reality rather than expect reality to adapt itself to him. This is the significance of the 11th Step of the A.A. program: "... praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry it out." This, like the other aspects of the A.A. "spiritual angle," assists the alcoholic in building an approach to a higher Power that is the exact opposite of his typical approach during his drinking days. The alcoholic develops humility and he begins to grow in his ability to trust. His spiritual growth occurs, as such growth nearly always does, in a group committed to spiritual values. The A.A. group thus gives the individual another opportunity to establish a trustful relationship with a higher Power. Like a good family, the group symbolizes, incarnates and communicates the acceptance of the higher Power. As his relationship with the higher Power grows, it reinforces his ability to trust people and to become a giving person. By staying in a dependent relationship with the higher Power, he is helped to retain his humility and to resist the temptation to return to narcissistic self-idolatry and to drinking.

Yet the surrendered alcoholic must continue to exercise vigilance to avoid losing his humility. The underlying problem of infantile narcissism is not resolved but instead is walled off in the experience of surrender. When deep-seated anxieties are aroused by threats to his self-esteem or by failure to grow spiritually, the old temptation to regress to his primitive defense and curse still remains. This accounts for the necessity which most A.A. members feel to "work the program" continually, even though their sobriety has been stabilized for years.

As relationships of trust are established—with others and with a higher Power—existential anxiety becomes, in Kierkegaard’s word, a “school.” The alcoholic is able to face and integrate his existential anxiety with his self-esteem. Tillich holds that it is only as existential anxiety is confronted and taken into self-affirmation of the person that it enriches rather than diminishes life. In his classic work, *The Concept of Dread*, Kierkegaard pointed out that in the very experience of facing anxiety an individual is educated to inner certitude or faith. This gives him the “courage to renounce anxiety without any anxiety, which only faith is capable of—not that it annihilates anxiety, but remaining ever young, it is continually developing itself out of the death throes of anxiety.”

The alcoholic in whom this has occurred has, as one of them put it, learned to “die living rather than live dying.” Existential anxiety has become a life-enhancing force which has been responded to in such a way as to produce inner resources which aid rather than hinder the handling of neurotic anxiety.

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