

# *The Progressive Nature of Alcoholism*

SLIDES IN  
WIDESCREEN FORMAT  
“PLEASE TURN YOUR  
MOBILE DEVICE  
90° TO VIEW”

*Part I – Two Stages of Alcoholism?*

# **Document Formatting Key** *(Appendix 1 Reproduced)*

- Direct quotes from the Big Book are displayed in “normal case using blue font” (p.1) followed only by a page number.
- Any minor change to a quote “will be in gray font”.  
(let’s say “he” is changed to “we”: “whether we will drink”)
- Other quotes are “similarly presented” with the specific source identified, such as: (12 & 12, STEP ONE, p.23).
- Key words or phrases taken from the Big Book or extracted from Other Quotes are displayed in “italics using blue font”.

# Beyond the Basics

## Big Book 12 Step Recovery

### BB12Step.com

*Copyright © 2020 by the Anonymous Alliance of Charitable Organizations  
(a Texas Non-Profit Corporation and 501(c)(3) Public Charity)  
FREE TO USE & SHARE – DO NOT MODIFY*

*Author:*



**Ken Laney, JD, CPA**

BB12Step@icloud.com

Date of Grace: 11/17/1994

*Founder:*



**Power House Recovery Center**

PowerHouseRecovery.com 713-442-1919

The **BIG BOOK (BB)**  
of **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**  
is a **“SURVIVAL GUIDE”**  
with **“DO-OR-DIE” DIRECTIVES**  
for **HOPELESS ALCOHOLICS**

# Four “Do-or-Die” Directives from the Big Book

1)

**WAKE UP OR DIE!**  
*Wake Up or Die! Wake*  
*Up or Die! Wake Up*  
**OR DIE!** **WAKE UP**  
**OR DIE!** *Wake Up or Die!*

2)

**Get Spiritual or Die.**  
**GET SPIRITUAL**  
**OR DIE!** *Get*  
*Spiritual or Die.*  
*Get Spiritual or Die.*

3)

**CLEAN HOUSE OR**  
**DIE!** *Clean House or*  
*Die! Clean House or Die!* *Clean*  
*House or Die!* **CLEAN**  
**HOUSE OR DIE!**

4)

*Work with Others or Die!*  
**Work with Others or**  
**Die!** **WORK WITH**  
**OTHERS OR DIE!**  
*Work with Others or Die!*

(Revised: 08/27/2020)

# Beyond the Basics

## Big Book 12 Step Recovery

*Copyright © 2020 by the Anonymous Alliance of Charitable Organizations  
(a Texas Non-Profit Corporation and 501(c)(3) Public Charity)  
FREE TO USE & SHARE – DO NOT MODIFY*

**BB12Step.com**

***Opening the Meeting***

## Opening:

- Welcome to the 7PM Monday Night “BEYOND HUMAN AID” meeting.
- My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I am an Alcoholic.
- Anyone here for their 1st AA Meeting?
- Any visitors attending this group for the first time who would like to be recognized?
- In accordance with 7<sup>th</sup> tradition, we will be passing the basket during the meeting.

## **Prayer & Meditation:**

- Please join with us now to open this meeting with the THIRD STEP PRAYER
- To be followed by a moment of silence for each to use in his or her own way.

**- Prayer -**

*(Go to next slide - recite 3rd Step prayer)*

**- Meditation -**

*(Follow with a moment of silence)*



## *Third Step Prayer*

God, I offer myself to Thee – to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.

Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.

Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always. (p.63)

*(Revised: 08/27/2020)*

# Beyond the Basics

## Big Book 12 Step Recovery

*Copyright © 2020 by the Anonymous Alliance of Charitable Organizations  
(a Texas Non-Profit Corporation and 501(c)(3) Public Charity)  
FREE TO USE & SHARE – DO NOT MODIFY*

**BB12Step.com**

***BB12Step Meeting Preamble***

# ***BB12Step Meeting Preamble***

- We are gathered here because we are faced with the fact that we are powerless over alcohol and are unable to do anything about it without the help of a Power greater than ourselves. (1940 AA Preamble)
- Probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism. (AA Big Book p.60)
- The simple purpose of our program is to show what may be done to enlist the aid of a Power greater than ourselves.  
(1940 AA Preamble)

# ***BB12Step Meeting Preamble***

- Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our program. ... Now you may like this program or you may not, but the fact remains, it works. It is our only chance to recover. (1940 AA Preamble)
- We do not speak for A.A. as a whole and you are free to agree or disagree as you see fit, in fact, it is suggested that you pay no attention to anything which might not be reconciled with what is in the A.A. Big Book. (1940 AA Preamble)

# ***BB12Step Meeting Preamble***

- There are no dues or fees. The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. Each member squares his debt by helping others to recover.

*(1940 AA Preamble)*

- Our REAL PURPOSE is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us. *(AA Big Book p.77)*

- Faith must work twenty-four hours a day in and through us or we perish. *(1940 AA Preamble)*

*Note: This composition was created using quotes from the 1940 AA Preamble and Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous*

(Revised: 09/07/2020)

# Beyond the Basics

## Big Book 12 Step Recovery

Copyright © 2020 by the Anonymous Alliance of Charitable Organizations  
(a Texas Non-Profit Corporation and 501(c)(3) Public Charity)  
FREE TO USE & SHARE – DO NOT MODIFY

[BB12Step.com](http://BB12Step.com)

**- SUMMARY -**

***The Progressive Nature of Alcoholism***

# **- SUMMARY -**

## ***The Progressive Nature of Alcoholism***

### ***Self-Study and Meeting Formats***

- *This summary is an overview of several presentations which make up a seminar: “The Progressive Nature of Alcoholism”. (Part I focuses on alcoholism - Part II focuses on recovery)*
- *Accordingly, these condensed materials now contain only a few of the supporting Big Book quotes originally provided.*
- *Due to the amount of detailed information in the original presentations, they can only be given in person at this time.*

***- please email [BB12Step@icloud.com](mailto:BB12Step@icloud.com) for seminar information -***

(Revised: 09/25/2020)

# Beyond the Basics

## Big Book 12 Step Recovery

Copyright © 2020 by the Anonymous Alliance of Charitable Organizations  
(a Texas Non-Profit Corporation and 501(c)(3) Public Charity)  
FREE TO USE & SHARE – DO NOT MODIFY

[BB12Step.com](http://BB12Step.com)

**- SUMMARY -**

***Part I - Two Stages of Alcoholism?***



# You tried **AA**?

## Maybe you need **BB**!

How “**seriously alcoholic**” are you? (p.25)

**AA** = DON'T DRINK; GO TO “**AA**” MEETINGS

**BB** = “**BIG BOOK**” 12-STEP RECOVERY

(BB Study: “The Progressive Nature of Alcoholism”)

# ***Are You a Chronic Alcoholic?***

- *The Doctor's Opinion provides the basis for a definitive test:*
- “We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and **NEVER** occurs in the average temperate drinker.” (The Doctor's Opinion, p.xxiv)
- **Conclusion:** *Have I EVER experienced this phenomenon of craving? If so, then I am a “chronic alcoholic”. The craving ONLY occurs in chronic alcoholics and is limited to this class.*
- **Note:** *Failing this test doesn't prove “I am not alcoholic”.*

## ***Are You a Potential Alcoholic?***

- *If I have **NEVER** experienced the **phenomenon of craving**, am I “**alcoholic**”? You could be. It might just be too soon to know for certain. If you are asking the question, it’s likely the evidence indicates there’s a problem. The Big Book refers to you at this point as what they call a “**potential alcoholic**”.*
- *Early in his drinking career, Bill W. refers to himself as such, saying: “**Potential alcoholic** that I was, I nearly failed my law course.” (p.2) As it turns out, Bill W. definitely was alcoholic.*
- **Conclusion**: *It’s probably much safer for you to assume you’re alcoholic than to wait and see if your problem progresses. Read “**Bill’s Story**” to learn what advanced alcoholism is like.*

# *Is Alcoholism Progressive?*

- “We are convinced to a man that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better. We are like men who have lost their legs; they never grow new ones.” (p.30)
- *They say over any considerable period it always gets worse.*
- *Any considerable period would include times of abstinence.*
- *If you experience the phenomenon of craving now and then, it will gradually become the rule, rather than the exception.*
- *Eventually, the time between drinking sprees is less and less.*
- **Conclusion:** *Chronic Alcoholism is a progressive illness.*



Reference.MD

## Disease Progression

**Definition:** The worsening of a disease over time. This concept is most often used for **chronic and incurable diseases** where the **stage of the disease** is an important determinant of **therapy** and **prognosis**.

## ***Does Alcoholism Progress in Stages?***

- *The Big Book talks about two “stages” in the progression of alcoholism. With only a layperson’s limited grasp of Disease Staging, we labeled these two critical stages **A** & **B**. **Stage A** - a person experiences the **phenomenon of craving**.*
- ***Stage B** - the alcoholic has **lost the power of choice in drink**.*
- *The first stage centers in the body, the second also the mind.*
- *Both defining symptoms get progressively worse over time.*
- *While these two stages most often occur sequentially, it is not uncommon for both stages to emerge simultaneously.*
- ***Note:** Before going further, let’s take a look at the Big Book.*

# Chronic Alcoholism - Stage A

- The first stage in the Big Book (**Stage A**) is the real alcoholic! “But what about the **REAL ALCOHOLIC**? He may... become... a hard drinker; but at some stage... he begins to lose all control of his liquor consumption, once he starts to drink.” (p.21) In **Stage A**, “POWERLESS” occurs **A**fter the first drink!
- “We know that while the alcoholic keeps away from drink, as he may do for months or years, he reacts much like other men.” (p.22) The **Stage A** alcoholic is **A**ble to “Stay Sober”!

## Summary - Stage A:

- 1) “**Powerless**” After the 1<sup>st</sup> drink!
- 2) Able to “**Stay Sober**”!

# Chronic Alcoholism - Stage B

(1 of 3)

- Our “**Stage B**” is what the Big Book calls the “final stage”!
- “As animals on a treadmill, we have patiently and wearily climbed, falling back in exhaustion after each futile effort to reach solid ground. Most of us have entered the final stage with its commitment to... Death was often near.” (p.107)
- A **Stage B** Alcoholic is a **Stage A** Alcoholic who additionally: “has no effective mental defense against the first drink.” (p.43)
- Dr. Silkworth’s theory on alcoholism was that “the obsession of the mind compels us to drink again and the allergy of the body condemns us to die or go insane.” The Big Book simply refers to it as, “a hopeless condition of mind and body.” (p.20)



# Chronic Alcoholism - Stage B

(2 of 3)

- Don't confuse habitual drinking with "Stage B" alcoholism!
- They describe the habitual HARD DRINKER as having: "the habit badly enough to gradually impair them physically and mentally... If a sufficiently strong reason... becomes operative this person can also stop or moderate, although they may find it difficult... and may even need medical attention." (p.21)
- The distinction is that the "Stage B" alcoholic cannot stop or moderate: "There was a tremendous urge to cease forever. Yet we found it impossible. This is the baffling feature of alcoholism as we know it this utter inability to leave it alone, no matter how great the necessity or the wish." (p.34)

# Chronic Alcoholism - Stage B

(3 of 3)

- The final stage (**Stage B**) is the “hopeless” alcoholic! (see p.xxi)
- “The fact is that most alcoholics,... have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so called will power becomes practically nonexistent... We are without defense against the first drink.” (p.24) In **Stage B**, “POWERLESS” occurs **Before the first drink!**
- “When this... is fully established,... he has probably placed himself Beyond human aid,... So many want to stop but cannot” (p.24) The **Stage B** alcoholic is **Beyond Human Aid**.

Summary - Stage B:

- 1) “Powerless” **Before the 1<sup>st</sup> drink!**
- 2) Beyond Human Aid!

## **Stage A and Stage B are both Progressive**

- “All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals - usually brief - were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization.” (p.30) *Both stages are progressive.*
- As **Stage A** progresses, the *phenomenon of craving* gets stronger and occurs more often; less control over drinking.
- As **Stage B** progresses, the *intervals* we can “stay sober” by exerting will power diminish; less control over NOT drinking.
- It’s possible to start off drinking normally with an occasional “unpredictable” binge; and eventually end up binge drinking almost daily in spite of a “*desperate desire to stop.*” (pp.7,155)

## *The Progression from Stage A to Stage B (1 of 3)*

- *The writers of the Big Book probably started out at Stage A:*
- *Though there is no way of proving it, we believe that early in our drinking careers most of us could have stopped drinking.*
- *It seems the majority of our fellowship today were lucky or smart enough to get into recovery while they were still Able to stay sober, with “a little help from their AA friends”.*
- *Let’s say, “the alcoholic keeps away from drink, as he may do for months or years...” (which implies possibly long but not unlimited periods of abstinence). Then, a tragic relapse!*
- *Have you known alcoholics to relapse, then return suddenly incapable of staying sober, as if trapped in a revolving door?*

## **The Progression from Stage A to Stage B** (2 of 3)

- The Big Book says, “**over any considerable period, we get worse**” implies we progress from **Stage A** to **Stage B**, even during a long period of abstinence. Here’s such a story:
- **Stage A**: “Once he started, he had no control whatever. (Powerless **A**fter the 1<sup>st</sup> drink) He made up his mind... he remained bone dry (**A**ble to stop) for twenty-five years...”
- **Stage B**: “In two months he was in a hospital...He attempted to stop altogether and found he could not. (Powerless **B**efore the 1<sup>st</sup> drink) Every means of solving his problem which money could buy was at his disposal. Every attempt failed...(**B**eyond Human Aid)...dead within four years.” (p.20)

## **The Progression from Stage A to Stage B** (3 of 3)

- **Stage A** naturally progress to **Stage B**, unless you die first!
- So many real life experiences indicate “we get worse” while abstinent, we have a saying: “My disease is doing pushups in the parking lot while I’m sitting on my butt in a meeting!”
- “At a certain point in the drinking of every alcoholic, he passes into a state where the most powerful desire to stop drinking is of absolutely no avail. This tragic situation has already arrived in practically every case long before it is suspected.” (p.24) *That certain point is **Stage B**.*
- “If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.” (p.44)

# ***The Progressive Nature of Alcoholism***

- *The real significance of the progressive nature of alcoholism is the dividing line between **Stage A** and **Stage B** which is the point our alternatives for recovery dramatically change.*
- *“If you are (or become) as seriously alcoholic as we were,... we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end,... and the other, to accept spiritual help.” (p.25)*
- *We need to diagnose and treat the stages of alcoholism like any other chronic progressive illness (i.e. cancer, diabetes,...).*
- *What works so well for **Stage A**, does not work for **Stage B**.*
- *In our next presentation, we look at two recovery programs.*

# Chronic Alcoholism - Stage A & Stage B

- **Stage A = “Able to Stop”**

*We are Powerless over Alcohol  
After we take the first drink.*

- **Stage B = “Beyond Human Aid”**

*We are Powerless over Alcohol  
Before we take the first drink.*



(Revised: 09/09/2020)

# Beyond the Basics

## Big Book 12 Step Recovery

Copyright © 2020 by the Anonymous Alliance of Charitable Organizations  
(a Texas Non-Profit Corporation and 501(c)(3) Public Charity)  
FREE TO USE & SHARE – DO NOT MODIFY

[BB12Step.com](http://BB12Step.com)

**- DISCUSSION -**

***Part 1 - Two Stages of Alcoholism?***

# You tried **AA**?

## Maybe you need **BB**!

Have you *“lost the power of choice”*? (p.24)

**AA** = DON'T DRINK; GO TO “**AA**” MEETINGS

**BB** = “**BIG BOOK**” 12-STEP RECOVERY

*(BB Study: “The Progressive Nature of Alcoholism”)*

## *Discussion*

*Are there two  
Stages of Alcoholism?  
At which Stage am I?  
(Stage A or Stage B)*

*- Continued -*

# Discussion: Two Stages of Alcoholism?

## Stage A:

- 1) "Powerless" After the 1<sup>st</sup> drink!
- 2) Able to "Stay Sober"!

## Stage B:

- 1) "Powerless" Before the 1<sup>st</sup> drink!
- 2) Beyond Human Aid!

- Stage A: Am I only powerless over alcohol **A**fter I take the first drink? Am I **A**ble to "Stay Sober" for months or years as planned without changing my mind? (pp.59;22)
- Stage B: To what extent have I lost the power of choice? Have I become powerless over alcohol **B**efore I take the first drink and therefore, "**B**eyond Human Aid"? (pp.24;59;24;24)  
- How far has my Alcoholism Progressed? -

## **Optional Questions: Stage A or Stage B**

- *Over any considerable period, has my drinking gotten worse?*
- *Have I EVER experienced the phenomenon of craving?*
- *Might I lose all control of the amount I take, **A**fter the first drink?*
- *Am I **A**ble to “Stay Sober” as planned, and not change my mind?*
- *Or have I lost the power of choice, and drink when I planned not to?*
- *Am I **P**owerless only **A**fter I take the first drink? (Stage **A**)*
- *Am I also **P**owerless **B**efore the first drink? (Stage **B**)*
- *Am I what we call a “Stage **A**” or “Stage **B**” alcoholic?*
- *Am I “**A**ble to Stay Sober” or am I “**B**eyond Human Aid”?*

**- How far has my Alcoholism Progressed? -**

*(Revised: 09/08/2020)*

# Beyond the Basics

## Big Book 12 Step Recovery

*Copyright © 2020 by the Anonymous Alliance of Charitable Organizations  
(a Texas Non-Profit Corporation and 501(c)(3) Public Charity)  
FREE TO USE & SHARE – DO NOT MODIFY*

**BB12Step.com**

***Closing the Meeting***

## *Closing:*

- Anyone need a chip?
- Any AA related announcements?
- If you are looking for a sponsor or just someone to give you a little extra help with the Steps, please raise your hand.
- If you have taken the Steps as outlined in the Big Book with a sponsor and are available to try and help others, please raise your hand.

## *Closing Prayer:*

“Please join us in closing this meeting  
with the SEVENTH STEP PRAYER.”

*(Go to next slide - recite 7th Step prayer)*



## *Seventh Step Prayer*

My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad.

I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.

Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen. (p.76)

The **BIG BOOK (BB)**  
of **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**  
is a **“SURVIVAL GUIDE”**  
with **“DO-OR-DIE” DIRECTIVES**  
for **HOPELESS ALCOHOLICS**

# Four “Do-or-Die” Directives from the Big Book

1)

**WAKE UP OR DIE!**  
*Wake Up or Die! Wake*  
*Up or Die! Wake Up*  
**or Die! WAKE UP**  
**OR DIE!** *Wake Up or Die!*

2)

**Get Spiritual or Die.**  
**GET SPIRITUAL**  
**OR DIE!** *Get*  
*Spiritual or Die.*  
*Get Spiritual or Die.*

3)

**CLEAN HOUSE OR**  
**DIE!** *Clean House or*  
*Die! Clean House or Die!* *Clean*  
*House or Die!* **CLEAN**  
**HOUSE OR DIE!**

4)

*Work with Others or Die!*  
**Work with Others or**  
**Die!** **WORK WITH**  
**OTHERS OR DIE!**  
*Work with Others or Die!*

THE END

*of Presentation*

- See Part 2 -