# The Foundation Meeting

*Primary Purpose Group — the script, in its own order: what alcoholism is, what the solution is, and how to take the action*

## WHERE WE BEGIN — THE DUST JACKET

problem → solution → action

We make certain everyone has a Big Book and begin by referring to the lower right-hand corner of the dust jacket, where it reads: **"This is the Third Edition of the Big Book, the BASIC TEXT for Alcoholics Anonymous."** Or, of course, if they have a Fourth Edition, the same message in the middle of the dust jacket.

> *"Because this book has become the basic text for our Society…"*
> Preface, p. xi — for a copy with no jacket, the book says it of itself

We want them to know what **ALCOHOLISM** is, what the **SOLUTION** is, and **HOW** to take the **ACTION** that is necessary to avoid death or insanity by drinking — that is, to get from the **PROBLEM** to the **SOLUTION**.

## FOREWORD TO FIRST EDITION, SENTENCE BY SENTENCE

p. xiii — 1939 · read the first paragraph, then dissect it

**1** "We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body." *— tells us who authored the Basic Text for Alcoholics Anonymous.*

**2** "To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book." *— tells us why they went to the trouble to publish the Basic Text.*

**3** "For them, we hope these pages will prove so convincing that no further authentication will be necessary." *— suggests the Big Book is all we will ever need to be successful in sobriety.*

**4–5** "We think this account of our experiences will help everyone to better understand the alcoholic. Many do not comprehend that the alcoholic is a very sick person." *— tell us the Big Book is also for those that care about us.*

**6** "And besides, we are sure that our way of living has its advantages for all." *— supported by the fact that the Big Book has given birth to over 200 anonymous fellowships that have nothing to do with drinking.* FOUNDATION MEETING

> *"The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking."*
> p. xiv — Traditions Three and Five

We have lost our understanding of **HONEST** by the time we decide to come to AA, so that requirement has been eliminated — but if a person is serious about living sober, they had better have an **HONEST** desire to stop **DRINKING**, and be willing to follow our directions.

## FOREWORD TO SECOND EDITION

pp. xv–xxi · 1955 · the book never names them: "the broker" and "the physician"

Gives a historical account of the first 20 years of our history — each line of the script, answered in the book's own words:

**1** **How Bill found Dr. Bob.** "The spark that was to flare into the first A.A. group was struck at Akron, Ohio, in June 1935, during a talk between a New York stockbroker and an Akron physician." p. xv "The broker had gone to Akron on a business venture which had collapsed, leaving him greatly in fear that he might start drinking again. He suddenly realized that in order to save himself he must carry his message to another alcoholic. That alcoholic turned out to be the Akron physician." "…when the broker gave him Dr. Silkworth's description of alcoholism and its hopelessness, the physician began to pursue the spiritual remedy for his malady with a willingness he had never before been able to muster. He sobered, never to drink again up to the moment of his death in 1950." p. xvi

**2** **How they got busy looking for other alcoholics to try to help.** "This seemed to prove that one alcoholic could affect another as no nonalcoholic could. It also indicated that strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent recovery." pp. xvi–xvii "Hence the two men set to work almost frantically upon alcoholics arriving in the ward of the Akron City Hospital. Their very first case, a desperate one, recovered immediately and became A.A. number three. He never had another drink." p. xvii

**3** **How their success attracted the attention of some of our leading citizens.** "Dr. Harry Emerson Fosdick, the noted clergyman, reviewed it with approval. In the fall of 1939 Fulton Oursler, then editor of Liberty, printed a piece in his magazine, called 'Alcoholics and God.'" pp. xvii–xviii "In the spring of 1940, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. gave a dinner for many of his friends to which he invited A.A. members to tell their stories." p. xviii

**4** **How we received some very favorable publicity — Jack Alexander's article.** "By March 1941 the membership had shot up to 2,000. Then Jack Alexander wrote a feature article in the Saturday Evening Post and placed such a compelling picture of A.A. before the general public that alcoholics in need of help really deluged us. By the close of 1941, A.A. numbered 8,000 members." p. xviii

**5** **How the onslaught of new prospects forced Bill to develop the Traditions.** "Our Society then entered a fearsome and exciting adolescent period. The test that it faced was this: Could these large numbers of erstwhile erratic alcoholics successfully meet and work together?" p. xviii "We had to unify our Fellowship or pass off the scene. As we discovered the principles by which the individual alcoholic could live, so we had to evolve principles by which the A.A. groups and A.A. as a whole could survive and function effectively." … "This was the substance of A.A.'s Twelve Traditions, which are stated in full on page 561 of this book." p. xix

# Page xx, and What Happened

*the success rate in the Foreword to the Second Edition, hammered — and what the script says became of it*

## AND THEN WE HAMMER THE STATEMENT ON PAGE XX

Foreword to Second Edition, p. xx · 1955 figures

> *"Of alcoholics who came to A.A. and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained that way; 25% sobered up after some relapses, and among the remainder, those who stayed on with A.A. showed improvement. Other thousands came to a few A.A. meetings and at first decided they didn't want the program. But great numbers of these—about two out of three—began to return as time passed."*
>
> p. xx

**50%**
never took another drink

**½**
of those who did drink returned and found permanent sobriety

**75%+**
who had Sponsors who followed the clear-cut directions in the Big Book were successful in sobriety

## WHAT HAPPENED TO THE RATE

the script's own history and figures

- **1953** — Bill published the 12&12; by **1965** our success rate had dropped to **50%**. Unfortunately, many newcomers are encouraged to try to use the 12&12 as their source of directions. Bill W. was the principal author of the Big Book and the sole author of the 12&12 — and on page 17 of the 12&12 he wrote:

  > *"The book 'Alcoholics Anonymous' became the basic text of the Fellowship, and it still is."*
  >
  > 12&12, Foreword, p. 17

- **Late 1960s** — we started "discussion/participation meetings" that failed to stick to our singleness of purpose, so by **1980** we had dropped to **33%**. We started ignoring the practice of focusing on *OUR* Solution, and we drifted into group therapy.
- **Recent years** — our success rate has decreased to what appears to be **less than 5%** for those finding as much as 5 years of sobriety. *Refer to Bob Bacon's article, "The Price of Don't Drink and Go To Meetings," "What Happened," plus the InterGroup stats and the Box 459 stats.*
- **Fellowship changed; Program didn't.** While there has been a dramatic change in our Fellowship, the Program has remained unchanged — consequently, the Fourth Edition reads the same as the First Edition.

> *"...there exists strong sentiment against any radical changes being made in it. Therefore, the first portion of this volume, describing the A.A. recovery program, has been left largely untouched in the course of revisions made for the second, third, and fourth editions."*
>
> Preface, p. xi

> *"While our literature has preserved the integrity of the A.A. message, sweeping changes in society as a whole are reflected in new customs and practices within the Fellowship."*
>
> Foreword to Fourth Edition, p. xxiv

# Page 30, then The Doctor's Opinion

*know in your heart of hearts that you are the victim of a killer disease — then go back to the doctor who named it*

> *"We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed."*
>
> More About Alcoholism, p. 30, middle paragraph — in our heart of hearts, we must know that we are the victims of a killer disease before we can begin recovery.

## DR. SILKWORTH, AND THE DEAD BATTERY

p. xxv (3rd ed. p. xxvi)

Return to The Doctor's Opinion. We identify who Dr. Silkworth was, how he wound up at Towns Hospital, and how his "opinion" opened the door for recovery — **until we understand a problem, we cannot find a solution.**

> *"A well-known doctor, chief physician at a nationally prominent hospital specializing in alcoholic and drug addiction, gave Alcoholics Anonymous this letter:"*
>
> p. xxv

**PROBLEM.** I walk out to my car, put the key in the ignition, and the damn thing won't start. I can sit on my butt and talk about the car not starting until hell freezes over, but that will get me nowhere. **SOLUTION.** I look under the hood and see that the battery cable has corroded. I know what the PROBLEM is, so the SOLUTION becomes very evident: I need a new battery cable. But that doesn't solve the PROBLEM. **ACTION.** I still must take the action necessary to obtain a new cable, replace the bad one — and now I'm on my way.

*Understand the problem, know what the solution is, and then take the action to make the solution a reality.*

## THE ALLERGY, AND THE CRAVING

p. xxviii ¶1 (3rd ed. p. xxvi ¶1) · p. xxx

From the first paragraph on the page we present the **ALLERGY**, which makes us powerless over alcohol — and the phenomenon of **CRAVING**, which is the manifestation of the allergy.

> *"We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all..."*
>
> p. xxviii ¶1

> *"...they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated. The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence."*
>
> p. xxx

## THE LAST PARAGRAPH ON THE PAGE — DISSECT IT WHOLE

pp. xxviii–xxix (3rd ed. p. xxvi) — the UNMANAGEABILITY: the alcoholic mind that cannot distinguish the true from the false

> *"Men and women drink essentially because they like the* **effect** *produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they* **cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false**. *To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience* **the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks**—*drinks which they see others taking with impunity. After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again.* **This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.**"
>
> pp. xxviii–xxix

### *First — what is the "effect" alcoholic men and women get from drinking alcohol?*

Why is it so important that we have this spiritual event occur in our lives? Well, Dr. Silkworth said that we drink essentially because we like the effect produced by alcohol. What is the effect an alcoholic gets from drinking? **When we alcoholics had a few drinks, we were amazed at the change in the way we thought and the way we felt. A few drinks produced an "entire psychic change."**

So let's go to page 83 in the Big Book and examine the Ninth Step Promises — beginning each promise with **"In the early days of my drinking, when I had a few drinks..."** Turn the page.

# The Promises, Read Backwards

*page 83 — begin each Ninth Step Promise with "In the early days of my drinking, when I had a few drinks…" and ask the room: did you?*

| | THE BOOK SAYS (PP. 83–84) | WHEN I HAD A FEW DRINKS… | DID YOU? — THE CHAIR'S ASK *(AND ANSWER)* |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | *"We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness."* | **…I knew a new freedom and a new happiness.** | Did you? *(I sure did.)* |
| 2 | *"We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it."* | **…I didn't regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.** | Did you ever come out of a blackout in a place you hadn't planned on visiting, with people you hadn't planned on being with, and learn you had done some things you sure wish you hadn't done? Because of the guilt and remorse, it was to be a secret? Then go into a bar, have a few drinks, and tell some stranger the whole story? *(I certainly did.)* |
| 3 | *"We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace."* | **…I comprehended the word serenity and I knew peace.** | Did you too find that serenity and peace of mind replaced the turmoil with a few drinks? *(Oh yeah.)* |
| 4 | *"No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others."* | **…no matter how far down the scale I had gone, I saw how my experience could benefit others.** | How willing were you to share your life's story with a poor drunk who had just had a really bad experience? *(Loved to talk about how bad my life was.)* |
| 5 | *"That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear."* | **…that feeling of uselessness and self-pity would disappear.** | With a few drinks, did you feel that you just might really have a purpose in this world, and feel sorry for those critters that didn't have what you had — although you just weren't too sure what it was you had? *(Almost every time.)* |
| 6 | *"We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows."* | **…I lost interest in selfish things and gained interest in my fellows.** | Did a few drinks make you a little more interested in people, especially of the opposite sex? *(Can I buy you a drink, honey?)* |
| 7 | *"Self-seeking will slip away."* | **…self-seeking slipped away.** | Did a few drinks make you somewhat generous? *(Drinks for everyone!)* |
| 8 | *"Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change."* | **…my whole attitude and outlook upon life changed.** | Did a few drinks take you from a gray, gloomy day to one that was bright and hopeful? *(From a shade of brown to rosy pink with just a couple.)* |
| 9 | *"Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us."* | **…fear of people and financial insecurity left me.** | Did you enjoy being in the company of people sober? *(Leave me alone!)* Did a few drinks diminish your concern for your financial difficulties? *(How am I going to pay all these bills? Think I better have a couple of drinks and figure it out.)* |
| 10 | *"We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us."* | **…I intuitively knew how to handle situations that used to baffle me.** | Did you too find that you were able to think much more clearly and wisely with a few drinks? *(You bet! I had answers to questions that hadn't been asked.)* |
| 11 | *"We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves."* | THE SCRIPT STOPS AT TEN — THE BOOK HAS ONE MORE | |

## BEFORE WE LEAVE THE DOCTOR

pp. xxix · the script's reading · a reminder for the newcomer

- **The UNMANAGEABILITY** is clearly presented in the last sentence of that paragraph: *"This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery."* (p. xxix)
- **"Ways to Stop Drinking."** From that article you can get some ideas of how we apply the information Dr. Silkworth proposed.
  THE SCRIPT'S REFERENCE
- **Over-the-counter medicines.** The newcomer is also reminded to be mindful of over-the-counter meds such as cough syrup, mouthwash, flavor extracts, etc., and that their health providers should know they are alcoholics, so the professionals will be mindful of what they prescribe. We emphasize that they themselves are responsible for their sobriety — so be honest with those who have a need to know.

**We have now helped the newcomers understand the PROBLEM.** We **may** breeze through Bill's Story by looking at the events that describe the progression of alcoholism in his life — next page.

# Bill's Story — the Progression, by Page

*the problem in one man's life, pp. 1–16 — read the line, name the symptom, move on — then what Step One means*

## THE EVENTS THAT SHOW THE DISEASE PROGRESSING

pp. 2–12

**p. 2** "Though my drinking was not yet continuous, it disturbed my wife." *— Lois is on his ass about his drinking.*

**p. 3** "I began to be jittery in the morning."

**p. 5** "Liquor ceased to be a luxury; it became a necessity." *— lying about his drinking, hiding his bottles, etc.* Lost an opportunity to make some money because he drank: "Then I went on a prodigious bender, and that chance vanished." Made up his mind to never touch another drop: "I saw I could not take so much as one drink. I was through forever." Returned home drunk: "Shortly afterward I came home drunk."

**p. 7** Met Dr. Silkworth and learned what was wrong with him: "Best of all, I met a kind doctor who explained that though certainly selfish and foolish, I had been seriously ill, bodily and mentally." … "Surely this was the answer—self-knowledge."

**p. 8** First paragraph — Bill surrendered to the PROBLEM: **Step One.** "I had met my match. I had been overwhelmed. Alcohol was my master." We use the next paragraph to exemplify the simplicity of our program. *First sentence, a broken man:* "Trembling, I stepped from the hospital a broken man." *Last sentence, a wonderful life as the result of having taken the action Ebby prescribed for him:* "I was to know happiness, peace, and usefulness, in a way of life that is incredibly more wonderful as time passes."

**pp. 10–11** Bill's rebellion at the idea of a spiritual solution, identifying him as a hard-nosed agnostic: "When they talked of a God personal to me, who was love, superhuman strength and direction, I became irritated and my mind snapped shut against such a theory."

**p. 12** The freedom — and the responsibility — we are given to develop an idea of God that we can begin to bet our life on: "Why don't you choose your own conception of God?" … "It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning."

## THE SIMPLICITY OF STEP TWO — EBBY, SOBER

pp. 8–9, 11

We then explain the simplicity of Step Two by the fact that Bill saw his old drinking buddy — who was supposedly in the nut house for alcoholic insanity — **sober**.

> *"He was sober. It was years since I could remember his coming to New York in that condition. I was amazed. Rumor had it that he had been committed for alcoholic insanity."*
>
> pp. 8–9

Both of them had been **POWERLESS** over alcohol, but Ebby was sober and Bill was going to die. Ebby had found the **POWER** that Bill was unaware of.

> *"Had this power originated in him? Obviously it had not. There had been no more power in him than there was in me at that minute; and this was none at all."*
>
> p. 11

Ebby gave Bill **HOPE** — the beginning of "coming to believe." From that HOPE, Bill finally became willing to try Ebby's plan of action.

## PAGE 13 — THE HOSPITAL

pp. 13–14 · December 11–18, 1934

**Entering Towns Hospital on December 11, 1934, going into DTs:** "At the hospital I was separated from alcohol for the last time. Treatment seemed wise, for I showed signs of delirium tremens."

**Taking Step Three on the 3rd day of his sobriety:** "There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would."

**Ebby visiting Bill on the 4th and 5th days,** to help Bill take the action Ebby had learned to apply to his life: "My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies. We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment."

**The result of which was a Spiritual Experience:** "…the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric." (p. 14)

Bill left the hospital on December 18, 1934, at the end of 7 days, and lived 36 years without taking another drink. **We are here because of the action that Bill took — not the meetings he attended.**

## STEP ONE — WHAT IT MEANS

POWERLESS over the body, POWERLESS over the mind · pp. xxviii–xxix

**POWERLESS** — because of the allergy. **UNMANAGEABILITY** — due to the mind that cannot remember that we have the allergy. It can only remember **THE SENSE OF EASE AND COMFORT WHICH COMES AT ONCE BY TAKING A FEW DRINKS**.

Therefore we are POWERLESS over our body and POWERLESS over our mind where alcohol is concerned. **We are screwed!!!**

The doctor's very next paragraph is the way out:

> *"…once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules."*
>
> p. xxix

# Steps Two and Three, and the Test

*the hope of a recovered alcoholic — "Will you be my sponsor?" — the two questions on page 44, and the pages that follow*

## STEP TWO — THE HOPE

pp. 58, 45

From the HOPE of hearing a **RECOVERED** alcoholic tell their story — "what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now" (p. 58) — or reading the 44 stories in the Big Book 3RD ED.; THE 4TH HAS 42, P. 29, is the beginning of Step Two.

If lack of **POWER** is the **PROBLEM**, then **A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES** must be the **SOLUTION**. And we see that the RECOVERED alcoholic has found that POWER.

> *"Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves."*
>
> p. 45

It takes no great mind to see that if LACK OF POWER or POWERLESSNESS is my PROBLEM, then A POWER GREATER THAN MYSELF must be the SOLUTION. Once I can see that, I am faced with a very simple **DECISION**: *"Am I or am I not willing to follow the clear-cut directions for recovery?"* But I need someone who knows how to do this.

## STEP THREE — "WILL YOU BE MY SPONSOR?"

pp. xi–43

*So the simplicity of Step Three is to ask the RECOVERED alcoholic, **"Will you be my sponsor?"** — and be willing to do precisely what the sponsor tells you to do!*

To determine if you have made a good choice in sponsors, it is pretty easy to tell. If they tell you to open your Big Book to **page xi** and **STUDY to page 43**, that is a good start. These 51 pages will get you ready to see if you are ready to move on.

Look at the first sentence on page 44 — it tells you why it is so important to be thorough in your study to this point. From this study we can separate the alcoholic from the non-alcoholic, which is so vital to the success of your group and of AA as a whole.

## PAGE 44 — NOW TAKE THE TEST

Step One, in two questions

> *"In the preceding chapters you have learned something of alcoholism. We hope we have made clear the distinction between the alcoholic and the non-alcoholic."*
>
> p. 44

> *"If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely,"* — How many of you have promised you'd never drink again? Appears you failed to MANAGE that decision, so your life is UNMANAGEABLE where alcohol is concerned — *"or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take,"* — How many of you cannot start drinking without getting drunk? It would appear that you too are POWERLESS over alcohol — *"you are probably alcoholic."* **Step One.** *"If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer."*
>
> p. 44

*How many **meetings** must you attend to have a spiritual experience? Or — how many **Steps** must you take to have this blessed Promise become a reality in your life?*

## PAGES 44 TO 63

the door · how it works · the prayers · the real problem · the decision

**44–57** We Agnostics will open the door for you to be able to consider your own conception of the God of your understanding.

**58** Answers that stupid comment we hear too often in meetings, "I don't know how it works." The first sentence tells us how it works: "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path." *— rarely have we seen a person fail who has carefully followed the clear-cut directions in the Big Book.*

**59** The Program of Alcoholics Anonymous is a **Spiritual** Program. Here we find the first of several prayers — one or more for each and every Step from Three through Twelve — which reminds us that the God of our understanding is the source of our recovery. We learn to invite Him to be the Solution to all our problems. "We asked His protection and care with complete abandon."

**62** We are told what our **REAL** Problem is: "Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles." But we can never see it without some method of revealing the truth to us. So we make a **DECISION** to do precisely what our Sponsor tells us to do…

**63** …and announce that decision in a prayer: "God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will…" The last sentence on page 63 tells us that we now have to get busy and take the rest of the Steps: "Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action…"

# Steps Four through Twelve, by Page

*the diagnostic Steps, the amends, the miracle of recovery in twenty pages — then the spiritual growth*

**One of the beautiful things about the Big Book** is that it will tell us **WHEN** to take a Step, **HOW** to take the Step, **WHAT** the results or **PROMISES** of having taken the Step will be — and provides us with the **PRAYERS** that make certain we are inviting the God of our understanding to be very involved in our recovery.

## STEPS FOUR THROUGH NINE

pp. 64–83 — the prayer counts are the script's

**4 · 64–71** Steps Four and Five are **diagnostic** Steps — to learn if what they told us on page 62 is true for us. "Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. This was Step Four." The clear-cut directions run pages 64 through 71, and there are **five prayers** for Step Four.

**5 · 75** The clear-cut directions for Step Five, and the **two** Fifth Step Prayers. "When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time."

**6 · 76** "If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six." Nothing more than a **commitment to God** that we will become students and practitioners of the rest of the Big Book — and there we find the Sixth Step Prayer: "...we ask God to help us be willing."

**7 · 76** The Seventh Step Prayer — "My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad..." — prayed after we have told God we are going to do our part: *now please do Your part by making me different.* This Prayer is the **completion** of the Prayer we prayed on page 63.

**8 · 76** We will be most pleased to learn that if we have carefully followed the directions in working Step Four, Step Eight is **all but a done deal**: "We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory."

**9 · 76–83** The directions for taking Step Nine, and the **four** Ninth Step Prayers.

**RECOVERED.** Having carefully followed the path the first 100 laid down for us, we now have had a spiritual awakening/experience and have joined the first 100 as **RECOVERED** alcoholics. The Ninth Step Promises describe that blessed event: *"If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through..."* (pp. 83–84). On page 64 we take the first action to recover from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body; by the time we get to page 83, we have RECOVERED. We have joined the first 100. We have been given the **POWER** that we lacked to survive alcoholism. **Carefully following the clear-cut directions outlined in just 20 pages of our Basic Text produces the miracle of recovery.**

## SPIRITUAL GROWTH — STEPS TEN, ELEVEN AND TWELVE

pp. 84–88 · Chapter Seven · p. 164

**10 · 84** The clear-cut directions for Step Ten are contained in the paragraph on page 84: "This thought brings us to Step Ten, which suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along." ... "We have entered the world of the Spirit."
THE SCRIPT POINTS TO IT AS THE "WE CONTINUED..." PARAGRAPH

**11 · 86–88** A running start for learning how to communicate with the God of your understanding is very adequately covered on pages 86, 87 and 88: "When we retire at night, we constructively review our day." ... "On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead." ... "It works —it really does."

**12 · 89–103 · 164** Now that we have received the POWER, it is our **primary job** to pass that on to the next newcomer God puts in our life. The clear-cut directions for Sponsorship are contained in Chapter Seven, Working With Others. But you won't find the Twelfth Step Prayer until you have reached the last page of the Basic Text: "Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick."

## THERE YOU HAVE IT

the closing challenge

So utterly simple, yet so garbled in our meetings. **I challenge you to be a part of the Solution and not a part of the Problem.** The simplest guide that I follow in working with others: *"If it isn't in the Big Book, they don't need to be exposed to it."*

If you are encouraged to wait until you have a better understanding of what OUR Program is about, I have one question for you:

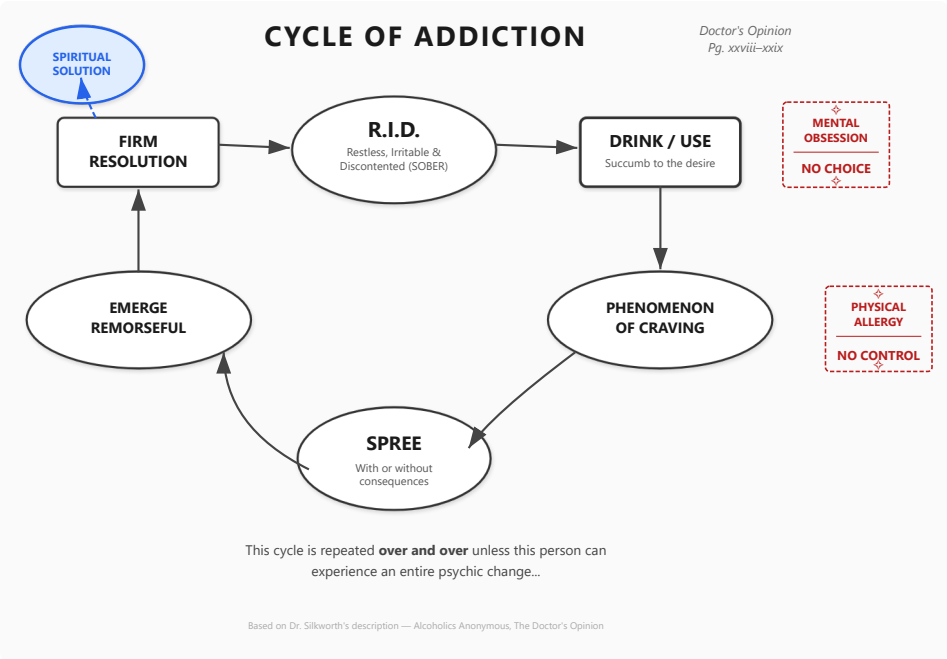
**"How well did you like sex before you tried it?"**

Well, you won't know a damn thing about recovery either — until you have taken the action of taking the Steps, precisely as they were given to us.

*Alcoholics Anonymous (4th ed.): Preface p. xi · Forewords pp. xiii–xxiv · The Doctor's Opinion pp. xxv–xxx · Bill's Story pp. 1–16 · pp. 29–30, 44–45, 58–64, 75–76, 83–88, 164 · Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Foreword p. 17 · Primary Purpose Group "Foundation Meeting" script, reproduced in its own order (its history, dates, prayer counts and success-rate figures are its own; word for word in foundation-meeting-script, its numbers drilled in foundation-meeting-statistics) · Appendix A: Relevant Recovery Sponsorship Workshop 2024 · Appendices B–C: the script's sources and Cliff B.'s recording, gathered in recovery/ppg/foundation-meeting/*

# Appendix A — Cycle of Addiction

*The Doctor's Opinion, pp. xxviii–xxix — the "effect" paragraph drawn as a circle, from the Relevant Recovery Sponsorship Workshop (2024)*




**R.I.D.** restless, irritable and discontented (sober) → **drink / use** (succumb to the desire — mental obsession, no choice) → **phenomenon of craving** (physical allergy, no control) → **spree** (with or without consequences) → **emerge remorseful** → **firm resolution** → back to R.I.D. — unless the **spiritual solution**.

This cycle is repeated **over and over** unless this person can experience an entire psychic change...

## MY CYCLE

What does it look like when I'm R.I.D.? Dry-drunk? Just not drinking or using? *(p. 52 bedevilments)* What does your spiritual malady come out looking like? What are you like inside when sober?

What insane ideas do I have that give self permission to drink or use?

**Can I always control the amount I drink or use?**

**What does a spree look like for me?**

**What does emerging remorseful feel like?**

**Have I made previous promises or firm resolutions to stay stopped?** **And did I?**

Dr. Silkworth stated that we will repeat this cycle over and over until we are "internally" or "emotionally rearranged"! Which is exactly what the Twelve Steps are designed to do.

What attempts have you made in the past to stay stopped?

**Have you ever worked all Twelve Steps and sponsored others consistently?**

# Appendix B — Where the Script's Numbers Come From

*the documents the script names were all on ppgaadallas.org; recovered from the Wayback Machine, 2026 — full texts in* ***recovery/ppg/ppgaadallas/articles***

## "BOB BACON'S ARTICLE" — BACK TO BASICS, APRIL 1976

Bob Bacon, Delegate, Northeast Ohio · excerpts from his General Service Conference talk

The discussion topic he put to the Conference: *Are we, in the content of our A.A. meetings, getting away from basics?* He answered yes — twelve years before this group was founded to do something about it.

> *"Are we, in the content of our A.A. meetings, getting away from A.A. basics? I believe we are." … "If our meetings are nothing but drunk-a-logs and meaningless chatter, we are not showing them 'How It Works'."*

> *"We have to tell them more than, 'Don't drink and go to meetings'. If all we talk about is our drinking, our ideas, our opinions, my day or the way I do it, we are not carrying the message—we are carrying the illness. We should be talking about recovery. I don't believe we are."*

> *"Our total Program is in the Big Book and only in the Big Book. Shouldn't we be telling people that?" … "Dr. Bob said, and I quote, 'There is no such thing as an individual interpretation of the Twelve Steps.'" … "Our future is dependent upon a continuing stream of recovered alcoholics."*
>
> Bob Bacon, 1976 — the 2026 site links a PDF of these excerpts (dead link; archived copy in the folder above)

## THE "INTERGROUP STATS" — HOUSTON, 1996

Cliff B., *The Price of "Just Don't Drink and Go To Meetings"*

Chips sold by the Houston Intergroup office in one year, each as a share of the desire chips taken:

| CHIP | SOLD | OF DESIRE CHIPS |
|---|---|---|
| Desire | 24,246 | 100% |
| 30 days | 8,839 | 36% |
| 60 days | 5,960 | 25% |
| 90 days | 5,019 | 21% |
| 6 months | 3,370 | 15% |
| 1 year | 2,102 | 9% |
| 2 years | 1,170 | 5% |
| 5 years | 707 | 3% |
| 10 years | 560 | 2% |
| 20 years | 143 | 0.6% |
| 30 years | 26 | 0.1% |

Desire chips fell to 22,191 in 1997, 19,504 in 1998 and 16,285 in 1999; the other shares held. In 1998, 592 ten-year medallions were bought against more than 40,000 desire chips taken in 1988 — *"Did only about 1.5% apply our Program?"* On tape (2003) Cliff updates it: large-city intergroups in 2002, Dallas included, ten-year medallions under one percent.

## THE "BOX 459 STATS" — U.S. MEMBERSHIP

GSO's yearly estimates as the group tabulated them, 2004

| YEAR | MEMBERS | CHANGE |
|---|---|---|
| 1987 | 727,145 | |
| 1988 | 778,045 | +7.0% |
| 1989 | 835,489 | +7.4% |
| 1990 | 896,033 | +7.2% |
| 1991 | 1,012,623 | +13.0% |
| 1992 | 1,079,719 | +6.6% |
| *1992 to 1997: 7.3% in five years, under 1.5% a year* | | |
| 1997 | 1,158,850 | |
| 1998 | 1,166,079 | +0.6% |
| 1999 | 1,166,927 | nil |
| 2000 | 1,161,436 | −0.5% |
| 2002 | 1,160,651 | −0.1% |
| 2003 | 1,168,990 | +0.7% |

"For the first time in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous, BOX 459 is reporting a decline in the number of members in our Country." … *"If you haven't recovered, what do you have to say that could help a newcomer?"*

GSO, DEC 31 2021: 1,350,415 U.S. · 1,967,613 WORLDWIDE

**"What Happened?"** (Cliff B.) is the script's history in essay form: thirty or forty years ago we kept 75% or more of those who came; today not 5%. Bob Bacon named the faults in 1976; treatment-center "clients" brought group-therapy habits, and "discussion or participation" meetings replaced recovered alcoholics telling their stories. *"We have gone from, 'Rarely have we seen a person fail' to 'Seldom do we see a person recover'."* It ends with the script's own challenge: *"Do you want to be a part of the problem or a part of the solution? Simple, but not easy; A price has to be paid."*

# Appendix C — The Article, the Prayers, and the Tape

*"Ways to Stop Drinking," the list behind the prayer counts, and what Cliff B. adds when he leads the meeting himself*

## "WAYS TO STOP DRINKING"

Cliff B. — the article the script sends you to after the Doctor

Two kinds of serious drinker: *"A drunk could quit if they would. An alcoholic would quit if they could."* Then the three known ways to stop:

| COVERED UP | LOCKED UP | SOBERED UP |
|---|---|---|
| Death | Jail, Prison or Mental Institution | A vital Spiritual Experience |
| *(This will do it)* | *(For a Period of Time)* | *(For as long as we apply Spiritual Principles)* |

> *"It would appear that a vital Spiritual Experience would be the best choice of the three known ways to 'stop drinking'. Unfortunately, most alcoholics will stop drinking only as the result of death."*

> *"Amazingly enough, the twenty-four pages tell us WHEN to take a Step, HOW to take a Step, state WHAT the results will be (PROMISES) and provide one or more PRAYERS for each and every Step of recovery."*
>
> pages 64 to 88 — the sentence the script's WHEN / HOW / PROMISES / PRAYERS line comes from. The article's liver-enzyme and THIQ explanations of the allergy and the alcoholic mind are 1970s theory (John Wallace) — Cliff's teaching aid, not medicine.

## THE PRAYERS, COUNTED

"Prayers From The Big Book" — the list behind five, two and four

> *"...though perhaps he came to scoff, he may remain to pray."*
>
> p. xxxii

> *"God either is, or He isn't. What was our choice to be?"*
>
> p. 53

**3** p. 63

**4** p. 67 resentment · p. 68 fear · p. 69, 69, 70 sex — **five**

**5** p. 75, twice — **two**

**6** p. 76 "we ask God to help us be willing"

**7** p. 76 "My Creator..."

**8** p. 76 "we ask until it comes"

**9** p. 79 legal matters · p. 80 others affected · p. 82 infidelity · p. 83 family — **four**

**10** p. 84 "we ask God at once to remove them" · p. 85 "Thy will (not mine) be done"

**11** p. 86 night · p. 86, 86, 87 morning · pp. 87–88 all day

**12** p. 164 "Ask Him in your morning meditation..."

## CLIFF B. ON TAPE, C. 2003 — WHAT THE RECORDING ADDS TO THE SCRIPT

55 min · transcript with timestamps in *recovery/ppg/foundation-meeting* · wording as whisper heard it

**0:15** Why the meeting exists: "What we do in here is to introduce people to something that's missing in our meetings today... It's called the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous." **8:12** "If you're going to bet your life on meetings, you're probably not through drinking."

**2:23** "Nothing kills more people than alcoholism... and yet, in Alcoholics Anonymous, we kind of treat it as an inconvenience or a bad habit."

**11:21** Silkworth's life; one drinker in ten; the party test — "What does an alcoholic do when we puke it up?" — and **13:00** "You don't become a diabetic by eating cookies." **15:35** "If you can't drink without getting drunk and you don't want to get drunk, then damn it, don't drink."

**16:27** The over-the-counter warning grows into prescriptions: tell every doctor you are an alcoholic, or Librium, Valium and Xanax will be prescribed "as they do normal people."

**19:43** "We get something out of alcohol nobody else gets" — the real alcoholic cannot say why he drank; then the promises backwards with the room. **25:20** "It's a God help program!" ... "It wasn't your problem, it was your solution."

**28:43** His own three sobriety dates, and the day a job mattered more than sobriety. **29:45** **The mirror list**: write every time you swore off and hang it "on the mirror where you looked at yourself first thing in the morning" — this is the day you choose. **31:38** "If you lose your sobriety now, you may never ever have another chance."

**33:21** The true and the false: "it was wonderful, but it wasn't quite enough. I had to have one more." Two ways to the psychic change, the bottle or the Book.

**38:30** Page 24 in italics is why the early sponsor handed you the book, not a meeting list: "Very seldom did they go more than seven to ten days before they began the process of recovery." Bill's third day, Dr. Bob's first, Bill Dotson's third. Ninety meetings in ninety days? "Pretty damn irresponsible, isn't it?"

**49:58** Step Three in practice is turning your will and life over to the care and direction of a recovered alcoholic — a sponsor; Bill did it with Ebby, Dr. Bob in fifteen minutes. **54:00** After page 83: grow, or go.

*Sources for Appendices B–C: ppgaadallas.org "AA Articles" library, 2003–2016, via web.archive.org · Cliff-B-FoundationMtg.mp3 (ppgaadallas.org/study-guide-foundation), faster-whisper transcript 2026-09-23 · GSO service piece SMF-53 (Rev. 01/22) · Alcoholics Anonymous pp. xxxii, 53, 63–88, 164*