

“IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”
AN AA “BIG BOOK” STUDY OF SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES IN CHAPTERS 8 - 11
FOUR FRIDAYS IN NOVEMBER 2022 - Presenter - Bill H., St. Louis, Mo.

The Four-part Study of Chapters 8 - 11 in Alcoholics Anonymous.

I spent very little time in these chapters in my early recovery. I had “contempt prior to investigation” for at least six reasons:

- I was not the wife, or “spouse” of an alcoholic;
- I was not a family member living with an drinking or newly-sober alcoholic;
- we had an EAP program at work—alcoholics in the workplace were not my problem;
- “A Vision for You” just seemed to repeat everything already said in the first 88 pages;
- trying to read these chapters made me feel uncomfortable;
- most people I knew in AA criticized these chapters and didn’t read them, either.

Today I believe these four chapters are just as important to me as any of the other chapters in Alcoholics Anonymous. *These chapters are important because they contain vital information for me about how to become spiritually healthy in all my relationships.*

Bill W., Dr. Bob S., and Hank P. intended Alcoholics Anonymous to include information for non-alcoholics—spouses, family members, friends and business associates— about the illness of alcoholism and the spiritual program they had been given to deal with the illness. Hank P. and Bill W. had a working outline for the book by June 1938. The Outline included:

- “Chapter Twenty-One. Dealing with wives, relative and friends, *showing them how they may help.*”—became “TO WIVES” and “THE FAMILY AFTERWARD”.
- “Chapter Twenty-Two. Herein employers will be given the *new view of alcoholism ... specific suggestions will be made ... in the best interest of all ... handle the myriad situations which are so baffling* to him at present.”—became “TO EMPLOYERS”.
- “Chapters Twenty-Three and Twenty-Four. The *sufferer must be willing to recover ... learned more from our failures* than our successes ... how our *simple common denominator* works in the every day world.”—became “A VISION FOR YOU”.
(Italics mine)

In this Big Book study, we examine Chapters 8 -11 to *discover the spiritual principles we can apply in all of our relationships*. We will do this with three goals in mind:

1. **Read** what the words say. We will not add to, or take away from, what the words say;
2. **Understand** what the words mean, in the context in which they are written;
3. Try to **apply** these spiritual principles “in all our affairs”, in all our relationships, today.

“IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”. Spiritual Principles in Chapter Eleven, “A Vision for You”.

An outline of Chapter Eleven “A Vision for You” might look something like this:

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| I. A Newcomer’s First Encounter with the Fellowship. | pp. 151-153. |
| II. Description of the Growth of the Akron Fellowship. | pp. 153-160. |
| III. The Twelve Step “Program of Attraction” and Action. | pp. 160-164. |
| IV. A Vision for All. | p. 164. |

While we have cited various “virtues” as spiritual principles during this study, it may be helpful to recall the view of the primary author of Alcoholics Anonymous regarding “spiritual principles”. Bill W. saw the Twelve Steps themselves as the spiritual principles of the recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous. This view is a “thread” running through “A Vision for You”.

“IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”
AN AA “BIG BOOK” STUDY OF SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES IN CHAPTERS 8 - 11
FOUR FRIDAYS IN NOVEMBER 2022 - Presenter - Bill H., St. Louis, Mo.

“IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”. Spiritual Principles in Chapter 11, “A Vision for You” (cont’d).

Spiritual Principles for Use in all Relationships.

“... commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey.” (p. 153)

“... give of yourself that others may survive and rediscover life.” “

“ ‘Love thy neighbor as thyself.’ “ “

Our common welfare must come first is not only a spiritual principle as part of AA’s Tradition One. This is a vital spiritual component of all of my relationships. I try to allow the “we” to be as important as the “me” in all my relationships.

“But what about his responsibilities ...” (p. 154)

“Both saw that they must keep spiritually active.” (p. 156)

“They explained their need ...” (p. 156)

“He has helped other men recover ...” (p. 158)

“Though they knew they must help other alcoholics if they would remain sober, that motive became secondary. It was transcended by the happiness they found in giving themselves for others.” (p. 159)

Their “need” was their responsibility to themselves and others to ***be of service, to try to carry the message (of their spiritual awakening)*** to someone else. When I am willing to try to help meet the legitimate needs of someone else as one of my daily priorities, I am acting within my spiritual responsibility.

“... made an effort to bring the man’s family into a spiritual way of living ...”. (p. 159)

“... anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life.” (p. 160)

“... loving and understanding companionship ...” “

“The expression on the faces ... that indefinable something in the eyes ... the stimulating and electric atmosphere of the place ... here was haven at last.” “

Our groups’ primary purpose is stated in Tradition Five, “to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers”. Tradition Eleven states “our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion.” A spiritual principle for use in all my relationships is to be willing to ***try to share my spiritual awakening in an attractive manner.***

“... the absence of intolerance of any kind, the informality, the genuine democracy, the uncanny understanding ... were irresistible.” (p. 160)

“Love and tolerance of others” is not just my code in Alcoholics Anonymous. I use this as a spiritual guideline in all my relationships. It is an application of the spiritual principle of ***improving my conscious contact with God.***

“God will determine that, so you must remember that your real reliance is always upon Him.” (p. 164)

“God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.” “

“See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others.” “

Tradition Two states that “for our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience.” My fundamental spiritual principle is to ***have God at the center, guiding all my relationships.***

.....
May we use the spiritual principles we learn in our Twelve Steps, our Twelve Traditions and in every chapter of our “Big Book” to improve our use of spiritual principles “in all our affairs”.