spiral, and with them his anger at depriving parent–symbols. The angrier he feels, the more cut off he must be to protect himself from expected retaliation. This spiraling mingles with the spiraling impact of existential anxiety in the advancing stages of the illness.

**SURRENDER AND THERAPY**

The key to understanding the psychodynamics of recovery, how some alcoholics escape from the self-perpetuating mechanism, is the concept of “surrender” which Tiebout has explored extensively.29

The phenomenon which he describes has been observed by various workers in the clinical encounter. Using Tiebout’s important contributions as a foundation, an alternative approach to understanding the nature of surrender will be set forth. The alcoholic “hits bottom”—i.e., his pseudo–religious solution no longer functions effectively and, at a deeper level, his narcissistic defenses no longer protect him from his fear of death and meaninglessness. The surrender experience, which may occur at this point, has two essentials: First, the unconscious renunciation of the disintegrating defense of infantile narcissism, which he gives up in order to avoid the overwhelming infantile anxieties to which this regression exposes him. Second, in hopelessness, the alcoholic makes a desperate leap. One alcoholic gave this description of the experience: “It’s a leap of fear. You leap the chasm blindly, not knowing what’s on the other side. Fear is pushing you and hope is pulling you.” Another put it aptly when he described his experience as “letting go of my I–ism.” He went on to describe the change in his distorted view of the world of relationships. During his drinking, his world had been peopled by depriving mother–figures. Having taken the leap toward trust, he discovered in A.A. that trustworthy relationships were available, that he could distribute his dependency within in the group, and that he could participate in the give as well as the take of relationships. For him, as for many alcoholics, this was a strikingly new experience. In effect, he broke the vicious cycle of spiraling isolation and anger, “rejoined the human race,” and thus acquired new and more effective ways of handling his anxiety.

Particularly significant, so far as the present discussion is concerned, he learned in A.A. an effective way of handling his existential anxiety. This happened gradually through the so–called “spiritual angle.” During the narcissism of active alcoholism, he had become his own mother, his own god. The essence of surrender is to stop playing god, or rather, to let go of the need to play god. The A.A. program helps the alcoholic curb his tendency to retreat to infantile, magical religion. It accomplishes this by suggesting to him that he line up his life with

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