

Dr. William D. Silkworth gives a summary of his theory on alcoholism, the general opinion of physicians on chronic alcoholics and his opinion on early A.A. in a letter of introduction and a statement. We use this chapter to look at the physical aspect of our drinking, what happens in our body after we take the first drink.

Consideration: *Do I lose control of my drinking after I have taken the first? Or can I control how I drink after I've started?*

READ XXV:1

The medical estimate ...

XXV : 1

L2. Am I interested in the medical estimate² of the plan of recovery³ described in this book?
Why?

L4. Do I think convincing testimony must come from medical men who have had experiences with the sufferings of alcoholics and their return to health by this plan of recovery?

READ the Doctor's Letter (DL) *Numbering of the paragraphs starts with 1 at the beginning of the letter.*

XXV : DL : 2

L1. Am I regarded as hopeless? *Do I see myself as hopeless? Do I want to quit but can't?*

XXV : DL : 4

L2. Has every method⁴ I tried, failed completely? _____
Which medical methods have I tried? What is my experience? Is there anything else I can do?

End of Doctor's letter

READ XXVI:1 - XXVII:1

The body of the alcoholic ...

XXVI : 1

L4. Have I suffered alcoholic torture? *What does that look like with me?*

L5. Do I think that my body is quite as abnormal as my mind⁵ when it comes to alcohol?

Does my mind seem to operate differently from others when it concerns alcohol?

Do I think my body is different from others as to its reaction to alcohol?

¹ 'Opinion' *noun*; a statement of advice by an expert on a professional matter.

² 'Estimate' *noun*; an approximate judgement of the value of something.

³ 'Recovery' *noun*; a return to a normal state of health, mind, or strength.

⁴ 'Medical method', *examples*; medication, counselling, detoxification, exercise, therapy, ie. cognitive behavioral therapy, psycho-therapy, etc...

⁵ 'Mind' *noun*; the element of a person that enables them to be aware of the world and their experiences, to think, and to feel; the faculty of consciousness and thought.

L6. Does it satisfy me to be told that I cannot *control* my drinking just because I am maladjusted⁶ to life, that I am in full flight from reality⁷, or outright mental defective⁸?

L9. Are these things true to some extent with me? _____

Was I failing to cope with the demands of a normal social environment, did I withdraw into inactivity, fantasy or detachment, or was my thinking faulty or imperfect? How?

*Does this explain why I cannot **control** my drinking?*

L11. Am I sure my body was sickened as well? *How? What happens when I start drinking?*

L12. In my belief, is any picture of me, which leaves out this physical factor, incomplete? *Does my body play a part in my drinking problem?*

The doctor's theory⁹ ...

XXVI : 2

L1. Does a doctor's theory¹⁰ that alcoholics have an allergy¹¹ to alcohol interest me? *Am I interested in a doctor's theory on how my body could have an abnormal reaction to alcohol? What is my reaction to alcohol when I start drinking?*

L2. As layperson¹², does my opinion as to its soundness perhaps mean little, but could I say that this explanation makes good sense? *Do I react differently to alcohol than some other people? Could a theory of hypersensitivity or susceptibility make sense to me?*

L5. Would it explain many things for which I cannot otherwise account? *Which things would this explain?*

⁶ 'Maladjusted' *adjective*; failing to cope with the demands of a normal social environment.

⁷ 'Flight from reality' *phrase*; a defensive reaction where a person will withdraw into inactivity, fantasy or detachment (and is an unconscious defence to anxiety).

⁸ 'Mental' *adjective*; relating to the mind, 'defective' *adjective*; imperfect or faulty.

⁹ For more information see Appendix II, ARTICLE I Alcoholism as a Manifestation of Allergy.

¹⁰ *Theory, noun*: a supposition or a system of ideas intended to explain something, especially one based on general principles independent of the thing to be explained.

¹¹ "Allergy" *noun*: a damaging immune response by the body to a substance, to which it has become hypersensitive.

synonyms: hypersensitivity, sensitivity, susceptibility.

Note on "allergy" in the 1930's: little was known about so-called allergies, there was no cure, it often was a life or death situation and in cases of allergies most people had to stay absolutely clear from the substance they were allergic to, sometimes change environment or be protected from it in some way.

¹² 'Layman' *noun*: a person without professional or specialized knowledge in a particular subject.

The brain ...

XXVI : 3

L1. Do I see that the A.A. solution is worked out on the spiritual¹³ as well as an altruistic¹⁴ plane (not on the medical or material, physical plane), although hospitalisation is favored for those who are very jittery or befogged¹⁵? *Do I need to be free physically from this "allergic" reaction before anything else is possible? What is my body craving when I'm like that, in withdrawal?*

L4. Does it seem imperative that my brain be cleared if I'm to have a chance of understanding and accepting any solution that's on offer? *What is going on in my brain when I'm like that?*

The Doctor's Statement (DS) Numbering of the paragraphs starts with 1 at the beginning of the statement.

READ XXVII:DS:1 - XXVIII:DS:1

XXVII : DS : 1

L1. Do I seem to be one of those afflicted with alcoholic addiction¹⁶? Does the subject presented in this book seem of paramount¹⁷ importance to me? *Do I seem to be physically and mentally dependent on alcohol? How important is it to me to find a solution to my problem?*

The Doctor's inadequacy ...

XXVII : DS : 4

L1. Do I realise that if some form of moral psychology¹⁸ is of urgent importance to me, that it's application presents difficulties beyond a doctor's conception? *Do I realise that doctor's can't help me with this?*

L4. Do I realise that with a doctor's ultra-modern standards, their scientific approach to everything, they are perhaps not well equipped to apply the powers of good¹⁹ that lie outside a doctor's synthetic²⁰ knowledge? *Do I realise that if it's the application of the powers of good I need, doctor's can't help me?*

XXVII : DS : 6

L8. Do I believe that if I'm a chronic alcoholic, the gates of death is where I'm eventually heading and doctors will not be able to pull me back? *(Doctors have no solution, they don't have the power to solve my problem)*

¹³ 'Spiritual' adjective; relating to or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things. Similar; inner, psychic, psychological, immaterial, etc.

¹⁴ 'Altruistic' adjective; showing a disinterested and selfless concern for the well-being of others; unselfish.

¹⁵ 'Jittery' adjective; nervous or unable to relax. 'Befogged' adjective; incapable of clear thought; confused.

¹⁶ 'Alcoholic addiction'; being physically and mentally dependent on alcohol.

¹⁷ 'Paramount' adjective; more important than anything else; supreme.

¹⁸ 'Moral Psychology'; To define what this meant at the time of writing or even now goes beyond the scope of this Workbook. Dr. Silkworth and his colleagues believed that for a chronic alcoholic to recover not only the thought processes of the mind needed to be transformed but the source of what powered those thought processes had to change, and they realised they, as doctors, were incapable of doing this..

¹⁹ 'the powers of good'; unknown or magical forces that people believe can influence events in a good way. Example: May we seek to develop the powers of good that lie within us.

²⁰ 'Synthetic'; Synonymous for 'Artificial', fabricated, unnatural, imitation etc.

XXVII : DS : 7

L1. Do I see the doctor also suggests the alcoholic ought to be free from their physical craving for liquor, before psychological²¹ measures can be of maximum benefit? *How long does it take for me to be free from the physical craving for alcohol after I've been drinking?*

READ XXVIII:DS:1 - 4

The Phenomenon of Craving ...

XXVIII : DS : 1

L1. Does the action of alcohol on me seem like a manifestation²² of an allergy; does a phenomenon²³ of craving occur once I start drinking? *When I drink, do I want to drink more? Do I lose control over the amount I drink? What is my experience?*

L2. Am I willing to believe this phenomenon is limited to chronic alcoholics, and never occurs in the average temperate²⁴ drinker? *Am I willing to believe that if this experience of craving occurs in me once I start drinking, I'm probably a chronic alcoholic?*

L5. Can I ever safely use alcohol in any form at all? *Without losing control over the amount I drink? What is my experience?*

Am I of this type, the "allergic" type?

L6. Have I formed the habit²⁵, and have I found I cannot break it? *How would I describe my habit? What is my experience?*

Have I lost my self-confidence²⁶, my reliance on things human²⁷? Have I lost trust in myself and anything human to help me break my habit? Have I given up?

L7. Did my problems pile up on me and become astonishingly difficult to solve? *What is my experience? Have I been able to manage my problems?*

XXVIII : DS : 2

L1. Is frothy (*light and entertaining*) emotional appeal (*plea*) enough to get and keep me sober, to break the habit? *What is my experience?*

²¹ 'Psychological' adjective; of, affecting, or arising in the mind; related to the mental and emotional state of a person. Similar; mental, emotional, inner, non-physical, etc. See also footnote 13 'Spiritual'.

²² 'Manifestation' noun; similar; sign, proof, symptom, etc.

²³ 'Phenomenon' noun, similar; occurrence, event, experience.

²⁴ 'Temperate' adjective; showing moderation or self-restraint.

²⁵ 'Habit' noun; a settled or regular tendency or practice, especially one that is hard to give up.

²⁶ 'Confidence' noun, similar; trust, belief, faith, reliance.

²⁷ 'Things human' examples; doctors, therapists, family, friends, partner, job, self-help literature, money, etc.

L3. Am I willing to believe that if I'm one of these alcoholic people, my ideals²⁸ must be grounded in a power greater than myself, if I'm to recreate²⁹ my life?³⁰ *Do I think I am one of those cases, do I need to recreate my life? Do I see that the doctor has no other solution for me?*

XXVIII : DS : 3

L1. Do I feel these psychiatrists are somewhat sentimental when they say the alcoholic's ideals must be grounded in a power greater than themselves? *What does it mean if scientific medical people say the only hope for the alcoholic lies in recreating their life with ideals grounded in a power greater than themselves?*

L2. Do I see that doctors, psychiatrists feel, after many years of experience, that they have found nothing which has contributed more to the rehabilitation of alcoholics than the selfless movement growing up among them (A.A.)? *(Still current today)*

READ XXVIII:DS:4 - XXIX:DS:2

My alcoholic life ...

XXVIII : DS : 4

L1. Do I drink essentially because I like the effect produced by alcohol? *Why do I drink? What was this effect like?*

L2. Is this sensation so elusive³¹ that while I admit it is injurious, I can't after a time differentiate the true from the false?
Was I always trying to achieve some perfect experience but it seemed to keep slipping away and while trying did I lose sight of what it was doing to me and kept going after what it could do for me? What is my experience?

L4. To me, did my alcoholic life seem the only normal one? *What did my alcoholic life look like and was this normal to me?*

L5. Was I restless, irritable and discontented³² unless I could again experience the sense of ease and comfort³³ which comes at once by taking a few drinks—drinks I see others taking with impunity³⁴ (*without consequences*)? *How did I feel unless I drank? Abnormal?*

Consideration: If I don't get rid of this feeling, this restlessness, irritability and discontentment in recovery, will I eventually drink again?

²⁸ 'Ideals' *noun plural*; a standard or principle to be aimed at.

²⁹ 'Create' verb; bring into existence, cause (something) to happen as a result of one's actions. 'Re-create' verb; create again.

³⁰ *Consideration: "If my ideals are grounded in a power greater than myself, I may re-create my life."*

³¹ 'Elusive': difficult to find, catch, or achieve

³² 'Restless' adjective; unable to rest or relax as a result of anxiety or boredom 'irritable' adjective; having or showing a tendency to be easily annoyed and 'discontented' adjective; dissatisfied, especially with one's circumstances.

³³ Disease= condition separated from Health. I.e; ease and comfort, normality vs dis-ease, dis-comfort and abnormality.

³⁴ 'impunity': exemption from punishment or freedom from the injurious consequences of an action.

L3. After I succumb³⁵ to the desire to experience this sense of ease and comfort again, as I do, and this phenomenon of craving develops, do I pass through the well-known stages of a spree³⁶, emerging³⁷ remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again? *Do I give in, drink more than I intend to, feel remorseful and really do not want to do this again? What is my experience?*

L5. Is this repeated over and over? *What is my experience?*

Am I willing to believe that unless a person like this experiences an entire psychic³⁸ change³⁹ there is very little hope of their recovery? *Am I this person? Do I have any other hope?*

XXIX : DS : 1

L2. Am I willing to believe—strange as this may seem—that once a psychic change has occurred, the person who seemed doomed⁴⁰, who had so many problems they despaired of ever solving, will suddenly find themselves easily able to control their desire⁴¹ for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules⁴² ?

Do I seem doomed? Is this what I need; an entire psychic change? Am I becoming curious what these principles are?

READ XXIX:DS:2 - XXIX:DS:4

The inadequacy of human power ...

XXIX : DS : 2

L1. Have I been desperate, have I sincerely said to myself or cried out: "I cannot go on like this! I must stop, but I couldn't"? *What is my experience?*

XXIX : DS : 3

L1. Faced with this problem, being honest with themselves, doctors must feel their own inadequacy? Although they give all that is in them, it is not enough. *Has a doctor, a therapist, my family, my partner, myself or anyone else been adequate in solving my problem?*

³⁵ 'Succumb' verb; fail to resist pressure, temptation, or some other negative force. *Similar*; give in, capitulate.

³⁶ 'Spree' noun; a spell or sustained period of unrestrained activity of a particular kind.

³⁷ 'Emerging' verb; recover from or survive a difficult situation.

³⁸ 'Psychic' adjective; relating to the soul or mind; *Similar*; emotional, spiritual, inner, etc..

³⁹ 'Entire psychic change'; reference back to footnote 15, pg.3 Dr. Silkworth and his colleagues believed that for a chronic alcoholic to recover not only did the thought processes of the mind need to be transformed but the source of what powered those thought processes had to change, hence an "entire psychic change". What is the source of what powers my thought processes?

⁴⁰ 'Doomed' adjective; likely to have an unfortunate and inescapable outcome; ill-fated.

⁴¹ *The doctor at this point in time does perhaps not understand yet that our solution is not about becoming able to control our desire for alcohol, but about our desire simply being gone, as a result of following a few simple suggestions, the program of recovery.*

⁴² 'Rules' noun plural; one of a set of explicit or understood regulations or principles governing conduct or procedure within a particular area of activity.

L3. The doctor feels that something more than human power⁴³ is needed to produce the essential⁴⁴ psychic change? *Do I feel I might need something more than human power in order for me to really change on a deep inner level, emotional, psychological, spiritual?*

L8. Do I believe I am the type that does not respond to the ordinary psychological⁴⁵ approach? (examples see footnote 4 pg.1) *What is my experience ? Which psychological approach have I tried? Did it work, did I respond?*

READ XXIX:DS:4 - XXX:DS:2

Mental control ...

XXIX : DS : 4

L1. Do I believe that my problem is entirely one of mental control?

L2. Have I, for example, worked/prepared for a significant time on some problem, some thing, exam, project or business deal, wedding, funeral, etc. which was to be settled on a certain date? Did I take a drink shortly prior to that date and has this phenomenon of craving then at once become paramount to all other interests, so that the important appointment, deadline was not met, project failed, exam missed, wedding over, etc. as a result? *What is my experience? Could I mentally control how much I drank?*

XXX : DS : Continuing from Page XXIX:DS:4

L1. Was I drinking to overcome a craving beyond my mental control? *Could I mentally control when to stop drinking? Could I think or will myself to stop? Did I tell myself I should stop, but didn't? What is my experience?*

XXX : DS : 1

L1. Were there situations (consequences) which arose out of this phenomenon⁴⁶ of craving, which caused me to *contemplate* the supreme sacrifice⁴⁷ rather than continue to fight⁴⁸? *Have I felt powerless over this phenomenon of craving that occurs after I take a drink and the consequences of it in my life and did I see no way out other than suicide (or another form of sacrifice like giving up relationships, children, homes, dignity, etc.)?*

⁴³ 'Human power' here; Doctors, therapists, family, friends, girl/boyfriends, Alcoholics Anonymous, sponsors, others, etc. But also my will power, my desire, my self-knowledge, my intellect, my money, my skills, my wit, etc.

⁴⁴ 'essential' *adjective*; absolutely necessary; extremely important.

⁴⁵ 'Psychological' *adjective*; of, affecting, or arising in the mind; related to the mental and emotional state of a person. *Similar*; mental, emotional, intellectual.

⁴⁶ 'Phenomenon of craving' *phrase*; 'Phenomenon' *noun*; a fact or situation that is observed to exist or happen, especially one whose cause or explanation is in question. 'Craving' *noun*; similar; hunger, thirst, itch, burning.

⁴⁷ 'supreme sacrifice'; *to give up your life or die (for a cause)*.

⁴⁸ 'fight' *here for example*; the life of a chronic alcoholic

Different types ...

XXX : DS : 2

L3. Was I emotionally⁴⁹ unstable?
Did I lack sound judgement? Did I act perversely and impulsively? Was I unable to learn from experience? Did I have amoral and asocial feelings? Which?

L4. Was I always “going on the wagon⁵⁰ for keeps”?

L5. Was I over-remorseful⁵¹ and did I make many resolutions⁵² but never a decision⁵³?

XXX : DS : 3

L1. Was I unwilling to admit that I could not take a drink?

L2. Did I plan various ways of drinking in an effort to control my drinking? *Which ways?*

L3. Did I change my brand or my environment? *What did I change?*

L4. Did I believe that after being entirely free from alcohol for a period of time I could take a drink without danger? *What is my experience?*

L5. Am I the manic-depressive⁵⁴ type? *How?*

XXX : DS : 4

L1. Am I the type entirely normal in every respect except in the effect alcohol has upon me?

⁴⁹‘Psychopath’ noun; a person characterized by emotional instability, lack of sound judgement, perverse and impulsive behaviour, inability to learn from experience, amoral and asocial feelings, and other serious personality defects: they may or may not have insane attacks or symptoms.

⁵⁰‘Going on the wagon’ phrase; To be on the wagon is to refrain from drinking. It applies especially to someone who has been a serious drinker in the past. To be off the wagon is to be drinking, usually again after a period of sobriety.

⁵¹ ‘Remorseful’ filled with remorse; ‘remorse’ noun; deep regret or guilt for a wrong committed. *Similar;* sorry ie. always saying I’m sorry.

⁵² ‘Resolution’ noun; a formal expression of opinion or intention. *Here; Thought not necessarily followed by action.*

⁵³ ‘Decision’ noun; an act of making up your mind. *Usually followed by action.*

⁵⁴ ‘Manic depression’ noun; another term for bipolar disorder; a mental condition marked by alternating periods of elation and depression.

XXX : DS : 5

One symptom in common ...

L2. Can I start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving? *What is my experience?*

L3. Do I believe this phenomenon differentiates me and others like me, and sets us apart as a distinct⁵⁵ entity⁵⁶ (ie. alcoholics)? *Am I physically different from other people when it comes to the action of alcohol on my body?*

L6. Am I willing to believe that this phenomenon has never, by any treatment physicians are familiar with⁵⁷, been permanently eradicated? *(Still true to this day, 2021)*

L7. Do I understand the only relief physicians have to suggest for this phenomenon is entire abstinence? *Can I do that, just not drink, forever, by myself, on my own power?*

READ XXX:DS:6

The general Opinion amongst physicians...

XXX : DS : 6

L4. Do I see that amongst physicians, the general opinion is that most chronic⁵⁸ alcoholics are doomed⁵⁹? *Do I believe I am likely to have an unfortunate and inescapable outcome if just not drinking would be my only solution?*

End of PART I _ the Doctor's Opinion

Continue with PART II _ There Is A Solution

⁵⁵ 'Distinct' *adjective*; recognizably different in nature from something else of a similar type.

⁵⁶ 'Entity' *noun*; a thing with distinct and independent existence.

⁵⁷ *Still true to this day, January, 2021.*

⁵⁸ 'Chronic' *adjective*; persisting for a long time or constantly recurring

⁵⁹ 'Doomed' *adjective*; likely to have an unfortunate and inescapable outcome; ill-fated