

Design for Living

*AA offers
a design for living
that really works*

I JUST FOUND five new promises in my worn copy of *Alcoholics Anonymous*. One of them (on page 100) reads: "Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances!"

I'm a rereader of the Big Book. I reread it daily; every day, I find something new to tell me that the longer I stay sober and follow AA's guidelines, the better my life will be.

On page 8 in "Bill's Story," he says, "I was to know happiness, peace, and usefulness, in a way of life that is incredibly more wonderful as time passes."

I'm trying daily to follow the path of Bill W. and Dr. Bob and the other ninety-eight who put that beautiful book together, and the rewards I have received have been tremendous.

On awakening, I start my day off by asking my Higher Power to direct my thinking and to give me inspiration. Then I simply say, "God, I can't handle today as well as You can, so I'm turning it over to You." As long as I remember to do that daily, things get better in every department of my life.

When Bill found sobriety, he said it was like being catapulted into what he called the fourth dimension of existence. I know what that feeling is. I've been on that cloud for seven and a half years now, and my life is overflowing with an abundance of benefits from this beautiful Fellowship.

We are supposed to be happy. AA promises us that. On page 83, the Big Book says, "We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness." Then, on page 152, it tells us that "you will find release from care, boredom, and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead."

My program involves a lot of action. I continually work the Twelve Steps, to the best of my ability; I'm active as secretary of a group; I visit hospitals and jails on our local hospital and institution committee of

AA. I do this because the Big Book reminds me throughout that strenuous work — one alcoholic working with another — is vital to permanent recovery.

I think I found the key on page 163: "To duplicate... what we have accomplished is only a matter of willingness, patience, and labor." And on page 164: "God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. ... See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others."

I notice a certain gleam in the eyes of the recovered alcoholic, that sparkle we have when we are getting sober. We really glow! Bill mentions it in his story (page 9) when his old

school friend visited him sober for the first time: "The door opened and he stood there, fresh-skinned and glowing. There was something about his eyes. He was inexplicably different."

AA offers a design for living that really works. I realize that we stay sober one day at a time, and I know that I'm just one drink away from a drunk, but I like what Dr. Bob said to the writer of "He Had to Be Shown." When Dr. Bob was asked whether he was ever going to want another drink, he replied (page 206), "So long as I'm thinking as I'm thinking now, and so long as I'm doing the things I'm doing now, I don't believe I'll ever take another drink."

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