

# THE NIGHT CAP

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## AN INTERPRETATION OF THE 12 STEPS

### Step No. 2:

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Sanity! That's the part of this that scares us - after all, we are not crazy - we are drunks. We have never done anything like this screwy performance when we were ourselves. We wouldn't think of performing like this if we were in our right minds. RIGHT MINDS? That's the cue. When I even think of taking a drink knowing that if I do the consequences will always be the same as they have been through the years. That the same old repeat behavior pattern that I can't do anything about. - If I take that first drink.

THERE IS SOMETHING MORE THAN JUST A PLAIN "DRUNK" THE MATTER WITH ME!

So far no human power has ever been able to do anything about that kind of thinking; so, what am I going to do? Certainly, I am afflicted with one of the most serious problems ever faced by man or woman. The things that lie behind the drinking - I have it - and I didn't inherit it. No one made me like this. This is a matter of fate - there isn't anything I can do about it, so I might as well accept it - and so off I go to search for the power to help. Certainly there must be a power greater than myself somewhere that can do the job.

The following are steps to be taken one at a time, as we can accomplish them: (1) We admit to ourselves;  
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## THE CONDITIONS OF FORGIVENESS

The most beautiful word in the English language is the word forgiveness. In this word we see love in action. In this word we have opened for us the vistas of all of God's attributes: wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness and truth. Without the act of forgiveness on the part of God most of us would not know peace of mind or peace of soul. Most of us are able to know life at its best because a power higher than ourselves is willing to forgive us of our wrongs.

But wait! There is a condition to forgiveness. When Jesus taught his disciples to pray, he clearly set forth this condition when he told them to pray: "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." In other words God can forgive us only to the extent that we are willing to forgive others; not because God is not willing to forgive, but because the door of an unforgiving heart is locked against Him.

There are countless thousands of people going through life with the burden of unforgiven wrongs weighing them down and keeping them from knowing life at its best. There are families split asunder because one member of the family refuses to forgive, and thus be forgiven. There are hundreds of friends estranged from each other because they are unwilling to forgive and be forgiven. How many people are reclined weekly on some psychiatrists' couch, who ought to be reclining on the altar of God, or kneeling at the feet of a friend in humility?

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(2) Come to believe; (3) Make a decision; (4) Admitted to God; (6) We were entirely ready; (7) We humbly asked Him.

The purpose of these steps is to prepare us to live 24 hours at a time. Each step readies us for the one ahead. One of the greatest requirements is an open mind. Through this we COME TO BELIEVE. In the first step we ADMITTED; we are in the process of getting ready. This is the beginning of the spiritual consciousness of the program.

It's puzzling; yet, smart as you are, don't be too intellectual -- you'll get it if you stick around.

It makes no difference what you think -- what kind of opinions we have. This is the thinking that has managed our lives up to now. But this is the experience of Alcoholics Anonymous -- and it works -- regardless of whether we agree or disagree. So -- an open mind! Listen to it. Even if you don't agree now, if you mean business, some day you will agree. We all do. "We have a way to stay sober and it works."

Our wives and husbands say they want back the same guys and gals they married. They will never get them back. We were the same people then that did the drinking later -- remember? They will get back a thousand times better fella than they ever had. They will get what they thought they were getting in the first place.

This is the beginning of the development of that new man or woman -- the beginning of that new way of life; something you don't know anything about yet. Neither you nor your family ever had anything like it.

AN OPEN MIND -- "We come to believe." We haven't done anything yet, and can't until we come to believe. Maybe you have to swallow a lot of hallowed beliefs and traditions and smart thinking -- so swallow them! Whole! As fast as you can. This will give you and yours everything you ever wanted out of life. Maybe even money!

- SAM McC

TO MY FRIENDS IN AA

Here among all of you wonderful people is where I found the "New Way of Life."

For nearly two years I had, and benefitted from, a close friendship with you.

I am leaving now for another part of the world, but am taking each one of you with me in my heart. Gratitude is a small word, when I realize how you helped me find this new life.

What you have done for me, I shall try to carry to others wherever I go.

God bless each and every one of you.

From 'way inside my heart,

- MARION B. W.

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Philosophy is the art of living - Plutarck

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When we consider seriously how much God has forgiven us, and how much He is willing to forgive us if we fulfill the conditions, how can we continue to refuse to forgive a little toward another person. We often say, "I can forgive but I can't forget." Which generally means we have not forgiven. Do you ask, "But can I forgive if my enemy refuses to repent?" Then I ask: "How can your enemy repent until you have shown a willingness to forgive?" While Joan of Arc fought, the English chaplain did not repent; but when she forgave and suffered martyrdom, he was brought to repentance.

We all need to pray often, "Forgive us our trespasses," but we need to realize when we pray the prayer; that the forgiveness of God is dependent on our forgiveness of others -- "as we forgive those who trespass against us."

- REV. W. EARL WALDROP

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BECAUSE WE ARE ALCOHOLICS . .

According to a fable written by La Fontaine, all the animals of the forest and jungle once gathered together in a great and solemn meeting. Jupiter, who had issued the invitations, called upon each of the animals to speak quite frankly. Everyone was entitled to complain about any fault or failing, any imperfection or defect he had been burdened with by nature and wished to have repaired. Much to Jupiter's surprise, every single beast declared himself quite satisfied -- with himself. But every single beast wishes also to call to Jupiter's attention some truly shocking weakness or deficiency in some other beast.

La Fontaine's animals not only speak like us, they act like us as well. Like us, they are most clear-sighted regarding the faults of their neighbors. Like us, they are blind to their own faults. Like us, they have small love for anyone or anything except themselves. And again like us, they would never admit it, perhaps least of all to themselves.

Although the foregoing is a fable, none of us can fail to feel the truth in it. God gave men the power of reason. This power, and the ability to remember is supposed to raise us above the level of lesser animals. However we use our reasoning power distinguishes one individual from another. As alcoholics we all misuse this power.

Before becoming arrested alcoholics we claimed that anything and everything was a reason for drinking. We even drank -- -- BECAUSE. After coming into A.A. too many of us use the same crutches to lean on even though we have stopped drinking. We add a few more words to -- -- BECAUSE -- -- because we are alcoholics -- is our reason and excuse for our actions.

We are much like a child learning to talk. First one single word, then two or perhaps three words, or a phrase, and finally, he makes sentences.

Unless we try to learn as much as we

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can about the underlying causes and reasons that "led us to the bottle," and try to correct them and study and absorb as much of the A. A. program as we can, we have accomplished very little and improved ourselves very little. True, we may not be drinking -- but we are not getting much out of life, even sober.

Through observation I would say that the favorite indoor sport of most human beings is "pointing the finger", so to speak, at other human beings' weaknesses and failings. Our Good Bishop Everett Jones made a memorable and unforgettable point at our conference here last October when he illustrated this by raising his hand and pointing one finger straight out. Three fingers pointed straight back at him. So will yours, if you point only one.

Were I to be presumptuous enough to think that I could improve on the twelve steps of our recovery program, not one word would I alter. I would, however, add this phrase at the end of Steps Six, Seven, Eight, Nine, Ten and Eleven...."and to practice Charity towards others." Get them out and read them.

Charity is defined in the dictionary as "the disposition to think well of others; liberality; universal love." To me, Charity is a beautiful word. It encompasses so much. Had a person not one other quality or asset but charity, he would be well endowed. Were we all to be charitable in our judgment of others, we would not be impatient with their excuses, or reasons, while never being at a loss for excuses and reasons for our own failures and shortcomings. It seldom occurs to us that in every word we utter, we are judging ourselves.

You may prefer to call your virtue "kindness," "love," "generosity," or any other name like a Boy Scout doing a good deed a day, but it all gets back to the same thing. It is really charity. Practice it on other people. Smile at them; compliment them; make a kind remark about some action of theirs, or how they look. Even if you don't mean it at first, do it

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SAN ANTONIO'S NEWEST GROUP  
IS A REALITY NOW.

"Isn't this wonderful " "Just what we have needed for a long time," "This is what I have been waiting for," "This reminds me of Fourth Street," "I'm coming here for every meeting." These and other like remarks were what was heard among over 200 San Antonio AAs who attended the first meeting of the Industrial Group and opening of the new clubrooms at 614 Avenue E on Saturday evening, Jan. 19.

Old-timers among the crowd said that it was the greatest AA meeting ever held in San Antonio, both in size and in its prevailing spirit of goodwill and brotherly love.

Rev. W. Earl Waldrop, minister of Central Christian Church, a friend of AA before ever coming to San Antonio, caught the spirit of the enterprise when he stated that the AAs in San Antonio are now, for the first time, in a position to do a good job in all directions with the two clubs and this new project to fill a deep & aching void in our picture.

Eddie T. followed with details of how much had been donated by the open hearts of members of AA and sympathetic business firms throughout the city; of how every piece of furniture and equipment in the room had been donated, shower and stall included.

Arthur C. then spoke on the history of AA in San Antonio from its original group down through the foundation of the Central Office and its successful operation until it became apparent that we were now ready for this new undertaking.

Bill McA followed, explaining that this new group headquarters is strictly for AA purposes and outlined its aims.

Bob C. did a swell job of emceeing the meeting, and in his opening remarks explained how the charter committee had leased the building, fixed it up as much as was possible, taking into consideration the condition of the building and

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the money available to work with. Then how the charter committee passed it on to the hands of an AA board of governors composed of representatives chosen from each of the six groups in S. A. This board is to set the policy and get the new group started and remain in office until such time as they can be replaced by men coming up through the group.

All in all it was a wonderful gathering and vindicated the judgment of those who felt it was a much needed move to make.

It is hoped that all AAs in San Antonio will drop in from time to time for a visit as well as attending the meetings whenever possible.

It is believed that by attending just one meeting and seeing what is going on, the AAs in S. A. will see to it that this new group will not suffer from financial needs and will be completely supported by AA money. This is a challenge to AAs of S.A.

Your donations of any size are earnestly solicited.

---AA---

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anyway. You will be positively amazed at the results. It forms a sort of chain reaction. Resolve to make yourself an Admiration Society Committee of one to brighten up the pathway of each individual you meet, with a smile and a pleasant remark. It brightens up their day and will react on you in the same manner. Do be sincere, however. This may tax you at first, but with a little practice and persistent effort you will soon have discovered that you have unconsciously acquired "the disposition to think well of others, be liberal in your point of view, and have universal love," - - but best of all, you will be practicing charity towards others. It's as simple as that.

- NEDRA M.

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