

Your Spiritual Progress... An Experience or Awakening?

The terms “spiritual experience” and “spiritual awakening” are used many times in this book which, upon careful reading, shows that the **personality change** sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has **manifested** itself among us in **many different forms**.

Yet it is true that our first printing (Alcoholics Anonymous) gave many readers the impression that these **personality changes**, or **religious experiences**, must be in the nature of sudden and **spectacular upheavals**. Happily for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous.

In the first few chapters a number of **sudden revolutionary changes** are described. Though it was not our intention to create such an impression, many alcoholics have nevertheless concluded that in order to recover

they must acquire an immediate and overwhelming “**God-consciousness**” followed at once by a vast **change in feeling and outlook**.

Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics such **transformations**, though frequent, are by no means the rule. Most of our experiences are what the psychologist William James calls the “**educational variety**” because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the **difference** long before he is himself. He finally realizes that he has undergone a **profound alteration** in his reaction to life; that such a **change** could hardly have been brought about by himself alone. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of **self-discipline**. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an **unsuspected inner** resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.

Most of us think this **awareness** of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of **spiritual experience**. Our more religious members call it “**God-consciousness**.”

Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience can **recover**, provided he does not close his mind to all **spiritual concepts**. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial.

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. *Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.*

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- Desperation
 - Hopelessness
 - Terror
 - Surrender

Result

Spiritual Experience

Sudden overwhelming *God-Consciousness*, followed at once by a *vast change in feeling and outlook*

Result

Personality change sufficient to bring about Recovery

- L**
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- Willingness
 - Believe
 - Decisions
 - Surrender
 - Actions

Result

Spiritual Awakening

Vast change in feeling and outlook develops over a period of time

Result

Personality change sufficient to bring about Recovery

“There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation.”

- Herbert Spencer