

POWERLESSNESS ... "THE ESSENTIALS" ... RELATIONSHIPS ... FELLOWSHIPS
A "BIG BOOK" STUDY OF FOUR "THREADS OF RECOVERY"

October 11 through December 27, 2021

(Page cites from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, except as noted)

POWERLESSNESS - Part 2.

"Desperate experiment of the first drink." Chapter 3, "More about Alcoholism".

"All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving." (p. xxx)

First, I **admit** I have a physical allergy to alcohol—I am physically powerless over alcohol. Physical powerlessness over alcohol is not a character defect—denial, defiance and doubt of my powerlessness are character defects!

In our book Alcoholics Anonymous in Chapter Two, "There is a Solution", there is much discussion about our **denial** of our allergy to alcohol:

"... impossible to persuade an alcoholic to discuss his situation without reserve." (p. 18)

"But what about the real alcoholic?" "... at some stage of his drinking career he begins to lose all control of his liquor consumption, once he starts to drink." (p. 21)

"... except liquor, but in that respect he is incredibly dishonest and selfish." "

"... the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind ..." (p. 23)

"... obsession that somehow, someday, they will beat the game." "

"The fact is that most alcoholics ... have lost the power of choice in drink ... we are without defense against the first drink." (p. 24)

After I **admit** and **accept** my physical powerlessness over alcohol, I must deal with my mental powerlessness over my choice to drink. In Chapter Three, I consider my **defiance**:

"... the great *obsession* of every abnormal drinker." (p. 30)

"... persistence of this *illusion* ..." "

"... the *delusion* that we are like other people ... has to be smashed." "

"We know that no *real* alcoholic ever recovers control." "

"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 non-alcoholic." (p. 31)

"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." (p. 33)

"What sort of thinking dominates an alcoholic who repeats time after time the desperate experiment of the first drink?" (p. 35)

Types of alcoholics who are powerless over their choice to take the first drink:

"Long-term abstainer."	The Retiree.	pp. 32-33.
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"Young people."	Drinking only a few years.	p. 33.
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"No intention of drinking".	Jim, the automobile salesman.	pp. 35-37.
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"The obsessive."	Jay, the jay-walker.	pp. 37-39.
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"The self-reliant one."	Fred, the accountant.	pp. 39-43.
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"Once more: The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink ... neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a Higher Power." (p. 43)

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Some Benefits of Powerlessness.

Powerless—leads to hopeless—leads to desperation—leads to seeking help!

"... who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body." (p. xiii)

Power-less does not mean "no power". It means "less power" ... "not enough power":

I need more power than I can muster on my own;

I am too proud to let go of my illusion of power;

I am too afraid to let go of my illusion of control;

I cannot see my need for help from a Higher Power until I am powerlessness.

Powerless does not mean hopeless—we become nearly hopeless to accept our powerlessness:

"But when the broker gave him Dr. Silkworth's description of alcoholism and its hopelessness, the physician began to pursue the spiritual remedy for his malady with a willingness he had never before been able to muster." (p. xvi)

The Power we need lies outside what we can mentally conceive, at first:

"... AA's speak the language of the heart in all its power and simplicity." (p. xxiv)

"... to apply the powers of good that lie outside our synthetic knowledge." (p. xxvii)

"... the Power that pulls chronic alcoholics back from the gates of death." "

The power we need must be a Power greater than ourselves:

"... their ideals must be grounded in a power greater than themselves ...". (p. xxviii)

"... something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change." (p. xxix)

Admitting and accepting our powerlessness leads us to seek spiritual help:

"... believed that for him there was no hope ... he accepted the plan outlined in this book." (Hank P., who helped Bill W. write the Big Book) (p. xxxi)

"The patient had made his own diagnosis ... deciding his situation hopeless, had hidden ... determined to die ... he did become 'sold' on the ideas contained in this book ..." (Fitz M., who also helped Bill W. write the Big Book) "

Accepting the process of powerless—to hopeless—to seeking spiritual help ... takes patience:

"Certainly I was interested. I had to be, for I was hopeless." (p. 10)

"... God had done for him what he could not do for himself. His human will had failed." (p. 11)

"There had been no more power in him than there was in me ... none at all." "

"My friend suggested ... 'Why don't you choose your own conception of God?' " (p. 12)

"It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself." "

"... I was separated from alcohol for the last time ... I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him ..." (Bill "trades in" a false god for a real God) (p. 13)

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Debbie McK. says: "I am out of ideas about what I can do on my own—not take the first drink."

Physical Powerlessness: I have a physical allergy to alcohol—craving after one drink.

Mental Powerlessness: I keep trying "... the desperate experiment of the first drink."

Next Time: POWERLESSNESS - Part 3. Alcoholic "categories": desire to stop drinking.

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