

NOTE: today's pages echo Steps 3, 4, 8, 10

"Most married folks in A.A. have very happy homes. To a surprising extent, A.A. has offset the damage to family life brought about by years of alcoholism."

NOTE: reminds me of page XX, Forward to 2nd edition, in Big Book – "Public acceptance of A.A. grew by leaps and bounds. For this there were two principle reasons: the large number of recoveries and reunited homes."

How? Putting the previous Steps into action in our lives. Looking at page 116, gives us a summary of the "HOW". "New attitude", new outlook". We can begin with:

- a. "put our lives on a give-and-take basis
- b. "we would have to develop the sense of being in partnership or brotherhood with all those around us."
- c. "we would need to give constantly of ourselves without demands for repayment."
- d. "we found that dependence upon His perfect justice, forgiveness, and love was healthy, and it would work where nothing else would.
- e. Quit playing God

"But just like all other societies, we do have sex and marital problems, and sometimes they are distressingly acute. (not limited to alcoholics, all of humanity have these problems)

- a. **Sex problems:** infidelity, identity, frigidity, physical/medical, emotional, abuse, etc.
- b. **Marital problems:** wide ranging – communication, money, intimacy, dependency, family, children, friends, responsibilities, etc.

Our main problem?

"Our main problem is not how we are to stay married; it is how to be more happily married by eliminating the severe emotional twists that have so often stemmed from alcoholism."

"Severe emotional twists": wide spectrum from annoying habits stemming from selfishness to clinical mental/emotional diagnosis. (One man's floor is another's ceiling.)

- a. **Twists:** (verb) to alter meaning, distort, pervert, contort. To cause to take on moral, mental or emotional deformity.

"Nearly every sound human being experiences, at some time in life, a compelling desire to find a mate with whom the fullest possible union can be made – spiritual, mental, emotional and physical." (I removed "of the opposite sex")

Bill then poses the question: "How, by ignorance, compulsion and self-will, do we misuse this gift for our own destruction?"

- a. **Ignorance:** lack of knowledge or information.
- b. **Compulsion:** An irresistible urge to behave in a certain way, especially against one's conscious wishes.
- c. **Self-will:** the stubborn or willful adherence to one's own desires or ideas, regardless of others.

What happens when alcoholism strikes?

- a. "A very unnatural situations may develop which work against marriage partnership and compatible union."
 - 1. **Unnatural:** not being in accordance with normal, human feelings or behavior; perverse, in human.

Bill moves on to 1st example on page 118.

- a. "a sick and irresponsible child". The "erring boy". (dependency page 116, Step 4 page 43-44, Steps 8, 10)

What is necessary? "a long period of patient striving" (page 118, 2nd paragraph)

Single A.A.s

"Boy meets girl on A.A. campus." Story time.

What do prospective partners need? (page 119, 2nd paragraph)

- a. To be "solid A.A.'s
- b. "Long enough acquainted to know their compatibility at spiritual, mental, and emotional levels is a fact and not wishful thinking."
- c. "they need to be sure as possible that no deep-lying emotional handicap in either will be likely to rise up under later pressures to cripple them."
 - a. Emotional handicap: a person's ability to effectively recognize, interpret, control and express fundamental emotions in appropriate manner.
- d. Clear understanding
- e. Right, grown-up attitudes

Money, Money, Money

Old attitudes about money. (page 120, 2nd paragraph)

- a. Spendthrifts
- b. Threw money about in every direction with the purpose of pleasing ourselves and impressing other people."
- c. "we acted as if the money supply was inexhaustible."
- d. Miserly
- e. "money was a symbol of pleasure and self importance."

"Upon entering A.A our attitudes were sharply reversed." (Note: I believe much of the paragraph on page 121 is Bill's personal fears and experience.)

Fears:

- a. The spectacle of years of waste threw us into panic
- b. Simply wouldn't be enough time to rebuild our shattered fortunes
- c. Awful debts
- d. Possess a decent home
- e. Educate kids
- f. Retirement
- g. Etc.

We forgot:

- a. Most alcoholics have an earning power considerably above average
- b. The immense goodwill of four brother A.A.'s who were only too eager to help us to better jobs when we deserved them.
- c. We forgot the actual or potential every human being in the world.
- d. Worst of all, we forgot God

"We were still victim of unreasonable fears. And these were fears which would make a serene and useful existence, at any financial level, quite impossible."

Promises

- a. "With the help of A.A.'s Twelve Steps (condition) we could lose those fears.
- b. "We could cheerfully perform humble labor without worrying about tomorrow."
- c. "We no longer dreaded a change for the worse."
- d. "Money gradually became our servant and not our master."
- e. "It became a means of exchanging love and service with those about us.
- f. "When, with God's help, we accepted our lot, (condition) we found we could live at peace with ourselves and show others who still suffered the same fears that they could get over them too."
- g. "We found that freedom from fear was more important than freedom from want."

Note: page 78 in Big Book and 9th step promise "...fear of economic insecurity will leave us." (pg 84)

The promises above speak directly **to the fears and new outlook, attitudes** about money, economic insecurity.

Other areas we have improved outlook? **Personal importance, power, ambition and leadership.** (page 122, 2nd paragraph)

Non-alcoholics grow out of their childhood dreams.

- a. He learns that he can be content as long as he plays well whatever cards life deals him.
- b. Still ambitious, but not absurdly so
- c. Sees and accepts actual reality
- d. He's willing to stay right sized

Alcoholics? (echo of the Doctor's Opinion)

- a. Childish
- b. Emotionally sensitive
- c. Grandiose

“as a result of unreasonable fears or anxieties. “At heart we had all been abnormally fearful.”
(echo of Big Book page 62) (page 123)

“Permanent and legitimate satisfactions that no amount of pomp and circumstance, no heap of material possessions could possibly be substitutes.” Promises: (page 124)

- a. Well matured A.A.s, (qualification) these distorted drives have been restore to something like their true purpose and direction.”
- b. We no longer strive to dominate or rule those about us in order to gain self- importance.
- c. We no longer seek fame and honor in order to be praised.
- d. “True leadership, we find, depends upon able example and not upon vain displays of power or glory.”
- e. “Still more wonderful is the feeling that we do not have to be specially distinguished among our fellows in order to be useful and **profoundly** happy.”
- f. “Service, gladly rendered...”
- g. “Obligations squarely met...”
- h. “troubles well accepted or solved with God’s help...”
- i. “the knowledge that at home or in the world outside we are partners in a common effort...”
- j. “the well understood fact that in God’s sight all human beings are important...”
- k. “the proof that love freely given surely brings a full return...”
- l. “the certainty that we are no longer isolated and alone in self-constructed prisons...”
- m. “the surety that we need no longer be square peds in round holes but can fit and belong in God’s scheme of things.”

“True ambition is the deep desire to live usefully and walk humbly under the grace of God.” (page 125)

Bill restates 1st sentence of Step 12:

“For it is only by accepting and solving our problems that we begin to get right with ourselves and the world about us, and with Him who presides over us all.” Understanding is the key to right principles and attitudes, and right action is the key to good living; therefor the joy of good living is the theme of A.A.s Twelfth Step.”

Bill’s hope for us all? “may every one of us sense more deeply the inner meaning of A.A.’s simple prayer.”

“God grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change,
Courage to change the things we can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.”