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DISCUSSION No. 4

ACTIVE WORK

The material contained herein is merely an outline of the active working step 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 matter 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 the Twelfth Step.

Step No. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This step logically separates into three parts:

1. The Spiritual Experience

The terms "spiritual experience" and "spiritual awakening" used here and in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* mean (upon careful reading)

that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many forms.

Do NOT get the impression that these personality changes or spiritual experiences must be in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals. Happily for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous. Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule.

Most of our experiences are what psychologist William James calls "the educational variety" because they develop slowly over a period of time.

Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before he is himself. The new man gradually realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life - - that such a change could hardly have been brought about by *himself alone*. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.

Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problem in the light of

our experience can recover provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial.

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.**

2. Carry the Message to Others

This means exactly what it says. Carry the message actively. Bring it to the man who needs it. We do it in many ways:

- a. By attending **every** meeting of our own group.
- b. By making calls when asked.
- c. By speaking at group meetings when asked.
- d. By supporting our group financially to make group meetings possible.
- e. By assisting at meetings when asked.
- f. By setting a good example of complete sobriety.
- g. By owning, and loaning to new men, our own copy of the Big A.A. Book.
- h. By encouraging those who find the way difficult.
- i. By serving as an officer or on group committees or special assignments when asked.
- j. By doing all of the foregoing cheerfully and willingly.
- k. We do any or all of the foregoing *at some sacrifice to ourselves with definite thought of developing unselfishness* in our own character.

3. We Practice These Principles in All Our Affairs

This last part of the **Twelfth Step** is the real purpose that all of the twelve steps lead to - - a *new way of life, a design for living*. It shows how to live rightly, think rightly and to achieve happiness. **How do we go about it?**

- a. We resolve to live our life *one day at a time* - - just twenty-four hours.
- b. We pray *each day* for guidance that day.
- c. We pray *each night* - - thanks for that day.
- d. We resolve to keep our heads and to forego any anger, no matter what situation arises.
- e. We are patient.
- f. We keep calm, relaxed.
- g. Now and most important: whatever *little* ordinary situations as well as *big* situations arise, we look at them calmly and fairly, with an open mind, then act on them in exact accordance with the simple true principles that A.A. has taught and will teach us.

In other words, our **sobriety** is only a correction of our worst and most evident faults. Our living each day according to the principles of A.A. will also correct all of our other lesser faults and will gradually eliminate, one by one, all of the defects in our character that cause frictions, discontents, and unhappy rebellious moods that lead right back to our very chief fault of drinking.

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 thought and experience with each other. Any question we 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.

Staying on the Beam

Today most commercial flying is done on a radio beam. A directional beam is produced to guide the pilot to his destination, and as long as he keeps on this beam he knows that he is safe, even if he cannot see around him for fog, or get his bearings in any other way.

As soon as he gets off the beam in any direction he is in danger, and he immediately tries to get back on to the beam once more.

Those who believe in the All-ness of God, have a spiritual beam upon which to navigate on the voyage of life. As long as you have peace of mind and some sense of the Presence of God you are on the beam, and you are safe, even if outer things seem to be confused or even very dark; but as soon as you get off the beam you are in danger.

You are off the beam the moment you are angry or resentful or jealous or frightened or depressed; and when such a condition arises you should immediately get back on the beam by turning quietly to God in thought, claiming His Presence, claiming that His Love and Intelligence are with you, and that the promises in the Bible are true today.

If you do this you are back on the beam, even if outer conditions and your own feelings do not change immediately. You are back on the beam and you will reach port in safety.

Keep on the beam and nothing shall by any means hurt you.

- - Emmet Fox

Lest We Forget

I shall pass through this world but once. Any good, therefore, that I can do, or any kindness I can show to any human being, let me do it NOW. Let me not defer it, or neglect it, for I shall not pass this way again.

- - Stephen Grellet (1773-1855)
