

Tradition Three: A Desire to Stop Drinking

The True Message of A. A.

By Rick R.

In Tradition Three it tells us that, the only thing that is required of us in order to become a member of alcoholics anonymous is a *desire to stop drinking*. It doesn't even require it to be an honest desire or even to quit drinking. There is no requirement to take or to work the steps or specify how many meetings we should attend. It doesn't require us to get a sponsor or to take on service responsibilities, or to call anybody. It's pretty much up to the individual, how far he wants to embrace these and many other suggestions. With that in mind, I observe a cross section of new members, who come to us, that range from the very desperate, to the guy that wants to fulfill a legal requirement to get the charges dropped (So to speak), and everything in between.

This brings me to the next observation that seems to be a pattern among the different degrees of thoroughness that is suggested, as they follow our path. The very desperate one seems to have an easier time of surrendering and embracing the program, much more thoroughly, than the less desperate one who has been introduced to the program long before he/she was ready to surrender, and still doesn't truly believe that he/she is that bad off. Down deep inside they seem to be *obsessed* with the alcohol abstinence part of the program and that the drinking was the problem and they have trouble addressing the life issues that made it necessary to drink for the relief it brought. If it was that simple, all a person would need to do is purchase a bushel basket full of Antabuse and take one every day, and for those that say that they drank on Antabuse, I would ask, what happened the second time you did it, and there was never a response.

Unfortunately, we have many who raise their fist in the air and state that "*I just don't pick up today*" and think that is the message that the AA program is trying to present, but it isn't. It conflicts with the AA message expressed in the Big Book and the 12X12 in three different areas. You can read the bottom paragraph on page 31, right after the word's ad infinitum, in the Big Book, and you can read from the bottom paragraph on page 100, to the end of the chapter, also in the Big Book. Then to reinforce again, you can read the third and fourth pages in step 1 in the 12X12 which almost word for word what was explained in the big book. These things are worth reading and are not based on my opinion.

Those that are still *obsessed* with the alcohol topic, years after they have been in the program, often get stuck in that quagmire and they seem to be equally *obsessed* with what others are drinking, as well as, what's on the liquor shelves at the market, and they have a perfect right to do so, when the more fortunate ones that arrived in that state of desperation mentioned earlier, are all about becoming better parents, husbands, wives, employees, etc. Those who search for the answers in the Big Book and the 12X12, and resist the temptation to modify the text, to fit their own agenda, have a chance to experience all of the wonderful promises that are on pages 83/84 in the Big Book, and live a meaningful, happy and peaceful life. For those that take this approach, a drink has no appeal to them.