



▲ The Importance of Step Twelve

Freedom From All Unresolved Mental Issues - *By Rick R.*

Chapter 11 on the Big Book (A Vision For You) starts by reminiscing about the early days of an alcoholic's drinking and how it gave the feeling that life was good. But not so in the last days of heavy drinking and facing the hideous Four Horsemen, Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, and Despair. The next line is: "Unhappy drinkers who read this page will understand!"

When I read that chapter I knew I qualified, as it was the blueprint of my life, up to that moment. What I didn't understand was that drinking was but a symptom of a much deeper-rooted emotional problem. After many years of sobriety, I still had trouble articulating how one caused the other.

In the first paragraph of Step Twelve in the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, it talks about finding emotional sobriety. What emotions are we talking about? That's what I wanted to know.

As a child, I had very little supervision, and I grew up in a dysfunctional environment. I did a lot of things that I was ashamed of, but I never knew how these things would come back to haunt me later in life.

When I started drinking, it immediately relieved me of the guilt and shame. And it even gave me license to continue acting badly as long as I could rationalize and lie about my behavior. The only thing that I hadn't considered

A.A. History

February 18, 1943



AA's were granted the right to use cars for 12th Step work in emergency cases, despite FDR imposing nationwide gasoline rationing in order to conserve rubber, a desperately needed commodity in short supply during WWII.



I'm Responsible for the Effort, Not the Outcome.

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was that I couldn't hide from my conscience, and it plagued me until I couldn't sleep at night without drinking myself into oblivion.

I had been a taker all my life. I never got enough of what I thought I needed. I was insecure. I had no self-esteem. No one had any respect for me except for the (want to be) losers like myself. Guilt and shame, brought on by a hundred forms of fear, ruled my mind. Not a happy way to live!

When they ask me what freedom I cherish the most as the result of practicing the program of Alcoholics Anonymous, most of my fellow members would expect me to say freedom from Alcohol. But they would be mistaken. I would reply that it is the freedom from all of those unresolved mental issues that plagued me to the point that only a drink would quiet my mind.

The hope that I experienced the minute I embraced this program—at the level of my innermost self— removed the obsession to drink alcohol, and it has never returned. I no longer have any fear of alcohol.

Having cleaned up the wreckage of the past by thoroughly taking the 12 Steps and ridding myself of the selfish motives, my conscience is clear. My self-esteem is high, and the feeling of wellbeing is my constant companion.

I'm so glad that I didn't become complacent and think that I could rest on my laurels (as the Big Book says) at any point as I came to understand the meaning of Step Twelve: to practice these principles in all our affairs.

I try always to be an asset and never a liability. I am neither a victim nor a perpetrator. I am always willing to make things right as best I can. I can be trusted and relied upon. I feel that I am on the positive side of the ledger.

Peace of mind and a quiet heart have been my goals ever since I entered AA, and I am happy to say that I haven't been disappointed. One of my favorite prayers is: "Thank You God." It's everything You promised it would be.

▲ RE: The Next Frontier

Regarding the January 2022 Central Bulletin article—The Next Frontier—Emotional Sobriety, By Bill W, I'd like to respond, in view of the half century of depression which had been mine.

As Bill W relates the difficulties of emotional reliance on fallible beings, it appears to me he is reiterating Dr. Bob's opinion on altruism.

Emotional sobriety, after all, involves giving with no strings attached. I didn't find emotional sobriety in trying to navigate or manage anyone's desires.

As the second of the 12 Traditions of AA states: "For our group purpose, there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience." AA is not organized to direct its members. Its essence rests in all members responding directly and promptly to each other.

I genuinely was surprised at the absence of a hierarchy of power within the system and the strength of peer observations. In seeking of a group conscience to gain perspective, I began to see a difference between seeking information/truth and seeking affirmation.

Concerning perspective, it also was a huge help to take seriously the program's suggestion to give up my grip on molding my world.

I'm not sure how this began to bring me out of the darkness to witness emotional fitness. But I am sure grateful that I began to see that my own map of the world was really off.

By Betsy L.

▲ Big Book Meaning of Insanity

Step Two: "Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

I came into AA after a long, nonstop toot with the usual accompanying delirium tremors. During my first meeting I was still hearing "non-existent" music, and

for several more weeks my emotions were a roller coaster. For a normal person, that might warrant a diagnosis of schizophrenia with a bipolar disorder, e.g., insane. However, I have come to believe the Big Book’s use of that word is in the context of something quite different.

I finally realized, only after studying the Big Book for some time, the concept it was trying to get across to me.

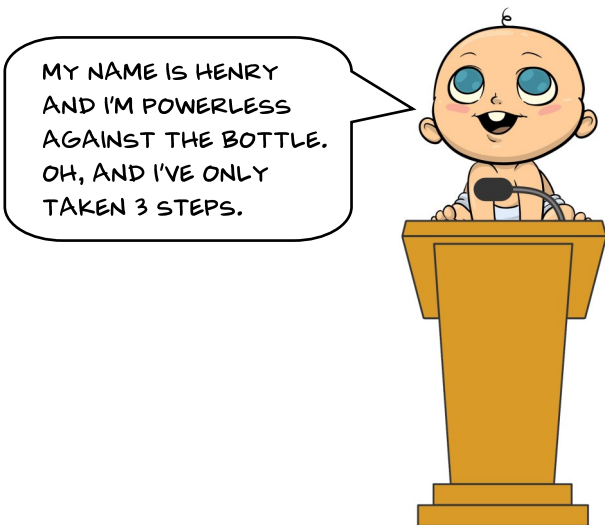
Two examples: I found on page 36, in Jim’s story, he came to the erroneous conclusion that he could safely drink whiskey so long as he mixed it with milk. As foolish as this may sound, no medical professional would clinically declare him insane. Alcoholic, yes. Insane no. Then I found on page 37: “Whatever the precise definition of the word may be, we call this plain insanity.”

We fellow alcoholics might simply consider this as “Alco-logical” thinking. I believe this is what Bill W. meant to get across to us:

- Sane: When an alcoholic can see and act on the truth in drink.
- Insane: When an alcoholic cannot see and act on the truth in drink.

By Bob S.

▲ Rule 62



▲ The Generation Gap

There tends to be a problem in our fellowship: A generation gap.

I am a very active member of AA. Yet, I am as guilty of helping proliferate this problem as the next person. My attitudes and fears have kept me in a self-imposed jail. One where the walls are strictly Young People’s meetings taken over by young people.

As a teenager, I was constantly yelling that the older generation didn’t understand me. They were closed minded.

But I was more interested in pointing out the splinter in other people’s eyes than worrying about the board in my own. Young People’s is a special interest group. I had forgotten that. Its purpose is to help the young alcoholic realize that a person doesn’t have to drink for 30 years to become an alcoholic, acquaint us with the principles in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, and help us feel a part of rather than apart from.

Yet, how can we be a part of something we don’t participate in?

Maybe it’s time to set aside our pride and resentments and participate in AA as a whole—to use our energies in positive, constructive ways, to help fellow alcoholics recover and to brighten and better the lives of those we come in contact with each and every day.

Anonymous, Reprinted from “Footsteps”

▲ Quote

FROM MY SPONSOR

*“Keep your sobriety first
to make it last.”*

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