

**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.)

**FELLOWSHIPS - PART 2: WITHIN THE AA COMMUNITY. Chapter 11, "A Vision for You".**

We alcoholics are **powerless** over alcohol. We are powerless over *our physical allergy*, over the *idea of the first drink*, and our *inability to stop drinking once we start*. We need a spiritual awakening produced by the Twelve Steps and the "**three essentials**" of *willingness, honesty and open-mindedness* to deal with our powerlessness. (See Appendix II, pp. 567-568)

The Twelve Steps guide me in seeking, establishing and growing a *healthy, helpful relationship with God, myself and with all others*, as outlined in Step Five. "Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us." (p. 77)

A fourth "thread" in the spiritual awakening of our recovery is **fellowship**. Three "fellowships" grow in AA, and as a result of AA: *fellowship with a sponsor; fellowship within the AA community; fellowship "in all our affairs"*.

A fellowship is characterized by *shared common experience*. We share a common problem, alcoholism, and our common spiritual solution to alcoholism, the Twelve Steps. The sponsor-sponsee relationship is a "one-on-one" fellowship of *shared common experience*.

Chapter 11, "A Vision for You", describes the purpose and growth of the fellowship within, and throughout, the entire AA community. The AA fellowship is not a replacement for the Twelve Steps. It is, however, a vital companion to the life-saving Twelve Step recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous. This unique AA fellowship is another blessing of the spiritual awakening produced by the Twelve Step recovery program of Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Basis and Growth of the AA Fellowship.**

- |  |        |           |
|--|--------|-----------|
| "... personal stories ... expanded to reflect the <i>Fellowship's</i> growth." | (2001) | (p. xi)   |
| "... we urge each of our <i>Fellowship</i> to omit his personal name ..."      | (1939) | (p. xiii) |
| "... every alcoholic who journeys will find the <i>Fellowship</i> ...".        | (1955) | (p. xv)   |
| "... we had to unify our <i>Fellowship</i> or pass off the scene."             | (1955) | (p. xix)  |

"In spite of the great increase in the size and the span of this *Fellowship*, at its core it remains simple and personal. Each day, somewhere in the world, recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope."  
(1976) (p. xxii)

"While our literature has preserved the integrity of the AA message [the Twelve Steps], sweeping changes in society as a whole are reflected in new customs and practices within the Fellowship."  
(2001) (p. xxiv)

**Early Recognition of the AA Fellowship.**

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|--|-------------|
| "... do likewise with still others ... basis of a rapidly growing <i>fellowship</i> ...".  | (p. xxv)    |
| "... a <i>fellowship</i> has grown up among us ..."  | (p. 15)     |
| "... so that newcomers may find the <i>fellowship</i> they seek."  | (pp. 15-16) |
| "... there exists among us a <i>fellowship</i> , a friendliness, and an understanding ... <i>shared in a common peril</i> ... <i>discovered a common solution</i> ." | (p. 17)     |

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**Fellowship Within and For the AA Community: Chapter 11, "A Vision for You"**

**A source of ease and comfort in place of alcohol -**

"We have shown how we got out from under. You say, 'Yes, I am willing. But am I to be consigned to a life where I shall be stupid, boring and glum, like some righteous people I see? I know I must get along without liquor, but how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute?'" (p. 152)

(See "The Doctor's Opinion", p. xxviii: "... ease and comfort ... a few drinks ...")

"Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous." (p. 152)

**A positive, spiritually-centered community of service for life -**

"There you will find release from care, boredom and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last ... most satisfactory years ... lie ahead." (p. 152)

"Among them you will make lifelong friends ... bound to them with new and wonderful ties ... escape disaster together ... commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey ... know what it means to give of yourself that others may survive and rediscover life. You will know the full meaning of 'Love thy neighbor as thyself'". (pp. 152-153)

**A natural out-growth of sponsorship and trying to "practice the principles" -**

"But life was not easy for the two friends. Plenty of difficulties presented themselves. Both saw that they must keep spiritually active ..." (p. 156)

"For an hour, the two friends told him about their drinking experiences." (p. 157)

"The two friends spoke of their spiritual experience and told him about the course of action they carried out." "

"So, you see, there were three alcoholics in that town ..." (p. 158)

"So one more was added to the Fellowship." (p. 159)

"... they must help other alcoholics if they would remain sober ... transcended by the happiness they found in giving themselves for others." "

"A year and six months later these three had succeeded with seven more." "

**The attitudes and characteristics of the fellowship within the AA Community -**

"... happy in their release [from the bondage of self] ..." (p. 159)

"... thinking how they might present their discovery to some newcomer." "

"... set apart one night a week for a meeting to be attended by anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life." (pp. 159-160)

"... fellowship and sociability ... new people might bring their problems." (p. 160)

"... loving and understanding companionship [among loved ones] ..." "

"... crowd inside, who laughed at their own misfortune and understood his." "

"... the expressions on the faces ... that indefinable something in the eyes ... the stimulating and electric atmosphere of the place ..." "

"... the absence of intolerance ... the informality ... the genuine democracy ... the uncanny understanding which these people had were irresistible." "

"... a host of new friends; it seemed they had known these strangers always." (p. 161)

"No one is too discredited or has sunk too low to be welcomed cordially—if he means business." "

"Some day we hope that every alcoholic who journeys will find a Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination." (p. 162)

**"[God] will show you how to create the fellowship you crave."** (p. 164)

**Next Time: Fellowships - Part 3: "In All Our Affairs". Chapters Eight, Nine and more.**