

Bill was once asked if he could describe the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous in simple terms. He replied, "I certainly can. It is a complete mystery shrouded in utter simplicity" Let's take a look at this wonderful Program as see if it is that simple.

Requirement for membership – a desire to stop drinking for good and all.

Why? – Because every time I start drinking, I drink too much but never get enough. So I make up my mind that I will never take another drink but for reasons I don't understand, I can't manage that decision. I am powerless over my body and powerless over my mind where it comes to alcohol.

I was told that Alcoholics Anonymous might be able to help me. By listening to the story of a recovered alcoholic, I got some hope that maybe this outfit really had a solution for my drinking problem. I was told if I had the willingness to do what other recovered alcoholics had done, I would be given the Power I needed to overcome my powerlessness over alcohol.

I made a decision to do what they said they had done. I was told that precise directions for doing what they did was in a book titled, "Alcoholics Anonymous." I need only follow those clear-cut directions and I would never have to take another drink containing alcohol and further, I would have a way of living that would be better than anything I had ever known.

I started carrying out that decision by making a list of all the people, institutions and principles I resented. Then I made a list of those I feared followed by a list of those who had been harmed by my sexual misconduct.

I sat with another human being and went over the lists I had made. In doing so, I saw how selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened and inconsiderate I had been to almost everyone I had ever known. It became evident that my selfishness had been the trigger for my insane act of starting to drink even though I had sworn I would never do it again.

Recognizing that the way I had been thinking which determined the way I felt which caused me to pick up that first drink, I reaffirmed my decision to continue the process they outlined for me.

Having become aware that I now felt the presence of a new inner Power, I appealed to that Power to begin changing the way I thought and the way I felt.

As I made those lists of people who I thought had done me wrong, I realized it was me who had wronged them so I made a list of them all and started becoming willing to make amends and restitution to each and every one of them.

With my Mentor's guidance, I began the process of making amends and restitution to those I had harmed by my thoughts and/or actions. I became aware that I had undergone a revolutionary change in the way I thought and the way I felt. It was utterly awesome and wonderful. And as I began the process of forgiving those who I thought were the cause of all my problems, I was told to begin my spiritual growth. This unreal transformation within me happened as the result of

following the clear-cut directions in just 20 pages of that A.A. Text Book. I had recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.

Since what I had done up to this point had produced the unbelievable results I had experienced, I was to continue doing exactly the same thing moment by moment, day by day. In doing so, I was promised I would grow in understanding and effectiveness in my new found spiritual way of life and I should continue to make amends wherever possible. I was also warned that if I failed to continue to do these things, I would return to the person I used to be and would therefore drink again and very likely die drunk.

Having come to A.A. looking for a way to avoid death or wet brain insanity, I learned that lack of power was my dilemma and I had no knowledge of what to do about it. But what I had done up to this point had given me a Higher Power that would solve all my problems. I had to learn how to improve my conscience contact with this Power and effectively communicate with Him. To accomplish this, I was given a number of prayers and specific directions on what to do at night, in the morning and all day long. By praying these prayers at appropriate times and practicing talking to and learning how to listen to Him, I have and am learning how to live a life of freedom. I am now free of alcohol, free of me and free of you. I am free and have a peaceful and purposeful life to live.

So now that I have recovered and have been given the Power to help others, my waking time is mostly directed toward learning how to be of maximum service to Him and the people He puts in my life. He gives me many opportunities to share my experience and knowledge of what a hopeless alcoholic can do to survive to those who are as willing as I was to learn how to live sober and experience a life that is beyond our wildest dreams. Or as Fred said:

“Quite as important was the discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems. I have since been brought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before. My old manner of life was by no means a bad one, but I would not exchange its best moments for the worst I have now. I would not go back to it even if I could.” Page 42 & 43  
*Alcoholics Anonymous*

Simple, but not easy. A price has to be paid but the prize is far greater than the price!

Cliff B.

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