

November 1967

What about guilt?

From Burnsville, N. C.:

The Big Book itself, since I am a Loner, has played a large part in the last ten months in my sobriety. It has had to take the place of meetings, of talks with other alcoholics.

I would like to hear someone's opinion on what feelings of guilt have possibly contributed to alcoholism—today and before. What are the real forces that cause a man to feel ashamed of his mistakes?

Even though we know today that each individual is a bit different, this is only one of the many miracles of his make-up — yet is not ego a part of shame even though we believe it to be the opposite?

Around me I notice a great reluctance on the part of people to go into their fears and apprehensions. We are quick to assume, yet slow to try to analyze.

All this is merely to show my gratefulness in feeling that I do *not* have the right to let shame of the past deter my effort to continue to try to analyze and to ask for the opinions of others—not as an emergency, but as a way of life.

And since the Big Book of AA has apparently broken down the door of shame and guilt, I shall try to keep it open to broader avenues of the future.

RAYMOND R.