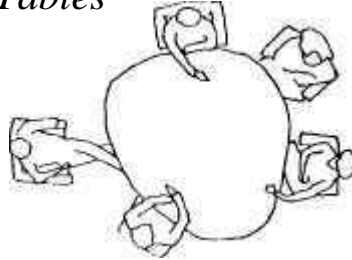


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*Around the Tables***Big Book Wisdom**

**A**ROUND THE TABLES, how often are "unique" situations described by newcomers, usually seeking a one-shot solution? As often as newcomers appear, I would say. I listened to one such tale the other night, and I was reminded once more of the wisdom packed into the pages of the Big Book. There, if one will only read it, lie the answers to all the questions raised. It is in the stories of recovery that the solutions are found. Isn't that exactly what the Big Book is all about? Recovery, not drunkenness.

The pattern for an AA talk is set forth in Chapter 5: "Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now." Throughout the text, including Bill's story, we read of disbelief, then identification, listening, trying, and working the Steps. Over and over, the message is repeated: "what happened."

A fellow AA came to me seeking advice, and I responded with a familiar story—my version of what the Big Book says. Right up front in my brain is the constant refrain "I am an alcoholic who needs God's help." I direct my day toward going to bed sober one more time. My answer is too simple, and I have disappointed my friend. But what else do I have? My recovering has come one day at a time without a drink; there is no other way for me.

My friend doesn't want stories; he wants magic, and I'm not a magician. Each night, I read the Big Book; each night, I learn a new lesson to help my sobriety. I keep thinking of the line in Chapter 5 about the "easier, softer way." Too often, the easiest, softest way as revealed in the success stories is overlooked, namely: Try following the Twelve Steps.