

OA HOW Precommitment Assignment

HOW QUESTION #70

Including all readings except Alcoholics Anonymous “Big Book” and Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions

What does the HOW concept mean to me?

10. For sections a through i, discuss and reflect on its associated quote, its connection to the assigned readings, and their connection to the original question. Unless otherwise noted, all Big Book references apply to the 3rd and 4th editions. In cases where the 3rd edition reading has been omitted from the 4th edition, your sponsor will advise you.

a) “HOW is serious business.” Read the following:

<u>Big Book</u>	Chapter 3, More About Alcoholism
	Chapter 7, Working With Others, pg. 92, paragraph 2, "Continue to speak. . . offer a solution."
	Chapter 11, A Vision For You, from top of pg. 151 through end of top paragraph of pg. 153, “For most normal . . . as thyself.”
	Personal Stories, (1) Alcoholics Anonymous Number Three, paragraph 1, pg. 187 through top paragraph pg. 188, “I was willing . . . at the time.”
<u>Pass It On</u>	Chapter 5, paragraph 2, pg. 119 through top paragraph pg. 121, "Bill told us . . . show Himself!"

Pass It On: pgs. 119-121, Chapter 5, paragraph 2, "Bill told us . . . show Himself!"

“Bill told us he had been at Calvary Church the previous night and saw Ebby T. get up in the pulpit and give witness to the fact that with the help of God, he had been sober for a number of months. Bill said that if Ebby T. could get help here, he was sure he needed help and could get it at the mission also. When the invitation was given at the close, Bill and J-went forward and knelt down. When they got up, I suggested that J-go upstairs, but since Bill looked prosperous in contrast to our usual mission customer, it was agreed that he go to Towns, where Ebby T. and others of the [Oxford] Group could talk to him.”

But Bill was not quite ready. He drank on for another two or three days. However, going to the mission had been more than a drunken impulse, and he pondered the experience. In the charged atmosphere of the meeting room, he had been aware of deep feelings. But again he fought those feelings, brushed them away; they went against both reason and education. Yet reason also told him that his illness had made him as helpless as a cancer victim. Had he had cancer, and had recovery involved praying with other sufferers at high noon in a public square, would he not have done so? What was so different about alcoholism? It was also a cancer of sorts. Certainly, it was destroying his mind and body - and soul, if there was such a thing. Not much difference, Bill admitted silently. He finally began to see his alcoholism clearly, as a helpless and hopeless condition.

He felt a strong desire to return to the hospital and to Dr. Silkworth. Leaving a note for Lois, he set out for Towns. He had only six cents, and that left a penny after the subway fare. Along the way, he managed to obtain four bottles of beer from a grocery store where he had a little credit. When he reached the hospital, he had finished three of the bottles. Dr. Silkworth met him in the hall.

Bill was in high spirits. Waving the bottle around, he announced that he had "found something." Silkworth remembered that Bill was carrying two books on philosophy, from which he hoped to get a new inspiration. It was December 11, 1934, a month to the day since he had started drinking again. He received the then-current Towns treatment: barbiturates to sedate him and belladonna for reducing stomach acids. As the effects of the alcohol wore away - it had not been one of his worst binges - he fell into deep depression and rebellion. He wanted the sobriety Ebby had found, but he couldn't believe in the God Ebby had talked about. His own feelings experienced at the mission had faded with the alcohol.

In a few days, Ebby visited him. Again, they talked as they had at the kitchen table. Ebby's visit made Bill momentarily less depressed, but after Ebby left, Bill slid into a very deep melancholy. He was filled with guilt and remorse over the way he had treated Lois, Lois who had stood by him unwavering throughout. He thought about the miraculous moments they had shared: standing on the Newport cliffs the night before he sailed for England, the camping trips, the wonderful years as motorcycle bums, the triumphs and failures on Wall Street. He thought about Winchester Cathedral, and the moment he had almost believed in God.

Now, he and Lois were waiting for the end. Now, there was nothing ahead but death or madness. This was the finish, the jumping-off place. "The terrifying darkness had become complete," Bill said. "In agony of spirit, I again thought of the cancer of alcoholism which had now consumed me in mind and spirit, and soon the body." The abyss gaped before him.

In his helplessness and desperation, Bill cried out, "I'll do anything, anything at all!" He had reached a point of total, utter deflation - a state of complete, absolute surrender. With neither faith nor hope, he cried, "If there be a God, let Him show Himself!"

b) “Step 00: Put The Food Down.” Read the following:

<u>Big Book</u>	The Doctor's Opinion, pg. xxviii, paragraph 5, “All these . . . entire abstinence.”
	Chapter 2, There Is A Solution, pgs. 21-25, paragraph 1, “But what about . . . but cannot.”
	Personal Stories, Doctor Bob’s Nightmare, pg. 181, paragraph 1, “Unlike most . . . down my throat.”
	3 rd Edition only: Personal Stories, He Had To Be Shown, pgs. 206-207, paragraph 1, “One morning . . . awoke in a hospital.” This story was omitted from the 4 th Edition.
	3 rd Edition: Personal Stories, Doctor, Alcoholic, Addict, pgs. 447-448, paragraph 1, “I interpreted “sober” . . . quit drinking.” 4 th Edition: Personal Stories, Acceptance Was The Answer, pgs. 415-415, paragraph 1, “I interpreted “sober” . . . quit drinking.”

c) “Don’t Water Down To Suit Your Fancy.” Read the following:

<u>Big Book</u>	Preface, pg. xi, paragraph 2
	Chapter 5, How It Works, pg. 58, paragraph 1
<u>Bill W.</u>	Chapter 8, pg. 229, paragraph 4, “If also some . . . his life.”
<u>Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers</u>	Chapter XXI, Group Concerns and Angry Rumors, pgs. 261-262, “Meetings in . . . program anymore.”

Bill W.: pg. 229, Chapter 8, paragraph 4, “If also some . . . his life.”

If also some of the disciplines of the Oxford Group were a little beyond his grasp, if some of their special tenets, such as their absolutes-absolute purity, absolute honesty, etc.-were eventually to prove too strict a diet for a drunk, none of this bothered Bill. He was sober. He was staying sober. That was the fact of his life.

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: pgs. 261-262, Chapter XXI, Group Concerns and Angry Rumors, “Meetings in . . . program anymore.”

Meetings in Cleveland evolved somewhat differently from those in Akron. "We opened with an audible prayer," said Clarence S. "The speaker, who was chosen four weeks in advance, spoke for 45 minutes, and we closed with the Lord's Prayer.

"Then, we would reopen for informal comments, questions, and so forth. The total meeting might go on anywhere from one and a half to two hours. No smoking was allowed in the first part of the meeting, only in the informal part.

"That's the trouble," Clarence said. "They take it so casually today. I think a little discipline is necessary. I think A.A. was more effective in those days. Records in Cleveland show that 93 percent of those who came to us never had a drink again. When I discovered that people had slips in A.A., it really shook me up. Today, it's all watered down so much. Anyone can wander in now."

Warren C., also an early Cleveland member, had a somewhat more optimistic view of A.A. when interviewed in 1977. "I think the program is just the same," he said. "The principles are there; the Steps are there; the practices are there; and the opportunities are there. If you do as the Big Book says, then it is the same program that existed when I came in, in 1939.

"We have more people in and out of the program now," he said. "But that's understandable, because we have more people. The people who wanted to stay sober then were the ones who did what the program suggested. Today, the people who want to stay sober are the ones who do what the program tells them to do. The only difference is that I don't know everybody in the program anymore.

d) "Stick To The Issue." Read the following:

<u>Pass It On</u>	Chapter 6, pgs. 131-133, paragraph 3, "In these . . . the Oxford Group."
<u>Bill W.</u>	Book 4, Chapter 1, pg. 256, paragraph 2, "There was also . . . drink today."
<u>Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers</u>	Chapter XI, Early Meetings and Big Book Controversies, pgs. 139-140, paragraph 5, "The leader would . . . I'll get drunk over it."

Pass It On: pgs. 131-133, Chapter 6, paragraph 3, "In these . . . the Oxford Group."

In these exciting months of new sobriety, Bill did not recognize that, along with his sincere desire to help other alcoholics and to create something new, another motive was working in him. Mingled with his humanitarian instincts and his spirituality was the same driving ambition that had created Vermont's only boomerang maker. As Bill himself described it: "I was soon heard to say that I was going to fix up all the drunks in the world, even though the batting average on them had been virtually nil for the last 5,000 years. The Oxford Groupers had tried, had mostly failed, and were fed up. Sam Shoemaker in fact had just had a run of bad luck. He had housed a batch of drunks in an apartment near his church, and one of them, still resisting salvation, had peevisly thrown a shoe through a fine stained-glass window in Sam's church.

"No wonder my Oxford Group friends felt that I had better forget about alcoholics. But I was still mighty cocksure, and I ignored their advice. Mine was a kind of twin-engine power drive consisting of one part of genuine spirituality and one part of my old desire to be a Number One man. This posture didn't pan out well at all. At the end of six months nobody had sobered up. And believe me, I had tried them by the score. They would clear up for a little while and then flop dismally. Naturally the Oxford Groupers became very cool indeed toward my drunk-fixing. "

An experience one Sunday evening made Bill feel that he was on the threshold of a real breakthrough. He was asked to speak at a large Oxford Group meeting in Calvary House. "I told what I knew about alcoholism, and all about my wonderful spiritual experience. Before finishing, I saw a man in the second row. He had a very red face. All attention, he never took his eyes off me."

The moment the meeting ended, the man rushed up and grabbed Bill by the lapels. He said he was an alcoholic, too, a chemistry professor who was barely managing to hold on to his teaching post. He had come to the Oxford Group at his wife's urging, but he

could not stand their "non-sensical" talk about God, nor did he like "all these aggressive people" who were trying to save his soul. And while he could not accept Bill's "weird" religious experience, he certainly did agree with what Bill had said about alcoholism.

Bill invited the man, Fred, to join him and a small group of alcoholics who met at Stewart's Cafeteria in the neighborhood after the meetings. "I was overjoyed. It looked like he was a surefire convert," Bill said. "If talking from a platform would produce results like this, I ought to do more of it, I thought. I decided on the spot that I liked public speaking."

Bill had a lot to learn. Although Fred B. became a good friend, he stayed drunk on and off for 11 years before finally getting sober in the A.A. program.

During the first months of 1935, Bill encountered one such frustration after another. In later years, he was to explain the failure as being one of method: During this period, he said, he was preaching to the drunks. Also, he still believed that an alcoholic required a spectacular spiritual experience, similar to his own, in order to recover. And he was hardly humble about the crusade he was on; while he did realize that working with other alcoholics gave him a tremendous lift, he did not realize that he actually needed the sick alcoholic.

It was Dr. Silkworth who helped straighten him out; Bill was preaching, said the doctor, and his preaching was driving his prospects away. He was talking too much about Oxford Group principles and about his own spiritual experience. Why not talk instead about the illness of alcoholism? Why not tell his alcoholics about the illness that condemned them to go mad or die if they continued to drink? "Coming from another alcoholic, one alcoholic talking to another, maybe that will crack those tough egos deep down," Silkworth said. "Only then can you begin to try out your other medicine, the ethical principles you have picked up from the Oxford Group."

Bill W.: pg. 256, Book 4, Chapter 1, paragraph 2, "There was also . . . drink today."

There was also a special faculty of Bill's, a talent that had been present in the boy in East Dorset and the commander of enlisted men in France—a rare ability to sympathize with and immerse himself in another man's problem. A story about this passed around these early meetings. They said you could go to Bill Wilson and tell him anything, you could tell him you'd just pushed your old crippled mother down the stairs, and Bill would nod. "I know. I know." Then he'd put his hand on your shoulder and say, "But you didn't take a drink today."

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: pgs. 139-140, Chapter XI, Early Meetings and Big Book Controversies, paragraph 5, "The leader would . . . I'll get drunk over it."

"The leader would open with a prayer, then read Scripture," Clarence recalled. "Then he would spend 20 to 30 minutes giving witness—that is, telling about his past life. Then it would open for witness from the floor. And it would get pretty emotional. I thought one of the women was a madam and that another was one of her girls, the way they sobbed and cried about their sinful lives."

Clarence also recalled one Oxford Grouper holding up his pipe and saying dramatically, “This is my worst sin.”

“‘Oh yeah?’ I thought. ‘Well, that pipe will never take you to the gutter.’”

J. D. H. (the Southerner who joined the Akron group in 1936) remembered one woman who “used to get on my nerves with her constant chatter. One day, I called her into T. Henry's study and said, ‘I don't like you for some reason or other.’ (In those days, you were supposed to ‘check’ people.) ‘You interrupt and talk too much. I'm getting a lot of resentment here, and I don't like it, and I'm afraid I'll get drunk over it.’

e) “I. V. Hook-Up/ Joint Effort/ Collective Surrender.” Read the following:

<u>Pass It On</u>	Chapter 6, pgs. 135-136, paragraph 4, “They left . . . being in trouble.”
<u>Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers</u>	Chapter XI, Early Meetings and Big Book Controversies, pgs. 148-149, paragraph 2, “Daily contact . . . we had four groups.”
	Chapter VI, Two Alcoholics Meet, pg. 71, paragraph 3, “According to Bill . . . in its approach.”
<u>AA Comes of Age</u>	Service: The Third Legacy, pgs. 145-146, “Dr. Bob very much . . . shall presently see.”

Pass It On: pgs. 135-136, Chapter 6, paragraph 4, “They left . . . being in trouble.”

They left on a Friday, and Bill faced a solitary weekend in a strange city where he had just sustained a colossal disappointment. He had time on his hands and bitterness in his heart; fate had suddenly turned against him. His self-pity and resentment began to rise. He was lonely. He did not even have his colleagues as weekend company. Saturday noon found him pacing up and down the lobby of the Mayflower Hotel in extreme agitation, wondering how to pass the weekend. He had about ten dollars in his pocket.

Now began the personal crisis that was to set in motion a series of life-changing events for Bill. There was a bar at one end of the lobby, and Bill felt himself drawn to it. Should he have a ginger ale or two, perhaps scrape up an acquaintance? What could be the harm in that?

For almost anyone else, no harm. But for Bill Wilson, the alcoholic, the idea was loaded with danger. It was just such a delusion that had led to his Armistice Day drunk. For the first time in months, Bill had the panicky feeling of being in trouble.

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: pgs. 148-149, Chapter XI, Early Meetings and Big Book Controversies, paragraph 2, “Daily contact . . . we had four groups.”

Daily contact was also emphasized. Ernie G. the second would drive around making business calls, then stop in at A.A. place for a cup of coffee, maybe make another call, then stop into another A.A. place and have another cu coffee. Then, maybe someone would invite a group in for evening. A lot of there even had breakfast together e morning.

"We had an intense loyalty to each other," said J. D." We would meet each other on payday to make sure nothing happened. When I had a slip after four months, I felt as though I had let down the most wonderful fellows on earth."

J. D. was involved in another A.A. first during this period. The newspaper on which he worked sold out in 1938, and he moved to Evansville, Indiana, about as far f. Akron as if he had moved to Philadelphia.

"I left an established group and had to start alone said. "The question was whether I could stay dry by m The thing to do was get a group started. I worked for eight months before I even got a prospect.

"I went to four or five preachers, and they couldn't help. I even went to some bartenders. Finally, a minister told me about a chap he thought was an alcoholic. The fellow's wife dragged him over to my house by his ears. I was willing to consider him an alcoholic, but I found out later that he wasn't.

"I worked on other prospects. Then I heard of a doctor. About this time, the book ["Alcoholics Anonymous"] came out, and I took it to him to read. He smiled and was courteous. He read the book about halfway through. Then he told me he thought it was all very fine, but he wasn't having any trouble.

"Well, on Thanksgiving Day, 1940, I heard that the doctor was in jail and wanted to see me. I had gone there more than two years without being able to help anybody. But working at it helped me stay sober. Mother G wrote me regularly.

"The doctor was sitting there in jail as if he owned the joint. I think there may be something in what you said,' he told me. 'I want to know more.'

"A friend and I scraped up \$75 to pay his expenses to Akron. Since he was a doctor, I wanted him to meet Dr. Bob. Well, he came back to Evansville, and he had a list of prospects a yard long that he already knew.

"We worked night and day there for about three months and got 12 or 14 people. And from that little group, it started. After two years, we had four groups."

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: pg. 71, Chapter VI, Two Alcoholics Meet, paragraph 3, "According to Bill . . . in its approach."

According to Bill, Anne Smith had decided that practical steps needed to be taken to protect her husband's newfound sobriety. She invited Bill to come live with them. "There, I might keep an eye on Dr. Bob and he on me," Bill said.

The invitation came at an opportune time. Bill was about broke, even though he had received some money from his partners in New York and was again hoping to come out ahead in the proxy fight that had first brought him to Akron.

"For the next three months, I lived with these two wonderful people," Bill said. "I shall always believe they gave me more than I ever brought them."

Each morning, there was a devotion, he recalled. After a long silence, in which they awaited inspiration and guidance, Anne would read from the Bible. "James was our favorite," he said. "Reading from her chair in the corner, she would softly conclude, 'Faith without works is dead.'"

This was a favorite quotation of Anne's, much as the Book of James was a favorite with early A.A.'s – so much so that "The James Club" was favored by some as a name for the Fellowship.

Sue also remembered the quiet time in the mornings – how they sat around reading from the Bible. Later, they also used *The Upper Room*, a Methodist publication that provided a daily inspirational message, interdenominational in its approach.

A.A. Comes of Age: pgs. 145-146, Service: The Third Legacy, "Dr. Bob very much . . . shall presently see."

Dr. Bob very much liked the idea of a book. But when it came to paid missionaries and profit-making hospitals he was frankly dubious. Promoter that I was, I shared few of his fears. I felt that we would have to have money and maybe a lot of it. Neither of us could give the work our full attention unless we were subsidized. And our members could not be expected to throw over their jobs and ignore their families' needs in order to do free missionary work. If we had our own hospitals, we would have to be financed. The book alone would take considerable time and some money. Neither Dr. Bob nor I had money; we had only debts. Every other member was in much the same fix. We would simply have to solicit money or get nowhere. Only half convinced, Dr. Bob rightly wondered what all these complications might do to the spirit of our undertaking, the carrying of our message to fellow alcoholics with no strings and no money attached. Finally he said, "Why don't we call the Akron boys together and have a meeting at T. Henry's? Let's try these ideas out on them."

At T. Henry's house, eighteen of the Akron alcoholics listened stolidly to our proposals. I kept pouring on my arguments for missionaries, hospitals, and the book as thick as I could. Despite his doubts, Dr. Bob strongly backed me up, especially about the need for a book.

The moment we were through, those alcoholics really did work us over! They rejected the idea of missionaries. Paid workers, they said, would kill our good will with alcoholics; this would be sheer ruin. If we went into the hospital business, everybody would say it was a racket. Many thought we must shun publicity; we would be swamped; we could not handle the *traffic*. Some turned thumbs down on pamphlets and books. After all, they said, the apostles themselves did not need any printed matter.

Dr. Bob and I returned to the fray and renewed our pressure. But this settled nothing and a vote had to be taken. By the barest majority and over the most strenuous objections, the Akron meeting finally decided that we ought to go for the whole works—the missionaries,

the hospitals, and the book. Even then, no one present volunteered to do much about these things. If a lot of money was needed, I had better go back to New York where there was plenty and raise it myself. Such was the verdict of that meeting, and a mighty close shave it was. In later years, I came to be very thankful for that powerful minority. Their contention that going into big business and hiring paid missionaries would destroy us turned out to be absolutely correct. On the other hand, had the ultraconservatives prevailed, and had we done nothing, A.A. might have got nowhere after all. Though I did not see it then, the group conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous was already at work hammering out right decisions for A.A.'s future. The majority of the meeting had given me permission to do as I wanted, and it was quite easy for the time being to ignore the minority warnings. But that was not the end of the minority, as we shall presently see.

f) "Tough Love." Read the following:

<u>Big Book</u>	Chapter 7, Working With Others, pg. 96, paragraph 1, "Do not be . . . of their chance."
<u>Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers</u>	Chapter XI, Early Meetings and Big Book Controversies, from pg. 142, paragraph 4, to middle of pg. 144, "Clarence S. was one . . . There was no suggestion."
	Chapter XIX, Minorities Within A.A. Gain Acceptance, from pg. 244, the last paragraph, through the first paragraph of pg. 245, "According to . . . It can't be!"
	Chapter XXII, Oldtimers' Impressions of Dr. Bob, from top of pg. 274 through paragraph 2 of pg. 275, "There were also . . . had compassion."

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: Chapter XI, Early Meetings and Big Book Controversies, from pg. 142, paragraph 4, to middle of pg. 144, "Clarence S. was one . . . There was no suggestion."

Clarence S. was one of those who came from Cleveland at the beginning of 1938 to be "fixed" by Dr. Bob. His wife, who later became very close to Anne and Dr. Bob, had talked to a number of ministers and doctors before her sister Virginia in New York, who was a patient of Bill Wilson's brother-in-law, Dr. Leonard V Strong, told her about Dr. Bob. One of these ministers, incidentally, was Dilworth Lupton, who was later to have a great deal to do with the rapid growth of A.A. in Cleveland.

"I called Dr. Smith, and I still remember my words and how gruff his voice was," Dorothy recalled in a 1954 conversation with Bill. "He scared me to death. I said, 'Is this the Dr. Smith who helps drunks?' When he said yes, I wept, and said that my husband was an alcoholic.

"Right away, he wanted to know how old Clarence was. 'Thirty-four,' I said. 'Impossible,' he replied. 'He hasn't suffered enough. There's never been anyone that young come into the Fellowship and recover.' "

This could have been one of Dr. Bob's tactics at the time-to suggest that a newcomer wasn't ready because of being too young, or being a woman, or not

having suffered enough. Prospects were thus forced to "prove" that they were indeed ready and willing to accept the program.

Upon hearing Clarence's age, Dr. Bob very likely thought of the first. Ernie G., who was also under 35 and had not stayed sober.

"Dr. Bob was about to hang up on me," Dorothy continued. "But then he relented and said there was one man in Cleveland who might be able to help Clarence. And he gave me Lloyd T -'s address.

"I went over to see Lloyd. He talked to me, but they were very secretive in those days. He didn't tell me what the solution was. I did know that it was tied up with the Oxford Group," said Dorothy, who described herself as being bitter and skeptical at the time. "I decided that I would pretend to go along with it if Clarence took to it."

So she bought her husband a bus ticket to Akron. There, Clarence made arrangements to go to the hospital, where he stayed for a week. He remembered Paul S. coming in and eating his breakfast, then coming in and eating his lunch. "I couldn't eat," said Clarence.

"Doc Smith came in later and took over. He sat on the edge of my bed and said, 'Well, what do you think of all this?' Then he paused and looked at me doubtfully. 'I don't know if you're ready yet. You're kind of young.' I was down to 135 pounds, no job, no clothes, and no money. I didn't know how much more ready I could be," recalled Clarence. "Still, I had to convince them I was ready.

"Then he asked, 'Do you believe in God, young fella?' (He always called me 'young fella.' When he called me Clarence, I knew I was in trouble.)

“‘What does that have to do with it?’

“‘Everything,’ he said.

“‘I guess I do.’

“‘Guess, nothing! Either you do or you don't.’

“‘Yes, I do.’

“‘That’s fine,’ Dr. Bob replied. ‘Now we're getting someplace. All right, get out of bed and on your knees. We're going to pray.’

“‘I don’t know how to pray.’

“‘I guess you don't, but that's all right.. Just follow what I say, and that will do for now.’

“‘I did what I was ordered to do,’” Clarence said. “‘There was no suggestion.’”

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: Chapter XIX, Minorities Within A.A. Gain Acceptance, from pg. 244, the last paragraph, through the first paragraph of pg. 245, “According to . . . It can’t be!”

According to Oscar W., there was another woman around who was built like a football player and wore a big hat flat on her head. "If she sponsored you, and you got drunk, she'd pick you up and slap you around.

Then she'd tell you, if you didn't get sober, you were gonna get some more."

Even Sister Ignatia found it difficult to understand how a "nice" girl could have a drinking problem, according to Anne C. "She knew my mother and my dad and the whole family before A.A. was born. When she found out I was in the program, she said, 'How could this have happened to you with that wonderful family of yours? It can't be!'"

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: Chapter XXII, Oldtimers' Impressions of Dr. Bob, from top of pg. 274 through paragraph 2 of pg. 275, "There were also . . . had compassion."

There were also those, of course, who had an extremely negative reaction to Dr. Bob on first acquaintance or at one certain moment – and then had occasion to change their minds.

Ed. B. was one of these. He had been in A.A., then had gone out to experiment. He woke up to find himself in the basement ward of a little community hospital.

Dr. Bob, he recalled, "came down to see me and asked, 'What happened, Ed?'"

"I don't know, Doc. Somehow, I found myself in a bar, and I don't know how I got there."

"I remember him getting up from the chair and pointing a finger at me. 'Now wait a minute,' he said. 'Before we go any further, one of the requirements-and an important requirement-is honesty. And you haven't got any honesty about you at all."

"Nobody pushed you in that bar. You walked in there, and you ordered that drink, and naturally, you drank it. So don't tell me you don't know how you got there. Now, you're lying here using a bed that could be used by somebody who needs it more than you. And you're taking up my time, and I have better ways to spend it than to talk to you. If I were you, I'd go out and get drunk and stay drunk until I made up my mind what I wanted to do. As far as I'm concerned, you stink!"

"I was really mad. I thought, 'If they have people like that in A.A., it will never be a success.' That same night, I called Annie [Ed's wife] and asked her to take me out of there. That was August 1944, the night I had my last drink."

"Of course, the first meeting I went to after I came out of the hospital, I made it my business to thank Doc for coming to see me," said Ed. "He was very nice about it. 'I'm helping myself by helping you,' he said. 'I want you to do the same thing.'"

"You know, we became good friends after my second trip, because I realized after I sobered up that he had actually done me more good by giving me hell than if he had been sympathizing with me. He *knew*. If you needed sympathy, he'd give it to you, and if you needed hell, he'd give it to you."

Alex M. agreed. "Dr. Bob was not patient with people who slipped, but he didn't let them down. He could give it to you in a rough way if he had to. If a guy got smart with him, he would set him down real quick. But he had compassion."

g) "The Dead Come Alive." Read the following:

<u>Pass It On</u>	Chapter Six, pg. 127, paragraph 2, "It started well . . . Bill recalled."
	Chapter Twenty-Three, pg. 372, paragraph 2, "It was . . . to comprehend."
<u>Big Book</u>	pg. 153 (par one beginning with "It may" and ending with "recovery proves that") pg. 180 (par 3 beginning with "It is " ending with "these uncertain times")

Pass It On: Chapter Six, pg. 127, paragraph 2, "It started well . . . Bill recalled."

It started well for the Wilsons. At the Oxford Group meetings, they found a kind of enthusiasm and friendship that Bill described as "manna from heaven." (He and Lois were probably experiencing what many of today's sick alcoholics and their spouses experience when they come to A.A. for the first time - warmth, succor, and a feeling of at last "coming in from the cold. ") They were impressed and inspired by the Oxford Group's success in helping people change their lives. "On the platform and off, men and women, old and young, told how their lives had been transformed," Bill recalled.

Pass It On: Chapter Twenty-Three, pg. 372, paragraph 2, "It was . . . to comprehend."

It was, in fact, about clearer perception that Huxley had written his now-famous book "The Doors of Perception." Dr. Osmond had given him mescaline, an organic substance that produces effects similar to those of the synthetic LSD. Of this experience, Huxley wrote: "The man who comes back through the Door in the Wall will never be quite the same as the man who went out. He will be wiser but less cocksure, happier but less self-satisfied, humbler in acknowledging his ignorance yet better equipped to understand the relationship of words to things, of systematic reasoning to the unfathomable Mystery which it tries forever, vainly, to comprehend."

h) "Women with Women — Men with Men." Read the following:

<u>Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers</u>	Chapter XIX, Minorities Within A.A. Gain Acceptance, pg. 246, paragraphs 2 through 5, "To give some idea . . . looks at you and grins."
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Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: Chapter XIX, Minorities Within A.A. Gain Acceptance, pg. 246, paragraphs 2 through 5, "To give some idea . . . looks at you and grins."

To give some idea of the dangers involved with women, Oscar W. recalled the first man killed on a Twelfth Step call.

"He called on her after the husband had left for work," said Oscar. "The neighbors saw this and told her husband. One night, the husband lay in the weeds outside the house, waiting for the guy, and when the A.A. came along to take the woman to a meeting, the husband blew him in half with a shotgun. This was in upstate New York, and it was said that they named a club after the fellow.

"They started a nursing home for women in Cleveland, because they couldn't. get them in hospitals," Oscar said. "They had been taking them in homes, but now they needed more room. They rented a duplex, and a nurse in A.A. and her husband lived there.

"The neighbors noticed a lot of women going in and out. Some of them were obviously drunk. So they called the cops, who came and found them all in nightgowns and so on. Imagine telling the desk sergeant you're helping them get sober. He just looks at you and grins."

i) "Love And Service." Read the following:

<u>Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers</u>	Chapter VII, A.A. Number Three Arrives, top of pg. 76 through paragraph 4 of pg. 77, "With the last drink . . . just what they needed."
<u>Big Book</u>	Chapter 7, Working With Others
<u>AA 12 Steps and 12 Traditions</u>	Step Twelve
<u>AA Comes of Age</u>	The A.A. Principles of Service, pg. 138
<u>AA Comes of Age</u>	Service: The Third Legacy, top of pg. 139 through last paragraph of pg. 160, "We are gathered . . . practice these precepts."

Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers: Chapter VII, A.A. Number Three Arrives, top of pg. 76 through paragraph 4 of pg. 77, "With the last drink . . . just what they needed."

With the last drink under his belt and the idea of service in his heart, Dr. Bob was eager to join Bill in finding another drunk to "fix," as they put it in those days.

While Bill's release from the desire to drink had been immediate, Dr. Bob's was not. By his own account, the craving was almost always with him during his first two and a half years of sobriety-although he added, "At no time have I been anywhere near yielding."

One often hears that Dr. Bob never did get over the urge to drink. But his later reactions to thoughts of drinking indicated that the urge was neither constant nor violent. In 1948, he admitted that "I still think a double Scotch would taste awfully good....

"But I have no legitimate reason to believe that the results would be any different," he said. When such an idea did occur, he took it as a sign that he hadn't been paying enough attention to the men in the ward at St. Thomas.

This confirms Bill's theory that his partner was so eager to help others because he found it the best way to stay sober. Dr. Bob held on to this discovery and developed it into the deep conviction shown in his last talk, saying that the Twelve Steps "when simmered down ... resolve themselves into the words 'love' and 'service.' "

Simmered down-to the essence!

Nothing more was mentioned about the "terrific rake and drunk" they had been working on before Bob went to Atlantic City. However, the minister J. C. Wright sent Bill and Dr. Bob another prospect, who, if not .a terrific rake, was a terrific drunk.

This was Eddie R., who lived down the block. Eddie had them enthusiastic one minute and despairing the next. They worked with him throughout the summer of 1935. From the stories told of him, Eddie could have kept an army sober. He was probably just what they needed.

A. A. Comes of Age: The A.A. Principles of Service, pg. 138

THE A.A. PRINCIPLES OF SERVICE

(As expressed in the Twelve Traditions and the Twelve Steps)

Each A.A. group has but one primary purpose-to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting.

Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional.

A.A. as such ought never be organized, but we may create boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.

Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern.

We try to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Note: The traditional principles of A.A. service stated above have been amplified by Bill W. and made a part of *The A.A. Service Manual* and *Twelve Concepts for World Service*.

A. A. Comes of Age: Service: The Third Legacy, top of pg. 139 through last paragraph of pg. 160, "We are gathered . . . practice these precepts."

We are gathered here for the final hours of A.A.'s twentieth anniversary celebration.

Above us floats a banner on which is inscribed the new symbol for A.A., a circle enclosing a triangle. The circle stands for the whole world of A.A., and the triangle stands for A.A.'s Three Legacies of Recovery, Unity, and Service. Within our wonderful new world, we have found freedom from our fatal obsession. That we have chosen this particular symbol is perhaps no accident. The priests and seers of antiquity regarded the circle enclosing the triangle as a means of warding off spirits of evil, and A.A.'s circle and triangle of Recovery, Unity, and Service has certainly meant all of that to us and much more.

On our first evening together here in St. Louis, we looked at the base of our triangle, A.A.'s First Legacy of Recovery, on which everything rests and depends. During our second evening we contemplated Unity, A.A.'s Second Legacy, and all its vast meaning for our future. Now we want to think about the third side of our triangle, A.A.'s Third Legacy of Service, which in this afternoon's closing hour will be delivered into your hands for all time to come. Then our symbol will be complete, and may Recovery, Unity, and Service, the means by which, under God, our fellowship has been created, be ever at His command for so long as He may use this society.

A.A.'s Twelfth Step, carrying the message, is the basic service that our fellowship gives; it is our principal aim and the main reason for our existence. A.A. is more than a set of principles; it is a society of recovered alcoholics in action. We must carry A.A.'s message; otherwise we ourselves may fall into decay and those who have not yet been given the truth may die. This is why we so often say that *action* is the magic word. Action to carry A.A.'s message is therefore the heart of our Third Legacy of Service.

Yet some of us are still a bit confused about A.A.'s Third Legacy. We still ask, "just what is this Third Legacy business anyhow? And just how much territory does 'service action' take in?"

The answer is simple. An A.A. service is anything whatever that legitimately helps us to reach fellow sufferers. As we have seen, the Twelfth Step call is the greatest of A.A.'s services. But the publicity that caused the prospect to get in touch with us, the car we rode in, the gasoline we paid for, and the cups of coffee we bought him—all of these aids were necessary to make our call possible and effective. And this is only the start. Our services involve meeting places, hospital co-operation, Intergroup offices, and pamphlets and books. Services can require committees, delegates, trustees, and conferences. They include small voluntary money contributions so that the group, the area, and A.A. as a whole can function. They range all the way from the cup of coffee up to A.A.'s General Service Headquarters for national and international action. The sum of all these services is A.A.'s Third Legacy. Such services are utterly necessary to A.A.'s existence and growth. Yearning for simplicity, we often wonder if we could not do away with many of A.A.'s present services. Wouldn't it be wonderful to have no bother, no politics, no expense, and no responsibility! But this is only a dream about simplicity; it would not be simplicity in fact. Without its essential services, A.A. would soon become a formless, confused, and irresponsible anarchy.

Regarding any particular service, we need to ask only one question: "Is this or that service really *needed*?" If it is not, then let it be eliminated. But if it is needed, then maintain it we must or fail in our mission to those who want and seek A.A. For twenty years now we A.A.'s have been trying to determine what are needed services and what are not. As I tell the story of the growth of A.A.'s services, I hope that the vision of our Third Legacy will come clear.

Let's begin with my own sponsor, Ebby. When Ebby heard how serious my drinking was, he resolved to visit me. He was in New York; I was in Brooklyn. His resolve was not enough; he had to *take action* and *spend money*. He called me on the phone and then got into the subway; total cost, ten cents. At the level of the telephone booth and subway turnstile, spirituality and money began to mix. One without the other would have amounted

to nothing at all. Right then and there, Ebby established the principle that A.A. in action calls for the sacrifice of much time and a little money.

Now let us have a look at one of those little meetings we held during that first summer. in Akron. We gathered in Dr. Bob's living room. Anne made her home ready for us, so we had shelter over our heads. There was some expense for coffee, and Dr. Bob paid it. If Anne and Dr. Bob had not given these hospitable services, no meeting could have been held.

As the Akron meeting got larger, it moved over to the house of T. Henry and Clarace Williams. They purchased a lot of extra chairs, served many suppers, and stood for much wear and tear on their house too. We alcoholics did not pay a cent. T. Henry and Clarace sacrificed a great amount of time and some money. If they had not done so, there could not have been any meeting.

In these obvious examples I think we can see what the test of an A.A. service really is. Whether it is a book, a translation, a service conference, or a twentieth anniversary convention, the principle is the same; the test is identical: *Do we need this particular service* or do we not? That is the only question.

As A.A. grew, homes were no longer big enough for meetings. We had to move into hotel parlors and halls. This marked the time when the groups themselves had to begin to pay. Landlords wanted their money, so a collection had to be taken. These collections were voluntary, but great cries went up nevertheless. A.A. was not supposed to cost anything, it was said. We cannot mix this great spiritual idea with landlords' commercialism! But the landlords were not impressed. We had to pay or get out. So we did pay, and voluntary contributions became a fact of A.A. life. We could not function without them. Moreover, somebody had to collect the money and bank it and account for it. This meant the existence of a treasurer. The group soon found, too, that it needed a secretary and sometimes a chairman. Absolutely necessary arrangements had to be made and people had to be appointed or elected to do the jobs. This often brought friction and power-driving, but it was found that the group had to survive and function, no matter what the cost. Means had to be found to keep friction-makers and power-drivers down to their right size. A suitable service committee, considerable mild coercion, coupled with much love and understanding, proved to be the answer. So these sometimes frightening experiences were not bad for us after all. They helped everybody to grow. Meanwhile the group went on functioning because it had to function or fail in its mission.

Cities and areas had their own special service problems. Unable to reach A.A. on the phone, alcoholics and their families got discouraged as they tried to contact us. This caused needless suffering and sometimes loss of life. Hospitals also became tired of slapdash, irresponsible admittance of patients into their institutions. This condition was not simplicity at all; it was complication. Sponsorship into these places and out of them became imperative; otherwise the hospitals might get fed up and quit. Ignoring the cries of "Let us keep it simple," and goaded by the sheer necessity of the situation, responsible old-timers in such areas would often hire a small office and a paid secretary, and would then act as a management committee for the service center. Next, the old-timers would ask the surrounding groups for voluntary contributions. When these failed to meet the needs of the simple and inexpensive setup, they often went into their own pockets. If the newly hired

secretary happened to be an A.A. member, this was a sure-fire cause for trouble. The often frightened little gal soon learned that she was considered a "professional A.A.," making money out of it. Of course this was unfounded because...-primarily she was doing a secretarial job. Over the years the areas learned the same lessons the groups did. They found what was necessary to make an A.A. area function, and what was not. Out of this long travail and struggle, A.A. s present Intergroup or area Central Offices have emerged. In scores of cities they are doing a vitally necessary job.

Meanwhile we found that we needed services that we could not perform ourselves. Chief among these was the right kind of hospitalization. Doctoring and physically caring for the very sick was not and could not be A.A.'s business. Here great friends like Dr. Silkworth and Sister Ignatia came to our aid. An ever growing number of hospitals has since welcomed us into the closest co-operation. Among these pioneers was Charles B. Towns Hospital in New York, St. Thomas Hospital in Akron, St. Vincent Charity Hospital in Cleveland, and Knickerbocker Hospital in New York. These and many others are superb examples of what our friends outside of A.A. have done to help us better to function and to serve.

In addition to these hospitals, we find today an impressive list of drying-out places-farms, state and provincial clinics, and many kinds of civic and professional people and groups-all interested in the solution of the problem of alcoholism. Jurists, penologists, educational committees, psychiatrists, great industrial enterprises-all are helping. What these outside services have meant in terms of aid to A.A. and endorsement of our society is beyond estimate.

The world of religion likewise has come to our aid. We enjoy the blessings of practically all sects and denominations. Any number of us as individuals have been counseled and brought into greater spiritual understanding and growth by the help of devoted clergymen.

Without all this outside help A.A. might never have started in the first place or grown so well since. These were, and still are, indispensable services.

Another great service has been performed by A.A.'s friends of press, radio, and all kinds of communications. These agencies have given A.A. millions of dollars of free publicity. They have brought alcoholics to us by the tens of thousands. And they never have required anything of us except our co-operation in getting the story of A.A. before the world. We know that without the help of these friends our growth would have been slow indeed.

Now we come to the story of A.A. s world services. Because these activities are so remote from most of us, not many know how A.A. s over-all service structure was built or what it has accomplished. To those who do know the real story this is one of the most vital and exciting developments in all our history.

When Dr. Bob and I realized on that fall day in 1937 that some two score of us had recovered from alcoholism, we at once asked ourselves, "How can this experience be shared? How can the word be spread?" Dr. Bob had recovered two and a half years before, and I had been sober three years.

It had taken all this time to perfect the recovery program and to bring sobriety to a handful of sufferers. The number of alcoholics in the world who wanted to get well was reckoned in millions. How could the great chance we had had be brought to them? At the snail's pace we had been going, it was clear that most of them could never be reached.

We could therefore no longer be a seldom heard of secret society. Word-of-mouth communication with the few alcoholics we could contact by our then-current methods would be not only slow but dangerous; dangerous because the recovery message in which we now had such high confidence might soon be garbled and twisted beyond recognition. Clearly our budding society and its message would have to be publicized.

Hardly a fraction of the world's alcoholics could be expected to come to Akron or New York for treatment. Somehow we would have to reach them where they were. Maybe we would have to get some of our members subsidized as missionaries to do this. It was already plain that most hospitals did not want to be bothered with alcoholics. Their beds were filled with people who seemed better subjects for treatment. Perhaps we would need to operate a chain of hospitals, and maybe the proceeds of such a venture would pay the missionaries. Above all, we would have to put our methods down on paper. A book of experience could carry our message to distant places we could never visit ourselves. Moreover, such a book could prevent the otherwise inevitable garble and distortion that would start as soon as publicity came. It would not only guide alcoholics to recovery, but also become the basis for telling our story to the world and therefore a guide to our public relations as well. These were our reflections and speculations.

Dr. Bob very much liked the idea of a book. But when it came to paid missionaries and profit-making hospitals he was frankly dubious. Promoter that I was, I shared few of his fears. It was that we would have to have money and maybe a lot of it. Neither of us could give the work our full attention unless we were subsidized. And our members could not be expected to throw over their jobs and ignore their families' needs in order to do free missionary work. If we had our own hospitals, we would have to be financed. The book alone would take considerable time and some money. Neither Dr. Bob nor I had money; we had only debts. Every other member was in much the same fix. We would simply have to solicit money or get nowhere. Only half convinced, Dr. Bob rightly wondered what all these complications might do to the spirit of our undertaking, the carrying of our message to fellow alcoholics with no strings and no money attached. Finally he said, "Why don't we call the Akron boys together and have a meeting at T. Henry's? Let's try these ideas out on them."

At T. Henry's house, eighteen of the Akron alcoholics listened stolidly to our proposals. I kept pouring on my arguments for missionaries, hospitals, and the book as thick as I could. Despite his doubts, Dr. Bob strongly backed me up, especially about the need for a book.

The moment we were through, those alcoholics really did work us over! They rejected the idea of missionaries. Paid workers, they said, would kill our good will with alcoholics; this would be sheer ruin. If we went into the hospital business, everybody would say it was a racket. Many thought we must shun publicity; we would be swamped; we could not handle the traffic. Some turned thumbs down on pamphlets and books. After all, they said, the apostles themselves did not need any printed matter.

Dr. Bob and I returned to the fray and renewed our pressure. But this settled nothing and a vote had to be taken. By the barest majority, and over the most strenuous objections, the Akron meeting finally decided that we ought to go for the whole works – the missionaries, the hospitals, and the book. Even then, no one present volunteered to do much about these things. If a lot of money was needed, I had better go back to New York where there was plenty and raise it myself. Such was the verdict of that meeting, and a mighty close shave it was. In later years, I came to be very thankful for that powerful minority. Their contention that going into big business and hiring paid missionaries would destroy us turned out to be absolutely correct. On the other hand, had the ultraconservatives prevailed, and had we done nothing, A.A. might have got nowhere after all. Though I did not see it then, the group conscience of Alcoholics Anonymous was already at work hammering out right decisions for A.A.'s future. The majority of the meeting had given me permission to do as I wanted, and it was quite easy for the time being to ignore the minority warnings. But that was not the end of the minority, as we shall presently see.

Much elated, I grabbed a train for home. I figured that the new developments would take millions of dollars. Our little New York group gave me more encouragement than had the Akronites. Most of them soon fell in with my grandiose notions. It was felt that raising money for such a noble enterprise should present no difficulties at all. We said to each other, "Why, this is probably one of the greatest medical and spiritual developments of all time. Certainly the rich will help us. How could they do anything else?" Then, too, the New York group had already scraped up a couple of super-salesmen, people who thought exactly as I did. So A.A.'s first (and last) great crusade for money got off to a flying start.

Armed with a list of wealthy prospects, we commenced to solicit funds. To our astonishment we got absolutely nowhere. Some of the wealthy exhibited mild concern and sympathy, but they were not really interested. Almost unanimously they seemed to think that tuberculosis, cancer, and the Red Cross were better charity investments. Why should they try to revive a lot of down-and-out alcoholics who had brought their troubles upon themselves? In great dejection we finally saw that drunks as objects of large charity might never be a popular cause.

I was quite angry and depressed, and in this mood I visited the office of my brother-in-law, Dr. Leonard V. Strong, Jr., to whom I delivered a diatribe on the stinginess and shortsightedness of the rich. Ours was a movement that would doubtless sweep the world. What was the matter with people anyway? Leonard had heard all this before, and somewhat wearily he said, "Years ago, I knew a man called Willard Richardson. As I remember, he had something to do with John D. Rockefeller's charities. I think he used to be very close to the Rockefeller family. If he is still alive I believe he would remember me. Maybe he is still at the Rockefeller offices. I'll call up and find out."

Leonard called, and at once the voice of one of our greatest friends-to-be, Mr. Willard Richardson, came over the wire. He said, "Why, hello, Leonard, where have you been all of these years? I'd love to see you." My brother-in-law replied, "I have with me a relative who has had some success in straightening out alcoholics. Could we come and talk to you about it?" Mr. Richardson said, "Of course you can. How about tomorrow?"

The next morning Leonard and I alighted on the fifty-sixth floor of the RCA building where Mr. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., had his offices. Soon we were shaking hands with Mr. Richardson, an elderly gentleman who had twinkling eyes set in one of the finest faces I have ever seen. He was warmly cordial. He showed the deepest interest as I unfolded the story of our struggling fellowship. After he had heard me out that wonderful gentleman said, "I think we should have another meeting soon. Maybe you and I ought to have lunch together. What about next week?"

In the elevator lobby my brother-in-law ran into a commuter friend, who said, "So you have been in to see Mr. Richardson? If you happen to want anything from Mr. Rockefeller personally, he is certainly your man. He has been in charge of Mr. Rockefeller's private charities for years." This was terrific! Here was the inside track! Here was a patron at last! Our money troubles were over! As promoters, we were doing all right after all.

At lunch with Mr. Richardson the following week my expectations were confirmed. He was keenly interested in the story of our society and its needs. He proposed still another meeting, to be held in Mr. Rockefeller's private board room. He would bring with him Mr. Albert Scott, Chairman of the Trustees for Riverside Church, Mr. Frank Amos, an advertising man and close friend, and Mr. A. LeRoy Chipman, an associate who looked after some of Mr. Rockefeller's personal affairs. And, of course, there would be Dr. Strong, who had brought us together. I was to bring Dr. Silkworth and some of the New York alcoholics, along with Dr. Bob and certain members from Akron. I rushed home to Brooklyn and excitedly called Dr. Bob. We were riding high on pink cloud number 17.

The historic evening in December, 1937, finally arrived. We had supper and presently found ourselves in Mr. Rockefeller Jr.'s private board room. My chair at the great table felt warm, and it was explained that Mr. Rockefeller himself had just vacated it. This made the chair feel even warmer; we were certainly getting close now!

There was a rather awkward pause while our friends waited for us to say something. I guess we were a bit awestruck. Then someone suggested that each alcoholic present tell his own story, just as he would at a meeting. As we told our several tales of alcoholic misery and release, we could see that a very deep impression was being made. When we were through, Mr. Scott, who chaired the meeting at the head of the table, exclaimed, "Why, this is first-century Christianity!" And then, still more to the point, he added, "What can we do to help?"

Our big moment had come. I mentioned our need for money, for paid workers, chains of hospitals, and literature. Though we could of course start modestly, these things eventually might require large sums. The need, I ventured, was very urgent. Though the risks of such undertakings might be considerable, the risk of doing nothing whatever would certainly be greater. Dr. Silkworth and the rest of our contingent at the table expressed the same opinion.

Then Mr. Scott posed a question that is still heard in A.A. to this day. "Won't money spoil this thing?" he asked. The discussion became general, and we were bombarded with questions: "Won't money create a professional class?" "Wouldn't professional members spoil the man-to-man approach that is now successful?" "Wouldn't the management of a hospital chain, with all the property and money required, be a fatal diversion?" This barrage of

questions was disconcerting. Though they were calm about it, these men sounded for all the world like the vociferous minority out there in Akron. We all realized that, coming from such unbiased friends, these were good questions indeed. We answered that we had already pondered these perils ourselves but had finally concluded that to do nothing at all would be even more perilous. Being deeply convinced that this was true, we earnestly continued to press our case with the same arguments that had been used in Akron. At last impressed with this logic, our new friends began to yield. They admitted that we did need money, at least *some* money.

At this point, Mr. Amos (who was to become a great friend and a long-time Trustee for A.A.) promised to make an investigation of our society which might be the basis for asking Mr. Rockefeller for some funds. Mr. Amos had never laid eyes on us before, and we were deeply moved by this evidence of his interest and generosity.

We suggested that Mr. Amos first look at the Akron group. Akron was our first group and our largest. It worked in a more typical community than New York. If an A.A. hospital were to be put into operation, the Akron location would be better, and Dr. Bob would be available to superintend it. For fear of embarrassing Dr. Bob, there was another reason we did not mention. Though more than two years sober, he had been unable to revive his surgical practice. People were glad for his sobriety, but they still feared the knife in his hands. Each was asking, "What if he gets drunk the morning he cuts *me* up?" We knew Dr. Bob was facing a mortgage foreclosure on his home, and if any money was forthcoming, he needed it more than any of the rest of us.

A week later Frank Amos arrived in Akron and ran a fine-tooth comb through the situation there. He questioned local citizens and certain medical associates of Dr. Bob's. He went to several meetings and talked with each alcoholic member. He also looked at a large vacant residence which might be converted into a hospital where Dr. Bob could work. Frank caught the contagion, and he came back to New York red-hot. At the conclusion of his enthusiastic report he recommended that Mr. Rockefeller grant us \$50,000 just as a starter. With this money two or three of us could be subsidized, a down payment on the hospital could be made, and Dr. Bob could be relieved of his mortgage troubles.

Mr. Richardson quickly took the glowing report to his friend, Mr. Rockefeller, who we thought would surely be interested. Here was medicine, here was religion, and here was a great good work, all in one package. Dick Richardson read Frank's report and then added his own account of what he had seen and heard from us. Mr. Rockefeller listened intently. He was tremendously impressed and said so. He has continued to say so ever since and has repeatedly stated that his connection with Alcoholics Anonymous is numbered among the finest and most moving experiences of his life.

Nevertheless, Mr. Rockefeller flatly turned down this plea for a large sum, despite the fact that our project appealed to his every charitable inclination. After a rereading of Frank's report, he said to his old friend, "Dick, I am afraid that money will spoil this thing." When he gave his reasons, they were identical with those advanced by the Akron group's minority. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., was guided then and there to save the A.A. fellowship from itself and from unnecessary hazards of money, property, and professionalism. It was one of the turning points in A.A.'s history. His great-wealth could have ruined us.

At this juncture, Dick Richardson described the desperate financial plight of Dr. Bob and myself. On hearing of this, Mr. Rockefeller said, "I will place \$5,000 for their use in the treasury of the Riverside Church. You may draw on this as you like. This will give these men some temporary assistance. But this fellowship should soon become self-supporting. If you and the others do not happen to agree, if you really think that the movement needs money, of course you can help them to raise it. But please don't ever ask me for any more."

This was very great news for Alcoholics Anonymous, but at the time it seemed like bad news. It was in fact a shattering blow to our hopes. Nevertheless Dr. Bob and I were grateful to get off the hook, even for a little while. The small mortgage on Dr. Bob's place was paid off, and each of us began to receive thirty dollars a week for as long as the money might last. Otherwise, we stood just where we had been all along. The prospect of missionaries and hospitals and the book had gone dim. Uncle Dick Richardson was definitely disappointed, and so were friends Amos, Chipman, and Strong. Seeing that they were not in complete agreement with Mr. Rockefeller, we renewed our pleas for aid. Maybe they would know other men of wealth who might be solicited with more success. To our delight all four thought this possible, and we held frequent meetings to talk about it.

By the spring of 1938 a definite program of action took shape. It was agreed that we needed a tax-free charitable trust or foundation. Wealthy contributors could then deduct gifts from their tax returns. Such a foundation would be a responsible repository for these funds and would guarantee the wise use of all contributions. Messrs. Richardson, Amos, and Chipman agreed to serve as Trustees and so did my brother-in-law, Dr. Strong. These were the first steps in forming the Alcoholic Foundation (recently renamed the General Service Board of Alcoholics Anonymous).

Frank Amos next secured the valuable help of a young friend, John Wood, then a rising junior in one of New York's famous law *offices*. This gave us the best possible legal talent. John Wood sat in at our meetings, and we commenced our work.

The first move was to choose a name for the new outfit. After long discussion we decided to call it the Alcoholic Foundation. This seemed like a resounding title, one that could create an impression of large importance. Still swayed by big ideas, we thought our trusteeship ought to be chartered to do just about anything within the field of alcohol or alcoholism except lobby for Prohibition. We intended an arrangement by which we could research, educate, and do a lot of other things. Attention to our membership would be only one of many functions. Thus the Alcoholic Foundation got its name and its charter.

Then we ran up against a legal riddle. It was thought that the Board of Trustees should consist of alcoholics and nonalcoholics. The latter were always to be in the majority by a margin of one. This would assure our membership and other contributors that nonalcoholics would be holding the purse strings. Mr. Wood then blandly asked us to define an alcoholic, and then a nonalcoholic. We came up with the definition that the alcoholic was a sick person who couldn't drink at all. The nonalcoholic, we surmised, was a perfectly well man who could drink if he wanted to! This made no legal sense at all, and Mr. Wood, still puzzled, finally gave up the attempt to describe an alcoholic in legal terms. But he soon found a way out of the impasse by suggesting that we write up a simple trust agreement and

sign it. This would avoid the whole business of a formalized charter. Soon afterward this document was completed, and the Alcoholic Foundation was in business.

Our first Board consisted of five Trustees. Dick Richardson, Frank Amos, and Dr. Strong were the nonalcoholic members, and we chose Dr. Bob and one of the New York A.A.'s as the alcoholic contingent. The New York member soon got drunk, but this possibility had been foreseen. Drunkenness on the part of an alcoholic Trustee meant immediate resignation. Another alcoholic was named in the drunken brother's place and we proceeded to business. It was May, 1938.

Our friends came up with the promised list of wealthy men who might be solicited, and from early summer to early fall we pounded that list of prospects. With a tax-free Foundation and the kind of friends we now had, we thought our money problems would be a push-over. But the attraction of tax exemptions and responsible Trustees seemed to make no difference. For a while Carlton Sherwood, a friend of Dick Richardson's, lent us a hand. Mr. Sherwood was a very successful money raiser for charities, but he found he could do little for us because we were too uncertain and glum ourselves. So the whole business bogged down and the treasury of our Foundation remained empty. It looked like the end of the line.

Some time in March or April of 1938 I began to work on what was to become the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*. By the time our big money push was under way I had completed my own story and had roughed out what is now the second chapter of the A.A. book. Mimeographed copies of these two chapters were part of the paraphernalia for the money-raising operation, which had now fizzled out.

Anxious to encourage us, our friends insisted on monthly Trustee meetings. For a while nothing happened at them except commiseration for the fact of the Foundation's empty treasury. But at one of these meetings in the early fall of 1938, Frank Amos popped up with an idea which opened the door upon our real future. Frank said, "One of my friends, Eugene Exman, is Religious Editor of Harper. Perhaps he would be interested in your new book. Why don't you go down there and show him the few chapters you have done? I'll fix it up for you."

So down I went to meet Gene Exman, another wonderful friend-to-be of our society. I related the tale of our struggles and handed over to him my first attempt at authorship. While I waited Gene thoughtfully scanned the two chapters. Then he asked, "Could you do a whole book in this style? And how many months would it take you?" I was shaking, but I had an answer ready: "I believe I can do it. It will probably take nine or ten months." Thereupon he made a proposal that was surprising. "If it would help things along," he said, "I think Harper might be willing to advance you \$1,500 in royalties. This amount would be deducted from your account when the book is finished in '939"

Again in the clouds, I left Harper to break the great news to the gang. I first headed for a visit with Frank Amos, but on the way there my elation was disturbed by disquieting thoughts. Suppose our embryo book were someday to become the chief text for our fellowship. Our principal written asset would then be owned by an outside publisher, a fine and conservative one surely, but nevertheless an outsider. So I wondered if our fellowship should own its own book. Then I thought about the \$1,500 of advance royalties. When the

book was done, I would still owe Harper that sum, and a good many volumes would have to be sold just to get even. And suppose that when the book appeared there were to be heavy publicity, and thousands of cries for help from alcoholics and their families began to pour in. We would not have any money to cope with this quite possible situation.

I kept these misgivings to myself, and it was good to see Frank's face light up as he heard the news. In any case it was fine to know that a firm like Harper wanted the book and that an editor of Gene's caliber believed that it was going to be good. This experience was one of the confidence builders that kept the book project going through thick and thin.

At the next Foundation meeting our friends smiled happily as they heard the details of the Harper project. It was the first ray of hope we had seen in months. The Trustees were unanimous in their opinion that the Harper deal was the answer.

I had shared my doubts with a few New York friends about the Harper proposal, but I had said nothing about them elsewhere. Now very reluctantly I told the Trustees what they were. But our nonalcoholics on the Board were not impressed with my reasons. They pointed to the well-known fact that authors seldom publish their own books and get away with it. The meeting ended on a dismal note. We were a hung jury; no conclusion or verdict was reached.

Soon afterward, one of the most terrific power-drivers I have ever met got into the act. This was my friend Henry P., one-time Standard Oil executive and the very first alcoholic ever to stay sober even a little while in the New York group. He had been a protégé of Dr. Silkworth's and a frequent visitor at Towns Hospital. At this time he had been sober about two years. Henry had red hair, at least one new idea a minute, and energy beyond telling. He was not a Foundation Trustee, and he had no official say at all, but that mattered not a bit. He was a hard-hitting salesman, and he sold his bill of goods. He said, "Look here, Bill, why do we bother any more with those Trustees and that Foundation? Those folks have not raised a cent and they are not going to. Why don't we put this proposed book on a business basis and form a stock company? Let's sell shares to our own folks right here in New York. If we give them a real argument, I'll guarantee they will get up the dough." I was an ex-Wall Streeter and had already toyed with this notion myself, but Henry had much bigger ideas and he breathed confidence. Our society would organize its own publishing company and maybe we would have to forget about the Foundation. I told him the Trustees would never agree to our scheme, and I did not want to hurt their feelings. But Henry's skin was thicker than mine. He was implacable; he said that it simply had to be done, and I finally agreed.

Still much disturbed about the whole business, I went back to Gene Exman and frankly explained to him what was about to happen. To my utter amazement, he agreed, quite contrary to his own interest, that a society like ours ought to control and publish its own literature. Moreover, he felt that very possibly we could do this with success. Though Gene's opinion did not register at all when it was transmitted to the Trustees, it did give Henry and me the kind of encouragement we so much needed.

Henry wasted no time but started selling the proposition to our New York members at once. He buttonholed them one by one, persuading, browbeating, hypnotizing. I trailed around in his wake, smoothing ruffled feelings and trying to dispel some of the suspicions

that had been created about our motives. After a couple of weeks of this kind of violent promotion we got a lukewarm consent from our Eastern membership. Dr. Bob was dubious, but he also consented. He did think it would be unwise at this stage to lay the matter before the Akron membership. Some promotion might be justifiable in New York, but few Akronites would be able to see it, he thought. He felt, too, that we should try the idea out on the Board of Trustees. We surely could not ignore them.

Meanwhile Henry and I were perfecting our plan. It would take a persuasive prospectus to induce alcoholics to part with their money for stock in a company that had not yet produced even one book. But the more we investigated, the better the proposition looked. We went to Edward Blackwell, the president of Cornwall Press, one of the largest printers in the United States. Here we discovered that the printing cost of an average-size book is only about 10 per cent of its retail price. A 400-page volume could be printed for only a fraction of a dollar. If we were to price our new book at \$3.50, as Henry and I figured it, this would be practically all net profit. There would be no bookstore commission, no paid advertising, and none of the usual losses that publishers had to take on books that did not sell. Our book of course would sell, and we could not fail to clean up. It looked too good to be true.

I laid this information before the next Trustees' meeting. I anticipated that the reaction would be bad, and it certainly was. To flatly disagree with these wonderful friends was the toughest possible assignment. Once more the Trustees' meeting adjourned without agreement. I knew we would have to go through with the deal despite all the objections. It was depressing.

But Henry was not depressed. He had been sitting up nights working on a prospectus. The main arguments were these: Harper had said the book was going to be a good one. And even if we paid our groups and outside bookstores a dollar a book for distribution there would still be a whopping profit margin. The book could be printed at very low cost and sold for \$2.50 wholesale or \$3.50 by mail order. And when the reviews and other publicity got rolling, we were certain there would be sales by the carload.

The prospectus suggested that a company be formed with stock of \$25 par value. The New York alcoholics and their friends could buy one-third of these shares for cash. The other two-thirds would be distributed between Henry and me for our work. To mollify the Trustees it was decided that the author's royalty which would ordinarily be mine could go to the Alcoholic Foundation. To the prospectus Henry attached a chart which showed the estimated profits on sales of 100,000, 500,000, and even a million books! I have now forgotten just what his hopes were, but they were fantastic. I was not *quite so* optimistic, but I did feel sure that the proceeds of the book would enable several of us to become full-time workers and to set up a general headquarters for our society. Whether this worked out or not, I was nevertheless convinced that our fellowship ought to own and control its own literature.

Our enterprise still lacked two essentials. It was not incorporated and it did not have a name. Henry took care of these matters. Since the forthcoming volume would be only the first of many such "works," he thought our publishing company should be called, "Works Publishing, Inc." This was all right with me, but I protested that we had no incorporation on which to base shares and that incorporation would take money. Next day I found that Henry had bought a pad of blank stock certificates in a stationery store, and across the top of each certificate was typed this legend: "Works Publishing, Inc., par value \$25.00." At the bottom

there was a signature: "Henry P. President." When I protested these irregularities, Henry said there was no time to waste; why be concerned with small details?

So the great enterprise was launched. It remained to be seen if it would float. Henry knew every stratagem of the super-salesman, and he got right down to work. He descended like a whirlwind on the New York alcoholics and some of their friends, suggesting that they take stock in the glittering new venture. I was no second-rater at this sort of thing myself, and I followed right along.

Well, we did not sell even one of our proposed 600 shares of Works Publishing, cheap as we claimed it was. The New York alcoholics said, "You fellows have certainly got nerve. What made you think that we would buy stock in a book not yet written?" But Henry was not discouraged. He still had ideas. "Bill," he said, "you and I know this book is going to sell. And Harper thinks it will sell. But these New York drunks just do not believe it. Some take it as a joke, and the rest talk high and holy about mixing a spiritual enterprise with money and promotion. But if they really *did* think that the book would sell, they would buy the stock all right, and fast. So why don't we go up and see *The Reader's Digest* people and find out if they will print a piece about our fellowship and this book? If the *Digest* runs an article about us, we will sell those books by the carloads. Anybody can see that, even these tightwad drunks. So what are we waiting for? Let's go!"

Two days later at Pleasantville, New York, we sat in the office of Mr. Kenneth Payne, then managing editor of the *Digest*. We drew a glowing picture of our fellowship and its book-to-be. We mentioned the high interest of Mr. Rockefeller and some of his friends. Mr. Payne was interested. After a while he said, "I am almost sure the *Digest* would like to handle this story, though of course I'll have to check it up with the other editors. Personally I think it is just the sort of thing we are looking for. When your book is ready next spring, let me know and I think we can put a feature writer to work. This should be a great story. But of course I must check it up with the staff first. That's understood, isn't it?"

Henry and I reached for our hats and sped for New York. Now we had *real* ammunition. That very night we started a fresh canvass, and the former doubters began to sign up. Nearly everybody was broke at the time, so we made things easy for them. They could buy their shares on the installment plan, five dollars a month for five months for each share. Many could afford only a single share. When the Trustees were brought up to date they loyally pitched in too. Some A.A.'s had friends who signed up for small amounts. Certain of my old Wall Street cronies tossed in a few chips. People like Dr. Silkworth and Dr. Tiebout lent a hand. Soon we had a subscription of 200 shares which amounted to \$5,000, and a little actual money began to come in. However, the subscribers were not animated wholly by commercialism. After receiving just a little assurance that they might someday get their money back, they really got behind the deal.

At 17 William Street, Newark, New Jersey, Henry had an office which was the headquarters for a rapidly failing business. He also had a secretary named Ruth Hock, who was to become one of A.A.'s real pioneers. The other assets consisted of a huge desk and some plush furniture.

Each morning I traveled all the way from Brooklyn to Newark where, pacing up and down in Henry's office, I began to dictate rough drafts of the chapters of the coming book.

As we seemed unable to come up with any genuine outline for the publication, I worked from a hastily drawn-up list of possible chapter headings. Week after week, Henry raced around among the stock subscribers, prodding them for their installments. In addition to this dribble of money, we were able to secure \$2,500 from Mr. Charles B. Towns. Most of these funds had to be devoted to office expenses and groceries for Henry, Ruth, Lois, and myself, and we kept going on this basis until April, 1939, the publication date of the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

As the chapters were slowly roughed out I read them to the New York group at its weekly meeting in our parlor at Clinton Street, and copies were sent to Dr. Bob for checking and criticism in Akron, where we had nothing but the warmest support. But in the New York meeting the chapters got a real mauling. I redictated them and Ruth retyped them over and over. In spite of the heated arguments, the New York group's criticisms did help a lot, and to some extent their enthusiasm and confidence increased.

So the job went until we reached the famous Chapter 5. Up to that time I had done my own story and had drafted three more chapters with the titles "There Is a Solution," "More About Alcoholism," and "We Agnostics." It was now realized that we had enough background and window-dressing material, and that at this point we would have to tell how our program for recovery from alcoholism really worked. The backbone of the book would have to be fitted in right here.

This problem had secretly worried the life out of me. I had never written anything before and neither had any other member of the New York group. Progress on the book had been too slow for several of the stock subscribers and they had slacked off on their contributions. The hassling over the four chapters already finished had really been terrific. I was exhausted. On many a day I felt like throwing the book out the window.

I was in this anything-but-spiritual mood on the night when the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous were written. I was sore and tired clear *through*. I lay in bed at 182 Clinton Street with pencil in hand and with a tablet of scratch paper on my knee. I could not get my mind on the job, much less put my heart in it. But here was one of those things that had to be done. Slowly my mind came into some kind of focus.

Since Ebby's visit to me in the fall of 1934 we had gradually evolved what we called "the word-of-mouth program." Most of the basic ideas had come from the Oxford Groups, William James, and Dr. Silkworth. *Though* subject to considerable variation, it all boiled down into a pretty consistent procedure *which* comprised six steps. These were approximately as follows:

1. We admitted that we were licked, that we were powerless over alcohol.
2. We made a moral inventory of our defects or sins.
3. We confessed or shared our shortcomings with another person in confidence.
4. We made restitution to all those we had harmed by our drinking.
5. We tried to help other alcoholics, with no thought of reward in money or prestige.
6. We prayed to whatever God we thought there was for power to practice these precepts.