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Rules or guidelines?

From Brooklyn, N. Y.:

I've been in AA a few twenty-four hours. Almost two years sober now, after beating my brains out for a number of years — in and out of the program — I have been aware of something lately.

I believe that the Big Book was written as a guide for the AA program, not as a definite set of rules we must follow. I believe that the Big Book and the Traditions are guidelines for the groups, that each group uses them to fit each group — not that we must follow them to the letter.

Some people have said that we must more or less follow them to the letter. Perhaps you and maybe some of the readers have opinions on this?

JACK W.