

## **AA Big Book in Plain English**

by Anonymous

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### **Chapter 7 - Working With Others (The Core of the Chapter)**

Actual experience shows, to make sure we don't get drunk, nothing works better than intense work with other alcoholics. When we try doing other things, and those things don't work to keep us sober, there's something that does work: intense work with other alcoholics.

Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can earn their trust when no one else can. Remember they are very sick.

Life will have meaning, a new purpose. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness disappear, to see a fellowship grow up around you, to have a ton of friends--this is an experience you should not miss out on. We know you won't want to miss out on it. The habit of reaching out to newcomers, and to each other, is the bright spot of our lives.

Because of your own drinking experience you can be uniquely useful to other alcoholics. To be helpful is our only goal.

If a person doesn't want to stop drinking, don't waste time trying to talk him into it. You might have a chance to carry the message to him later, and he might want to stop drinking at that time, especially if you haven't tried to force him.

Put yourself in his place, to see how you would like him to reach out to you if the tables were turned.

If he doesn't want to see you, never force yourself on him. You might put this book somewhere in his home where he can see it. He might be more willing when he's depressed.

Talk to a person privately, if possible. Tell him about your drinking habits, symptoms, and experiences. Tell him about these things so that he talks about himself. If he wants to talk, let him talk. If he's an alcoholic, he'll understand you right away. When he hears about how messed up your mind was, he'll relate to that. Be careful not to label him as an alcoholic. Let him decide for himself whether or not he's an alcoholic. Keep his attention focused mainly on your personal experience. You can talk to him about the hopelessness of alcoholism because you offer a solution.

Pretty soon your friend will admit that he's a lot like an alcoholic, or that he's definitely an alcoholic.

Tell him exactly what happened to you. Openly tell him about the spiritual side, about you coming to believe that a Higher Power could solve your problem. If the person thinks it's impossible to know whether or not there's a God, or if the person thinks there's no such thing as God, then stress the following point: he does not have to agree with your concept of God. He can choose any concept he likes, as long as it makes sense to him. The main thing is that he be willing to believe in a Power greater than himself and that he live by spiritual principles. When

dealing with this kind of person, you'd better use everyday language to tell about spiritual principles.

The person might belong to a religion. He might know a lot more about religion than you. In that case he's going to wonder how you can add anything to what he already knows. Let him see that you're not there to teach him about religion. Maybe your story will help him see where he has failed to practice the religion he knows.

Tell about the steps that involve action, Steps 4 through 12. Tell about how you made an honest inventory of yourself, how you cleaned up your past and put it behind you, and why you're now trying to be helpful to him. It's important for him to know that your effort to pass this on to him plays a big part in your own recovery.

You shouldn't be offended if he doesn't want to work the program, or if he doesn't want to talk to you anymore, because he has helped you more than you have helped him. If your talk has been sane, quiet and full of human understanding, maybe you've made a friend.

The more hopeless he feels, the better. There's a better chance he'll follow your suggestions.

You'll be highly successful with alcoholics if you do not show any passion for religious fighting, or for controlling other people's lives. Never talk down to an alcoholic from any moral or spiritual hilltop; simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools, for him to take a good look at. Show him how they worked with you.

He's got to decide for himself whether he wants to go on, doing the deal. He shouldn't be pushed or prodded by you. If he's going to find God, the desire has to come from within himself. We don't have God in a box. Others don't have to agree with all our ideas. We just have a program of recovery that worked with us.

Don't get too sad if the person doesn't jump on board right away. Search for another alcoholic and try again. You'll definitely find someone desperate enough to accept what you offer, really wanting it. For us it's a waste of time to keep chasing a person who can't or won't work with you. If you leave that kind of person alone, in a little while he might get it through his head that he can't recover by himself. If we spend too much time on a single situation, then some other alcoholic won't get a chance to live and be happy. One person belonging to our Fellowship totally failed with his first few people. He often says that if he had kept working on them, then a lot of other people, who have recovered, wouldn't have had a chance.

Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery. An act of kindness once in a while isn't enough. You have to play the part of the Good Samaritan every day, if need be.

For the kind of alcoholic who is able and willing to get well, not much charity is needed--charity in the ordinary sense of the word. The people who cry for money and shelter before conquering alcohol, are on the wrong track. But still, we do go to extreme lengths to provide each other with these things, when this action is appropriate. It isn't whether or not to give, but when and how to give.

Let an alcoholic keep going with his program day by day. Both you and the new person have to walk day by day on the road of spiritual progress. If you keep at it, amazing things will happen. When we look back, we realize that things came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands, and those things were better than anything we could've planned. Live by what a Higher

Power teaches you, and pretty soon you'll live in a new and awesome world, no matter how things are around you!

When we're spiritually fit, we can do all kinds of things alcoholics are not supposed to do. People have said we shouldn't go where alcohol is served; we shouldn't have it in our homes; we should stay away from friends who drink; we should avoid movies that show drinking scenes; we shouldn't go into bars; our friends should hide their bottles if we go to their houses; we shouldn't think or be reminded about alcohol at all. Our experience shows that this is not always the case.

We meet these conditions every day. Go or stay away, whichever seems best. Your job now is to be at the place where you can be of maximum helpfulness to other people, so don't hesitate to go anywhere if you can be helpful. You shouldn't hesitate to visit the most shady place on earth when this is your mission. Stay on the front lines of life with these motivations, and God will keep you from getting hurt.

We have stopped fighting anybody or anything. We have to!