

(1994). Alcoholics Anonymous. New York City: Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc.

OVERVIEW

The Alcoholics Anonymous book is the "bible" for recovering alcoholics. The "Big Book" talks about alcoholism, solutions to alcoholism, and how A.A. works. The book goes on to describe the twelve steps and the twelve traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous. More chapters include putting sobriety into action and working with others, which is what step twelve—making amends—is devoted to. Also included in the book is how alcoholism and sobriety affects wives, families, and employers. Finally, the chapters conclude with "A Vision For You," which gives hope to recovering alcoholics for the future and makes them aware of the difficult road ahead. Everything mentioned in this chapter is generally already known to alcoholics. The next segment of the book offers recovering alcoholics some hope. It gives them support and relief to know that they are not alone. The remainder of the "Big Book" is composed of personal stories, the everyday "you and I" stories. The stories include those of the pioneers of A.A., those alcoholics who stopped drinking in time, and those who lost nearly all to alcohol.

The influence of this "Big Book" is amazing. A friend of mine, named Bill F., is a recovering alcoholic. He began attending A.A. meetings, and he even made a few trips to detox centers. Alcohol was ruining his life. Had it not been for A.A. and the support he received, he could have lost his life with alcohol. Bill started recover like every other alcoholic, by admitting that he was powerless over alcohol—that his life had become unmanageable. That is Step 1. There were eleven more steps to follow. Bill had to believe in a Power greater than himself to restore his sanity; for Bill, that Power is God. Every day Bill wakes up and thanks God, and asks Him to guide him through the day; to stay sober, just for that day. Alcoholism and its recovery is an ongoing process that can only be dealt with one day at a time. Every night, Bill goes to bed, thanking God for keeping him sober yet another day. Bill wishes that he could remember all the "good times" he had when he was drinking. He now knows that those weren't good times. Bill rejoices that sobriety has given him a life "second to none." He doesn't need to drink to have a good time. The impact that the Alcoholics Anonymous book and A.A. itself had on Bill is phenomenal. However, the book alone cannot save an alcoholic. Fellow recovering alcoholics, friends, and family must all give support. Also, sobriety can't be earned unless there is guidance from a higher Power.

Bill W. and Dr. Bob were the two co-founders of A.A. Their thoughts and experiences were the basis for the book. They faced the same struggles that each and every other alcoholic faces—the struggle for sobriety. Sobriety isn't something that can be achieved or won, it is a lifelong battle of will, to overcome the desire to drink. Having read Alcoholics Anonymous, it is understandable that alcoholism is one of the toughest battles to face. It is a disease that can take your life. A.A. is there to help those in need of recovery. A.A., along with the "Big Book" shows that you are not alone and the end is not near. There is hope. The effects of sobriety through A.A. and the "Big Book" are tremendous. That is why the saying states, "A.A. First—Everything Else Later."

Bryan S. Conley cCYS