

## We Found No 'Easier, Softer Way'

*We have to be willing to go to any length*

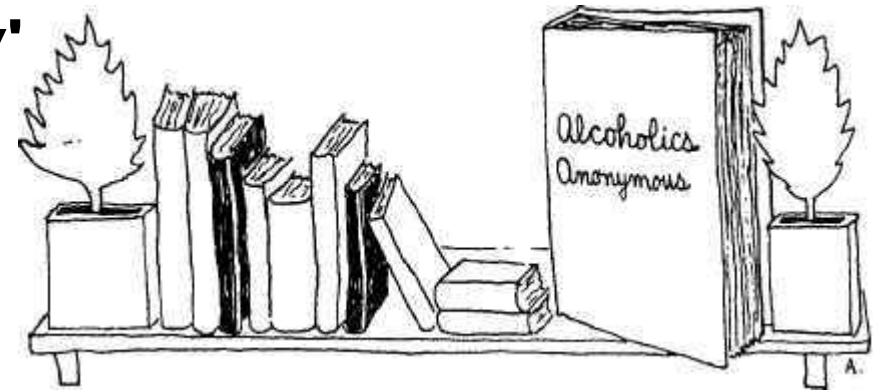
THERE ARE two sayings which have been rather traditional around AA and which, in this writer's opinion, have been greatly misused. "Keep it simple" and *Easy Does It* were not meant to be an alternative to the working of the Twelve Steps, nor were they meant to be "an easier, softer way." I believe their intention was to keep us from going overboard in our typical compulsive fashion; they were not meant to be a license for sitting on our duffs.

The program of Alcoholics Anon-

ymous is a program of action, requiring willingness to go to any lengths to obtain and maintain our sobriety.

For example, let's look at the opening of Chapter 5 in the Big Book. There we find many words which strongly suggest action. Even the chapter title suggests action: "How It *Works*." The italics are mine, as are those in the following excerpt:

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has *thoroughly followed our*



*path*. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not *completely give themselves* to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of *grasping and developing* a manner of living which *demand*s rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stones disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are *willing to go to any length to get it*—then you are ready to *take certain steps*.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be *fearless* and *thorough* from the very start. Some

of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with alcohol—cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now!

*Half measures availed us nothing.* We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a Program of Recovery:

1. We *admitted* we were powerless over alcohol... that our lives had become unmanageable.

2. *Came to believe* that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

3. *Made a decision* to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

4. *Made a searching* and *fearless* moral inventory of ourselves.

5. *Admitted* to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

6. *Were entirely ready* to have God remove all these defects of character.

7. Humbly *asked* Him to remove our shortcomings.

8. *Made a list* of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

9. *Made direct amends* to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

10. *Continued to take personal inventory* and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

11. *Sought* through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power *to carry that out*.

12. Having had a spiritual awakening *as the result of these Steps*, we *tried to carry this message to alcoholics*, and to *practice these principles in all our affairs*.

"Keep it simple" and *Easy Does It* — but do it!

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