

Came to believe...

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Many of us in Alcoholics Anonymous found the idea of God extremely distasteful. Some in the scientific community, many doctors, and those that feel they have achieved in life all things through self-will can fit this model. Willpower, they believe, is the key to defeating any human vice as well as the impetus of human achievement.

The belief that willpower alone can save us from our alcoholic hell is as absurd as saying that our willpower alone can save us from diabetes. Diabetes is a disease that must be managed properly in order to stay healthy. Alcoholism is the same in that respect. It requires a mindset in addition to external resources. It requires life-changing dedication to a handful of principles. A doctor can give any of us a regimen to follow in order to manage diabetes, but if we don't believe the doctor is knowledgeable enough to help us we won't follow the doctor's orders, and possibly die from the disease.

Willingness to believe that something is more powerful than us is the root of faith. Most of us have faith that doctors know enough about diabetes to recommend a course of health management. So if one can believe that a doctor is a power greater than oneself, then surely one can hazard a belief that a Spiritual Power greater than oneself can restore us to sanity as well.

Sanity means "wholeness of mind". All alcoholics are neurotic to some degree. We must be honest, and open-minded enough to learn about our insanity. We, as alcoholics, must have a self-understanding of a Higher Power in order for us to realize the strength, wisdom, and power necessary to restore us to sanity. As alcoholics, our sanity has never been proven to be restored by psychoanalysts, clinics, doctors, or any mental health practitioners alone. Only a spiritual experience of some significance has been proven to cause our sanity to return to us. This is an acceptance of a Higher Power of our own understanding. Not what someone else tells us that may be, but what we, ourselves understand that to be.

The atheist is one that refuses to believe. This type of alcoholic is described as one who is a hopeless egotist. This one believes all things can be accomplished through self-will. If the atheist can admit the dishonesty of that line of thinking or that self-power cannot accomplish all things then a belief in a Higher Power can be realized. This is called "the capacity to be honest" with oneself.

The agnostic believes in zero-proof, rather than any proof. Nearly all agnostics do believe in good rather than bad. To be able to judge good from bad one must have a concept of the contrast between the two. The agnostic does have a very good chance in achieving freedom from the alcoholic insanity if even the smallest bit of hope is found. Hope cultivates faith, and faith leads to acceptance of a Higher Power.

In short, the keys to step two are honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. We see these terms on our sobriety medallions. On some medallions is also emblazoned "To Thine Own Self Be True". This denotes the importance of honesty with ourselves in our program. This belief puts us in the spiritual kindergarten that will facilitate our progress in all of the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

- *Anonymous* -