

The Doctor's Opinion

The following is a motion which was approved by my Home Group during the business meeting of the Salem Noontime Group of Alcoholics Anonymous:

"I move that upon the creation of a 5th Edition of the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, that the Doctor's Opinion be returned to page 1."

BACKGROUND:

I am a grateful alcoholic; my name is Dave. I am also a retired history teacher and I would assume that my historical curiosity has led me to where I am today. My sponsors (God Bless them all) would have to be described as "Big Book" thumpers with a strong "trusted servant" legacy. As a result, I found myself reading everything I could on our AA history, good, bad or indifferent. During my leisure historical AA reading, I discovered that the Doctor's Opinion had been moved! It was originally Page 1 Chapter 1 in our first edition. The Doctor's Opinion medically and scientifically explains to me why I am the way that I am. Why would "they" move the Doctor's Opinion? I was baffled so I started asking questions to all of the "elders". I soon discovered that no one, including our archivist at GSO, had one definitive answer. There appear to be many rumors but again, no one reason. There also appears to be no documentation to authenticate or deny the relocation of this chapter.

The movement of the Doctor's Opinion stayed a mystery, so I continued to research. The questioning led me to those who reference Bill's relationship with Doctor Paul O from Laguna Niguel, CA. Dr. Paul wrote "Doctor, Alcoholic Addict" page 439 in the 3rd edition and page 407 in the 4th edition. By the way, "they" also changed the title of Dr. Paul's story to "Acceptance is the answer". Here is where my investigation gets bogged down. I was given the information that Dr Paul considered the Doctor's Opinion "too medical" and lobbied Bill W to move the story away from page 1. This explanation has never really made any sense to me, and that was 23 years ago. "Too medical"? How can the "Doctor's Opinion" be too medical? Again, I continued to perform research and I have not been able to identify the reason or rationale to why the chapter was moved.

All of my investigation has led me, I think, to a higher ordered question. When a person reads a book, where do they start? This would not be so important if we were not talking about alcoholics and the "Basic Text" of Alcoholics Anonymous. My entire being is convinced to the core that God led Bill and his followers to create our Big Book. It is

indeed, divinely inspired. The question of placement of the "Doctor's Opinion" could mean life or death for the remote reader, whether here or abroad. It is my data backed opinion that the average reader does not read the introduction or preface. They start on page 1 and if an alcoholic, without a sponsor or guidance, starts on page 1, they will miss the most important medical evidence presented in our "textbook". How can we take the chance of losing even one alcoholic because at some time in the past the Doctor's Opinion was moved?

Next comes the argument against returning the "Doctor's Opinion" because it is the sponsor's responsibility to show the sponsee where the "Doctor's Opinion" is and its importance. What about the rural person who receives the Big Book but has no sponsor to guide him? What about the foreign alcoholic who receives the Big Book in their language but again has no one to guide them? When you read a **textbook** do you start with the preface or do you start on page 1? When you purchase a new item, which has a quick guide, do you read the entire directions, or do you go straight to the quick guide? If you are in a hurry or in a painful state, do you take the time to start at the beginning of a reading or do you jump to page 1?

Some may argue that this is a change to the Big Book. Please remember that the Doctor's Opinion was originally on Page 1 Chapter 1 and this motion does not change the Big Book. I am seeking, for the benefit of the remote reader, to return the Chapter to the beginning of the book.

To conclude, can we take the chance that even a single alcoholic would not attain sobriety because the Doctor's Opinion was moved? I am not willing to take that chance. Let us return the Doctor's Opinion to page 1 of 5th Edition whenever we decide it is time for a new edition.

Yours in Love & Service

Grateful Dave T
District 10
Area 43

The second edition Big Book was introduced at a retail price of \$4.50 (\$38 today). Bill renumbered the pages. Page 1 began with "Bill's Story" instead of "The Doctor's Opinion." It is not known why he did this but there has been much creative speculation on the matter.