

THE KEY

U. S. PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE HOSPITAL, LEXINGTON, KY. Gott. 5th. '52 - VOL. V. # 44

A A

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

A A

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STEP NUMBER SIX

Were entirely ready to have
God remove these defects of character.

It is only after we have completed Step Five, when humility has been experienced and self-respect has been restored as a result of our admitting to God and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs, that we are in a suitable spiritual condition to sincerely carry out the provisions of this step and of the following step.

Here we are entirely ready and willing to accept all that happens each day as God working on our character. He may use some striking measures, but we are ready. He may put us in circumstances where someone is always aggravating us - that is to teach us patience. He may give us association with someone we don't like - that is to teach us charity and tolerance. He may put us in a position of inferiority - that is to teach us humility. He may bring about that we have to work hard - that is to eliminate laziness. He may even give us failure - that is to teach us courage and trust in Him. All the disappointments, circumstances or whatever He may arrange for us in His Providence and Wisdom, are all going to be opportunities to eliminate our defects of character.

We try to fit in with all the circumstances of our life as best we can. Each day we ACT saying in effect: "You arrange my life God, we'll do our best each day to FIT in." and here again sincerity in this step finds its expression and action in the next step. For if we honestly want God to "remove our defects" we logically "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings." Steps Six and Seven are closely interwoven and Step Seven is taking action on Step Six.

We find in the consummation of Steps Six and Seven a NEW PEACE, a release from TENSION and ANXIETY as we now are laying our misconceptions or defects of character in the hands of the Higher Power. We are asking Him to rid them from our lives. We are exerting great mental cooperation with God, as we understand Him.

The mental hygiene and spiritual housecleaning we have started in our inventories and continued in Step Five reaches its climax, through this step and in step seven to be studied next week.

TRY OUR A. A. WAY OF LIFE

Lou R., Sec. Men's Group - Bertha L., Sec. Women's Group - Eleanor T., Assoc. Ed.
Robert L. B., Chairman Steering Committee'

END OF OUR MEETINGS

MEETING THURSDAY, Sept. 19, 1952: Lou R. brought the meeting to order, then read the A. A. purpose, and Jake C. read the twelve steps. Bob E. presented two new members who were welcomed into the group with a hearty hand. Lou R. then described, for the benefit of the new members, the principles of A. A. philosophy. Bob B., who devotes all of his time to A. A. work here, was at last persuaded to give us his story. From his narrative we were convinced that no matter how desperate one becomes if we persevere and continually seek help, the A. A. program will put us on the right road. Jack V. then gave his interesting experience, stressing the thought of living day by day, giving it your all and letting tomorrow take care of itself. His statement, "I'd like to be a do gooder", wraps up the whole program. Lou R. interspersed with a story about race tracks and touting. It really got a horse laugh. Doc. M. then added some details, confirming Bob B.'s story of B. T.'s. Our visitor from the outside, Houston S., gave a few final words in parable form, which told a big story. The meeting closed with the repeating of the Lord's Prayer; after which, attachments were shared by all.

MEETING SUNDAY, Sept. 21, 1952: Forty members were in attendance for this meeting. The meeting was opened with A. A. prayer, led by Whitely C. The purpose was read by Doc. C. and the twelve steps by Buddy C. Bob B. read a letter from Fred M., who left here last week. Fred and his family are together at home and he has returned to work. He sends best regards to all his many friends. Fred has our best wishes, our hopes and prayers for a successful A. A. way of life. The fourth step was discussed at length and with forceful language by Bob B., Buddy C. and Doc. C. Doc. S. who is leaving on Wed., was asked to make a farewell talk. He confessed to a degree of trepidation at facing the world again, but believes if he can stick to the A. A. principles of daily living he will be able to conquer all the problems of life. Luke G., from outside, one of our stalwart friends, gave us this thought: Devoted use of A. A. principles daily, with emphasis placed on a pattern of cheerful service to others. Lou R. closed the meeting, giving a few examples of the power of prayer, after which the group repeated aloud The Lord's Prayer.

WOMEN'S GROUP - TUES., Sept. 9th: We opened the meeting with a silent prayer and then the reading of The Purpose and Steps. We discussed the 9th step, agreeing that we all have physical and moral amends to make. Moral amends to our loved ones are the hardest to make. In performing the 9th step we not only make amends but strengthen our character. As we obtain strength of character we are able to overcome each new problem life has to offer. Sudi's G. gave a short going home talk, telling of the help she has gotten from A. A. She intends to join A. A. in her home town. She also stated that A. A. has helped her overcome the resentment she at first felt and that her time spent here has passed much easier since following the A. A. plan. The meeting was closed with the Lord's Prayer.

WOMEN'S GROUP - SUNDAY, Sept. 14th: Meeting was opened with a silent prayer, the Purpose being read by Grace F. and the steps by Peggy M. Our visitor Dr. K. stated that if we use A. A. as a tool our way of thinking would change and then our daily way of living. Mr. Phillip M. told us that by going to A. A. he overcame his bitterness and regained faith in people. Meeting was closed as usual with the Lord's Prayer.

THE KEY

4. 4. SLIPS - RELAPSES

Relapse. What a word it is. There are some who have gone out into the free world and before they could get well started on their new lives have made a slip and are on their way back here. Those men coming back seem to be classed outside the rest of humanity. To many it doesn't seem as though a man who has been a member of AA can make a slip. It isn't realized that an AA member is not different from anyone else and that if he is placed under some sort of pressure he will slip if he doesn't get the help he is in need of.

Let us look at it this way. Did that person have AA? It must be understood that AA is not a cure for our diseased condition. It is not specific, like a shot of penicillin. It is merely a way of life that if accepted and worked for can do the job that nothing else seems to be able to do. There are some who go to the meetings and get the impression that they really have AA when they have nothing of the sort. If they would take an honest self inventory they might find out they are a little too confident of their own powers and trust more in themselves than in a greater power.

We cannot make promises with our fingers crossed. When we are given an opportunity to prove to ourselves our sincerity, out in the free world, it behooves us not to waste that opportunity. We must avail ourselves of all the AA we can get and each morning and each night take a self-inventory to see how we are progressing and how to improve our daily living. We cannot run this road of life alone. That has been proven time after time. We need the Greater Power every minute of the day and night.

An addict or an alcoholic has a diseased mind. This has been proven also and when he is bankrupt, his money and friends, what does he do? He steals or does something worse. Neither an addict nor an alcoholic has any virtue when he is in need of a shot or of a drink. By some hook or crook he is going to have his shot or his drink, and not much will stop him. And there we have it. This is the force that activates the drug addict and the alcoholic. This is our problem, in here and on the outside.

To conquer this force we need the AA program, and if we don't completely feel that we have AA strength we might just as well stay here for it won't be long before we will have relapsed or slipped and have returned.

(From an Editorial in Alconaire, Issue July-August 1952, by Steve W.)

THE HEART OF GOLD

Roberta Nible

What matter to me if a man is poor,
If his clothes and shoes are old;
If only his words and deeds are pure,
If only his heart is gold!

What matter to me if a man is aged,
If he walks with a step not bold;
What matter to me if his hair is gray -
If only his heart is gold!

(From Sunshine Magazine)

A sardine is the most inoffensive creature in the world, yet he always ends up in the CAN.

From the day you are born until you ride in the hearse,
Things are never so bad that they could not be worse.

SENSE OF VALUES

I'd like to begin by saying even though I have only been to a few A. A. meetings that we have a fine group; and if we are sincere we have a good chance of licking drug addiction.

In the real sense of the word I cannot call myself a true A. A. because I have not had a moral and spiritual awakening. I pray and hope that I will experience such an awakening and my mind is open and receptive. We must all realize that we can't beat this in a few meetings, and then only come to these few meetings, and by our attendance of a couple of hours a week think that we have discharged our obligation to our A. A. We must, to receive maximum benefit, live this program and believe in this program. It takes work, hard work, and the result may seem forever out of reach. But our proof is a living example of the men we have seen here that have have licked drugs and alcohol. They are a true inspiration for all of us. They are our answer for the skeptics that say "It can't be done."

One of the biggest problems that we face is our "sense of values." Now I am sure that you all have a good physical and financial sense of value. We have the value of the dollar. We know the value of a new car, a home, food for the family, and all the material things that are very necessary to our physical well being. But let's go a little deeper. Is our physical well-being enough to give us moral security? Now I can't pretend to know what moral security is. I have never had it. Maybe, through this program I can find it. The first step to moral security, and we are all beginners, is to get our thinking straightened out. To break that down further my first and biggest problem has been my personal sense of values.

Let us go to any one of the court yards here and listen to one of the group for a moment. One fellow is talking about some well known thief, hustler and dope fiend. About how he beat this one, stole that, shot all the dope in the city, and had been to all the better jails - kicked really tough habits, had a name that is a by word where all hustlers meet. Listen to this description for a few moments, then we move on to another group. Here we find a group of maybe doctors and other professional men talking about a man that is a credit to society, a famous surgeon, a scientist and humanitarian, about how many people he has aided, this hospital that he has built. And all the fine things he has done. Well, if your mind runs the way mine has for these past few years you will look at the second group and mutter "Square Johns" under your breath, and turn back to the old copies and open-mouthed listen to the tales of Joe Thief. You will even feel envy for this man so well known. You might even think "Well why can't I be like him." Now a man with the right kind of thinking will admire the "Square John." We must stop and take into consideration who is the Square John. Who is this sucker? Let's make a balance sheet. Joe Thief, age 50, alma mater, reform school. Post Grad: State Pen - arrested 20 times. Home Address: Where he hangs his hat. Material possessions: One suit of clothes, holes in his shoes, enough money and dope to make until the next morning. Outlook: Life on the installment plan. Moral possessions: None. The Famous surgeon: Age 50 years. Alma Mater: Harvard. Post Grad: University Hospital. Home Address 618 Lake Shore Drive. Material possessions: A nice home, car, wife, family, and money in the bank. Moral possessions: Respect of his fellowman. Peace of mind.

Suppose we present these balance sheets to our Maker on Judgment Day. How will yours read? We can't all be famous surgeons, but we are all capable of working and winning the respect of our community in some way no matter how humble. Think it over, fellows, and ask yourselves "What is my sense of values?"

(Submitted by Jack A. Van— a youthful addict patient, recently in the Army)

Jackaroo, former editor of the Key, says that "whenever a man ceases to show interest in women he is ready for the embalmer."

THE KEY

THE MASTER'S TOUCH

'Twas battered and scarred, and the auctioneer
Thought it scarcely worth his while
To waste much time on the old violin
But he held it up with a smile.

"What am I bid, good folks?" he cried,
"Who'll start the bidding for me?"
"A dollar - a dollar - then two, only two -
Two dollars, and who'll make it three?"
"Going for three." - But no -
From the room far back, a gray-haired man
Came forward and picked up the bow,
Then wiping the dust from the old violin,
And tightening the loosening strings,
He played a melody pure and sweet
As a caroling angel sings.

The music ceased, and the auctioneer,
With a voice that was quiet and low,
Said, "Now what am I bid for the old violin?"
And he held it up with the bow.
"A thousand dollars - and who'll make it two?
Two thousand - and who'll make it three?
Three thousand once - three thousand twice -
And going - and gone," he cried.
The people cheered, but some of them cried,
"We do not understand.
What changed its worth?" - Quick came the reply,
"The touch of the Master's hand."

And many a man with life out of tune,
And battered and scarred with sin,
Is auctioned cheap, to a thoughtless crowd,
Much like the old violin.
A "mess of pottage" - a glass of wine,
A game - and he travels on;
He is going once - and going twice -
He's going - and almost gone!
But the Master comes, and the foolish crowd
Never can quite understand
The worth of a soul, and the change that's wrought
By The Touch Of The Master's Hand.

(Author Unknown)

Dedicated to Preacher Ralph H., former secretary of this group, by Jack B.
former editor of The Key, who has now gone home.

FREEDOM FROM FALSE PRIDE AND ARROGANCE - False pride and arrogance
are opposed to Humility. They stifle its growth. A reasonable pride
that springs from spiritual development, fed by right motives and
unselfish service is our goal. Anything beyond that is apt to be
boastful, dominant and self-centered. Haughty, insolent, presumptuous
behavior is that part of the addict personality which we wish to change

FREEDOM IS NOT FREE

In A. A., one word that has been kicked around for several years, is the word "freedom." Somewhere along the line the word has lost its true meaning and significance. The word did not change its meaning over-night, but over so gradually. Through misuse and abuse, it has become nebulous and nefarious. It has come to mean doing what you want, whenever you want, and to whomever you please.

But that isn't what it meant when A. A. was first started. Then it meant disciplining oneself by the rules of our Twelve Steps, that all A. A. members might enjoy the freedom of our fellowship - it meant harnessing every individual, so that the group might benefit.

As a member of A. A., I am aware that regular membership in A. A. is not free. It isn't free financially, for any group that is dedicated to the relief of men and women afflicted with addiction or alcoholism is bound financially. It isn't free morally, for any member who takes upon himself or herself the promise to live according to our Twelve Steps, is confronted with restraint and discipline to obey these covenants. It isn't free of criticism - those who need our way of life and are still on the outside are ready to suspect, because they do not understand.

An acquaintance of mine who recently joined A. A. said to me, "Joining A. A. is going to make a whale of a difference in my life." God bless him - it ought to make a whale of a difference. But it won't be too easy, and it won't be free. And it ought to cost something, because anything cheaply gained is never dearly cherished. The sobriety, happiness, peace of mind and security we get in A. A. should cost us something - money, time, honesty and effort - and if it doesn't, then we, not A. A., are failing.

(The A. A. Grapevine - anonymous)

YOU CANNOT TEACH A. A.
(Charlie F. The Key)
(June 17, 1951)

You cannot teach A. A. If you can get that in your mind and heart much of your frustration will vanish. No one can teach it - and not one can learn it. That's for sure - no one can learn recovery - in the generally understood meaning of that term.

If recovery could be taught, the problem would have been resolved hundreds of years ago. Think it over! How, then, is release from a life of enslavement effected? By an incredibly simple technique of ABSORPTION. One absorbs the basic spiritual truths which lead to recovery in the same manner as a sponge absorbs dampness from its surroundings. Hence the first matter is to create a healing, a recovery climate. The ingredients are infinite patience, deep charity, much tolerance, personal HUMILITY, and TIME - and more TIME. Neither Mother Nature nor Almighty God can be hurried.

And remember, His turns are inexorable. Also remember, the virtue which pleases Him most is genuine humility, for it is in that soil that the great virtue charity grows and flourishes. Do not feel that you are forced to teach A. A. when you had rather learn, as you cannot give what you have not got. One must be always humble and know that one can learn (not recovery or release but some of its kin-folks) from your companions. Resist with all that is in you the exhibitionistic tendency to teach. Remember that you are charged primarily with your recovery. Be concerned in your recovery first. Be impatient - not with others - but with yourself.

THE KEY

OUR PURPOSE

This is an informal group of drug addicts, banded together to help one another renew their strength in remaining free of drug addiction.

Our precepts are patterned after those of Alcoholics Anonymous, to which all credit is given and precedence is acknowledged. We claim no originality but since we believe that the causes of alcoholism and addiction are basically the same we wish to apply to our lives the truths and principles which have benefited so many otherwise helpless individuals. We believe that by so doing we may regain and maintain our health and sanity.

It shall be the purpose of this group to endeavor to foster a means of rehabilitation for the addict, and to carry a message of hope for the future to those who have become enslaved by the use of habit-forming drugs.

THE TWELVE STEPS OF A. A.

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and drugs--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 UNDERSTAND 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 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 whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual experience (or awakening) as a result of these Steps, we try to carry this message to alcoholics and addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.