

“IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”
AN AA “BIG BOOK” STUDY OF SPIRITUAL PRINCIPLES IN CHAPTERS 8 - 11

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.

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“IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”. Spiritual Principles in Chapter Ten, “To Employers”

An outline of Chapter Ten “To Employers” might look something like this:

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| I. Introduction. “Not understanding alcoholism.” | pp. 136-139. |
| II. How an Employer can Help. | pp. 139-147. |
| III. Benefit to the Organization of a Recovering Employee. | pp. 147-150. |

Some information about “To Employers”:

- the chapter was written by Hank P., not Bill W.;
- this is the least spiritually-explicit chapter in the Big Book;
- spiritual principles in this chapter can be inferred by reference and context;
- this chapter is mainly one of spiritual application, not spiritual discovery.

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“IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS”. Spiritual Principles in Chapter Ten, “To Employers”. (Cont’d)

Spiritual Principles for Use in all Relationships.

“I did not understand alcoholism as I do now.” (p. 137)

“We think the business fabric is shot through with a situation which might be helped by a better understanding all around.” “

“... lack of understanding ...” (p. 139)

“Your understanding treatment ...” (p. 141)

Seeking understanding of the other person is fundamental in my healthy relationships. I need spiritual help to love and tolerate another person when they are being “intolerable”.

“Nearly every modern employer feels a moral responsibility for the well-being of his help; and he tries to meet these responsibilities.” (p. 137)

“... so I spent two hours talking about alcoholism, the malady, and described the symptoms and results as well as I could.” (p. 138)

“He simply could not believe that his brother-executive suffered from a serious illness. There was nothing to do but wait.” (pp. 138-139)

Patience and ***perseverance*** are useful spiritual principles in all my relationships.

“... the man did slip ... we contacted him ... he accepted the principles and procedures that had helped us.” (p. 139)

The spiritual principle of ***sharing our experience, strength and hope*** with another person when they are ready to receive help is demonstrated here. The “principles and procedures” referred to are, of course, the Twelve Steps.

“If you desire to help it might be well to disregard your own drinking, or lack of it ... have some pretty strong opinions ... quite sure of many things which ... are not always so ... there may be a natural annoyance ...” (p. 139)

The spiritual principle of ***live and let live*** improves all my relationships. I learn to not let our differences ruin my relationships. I learn to disagree agreeably.

“... can he be forgiven for what he has done in the past?” (p. 140)

“... you do not intend to lecture, moralize, or condemn ...” (p. 142)

The spiritual principle of ***forgiveness*** is vital to make all my relationships healthy.

“It is better for him to feel fully responsible.” (p. 143)

“The man must decide for himself.” (p. 144)

“... he must be honest if he would live at all.” (p. 146)

The spiritual principle of ***let go and let God*** is implied here. I cannot be responsible for the choices another person makes. I can encourage them to make healthy choices.

“The greatest enemies ... are resentment, jealousy, envy, frustration, and fear.” (p. 145)

The spiritual principle of ***seeking God’s strength*** to combat these “enemies is important in all of my relationships.