

**DISINTEGRATION  
OR  
OVER-INTEGRATION**

**IN ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

*Kelly D. Area 35 Panel 66 Delegate*



**“...we need it to protect A.A.  
against disintegration, while  
preventing over-integration...”**

*Bernard Smith “Why We Need a Conference”*

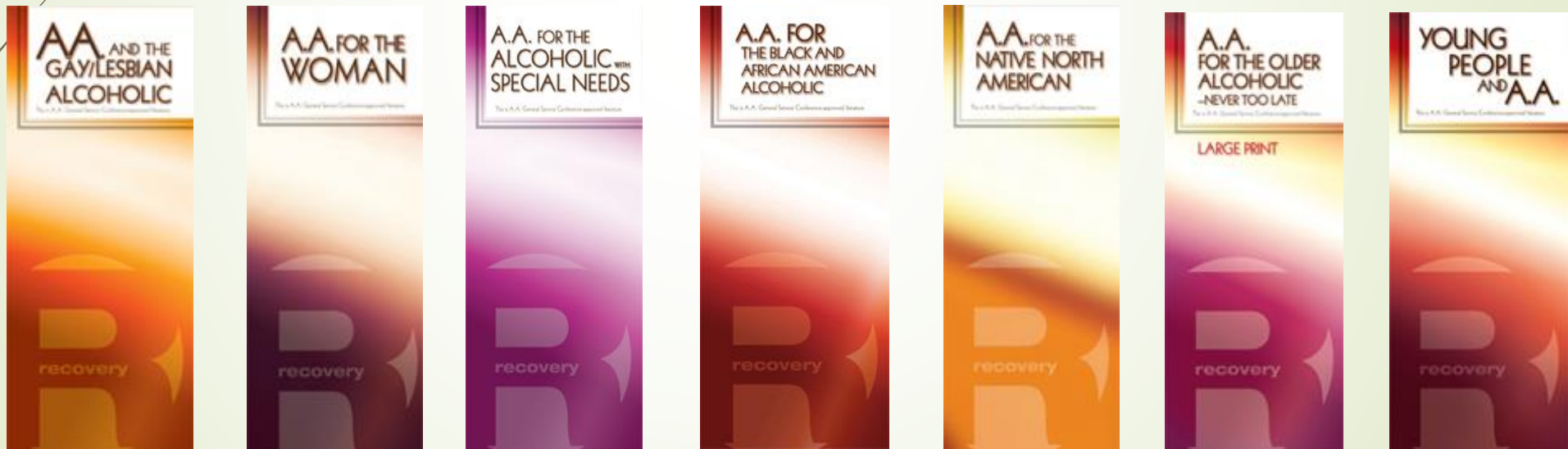
**Disintegration**: the process of losing cohesion or strength.

**Cohesion**: is often described as the action or fact of forming a united whole.




Bernard Smith apparently saw the potential for “fracturing” – a loss at unity within Alcoholics Anonymous and was inviting us to be mindful of it.

- The literature we have produced over recent decades









Are these the signs of the disintegration that Bernard Smith was talking about?

- Conference Advisory Actions
- Are we not a program to assist in finding a Higher Power?
- Are groups acting as their own Higher Power?



*Integration*: the act or process of uniting different things.

*Over-integration*: appears to be a phrase coined by Bernard himself. We will need to clarify what he was illustrating.

*Diversity*: the inclusion of different types of people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization.



Therefore, it is reasonable to believe that Bernard was pointing to a desire to include more or different people than was originally intended in the creation of the Society of Alcoholics Anonymous, or to do so in a way that would be injurious to AA?

➤ Bill and early AA's

➤ Promotion

➤ Accepting alcoholics who want to be a part of AA

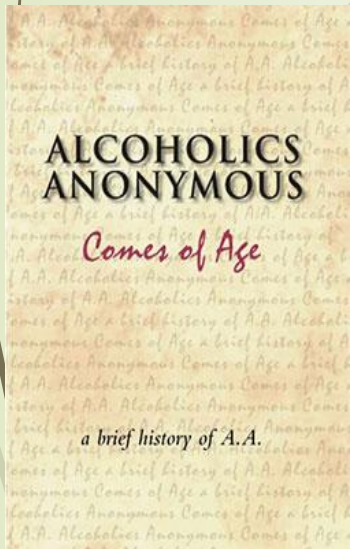


© Can Stock Photo





The question before us is whether this is what Bernard was warning us against. Also referencing Bill's writing.



“In something of the same fashion, this idea began to work out with other kinds of prospects. In the beginning we could not sober up women. They were different they said. But when they saw other women get well, they slowly followed suit. The derelict, the rich man, the socialite – all these once thought AA was not for them. So did certain people of the races and tongues and creeds. But when they clearly saw the alcoholic tragedy for which they were headed, they could forget their differences and join AA. As these new friends came into full view, we were overjoyed. Today more than half of AA’s membership consists of mild cases and those who once thought they were “different.”

*Bill's writing from Alcoholics Anonymous Comes of Age*



*Integration*: also defined as *incorporation as equals into a society or an organization of individuals of different groups.*

- Identify groups willing to set aside difference
- The comment element is alcoholism



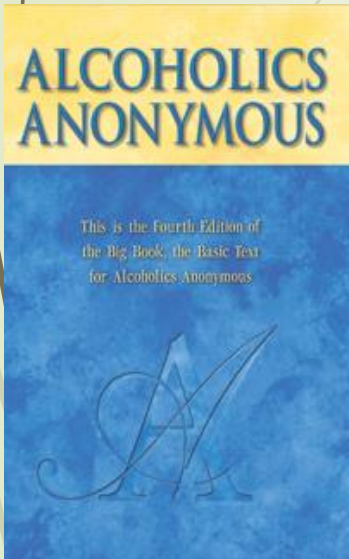
Bernard knew very well what the Big Book points out – that alcoholics are extremists.

*Disintegration*: bluntly stated is illustrative of an attitude of apathy, or lets say disinterest, by the body of people concerned – that is one extreme.

*Over-integration*: is, at its core, an attitude of arrogance, or self-power, in its attempt to “make something happen.”

Could Bernard have been pointing us to that tried and true approach as a Society?

- Our Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous – on two occasions – points us the illustration of *“laying the kit of spiritual tools at their feet.”*
- Are we using our message as side barriers?
- Membership numbers or monetary goals





And our final Question: Are we trying to maintain our fellowship on more of an intellectual level rather than a spiritual, service level?

***“Recovery begins when one alcoholic talks to another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength and hope.”***

*Forward to the Third Edition of Alcoholics Anonymous*

