

Don't Be Afraid of the Steps

*According to the Big Book,
they are the program*

MORE AND MORE, I hear new members and sometimes old ones say that they get more AA by going to meetings or by talking to other AAs than they would by reading the Big Book. Sometimes voluntarily, but generally only when asked, these and others will admit that they haven't even attempted working most of the Steps for the first time.

Some AAs, while saying they want the program, just cannot get honest enough to start working the Fourth through Tenth Steps. I believe that these people are not really happy with whatever measure of sobriety they may have, and that they had better find out why. I am willing to bet that they will find they have been more than just a little dishonest with themselves from the very beginning. They will probably learn that they have been holding back in turning their lives over to the care of God.

I have heard it said that there are no musts in AA and that we don't have to work all the Steps to be sober. Well, nothing says a sky diver *has* to

pull the rip cord on his parachute, but he will be happier and live longer if he does!

I do not see how an AA who hasn't read the Big Book or doesn't attempt to work all the Steps into his or her daily life can have anything but an eventual abrupt landing. The AA who uses all the other activities first is like the sky diver who jumps holding on to a lot of umbrellas and hoping to use the parachute if he needs it at the last minute.

The thought of staying sober the rest of our lives is not an easy thing to face, but honestly taken one day at a time, it becomes simple. Likewise, the thought of working all Twelve Steps in one day for the first time is not only monumental, it's impossible.

A no less monumental task would be to buy twelve new pairs of shoes and try to break all of them in and make them wearable from the start. Doing so would reduce our feet to a bloody mess the first day. It would be a long time before we could wear

any shoes, much less break in all twelve pairs.

A much simpler way would be to put all twelve pairs on a shelf and wear only the first pair for a little bit each day. As soon as it began to pinch, we could put it back on the shelf with the resolve to wear it again for a while later in the day or at least as much as possible the next day. When the first pair of shoes was completely broken in and could be worn all day long, we could try the second pair on a little each day until it, too, became comfortable.

If we use this method, we soon find that we have twelve comfortable pairs of shoes. Now it sounds as if we have it made, but we can't stop there. If we don't wear all twelve pairs frequently, those that are left on the shelf dry out and stiffen. When we finally try to wear them, they hurt and

pinch, and we have to break them in all over again.

My sponsor told me that I could understand the Big Book and work the Twelve Steps more comfortably if I tried this method. It has worked for me, and in the attempt I have gained some serenity and much happiness from my sobriety.

Working the AA program hasn't merely taught me how to be sober; it has taught me to be happy with sobriety. Today, I am happy to be sober, but I still have much to learn about how to face life day by day in a mature manner. For that, I must embrace and use the entire AA program, especially by working all Twelve Steps in my daily life. Using the first three and the Twelfth just isn't good enough if I want to be truly happy with my sobriety.

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