

**WHAT IS AN “ENTIRE PSYCHIC CHANGE”?
WHAT IS A “SPIRITUAL AWAKENING” OR A “SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE”?**

What is the Solution to Alcoholism? Dr. Silkworth stated that the chronic alcoholic must “experience an entire psychic change” if he is to survive this fatal malady. (AA, pg. xxvii). And he further stated, “One feels that something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change” (AA, pg. xxvii). Something more than human power must indicate the need for a Higher Power. Yep, that does make sense.

Then Bill W., writing for the 1st 100, wrote, “There is a Solution.”
What is it?

“The great fact is just this and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God’s universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.”(AA, pg. 25) (A self-help program? Of course not! It is a God Help Program.)

The (*) asks us to go to page 569 to learn the difference between a “spiritual experience” and a “spiritual awakening” and from there we learn that the only difference is in the time it takes for us to have that personality change from a selfish, self-seeking individual to a selfless, loving and giving person. A “spiritual experience” is sudden as was experienced by Bill W. in Townes Hospital. The “spiritual awakening” comes about over a period of time as was the case with Dr. Bob.

So how do we know if we have had this “deep and effective spiritual experience”? They tell us on page 83 & 84 where they report that: When they had been painstaking in following the clear-cut directions for taking the first nine of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, they were amazed. (A Promise)

They knew a new freedom and a new happiness. (Promise)

They didn’t regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.
(Promise)

They comprehended the word serenity and they knew peace.
(Promise)

No matter how far down the scale they had gone, they saw how their experience could benefit others. (Promise)

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That feeling of uselessness and self-pity disappeared. (Promise)

They lost interest in selfish things and gained interest in their fellows. (Promise)

Self-seeking slipped away. (Promise)

Their whole attitude and outlook on life changed. (Promise)

Fear of people and financial insecurity left them. (Promise)

They intuitively knew how to handle situations that used to baffle them. (Promise)

They suddenly realized that God was doing for them what they could not do for themselves. (Promise)

These Promises came true for everyone of them when they took the action required by the Twelve Steps and learned to apply (work) them in their lives, one day at a time. (Promise)

Why is it so important that we have this spiritual event occur in our lives? Well Dr. Silkworth said that “we drink essentially because we like the effect produced by alcohol”. What is the effect an alcoholic gets from drinking? When we alcoholics had a few drinks, we were amazed at the change in the way we thought and the way we felt. A few drinks produced an “entire psychic change”.

Let’s go to page 83 in the Big Book and examine the Ninth Step Promises by beginning each promise with, “In the early days of my drinking, when I had a few drinks.....”.

When I had a few drinks, I knew a new freedom and a new happiness.
Did you? (I sure did)

When I had a few drinks, I didn’t regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

Did you ever come out of a blackout in a place you hadn’t planned on visiting with people you hadn’t planned on being with and learned you had done some things you sure wish you hadn’t done? Because of the guilt and remorse, it was to be a

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secret? Then go into a bar and have a few drinks and tell some stranger the whole story? (I certainly did)

When I had a few drinks, I comprehended the word serenity and I knew peace.

Did you too find that serenity and peace of mind replaced the turmoil with a few drinks? (Oh yeah)

When I had a few drinks, I didn't regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

How willing were you to share your life's story with a poor drunk who had just had a really bad experience? (Loved to talk about how bad my life was)

When I had a few drinks, that feeling of uselessness and self-pity would disappear.

With a few drinks, did you feel that you just might really have a purpose in this world and feel sorry for those critters that didn't have what you had although you just weren't too sure what it was you had? (Almost every time)

When I had a few drinks, I lost interest in selfish things and gained interest in my fellows.

Did a few drinks make you a little more interested in people, especially of the opposite sex. (Can I buy you a drink honey?)

When I had a few drinks, self-seeking slipped away.

Did a few drinks make you somewhat generous? (Drinks for everyone!)

When I had a few drinks, my whole attitude and outlook upon life changed.

Did a few drinks take you from a gray, gloomy day to one that was bright and hopeful? (From shxxxxty brown to rosy pink with just a couple)

When I had a few drinks, fear of people and financial insecurity left me.

Did you enjoy being in the company of people sober? (Leave me alone!)

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Did a few drinks diminish your concern for your financial difficulties? (How the hell am I going to pay all these bills? Think I better have couple of drinks.)

When I had a few drinks, I intuitively knew how to handle situations that used to baffle me. Did you too find that you were able to think much more clearly and wisely with a few drinks? (You bet! I had answers to question that hadn't been asked.)

Well, we normally won't suddenly come to realize that alcohol was doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. We won't suddenly come to realize that alcohol was really our solution for living. But as we learn to apply our Program to our lives, that fact becomes very clear. Drinking alcohol produced that “entire psychic change” that made us feel a part of rather than apart from. It gave us the confidence to be and do what we otherwise could not be or do. It was our solution for living.

Unfortunately, our mind will always be able to remember that sense of ease and comfort (entire psychic change) that comes at once by taking a few drinks. It will insist that it be treated to those promises that come with a few drinks or the Promises that come by taking our Twelve Steps. That is precisely why the Big Book was written and published. To give us the clear-cut directions for taking the actions that will produce the needed personality change so we may live with a deadly condition of mind and body and do it very comfortably. And that, of course, is the Promise of the Twelve Steps, “Having had a spiritual awakening/experience, entire psychic change, as the result of these Steps,...”

How many PTA Meetings must a person attend to become a parent? How many Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings must an alcoholic attend to become a recovered alcoholic? Neither of these events can possibly take place by going to meetings. They can only occur when the person has taken the appropriate action. Following a precise course of action is necessary to become a parent and then they can go to PTA meetings with a purpose. Following a precise course of action is necessary to become a recovered alcoholic and then we will have something worthwhile to contribute to the meetings.

So when should a chronic alcoholic take the prescribed course of action (Take these Steps) to produce the spiritual experience/awakening so they will recover from that seemingly hopeless condition of mind and body? The alcoholics who participated in writing the Basic Text for Alcoholics

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Anonymous, which is titled, Alcoholics Anonymous, took that action within a few days following their last drunk. When that was the common practice within our Fellowship, a very high percentage of alcoholics recovered. Today, that is not the case. The newcomer is encouraged to go to meetings and listen to people suffering from untreated alcoholism talk about their problems, ideas, opinions or their way of working a program. Today, many of our meetings have developed into death-traps for the newcomer and for the groups that conduct meetings that ignore the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

This is a deadly serious matter; recovery from alcoholism, that is. It is accomplished by taking the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, not talking about them. When we have had a spiritual awakening, we have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow spiritually. We do this through working Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve all day, every day.

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