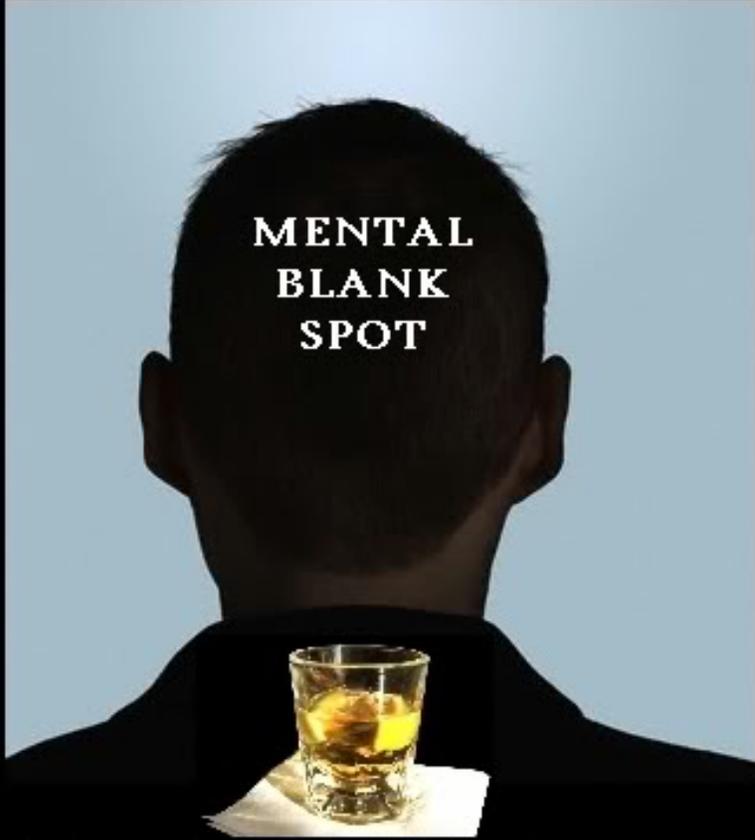


Staying Sober.....



MENTAL
BLANK
SPOT

The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so called will power becomes practically nonexistent. We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink.

Big Book, 4th edition, p. 24

SG

Ralph Pfau was a priest in Indianapolis, Indiana, the first Roman Catholic priest to get sober in the AA programme. On November 10, 1943, he telephoned Doherty Sheerin, who had started the first AA group in that city on October 28, 1940. Doherty became his sponsor, and Ralph never drank again. (see www.designforlivingaagroup.co.uk)
Published works as F ather John Doe extracts below from Sobriety without end.

It was one such great violinist who gave the insight into what was behind these “failures” when he made the following statement: “If I fail to *practice* one day, I shall notice the difference in my playing; if I fail to practice two days, my family will notice the difference in my playing; if I fail to practice three days, my public will notice the difference in my playing.”

Why such failures? What happened? They quit *practicing*. They either gradually or suddenly discontinued that constant repetition that made them masters, and which was necessary to maintain the mastery once acquired. “Repeat and repeat and repeat, day in and day out, hour in and hour out and, if necessary, minute in and minute out.”

The above fact was behind the seemingly endless and, to us, foolish repetitions of our school lessons. It is the reason behind the success of a few who achieve the “top” in any profession. It is behind those very, very few who *stay* at the “top”—who remain “masters” in their field of endeavor.

And do you know something? It is that same almost startling truth that is behind those who achieve and maintain *mastery* in A.A.—not masters of drinking, but masters of sobriety—which means maintaining complete, total sobriety under every circumstance and in any and every situation. It is the truth behind those few in A.A. who achieve and maintain serenity and happiness and peace of mind in spite of the changing vicissitudes of life and in the face of any and all obstacles. It is the truth behind those many who have now gone for A.A. through the portal of death—sober and happy, and courageously meeting their final curtain call. Not necessarily perfection; but mastery.

And do you know something else? It is also the above truth that is the missing factor in all of those A.A.’s who were sober or at least “dry” for awhile, or for a few years, or even for many

years and who then suddenly “slipped” into the oblivion of drinking again. What happened? Why do A.A.’s slip? Why does the old-timer in A.A. often disappear from our ranks? All of these questions can be answered by the same answer—the same identical truth: *They quit practicing.* They “learned” A.A.; they “learned” the twelve steps; they “learned” all about alcoholism and the alcoholic. But they *quit practicing all of those things they learned.* They seemed to have forgotten that all of the twelve steps are necessary for obtaining sobriety and happiness; and that *all of the twelfth step is necessary for maintaining sobriety and happiness—for retaining the mastery in sobriety.* They never learned, or they forgot, or they never accepted the truth that to “*practice these principles in all of our affairs*” means to *repeat and repeat and repeat—day in and day out, hour in and hour out, and, if necessary, minute in and minute out those principles we learned in A.A. in all of our affairs, i.e., in every area of living:*

In our home life.
In our social life.
In our business life.
In our financial affairs.
In our spiritual life.
In our emotional life.
In our physical life.
In our thought life.
In our A.A. life.

All slippees, all unhappy people in A.A., all unhappy people—period, have never begun to, or have not continued to apply, the most important part of the whole program for continued sobriety and happiness:

“To practice these principles in all of our affairs.”

What principles have we learned in A.A.?

We do not here refer to those underlying truths and principles with which most of us have been familiar prior to joining A.A.,—the principles of justice, the ten commandments, etc. We refer to the *application of these same age-old truths to the alcoholic problem* and to the alcoholic. The principles that “worked”

for the alcoholic; all the “how” of using the truths many of which we already knew, but which we seldom used or used wrongly or badly; the principles we, as alcoholics, *need* to use in our living, if we ever hope to achieve—not perfection—but *mastery* of living *as alcoholics, masters of sobriety*. And *sobriety*, total sobriety, means not only freedom from alcoholic indulgence, but also peace of mind, contentment, happiness, peace of soul, *adjustment to life, to reality, to God’s will and man’s presence*.

