

AA Harrisburg

MONTHLY FOCUS FEBRUARY STEP 2 DETAIL

THE moment they read Step Two, most A.A. newcomers are confronted with a dilemma, sometimes a serious one. How often have we heard them cry out, “Look what you people have done to us! You have convinced us that we are alcoholics and that our lives are unmanageable. Having reduced us to a state of absolute helplessness, you now declare that none but a Higher Power can remove our obsession. Some of us won’t believe in God, others can’t, and still others who do believe that God exists have no faith whatever He will perform this miracle. Yes, you’ve got us over the barrel, all right—but where do we go from here?”

Let’s look first at the case of the one who says he won’t believe—the belligerent one. He is in a state of mind which can be described only as savage. His whole philosophy of life, in which he so gloried, is threatened. It’s bad enough, he thinks, to admit alcohol has him down for keeps. But now, still smarting from that admission, he is faced with something really impossible. How he does cherish the thought that man, risen so majestically from a single cell in the primordial ooze, is the spearhead of evolution and therefore the only god that his universe knows! Must he renounce all this to save himself?

At this juncture, his A.A. sponsor usually laughs. This, the newcomer thinks, is just about the last straw. This is the beginning of the end. And so it is: the beginning of the end of his old life, and the beginning of his emergence into a new one. His sponsor probably says, “Take it easy. The hoop you have to jump through is a lot wider than you think. At least I’ve found it so. So did a friend of mine who was a one-time vice-president of the American Atheist Society, but he got through with room to spare.” “

Well,” says the newcomer, “I know you’re telling me the truth. It’s no doubt a fact that A.A. is full of people who once believed as I do. But just how, in these circumstances, does a fellow ‘take it easy’? That’s what I want to know.”

“That,” agrees the sponsor, “is a very good question indeed. I think I can tell you exactly how to relax. You won’t have to work at it very hard, either. Listen, if you will, to these three statements. First, Alcoholics Anonymous does not demand that you believe anything. All of its Twelve Steps are but suggestions. Second, to get sober and to stay sober, you don’t have to swallow all of Step Two right now. Looking back, I find that I took it piecemeal myself. Third, all you really need is a truly open mind. Just resign from the

debating society and quit bothering yourself with such deep questions as whether it was the hen or the egg that came first. Again I say, all you need is the open mind.”

The sponsor continues, “Take, for example, my own case. I had a scientific schooling. Naturally I respected, venerated, even worshiped science. As a matter of fact, I still do—all except the worship part. Time after time, my instructors held up to me the basic principle of all scientific progress: search and research, again and again, always with the open mind. When I first looked at A.A. my reaction was just like yours. This A.A. business, I thought, is totally unscientific. This I can’t swallow. I simply won’t consider such nonsense.

“Then I woke up. I had to admit that A.A. showed results, prodigious results. I saw that my attitude regarding these had been anything but scientific. It wasn’t A.A. that had the closed mind, it was me. The minute I stopped arguing, I could begin to see and feel. Right there, Step Two gently and very gradually began to infiltrate my life. I can’t say upon what occasion or upon what day I came to believe in a Power greater than myself, but I certainly have that belief now. To acquire it, I had only to stop fighting and practice the rest of A.A.’s program as enthusiastically as I could.

Alcoholics Anonymous World Service Inc.. Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions (pp. 25-27). AA World Services, Inc. Kindle Edition.

As Bill Sees It p. 109

Freedom Through Acceptance

We admitted we couldn’t lick alcohol with our own remaining resources, and so we accepted the further fact that dependence upon a Higher Power (if only our A.A. group) could do this hitherto impossible job. The moment we were able to accept these facts fully, our release from the alcohol compulsion had begun.

For most of us, this pair of acceptances had required a lot of exertion to achieve. Our whole treasured philosophy of self-sufficiency had to be cast aside. This had not been done with sheer will power; it came instead as the result of developing the willingness to accept these new facts of living.

We neither ran nor fought. But accept we did. And then we began to be free. GRAPEVINE, MARCH 1962

As Bill Sees It p. 141

“Restore Us to Sanity”

Few indeed are the practicing alcoholics who have any idea how irrational they are, or, seeing their irrationality, can bear to face it. For example, some will be willing to term themselves “problem drinkers,” but cannot endure the suggestion that they are in fact mentally ill.

They are abetted in this blindness by a world which does not understand the difference between sane drinking and alcoholism. “Sanity” is defined as “soundness of mind.” Yet no alcoholic, soberly analyzing

his destructive behavior, whether the destruction fell on the dining-room furniture or his own moral fiber, can claim “soundness of mind” for himself.

AA World Services Inc. As Bill Sees It . A.A. World Services, Inc.. Kindle Edition.

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