

Why We Should Study the Big Book

The rhetoric HEARD in meetings compared to THE PROGRAM of Alcoholics Anonymous

(The origins of this document are from Cliff B., Primary Purpose Groups, Dallas. Much material has been added)

Since the suggestion made by “The Grapevine” in the late 60s that ‘Discussion Meetings’ might be a good idea, there has been a change in the content of meetings from ones that focused on The Program of Alcoholics Anonymous to ‘group therapy free-for-alls’ where anyone and everyone (non-alcoholics also) is privileged (even encouraged) to speak on whatever might be on their mind. In the 80s, treatment centers, the justice system, and mental health facilities started requiring attendance at AA meetings. Their rhetoric also contributed to the watering down of the original, strong message of A.A. Some in recovery attend various 12-Step fellowships and assume whatever they hear is interchangeable and they bring these clichés to AA meetings. Also, the “personal stories” are NOT THE Program of A.A.

Therefore, we now hear a lot of stuff said in meetings that cannot be reconciled with the Program as described in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. The result of all this has been a severe decline in the success rate of alcoholics finding lasting recovery.

From the Foreword to the First Edition of the A.A. text. “We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book.”

NOTE: “PRECISELY” means, “Exactly or sharply defined or stated. Minutely exact; not varying in the slightest degree from truth.” Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary – circa 1936.

There is also a HUGE amount of misleading information from Rehabs and treatment centers informing their ‘graduates’ of THEIR own views and opinions (outside issues) of AA and NA. They lump all 12-step programs together; suggest when they can start sponsoring others; that they don’t need AA for a lifetime (which is true if they’re not REAL alcoholics); to learn to rely on people they meet (their ‘new friends’ will keep them sober, for sher-r-rr); encourage them to take it easy and WHEN they relapse, to just start again and maybe try following some suggestions this time; to find their own path through recovery (right out the door, probably).

No wonder they come in already loaded up with THEIR program and an entitlement attitude (*I’m unique and the most important person here so you better not judge me, fool. I already know enough to rewrite that old AA book of yours*).

So, what IS the TRUTH according to the first one hundred recovered alkies?

“If you are an alcoholic who wants to get over it, you may be asking – ‘what do I have to do?’ It is the purpose of this book to answer such questions specifically. We shall tell you what we have done.” pg. 20
“Lack of power 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? Well, that is exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself that will solve your problem.” pg. 45
“Further on, “clear-cut directions are given showing how we recovered.” pg. 29

Here are some of the opinions, perspectives, and slogans often heard in the rooms—and what the Big Book has to say about it:

Heard - “Just don’t drink, and go to meetings.” or “If you don’t drink—you won’t get drunk.”

“Don’t drink” are words you would expect to hear from a non-alcoholic. If a person knew how to “Don’t drink,” they would have no reason to go to meetings. “We are without defense against that first drink,” remember?

TEXT – “We feel a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough.” pg. 82

“The message which can interest and hold these alcoholic people must have depth and weight.” pg. xxviii

Heard - “Think before you drink;” “Just play the tape through;” “Remember your last drink.”

Are we to use our ‘alcoholic thinking?’ Like when we USED TO try to control our drinking? That may keep a hard-drinker from getting drunk, but not a real alcoholic who has a peculiar mental twist that precedes the first drink.

TEXT – “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.” pg. 43

“We are without defense against the first drink.” “We are unable at certain times to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago.” pg. 24

Heard - “Don’t drink, no matter what;” or “Just put the plug in the jug.”

Real alcoholics drink, no matter what. It is impossible for the alcoholic to control his or her drinking. This is the nature of alcoholism. A.A. is for people who can’t stop drinking.

Heard - “Just keep coming back/stick around... you’ll be okay.”

That is a lie... NOT rigorous honesty. Dry drinking is just as painful and purposeless as the life of a wet booze drinker. We can’t carry a message to someone who doesn’t want to hear it—it’s best to leave him alone.

TEXT – “Here are the steps we took which are suggested as a program of recovery.” pg 59

“If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die.” pg 15

“... unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.” pg. xxix(xxvii)

Heard - “I have a choice of whether or not I take a drink today.” “Alcohol was my drug of choice.”

Then why do they come to Alcoholics Anonymous meetings? They apparently don’t need recovery.

TEXT – “The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink.” pg. 24

“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 to a man that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better.” pg. 30

Heard - “Don’t drink even if your ass falls off.”

Pretty ridiculous. An untreated alcoholic usually **would** reach for a drink if their “ass started falling off!” ...and if it is, he/she may still be living in the ‘bedevilmments’ listed on page 52 of the Big Book.

TEXT – “Many of us felt we had plenty of character. 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.” pg. 34

Heard - “Meeting-makers make it.” Or “my medicine for sobriety is right here in these meetings.”

This implies that going to lots of meetings—and not drinking in between—is how the program of Alcoholics Anonymous works. The fact is that meetings exist so hope can be brought to those who seek an answer to their dilemma ...the Primary Purpose of EACH group is to carry this message. The only thing that “meeting-makers” make however, is meetings and sobriety for another hour. Recovery is not acquired by osmosis and does not ‘rub off on us.’

TEXT – “Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery” pg. 59 “He has read this volume and says he is prepared to go through with the Twelve Steps of the program of recovery.” pg. 96

“It also indicated that strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent recovery.” pg. xvii

Heard - “Making meetings is a means of spiritual growth.”

Really? Who knows where this one came from? Have only heard this from people who accuse AA of being a cult; used as a criticism. It is certainly not from the Big Book or 12&12.

TEXT – “For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he didn’t work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die.” pgs.14-15

Heard - “I haven’t had a drink today so I am a complete success.”

No, you’re just sober today. You’re just taking evasive actions and ‘white-knuckling’ instead of living the solution.

TEXT – “The elimination of drinking is but a beginning. A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations and affairs.” pg. 19

“Sometimes we hear an alcoholic say that the only thing he needs to do is to keep sober. Certainly he must keep sober, for there will be no home if he doesn’t. But he is yet a long way from making good to the wife or parents whom for years he has so shockingly treated.” pg. 82

“We feel a man is unthinking when he says sobriety is enough.” pg. 82

Heard - “The gift of sobriety.”

A GIFT= a present that is given, not paid for. ‘Staying sober’ and ‘becoming recovered’ are different things.

TEXT – “Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid.” pg. 14

“The fact is that he should work with other people to maintain his own sobriety.” pg. 119

Heard - "Go to 90 meetings in 90 days."

TEXT – "We (chronic alcoholics) are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink." pg. 24

"Here are **the steps** we took, which are suggested as **a program of recovery**" pg. 59

THIS IS NOT PART OF AA'S PROGRAM. Why would a right thinking member of Alcoholics Anonymous direct a newcomer to sit in meetings with untreated alcoholics to listen to them "discuss their issues"—their resentments, problems, ideas, and opinions—for 90 meetings in as many days? **This phrase comes directly from the NA text** (p 53). It is often required by rehabs and treatment centers. It has proved to be a death sentence for many alcoholics. **The STEPS are the Program of Recovery, not meeting attendance.**

A better way is "12 Steps in 4 sessions" as they used to do in Beginner Meetings.

{Although treatment centers and NA endorse 90-in-90, the original program of AA, did not. In the 40s, after the Plain Dealer article, the Cleveland Salvation Army introduced the saying '90-in-90' after providing beds, with a 3-month limit, for alcoholics after AA was flooded with requests. Cleveland broke AA's philosophy when they became allied with an outside organization, and the saying stuck. Cleveland's statistics revealed that no one gained any long-term sobriety using that plan. So they separated from the Salvation Army with a valuable lesson: stick to the methods proven successful—alkies taking alkies through the steps and doing it pronto. After Cleveland got back to doing that instead of the 90-in-90-Salvation-Army plan, the AA's got a 93% success rate over the next several decades. (As told by Chief Blackhawk, Detroit, had 40 years in October, 1998)}

Heard - "You don't need to rush into taking the steps. Take your time."

For the binge drinker or a 'required to attend' newcomer, sure. If the newcomer whose life depends on it doesn't rush into taking the steps, they will most likely rush into a bar or liquor store. "Easy Does It" is often cited as reassurance that there is no need to hurry taking the steps. It really refers to not expecting a complete personality change immediately—the results take time to manifest. Sobriety is a new way of living that must be learned step by step. (The three slogans on page 135 are directed toward the families of alcoholic newcomers.)

TEXT – "Half measures availed us nothing." pg. 59 "If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any lengths to get it--then you are ready to take certain steps." "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." pg 58

"We vigorously commenced this way of living, as we cleaned up the past." pg 84

"On your first visit tell him (your prospect) about the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. If he shows interest, lend him your copy of this book." pg. 94

"Suppose now you are making your second visit to a man. He has read this volume and says he is prepared to go through with the Twelve Steps of the program of recovery." pg. 96

"We, in our turn, sought the same escape with all the desperation of drowning men." pg. 28

Heard - "This is a 'suggested' program. You can work it any way you want to."

The term "suggested" implies the need for a **voluntary decision**. The Steps are our life-saving directions. The whole program is suggested for recovery; the 12 steps are a package, never intended to be dissected and done "my day, my way."

TEXT – "To show others precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book." (The Big Book, that is.) pg. xiii.

"Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery: ..." pg. 59

Dr. Bob is quoted as saying, "There is no such thing as individual interpretation of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous."

Heard - "I have to put myself first. This is a selfish program."

TEXT – "Selfishness – self centeredness! That we think is the root of our troubles." "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!" pg. 62

"Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I receive. But that would be in great measure." pg.13

"While I lay in the hospital the thought came that there were thousands of hopeless alcoholics who might be glad to have what had so freely been given me. Perhaps, I could help some of them. They in turn might work with others." pg. 14

"It is important for him to realize that your attempt to pass this on to him plays a vital part in your own recovery. Actually, he may be helping you more than you are helping him." pg. 94

A paradox of Alcoholics Anonymous is that we come to A.A. to save our lives and learn we must pass our message of hope on to others if we are to live. So, the Program of A.A. is both selfish and it is selfless. We are to use prudent selfishness while remembering that this is a GIVE program not a TAKE program.

Heard - "There are no instructions for 'sponsorship' in the Big Book."

Isn't 'sponsorship' basically 'working with others'? What is the title of the Chapter following, "INTO ACTION?" Chapter 7 gives clear-cut directions on how to successfully "sponsor" alcoholics who are willing to go to any length for victory over alcohol.

TEXT – Chapter 7 is titled, 'WORKING WITH OTHERS' "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." pg. 60

"PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics." pg. 89

Bill's story shows the example that the process involved in 'taking the steps' is best done quickly.

Heard - "I have to get a Sponsor," or "My sponsee(s)."

TEXT – "That the man who is making the approach has had the same difficulty, that he obviously knows what he is talking about, that his whole deportment shouts at the new prospect that he is a man with a real answer, that he has no attitude of Holier Than Thou, nothing whatever except the sincere desire to be helpful; that there are no fees to pay, axes to grind, no people to please (except your Sponsor?), no lectures to be endured—these are the conditions we have found most effective." pgs. 18-19

"Continue to speak of alcoholism as an illness, a fatal malady. ...But you may talk to him about the hopelessness of alcoholism because you offer a solution. You will soon have your friend admitting he has many, if not all, of the traits of the alcoholic. If his own doctor is willing to tell him that he is alcoholic, so much the better. Even though your protégé may not have entirely admitted his condition, he has become very curious to know how you got well." pgs. 92 & 93

In the Basic Text, the word "friend" is used many times; the word "prospect" is used eleven (11). The word "protégé" is used one (1) time; the word "sponsee" cannot be found in the Basic Text. Nor can we find the word "sponsee." In fact, neither can they be found in current dictionaries. The good oldtimers often referred to them as 'pigeons' or 'babies' because they were reborn while going through the steps. A sponsor has been excepted as someone who introduces his takes his protégé through the steps... it is not a life-time commitment.

Heard - "We have to live life on life's terms."

TEXT – "Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us." pg. 77

"We found that God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him." pg. 46

"We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them." pg. 69

It appears from this that we are to learn to live our life on God's terms. Life's terms are harsh in a "dog-eat-dog" world. Our problems were caused by our instincts run wild. The ONLY reference to "life's terms" anywhere in the Big Book is in a personal story, which IS NOT PART OF THE AA PROGRAM... that is part of ONE person's spiritual journey which we should NOT try to recreate.

Heard - "Keep it Simple—don't work too hard or think too much."

"Keep It Simple" has become a permanent A.A. cop-out." (Quoted from Tex B, a friend of Bill and Dr Bob). He admitted to spreading this phrase as a misinterpretation of Dr Bob's last message about the simplicity of the program, and not to louse it up with Freudian complexes.

TEXT – "I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within." pg. 13

"Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.... Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.... Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use." pg. 86

"What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind." pg. 87

It seems we are expected to use our new, recovered thinking on a daily basis, asking God for guidance. And daily work is necessary for survival!

TEXT – "For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead." pg. 15

"It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it." pg. 86

"They (the promises) will always materialize if we work for them." pg. 84

Heard - "Wait until they are ready. They'll show up and ask for a sponsor."

How can we carry the message if we are sitting on our butts? There ARE people who attend AA meetings and have never cracked a Big Book, and are sober. They can't help others. They are there only to help THEMSELVES.

TEXT – "Search out another alcoholic and try again." pg. 96

"Your job now is to be at a place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others, so never hesitate to go anywhere if you can be helpful." pg. 102

"In the chapter 'Working With Others' you gathered an idea of how we approach and aid others to health." pg. 153

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we try to carry this message to alcoholic..." pg. 60

"You work YOUR program and I'll work MY program." Or "Don't tell me how to work MY program."

We have THE 12-Step Program—alcoholics do recover if they follow directions and thoroughly follow the path and a "few simple rules" given to us by the pioneers.

TEXT – "The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join brotherly and harmonious action. That is the great news this book carries to those who suffer from alcoholism." pg. 17

"Further on, clear-cut directions are given showing how we recovered." pg. 29

Heard - "Relax, don't be so hard on yourself."

TEXT – "The rule is we must be hard on ourselves, but always considerate of others." pg. 74

"It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels." pg. 85

"For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead." pg. 15

"Of course, we all fall much below this standard many times. But we must try to repair the damage immediately lest we pay the penalty by a spree." pg. 99

When facing indecision, we pray: "Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. **We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle.**" pg 86

Heard - "Fake it until you make it."

TEXT – "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." pg. 59

"This was only a beginning, though if **honestly and humbly made**, an effect, sometimes a very great one, was felt at once." pg. 63

"For he knows **he must be honest** if he would live at all." Pg. 146

This one **may be intended to mean** that if we practice imitating confidence so that as the confidence produces success, it will generate real confidence. It partly comes from therapy techniques to deal with depression and is about practicing new, still uncomfortable, healthier behaviors. **Unfortunately** the meaning has become warped for use by people who are still pretending, manipulating, and avoiding living a life of rigorous honesty.

Heard - "Don't make any major decisions for the first year."

Drastic problems require drastic actions.

TEXT – "Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas: (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives. (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism. (c) That God could and would if He were sought. Being convinced, we were at Step Three, which is that we decided to turn our will and life over to God as we understood Him." pg. 60

Heard - "I don't know how it works, it just does."

There is a chapter titled "HOW IT WORKS" and it begins with a statement as to how it works:

TEXT – "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path." pg. 58

"A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, **"a design for living" that really works.**" pg 28

Further on, **clear-cut directions** are given showing **how we recovered.**" pg. 29

There are more references about and details for this "design for living that really works" in the next chapter, "Into Action"

Heard - “We don’t ‘work’ the steps, we just ‘take’ the steps.”

TEXT – “Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. But they will always materialize **if we work for them.**” pg. 84

“**If he did not work**, he would surely drink again.” pg. 15

“On each of these occasions **we worked with him**, reviewing carefully what had happened.” pg.35

“Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and **performed His work well.**” pg. 63

“It works, if we have the proper attitude and **work at it.**” pg. 86

“Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as **intensive work with other alcoholics.** It works when other activities fail.” pg. 89

“Now we try to put spiritual principles to work in every department of our lives.” pg. 116

In addition, what is often said in the group circle after the meeting is, “It works if you work it.” So **WORK** them or **TAKE** them—just make sure you practice them on a daily basis.

“It is my opinion that” or “I don’t know anything about the Big Book but here is the way I do it.”

TEXT - “We have concluded to publish an anonymous volume setting forth the problem as we see it. We shall bring to the task our combined experience and knowledge. This should suggest a useful program for anyone concerned with a drinking problem.” pg 19

The Big Book is based solely on the experience and knowledge of the first one hundred recovered alcoholics.

The Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous has been unable to find any way to improve on its effectiveness since it was first published. It contains no opinions because one thing the early members learned was that **opinions have the power to kill alcoholics.** The only opinion in the Big Book is the *Doctor’s Opinion*.

Heard - “There is no such thing as a recovered alcoholic.”

If so, then who were the Authors of A.A.’s Basic Text? The word “Recovered” is used many times in the Basic Text by “Recovered” alcoholics. We are not CURED, but we can and do recover if we live on a spiritual basis.

[There are references in the 12&12, Dr Bob & the Good Oldtimers, and AA Comes of Age also.]

Continue to the following statement and Big Book references.

Heard - “We’re always ‘recovering’ never ‘recovered.’ ”

UN-RECOVERED: does not know that the obsession (lie) is in his head. Generally he/she believes the obsession (lie). Generally gets drunk. A.K.A.: an ‘un-treated alcoholic.’

IN RECOVERY: When someone has admitted that they are an alcoholic, they enter into ‘recovery.’

RECOVERING: Is sober and continues to fight the obsession (the lie) **using self-reliance instead of God.** Has not completely surrendered to a higher power. Gathers prospects, attends meetings, but doesn’t study the Big Book. Stays involved in activities, but doesn’t LIVE The Program. Stays dry, but becomes restless, irritable and discontented (dry drunk). May drink when a crisis throws him/her off-balance.

RECOVERED: The Great Reality (the truth) has **removed the lie** from our consciousness—the ‘white-knuckling’ is over. This person relies on infinite God... Has ‘entered the world of the Spirit’... Lives the clear-cut directions as explained in the Big Book... Tries to carry a spiritual message to newcomers. The only hope of recovery for a chronic alcoholic is a spiritual experience—with this, the problem is removed (the mental obsession). It is a conditional state of mind—we are not cured, but we have a reprieve by staying spiritually fit—it is our defense against that first drink. This can last for a lifetime. **Read the promises on pages 84-85.**

The Big Book has 16 references to the recovered alcoholic. Pg xxv, The Doctor’s Opinion... xiii, Foreword to First Edition... xiii, Foreword to First Edition... xv, Foreword to Second Edition... xvii, Foreword to Second Edition... p.17, There Is A Solution... p.20, There Is A Solution... p.29, There Is A Solution... p.45, We Agnostics... p.90, Working With Others... p.96, Working With Others... p.113, To Wives ... p.132, The Family Afterward... p.133, The Family Afterward... p.146, To Employers...

Heard - “This program is caught not taught”

Page xiii Paragraph 1: “To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book.”

The A.A. book is considered our first ‘textbook’ and should be studied. If it was only caught from meetings, alcoholics would never recover, due to the non-AA stuff that’s passed off as ‘program.’

But **this saying may be based on an old Oxford Group saying, “Christianity is caught, not taught.”**

The implication being that a relationship with your Higher Power cannot be learned by simply reading scripture or other books.

Heard - "There are no 'musts' in Alcoholics Anonymous"

TEXT - "As a part of his rehabilitation he commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing upon them that they must do likewise with still others." pg. xiii

"My friend had emphasized the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs. Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me." pg. 14

"Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must or it kills us." pg. 62

"Every day is a day when we must carry a vision of God's will into all of our activities. 'How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done.' These are thoughts which must go with us constantly." pg. 85

According to one authority, the word "must" appears no less than 67 times in the Basic Text. If, to those, you add, "had to" and "have to," it gets to be a bunch more.

Heard - "Alcoholism is a problem of denial."

DENIAL= "Refusal to admit the truth. Sure sounds like **lying**, doesn't it? Alcoholics are really good at that. We cannot work on a problem unless we accept that it exists. **But the Big Book uses 'denial' in reference to our views on spirituality.** It DOES refer to alcoholics being "delusional." This goes beyond mere 'denial.' Alcoholics have a distorted sense of reality.

TEXT - "Is he not a victim of **the delusion** that he can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if he only manages well?" pg 61

"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." pg 62

"**The delusion** that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed." pg 30

"Whatever the definition of the word may be, we call it **plain insanity**." pg. 3

"However intelligent we may have been in other respects, where alcohol has been involved, we have been **strangely insane**." pg. 38.

"Again it was **the old, insidious insanity**—that first drink." pg. 154

"Most of us have been **unwilling to admit** we were real alcoholics." pg 30

Heard - "(1) I can't help myself.... (2) How could I possibly help anyone else?"

TEXT - (1) - "We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves." pg. 84

(2) - "We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others." pg. 132

"The power to help others" is a God given power. We are directed to help others—not only the alcoholic but his family and specifically his spouse, never avoiding this responsibility.

Heard - "Relapse is an expected part of the program."

Not according to AA literature. In treatment centers and NA—possibly. In using AA's program, we never have to drink again, no matter what happens, IF we follow a few simple steps and work daily on spiritual maintenance.

TEXT - "Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program,..." pg. 58.

"...once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules. pg. xxix (xxvii).

"...provided we took other simple steps. pg. 46.

"What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition." pg. 85

Heard - "Alcoholics Anonymous is a self-help program."

TEXT - "We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves." pg. 84

"We had to have God's help." pg. 62 "Without help it is too much for us. pg. 59 "We were in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help." pg. 25 It would appear from this that **A.A. is a God-help program.**

Also, **we help each other** according to the principles and procedures of the AA text:

"Without much ado, he accepted the principles and procedure that had helped us." pg. 139

"We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others. pg. 132

"Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism. -- Grapevine Preamble

Heard - “Your Higher Power can be whatever you want it to be; a door knob, a soda can, a light bulb, or just make something up.

Do you really believe an inanimate object, or something made up from your non-treated, alcoholic thinking, is a Power greater than you? ...and can accomplish for you what you couldn't do on your own?

TEXT – “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.” pg. 46

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” pg. 59

“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.” pg. 45

“The great fact is 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 that is indeed miraculous.” “He has commenced to accomplish those things for us that we could never do by ourselves.” pg. 25*

Heard - “Just do the next right thing”

How do YOU determine what that is? How does an un-treated alcoholic even begin to know what that means? If someone still has 'alcoholic thinking' they can rationalize ANY behavior—that's the danger. Hopefully they are checking with a spiritual advisor.

TEXT – “We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision.” pg 86

“Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. ...we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves that we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day “Thy will be done.” pg 87

“Being convinced, we were at Step Three, which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him.” pg 60

Now THAT'S definitely doing the NEXT RIGHT THING. The answers will come if your own house is in order.

After we become recovered from the obsession of the mind, God helps us know which path to take—after all, we've asked Him to direct our thinking for the day, right?

Heard - “I am powerless over people, places and things.”

These people may be good candidates for Al-Anon. AA is for those who declare:

*TEXT – “We admitted we were powerless over **alcohol.**” pg. 59*

*“We alcoholics are men and women who have **lost the ability to control our drinking.**” pg. 30*

*“We have recovered, and **have been given the power to help others.**” pg. 132*

Heard - “We are ALL just an arms-length away from a drink”

TEXT – “And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality—safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us.” Pg. 84

Heard - “If you're feeling emotional, you ought to get some professional help.”

Another large fellowship today is “Emotions Anonymous.” They have found a 12-Step Solution for many who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders through their adaptation of our AA's Program. Feelings are not always dependable as a gauge for reality. But DO seek professional counseling for deeper psychological issues.

TEXT - “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.” pg. 58

Dr. Harry M. Tiebout, psychiatrist: “As a psychiatrist, I have thought a great deal about the relationship of my specialty to A.A. and I have come to the conclusion that our particular function can very often lie in preparing the way for the patient to accept any sort of treatment or outside help.” p.569(571), Appendix III, The Medical View on A.A.

Heard – “My sponsor told me that, if in making an amends I would be harmed, I could consider myself as one of the ‘others’ in Step Nine.”

TEXT – “Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences might be.” pg. 79

If it causes harm to a family member, ask for feedback from your spiritual advisor.

“I do Step Ten at night.” Or “I do Step Ten when I’m wrong and need to apologize to someone.”

TEXT – “Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear (Step Four). When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them (Steps Six & Seven). Discuss them with someone immediately (Step Five) and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help (Step Twelve).” pg. 84

Heard – “Steps 10, 11, & 12 are maintenance Steps; that’s all you need after working the steps.”

TEXT – “We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to ‘grow’ in understanding and effectiveness.”

pg. 84 “It is easy to let up on our spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the ‘maintenance’ of our spiritual condition.” pg. 85

It appears that Steps 10, 11, & 12 are both “growth” Steps and “maintenance” Steps. Through working them moment by moment, day by day, we “grow” spiritually and thereby “maintain” our physical sobriety. And what about the “understanding and effectiveness”?

TEXT – “Well, that is exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself that will solve your problem.” pg. 45

If we (or someone to whom we are trying to be helpful) is tired and burned out all the time, they are not following Step Eleven as laid out. We grow spiritually and come to understand that we do, in fact, have a Power greater than ourselves that will solve our problems and effectiveness in learning how to apply these Steps to what we consider to be a problem.

Heard – “More will be revealed”

That wording seems to come from the Basic Text of **Narcotics Anonymous**. The title of Chapter 10 is “More Will Be Revealed” and the last paragraph of the book is: “We have found a way out, and we see it work for others. Each day more will be revealed.” The closest phrase we know of in the Big Book is from page 164:

TEXT – “Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.” pg. 164

Heard – “To thine own self be true.”

The quote does not originate in A.A. literature. It is a quote from Hamlet by Shakespeare: “This above all: to thine own self be true, And it must follow, as the night the day, Thou canst not then be false to any man.”

The quote is on “our coins;” although, A.A. does not make coins, they come from private companies that often have nothing to do with A.A. **However, it is a great statement about honesty with self and others.**

Heard – “A.A. is a fellowship-based (peer-support) recovery program.”

Uh-uh. Not A.A. This is a God-based program for full recovery from the mental obsession and our curious mental twists. This one comes straight from the Rehabs and the misunderstandings and watered-down programs in other fellowships.

“Tradition 3 says I’m a member when I say so. So as a member, I can say whatever I want to in a meeting.

TEXT – “We do not like to pronounce any individual as alcoholic, but you can quickly diagnose yourself.” pg 31.

Tradition Three says no-one else should diagnose you as an alcoholic; you must do that yourself AFTER reading the descriptions on pages 1-43. (“Hence we may refuse none **who wish to recover**”) AA wants you to be here voluntarily and to hear the message of recovery so that you too, can recover. **AA does not keep membership roles.** It is left to each individual to determine whether he/she is an **AA member**. It is left to each two or three members to determine if they are an **AA group** and how they conduct their internal affairs. In meetings, our primary purpose is to carry the message of A.A.’s 12-Step Program of Recovery; not all the rhetoric listed above. Each meeting is autonomous (Tradition Four); the meeting format reflects **their** Group Conscience.

Tradition Five: “Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose— that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.” p.563 (565).

Heard - "Cross-talk is not allowed in meetings."

There is no rule in A.A. against "cross talk" though it is avoided as a matter of strong custom in many areas to avoid chaos in larger meetings. Susan U., NYC: "Until the 1990s the word wasn't even in A.A. vocabulary." Anon-Press.org: "Prohibition of 'cross talk' is a common practice in clinical group therapy and perhaps this has become an influence on A.A. Many people first encounter this custom in a rehab setting and often have no reason to consider that it might be different in A.A., which is NOT intended to be a form of group therapy."

The distracting chatter and unrelated conversations that often happen in the 'back of the room' is NEVER okay. *TEXT - On giving advice, in general: "We find it better, when possible, to stick to our own stories. A man may criticize or laugh at himself and it will affect others favorably, but **criticism or ridicule** coming from another often produces the contrary effect. Members of a family should watch such matters carefully, for one careless, inconsiderate remark has been known to raise the very devil. We alcoholics are sensitive people. It takes some of us a long time to outgrow that serious handicap."* pg. 125

Heard - "God never gives us more than we can handle."

Believing that I could handle everything without His help is what got me into trouble. However, with God's help I can. *TEXT - "...he made the point-blank declaration that God had done for him **what he could not do for himself.**"*

pg 11 *"We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable."* pg 59

There is a better phrase sometimes heard in meetings: "There is nothing too difficult for God and me to handle together."

Heard - "I'm feeling pretty crappy, and feel like drinking. I need a meeting."

Work with another alcoholic 'who wants and needs it badly.' ...pass on what you learned.

*TEXT - "I was not too well at the time, and was plagued with waves of self-pity and resentment. This sometimes nearly drove me back to drink, but I soon found that **when all other measures failed, working with another alcoholic would save the day.** Many times, I have gone to my old hospital in despair. On talking to a man there, I would be amazingly lifted up and set on my feet. It is a design for living that works in rough going."* pg.15

"Every time I (pass it on) I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip." pg. 181 (Dr. Bob)

Heard - "Your problem is you just don't have enough faith."

TEXT - "He may be an example of the truth that faith alone is insufficient. To be vital, faith must be accompanied by self sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action." pg. 93

"Faith without works is dead." pg. 88

Faith increases as we practice the spiritual principles in all our affairs.

Heard - "We'll love you until you can love yourself."

*TEXT - "If you are satisfied that he is a real alcoholic, begin to **dwell on the hopeless feature of the malady.** Show him, from your own experience, how the queer mental condition surrounding that first drink prevents normal functioning of the will power." "But insist that if he is severely afflicted, there may be little chance he can recover by himself. Continue to speak of alcoholism as an illness, a fatal malady.... Explain that **many are doomed** who never realize their predicament. ... **you may talk to him about the hopelessness of alcoholism because you offer a solution.**"* pg. 92

That sounds like TOUGH love! But THEN we offer a solution... the spiritual program of AA! Beginners and 'slippers' tend to look for love in all the wrong places. AA meetings are not group therapy and members are not professionals.

Are we here to save lives? ...or to win friends and get name recognition as 'a nice guy'?

For some people, loving others is an issue of 'people-pleasing,' and/or codependency.

TEXT - "What seemed at first a flimsy reed, has proved to be the loving and powerful hand of God." pg. 28

"He stood in the Presence of Infinite Power and Love." pg. 56

"The minute we put our work on a service plane, the alcoholic commences to rely upon our assistance rather than upon God." pg. 98

Unconditional love comes from the Higher Power. Direct the newcomer and 'slider' toward that conscience contact. THAT'S where they should be looking for love. (unconditional = absolute = perfect. Do you know any perfect people?)

"Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness." "...make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code." pg. 84

Step 10 is about reviewing each day with prayer and meditation. We use love and tolerance when we make any amends for that day. We ask God to direct our thinking when considering someone we can help, **so that we can be effective.**

Heard - "The 12 Traditions are our guide for living."

The Twelve Traditions are to **group survival and harmony** what AA's Twelve Steps are to each member's sobriety and peace of mind. The traditions apply to the life of the Fellowship itself. They are based on different principles. [Also read the introduction in the 12&12]

TEXT – "The '12 Traditions' of Alcoholics Anonymous are, we A.A.s believe, the best answers that our experience has yet given to those ever-urgent questions, 'How can A.A. best function?' and, 'How can A.A. best stay whole and so survive?' pg. 561(563), Appendix I

"As we discovered the principles by which the individual alcoholic could live, so we had to evolve principles by which the A.A. groups and A.A. as a whole could survive and function effectively." pg. xix

According to the AA Text, the **12 Steps** are our DESIGN FOR LIVING." We follow directions, and use the spiritual principles of the STEPS to live on a daily basis.

TEXT – "A.A.'s Twelve Steps are principles for personal recovery. The Twelve Traditions ensure the **unity of the Fellowship.**" pg. p.574, Appendix VII, Twelve Concepts

"A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, "a design for living" that really works" pg 28.

*"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." "The principles we have set down are **guides to progress.**" pg 60*

*"The main thing is that he be willing to believe in a Power greater than himself and that he **live by spiritual principles.**" pg. 93*

*"My friend promised when these things were done I would enter upon a new relationship with my Creator; that I would have **the elements of a way of living which answered all my problems.**" pg 13, Bill's Story*

"When your prospect has made such reparation as he can to his family, and has thoroughly explained to them the new principles by which he is living, he should proceed to put those principles into action at home." pg. 98

*"Quite as important was the discovery that **spiritual principles would solve all my problems.**" pg. 42*

*"If we have **carefully followed directions,** we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us." pg. 85*

*"...we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, **provided we took other simple steps.**" pg. 46*

Heard - "The HOW of the program is Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness."

At least this one isn't dangerous for newcomers, but again, that's NOT what the book tells us. The HOW of the **program** is in the chapter, "How it Works," hence the title.

The H.O.W. doesn't come in until the Appendix, "Spiritual Experience" which is an explanation of terms used.

This should be read in context—both pages (567 & 568)! We are to use honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness so that we don't have difficulty grasping the SPIRITUALITY of the program... to grasp that flimsy reed... for honestly facing our problems... so we don't close our minds to spiritual concepts... to become willing to let go of intolerance or belligerent denial. This is followed by a reference to 'not having contempt for investigation.'

TEXT – "We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty, and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery." pg. 568, Appendix II

H. O. & W. are the essentials of recovery!

Heard - "This is a journey without a destination."

TEXT – "We have entered **the world of the Spirit.**" pg. 84

*"We have found much of heaven and we have been **rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence** of which we had not even dreamed." pg. 25*

The chronic alcoholic had better enter the world of the Spirit or they will return to the world of "spirits."

SPIRITS = "Alcohol." Webster's Collegiate Dictionary – circa 1936). Yes, there is no 'graduation' as a destination.

Heard - "The newcomer is the most important person at the meeting."

This is another phrase that comes directly from the N.A. text! **It is not true according to AA.** WORKING ONE-TO-ONE WITH the newcomer helps keep us sober, yes. Some oldtimers have said, 'newcomers may be the **lifblood of AA**, but old and middle-timers are its skin and backbone' (that is in AA, as a whole). Read the chapter,

“Working With Others.” Too many ‘newcomers’ sitting in AA meetings are not ‘real alcoholics,’ don’t want help, and don’t even want to be there!

TEXT – “Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail.” pg. 89

“If (your prospect) does not want to stop drinking, don't waste time trying to persuade him. You may spoil a later opportunity.” pg. 41

Heard - “The Big Book is the ONLY book you need for recovery.”

The 12 STEPS of AA is our Program of Recovery. The TEXT is our first ‘textbook’ and is our starting point for first “taking the Steps.” We are expected to make use of help from outside sources for our continued spiritual growth.

A.A. has no index of forbidden books.

TEXT – “There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one’s priest, minister, or raTexti. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.” pg. 87
“Literature has played a major role in A.A.’s growth, and a striking phenomenon of the past quarter-century has been the explosion of translations of our basic literature into many languages and dialects.” pg. xxiii, Foreword to Fourth Edition

Heard - “An AA meeting that won’t sign my court slip is discriminating against me.”

Attendance slips do **not** come from AA, are not supplied by AA, and have nothing really to do with AA. Sending people to AA with something to be signed is not done by AA, but by some agency that is in no way affiliated with the fellowship. AA should not be affiliated with **any** outside agency, and **AA is not affiliated with any court system.** It also breaks OUR anonymity when we sign a slip. Slips do NOT belong in a 7th Tradition basket, as they are not voluntary contributions. Tradition 10 says we should stay out of outside issues to avoid controversy; and AA wants to be part of a person’s recovery, not a part of their punishment.

A meeting’s ‘group conscience’ may decide not to sign slips, because they have a right to be autonomous and **are not obligated** to sign. As a practical matter, people often have a friend sign their slip; many sign their own.

Heard - “The Big Book says I shouldn’t give my name in a meeting, just that I’m a member of A.A.”

TEXT – “When writing or speaking publicly about alcoholism, we urge each of our Fellowship to omit his personal name, designating himself instead as “a member of Alcoholics Anonymous.” pg. xiii, Foreword to First Edition.

PUBLICLY! As in “at the level of press, radio, and film.”

Heard - “If you spill your guts in a meeting that shows REAL honesty.”

TEXT – “Five— Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.” pg. 562 (564), Appendix I

AA meetings are NOT group therapy sessions; we don’t vomit up our mess, or dump our 5th step in a meeting—dumping is not the same as an ‘honest confession.’ Unfortunately, if we can’t get our hands on solid 12-step recovery, we start ‘drinking’ our own emotional turmoil. Dry drunks can become a problem for the recovered drunk hoping to carry a spiritual message to newcomers. “God talk” is not always welcome in meetings dominated by emotional, **dry drinkers.** Honesty that cuts to the heart of one’s own selfishness is special, and is part of a healthy meeting.

Heard - “Our traditions tell us not to promote the program in meetings.”

Kind of goes along with the ‘group therapy’ thinking. A nice try for complacency and the excuse of not wanting to offend people, but it’s NOT what the tradition says.

*TEXT – “Eleven -- Our **public relations policy** is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the **level of press, radio and films.**” pg.562 (564), Appendix I*

Seems clear: in our relations with THE PUBLIC, such as treatment centers, justice system, news affiliates, state programs, community groups, etc. And we don’t preach to the drunk staggering out of the bar, or our friend’s cousin who doesn’t want our help. But in meetings, YES, OUR PRIMARY PURPOSE IS TO CARRY A.A.’S MESSAGE OF RECOVERY FROM ALCOHOLISM. If we’re practicing Step 12, **we’re obligated to do so—this includes promoting ourselves as available and capable of helping the newcomer take THEIR steps by the book.**

(By the way—if you observe that staggering drunk climb into a vehicle to drive away—YES, you should call the authorities.)

Heard - “The first drink gets me drunk.”

This phrase is **not** in the Big Book, but the meaning of it DOES fit the concept that our book informs us of—that alcoholics have a physical allergy. After the first drink, we have a CRAVING FOR MORE which often is impossible to overcome.

TEXT — “All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving.” pg xxx

“We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker.” pg xxviii

Heard - “Acceptance is the answer to all my problems.”

This comes out of a PERSONAL story in the Big Book... it is not part of the AA program. We do not have to try to re-create someone ELSE'S personal, spiritual awakening.

The Program's answer to all our problems is outlined in our textbook (xxv to 164). The quick version is “**clean house, trust God, and help others.**”

TEXT — “Each individual, in the personal stories, describes in his own language and from his own point of view the way he established his relationship with God.” pg. 29

“Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now.” pg 58

Heard - “The 4th Dimension is time. We are ‘rocketed’ into ‘the moment,’ we stand still in time.”

Fascinating. So, after going through the process of ‘self-searching, the leveling of our pride, and the confession of our shortcomings,’ we rise up swiftly and travel rapidly to where time stands still in this moment? That's the lesson? The easier-softer way people keep trying to explain a spiritual process with a scientific explanation—that Einstein said ‘the fourth dimension means time.’ Please, KEEP IT SIMPLE, silly. The founders gave us a **spiritual program**; they had ‘no opinion on outside issues.’ Scientific explanations are *outside issues* and for non-alcoholics with a secular (non God) program of sobriety only.

TEXT — “I was soon to be catapulted into what I like to call the fourth dimension of existence. I was to know happiness, peace, and usefulness, in a way of life that is incredibly more wonderful as time passes.” pg 8

This is God-consciousness! Bill was describing his spiritual experience, the nearly instantaneous coming **ALIVE** of ‘**Our Own SPIRIT to full spiritual awareness, to freedom, and to perception of possibility.**’ It is a ‘**rocketing**’ experience.

TEXT — “...we have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed. 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...” (read all of page 25)

William James, in “The Varieties of Religious Experience,” described it as, “...being plunged, it seems to me, into an altogether other dimension of existence from the sensible and merely “understandable” world. Name it the mystical region, or the supernatural region, whichever you choose.”

Heard - “A.A. membership is for anybody who wants it, even if they're not alcoholics.”

Using and practicing the 12-step program CAN HELP anyone. BUT it was started to help chronic, real alcoholics to recover. The intent behind Singleness of Purpose is to prevent AA from being all things to all people.

“I see no way of making nonalcoholic addicts into AA Members. Experience says loudly that we can admit no exceptions, even though drug users and alcoholics happen to be first cousins of a sort. If we persist in trying this, I'm afraid it will be hard on the drug user himself, as well as on AA. We must accept the fact that no nonalcoholic, whatever his affliction, can be converted into an alcoholic AA member.” —Bill Wilson, *The Language of the Heart*, p. 223

The breakdown in this purpose happens when one alcoholic fails to talk to another alcoholic about the spiritual solution to alcoholism—at the sponsorship level. “Changing ‘alcoholic’ to ‘alcohol-addict’ or lumping everyone into ‘addictive personality’ or whatever other word play that has become popularly espoused by outside interests—not AA—is irrelevant to the truth about alcoholism.” —Danny S.

TEXT — “If you are satisfied that he is a **real alcoholic**, begin to dwell on the hopeless feature of the malady.” pg 92

“The tragic truth is that if the man be a **real alcoholic**, the happy day may not arrive.” pg 23

“We know that no **real alcoholic** ever recovers control.” “Most of us have been unwilling to admit we were **real alcoholics.**” pg 30

“If he is a **real alcoholic** and very far advanced, there is scant chance of success.” pg 34

“He agreed he was a **real alcoholic** and in a serious condition.” pg 35
