
HARRY TIEBOUT STUDY GUIDE, 2ND EDITION

Introduction

Harry Tiebout was a psychiatrist who had worked for years with alcoholics when he was first exposed to AA in 1939. He was given a preprint of the book "Alcoholics Anonymous," which he gave to one of his patients, Marty Mann, who proceeded to throw it out the window. On a subsequent reading however, she became willing enough to attend an AA meeting. She reacted favorably to AA and stopped drinking for a period. Though she later relapsed, she attained permanent sobriety a year and a half later. In his first paper on alcoholism, written 5 years later, Dr Tiebout summarized what he saw as an important discovery

"Characteristic of the so-called typical alcoholic is a narcissistic egocentric core, dominated by feelings of omnipotence, intent on maintaining at all costs its inner integrity. While these characteristics are found in other maladjustments, they appear in relatively pure culture in alcoholic after alcoholic. ... Granting then the more or less constant presence of these character traits, it is easy to see how the person possessing them has difficulty in accepting God and religion. Religion by its demand that the individual acknowledge the presence of a God challenges the very nature of the alcoholic. But, on the other hand, and this point is basic to my paper, if the alcoholic can truly accept the presence of a Power greater than himself, he, by that very step, modifies at least temporarily and possibly permanently his deepest inner structure and when he does so without resentment or struggle, then he is no longer typically alcoholic."



Dr Harry Tiebout

Dr Tiebout was astonished at how effective the AA program was in getting his patient to stop drinking. He continued to make a close study of AA's method

and tried, with success, to apply it to his own therapeutic practice. Tiebout developed his ideas about why AA works for alcoholics. He expanded on those ideas in papers published in medical journals and talks given to professional medical societies over a period of 21 years. (The earliest paper in this collection was published in 1944 and the last in 1965.)

MY TAKE AWAYS FROM TIEBOUT:

1. **Alcoholism is a disease of the mind.**
2. **I have a stubborn, large and immature ego.**
3. **I have to smash that ego in order to get on with AA. (Surrender)**
4. **My resistance is unconscious. I can agree consciously but secretly (even to myself) resist.**
5. **The ego has astonishing recuperative powers. I need a practice that continuously keeps it in check.**

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In Memory of Harry

By Bill W.

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By the time this issue of the Grapevine reaches its readers, the whole world of AA will have heard of the passing of our well-beloved friend, Dr. Harry M. Tiebout, the first psychiatrist ever to hold up the hands of our Fellowship for all to see. His gifts of courageous example, deep perception of our needs, and constant labor in our behalf have been—and always will be—values quite beyond our reckoning.

It began like this: The year was early 1939, and the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* was about to hit the press. To help with the final edit of that volume we had made prepublication copies in multigraph form. One of them fell into Harry's hands. Though much of the content was then alien to his own views, he read our upcoming book with deep interest. Far more significantly, he at once resolved to show the new volume to a couple of his patients, since known to us as "Marty" and "Grenny." These were the toughest kind of customers, and seemingly hopeless.

At first, the book made little impression on this pair. Indeed, its heavy larding with the word God so angered Marty that she threw it out her window, flounced off the grounds of the swank sanatorium where she was, and proceeded to tie on a big bender.

Grenny didn't carry a rebellion quite so far; he played it cool.

When Marty finally turned up, shaking badly, and asked Dr. Harry what next to do, he simply grinned and said, "You'd better read that book again!" Back in her quarters, Marty finally brought herself to

leaf through its pages once more. A single phrase caught her eye and it read, “We cannot live with resentment.” The moment she admitted this to herself, she was filled with a “transforming spiritual experience.”

Forthwith she attended a meeting. It was at Clinton Street, Brooklyn, where Lois and I lived. Returning to Blythewood she found Grenny intensely curious. Her first words to him were these: “Grenny, we are not alone anymore!” This was the beginning of recovery for both—recoveries that have lasted until this day. Watching their unfoldment, Harry was electrified. Only a week before they had both presented stone walls of obstinate resistance to his every approach. Now they talked, and freely. To Harry these were the facts—and brand-new facts. Scientist and man of courage that he was, Harry did not for a moment look the other way. Setting aside his own convictions about alcoholism and its neurotic manifestations, he soon became convinced that AA had something, perhaps something big.

All the years afterwards, and often at very considerable risk to his professional standing, Harry continued to endorse AA. Considering Harry’s professional standing, this required courage of the highest order.

Let me share some concrete examples. In one of his early medical papers—that noted one on Surrender—he had declared this ego-reducing practice to be not only basic to AA, but also absolutely fundamental to his own practice of psychiatry. This took humility as well as fortitude. It will always be a bright example for us all.

Nevertheless this much was but a bare beginning. In 1944, helped by Dr. Kirby Collier of Rochester and Dwight Anderson of New York, Harry persuaded the American Medical Society of the State of New York to let me, a layman, read a paper about AA, at their annual gathering. Five years later this same trio, again spearheaded by Harry, persuaded the American Psychiatric Association to invite the

reading of another paper by me—this time in their 1949 Annual Meeting at Montreal. By then, AA had about 100,000 members, and many psychiatrists had already seen at close range our impact on their patients.

For us of AA who were present at that gathering it was a breathtaking hour. My presentation would be the “spiritual experience,” as we AAs understood it. Surely we could never get away with this! To our astonishment the paper was extremely well received—judging, at least, from the sustained applause.

Immediately afterwards, I was approached by a most distinguished old gentleman. He introduced himself as an early president of the American Psychiatric Association. Beaming he said, “Mr. W., it is very possible that I am the only one of my colleagues here today who really believes in ‘spiritual experience’ as you do. Once upon a time, I myself had an awakening much akin to your own, an experience that I shared in common with two close friends, Bucke and Whitman.”

Naturally I inquired, “But why did your colleagues seem to like the paper?”

His reply went like this: “You see, we psychiatrists deeply know what very difficult people you alcoholics really are. It was not the claims of your paper that stirred my friends, it was the fact that AA can sober up alcoholics wholesale.”

Seen in this light, I was the more deeply moved by the generous and magnificent tribute that had been paid to us of AA. My paper was soon published in the American Psychiatric Journal and our New York headquarters was authorized by the Association to make all the reprints we wished for distribution. By then the trek of AA overseas had well begun. Heaven only knows what this invaluable reprint

accomplished when it was presented to psychiatrists in distant places by the fledgling AA groups. It vastly hastened the worldwide acceptance of AA.

I could go on and on about Harry, telling you of his activities and in the general field of alcoholism, of his signal service on our AA Board of Trustees. I could tell stories of my own delightful friendship with him, especially remembering his great good humor and infectious laugh. But the space allotted me is too limited.

So in conclusion, I would have Harry speak for himself. Our AA Grapevine of November 1963 carried a piece by him that, between its lines, unconsciously reveals to us a wonderful self-portrait of our friend. Again, we feel his fine perception, again we see him at work for AA. No epitaph could be better than this. —BILL W.

Excerpt From “Therapeutic Mechanisms of Alcoholics Anonymous”

Harry Tiebout published his first paper on alcoholism in the Journal of the American Psychiatric Association in 1944. In this excerpt, Dr. Tiebout refers to his experience with Marty Mann, one of his patients, from 5 years before.

Something had taken place under my very nose which could not be doubted and which could not be explained away as mere coincidence. I found myself facing the question: What had happened? My answer is that the patient had had a religious or spiritual experience. The answer, however, did not prove particularly enlightening and it was not until much later that I began to appreciate the real meaning of the answer.

Before attempting to explain how further understanding of the significance of the religious factor developed, it is necessary to discuss the character structure which had dissolved. Despite most reports to the contrary, there is a growing recognition of certain common qualities which are regularly present in alcoholics excepting those who have a frank underlying mental condition. Characteristic of the so-called typical alcoholic is a narcissistic egocentric core, dominated by feelings of omnipotence, intent on maintaining at all costs its inner integrity. While these characteristics are found in other maladjustments, they appear in relatively pure culture in alcoholic after alcoholic. In a careful study of a series of cases, Sillman recently reported that he felt he could discern the outlines of a common character structure among problem drinkers and that the best terms he could find for the group of qualities noted was “defiant individuality” and “grandiosity.” In my opinion, those words were accurately chosen. Inwardly the alcoholic brooks no control from man or God. He, the alcoholic, is and must be master of his destiny. He will fight to the end to preserve that position.

Granting then the more or less constant presence of these character traits, it is easy to see how the person possessing them has difficulty in accepting God and religion. Religion by its demand that the individual acknowledge the presence of a God challenges the very nature of the alcoholic. But, on the other hand, and this point is basic to my paper, if the alcoholic can truly accept the presence of a Power greater than himself, he, by that very step, modifies at least temporarily and possibly permanently his deepest inner structure and when he does so without resentment or struggle, then he is no longer typically alcoholic. And the strange thing is that if the alcoholic can sustain that inner feeling of acceptance, he can and will remain sober for the rest of his life. To his friends and family, he has gotten religion! To psychiatrists, he has gotten a form of self-hypnosis or what you will. Regardless of what has occurred inside the alcoholic, he can now stay dry. Such is the Alcoholics Anonymous contention, and I believe it is based upon facts.

Anonymity: the Ego Reducer

Talk presented at the 1955 AA International Convention, St Louis, Missouri

A version of this talk appears in "Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age" on page 245

Under ordinary circumstances I should thank the man who introduced me for his very nice remarks, but also for years I have been making a name for ego reduction. I'm not sure my ego got sufficiently reduced by the introduction.

When the invitation came to speak before this group, I immediately said yes, I want to go. For many years, as you all know, I have been associated with AA. All the experiences that I had had came flashing through my mind, and I had so much to say that I didn't quite know where to begin. And with your permission I am going to use a manuscript so that the points that I want to make will not be forgotten.

At an AA meeting, the speaker, as a rule, identifies himself as an alcoholic and then proceeds to tell his story, sprinkling garlands of wisdom, humor, or both as he goes along. I shall also tell my story, although I am much less sure about my matching either the wit or the wisdom of the AA speakers.

I joined AA by proxy in 1939, when a patient of mine became a member of the New York group. Well do I remember my first AA meeting. It was tinged with excitement. AA was going on the air for the first time. One of the members, trying to rehabilitate himself, had talked with Gabriel Heater, who, on hearing his story, suggested that he, the AA man, appear on the program We the People. This was a night far too thrilling and special for settling down to a regular meeting.

The actual event was a bit of a letdown. The man from AA spoke briefly of

his experiences. Gabriel Heater, plainly puzzled, had a couple of pointless questions, and it was over. AA, however, had taken a step toward making itself known. Not a very big step to be sure, but one of the many that finally led to its present position on the national and international scene.

Later I attended other meetings more orthodox in character. As I did, I developed a conviction that the group had hit upon a method that solved the problem of excessive drinking. In a sense it was an answer to my prayers. After years of butting my head against the problem of treating the alcoholic, one could begin to hope.

In retrospect my first two or three years of contact with AA were the most exciting in my whole professional life. AA was then in its "miracle phase." Everything that happened seemed strange, wonderful. Hopeless drunks were being lifted out of the gutter. Individuals who had sought every known means of help without success were responding to this new approach. To be close to any such group, even by proxy, was electrifying. In addition, professionally, a whole new avenue of problems of alcohol had opened up. Somewhere in the AA experience was the key to sobriety. There was the first authentic clue after many years of fruitless efforts. Needless to say, the possibilities ahead were most intriguing. Perhaps I could learn how AA worked and thus could learn something about how people stop drinking. All of which meant that I shared in the general excitement of those days. I could see some daylight ahead. My future in this regard was now clear: I would try to discover what made AA tick.

In this quest for understanding, I would have never gotten beyond first base, if it had not been for Bill and many of the early members. The study of the Twelve Steps helped a little. But of far greater importance were the many insights already possessed by Bill and the others into the process through which AA brought about its results. I

heard of the need to hit bottom, of the necessity for accepting a Higher Power, of the indispensability of humility—ideas that had never crossed my professional horizon and certainly had never influenced my nonprofessional thinking or attitudes. Revolutionary as they were, these ideas, nevertheless, made sense, and I found myself embarked on a tour of discovery. I began to recognize more clearly what hitting bottom really implied. I began to do what I could to induce the experience in others, always wondering what was happening inside the individual as he went through the crisis of hitting bottom.

Finally fortune smiled upon me again, this time in the form of another patient. For some period she had been under my new brand of psychotherapy, designed to promote hitting bottom. For reasons completely unknown, she experienced a mild but typical conversion, which brought her into a positive state of mind. Led by her newly found spiritual elements, weak though they were, she started attending various churches in town. One Monday morning she entered my office, her eyes ablaze, and at once commenced talking. “I know what happened to me. I heard it in church yesterday. I surrendered.”

With that word *surrender* she handed me my first real awareness of what happens during the period of hitting bottom. The individual is fighting the admission of being licked, of admitting that he is powerless. If and when he surrendered, he quit fighting, could admit he was licked, and could accept that he was powerless and needed help. If he did not surrender, a thousand crises could hit him, and nothing would happen. The need to induce surrender became the new therapeutic goal.

The miracle of AA was now a little clearer. For reasons still obscure, the program and the fellowship of AA could induce a surrender, which could in turn lead to a period of no drinking.

As might be expected, I too had a thrill of my own. I was getting in on what was happening, always an enjoyable experience. Still questing eagerly I shifted my therapeutic attack. The job now was to induce surrender. When

I tried to cause that, I ran into a whole nest of resistances to that idea, totally new territory to be explored. As I continued my tour, it became ever more apparent that in everyone's psyche there existed an unconquerable ego that bitterly opposed any thought of defeat. Until that ego was somehow reduced or rendered ineffective, no likelihood of surrender could be anticipated.

The shift in emphasis from hitting bottom, to surrender, to ego reduction all occurred during the first five or six years after my initial contact with AA. I well remember the first AA meeting to which I spoke on the subject of ego reduction.

AA, still very much in its infancy, was celebrating the third or fourth anniversary of one of the groups. The speaker immediately preceding me told in detail of the efforts of his local group—which consisted of two men—to get him to dry up and become its third member. After several months of vain effort on their part and repeated nosedives on his, the speaker went on to say, “Finally I got cut down to size and have been sober ever since.” His sobriety was a matter of some two or three years then.

When my turn came to speak, I used his phrase cut down to size as a text around which to weave my remarks. Before long, out of the corner of my eye, I was conscious of a disconcerting stare. It was coming from the previous speaker. Looking a little more directly, I could see his eyes fixed on me in open-eyed wonder. It was perfectly clear that he was utterly amazed that he had said anything that made sense to a psychiatrist. The look of incredulity never left his face for my entire talk.

The incident had one value in my eyes. It showed that two people, one approaching the matter clinically, and the other relying on his own intuitive report of what had happened to him, both came up with exactly the same observation: the need for ego reduction.

During the past decade, my own endeavors have centered primarily upon this problem of ego reduction. How far I have been able

to explore that territory is not at all certain. I have, however, made a little progress. I shall try first to acquaint you with some of my findings, and second to relate them to the AA scene as I see it.

As I have already stated, the fact that hitting bottom could produce a surrender that cut the ego to size was evident fairly soon. In time, two additional facts manifested themselves. The first was that a reduced ego has marvelous recuperative powers. The second was that surrender is an essentially disciplinary function and experience. The first is merely repeating a fact known to you all. It is common knowledge that a return of the full-fledged ego can happen at any time. Years of sobriety are no insurance against its resurgence. No AA, regardless of his veteran status, can ever relax his guard against the encroachment of a reviving ego.

Recently one AA, writing to another, reported he was suffering, he feared from “halo-tosis,” an obvious reference to the smugness and self-complacency that so easily can creep into the individual with years of sobriety behind him. The assumption that one has all the answers—or the contrary, that one needs to know no answers and just follow AA—are two indicators of trouble. In both, open-mindedness is notably absent.

Perhaps as the commonest manifestation of the return of ego is witnessed in the individual who falls from his pink cloud, a state of mind familiar to you all. This blissful pink-cloud state is a logical aftermath of surrender. The ego, which is full of striving, just quits, and the individual senses peace and quiet within. The result is an enormous feeling of release, and the person flies right up to his pink cloud and thinks he has found heaven on earth. Everyone knows he is doomed to fall. But it is perhaps not equally clear that it is the ego, slowly making its comeback, that forces the descent from the pink cloud into the arena of life, where with the help of AA, he can learn how to become a sober person and not an angel.

I could go on with many more examples familiar to you all of the danger

of ever assuming that the ego is dead and buried. Its capacity for rebirth is utterly astounding and must never be forgotten.

My second finding that surrender is a disciplinary experience requires explanation. In recent articles I have shown that the ego basically must be forging continuously ahead. It operates on the unconscious assumption that it, the ego, can never be stopped. It takes for granted its right to go ahead, and in this respect has no expectation of being stopped and no capacity to adjust to that eventuality. Stopping says, in effect, “No, you cannot continue,” which is the essence of disciplinary control. The individual who cannot take a stopping is fundamentally an undisciplined person.

The function of surrender in AA is now clear. It produces that stopping by causing individuals to say, “I quit. I give up my headstrong ways. I’ve learned my lesson.” Very often for the first time in that individual’s adult life he has surrendered and truly feels, “Thy will, not mine, be done.” When that is true we have become, in fact, obedient servants of God. The spiritual life, at that point, is a reality. We have become members of the human race.

I have now presented the two points I wish to make, namely, first, the ego is revivable, and second, surrender is a disciplinary experience.

I next wish to assess their significance for AA as I see it. Primarily the two points say quite simply, “AA can never just be a miracle.” The simple act of surrender can produce sobriety by its stopping effect upon the ego. Unfortunately, that ego will return unless the individual learns to accept a disciplined way of life, which means the tendency for ego comeback is permanently checked.

This is not new to AA members. They have learned that a single surrender is not enough. Under the wise leadership of the founding fathers, the need for continued endeavor to maintain that miracle has been steadily stressed. The Twelve Steps urge repeated inventory, not just one. And

the Twelfth Step itself is a routine reminder that one must work at preserving sobriety. Moreover, it is referred to as Twelfth Step work, which is exactly what it is. By that time, the miracle is for the other fellow.

The Twelve Traditions are also part of the non-miracle aspect of AA. They represent, as Bill has said, the meanings of the lessons of experience. They serve as guides for the inexperienced; in reality they check the ways of the innocent and unwary. They bring the individual down to earth and present him with the facts of reality. In their own fashion the Traditions say, "Pay heed to the teachings of experience, or you will court disaster." It is with reason that we talk of the sober voice of experience.

My stress on the non-miracle elements of AA has a purpose. When I first made my acquaintance with AA, I rode the pink cloud with most of its members. I too went through a period of disillusionment and, fortunately for me, I came out with a faith far stronger than anything a pink cloud can supply. Mind you, I am not selling miracles short, they do loosen the individual up. I now know, however, the truth of the biblical saying, "By their works you shall know them." Only through hard toil and labor can lasting results be obtained.

As a consequence of the need for work to supplement any miracle, my interest in the non-miracle features has grown. I can accept more truly the necessity of organization, of structure, which curb as well as guide. I believe there must be meetings like this one to provide a sense of belonging to a big working organization, of which each individual is but a part. And I believe that any group or individual who fails to participate in the enterprises of the organization is rendering himself and his group a disservice by not submitting to the disciplinary values inherent in those activities. He may be keeping the ego free of entanglements, but he is also keeping

himself unstopped. His chances of remaining sober are not of a high order. He is really going it alone and is headed for another miracle—that may not come off the next time.

In closing let me reaffirm my proxy membership in AA. I have been in on its glowing start, and I've shared in its growing pains. And now I have reached the state of deep conviction in the soundness of the AA process, including its miracle aspect. I have tried to convey to you some of my observations on the nature of that process. I hope they will help in making the AA experience not just a miracle, but a way of life that is filled with eternal values. AA has, I can assure you, done just that for me.

The Act of Surrender in the Therapeutic Process With Special Reference to Alcoholism.

INTRODUCTION: The Importance of a Positive Attitude

A year and a half ago, I wrote a paper in which I discussed a phenomenon which I labeled "conversion." In that paper I broadened the concept of conversion to cover any major switch from negative to positive thinking and feeling irrespective of a possible religious component. Two points stood out to me as important: first, the fact that the positive frame of mind could appear under a given set of circumstances without special help, psychiatric or otherwise; and second, that the new state of mind had a decidedly healthier tone to its thinking and feeling than that which prevailed when the negative tone was uppermost. Without saying so, I then believed that the positive frame of mind could become a legitimate aim in therapy as, once it was brought about, the individual's attitudes and responses were much healthier.

While I no longer believe that therapy is simply a matter of reaching a positive relationship with reality, I remain convinced that the creation of a positive attitude is one of the essential features in a successful therapeutic program, and that any experience that brings about such an attitude or frame of mind deserves careful study for the light it may throw on treatment in general. Consequently, I continued my observations on the conversion experience and have arrived at the conclusion that the key to an understanding of that experience may be found in the act of surrender which, in my opinion, sets in motion the conversion switch. My paper will therefore consist of (1) a discussion of the act of surrender, and (2) an endeavor to relate it to the therapeutic process as a whole.

Before I go ahead, it may be wise to recapitulate the contents of my previous paper. In it I described how, with the conversion switch, many aspects of the patient's attitudes underwent profound and often remarkable alterations. I pointed out how, in eight major ways, the individual switched or changed. Rather than go through the whole list again, I can sum up these changes briefly by saying that the person who has achieved the positive frame of mind has lost his or her tense, aggressive, demanding, conscience-ridden self that feels isolated and at odds with the world and has become a relaxed, natural, more realistic individual who can dwell in the world on a Live and Let Live basis. The difference in the before and after state of these people is very real and represents, I believe, a fundamental psychic occurrence.

The Act of Surrender

With respect to the act of surrender, let me emphasize this point: it is an unconscious event, not willed by the patient even if he or she should desire to do so. It can occur only when an individual with certain traits in his or her unconscious mind becomes involved in a certain set of circumstances. Then the act of surrender can be anticipated with considerable accuracy, as I shall soon show. It cannot be defined in direct conscious terminology but must be understood in all its unconscious ramifications before its true inner meaning can be glimpsed. The simplest way to picture what is involved in the act

of surrender is to present a case in which there was a conversion experience that seemed to follow an act of surrender.

One Man's Story

The patient is a man in his early fifties, very successful in business, and referred to by his associates as Napoleon because of his autocratic methods when he was stirred up. For years, heavy drinking to the point of frequent intoxication was present, interfering to some extent with his efficiency, but never to the degree that his business really suffered. My first contact came some six or seven years ago when he came to Blythewood to dry out. Pursuant to our policy of trying slowly and from time to time to educate patients about the danger of their condition, we permitted this man to remain just for the drying out, at the same time telling him that, in our eyes, he was headed for trouble if he continued on his present trend. Without putting any pressure on him and thus arousing his resistance, we placed the facts before him and let it go.

We continued the policy of letting him come and go pretty much as he pleased, always, however, keeping uppermost before him the need to do something about his drinking, and always making it evident that we were not interested in drying him out, but in the real problem of helping him stop his drinking. Later on and in retrospect, the patient, in referring to these tactics, said, "I used to like to come here; you didn't always argue with me. I always knew just where you stood and knew I wasn't fooling you any."

During all this time, however, I was working on his life situation so that ultimately it would provide the necessary dynamite to jar him loose from his whirl of self-centeredness. Gradually, his wife gave up her protectiveness and, before the time of this last admission nearly two years ago, she had determined to leave him if his drinking continued. Moreover, as a result of some discussion with me, his business partner had decided that he, with several key members of the firm, would tender their resignations if the patient did not make a real effort to mend his ways.

After a particularly severe bout, the patient was induced again to enter Blythewood. This time, however, I told him flatly that he would sign himself in for thirty days or he would go elsewhere; we were through with him running his case once and for all. He looked startled, picked up his hat, fiddled with it, and then put it on his head, saying, "Where's your pen? I'll go to Hilltop where I belong," referring to the cottage where he had dried out on previous occasions. Within three or four days he was off the liquor and thinking reasonably straight. He was then informed of his wife's decision and, instead of ranting around and making it clear where she could go, he discussed for the first time the real hell he had put her through and really seemed regretful. By the end of the first week, quite prepared for trouble, the partner told him of the pending resignations if the drinking persisted, only to be surprised and pleased with the patient's quiet acceptance of their decision and an acknowledgment of his own real wish to be different. He soon joined A.A. and is now an active member of that organization in his home community. The patient has stayed sober.

What Happened?

Recently in discussing his experience the man in the story explained, "You did something to me when you made me sign that card. I knew you meant business. I knew my wife was getting sore and that Bill his partner was fed up, but when you showed me you were through fooling, that was a clincher. I knew I needed help and couldn't get out of it myself. So I signed the card and felt better right off for doing it. I made up my mind that I wasn't going to run my own case any longer but was going to take

orders. Then later I talked with Chris his wife and learned how she felt, and then Bill came along and I knew deep inside my heart they were right. But, I didn't mind. I didn't get angry and want to argue like I used to. I kind of surprised myself by agreeing with them. It sure was nice not to have to fight. I felt calmer and quieter inside and have ever since, although I know I'm not out of the woods yet."

Here is the story of a patient who has been through a conversion experience and is still in the positive phase. His own account of what happened stresses the signing of the card as the turning point in his experience, and I am also convinced that he is right. We can sum this man's experience up by saying that after trying to run his own case to his own ruination, he gave up the battle and surrendered to the need for help, after which he entered a new state of mind that has enabled him to remain sober.

Breaking Down The Act Of Surrender

This man's experience, which is not limited to alcoholics, raises three questions:

1. What qualities were there in his nature that so long resisted help and finally were forced to give in?
2. What were the circumstances that brought about the final act of surrender?
3. Why does a positive phase follow the surrender experience?

My answers to these questions are derived primarily from my studies of alcoholics, but not entirely, as I have witnessed surrender with a typical aftermath in at least four cases among the students at Sarah Lawrence. I hope through my discussion in reply to these questions not only to define the act of surrender, but also to give you some feeling for it as a psychological entity or event.

Internal Qualities

To turn then to the first question, "What are the qualities in a patient's nature that make him or her put up such a battle before finally surrendering?" In the alcoholic, my observations have led me to see that the two qualities that Sillman selected as characteristic -- *defiant individuality* and *grandiosity* -- may very well explain that the alcoholic is typically resistant to the point of being unreasonable and stubborn about seeking help or being able to accept help even when he or she seeks it. Defiant individuality and grandiosity operate in the unconscious layers of the mind and their influence must be understood if one is to see what probably goes on at the time of surrender.

Defiance

Defiance may be defined as a quality that permits an individual to snap his fingers in the face of reality and live on unperturbed. It has two special values for handling life situations. In the first place, defiance, certainly with alcoholics, is a surprisingly effective tool for managing anxiety or reality, both of which are so often a source of anxiety. If you defy a fact and say it is not so and can succeed in doing so unconsciously, you can drink to the day of your death, forever denying the imminence of that fate. As one patient phrased it, "My defiance was a cloak of armor." And so it was a most trustworthy shield against the truth and all its pressures.

In the second place, defiance masquerades as a very real and reliable source of inner strength and self-confidence, since it says in essence, Nothing can happen to me because I can and do defy it. With

people who meet reality on this basis, life is always a battle with the spoils going to the strong. Much can be said in favor of defiance as a method of meeting life. It is the main resource of the chin-up and unafraid type of adjustment and, as a temporary measure, it helps people over many rough spots.

Grandiosity

Grandiosity, the second quality noted by Sillman, permeates widely throughout the reactions of the alcoholic. Differing from defiance -- which seems almost uniquely structuralized in the psyche of the alcoholic -- grandiosity springs from the persisting infantile ego. As in other neurotic states, grandiosity characteristically fills a person with feelings of omnipotence, demands for direct gratification of wishes, and a proneness to interpret frustration as evidence of rejection and lack of love. The effect of this persistence in the alcoholic is not a bit different from the effect of any other neurotic. Perhaps in the alcoholic the typical arrogance and sense of superior worth are kept nearer the surface by the associated defiance that feeds the childish ego constantly by its succession of victories. By and large, however, there is nothing in the alcoholic's grandiosity that distinguishes him or her from the neurotic, whose infantile ego survives to become a significant factor in adult life; it is part of the typical egocentricity of that group, and its presence is confirmed by any careful study of them.

Defiance and Grandiosity at Work in the Alcoholic

We are now in a position to discuss how these qualities operate in alcoholics. On the one side, the defiance says, It is not true that I can't manage drinking. On the other side, the facts speak loudly and with increasing insistence to the contrary. Again, on the one side, grandiosity claims, there is nothing I cannot master and control, and on the other side, the facts demonstrate unmistakably the opposite. The dilemma of the alcoholic is now obvious: the unconscious mind rejects -- through its capacity for defiance and grandiosity -- what the conscious mind perceives. Hence, realistically, the individual is frightened by his or her drinking and at the same time is prevented from doing anything about it by the unconscious activity that can and does ignore or override the conscious mind.

Let us see how this clash between the conscious and unconscious response manifests itself in the clinical setting. A stimulus from reality, such as a recognition of the downhill pattern of the drinking, impinges upon the conscious mind and creates acute anxiety which, for the moment, dominates the conscious processes and is recorded as worry, distress, fear, and concern. The patient, in this state, is fired with a desire to quit and eagerly grabs at any kind of help. He or she is in a state of crisis and suffering.

In the meantime, however, the stimulus of reality is hitting the unconscious layers of the mind and is stirring up the reactions of defiance and grandiosity. Since, characteristically, it takes a certain amount of time before the unconscious responses are sufficiently mobilized to influence conscious mental activity, there is always an appreciable lag before the conscious mind evidences signs of the underlying unconscious activity. Then slowly and gradually these attitudes supervene. Patients express less concern about their drinking, complain that they were rushed into seeking help, that they're no worse than anybody else, and that the worry of others is silly and a gratuitous invasion of their rights. Finally, the memory of their own acute period of anxiety is swallowed up by the defiance and grandiosity. Thus the patient loses the effectiveness of the anxiety as a stimulus to create suffering and a desire for change. This cycle will go on repeating itself as long as the defiance and the grandiosity continue to function with unimpaired vigor.

External Circumstances

We now come to the second question: "What were the circumstances that made that patient give in and sign that card?" Let me review them for you briefly. He had been drinking for years, and he knew his drinking was getting worse in the eyes of family and friends. However, he knew that his condition had reached the point where both his wife and his business associates were leaving him and thereby withdrawing their support and protection. He was threatened with the task of managing himself and his condition entirely on his own, so he sought my help and protection to dry him out and thus allow him once more to resume his role of successful defiance and grandiosity. This time, however, I refused to follow my previous role. I had established myself as not arbitrary, not willing to fit what he needed. But when I asked him to sign the card, I knew that his other circumstances were different and that I represented the one way for him. When I told him, in essence, that he was not running his case or me anymore, his last prop was thus removed. He had no place to take his defiance and his grandiosity; nor could he become defiant with me: someone who stood for his last bit of hope and who actually had become established as an ultimate resource when he was in difficulty. So he staged a brief inward debate and then signed the card.

In short, the patient signed the card, first, when all support was withdrawn; second, when he could not in anger defy those who withdrew their support because he knew they had been patient and long suffering; and third, when he found himself desperately needing help and had no grandiose ideas left about being able to drink like non-alcoholics. He had neither unconscious defiance nor grandiosity left to fight with. He was licked, and he both knew it and felt it.

The Positive Phase

We now reach the third question, "Why does the positive phase follow?" Here, we frankly reach speculation. I know the positive phase comes, but not just why. Surrender means cessation of a fight, and cessation of a fight seems logically to be followed by internal peace and quiet. That point seems fairly obvious, but why the whole feeling tone switches from negative to positive without all the concomitant changes is not so clear. Nevertheless, despite my inability to explain the phenomenon, there is no question that the changes do take place and that they may be initiated by an act of surrender.

The Difference Between Submission and Surrender

One fact must be kept in mind, namely, the need to distinguish between submission and surrender. In submission, an individual accepts reality consciously, but not unconsciously. He or she accepts as a practical fact that he or she cannot at that moment lick reality, but lurking in the unconscious is the feeling, there'll come a day, which implies no real acceptance and demonstrates conclusively that the struggle is still on. With submission, which at best is a superficial yielding, tension continues.

When an individual surrenders, the ability to accept reality functions on the unconscious level, and there is no residual of battle; relaxation with freedom from strain and conflict ensues. In fact, it is perfectly possible to ascertain how much acceptance of reality is on the unconscious level by the degree of relaxation that develops. The greater the relaxation, the greater the inner acceptance of reality.

We can now be more precise in our definition of an act of surrender. *It is to be viewed as a moment when the unconscious forces of defiance and grandiosity actually cease to function effectively.* When that happens, the individual is wide open to reality; he or she can listen and learn without conflict and fighting back. He or she is receptive to life, not antagonistic. The person senses a feeling of relatedness and at-oneness that becomes the source of an inner peace and serenity, the possession of which frees the individual from the compulsion to drink. In other words, an act of surrender is an occasion wherein the individual no longer fights life, but accepts it.

Having defined an act of surrender as a moment of accepting reality on the unconscious level, it is now possible to define the emotional state of surrender as a state in which there is a persisting capacity to accept reality. In this definition, the capacity to accept reality must not be conceived of in a passive sense, but in the active sense of reality being a place where one can live and function as a person acknowledging one's responsibilities and feeling free to make that reality more livable for oneself and others. There is no sense of "must"; nor is there any sense of fatalism. With true unconscious surrender, the acceptance of reality means the individual can work in it and with it. The state of surrender is really positive and creative.

To sum up, my observations have led me to conclude that an act of surrender is inevitably followed by a state of surrender that is actually the positive state in the conversion picture. Because of the two always being associated, I believe they represent a single phenomenon to which I attach the term *surrender reaction*.

Relating the Act of Surrender to the Therapeutic Process

Having at last made as clear as I could my use of the term *surrender*, I must now try to relate that concept to the therapeutic process. While, a recognition of the dynamic force of the event has proven enlightening in many directions, it has been particularly helpful in understanding the fluctuations in moods of patients and in certain aspects of therapy.

The following patient's problem took on meaning for me when I grasped the fact that he had experienced an act of surrender at the time he attended his first A.A. meeting. A man in his middle thirties, he tells his story this way:

"I was licked. I'd tried everything, and nothing had worked. My wife was packing to leave me; my job was going to blow up in my face. I was desperate when I went to my first A.A. meeting. When I got there, something happened. I don't know to this day a year later what it was, but I took a look at the men and women there and I knew they had something I needed, so I said to myself, I'll listen to what they have to tell me. From that time on, things have been different. I go to meetings, work with other drunks, and study all I can about alcoholism. I know I'm an alcoholic, and I never let that fact escape me."

Now, if you stop and review this man's account, you will note the statement, "I'll listen to what they have to tell me." In that comment to himself, the patient initiated his act of surrender.

There was no lip service in his willingness to listen; he really wanted help. There was no defiance or grandiosity available at the moment to dilute his listening. He was accepting, without inner reservation or conflict, the reality of his condition and the need for help. And, significantly enough, at

this point he goes on to say, "From that time on, things have been different." Subsequent events clearly indicate that this man did experience the typical change I have been calling *conversion*, and from that time on "things were different." His wife, commenting on this change, said feelingly, "It's the most remarkable thing I ever could imagine. The only trouble is that I still have to keep my fingers crossed because it still doesn't make any sense to me."

The patient, however, consulted me because he "didn't like the way things were going." By that, he meant that he was finding himself cranky at home and irritable in business, signs that his A.A. experience had taught him were ominous. When I asked him why he gave up drinking, he replied that he had made up his mind to quit so he, did, although he had to admit that A.A. was helpful. A little surprised at this simple assertion and doubting it somewhat, I plied him with further questions and got the real story, which showed to me that he had a typical surrender experience, followed by a typical positive aftermath. But I also saw that the change did not last and that, after several months in which the patient had lived in a state of surrender, he slowly reverted to his former attitudes and ways of feeling. In other words, the surrender reaction did not fix itself into his personality and thus allowed the return of his previous state of mind.

Differing acts of surrender

The fate of the surrender reaction is in itself an interesting study. With some, the surrender experience is the start of genuine growth and maturation. With others, the surrender phase is the only one ever reached, so that they never lose the need to attend meetings and to follow the program assiduously, apparently relying on the constant reminders in their daily existence to supply the necessary impetus to the surrender feeling, at least insofar as alcohol is concerned. For a few, there seems to occur a phenomenon of what might be called selective surrender. After the effects of the initial surrender experience have worn away, the individual returns to pretty much the same person he or she was before, except for the fact that the person doesn't drink. His surrender is not to life as a person, but to alcohol as an alcoholic. Many other differing aftermaths undoubtedly occur, but a study of any or all of them would, I am sure, disclose the same basic fact: the surrender experience is followed by a phase of positive thinking and feeling that undergoes various vicissitudes before it becomes established in some form or other in the psyche -- or it is lost completely, becoming merely a memory and a mirage.

Recognizing the Surrender Reaction

From the standpoint of therapy, recognition of the surrender reaction throws a challenging light upon many clinical phenomena that are generally held to be of significance in the process of getting better. For instance, in catharsis it is not what is revealed but the act of surrender (that preceded and permitted the revealing to come to light) that, in my opinion, produces the characteristic afterglow of positive feeling. It also explains its temporary effect just as with the conversion experience of the alcoholic. Again, the frequent unexpected lifts derived from seemingly ordinary first interviews, while they may be considered transference phenomena, seem to me more in the nature of "surrender reactions" based upon the fact that the client found the interview palatable, and the client made a decision to continue, which by implication means "surrender", to the psychiatrist. The very decision to come to a psychiatrist, through its surrender significance, often has an ameliorating influence and certainly accounts for the remark of a patient who said, "Once I rang your doorbell, I felt 75 percent better". The phenomenon of release, which makes people realize that, in losing their lives they are

finding them, becomes explicable if one sees that the surrender that preceded the sense of release stills the inner fight and hostility, thus permitting the spontaneous creative elements of the Inner Self outlet for expression.

Resistance

It is in the area of resistance, however, that an understanding of the surrender reaction sheds the greatest light on the therapeutic process. Regularly, therapy goes ahead by fits and starts. For a while there is a period of resistance that is worked through, permitting progress, insight, and awareness of the emotional interplays in the unconscious life. Then another point of resistance is encountered, and again it must be ferreted out and dissolved before further constructive steps may be taken. Meeting resistance and working it through are the everyday tasks of therapy.

Breaking Through Resistance

Where before the patient has been in full resistance -- bucking treatment, difficult to manage, getting nowhere -- suddenly there is a marked change, almost like the sun bursting through the clouds, bringing everything into focus and making what was once a confused jumble take on form, significance, and meaning. For the time being, the resistances have disappeared and the treatment proceeds apace.

We have been accustomed to saying that the patient has a flash of insight and understanding that brought clarification and a greater awareness of his or her individual emotional makeup. Actually, if you examine the state of mind that breaks through when the resistance melts, you will find it is strikingly parallel to the positive state of mind an individual may have after a conversion experience. In fact, the parallel is so striking that I am more and more becoming convinced that the two are identical. In other words, I now believe that the giving up of resistance during treatment is in reality an act of surrender that typically, as in the conversion experience, is followed by a positive state of mind where elements of resistance are no longer present. This "giving in" may be sudden, causing the patient to enter the positive phase so rapidly as to constitute a sudden turnover with dramatic results. Generally, as in the conversion change, the change is slower, but the alteration is in exactly the same direction.

Conclusion

No one recognizes more than I do the sweeping nature of any such observations. No one is more aware than I am of the need to substantiate these observations with clinical material. Someday I may be able to support more conclusively my present hypothesis with case material. I can point out, however, that the positive aftermath of the so-called "successful interpretations" is no more lasting than the positive phase of the so-called "conversion experience". They are both temporary; they are both slowly supplanted by a new crop of resistances or negative feelings. Also, they both require further change in the unconscious mind before the act of surrender becomes a settled state of surrender in which defiance and grandiosity no longer raise havoc with adjustment, serenity, and the capacity to function as a human being.

To recapitulate, my studies of the conversion experience have led me to see that:

- It is the act of surrender that initiates the switch from negative to positive behavior.
- It occurs when the unconscious defiance and grandiosity are for the time being rendered completely powerless by force of circumstance or reality.
- The act of surrender and the change that follows are inseparable since it is safe to assume that if there is no change, there has been no surrender.
- The positive phase is really a state of surrender that follows the surrender act.
- In several places, as in catharsis, the so-called improvement or feeling better is actually a state of surrender induced by an act of surrender.
- The state of surrender, if maintained, supplies an emotional tone to all thinking and feeling that does insure healthy adjustment.

I have tried in this paper to establish the fact that there is such a psychic event as surrender and that once the fact is appreciated in all its ramifications, it is illuminating clinically and provides a basis for understanding much that goes on in the therapeutic process.

Surrender Versus Compliance in Therapy with Special Reference to Alcoholism

Introduction:

SINCE BECOMING a side-line observer of Alcoholics Anonymous in 1939, my approach to alcoholism has undergone an almost total reorientation. For the first time I saw what peace of mind means in the achievement of sobriety and I began to consider the emotional factors involved from a very different viewpoint. In A.A. meetings, the role of resentments was a recurrent theme. This seemed significant. Continuing this line of observation, I found that another enemy of sobriety was defiance, which Sillman had already described as "defiant individuality," a major hallmark of the personality of alcoholics.

Another significant emphasis in A.A. was humility and "hitting bottom," completely new points of emphasis for me. It was clear that if the individual remained stiff-necked he would continue to drink, but I could not see why. Finally the presence of an apparently unconquerable ego became evident. It was this ego which had to become humble. Then the role of hitting bottom, which means reaching a feeling of personal helplessness, began to be clear. It was this process that produced in the ego an awareness of vulnerability, initiating the positive phase. In hitting bottom the ego becomes tractable and is ready for humility. The conversion experience (2) has started.

What happens in the unconscious at the time of hitting bottom remained a mystery. The first elucidation came from a patient. Through psychotherapy she was gradually losing the intractable ego structure and finally, for rather obscure reasons, she had a minor conversion experience which brought her relative peace and quiet. During this phase she began attending various churches in town. One Monday morning she entered the office, her eyes shining and said at once, "I know what happened to me. I heard it in a hymn yesterday. I surrendered when I had that experience." Guided by this clue, I realize that "hitting bottom" is ineffectual if not followed by a surrender. Hitting bottom must produce a result, which is surrender.

Most of my ideas along these lines were incorporated in an article on "the act of surrender" in relation to the therapeutic process. I now wish to extend these thoughts a step further. The surrender concept has not generally been well received except by some A.A.'s who recognize its validity in their own experiences. One or two psychiatrists have told me they are beginning to see the usefulness of the concept but no one, to my knowledge, has yet come forward with a paper supporting the thesis of surrender out of his own observations.

One reason for this lag is the resistance to the idea of surrender. It seems too completely defeatist. Were I writing that article now I would change it in this respect so as to discuss the term surrender in linkage with other, less to-be-shunned concepts. But those links were discovered only later.

In the article on surrender, I said:

"One fact must be kept in mind, namely the need to distinguish between submission and surrender. In submission, an individual accepts reality consciously but not unconsciously. He accepts as a practical fact that he cannot at that moment conquer reality, but lurking in his unconscious is the feeling, 'There'll come a day' -- which implies no real acceptance and demonstrates conclusively that the struggle is still going on. With submission, which at best

is a superficial yielding, tension continues. When, on the other hand, the ability to accept reality functions on the unconscious level, there is no residual battle, and relaxation ensues with freedom from strain and conflict. In fact, it is perfectly possible to ascertain to what extent the acceptance of reality is on the unconscious level by the degree of relaxation which develops. The greater the relaxation, the greater is the inner acceptance of reality."

Understanding Acceptance

In that paragraph the words *accept* and *acceptance* are each used three times. I saw at the time that surrender leads to acceptance. What I failed to see and emphasize was the very important relationship between surrender and the capacity for acceptance.

I propose, therefore, first, to consider acceptance as a human capacity, and second, to discuss the blocks to the development of acceptance. The importance of acceptance is widely recognized although often only by indirection. Sometimes the necessity for acceptance is bluntly stated, as in Grayson's recent article on the role of "acceptance" in physical rehabilitation. Grayson reports his discovery that the individual who needs rehabilitation remains a poor prospect until he finally accepts his need for the rehabilitating procedures. More often the concept of acceptance is dragged in by the heels with little or no recognition that acceptance itself is a major psychological step. Two recent illustrations are worthy of mention. In a summarizing article on Alcoholics Anonymous, in the Connecticut Review on Alcoholism, the following statements appear: "He does not have to fight against ideas which come from this group, he can accept them." Thus the idea that he is an alcoholic is acceptable when coming from this group. The need to avoid the 'first drink' is accepted." Certainly the need for acceptance is unequivocally stated. And the following statement is from Kubie's book: "The man who is normal can accept the guidance of reason, reality and common sense" The word "accept" is scattered throughout the pages of the book but the question of acceptance is never raised—as if it were something that needs no discussion.

The first of the Alcoholics Anonymous twelve steps reads: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable." The second word is "admitted," which in many ways is a blood brother of acceptance although many an A.A. meeting has been devoted to quibbling about the difference between admit and accept. Time and again slips are explained on the basis that the one who slips has not truly accepted his alcoholism.

The word "accept", thus, appears quite regularly in speech and writing but never is there much discussion of how acceptance comes about. The usual explanation is that, if the doctor is accepting, the patient will be so too; in case of failure, the therapist is held responsible, just as parents are for their children. To suppose that acceptance is caught by contagion is a pretty thought. It is not, however, likely to stimulate much understanding of individual psychodynamics. It is not enough merely to point the finger elsewhere.

There is need, therefore, to discuss the dynamics of acceptance in the individual. Acceptance appears to be a state of mind in which the individual accepts rather than rejects or resists: he is able to take things in, to go along with, to cooperate, to be receptive. Contrariwise, he is not argumentative, quarrelsome, irritable or contentious. For the time being, at any rate, the hostile, negative, aggressive elements are in abeyance, and we have a much pleasanter human being to deal with. Acceptance as a state of mind has many highly admirable qualities as well as useful ones. Some measure of it is greatly to be desired. Its attainment as an inner state of mind is never easy.

It is necessary to point out that no one can tell himself or force himself wholeheartedly to accept anything. One must have a feeling -conviction -otherwise' the acceptance is not wholehearted but halfhearted with a large element of lip service. There is a string of words which describe halfhearted acceptance: submission, resignation, yielding, compliance, acknowledgment, concession, and so forth. With each of these words there is a feeling of reservation, a tug in the direction of nonacceptance.

Most people regard nonacceptance as a sign of willful refusal; this bypasses all current knowledge of the unconscious elements in resistance and will power. Others, better informed about those attributes, avoid the use of such a phrase as willful refusal. They know that it is largely unconscious attitudes and feelings that determine the conscious thinking and hence do not suppose that resistance can be given up by an act of will on the part of the conscious mind.

Acceptance: A Step Beyond Recognition

Those who recognize the role of unconscious forces then take a curious next step: They talk about undermining the resistance by uncovering the reasons for the particular series of resistance, as if the unconscious mind must then accept those reasons-a non sequitur. It is one thing to see reasons and quite another thing to behave with corresponding rationality. One patient neatly punctured this assumption. After 8 years of analysis with four therapists of different schools, he began to get some inkling of acceptance as a state of mind which he sadly lacked. Finally, in a burst of awareness, he remarked, "I know all the reasons but I don't know how to be reasonable." That statement aptly summed up his predicament. His logical mind could perceive and believe all the factors underlying his difficulties but he remained cantankerous and unreasonable as far as his feeling life was concerned. In his head, or conscious mind, he could "accept" the explanations but deep inside where the heart, or the unconscious, operates there was no feeling of acceptance. That capacity still had to be developed. Uncovering reasons for behavior, no matter how convincing, does not and cannot insure acceptance of those reasons. Acceptance is a step beyond recognition, a further operation in the process of therapy. Many therapists have failed to discern this two-stage process. The clue was my patient's use of the word "reasonable." He could have said, with accuracy, "reasonable and accepting," because he was beginning to appreciate the fact that one's frame of mind governs one's response to things that are reasonable or, for that matter, unreasonable.

What was not clearly appreciated is the fact that a state of reasonableness or acceptance or receptivity has an emotional origin which rises from exactly the same source as does the resistance and the forces which predominantly contribute to our being willing, namely, the unconscious. Unless the unconscious has within it the capacity to accept, the conscious mind can only tell itself that it should accept but by so doing it cannot bring about acceptance in the unconscious which continues with its own non-accepting and resenting attitudes. The result is a house divided against itself: the conscious mind sees all the reasons for acceptance while the unconscious mind says, "But I won't accept!" Wholehearted acceptance under such conditions is impossible. Experience has proved that in the alcoholic a halfhearted reaction does not maintain sobriety for very long. The inner doubts all too soon take over. The alcoholic who stays "dry" must be wholehearted. Here we meet a complication. People accept the necessity of being wholehearted about alcoholism but not about everything else. They are determined to maintain their capacity for resistance. They fear the fact that if they become total acceptors they will have no ability whatsoever to resist and will become "pushovers," complete "Caspar Milquetoasts."

Such fears of passivity are supported not only by conscious logic but also by deep unconscious sources which cannot be dealt with in the present paper. Powerful forces are aligned against acceptance, producing in the individual extreme conflict which must be resolved if the capacity for acceptance is ever to develop.

Compliance: Partial Surrender

We are thus confronted with the question: What does produce wholehearted acceptance? My answer is, as before, surrender. But surrender is a step not easily taken by human beings. In recent years, because of my special interest in the phenomenon of surrender, I have become aware of another conscious and unconscious phenomenon, namely compliance -- which is basically partial acceptance or partial surrender, and which often serves as a block to surrender. The remainder of this paper will concern itself with that reaction and how it throws light on the handling of patients, particularly alcoholics.

Compliance needs careful definition. It means agreeing, going along, but in no way implies enthusiastic, wholehearted assent and approval. There is a willingness not to argue or resist but the cooperation is a bit grudging, a little forced; one is not entirely happy about agreeing. Compliance is, therefore, a word which portrays mixed feelings, divided sentiments. There is a willingness to go along but at the same time there are some inner reservations which make that willingness somewhat thin and watery. It does not take much to overthrow this kind of willingness. The existence of this attitude will probably appear as neither strange nor new. Nor is it, until one begins to see how it operates in the unconscious.

One thing must be made absolutely clear: There is a world of difference between' thinking of compliance in conscious terms and in unconscious terms. The following discussion is focused wholly on unconscious reactions and cannot be translated into conscious reactions until the possible effect of the former upon the latter is appreciated. An illustration at this point may be helpful. An alcoholic, at the termination of a long and painful spree, decides that he has had enough. This decision is announced loudly and vehemently to all who will listen. His sincerity cannot be questioned. He means every word of it. Yet he knows, and so do those who hear him, that he will be singing another tune before many weeks have elapsed. For the moment he seems to have accepted his alcoholism but it is only with a skin-deep assurance. He will certainly revert to drinking. What we see here is compliance in action. During the time when his memory of the suffering entailed by a spree is acute and painful he agrees to anything and everything. But deep inside, in his unconscious, the best he can do is to comply -- which means that, when the reality of his drinking

problem becomes undeniable, he no longer argues with incontrovertible facts. The fight, so to speak, has been knocked out of him. As time passes and the memory of his suffering weakens, the need for compliance lessens. As the need diminishes, the half of compliance which never really accepted begins to stir once more and soon resumes its way. The need for accepting the illness of alcoholism is ignored because, after all, deep inside he really did not mean it, he had only complied. Of course consciously the victim of all this is completely in the dark. What he gets is messages from below which slowly bring about a change in conscious attitudes. For a while drink was anathema but now he begins to toy with the thought of one drink, and so on, until finally, as the noncooperative element in

compliance takes over, he has his first drink. The other half of compliance has won out; the alcoholic is the unwitting victim of his unconscious inclinations.

It is the nature of the word to have this two-faced quality of agreeing and then renegeing. It is only by realizing the widespread ramification of the compliance tendency that its far-flung importance can be appreciated.

One of the first things to recognize is the fact that the presence of compliance blocks the capacity for true acceptance. Since compliance is a form of acceptance, every time the individual is faced with the need to accept something he falls back on compliance, which serves for the moment -- the individual consciously believing that he has accepted. But since he has no real capacity to accept, he is soon swinging in the other direction, his seeming acceptance a thing of the past. In other words, the best an inwardly complying person can do toward acceptance is to comply. During treatment the patient regularly is surprised to learn that his previous tendency to agree in order to be agreeable was merely a lot of compliance without any genuine capacity to accept.

This unconscious split in the compliance mechanism has deep psychosomatic reverberations. One patient, who had uncovered a wide streak of compliance, had a dream in which he placed the two components of compliance side by side, disclosing their utter incompatibility. What he saw was that his wish to be cooperative and well liked while yet maintaining his ego intact meant certain conflict, with other people whose very existence was a threat to his own ego. He was torn by the dilemma of being nice and pleasant or being a man and holding his own. His next dream contained a busy ferry-boat plying back and forth across a river. As the patient watched, it went faster and faster and faster, the patient following its motion closely. Soon it seemed as if he were following the flight of a tennis ball while sitting at the net, his head turning more and more rapidly until finally he became giddy and woke up feeling dizzy. When the patient, and physician, saw the connection between this

dream and the dilemma of his preceding dream, he laughed and remarked, "You know, I have been doctoring for many years and have heard all about this psychosomatic business, but I never thought I would learn about it from myself."

Compliance creates other problems for the individual. Since it says "yes" on the surface and "no" inside, it contributes to the sense of guilt. The person who says yes and feels the opposite has an inward realization that he is a two-faced liar; this stirs up his conscience and evokes a feeling of guilt. Compliance also adds mightily to the problems of inferiority. The guilt reaction increases the sense of inferiority but the compliance response engrafts it even more. The unconscious situation can be outlined thus: Compliance is a form of agreeing, of never standing up for one-self. When that response is automatic, routine and unvarying, the individual gets a feeling that he cannot stand up for himself; this inevitably augments his inferiority problems.

Compliance and Alcoholism

It is now possible to link compliance with the problem of alcoholism and also to the theory of surrender. The link between alcoholism and compliance has already been shown in the alcoholic's repeated vows that he would never take another drink, vows which go by the board because of the inner inability to do more than comply. The presence of a strong vein of unconscious compliance in

the alcoholic can be demonstrated in other ways. Alcoholics are a notably pleasant and agreeable group with a marked tendency to say yes when approached directly. They claim they want to be well liked -- hence their willingness to promise anything. Yet -- and here the other side of the compliance reaction is manifest -- they balk at the showdown and are' ever likely to renege on their original promises. As another illustration, they are keen to go to a show, buy tickets in advance, and then on the night of the performance wish they had never had the idea. Characteristically, one man always calls up at the last moment for a date, knowing that if he had made the engagement in advance his present wish would later appear as a "must" which he had to live up to. He, like so many of his kind, has to do things on the spur of the moment. Otherwise, the contrary half gets into action and the project is opposed and quashed. A favorite remark, "Let's have some fun," must mean immediately: the desire evaporates if there is any planning to be done. Often alcoholics go downtown merely looking for fun with not a thought of a drink on their minds -- in fact, quite "compliant" to the need for sobriety. When they find the fun, however, the chances are that they will be in trouble before the night is over. Undoubtedly the initial restlessness which stimulated the need for some fun had its origin in the early rumblings of the noncompliance elements. Much of the apparent dual personality of alcoholics becomes understandable if their behavior is seen in the light of conflicting trends.

The next point, the relationship between compliance and surrender, has already been intimated in the remark that compliance blocks the capacity to surrender. The inability to surrender may seem a small loss until the matter is studied more thoughtfully.

After an act of surrender, the individual reports a sense of unity, of ended struggles, of no longer divided inner counsel. He knows the meaning of inner wholeness and, what is more, he knows from immediate experience the feeling of being wholehearted about anything. He recognizes for the first time how insincere his previous protestations actually were. If he is a member of Alcoholics Anonymous, he travels around to meetings proclaiming the need for honesty -- usually, at the start of his pilgrimage, with a certain amount of surprise and wonder in his voice. Quite frankly, before he was able to embrace the program, he had no idea he was a liar, dishonest in his thoughts; but now that A.A. is making sense -- that is, he is accepting A.A. wholeheartedly and without reservations -- he sees that previously he had never truly accepted anything. The A.A. speaker does not follow through to state that, formerly, all he had been doing was complying; but if asked, he nods his head in vigorous assent, saying, "That's exactly what I was doing." A more articulate individual, after a little thought, added: "You know, when I think back on it, that was all I knew how to do. I supposed that was the way it was with everybody. I could not conceive of really giving up. The best I could do was comply, which meant I never really wanted to quit drinking, I can see it all now but I certainly couldn't then."

Obviously this speaker is reporting the loss of his compliant tendencies, occurring, let it be noted, when he gave up, surrendered, and thus was able wholeheartedly to follow the A.A. program. Let it further be noted that this new honesty arises automatically, spontaneously; the individual does not have the slightest inkling that this development is in prospect. It represents a deep unconscious shift in attitude and one certainly for the better.

It is now possible to see the usurping, dog-in-the-manger role of compliance. As long as compliance is functioning, there is halfway but never total surrender. But the halfway surrender and acceptance, serving as it does to quell the fighting temporarily, deceives both the individual and the onlooker,

neither of whom is able to detect the unconscious compliance in the reaction of apparent yielding. It is only when a real surrender occurs that compliance is knocked out of the picture, freeing the individual for a series of wholehearted responses -- including, in the alcoholic, his acceptance of his illness and of his need to do something constructive about it.

Enough has been said, it would seem, to show the significance and the importance of understanding the relationship between compliance and the ability to surrender and accept. They are in complete opposition. As long as the former controls reactions, there can be no wholehearted acceptance, only the halfhearted kind which is admittedly not sufficient. Results of real value can only come about when the compliant reactions have been successfully dissipated.

No Easy Road to Understanding

Some will ask how this can be brought about. The answer, insofar as I have been able to formulate it, is long, involved and rather hazy. Experience shows that through psychotherapy the dominance of compliance over the unconscious can slowly be superseded, and that through the A.A. experience compliance can be temporarily and sometimes permanently blotted out. There does not appear to be any easy road to real understanding of this problem.

The preceding materials can now be summed up. It was pointed out that in an earlier article on the phenomenon of surrender, the tie of surrender to acceptance had not been sufficiently stressed. It was also pointed out that the concept of acceptance is freely talked about but rarely if ever made an object of study. Some observations regarding the nature of acceptance were reported and it was shown to contain two possible reactions which we called wholehearted acceptance and halfhearted. It was then demonstrated how halfheartedness and compliance were closely allied. The nature of compliance was next discussed and, lastly, the antipathetic relationship between compliance on the one hand and surrender and acceptance on the other.

This is a long and rather circuitous route to the point of this paper, namely, that surrender is essential to wholehearted acceptance and that unconscious compliance, which is a halfway surrender, can be a vital block to genuine surrender. It was then pointed out that alcoholics frequently show marked unconscious compliant trends which not only help to explain some puzzling aspects of their behavior but also account for their frequent inability to respond meaningfully to treatment. Since the presence of these trends has been more clearly recognized, the response of many patients to therapy has been considerably more satisfactory. These considerations have been presented in the hope that others also may find that a recognition of the processes of surrender, acceptance and compliance can be a source of help in tackling the alcoholic psychotherapeutically.

The Ego Factors in Surrender in Alcoholism

Introduction

In the past 15 years, my understanding of the nature of alcoholism as a disease has been influenced largely by insight into the mechanisms at work in the Alcoholics Anonymous process. Some years ago I stated that A.A., to succeed, must induce a surrender on the part of the individual I. More recently, I discussed the idea of compliance acting as a barrier to that real acceptance which a surrender produces. On this occasion I propose to extend my observations by discussing (a) what factors in the individual must surrender, and (b) how the surrender reaction changes the inner psychic picture.

The first question, what factors in the individual must surrender received passing attention in the article on compliance. There, relative to the difficulty of surrender, I noted that "the presence of an apparently unconquerable ego became evident. It was this ego which had to become humble." The first part of the present communication will be devoted to an elaboration of the nature of this ego factor.

Use of the word "ego" involves always the possibility of confusion of meaning. For a time, therefore, I considered a substitute term. That idea was set aside because, despite possible misinterpretation, the word ego is current in everyday language in exactly the sense in which it will be employed in this discussion. The expression, "he has an inflated ego," is self-explanatory. It evokes the picture of a pompous, self-important, strutting individual whose inferiorities are masked by a surface assurance. Such a person appears thick-skinned, insensitive, nearly impervious to the existence of others, a completely self-centered individual who plows unthinkingly through life, intent on gathering unto himself all the comforts and satisfactions available. He is generally considered the epitome of selfishness, and there the matter rests.

This popular view of ego, while it may not have scientific foundation, has one decided value: it possesses a meaning and can convey a concept which the average person can grasp. This concept of the inflated ego recognizes the common ancestor of a whole series of traits, namely, that they are all manifestations of an underlying feeling state in which personal considerations are first and foremost.

The existence of this ego has long been recognized, but a difficulty in terminology still remains. Part of the difficulty arises from the use of the word ego, in psychiatric and psychological circles, to designate those elements of the psyche which are supposed to rule psychic life. Freud divided mental life into three major subdivisions: the id, the ego and the superego. The first, he stated, contains the feeling of life on a deep, instinctual level; the third is occupied by the conscience, whose function is to put brakes on the impulses arising within the id. The ego should act as mediator between the demands of the id and the restraints of the superego, which might be over-zealous and bigoted. Freud's own research was concerned mainly with the activities of the id and the superego. The void he left with

respect to the ego is one that his followers are endeavoring to fill, but as yet with no generally accepted conclusions.

Ego: Two Definitions

The word ego, however has been preempted by the psychiatrists and psychologists, although they do not always agree among themselves about the meaning to be attached to it. The resulting confusion is the more lamentable because almost everyone, layman or scientist, would agree on the concept of the inflated ego. It would be helpful if other terms were found for the ego concepts about which there are differing views.

The solution for this dilemma will be to indicate with a capital E the big Ego, and without a capital to identify the personality aspect which Freud had in mind when he placed ego between id and superego.³

With this disposition of the problem of terminology, it is now possible to consider the first issue, namely, the Ego factors in the alcoholic which, through surrender, become humble. The concept of the enlarged Ego, as noted previously, is available to common observation. Those who do not recognize it in themselves can always see it in some member of their family or among friends and acquaintances -- not to mention patients. Everyone knows egotistical people and has a perfectly clear idea of what the word means. Besides egotistical, and the series of words mentioned earlier, adjectives which help to round out the portrait of the egotistical person are prideful, arrogant, pushing, dominating, attention seeking, aggressive, opinionated, headstrong, stubborn, determined and impatient.

All these terms are inadequate, however, because they describe only surface features without conveying any feeling of the inner essence from which the Ego springs. Unless some appreciation for the source of the Ego is gained, the dynamic import is lost and the term may seem merely a form of name calling. It is easy to say someone has a big Ego without awareness of what is really happening in the deep layers of that person's mind, without perception of the Ego. Nor is it a matter of intellect. The need here is to lay hold of the inner feeling elements upon which the activity of the Ego rests. Only when these elements become clear can the fundamental basis of the Ego also be clarified.

It is convenient, for the exposition of this inner functioning, to reverse the usual sequence and to present a conclusion in advance of the evidence on which it is based. This is, briefly, that the Ego is made up of the persisting elements, in the adult psyche, of the original nature of the child.

Certain aspects of the infant's psyche may be usefully examined. There are three factors which should receive mention. The first is, as Freud observed in his priceless phrase "His Majesty the Baby," that the infant is born ruler of all he surveys. He comes from the Nirvana of the womb, where he is usually the sole occupant, and he clings to that omnipotence with an innocence, yet determination, which baffles parent after parent. The second, stemming directly from the monarch within, is that the infant tolerates frustration poorly and lets the world know it readily. The third significant aspect of the child's original psyche is its tendency to do everything in a hurry. Observe youngsters on the beach: they run rather than walk. Observe them coming on a visit: the younger ones tear from the car while their elder siblings adopt a more leisurely pace. The three-year-olds, and more so the twos, cannot

engage in play requiring long periods of concentration. Whatever they are doing must be done quickly. As the same children age, they gradually become able to stick to one activity for longer times.

Thus at the start of life the psyche (1) assumes its own omnipotence, (2) cannot accept frustrations and (3) functions at a tempo allegretto with a good deal of staccato and vivace thrown in.

Now the question is, "If the infantile psyche persists into adult life, how will its presence be manifested?"

In general, when infantile traits continue into adulthood, the person is spoken of as immature, a label often applied with little comprehension of the reason for its accuracy. It is necessary to link these three traits from the original psyche with immaturity and, at the same time, show how they affect the adult psyche. If this is done, not only will the correctness of the appellation "immature" be apparent but, moreover, a feeling for the nature of the unconscious underpinnings of the Ego will have been created.

Recognizing Immaturity

Two steps can aid in recognizing the relationship between immaturity and a continuance of the infantile elements. The first is, by an act of imagination, to set these original traits into an adult unconscious. The validity of this procedure is founded upon modern knowledge of the nature of the forces operating in the unconscious of people of mature age. The second step is to estimate the effect that the prolongation of these infantile qualities will have upon the adult individual.

This attempt should not strain the imagination severely. Take, for instance, the third of the qualities common to the original psychic state, namely, the tendency to act hurriedly. If that tendency prevails in the unconscious, what must the result be? The individual will certainly do everything in a hurry. He will think fast, talk fast and live fast, or he will spend an inordinate amount of time and energy holding his fast-driving proclivities in check.

Often the net result will be an oscillation between periods of speeding ahead followed by periods during which the direction of the force is reversed, the brakes (superego) being applied in equally vigorous fashion. The parallel of this in the behavior of the alcoholic will not be lost on those who have had experience with this class of patients.

Let us take the same trait of doing everything in a hurry and apply it to the word "immature." Few will deny that jumping at conclusions, doing things as speedily as possible, give evidence of immaturity. It is youth that drives fast, thinks fast, feels fast, moves fast, acts hastily in most situations. There can be little question that one of the hallmarks of the immature is the proneness to be under inner pressure for accomplishment. Big plans, big schemes, big hopes abound, unfortunately not matched by an ability to produce. But the effect upon the adult of the persisting infantile quality to do everything in less than sufficient time can now be seen in a clearer light. The adult trait is surely a survival from the original psyche of the infant.

The two other surviving qualities of the infantile psyche similarly contribute to the picture of immaturity and also, indirectly, help to clarify the nature of the Ego with a capital E. The first of these,

the feeling of omnipotence, when carried over into adult life, affects the individual in ways easily anticipated. Omnipotence is, of course, associated with royalty, if not divinity. The unconscious result of the persistence of this trait is that its bearer harbors a belief of his own special role and in his own exceptional rights. Such a person finds it well-nigh impossible to function happily on an ordinary level. Obsessed with divine afflatus, the thought of operating in the lowly and humble areas of life is most distressing to him. The very idea that such a place is all one is capable of occupying is in itself a blow to the Ego, which reacts with a sense of inferiority at its failure to fill a more distinguished position. Moreover, any success becomes merely Ego fodder, boosting the individual's rating of himself to increasingly unrealistic proportions as the king side eagerly drinks in this evidence of special worth.

The ability to administer the affairs of state, both large and small, is taken for granted. The belief that he is a natural executive placed in the wrong job merely confirms his conviction that, at best, he is the victim of lack of appreciation, and at worst, of sabotage by jealous people who set up roadblocks to his progress. The world is inhabited by selfish people, intent only on their own advancement.

The genesis of all this is beyond his perception. To tell him that his reactions spring from the demands of an inner unsatisfied king is to invite incredulity and disbelief, so far from the conscious mind are any such thoughts or feelings. People who openly continue to cling to their claims of divine prerogative usually end up in a world especially constructed for their care. In others, the omnipotence pressures are rather better buried. The individual may admit that, in many ways, he acts like a spoiled brat, but he is scarcely conscious of the extent of the tendency, nor how deeply rooted it may be. He, like most people, resolutely avoids a careful look because the recognition of any such inner attitudes is highly disturbing. The unconscious credence in one's special prerogatives savors too much of straight selfishness to be anything but unpleasant to contemplate.

And so, for the most part, people remain happily ignorant of the unconscious' drives which push them around. They may wonder why they tend to boil inside and wish they could free themselves from a constant sense of uneasiness and unsettlement. They may recognize that they seem jittery and easily excited and' long for the time when they can meet life more calmly and maturely; they may hate their tendency to become rattled. But their insight into the origin of all this is next to nothing, if not a complete blank. The king lies deep below the surface, far out of sight.

Inability to Accept Frustration

The last trait carried over from infancy is the inability to accept frustration. In an obvious sense, this inability is another aspect of the king within, since one of the prerogatives of royalty is to proceed without interruption. For the king to wait is an affront to the royal rank, a slap at his majesty. The ramifications of this inability to endure frustration are so widespread, and the significance of much that occurs in the behavior of the alcoholic is so far-reaching, that it seems advisable to discuss this trait under a separate heading.

As already indicated, on the surface the inability of the king to accept frustration is absolutely logical. The wish of the king is the law of the land, and especially in the land of infancy. Any frustration is clearly a direct threat to the status of his majesty, whose whole being is challenged by the untoward interruption.

Even more significant is another aspect of this inner imperiousness. Behind it lies the assumption that the individual should not be stopped. Again, this is logical if one considers how an absolute monarch operates. He simply does not expect to be stopped; as he wills, so will he do. This trait, persisting in the unconscious, furnishes a constant pressure driving the individual forward. It says, in essence, "I am unstoppable!"

The unconscious which cannot be stopped views life entirely from the angle of whether or not a stopping is likely, imminent, or not at all in the picture. When a stopping is likely, there is worry and perhaps depression. When it seems imminent, there is anxiety bordering on panic, and when the threat is removed, there is relief and gaiety. Health is equated with a feeling of buoyancy and smooth sailing ahead, a sense of "I feel wonderful!" Sickness, contrariwise, means lacking vim, vigor and vitality, and is burdened with a sense of "I'm not getting anywhere." The need to "get somewhere" to "be on the go," and the consequent suffering from eternal restlessness, is still another direct effect of an inner inability to be stopped or, expressed otherwise, to accept the fact that one is limited. The king not only cannot accept the normal frustrations of life but, because of his inordinate driving ahead, is constantly creating unnecessary roadblocks by virtue of his own insistence on barging ahead, thus causing added trouble for himself.

Of course, on some occasions, the king gets stopped, and stopped totally. Illness, arrest, sometimes the rules and regulations of life, will halt him. Then he marks time, complies if need be, waiting for the return of freedom, which he celebrates in the time-honored fashion if he is an alcoholic: he gets drunk, initiating a phase when there is no stopping him.

The immaturity of such a person is readily evident. He is impatient of delay, can never let matters evolve; he must have a blueprint to follow outlining clearly a path through the jungle of life. The wisdom of the ages is merely shackling tradition which should make way for the freshness, the insouciance of youth. The value of staying where one is, and working out one's destiny in the here and now, is not suspected. The 24-hour principle would be confining for one whose inner life brooks no confinement. The unstoppable person seeks life, fun, adventure, excitement, and discovers he is on a perpetual whirligig which carries him continuously ahead but, of course, in a circle. The unstoppable person has not time for growth. He must always, inwardly, feel immature.

This, then, is how the carry-over of infantile traits affects the adult so encumbered. He is possessed by an inner king who not only must do things in a hurry, but has no capacity for taking frustration in stride. He seeks a life which will not stop him and finds himself in a ceaseless rat race.

All this is part and parcel of the big Ego. The individual has no choice. He cannot select one characteristic and hang on to that, shedding other more obviously undesirable traits. It is all or nothing. For example, the driving person usually has plenty of energy, sparkle, vivacity. He stands out as a most attractive human being. Clinging to that quality, however, merely insures the continuance of excessive drive and Ego, with all the pains attendant upon a life based on those qualities. The sacrifice of the Ego elements must be total, or they will soon regain their ascendancy.

Learning To Live

Those who view the prospect of life without abundant drive as unutterably dull and boring should examine the life of members of Alcoholics Anonymous who have truly adopted the A.A. program. They will see people who have been stopped -- and who, therefore, do not have to go anywhere -- but people who are learning, for the first time in their lives, to live. They are neither dull nor wishy-washy. Quite the contrary, they are alive and interested in the realities about them. They see things in the large, are tolerant, open-minded, not close-minded bulling ahead. They are receptive to the wonders in the world about them, including the presence of a Deity who makes all this possible. They are the ones who are really living. The attainment of such a way of life is no mean accomplishment.

Preliminary to this discussion, the conclusion was offered that the Ego was a residual of the initial feeling life of the infant. It should be evident that the immaturity characteristically found in the make-up of the alcoholic is a persistence of the original state of the child. In connection with the description of the manifestations which denote a large and active Ego, it should be recalled that the presence in the unconscious of such Ego forces may be quite out of reach of conscious observation. Only through the acting and feeling of the individual can their existence be suspected.

Now the answer to the first question raised herein, namely, what part of the alcoholic must surrender, is obvious: it is the Ego element.

Life without Ego is no new conception. Two thousand years ago, Christ preached the necessity of losing one's life in order to find it again. He did not say Ego, but that was what he had in mind. The analysts of our time recognize the same truth; they talk also about ego reduction. Freud saw therapy as a running battle between the original narcissism of the infant (his term for Ego) and the therapist whose task it was to reduce that original state to more manageable proportions. Since Freud could not conceive of life without some measure of Ego, he never resolved the riddle of how contentment is achieved; for him, man to the end was doomed to strife and unhappiness, his dearest desires sure to be frustrated by an unfriendly world.

In his studies on the addictions, Rado more explicitly asserts that the Ego must be reduced. He first portrays the Ego as follows: "Once it was a baby, radiant with self-esteem, full of belief in the omnipotence of its wishes, of its thoughts, gestures and words." Then, on the process of Ego-reduction: "But the child's megalomania melted away under the inexorable pressure of experience. Its sense of its own sovereignty had to make room for a more modest self evaluation. This process, first described by Freud, may be designated the reduction in size of the original ego; it is a painful procedure and one that is possibly never completely carried out."

No Compromise With Ego

Like Freud, Rado thinks only in terms of reduction; the need for the complete elimination of Ego is a stand which they cannot bring themselves to assume. Hence they unwittingly advocate the retention of some infantile traits, with no clear awareness that trading with the devil, the Ego, no matter how carefully safeguarded, merely keeps him alive and likely at any occasion to erupt full force into action. There can be no successful compromise with Ego, a fact not sufficiently appreciated by many, if not most, therapists.

Thus the dilemma encountered in ego-reduction would be best resolved by recognizing that the old Ego must go and a new one take its place. Then no issue would arise about how much of the earliest elements may be retained. The answer, theoretically, is none. Actually the total banishment of the initial state is difficult to achieve. Man can only grow in the direction of its complete elimination. Its final expulsion is a goal which we can only hope.

The second question raised here is, "How does the surrender reaction change the inner psychic picture?" This question is based on a presupposition, namely that surrender is an emotional step in which the Ego, at least for the time being, acknowledges that it is no longer supreme. This acknowledgment is valueless if limited to consciousness; it must be accompanied by similar feelings in the unconscious. For the alcoholic, surrender is marked by the admission of being powerless over alcohol. His sobriety has that quality of peace and tranquility which makes for a lasting quiet within only if the surrender is effective in the unconscious and permanent as well.

The effects of surrender upon the psyche are extremely logical: The traits listed as~ characteristic of the Ego influence are canceled out. The opposite of king is the commoner. Appropriately, Alcoholics Anonymous stresses humility. The opposite of impatience is the ability to take things in stride, to make an inner reality of the slogan, "Easy does it." The opposite of drive is staying in one position where one can be open-minded, receptive and responsive.

This picture of the non-Ego type of person might be amplified in many directions but to do so would serve no immediate purpose. To have discussed the effect of the Ego upon behavior, and to have pointed out what may happen when the Ego is at least temporarily knocked out of action, is sufficient to, make the point of this communication: It is the Ego which is the arch-enemy of sobriety, and it is the Ego which must be disposed of if the individual is to attain a new way of life

Up to this point, no clinical material has been submitted to confirm the ideas presented. Their validity will be apparent to many therapists. One brief citation from clinical experience will be offered, however, in the hope that it may serve as a concrete illustration of these ideas.

The patient, a man in his late 30's, had a long history of alcoholism with 7 years of futile attempts to recover through Alcoholics Anonymous, interspersed with countless admissions to "drying out" places. Then, for reasons not totally clear, he decided to take a drastic step. He determined to enter a sanatorium and place himself in the hands of a psychiatrist, a hitherto unheard of venture. We planned to arrange for a limited stay at a sanitarium where he could have regular interviews with me.

From the outset, he was undeniably in earnest, although it was only after the first interview that he really let go and could talk freely about himself and the things that were going on inside him. After the usual preliminaries, the first interview started with a discussion of feelings and how they operate. The patient was questioned about the word Ego as used at A.A. meetings. He confessed his ignorance of its true meaning and listened with interest to brief remarks on how it works. Before long, he was locating in himself some of the Ego forces which hitherto he had been vigorously denying because they savored too much of vanity and selfishness with that recognition, the patient made a revealing remark. He said, in all sincerity, "My goodness, I never knew that. You don't do your thinking up here (pointing to his head), you think down here where you feel" placing his hands on his stomach. He was

learning that his feelings had a "mind" of their own and that unless he heeded what they were saying, he could easily get into trouble. He was facing the actuality of his Ego as a feeling element in his life, a step he was able to take because he was no longer going at full steam ahead. His decision to place himself under care, a surrender of a sort, had quieted him and made him receptive, able to observe what was going on in himself. It was the beginning of a real inventory.

The next insight he uncovered was even more startling. He had been requested routinely to report any dreams he would have. Much to his surprise, they appeared regularly during the period of contact. In his fifth dream, the patient found himself locked up in an institution because of his drinking. The interpretation offered, based upon relevant materials, was that the patient equated any kind of stopping with being locked up; that his real difficulty lay in the fact that he could not tolerate being stopped, and abstaining was merely another stopping he could not take. The patient's reaction to the interpretation was most significant. He remained silent for some little time; then he began to talk, saying, "I tell you, Doc, it was like this. I'd get drunk, maybe stay on it 2 or 3 days, then I'd go into one of those drying out places where I'd stay 5 or 6 days and I'd be all over wanting a drink. Then I'd come out and stay sober, maybe a week, 'maybe a month, but pretty soon the thought would come into my mind, I want to drink! Maybe I'd go into a tavern and maybe not, but sooner or later I'd go and I'd order a drink, but I wouldn't drink it right off. I'd put it on the bar and I'd look at it and I'd think and then I'd look and think: King for a day!" The connection between Ego and his own conduct had become explicit, as well as the relationship between not being stopped and Ego. He saw clearly that when he took that drink, he was the boss once more. Any previous reduction of Ego had been only temporary.

In treatment, the problem is to make that reduction permanent. Therapy is centered on the ways and means, first, of bringing the Ego to earth, and second, keeping it there. The discussion of this methodology would be out of place here, but it is relevant to emphasize one point, namely the astonishing capacity of the Ego to pass out of the picture and then reenter it, blithe and intact. A patient's dream neatly depicted this quality. This patient dreamt that he was on the twelfth floor balcony of a New York hotel. He threw a rubber ball to the pavement below and saw it rebound to the level of the balcony. Much to his amazement, the ball again dropped and again rebounded to the same height. This continued for an indefinite period and, as he was watching, a clock in a neighboring church spire struck nine. Like the cat with nine lives, the Ego has a marvelous capacity to scramble back to safety -- a little ruffled, perhaps, but soon operating with all its former aplomb, convinced once more that now it, the Ego, can master all events and push on ahead.

The capacity of the Ego to bypass experience is astounding and would be humorous were it not so tragic in its consequences. Cutting the individual down to size and making the results last is a task never completely accomplished. The possibility of a return of his Ego must be faced by every alcoholic. If it does return, he may refrain from drinking, but he will surely go on a "dry drunk," with all the old feelings and attitudes once more asserting themselves and making sobriety a shambles of discontent and restlessness. Not until the ego is decisively retired can peace and quiet again prevail. As one sees this struggle in process, the need for the helping hand of a Deity becomes clearer. Mere man alone all too often seems powerless to stay the force of his Ego. He needs assistance and needs it urgently.

Summary

In the process of surrender which the alcoholic necessarily undergoes before his alcoholism can be arrested, the part of the personality which must surrender is the inflated Ego. This aspect of personality was identified as immature traits carried over from infancy into adulthood, specifically, a feeling of omnipotence, inability to tolerate frustration, and excessive drive, exhibited in the need to do all things precipitously. The manner in which surrender affects the Ego was discussed and illustrated briefly from clinical experience. The object of therapy is to permanently replace the old Ego and its activity.

When the Big “I” Becomes Nobody

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Why stress anonymity in AA? There is a profound psychological reason. Here a distinguished psychiatrist, an old friend of AA, and a Class A (non-alcoholic) Trustee of our General Service Board gives his insight into it.

THE AA program of help is touched with elements of true inspiration and in no place is that inspiration more evident than in the selection of its name, Alcoholics Anonymous. Anonymity is of course of great protective value, especially to the newcomer, but my present target is to focus on the even greater value anonymity has in contributing to the state of humility necessary for the maintenance of sobriety in the recovered alcoholic.

My thesis is that anonymity, thoughtfully preserved, supplies two essential ingredients to that maintenance. The two ingredients, actually two sides of the same coin, are first, the preservation of a reduced ego and second, the continued presence of humility or humbleness. As stated in the Twelfth Tradition of AA, “Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions,” reminding each member to place “principles before personalities.”

Many of you will wonder what that word ego means. It has so many definitions that the first task is to clarify the nature of the ego needing reduction.

This ego is not an intellectual concept but a state of feeling—a feeling of importance—of being “special.” Few people can recognize this need to be special in themselves. Most of us, however, can

recognize offshoots of this attitude and put the proper name to it. Let me illustrate. Early in the AA days, I was consulted about a serious problem plaguing the local group. The practice of celebrating a year's sobriety with a birthday cake had resulted in a certain number of the members getting drunk within a short period after the celebration. It seemed apparent that some could not stand prosperity. I was asked to settle between birthday cakes and no birthday cakes. Characteristically, I begged off, not from shyness but from ignorance. Some three or four years later, AA furnished me the answer. The group no longer had such a problem because, as one member said, "We celebrate still, but a year's sobriety is now a dime a dozen. No one gets much of a kick out of that any more!"

A look at what happened shows us ego, as I see it, in action. Initially, the person who had been sober for a full year was a standout, someone to be looked up to. His ego naturally expanded, his pride flowered; any previous deflation vanished. With such a renewal of confidence, he took a drink. He had been made special and reacted accordingly. Later, the special element dropped out. No ego feeds off being in the dime-a-dozen category and the problem of ego buildup vanished.

Today, AA in practice is well aware of the dangers of singling anyone out for honors and praise. The dangers of reinflation are recognized. The phrase "trusted servant" is a conscious effort to keep that ego down, although admittedly some servants have a problem in that regard.

Now let us take a closer look at this ego which causes trouble. The feelings associated with this state of mind are of basic importance in understanding the value of anonymity for the individual—the value of placing him in the rank and file of humanity.

Certain qualities typify this ego which views itself as special and therefore different. It is "high" on itself and prone to keep its goals

and visions at the same high level. It disdains what it sees as grubs who plod along lacking the fire and inspiration of those who are sparked by ideals which lift people out of the commonplace and offer promise of better things to come.

Often the same ego operates in reverse. It despairs of man with his faults and his failings, and develops a cynicism which sours the spirit and makes of its possessor a cranky realist who finds nothing good in this vale of tears. Life never quite meets his demands upon it and he lives an embittered existence, grabbing what he can out of the moment but never really part of what goes on around him. He seeks love and understanding and prates endlessly about his sense of alienation from those around him. Basically, he is a disappointed idealist—forever aiming high and landing low. Both of these egos confuse humbleness with humiliation.

To develop this further, the expression “You think you’re something” nicely catches the sense of being above the crowd. Children readily spot youngsters who think they are something and do their best to puncture that illusion. For instance, they play a game called tag. In it, the one who is tagged is called “it.” You’ve heard them accuse each other saying, “You think you’re it,” thereby charging the other with acting as though he was better than his mates. In their own way, children make very good therapists or head shrinkers. They are skillful puncturers of inflated egos even though their purpose is not necessarily therapeutic.

AA had its start in just such a puncturing. Bill W. always refers to his experience at Towns Hospital as a “deflation in great depth” and on occasion has been heard to say that his ego took a “hell of a licking.” AA stems from that deflation and that licking.

Clearly the sense of being special, of being “something,” has its dangers, its drawbacks for the alcoholic. Yet the opposite, namely that one is to be a nothing, has little counter appeal. The individual

seems faced with being a something and getting drunk or being a nothing and getting drunk from boredom.

The apparent dilemma rests upon a false impression about the nature of nothingness as a state of mind. The ability to accept ourselves as nothing is not easily developed. It runs counter to all our desires for identity; for an apparently meaningful existence, one filled with hope and promise. To be nothing seems a form of psychological suicide. We cling to our somethingness with all the strength at our command. The thought of being a nothing is simply not acceptable. But the fact is that the person who does not learn to be as nothing cannot feel that he is but a plain, ordinary, everyday kind of person who merges with the human race—and as such is humble, lost in the crowd and essentially anonymous. When that can happen, the individual has a lot going for him.

People with “nothing” on their mind can relax, go about their business quietly and with a minimum of fuss and bother. They can even enjoy life as it comes along. In AA, this is called the twenty-four-hour program, which really signifies the fact that the individual does not have tomorrow on his mind. He can live in the present and find his pleasure in the here and now. He is hustling nowhere. With nothing on his mind, the individual is receptive and open-minded.

The great religions are conscious of the need for nothingness if one is to attain Grace. In the New Testament, Matthew, 18:3, quotes Christ with these words: “Truly I say to you, unless you turn and become like children, you will never enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Whoever humbles himself like this child, he is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven.”

Zen teaches the release of nothingness. A famous series of pictures designed to show growth in man’s nature ends with a circle enclosed in a square. The circle depicts man in a state of nothingness. . .the square represents the framework of limitations

man must learn to live within. In this blank state “Nothing is easy, nothing hard” and so Zen, too, has linked nothingness, humbleness and Grace.

Anonymity is a state of mind of great value to the individual in maintaining sobriety. While I recognize its protective function, I feel that any discussion of it would be one-sided if it failed to emphasize the fact that the maintenance of a feeling of anonymity—of a feeling “I am nothing special”—is a basic insurance of humility and so a basic safeguard against further trouble with alcohol. This kind of anonymity is truly a precious possession.

Treating the Causes of Alcoholism

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I LIKED the article *An AA Doctor's Prescription* which appeared in the July issue of the Grapevine. It nicely stressed the importance of stopping the symptom of drinking. The picture showing the roots and fruits of alcoholism is graphic and intelligible. The concept "The treatment of a symptom" is, I am sure, a sound one.

The emphasis on the removal of the symptom can, however, be misleading. It suggests a failure to reach the fundamentals and implies that the symptomatic cure leaves the individual skating on thin ice with the underlying causes of the trouble still lurking in the background ready at any moment to trip up the individual. The charge of superficiality may well be levied against a treatment which thinks only in terms of symptoms.

The truth, however, is that routinely to assume superficiality is also an error. Sometimes, the treatment of a symptom hits into the deeper structures while it takes care of the symptom itself.

The history of medicine is dotted with examples in which the remedy of a symptom provided the cure of the condition. A classic illustration is malaria. The malarial patient had a symptom, a fever. Quinine cured this fever and was in use over the centuries, long before the cause had been determined. The therapy was completely symptomatic yet, as is now known, actually has a scientific basis, namely, that the cause of the illness, the malarial parasite, was killed by the drug.

In other words, treatment, discovered by chance in nature, in a funny sense, reversed the usual sequence. Science says first find the cause and remedy that, thus curing the illness. Instead, the use of quinine treated the symptom of fever with no reference to the cause

which only later was revealed. The charge of superficiality was disproved by facts uncovered subsequently.

AA is also a therapy discovered by chance. To be sure, the original members followed brilliantly the clues with which their own experience had presented them. They learned from experiencing, they followed no book. They found a method, a program; they prescribed it and it worked. The idea of seeking causes was discarded, sometimes noisily and with jeers at those who still tried to be scientific.

Yet AA, like quinine, was designed not only to cure the symptom of drinking but also to tackle and, if possible, eradicate its causes. The AA program helped the individual remain sober, thus removing the symptoms. It also aimed at altering the inner source of discord by its stress on spiritual development, thereby getting at the causes which provoked the symptoms.

The fact is that, as spiritual growth proceeds, the underlying hostile elements are steadily reduced in strength, and thus, in their capacity to cause trouble. Psychiatric therapy, depending upon analytic concepts, had tried to reach and uproot the hidden hostilities which poisoned the psyche, the assumption being that such unearthing would free the individual from their grip and enable him to pursue a more healthy path. Unfortunately, the uncovering method had no way of insuring removal. The individual became acquainted with his hostilities and had no means of getting rid of them.

AA adopted a very different approach. AA found a very basic fact, namely, that spiritual growth is the real antidote for the hostile, negative forces. It learned that these feelings do not have to be uncovered but that somehow the spiritual elements can neutralize the negative forces, thus freeing the individual from their grip. In that way, the cause of the condition is effectively extirpated. Like quinine, which actually killed the organism, AA through its spiritual emphasis

actually may succeed in ridding the individual of harmful attitudes and feelings which had contributed to his difficulties. AA, so to speak, cures without uncovering.

The point of my comment has now been made. AA is not to be considered merely a symptomatic remedy. Through its stress on the spiritual, it really digs much deeper. Like quinine, it tackles the original causes. Unfortunately, here the parallel ends. The malarial parasite is specific and can be destroyed. The evils with which the spiritual element must contend are not so readily wiped out. The most one can hope for is progress in the amelioration of the hostilities and growth in the positive forces which insure health.

As a result of this thinking about AA and how its program works, I would like to suggest a companion picture. The tree would have a trunk with roots and branches. The trunk would be labeled the spiritual life and/or sobriety. The roots would have titles like love, warmth, charity, gratitude, friendship, forgiveness, kindness. The limbs would be covered with leaves or blossoms, and would indicate some-how the over-flowing horn of plenty, the abundant life. This, as I see it, is the miracle not only of AA but of all life—the capacity to move from a negative to a positive way of life.

One final point, this time about how the psychiatrist fits into this picture. In my eyes, his is a dual task. He can help to remove blocks, i.e. the hostilities to spiritual growth and also do what he can to foster the processes which lead to that growth. Unless he is mindful of both aspects, he is likely to be of little help. He can no more afford to overlook the spiritual than can any member of AA.

Why Psychiatrists Fail With Alcoholics

BY: HARRY M. TIEBOUT, M.D.

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In a frank talk to his professional colleagues, one of the top practitioners in the field of alcoholism gives his answer to a baffling question. It also brings AAers up to date on a professional dilemma.

WHILE NO ONE is more convinced than I am that alcoholism is a disease, no one is more appalled than I am at the blithe manner with which the concept has been received and the easy use to which it has been put. To paraphrase Winston Churchill's famous war statement, I could say, "Never has so much been done on so little with so much hullabaloo."

I can say this quite frankly. I was in on the early hullabaloo and did a certain amount of it myself. I cannot help but feel that the whole field of alcoholism is 'way out on a limb which any minute will crack and drop us all in a frightful mess. I sometimes tremble to think of how little we have to back up our claims.

Yet actually I would not have it otherwise nor do I think it could have happened differently. All movements get under way through some one or some group taking a chance. That has to be. The only danger comes from failure, later on, to see things in perspective. We should never be fooled by our own ballyhoo into any false sense about our accomplishments. The need to do something about alcoholism is admitted; the main question concerns the tools we have available to carve out satisfactory results. To me they still, seem pretty crude and makeshift.

This fact, while it is to be deplored, cannot be used to condemn. It is an outgrowth of forces over which we as a group had little or no control. The field, like Topsy, just “grewed.” First it was the Research Council, then it was the people at Yale and the mighty impetus of Alcoholics Anonymous. Finally it was the organizational and educational work of the National Committee on Alcoholism. The question now is what do we face,—those of us who are actively engaged in meeting the problem?

Have we not almost promised to do a job with very little real right to say anything more than “we’ll try”? Have enough of our energies been devoted to helping us get down off that limb—toward establishing a reliable body of data and experience which will enable us to develop competent practitioners in the field of alcoholism? I very much doubt it.

There are undoubtedly many reasons for this failure to establish reliable information about alcoholism. One, however, strikes me as of great importance because it is subtle and not generally recognized: the fact that persons who enter the field of alcoholism come from other fields. More than they realize, they are bringing something to the field and have little expectation of learning anything from the field, nor do they feel any particular need to do this. They have already been taught; now they will apply what they know. It does not take them long to realize that what they know does not amount to much when it comes to handling alcoholics.

Two reactions are then possible. The individual either changes and begins to function or he remains rigid and becomes discouraged, disillusioned, and skeptical about the prospects of working with the alcoholic. The unfortunate truth is that, as far as psychiatrists are concerned, a sizable majority never quite make the grade. They always seem like fish out of water.

Naturally I have given thought to this new phenomenon. My explanation lies in the point of view they bring with them. They come equipped with training and they busily engage themselves in trying to utilize their equipment. Rarely does it function well in the field of alcoholism. The question is: “Why, when that same equipment serves well in other areas, does it fail them with alcoholics?”

I think this is an important question. One reason for the lack of specific knowledge about alcoholism is the dearth of clinicians who remain in the field long enough to obtain any feel for the condition. They seldom get beyond the dabbling stage and are in no position to add to our knowledge. In the summary of the research meeting held in October 1954, Diethelm[1] stated that most investigators in alcoholism reported once and then quit, confirming my own observations. We must ask the question, “What happens to produce this repeated development?”

This question and its predecessor, “Why does the well-equipped psychiatrist fail with alcoholics?” can, I believe, be answered by the same reply. Before trying to formulate an answer, let me set the stage with some background material. The present day psychiatrist is steeped in the methods of modern medicine. Whenever you encounter illness, you search for the cause, then you treat the cause and cure the illness. That is just as true for psychiatric ailments as it is for physical conditions. Treatment is directed toward etiology.

When a person so oriented hits alcoholism, he is out of luck—only he does not know it. What happens is that he by-passes the disease and looks for causes; he ends up talking about earlier experiences and never gets close to this patient or the illness. His training is a hindrance instead of a help. He must revamp his sights or he is lost.

At a meeting last winter, a psychiatrist thoroughly trained in the modern approach read a paper in which he outlined some of the thinking which he had to scrap before he could operate comfortably

with alcoholic patients. He stressed mostly the need to give up history-taking and deep search for causes, particularly at the start of any therapeutic relationship. During the discussion which followed, he was chided by a more orthodox colleague who was a bit horror-struck at the heresy about history taking. The reply of the reader of the paper was in my eyes perfect. He said in part, "I used to think a full history was necessary but I found it didn't work; I had to change my mind." Needless to say this person is continuing in the field of alcoholism and I believe will be heard from again. He did not adhere rigidly to his training precepts; he really accepted reality and to that extent was more effective. Unfortunately, there are not many of his kind.

What happened, of course, was that he shifted his sights and looked at the illness alcoholism, which he was finding could not be treated by the conventional approach he had learned. He had to formulate a new approach. How he did that I cannot tell you. I can tell you, however, about how I have modified my own thinking in the light of experiences similar to those of the man I have been talking about.

Perhaps the first thing to impress me with the need to change my approach was the routine complaint from patients that their talks with psychiatrists were almost uniformly unhelpful. This was in the earlier days. The complaint was that the psychiatrists never talked about the drinking and seemed to minimize its importance, which was duck soup for the alcoholic, but, in the long run, not very effective. The routine history-taking approach seemed to have many strikes against it.

Then secondly, AA came along with a program to stop drinking; causation was ignored, the focus was all on treatment. Medicine's insistence on treating causes was disregarded, not wittingly to be sure, but the emphasis was on stopping the drinking and helping the individual to achieve and maintain that end. Like the treatment by surgery, the causes were irrelevant in meeting the immediate issues.

Instead of the scalpel, there was the AA program. Instead of the infected appendix being removed, the individual was told to stop drinking, or stated in another way, liquor was removed from his life.

In the old days, patients were given remedies such as digitalis to help correct or overcome the symptom, namely, the weakened heart muscle. Remedial treatment nowadays tends to be downgraded as temporizing and superficial. It lacks precision and seems a blunderbuss method. Yet no one is willing to discard digitalis and no one that I know of is going to urge the scrapping of AA. They both work, they both preserve life, and though neither cures, both provide for the prolongation of life and thus add years of satisfying existence. For people so benefited, interest in causation is academic. The clinician may wish he knew more about causes but he is grateful for the fact that he has a remedy. And almost always he wishes he had more of them.

Similarly, any treatment of the alcoholic must be remedial. There is no present value in getting at the causes and correcting them because the net result of such an endeavor would be to enable the person to drink normally. While such a goal may be achieved in some far off millennium, its attainment in the immediate future is absolutely unlikely. Any therapy devoted to such a goal is admittedly unrealistic; everyone acknowledges that there is no present cure, that the only remedy is total sobriety. The person does not learn how to handle liquor, he stops using it.

The goal of therapy is, therefore, to get the patient to stop taking the first drink. I have found it fruitful to work along the line of why the patient will not or cannot stop taking that first drink. It has led to the concepts of hitting bottom, (adopted, of course, from AA) surrender, compliance, and recognition of an intractable ego which will not stop for anyone or anything. And strangely enough, in trying to apply the remedy of stopping drinking, I have learned more about the

alcoholic and his problem than I ever did when I was concentrating on causes and minimizing all remedial efforts.

Once I concentrated on trying to stop the drinking, I began to focus on the illness itself which took on more and more stature as a disease. Finally, I was willing to set aside my previous experience and center attention upon what was going on that was ill or sick. The clinical situation held my nose to the grindstone and it was from the clinical situation I learned about alcoholism. And I know that as soon as I divorce myself from the clinical situation my source of learning will be gone.

Now is not the time to talk about the remedies we have available. You know them as well as I do. The real problem is to get the individual to take those remedies. Unless one is practiced in handling the various dodges or stratagems of the alcoholic, one gets nowhere. Defense reactions are found in every psychological illness. The alcoholic has the same defenses as others plus a sturdy crop of his own, arising from the special nature of his ailment. Until the practitioner develops some dexterity in penetrating the wall surrounding the alcoholic, he can anticipate little progress.

Articles on how to establish contact with the alcoholic in order to get him to accept possible remedies are scarcer than hen's teeth. Should there be pressure or not is an everyday issue. Do we have any consensus of opinion? What has experience taught? Too often the voice of the clinician is muted because all he can offer is his own experience which seems pretty feeble compared with the authoritative voice of statistics. Yet all the statistics in the world will never provide one with clinical judgment nor aid one in the practice of one's trade or profession.

In the field of alcoholism, we need more people who will report their experiences as practitioners so that gradually a body of accepted practice can slowly be acquired. The knowledge of that practice and

the ability to apply it will enable the individual to be expert in the field. Not until he has that knowledge can he be called expert, no matter how thoroughly trained he may be in the same allied field.

We can now answer the question raised previously, namely, "Why do psychiatrists fail so frequently with alcoholics?" The answer is that they fail to adopt a remedial approach and consequently are pretty much strangled as therapists. Not until they know that they are tackling a disease which must be treated for itself can they hope to be effective.

My plea, of course, is for more serious study of the illness alcoholism. My interest is not so much in causation as in the recognition of a disease which must be treated by remedial measures. My hope is that as the focus is kept on the disease, the practice of handling the disease will receive even greater study and consideration. I believe that only in that way will the field be able to climb off the limb it now occupies and reach solid ground where it can meet its obligations with some degree of consistency.

We must stop borrowing from other disciplines and develop our own body of knowledge and experience.

1*DIETHELM, OSKAR, M.D.: *Current Research on Problems of Alcoholism*. 6. Report of the Section on Psychiatric Research. Quart. J. Stud. Alcohol 16: 574, 1955.

Maintaining Sobriety

Talk presented at the 1960 AA International Convention, Long Beach, California

The topic I have selected has interested me for many years. AA is faced with a dual responsibility. It first must bring its message to newcomers, and second, see that the message exerts a continuing influence upon its members. As I see it, when the message is truly received, a miracle is worked. Whether that change comes slowly or in a rush, the shift to sobriety is nothing short of miraculous.

In my paper at St. Louis, I discussed that aspect of AA. I talked about hitting bottom, surrender, and ego reduction. All of which contributed to the interchange that has made sobriety possible. I also warned that the problem of keeping sober still lay ahead. Today, I shall devote my remarks to the concern we all have for the problem of maintaining sobriety once it is achieved. No one can afford to rest on his laurels. Sobriety to be preserved must be earned by good works and hard. Sobriety is never handed to one on a silver platter.

This problem of no small moment to all in AA. The years have passed, and the length of sobriety of many members has stretched into a very respectable number of years. The question of preservation of the non-drinking state is increasingly before us as time marches on. The answer as you all know is not always favorable.

One sees and hears that the old-timer who lasted 10 to 15 years without trouble is back once again in the rat race of alcoholism. The number is not alarming, nor do I think it represents a trend, but it happens with sufficient frequency and apparently over a wide enough area to make it a matter worthy of serious concern and consideration.

My paper will have three sections. The first will present my understanding of the workings of the AA program. The second will describe the downfall of sobriety, the ego, and how it may be identified. The third will discuss humility, which is the arch opponent of the ego. On the basis of these three sections, I shall endeavor to offer some comments on the AA scene.

The first section has to do with how sobriety succeeds initially. Here I will repeat much of what I said before about hitting bottom, surrender, and ego reduction. Summarizing my thinking, I believe that the person, if and when he succeeds in becoming a member of AA, has first: undergone a conversion or personality change, which has occurred because he has second: hit bottom, which has produced third: a surrender by his previously entrenched ego. This can be put into something of an equation which reads hitting bottom plus surrender equals conversion or personality change. Basic to all such thinking is the fact that in this new state may be found the capacity to feel and to have humility. What then is this ego, this downfall of sobriety?

Without going into the long technical discussion about its source, let me in the second section give you some feel for the inner attitude that I have in mind about the nature of this ego, which is the villain in the drama, of the alcoholic. To start with, let me illustrate my ideas with a story that goes back a number of years. The dangers of ego, in the sense I am using it here, was just becoming apparent to me and to all my patients, One day one of them said, "You know, I just heard X say something that has been bothering me like the dickens. I wonder how you feel about it." He then added that he, my

patient, was at a meeting with X in which they were discussing the program and that X had stated that he would only speak if he were the third speaker. Continuing my patient said, "that sounds suspiciously like ego to me. What do you think?" I agreed but we both found it hard to believe because X was the spark plug and leading light of his group, and as solid an AA citizen as one could imagine. Yet within a year of his boldly claiming that special spot this man was drinking, and in two years he was dead of complications brought on by his continued use of alcohol.

Obviously, this man suffered from a case of big-shot-ism. As most of you fully realize, egos in AA are dime a dozen. (laughter) Many of them are out in the open. They constitute the power boys, who often get things done but just as often are the cause of endless headaches because of their very forcefulness. They are not noted for their patience.

Of equal importance and certainly a far greater frequency are the individuals whose egos are hidden even from themselves. The following incident makes this point quite simply I think. It concerns a patient who had been protesting vigorously that she could not have a big fat ego because she loathed all persons who showed any evidence of that kind of thinking and feeling; that she had no use to anyone who thought herself or himself superior; putting on airs as though he were among the blessed. After she had finished proving that she was not ego-driven, I asked her a couple of questions. The first was, "Which way do you look when you loathe someone?" After some wiggling, she said, "I look down", and then I asked her, "Where does that put you?" Her answer was an explosive pop. There was a long pause, and the patient began to talk, "My goodness. You can feel up about not being up. That is an awful fact. Where does this thing end? How can you be sure about anything you feel? You are thinking of stuff like this all the time. Gracious, you are not as smart as you think you are!" Then of course adding, "Are you?" as she looked at me questioningly with a note humbleness in her voice.

It was apparent that the wind had been knocked out of her sails and that she had dropped way down from being up. She was having the first-hand contact with humility. For her, the word ego had taken on a new dimension. It meant no aggressive pushing ahead but an inner state of mind in which her ego was in full flower despite her conscious denial of its presence.

It was marked by attitudes which on the surface seem blameless, if not downright praiseworthy. Just like the snob who abhors snobs, she found herself hooked with her capacity to look down her nose and loathe. His ego has sneaked in in a totally unexpected fashion. She was beginning to take an inventory that might be more than a list of words. She was beginning to feel some truths about herself. This ego can cause one profound trouble. Elusive, disowned, its presence can be denied with the utmost sincerity. It takes considerable digging in large doses of honesty before this inner self can be reached and its quietly stubborn way, it can ruin our best intentions.

The sad truth is that the ego is always more visible in others than in ourselves. We can delight in puncturing the pomposities of others. We can laugh at the saying of the Chinese philosopher, Lao Tse, who had this gem to offer, "He who feels prick must have been a bubble." We can recognize the wisdom of deflating inflated egos, but all too often, the target is someone else. When it is ourselves, our aim can be notoriously bad.

The ego then it is to be seen as the driving force which seeks to dominate and feel comfortable only when it is able to maintain a non-underdog position. It may recoil at any obvious display of big-shot-ism but down inside where the feelings count, it can be touchy as a sore thumb. It is not an accident that the numbers of my specialty are called head shrinkers. (Laughter)

Our next task is to consider the evidence which shows that the ego has gone . That evidence can be summed up in one of two

words, humbleness, and humility. When either is present, the ego has departed and made no effort to distinguish between these two words. Using them as synonyms to identify a state of mind with that certain characteristics.

The problem basically is how does one feel when one feels humble. The answer to that question lies in an understanding of what I call a state of being up and a state of being down. Both of these states are familiar to you all. When one is up, one is gay, cheerful, and animated. A person in such a state may be up on his toes in high gear or perhaps up and at 'em. He is all for action, progress and improvement, getting somewhere and is rendered acutely uneasy whenever his advancing is in any way impeded . Perhaps more than he knows, he seeks to make life a pink cloud. In a deep sense, he lives off hope, and any ingredient which keeps telling him that someday his just will come in and his worries will be over.

For him, surrender is a completely shattering experience and impossible to contemplate. It mainly means renouncing the will to live - the force that keeps him going. The person in the upstate seldom questions its validity. It seems the epitome of health and well-being. Down on the other hand is the exact opposite. In the state of being down, the individual is not gay, lacks attitude, drive and finds life a dreary bore Such phrases as "Down in the mouth" or "down in the dumps", successfully picture the down frame of mind. It is a state of mind to be avoided and smacks little of health.

In keeping with most everyone else, for years, I viewed the upstate with kindly eyes and the down one be the enemy of mankind. Then AA entered my life and the whole new series of facts were forced upon me. I heard of a pink cloud, an upstate if ever there was one, yet clearly not necessarily a healthy one. Even more confusing, I heard of humbleness and humility which were certainly part of a downstate that was essential to sobriety. Finally, to my surprise, I realized that being sober meant being sober-minded with

no trace of being up. These were incontrovertible facts which seemed to fly in the face of all logic. Yet facts they were and some sense had to be made out of them.

The question was, how can one lose the upstate, without plunging into a down which is crippling, and surely a miserable form of existence. The answer to that question lies in a recognition of the fact that the word down does not have the mean down and out. It can also mean down to earth.

This down is a very rare one too. The down-to-earth individual has a seat on the ground. They can spot the pink cloud for the up element it has and can distrust its airy and insubstantial quality. The man with his feet on the ground is a solid citizen going nowhere, interested in nothing spectacular, but able to live every 24 hours as a contributing member of the human race.

These were incontrovertible facts that seemed to fly in the face of all logic. And facts they were, and some sense had to be made out of them. The question was how can one lose the upstate without

Here is a very different down from a depressed and unhappy sort of down which formerly has been envisioned. Here was a down that stood for substance, for lasting value. A down which could not be deplored. This kind of down meant health and real well-being. Not the ephemeral kind which lifts the individual slightly off this Earth. Down could mean being humble and free from a lot of giddy notions about ourselves. They could mean the end of ego and all the unrest associated with that part of our nature. In a very deep and profound sense, down could mean that we were able to accept ourselves for what we are. No longer do we have to be up looking down with scarcely concealed loathing. We are down, we can look up, maybe even to a deity who has never looked down on us.

We can now talk about humbleness. In the light of our discussion of up and downstate, we can realize that humbleness is the downstate that puts its appearance whenever the individual

descends and stops Earth rather than plunges on through to the lower regions. The humble person is down but his feet on solid ground. The former fears of what will happen to him if and when he drops from his high estate vanish as he experiences the comforting realization that he can let the gods fight among themselves. All he needs to do is to stay where he is and learn to live.

In so many words, humbleness or humility is a downstate that is livable, and not a downstate which is filled with rancor, unhappiness, and a constant need to escape from its strangling clutches. In true humbleness, the discontent, the restless urge to get away, all disappear, and an inner stillness makes its presence felt.

The ego in the genuinely humble person is in abeyance. Sufficiently, so no longer to color the psychic picture for the moment at any rate. It is accurate to say that true humility is the real evidence that the ego has gone or is no longer influencing the individuals' thought of feeling. The next question is now clear. How can this down to Earth state of mind, which is the real sort of humbleness, be induced, and then maintained? Both of these questions are worth inspecting.

The first, how is humbleness induced, is of course known to you all. Hitting bottom is the key, it brings the individual into contact with Earth, usually with a resounding clap. The use of the word bottom suggests quite neatly where the hitting is applied. For the fortunate, it can spank them into some measure of sense. The whole art of engineering the individual so that they hit the bottom as a fascinating matter about which to conjecture.

You all can tell me more about how it happens than I possibly can. You all have been through the mill and may have seen many others through the same rough time. Nothing I have to say will match your first-hand experiences to the nature of the forces within which finally produce a breakthrough leading to hitting bottom and

surrender. Before this group, any extended discussion of hitting the bottom and its role in producing sobriety is wasted time.

Therefore, let me pass on to the much trickier problem of maintaining the down-to-earth sober person. It is one thing to knock a person off his pedestal. It is a much more difficult task to keep him from climbing right back on again. Since the considerable portion of my practice is devoted to helping AA members develop their capacity to stay humble or down on Earth. Out of my experience, three points seem to have a particularly pertinence for this audience. The first is a need to recognize that the ability to remain on Earth is not under the control of the will because death is impossible to will yourself to be humble, as it is to lift yourself up by your bootstraps.

The very effort to will humbleness is in itself an act of sheer arrogance. It is an attempt to dictate how one should feel. One can only hope and pray for the desired feelings to come along. One can just not order them to be present, the feelings have an independence, which must be respected. The second point for consideration is that as people we have forces within us which can carry us off the Earth so suddenly and so quickly that we are totally unaware that anything has happened to us.

To climb back on pedestals can go completely unnoticed. The old-timers who insisted on a preferred position could still talk AA and be convincing to themselves and others. My patient had spotted the return ego, but the victim of that return was totally innocent of the fact. If do charged he would have flatly asserted his humbleness and would have been quite honest, although, of course, quite inaccurate. The problem of the unnoticed return of the ego is widespread.

The individual who enters AA after the hitting bottom has his own experience which provides him with a genuine feeling of humility. Then a tragic thing often happens. The memory lingers but the humility slowly seeps away. Finally, the individual is back in the memory of being humble but his ego has staged a comeback, quite

without his having the slightest awareness of the truth. When the comeback has occurred, the individual can get up and say in all sincerity, "I am the most humble man in this room."

That statement made at a meeting in Greenwich received a salutary horselaugh. Although the speaker was obviously puzzled by it. Perhaps later on the impact of what he said sank in and brought him down a peg or two. Let us hope so for his sake. The third point I wish to discuss the problem of remaining humble concerns the actual ways and means by which humbleness is preserved. Taken for granted the automatic return of the ego, the question resolves itself to the problem of how to stop this process of ego re-inflation.

Obviously, no foolproof formula exists. The pitfalls are too many. Attendance at meetings, 12-step work, repeated inventories, and improving our conscious contact with a higher power, are all helpful and maybe depended on in most instances. However, the unwary individual may get trapped in ways in which he least suspects. Time does not permit a full discussion of many snares that look to the unsuspecting. One dangerous spot is so common and so pervasive, but I must bring it to your attention. I refer to the ease with which we can surround ourselves with virtue.

We all have the capacity to give ourselves "A" for effort and thus pat ourselves on the back. An act which feeds our self-esteem and furnishes the ego with a heady diet. A patient dreamed of doing what was right and followed that dream with another in which she saw herself all wrapped up in a lovely golden cake. The perfect symbol for the individual who is all wrapped up in herself and emitting a golden glow.

Although not unaware of it, she was in obvious thing. Any person self-conscious of her inner glow would have no trouble planting a halo on her head with all the inflationary aspects of such an adornment. Like many another, she was being forced to realize that with her, virtue was its own reward and how she loves to gobble up

that reward. She can profess all the humility in the world, she put down aside where it counts, she pictures herself in a golden cake.

All she could do when the impact of her dream was laid before her was to smile a bit secretly and remark, "I guess it is harder to be humble than you think. You just do not know you had such silly ideas down inside of you and the worst of it is, I am afraid that you are telling me the truth about myself. I guess the smart thing to do is not to dream." I have no answer to this problem of giving ourselves "A" for effort. Like a snob who abhors snob wants to give oneself "A" for effort, for not giving oneself "A" for effort.

My advice to patients is to keep their fingers crossed and hope that this self-glorification does not take place. There is no conscious way of dictating that it will not occur. Awareness, hopefully, can be helpful. Beyond that, all one can do is to pray. The second certainty about maintaining humbleness may seem very unenlightening, and leaves one groping for answers, a state of mind which makes many people unhappy.

Let me point out that the individual who feels that he has the answers must be very careful or he will be in trouble. To have the answers put him right back in the driver's seat, able to cope with anything and a far cry from being humbled, and aware that one does not know everything nor need to in order to get along. In fact, one indication of humility is a willingness to forgo absolute certainty in the consciousness that a man's life is but a humble one.

There are many many things he cannot understand and does not need to. A Higher Power does exist and can be trusted. A humble person can leave it there. He does not have to be in on the know about everything. And I wish to make some comments on the AA scene in the light of my remarks about humility and its place in the life of the alcoholic. Having been alerted by AA to the significance of humbleness, I could begin to see it from a wider perspective. I could

recognize that humbleness is not confined to individuals but organizations may have a problem of keeping humble.

AA is no exception. Succeeding where others have failed, it was logical for some members to assume that they had special know-how which often made them act as though they were the only person on the beat when it came to handling alcoholics. Such an attitude did not endear them to others who were interested in helping alcoholics. In the eyes of others, the humility so much talked about seem strangely missing. In fact, sometimes it was not present. Looking upon this fact, I realized that the group must be humble. That it too, unless it is very careful, can wrap itself in the glow which makes it sacrosanct and untouchable.

Any organization can develop notions that need correcting. AA can well examine some of its attitudes and practices. How often have I heard members say and I quote with some accuracy, "My job is to help the drunk who comes to us. What is the use of all this fancy, New York stuff? We do not need any assistance from the outside. We can do a job right within our rank." That is where the alcoholic gets his help. That self-sufficiency and those remarks require no comment. For a long time, such thinking influenced a large and often vocal group among the AA membership.

Coupled with that belief was a second, namely that the group could help and that anyone who did not help was himself not ready for AA. As a result of such thinking was that the drunk that did not respond was written off as a poor prospect. Thereby absolving the group from any responsibility for the [inaudible] that interests him in AA. Such absolving keeps the group's ego intact. This intactness or really lack of group humility has been life manifest in recent years. The reason for this change is time.

The years that have shown that AA is not the only answer to alcoholism. Still, the best by all odds is by no means the 100% solution. Moreover, other approaches have their successes so that

AA has no longer a corner on recovery. In other words, as time passes, experiences taking the first flush of the rosy hope which the success of AA had generated. Now, AA is no longer the one answer. AA has to take its place alongside others who are concerned about drunks.

AA must now accept a much humbler place than formerly. A much healthier position, since, once one can recognize confreres, one can live with them on a give and take basis and perhaps absorb something from them. An important element in maturing is the ability to listen and to learn. Fortunately, the success of AA has in a sense served as its own corrective. Being the most promising of all remedies for helping the alcoholic, AA has had to bear the brunt of treatment. Then you have to take on all comers and feeling like everyone else with a very considerable percentage.

It is now obvious that AA is the answer for some people at a certain time in their drinking career when that particular time is reached. AA can serve magnificently and does.

We will still face a whole series of questions. First, what about the people who have not reached that critical stage when they are susceptible and responsive to the offerings of AA? Second, has AA any responsibility for helping individuals reach that critical stage? Third, is that a job for others or for faith? Fourth, should AA both as an organization, and through its individual members join hands with others who are tackling the problem?

These questions were not asked to be answered but to stimulate your thinking. I wish however to close my remarks with an incident from my practice which bears on the last question, the joining of hands with others. I shall tell how I was a part of a two-stage miracle. The recipient of those miracles was a man whom I saw at the insistence of his wife. He was reluctant, defensive, and even surly but he did talk revealing effect of drinking which seemed pretty

grim to me. Finally, at the end of the hour, he warmed up sufficiently to ask me a question. It was, "Do you think my drinking is serious?"

Anxious to avoid any long lecture. I limited myself to the observation "I am not sure, but I'd hate to be in your shoes." The scene now shifts. It's five years later and I am slated to give a talk at an AA meeting. As I enter the room, a man comes up to me, stretching out his hand and breathing saying as he did so, "You do not know me but my name is X and I saw you over five years ago and you told me you did not want to be in my shoes. Enlightened by that, I said "what happened since then?" He replied, "I have been in AA for four years going on five. After our talk, I thought about what you said about shoes. It is like I could not get it out of my mind. So, eight months later, I decided to go to AA to an AA meeting, and I have been going ever since."

Now, I submit that I must be a miracle worker if in one interview. I get a person like that to join AA. Of course, it took eight months before my miracle came off, and without AA, my miracle could have never occurred. At the same time, I insist with a miracle with AA would have not taken place if I had not fortuitously said the right thing. Setting into motion some doubts and fears which resulted in him to his going to a meeting ready for the miracle of AA to work its blessing. Surely, it was a two-stage miracle. Mine, mostly my luck AA because the path to help out the alcoholic has been carved out of the experience of you, and your associates.

Neither miracles could have happened alone. That man's rescue was a joint enterprise. Neither myself nor AA was self-sufficient. Without AA, my interview would have not been led to nothing but meaningless stewing, and nothing else. Without my remarks, AA would have not seen the man. Each was essential for the other. The recognition of such mutual need is both ego reducing and humbling. In pursuit of one's own interest in activities, it easy to lose sight of others and go alone.

The fact that I was asked to come on this program is evidence that AA is mindful of its relationship to others, apart from itself. Maintain the awareness that you are but one of the instruments whereby the alcoholic can be helped, and you will have no trouble remaining humble either as individuals or as an organization.