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DISCUSSION No. 2

THE SPIRITUAL PHASE

The material contained herein is merely an outline of the spiritual phase of the program and is not intended to replace or supplant:

- a. The careful reading and re-reading of the Big Book.*
- b. Regular attendance at weekly group meetings.*
- c. Study of the program.*
- d. Daily practice of the program.*
- e. Reading of approved printed material on alcoholism.*
- f. Informal discussion with other members.*

This instruction is not a short-cut to A.A. It is an introduction - - a help - - a brief course in fundamentals.

This meeting covers Steps 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 11. We will take them in order.

Step No. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Our drinking experience has shown:

1. That as we strayed away from the normal *social* side of life, our minds became confused and we strayed away from the normal *mental* side of life.
2. An abnormal *mental* condition is certainly not **sanity** in the accepted sense of the word. We have acquired or developed a **mental disease**. Our study of A.A. shows that:
 - a. In the *mental* or tangible side of life we have lost touch with, or ignored, or have forgotten the **spiritual** values that give us the dignity of *man* as differentiated from the *animal*. We have fallen back upon the **material** things of life and these have failed us. We have been groping in the dark.
 - b. No *human* agency, no *science* or *art* has been able to solve the alcoholic problem, so we turn to the **spiritual** for guidance.

Therefore we "came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." **We must believe with a great FAITH.**

Step No. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

In the first step we learned that we had lost the power of **choice** and had to make a **decision**.

1. What **decision** could we make better than to
 - a. turn our very **will** over to **God**, realizing that our own use of our own will had resulted in trouble.
 - b. As in the Lord's Prayer, you must believe and practice **thy will be done**.
2. **God as we understand Him.**
3. *Religion* is a word we do not use in A.A. We refer to a member's relation to *God* as the **spiritual**. A

religion is a form of worship - - not the worship itself.

4. If a man cannot believe in God he can certainly believe in something greater than himself. If he cannot believe in a power greater than himself he is a rather hopeless egotist.

Step No. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

1. There is nothing new in this step. There are many sound reasons for "talking over our troubles out loud with others."
2. The Catholic already has this medium readily available to him in the confessional. But - - the Catholic is at a disadvantage if he thinks his familiarity with confession permits him to think his part of A.A. is thereby automatically taken care of. He must, in confession, seriously consider his problems in relation to his alcoholic thinking.
3. The non-Catholic has the way open to work this step by going to his minister, his doctor, or his friend.
4. Under this step it is not even necessary to go to a priest or minister. Any understanding human being, friend or stranger, will serve the purpose.
5. The purpose and intent of this step is so plain and definite that it needs little explanation. The point is that we **must** do **exactly** what the fifth step says, sooner or later. We must not be in rush to get this step off our chest. Consider it carefully and calmly. Then get about it and do it.
6. "Wrongs" do not necessarily mean *crime*. It can well be wrong thinking - - selfishness - - false pride - - egotism - - or any one of a hundred such negative faults.

Step No. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

1. After **admitting** our wrong thinking and wrong actions in step five we now do something more than "admit" or "confess."
2. We now become **ready** and **willing** to have God remove the defects in our **character**.
3. Remember it is **our** character we are working on. Not the other fellow's. Here is a good place to drop the **critical** attitude toward others - - the **superior** attitude toward others.
4. We must clean our mind of wrong thinking - - petty jealousy - - envy - - self pity - - remorse, etc.
5. Here is the place to drop **resentments**, one of the biggest hurdles the alcoholic had to get over.
6. What concerns us here is that we drop all thoughts of **resentment**: anger, hatred, revenge.
7. We turn our **will** over to God and let **his will** direct us how to patiently remove, one by one, all defects in our character.

Step No. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

The meaning of this step is clear: *prayer, humility*.

1. **Prayer** No man can tell another **how** to pray. Each one has, or works out for himself, his own method.
 - If we cannot pray, we just talk to God and tell him our troubles. Meditate (think clearly and cleanly) and ask God to direct our thoughts.

- Christ said, "ask and ye shall receive." What method is simpler? - - merely *ask*.
 - If you cannot pray, ask God to teach you to pray.
2. **Humility** This simply is the virtue of being ourselves and realizing how small we are in a big world full of its own trouble.
 - Drop all pretense.
 - We must not be Mr. Big Shot - - bragging, boasting.
 - Shed false pride.
 - Tell the simple, plain, unvarnished truth.
 - Act, walk, and talk simply.
 - See the little bit of good that exists in an evil man; forget the little bit of evil that exists in a good man.
 - We must not look down on the very lowest of **God's** creations or man's mistakes.
 - Think clearly, honestly, fairly, generously.
 3. The shortcomings we ask **God** to remove are the very defects in character that make us drink - - the same defects we drink to hide or get away from.

Step No. 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.

1. We pray each night - - *every night* - - a prayer of thanks.
2. We pray each morning - - *every morning* - - for help and guidance.
3. When we are lonely, confused, uncertain - - *we pray*.

Most of us find it well to - -

1. Choose, for each day, a "quiet time" to meditate on the program, on our progress in it.
2. Keep conscious contact with **God** and pray to make that contact closer.
3. Pray that our will be laid aside and that God's will direct us.
4. Pray for calmness - - quiet - - relaxation - - rest.
5. Pray for strength and courage to enable us to do today's work today.
6. Pray for forgiveness for yesterday's errors.
7. Ask for **hope** for better things tomorrow.
8. Pray for what we feel we need. We will not get what we *want* - - we will get what we **need**, what is good for us.

Conclusion

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spiritual side of the program. **Willingness, Honesty, and Open-Mindedness** are **the essentials of recovery**. *But these are indispensable.*

ASK QUESTIONS

*No question pertaining to drinking, or stopping drinking, is silly or irrelevant. The matter is **too serious**. In A.A. we learn by question and answer. We learn by exchanging our thoughts and our experience with each other. Any question you ask may help someone else. To cover as many questions as possible in the short time available, all answers must be limited to three minutes.*

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.
