

4 absolutes of aa

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The Four Absolutes are not a formal part of our AA philosophy. Since this is true, some may argue that the Absolutes should be ignored. This premise is about as sound as it would suggest that the Bible should be flooded. Absolutes were borrowed from the Oxford Movement Group back in the days when our society was in its humble beginnings. In those days, our founders and their early colleagues were sincerely seeking any sources of help in defining and formulating proposals that could guide us in the pursuit of a useful, happy and significant sober life. Since the Absolutes are not repeated specifically in our Steps or Traditions, some of us tend to forget about them. However, in many old groups of the time, where the solid spirit of our communication is so strongly illustrated, the Absolutes receive frequent mention. Indeed, you will often find a set of old carefully preserved posters that trot out for a prominent display every night meeting. There may be a consensus that our way of life should include not only awareness, but also a constant desire for greater achievement of the qualities that the Absolutes represent. Many of those who have lost the precious gift of sobriety attribute his negligence to the search for these goals. If you return with caution to the Twelve Steps, you will find that the Four Absolutes form a thread that is discernible in the sober life of quality, at every step of a glorious journey. Honesty..... Disinterestedness..... Love..... Clean Absolutes We have joined this great group about which we have heard so much but never visited. From the lobby we saw a poster on the corner of a distant wall with the inscription Easy Does IT. We turned left to park our coats. We turned back and there on the other corner of the same wall was a double poster that said: First things first. Then facing the front of the room, high above the platform we saw in the largest letter of all, but for the grace of God. Then, when our eyes came down, right on the front of the podium there were four more words: Honesty, selflessness, purity and love. For the next ten minutes, as we sat unnoticed in the back row, waiting for the meeting to begin, many thoughts fell through the mind that was really struck by this first face-to-face encounter with the four Absolutes for a very long time. We began to fearlessly put ourselves on our own progress towards these Absolutes through years of sobriety. The score was a pathetic, lonely little score. We thought of the fine lead recently heard in which a patient humble brother told his story, and mentioned his overwhelming sense of gratitude as an important ingredient of his fifteen years of sobriety. And in listing things for which he was so grateful, he mentioned how convenient it was to be completely honest. He just meant that he told his wife and friends the truth as best he could, there were no fish stories to reconcile, was honest with money and material things, etc. Of course, he doesn't look like the person in the cartoon, speaking in front of a large audience, banging on the table and with a protruding chin, proclaiming in a loud voice that he has more humility than anyone else out there, and can prove it. But just think of complete honesty. Is this not an eternal search for truth that is infinite and in which no one achieves perfection? What do the four Absolutes mean to most of us? Words are like tools. Like any other tool, they get rusty and corrosion when not in use. More importantly, we need to familiarize ourselves with the tools, understand them, and ever improve our skills in using them. The rest of the final product, if any, is pathetically poor. We thought of a dear friend in communication, inclined, like other alcoholics, to quickly move from one hobby or interest to another without doing much with any of them. (Does that sound like someone you know?) Once this friend decided that working with his hands will solve some problems, joy nerves, perhaps help him to achieve calm and balance. So he reviewed an impressive collection of tool catalogs with friends already addicted to woodworking hobbies. He bought a large expensive collection of tools and a lot of equipment. He hired a carpenter to build a store in his basement, install equipment, and make purpose-built shelves for home tools. But in the end, not one shave and not a single tiny piece of sawdust decorated his floor. Idle tools serve just as will keep our friend busy until he goes to meetings, do twelfth step work or participate in other happy activities in the AA. How many of you will be completely honest and admit that you put four Absolutes in the attic, a little rusty from non-use, perhaps, but not worse for wear? Give or take a little, as many of us who still support the seminar for Absolutes, recognize that not too many shavings or a lot of sawdust from our activities have ever decorated its floor? Or even assuming that the activity is preserved, how many recognize that the final product did not receive a prize for its quality? Such a lack of quality can only mean a lack of goals or no effort to achieve such goals. We must recognize the Absolutes as benchmarks to better and higher goals for mortal man. But recognition is not enough. We have to use tools. Honesty over and over again we have to ask ourselves: Is this true or is it a lie? For honesty is an eternal search for truth. I am by far the most difficult of the four Absolutes, for but especially for us in this communication. The problem of drinkers is developing genuine artistry in deception. Too much (and we plead guilty) just to flip a new new and relax. That's not right. The real virtue of honesty lies in the constant selfless pursuit of it. There is no relaxed twilight zone, it is either full speed forward constantly or it is not the honesty we are looking for. And the relentless pursuit of truth will set you free, even if you don't quite catch up with it. We don't have to choose or prosecute fraud. All we need to do is relax our desire for truth, and lies will find us. The search for truth is the noblest expression of the soul. Let a man throw the engines of his soul into the cause or make something good, and the instinct of skill itself will take the machine of his honesty. The best pleasure we can get is to find a great new truth and to abandon old prejudices. When not actively searched, the truth rarely comes to light, but lies do. Truth is life, and lies are spiritual death. It is the eternal, unforgiving instinct of truth that matters. Honesty is not politics. It must be a permanent conscious state of mind. Precision is close to being a twin brother of honesty, but inaccuracy and exaggeration are at least kissing cousins of dishonesty. We can make ourselves believe in almost anything by rationalizing, (another one of our fine arts), and so it's good to start and finish our investigation with the question: Is it true? Any person who likes to seek the truth is valuable for any communication or society. Any alleged violation of honesty is a blow to the health of not only

the doer, but also all communication. On the other hand, if we are honest to the limit of our abilities, the basic appetite for truth in others who may be asleep but not dead will rise majestically to join us. Like sobriety, it is the power of an example that does the job. It's much easier to be honest than to be honest. We must strive to be what we really seem to be. It's easier to be honest with others than with yourself. Our search self-recauts help because a person who knows himself is at least on the cusp of honesty. When we try to raise our status in the eyes of others, dishonesty is in the shadows. When lies even creep in, we get back on the merry-go-round because lies not only disagree with the truth, they quarrel with each other. Remember? It is one thing to sincerely wish that the truth is on your side, and quite another to sincerely wish to be on the side of the truth. Honesty is seemingly the toughest of our four absolutes and at the same time, the most exciting challenge. Our sobriety is a gift, but honesty is the grace we must earn and constantly fight for protection and expansion. Is it true or false? Let us make this continuous question that we are trying to answer with all the sober power and intelligence we have. Unselfish At first glance, seemingly the easiest of all to understand, identify and execute. But we have a long way to go to travel, for ours was master the exact opposite during our drinking days. A little careful thought will show that selflessness in its best sense, the kind to which we should aspire in our way of life, is not easy to achieve or describe in detail. At the end of the case, he must receive for us the dedication that is our spiritual cornerstone, the real meaning of our anonymity. Continuing the question of the method of digestion of the absolute, we invite you to ask yourself over and over again, assessing what you will do, say, think or decide, How will this affect the other guy? One day I heard an old-fashioned saying that it was a 100% selfish program in one respect, namely that we had to maintain our own sobriety and its quality before we could help others as much as possible. However, we know that we must give ourselves to others in order to maintain our own sobriety, in a spirit of total selflessness without the thought of reward. Ho, we put these two things together. Well, first, it indicates that we will get in direct proportion to the real help we give to others. How many of us make hospital calls simply because we think we should do it to stay sober? Those who think only of their own necessity and who think little about making the guys in the hospital some genuine good, lack the boat. We know because we used to make hospital calls in much the same way as we took vitamin pills. One day, in our early sobriety, we were asked to call a patient. There were not enough girls walking in those days, and men were called in to help. We will never forget the anxiety on the way to this nursing home. And after almost two hours of serious conversation, we left one of the noblest women we've ever met, worried about whether we helped, or suffered, or perhaps did nothing at all. Some of her questions stayed with us. We thought about the best answers later, and came back to see it a few times. On our long journey to selflessness, we are helped by our great mission of understanding, which sometimes seems as valuable as the gift of sobriety itself. But quality cannot be limited to what we do for others. We must be selfless even in our pursuit of self-preservation. Not least our help to others comes from examples of our own lives. Is there a defense against this first drink that is equal to our thought of what it can do to others, those whose unselfish love guided us in the beginning, and those we, in turn, guided later? We recall again the last verse of an anonymous poem: I must remember how I Although sober days are both high and low, what I always have to seem to be for someone who always follows me. Love We often learn more from questions than answers. Have you ever heard of what made you think for days or even weeks? The questions, to which there is no simple answer, are often the key to the truth. However, in this series about the Four Absolutes, we are concerned about the questions we need to ask ourselves again and again in life. The integrity of our answers to these questions will determine the quality of our lives, may even determine the continuation of our sobriety. A good question to ask yourself about love can be: Is it ugly or is it beautiful? We're ugliness experts. We were really there. We are not beauty experts, but we tried a little and we are hungry for more. Love is beauty. Based on the depths of fear, physical agony, mental torture, and spiritual hunger, we feel completely unloved, imbued with self-pity, poisoned by resentment, and devoured by a proud ego that with alcohol has brought complete blindness. We get understanding and love from strangers, and we make progress as we in turn give it to new strangers. It's that simple. Fortunately for us love inspires from the beginning, even in kindergarten, where many of us still do. An old song tells us that love is a lot of the splendor thing. Giving it, we get it. But the joy of receiving can never match the real thrill of giving. Consider that this great love mission, which is ours, is rare in non-alcoholic, and you have a new reason to be grateful. Few of them have the privilege of saving lives. Few have the rich experience of being God's helper as a gift of a second life. Love is the beginning of the poor towards God. We reach the twelfth step when we give love to a new man who is poor today because we were poor yesterday. A man too proud to know that he is poor has turned his back on God with or without alcohol. We were there as well. But if he has a problem with alcohol, we can show him the way through love, understanding and our own experience. When we live for our own sobriety, we again become beggars in spiritual rags, blind once again with the dust of pride and self. Soon we will starve of starvation devouring ourselves, maybe even lose sobriety, Love gives about itself, and if we do, our progress will be lost. Everyone owes this second life of sobriety to every other person he meets in the incessant presence of God, and especially to other alcoholics who are still suffering. Not to give yourself brings the desolation of a new poverty sober alcoholic. When we offer love, we offer our lives; Are we ready to give it? When another offers us love, he offers his life; Do we have the grace to get it? When love is offered, God is there; we accepted him. Love is God's will; We took the third step? Ask yourself: Is it ugly or is it beautiful? If it's really beautiful, then it's the way of love, it's AA, and that's it. God as we understand Him. The purity of purity is easy to understand. The purity of impeccable quality. Gerard Groot, in his famous book meditation of the fourteenth century, has an essay called Pure Mind and Simple Intention, in which he says: Two wings of man rises from the things of the earth, namely simplicity and purity. The simplicity of the doth tends to god; Clean doth hold up and try it out. Purity is the quality of both the mind and the heart, or perhaps we should tell the soul of man. As for the mind, this is a simple case of answering the question: Right, or is it wrong? It should be easy for us. There is no twilight zone between right and wrong. Even in our drinking days we knew the difference. With most of us knowing the difference was the cause or part of the cause of our drinking. We didn't want to face reality doing wrong. Our problem is not the mental aspects of purity. We can all answer the question quoted above to the best of our ability and get the right answer. It is in the realm of heart and spirit that we face difficulties. We know what's right, but do we have the dedicated will to do it? Just as a real desire to stop drinking must exist to make our way of life effective for us, so we must have a strong desire to do what we know is right if we are to achieve any measurable degree of purity. It is well said that intelligence is a discipline. In other words, knowledge means little until it is used. We knew we shouldn't drink the first drink, remember? Until we translate our knowledge into our own lives, the value does not exist. We're not smart in these circumstances. It's the same with the decency of our lives. We know what's right, but if we don't, knowledge will be an obsessive vacuum. Discussing selflessness, we mentioned that it includes not only for others. We repeat that it includes everything we do, since much of our help to others comes through our own example. Nowhere is this as true as in the decency and rightness of our lives. If we were to think about the peace and satisfaction that a clear conscience would bring us, and the joy and help it will bring to others, we would be more determined about our spiritual progress. If our surrender under the Third Step was not absolute, perhaps we should pay more attention to the eleventh step. If you have turned your will and your life to God, as you understand Him, purity will come to you in due course, because God is good. Let's not just strive for God, let's try it. In Purity, as in Honesty, virtue lies in our quest. And how to seek the truth, giving all of ours in his constant pursuit, will make us free, though we never quite catch up with him. This pursuit is an exciting and challenging journey. Travel is just like as a destination, no matter how slow it may seem. As Goethe says, In life, as in knowledge, be intent on the purest way. Absolutes - Summary Our examination of absolutes individually leads to several conclusions. Twelve steps represent our philosophy. Absolutes represent our goals in self-help and means of achieving them. Honesty, being an ongoing search for truth, is our most difficult and, at the same time, the most difficult goal. It is a long way for all, but a longer way for us to find the truth. Purity is easy to define. We know what's right and what's wrong. Our problem here is the relentless desire to do what is right. Selflessness is the stream in which our sober life must flow, the boulevard on which we triumphantly march through the grace of God, ever warned to be retreated into a dark, obscure alley along the way. Our selflessness must permeate our whole lives, not just our work for others, for the greatest gift we give to others is an example of our own life as a whole. Love is the environment, the blood of a good life, that circulates and preserves its value and beauty. It is not only our circulatory system within ourselves, but it is our environment of communication with others. A real virtue in our quest for these Absolutes. It is an endless journey, and our joy and happiness must come every step of the way, not at the end, because it is infinite. Cicero said: If you pursue good with difficulty, labor passes and good remains, but if you judgment evil through pleasure, pleasure passes and evil remains. Our life is a diary in which we want to write one story, and usually write a completely different story. It is when we compare the two that we have our most humble hour. But let's compare through our self inventory and make today a new day. Men who know themselves have at least ceased to be fools. Remember, if you follow the Golden Rule, it's always your move too. Loving what is true and right, rather than doing it, doesn't really love it, and we try to face reality, remember? The art of living in truth and law is the best of fine art, and, like any fine art, must be studied slowly and practiced with incessant caution. We must humbly approach this goal of the Absolutes. We pray for these things, and sometimes we forget that these virtues must be earned. The gates of wisdom and truth are closed to those who are wise in their vanity, but are always open to the humble and the trainee. Learning what is right and practicing what is good are two higher goals in life. If we were humble, we should not stoop, but should stand at our full height, close to our Supreme Power, which shows us what a smallness of our greatness is. Remember our four questions: The truth or lies?, Right or Wrong?, How will it affect the other person?, and is it ugly or beautiful?. Answering these questions, questions every day with absolute integrity, and following the dictates of these answers one day at a time will certainly lead us well on our way to the absorption and application of 4 Absolutes.

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