



The Sunrise Group

June, 2007



SUNRISE GROUP

Saturday Morning
Step Study 8:15 am
above PINZ Bowling Alley
12655 Ventura Blvd
Studio City, CA

June 2

David G.
Step 1

June 9

Donna F. of Hawaii
Step 2

June 16

Meredith B.
Step 2

June 23

Frank C.
Step 3

June 30

Wayne B.
Step 3

July 7

Timothy H.
Step 4 (Fear)

July 14

Karen G.
Step 4 (Resentments)

When We Finally See "The Problem" Where Can We See a Solution?

Step 1 Is Often a Painful Beginning of a Beautiful Journey

(From "The Doctor's Opinion" in *The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*)

"I do not hold with those who believe that alcoholism is entirely a problem of mental control. I have had many men who had, for example, worked a period of months on some problem or business deal which was to be settled on a certain date, favorably to them. They took a drink a day or so prior to the date, and then the phenomenon of craving at once became paramount to all other interests so that the important appointment was not met. These men were not drinking to escape; they were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control.

There are many situations which arise out of the phenomenon of craving which cause men to make the supreme sacrifice rather than continue to fight.

The classification of alcoholics seems most difficult, and in much detail is outside the scope of this book. There are, of course, the psychopaths who are emotionally unstable. We are all familiar with this type. They are always "going on the wagon for keeps." They are over-remorseful and make many resolutions, but never a decision.

There is the type of man who is unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink. He plans various ways of drinking. He changes his brand or his environment. There is the type who always believes that after being entirely free from alcohol for a period of time he can take a drink without danger. There is the manic-depressive type, who is, perhaps, the least understood by his friends, and about whom a whole chapter could be written.

Then there are types entirely normal in every respect except in the effect alcohol has upon them. They are often able, intelligent, friendly people.

All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated. The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence."

As newcomers, or even just curious about AA, the chilling conclusion at the end of this excerpt leaves us wondering, "how can I live a life of total abstinence. That is not even living!"

Well, dark as the hour may seem, this realization that we are alcoholics is crucial. But we don't have to figure out how to live without drinking all by ourselves. If we don't look toward Step 2 "Came to Believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity" we will surely wallow the confusion and despair. Step 2 can, in essence, be expressed as "hope."

Step 2: Trying to Find Hope

Few indeed are the practicing alcoholics who have any idea how irrational they are, or seeing their irrationality, can bear to face it. Some will be willing to term themselves "problem drinkers," but cannot endure the suggestion that they are in fact mentally ill. They are abetted in this blindness by a world which does not understand the difference between sane drinking and alcoholism. "Sanity" is defined as "soundness of mind." Yet no alcoholic, soberly analyzing his destructive behavior, whether the destruction fell on the dining-room furniture or his own moral fiber, can claim "soundness of mind" for himself. Therefore, Step Two is the rallying point for all of us.



The Sunset Group

June, 2007

A publication of the Sunset Group of Alcoholics Anonymous

Hamlet: An Alcoholic?

Why Should That Surprise Any Lover of "Drama"?

As Professor of English at the Winkley Institute for Alcohol Studies, I beg to report that our class in Shakespeare has made a significant discovery. Hamlet, the most enigmatic character in English literature, was an alcoholic.

Shakespeare doesn't say he was. But then, he doesn't say he wasn't. Anyhow, the antics of Hamlet become far less puzzling if the play is read as a tale of the fall and regeneration of a problem drinker.

Yes, something was rotten in the state of Denmark. It was Hamlet's thinking. He is a man seething with resentments, indecisive, cruel to those he loves, alternating between self-pity and self-reproach—in other words, a typical alcoholic personality.

Oblivion is what Hamlet wants. "O that this too, too solid flesh would melt, thaw, and resolve itself into a dew," he says early in the play. "How weary, stale, flat and unprofitable seem to me all the uses of this world." Are these not the typical thoughts of an alcoholic reaching for his bottle?

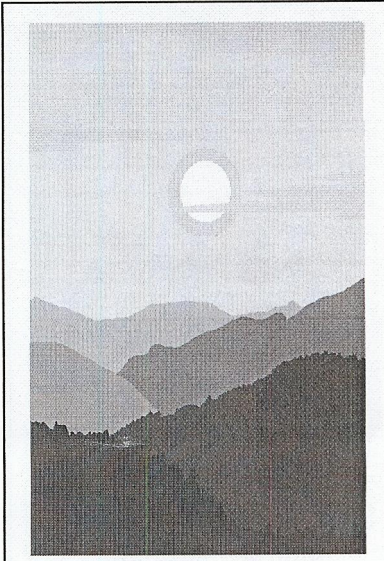
Reach for it Hamlet does, and we soon find him staggering around the battlements of the castle having a conversation with a "ghost," which is obviously an alcoholic hallucination.

The "ghost" tells Hamlet he should revenge his father's murder. Now we find Hamlet in a dilemma familiar to every alcoholic. Since he was half-crocked when he received this message, he isn't sure whether he got it straight or not. Thus, for three more acts Hamlet hesitates. Should he accuse his uncle of murder or not? Facing a seemingly insoluble problem, he goes right on drinking.

.. Here is Ophelia, his girl friend, describing him in a famous scene: "Lord Hamlet, with his doublet all unbraced, no hat upon his head, his stockings fouled, ungartered and down-gyved to his ankle; pale as his shirt, his knees knocking each other, and with a look so piteous in purport as if he had been loosed out of hell to speak of horrors."

Hamlet sinks deeper into despair, nearing his bottom. "I am pigeon-livered and lack gall," he whines. He contemplates suicide. "To be or not to be, that is the question. . . ." He soliloquizes on this subject for thirty-four lines, and to the surprise of no one who knows alcoholics, he talks himself out of it.

(FOR MORE ON THE TIMELESSNESS OF ALCOHOLISM SEE THE GRAPEVINE DIGITAL ARCHIVE, AVAILABLE ONLINE AT www.aagrapevine.org. The above from September 1963



The Sunset Group
Thursdays at 7:00 pm
Jewish Community Center
13164 Burbank Boulevard
Sherman Oaks, California

June 7
Don M. of Los Angeles

June 14
Carla M. of Sherman
Oaks

June 21
Cliff R. of Oceanside

June 28
Bill R. of Pasadena

Steering Committee Meeting June 11th at Vittorio's Restaurant
Want to be more involved with our group? Want to be part of planning our annual All-Day Workshop? Join us for this important quarterly meeting. See Belinda T. for details

Step 6: Not Removing "Desires" But Defects

It is nowhere evident, at least in this life, that our Creator expects us fully to eliminate our instinctual drives. So far as we know, it is nowhere on the record that God has completely removed from any human being all his natural drives. Since most of us are born with an abundance of natural desires, it isn't strange that we often let these far exceed their intended purpose. When they drive us blindly, or we willfully demand that they supply us with more satisfactions or pleasures than are possible or due us, that is the point at which we depart from the degree of perfection that God wishes for us here on earth. That is the measure of our character defects, or, if you wish, of our sins.

-- 12 Steps & 12 Traditions

Coffee and refreshments are served before the meeting at the break only. Smoking is allowed on the patio next to the meeting room. CD's of all our speakers are available for \$4.00. See Jonathan S. Also, as commitments are an important part of service in AA, if you'd like to become part of our team see Jonathan S.