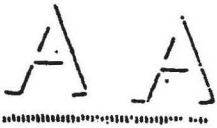


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THE KEY

U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HOSPITAL, LEXINGTON, KY. SEPT. 7, 1952, Vol. V No. 40.



God grant me the serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can
And wisdom to know the difference.



STEP NUMBER TWO

Came to believe that a Power
greater than ourselves could
restore us to sanity.

Having entered the portals of The A. A. Way of Life through the acceptance of Step One by admitting our powerlessness over drugs and the consequent unmanageability of our lives, we enter farther within the A. A. house by taking Step Two. The purpose of this step is to disclose the nature of the mental illness which we have suffered from the use of drugs and to admit the belief that we can overcome it by help from a POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES. Those of us who have had an honest desire to recover from the mental illness that the use of narcotics has imposed upon us have successfully used this Power. What you call this Power is a matter of your own choice. Call It what you will. Its recovery value lies in the fact that you believe It exists, that you approach It with faith and that you sincerely depend upon It to restore you to mental fitness.

Many balk at the phrase "could restore us to sanity." They do not feel that they have been in a state of insanity in any manner. However, some members have eventually arrived at the true meaning of Step Two by temporarily rephrasing it to read, "Came to believe that a Power Greater than Ourselves could restore us to SAME BEHAVIOR." The drug addict who wishes to cling to the illusion that he exercised sanity in his use of habit forming drugs is invited to prove his case against the accepted definition of insanity: "A simple definition for insanity is a disorder of conduct that occurs when the body impulses no longer find in the brain a co-ordinating center for the conditioning of conduct." When this condition arises man's behavior is unpredictable and he becomes legally insane.

Here we are initiated into the realm of faith, which means acceptance, not necessarily understanding. The only thing that is necessary is to be willing, with an open mind, to accept the existence of a higher Power and to be willing to learn more about that Power.

This step must not remain only in the mind. There must be action. "Faith without works is dead." This is a very important and vital phase of the A. A. program and is necessary in achieving and maintaining abstinence and sobriety.

So having taken the second step - its action takes place in the third step. For, if we truly believe that a "Power Greater than Ourselves can restore us to sanity" the only logical practice of that faith would be when we take the next step and make "a decision to turn our will and our life over to the care of God as we understand Him."

SPIRITUAL PROGRAM

Men and women often get a false idea about the Twelve Steps when they join A. A. They see no reason why they should be handed out a spiritual program to combat the disease of addiction or alcoholism and they snatch at the opportunity to proclaim A. A. as just another camouflaged effort to bring them back to religion. But as A. A. is essentially simplicity itself, let us simplify this point by asking ourselves why in fact do addicts and alcoholics turn to drugs and alcohol?

Psychologists very often tell us that we use drugs or drink because we are emotionally immature. And, indeed, most addicts and alcoholics use drugs and drink to escape from their humiliated self-pride and their thwarted greeds. A. A. tells us that the only way in which we can recover is by stopping the use of drugs and strong drink altogether; but it is not so foolish as to say "Just stop using drugs or drinking, and you will lose fears, resentments, pride, and selfishness that have urged you on to take narcotics or drink." Rather A. A. tells us "Stop being afraid, being resentful, being proud, being intolerant and selfish, and then you will lose the urge to escape and so you will cease to feel the urge to use drugs or drink."

These resentments, intolerances and the rest are not physical ailments, they are spiritual ills. They are frames of mind or mental attitudes which we have to learn to put into reverse. For our fears, we must substitute Serenity, Patience, and Peace of Mind; for our Intolerance, tolerance of others and of ourselves; for our Greed, and Self-centeredness, charity and work for others; for our Resentments, a willingness to accept the word as it really is and not to insist that it must be as we deem it should be. Those of us who have recovered, realize the paramount necessity for themselves of this program of re-education. To stop drinking and using drugs is the first step to recovery, but only the first. The disciplining of our spiritual selves is the next, the hard task that will occupy us for the rest of our lives.

(From The Road Back, Dublin, Ireland - Submitted by Betty T. LA HFD Group to Key)

A man failed to remove his hat when he entered a church, and was presently sighted by a horrified deacon, who quietly called the man's attention to his apparent forgetfulness. The man explained that he had been worshiping in that church for three years without anyone speaking to him, and he thought the hat would do the trick. (Sunshine)

A kind word is never lost. It keeps going on and on, from one person to another, until at last it comes back to you again.

No matter how handsome or how homely you are, you still look better when you smile.

A single sunbeam is enough to drive away many shadows.

NOT WHAT YOU OWN,
 BUT WHAT YOU GIVE,
 NOT WHAT YOU LEARN,
 BUT HOW YOU LIVE,
 NOT HOW YOU TALK,
 BUT WHAT YOU DO,
 MAKES UP THE PERSON
 KNOWN AS YOU.

ABUSE OF BARBITURATES

Barbiturates (seconals, amyals, nembutals - all the "als"), commonly known as "Sleeping Pills," vulgarly referred to as "goofballs, stumbling pills, idiot pills," et cetera, are potent drugs, and have now become one of the nation's addiction problems. More than a million pounds of this deadly menace were produced in 1951 alone, which means, according to Albert Deutsch in Look, more than 12 million doses a day - enough pills and capsules to put every 12th American to sleep every night in the year. Today, barbiturates lead all other poisons, except carbon monoxide, as a cause of death, both intentional and accidental. Many opiate addicts and many alcoholics drift into the use of these tiny dealers in death, the addict principally to splice out the shortage of his favorite opiate; the alcoholic to overcome anxiety and insomnia when coming off liquor.

Scattered warnings that barbiturates are addicting, as well as very dangerous drugs, went unheeded until Dr. Harris Isbell, Director of Research of this Hospital, reported upon his experiments with the drug upon volunteer subjects. From his observations Dr. Isbell states "No matter how one defines the term, barbiturates are addicting drugs...The addiction is, in fact, far more dangerous, from the point of view of physical damage, than addiction to morphine."

Therefore, while barbiturates are a useful medicine when properly used, they are both dangerous to life - to health, mental and physical - and addicting. They should be used only upon the advice and under the direction of a physician, following explicitly his instructions. As long as this is done barbiturates cause no harm. Only when the patient begins to prescribe for himself and takes barbiturates in very large amounts, does habituation occur. These pills are particularly harmful for opiate addicts and alcoholics to use.

A. A. WAY OF LIFE.

The A. A. Way of Life can become an exciting adventure if we wish to make it so. Its spiritual philosophy is ever unfolding if we will prepare ourselves to receive it. The Big Book promises recovery to those who are honest and follow its suggestions. Our experience proves this true. At times some of us, although willing, lack the understanding to join in group discussion or to speak on a given A. A. topic. A helpful suggestion to meet this condition may be found by examining one of hundreds of such topics in the Big Book. Get the large A. A. Book out of our library and read it, and then read it some more. Attend our A. A. meetings regularly. Read the 12 steps carefully and let your thoughts dwell upon each step. Peruse our little Key closely. Your understanding of A. A. topics and of the A. A. Way of Life will gradually be unfolded to you and you will see the sweetness of its spiritual philosophy.

JUST FOR TODAY, LET US BE AGREEABLE, RESPONSIVE, CHEERFUL, AND CHARITABLE.
 JUST FOR TODAY, LET US BE AT OUR BEST, DRESS OUR BEST, WALK SOFTLY, OFFER PRAISE
 FOR WHAT PEOPLE DO, NOT CRITICIZE THEM FOR WHAT THEY CANNOT DO. AND, IF WE
 FIND FAULT, LET US FORGIVE AND FORGET. TO TRY TO MAKE THE WORLD OVER IS A
 LARGE ORDER. IF WE CANNOT HAVE WHAT WE LIKE, MAYBE WE CAN LIKE WHAT WE HAVE.
 (From Alky Argot, August 1952, Wisconsin State Prison)

The man who wastes time lamenting yesterday, will waste tomorrow lamenting today.
 ONE DAY AT A TIME F. M. Ruskin EASY DOES IT A. A.

THE A.A. WAY

The core of the technique by which ADDICTS ANONYMOUS has worked what often seems a miracle in the lives of men and women is spiritual.

We repeat: It is not religious, but spiritual.

Not mental, not psychological—though it is all three of these as well—but spiritual.

The membership embraces agnostic, Jew and Gentile, Protestant and Catholic; all creeds, all denominations, all faiths. They all make spiritual progress by translating this universal and central truth of their release from drugs into their own faith.

It is universal because it depends for its effectiveness—and depends absolutely—upon the recognition of a power higher than man; the Creator, the Creative Spirit over all.

After the acknowledgment of a belief in a power higher than man, the next step is the making of a decision to relate themselves personally to this Power.

They made a decision to turn their will and their lives over to the care of God as they understood Him. When this was sincerely done, and the further suggested steps carried out, they underwent a profound mental and emotional change common to religious experience.

Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps, they try to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all their affairs.

They believe that their permanent abstinence depends on their willingness to remain spiritually alive.

They believe that sincere prayer and meditation, mighty channels of spiritual vitality, lead us to the next great step, which is effective living.

They believe that spirituality itself is the reflection of Godliness into channels of human living.

None of the members claims perfect adherence to these principles. They are not saints. These principles are guides to progress and the members claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

The "Twelve Steps" we took, are suggested as a program of recovery. READ THEM. MEMORIZE THEM. PRACTICE THEM. TAKE ACTION ON THEM. YOU CANT LOSE.

"Will A. A. work for me?" Buddy, that depends entirely on you. If you are not a mental cripple - If you REALLY want to quit using drugs - If you are capable of being absolutely honest with yourself - YES - A. A. will work for you one hundred per cent. We've heard so many people talk of their addiction and a lot of them have slipped one or several times. This alone should make us realize there can be no halfway in using the A. A. Program. We must work at A. A. to have A. A. work for us.

AA - "IT IS EASIER TO SUPPRESS THE FIRST DESIRE, THAN TO SATISFY ALL THAT FOLLOWS."