



A Fourth Dimension of Living

gone on before us had offered, namely, "If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it — then you are ready to take certain steps." It's really that simple, I said, knowing that it still wasn't easy.

Those early days were a struggle for me. Even today, after thirteen years in AA, there are still times when I fight the obvious solution. Lack of power was the driving force that both brought me to AA and compels me to stay. I had become convinced that I could no longer manage things myself, nor could I find a method of release that satisfied my own ego.

I found grave difficulty in "giving up to win" or "turning it over," let alone identifying what the "it" was that I was to turn over. How could I

SOMEONE ONCE asked me after a meeting just how I was able to establish what he perceived to be a strong relationship with my Higher Power. He felt that I had something he wanted, and he did not know how to get it. I explained that basically he was asking for what those who have

release control over my will and my life to a higher power? After all, I had been the highest power for many years. The answer to that question came from the Big Book: I "had to quit playing God."

It wasn't that I did not believe in God. I had always had some thought of a creator of the universe, some intelligent force responsible for it all. But I had taken over for Him somewhere along the line. It was as if God (as I understood Him) simply vanished from existence, giving up on the human race in general and on us alcoholics in particular.

I found that believing He exists was easy, but trusting Him was something else. Trusting has the same relationship to believing that accepting has to admitting (in regard to my alcoholism). The trick for me was to learn to trust this power over all areas of my life, especially my disease. But how was I to accomplish that?

Sure, I had admitted I was alcoholic, and accepted it. Sure, I recognized that my life was unmanageable. I even believed that God could restore me to sanity, and that was a gift I really needed. But why wasn't it happening to me? Why did some people in AA have such a peaceful spirituality, and not me? Had they found some mysterious method that they were keeping secret? They had a method, all right, but it was far from being a mystery. I had to return to the source, the Big Book.

Steps One and Two didn't seem to be a problem for me. Then, I noticed that the Third Step uses the word "decision." I learned that the word means the art of deciding to do something after an honest appraisal of the facts. The facts at that point were being alcoholic and being unable to manage my own life.

The Step continued by saying to me that I should be turning my will (the choice of one in authority) over to the care of God as I understood Him. But why wasn't I doing that? My problem was that I kept on deciding and deciding and deciding. I later learned that I had to carry out that decision with action, before I could realize any meaningful and long-

lasting results. What action?

Fortunately, I had a sponsor who had once found himself at that same turning point. He explained that he, like me, had wanted more than just not drinking today, or not drinking and wanting to. He said, paraphrasing the Big Book, "Though my decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless *at once* followed by a strenuous effort to face, and be rid of, the things in myself which had been blocking me."

"Blocking you from what?" I asked. He smiled.

Since that day when I began to face and be rid of those things in myself which were blocking me from God, my life has taken a new direction. As the Big Book promises, I intuitively know how to handle those things which used to baffle me. I discover each day that God is doing for me what I could not and cannot do for myself. He is indeed giving me a

peace which becomes more meaningful each day. I have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of living.

What did I suggest to my inquiring friend to aid him in finding his God-consciousness? Well, I simply told him to take his inventory, face and be rid of those things in himself that were blocking him. Many of us minimize the importance of Step Four these days, and by so doing, we often sign our own death warrants, or force ourselves into a life of terrible fear and alcoholic compulsion.

Seek out a sponsor who has taken the inventory as *it is in the Big Book*, pages 64-71. Ask your sponsor to help you through it. It is not a Pandora's box, unleashing evil creatures intent on having you for lunch. It is the process of recognizing and removing those items inside you which have kept you debilitated for years. Do you want to find God, God *as you understand Him*? Take your inventory.

D. M., Lebanon, Pa.