

1st Step Worksheet

The Doctor's Opinion, The Allergy to Alcohol

Instruction:

*Make a list of **5 times** the following situation occurred.

I was going out. I was going to have two drinks. I wound up getting wasted.

Page 1 (p. XXV, 4th edition)

1. Am I interested in the medical estimate of this plan of recovery?
"We of Alcoholics Anonymous believe that the reader will be interested in the medical estimate of the plan of recovery described in this book."
2. Do I regard myself as hopeless? What does "hopeless" mean in this context? They are not talking about the feeling of hopelessness. They are referring to a medical diagnosis.
"...was an alcoholic of a type I had come to regard as hopeless."
3. *"As part of his (Bill Wilson's) rehabilitation he commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing up them that they must do likewise with still others."*
This is the first solution presented in the book *Alcoholics Anonymous: working with other alcoholics*. Telling them to tell others to work with others.
Am I willing to do this?
Am I willing to do whatever it takes to ready myself to be as effective as possible to take others through the 12 Steps in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous?
Can I see how important this is?
4. *"This has become the basis of a rapidly growing fellowship of these men and their families."*
Can I see why "the families must be included?"
5. *"I personally know scores of cases who were of the type with whom other methods failed entirely."*
Have other methods failed completely?
Have I exhausted all of my other options?
If I have not, should I peruse them before taking the steps?

The Doctor's Opinion

Page 2. (pg. XXVI, 4th Edition)

1. *"You may rely absolutely on anything they say about themselves."*
Do I believe I can rely on this testimony presented in this book?
2. *"...the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind."*
Is my body abnormal when it comes to drinking? What happens after I take the first drink. What happens when I say I'm going to only have two drinks? Is it my mind, my will power that is weak, or does something happen physically to me that forces me to drink more alcohol than I ever intended?
Do I yet understand that my body, as well as my mind is sick?
3. *"...our bodies were sickened as well."*
Can I now see that my body was sickened as well?
Do I believe this? Or, do I know this?
4. *"The doctor's theory that we have an allergy to alcohol interests us."*
Does this interest me? Could this explain many times in my drinking history that I could not explain before? Does the idea that my will was not weak, but my body was sick, explain a thousand moments in my life that baffled me before?
5. *"...his explanation makes good sense. It explains many things for which we cannot otherwise account."*

The Doctor's Opinion

Page 3. (pg. XXVII, 4th Edition)

1. *"...one of the oldest hospitals in the country treating alcoholic and drug addiction."*
Towns Hospital, New York City, New York. 1930's
2. *"moral psychology"* - Spiritual Experience
3. *"...leading contributor of this book"* - Bill W. Co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous
4. *"Later, he requested the privilege of being allowed to tell his story to other patients..."*
One alcoholic sharing his experience with another. This is the basic solution of Alcoholics Anonymous put simply.
5. *"The unselfishness of these men as we have come to know them, the entire absence of profit motive, and their community spirit..."*
Altruism defined.

The Doctor's Opinion

Page 4. (pg. XXVIII, 4th edition)

1. *"...the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy"*
Can I see that the action of alcohol on me is a manifestation of an allergy?
Does this make me an alcoholic?
2. *"...that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker."*
When has the phenomenon of craving expressed itself in my drinking history? What happens after I take the first drink? Refer back to our lists. I planned on going out, having two drinks, and I got wasted. Can I now begin to know what the allergy to alcohol really is?
3. *"These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all."*
Can I safely use alcohol in any form at all? What about Nyquil?
4. *"...once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it"*
Have I formed habits I could not break? Specifically with alcohol? Specifically with drugs? Can I see the allergy to alcohol independent of the drugs? Can I see the drugs independent of alcohol?
5. *"...their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve."*
Have my problems piled up on me? Were the problems a result of my alcoholic life?
6. *"Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices."*
Will simple emotional appeal suffice? Meaning, will begging and pleading me to stop ever result in stopping? Will it ever result in me staying stopped? Have my loved ones begged me to stop? How many times?
7. *"The message which can interest and hold these alcoholic people must have depth and weight."*
Do I know AA's who have a message (who have experience with the 12 Steps) with depth and weight? Am I as close to them as I can be? Am I part of **that** fellowship?
8. *"Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol."*
Do I drink because I like the effect produced by alcohol? What happens after I take the first drink? Can I control the amount I take? When I decide to just have the two drinks, can I stick to the plan? Or does something happen to me, where no matter what I have planned, everything changes depending on whether I can drink or not?
9. *"...their alcoholic life seems the only normal one."*
Did, or does, my alcoholic lifestyle seem normal? Did there seem any other way to live?

The Doctor's Opinion

Page 5. (pg. XXIX, 4th edition)

"After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery."

How many times have I succumbed to the desire to drink again after saying I would stop? What happens after I start drinking, what happens after the first two drinks? Does the phenomenon of craving develop in me? Do my plans change? Does everything I do after the first drink revolve around getting more? Or do I still have the ability to control my alcohol? Can I stop after two drinks? That is the most important question in this part of the book. Do I pass through the well known stages of a spree? Do I go on a run? Drinking? Drugs? Endlessly changing all of my plans unless to include alcohol, and validate my spree? What about with drugs? Can I see how alcohol acts on my body independent of drugs? Do I emerge remorseful from the spree? Have I made countless "*firm resolutions*" to never drink again? Have I repeated this cycle over and over throughout my drinking career? More times than I can count, or remember?

1. *"...the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks – drinks which they see others taking with impunity."*
Do I need to get the same sense of ease and comfort from the steps that I got from alcohol and/or drugs?
2. *"Doctor, I cannot go on like this!"*
If the condition described in the main paragraph above describes me, can I go on like this? More importantly, can I, on my own, do anything about it?
3. *"One feels that something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change."*
Do I believe that I can get myself out of the cycle I have been stuck in? Does it make sense that something outside of myself is needed to produce the change necessary for me to break free from this hopeless cycle?
4. *"Many types do not respond to the ordinary psychological approach."*
Have I tried the ordinary psychological approach? If so, what were the results? Did these methods help me to quit entirely?
5. *"I do not hold with those who believe alcoholism is entirely a problem of mental control"*
After I take the first two drinks, do I believe what happens has anything at all to do with mental control?

The Doctor's Opinion

Page 6. (pg. XXX, 4th Edition)

1. *"These men were not drinking to escape"*
After I take the first couple drinks, was I drinking only to escape?
2. *"...they were drinking to overcome a craving beyond mental control."*
Or can I see that I was drinking to overcome a craving that occurs after I take the first few drinks?
Does this allergy have anything to do with my ability to control the amount I take?
3. *"They are always 'going on the wagon for keeps'."*
Was I always *going on the wagon for keeps*? Was I always saying I would stop?
4. *"There is the type of man who is unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink"*
Have I been unwilling to admit I could not even take one drink? Am I now willing to admit this? Do I know exactly what will happen if I start drinking?
5. *"There is the type who always who always believes that after being entirely free from alcohol for a period of time he can take a drink without danger."*
Do I believe, or did I believe in the past, that after being entirely free from alcohol for a period of time I can take a drink without danger?
6. *"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."*
Can I yet see how alcohol acts on my body when I start to drink? What happens when I start drinking, and decide to stop? Can I stop on my own? Is something more than me needed?
If the answer presented here is *complete abstinence*, can I just not start to drink?
7. *"...the general opinion seems to be that most chronic alcoholics are doomed."*
Does the description of the allergy make sense?
Am I doomed?

The Doctor's Opinion

Page 7. (pg. XXXI, 4th edition)

1. *"He had lost everything worthwhile in life and was only living, one might say, to drink."*
Was I only living to drink?
2. *"He accepted the plan outlined in this book."*
Does understanding the allergy inspire interest in the plan outlined in this book?
3. *"The patient had made his own diagnosis, and deciding his situation hopeless..."*
Have I made a diagnosis yet?
Is my situation hopeless?
4. *"...the 'will power' to resist the impulse to drink"*
Does will power have anything to do with the allergy? Do I think I will ever have the will power to resist temptation?