

# The NIGHT CAP

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## ARE YOU A PRISONER OF PRIDE?

The Psalmist in writing about a certain group of people wrote: "Pride compasseth them about as a chain." What is he intimating here? He is saying that if you are not careful, you will become a prisoner of your pride.

Pride is intoxication with your own achievements. It is selfishness. It is thinking of oneself too much. If pride rules you, you no longer have freedom of thought. You cease to think about the things that should be in your thoughts, and think only of self. Before any act, you will ask: "How will this affect me?" instead of asking, as you should: "What will this do for others?" But pride will do more than this to you if you become its prisoner. It will take away your loyalty to, and dependence in, the power higher than yourself.

Do I need to argue that you are already in a measure a prisoner of your pride? Do I need to argue the point that you are already to a degree selfish? Of course not. We all are. We are all to a degree prisoners of pride. Do you ask, "How can I free myself from pride?" Then consider these words from Holy Writ: "Who-soever shall exalt himself shall be abased; and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted." How then can you humble yourself?

Well for one thing, you can hold the perfection of Christ up beside your own faulty life, and be reminded that you do not have so much of which to be proud. When I compare my own life to His, I am tempted to cry with Peter, "Get away Lord, you bother me." I feel so humble before Him, what I am ashamed. You cannot look at perfection, and then look at yourself without losing some conceit. Try it.

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## AN INTERPRETATION OF THE TWELVE STEPS

In the book "Alcoholics Anonymous" there is a chapter that is entitled "How it Works." That is the first chapter that we turn to when first we see the Big Book. That is the most vital interest we, as newcomers, have. We want to know what A.A. is going to make us do. We're not over-enthusiastic about the deal anyway - maybe this group will find some way to make us quit drinking - and we don't want to quit - we just want to get out of trouble, and maybe stay out of it. But our wives have told us they're leaving, unless! And the boss has told us, or else! So here goes! We might just as well make the best of it - - we've got to do something!

This chapter starts out with the words: "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path." And that is right. That is the experience of Alcoholics Anonymous. And later on in this same chapter: "Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a Program of Recovery." These are the steps we try to follow; and steps they are. To be taken one at a time - as we are "ready" - and you will note that in the majority of the steps we only become "ready" or "willing," or "make a decision" to carry out the action that is prescribed in the next step.

STEP NO. 1: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable."

This is the admission - or let us say, the "acceptance." And we didn't just admit this to our wives to keep them, or to our employers or to our fathers or brothers for the effect it might have on them. We really sell it to ourselves.

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Then you can attain humility through prayer. Pride is the mirror in which you see yourself. Put it down and take up the crystal through which you can see God. Prayer is that crystal. When you are at prayer you are in a searching experience. If you pray earnestly, and honestly, your life is laid bare before you and God. As the searching eyes of God play upon your weaknesses, you no longer rationalize them into strengths, but you see them for what they are. But listen, the eyes of God are not only searching, they are merciful. His eyes see your weaknesses and point them out to you for one purpose, to keep you at your best. Let Him be your companion as you walk down the pathway of life. Let Him control your pride; if you will, you will never be a "Prisoner of Pride."

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By Rev. W. Earl Waldrop,  
Minister, Central  
Christian Church

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#### SAN ANTONIO'S NEW GROUP

614 Avenue E is the address of the home of the youngest group of Alcoholics Anonymous in San Antonio. Tentatively, the rooms will be open from 11 a.m. every day. As usual, trial and error will show the new group what hours are best to remain open. This building will not be a club in the sense that AA clubs are understood in San Antonio. There will be no fees or dues for the use thereof. All alcoholics will be welcomed there at all times, and most especially those brother alcoholics who have been unfortunate enough to have really hit bottom as a result of their disease - alcoholism, and who need rehabilitation in every respect. These are the men to whom this new group is dedicated.

For the present this group is directed by a board of governors consisting of 7 members of San Antonio Alcoholics Anonymous groups. They are: Bob C. and Carroll P., Downtown Group; Guy H., Olmos; Joe C., Alamo Heights; Benny V., Collins Gardens; Paul B., Highland Park, and Bobby M., Club 12.

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(An Interpretation....) Continued from Page 1.

How can a man or woman do anything constructive about a problem that they won't admit they have? How much progress does one afflicted with tuberculosis, for example, make if he or she won't go to a doctor because he won't admit he is afflicted?

If we can drink and manage our lives, good deal! No one has any criticism if we can manage our lives. That's the criterion. No one can decide that for us but ourselves. We haven't come to A.A. because we can "take it or leave it alone." We haven't come because we're perfectly normal people with no problems. We usually arrive down and out; our wives about to leave; our boss about to give up - undependable, miserable, hopeless, doomed people with nothing real to live for - and amazingly, for the first time in our lives, we find a group of people who accept us for just exactly what we are - drunks - with nothing to offer; no hope for anything. They don't expect us to live up to performances that we are entirely unable to manage. They don't want anything of us except a chance to help, if we want them to.

They're pretty good people - they know more about us than we do ourselves. They accept us with open arms - and if they can accept us, why shouldn't we accept them? This is the first time we have ever taken any responsibility for our drinking. This is the beginning. This is the only slim hope we have ever known. Without it, there are no other steps. So let's sell ourselves a bill of goods! "We can never take the first drink." You and I don't dare! The consequences are too disastrous. Come what may, we can't take it. If we've ever worked on anything, let's go to work on this.

This is the kind of a guy or gal you and I are and we might as well accept it, because there isn't anything else we can do. Where there's smoke there's fire; so let's make up our minds! This is a "decision" - the hardest thing an alcoholic ever has to do. Can we manage our lives or can't we? Let's decide! And we're on our way. This is half the battle.

- By SAM McC.

TWELVE ESSENTIAL STEPS  
LEADING TO A NEW WAY OF LIFE

1. We 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 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 experience as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and practice these principles in all our affairs.

---AA---

JANUARY BIRTHDAYS:

- 1 Year: Frank B.; Col. C.J.I.; Frank E.O.  
2 Years: Paul B.; Charles M.D.; Col.W.J.H.  
3 Years: Ted A.; John B.  
4 Years: Dick L.; Jim McI.

---AA---

GEM FROM THE BIG BOOK

"Most of us feel we need look no further for Utopia. We have it with us right here and now."

\* \* \* \* \*

DIRECTORY OF SAN ANTONIO AA ACTIVITIES

General meetings, open to the public, are held every Tuesday at 8 p.m., in the West Wing of the Municipal Auditorium. These meetings are under the sponsorship of the San Antonio Central Committee of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The Suburban and State Hospital Groups meet Monday nights at 8 o'clock.

Alamo Heights, Collins Gardens and Highland Park Groups meet Wednesdays at 8 p.m.

Olmos Park and Earl Groups meet Thursdays at 8 p.m.

Downtown Group meets at Sahara Clubrooms on Fridays at 8 p.m. Beginners class at 4 p.m., Sundays. The Downtown Family Group meets Fridays at 8 p.m., in Sahara Clubrooms.

Group 12 meetings are held in Club 12 Clubrooms on Fridays at 8 p.m.; Discussion groups on Wednesday nights. Group 12 Family Group meets Fridays at 8 p.m., in Club 12 Clubrooms.

Further information regarding any San Antonio A.A. activities may be obtained by calling "Doc," the Central Office Secretary, at Fannin 2523.

---AA---

This issue of the Nightcap is sent to all AA members in San Antonio whose addresses are known, in the hope that maybe some of them will be reminded that they should send in their subscription to the Central Service Office, which retains whatever profits derive from its sale. The price is \$2.50 a year. Make checks payable to AA of S.A. and send to: P. O. Box 644.

---AA---

Certain material things in life are necessary, but to still want this world's goods heaped at our feet shows that we still continue as foolish men. "I seek none of these," said Marcus Aurelius, "But on my head pour only the sweet waters of serenity. Give me the gift of the untroubled mind."

IT'S A BUSY BUSINESS . . .

"Doc", Central Office Secretary, gives an interesting breakdown of the business passing through the office:

There are an average of 400 telephone calls incoming each month and 175 visitors to the office. Fifty twelfth-step calls are made as a result of these calls and visitors. An average of six persons are hospitalized each day; that is, on any given day there will be six persons in hospitals as a direct result of alcoholism in San Antonio.

There were five persons committed to state eleemosynary institutions during the months of November and December; one each from Corpus Christi, McAllen and Lubbock and five from San Antonio. Also one patient was sent to the Federal Narcotics Hospital at Ft. Worth and one referred to the U. S. Public Health Service.

Known deaths from acute alcoholism in 1951 totalled eight and three women alcoholics committed suicide.

There were 51 meetings at the Municipal Auditorium during 1951 at which 3692

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(S.A.'s Newest Group - Contd fr Page Two.)

At the first meeting of this board, held at 614 Avenue E, Sunday, Dec. 30, 1951, Bob C. was elected chairman and Joe C. representative to the Central Service Committee of AA in San Antonio. The new group was ramrodded by Eddie T of Group 12 and financed to start by anonymous individuals. Eddie then called upon Arthur C of the Highland Park Group and Bill McA of Group 12 to help with the leg work. After formally organizing and calling themselves the Charter Committee, and electing Eddie president, Arthur as veep and Bill sec-treas, these three decided upon the name under which a charter was applied for from the State of Texas: Industrial Group, Inc. of San Antonio; a non-profit, non-stock organization for the purpose of disseminating education on the disease of alcoholism. This Charter Committee is set up to handle all business and financial transactions that are necessary to operate this group.

The wherewithal to operate this group will come from you and others. If you have any discarded furniture, chairs, tables, heating stoves, games (checkers, dominoes, etc.) bring 'em by or call Bill McA. and he'll arrange to have them picked up. And, of course, money we can use. In any event, please go look and see what the new Industrial Group has to offer alcoholics in S.A.

LET'S TALK FINANCES

In the early months of 1950, the San Antonio AA Central Office was not breaking even financially. The secretary (who is on a full time basis and is the only individual in San Antonio paid for his services to AA) had not been paid for two months.

A meeting of the representatives and secretaries of all five groups in the city was called to meet in the home of Doc M. At that meeting it was brought out that the reasons for the financial failure were:

1. That the Tuesday night Auditorium meetings were not being attended by as many as it was thought would attend; therefore, the collections were not as great as was expected.

2. Pledges were not meeting their pledges to the Central Office promptly if at all.

It was suggested at that meeting that each contributor to the Central Office contribute \$4 monthly. This figure was arrived at by the following reasoning: Only 25 per cent of the members of any organization contribute to that organization's financial support, and there being approximately 400 AA members in San Antonio, if each one is asked to contribute \$4 monthly to the Central Office, that office would have a chance of getting \$400 monthly from the 25 per cent (or 100 members) who contribute.

That is not the fact. The contributors have been fewer than 100. The collections at the Auditorium meetings are still far below the hoped-for figure. The absolute minimum income necessary to maintain the Central Office and pay the secretary's salary is \$300 monthly. This amount does not include office supplies, etc.

We think that more members will contribute to this worthy cause if the need is brought to their attention. So there it is, fellow AAs. Any amount from you will be happily accepted.

---AA---

It is a well recognized fact that Alcoholics Anonymous has a spiritual basis. Its members have helped each other frankly with the help of God. AA offers the most logical approach to this help for the average alcoholic.

(It's a Busy Business, Cont'd from Page 4)

persons attended.

Only three groups in San Antonio contribute regularly to the Central Service Office: They are Collins Gardens, Highland Park and Olmos Park groups.

Incidentally, the proper name of the San Antonio office is: Central Service Office for Alcoholics Anonymous in San Antonio and Southwest Texas Regional Service Office for AA, serving 27 groups of Alcoholics Anonymous.

The New York Service Office of AA has, on more than one occasion, pointed to the San Antonio Office as a model for other cities to copy in setting up a central office.

---AA---

I WANT TO BE DRUNK AGAIN . . .

. . . for just a moment every day so I can better realize how wonderful my new life is. My sobriety period isn't very long compared to some of the "Old Timers," but even now after almost a year I can see how I might fail to appreciate the big things AA has given me. I want to remember the misery of those days when I was drinking the misery of feeling shaky, the horrible fears that I had for everything I had to do, the sickness of my mind and body that only liquor had caused.

I want to remember the desolate loneliness I found in drinking, the remorse and shame I felt. In particular, I hope I never forget the actual envy I felt for the people I saw about me who could walk, and talk, and eat, and work, and actually be happy without drinking. If I can remember how much I wanted that freedom - If every day I realize that I now have the very thing I thought would never be mine, then I will not be in any danger of taking that First Drink.

Alcoholics Anonymous has given me back a life I had almost forgotten existed; I now have that happiness and peace of mind, and the contentment that I saw in other people and wanted so badly for myself. My problems are not all solved just because I am dry; I have new ones all the time. I have not found sudden wealth, nor have I found that the world about me has become a Utopia. (Continued, Column Two)

I have found though that I can cope with my problems now; I am learning to accept the things in life that I cannot change. With my sobriety has come the ability to try to change the things I need to change. I have the average amount of set-backs and disappointments - so I want to be drunk again - for just a fleeting second - so that I can more thoroughly appreciate what A.A. has done for me.

- ZELDA

---AA---

When we shall be less ready to excuse our own mistakes and more anxious to forgive others, our friends will be more numerous.

---AA---

It requires no bravery to tell the world where to get off, but it does require courage to tell yourself the truth.

---AA---

We have no more right to consume happiness without producing it than to consume wealth without producing it.

--G. B. Shaw

---AA---

It is important for the family of an alcoholic to understand something of his problem. Those close to him should study the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. It would help the non-alcoholic residing in San Antonio to attend some of the Family Group meetings at either of the magnificent AA clubrooms here. Members of AA realize that there seldom is a meeting of minds between alcoholics and non-alcoholics, but there can be a sympathetic understanding of the alcoholic's problem by any non-alcoholic, which will be of tremendous value in the alcoholic's rehabilitation through following the AA program.

---AA---

Friends have all things in common.

- Pythagoras

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