The Power of Choice

the loss of the power of choice — the first of two diagrams

Power of Choice

"...most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink." — p. 24

DRINKING / USING

Pros	Cons
+	−
+	−
+	−
	−
	−

THE FIRST DRINK

Reasons to take the first drink	Reasons NOT to take the first drink

At certain times the right-hand column simply does not come to mind — "We are without defense against the first drink." (p. 24)

Fill in both ledgers. At certain times the right-hand column is simply not there — that is the insanity of the first drink.

THE MAIN PROBLEM CENTERS IN THE MIND

There Is a Solution, pp. 23–24

> *"These observations would be academic and pointless if our friend never took the first drink, thereby setting the terrible cycle in motion. Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body."* p. 23

> *"The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so-called will power becomes practically non-existent. We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink."* p. 24

THE TWO QUALIFIERS — P. 44 — THE FIRST IS THE MENTAL OBSESSION, THE SECOND THE PHYSICAL CRAVING

- ☐ *When you honestly want to, do you find you cannot quit entirely?* YES / NO
- ☐ *When drinking or using, do you have little control over the amount you take?* YES / NO

MY LOG LIST

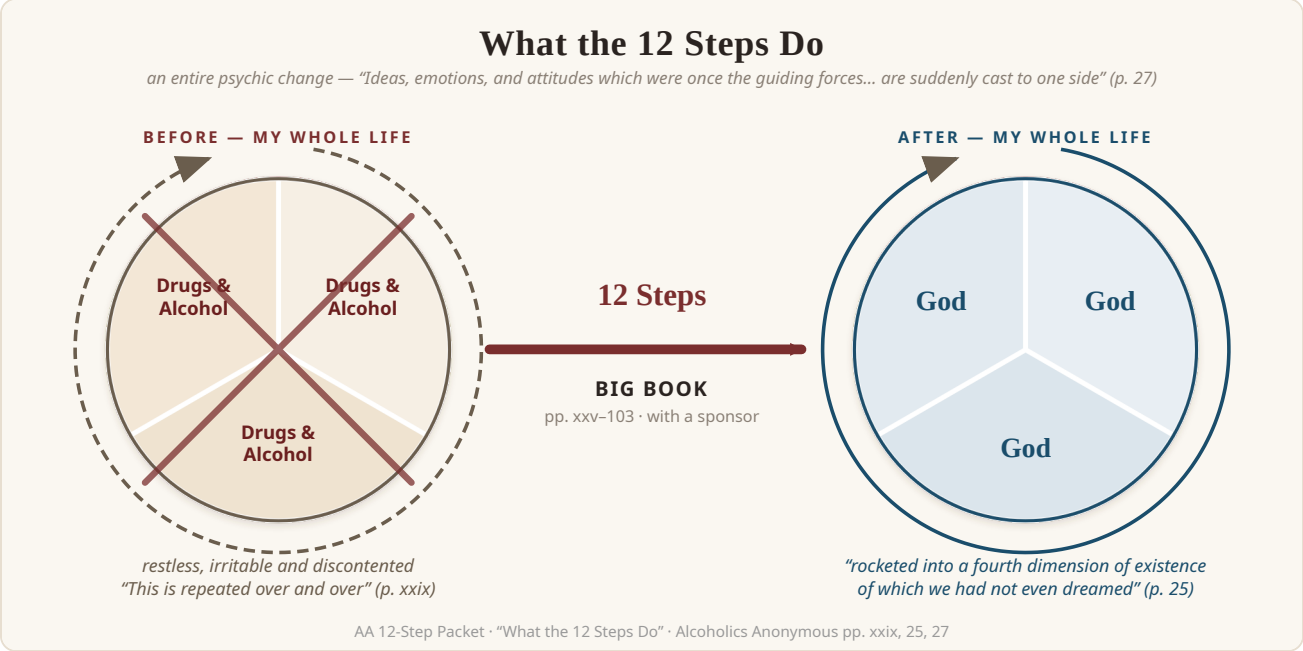
admitting powerlessness — the "logs" that failed to keep me afloat

Check the "easier softer ways," "middle of the road solutions," "half measures" and "human aids" that failed to keep you permanently abstinent:

- ☐ will power
- ☐ resolutions, oaths, promises, contracts
- ☐ controlled using, drinking, thinking, behaving
- ☐ harm reduction, substitution strategies (pills only, alcohol only)
- ☐ ill health, sickness
- ☐ ominous warnings from a doctor, judge, lawyer, employer, priest, minister, counsellor
- ☐ change of environment, trigger lists, avoiding people, places, things (new friends, new job, new school, new apartment)
- ☐ counselling, therapy, group therapy, behavioral modification
- ☐ detox, treatment centers, rehab, spas, spiritual retreats
- ☐ war stories, fear, horror
- ☐ relationships, friends, spouse, children, family, sex, pregnancy
- ☐ getting a pet (dog, cat)
- ☐ church, prayer (faith without works)
- ☐ having a sponsor, body-guard, mentor, life coach / recovery coach
- ☐ meetings, 90 meetings in 90 days, "meeting makers make it"
- ☐ yesterday's spiritual experience
- ☐ self-help books, personal development courses, recovery movies
- ☐ recovery knowledge, recovery slogans or memes
- ☐ reading / studying the Big Book
- ☐ intelligence / education
- ☐ frothy emotional appeals, interventions, threats, ultimatums
- ☐ positive thinking, affirmations, self-talk, gratitude lists, recovery tattoos
- ☐ poetry (*Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow*; *The Man In the Glass*), music
- ☐ guilt, shame, remorse
- ☐ good days/bad days
- ☐ keeping busy
- ☐ money / no money
- ☐ memory strategies — "remember when," "think, think, think," "play the tape all the way through"
- ☐ jail, incarceration, detention, arrested
- ☐ good reasons to stop, sufficiently strong reasons to stop, consequences, my log & loser list
- ☐ reputation, moral & philosophical convictions
- ☐ suffering, humiliation, pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization
- ☐ sobriety time, length of sobriety
- ☐ hydrotherapy, exercise, holistic medicine, acupuncture, hypnotism, healthy diet, vitamins, fasts, colon cleansing

What the Twelve Steps Do

an entire psychic change — the second of two diagrams



Every part of life filled with drugs and alcohol — through the Steps, out of the Big Book, with a sponsor — every part filled with God.

THE SOLUTION — A VITAL SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE

There Is a Solution, pp. 25, 27

> *"…we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed. The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves."* p. 25

> **Vital spiritual experiences — the doctor's answer.** *"They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them."* p. 27

MY LOSER LIST

admitting my life is unmanageable — check what you've lost due to your inability to stay stopped

- ☐ time
- ☐ family
- ☐ spouse
- ☐ children
- ☐ friends
- ☐ money
- ☐ home / residence
- ☐ health
- ☐ safety
- ☐ hygiene
- ☐ opportunities
- ☐ careers, jobs, employment
- ☐ license (vehicle, professional)
- ☐ education
- ☐ quality of life
- ☐ hope
- ☐ courage
- ☐ intelligence
- ☐ mental acuity
- ☐ self-respect
- ☐ respect from others
- ☐ self-esteem
- ☐ self-confidence
- ☐ self-improvement
- ☐ self-control
- ☐ emotional security
- ☐ integrity, morality, character
- ☐ responsibility for myself / others
- ☐ volition & agency
- ☐ reputation
- ☐ freedom
- ☐ morality
- ☐ spirituality / God
- ☐ peace of mind
- ☐ sanity
- ☐ faith
- ☐ humanity

*** my life (not yet) — Big Loser!**

THE QUALIFYING QUESTION

We Agnostics, p. 44

> *"If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer."*

- ☐ *Do you honestly want to stop drinking, using or acting out?* YES / NO
- ☐ *And based on your log list, have you been able to stay stopped?* YES / NO
- ☐ *Do you exhibit little control when drinking, using or acting out?* YES / NO