

The Insanity of Alcoholism

The insanity of alcoholism is NOT the goofy behavior that people exhibit when they are drunk. Everyone who ingests enough alcohol will act goofy. The insanity of alcoholism is the alcoholic's persistent return to alcohol in the face of overwhelming evidence that it is destroying his or her life, over and over again. There are some in our fellowship of AA who have serious mental problems, but most of us joke about how "insane" or crazy or "goofy" we are or have been, when what we really are talking about is our emotional immaturity, our impulsiveness, our lack of self-discipline...our character defects if you will. Most of us would have a hard time describing many of our thoughts and actions as being in-sane. In fact, in some areas of life, we may exhibit a high degree of sanity. However, there is something about the way we perceive the world around us that has always caused us a great deal of discomfort in simply living our lives. Our general discomfort with living has much to do with the way we perceive the effects of alcohol. Our falling short of what is called "well adjusted" is definitely a part of our makeup as an alcoholic. However, that alone does not separate us much from the general population. It is our physical as well as our mental response to alcohol that is insane, and that is what separates the alcoholic from the non-alcoholic. There are two problems alcoholics have with alcohol: 1. The obsession of the mind, and 2. The compulsion of the body – an incomprehensible craving. Somewhere along the line, early or late, we develop obsession with the idea that alcohol eases our minds and solves our problems. Then, our physical response to alcohol manifests in what the "Big Book" calls an allergy. Our alcoholic insanity of our minds tells us that it is a good idea to drink to relieve our stress and to have fun. Once we start, our alcoholic bodies tell us we must drink more to satisfy the craving. As every alcoholic should know, that is where the well-known cycle begins and continues over and over again, leading to death, incarceration, or "wet brain" insanity. What Dr. Silkworth called the phenomenon of craving, manifesting as an allergy, is so overpowering that all else comes second to our primary concern of getting the next drink, even life itself takes second place. That, my friends is the "INSANITY OF ALCOHOLISM." It is only relieved and arrested by total abstinence, and as we have found, by and through the application of the 12 Steps of AA in our lives, in all our affairs, to achieve a psychic change, a "spiritual awakening," leading to growth and maturity, and a firm grasp of the reality of life and the world about us. As a young man (with tears in his eyes) in his first AA meeting said, "I'm here because I just want to live. That's it. I just want to live." It is as simple as that.

– Barefoot Bob, Denver CO.
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