

The Four Questions

by Gary N.

Many AA's know that both Dr. Bob and Bill W. were in the Oxford Group when they met in May of 1935. And many also know of the four Absolutes, though not that many, outside the sphere of the Akron-Cleveland AA, remember what they are. They are "Honesty, Unselfishness, Love, and Purity." (I remember those four by the abbreviation H-U-L-P, which resembles H-E-L-P). Pamphlets on the four Absolutes can be obtained at many an Akron-Cleveland AA meeting, because there the Absolutes form a significant role. They represent the goals of why one works the steps: to become more honest, more unselfish, more loving, and more pure.

There are four questions, one per Absolute, which may be helpful to an alcoholic (or anyone else) when facing a decision in daily life. The quotes come from an Akron AA Intergroup pamphlet available through www.akronaa.org.

- 1) Honesty – **Is it true or false?** - "It is by far the most difficult of the four Absolutes, for anyone, but especially for us in this fellowship. The problem drinker develops genuine artistry in deceit... The search for truth is the noblest expression of the soul . . . The noblest pleasure we can have is to find a great new truth and discard an old prejudice . . . It is easier to be honest with others than with ourselves."
- 2) Unselfishness – **How will this affect the other fellow?** - ". . . It points up that we shall gain in direct proportion to the real help we give others . . . We must be unselfish even in our pursuits of self-preservation. Not the least of our aid to others comes from the examples of our own lives.
*I must remember as I go
Through sober days, both high and low,
What I must always seem to be
For him who always follows me."*
- 3) Love – **Is it ugly or is it beautiful?** - "We are experts on ugliness . . . We are not experts on beauty but we have tasted a little, and we are hungry for more. Coming from the depths of fear, physical agony, mental torture and spiritual starvation, we feel completely unloved, impregnated with self-pity, poisoned by resentment, and devoured by a prideful ego which with alcohol has brought complete blindness. We received understanding and love from strangers and we make progress as we in turn give it to new strangers. It's as simple as that."
- 4) Purity – **Is it right, or is it wrong?** – "It's in the realm of the heart and spirit that we face difficulty. We know which is right, but do we have the dedicated will to do it? . . . In other words, knowledge means little until it goes into action . . . Until we translate our knowledge into the action of our own lives, the value of it is non-existent."

Thus, maybe it will be helpful, the next time some ominous clouds seem to be on the horizon, to ask four questions. With the help of a sponsor, the fellowship, and your Higher Power, next time tries asking:

- 1) Is it true or is it false?
- 2) How will this affect the other fellow?
- 3) Is it ugly or is it beautiful?
- 4) Is it right or is it wrong?