

Chapter Three: **MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM**
(pgs. 30-44)

Having laid out the solution in the previous chapter, Bill is probably thinking, “There are some folks who are not going to like this idea of a Spiritual Experience any more than I did. So, I need to tell them just exactly what’s going to happen to them if they don’t have a Spiritual Experience.” So he writes a chapter called *More About Alcoholism*, which, is about one thing and one thing only: the **insanity** of the first drink.

Step Two says “We came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” Well if we’ve got to be *restored* to sanity, that indicates we must, on some level, be insane. And many alcoholics are highly offended when you bring this up. They say “Oh don’t tell me I’m insane. Yeah I do some crazy, stupid things when drinking but when I’m sober I’m much like normal people. So, as long as I’m not drinking or drugging, I *have been* restored to sanity.”

Well, those crazy, stupid things we do while drunk are caused by a mind that’s filled with alcohol - which lowers the inhibitions. And if your head is filled with chemicals that lower your inhibitions - look out - you’re going to do some crazy stupid things all right. But, **that’s not insanity** -- that’s **intoxication** caused by the alcohol itself. So, in order for us to understand this, we had to go back to the dictionary and look up the word “sanity”. And we find:

Sanity = wholeness of mind or the ability to recognize the truth

If your mind is sane, that means you can see the truth about everything around you. That means you’ll make decisions based on the truth and life turns out to be pretty good.

An *insane* mind is one that cannot always see the *truth* about everything around it. And when it comes to alcohol it seems as though we cannot always see the truth .

***We make a decision based upon a lie...
then we run into the truth...
and life becomes an absolute living hell.***

So let’s look within the mind of us alcoholics just before we take the first drink – when we’re *stone cold sober*. Can we or can we not see the truth? If we can recognize the truth, we’re sane. If we can’t – and we take action based on a lie - we’re insane.

Now Bill is going to show us this by a series of examples. He’s going to give us the “Man of Thirty”. He’s going to look at “Jim”. He’s going to look at the “Jaywalker”. And he’s going to look at “Fred”. And each time we’re going to look into their minds to see if they can or cannot see the *truth* about alcohol.

Remember, it’s the *LIE* which imprisons us in a Hopeless State of Mind, Body and Spirit. And.....as the saying goes...**the TRUTH** will set us free!

Identifications:

"The man of thirty" Page 32 (2nd paragraph)

This story was probably adapted from the chapter "First Steps" in the book *"The Common Sense of Drinking"*.

There is one story on page 37 that speaks of a man 36 years old that had been drinking for 16 years and another story on page 123 regarding a man who gave up drinking to make a million dollars.

Neither one of these actually match the story in the big book. The story on page 123 is the one that most closely matches the story in the book. The big discrepancy in the story is the amount of sobriety this man had (full text below). The big book speaks of 25 years of sobriety and the other states he had 5 years sober.

Excerpt From *Common Sense of Drinking* by Richard Peabody:

"Some years ago there lived a man who decided to give up drinking until he could make a million dollars, at which time he intended to drink in moderation. It took him 5 years of sobriety to make the million; then he begins his "moderate" drinking. In two or three years he lost all his money, and in another three he died of alcoholism. "

"Jim the Car Salesman" Page 35 (2nd paragraph)

Ralph F. author of the first edition big book story "Another Prodigal Story".

"Fred the Accountant" Page 39 (2nd paragraph)

Harry B. author of the first edition big book story "A Different Slant".
Harry later sued AA for money he loaned to print the big book.