

## The Pains of Growing Up

Now that we're in A.A. and sober, and winning back the esteem of our friends and business associates, we find that we still need to exercise special vigilance. As an insurance against "big-shot-ism" we can often check ourselves by remembering that we are today sober only by the grace of God and that any success we may be having is far more His success than ours.

Finally, we begin to see that all people, including ourselves, are to some extent emotionally ill as well as frequently wrong, and then we approach true tolerance and see what real love for our fellows actually means. It will become more and more evident as we go forward that it is pointless to become angry, or to get hurt by people who, like us, are suffering from the pains of growing up.

Such a radical change in our outlook will take time, maybe a lot of time. Not many people can truthfully assert that they love everybody. Most of us must admit that we have loved but a few; that we have been quite indifferent to the many so long as none of them gave us trouble; and as for the remainder—well, we have really disliked or hated them. Although these attitudes are common enough, we A.A.'s find we need something much better in order to keep our balance. We can't stand it if we hate deeply. The idea that we can be possessively loving of a few, can ignore the many, and can continue to fear or hate anybody, has to be abandoned, if only a little at a time.

We can try to stop making unreasonable demands upon those we love. We can show kindness where we had shown none. With those we dislike we can begin to practice justice and courtesy, perhaps going out of our way to understand and help them.

Whenever we fail any of these people, we can promptly admit it— to ourselves always, and to them also, when the admission would be helpful. Courtesy, kindness, justice, and love are the keynotes by which we may come into harmony with practically anybody. When in doubt we can always pause, saying, "Not my will, but Thine, be done." And we can often ask ourselves, "Am I doing to others as I would have them do to me— today?"