

Knock! Knock! -- Who's There?

We have finally had all the fun we can stand. We have bought the ticket that is required for admission to Alcoholics Anonymous; that longing, that yearning, that burning desire to quit drinking for good and all. Wouldn't we like to know who is going to be there to answer that most important question, "What do I have to do to avoid death or insanity from drinking?" What other legitimate reason is there for seeking help through Alcoholics Anonymous? There is none. The ONLY requirement for membership in Alcoholics Anonymous is a desire to stop drinking. It doesn't say "anda" anything nor does it say "or" anything. Just a burning desire to stop starting. What's the answer to that question, "Who will be there to help the serious drinker?" It appears that in many groups, there will be five (5) types of folks the one seeking help will encounter. They are:

1. There will be the "Players". These are the ones who have the answer because they KNOW what is in the Basic Text for Alcoholics Anonymous. They will KNOW because they have and do study the Text and apply the directions they find there to their lives day in and day out. They have RECOVERED and have been given the Power to help others. They are the ones who not only are the real leaders of their Group but they are the ones who go to the wind-up places searching out, going to, approaching the suffering serious drinker to try to carry the message, "I have been where you are. I truly understand. I have had a spiritual awakening as the result of the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and I'd like to help you, if you will let me." They make for the kind of Sponsors we all wish we could find. Unfortunately, in today's Fellowship, they are few.

2. Then there are the "Sayers". They have read the Big Book, the Twelve & Twelve and probably a lot of other stuff. They sound real good in meetings. They know all the right things to say. But their time is far too important to go to the Alano Clubs, Salvation Army, Soup Kitchens, Shelters, etc. They believe it is best to sit in the comfort of their meeting place and wait for the ones seeking help to show up. The message they have to pass on is varied but most likely will NOT be, "Are you willing to go to any length for victory over alcohol? If you are, let me explain the problem (alcoholism) as it is described in the 'Doctor's Opinion' and then we'll talk about the Solution we have found". No, they will most likely suggest that you don't drink and go to meetings and maybe you can recover by osmosis. Just sit and listen to us talk.

3. Then there are the "Fakers". They may have had a little trouble with drinking at some point in their life but they are not alcoholic. They are described several places in the Big Book, specifically on pages 20 - 21. They might be a hard drinker or a "drunk". The main difference between the "real alcoholic" and the "drunk" is very simple. The "drunk" could quit drinking if they would. The "real alcoholic" would quit drinking if we could. They do not have to take the action outlined in the Twelve Steps to stay away from drinking. They are strong for "don't drink and go to meetings" or far worse, "you should go to 90 meetings in 90 days". "You shouldn't rush into taking the Steps." "Take your time until you figure out what this thing is all about." "I've never had to take the Steps and I haven't had a drink since God dug the river." They are the ones my good friend in Houston calls the, "Get out the tissues -- I've got some issues" bunch. These phonies are bad enough but we have one other type of individual sitting in our meetings and they are:

We recover by the Steps we take, not the meetings we make!

4. Those who have absolutely no business of sitting in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous. They have never had a problem with drinking alcoholic liquids. They may have problems with drugs or narcotics or gambling or dependency on other people or sex or any number of other types of problems. But a problem with alcohol is not one of them. And, unfortunately, in some groups, they are permitted to talk about whatever is bothering them at that moment.

5. Then there are the "undecided". They are the newcomers who sit in meetings trying to figure out what the "Program" is all about. They see the "Steps" and "Traditions" on the wall but are unsure of what it takes to recover. The more they listen in meetings, the more confused they become. Many of us have qualified for membership in Alcoholics Anonymous because we have hit that point in our life where we are willing to go to any length to never have to try to sober up ever again. We ask that question, "What do I have to do to never go through this misery again?" And the answer they are given is, "Just keep coming back.", or "Don't drink and go to meetings" or "You really need to go to 90 meetings for 90 days." And they might even hear someone say, "If you really want to whip this drinking problem, let's get you a Big Book, read it and then I'll help you take the action those recovered alcoholics report they took and see if this Program will work for you as well as it did for them and for me." But that voice is in the minority. When over 90% of the folks who are in meetings or sitting around drinking coffee, smoking cigarettes and telling how awful their drinking was but haven't had to take the Steps to recover from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body, who will the newcomer listen to?

Well, the undecided are the ones our meetings are suppose to be for. To help them understand the difference between the alcoholic and the non-alcoholic and if they are, in fact, real alcoholics, here is our Solution. The question is then asked, "Are you willing to go to any length for victory over alcohol?" If the answer is yes, let's get busy in taking the Steps so you too can become a recovered alcoholic. That is what we are here for. To protect our sobriety by trying to carry "this message", "Yes, I have had a spiritual awakening as the result of taking the Steps and I'll help you if you want what I have" What do I have? "I know a new freedom and a new happiness. I don't regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. I comprehend the word serenity and I know peace. No matter how far down the scale I had gone, I see how my experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity has disappeared. I have lost interest in selfish things and gained interest in my fellows. Self seeking has slipped away. My whole attitude and outlook upon life has changed. Fear of people and economic insecurity has left me. I normally intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle me. Today, I fully realize that God is doing for me what I could not and can not do for myself. If that is what you want more than anything on earth, I'll help you get it." Be a "PLAYER"!!!

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