

Why is A.A. interested in problem drinkers?

Members of A.A. have a selfish interest in offering a helping hand to other alcoholics who have not yet achieved sobriety. First, they know from experience that this type of activity, usually referred to as “Twelfth Step work,” helps them to stay sober. Their lives now have a great and compelling interest. Very likely, reminders of their own previous experience with alcohol help them to avoid the overconfidence that could lead to a relapse. Whatever the explanation, A.A.s who give freely of their time and effort to help other alcoholics seldom have trouble preserving their own sobriety. A.A.s are anxious to help problem drinkers for a second reason: It gives them an opportunity to square their debt to those who helped them. It is the only practical way in which the individual’s debt to A.A. can ever be repaid. The A.A. member knows that sobriety cannot be bought and that there is no long-term lease on it. The A.A. does know, however, that a new way of life without alcohol may be had simply for the asking, if it is honestly wanted and willingly shared with those who follow. Traditionally, A.A. never “recruits” members, never urges that anyone should become a member, and never solicits or accepts outside funds.