

What Is my REAL Problem?

If you have a deep desire to stop drinking for good and all, the first thing you must do is come to understand in your heart of hearts why you have been such a failure at achieving that most desired goal.

STEP ONE

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol
—that our lives had become unmanageable.”

My POWERLESSNESS over alcohol is the result of an allergic reaction that alcoholics have to drug ethanol. It is very simply, that once I've taken the first few drinks, a craving is produced for the next drink that is greater than my will power to resist that next drink.

My UNMANAGEABILITY is the result of my mind that cannot find peace of mind without alcohol in my blood stream. A mind that can remember the sense of ease and comfort that comes at once with a couple of drinks. A mind that cannot remember the suffering and humiliation which has accompanied my previous drinking episodes. That on my own, I am without defense against the first drink.

When I truly understand that I no longer have any POWER over my body nor over my mind were alcohol is concerned, I am ready to take a look at the next Step.

But I must also understand that the fact I have no power to control the amount I drink once I start drinking is not the REAL Problem. The REAL Problem is that I have a MIND that I can no longer depend on to keep me from taking the first drink.

STEP TWO

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

I will find that I WILL COME TO BELIEVE that there is hope for my recovery as I read the stories in the Big Book, talk with recovered alcoholics and/or attend Speaker Meetings where recovered alcoholics tell their story of what they were like when drinking, how they adopted the Program (Steps & Traditions) of Alcoholics Anonymous as a way of life and what their life is like as the result of having done that.

NOW, I NEED TO CONSIDER MY ALTERNATIVES

If I can truly see that lack of WILL POWER, where it comes to alcohol, is my REAL Problem and I can begin to BELIEVE that the needed POWER can be found because I can see IT working in other hopeless, helpless alcoholics, I am standing between the REAL Problem (lack of power) and the REAL Solution (a Power greater than me or alcohol). I am at the turning point where I must now make a decision.

If I have any ideas as to how I might whip this Problem through my own efforts, or with the help of others or some other scheme, I must try them. I need to explore any and every idea that seems to have any merit. There is a chance I might be successful.

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But if I can see that I have no other choice but to try the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous that has proved to be so successful for so many, I'm ready to get on with it.

So, very carefully consider the message that is given us in Chapter Five, "HOW IT WORKS." By the time you get to page 62, you are told that the REAL Problem is, "**Selfishness—self-centeredness! That , we think is the root of our troubles.**" If that is true, it simply indicates that it is a matter of what I think and what we feel. The REAL Problem is in the mind. And isn't that just what they wrote on page 23? "**Therefore, the MAIN problem of the alcoholic centers in his MIND rather than in his body.**" The only way I will be able to see if that is true for me is to take the Steps and learn the truth.

STEP THREE

"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*"

This is simply a decision to take the Steps to see if I can find that Power, greater than myself, that will make me sane where alcohol is concerned. If I attempt to do this on my own, I will have an alcoholic mind as my "mentor" which is probably not the best idea I've had. A much better approach is to turn your will and life over to the care and direction of recovered alcoholic. We call them "Sponsors." Just make certain that one you pick has had a spiritual experience as the result of having taken the Steps and continues to apply them to their life, day by day.

STEP FOUR

"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."

This is the 1st of the two diagnostic Steps to see if there is any truth to the statement, "**Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think is the root of our troubles.**" If I carefully follow the clear-cut directions from page 63 through page 71, I will begin to learn the TRUTH. And the TRUTH will set me free, but until it does, it will beat my brains out. So, as soon as I have completed this piece of action, I will call my Sponsor and tell them I have it done and am ready to move on.

STEP FIVE

"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

This is the 2nd diagnostic Step to help us see what the REAL Problem is. In God's presence, I will very honestly and openly go over what I have done in my Fourth Step and since my Sponsor has taken the Steps and has recovered, s/he can help me more clearly see the TRUTH. As I complete this "confession" to God, myself and another human being, I will clearly see that "**Selfishness—self-centeredness! That is, in fact, the source of all my troubles.**" So now I can see what the REAL Problem is. After

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spending my hour reviewing the 1st five Steps, am I now ready to move on? Am I really willing to pay the price that is necessary to survive alcoholism? Am I truly willing to GO TO ANY LENGTH FOR VICTORY OVER ALCOHOL?

Now I can see that drinking was not the REAL Problem. That selfishness, dishonest, self-seeking, the fearful and inconsiderate way I have treated others was my REAL Problem! The way I thought, the way I felt, the way I acted! IF I AM GOING TO LIVE, I MUST BECOME DIFFERENT!

NOTE – If that is true, get ready to move into action and see if our Program doesn't do for you what it has done for all of us who have been willing to put the rest of the Steps to the test. Read the last paragraph on page 42 of Fred's story. See if that isn't what you would like to have happen in your life. If it is, get busy with Steps Six through Twelve!!!

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