

April 2009

Garden Island Sobriety

'Step Four'



“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”



He said: Many of us in AA, especially the “newbies” or “retreads” fear this step and claim they can’t do it but I suspect their heads are on the 5th rather than the 4th. When it comes to self-evaluation nobody is more elusive than an alcoholic. It’s so much easier for us to point our high-powered fingers at others as the cause of all our troubles. What’s the point of fearing our 5th when we haven’t even taken pen to paper on our 4th?

This shows me that we have not truly given our lives over to the God of our understanding as in our 3rd step. We don’t trust God. If we don’t trust God then we really don’t believe that He can restore us to sanity (2nd step). And if we don’t believe that God can restore us to sanity then we still believe that our lives are manageable and we still have power over alcohol (1st step).

We must concede to our innermost selves that “our way” only led us to AA. I made a simple contract with the power I understand. “Please don’t ever let me use or drink again and I will do anything you ask.” This was no empty promise that I would start going to church or some other meaningless vow. I was willing to do anything to keep from drinking and that included a 4th step. The difference was that when I did my 3rd step my mind was on my relationship with God....not my 4th step. No restrictions...no blackout dates, no exclusion clauses, just the real deal. I’ve honored my end of the bargain and so has the God I understand. I made it through all the steps several times because I trust that power to lead me through anything.

Every time I wrote something down it lifted the load off my shoulders a little more. A little tip that was given to me I will share with you readers. “Write down the most horrible, most disgusting thing you can think of, then throw that in the trash and write down the REAL one.” Once you get started you’ll get better at it. You don’t have to be perfect because as we say more will be revealed. I think that this step is designed to get us all in the habit of being aware of our character defects.



She said: I don’t consider myself a procrastinator (don’t be fooled, I have plenty of other fun defects of character to take its place). At least until it comes to a “searching and fearless moral inventory.” My palms are sweating and my heart is beating faster just writing about it, and the fact that I’m writing about means I’m up against a deadline. Coincidentally, I am actually on the 4th Step - again!

The deadline I was up against the very time I did the 4th Step was my life, because when I entered the rooms of AA I wanted to die. Unfortunately, this didn’t help ease my anxieties around working this step. I literally got physically ill, but once I wrote down the words “God, thank you for making me honest, open-minded and willing to work this step”, at the top of my notebook page, the process began. And so it begins again. **I do believe that** each time I do a 4th Step, another layer is peeled away, like that of the onion, revealing yet another layer of denial, character defects and harm I have - or continue - to cause. Yes even with some time in sobriety the tentacles of my defects reach into the world and as the time for working this step draws nearer my instincts still “balk at investigation.” I definitely swing the pendulum of emotions from depressive to self-righteous.

Between financial insecurities and personal relations lie my biggest problems today. I recently (yesterday) quickly forgot to “quiet” my disturbance with my accountant when I rapidly became deeply agitated by the information she was giving me. This resulted in some very ugly behavior on my part. Fortunately I do have a little time in the program and with the help of the 4th Step I can use this information to help me grow, to look for patterns, and perhaps let go of something - however destructive it is – that I continue to hold onto for the sake of comfort. It may also help disclose one more way I have been able to shut down my feelings.

With the current state of the nation’s economy my



Birthdays

Page 2



2009 AA ‘Round Up’

Page 3

AA Hotline 245-6677

(He Said) Then we become aware enough, in time, to use this new consciousness to halt our old patterns before they cause us trouble.

Then on to the other steps ... one at a time.

~ Uncle Tim, Kauai

Happy Birthday

Dick W.	3/17	1973	36 yrs
Pat Q.	3/7	1977	32 yrs
Bebe S.	3/10	1980	29 yrs
Jerry J.	3/4	1981	28 yrs
Dave G.	3/7	1987	22 yrs
Judy B.	3/2	1987	22 yrs
Larry	3/24	1987	22 yrs
Julie M.	3/1	1987	22 yrs
Kathy	3/12	1997	12 yrs
Julia	3/11	1997	12 yrs
Norman P.	3/1	1991	18 yrs
Heather C.	3/10	2004	5 yr
Julie H.	3/30	2004	5 yr
Shoshanah	3/14	2005	4 yr
Jennifer	3/5	2005	4 yr
Eddie	3/1	2005	4 yr
Linda R.	3/20	2006	3yr
Cindy T.	3/14	2008	1 yr

Birthdays are published the month following their occurrence. Tell us yours at - luv2bnh@hawaii.rr.com

Birthday Celebrations

South Shore

- Koloa Monday Women's 'As Bill Sees It' - 4:30 p.m. Last Monday of the month. **CAKE & POTLUCK.**
- Aloha Group - 7:30 p.m. Last Tuesday of the month - **CAKE FOR BIRTHDAYS!**

East Side

- Hui Ohana - 7:00-8:00a.m. Last Saturday of the month. **CAKE FOR BIRTHDAYS!**
- Steps to Freedom - 6:30 p.m. Last Monday of the month. **CAKE & POTLUCK** (7:30-8:30 pm meeting).

North Shore

- North Shore Aloha Group - 7:30 p.m. Last Monday of the month - **CAKE FOR BIRTHDAYS!**
- Princeville-Hanalei Group - 7:30 p.m. Last Thursday of the Month - **CAKE FOR BIRTHDAYS!**

(She Said) traits relating to my financial insecurities seem to be heightened, even though I'm aware I can't control the economy. However, the Twelve and Twelve tells us that "the most common symptoms of insecurity (emotional or financial) are worry, anger, self-pity and depression....If I am unable to change the present state of affairs, am I willing to take the *measures necessary* to shape my life to conditions as they are?" The answer, simply, is: Yes.

And I'll do this by doing my fourth step - again - and sooner rather than later.

~ Kathie G., Kauai



A.A. Meetings

"Koloa Monday Women's"

The Monday Women's meeting is still alive and well. Last month's announcements made it sound like the whole meeting moved but most of us are still attending the meeting on Monday at 4:30 pm in the Koloa library.

"Koloa Aloha Women's"

NOW on WEDNESDAYS (not Tuesdays) at 5:00pm, at the **Koloa Missionary Church**, 3370 Poipu Road. This is a 10th step meeting. First meeting is April 1. More Info. - Kathy S. konakathy@yahoo.com

'The Water Meeting'

AT LYDGATE POND



2nd Sunday of the month at 1:00 pm
BBQ /Potluck starts at 10:30 am

April meeting is Easter Sunday!
Come to the Easter Egg Hunt!!

'Daily Reflections'

- Wednesdays 12:00pm (Kapaa First Hawaiian)
ASKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN ATTENDANCE

'Experience, Strength & Hope'

- Fridays 10:00am (Kapaa First Hawaiian)
ASKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT IN ATTENDANCE

From Our Readers Your Thoughts on Step 4

- ❖ **The 12x12** says "Step Four is our vigorous and painstaking effort to discover what these liabilities in each of us has been..." When I made a thorough moral inventory I made a list of every person, place or thing that popped into my head. Next I sat down and sifted through all those to see which ones caused me anxiety. If I felt a twinge of remorse, guilt or shame, I probably had resentments so I commenced to see what my part in causing the resentment was. I was fearless and I was searching and when I finished my defects of character were right in my face. Thank God (my Higher Power) for my fourth step. **Sobriety date 7- 17-84**
- ❖ **I did Step Four** in fits and starts over a period of several months. I'd write for a few hours then wouldn't look at it for weeks--finally completed it in the reception room waiting for a counseling appointment, Boy, was I ready for that session! I found writing my fourth step emotional, purgative, powerful and freeing. There was stuff in there I was going to take to my grave, more likely it would have taken me to my grave. **Sobriety date 10- 25-89**
- ❖ **My 18th year presented** me with another bottom in recovery. Now it was time to finish those steps! The 4th Step really opened up the door for me to find freedom from behavior that is difficult for others to take and alienates me from the sunlight of God's spirit. I discovered that when things don't go my way I will be either demanding and/or kind, whatever the situation requires. By identifying people, institutions (usually people in institutions) and principles I resent, and doing the 4th step process from the Big Book, as described by my sponsor, I was able to move on through the steps. I actually finished my 9th step from this inventory. This was something I had not done before. The peace of doing the steps of Alcoholics Anonymous passes all human understanding. Thank you God, A.A. and all of you. **Sobriety date 12-19-1986**
- ❖ **Completion of my fourth** step was like clearing the weeds out of a flower garden, once I gently and patiently removed the weeds from my garden; I was able to see the whole flower garden and its potential. **Sobriety date 4-22-07**



AA FOUNDERS DAY **June 10th, All You Can Eat**

Hosted by 'Steps to Freedom'
Buffet at "Hanamaulu Cafe"

Tickets available for \$25.00 each.

Everyone Invited!

A Donation from the dinner will be made to GSO
For Tickets – call Susan O'N

KAUAI 2009 ROUND UP **June 26, 27, 28**



Kahili Mountain Park

Web Site www.kahilipark.org

"Mountain Dreams"

Activities: Hiking (3 trails), softball, talent show, musical concert, kayak races, bonfire meetings nightly, picnic sack lunch in the woods, and of course ... *more* meetings.

Prices:

\$88.00 - Advanced registration before June 12

\$100.00 - After June 12,

1/2 Price - Children under 12

Includes: 2 nights, 5 meals & fun!

Check in: Friday 2:00pm

Check out: Sunday 10:00am.

Contact: Kathryn or Jerry

email: Kauairoundup09@yahoo.com or

Fax: 742-6447 for information & Registration Form



Oldies but Goodies

~Hear it from the Old-Timers~

"I had so much fear when I wrote my first 4th step. I had never even admitted to MYSELF my deepest, darkest secrets, let alone to another human being! Denial kept me in the bottle for about 18 years, and I wanted freedom from the booze so bad, that I did what my sponsor told me to do ... I read step 4 in the Big Book and the 12x12, and followed the format on page 65.

When I finished reading it to her during my 5th step visit, she complimented me on a job well done with the exception of one thing: "Mary, you didn't write anything about your Mother." I told her that I had no resentment against my mother, and she chuckled through a smirk on her face ... needless to say, more would be revealed! I told her that I felt guilty feeling angry about my mom because "she had done so much for me" ... right then and there, I learned a valuable lesson ... getting in touch with ALL the feelings and admitting them was the way to let go and move beyond the prison of self-loathing that kept me in a drunken stupor, blackouts, and insanity. I had to get brutally honest with myself or I would be harboring these negative feelings and eventually return to the bottle to avoid facing my reality. My anger towards my mother was real, and I needed to bring it to the surface and release it with my sponsor so it wouldn't interfere with the love I did have for my mom!

To this day I still do the 4th and 10th in combination, using the format on page 65. I am a "high maintenance" drunk ... I can feel crazy pretty quickly, so it has been necessary and very beneficial to write something almost every day and share it with another woman who is also working the steps and wanting solutions in her life. The freedom I receive as a result cannot be described.

I thank God for leading me to AA and the tools of the program."
~ Mary C.



Eastside Workshop

AT:

'THE SMALL TOWN COFFEE SHOP'

APRIL 26, 2:00 – 4:00 PM

TOPIC: "SPONSORSHIP"

Guest speakers share their Experience Strength and Hope. Want to share?

Please email Lu at KeepItSimpleKauai@gmail.com



Softball Practice

ALL GROUPS ON KAUAI INVITED

WHERE? "Wailua Houselots park"

WHEN? Every 1st & 3rd Sunday at 2:00 PM

Bring your Glove, Bring your Water, Bring Yourself!



Softball Game

Sunday May 17th

Anonymous Vs. Anonymous 11am-3pm

Kapaa Ball Park

Bring Your Own Glove! Everyone Plays!

Rule 62 in Effect!

"Don't take yourself too damn seriously."



Big Island Bash

Speakers Convention

April 24 - 26, 2009

The 21st Annual Big Island Bash at the Sheraton Keauhou Bay Resort & Spa

For Registration, Schedule of Events & Accommodations -

www.bigislandbash.com

Hot Summer Nights

HICYPAA Fundraiser BBQ & Pool Party

Saturday May 23rd

11am -9pm Kapaa Neighborhood Center

Summer Fun and Sun! Bring your favorite BBQ Recipe and don't forget your Towel!

Volunteers Email KeepItSimpleKauai@gmail.com



For Newcomers

Step Four is where the rubber meets the road. Up until four I went along about my life admitting I was an alcoholic, came to and came to believe in a power greater than myself. Following that I learned to turn my will AND my life over to the care of a God of *my understanding*. NOW I was ready to take a thorough and moral inventory. Okay, let's me pause to mention the word *inventory* one more time. Now, the Big Book gave me a format to follow along with some examples. I grasped my pencil in hand, pulled out the tablet, separated the two pages facing each other into four columns and off I went.

Three hours of cleaning out bedroom drawers, washing dishes, preparing a salad for dinner and calling three friends I suddenly remembered what I was supposed to be doing; back to the inventory. This time I concentrated mightily. Nothing came, just a sip of soda and a burp. WAIT, a name popped up - one of my ex-husbands (not surprising) so I wrote that one down. Oops, doorbell rang, then the phone, and by the time I got off it was my favorite television show. I put the *inventory* away, it was time for bed.

Day two, three, four, five (and many days later) I had eight names. There, that takes care of that, I'm done! So, while tanning on the beach I mentioned to my kids (who are in the program) that I had completed my fourth step. They asked "How many names?" I said eight and to their credit they didn't burst out into uncontrollable laughter but rather glanced knowingly at each other and nodded. "*Perhaps*" they suggested, I might want to look at this or that. Did I not hold a resentment against the government, myself, my church, the guy who cut me off in traffic last week (the list went on and on).

I went back to the drawing board; new page, new pencil, more coffee. **THIS** time I asked my Higher Power for willingness. Lo and behold, the pencil flew, the names spewed forth and the fourth step list began to unfold. I think I ended up with three full pages (front and back) and lots and lots of recognition as my part began to unfold (like the layers of the onion you hear about).

A step four inventory brought me to the realization of how unmanageable my life really had become and the *acceptance* that my Higher Power *could and would* if He were asked.

~ Jerrie S.

Step Sisters is my Home Group

Bring HOPE to Hina Mauka

AN OPPORTUNITY FOR SERVICE

- * Where: Hina Mauka Lihue / Outpatient Program
 - * When: 3rd Wed. each month
 - * Time: 11am - 12 noon
- Contact Bebe - aloha@yourbeach.com

Kauai Intergroup

Next Meeting April 4th, 9:30 ^{am}
The Lihue Neighborhood Center

Directions: The Lihue Neighborhood Center is at 3353 Eono St., behind the AT&T store (across from Wal-Mart) 2 streets down, turn right and go 2 blocks.



Got Literature?

WE DELIVER!

Or Come to the Intergroup Meeting!

- ◆ Books ◆ Pamphlets ◆ GIS Newsletter and
- ◆ Kauai AA Meeting Schedules.

Intergroup Officers

Chairperson - Anonymous

Alt. Chair - Tom R. triumph@hisemail.net

Treasurer - Mike C (temp.)

Secretary - Dianne M. kauai-intergroup-sec@hotmail.com

Literature - Mark M.

Alt. Literature - Danette M.

Hotline Chair. - Dana M.

Events - Kathryn B. _____

GIS News. - Linda B. _____

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO:

Kaua'i Intergroup

PO Box 3606, Lihue, HI 96766



Please put your Group Name on the check.

DCM CORNER

APRIL 2009

■ **Panel 59's second district meeting** was attended by 16 members representing 10 groups on the island. The main topics of discussion were workshops and standing committees after a brief discussion on the proceeds from the Area Orientation Assembly.

■ **April is the month** of our General Service Conference and so this month's District Committee was dedicated to preparations for the Inform the Delegate Assembly which GSR's will attend on April 4th and 5th in the Honolulu District.

■ **Specifically, our island** has been asked by the delegate to present on two issues: Should the sponsorship pamphlet be reviewed toward eliminating outmoded ethnic, cultural and vocational references; and, should we develop a new Special Needs recovery pamphlet aimed at newcomers?

■ **These are our responsibility**, of course, but there are 76 other items on this year's agenda. GSR's were given a copy of that agenda as well as the 26 topics to be considered at the Area Assembly when we go to Honolulu. I also have a copy of the 971 pages of background information given each delegate in preparation for the General Services Conference which I am more than willing to share with members of our fellowship. I was afforded the time to peruse a good bit of that material on the way back from PRAASA on March 8.


■ **I really** want to take a minute to thank each and every one of you for allowing me that remarkable opportunity. Bearing witness to the unqualified dedication of such a large number of alcoholics in our fellowship is beyond description! I would encourage anyone to attend PRAASA when it is hosted in Honolulu in 2011. It is truly amazing. Thank you all!
And THINK SPRING! ~ Jim D., DCM

**Next District Meeting April 11th
9:30 am, 3146 Akahi St., Lihu`e**

District 6 Committee

- DCM - Jim D. - _____
- Alternate DCM - Susan O'N _____
- Treas - Courtney P. _____
- Secretary - Michele K. kauaidistrict6sec@gmail.com
- Grapevine-Alejandro 652-3128 _____
- Archives - Mathea A. _____
- CPC - Bart D. _____

SEND YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO:
Kaua'i District Committee
 PO Box 1503, Kapa'a, HI 96746
 Please include "District 6" & "Group Name" on check



Kauai District Cash Flow

Feb. 15 to March 14

Starting Balance	\$2864.97
Income	
Wed. daily reflections	\$25.00
N. Shore Aloha Group	\$80.00
Koloa Aloha	\$100.00
Income Total	\$205.00
Payments	
Workshops	\$120.00
Jan. Area Assembly	\$432.68
DCM Office	\$22.50
Payments Total	\$575.18

SUMMARY FOR 2009	
Starting Balance in 2009:	\$2864.97
Income Total:	\$205.00
Payments Total:	-\$575.18
Prudent Reserve:	-\$500.00
Available Funds:	\$1994.79

Concepts Checklist

Concept IV

Concept IV: At all responsible levels, we ought to maintain a traditional "Right of Participation," allowing a voting representation in reasonable proportion to the responsibility that each must discharge.

- ✓ **Do we understand** the spiritual principles underlying the "Right of Participation"?
- ✓ **What does** "in reasonable proportion" mean? Do we understand when it is appropriate for A.A. paid staff to have a vote at the General Service Conference or in our local service structure?
- ✓ **Do we expect** that, because we are A.A. members, we should be allowed to vote at any group, even if we are not active members of that group?

Service is Sobriety
Our Area 17  Delegate is
Elizabeth M. delegate@area17aa.org

Send Area Contributions

ADDRESS IT EXACTLY LIKE THIS:

To: Hawaii Area Committee
#2107



575 Cooke St., Suite A, Honolulu HI 96813
Please include "District 6" & Group Name on the ck.

A Spiritual Program

A Gift That Surpasses Understanding, (Part I)

Frequently around the AA program we hear a person say, "The spiritual side of the program is not for me" or "I don't go for the spiritual bit. As long as I don't drink, I'm satisfied. I leave the pie-in-the-sky stuff to other people." Any such cavalier dismissal of the spiritual side of our program makes me wince a little and feel a bit sorry for this person. This sense of pity and sorrow is the more intense and poignant the longer the person has been in the program.

In most cases, I have good reason to suspect that this man or woman is unwittingly confusing formal religion with what we call the spiritual side of the program. To my mind, he is unconsciously rebelling against the possibility of his being soft-soaped into embracing the creed, code, and cult of some particular religious denomination and then being wheedled into a kind of dogmatic straitjacket. For him, the word "spiritual" has overtones of something soft, hypocritical, less-than-virile, because it can evoke images of "church mice" with hands folded, eyes down, grim faces that seem to say, "Remember death!" And, understandably, he wants nothing to do with these creeps.

Yet I am quite sure that such a person, like the rest of us, would be quick to deny that he came into AA primarily because he had a religious problem. I have never yet met anyone who crawled into AA because he couldn't understand the infallibility of the Pope or the source of authority in the Protestant or Jewish faith. I seriously doubt, too, that any atheist has come into our program to get a black or white answer to the question of God's existence.

When I first came into AA, the good people in the program told me that, if I was alcoholic, I had a very real sickness, that I was sick physically, mentally, and spiritually. I do not remember anyone ever telling me

that I was sick religiously or that, because I was a priest, I could not be sick spiritually. And how right they were in refraining from saying that I was sick religiously! In my descent down the skids of booze and pills, I never had any serious difficulty with my religion or my priesthood. It is true that I was less than vigorous in the practice of both, but I sensed that my sickness was on a level much more basic than these.

And yet it was by no means clear to me what it meant for me to be spiritually sick and at the same time not to be religiously sick. Like many others in AA, I was uneasy with the word "spiritual" as it is used in the program. But when it dawned on me that the term "spiritual" is derived from the word "spirit," things started to clear up. I was comfortable with the word "spirit," because I had lived with it all my life. This spirit, this soul, this principle of life, call it what you will, was given to me long before I had any knowledge or practice of a formal religion, long before I had the slightest idea what profession or vocation I might want to pursue.

This is the spirit that was infused into me at the moment of my conception, the thing that would automatically give me membership in the human race. This spirit is the rational part of me that endowed me with dignity, nobility, and a separate identity. My spirit or soul gave me the power to think, to make judgments, to wish, to will, to love, to reach out for the infinite. This spirit of mine gave me all these wonderful powers and something more—it gave me my total personality, which in the years to come would be molded and shaped, for better or worse, by environment, education, and circumstances.

The environment, education, and circumstances of the intervening years can be briefly telescoped. I had all the advantages of a good home, a better-than-ordinary education, a life with pleasant surroundings. My priesthood, which I loved (and still love dearly!), should have enhanced all these advantages. But life does not always work according to a definite blueprint.

Somewhere along the line, fears, self-doubt, and a sense of inadequacy began to manifest themselves. Then I discovered those two "friends," alcohol and tranquilizers, which seemed to quiet the fears and self-doubt and restore the sense of adequacy. The classical, insidious pattern started to form and continued growing over a long period: more and deeper fears, loss of interest in work and in life, gradual withdrawal from people and activities, deep-seated loneliness, panic, near despair. In this process of slow death, there was no one to whom I could turn except my two "friends."

The climax was occasioned by an enforced

withdrawal from both the alcohol and the pills during hospitalization for major surgery. I went into dt's for a period of eleven days. After emerging from this pleasant interlude, I was immediately shipped to a "special-type" hospital (nut factory). About six weeks after being released from this institution, I went in and out of hallucinations, a delayed withdrawal symptom, and I soon found myself in the alcoholic ward of a state mental hospital. It was here that AA came to me.

Life had taken a tremendous toll on my spirit, my soul. I came into AA broken in spirit, soul-sick. If the ray of hope that I heard had worked for so many thousands in AA was to warm up my heart and light up my life, it would have to penetrate, not into the areas of my religion and my priesthood, but into the much deeper, more basic area where I was really sick--into my human spirit. Had there been in the AA program any suggestion of theology, formal or otherwise, I would have picked up my weak carcass and broken spirit and headed back to the desert outside. Having formally studied theology for four years under good professors, I was, according to ordinary standards, something of a professional theologian. At that time, I needed more theology about as much as I needed a third thumb.

What I did need and need desperately was, not more knowledge about God, but, with God's help, a deep, penetrating knowledge about myself. How could I learn to live, not ecstatically nor even euphorically, but with at least a modicum of peace? How could this spirit of mine find some kind of interest, enthusiasm, self-fulfillment? I was to discover that AA had the answer for this plain, ordinary, human craving of my heart.

I followed the suggestions of the AA people in the hope that I might emerge from the jungle, as they had, and enjoy a kind of resurrection. I went and still go to many meetings; I talked with many people, a newly discovered pleasure; I read a great deal of the available AA literature. These were immensely helpful and will always be necessary for me, to a certain extent. But if these techniques are to have any real meaning, body, and flavor for me, they must rest on something as substantial, vigorous, and life-giving as the Twelve Steps. When I studied and started to live these Steps, it became clear that, at least for me, the "spiritual awakening" mentioned in the Twelfth Step had to mean "an awakening of the spirit"--i.e., no matter how swift or prolonged the process might be, I had to come awake, alive in my spirit as a human being. From that time on, I have had very few, if any, hang-ups with the word "spiritual" as used in the AA program.

I was greatly impressed with the order, the logic, and the thoroughness of the Steps. They seemed to be an

all-or-nothing deal. If I had taken the First Step and settled for that, I would have been guilty of the "selective surrender" spoken of by that pioneer friend of AA, Dr. Harry M. Tiebout. In his wonderfully perceptive brochure "The Act of Surrender in the Therapeutic Process," he makes this comment about one of his patients: "His surrender is not to life as a person, but to alcohol as an alcoholic."

Had I merely surrendered to alcohol as an alcoholic, this would have been good, but not nearly good enough. True, it would have meant that alcohol and pills, two deadly substances for me, would have gone out of my life--no small blessing! But the trouble with me was that everything was going out of my life--friends, activities, my sense of values, the meaning of life, love, laughter, and beauty. My human spirit was indeed desert-dry, and now, with booze and pills gone, it would seem a more arid, barren wasteland. If I was to recover the wholeness, the oneness of my personality, if I truly wanted a rebirth of my human spirit, a taste of the joy of living, then, in accordance with Dr. Tiebout's formula, I had to surrender, not only to alcohol as an alcoholic, but to life as a person.

But Chapter V of the Big Book, "How It Works," assured me that this awakening of the spirit was the natural, orderly result of studying and living the Twelve Steps. "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path," it says. Here was a safe, secure, comfortable framework within which I could move forward gradually and gracefully toward a new way of life, toward something of the peace and serenity that I saw in other AA people. Here was a mode of living fashioned, not from pure theory nor in the halls of academe, but from the rough, tough, raw experience in life of the first hundred members of AA, who had desperately wanted the same kind of awakening of the spirit that I was searching for.

This awakening of the spirit is set down so naturally and confidently in the Twelfth Step that it seems to carry this implicit warning: "If you are not having at least the beginnings of a spiritual awakening, it would be well to look back over the Steps and find out where you are failing." And there are no qualifying words, such as "maybe," "perhaps," or "perchance." On the other hand, there *is* a kind of built-in guarantee that, if you are living the Steps to the best of your ability, no matter how difficult it may be at times, you will eventually have this awakening of the spirit. What a tremendous source of encouragement!

~ A Priest

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(To be continued in next month's Issue)