

Big Book Stories — Updated

"I've Never Quit Being Active."

*This is a
life-changing program
and the growth process
never ends*

ON FEBRUARY 11, 1938, I had my last drink. I was a chronic alky, and through a long, involved miracle I met my sponsor, Dr. Bob, one of our co-founders. He put me in Akron City Hospital, where I met most of the alky who had preceded me in the Fellowship.

Fifteen months later, I organized the Cleveland, Ohio, AA group. The activity in the Cleveland area was hectic. I spent practically all my time obtaining and following up on publicity for AA, lining up cooperation with civic and church groups, hospitals, and courts, and helping new groups to start.

So what do I do now, thirty years later? I have never quit being active, although my position in the Fellowship has modified over the years. I attend an average of two meetings per week, when I am home. I am also asked to speak at various groups. In addition, I am invited to take part in numerous group anniversary programs and AA round-ups around the country (and some-

times out of the country). Many people call upon me for counsel and advice on both personal and group problems. I have an extensive correspondence, since I have made so many friends in AA from coast to coast. Once in a while, I sponsor someone. Cases where about everything has been tried, by about everyone else, often wind up in my hands.

I have not found the program to be difficult, and I maintain that if it does seem difficult for anyone, he is not doing it "right." Certainly, when I came to this Fellowship, I was in no position or condition to handle anything difficult! I kept things simple. But I must add that when I first began I was well sponsored.

I took measures now summarized in the first nine Steps of the program: admittance of a need (the First Step), surrender (Second through Seventh), and restitution (Eighth and Ninth). Having done this, I no longer had a drinking problem, since it had been turned over to a Higher Power. Now I had — and still have — a living problem. But that is taken care of by the practice of Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve. So I don't have to be concerned about anything but a simple

three-step program, which with practice has become habitual.

Step Ten enables me to check on myself and my activities of the day. I have found that most things disturbing me are little things, but still the very things which, if not dealt with, can pile up and eventually overwhelm me. My daily checkup covers good deeds as well as questionable ones; often, I find I can commend myself in some areas, while in others I owe apologies.

Step Eleven is done after my daily inventory. I usually need the peace resulting from prayer and meditation, and I do receive guidance for my life and actions.

Step Twelve, to me, *does* involve not only carrying the message, but extending AA principles into all phases of my daily life.

I learned long ago that this is a life-changing program, but that, after the change occurs, it is necessary for me to go on making the effort to improve myself mentally, morally, and spiritually.

This is my simple program, and I recommend it to anyone who wants a good life and is willing to do his share of helping.

C.H.S., St. Petersburg, Fla.

*The author's story,
"Home Brewmeister,"
appears on page 297
of the revised edition
of "Alcoholics Anonymous,"
published in 1955*