

Our Own Concept of a Higher Power

All You Need is an Open Mind

When we are born, we come into the world untainted and perfectly innocent. From that time on, we are influenced by everything we experience in life, good and bad. If we are loved and nurtured, we may develop feelings of trust and safety, but if, as it sometimes happens, we get our hand slapped when we pick up something from the coffee table, it may trigger an attitude of defiance and resistance. These two opposites are just examples of the many conflicts we encounter in a lifetime. We are conditioned to think and react in a certain way as the result of the influences we are exposed to. Newcomers in Alcoholics Anonymous, and even some seasoned veterans, often find it hard to grasp a concept of "a power greater than ourselves." This is probably the biggest hurdle we in AA must face in our search for a happy and meaningful life. Once we come to terms with the concept of a higher power, it becomes much easier to proceed with the rest of the program. The word God means something different to just about everyone that is having difficulty with it, and if God alone was the answer, why do priests and ministers come to AA for solutions; why not just go to church? Alcoholics Anonymous is here for all alcoholics that want to get sober regardless of their approach to faith. Anyone that thinks that we are trying to convert someone into a religion or out of a religion is simply misguided. The Big book and the 12X12 have many comments explaining this, but unfortunately this old conditioning, bolstered by the EGO, seems to block some of us from breaking down the resistance on this subject, or some members may just fake it to appear to be going along with the program, but never getting the results. If we denied the possibility of a God of the different religious groups, they could not have AA available to them, and if we made it a requirement that we picked one of those beliefs, atheists would be left out. If a person believes that he doesn't have a higher power, I might remind him/her that alcohol was more powerful or else why would they need AA. With that in mind, I might suggest that they may only need to find a power greater than alcohol to begin with, then, as it says in the 12&12 " To acquire it, I had only to stop fighting and practice the rest of A.A.'s program as enthusiastically as I could." As I look back on it now, I realize that that was exactly the way I found my way through this dilemma. I find absolutely no conflict in any approach that one discovers on his own, only that he practices the rest of the program with enthusiasm. What it seems to imply is that if we trust the process and, just do the suggestions, you will find a suitable understanding of a power greater than yourself that you can do business with. I'm still not sure what or who (if you like) I am asking for guidance from but I'm open minded about these things, and I must let everyone find their own brand of enlightenment, without prejudging anyone else's approach on this matter. I believe that changing my perception was what put me firmly on the road to recovery. The only thing that I must resist is my EGO, and the way I do that is by living by sound and proven unselfish principles many of which are discussed in AA meetings It's not that complicated. If I don't get caught up in the debate and just follow the simplest suggestions, it all works out just fine. Therefore, Step Two is the rallying point for all of us. "Whether agnostic, atheist or former believers, we can stand together on this Step." (12&12 Pg.33)