

# THE NIGHT CAP

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## AN INTERPRETATION OF THE TWELVE STEPS

Step Eight: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all."

Here, again, is a Step calling for specific action. Like Step Four, this Step is a challenge to immediate action. This is something we can begin doing right now. Steps dealing with the so-called "spiritual" phase of the A.A. program often are difficult for some of us. Such was the case of the writer. However, this Step presented him with a plan of action upon which he could embark at once.

No doubt, our list will be a long one. We alcoholics have left a trail of tragedy, heartbreak, debts, perhaps even crime, in our mad pursuit of the nepenthe of escape. It will be a list which we will have to add to from time to time for memory will not at once supply us with all the wrongs against common decency which we have committed.

In the next Step we shall concern ourselves with making direct amends to those we have harmed. But our present concern is again an attitude of mind - a "willingness" to make necessary restitution.

-- Merrill L. "Doc" F.

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## BIRTHDAYS . . . . FOR AUGUST

- 1 Year: Betty A.
- 2 Years: Dick L. Lavea McC.,  
James P. S.
- 4 Years: Ann S., Bennie V.
- 6 Years: Eddie L., Carroll P.,
- 7 Years: Boney D., Max M.,  
Ann P. (nee Ann C.)  
Col. Orlo. Q.

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We enjoy thoroughly only the pleasure  
that we give -- Dumas

## THE 24 HOUR PROGRAM OF A. A.

"On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance for after all, God gave us brains to use. Our thought on life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives. In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy, we don't struggle.

We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for awhile. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and just making conscious contact with God, it is not probably that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it. As we go through the day, we pause when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves that we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times a day, "Thy will be done."

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?

Continued on Page Four....

LETTER WRITTEN TO ANDREW JACKSON BY HIS MOTHER

"Andrew, if I should not see you again, I wish you to remember and treasure up some things I have already said to you. In this world you will have to make your own way. To do that, you must have friends. You can make friends by being honest, and you can keep them by being steadfast. You must keep in mind that friends worth having will, in the long run, expect as much from you as they will give you.

"To forget an obligation or be ungrateful for a kindness is a base crime. Men guilty of it sooner or later must suffer the penalty. In personal conduct, be always polite, but never obsequious. No one will respect you more than you esteem yourself. Avoid quarrels as long as you can without yielding to imposition. But sustain your manhood always. Never bring a suit at law for assault and battery or for defamation. The law affords no remedy for such outrages that can satisfy the feelings of a true man.

"Never wound the feelings of others. Never break wanton outrage upon your own feelings. If ever you have to vindicate your feelings or defend your honor, do it calmly. If angry at first, wait till your wrath cools before you proceed."

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He drew a circle that shut me out -  
Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout;  
But Love and I had the wit to win:  
We drew a circle that took him in.

- Edwin Markham

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PRIDE: "The anesthetic that God gave us to deaden the pain of being like everybody else."  
- L.V. Berry, Satevepost

OPERA: "Where a guy gets stabbed and instead of bleeding he sings."  
- E. Gardener

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NEW ATTITUDE

Never before in my life have I been afraid of anybody or anything, because I always figured that I could take care of myself in any circumstance. And I have been in some rough spots, too. Yet not long ago I found myself alone, thoroughly frightened, and nearly crazy from worry. I knew then that only God could help me - and He did.

I prayed for help, promising in return to do an about-face from the dismal kind of life that I had been living, or, in the common vernacular, just "straighten up and fly right!" I decided that I would accept GOD'S WILL for a change instead of catering to my own whims and desires so much.

Well, I went to bed that night and slept like a baby, and have done so every night since. Also, I have lost my desire for alcohol, having acquired in its place a peace of mind that I've never known before in my entire life.

I can hardly believe myself the remarkable change in my attitude. For the first time, I know what it means to be humble. In the past I never even considered the possibility that my actions were hurting anyone except BIG ME, but now I see things differently. I realize that I have hurt nearly everyone whom I have had contact with, especially my husband and my daughter. It was tremendously difficult for me to write letters asking forgiveness, but now that I have done so I feel very good inside. Also, I want to make amends to others when I am free again and in a position to do this properly. The bitterness which I previously felt for some of these people is rapidly disappearing.

I am glad that I woke up now instead of twenty years hence. I shall strive each day to live a better and cleaner life; for I truly believe that, by the grace of God, I have acquired the awakening which AA talks about so much. And although I have a number of tribulations to face, I feel calm and secure for I know that God will help me to see them through.

- Punkin T. In The Key

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

Time passes quickly. There is nothing we can do about it except to see, as far as possible, that it passes fruitfully. If, in passing swifter than a weaver's shuttle, it nevertheless lays up its store of good deeds done, noble ambitions clung to heroically, and kindness and sympathy scattered with a lavish hand, there will be given to it a permanence and enduring quality that nothing can take away.

The past has gone; the future has not yet come; the present is all we have. We cannot change the past, nor can we draw upon the future, but we can use the present. So, let us touch the philosopher's stone, for it is the foundation of successful living.

Take time to look - it is the price of success. Take time to think - it is a source of power. Take time to play - it is the secret of perennial youth. Take time to read - it is the source of wisdom. Take time to be friendly - it is the way of happiness. Take time to laugh - it is the music.

- SUNSHINE MAGAZINE

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WHATEVER YOU ARE, BE THE BEST . . .

Sometimes we alcoholics, without realizing it, live in a little world of our own making. Here we can dream of great deeds and high positions, away from the pettiness and humdrum of ordinary life. Yet, success is not occupying a lofty place or doing conspicuous work. It is being the best that is in you. After all, who can ask for anything more? Rattling around in too big a job is worse than filling a small one to overflowing. Aspire to your dreams, but do not ruin the life you must lead by dreaming pipe dreams of the one you would like to lead. Make the most of what you have and are. Perhaps your trivial, immediate task is your one sure way of proving your mettle. Do the thing near at hand, and great things will come to your hand to be done. Let AA be your shield and God your flaming sword.

- E. G. B.

AA IN IRELAND —  
FROM DUBLIN GROUP AA, DUBLIN, IRELAND

Men do not grow perfect just by entering A.A. On the contrary, their whole lives in it are meant to be a striving for perfection. Further, men do not cease to be men by entering it. They retain their free will and the capacity to fix their will upon any object that seems to them to be desirable. Thus, at any moment, A. A. consists of thousands of men at various stages on the road to recovery. Some have attained it, but must still struggle to retain it. Some are close to it; some are not so close. Some seem to have given up the struggle; some seem viciously headed away from success. It is made up, in proportion that changes from moment to moment, of men headed for recovery, men headed for failure, and men not apparently headed anywhere. And it is through THIS society that God is operating.

The men remain men, the society remains a society of men. They do glorious things, they do ghastly things.

There is a certain kind of spiritual man who finds all this intolerable. His every instinct is revolted at the thought of GOD working in him and through him, and of himself being recovered, in and through, this mixed crowd of human beings. He would have his own direct relation with GOD, excluding the turbulence of humanity; or he would make his own choice of the men he feels GOD would choose. But this is preciousness and folly. One cannot be thus delicate about the gifts of GOD. We do not join A. A. for the company, but for the gifts.

The plain truth is that GOD has chosen to unite to himself and work through, not an elite, but an utterly unexclusive free-for-all cross section of humanity.

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GOD GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT  
THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE,  
COURAGE TO CHANGE THINGS I CAN, AND  
THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE.

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AA AND THE VA

Since 1948, the Veterans Administration has been treating about 10,000 ex-service-men for alcoholism each year. Neither insulin shock nor the conditioned-reflex treatment has been very successful, and recently VA doctors have relied more on psychotherapy and help from chapters of Alcoholics Anonymous, which practices a kind of group therapy.

During the past year Charles E. Thompson and Payton Kolb, two psychologists attached to the VA hospital in North Little Rock hospital secured an AA chapter of its own, on the theory that patients would become more firmly trained in AA techniques and more willing to continue them after release. The patient's group, with one therapist, met in 1½ hour sessions six days a week; one night a week they visited local AA units.

Of 217 alcoholics treated thus in one year only 20 have returned for re-hospitalization. (A few of the returnees went back because the treatment was too successful. They became so attached to the chapter that they took up drinking again so they could be re-admitted to the hospital.) Thompson and Kolb were encouraged, but offered the procedure only as a "approach to the perplexing as well as persistent alcoholism dilemma."

From NEWSWEEK MAGAZINE - Sept. '52

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THE 24 HOUR PROGRAM OF A. A. (Continued)

Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken

- Page 99 Of THE BIG BOOK

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Great men never feel great...  
Small men never feel small...

Let us watch well our beginnings, and  
The results will manage themselves.

I N P U R S U I T O F

H A P P I N E S S

Sooner or later, a man, if he is wise, discovers that life is a mixture of good days and bad, victory and defeat, give and take. He learns that it doesn't pay to be a sensitive soul; that he should let some things go over his head like water off a duck's back. He learns that he who loses his temper usually loses out.

He learns that carrying a chip on his shoulder is the easiest way to get into a fight. He learns that the quickest way to become unpopular is to carry tales and gossip about others. He learns that buck-passing always turns out to be boomerang, and that it never pays. He learns that even the janitor is human and that it doesn't do any harm to smile and say, "Good Morning," even if it is raining. He learns that 'getting along' depends about ninety-eight per cent on his own behavior.

- Anonymous.

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T H E M A S T E R ' S T O U C H ...

Out of marble thrown aside as useless, Michael Angelo shaped his famous statue of David. Out of unpromising material which is you or I, through that Greater Power can be shaped - who knows?

Never give up, for no one is useless in this world who lightens the burden of it for anyone else - and that for us in A.A., together with our own rehabilitation is our destiny. There is a destiny that makes us brothers. None goes his way alone. All that we send into the lives of others - comes back into our very own.

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DIPLOMACY

The champion corn grower of the U. S. had a difficult time earning his title. He reported that to grow better corn, he had developed a better seed. But pollen from the corn in neighbors' fields spoiled his first year's growth. The farmer then went into a huddle with his neighbors. He shared his seeds, his know-how. Then did he realize his ambition to grow good corn.

THE TWO GLASSES

FOR  
FORTUNATELY  
FOR MOST  
OF US,  
WE DON'T  
ALWAYS  
GET WHAT  
WE  
DESERVE!

There sat two glasses filled to the brim,  
On a rich man's table, rim to rim;  
One was ruddy and red as blood,  
And one as clear as the crystal flood.  
Said the glass of wine to the paler brother;  
Let us tell the tales of the past to each other;  
I can tell of banquet and revel and mirth,  
And the proudest and grandest souls on earth  
Fell under my touch as though struck by blight,  
Where I was king, for I ruled in might.  
From the heads of kings I have torn the crown,  
From the heights of fame I have hurled men down;  
I have blasted many an honored name;  
I have taken virtue and given shame;  
I have tempted the youth with a sip, a taste,  
That has made his future a barren waste,  
Greater, far greater than king am I,  
Or than any army beneath the sky,  
I have made the arm of the driver fail,  
And sent the train from the iron rail.  
I have made good ships go down at sea,  
And the shrieks of the lost were sweet to me,  
For they said, 'Behold how great you be!  
Fame, strength, wealth, genius before you fall,  
For your might and power are over all.'  
Ho! Ho! pale brother, laughed the wine,  
"Can you boast of deeds as great as mine?"

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The rich are alcoholics,  
The poor are drunkards!

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Road maps tell a motorist  
what he want to know -  
Except how to fold them up  
again!

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The trouble with husbands  
who work like horses,  
Is that they want to hit  
the hay early every  
night.

Troubles come through  
the things we let  
slip through our  
lips rather than  
those we let  
slip through  
our fingers.

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They say that nothing  
perks up a gal's morale  
than a new hat... or,  
a whistle.

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The greatest stumbling  
block in the path of  
men usually is not  
laziness or fear,  
But a tight-skirted, low-  
necked, perfumed gal  
Called TOMORROW!

Said the water glass: "I cannot boast  
of a king dethroned or a murdered host;  
But I can tell of a heart once sad,  
By my crystal drops made light and glad;  
Of thirsts I've quenched, of brows I've laved,  
Of hands I have cooled, and souls I have saved;  
I have leaped through the valley, dashed down the mountain,  
Flowed in the river and played in the fountain,  
Slept in the sunshine and dropped from the sky,  
And everywhere gladdened the landscape and eye.  
I have eased the hot forehead of fever and pain;  
I have made the parched meadows grow fertile with grain;  
I can tell of the powerful wheel of the mill.  
That ground out the flour and turned at my will.  
I can tell of manhood bebased by you,  
That I have lifted and crowned anew.  
I cheer, I help, I strengthen and aid;  
I gladden the heart of man and maid;  
I set the chained wine-captive free;  
And all are better for knowing me,"

These are the tales they told each other,  
The glass of wine and the paler brother,  
As they sat together filled to the brim,  
On the rich man's table, rim to rim.

