

Below is an email interaction between two AA members at a local group regarding the actual meaning and use of the words 'recovered' and 'recovering'. It shows quite clearly the poor psychological state of both AA members. It shows how objective and analytical thinking is shaped and massaged to meet the definitions and theology as laid out by AA and AA literature.

It's a very clear example of how members, because of AA brainwashing, can't trust their own thinking and must reach even the simplest of conclusions by consensus rather than by independent thought.

-----Original Message-----

Sent: Friday, January 18, 2008 11:44 PM

Subject: Just Thinking

"AA member 1", I was just thinking today, and came up with this. I didn't think it would be appropriate for a table discussion, so I thought I'd just write it out, to help me understand it better. For me, this is a good sign that I am growing, changing the way I deal with things that I don't understand. Anyhow, I thought I'd send it to a few people in the Fellowship, and see what your thoughts were. It's not a sobriety threatening issue, just something that has been on my mind lately.

Attachment: Just thinking.doc (25 KB) [text below]

Sent: Sunday, January 20, 2008 3:01 PM

Subject: RE: Just Thinking

"AA member 2", this is an excellent 'base' analysis of terms and the application of those definitions to your disease of alcoholism. Personally, I think your conclusions are sound as you make a distinction between the concepts of "fully recovered" which suggests a more permanent condition vs. "remission", which better describes a more temporary state! This is very much semantics my friend, and be careful to not overanalyze, lest we convince ourselves of the validity of any 'notion' applying a little dose of salesmanship!

Again, your conclusions seem sound-in my spiritual condition I have been granted a 12-yr. state of remission, but only when I'm six feet under having left this place sober (God willing) can someone suggest; "He's recovered!"

Text of 'Just thinking.doc'

Recently my sponsor and I had a discussion about certain alcoholics considering themselves recovered, at certain meetings, a few alcoholics introduce themselves as "recovered alcoholics". Later that same week, while burning some Open Talks I had downloaded for the library of a meeting, this same proposition was stated. They introduced themselves as a recovered alcoholic.

In the foreword to the first addition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous it states: "We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book." Yet later on, on page 85 in the same book, it states: "We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition."

In my quest for clarification of these terms I looked up the word "recovered". In my mind, recovered implied that we were all better. Perhaps I inferred this, rather than it being implied. I had to look up the root word, recover, and this is what it stated: get or obtain (something lost) again, regain, save 1. grow well again after illness, come back to a former, better state 2. (law) obtain a judgment, as for damages.

Now this was a shock to me, this word recover assumes I was once at a better state. Even the definition that deals with illness, and I assume it is the most pertinent definition, says that "come back to a former, better state". I am not sure that even before I started drinking, I was ever in a healthy state. How can I recover something I don't think I ever had?

A few weeks ago I had to get an alcohol assessment by a certified therapist. In his diagnosis of me, he stated that I suffered from Alcoholism, in full remission. Now in medical, technical terms, any person who has abstained from drinking for a year or more and is deemed an alcoholic, that person is "in full remission". This idea intrigued me. Once again I had to turn to my dictionary for a little clarity on the term "remission". Remission: 1. a giving up or discharge, as of debt 2. the act of forgiving, pardon 3 abatement.

The final definition seemed the most applicable, although "the act of forgiving" had another totally different tangent of thought going, The "giving up" also seemed intriguing for I had to "surrender to win" and giving up my way and trying AA's way was integral to my program. Never the less, I stuck to my task at hand. I had to look up the root word "abate" to make sure I wasn't mistaken on this definition, as I had been on the meaning of "recover". Abate: vt beat down, reduce, moderate. Vi diminish, lessen. Now this seemed promising, for after all, don't we claim progress, not perfection?

To myself, the term "recovered" implies that we are done recovering, the work is finished. It's passed[sic] tense! The idea that I am returning to a better state that I once had is, well, not what I think I am doing. I have never been this well! I don't think that I have stopped all the traits of an alcoholic, but I think I have lessened them. Yes, I don't suffer from the obsession of the mind as far as alcohol is concerned anymore. But I have learned that not drinking is only the tip of the iceberg of my problems. "In full remission" is not what I consider myself either. The absolute term of "full" is a dangerous thing to my way of thinking. I find that I use absolute terms such as "totally" and "fully" only when I haven't thought a thing out entirely. When I am rash, and acting on instinct alone, I am dealing with the black and white of absolutes, and most likely indulging in my alcoholic thinking.

I think that today, I am an alcoholic in remission. Many of the character defects of this alcoholic are lessened. Are they totally gone? I don't think so, but I am making progress on lessening them more and more everyday. Am I regaining a former better state? Looking back, I can see how I felt different and controlled by fear as far back as 6 years old; I don't think I want that again. At one point in my life I didn't have the obsession for alcohol, I have recovered that, but in many ways I am more whole now than I have ever been in my life.

These are just things that I muse about in my head today. A lively discussion of ideas, the AA meeting in my head rolls on. If you have any thoughts, comments etc, send them back to me, please! I was just thinking.