

The Problem with AA

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Seeker: Nevertheless, I've been into Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) for 12 years, clean and sober, and have gotten my whole life there in terms of basic human education, manners, everything. What I can see is that a lot of people start drinking again after years or even decades of sobriety when they leave AA for a time. I don't know if they leave to drink or drink because they leave. I grew up in an alcoholic family and fully respect the twisted disease of addiction; it is pure destructive evil. It seems that no matter your intelligence or character it's a battle almost impossible to win if you are once over that edge.

James: The problem with AA is that it doesn't understand that you are not the doer/enjoyer entity. So when you stop drinking you have not rid yourself of the problem that caused you to drink in the first place. Instead of saying, "I am a drunk," you say, "I am clean and sober." "Clean and sober" is not a helpful identity. It is your natural state. You did nothing to be clean and sober. God made you clean and sober from the start. So sobriety is not your glory. You weren't happy with what God gave you, so you started drinking, thinking you could do better. When you say, "I am clean and sober," you are still thinking that you are a drunk, albeit a dry drunk. You are taking credit for something that belongs to God.

To think you are clean and sober is just a statement of the fear that some object (achohol) can limit you. The thought itself produces anxiety because the implied meaning is that you are not free. To come to terms with it you have to accept yourself as a weak, dependent person. You become strong by accepting your weakness. To accept it you need to see that you did not set out to be this way, that ignorance and bad *karma* caused the problem. It is simple but not easy. So you stop trying to change the doer. At the same time you need to catch the "I am an alcoholic" thought whenever it arises, detach from it and take a stand in the opposite thought - "I am whole and complete, I need nothing" - assuming that you understand what it means. You can let this limited identity go and claim your rightful identity but it is hard work. The basic thought behind addiction is "I am worthless," so to destroy it you have to look for the reasons why it is not true. If you focus on the good and the true about yourself the addiction will go.

~ Love, James