

THE DOCTOR'S OPINION

The "Doctor's Opinion" was written by William D. Silkworth, M.D. To many recovered alcoholics, this section of the Big Book is important as it describes alcoholism in terms that make sense to the real alcoholic. It lets us know exactly what's wrong with us. From this description, the alcoholic learns the true nature of the disease of alcoholism and how hopeless this condition of mind and body seems to be. We are told why we are unable to control the amount we drink once we have taken the first few drinks due to the **allergy** of the body. Then, we are told why it is that we cannot manage our decision to not take the first drink once we have made a firm decision, pledge, vow, promise, etc. to never drink again, and that's due to the **obsession** of the mind.

He also expresses his belief, based on his observations, in the effectiveness of the Program of Alcoholics Anonymous as a method of assuring the essential entire psychic change which he believed to be the only solution for this seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.

Dr. Silkworth was trained in Neurology and lost his practice as the result of the stock market "crash" of 1929. He then met Charles Towns who asked him to direct the Charles B. Towns Hospital, 293 Central Park West, New York, which specialized in the treatment of alcoholics and drug addicts. "Silky, the little doctor who loved drunks," as he came to be known, devoted his entire career to the practice of helping alcoholics.

His "diagnosis" became the basis for our first step. It is only when we clearly understand a problem (Step One) that we may be able to find a solution (Step Two). Bill W. understood the hopelessness of his alcoholism from Dr. Silkworth's opinion. Dr. Bob understood the hopelessness of his alcoholism after Bill W. explained Dr. Silkworth's opinion to him. And on and on and on.

Very simply, from this section of the Big Book, we learn of the **physical allergy** which ensures that we cannot drink like other people due to the **phenomenon of craving** we experience once we start. We also learn of the **obsession of the mind** which denies the physical allergy, and so ensures that we cannot keep from drinking. The ultimate conclusion being, if we have a body which says NO, and a mind which says, YES, then we have become absolutely **powerless** over alcohol, and most certainly our lives had become **unmanageable**.

THE DOCTOR'S OPINION

SUMMARY QUESTIONS:

1. *Why can't I drink/use like everybody else?*
2. *Why, despite everything I knew about what happens everytime I drink/use, do I start drinking/using after a period of abstinence?*
3. *Why can't I stop whenever I want to?*