

One is too many and one thousand is not enough  
-Folk saying

A man takes a drink, the drink takes a drink,  
the drink takes the man.

-Folk saying

...habitual drunkenness should be regarded not  
as bad habit but as a disease... [it is] a palsy of  
the will.

-Dr. Benjamin Rush, Signatory of the Declaration of  
Independence, 1808

The AMA endorses the proposition that drug  
dependencies, including alcoholism, are  
diseases and that their treatment is a  
legitimate part of medical science.

-The American Medical Association, 1987

There is a principle which is a bar against all  
information, which is proof against all  
arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man  
in everlasting ignorance— that principle is  
contempt prior to investigation.

-Herbert Spencer c.a. 1864

# THERE IS A SOLUTION

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles...

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:

1. **Admitted** we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. **Came to believe** that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. **Made a decision** to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.
4. **Made** a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. **Admitted** to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were **entirely ready** to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. **Humbly** asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. **Made a list** of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. **Made direct amends** to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. **Continued** to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. **Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.**
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.

# THE PROBLEM

therefore our main problem centers in our mind...

## I'm Not Alcoholic!



## I Don't Need A.A!



## I Can't Stop.

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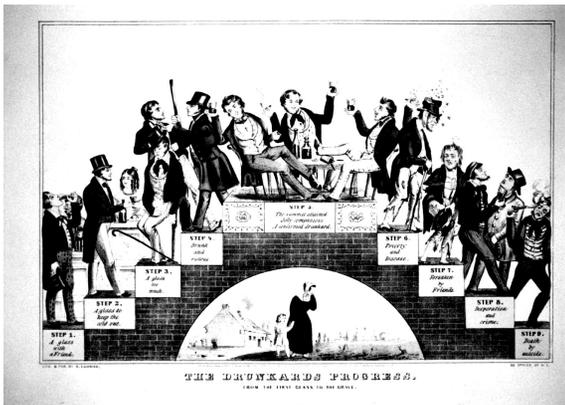
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# THE PROBLEM

CAGE questionnaire\*

1. Have you ever felt you needed to **Cut** down your drinking?
2. Have people **Annoyed** you by criticizing your drinking?
3. Have you ever felt **Guilty** about drinking?
4. Have you ever felt you needed a drink first thing in the morning (**Eye-opener**) to steady your nerves or get rid of a hangover?

People answering “yes” to 2 or more of the above questions have been diagnosed as Alcoholic at least 93% of the time.\*



The Drunkard's Progress, 1846

\*The Journal of the American Medical Association, Ewing (1984), Kitchens (1994), O'Brien (2008)

## ALCOHOL AND THE PHENOMENON OF CRAVING

When a human being drinks alcohol, the body uses enzymes to break it down into water, carbon dioxide and sugar. We pass the water when we go to the bathroom, the carbon dioxide as we breathe, and the sugar is burned or stored as fat within the body.

In certain people, though, something goes wrong.

Their body doesn't produce enough enzymes to process the alcohol as quickly as it should. The body's communication with itself breaks down, and the signals that tell a person when they've had too much to drink *do not* get sent. In these people, the desire for more alcohol after 20 drinks is just as strong as it was after the first.\*

In the very first edition of the book, “Alcoholics Anonymous,” Dr. William Silkworth, author of a section called The Doctor's Opinion, theorized this problem before any of the above had been proven by medical science:

*“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 drinker....once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost their self-confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve.”*



“The Man on the Bed” - A.A. founders Bill W. and Dr. Bob visit Bill Dotson in 1935

\* National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, July 2007

## ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS AND THE PHENOMENON OF CRAVING

As a program of recovery based on sharing experience, strength, and hope with each other, A.A. groups understand, better than anyone, how hard it can be to keep away from that first drink.

*“Therefore, the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body....chances are he will offer you any one of a hundred [excuses]...They sound like the philosophy of a man who, having a headache, beats himself on the head with a hammer so that he can't feel the ache...the truth, strange to say, is usually that he has no more idea why he took that first drink than you have...in their hearts they really do not know why they do it.*

-“The Big Book”, p.23

## A “THINKING PROBLEM”

So our bodies won't let us stop drinking once we've started, and our minds drive us towards the first drink. Does that mean we're hopeless, a lost cause? Dr. William Silkworth has this to say about alcoholic thinking:

*“Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol...to [alcoholics], their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable, and discontented...After they have succumbed to the desire again...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.”*

Since 1935, Alcoholics Anonymous has recognized and been dedicated to helping people with this “thinking problem.” To those who answered yes to the CAGE questions, to those who suspect they do not drink like other men and women, to those who feel like they just can't stop, we would like to offer you hope.

**There is a Solution.**