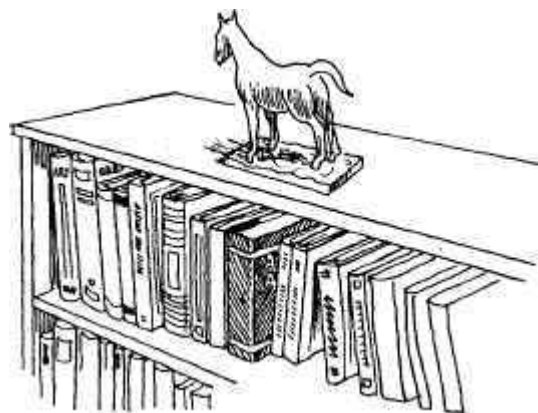


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## Too Big to Wade Through Now

*But the  
book  
had all the answers*



WHEN I FIRST commenced experimenting with Alcoholics Anonymous, I was given a copy of the Big Book and told to read it. It's big, all right, I thought, too big to wade through now. So all I read was the Twelve Steps, which meant nothing to me.

For seventeen long years, that book sat in my various bookshelves as I moved from pillar to post, from just being sick occasionally to being desperately ill constantly and almost dead several times — all because of my continual and excessive drinking, of course. The unreal thing was that although I lost just about everything else, I never lost that Big Book. During my sorties in and out of the Fellowship of AA, I would occasionally

read a page or two, but my mind was never free from booze long enough for it or anything else to have any meaning.

Then came a wondrous event. I was in treatment for the *n*th time, and I suddenly decided I wanted sobriety more than I wanted anything else in life or in this world. I became willing to go to any length to achieve and maintain this sobriety. I'd had enough, not only of hurting myself, but of hurting everyone else as well. I'd had it with that prison called alcohol. I began to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understood Him, and I found that my Big Book had all the answers as to how I could do this.

My sponsor had told me, "Read

the Big Book seven or eight times, then start to study it." This I have done and mean to continue doing for as long as I want a happy, contented, well-rounded sobriety. To me, it is just as important as attendance at meetings — sometimes more important, for the book is always handy, and if I'm in trouble, I can grab it, open it anyplace, and read something stimulating, something that will make me recall the horrors of my drinking. Most important, I can read something that will help me get over whatever is bugging me.

I now have all three editions of the Big Book, and I have just finished reading the new stories in the most recent edition. They are great, as they point out to the younger generation

that the illness of alcoholism can affect them as well as older people.

I can pick up my Big Book anytime, open it to any page, and always find something that is thought-provoking and illuminating, something that will help me in my sobriety. My book goes with me wherever I go. I use it if I chair a meeting, and I use it if I can't get to a meeting. It has all the answers that are necessary for me to recover from my illness and to stay recovered.

So I say to all newcomers what was said to me when I was a newcomer: "Read the Big Book seven or eight times and then start to study it." And I add, "Continue to study it for as long as you live and want a good sobriety."

*G.T., Excelsior, Minn.*