ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

"STINKING THINKING" WORKSHOP

Some us remain "irritable, restless and discontent", even though we have worked the Steps. In this workshop, you will learn a new perspective on the thought process of recovery.

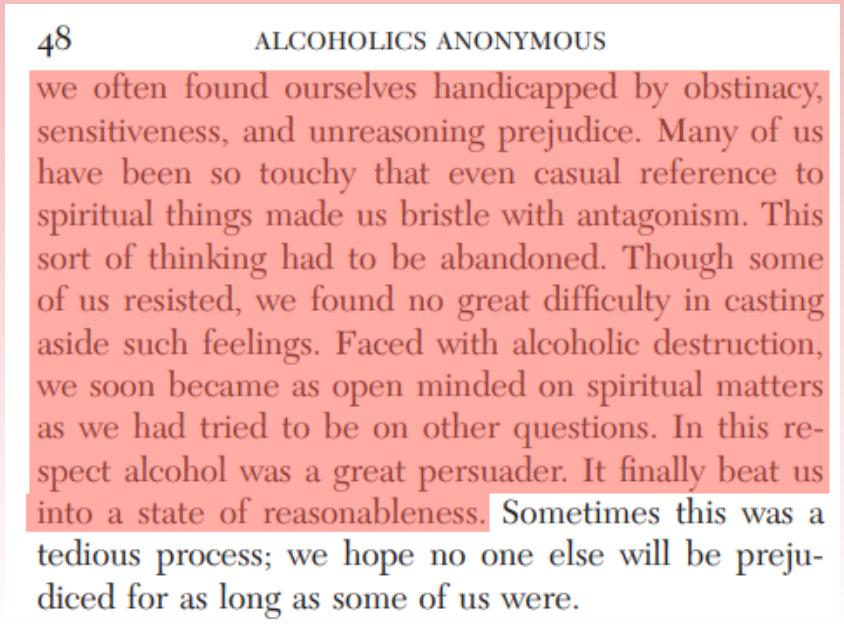
The 12&12 tells us in Step 10 on pg. 90:

It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong *with us*. If somebody hurts us and we are sore, we are in the wrong also. But are there no exceptions to this rule? What about "justifiable" anger? If somebody cheats us, aren't we entitled to be mad? Can't we be properly angry with self-righteous folk? For us of A.A. these are dangerous exceptions. We have found that justified anger ought to be left to those better qualified to handle it.

What is "Stinking Thinking"?

Means: Addictive/Negative Thinking, Maintaining Old Ideas

For many years, the term stinking thinking has been used in AA and in other Twelve-Step organizations to mean all the thinking processes that support the disease of addiction. Let's dig a little deeper…



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we often found ourselves handicapped by obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice. Many of us have been so touchy that even casual reference to spiritual things made us bristle with antagonism. This sort of thinking had to be abandoned. Though some of us resisted, we found no great difficulty in casting aside such feelings. Faced with alcoholic destruction, we soon became as open minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect alcohol was a great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness. Sometimes this was a tedious process; we hope no one else will be prejudiced for as long as some of us were.

THE PROBLEM

How do we speak to ourself?

- "Committee in the Head"

The committee (or the girls/boys) in the head are those voices replaying tapes from your past. Sometimes it seems so easy to get confused, with addictive thoughts and recovery thoughts going full blast and battling for dominance, playing tug of war.

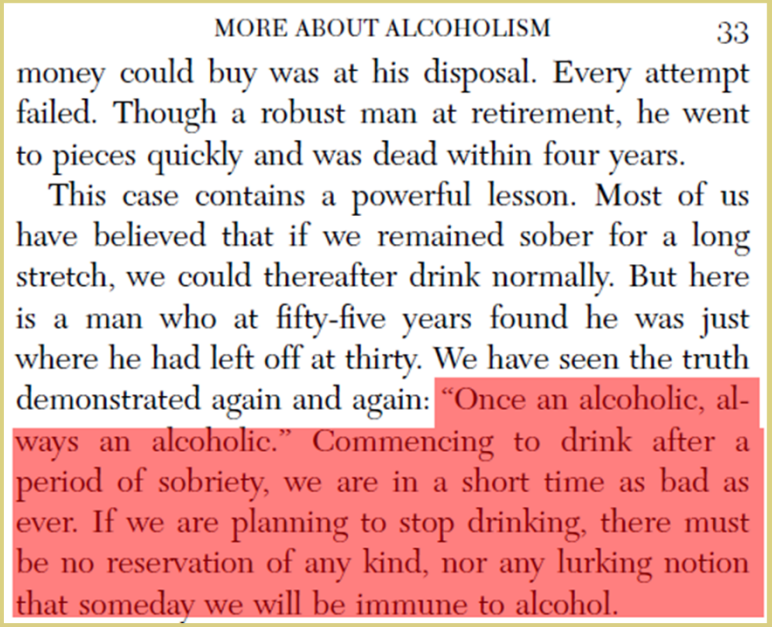
What am I doing to maintain The enthusiasm I had when I first came to AA?

THE SOLUTION

Recognize "Stinking Thinking"

Freedom from "Stinking Thinking" occurs gradually. At first you may be doing well just to recognize after you have gotten into the "Stinking Thinking" mode, but before you have done any real damage. Later you might catch yourself just as you get into it. Eventually, through good progress on your recovery, you will be able to avoid getting into it in the first place or will catch yourself and modify the "Stinking Thinking".

We must remember what The Big Book says on pg. 33:



MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM 33

money could buy was at his disposal. Every attempt failed. Though a robust man at retirement, he went to pieces quickly and was dead within four years.

This case contains a powerful lesson. Most of us have believed that if we remained sober for a long stretch, we could thereafter drink normally. But here is a man who at fifty-five years found he was just where he had left off at thirty. We have seen the truth demonstrated again and again: "Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic." Commencing to drink after a period of sobriety, we are in a short time as bad as ever. 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.

"Denial"

- Denial is an outright rejection of what you know or suspect to be true. Alcoholics in AA have usually seen several examples of AA members who decide to have an occasional social drink, but wind up coming back after months of heavy drinking and frightening consequences. Yet through denial, they may think, "But it won't happen to me."

"Rationalizing"

- Giving excuses for your behavior is rationalizing. "Well, everyone does it. You would too if you had a _____ *(give example of a problem)* like mine."

THE PROBLEM

Intellectualizing

- **With enough mental gymnastics, almost anything can sound reasonable.** Alcoholics who get all wrapped up in theories of addiction or other intellectual subjects may have to beware of a tendency to think themselves into trouble.

Am I "thinking" myself into trouble and carrying out its action?

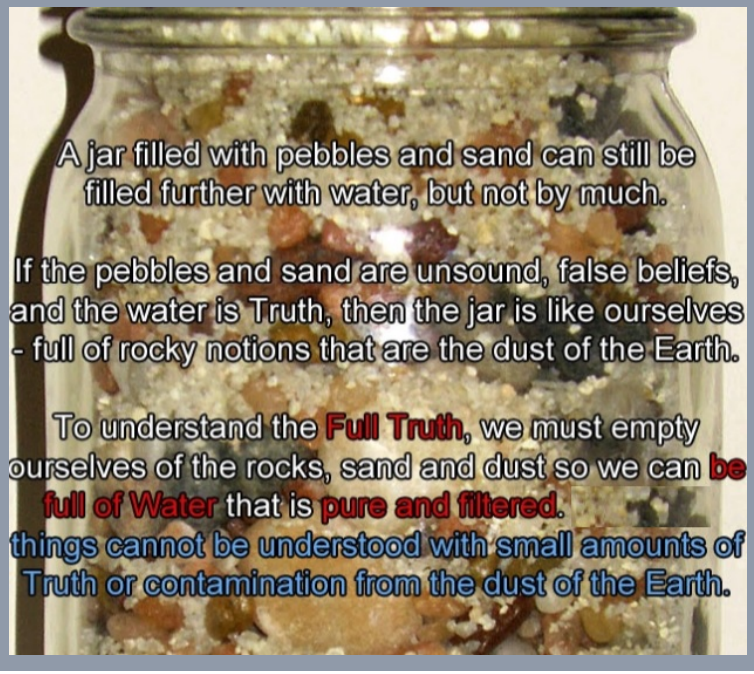
THE SOLUTION

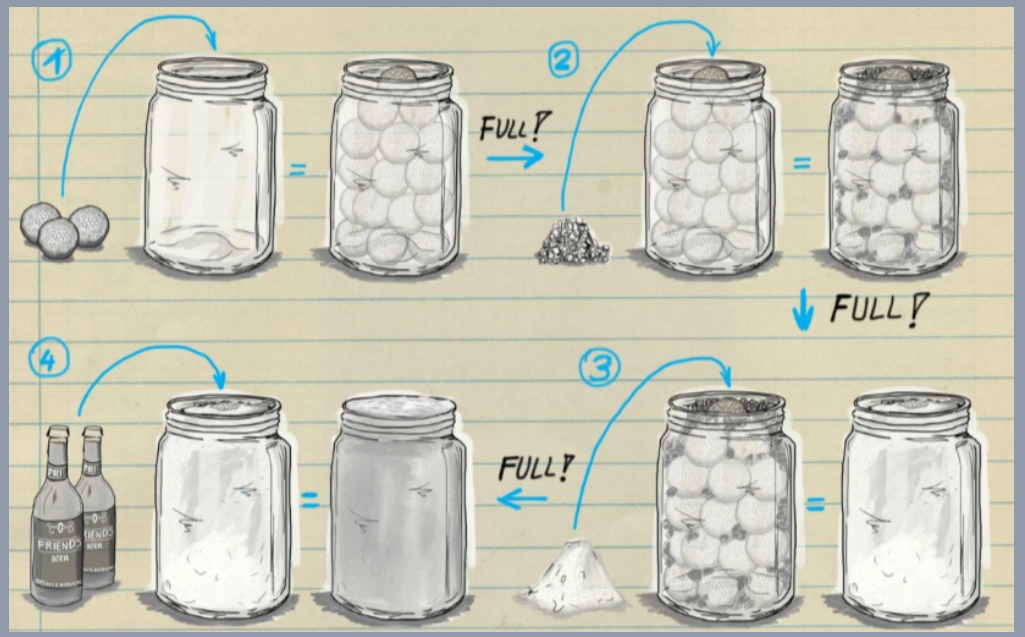
Avoid the "Checklist Mentality"

The idea that you can control your abnormal behavior by “checking off” a list of prescribed actions, like attending a certain number of meetings each week, calling someone each day, doing this and doing that, is called the “checklist mentality.” Everything we will mention today may be useful in recovery, but checklist mentality is the subtle attitude that following the checklist will give you control of your addiction. **Control is an illusion.**

“Obstinacy” (“Stubbornness”)

- Refusing to change one's opinion or chosen course of action, despite attempts by others to persuade one to do so
- How easily the thought comes of “That doesn’t apply to me“ -or- “I can handle this” and the subtlety that precedes a relapse into unhealthy thinking
- The process of attempting to handle things on my own, even though I am not qualified and do not have the experience to carry out the necessary actions successfully





Unreasonable Fears

THE PROBLEM

All these failings generate fear, a soul-sickness in its own right. Then fear, in turn, generates more character defects.

- Fear fuels my character defects
- I cannot handle the "Effect" of uncomfortable emotions and thoughts
- I allow my fear to "Affect" my actions, words and thought process
- I begin to "Infect" everything around me in a negative way
- I drank to change the "Effect" of how I felt, without caring about what it "Affected", not realizing that I became "Infected" with a disease.

THE SOLUTION

"Transformation" (Steps 3-9)

BEFORE working the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, most of us relied upon:

- **Impulse**
- **Instinct**
- **Intuition**

AFTER working the 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, these were transformed into:

- **Influence**
- **Identity**
- **Inspiration**

WE HAD A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE AND OUR PERSONALITY CHANGED. WE FINALLY GOT TO KNOW OUR "TRUE SELVES" AND FOUND CONTENTMENT.

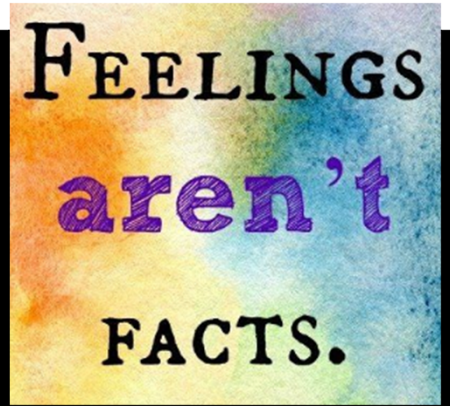
"Dichotomous Reasoning "

- The process of making things either black or white, excluding any possibility for a middle ground, carrying everything to extreme — this is called dichotomous thinking.



cal fraternity. So we shall describe some of the mental states that precede a relapse into drinking, for obviously this is the crux of the problem.

What sort of thinking dominates an alcoholic who repeats time after time the desperate experiment of the first drink? Friends who have reasoned with him after a spree which has brought him to the point of divorce or bankruptcy are mystified when he walks directly into a saloon. Why does he? Of what is he thinking?



THE PROBLEM

Histrionics

- People who overdramatize are called histrionic. The alcoholic can use this process of making mountains out of molehills as an excuse to drink, lie, overspend, gamble, binge, purge, starve, or make other bad decisions.

Do these thoughts ever cross your mind?

- An alcoholic says to himself, "I could really use a drink right now." Then adds, "Like a hole in the head."
- A bulimic thinks, "I ate too much for dinner — no, I really didn't."
- A codependent says, "How long has it been since I went to a meeting?" Then adds, "Obviously I have been too long without one."

THE SOLUTION

10th Step
(Live in the moment)

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

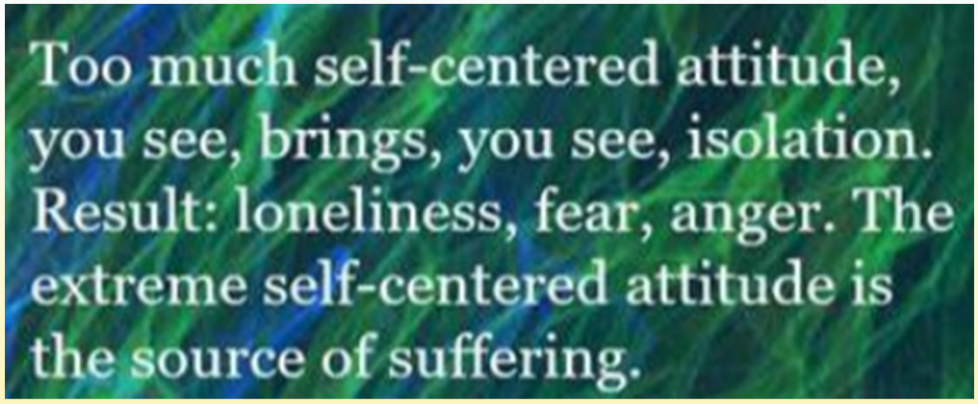
Found on page 85 of the Big Book:

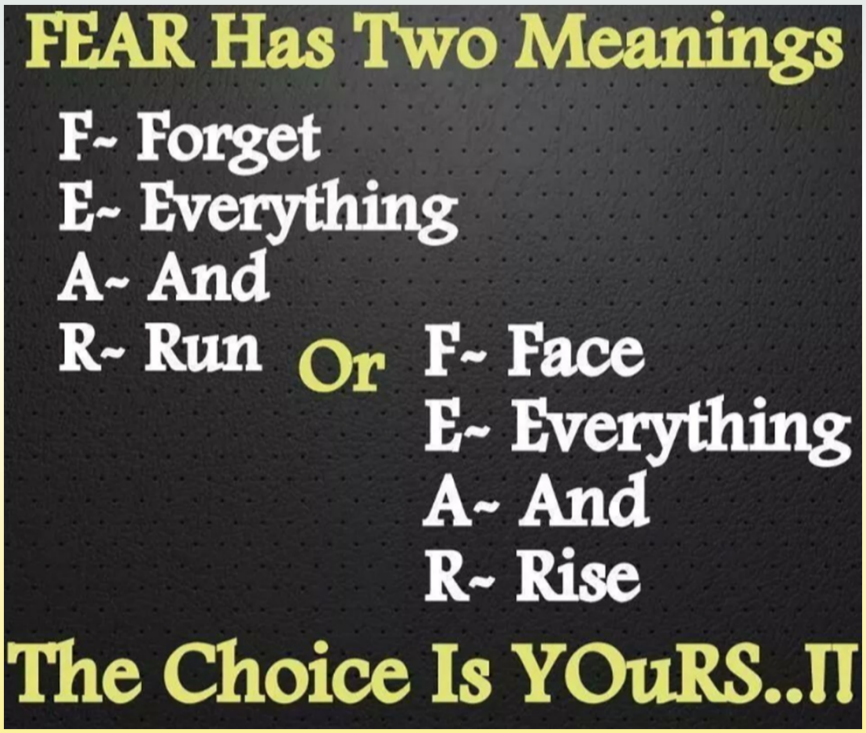
It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.

Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action.

" Self-Centered Fear "

- The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear - primarily fear is that we would lose something we already possess or would fail to get something we demanded. Living upon a basis of unsatisfied demands, we were in a state of continual disturbance and frustration. Therefore, no peace was to be had unless we could find a means of reducing these demands. So fear need not always be destructive, because the lessons of its consequences can lead us to positive values. *(As Bill Sees It pg. 22)*





THE PROBLEM

"Delusion"

- By starting with some lies, half-lies, or other misinformation, you can build a fantasy world of delusion, which gets further and further away from reality.

- It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads ONLY to futility and unhappiness.

- Is your head so busy that it blocks you from the sunlight of the spirit?





THE SOLUTION

11th Step (Conscious Contact)

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

- "It never occurred to us that we needed to change ourselves to meet new conditions whatever they were". *(pg. 1 As Bill Sees It)*
- Acceptance and Faith are capable of producing 100% sobriety. Nobody can, for example become completely free from Fear, anger, and pride. *(pg. 6 As Bill Sees It)*

A = Always
S = Say
A = A
P = Prayer



Invitation To Recite 11TH Step Prayer

PRAYER OF SAINT FRANCIS OF ASSISI (Page 99 of 12 & 12)

Lord, make me a channel of Thy peace ---

that where there is hatred,	I may bring love ---
that where there is wrong,	I may bring the spirit of forgiveness ---
that where there is discord,	I may bring harmony ---
that where there is error,	I may bring truth ---
that where there is doubt,	I may bring faith ---
that where there is despair,	I may bring hope ---
that where there are shadows,	I may bring light ---
that where there is sadness,	I may bring joy.

Lord, grant that I may seek rather

to comfort	than to be comforted ---
to understand,	than to be understood ---
to love,	than to be loved.

For

it is by self-forgetting	that one finds.
it is by forgiving	that one is forgiven.
it is by dying,	that one awakens to Eternal Life.

