Bill W.’s Failed Attempts at Sobriety Prior to AA

1) Will Power
Big Book Page 5:1 - Nevertheless, I still thought I could control the situation…
Page 5:5 - Where had been my high resolve?
Page 5:5 - Renewing my resolve, I tried again.
Page 6:0 - …I told myself I would manage better next time…

2) Promises
Page 5:4 - …I had written lots of sweet promises, but my wife happily observed that this time I meant business.

3) Suicide
Page 6:1 - Should I kill myself? No not now.

4) Geographical Changes
Page 6:2 - There were flights from city to country and back, as my wife and I sought escape.

5) Self-knowledge
Page 7:2 - Understanding myself now, I fared forth in high hope…Surely this was the answer self-knowledge. But it was not…

6) Doctor’s & Hospitals
Page 6:2 - A doctor came with a heavy sedative. Next day found me drinking both gin and sedative.
Page 7:1 - My brother-in-law is a physician, and through his kindness and that of my mother I was placed in a nationally-known hospital for the mental and physical rehabilitation of alcoholics.

7) Fear
Page 7:4 - My weary and despairing wife was informed that it would all end with heart failure during delirium tremens, or I would develop a wet brain, perhaps within a year. We would soon have to give me over to the undertaker of the asylum. They did not need to tell me. I knew, and almost welcomed the idea.
Page 8:2 - Fear sobered me for a bit. Then came the insidious insanity of that first drink…