocky, it was worse.

Perhaps there is a better way—we think so. For we are now on a different basis; the basis of trusting and relying upon God. We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. ^Q We are in the world to play the role He assigns. Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity.

We never apologize to anyone for depending upon our Creator. We can laugh at those who think spirituality the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear. Promise

Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there. But above all, we tried to be sensible on this question. It's so easy to get way off the track. Here we find human opinions running to extremes—absurd extremes, perhaps. One set of voices cry that sex is a lust of our lower nature, a base necessity of procrea-

tion. Then we have the voices who cry for sex and more sex; who bewail the institution of marriage; who think that most of the troubles of the race are traceable to sex causes. They think we do not have enough of it, or that it isn't the right kind. They see its significance everywhere. One school would allow man no flavor for his fare and the other would have us all on a straight pepper diet. We want to stay out of this controversy. We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct. We all have sex problems. We'd hardly be human if we didn't. What can we do about them?

We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? Where were we at fault, what should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it.

In this way we tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life. We subjected each relation to this test—was it selfish or not? We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them. We remembered always that our sex powers were God-given and therefore good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly nor to be despised and loathed.

Whatever our ideal turns out to be, we must be willing to grow toward it. We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing. In other words, we treat sex as we would any other problem. In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come, if we want it.

God alone can judge our sex situation. Counsel with