



12-STEP STUDY GUIDE

NOTES

12 STEPS & 12 TRADITIONS

Alcoholics Anonymous

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO WORKING THE STEPS
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This step study is offered in hopes that those who apply the principles behind the Twelve Steps will overcome their addiction difficulties and live a life of freedom and purpose.

Back in 1935, two men battling the same challenge met. Somehow, through sharing together, they were able to battle the debilitating disease of alcoholism with success, one day at a time. These two men, Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, went on to develop a program based on their experience, strength, and hope with others who faced the same challenge. Alcoholics Anonymous was born, with a three-fold approach that includes unity, service, and recovery. Those wanting to live free from merciless obsessions have found help by following a group of twelve spiritual principles, called steps.

You don't have to be an alcoholic to benefit from this amazing way of life. If you are suffering with something you can't control, working the 12 Steps can bring relief and give you a new way to cope. Since these steps were first published, they have been adopted by many different groups to help their members become "happily and usefully whole." Won't you consider this design for living that can help you reconnect with God, with others, and with your true self?

This guide is designed to be accompanied by two books, Alcoholics Anonymous, also known as The Big Book, and the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, also known as the 12 & 12. You can purchase both at AA.org or at a local Alcoholics Anonymous Intergroup Office. This guide references both books regularly. Unless specified, most passages will be taken from the 12 & 12. When drawing from the Big Book, it will be indicated.

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Beth Walsh Stewart, MTh, developed this particular manual in love and service to assist those endeavoring to work the steps of recovery in earnest. The visionary behind the WeCovering Project and the Creator of BethWe, the nonprofit that was the impetus for this work, Beth is dedicated to rescuing the stragglers lost in the shadows of the road of life. Best-known for her Good Seed Podcasts, 12-Step seminars, weekly blogs, g.o.d. speaks books, regular magazine articles, and uplifting workshops, Beth is a firm believer that there is quality life after addiction. Her motto is: I have called to help my brother find his authentic self and his God, and I best accomplish this by sharing my pursuit of the same. You can contact her at Beth@BethWe.com.

STEP ONE: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.

Let's look at some of the ideas in the Doctor's Opinion, a chapter which appears at the beginning of the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous.

- 1) Page xxvi: Physical must be cleared before these principles can be of maximum benefit. This means you must STOP the obsessive behavior.
- 2) Page xxvii: Read the last sentence on the page and then continue through the whole paragraph. Why do you perform the compulsive behavior when you know it is injurious? Getting honest about how twisted the thinking can get is important. Recognize that continuing the behavior is causing self-harm, and sometimes harm to others close to you.
- 3) Page xxviii: Read slowly and pay attention to how the disease is described in physical, spiritual, and mental degrees. The Doctor describes each of these natures and how they are affected.
 - a) ALLERGY – abstinence listed as the answer
 - b) NEED FOR HIGHER POWER – must be experienced personally
 - c) MENTAL – listed in the last paragraph. Go slowly through this portion of the doctor's writings. Recognize the mental twist of addiction, and consider if it has affected you personally in this way
- 4) Page xxx – Addicts cannot start imbibing in the substance or obsessive behavior without developing the phenomenon of craving. An allergy is an abnormal physical reaction. The abnormal physical reaction for many addicts is the craving that follows use. Addicts don't break out in hives or bumps; they break out in craving more. Another abnormal physical reaction some addicts notice is that they can take in more of a substance than others around them. They can drink friends under the table, for example. When everyone else has had enough, the addict wants to keep going. Food, drugs, alcohol, gambling . . . once the substance or behavior is introduced, their physical body calls for more. The body of an addict/alcoholic responds to the substance or behavior unlike those who do not suffer from the disease of addiction.

Can you remember the Norman Rockwell picture of a holiday? Now, think about this picture versus the real picture you have lived.

IT'S NOT HOW YOU ARE DIFFERENT THAT MATTERS, BUT HOW YOU ARE ALIKE. How people are different is noted by comparing themselves with others. How they are alike is noted by identifying with others. The story of compulsion is a story that is shared. With this commonality, sufferers come together to recover. You will hear people describe great societal differences – from Park Avenue to park bench, from Yale to jail – yet they still recover together. How is this possible when we have nothing in common? It's possible because those who recover from addictions share the most important understanding of each other and with each other. They know what it means to be powerless.

12 & 12, page 21 Who cares to admit complete defeat?

The admission of personal powerlessness is the admission of complete defeat. When you tried to stop partaking in your compulsion, were you unable to achieve lasting success on your own? You tried control, but always lost it eventually. You tried abstaining, but always gave in. Eventually, you hit bottom. You came to a place where you could limbo no lower in life. Or, can you? Pick up your addictive substance or behavior and watch it happen.

What is a bottom? Think about the bottom of a pool. What happens if you touch bottom? What happens if you don't? When it comes to recovery from addiction, hitting bottom is positive. Hitting the bottom helps you spring up and out of the swimming pool where you can breathe freely again. It's the same with hitting a bottom in life.

Page 21, third paragraph: Have you conceded?

From the dictionary: concede - admit that something is true or valid after first denying or resisting it.

Do you think you can do it on your own unaided strength? If that lingering notion is lurking in the back of your mind, you have not conceded. Conceding is the end of denial. Until concession, you will remain self-deceived. DENIAL = Don't Even Notice I Am Lying. Sadly, the big lie is to yourself first, then to others on your life, usually the ones you care about most.

Turn to the Big Book for a moment. Read pg. 30, paragraphs 2 & 3

Now, go back to the 12 & 12, and read again from the top of page 22. What's the difference between finding strength and finding ENDURING strength? Which one do you want?

Draw a picture of a tree. Now, under the tree, draw a long, long root that burrows down until it finds water. This is the taproot. The taproot is responsible for providing the tree with the sustenance it needs to grow.

What is the main taproot of the recovery society? If you don't know, reread those sentences at the top of page 22 again.

We've heard it, right? Alcoholism is a three-fold disease. Dr. Silkworth mentioned it. Here it is described again. It must be important. *"Victims of a mental obsession so subtly powerful that no amount of human willpower could break it. There was, they said, no such thing as the personal conquest of this compulsion by the unaided will. Relentlessly deepening our dilemma, our sponsors pointed out our increasing sensitivity to alcohol – an allergy they called it."*

Page 22, paragraph 5: Have you ever been . . .

Thirsty, but thought you were hungry? Tired, but thought you were angry? Powerless, but thought you were hopeless? (Addicts and alcoholics often confuse powerlessness with hopelessness. They are NOT the same, though they sometimes overlap.) This is great news! Hope is available. It comes in the form of help! Reach out to other sufferers who have found solution. Reach out to the Higher Power and ask for assistance.

THE GIFT OF DESPERATION - oddly enough, abbreviated G. O. D.

"I have been driven to my knees many times by the overwhelming realization that I had nowhere else to go." – Abe Lincoln

Unmanageability is the result of powerlessness. They are not two separate thoughts. The dash declares it so! In English grammar, what follows a dash better describes what precedes the dash. In the case of Step One, unmanageability of life follows admitting powerlessness. They go together. Where there's one, there's the other. How can you manage that over which you have conceded defeat?

If you're a "functional" alcoholic, and your life is manageable . . . then how come you can't "manage" to drink just one?

Page 24, last paragraph: Notice the use of "horse" words:

Lash = whipped

Driven – when a beast is forced to run

Active alcoholics are the beasts of burden . . . and alcohol is the raging master.

HOMEWORK: Read More About Alcoholism in the Big Book and look for powerlessness and unmanageability. Look for how your three natures are affected by the disease – Physical, Mental, Spiritual.

STEP TWO: Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Prejudice is often considered as a matter of race, socio-economic status, or ethnicity. That definition is incomplete. Prejudice is simply a mind that snaps shut because a person has pre-judged something and is unwilling to consider another possible idea about it.

This is the newcomer's dilemma. Old ideas will hold us back when we attempt to start a new way of living. Without a new way of living, we cannot stay sober.

Big Book, page 45, paragraphs 5 – 12, give some thoughts to direct and encourage you as you begin:

- 1) Lay aside any pre-judgment before you have personal experience;
- 2) Be relieved that it can be YOUR OWN UNDERSTANDING of God;
- 3) Admit that it is possible that God will give you power and direction;
- 4) Ask, "what does this mean to ME?" This is not a premise to study and master as an academic. This is the actual opening of your mind and allowing yourself to come out of isolation and into reality.
- 5) Even if you don't believe, be WILLING to believe.

THE BELIEF IN GOD IS A FREE GIFT. ASK TO RECEIVE IT. Then, stop fighting its arrival. Don't question seemingly unrelated or random occurrences that come along. Notice the new people moving into your circle and those that are moved out. Allow God to prove Himself to you.

There are five different character types cited in the literature that may have trouble with Step Two. Each one is described so that you can identify with the emotional or intellectual "speed bumps" that keeps us from heading into Step Three with excited anticipation.

12 & 12, page 25, paragraph 2:

Guy #1: The Belligerent One

Alcohol has him down, and that ticks him off, but now he must claim belief in a HP to overcome drinking? NO WAY!

12 & 12, Page 26, paragraph 3: "It's the beginning of the end of his old life, and the beginning of his emergence into a new one."

What was the old life? From what are you emerging? Here are a list of changes that some people report once they've quit fighting the program and allowed it to open around them.

- OLD LIFE > NEW LIFE
- FEAR > FAITH
- CLOSED-MINDED > OPEN-MINDED
- SELF-CENTERED > GOD-CENTERED

12 & 12, Page 26, paragraph 5: The belligerent one made it possible for Bill and Dr. Bob to write the three statements that can make Step Two possible for everyone.

- 1) Suggestions, not orders;
- 2) Take it piecemeal – don't have to swallow it all right now;
- 3) Keep an open mind

Some people have found comfort in the acronyms for the name GOD.

- 1) Good Orderly Direction (decision to work the steps)
- 2) Group of Drunks (the collective success of the fellowship)
- 3) Gift of Desperation (surrender, because of nowhere else to go)
- 4) Great Out Doors (finding power/grandeur in nature)

REMEMBER: The gift of the open mind usually follows honesty and precedes willingness.

Step Two has an answer to a question many newcomers ask: When you're getting sober, when do your feelings come back?

12 & 12, Page 27, paragraph 7: At the turning point – "The minute I stopped arguing, I could begin to see and feel."

Still struggling with the idea of a Higher Power?

12 & 12, Page 27, paragraph 8: Some people effectively make AA their Higher Power

Guy #2: The Guy Who Had Faith but Lost It

The plight of the former believer in 12 Step is a bit different. These are some of the obstacles he/she must overcome:

- 1) Indifference
- 2) Self-sufficiency
- 3) Prejudice against religion
- 4) Defiant because God hasn't "delivered"

The book says this is one of the hardest spots to be in seeking sobriety/wholeness because this guy suffers from profound confusion. "He is the bewildered one." You can rediscover your faith by working these 12 Steps.

Said one recovering person, "I thought I had rejected faith, but what I actually rejected was religion. Faith is between me and God. Religion is created by man. It gets fouled up."

12 & 12, Page 29, paragraph 13:

Guy #3: The Intellectually Self-Sufficient One

What if you believe that knowledge is power, but alcohol is still kicking your butt? You read about it, you try mind control, you assess your situation, but you keep getting drunk anyway. Your pride and belief in your ability to master problems will separate you from the group, because the God of Knowledge has replaced the God of our fathers. How does this guy recover?

- 1) Recognize that alcoholism is a stronger force in you than intellect.
Remember, you are not just dealing with your mental self. The physical and spiritual defeat is dragging your high intellectual prowess down.
- 2) Become teachable. Let humility lead your other talents – even your intellect.

Reconsider or die. It's time to get right sized. Humility is an accurate assessment of self. In this case, you are unable to stop your compulsive behavior on your own. Look at your record. How many times have you tried to control this?

It is true that you are very capable in other areas, but it is important to find the honesty necessary to admit defeat. Humility and intellect can be compatible, provided we place humility first (12 & 12, Page 30, paragraph 13). The concession of defeat will lead to a faith that works.

12 & 12, Page 30, paragraph 14:

Guy #4: The Self-Righteous One

This is the person who is disgusted with the institution of religion and the people that follow it. We looked only at the failures of both and puffed ourselves up as we compared ourselves to them. Remember: comparison among people groups is used for separation. Identification is used for connection. We wanted to stand on the outside pointing at their brokenness to feed our own ego.

We closed our mind to any contemplation of joining those who said one thing and lived another. (Our mirror was out of range for this declaration.) This guy needs to open his mind to the positive value of spiritual living.

An open mind is not a lack of direction, but a direction in itself.

An open mind is not a lack of conviction, but a conviction in itself.

Self-righteousness, and the resulting rants that come from it, is a phony form of respectability (12 & 12, Page 30, paragraph 14).

THE FIRST FOUR GUYS

All four of these guys share one trait – DEFIANCE. We ask God for stuff, and we don't get it . . . so we defy God. In AA, defiance is unraveled. At no time had we said, "Thy will, not mine, be done."

Defiance is characteristic of alcoholism. All seeking recovery must learn to RELY on the God of their understanding instead of DEFY Him.

There are promises for those who learn reliance instead of defiance. Look them up and read them in the 12 & 12, Page 31, paragraph 16. God blesses those who rely on Him.

12 & 12, Page 31, paragraph 17:

Guy #5: Full of Faith but Reeking of Alcohol

The problem here is not the quantity of faith, but the QUALITY. During a horrendous storm, which flashlight do you want? The one purchased at the Quickie Mart or the Black & Decker you bought at Home Depot?

Faith is the same. Don't settle for a faith that lacks true power, especially for the storms in life. Sometimes, the cheap flashlight shines brightly in the moment of purchase, but it still lacks the strength to endure the dark night of the storm. In the same way, sometimes religious feeling comes to us in a moment of heavy emotion. Though exciting, this should not be confused with true relationship with the Higher Power.

Faith – The belief that great help is available if we admit we need help and ask for it.

EMOTIONALISM IS NOT TRUE RELIGIOUS FEELING (12 & 12, Page 32, paragraph 18). To have enduring faith will take action. We will have to clean house so that the obsession will be lifted. We cannot clean house without a strong quality faith.

12 & 12, Page 32, paragraph 18: "Therefore we remain self-deceived, and so incapable of receiving enough grace to restore us to sanity."

What is grace? This observation may help:

JUSTICE – You get what you deserve.

MERCY – You don't get what you deserve.

GRACE – You get what you don't deserve.

On Page 37 of the Big Book, read paragraphs 23-28.

Sanity – Soundness of mind

Insanity – "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting a different result." – *quote often attributed to Albert Einstein*

Think ~ Think ~ Think How does this AA slogan remind you of Step Two, and why do we need all three “thinks”?

First Think – usually alcoholic or self-centered

Second Think – moment of clarity/turning point where you ask God for restoration of
sanity

Third Think – new idea on how to proceed, using principled living as a guide

Some definitions that help some understand these concepts:

True Humility – Acceptance of myself where I am, where I’ve been, and where I’m going.

Open-Mindedness – Acceptance of others where they are, where they’ve been, and where they’re going.

During this process of coming to believe, beware of HALT. Don’t allow yourself to get too Hungry, Angry, Lonely, or Tired.

The last sentence in Step Two in the 12 & 12, (on Page 33, paragraph 20), will remind you how to find a quick sanity fix when you need one.

HOMEWORK: Humility Drill – Instead of arguing on inconsequential topics, pause, and say, “You may be right. I’ll have to think about that.”

FUN EMERGING TO NEW LIFE STANCES TO CONSIDER (aka Step Two Perks)

False god > True God	Desperate > Hopeful	Quick to blame > Accountable
Existing > Living Large	Religious > Spiritual	Judgmental > Tolerant
My way > God’s way	Unconscious > Aware	Chaos > Order
Fear > Faith	Self-sufficient > Humble	Apathetic > Concerned
Thinking > Feeling	Defiant > Reliant	Indifferent > Compassionate
Empty > Whole	Angry > Forgiving	Self-Loathing > Self-Love
Nobody > Somebody	False Beliefs > Truth	Slave > Free
Forcing > Allowing	Isolated > Belonging	Demanding > Surrendering

These changes were identified by individuals in a step study group. Can you add some of your own to the list? The changes brought about by opening one’s mind are varied and personal. Enjoy watching yourself grow as you come out of darkness.

STEP THREE: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

12 & 12, Page 34, paragraph 1:

What is the first word in the step? _____

What else do people practice? Consider a pianist who practices hours each day. Do you think it's possible that he never makes a mistake? How about a doctor that practices medicine? Does that mean that no one will never be worse off for his care? Practice does not always make perfect . . . but it can keep one sober.

Think of a famous athlete. Was practice an important element in honing their abilities? Did practice make them proficient in their sport? Quick mind game: Did Babe Ruth enjoy baseball before he became an all-star? Was practice enjoyable? Sometimes, it's important to stop and remember that you actually LIKE living free from addiction because of the benefits it provides.

Take a moment: List five things that are better since you embraced this new way of life.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____

When the step work gets difficult, remind yourself of these five things. Become willing to practice Step Three, because it is the start of becoming an all-star in recovery. The more you practice, the better you'll get at turning your will and your life over to the care of a Higher Power. Acceptance and peace of mind will be the fruits of this way of life.

By taking these steps, you are knocking at the door of a new life. The only problem is – you're the one who has to open the door, and it's locked. The key that opens the door is WILLINGNESS. You cannot get the key from anyone but yourself. Even the Higher Power will wait for you to place the key in the lock and turn it.

RECOVERY TIP: A real HP will never take away your right to choose.

(That's how we know alcohol/drugs/food/gambling, etc. were false gods. They robbed us of our ability to choose. Step Three is where you CHOOSE to walk with your HP. The HP will help you, but only if you want Him to help. The decision is always yours to make. God will back you up, but only if you ask.)

12 & 12, Page 34, last sentence in paragraph 1 and first sentence of paragraph 2: Reminds us that Steps One and Two didn't require action – only acceptance. Step Three calls for ACTION. You are now beginning to take the action steps.

***Congrats!**
You're taking action*

Earlier, we mentioned the importance of practicing this step. On Pages 34 & 35, the last sentence of paragraph 2 really sums it up: The effectiveness of the program rests on how well you do this step. It's mighty important. But you'll never get it down perfectly . . . so you just keep practicing.

12 & 12, Page 35, paragraph 3, the last sentence: This is why we practice. When the door slams shut, we have to become willing all over. That takes practice.

BIG BOOK, page 60, paragraphs 9 – 15: The first REQUIREMENT to get and stay sober is that you must be convinced that self-will cannot manage your life. What are some of the other terms we use for self-will?

- Exerting oneself
- Manipulating situations
- Self-seeking, or wearing "me-colored" glasses to look at situations
- Self-propulsion
- Self-centeredness, egocentricity
- Self-will

BIG BOOK, Page 62, paragraph 14: "An alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot." Can a recovering alcoholic become an example of God's will run riot?

Alcoholism is a disease. We agreed on that. So, how do we get rid of self-centered thinking? Last sentence in this paragraph says, "We had to have God's help."

Did you turn your drinking problem over to AA? In this case, AA is a Higher Power. With this relationship comes a feeling of belonging and safety. These feelings are helpful when trying to develop faith. Remember how safe you feel in meetings. Close your eyes and think about that when you need to practice Step Three.

INSTINCT AND LOGIC FRUSTRATE SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT. Instinct is an inborn knowing, part of your physical wiring. Logic is tied to intellect, the mental powers of a person. We just described two of the three human natures. Body and Mind/Soul.

If mental or emotional independence is questioned, you may be tempted to return to self-centered decisions and behaviors. In other words, we return to the fight.

SELF-SUFFICIENCY IS NOT AN ASSET IN THE RECOVERY PROCESS.

12 & 12, Page 37, paragraph 8: "Plainly enough, it [the philosophy of self-sufficiency] is a bone-crushing juggernaut* whose final achievement is ruin."

*Juggernaut – a massive force that crushes anything in its path

Pg. 38 Circumstance drives us back to Step Three – not virtue. At first, it's not because we WANT God's will, but because we DON'T WANT despair again.

Look at the words chosen in the 12 & 12 at the top of Page 38. Step One: We have admitted defeat; Step Two: We have acquired the rudiments of faith; Step Three: We want to make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to a Higher Power.

REMEMBER: NOT TO DECIDE IS A DECISION. IT IS A DECISION NOT TO.

Are you fighting with the idea of dependence still? There is healthy dependence and unhealthy dependence. You probably don't think a thing about depending on indoor plumbing when you go to the bathroom, do you? Have you ever been through a time when it didn't work? You made it through that on your own, but when the plumbing was restored, did you jump at the chance to depend upon it again? If so, does that make you weak?

12 & 12, Page 39, paragraph 13: We learn to "depend" on someone. We know it's been hard to trust in the past. As our alcoholism progressed, we grew more and more isolated. Trust wasn't even in our vocabulary anymore. Maybe, because of our circumstances, it was NEVER in our vocabulary. If you can't depend on a HP yet, try depending upon a sponsor. Just open up to that one person, and you will learn to trust. As your trust is reciprocated, you will be able to branch out with it, perhaps trusting others. Remember, at first the pain of risking vulnerability will seem severe without alcohol to numb it. Walk into the pain with the help of one other person. It is the experience of the group that this will pay off. Trust the process so that you can trust a person. Progress, not perfection.

Keep reading paragraph 13. Is attendance at meetings enough?

That's where the REMAINING STEPS OF THE AA PROGRAM come in. What if Step Three simply said, "Made a decision to take the rest of the steps"? Would that make it easier for you? If so, that can be your FIRST Step Three decision.

Can we coast through if we do a partial Step Three? NO! The other steps are ONLY successful when Step Three is given a determined and persistent trial. You have to PRACTICE every day, just like the doctor or pianist.

12 & 12, Page 40, paragraph 14: Did you ever wonder what God's will for you is? According to the last sentence in this paragraph, God's will for you is to bend your will to the principles behind the steps. And this is one place that your own personal exertion and willpower can be utilized to full advantage.



WILLPOWER has been misused . . . NOT lacking. Use it to agree with God's intention for you. HOW CAN YOU DO THAT? The book clearly states that we do that by getting into the rest of the steps.

12 & 12, Page 40, paragraph 15: Read the words in italics. When we bring our willpower into agreement with God's intention for us, we use it rightly. We live the theme: "Thy will, not mine, be done."

12 & 12, Page 41, last paragraph in the chapter: Are you disturbed? Here's what to do:

- Pause
- Ask for quiet
- Say the Serenity Prayer

(The hardest part is to pause! Remember why? Because of the MOMENT we talked about earlier. That moment is the turning point. Ask for protection and care with complete abandon.)

BIG BOOK, Page 63: The Promises of Step Three are listed here. You didn't think the only promises you had coming to you wouldn't get here until after Step Nine, did you? The BIG BOOK is full of promises!

Work on memorizing the Third Step Prayer. As you say it, feel the HOPE of Step Two coupled with this newfound FAITH. Willingness to believe is the beginning of faith. Acting on that willingness to believe is how lives are changed, one decision at a time. Our well-intentioned actions will bring us into alignment with God and others. The next dividend you'll receive is HAPPINESS.

HAPPINESS IS NOT A GOAL. IT IS THE RESULT OF RIGHT LIVING.

**God, I offer myself to Thee – To build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.
Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.
Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help
of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy will always!**

HOMEWORK: Practice, practice, practice! Align your will with God's will one decision at a time.

STEP FOUR: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

12 & 12, pg. 42, pp. 1 “Creation gave us instincts for a purpose.” The word “Creation” calls to mind a Source of all that is. From this Source, man arrived on the planet, complete with instincts to help him survive.

(Though not addressed in the books of Alcoholics Anonymous, SURVIVAL is the first intrinsic instinct. For many that have found their way to 12 Step recovery, that instinct has also become warped. Most alcoholics know the stance of not caring if they live or die. That stance is UNNATURAL. The desire to survive is expected and fundamental. Addiction distorts even this base instinct.)

The instincts listed in the books of Alcoholics Anonymous are: “for the SEX relation, for material and emotional SECURITY, and for companionship” – a place in SOCIETY. (As we move forward in this step study, we will call them the three S’s. Sex, Security, Society.) Understanding these instincts is the crux of taking a fearless moral inventory. Once you see that everyone has these drives, you become aware that when taken to the extreme, these instincts “powerfully, blindly, many times subtly, drive us, dominate us, and insist upon ruling our lives.” 12 & 12, page 42, pp. 2 Read the rest of this paragraph and see where your character defects come from.

Remember, these instincts are God-given to all humankind. Just as blue jays have instinctive knowing on nest-building and hatchling care, humans were given instincts to stay alive and prosper. There isn’t a human being without one of these instinctive drives. There may be gradients of less and more, but each person was born with an animal knowing of how to persist as a member of our species.

There is a natural order, or balance, to instincts. For example, it is the same material security instinct that can produce a miser or a spendthrift. It is the same sex instinct that produces promiscuity or prudishness. It is the same social instinct that moves a person to being outgoing or stand-offish. The pendulum swings to the plus and to the minus. Once off-center, it moves to an extreme. That is how instincts can get out of whack.

So, what is step four about? 12 & 12, pg. 43, pp. 4 “We want to find exactly how*, when**, and where*** our natural desires have warped us.” This is what we mean when we say LOOK AT YOUR RECORD. A record for an athlete tells you how many wins and losses they’ve had. A record for a criminal tells you only about the losses. In Step Four, alcoholics must look at our losses through understanding our extreme attempts to win.

How*? How were our instincts involved?

When**? When did this happen? Was it a one-time occurrence or has the drive to get these instincts met become a driving force in our lives and relationships?

Where***? Where did instinct go to extreme? Where were we and what was happening

in our lives then? How, when, and where did my emotions become deformed?
(Dictionary: deformed – not having a normal or natural shape, misshapen.)

Remember how we learned that the effectiveness of our whole program rests on how well we practice Step Three? Well, that statement is further explained in Step Four. 12 & 12, pg. 43, pp. 4 reads: “Without a searching and fearless moral inventory, most of us have found that the FAITH WHICH REALLY WORKS IN DAILY LIVING is still out of reach.” Step Four will make your practice of Step Three easier. Weird, eh? Weren’t we told the steps come in order for a reason? In this case, we needed to practice before we got good at it – and a moral inventory will further improve our third step efforts.

Let’s look for and underline a few more places where the step book tells us that these three instincts: SEX, SECURITY, SOCIETY, are the ticket to understanding our wrongs. Look for these words: sex desire, material and emotional security, standing in the community, financial security, power-mad. You’ll find ALL these in the 12 & 12 on page 43.

Remember what it says in 12 & 12, on pg. 44, pp. 7: “WHENEVER A HUMAN BEING BECOMES A BATTLEGROUND FOR THE INSTINCTS, THERE CAN BE NO PEACE.” Further down on the page: “Alcoholics especially should be able to see that instinct run wild in them is the underlying cause of their destructive drinking.”

12 & 12, pps. 9 & 10: Are you depressive or grandiose? It’s important to know because only two people can get you drunk – the POOR ME or the GREAT I AM. Though this is over-simplified and most of us find ourselves vacillating between egomania and inferiority, allow the idea to be planted so that you can see how many decisions you make and thoughts you consider are in response to seeking to meet an instinctive drive.

A leading excuse for avoiding a Step Four inventory is our need to BLAME others so we deflect our record onto them. This is a form of denial. (Bottom of page 45 and on to 46) “PEOPLE WHO ARE DRIVEN BY PRIDE OF SELF UNCONSCIOUSLY BLIND THEMSELVES TO THEIR LIABILITIES.” Consider these words. Blame contends that you are not accountable for your actions, but you acted ONLY because someone else was standing in the way of you getting your needs met. Once again, that lack of accountability for one’s actions will keep that person from a lasting, contented sobriety. Everyone has to take responsibility for his/her own shortcomings.

Self-justification is the maker of excuses. These excuses are not just to explain away our drinking. They cover all kinds of crazy and damaging conduct.

Self-justification: the act or an instance of making excuses for oneself. “It’s not my fault.” “They misread my meaning.” “It wasn’t intentional.” “I didn’t do that.” You get the idea.

THE WRITING: You must write this step down – you cannot do it in your head and get the desired results. It will be the first TANGIBLE evidence that you want to get better.

Big Book pg. 64, paragraph underway at the top of the page: "We had to get down to causes and conditions."

WHAT IS THE CAUSE OF OUR CHARACTER DEFECTS? _____ *

**Self, manifested in various ways.*

We want to find out more about ourselves. How did selfishness and self-centeredness change the way we think and the things we do? We want to find the truth behind our actions. We will attempt to find these truths in three ways.

#1) RESENTMENTS – the number one offender. Break the word down. Re – means to do over. Sent – root from Latin means to feel. Why are resentments the number one offender? Which resentments really tear us apart? (BB, pg. 64)

#2) FEAR – an evil and corroding thread. It sets in motion "TRAINS OF CIRCUMSTANCES WHICH BROUGHT US MISFORTUNE." (BB, pg. 67) Now, it's time to find out what's driving our trains? Fear of not getting an instinctive need met will always show up in the shadows. Sex, security, society . . . which one did we fear we would lose, or fear we wouldn't get our share of?

#3) SEX – where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Where were we at fault, what should we have done instead? (BB, oddly enough on page 69 – LOL!) *Sex relations seem to bring up shame for many of us seeking recovery. TELL YOUR BRAIN TO SHUT UP and get the information down on paper. The embarrassment may be indicative that you had only thought of SELF during these connections. Take a deep breath and remember that this self-seeking behavior is a function of alcoholic thinking. Remember what we read in the Doctor's Opinion where we started. You are a sick person trying to get well, not a bad person trying to get good. Write the information on the sheet and be done with it once and for all. For many, this activity is paramount in changing future relations. This work leads to one of the upcoming promises ensured if you withhold nothing: "We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease."*

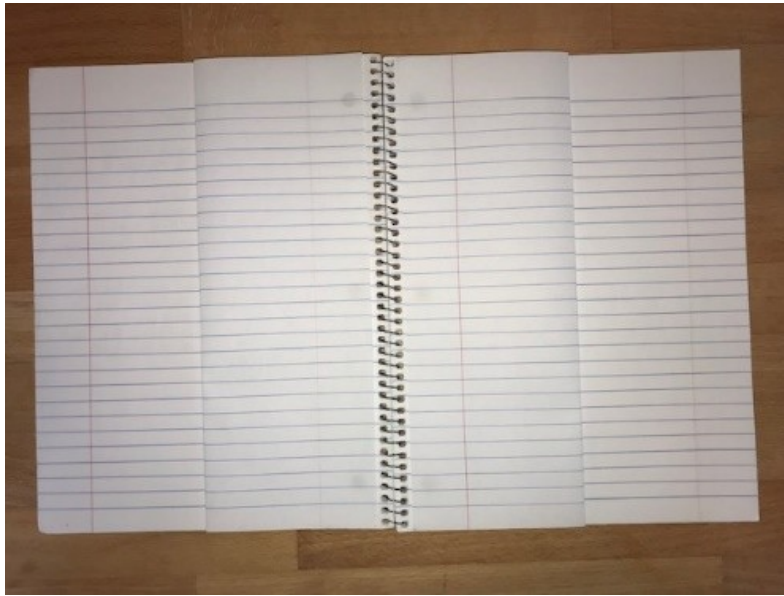
How to take your fourth step? The Big Book has a layout that works well. We recommend a spiral composition notebook earmarked for this task. If it is one of your first times working this step, it may take many pages. As you repeat this effort, (many do this as an annual housecleaning), there may be less writing. Be searching and thorough no matter what. The payoff is great for really getting this done fully.

We will start with resentments against people, principles, and institutions. After we cover page set-up, we'll give you a head start with a list to consider when writing. The columns needed for your resentment work will include 1) NAME of person/principle/institution resented; 2) REASON for resentment (please keep to seven words when possible); 3) What INSTINCT was affected; 4) Four separate lines for with the letters S, D, SS, and F; 5) Optional space to write CHARACTER DEFECTS uncovered.

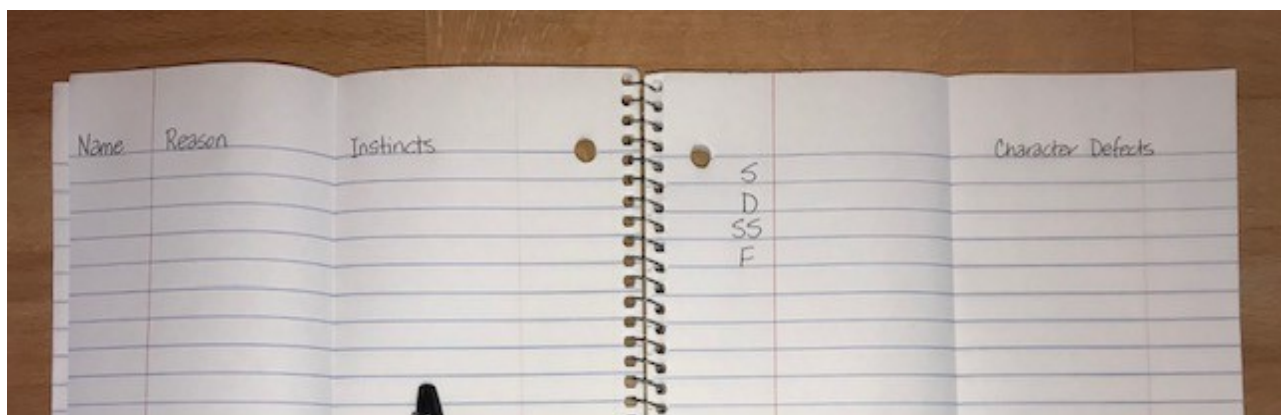
WE START WITH OUR RESENTMENTS

Resentments usually cue the instincts of emotional security and social instinct because they are relational. When a spouse/partner/lover is listed, the sex instinct is prompted as well. These are needs to survive. It is only when out of balance that they cause problems. Without self-centered thinking, they can return to the place for which the Higher Power created them – to create happy and usefully whole lives.

Fold the composition pages into each other. Right to middle. Left to middle. You have just created multiple columns if you use the folds and center as lines.



When you open the lefthand side, you will have a thin margin line about an inch in from the side of page. This margin area will be utilized for NAME of person resented. Use the other folded columns as outlined below.



The fourth column is where you will ask your part of the resentment. The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous uses these four questions to dig deeper into how the resentment came to be. The letters stand for these important questions.

	Where was I
S	SELFISH
D	DISHONEST
SS	SELF-SEEKING
F	FRIGHTENED

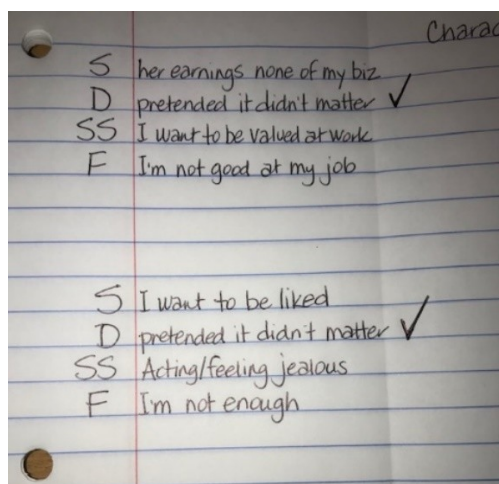
Fill out the columns with the fewest words necessary. When possible, use seven words or less. Your fifth step will allow more to come out, but in this writing, you are looking to uncover the resentment and how it has implanted its tenacles into your psyche.

Name	Reason	Instincts		Character Defects
Susan	She made more money than me	Financial security Social instinct Ambition Emotional Security	S her earnings none of my biz D pretended it didn't matter SS I want to be valued at work F I'm not good at my job	gossip w/ others low self-esteem comparing, not identifying treated her with disrespect

Don't try to write multiple resentments for the same person in one area. Just repeat them. See the example below.

Name	Reason	Instincts		Character Defects
Susan	She made more money than me	Financial security Social instinct Ambition Emotional Security	S her earnings none of my biz D pretended it didn't matter SS I want to be valued at work F I'm not good at my job	gossip w/ others low self-esteem comparing, not identifying treated her with disrespect
Susan	Everyone likes her better than me	Social instinct Emotional security	S I want to be liked D pretended it didn't matter SS Acting/feeling jealous F I'm not enough	low self-esteem shyness jealousy

When you notice a repeated line used in any of the four leading questions, make sure to bring that up in your fifth step. You have most likely uncovered a deep-rooted false belief that can be released in your next step work. These false beliefs create default behaviors that do not serve us. We are striving to be true to ourselves. These repetitive behavioral responses to pain can be lifted once they come to the light.



When you fill out your columns for your resentment inventory, don't skip the fourth one! That one (BB, pg. 65) indicates how your instinct got twisted. THIS IS THE TICKET TO SELF-DISCOVERY. WHAT DRIVES YOUR TRAIN MOST OF THE TIME? FOR ALL OF US, IT IS USUALLY ONE OF THESE THREE INSTINCTS – sex, security (either financial or emotional), and society (how we interact with others).

POSSIBLE RESENTMENTS (LIST TO GET YOU STARTED)

PEOPLE

Father	Mother	Partner/Lover	Spouse	Sister	Brother
Employer	Employee	Boss/Supervisor	Aunt	Uncle	Friend
Clergy	Coworker	Cousin	Doctor	Sponsor	In-Laws
Judges	Lawyer	Parole Officer	Police	Teacher	Prob. Officer

INSTITUTIONS

Authority	Bible	Correctional System	DCF	Education System
Church	Law	Government	Marriage	Mental Health Dept
Nationality	Race	Health System	Religion	Philosophy
CDC	Taxes	Democrats	Republicans	

PRINCIPLES

Adultery	Death	God-Deity	Golden Rule	Heaven	Hell
Sin	Jesus	Satan	Homophobia	Rich/Poor	Judgment
Honesty	Courage	Integrity	Brotherly Love	Service	Faith
Patience					

COLUMN FOUR CHECKLIST HELP – SOME ANSWERS TO “WHAT IS MY PART?”

“Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, and frightened?” (Big Book, pg. 67) These ideas may help you see your part more clearly. They are not dogma, just intended to help you begin to see how alcoholic thinking bends the instincts.

S – Selfish

- Unable to see another person’s point of view, problems, needs, or feelings
- Wanting things my way
- Expecting or wanting special treatment
- Depending on others to meet my needs
- Wanting what others have
- Wanting to be in control
- Thinking I’m better than others, grandiosity
- Need to be the best
- Thinking others are jealous
- Wanting others to be like me
- Being possessive of money, things, and people
- Wanting more than my share
- Self-righteousness or self-loathing, me-centered thinking
- Unfriendly when the person has nothing I need or want
- Consumed with how I look or if others like me
- Focused on self; looking at all situations as how they affect me personally

D – Dishonest

- Unable to see or admit when I am wrong
- Superior attitude – I am better than another
- Blaming others for consequences of my thoughts and actions
- Unwillingness to admit I’ve done the same or similar things
- Holding back feelings or ideas
- Being unclear about my motives – manipulating for my benefit
- Lying, cheating, stealing
- Hiding – any kind of sneaking or covering up
- Holding inaccurate beliefs as an act of my will
- Rule breaking – “if they didn’t see it, I didn’t do it”
- Lying to myself or retelling an untruth so often I adopt it as real
- Exaggerating or minimizing – both ends of the pendulum swing
- Setting myself up to be wronged – pretending I don’t recognize or feel an unsafe relationship/situation

- Demanding perfectionism from self and others
- Expecting others to be what they are not

SS – Self-Seeking

- Looking at every situation as how it affects me and my needs
- Manipulating others to accomplish my wishes
- Putting others down so I look better
- Character assassination
- Superior attitude and actions
- Gluttonous behaviors
- Lusting, even when another person is affected
- Being unaware or purposely ignoring the needs of another
- Controlling behaviors
- Plotting revenge when I don't get my way
- Holding a resentment
- Pretending to be something I am not to impress
- Pretending to be something I am not to fill an inner emptiness

F – Frightened (of)

- Peoples' opinions of me
- Peoples' opinions about things I don't understand or know about
- Rejection
- Loneliness
- Abandonment
- Physical injury or abuse
- Emotional injury or abuse
- Inability to change another person
- Personal inferiority or inadequacy
- Criticism, especially unsolicited
- Loss of approval
- Speaking my thoughts or emotions out loud
- Feeling trapped
- Exposure or embarrassment
- Not performing to standards

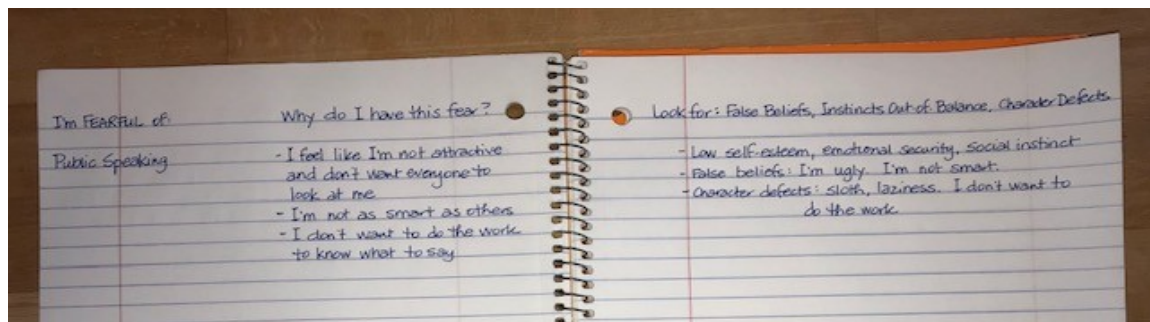
NEXT, LOOKING AT OUR FEARS

The next part of the fourth step asks us to look at our fears. What unsettles you at a gut level so that you respond by one of the three: flee, freeze, or fight? Fears can be gaping holes in our confidence or subtle voices in our subconscious. Either way, they lie to us, and we believe them. This part of the fourth step is to allow us to uncover and examine

the fear. Many of them are clearly not true, but we came to believe them when we were small and didn't have the full capacity of mature understanding to check them out.

Some of us can get overly dramatic at this phase of writing. Our suggestion is to be realistic about this part of the writing. If the fear is not significant, it may be theory or made-up. We want to review thoroughly the real fears that have shaped us, even if there has been no resentment connected with them.

When adding this portion of the fourth step to your composition book, a simple format like this will work well. If you aren't sure about the answers to the third column, leave it blank. The fifth step conversation with your faithful witness may open up more understanding. You'll be able to make notes in the composition book then to help you solidify your understanding of how fears affect you with decisions, relationships, and trusting the Higher Power.



When figuring out what fears to list, sometimes a list of those shared by others will help you uncover those that are hidden in your psyche. This list is to accommodate tapping that inner knowing. Search your own experience to find other fears. This list is not comprehensive. Again, it was formed by the work of other seekers before you.

FEARS

Aging	Employment	Hurting Others	Police
Anger	Facing Myself	Hurting Self	Political Talk
Authority Figures	Failure	Incarceration	Poverty
Being Alone	Fear	Intimacy	Procrastination
Being Deceived	Feelings	IRS	Rape
Being Found Out	Financial Security	Letting Go	Rejection
Being Abandoned	Flying	Living	Relationships
Change	Fourth/Fifth Steps	Loneliness	Resentments
Compliments	Future	Losing Hope	Responsibility
Confrontation	Getting fat/thin	Love	Risks
Creditors	God	Mediocrity	Saying No
Death	Going Home	Money	Sex
Denial	Going Out	Needing Anyone	Sponsorship
Disapproval	Having Kids	Not Good Enough	Success

Disease	Homelessness	Not Being Happy	Unemployment
Divorce	Homosexuality	Not Being Liked	The Unknown
Embarrassment	Honesty	Not Being Perfect	Violence
Employment	Humiliation	People (name who)	Work

The 12 & 12 (pg. 48) lists the seven deadly sins. Where did the word sin come from? It's an archery term, and it means you missed the mark. If it wasn't a bullseye, it was called **sin**. Nothing more, nothing less. Get that fire and brimstone preacher out of your head! Write your resentments and your fears because you're in the process of setting yourself free, and the Higher Power is ready and willing to help you move forward to the life of liberty at last.



This inventory process depicts how demoralization works in the life of a good person. Remember from the Doctor's Opinion, demoralization is the spiritual component of the disease of alcoholism. It comes with the territory. Our thinking, our relationships, and our choices have been tainted by alcoholism.

*Religion is for people who don't want to go to hell.
Spirituality is for people who have been there.*

LAST SECTION OF THE INVENTORY, SEX CONDUCT

IF YOU HAVE BEEN VICTIMIZED BY RAPE, INCEST, OR MOLESTATION, THOSE ISSUES ARE NOT INCLUDED HERE. THIS PORTION IS FOR ASCERTAINING YOUR PART. A VICTIM OF A SEX CRIME HAS NO PART IN THE TRAVESTY.

Though you will need to work out the broken history, we recommend a counselor sensitive to the nature of your injury. Also, spiritual healing has helped many discover the power of forgiveness, and so move forward unencumbered by this history.

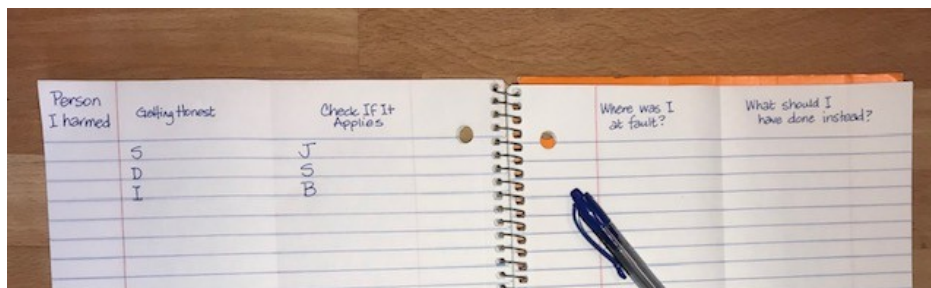


Each of us are attempting a thorough review of our history so that we can break free from bad feelings, shame, fear, and past injury. (It wasn't just others that were injured. We are accountable for many relational bruises on our psyches, too. Don't forget to list yourself if applicable.)

Whom did we hurt with our sex conduct? That's the first column that we need to fill out. When doing a list, remember you will need at least five or six lines per name.

What names? It could be a spouse, partner, him, her, a nameless person in the blue shirt, friend, family, coworker . . . do your best to identify the person as best you can. It may be us with embarrassment, guilt, or shame. It may be someone who was infected with an STD. The tryst may have erupted in legal proceedings, divorce, loss of credibility, respect, or livelihood. Perhaps it embarrassed another person that needs to be listed. The main idea in creating this list is the recognition that we caused the hurt because of our sex instinct.

The layout of your composition book is simple. Fold the pages inward again, as you did with the resentment inventory sheets. Label them as follows: PERSON I HARMED; GETTING HONEST (S, D, I); CHECK IF IT APPLIES (J, S, B); WHERE WAS I AT FAULT?; WHAT SHOULD I HAVE DONE INSTEAD?



The meaning of the letters in the sex conduct composition book layout

Getting Honest	Did I Arouse?
Selfish	Jealousy
Dishonest	Suspicion
Inconsiderate	Bitterness

COLUMNS 2 & 3 CHECKLIST NOTES

Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?

Selfish

- Using person to meet my needs for sex, attention, approval, mothering, fathering, or controlling
- Clueless of other person's needs, wants, or problems
- Wanting to look good or be liked
- Using person to release my emotions (anger, sadness, etc.)
- Wanting special treatment
- Wanting to be taken care of/sexual entitlement
- Wanting focus on my needs
- Unaware of the person with whom I was engaging – name, concerns, or personal information
- Unfriendly when my needs were met
- Using person as a tool for my desires, not as a partner or peer

Dishonest

- Leading someone on with feigned interest
- Pretending I cared about person
- Not admitting sexual orientation
- Thinking I'm better, and that they're lucky to get me
- Being perfectionistic
- Unclear about motives (not clear about why I was there)
- Looking for scapegoat on whom to vent emotions
- Looking for unsuspecting victim to control to feel power
- Cheating on person
- Lying about "no need for protection"
- Not forthcoming about STD presence

Inconsiderate

- Treating person poorly once finished with them
- Rude to them in future interactions
- Putting people at risk of disease, legal issues, and embarrassment
- Thinking of person as a means to my ends, not as a fellow human being

Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness?

Jealousy

- Of person, family, friends, coworkers, etc.
- Tricking, flirting
- Knowledge that person pursued wasn't free to engage
- Using person pursued to punish another

Suspicion

- Of person, family, friends, coworkers, etc.
- Lying, flirting, tricking, coming home late, not showing up elsewhere
- Using history with person to enflame another

Bitterness

- About person, family, friends, coworkers, etc.
- About me (guilt, shame, embarrassment)
- Creating false belief about my value due to decision to engage
- Creating false belief about my value due to decision to withhold
- Seeing person as flawed and bad, playing the innocent

Where was I at fault? Look for selfishness, self-seeking, thoughtless, uncaring actions.

What should I have done instead? Treated person with dignity and respect; tried to be a friend; been candid and open; truly cared about their wellbeing; treated person as I would like to be treated.

Person I harmed	Getting Honest	Check IF It Applies	Where was I at fault?	What should I have done instead?
Jason	<p>I played around</p> <p>S Expected Montgomery family</p> <p>D Lied about Dylan</p> <p>I Never worried about hurting him</p>	<p>J ✓</p> <p>S ✓</p> <p>B ✓</p> <p>Jason for Dylan</p> <p>" " me</p>	<p>Speaking commitment, but acting single</p>	<p>Tell Jason I wasn't ready for steady relationship from the start</p>

STEP FOUR IS THE BEGINNING OF A LIFETIME PRACTICE.

The promises of Step Four begin on pg. 49 of the 12 & 12. Read the last sentence on the page to the end of the paragraph on pg. 50.

The questions in the 12 & 12 on pages 50 – 52 can jumpstart a fourth step when we're struggling to get the writing started. We must use them to our advantage.

12 & 12, pg. 53 Twisted relations with family, friends, and society at large have caused us the most suffering. Why? When our instincts are whacked, we cannot form a true partnership with another because of self-centered behavior blocks it. The steps can heal this rift, but we have to start here with a personal inventory.

12 & 12, pg. 54 "Whatever the defects, they have finally ambushed us into alcoholism and misery."

Ambush – sneak attack designed to overtake you.

The way you actually write your fourth step is a personal decision. If you have never followed the layout in the Big Book, we highly recommend it. It is simple and easy, and it is the way the first 100 did the step. All you need is a notebook, pen, and dedication to do the writing. We have outlined that plan throughout this study guide with tips that made it easier for us to follow.

Other friends in recovery may tell you about alternate routes for Step Four. These are fine, as long as you get to the heart of the matter – which is to find out what instincts are driving and dominating you. By all means, ask your sponsor how he/she did the step. Lean on the experience of those that went before you.

Some recovery friends will tell you that you "have to" answer all the questions in the 12 & 12, "have to" follow only the diagram in the Big Book, "have to" do the step the way they say. Hopefully, by now this handbook has taught you about those who seek to dominate us. What instinct does this type of control SCREAM OUT? LOL!

Remember, when someone is telling you that you “have to” do something in program, they are trying to share their experience, strength, and hope with you. They are trying to save you from pain they know personally. They are offering you LOVE in the truest sense. Don’t take their controlling words to heart and separate from them. Choose to connect. It’s always a great way to placate them with this TRUE statement:

“You may be right - I’ll have to think about that. I’ll get with my sponsor about it.”

In the end, this is YOUR attempt to know yourself better, and to know what drives YOUR train. Once you know that about yourself, you will begin to see others in a new light. You will be able to forgive their power-drives with ease because you will see that they, too, are being driven by their instinctive needs. “Creation gave us instinct for a purpose.” Instinct is powerful. Look at the birds that migrate south each year. It’s a long trip, and many die along the way. Yet, each year, they take flight south. Instinct demands it.

Look at others in the animal kingdom. Instinct abounds. Sometimes, we forget that we, too, are animals. (Some of you may be vegetables or minerals . . . but mostly, animals.) Understand your own instincts, and how out of whack they’ve become. They are no longer tools of survival – but weapons of separation from God and from your fellows.

12 Step Study Guide

Step Five

www.BethWE.com

STEP FIVE: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

12 & 12, pg. 55, first paragraph

Step Five causes two things:

- 1) EGO deflation (not our favorite!)
- 2) longtime sobriety & peace of mind (the reason we started step work)

EGO – EASING GOD OUT

(Therefore, acting in EGO negates all our Step Three practice where we’ve asked, “Thy will, not mine, be done”).

12 & 12, pg. 56, pp. 5

What if you skip Step Five?

- 1) Some are unable to stay sober at all;
- 2) Others relapse periodically until they really clean house;

3) Some try to carry the load alone, suffering irritability, anxiety, remorse, depression, and blaming those they love (often called “dry drunk”).

WE NEED TO STOP THE BLAME GAME IF WE ARE TO HAVE CONTENTED SOBRIETY. We need to become accountable for our own lives to this point and going forward.

BIG BOOK, pg. 75, pp. 10

Up above, we listed three consequences of skipping Step Five. How do those consequences compare with the Promises of Step Five listed on this page?

- 1) The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly;
- 2) We can look the world in the eye;
- 3) We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator.

12 & 12, pg. 56, pp. 6

The practice of admitting faults to another is a very ancient exercise.

ANCIENT WISDOM IS HANDED DOWN THROUGH THE CENTURIES BECAUSE THE COLLECTIVE EXPERIENCE SHOWS GREAT POWER IN THE WORDS OR ACTIONS. SELF-EXAMINATION AND ADMISSION OF CHARACTER FLAWS IS A PRACTICE THAT HAS BEEN HANDED DOWN THROUGHOUT TIME IN MANY CULTURES BECAUSE IT WORKS. In this century, mental health professionals have adopted it as well because they see the need for this habit.

12 & 12, pg. 56, pp.6

Read from “Most of us – willing to try this.”

Look at your record. What did drinking give you at first? What did alcohol “do” for you?

- 1) It made me better looking, funnier, and more interesting;
- 2) It lessened my fear of other people – especially noted in early sexual situations;
- 3) It gave me the sense of belonging, making me feel like I fit in for the first time.

Again, alcohol promised us something it couldn’t deliver long-term. Compare the three statements above to the next three. Let’s look at the REAL picture. Where did alcohol “leave” you?

- 1) Unattractive and feeling flat;
- 2) Terrified of connection;
- 3) Isolated and cut-off from others.

12 & 12, pg. 57, pp. 7 & 8

Find the path out of the feelings produced by alcohol’s worst consequence.

“Step Five rids us of the terrible sense of isolation.”

Then last sentence in pp. 8: “It was the beginning of TRUE KINSHIP with man and God.

Merriam-Webster describes kinship as the quality of being in relationship. Synonyms include: affinity, connection, liason, linkage, relationship.

But what about the wreckage of past and the people who used us up?

12 & 12. pg. 58, pp. 9

Last sentence reminds us that after Step Five we realize that forgiveness seems possible – not just to give it, but to receive it, too. Don't minimize this statement. Hope is found here.

Forgiveness is a tough concept, but only because it is often misunderstood. It may be easiest to explain by citing what forgiveness is NOT:

- 1) Forgiveness is not approval or excuse
- 2) Forgiveness is not denial of a person's responsibility
- 3) Forgiveness is not minimizing or justifying the harm done
- 4) Forgiveness is not always reconciliation. When the person being forgiven is unsafe, you do not have to re-engage or begin anew with them.
- 5) Forgiveness is not a feeling. It is an act of your will. It is a choice to give up the desire to punish so that you can walk free of the burden of someone else's wrongdoing.

12 & 12, pg. 58, pp. 10 Another great reward of doing Step Five is the gift of humility, defined right here for us: "a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be."

HUMILITY IS AN ACCURATE ASSESSMENT OF SELF. IT IS ANOTHER WORD FOR AUTHENTICITY.

12 & 12, pg. 58, pp. 11

We get more realism and more honesty about ourselves. Last sentence promises three awesome gifts: 1) straight thinking; 2) solid honesty; 3) genuine humility

When we were using, we'd say things like, "keeping it real," when in actuality we had no idea what that meant. We were always manipulating our circumstances, our loved ones, our thinking.

12 & 12, pg. 60, pp. 14

Why can't we make the admissions alone with only God as our witness? Why do we have to tell another human being?

1) Choosing the way that relieves us from embarrassment makes our desire to clean house mainly theoretical. Remember we were getting the gift of realism and honesty? It starts HERE!

STEP FIVE CAN BREAK THE CHAINS OF DYSFUNCTION WE CARRY FROM OUR HOMES INTO THE WORLD AROUND US – "DON'T TELL, DON'T FEEL, DON'T TRUST"

2) Our thinking isn't clear yet when we do this step. Rationalization and wishful thinking can masquerade as "the guidance of the Higher Power." We need a faithful witness to make our efforts meaningful in the land of the living – the world as it is, not as we would have it.

"Let one person know everything about you. No, that was not a typo. Every Think."
-g. o. d. (group of drunks) speaks series

BIG BOOK, pg. 72 – 73

Read the paragraphs from: "Time after time – their life story."

Who do I tell? Do I have to take this step with my sponsor?

12 & 12, pg. 60, pp. 16 – 18

NO! As you can see, sometimes we need to take this important Step with someone else. The benefit of taking Step Five with a sponsor is that it builds intimacy. However, if that repels you . . . make an appointment with someone else! No matter what, take the Step! You get to choose your faithful witness.

"Step Five is about intimacy. When I was drinking, I thought intimacy was being able to get naked with the lights on."
-g. o. d. (group of drunks) speaks series

WE GAIN INTIMACY WITH OURSELVES AND OTHERS, THAT'S TRUE. BUT STEP FIVE ALLOWS US TO ACTUALLY FEEL THE PRESENCE OF GOD . . . BECAUSE WE ARE EMERGING FROM ISOLATION. INTIMACY IS PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL, AND SPIRITUAL.

"A head nods, a smile forms, the listener is intent on my words alone. Suddenly, I realize I am not alone with my feelings. Suddenly, I realize this person gets it. Suddenly, I am understood."
-g. o. d. (group of drunks) speaks series

12 & 12, pg. 62 Read the last paragraph:

Remember: The act can be forgiven. The nature must be healed.

This step isn't about confession. It's about awareness. We want to be aware of how low we will limbo to get our whacked instinctive needs met. It's not the action of ripping off our own mothers. It's that we became the kind of people who would rip off our own mothers. That's NATURE – not sin. It's an actual defect in our characters. That's what we look for. Defects in our characters. Broken spots where addiction warped our moral standards so that we no longer behaved or believed like ourselves.

God heals our nature when we ask in Steps Six and Seven. But, we'll have to get humble. Step Five is a precursor to this. That's why the faithful witness who listens is so important.

Last thoughts on Step Five to promote discussion and deeper self-examination:

When you hear people in the rooms speak about horrible past actions, sometimes you run up to them after the meeting to give them a hug. How can this happen? This is the

premise of Step Five. To recover, one must make peace with his past. Together in a group, it is easier to remember that the bad actions were the result of alcoholic thinking. The person wasn't bad, he was sick. Therefore, he deserves unconditional Love.

In the same way, Step Five isn't a laundry list of bad behaviors. Active addicts/alcoholics may limbo lower with our actions because the spiritual disease has robbed us of the ability to act on our personal morals and ethics and instead, we manipulate people, places, and things to get our way. When the disease is arrested and treated, these ethics and morals return, along with the power to carry them out. Then, our actions will change. But that takes time. Patient improvement is the goal.

Always consider the NATURE of the wrongs. To do this, we must consider the base disposition of our characters. The character is healing, growing, and making progress since we came into recovery and began our step work. When old-timers look back to tell their stories, they tell of a person most cannot even imagine. Their characters have healed, and the old-timer no longer looks like his/her story. The story becomes the most helpful tool of remaining vigilant against relapse. The story promotes awareness that our natures can be changed for the worse by diseased thinking.

Even in active sobriety we may stoop to these lows to get our needs met. As we mature spiritually, we will move away from selfish objectives and rejoin the human race. Nonetheless, if we add alcohol, eventually we will be doing the limbo again. It's the nature of the alcoholic.

**“It's natural for an alcoholic to drink. It's supernatural that he doesn't.” -g. o. d.
(group of drunks) speaks series**

12 Step Study Guide

Step Six

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STEP SIX: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

A man named Boston Eddy once said, “The reason you're struggling with this Step is because you think it's about you. Go home and read the Step over again. Your name isn't in it.”

So, for those of us that struggle with Step Six, read it again. It would appear that the heavy lifting in the Step would be removing the horrible defects of character we just dug up in Step Four and admitted to in Step Five, right?

Were entirely ready to have fill in your name here remove all these defects of character. Wait! Is that what Boston Eddy meant? Our names are NOT in this step. Well, if we're not removing character defects, what's the point of Step Six?

Therein lies the confusion. Clearly, removing defects is God's work. Our job is to get ready to let them go. Sounds like it should be easy, doesn't it? Sadly, most of us use defects of character to help us get our instinctive needs met. Remember? So, when the defects are gone . . . how will the needs be met? Please don't send us back to Step Three and talk about turning it over. We've been practicing that forever it seems.

According to the first 100 that recovered, this is next:

BIG BOOK, pg. 75, pp. 11

After finishing Step Five, one should return home (or to a safe spot for contemplation) and consider the first five steps. Before even beginning Step Six, it's imperative to make sure the first five Steps are completed thoroughly.

- 1) Do we grasp our powerlessness, and accept the unmanageability that results from it?
- 2) Have we come to believe that a Higher Power can relieve our crazy need to manipulate things to get our perceived needs met?
- 3) Can we continue to ask that He cares for our wills and our lives?
- 4) Were we searching and fearless in our self-examination? Did we see what drives our trains and realize that fearing something may be lost or missed has made us do some crazy things, like lower our moral standards and act according to inauthentic natures?
- 5) Did we tell on ourselves in front of God and a faithful witness who helped us see our part even more clearly? Were we saddened by how low we would limbo because of selfish motivation, expectations, and fears?

Do we want it to change? Do we want to be restored to sanity? Do we want our "better selves" to run the show again? Are we ready to let go of everything that ties us to ego and replaces our Higher Power with dreams of self-sufficiency, self-degradation, or self-deification? (I'm all I need. I'm never going to be enough. I am god in my own mind.)

12 & 12, pg. 63, pp. 1 "This is the Step that separates the men from the boys." That statement rings of spiritual maturity. It's time to pitch the childish tools like blame, evasion, and hiding and face life head-on. It will take honesty and willingness to try this Step on ALL faults found, and only a person who is developing spiritually will consider attempting it. It's starting to make sense now why the principle behind this step is WILLINGNESS.

Will we even consider going forward without manipulating our environments, our thoughts, and our relationships?

12 & 12, pg. 63, pp. 2

Can God remove these defects? Experience from those that went before screams "YES!" The defect "clean-up" started when we put down the drink. It continued in the first five Steps. Miraculously, God lifted the merciless obsession for drink from us. We

wanted the mania for alcohol removed, and God did exactly that. He has kept His part of the bargain. Now it's up to us to continue the forward motion.

HEAVY STUFF ALERT!

12 & 12, pg. 64, pp. 6

It is unnatural to drink alcoholically. It defies the deepest instinct, which is for self-preservation. Beaten by alcohol, the sufferer turns to the grace of God. Then, the instinct to live cooperates fully with Creation's desire to give life. At the very beginning of this study guide we talked about the instinct to SURVIVE. This suggests that Step Six is imperative to let God have all these "tools" we've been using to get by. God doesn't want us to "get by", He wants us to LIVE! (And by the way, our old tools have morphed into weapons. They are not building anything. They are only killing our characters.)

12 & 12, pg. 64, pp. 7

The instincts . . . AGAIN! They are always at the bottom of human behavior because man was designed that way.

12 & 12, pg. 65, pps. 9 & 10

What happens when the natural desires exceed their proper function? They drive the person away from alignment with the God of his understanding. Do not fear!

Forgiveness from HP comes easily. One just asks for it. But if the defect remains, falling out of alignment with HP becomes a way of life. That is why removal is imperative. To get free from the actual defect of character requires cooperation with the Higher Power because we are not strong enough to rip the roots of some of these from our souls.

12 & 12, pg. 65, pp. 11

Is this a one-time process? NO! It is a lifetime job. (Note that we are to be accepting of patient improvement, though.)

12 & 12, pgs. 65 & 66, pp. 12

TRY to be ready. If a sticking point comes, continue to TRY to become ready. The only dangerous spot is if one decides NEVER to give up a defect he is still using.

NO MATTER HOW FAR WE HAVE PROGRESSED, DESIRES WILL ALWAYS BE FOUND WHICH OPPOSE THE GRACE OF GOD. Quit beating yourself up. Get up and get back on the horse. Try again.

12 & 12, pgs. 66 & 67, pps. 15 – 17

What defects do you still love?

Lust, self-righteous anger, gossip, gluttony, envy, sloth, procrastination, superiority complex, victim role, silent scorn, bossiness, know-it-all-ism, tardiness . . . basically any that feed my ego instead of my character development.

Be aware that defects of character are easier to let go if we make enough meetings, help others, and work a strong program. Ease up on our program and watch the defects

dance back into our lives with detrimental side-effects. Watch for the voice of disease. "You're not hurting anybody." "It's not like you're using." "If nobody knows, it's alright." Remember: we are somebody. We know. And it does affect us.

12 & 12, pgs. 67 & 68, pp. 18

If the defects listed were "milder", would you want to hang on to some of them?

The mature spiritual walk (the difference between the boys and the men) is the difference between striving only to get your needs met and striving to fulfill the purpose for your life given by God.

What is God's will for us?

Go back in the 12 & 12, pg. 40, pp. 15

He wants us to live by the principles behind the steps. That means character development. It means letting go of the things that hold our spirits down. It means doing it His way instead of our own. It means jumping, even when we don't see the net.

12 & 12, pg. 68, pp. 19

Can anyone practice the ideals behind the Twelve Steps perfectly? No. We must admit 100% powerlessness over alcohol, but the rest of the steps call for progress, not perfection.

12 & 12, pg. 68, pp. 20

Can the steps be used on problems other than alcoholism? Only with an open mind. How open is your mind? How much do you trust the process? How much do you trust the HP?

ONE CAVEAT: DON'T TRY TO BLUFF YOURSELF BY POSTPONING DEALING WITH SOME PROBLEMS INDEFINITELY. "TO THINE OWN SELF BE TRUE."

12 & 12, pg. 69, pp. 23

What happens if we say, "No, never!" when asked to give up a defect of character?

The mind will close against the grace of God. This may be a fatal decision, because it is only by the grace of God that an alcoholic stays away from a drink one day at a time.

BIG BOOK, pg. 76, pp. 12

Willingness is indispensable. Can you now see that the defects of character stand in the way of becoming all that Creation had in mind for you to be? Are you willing to let God remove the speed bumps that slow your progress spiritually?

If you don't feel willing, ask God to help you become willing.

Back to Boston Eddy's comment . . . is OUR name is this Step? Do WE have to turn from our defects on our own? If not . . . then Who? And if not by self-will . . . then how?

Step Six Thought to encourage discussion:

When you were a child, you developed ways to get your needs met. In your youth, these defects were the “tools” you used to build your world. Through the years and with the progression of disease, these tools morphed into weapons. Now, what were once little defects have become instruments of destruction . . . hurting others, your own moral character, or your self-esteem. These defects are taking a toll in your life. How have they hurt you and those you love?

12 Step Study Guide

Step Seven

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STEP SEVEN: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

12 & 12, pg. 70, pp. 1 & 2

This step, and ALL the other 12 steps, is about attaining greater humility. Why do we need humility?

- 1) Without it, no alcoholic can stay sober at all;
- 2) Unless we develop more than we need just to stay sober, we haven't much chance at becoming happy;

- 3) Without it, we can't live to useful purpose;
- 4) Without it, we can't summon enough faith in adversity to meet an emergency.

"If your God is BIG enough, you can stay right-sized."

– g. o. d. (group of drunks) speaks series

Humility has to become a way of life, yet most people dislike the word or, at best, misunderstand it. We liken it to humiliate or humiliation. The only reason those words were created from the same root is because they mean to be discovered in a false role. Humility is authenticity. It is being comfortable with who we are, where we've been, and where we can go. There is no false self covering humble people, and therefore, no need to hide or lie.

12 & 12, pg. 71, pp. 5

Can you believe it? We're back to the instincts again. If the *satisfaction of our basic natural desires* is the main object of life, then we have a limited life. We are ego-centric and self-absorbed, which is the opposite of having humility. In this state, we will have no quality in relationship with self, with others, or with God.

Let's look back at our Fourth Step to see if we were blameless. Yikes! How low did we limbo to get those needs met? And by adding booze, drugs, or other excesses, we left our true selves deeply buried in the mire.

IN ALL OUR STRIVINGS (EVEN THE WELL-INTENTIONED ONES), OUR CRIPPLING HANDICAP WAS LACK OF HUMILITY .

12 & 12, pp. 6

Which comes first? Character-building and spiritual values or material satisfactions? Are material satisfactions our main goal in life? If so, are they a means by which we can live and function to our full potential? What part does selfishness play in this question?

Remember: Big Book, page 62, pp.13. Selfishness – self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles.

12 & 12, pg. 72, pp.7

But whenever we had to choose between character-building and comfort, the character-building was lost in the dust of our chase after what we thought was happiness.

Do we: go to meeting or relax at home; forgive wrongs or hold on to self-righteous anger; take the newcomer's call or let voicemail pick it up; cook a healthy meal or grab crappy fast food; recycle your plastic bottles or throw them in the trash?

These are just some ways we choose SELF when we are spiritually asleep. Step Seven asks us to look at these actions, because as we grow in humility, these details of living are bound to change. The first change will happen in the way we think. Life and all its issues will begin to revolve around the principles behind the steps . . . and we will

exercise permanent values for once in our lives. This happens when we move away from selfishness and toward humility.

AS LONG AS WE WERE CONVINCED THAT WE COULD LIVE EXCLUSIVELY BY OUR OWN INDIVIDUAL STRENGTH AND INTELLIGENCE, A WORKING FAITH IN THE HIGHER POWER WAS IMPOSSIBLE. THIS IS TRUE EVEN IF WE BELIEVE THAT GOD EXISTS. AS LONG AS WE PLAY GOD, OUR LIVES WILL REMAIN BARREN.

Step Seven is the spiritual alarm clock. We've been sleep-walking through life.

Don't hit snooze. Start to wake up each day spiritually!

12 & 12, pg. 72, pp. 8

What is the basic ingredient of all humility? A desire to seek and do God's will.

The gift of desperation is the gift that allows us to walk away from the paralyzing grip of active alcoholism. By the time we arrive at Step Seven, we see that this sort of humility is a GIFT, a necessity. It may have resembled humiliation, but we needed to get free of that thick covering of the false self. But why do we still hate the idea of being humble?

12 & 12, pg. 73, pp. 10

A whole lifetime geared to self-centeredness cannot be set in reverse all at once. Rebellion dogs our every step at first.

12 & 12, pgs. 73 & 74, pp. 11 & 12

The writers are asking us to look at our NEW record in these paragraphs – wanting us to draw upon the memory of Step One desperation, Step Four recognition of character flaws, and the “inescapable conclusion that we draw from AA experience” that we have to let even our favorite defects go in Step Six. Still, we could care less about humility. We move forward only because it is necessary to survive.

12 & 12, pg. 74, pp. 13

Do you see Step Four, Five, and Six in the first sentence? Do you remember your first taste of “peace of mind” that is described? What does peace of mind have to do with serenity? Why do you need serenity to live sober?

Ready for a revolutionary change in your outlook? Step Seven provides it for you with an experiential understanding of the word humility. Before:

FAILURE AND MISERY = PAIN AND ESCAPE

Then, 12 & 12, pg. 75, pp. 15:

FAILURE AND MISERY + HUMILITY = STRENGTH AND HEALING

12 & 12, pg. 75, pp. 16

A side effect of learning about humility is the change in our attitude toward God. We come to a more mature relationship, no longer muttering fox-hole prayers, but having actual conversations with HP. This is just another sign that the steps are becoming a way of life, not just a program of recovery.

12 & 12, pg. 75, pp. 17

What's this? We don't have to be beaten into humility? We can voluntarily reach for it? This is true only if we have come to WANT humility. This is what the term "growing up in AA" means. Our new track record makes humility desirable. It is making our lives better.

12 & 12, pg. 76, pp. 18

What are the objectives of taking Step 7?

- 1) We want to live in peace with ourselves and others;
- 2) We want to know the grace of God is operational in our lives;
- 3) We want to see that our character defects block our path toward the first two objectives;
- 4) We want to stop making unreasonable demands upon ourselves, others, and upon God.

12 & 12, pg. 76, pp. 19

THE CHIEF ACTIVATOR OF OUR CHARACTER DEFECTS IS SELF-CENTERED FEAR – THAT WE WILL LOSE SOMETHING WE ALREADY HAVE OR FAIL TO GET SOMETHING WE THINK WE NEED.

Remember: You know this. When you feel anxiety or fear, watch out! Get your butt to a meeting where you can be restored to sanity. If you can't get to a meeting, PAUSE, and ask for QUIET. Connect with HP.

P.A.U.S.E. – Pray and Use Spiritual Energy

"Humility – an accurate assessment of self, and acceptance of the same. It includes acceptance of myself where I am right now, where I've been, and where I'm going. Humility calls me to listen for God's will instead of my own, and to do that will instead of what gives me instant gratification."

-Bill's Reader (As Bill Sees It), page 106

BIG BOOK, pg. 76, pp 13

Shall we try praying on our knees? To some, this is not a big ask. To others, it is. Let God see our desire by our willingness to show the posture of our souls by the posture of our bodies.



**My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me,
good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me
every single defect of character which stands in the way
of my usefulness to You and my fellows.
Grant me strength, as I go out from here,
to do your bidding, Amen.**

Homework: Find a copy of Bill's Reader (As Bill Sees It) and read ALL the entries on humility.

STEP EIGHT: Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Relationships are assignments from God.

In your step book, circle the words in the step: WE – you are not alone. BECAME – if we lack the willingness to do this, we ask until it comes.

**KEY THOUGHT: An AMEND is not an apology –
it is the opportunity to make things right.**

When it became evident in the United States that denying women the right to vote was objectionable, the government didn't apologize. They didn't say, "As a nation, we are sorry for this oversight. Please forgive us." No! They AMENDED the Constitution. They made it right! That's where the 19th Amendment came from. What was improper was repaired. Reparation is the theme of making amends. Read the key thought above again with this comparison in mind.

12 & 12, pg. 77, first paragraph

What are the goals of steps eight and nine?

- 1) To take a look backward and try to discover where we've been at fault;
- 2) To make a vigorous attempt to repair the damage we have done;
- 3) To develop the best possible relations with every human being we know utilizing the newfound knowledge of ourselves.

THIS IS A TASK WE MAY PERFORM WITH INCREASING SKILL, BUT NEVER REALLY FINISH. Remember, the books tell us that relationships are difficult for alcoholics. We are learning how to better serve them as we recover, but it is not an automatic "fix" once we write this list and make our amends. We live into recovery when it comes to our social instinct.

12 & 12, pg. 77, pp. 2 To move forward, we have to look back and make an accurate and unsparing survey of the human wreckage we have left in our wake.

THIS IS GOING TO HURT. WE WILL REOPEN OLD WOUNDS, SOME THAT ARE STILL OOZING. Why do it, then? Once addressed, these old wounds can heal, and life will improve. We are trying to develop the best possible relations with every human being we know, and facing what has long been hidden will bring blessings down the line.

Big Book, pg. 76, pp. 14 You said you'd go to any length to get over drinking. Did you mean it?

Back to 12 & 12: Bottom of page 78, pp.3-6: The obstacles are real. They include:

- 1) We'd rather defend ourselves than forgive another;

- 2) We'd rather not make face-to-face or written admissions to people who already had it in for us . . . or didn't even know we'd hurt them;
- 3) We claimed that when drinking we never hurt anybody but ourselves.

12 & 12, pg. 79, pp. 7 & 8 Even if these obstacles are rearing their ugly heads, make a COMPLETE list. You can worry about doing the ninth step when you're on that step. YOU ARE ONLY WRITING A LIST. Stay with your feet and your pen. Write the name down.

Sometimes, we will find that the emotional harm we've done to ourselves goes deeper than the harms that others did to us. Some personal conflicts may be below the level of our consciousness and may have changed our personalities and altered our lives for the worse. WRITE THESE THOUGHTS DOWN IF THEY COME TO YOU. DON'T SKIP YOURSELF.

12 & 12, pg. 80, pp. 9 The first sentence in this paragraph really explains what we will learn about ourselves in this part of step eight. Read it and notice the words:

"IT IS EQUALLY NECESSARY," which means it is just as important as writing the list. What could be that important?

Let's read the whole paragraph together. SLOWLY.

Main points to consider:

- 1) Extricate (to dig out; to disentangle) from the examination of our personal relations every bit of information about ourselves and OUR FUNDAMENTAL DIFFICULTIES that we can.
- 2) Defective relations with others have nearly always been the immediate cause of our woes, INCLUDING OUR ALCOHOLISM.
- 3) The rewards from doing this digging will be satisfying and valuable.
- 4) We will uncover not just superficial flaws, but deeper flaws that were responsible for the WHOLE PATTERN OF OUR LIVES.
- 5) Be thorough here. It pays off BIG TIME.

Let's spend some time in calm, thoughtful reflection. What are some of the **patterns** that many alcoholics exhibit that we might identify with? Here is a list to get you started. This is by no means a complete list:

Competing, quitting, blaming, dominating, depending upon, running, fixing, controlling, avoiding intimacy, isolating, drama, know-it-all-ism, rebellion, buying love, saving/rescuing, seeking recognition, withholding information, entitlement, judgmentalism, nagging, intimidating, avoiding responsibility, dismissing, criticizing, lacking tolerance, seeking approval, confrontational, non-confrontational, accepting abuse, raging, people-pleasing, self-sabotaging, projecting, defensiveness, minimizing

12 & 12, pg. 80, pp. 10 What do we mean when we say we have harmed someone? What is harm, anyway?

The answer: INSTINCTS IN COLLISION which cause physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual damage to others



Read the whole paragraph and see if you recognize any of the “harms” done.

Have you: aroused anger in others?
 lied or cheated?
 deprived others of emotional security or peace of mind?
 made others feel contemptuous or vengeful?
 excited jealousy, misery, or desire to retaliate due to sexual selfishness?

Step Eight is about FREEDOM.

An awareness this deep will change your approach to your relationships.

12 & 12, pg. 81, pp. 12 Walk through your life backwards and construct a long list of people who have been affected by your disease. **YOU MUST WRITE IT DOWN.**

This is the BEGINNING OF THE END OF YOUR ISOLATION FROM GOD AND FROM YOUR FELLOWS.

“We teach other people how to treat us.”
Once you have worked your eighth step, you know this is true.

STEP NINE: Made direct amends wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

When making amends, you must be on the AA beam! That means making regular meetings, calling your sponsor, daily prayer, and working with others. The AA beam gives one good judgment, good timing, courage, and prudence.

An AMEND is not an apology – it is the opportunity to make things right.

DIRECT (adj.): 1. natural, straightforward; 2. stemming immediately from the source (Merriam Webster Online)

12 & 12, pg. 83, pp. 2 The four classes of people to whom we need to make amends include:

- 1) Those we should deal with as soon as possible without losing our sobriety;
- 2) Those to whom we can only make partial restitution, so we don't do more harm;
- 3) Those to whom action ought to be put off;
- 4) Those to whom we can never make direct personal contact with at all.

THE MOMENT WE TELL OUR FAMILIES THAT WE ARE REALLY GOING TO TRY THE PROGRAM, THE PROCESS HAS BEGUN.

12 & 12, pg. 84, pp. 3 We cannot buy our own peace of mind at the expense of others.

“The generous response of most people to such quiet sincerity will often astonish us. Even our severest and most justified critics will frequently meet us halfway on the first trial.” 12 & 12, page 84



12 & 12, pg. 85, pp. 5 The atmosphere of approval and praise will tempt us to hurry on

to other cases, or skeptical and cool receptions may discourage us or make us want to argue. BE PREPARED for either well in advance and you will be able to stay in balance.

12 & 12, pg. 85, pp. 6 This is when we want to:

- 1) Rest on our laurels, and skip the more painful meetings still on our list;
- 2) Dodge the issues by creating excuses as to why we can't make the amend;
- 3) Procrastinate and make the amend at some later date.

Don't kid yourself. This is your alcoholism rearing its ugly head. Evasion is one of the patterns we learned about ourselves in Step Eight, and it's luring you back into stinking thinking. Don't give in! **ASK HP FOR THE COURAGE TO CONTINUE.**

12 & 12, pg. 85, pp. 7 As soon as we are confident, we talk with frankness to those most affected, unless it would cause them harm. It can be casual and natural if it works out that way . . . but if it doesn't, head straight for the person you need to speak to and take care of business.

BIG BOOK, pgs. 79 – 81

Main points to consider:

- 1) First sentence: REPARATIONS – NOT apologies
- 2) We will go to any length to make these amends. We have to, or we may drink again . . . and for us, to drink is to die. Spiritually, and eventually, physically.
- 3) Check your intentions and motives with your sponsor or another experienced AA. Don't sacrifice others needlessly to save yourself.
- 4) If you will implicate others, you must first secure their consent.
- 5) In domestic affairs, remember that you have no right to involve another person. We are only cleaning up our side of the street – not pointing out the folks with whom we made it dirty.

We feel a man is unthinking when he says
that sobriety is enough.

Big Book, page 82

BIG BOOK, pg. 83, main points to consider:

- 1) We must take the lead in the reconstruction – and a mumbling “I’m sorry” won’t do it;
- 2) Each morning in meditation, ask HP to grant us patience, tolerance, kindliness, and love;

- 3) The spiritual life is NOT a theory – we have to live it;
 - 4) Our behavior will convince people more than our words;
 - 5) If you would right a wrong if you could, but can't see the person involved, you can let it go, knowing if the "where" comes up, you'll make the amend;
 - 6) As God's people, we don't crawl or scrape. We stand on our two feet and face the music, acting with integrity and tact.
- Big Book, pgs. 83 – 84: What happens at this point in the journey through the steps?

TWELVE 9th STEP PROMISES

If we are painstaking about this phase of our recovery we will be amazed before we are half-way through.

1. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.
2. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.
3. We will comprehend the word serenity.
4. We will know peace.
5. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.
6. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.
7. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.
8. Self-seeking will slip away.
9. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.
10. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.
11. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.
12. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us – sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.

THESE ARE THE PROMISES THAT YOU HEAR READ ALOUD IN MEETINGS.
AT THIS PHASE OF YOUR DEVELOPMENT, THEY WILL BE COMING TRUE.
(Some of us think they ARE rather extravagant, but we love that about them!)

Back to the 12 & 12, pg. 86, pp.9 When we struggle with the idea of making an amend, do we lay the matter before our sponsor or spiritual adviser, earnestly asking God's help and guidance – meanwhile resolving to do the right thing when it becomes clear, cost

what it may? When that's difficult, sometimes, our perception of the amend is the problem. By speaking to a trusted AA, we can open up the picture to find a way to rid ourselves of the wreckage of the past without fear. With God, there is a way. Let Him speak to you through the fellowship.

12 & 12, pg. 87, pp. 10 Do not delay because of FEAR. Once we take responsibility for our past acts AND responsibility for the well-being of others, we understand the spirit of this step. Face any fears with courage. Courage is not the lack of fear, but the willingness to walk into fear because our hearts have called us to healing and hope. Any time we must summon courage in our step work, it means that the Higher Power is beside us ready to take our hands and move ahead.

Get ready for some really good things to start happening in your life! You are finishing up the "Clean Up" steps, and the feeling that your insides are shiny and new will come strongly. You are being transformed into all that God had in mind for you to be!

Is sobriety an amend in itself? It is to me, and that's a BIG statement. It is the beginning of self-forgiveness, which is sometimes that hardest forgiveness for us to find.

Thoughts on Step Nine to encourage discussion:

Do you know WHEN you got sober? Do you know WHERE you got sober? What's the difference? Oftentimes, people read Step Nine quickly and substitute the word "whenever" for "wherever". What's the difference? How will it affect the amend?

STEP TEN: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

The word “when” in the middle of this step reminds us that as we go forward, we will make mistakes. This is the normal human condition. That is why we claim spiritual PROGRESS and not spiritual PERFECTION.

Our next function in program is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. To accomplish this, we use our steps as a way of life. Step Ten teaches us how to do this.

All of us have heard: “You take the steps in order!” That is true the first time we go through them, or even as an annual clean-up. But are we ever instructed to take them “out of order”?

BIG BOOK, pg. 84, pp. 39 Begin with “This thought brings us to Step Ten”. Let’s read the order of step work listed in the Big Book here:

- 1) Continue to watch for defects (Step 10);
- 2) When they crop up, ask God to remove them (Step 7);
- 3) Discuss them with somebody (Step 5);
- 4) Make amends quickly if we’ve harmed someone (Step 9);
- 5) Turn our thoughts to someone we can help (Step 12).

POINT OF INTEREST: ARE YOU TAKING THE 12 STEPS OR LIVING THE 12 STEPS. WE DO BOTH WHEN WE FULLY SURRENDER TO THIS PROGRAM. “LIVING” THE TWELVE STEPS CAN MEAN TAKING THEM AS NEEDED, NOT NECESSARILY IN ORDER.

Continue in the BIG BOOK, pg. 84-85, because the next paragraph is FULL of promises. The very type of insanity that brought us to the rooms has been relieved, and we are safe!

BIG BOOK, page 85. WHAT WE REALLY HAVE IS A DAILY REPRIEVE CONTINGENT ON THE MAINTENANCE OF OUR SPIRITUAL CONDITION. We’ve heard this statement frequently, but did we know this statement is part of Step Ten? Can we see why a daily tenth step is vital to a sober lifestyle?

BIG BOOK, pg. 85, pp. 42 More promises. These promises remind us that we can now FEEL the hook up with HP. We have a **working sixth sense** that connects us to strength, inspiration, and direction from HP. This may be one of our best assets as we move forward in life and sobriety.

12 & 12, pg. 88, pp. 2 The Serenity Prayer in a paragraph . . . taken apart the way we will use it throughout our lives.

- 1) Wisdom to know the difference comes from making self-searching a regular habit;
- 2) Serenity to accept reality comes from this self-searching lifestyle;
- 3) Courage to change comes with patience and persistence – two traits known to those who search to know themselves better regularly.



Emotional Hangover: the direct result of yesterday's and sometimes today's excesses of negative emotions – anger, fear, jealousy, and the like. The “cure” is living in the NOW by practicing Step Ten.

THREE TYPES OF TENTH STEPS

12 & 12, pg. 89, pp. 4

- 1) Spot-check – taken any time of day when tangled up;
- 2) Day's end – review of the day with pluses and minuses of our thoughts and actions;
- 3) Annual or Semi-annual housecleaning – can be a retreat or a regular fourth step. We already know how to do this . . . just pull out our notes from Step Four!

THE REWARDS WILL BE CONNECTED TO THE EFFORTS APPLIED. YOU WANT A BALANCED LIFE? DO A REGULAR INVENTORY AND YOU'LL GET ONE. SKIP IT TO SAVE TIME, AND YOU'LL PAY IN SERENITY.

Main points to consider for Spot-Check Inventory (from pg. 90 in the 12 & 12):

- 1) It's a spiritual axiom that when I'm disturbed, there's something wrong with me;
- 2) Justified anger ought to be left to those who can handle it . . . alcoholics are not in that group;
- 3) Emotional dry benders – spurred by anger, jealousy, envy, self-pity, or hurt pride – can lead us straight to the bottle after a indefinite emotional jag;

4) When off-the-beam, this quick inventory reminds us to use self-restraint, honest self-analysis, and willingness to take responsibility for our part and to forgive when the fault is elsewhere.

WE MUST LOOK FOR PROGRESS, NOT PERFECTION, BECAUSE THESE DISCIPLINES ARE NOT EASY. 12 & 12, pg. 91, pp.10

Live and Let Live is an attitude of the Tenth Step. Let's read pp. 11 – 17 on page 91- 93 in the 12 & 12 together.

Key thoughts on page Day's End Inventory:

- 1) Draw up a balance sheet – GOOD as well as bad. Be quick to notice where you're thinking and attitudes have adjusted for the better;
- 2) Check your motives. As you look at the debit side of the ledger, ask yourself, "What need was I trying to get met?" "What fear was I trying not to feel?"
- 3) Don't let rationalization and self-justification cover up your true motives. Dig deep, really deep. (Review the questions on page 94 together)
- 4) Look for bad motives hidden beneath good ones – a NORMAL HUMAN TRAIT STEMMING FROM SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS.

Learning daily to spot, admit, and correct these flaws is the essence of character-building and good living.

Let's go back to 12 & 12, pg. 94, pp. 19 to find another one of our slogans hidden in the text:

- 1) Recognize we acted or thought badly; THINK
- 2) Try to visualize how we might have done better; THINK
- 3) Resolve with God's help to learn from the painful lesson and to make any amends needed. THINK

Think - Think - Think

Once we get more practiced at Step Ten, we can occasionally use these "Express Lane" questions at Day's End:

- 1) What did I do for my recovery today?
- 2) What did I do to help others today?
- 3) What did I do to connect with God today?

- 1) How did I treat my body today, good, and bad?
- 2) How did I care for my emotional state, good and bad?
- 3) How did I approach spiritual growth today, good and bad?

We must pray for discernment. That is a key ingredient to well-being and good character. Ask these questions regularly throughout the day whenever you are emotionally challenged or thrown off balance.

What is my part?
Have I injured another?
Do I find someone else or their feelings insignificant?
Am I able to practice mercy?
Am I demanding something and punishing when my demands aren't met?
Have I retreated to isolation as a punishment?

Make these next two a regular question at night and we'll be amazed at how our programs will radically change automatically.

DID I LIVE MY PRIMARY PURPOSE TODAY?

DID I CARRY THE MESSAGE TO SOMEONE IN NEED?

STEP ELEVEN: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

12 & 12, pg. 96, first sentence: "Prayer and meditation are our principal means of conscious contact with God."

Then next part of this study was directed to people who were once agnostics or are not convinced of a Higher Power outside the AA group. To these, the suggestion is to TRY prayer and meditation anyway. The experience in the rooms is that the only scoffers are those who haven't experimented with it.

12 & 12, pg. 97, pp. 5: Depriving ourselves of prayer and meditation is like refusing air, light and food:

- 1) Light – is God's reality;
- 2) Food – is nourishment of God's strength;
- 3) Air – is the atmosphere of God's grace.

THERE IS A DIRECT LINKAGE AMONG
SELF-EXAMINATION, MEDITATION, AND PRAYER. WHEN
LOGICALLY RELATED AND INTERWOVEN, THE RESULT IS
AN UNSHAKEABLE FOUNDATION FOR LIFE.



Spiritual HEAT Journal – This process links Step 10 & 11 together to create the unshakeable foundation for life that is promised. Give it a try.

One month of discipline will change your life.

Write for 15 minutes each day (or more if you desire) according to this format:

H – Honor; honor God with your words.

E – Examine; do a written tenth step.

A – Ask; don't hold back from asking for what you need to grow spiritually. This growth will reap dividends in God's Kingdom, and it is His will that you get what you need. This is where you pray for others, too.

T – Thank; write a gratitude list. Each day, write down five things for which you are grateful, and never repeat one of them.

HOW, THEN, SHALL WE MEDITATE?

12 & 12, pg. 99, pp. 11 Consider the Eleventh Step Prayer – known as the prayer of St. Francis. Many in recovery have found a comfortable understanding of reaching out to the Higher Power using this prayer.

As beginners in meditation, let's reread this prayer slowly and try to understand what our friend says. Drop resistance, for in meditation, debate has NO place.

Remember the plans we made when drunk or high? Writing on the cocktail napkin, or planning a road trip with a buddy? That was a form of meditation called constructive imagination. We can still do this, only now we focus on how we can move forward and what we can contribute to life. "Meditation is something that can always be further developed." 12 & 12, pg. 101, pp. 21

12 & 12, pg. 102 Why keep trying to clear your mind and meditate? One of the first fruits of meditation is emotional balance. With it, we can broaden the channel between ourselves and God.

Try this: Breathe in faith. Breathe out fear. This simple practice is a short meditation that can restore calm in a moment of anxiety. Meditation doesn't have to be sitting cross-legged for hours at a time, though it can be if we would like it to be. The most important thing is that you start the practice in a way that make us feel comfortable so we will repeat it daily.

12 & 12, pg. 102, pp. 22: Now, what about prayer? Prayer is the raising of the heart and mind to God – and in this sense it includes meditation. More often it is considered a petition to God.

Ask God for specifics and limit His hand.

Sometimes, we think we know what is best when we pray. When we ask God to do things our way, we forget the dynamics of our relationship. He is God. We are not. More than that, we are recovering from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Chances are good that God will have a better idea if we leave it to Him.

Always add, "if it be Thy will".

12 & 12, pg. 103, pp. 24: We continue through our day, PAUSING when making decisions or situations are demanding. We renew the request, "Thy will, not mine, be done." But what else can we do to keep ourselves balanced?

To clear a channel (we are the channel) choked up with anger, fear, frustration, or misunderstanding, we repeat a particular prayer or phrase (mantra) that has appealed to us in our reading or meditation. For example, some people repeat, "This, too, will pass." The repetition and remembrance that the difficult situation is temporal help them hold onto their willingness to remain surrendered instead of reacting in emotions.

12 & 12, pg. 103, pp. 25 & 26: Can't we just go to God and secure an answer to a troubling dilemma? Sometimes, the thoughts that seem to come from God are really well-intentioned rationalizations, one of the most basic human tendencies.

Don't limit God by giving Him the boundaries of your understanding.

12 & 12, pg. 104, pp. 27: What about other people? Can't we pray for what they need? For example, if we hear a friend has been diagnosed with cancer, can't we pray for the cure? Though usually based in love, these prayers are based on the supposition that we know God's will for the person for whom we pray. So, along with an earnest prayer is presumption. Because we are trying to rid ourselves of self-centeredness, we simply ask for God's will for them, whatever it is.

12 & 12, pg. 104, pp. 28

THE PERKS OF PRAYER

- 1) We find strength, not ordinarily our own;
- 2) We find wisdom beyond our usual capability;
- 3) We find peace of mind which stands firm in the face of difficulties.

WE RECEIVE GUIDANCE FOR OUR LIVES TO THE EXTENT THAT WE STOP MAKING DEMANDS UPON GOD TO GIVE IT TO US ON ORDER AND ON OUR TERMS.

12 & 12, pg. 105, pp. 30: We will all pass through times when we are defiant, not reliant. Sometimes, we have to make ourselves pray. Other times, we just won't pray. What should we do?

When this happens, don't think ill of ourselves. Resume prayer when we can. Talk to other recovery persons to stay afloat when you can't feel your connection with HP. Keep going to meetings, reading the literature, and working with others.

12 & 12, pg. 105, pp. 31: Another promise coming true. One of the greatest rewards of meditation and prayer is the *sense of belonging* that comes to us. We know that all will be well with us. What we seek becomes a reality – Truth, contented sobriety, serenity, and happiness. Oddly enough, many of us began to use alcohol and chemicals or use

other compulsive behaviors in an effort to belong. Finally, we have done the work, and this time we find we really do have a place that is comfortable.

What else do we get?

Big Book, pg. 86, pp. 46: We've read that we will be rocketed to the fourth dimension in this program. What does that mean? We develop new ways of understanding that surpass what is commonly understood. In this paragraph, the writers share their experience about how regular prayer and meditation has changed the way their mind works. This is beyond the original psychic change. This is MORE.

"What used to be the hunch or occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind." And further down: "We find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely on it."

The promises continue in the Big Book on page 88:

"We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves."

*To consciously connect with God, we must get quiet from
time to time. Remember the wisdom of the phrase,
"Be still and know that I Am God."*

STEP TWELVE: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

12 & 12, pg.106, first sentence "The joy of living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step, and action is its key word."

First things first. What does Bill mean when he says "spiritual awakening"?

BIG BOOK, Appendix II, pg. 567. Read it and consider our awakening. Was it sudden? Or did you have more of the educational variety?

12 & 12, pg. 106-107, pp. 3 The most important meaning of awakening is that you have now become able to:

- 1) Do – take the next right action;
- 2) Feel – emote without fear;
- 3) Believe – you have returned to trust, confidence, reliance, and security in your own convictions.

**YOU HAVE BEEN GRANTED A GIFT
WHICH AMOUNTS TO A NEW STATE
OF CONSCIOUSNESS AND BEING.**

12 & 12, pg. 109, pp. 7 What is the magnificent reality of AA? Find it and write it down so you will remember.

IS THIS THE ONLY KIND OF 12TH STEP WORK?

12 & 12, pg.110, pp. 10

Can you find yourself in this list of 12 Step opportunities?

12 & 12, pg. 111, pp. 11 Being off the beam may seem to be a setback at the time, but it is really the path to better things. We need to remember ALL of the 12 steps to get the answers we need . . . not just one and twelve. (Admission of powerlessness and attendance at meetings with no other work is often called AA two-step. It has a complacent beat that makes us think we are safe when we are dancing our way into disaster.)

12 & 12, pg. 114, pp. 21 & 22 The tough stuff continues, and we feel off the beam. What is the answer? More spiritual development. (Can you believe Bill Wilson is still talking about the instincts from Step Four?) Continue reading pages 114 to 117. This portion of the book gives us insight into homelife, spiritual progress, and general life lessons.

The last pages on Step Twelve in the 12 & 12 go in depth with instinctive drives that can get out of whack. CHECK THEM OUT. Read these more carefully when you have a chance and see if you can find yourself. You may have a problem in your sober life right now, and the answer could be in black and white on these pages. Don't skimp. In this portion of the book, Bill is talking to RECOVERED people. He is reminding us how to maintain the JOY OF LIVING. Yes, he is suggesting you won't get that without ACTION as a way of life.

We came to the program to learn to stop drinking.

We realize now that the whole problem had been thinking.

To stay on the beam, action will be a way of life for us.

The BIG BOOK has an entire chapter devoted to this step. Why is that?

The answer is in the first sentence in the Big Book on page 89.

"PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE SHOWS THAT NOTHING WILL SO MUCH INSURE IMMUNITY FROM DRINKING AS INTENSIVE WORK WITH OTHER ALCOHOLICS."

BIG BOOK, pg. 89, pp. 2: More promises of the program. Many of us shortchanged ourselves thinking that the ninth step promises were the only ones. Read through these promises, and consider if we've seen them coming true.

Continue reading the whole chapter *Working with Others*. We've listed the how-to straight out of its pages below. Many of us are surprised that we don't just hand someone a BIG BOOK if they're struggling with alcoholism. There is a time for that, but it comes after some other crucial work.

Important points on 12-Stepping:

1. If he does not want to stop drinking, don't waste time trying to persuade him;
2. If he wants to stop, have a good talk with the person closest to him to get an idea on his behavior, background, current problems, seriousness of the condition, and his religious leanings;
3. Don't deal with him when he is drunk;
4. Wait for the end of his next drinking bout and ask if he would like to talk to you as you have recovered. Never plead with him, and remind the family not to be over-anxious as this can make him run;
5. Place a Big Book where he can see it, BUT DO NOT GIVE IT TO HIM DIRECTLY;
6. When you get your first chance to talk to him, show up while he's still hurting from the last spree, and don't talk about his family. Keep it personal;
7. See him alone, if possible;
8. Talk about your own drinking career and let him talk about his if he is able. DO NOT say anything about how you quit drinking at this point;
9. If he is serious, dwell on the troubles drinking caused you; if his mood is light, tell your funny drunk stories;
10. Once he sees you know all about drinking through this give and take, begin to describe yourself as an alcoholic. Tell him how you struggled until you found out you were sick, not bad;
11. Describe the mental twist that leads to the first drink when you didn't want one or had sworn off;
12. Begin to dwell on the hopeless feature of the disease, how you can never predict what will happen when you drink;
13. **DO NOT BRAND HIM AS AN ALCOHOLIC.** He must come to that conclusion on his own;
14. Continue to talk about alcoholism as an illness, focusing on YOUR experience. Tell him that before you got well, you were doomed;
15. **LET HIM ASK YOU HOW YOU GOT WELL.** Do not give that information up unless he asks you;
16. Tell him exactly what happened to you. Stress the spiritual feature freely now, because up until this point you have not even mentioned it;
17. Be clear he does not have to agree with your conception of God – but he must be willing to believe in a Power greater than himself and live by spiritual principles;

18. Use regular language to describe principles. Don't put him off with terms you learned in church or through coming to your own convictions;
19. If he is religious, let him see you are not there to teach him what he already knows, but that you want to help him to a place where his faith will work, admitting that he may know more than you do about the whole God business. Call his attention to the fact that he couldn't have applied this knowledge or he wouldn't still be drinking;
20. Outline the program of action and let him know that your attempt to pass this on is vital to your own recovery;
21. Make it clear that he doesn't have to see you again if he doesn't want to;
22. If he balks at some of the work, don't contradict his views. Tell him you once felt that way, but made progress when you did the work;
23. Tell him about the fellowship. If he shows interest, lend him your copy of the BIG BOOK;
24. Don't overstay your welcome. Tell him if he wants what you have you'll do anything to help him;
25. If he's serious, follow up. If not, don't push. We have no monopoly of God. If you permit him to "use" you, you will only harm him. Help where you can, but be sure you are doing the right thing by checking with your sponsor or network;
26. If he is not interested in your solution, drop him until he changes his mind. Be friendly, and let it go at that.

**BURN THE IDEA INTO THE CONSCIOUSNESS OF EVERY MAN THAT HE CAN GET
WELL REGARDLESS OF ANYONE. THE ONLY CONDITION
IS THAT HE TRUST IN GOD AND CLEAN HOUSE.**

After all, our problems were of our own making. Bottles were only a symbol. Besides, we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. We have to!

Thoughts on Step Twelve to encourage discussion:

1) "Carry the message, not the mess." – g. o. d. (group of drunks) speaks series
What does this mean to you?

2) Did you ever hear the joke about the body?

The brain said it was the most important because thinking controls everything. The kidneys laughed, and claimed they were most important because they eliminate fluids. The heart jumped up and said it was most important because it allows blood to flow. The lungs said they were most important, because without breath the body wouldn't live to function. The ass piped up and claimed to be most important, but before it could get a word out, all the other body parts started laughing and making rude comments. The ass got angry and decided to shut down. Within two days, the brain was foggy, the

kidneys were creating stones, the heart was beating out of sequence, and the lungs were struggling to take in oxygen. They all cried, "Uncle!" The moral of the story is you don't have to be a brain to be in charge, just an ass.

Okay, the Program is similar. Every person who comes, comes to, and commits to this way of life has different talents to bring to the mix. Some are great at working with newcomers. Others are genius at understanding spiritual concepts. Still others command an audience when they speak. ALL are important, and all are performing 12 Step work. Happily, they all appreciate the coffee that someone else made to ready the room for the meeting, and they notice the regulars who make attendance their gift.

What is the talent that you bring to the Program? Don't sell yourself short. You're doing something right! If you made it 24 hours without using or behaving compulsively, Richie K says that then you're a HOWLING SUCCESS. Bring the group the best you can, and as you grow, you will bring them more.

10 THINGS THAT REQUIRE **ZERO TALENT**

1. Being On Time
2. Making An Effort
3. Being High Energy
4. Having A Positive Attitude
5. Being Passionate
6. Using Good Body Language
7. Being Coachable
8. Doing A Little Extra
9. Being Prepared
10. Having A Strong Work Ethic

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1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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