

Re: The BASIC INSTINCTS of Life

Step Four

(fact-finding) (a list)
"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."
(fact-finding) (truth)

CREATION gave us instincts for a purpose. Without them we wouldn't be complete human beings. If men and women didn't exert themselves to be secure in their persons, ^{Physical Security} made no effort to harvest food or construct shelter, ^{Physical Security} there would be no survival. If they didn't reproduce, ^{Sex relations} the earth wouldn't be populated. If there were no social instinct, ^{Relationships} if men cared nothing for the society of one another, there would be no society. So these desires—for the sex relation, ^{Sex relations} for material and emotional security, and for companionship ^{personal relationships} —are perfectly necessary and right, and surely God-given.

Yet these instincts, so necessary for our existence, often ^{it of proportion} far exceed their proper functions. Powerfully, blindly, many times subtly, they drive us, dominate us, and insist upon ruling our lives. Our desires for sex, for material and emotional security, and for an important place in society often ← (ambition - ability to accomplish goals) tyrannize us. When thus out of joint, man's natural desires ← (out of proportion; Not "right-sized") cause him great trouble, practically all the trouble there is. No human being, however good, is exempt from these troubles. Nearly every serious emotional problem can be seen as a case of misdirected instinct. When that happens, our great natural assets, the instincts, have turned into physical and mental liabilities. (defects of character)

Step Four is our vigorous and painstaking effort to discover what these liabilities in each of us have been, and are.

defects

Page 43

We want to find exactly how, when, and where our natural ^{basic instincts} desires have warped us. We wish to look squarely at the unhappiness this has caused others and ourselves. By discovering what our emotional deformities are, we can ^(defects of character) move toward their correction. Without a willing and persistent ^(searching and fearless) effort to do this, there can be little sobriety or contentment for us. Without a searching and fearless moral ^(the truth about ourselves) inventory, most of us have found that the faith which really works in daily living is still out of reach. (We are still ruled by fear!)

Before tackling the inventory problem in detail, let's have a closer look at what the basic problem is. Simple examples like the following take on a world of meaning when we think about them. Suppose a person places sex desire ahead of everything else. In such a case, this imperious urge

horny impulse

Re: The BASIC INSTINCTS of Life

can destroy his chances for material and emotional security as well as his standing in the community. Another may develop such an obsession for financial security that he wants to do nothing but hoard money. Going to the extreme, he can become a miser, or even a recluse who denies himself both family and friends. (obsession = a thought which overrides all thoughts to the contrary)

Nor is the quest for security always expressed in terms of money. How frequently we see a frightened human being determined to depend completely upon a stronger person for guidance and protection. This weak one, failing to meet life's responsibilities with his own resources, never grows up. Disillusionment and helplessness are his lot. In time all his protectors either flee or die, and he is once more left alone and afraid. (self-esteem and emotional security out of whack) (The Spiritual Malady - "R.I.D.") (filled with fear)

We have also seen men and women who go powermad, who devote themselves to attempting to rule their

ambition instinct

page 44

fellows. These people often throw to the winds every chance for legitimate security and a happy family life. Whenever a human being becomes a battleground for the instincts, there can be no peace.

(Conflict with God, ourselves, and with other people - no harmony)

But that is not all of the danger. Every time a person imposes his instincts unreasonably upon others, unhappiness

(people retaliate)

follows. If the pursuit of wealth tramples upon people who happen to be in the way, then anger, jealousy, and revenge are likely to be aroused. If sex runs riot, there is a similar uproar. Demands made upon other people for too much attention, protection, and love can only invite domination or

economic security out of control

revulsion in the protectors themselves—two emotions quite as unhealthy as the demands which evoked them. When an individual's desire for prestige becomes uncontrollable,

←ambitions/emotional security pride self-esteem

whether in the sewing circle or at the international conference table, other people suffer and often revolt. This collision of instincts can produce anything from a cold snub to a blazing revolution. In these ways we are set in conflict not only with ourselves, but with other people who have instincts, too.

(prestige - self-esteem, ambition, pride)

Alcoholics especially should be able to see that instinct run wild in themselves is the underlying cause of their destructive

drinking. We have drunk to drown feelings of fear,

(fear, frustration & depression = R.I.D.)

frustration, and depression. We have drunk to escape the guilt of passions, and then have drunk again to make more

passions possible. We have drunk for vainglory—that we might the more enjoy foolish dreams of pomp and power.

(vainglory - pride, self-esteem)

This perverse soul-sickness is not pleasant to look upon. Instincts on rampage balk at investigation.

(delusions)

(because of rationalizations and justifications)

soul-sickness = spiritual malady