

## The Four Paradoxes by The Professor and the Paradox (2<sup>nd</sup> Edit. AA Book)

**We Surrender To Win:** On the face of it, *surrendering* certainly does not seem like *winning*. But it is in A.A. Only after we have come to the end of our rope, hit a stone wall in some aspect of our lives beyond which we can go no further; only when we hit “bottom” in despair and surrender can we accomplish sobriety, which we could never accomplish before. We must, and we do, surrender in order to win.

**We Give Away To Keep:** That seems absurd and untrue. How can you keep anything if you give it away? But in order to keep whatever it is we get in A.A., we must go about giving it away to others, for no fees or rewards of any kind. When we cannot afford to give away what we have received so freely in A.A., we had better get ready for our next “drunk.” It will happen every time. We’ve got to continue it away in order to keep it.

**We Suffer To Get Well:** There is no way to escape the terrible *suffering* of remorse and regret and shame and embarrassment which starts us on the road to getting well from our affliction. There is no new way to shake out a hangover. It’s painful, and for us, necessarily so. I told this to a friend of mine as he sat weaving to and fro on the side of the bed, in terrible shape, about to die for some paraldehyde. I said, “Lost John” – that’s his nickname – “Lost John, you know you’re going to have to do a certain amount of shaking sooner or later.” “Well,” he said, “for God’s sake let’s make it later!” We suffer to get well.

**We Die To Live:** That is a beautiful paradox straight out of the biblical idea of being “born again” or “in losing one’s life to find it.” When we work at our Twelve Steps, the old life of guzzling and fuzzy thinking, and all that goes with it, gradually dies, and we acquire a different and better way of life. As our shortcomings are removed, one life of us dies, and another life of us lives. We in A.A. die to live.