Chapter 10

TO EMPLOYERS

Among many employers nowadays, we think of one member who has spent much of his life in the world of big business. He has hired and fired hundreds of men. He knows the alcoholic as the employer sees him. His present views ought to prove exceptionally useful to business men everywhere.

But let him tell you:

When we think of managers who understand alcoholics, one A.A. member comes to mind. He has hired and fired hundreds of people. He knows how employers see and treat alcoholics. We believe his ideas will be helpful to other managers and bosses all over the world.

We will let him share his own thoughts with you:

I was at one time assistant manager of a corporation department employing sixty-six hundred men. One day my secretary came in saying that Mr. B— insisted on speaking with me. I told her to say that I was not interested. I had warned him several times that he had but one more chance. Not long afterward he had called me from Hartford on two successive days, so drunk he could hardly speak. I told him he was through—finally and forever.

I used to be an assistant manager at a company

that employed 6,600 people. One day my secretary came into my office to say that one of my employees wanted to talk with me. Let's call this employee Mr. B. I told her to tell Mr. B I was too busy. Mr. B was an alcoholic, and had already done some things that worried me. I'd warned him about his behavior, and told him he had one more chance to do better.

Not long after that, Mr. B called me two days in a row, so drunk he could hardly speak. I told him he was fired.

My secretary returned to say that it was not Mr. B—on the phone; it was Mr. B—'s brother, and he wished to give me a message. I still expected a plea for clemency, but these words came through the receiver: "I just wanted to tell you Paul jumped from a hotel window in Hartford last Saturday. He left us a note saying you were the best boss he ever had, and that you were not to blame in any way."

Later on, my secretary returned to say that it was not Mr. B on the phone; it was Mr. B's brother. He wanted to give me a message. When I got on the phone, I expected the brother to beg for forgiveness. Instead he said, "I just wanted to tell you Paul jumped from a hotel window in Hartford last Saturday. He left us a note saying you were the best boss he ever had, and that this wasn't your fault at all."

Another time, as I opened a letter which lay on my

desk, a newspaper clipping fell out. It was the obituary of one of the best salesmen I ever had. After two weeks of drinking, he had placed his toe on the trigger of a loaded shotgun—the barrel was in his mouth. I had discharged him for drinking six weeks before.

> Another time, I was opening a letter at my desk and a newspaper clipping fell out. It was the obituary of one of the best salesmen I ever had. After two weeks of drinking, he had put his toe on the trigger of a loaded shotgun—when the barrel was in his mouth. I had fired him for drinking six weeks before that.

Still another experience: A woman's voice came faintly over long distance from Virginia. She wanted to know if her husband's company insurance was still in force. Four days before he had hanged himself in his woodshed. I had been obliged to discharge him for drinking, though he was brilliant, alert, and one of the best organizers I have ever known.

> One more story: I picked up my phone to hear a woman's voice speaking. She was calling from Virginia. She wanted to know if her husband's company insurance was still active. Four days before that, he had hanged himself. I had been forced to fire him for drinking, even though he was brilliant, sharp, and one of the best organizers I had ever known.

Here were three exceptional men lost to this world because I did not understand alcoholism as I do now. What irony—I became an alcoholic myself! And but for the intervention of an understanding person, I

might have followed in their footsteps. My downfall cost the business community unknown thousands of dollars, for it takes real money to train a man for an executive position. This kind of waste goes on unabated. We think the business fabric is shot through with a situation which might be helped by better understanding all around.

> All three exceptional men chose to leave this world because I did not understand alcoholism. I understand it now. In fact, I became an alcoholic myself! And if a caring person in my own life had not stepped in to help me, I might have ended my own life, too. My drinking made me unable to work. Since it takes real money to train a business executive like me, my drinking cost my employers huge amounts of money. The A.A. Fellowship sees situations like this as wasteful and never-ending. We think that employers everywhere could avoid these situations by learning to understand alcoholism.

Nearly every modern employer feels a moral responsibility for the well-being of his help, and he tries to meet these responsibilities. That he has not always done so for the alcoholic is easily understood. To him the alcoholic has often seemed a fool of the first magnitude. Because of the employee's special ability, or of his own strong personal attachment to him, the employer has sometimes kept such a man at work long beyond a reasonable period. Some employers have tried every known remedy. In only a few instances

has there been a lack of patience and tolerance. And we, who have imposed on the best of employers, can scarcely blame them if they have been short with us.

Alcoholic employees frustrate their managers

Most modern companies feel responsible to help their workers stay healthy. Doing this for alcoholic employees is very difficult. Supervisors and managers may see these employees as foolish and irresponsible. If they are very talented, or if the supervisors are friendly with them, they may be able to keep their jobs. But not always. Some employers have tried to help in every way possible. Most are very patient and forgiving. Those of us who have been alcoholic employees know this. We don't blame our bosses for getting frustrated with us.

Here, for instance, is a typical example: An officer of one of the largest banking institutions in America knows I no longer drink. One day he told me about an executive of the same bank who, from his description, was undoubtedly alcoholic. This seemed to me like an opportunity to be helpful, so I spent two hours talking about alcoholism, the malady, and described the symptoms and results as well as I could. His comment was, "Very interesting. But I'm sure this man is done drinking. He has just returned from a three-months leave of absence, has taken a cure, looks fine, and to clinch the matter, the board of directors told him this was his last chance."

Here's an example: a friend of mine who works for one of the largest banks in the United States knows I have stopped drinking. One day he asked to talk with me about a manager at the same bank. From what my friend told me, this manager was definitely an alcoholic. I felt like this was my chance to be helpful. I spent two hours talking about alcoholism with my friend. I explained the disease and described the symptoms. My friend just said, "Very interesting. But I'm sure this man will stop drinking. He just got back from a three-month leave. He seems fine now. Plus, the bank's board of directors told him this was his last chance."

The only answer I could make was that if the man followed the usual pattern, he would go on a bigger bust than ever. I felt this was inevitable and wondered if the bank was doing the man an injustice. Why not bring him into contact with some of our alcoholic crowd? He might have a chance. I pointed out that I had had nothing to drink whatever for three years, and this in the face of difficulties that would have made nine out of ten men drink their heads off. Why not at least afford him an opportunity to hear my story? "Oh no," said my friend, "this chap is either through with liquor, or he is minus a job. If he has your will power and guts, he will make the grade."

I said that if this manager followed the usual pattern, he would go on a bigger drinking spree than ever before. I believed this was very likely to happen. Why not just introduce him to me, and let me introduce him to my recovering friends? That might give him a fighting chance. I reminded my friend that

I had not had a drink in three years. And during those three years I'd had problems that would've made nine out of 10 men drink their heads off. Why not let this manager hear my story?

"Oh no," said my friend, "This guy is either done with liquor, or he is out of a job. If he has your willpower and guts, he will just make himself stop."

I wanted to throw up my hands in discouragement, for I saw that I had failed to help my banker friend understand. He simply could not believe that his

brother-executive suffered from a serious illness. There was nothing to do but wait.

I wanted to scream in frustration. I had failed to help my banker friend understand. He simply could not believe that this manager was battling a serious illness. There was nothing I could do but wait.

Presently the man did slip and was fired. Following his discharge, we contacted him. Without much ado, he accepted the principles and procedure that had helped us. He is undoubtedly on the road to recovery. To me, this incident illustrates lack of understanding as to what really ails the alcoholic, and lack of knowledge as to what part employers might profitably take in salvaging their sick employees.

Soon after, the manager got drunk again and was fired. After that, I contacted the man. I introduced him to A.A. He accepted the principles and program with almost no fuss. Now he is undoubtedly on the road to recovery. To me, this shows how few people really understand what alcoholics are going through. It also shows that employers could do more to help their sick employees.

If you desire to help it might be well to disregard your own drinking, or lack of it. Whether you are a hard drinker, a moderate drinker or a teetotaler, you may have some pretty strong opinions, perhaps prejudices. Those who drink moderately may be more annoyed with an alcoholic than a total abstainer would be. Drinking occasionally, and understanding your

own reactions, it is possible for you to become quite sure of many things which, so far as the alcoholic is concerned, are not always so. As a moderate drinker, you can take your liquor or leave it alone. Whenever you want to, you control your drinking. Of an evening, you can go on a mild bender, get up in the morning, shake your head and go to business. To you, liquor is no real problem. You cannot see why it should be to anyone else, save the spineless and stupid.

Managers may have strong opinions

If you are an employer, manager, or supervisor who wants to help an alcoholic employee, start by thinking about your own drinking. You might be a hard drinker, a moderate drinker, or someone who never drinks. No matter what, you probably have some pretty strong opinions. You might even dislike alcoholics.

Moderate drinkers sometimes get more annoyed with alcoholics than people who never drink at all. They are people who drink occasionally and understand how their bodies and minds react to alcohol. But their experiences with alcohol are nothing like the experiences that alcoholics have. Moderate drinkers can choose to drink or not drink. They can go on mild benders, get up in the morning, shake off their hangovers, and go to work. For moderate drinkers, liquor isn't a real problem. They can't see why it would be a problem for anyone except people who are spineless and stupid.

When dealing with an alcoholic, there may be a natural annoyance that a man could be so weak, stupid and irresponsible. Even when you understand the

malady better, you may feel this feeling rising.

> When dealing with an alcoholic, you may feel annoyed that anyone could be so weak, stupid, and irresponsible. Even when you understand alcoholism better, you may have this feeling.

A look at the alcoholic in your organization is many times illuminating. Is he not usually brilliant, fast-thinking, imaginative and likeable? When sober, does

he not work hard and have a knack of getting things done? If he had these qualities and did not drink would he be worth retaining? Should he have the same consideration as other ailing employees? Is he worth salvaging? If your decision is yes, whether the reason be humanitarian or business or both, then the following suggestions may be helpful.

But think about the alcoholic who works for you. Is she brilliant, quick-thinking, imaginative, and likable? When she's sober, does she work hard and get things done? If she had this type of personality and didn't drink, would you want to keep her as an employee? Should she get the same treatment as other sick employees? Is it worth your time to help her? If your answer is yes, the following suggestions may help you.

Can you discard the feeling that you are dealing only with habit, with stubbornness, or a weak will? If this presents difficulty, re-reading chapters two and three, where the alcoholic sickness is discussed at length might be worth while. You, as a business man, want to know the necessities before considering the result. If you concede that your employee is ill, can he be forgiven for what he has done in the past? Can his past absurdities be forgotten? Can it be appreciated that he has been a victim of crooked thinking, directly caused by the action of alcohol on his brain?

Can you let go of the feeling that she acts this way out of habit? Or because she is stubborn or has a weak will? If letting go of that feeling is too hard, try re-

reading Chapters 2 and 3. As a manager or supervisor, you will want to know the facts before you take action. These are the chapters where we discuss the alcoholic sickness in detail and reviewing them might help. If you re-read them and accept that this employee is ill, can you forgive her for what she has done in the past? Can you forget about the outrageous things she's done? Will you accept that she's been a victim of twisted thinking? And that alcohol is the cause?

I well remember the shock I received when a prominent doctor in Chicago told me of cases where pressure of the spinal fluid actually ruptured the brain. No wonder an alcoholic is strangely irrational. Who wouldn't be, with such a fevered brain? Normal drinkers are not so affected, nor can they understand the aberrations of the alcoholic.

I remember being totally shocked when a famous doctor in Chicago told me about how alcohol affects the brain. He had seen cases where the pressure in an alcoholic's spinal fluid built up and exploded into the brain. No wonder alcoholics act so strange and unreasonable. Who wouldn't feel confused and upset with an unstable brain? Normal drinkers don't experience this, so they can't truly understand the chaos that alcoholics feel.

Your man has probably been trying to conceal a number of scrapes, perhaps pretty messy ones. They may be disgusting. You may be at a loss to understand how such a seemingly above-board chap could be so involved. But these scrapes can generally be charged, no matter how bad, to the abnormal action of alcohol on his mind. When drinking, or getting over a bout, an

alcoholic, sometimes the model of honesty when

normal, will do incredible things. Afterward, his revulsion will be terrible. Nearly always, these antics indicate nothing more than temporary conditions.

> Now think back to your alcoholic employee. She has probably tried to hide her professional and personal mistakes, including some really messy ones. They may be disgusting to you. You may struggle to understand how someone who seems so smart and capable could do such nasty things. But these mistakes are linked to the action of alcohol on her mind. Alcoholics may seem honest and trustworthy when they're not drunk, and do unthinkable things when they are drunk. This can happen when they are recovering from a drinking spree, too. Once they sober up, they will feel overwhelmed by shame. And almost always, these disgusting activities are temporary.

This is not to say that all alcoholics are honest and upright when not drinking. Of course that isn't so, and such people often may impose on you. Seeing your attempt to understand and help, some men will try to take advantage of your kindness. If you are sure your man does not want to stop, he may as well be discharged, the sooner the better. You are not doing him a favor by keeping him on. Firing such an individual may prove a blessing to him. It may be just the jolt he needs. I know, in my own particular case, that nothing my company could have done would have stopped me for, so long as I was able to hold my position, I could not possibly realize how serious my situation was. Had they fired me first, and had they

then taken steps to see that I was presented with the solution contained in this book, I might have returned to them six months later, a well man.

> To be clear, we are not saying that all alcoholics are honest and trustworthy when they are not drinking. That simply isn't true. And if you trust a dry drunk, may abuse your trust. When they see that you are trying to understand and help, they might take advantage of your kindness.
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> If you're sure your employee doesn't want to stop drinking, you can go ahead and fire her. The sooner the better. You aren't doing her a favor by keeping her on the payroll. Actually, firing her may end up being a blessing. It could be the wake-up call she needs. In my own case, nothing my company could have done would have stopped me from drinking. As long as I kept my job, I could ignore how serious my situation was. If they had fired me first and made sure I understood the solution explained in this book, I might have recovered faster. I might have come back to work after six months, no longer sick.
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> If you think your employee may want to stop drinking, there is hope. Many people do want to stop, and as their manager or supervisor you can help them. Treating them with understanding will benefit both them and you.

But there are many men who want to stop, and with them you can go far. Your understanding treatment of their cases will pay dividends.

Perhaps you have such a man in mind. He wants to quit drinking and you want to help him, even if it be only a matter of good business. You now know more about alcoholism. You can see that he is mentally and

physically sick. You are willing to overlook his past performances. Suppose an approach is made something like this:

How to talk with an alcoholic employee

Let's say you have an employee in mind. He wants to quit drinking and you want to help him. If your desire to help is more about helping the business than helping him as a person, that's fine. Now you know more about alcoholism. You can see that he is mentally and physically sick. You are willing to overlook his past mistakes. Here's one way you could begin talking with him about his problem:

State that you know about his drinking, and that it must stop. You might say you appreciate his abilities, would like to keep him, but cannot if he continues to

drink. A firm attitude at this point has helped many of us.

Say that you know about his drinking, and that it must stop. You might say you recognize his talents and would like to keep him as an employee, but cannot if he continues to drink. It will help to keep a firm attitude while saying this.

Next he can be assured that you do not intend to lecture, moralize, or condemn; that if this was done formerly, it was because of misunderstanding. If pos-sible express a lack of hard feeling toward him. At this point, it might be well to explain alcoholism, the illness. Say that you believe he is a gravely ill per-son, with this qualification—being perhaps fatally ill, does he want to get well? You ask, because many alcoholics, being warped and drugged, do not want to quit. But does he? Will he take every necessary step, submit to anything to get well, to stop drinking for-ever?

Next, reassure him that you don't want to lecture, moralize, or judge him. Say that if you did this in the past, it was because you misunderstood his problem. If it's the truth for you, tell him there are no hard feelings. At this point, it might help to explain alcoholism as an illness. Say that you believe he is a seriously ill person, and quickly add, "Since this illness may be fatal, do you want to get well?" Tell him you are asking because many alcoholics feel so warped and drugged they don't want to quit. But does he? Will he take every necessary step? Will he do

anything to get well, to stop drinking forever?

If he says yes, does he really mean it, or down inside does he think he is fooling you, and that after rest and treatment he will be able to get away with a few drinks now and then? We believe a man should be thoroughly probed on these points. Be satisfied he is not deceiving himself or you.

If he says yes, does he really mean it? Or deep down inside does he think he is fooling you? Does he think that after rest and treatment, he will be able to get away with a few drinks now and then? We believe people should be thoroughly questioned about these things. Feel absolutely certain he is not lying to himself, or to you.

Whether you mention this book is a matter for your discretion. If he temporizes and still thinks he can ever drink again, even beer, he might as well be discharged after the next bender which, if an alcoholic, he is almost certain to have. He should understand that emphatically. Either you are dealing with a man who can and will get well or you are not. If not, why waste time with him? This may seem severe, but it is usually the best course.

It is up to you if you want to mention this book. If your employee seems to think he can drink again someday, even beer, he doesn't really want help. You can fire him after his next bender. And as an alcoholic, he is almost certain to have one. Tell him this is your plan, and make sure he understands you completely. You're either dealing with a person who can and will get well … or you are not. And if not, why waste time

with him? This may seem severe, but it is usually the best plan.

After satisfying yourself that your man wants to recover and that he will go to any extreme to do so, you may suggest a definite course of action. For most alcoholics who are drinking, or who are just getting

over a spree, a certain amount of physical treatment is desirable, even imperative. The matter of physical treatment should, of course, be referred to your own doctor. Whatever the method, its object is to thoroughly clear mind and body of the effects of alcohol. In competent hands, this seldom takes long nor is it very expensive. Your man will fare better if placed in such physical condition that he can think straight and no longer craves liquor. If you propose such a procedure to him, it may be necessary to ad-vance the cost of treatment, but we believe it should be made plain that any expense will later be deducted from his pay. It is better for him to feel fully responsible.

When you're sure that your employee truly wants to recover and that he will take action to do so, you can suggest the next steps. For most alcoholics who are drinking, or who are just getting over a spree, medical treatment is helpful. Sometimes it's absolutely necessary. Medical treatment can take many forms, and your employee's doctor can help make decisions about what to do. The purpose is to thoroughly clear the mind and body of the effects of alcohol. Your employee will do better if he is able to think straight and no longer craves alcohol.

If you suggest that your employee try some kind of treatment, you should consider offering to temporarily cover the cost. Be clear that you expect him to pay back this cost, or offer to deduct it from his paycheck. It is better for him to feel fully responsible for any treatment.

If your man accepts your offer, it should be pointed out that physical treatment is but a small part of the picture. Though you are providing him with the best possible medical attention, he should understand that he must undergo a change of heart. To get over drinking will require a transformation of thought and attitude. We all had to place recovery above everything, for without recovery we would have lost both home and business.

If your employee accepts your offer, point out that medical treatment is just part of the picture. Along with excellent medical care, he should understand that he must have a true change of heart. To get over drinking, he needs a transformation of both thought and attitude. All of us who have recovered had to focus on recovery above everything. And without recovery, we would have lost both our homes and businesses.

Can you have every confidence in his ability to recover? While on the subject of confidence, can you adopt the attitude that so far as you are concerned this will be a strictly personal matter, that his alcoholic derelictions, the treatment about to be undertaken, will never be discussed without his consent? It might be well to have a long chat with him on his return.

Are you fully and completely confident in his ability to recover? And can you promise him that you will treat this as a strictly personal matter? That his alcoholic mistakes and the treatment he will experience will never be discussed without his consent? You might want to talk to him when he comes back from treatment.

To return to the subject matter of this book: It contains full suggestions by which the employee may

solve his problem. To you, some of the ideas which it contains are novel. Perhaps you are not quite in sympathy with the approach we suggest. By no means do we offer it as the last word on this subject, but so far as we are concerned, it has worked with us. After all, are you not looking for results rather than methods? Whether your employee likes it or not, he will learn the grim truth about alcoholism. That won't hurt him a bit, even though he does not go for this remedy.

Ways to help

This book contains detailed suggestions that your employee may use to solve his problem. To you, some of these ideas will be brand new. You may not completely agree with the approach we suggest. We would never say that this is the only way to recover, but it has definitely worked for us. And after all, as an employer, you aren't looking for methods for recovery from alcoholism. You are looking for results. You want your employee to stop drinking. Even if your employee doesn't want to follow the program, reading this book will show him how dangerous it is to be an alcoholic. That knowledge won't hurt him a bit.

We suggest you draw the book to the attention of the doctor who is to attend your patient during treatment. If the book is read the moment the patient is able, while acutely depressed, realization of his condition may come to him.

We suggest you discuss this book with your employee's doctor. If he reads this book during treatment, as soon as he's able, it may help him understand how ill he really is. This is especially true if he reads it when he is depressed.

We hope the doctor will tell the patient the truth about his condition, whatever that happens to be. When the man is presented with this volume it is best that no one tell him he must abide by its suggestions. The man must decide for himself.

We also hope the doctor will tell the patient the truth about his condition. When your employee is given a copy of this book, don't let anyone tell him he must follow its suggestions. He must decide that for himself.

You are betting, of course, that your changed attitude plus the contents of this book will turn the trick. In some cases it will, and in others it may not. But we think that if you persevere, the percentage of successes will gratify you. As our work spreads and our numbers increase, we hope your employees may be put in personal contact with some of us. Meanwhile, we are sure a great deal can be accomplished by the use of the book alone.

As his boss, you are betting that your changed attitude plus the contents of this book will help him recover. In some cases it will, and in others it won't. But we think that if you keep trying to help, the successes you help create will be deeply rewarding. As our work spreads and our

Fellowship grows, we hope your employees will reach out to us.

On your employee's return, talk with him. Ask him if he thinks he has the answer. If he feels free to discuss his problems with you, if he knows you under-

stand and will not be upset by anything he wishes to say, he will probably be off to a fast start.

Until then, we are sure you can accomplish great things just using this book. When your employee returns from treatment, be sure to talk with him. Ask him if he thinks he has the answer. If he feels like he can discuss his problems with you—if he knows you understand and will not be upset by anything he says—that will be a huge help to him.

In this connection, can you remain undisturbed if the man proceeds to tell you shocking things? He may, for example, reveal that he has padded his ex-pense account or that he has planned to take your best customers away from you. In fact, he may say almost anything if he has accepted our solution which, as you know, demands rigorous honesty. Can you charge this off as you would a bad account and start fresh with him? If he owes you money you may wish to make terms.

When you have this talk, try to stay calm if he tells you shocking things. For example, he may confess that he has been using company money for personal reasons. Or that he planned to take your best customers away from you. If he owes you money you may need to discuss repayment. In fact, he may say almost anything if he has accepted the A.A. solution. As you know, our solution demands complete honesty. Can you let this go, like you would let go of a bad customer? Can you start fresh with him? If he does owe you money, you might wish to make a

payment arrangement with him.

If he speaks of his home situation, you can undoubtedly make helpful suggestions. Can he talk frankly with you so long as he does not bear business tales or criticize his associates? With this kind of employee such an attitude will command undying loyalty. The greatest enemies of us alcoholics are resentment, jealousy, envy, frustration, and fear. Wherever men are gathered together in business there will be rivalries and, arising out of these, a certain amount of office politics. Sometimes we alcoholics have an idea that people are trying to pull us down. Often this is not so at all. But sometimes our drinking will be used politically.

Can he talk with you openly as long as he does not gossip about business associates or criticize his coworkers? With this kind of employee, creating this trusting relationship will help you win his loyalty. An alcoholic's greatest enemies are resentment, jealousy, envy, frustration, and fear. Wherever people do business together there will be tension and office politics. Sometimes we alcoholics believe that people are trying to ruin our careers. Most of the time, this is not true. But sometimes our drinking will be used against us politically.

One instance comes to mind in which a malicious individual was always making friendly little jokes about an alcoholic's drinking exploits. In this way he was slyly carrying tales. In another case, an alcoholic was sent to a hospital for treatment. Only a few knew of it at first but, within a short time, it was billboarded throughout the entire company. Naturally this sort of thing decreased the man's chance of recovery. The

employer can many times protect the victim from this kind of talk. The employer cannot play favorites, but he can always defend a man from needless provocation and unfair criticism.

One example comes to mind. A cruel person had a habit of making friendly little jokes about his coworker's alcoholic drinking exploits. In this way he was spreading gossip in a very dishonest way. In another case, an alcoholic was sent to a hospital for treatment. Only a few coworkers knew about it at first, but soon the whole company knew. Naturally, this decreased the man's chance of recovery. Sometimes the employer can protect the alcoholic from this kind of talk. The employer cannot play favorites, but can always defend someone from gossip and unfair criticism.

As a class, alcoholics are energetic people. They work hard and they play hard. Your man should be on his mettle to make good. Being somewhat weak-ened, and faced with physical and mental readjust-ment to a life which knows no alcohol, he may overdo. You may have to curb his desire to work sixteen hours a day. You may need to encourage him to play once in a while. He may wish to do a lot for other alco-holics and something of the sort may come up during business hours. A reasonable amount of latitude will be helpful. This work is necessary to maintain his sobriety.

Most alcoholics are energetic people. They work hard and they play hard. This means your employee

should dedicate himself to recovery, fully and completely. In fact, as he begins to live a life without alcohol, he may overdo it. You may have to tell him he can't work 16 hours a day. You may need to encourage him to relax once in a while. He may wish to help other alcoholics, sometimes during business hours. If you can give him the flexibility to do this that will help. This work is necessary to maintain his sobriety.

After your man has gone along without drinking for a few months, you may be able to make use of his services with other employees who are giving you the alcoholic run-around—provided, of course, they are willing to have a third party in the picture. An alcoholic who has recovered, but holds a relatively unimportant job, can talk to a man with a better position. Being on a radically different basis of life, he will never take advantage of the situation.

The importance of trust and honesty

After your man has stopped drinking for a few months, you may be able to ask for his help with other alcoholic employees. This will only work if other employees are willing to talk with both you and someone else. An alcoholic who has recovered can even help someone in a higher or more powerful position. Since the recovered alcoholic has adopted a radically new way of living, he would never take advantage of his powerful coworker's trust.

Your man may be trusted. Long experience with alcoholic excuses naturally arouses suspicion. When his wife next calls saying he is sick, you might jump to

the conclusion he is drunk. If he is, and is still trying to recover, he will tell you about it even if it means the loss of his job. For he knows he must be honest if he would live at all. He will appreciate knowing you are not bothering your head about him,

that you are not suspicious nor are you trying to run his life so he will be shielded from temptation to drink. If he is conscientiously following the program of recovery he can go anywhere your business may call him.

Once he has begun to recover, trust your employee. Dealing with alcoholic excuses for so long will make you suspicious of everything. When his wife calls saying he is sick, you might assume he is actually drunk. If he is, and he's still trying to recover, he will tell you about it later. Even if it means getting fired. He knows he must be honest if he wants to live at all. He will appreciate knowing you are not worried about him—that you trust him, and aren't trying to run his life so he will never be tempted to drink. If he is following the program of recovery, he can go anywhere your business needs him to go.

In case he does stumble, even once, you will have to decide whether to let him go. If you are sure he doesn't mean business, there is no doubt you should discharge him. If, on the contrary, you are sure he is doing his utmost, you may wish to give him another chance. But you should feel under no obligation to keep him on, for your obligation has been well discharged already.

If he does stumble, even once, you will have to decide whether to fire him or not. If you are sure he will not stick to the program of recovery, there is no doubt you should let him go. But if you are sure he is doing his best, you may want to give him another

chance. But you should not feel like you are required to keep him on the payroll. You have already done your part to help him.

There is another thing you might wish to do. If your organization is a large one, your junior executives might be provided with this book. You might let them know you have no quarrel with the alcoholics of your organization. These juniors are often in a difficult position. Men under them are frequently their friends. So, for one reason or another, they cover these men, hoping matters will take a turn for the better. They often jeopardize their own positions by trying to help serious drinkers who should have been fired long ago, or else given an opportunity to get well.

There is another thing you might want to do. If your organization is large, you might want to give your managers or junior leadership team copies of this book. Tell them that you are not trying to get anyone in trouble. Managers are often friends with their employees. For one reason or another, they may try to make excuses when these employees struggle with alcoholism. They mostly hope that things will get better on their own over time. Some of these leaders put their own jobs at risk trying to help serious drinkers who should have been fired long ago.

After reading this book, a junior executive can go to such a man and say approximately this, “Look here, Ed. Do you want to stop drinking or not? You put me on the spot every time you get drunk. It isn’t fair to me or the firm. I have been learning something about alcoholism. If you are an alcoholic, you are a mighty sick man. You act like one. The firm wants to help you get over it, and if you are interested, there

is a way out. If you take it, your past will be forgotten

and the fact that you went away for treatment will not be mentioned. But if you cannot or will not stop drinking, I think you ought to resign."

After reading this book, an executive can go to any of the people reporting to her and say something like this, "Listen. Do you want to stop drinking or not? You put me in a bad position every time you get drunk. It isn't fair to me or the company. I have been learning something about alcoholism. If you are an alcoholic, you are a very sick man. You act like one. The company wants to help you stop drinking. If you are interested, there is a way out. If you take it, we will forget about the past. The fact that you went away for treatment will never be mentioned. But if you cannot or will not stop drinking, I think you ought to resign."

Your junior executive may not agree with the contents of our book. He need not, and often should not show it to his alcoholic prospect. But at least he will understand the problem and will no longer be misled by ordinary promises. He will be able to take a position with such a man which is eminently fair and square. He will have no further reason for covering up an alcoholic employee.

Your executive may not agree with the contents of this book. That's OK. She probably should not show it to her alcoholic employee. But if the executive reads this book, at least she will understand the problem. She will be able to talk with this employee, and do so in a way that is fair and square. She will have no reason to cover for an alcoholic employee ever again.

It boils right down to this: No man should be fired just because he is alcoholic. If he wants to stop, he should be afforded a real chance. If he cannot or does not want to stop, he should be discharged. The exceptions are few.

It boils down to this: No one should be fired just because they are an alcoholic. If they want to stop, they should be given a real chance. If they cannot or do not want to stop, they should be fired. There are very few exceptions to this rule.

We think this method of approach will accomplish several things. It will permit the rehabilitation of good men. At the same time you will feel no reluctance to rid yourself of those who cannot or will not stop. Alcoholism may be causing your organization considerable damage in its waste of time, men and reputation. We hope our suggestions will help you plug up this sometimes serious leak. We think we are sensible when we urge that you stop this waste and give your worthwhile man a chance.

We think this way of dealing with alcoholic employees will accomplish several things. It will help good people begin to recover. At the same time, it will help employers feel less guilty about firing people who cannot or will not stop drinking. Alcoholism may be harming your company by wasting time, people, and resources. We hope our suggestions will help you plug this sometimes-serious leak. We think we are being reasonable when we encourage you to stop this waste and give your employees a chance to do better.

The other day an approach was made to the vice

president of a large industrial concern. He remarked: “I’m mighty glad you fellows got over your drinking. But the policy of this company is not to interfere with the habits of our employees. If a man drinks so much that his job suffers, we fire him. I don’t see how you can be of any help to us for, as you see, we don’t have

any alcoholic problem." This same company spends millions for research every year. Their cost of production is figured to a fine decimal point. They have recreational facilities. There is company insurance. There is a real interest, both humanitarian and business, in the well-being of employees. But alcoholism —well, they just don't believe they have it.

> When an A.A. member spoke with the vice president of a large industrial company, he said "I'm very glad you all stopped drinking. But the policy of this company is not to interfere with the habits of our employees. If someone drinks so much that their job suffers, we fire them. I don't see how you can help us since we don't have any alcoholic problem."
>
> This same company spends millions of dollars on research every year. They have a gym that employees can use. The company helps pay for employee insurance. They have a real interest in the well-being of their employees. But alcoholism ... well, they just don't believe they have it.

Perhaps this is a typical attitude. We, who have collectively seen a great deal of business life, at least from the alcoholic angle, had to smile at this gentleman's sincere opinion. He might be shocked if he knew how much alcoholism is costing his organization a year. That company may harbor many actual or potential alcoholics. We believe that managers of large enterprises often have little idea how prevalent this problem is. Even if you feel your organization has no alcoholic problem, it might pay to take another look down the line. You may make some interesting dis-

coveries.

> Perhaps this is a typical attitude. We have seen plenty of business life, at least from the alcoholic angle. And we have to smile at this man's opinion of his company. He might be shocked if he knew how much alcoholism is costing his organization every year. That company may employ many alcoholics and potential alcoholics. We believe that managers of big companies rarely know how bad this problem is. Even if you feel your organization has no alcoholic problem, it might be worthwhile to take another look down the line. You may make some interesting discoveries.

Of course, this chapter refers to alcoholics, sick people, deranged men. What our friend, the vice president, had in mind was the habitual or whoopee drinker. As to them, his policy is undoubtedly sound, but he did not distinguish between such people and the alcoholic.

> Of course, this chapter refers to alcoholics, sick people, troubled individuals. What the vice president was imagining was someone who was constantly drunk. Or maybe someone who parties hard and gets extremely drunk often. For them, his policy will work just fine. But he doesn't see the difference between those types of drinkers and a typical alcoholic.

It is not to be expected that an alcoholic employee will receive a disproportionate amount of time and attention. He should not be made a favorite. The right kind of man, the kind who recovers, will not want this sort of thing. He will not impose. Far from it. He will work like the devil and thank you to his dying day.

> No one should expect that an alcoholic employee will receive a lot of additional time and attention. They should not be treated like a favorite. The right kind of person—the kind who recovers—will not want to be seen this way. They will not ask for extra help or special treatment. Far from it. They will work their hearts out and thank you until their dying day.

Today I own a little company. There are two

alcoholic employees, who produce as much as five normal salesmen. But why not? They have a new attitude, and they have been saved from a living death. I have enjoyed every moment spent in getting them straightened out.*

> Today I own a little company. There are two recovering alcoholic employees who produce as much as five non-alcoholic employees. And why shouldn't they? They have a new attitude, and they have been saved from a living death. I have enjoyed every moment I spent helping them straighten themselves out.

* See Appendix VI—We shall be happy to hear from you if we can be of help.