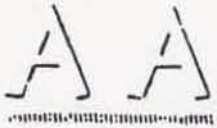
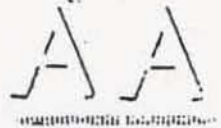


THE KEY

U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HOSPITAL, LEXINGTON, KY. SEPT. 14th, 1952 VOL. V. No. 41



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 THREE

Made a decision to turn our will
and our lives over to the care of
God, as we understand Him.

The purpose of Step Three is to recognize and treat a malady none of us formerly looked upon as a sickness; this malady is spiritual illness. A. A., as a "Way of Life," is basically a spiritual program that will arrest the use of drugs and the drinking of intoxicants as we develop within ourselves a true sense of responsibility. Knowledge and treatment of our physical and mental illness are necessary but we can never attain full recovery until we conquer our spiritual sickness.

In this step we have the beginning of charity, the beginning of the love of the Higher Power. We "surrender our will and our life to the care of God as we understand Him." In this we learn that giving is the essence of charity and we begin to realize that true love is nothing else but sacrifice. Having endeavored for years to run our own wills and finding that in so doing our lives had become unmanageable, we now learn that if we love God, if we give our will over to His care, that again our lives not only will become manageable but happy and serene. If we are not willing to take this step unconditionally, then we should pray that God will make us willing - praying for the will to do and the strength to accomplish. This, for a time, may be necessary for most of us. For, after years away from normal living, it is not going to be so easy to change.

The taking of this step of necessity presumes that we have reached some concrete form of belief, in God as we understand Him. As far as A. A. is concerned and as far as the achieving and the maintaining of freedom from drugs is concerned, it matters little what our belief is - BUT IT IS PARAMOUNT THAT WE ACT ON IT regardless of what it may be. For in the realm of faith - above all else - ACTION IS THE MAGIC WORD.

Now if the decision in the third step is sincere, if it is not only mental, if it does not remain sterile, then we must necessarily take Step Four. We must make a "searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." How can we turn our will and our life over to the care of God unless we KNOW what our life consists of? Or unless we make some sort of inventory to find out just what we are turning over to HIM?

A spiritual writer of old tells us: "Act as if everything depended on yourself; BELIEVE and trust as if everything depended upon God."

Lou. R., Men's Sec'y - Sudis G., Women's Sec'y - Bob B., Ch'mn - Peggy F. Asso.

NEWS OF OUR MEETINGS

MEETING THURSDAY NIGHT, August 28, 1952: Lou R., men's secretary, called the meeting to order. Jack B. read the little A. A. Prayer, while Johnny R. read the Purpose of Addicts Anonymous and Doc J. of S. C. read the 12 Steps. Lanky Bob B. introduced the new members. There were more than a dozen and we were glad to welcome such a nice bunch of new boys. We had over sixty five present at this meeting. Lou made a short talk on the purpose that we have in coming to A. A. - to get off drugs - that we are all kindred souls, seeking a way out of the maze of our difficulty. Doc M. from Indiana made a short talk, stating that we regain our security, our mental health, in A. A. by staying off drugs. He says we must overcome our defeatist attitude and this we can accomplish through A. A. Our good friend, Pete S. of Frankfort A. A. made a short and interesting talk. He said we have something in the A. A. Program and we must hold on to it. Fred M. of Tennessee also made a short talk on what A. A. has done for him while here. Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer. Coca Colas and cakes were served after the meeting.

MEETING SUNDAY AFTERNOON, August 31, 1952: Lou R. read the A. A. prayer. The Purpose of A. A. was read by Buddy C., the Alabama ladies' delight. Fred M. read the 12 Steps of A. A. Bobby B. from Ohio introduced the new members. Al S. from Port Arthur made a short talk on the First Step of our A. A. Program. Our friend, Doc M. from Jacksonville, Florida, made a very fine talk to the group. He stated that our group here resembled the A. A. on the outside in that we have doctors, lawyers, and all kinds of people composing our membership. Doc told us how he was first a drinker and then swapped alcohol for drugs. He said that he was told about our group and came to see what it was like, and he says that he has been coming regularly since then and has enjoyed it very much. He says that he hopes to continue in A. A. when he returns home. Doc said that a person can remain off drugs by living the A. A. Way of Life one day at a time. We predict great things of Doc both in here and on the outside in A. A. Bob B., the writer's assistant???, made a nice talk and advised all of us to read the Gold Book. Bob then fingered our old friend, Luke G. from Frankfort, a former secretary of the group here, and Luke made a fine and spirited talk on what A. A. had done for him in here and what it was doing for him on the outside. Meeting closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Chin Chow Chollie W. has taken unto himself a wife -

Ye editor hopes that he is now happily enslaved for life -

AA AA

AA AA

Fellows and girls: Come to our A. A. meetings. Drop the card game - put off going to work. There is something there for you and some of A. A. may rub off a you.

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE 12 TRADITIONS

(a). The "taint necessary for my abstinence" sort of member. He cares little or nothing for the welfare of A. A. as a whole. He has attained a modicum of abstinence and sobriety, and to satisfy his selfishness in a rationalizing manner without twinges of conscience, he is always saying "I came into this for my own abstinence and that's all I care about." In reality he doesn't, because he often loses it!

(b). The "Club-A. A." It is amazing how many of these individuals are extant and who seem determined to bump their own heads before realizing that the Tradition as to Clubs was written like all the rest, as a result of experience! And this tradition states that A. A. Clubs should be outside the A. A. group and incorporate and separate therefrom. Yet it is a fact that most groups still persist in tying the A. A. Group and Club together as one entity and learn only the hard way - after lots of dissension and slips!

(c) The "non-anonymi." The ones who disregarding the common good of A. A. and the security of the prospective members, shout to the world that they are members of A. A. - for their own material advancement. And the pity is that when they slip, they not alone are hurt, but others, yet not reached, put off their recovery.

THE CORRECT ATTITUDE: The twelve traditions, like the twelve steps, are suggested as a result of experience and for the general good wo, both as individuals and groups, should try our best to adjust.

ATTITUDE TOWARD THE A. A. BOOK

There are many who do not have the correct attitude toward the A. A. Book. For instance the "re-write specialist", the guy who always finds new ways, new rules, and so on, and does not honestly attempt to follow the suggested way. Then there is the "non-reader", who just skips about in the book, and the "one-timer", who read the book only once. Also we have the guy that buys the book but hangs onto it and is too tight to lend it to a newcomer who perhaps can ill afford one.

THE CORRECT ATTITUDE: The one who reads the A. A. book thoughtfully and carefully, and then re-reads it thoughtfully and carefully, and who perhaps re-reads it a third or fourth time; who afters again reads it from time to time to re-fuel; and who, when occasion demands it, loans it to others. Such a one eventually knows most of the answers, but he does not brag about it, for one of the answers is the necessity of humility.

"A MAN MAY SMILE AND BID YOU HAIL;
AND WISH YOU WITH THE DEVEL;
BUT WHEN A GOOD DOG WAGS HIS TAIL,
YOU KNOW HE IS ON THE LEVEL."

TRUE EVALUATION OF CONDITIONS AS THEY ARE

True humility does not exist without honest evaluation. Serious realization of our powerlessness over drugs will awaken us to our need of help from A. A. It encourages treatment of our illness and breaks down prejudice that denies us the help of A Higher Power. The importance of humility is summed up in the First Step of Recovery in the Big Book, page 41 par. 2., "We learn that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics (were powerless over drugs)."

SECRET OF CONTENTMENT

When the world was young, according to an old Hindu religious myth, Brahma gave to man the SECRET OF CONTENTMENT. He had it engraved on a gold tablet and fixed it to the trunk of a mighty tree where all men could read, and, if they understood aright, could profit thereby.

But in spite of Brahma's thoughtfulness, there was little contentment in the world. There were too many men who sought some special advantage over their brothers; too many cunning men who devised stratagems to mulct the unsuspecting of hard earned sustenance.

At first Brahma ignored the din of bickerings and complaints. Then he became angered by the hypocrisy of the greedy, the selfish, the unscrupulous, the shiftless, the knave and the thief, when each tried to justify his own reprehensible conduct by some far-fetched interpretation of the message on the tablet. Brahma pondered where he should conceal it. If he hid it in the earth, men would dig it out again. Nor could he sink it deep in the ocean because men would dive to the coldest depths of the sea to bring it up. But there was one place he could hide it - one place where most men would never think to look. So he destroyed the tablet of gold and implanted the SECRET OF CONTENTMENT within man himself.

Well Brahma knew the greedy, the selfish, the trickster, and the thief would race from one end of the earth to the other trying to find contentment, but never would they look into their own hearts for it. Only those who deserved to be content would know where to find its secret, and by placing it deep within the hearts of all, he did not deny it to those who were entitled to it.

(Reprint from The Key of April 16, 1950)

IN ADDITION TO FREEDOM FROM DRUGS AND A NORMAL AND HAPPY LIFE, A. A. GIVES US TWELVE REWARDS TO THE FAITHFUL PRACTICE OF THE TWELVE STEPS OF THE PROGRAM:

1. Hope instead of desperation.
2. Faith instead of despair.
3. Courage instead of fear.
4. Peace of mind instead of confusion.
5. Self respect instead of self contempt.
6. Self confidence instead of helplessness.
7. The respect of others instead of their pity and contempt.
8. A clean conscience instead of a sense of guilt.
9. Real friendships instead of loneliness.
10. A clean pattern of life instead of a purposeless existence.
11. The love and understanding of our families instead of their doubts and fears.
12. The freedom of a happy life instead of the bondage of addiction to drugs.

Many drug addicts would like to get off and remain free of drugs, and thus regain their place in society and live a life of peace of mind, contentment and happiness. I have been in that frame of mind for a long time. However, we take no action to accomplish this life of freedom from narcotics. We try to do it by just desiring to get well and to remain that way. Let us now DO SOMETHING about our malady - drug addiction. There is a Way of Life that insures to those living it continued abstinence from narcotics, and that is, the A. A. Way of Life. If one will just take and practice the Twelve Steps of the A. A. Program he will live the A. A. Way of Life and will find and keep that life of peace of mind, contentment and happiness that he so much desires. We cannot attain this kind of life alone - we must have help, and we will find that help through the Higher Power found in the spiritual side of A. A. TAKE A SHOT OF A. A. AND GET A BANG.

REMEMBER: To keep your thinking straight; REMEMBER: That defects will creep into your life if given half a chance; REMEMBER: You are completely dependent upon God as you understand HIM; REMEMBER: To daily thank Him for His mercy and kindness.

It was a beautiful, fresh spring morning in Macon, Georgia, and I remarked to a fellow Georgian and native Maconite, -

"A day like this really makes a person feel like working."

"Well, now, I wouldn't go so far as to say that," he drawled, "but I will say it makes a body feel like he OUGHT TO!"

A disgruntled A. A. is a man who has taken a moral inventory of himself and gotten sore about it when he discovered what a rotten guy he had really been.

YE EDITOR LEAVES

Well, fellow A. A.s, when you receive this issue of The Key, ye editor will have completed his sojourn in this Hospital and be well on his way home - to the sunny southland. Ye editor comes from so far south until he deems the people of North Georgia "danyankoes!" Ye editor will miss each and every one of you and he has enjoyed being able to serve as your editor. If he gets no more out of his A. A. than being associated with this Fellowship he has been richly rewarded. However, he hopes that he can and will continue to live without narcotics after he leaves here, and this he fully realizes he can only do through the Grace of Almighty God and this he can obtain by living The A. A. Way of Life each day - and thus he will attain that serenity and happiness in his declining years that he so earnestly and longingly yearns for. He is turning the office over to his ASSISTANT(???) and Bridge Partner, Long Texas Bob Lex B., now of "Day Tun Capital O. H. Ten." If ye editor can but do half so well as Luke G. and Charlie " are doing he will feel that he has accomplished and is accomplishing much. Jack B. The Georgia and Florida Bridge Expert - The Ga. B. W.

From the Vancouver Sun: "During the storm on Saturday, Mrs. Timothy McPherson slipped on the ice and hurt her somewhat."

WHERE ARE WE HEADED?

Before entering this hospital we were all headed on the wrong road. Many of us might not even have started heading in any direction, but were merely going in circles. By entering here, we have found someone and something to assist and to direct us and put us on safe ground once again. The road we follow now will be up to each of us. Many will find that they have slipped off of solid ground onto the shoulders with mud surrounding even after having proper instructions as to the smooth traveling on the right highway of life. For all of us there is the A. A. Program and Way of Life where, through experience others have found the right road, and at all times A. A. is there to assist and to guide us. It is wonderful to have the thankful feeling in your heart that you have been given another start and can look forward to the time you will head to the destination of love, happiness and clean living once again. When we leave the front gate of this Hospital, let's each one of us be sure to take the right road. It is so easy to be misrouted - to misroute ourselves. One wrong step along the wrong road and it takes much to get straightened out again. If we get onto solid ground and get accurate directions with the help of A. A. then we are certain to reach our goal. There are A. A. groups in the majority of cities and why not step in and see if we are still headed in the right direction.

(By Henley R., Women's Group of A. A., The Key, April 23, 1950)

Wife: "What do you say we go out for a good time tonight, dear?"

Husband: "That's swell. If you get in before I do, leave the hall light on."

Irving Berlin says, "Life is ten per cent what you make it and ninety per cent how you take it."

Christopher Morley says, "From now until the end of time no one else will ever see life with my eyes, and I mean to make the most of my chances."

When Umpqua, Oregon pupils were told classes would be dismissed because of the teachers' institute, Lonnie Leonard, eight, startled his parents with: "No school tomorrow. The teachers are going on an innocent toot."

In substance A. A. says: "Determine if you are an addict; learn there is a way out; love people - do not judge them; be kind and sympathetic; understanding; patient; tolerant; serve others; and all the world will be your friend and your attitude about life will bring joy and contentment into your own life."

To those of us who are trying to live the Addicts Anonymous Way of Life; I remind you of your course of action. We can succeed or we can fail in A. A. as individuals but it's principles are simple as is all Truth and if we practice these principles, our lives will be useful, fresh in moral beauty, powerful in furthering God's Kingdom through service to our fellowman.

Peace of mind may be found in our A. A. Way of Life - it is difficult to find; it is maintained only by vigilance and once attained must also be carefully preserved.

OUR PURPOSE

This is an informal group of drug addicts, banded together to help one another renew their strength in remaining free of drug addiction.

Our precepts are patterned after those of Alcoholics Anonymous, to which all credit is given and precedence is acknowledged. We claim no originality but since we believe that the causes of alcoholism and addiction are basically the same we wish to apply to our lives the fruits and principles which have benefited so many otherwise helpless individuals. We believe that by so doing we may regain and maintain our health and sanity.

It shall be the purpose of this group to endeavor to foster a means of rehabilitation for the addict, and to carry a message of hope for the future to those who have become enslaved by the use of habit-forming drugs.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF A. A.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and drugs--that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we UNDERSTAND HIM.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual experience (or awakening) as a result of these Steps, we try to carry this message to alcoholics and addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.