

Chapter Four

**Human Ego:  
Obsessed Ego/Healthy Ego**

I would like to start tonight in the same way that we've started all our meetings with our little prayer:

***Dear God, let me set aside everything I think I know about You and me and this program and these steps, for an open mind, and a new experience with You and me and this program and these steps.***

Sure thank you.

Now you have received, by courtesy of my absent Pigeon, Brian V. (who bullied me into doing this series and didn't bloody well show up at the last meeting with some lame excuse), but he did these hand-out sheets for me anyway, so I'm very grateful for that. What we are looking at here in this depiction is a representation of a human ego; the alcoholic ego; the obsessed ego. This is my ego, I don't know whether it fits you or not, but if it fits, you are welcome to it. But it sure fits me. A TV fan might say "if it fits -- you must commit!"

**See the diagram at the end of this chapter**

On the one hand is the *Alcoholic Obsessed Ego* (shown at the top of the fold-out) that I came here with, and that I had long before I ever got to take a drink, so that I was in trouble with life before I started drinking. When I started drinking, I saw alcohol as an answer, it

made life more bearable for me. It made me seem to become part of life.

And then when I had to give the alcohol up, I was amazed that when I gave the alcohol up, I didn't give all my troubles up, all my problems, all my living problems. I was still having trouble living. Of course the reason is very simple as you see, the obsession remains. The booze is gone, but the obsession remains.

And if you recall we looked, during our second meeting we looked back over the relationships that would be formed by an obsessed person, a person obsessed with self, self-centredness Bill called it in our Big Book, and if you remember, we went through those seven points, comparing, or rather contrasting, the obsessed ego and the healthy ego in a relationship.

The first point the magical thinking, the unreal expectations. With this sort of thinking we feel we know exactly what our partner is going to do before we even meet them. We know what they are going to say, and what we are going to say, and they will say this and we will say that, and it will be wonderful.

And then if you look at the healthy ego you see that person doesn't think like that. The healthy person goes by the principles of Alcoholics Anonymous. And that person would take the motto "*First Things First*" into consideration, and give the other person a chance to express themselves, when they meet that other person. It may start out firstly as a superficial relationship, and then, if it continues at all, it may develop into a companionship where the activity is more important than the person. And then as it grows

through that, it can grow into a friendship, where the person is more important than the activity, and we gave examples of all of those things.

And then as time goes on it may blossom into an intimate relationship, at whatever level of intimacy. And one of the examples of an intimate relationship that we used was sponsorship. And of course another example of an intimate relationship would be romantic love. And every alcoholic knows all about that, because we are the most romantic lovers you ever saw (as we imagine), up here (in our mind), that you ever saw.

But, of course, with magical thinking we don't stop to realize that romantic love on the one hand is balanced with certain responsibilities on the other hand, when the relationship develops in a healthy way. And we said that any relationship that is based on sex, if sex is the basis of a relationship, 90% of the time that relationship will fail. It will end up in a cat fight, a clashing of obsessed egos, and it will be awful.

We went through and considered the intense ego -- gratification that comes with sex, out of a "love equals sex" relationship. Whereas by contrast the healthy person with the healthy ego goes on the basis of Easy Does It, and takes time to develop things. Then of course the person who is suffering from the Obsessed Ego cannot be honest because fear declares that if we are honest the relationship won't last. The unfortunate people in "love equals sex" relationships have to be dishonest.

They have to make up stories and they have to exaggerate things, and they are always smarter and

better and richer and better looking, and better dressed, and everything else, then they really are. They are not really as they represent themselves at all. Now, if you get two obsessed people trying to relate to each other, hey, you are going to have a hell of a lot of fun.

But the healthy person doesn't bother with that, the healthy ego says no, we go on the basis of *Live and Let Live*. And we deal on the basis of honesty. You have all been at AA long enough to know that the golden key; the magic golden key, to sobriety, in the sense that we use it, is rigorous self-honesty. That is number one on the hit parade. Without that, nothing can be lastingly accomplished.

So the healthy person goes by the principle of *Live and Let Live, Live and Let Live*. The healthy person doesn't have to keep up that compulsive over control. The healthy person accepts people as they are, until they prove themselves to be something different. And that lack of trust that the obsessed person gets into, because they can't trust the other person. We know that we don't control them perfectly, and therefore we can't trust them. So from that we get into the whining and the self-pity and that gives rise to lots of conversation.

I get lots of calls from people who want to tell me about that s.o.b. that they are married to or that bastard that they have got, or whatever, and you know, it's just self-centredness, the ego obsessed with self. And I don't want to talk about that. Sometimes they get mad at me and say, "Well, what am I going to talk about?", "What can we talk about?" they ask. Naturally I want to talk about the Answer. I want to talk about

the Program. I want to talk about the Healthy Ego and how you get to develop that. So we went all through that.

The Obsessed Ego, is always desperately seeking satisfaction; ego satisfaction, and, of course, Bill says it's a divine impossibility to satisfy the human ego. Why? Because the only final lasting satisfaction it could ever have would be to become equal to or greater than God, to be God. There is a Power, but it ain't you. And kids, that ain't going to happen. That is never going to happen.

We live in a crazy world where God is dead, but Elvis is alive. And Bill tells us very clearly in step Three. He says, the first thing is we have to quit playing God. Now do you see why Bill put that in there? Because that is exactly what we have been doing. It is self-worship, we are obsessed with ourselves. But the Healthy Ego doesn't want that, it doesn't want to be God, doesn't want to manage and control everything, The Healthy Ego lives for love and service.

That is what Dr. Bob talked about in his last message. That is all he talked about in his last message. He says, "Everybody knows what love is", I could have kicked him in the shins because I didn't know what love was, and "Everybody knows what service is", and I had no idea what service was. I didn't understand that service is giving of self, without a price tag, for free and for fun, and just for the sheer joy of giving of self. Of what of self? Of time, of effort, of ideas, of whatever I have that is me.

Bill says that the real purpose is to fit ourselves,

and you will remember this, to be of maximum service to God and to other alcoholics, right? No. To God, and to the people about us, in other words, to every single person that we relate to in our life. That is what we are supposed to do. That is how we base our relationships, they are based on that, maximum service, firstly to God, and then to all the people that we relate to.

So once we are in AA, we can't try to change a superficial relationship overnight into an intimate relationship, with declarations of undying love and passion that, you all know that story, don't you? To obtain instant sexual gratification, or spiritual; it won't work in spiritual gratification either. In checking it over, you remember what we said about actions, every action tends to either, leads us to closer connection or to more isolation. So we have to be very careful with that. But that Obsessed Ego is always looking for gratification.

Now if you just take a quick look at that little depiction of the egos. Take a look at the Obsessed Ego. And notice the outer circle is a shell. It is like a practice golf ball and it has holes in it, so if something from outside of us, outside of self, tries to get through to us, it is most probably going to hit that hard shell and bounce off. People don't find us easy to get to. They find us hard to know. And you would wonder, you would say, well what could that hard shell be composed of? Well, what would create that hard shell? And the answer to that is very simple. Prejudice. Prejudice. Pre-judging.

We are prejudiced against the church, we are prejudiced against marriage, we are prejudiced against

responsibility, we are prejudiced against anybody having their way but us. We are prejudiced against anything that threatens our ego. It is a solid mass of prejudice, and nothing can get through that.

And what exists inside of that Obsessed Ego? Well, that is kind of interesting because life will sometimes fire something at us, like maybe a question or something like that, and that question may come in through one of those holes. So there is no protection from it, it just comes straight in through the hole and stabs me in the heart. And the question might be something really complicated and difficult to handle like, "Where are you going?" Or, my wife's favourite question that threw me completely, I never did figure out an answer to it, I've never answered it yet. I'd come home after an absence of three or four days, and she would say, "where were you?" How the hell are you going to answer a question like that? If I'd known where I was, I would have come home. I didn't come because I didn't know where the hell I was. I never did answer that question properly. I answered it like this guy does here, like I does here.

The question comes roaring in and strikes me (that's me at the middle there), and then the answer goes, in this case right back out through the same hole; and the answer is something you know that a really clever alcoholic would think up, like "Go to hell". I mean there is an answer, uh? Deal with that. But the question doesn't stop there [at me]. You see, it ricochets around inside of that shell of ego; it fires out "Leave me alone", and then it bounces across the other side of my Obsessed Ego, and my reaction is, "Everybody in the world is against me", and then it ricochets up at another angle and comes right back

and stabs me in the heart. And now it says, "You hate me". And the result is that the entire inner shell of ego that I live in is filled with anger, rage, and resentment.

How many times have you heard that somebody in the group is having trouble and they are angry. What are they angry about? I don't know, have you ever talked to a person like that? Ask them why are you so bloody mad all the time, what is it? My wife used to ask me that, "Why are you angry all the time?" Hell, I didn't know, I couldn't answer her. I didn't realize that it was inward anger. And the result of that, as any psychologist will tell you, is depression.

Are you depressed? There are two kinds of depression, physical depression or mental depression, which ever you want to call it, and spiritual depression. The mental depression is from inward anger, I am not good enough, I am not adequate enough, I am not this, I am not that. I'm less than. And the spiritual depression is -- "I am not worthy". I am not well, that is okay for you, God would smile at you, smile on you, but I am not worthy. I am bad, I am a sinner. God could not only never love me, nor ever even give me the time of day, but because I'm so unworthy He's probably out to get me. Chuck always called that "spiritual lack". The lack of any conscious relationship with a God of my own.

You know that television show, they have that little song that they play, it is a police show of some kind, "Bad boys bad boys what you gonna do when they come for you", that's the alcoholic. Damn it, that is our theme song, we love that one, we sit in the bar and hum it. You may go, "I am bad", right!. Because underneath all of that there is fear and panic, and if

you look, you will see how that goes down into anger, rage, resentment.

It is no bloody wonder that Bill tells us in Step Four that resentment is the Number One Offender. And here is what Bill says about resentment. This is interesting. Bill says, "from it stems all forms of spiritual disease". You see why now, because in resentment we are totally separated from the Power. Now of course if you look at this depiction, you will see that there is God, God, God, because God is everywhere. In, out, up, down, there is no life apart from God, all life comes from, God is life, so all life comes from God. No life apart from God, but there is experience apart from, and that is what we are living in, in the Obsessed Ego.

If you want to see a picture of hell, here it is, you don't need flames and cinders and burning and all that, you know, devils with pitch -- You are the devil. You've got the pitchfork. You are sticking it in yourself. This is why Bill says, "There is One who has all Power and that One is God. Now of course I can't say there isn't a devil. Maybe there is, I don't know, I am not a theologian. All I know is that if there is a devil, I don't need to worry about him because he hasn't got any power. God has the Power. All Power. All Power Bill tells us.

And prejudice, ahhh, we love that. So we lather the whole inside of that shell, we plaster it with prejudice, and it gets to be thick and thick and you can't get a damn thing through it. And then that gives rise to all those neat little things like envy and jealousy and greed and lust and sloth.

Lust incidentally deals with a lot more than just sex. For a long time I thought lust and sex were sort of -- I was going to say bed mates but I better not say that -- partners, like they went together. No, no! Lust is an exorbitant longing for whatever. It could be for food, it could be for clothing, it could be for money, it could be for anything. Trying to get more than your share, trying to bloody well (I hope it is not food), trying to get more than your share.

So, on re-examining all of those neat things that we have just looked at, somebody says, well hell you are talking about the seven deadly sins. I don't know what sin is, so I can't talk about that, but I know what the hell these things are, because I have had every one of them, and still do to a degree. I am a human being. I am never going to be totally, totally rid of them.

These things can make me crazy in a hurry. They are the children of the ego. So if you want to get rid of anger you can work on it as long as you like, you ain't never going to get rid of anger. I used to tease friends of mine who are Oblates. I would tell them "That is the Oblate way to do it". You know, work on anger, work on fear, and pray to beat hell to be rid of fear and envy and jealousy and all that.

Ah, see, I was raised by the Jesuits, and the Jesuit way is to get rid of the Ego. If you get rid of the ego, you get rid of the children of the ego. So you don't work on any specific defect, hell we all got defects and we are always going to have them, and we all have Egos too. Just work on your Ego, and reduce that and see what happens.

If you may recall, Bill suggests in our Step Seven

Prayer that we ask God to remove every "single" defect of character that stands in the way of my usefulness etc. It is my belief that Bill meant the Obsessed Ego when he said "single" defect. If God removes the obsession with self from our Ego we'll be left with a healthy ego. And in the healthy ego the anger, resentment, fear, jealousy etc. defects are not present or at least, minimally present. To me, the Step Seven Prayer is a powerful Ego Buster.

There are some other neat things inside of that shell of ego that we keep to ourselves. We think nobody else is like this, we think it is just us. We feel unique, and of course, we are, because we are trapped and imprisoned inside that shell of the Obsessed Ego. So of course we can't relate to other people. Remorse, boy when we feel remorse, we don't just feel a little bit of remorse, we dive into it right up to our necks. And guilt, we don't feel just a little bit guilty, we want to go and confess to everything, you know.

Where do all those people come from that turn up at the police station and confess to crimes that they never committed? Who do you think those people are? Where do you think they were the day before they were at the police station? They were not in church, I will guarantee you that, they were in some booze can somewhere lapping it up, playing the hero.

Alcoholics do a lot of funny things. I once had an alcoholic client confess to a murder and get arrested just to get even with his girlfriend. And it took several lie detector tests and three months to get him out of jail and back in mommy's loving arms.

And shame, that is a big deal with alcoholics,

shame, particularly women alcoholics. Lack of trust, of course, how can we trust anybody? We are contemptuous, because our ego, that is the way it works. "It's either look at me, look how wonderful I am", or "look at me, how terrible I am". We are never in the middle, we are either way up there or way down there, so we have both opposites you see. Contempt, I am smarter than him, I am better than him, I am faster than him, all that crap. And self-pity, oh boy.

So you see, one problem, the line says underneath that ego, one problem that includes all problems. So it is not as complicated and as complex as we would like to make it. "Oh, nobody could understand me. Why not" "Have you got a different kind of ego?" Yours doesn't work like this? If so, please draw me a picture of it and bring it up and let me have a look, I'll wait. I'm pretty convinced this is how my ego looks, and this is how my ego works, and this is how it feels to be inside that mess. That's my Obsessed Ego. It is hot in there, and nothing can get through.

And then we look at the Healthy Ego, which is no longer obsessed. The obsessed ego has been smashed, and has fallen apart and gone down, and out of the ashes of that crushed ego arises, little by little, the vestiges of a healthy ego, as action is taken and time goes by. This is why you don't get sober in 30 days. You know, treatment centres are very big on that. Shoot, I even saw one in Atlanta that guaranteed, on television, 10 days, guaranteed sobriety. I thought I would die. Wouldn't it be great if you could go somewhere and somebody could turn a switch or something and you would be wonderful? It ain't going to be like that. That is dreaming, just fantasy, it will never be like that.

But as the Healthy Ego arises, it is pliant and it is flexible, and is penetrated easily from the outside, so even God can get in. And suddenly there is a Power in our lives that was not there before. And inside of that ego, I use three words, I use Life, Good, God. I think they are all the same, I think they are synonymous. I think Life is good, God is life, God is good, I use those three words, to me they mean the same thing.

And now when the question comes firing in at us, "what happened?" It comes in through that flexible fuzzy tennis ball type shell of ego that protects but doesn't prohibit. And inside of that have arisen great strengths because there is Power in there now. Compassion, understanding and love, honesty, reason, respect, confidence, trust, and if you are in Alcoholics Anonymous, anonymity belongs in there.

It ain't no longer me first. The law of sacrifice applies, and we can take the whole Twelve traditions and put them right in there. Anonymity says that principles apply before personalities, and it is on that basis that I start relating to other people, on the basis of principles, and humility.

Humility is a very scarce commodity, if you think you got it, you ain't. We had a guy years ago, a big guy, his son was a professional football player, and he was the first lifer to be paroled, after having been sentenced to life in prison as an habitual criminal. He has knocked over every Credit Union in Saskatchewan. He knew all the RCMP by their first name, ol Bertie, and he was a hell of a guy. We got him out on parole, and he stayed sober and he got a job, and it was wonderful. He would come to jail with

us, come to institutional AA meetings with us and he would walk in and he would say, "I am the humblest man in this room". We would all die laughing. He drove a great big Cadillac. He was something, but he wasn't humble. But he was sober by God, and he did fine.

Gratitude. Here is the place for gratitude. This is the place for gratitude, not standing up in a meeting and saying "I am a grateful Alcoholic". No kidding. That impresses the hell out of me, if you are so grateful, how come you have to tell me about it? How come I can't see it for myself. Don't tell me, let me see it.

Sharing and caring. This is the way we live, sharing and caring. The sharing comes first. Remember what we said about how our relationship starts, you go down inside and get a feeling, put a name on it and bring in out, communicate it to someone, and then listen. That is the sharing part. The caring part comes afterward as we listen to the other person tell us how they are feeling, what their feelings are. Now we start to feel connected, because our feelings connect us.

But our ideas and judgments separate us. But feelings connect us, you see. And that is where we start to care about the other person. If they are hurting, we will share with them and try to help where we can. And faith hope and charity, come in there, charity, love, it is a form of love, just love, that is all.

Life fires a question in through that soft shell, "what happened?". And I have the time to think about it because I am using time to my advantage now, and

I'm no longer consumed by self. And I listen to that honestly, and I reason about it. I respect the other person, I am not going to try to BS them, I am going to try to answer them truthfully, because honesty is part of my package now. The key part of my package, I have to be honest with you. And the answer is 'I was wrong'. Hey, can you imagine an alcoholic bare faced saying, "I was wrong"? You might go over and smell his breath. That ain't natural for an alcoholic. But I tell you something. It is for a Healthy Ego.

What is wrong with that? See, -- tell the truth, just the bare naked simple truth is good enough. It doesn't have to be better than that. That is good enough you know. So you see this gives us One Answer. One Answer. To avail ourselves of the healthy ego instead of the obsessed ego and like it says at the bottom line there, "One Answer that includes All Answers".

So it is just like Dr. Harry Tiebout told us years and years ago when he wrote that paper for the American Psychiatric Society that is recorded at page 311 in AA Comes of Age, where he described the kind of people we are. Harry accurately describes what an obsessed ego is like, and states that the obsessed ego will at all costs try to preserve itself. So it does not matter to the obsessed ego what the cost is. Lying? No problem. Stealing? No problem. Dishonesty? No problem. That obsessed Ego always comes first, and insists upon maintaining that position to the bitter end.

So here we are, left with, "One answer that includes all Answers". That is why Bill says in the Big Book, that this book contains an answer that will solve all of your problems. And people look at that and say, "How can that be? That a simple program like this can

solve all my problems? How is it possible that one answer would solve all of my problems? I must have a thousand problems.

We used to have a big guy in this group. He must have weighed, I guess, 250 pounds, maybe more. He was a big tall kid, hell of a nice kid, and he showed me his book one night. He wanted me to write something in his Big Book. So I write what I always write, 'Carry the Message'. Why, because that is the most important thing in Alcoholics Anonymous, carry the message. You notice how many things I say are the most important things in Alcoholics Anonymous? And as I looked at his book I saw that it said, 'God has ten thousand answers for our problems'. I said, "Who wrote that in your book?" He said, "I did". I said "Where did you get that?" He says, "I heard it in a meeting". I said, "You like that?" He said, "Yeah." I says, "So you need ten thousand programs, we only got one program." "Well, yeah I know, but, he said, it means God has an answer for every problem." I said, "God has one answer, because we only have one problem." I said, "Take that out of your book". (Laughter) He is big enough to eat me, but he took it out of his book.

We don't need ten thousand answers. One God, One power, one problem, one answer, that simple enough for you? That is what this says. That is exactly what this says. So forget about working on anger. Well I am just trying to be honest. Sure, I know how hard you are trying to be honest, don't kid me. See, one problem, that bloody ego, and we have to somehow or other move from the Obsessed Ego at the top in the depiction, to the Healthy Ego at the bottom. And tonight, that is what we are going to talk about.



So the question is, 'How do I get from the Obsessed Ego to the Healthy Ego?' The simple truth is that there is no way that I can ever do that -- by myself. Why? Because I am powerless. I am an alcoholic, I am powerless. Are you powerless? Bill says that in our book. Powerlessness is our dilemma. That is the dilemma of the alcoholic -- *powerlessness*. Have you accepted that? Have you really accepted the fact that you are totally and utterly powerless by yourself?

Well you are going to have to, before you can go from Obsessed to Healthy. That is why Step One is so important in our program. We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol (and everything else). Our lives were unmanageable -- by us. Not by God, but by us. Lack of power is my dilemma and I had to find a Power (which obviously has to be greater than I am, Bill says), which power can and will, oh, isn't that something.

I sit in a meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous, I have either read or heard or read that preamble to Chapter Five in 39 years, I bet ya, 20,000 times, maybe more. And I sit and listen to some new alcoholic, who is maybe 10 days sober, read that, and I watch the hair on my arms stand up, because (C) says *God could and would if He was sought*. Of course God could. God can do anything. The miracle is that He would. If He were sought. It's not for nothing. There is a condition there, and that is the condition. If He were sought. You prepared to do that? You can't hang on to that Obsessed Ego and do it. You have to give that up if you are going to try that.

I got sober by the grace of a loving God, and it is only by fulfilling the conditions for sobriety, that I can find freedom from the obsession. That obsession of self. And rid myself of that obsession, that is the only way that I am ever going to do it. And the conditions for sobriety are simple, they are four fold.

First, number one, the most important thing in Alcoholics Anonymous, surrender. Not acceptance, oh boy, that doctor that wrote that acceptance thing in the big book, what is it, 449 or 526 or something or other. He said that if you just accept everything you will be fine and you accept, accept, and oh shoot, you forget to accept once.

That doctor is a friend of mine, Paul O. I was on a conference with Paul in San Diego about 10 years ago and he was talking to some people there and I joined in and we got to talking and he admitted to me that he has changed a little bit since he wrote that. He is not so big on acceptance anymore. Now you know what word he uses? Hah. Surrender, surrender, surrender, and again and again, surrender.

Chuck was Paul's sponsor too, so I got to know him pretty good. There is a big difference between acceptance and surrender. Acceptance is passive. In acceptance you don't do anything -- you passively accept. But to surrender you have to take action -- you have to do something. Surrender involves the destruction of the Obsessed Ego -- we have to work at our program.

Two kinds of surrender, the big surrender we make when we come in the door, when we fall in the door stinkin' and shakin', and freezing and dying. You get a

little bit sober, a little physical sobriety, and then the daily surrender follows that because surrender is not something you do one time. I don't think that there is anything that you do in Alcoholics Anonymous one time. Because it is a way of life.

Surrender, surrender, and secondly willingness, enough willingness to take the action. To take the actions that are recommended to us in the Big Book and thirdly, enough honesty to see myself as I am where I am; to really look at myself and see what my condition is. In other words, see myself in that Obsessed Ego.

And then the fourth condition, enough self-honesty to do something about it. What do we have to do, what is it that we must do? There is something we must do, Bill tells us that. He says, "*After awhile we had to face the fact that we must*". That is his word, not mine. It is mine now because I believe it, it is a must. "*Adopt a spiritual way of life — or else*". Does that sound like a choice to you? When somebody says to you damn better or else, is that a choice?

I was in a meeting not long ago and I heard somebody saying, (I've heard this many times in Alcoholics Anonymous). "it is so wonderful to be in Alcoholics Anonymous now that I have the Power of choice restored to me. Apparently thinking that the Power of choice has been restored to them. And I always wonder what choice they are talking about? You got options or something? Where did you get them? As long as I had choice, it was my choice never to come to AA, and I never did. I would have died out there in left field if I hadn't run out of choice. But mercifully, I ran out of choice, and it was only then that

I was able to come to Alcoholics Anonymous.

Because choice is an ego word. Choice means I like, I don't like, I need, I don't need, I want, I don't want, I, I, I, I, I. Ego. Look at it. When you were drinking, did you drink out of choice? Oh, shoot. Well sir, very nice to see you in our hip slick and cool bar, what would you care to drink? Oh, I drink Johnny Walker Red Label. Oh, I am sorry sir, we don't seem to have any Johnny Walker Red Label tonight. Oh, that is alright, give me Black Label. But we don't have any Black Label either. Well then give me whatever the hell you've got. Drank out of choice? Right? When I wanted, how much I wanted, the kind I wanted, who is kidding who.

I drank because I was compelled to. I drank because I had a disease which compelled me to drink, and then condemned me to death if I did. That is called alcoholism. And that is what we got. So I did not drink out of choice. Then I come to Alcoholics Anonymous. And when I get here they say to me, oh, "That is okay Tom, now you have a choice, you can do whatever you like". Right? That ain't the way my book reads. My book says, "Not my will, Thy will, God's Will". Do the right thing, be the best member of Alcoholics Anonymous you can possibly be. That is the rule. Not choice. That is that damn ego again, raising its head and saying, that is okay, it is alright now. It ain't.

Faced with this problem of travelling from the Obsessed Ego to the Healthy Ego, if you look at your depiction, you will see that there seems to be a faint line from the Obsessed Ego to the Healthy Ego. Two lines. Like maybe a road, a way, a path. Maybe.

Picture this in your mind. A little drunk, almost physically sober, is huddled in the prison of his obsessed ego, shivering and shaking and full of fear. And he turns to the AA member standing with him, beside him, and he says to the AA guy, "I want to get out of this mess, I want to live in that healthy ego, where you live. How do I get there?" The AA guy says, "Simple, but not easy". You have to follow down this path, thoroughly. This path leads from Obsessed to Healthy. And the little drunk says, "What path?" I don't see any path. And the AA guy says, yeah, I know, the path is invisible to you right now. It is an invisible path to you, but I can see it clearly. I have been over it many times. Just come with me, do what I do, and after a while the path will visibly appear to you, and you will be able to see it for yourself.

In time, if you continue, you will be able to meet new people, like you are right now and help them to follow and find the path. *You don't find the path and follow it, you follow the path and find it.* Because it starts out as an invisible path and we can't believe it until we do it. That is how you get from Obsessed to Healthy. That is how you get there in a nutshell. And all you guys know that. And that is how this works and that is why this works for an alcoholic when nothing else does. It is miraculous. It beats any wonder drug hollow.

Now what about relationships? Back to that. Well it all stems from this invisible path you see, so it is really all one thing. Because relationships are never going to be successful for us until we get rid of that obsession of the ego until we rid ourselves of that Obsessed Ego and start producing a Healthy Ego.

Then we are going to be able to relate. But they can all go together as long as we are in the program, and working the program.

What about your relationships in and about the group? That is a good place to start because that is where our relationships start, with the likes of us. That is where all my relationships started, in and about the group. It was the group that took me to the Retreat House to do a retreat. Trying to do a Step Four and Five with that little priest who explained to me, Tom, your problem is not in patience, you don't love your family enough. He told me, "It is love, lack of love, that is your big problem".

In other words, the Obsessed Ego. It was greatly over balanced. And I had to put that all aside and start a program of love with my children. And that taught me a great deal about love, because my children were suffering from Alcoholism, it is a family disease and they were evincing all the symptoms of active alcoholism. My little girl, I told you about her, stuttering, and stammering and bed wetting and nail biting and eye blinking, and within a year that just about all but disappeared, within two years gone completely. She doesn't ever remember it now.

Anytime you are uncomfortable in a relationship, whether it is personal, outside of the group or in the group, there is a rule to follow. (Boy, we have lots of rules in AA, lots or rules – Well, not really that many.) We have a code, Love and Tolerance is our code. We don't have many rules, but this is a rule. And it always brings positive results, and here it is, "*Enlarge your spiritual life*".

And immediately we get a picture in mind of prayer somewhere, and maybe we have to go and kneel down and bless ourselves and repeat all kinds of prayers, and, no, no, no, no. This is an action program. But prayer is an action word, we will get to that in a bit. So our rule is, "*Enlarge your spiritual life*". Here are a couple of ways in which you can do that.

**Firstly**, make friends in the group. If you want friends, first, you be friendly. Make it your business to meet everybody in your group. Be a greeter, we used to have greeters, they would go to the door, they had little hats, they had like Christie Stiffs, you know those straw boaters, and they would meet people at the door. "Hi, Hi, Hi. Boy you are welcome in this group, come on in, new guy go and sit there, I'll get you coffee".

One night a guy comes in and he is from Carolina or somewhere, he says oh I've been sober for 27 years, well that is alright, come and sit down, here are a couple of new comers you can talk to them. Make people feel at home, make it your business. This is the business of AA. Make it your business to meet everybody in the group and be friendly with everybody, especially people newer than you. But remember, long timers need love too. So be friendly.

**Secondly**, do something to serve the group. Do something to serve the group, you don't have to ask anybody. Just go and do it. You know the best job in the group? The guy that makes the coffee. That is the best job in the group. Why? Because he gets to meet everybody in the group and he knows everybody by their first name. He knows what kind of coffee they would like, and what they don't like, they take milk or sugar or whatever, he knows all that stuff about them.

And gradually, he gets to know a little bit about their life and about their feelings and about their family and about their sobriety. The coffee guy has a prime job.

Next best job in the group is secretary, because secretary looks after all the cards and stuff like that, and gets to know everybody too. Knows their dry date and gets to know all their phone numbers and stuff, so it is a good thing to do.

But the guy you know, who sets up the chairs in the room, he is an important guy, looks after the room, whatever, if you want to enlarge your spiritual life, stay around after the meeting and clean up the room. The group will love you. Do it with a smile and the group will just think you are fabulous. They will say, jeez, he's a nice guy, what a hell of a guy. We have a guy in this group right now, who came to this group and became part of it years ago because we had a round up, and he came to the round up. At a certain part of the evening, the chairs had to be removed off the floor because there was going to be a dance, and he was moved by the holy spirit. God moved him.

God told him, hey, there are some good looking gals around this place, you are going to have fun dancing. But you ain't going to have fun dancing till the chairs are put away. And he dug in and he worked like hell and put the chairs away and, first things you know, he is a member of the group. He has been a member ever since.

**Carry the message.** See how this works, see, if you are willing to do some little thing. God will make it His business to put something in your road that will make it worthwhile. Whatever you do, it might just be

a little thing, it will have value. The Power will see to that. So when you see something that needs to be done, just do it, don't wait for a written invitation, and don't hang around for applause, because you ain't going to get any. We just do it for free and for fun and because we want to. Always be ready to help, if asked, even the menial task, that is beneath you, you know we are all vice-presidents at heart, so most menial tasks are beneath us. But remember, one thing is not more spiritual than another. So little jobs are important.

There is a Saint called Saint John of the Cross, about whom they wrote several articles that are really about humility and service, as he was renowned for his humility. He was not a learned man. Not highly educated, he was a brother, he was not even a priest. He didn't work in the front office and deliver stirring religious sermons. He was not even a cook, he was a dishwasher. He didn't even wash the dishes, he washed the pots, he was the potlicker. How low can you get. But he did it with such humility and grace, that now he is called Saint John of the Cross, because everything he did, he did for God, for his love of God. And that was his total answer. So you can emulate that, you don't have to become a holy Joe, and oh I am doing this for God. Do it for AA. Do it for yourself, but do it. Join a committee.

When somebody reads out in the meeting that we are going to answer phones this night, go answer the phones. The problem, you see, is spiritual. It is totally a spiritual problem. Not partly. I have to kind of giggle a little bit when somebody tells me they are having trouble with the spiritual part of the program. I look at them and I say, "Oh, that is interesting, tell me, what

part of the program are you having success with"? The physical part, one two, one two, right.

And we weren't the first people to see that, Carl Jung knew that, he knew that before Bill ever had his experience. He knew that three or four years before. I don't know when he first knew it, but he certainly knew it when he saw Roland Hazard because that is exactly what he told Roland Hazard. He said: "your problem is, you are what is known as an alcoholic. And that is a spiritual problem. And you have to find a spiritual answer." And Hazard said, "Well how am I going to do that"? And Jung said, "Well I can't help you there, I am sorry, I just know that for the likes of you what is necessary is a vital spiritual experience at depth." He said "I've heard of cases, I know of cases where that has happened and a life has been totally transformed."

And when I told you that last week I was thinking of such a case, I was thinking of St. Frances of Assisi. The guy who founded the Franciscan Order. Old Francis was a rich man, son of a rich family, gave everything away, gave his life for service. For service, love and service, he was totally changed overnight, like that. Like Bill. Roland ran into the Oxford Groups and found an answer that seemed to work for him. He never came to AA. I don't know the whole story, I just know that there is some mystery there. I have seen a copy of his death certificate and there is always a big argument about whether he was sober or not sober. I know he got sober, and if he got sober, I know how he got sober.

Jung told Roland a very interesting thing, he said you are an alcoholic, and said Jung, so far as I am aware, there is no treatment for the likes of you,

## Human Ego: Obsessed Ego/Healthy Ego

anywhere at any cost. Roland was a very, very rich guy, and he could have paid any amount of money, \$100,000, \$500,000, \$1,000,000, \$2,000,000, wouldn't have mattered to him, he had it. But you can't buy sobriety, see, and Jung told him that. We are not into treatment in Alcoholics Anonymous, we don't have any legacy of treatment, we have a legacy of sobriety. We have a legacy of recovery, I mean to say we don't have a legacy of sobriety, we have a legacy of recovery, a legacy of unity, and a legacy of service. So we are into recovery.

What is it that we recover? Well, Bill tells us it is a spiritual malady, Bill says, "In every man woman and child is the fundamental idea of God". It is in every one of us, but it is covered up and we are separated from God and from ourselves by and with this Obsessed Ego. The Power can't be found in there, so what we recover is that sense of God with which we were born. That came with us. That came with us you see. So the fundamental idea of God includes the fundamental relationship.

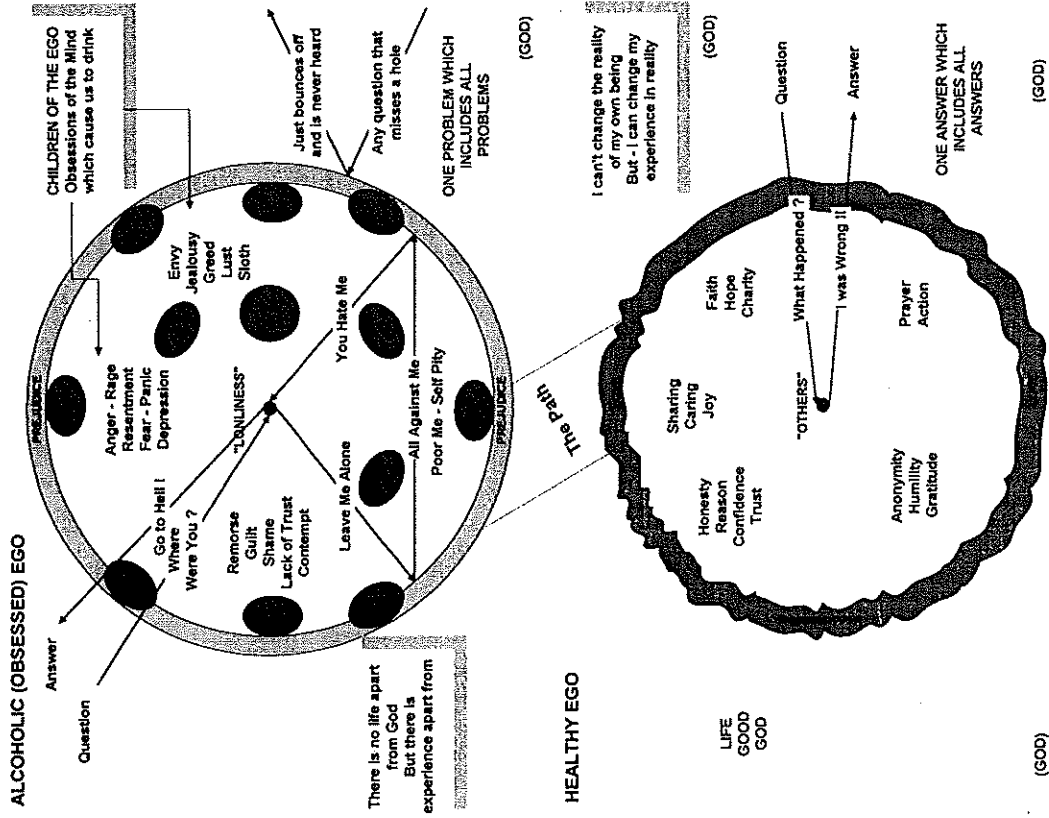
It includes a relationship with God and a relationship with all of God's kids. It is one and the same thing. I am not going to come here and relate exclusively with God. I have to come here, work my way into the group and start to be friends with people in my group and work with people in my group, and communicate and relate to people in my group. Then gradually I relate to and with people in my family at home. And that spreads out to all the relationships that I should have in my life, and eventually through that, through my relating to people, I automatically relate to the Power. It is all one and the same. You see that?

## Reflecting on Relationships

Bill says we are reborn (not born again). He says we are reborn, recovered, reborn into a conscious relationship with that Power. See how important relationships are? Now every relationship starts in the same way, including spiritual, that is an intimate relationship. I don't find this difficult to understand, I believe that what I am talking about is what the Christians talk about when they say the birth of Christ in me and the birth of Christ in you. I think it is one and the same thing, and I think it has to happen to everybody, not just Christians. The discovery of self. The discovery of the Power, whatever name you put on that power, I don't think it matters a hell of a lot. So to become conscious of that relationship with God I have to enlarge my consciousness and learn to be more conscious of life itself. To enlarge and expand my livingness.

Now you guys have been fantastic and I am not going to finish tonight. I am sorry, I have got too much left to cover tonight.

Thank you.



Notes

The top part of the figure on the right depicts the Obsessed Ego, and it looks like a practice golf ball. It is plastic, has an impervious shell, and has holes in it. The Healthy Ego is depicted in the lower part of the figure and is floppy, and soft, and fuzzy; something like a tennis ball. As discussed in the text, the fuzzy layer of the Healthy Ego has qualities like Compassion, Understanding, and Love. The path from the Obsessed Ego to the Healthy Ego is depicted by two faint lines proceeding from the Obsessed Ego to the Healthy Ego. The journey from the Obsessed Ego to the Healthy Ego is undertaken by following the path as outlined in the text in Chapters Three and Four.