

Emotional Sobriety A Journey of Perspective

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“If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its consequent unhealthy demand. Let us with God’s help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelfth Step ourselves and others into emotional sobriety.”

- Bill Wilson

A Journey of Perspective

Doing what's suggested in this workshop may cause you to let go of some parts of your personal "reality." It could cause you to be less limited. You may stop blaming other people, places, and things. You may stop being a user and become an owner of your own stuff. You may find yourself giving up some of your old resentments, pains and fears. You could even find yourself with a new understanding and/or awakening. Maybe you will find your Self. Neither this workshop nor any of its contents are for sale. They are for sharing. Pass it on freely to those you love and those you don't.

Our primary purpose in this workshop is to offer additional tools, which could enable you to be more and more conscious of three great Spiritual Gifts and ways to apply these in our everyday life. We will introduce you to this set of useful tools; however, tools are worthless unless we learn how to use them and then use them. Well that's what this workshop is about. Our main focus will be learning new ways to expand our application of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous. To help you awaken to the powerful spiritual principles embodied in the Twelve Steps (Recovery), Twelve Traditions (Unity) and Twelve Concepts for World Service (Service).

The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety

by Bill Wilson

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(Also see: ***A Letter From Bill W. on Depression***, from the memoirs of Tom Pike, an early California AA member, which is strikingly similar to this AA Grapevine Article, "The Next Frontier: Emotional Sobriety.")

I think that many oldsters who have put our AA "booze cure" to severe but successful tests still find they often lack emotional sobriety. Perhaps they will be the spearhead for the next major development in AA—the development of much more real maturity and balance (which is to say, humility) in our relations with ourselves, with our fellows, and with God.

Those adolescent urges that so many of us have for top approval, perfect security, and perfect romance—urges quite appropriate to age seventeen—prove to be an impossible way of life when we are at age forty-seven or fifty-seven.

Since AA began, I've taken immense wallops in all these areas because of my failure to grow up, emotionally and spiritually. My God, how painful it is to keep demanding the impossible, and how very painful to discover finally, that all along we have had the cart before the horse! Then comes the final agony of seeing how awfully wrong we have been, but still finding ourselves unable to get off the emotional merry-go-round.

How to translate a right mental conviction into a right emotional result, and so into easy, happy, and good living—well, that's not only the neurotic's problem, it's the problem of life itself for all of us who have got to the point of real willingness to hew to right principles in all our affairs.

Even then, as we hew away, peace and joy may still elude us. That's the place so many of us AA oldsters have come to. And it's a hell of a spot, literally. How shall our unconscious—from which so many of our fears, compulsions and phony aspirations still stream—be brought into line with what we actually believe, know and want! How to convince our dumb, raging and hidden "Mr. Hyde" becomes our main task.

I've recently come to believe that this can be achieved. I believe so because I begin to see many benighted ones—folks like you and me—commencing to get results. Last autumn [several years back - ed.] depression, having no really rational cause at all, almost took me to the cleaners. I began to be scared that I was in for another long chronic spell. Considering the grief I've had with depressions, it wasn't a bright prospect.

I kept asking myself, "Why can't the Twelve Steps work to release depression?" By the hour, I stared at the St. Francis Prayer..."It's better to comfort than to be the comforted." Here was the formula, all right. But why didn't it work?

Suddenly I realized what the matter was. My basic flaw had always been dependence - almost absolute dependence - on people or circumstances to supply me with prestige, security, and the like. Failing to get these things according to my perfectionist dreams and specifications, I had fought for them. And when defeat came, so did my depression.

There wasn't a chance of making the outgoing love of St. Francis a workable and joyous way of life until these fatal and almost absolute dependencies were cut away.

Because I had over the years undergone a little spiritual development, the absolute quality of these frightful dependencies had never before been so starkly revealed. Reinforced by what Grace I could secure in prayer, I found I had to exert every ounce of will and action to cut off these faulty emotional dependencies upon people, upon AA, indeed, upon any set of circumstances whatsoever.

Then only could I be free to love as Francis had. Emotional and instinctual satisfactions, I saw, were really the extra dividends of having love, offering love, and expressing a love appropriate to each relation of life.

Plainly, **I could not avail myself of God's love until I was able to offer it back to Him by loving others as He would have me.** And I couldn't possibly do that so long as I was victimized by false dependencies.

For my dependency meant demand—a demand for the possession and control of the people and the conditions surrounding me.

While those words "absolute demand" may look like a gimmick, they were the ones that *helped to trigger my release into my present degree of stability and quietness of mind, qualities which I am now trying to consolidate by offering love to others regardless of the return to me.*

This seems to be the primary healing circuit: an outgoing love of God's creation and His people, by means of which we avail ourselves of His love for us. It is most clear that the current can't flow until our paralyzing dependencies are broken, and broken at depth. Only then can we possibly have a glimmer of what adult love really is.

Spiritual calculus, you say? Not a bit of it. Watch any AA of six months working with a new Twelfth Step case. If the case says "To the devil with you," the Twelfth Stepper only smiles and turns to another case. He doesn't feel frustrated or rejected. If his next case responds, and in turn starts to give love and attention to other alcoholics, yet gives none back to him, the sponsor is happy about it anyway. He still doesn't feel rejected; instead he rejoices that his one-time prospect is sober and happy. And if his next following case turns out in later time to be his best friend (or romance) then the sponsor is most joyful. But he well knows that his happiness is a by-product—the extra dividend of giving without any demand for a return.

The really stabilizing thing for him was having and offering love to that strange drunk on his doorstep. That was Francis at work, powerful and practical, minus dependency and minus demand.

In the first six months of my own sobriety, I worked hard with many alcoholics. Not a one responded. Yet this work kept me sober. It wasn't a question of those alcoholics giving me anything. My stability came out of trying to give, not out of demanding that I receive.

Thus I think it can work out with emotional sobriety. If we examine every disturbance we have, great or small, we will find at the root of it some unhealthy dependency and its

consequent unhealthy demand. Let us, with God's help, continually surrender these hobbling demands. Then we can be set free to live and love; we may then be able to Twelfth Step ourselves and others into emotional sobriety.

Of course I haven't offered you a really new idea—only a gimmick that has started to unhook several of my own "hexes" at depth. Nowadays my brain no longer races compulsively in either elation, grandiosity or depression. I have been given a quiet place in bright sunshine.

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The three Spiritual Gift embedded in the Twelfth Step.

1. *Awakening (Gift One) We believe “awakening” is the correct word because it does happen as the result of applying the spiritual principles, which open us up to our Higher Power’s grace.*
2. *Love (Gift Two) We use information and understanding gained in working the Twelve Steps to help chip away all that is not the Love we are.*
3. *Our true mission or “plan” (Gift Three) opens us to our God-created self with purpose and meaning. Understanding our true mission opens us up to realize our Spiritual Gifts, which is our true nature. We are then more likely to be open to our Higher Power’s loving grace, miracles and the promises.*

Our 1st Spiritual Gift

Our Awakening

“Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a Power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power? Well, that’s exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to en-able you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.” (Alcoholics Anonymous page 45) The main object of this workshop is to be in concert with that. Working the first eleven Steps will assure us of having a personality change, a shift in our perception sufficient to cause a spiritual awakening. Step Twelve opens with: **“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps...”** This spiritual awakening, this Gift, is the first of our three primary goals of this workshop.

As we awaken, we are most likely to realize that our Program is spiritual in its nature. Something spiritual will expand with its use. Material and ego things deteriorate with use.

- What was your understanding of a spiritual awakening when you first came into the Program?
- How did you judge others or yourself when you were on and/or off the Path? And how did you feel spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally and socially?
- What can you recall about your first Spiritual Awakening?
- What does it mean to you to be a Spiritual Infant, child, adolescent, adult and elder? Pick one or all five. How are these expressed spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally and socially?
- What was/is your resistance to a Higher Power, religions and/or a spiritual way of life?
- What did/can you do about this resistance or what have you been unable/unwilling to do? How does this resistance affect your spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally and socially? What did you experience spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally and socially?
- What types of prayers and meditation have you used and how effective were/are they? Did you grow up with these or did they come later? Have your prayers and meditations changed since coming into the Program.
- Do you use affirmations? Give examples.
- How does prayer and meditation change things?
-

What can you do to increase what does work and decrease what does not work?

What happens when I am on/off the “Path”Spiritually? Mentally? Physically? Emotionally? Socially?

Our 2rd Spiritual Gift

Our Love

One of the most common human needs is love. The second part of Step Twelve is; **“...we tried to carry this message.”** This is sharing; this is Love. We give but little when we give of our possessions, it is when we give of ourselves that we truly give. In the act of giving, “passing it on”, what we have received, we realize that giving and receiving are the same? In fact, the only way we can become a Master Receiver is to share with others everything we want for ourselves. We can love because our deepest nature is love. The messenger is the message.

One of the greatest gifts of many of us have every received as the result of this way of life is we awaken to the love we are. Did you know that everyone you are drawn to brings you a gift and you have a gift for that person? When you remember this it will bring you closer to the lover you are.

- How did you react to others that were freely sharing with you when you first came in the Program?
- Could you somehow know when one was on and/or off the Path?
- How did you react to others that were freely sharing with you when you first came into the Program?
- Could you somehow know when one was on and/or off the path?
- What do you recall your spiritual mental, physical, emotional and social experiences were?
- When you were new in the Program would you say that the one who shared with you used tough love or gentle love? How did this affect you spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally and socially?
- What was the most unselfish thing you can recall every done for you? What was the most unselfish thing you have ever done for someone else? How were these expressed spiritually, mentally, physically, emotionally and socially?
- We can feed someone a fish today (12th step). We can teach one to fish and you feed him/her for a lifetime. Are you a taught teacher teaching?

What can you do to increase what does work and decrease what does not work?

What happens when I am on/off the “Path”... Spiritually? Mentally? Physically? Emotionally? Socially?

Our 3rd Spiritual Gift

Our Mission

Awakening to the individual self we were created to be with purpose and meaning, in other words, to consciously live our mission, our Heart's Desire, God's Will for each individual. The third part of Step Twelve is: **"...and to practice these principles in all our affairs."** The only way we can fully realize who we are is to share what we currently are as the result of this process. When we are God-centered even for a moment we will have all the power and wisdom we need. In that moment we will be told, shown what to do, say, think and feel in a way we can currently hear, understand and follow.

It is a good thing that our Program talks about practicing these principles in all our affairs after we have had some experience in the Program. For many of us it was very difficult to be consistent at anything.

- When did you first get some idea what these principles were and how you may be able to practice them?
- How did you practice these early in the Program when you were on and/or off the Path?
- What were you able to do at least some of the time when you were on/off the Path?
- What did you experience early in the Program spiritually, mentally, physically emotionally and socially practicing these principles the best you could anywhere, with anyone at any level?
- List the ways you use global statements such as: I never, I always.... Do you believe that these principles which cannot be changed or are they just another habit running on automatic? Give examples of how you practiced these principles spiritual, mental, physical, emotional and social, where and how well.
- What do you want to consciously and consistently experience but have been unable to do so? How does this affect you?
- By practicing this way of life here and now, how does that undo the past and release the future?

What can you do to increase what does work and decrease what does not work?

What happens when I am on/off the "Path"? Spiritually? Mentally? Emotionally? Physically? Socially?

Step One

“I am powerless over alcohol and my life has become unmanageable”

Step 1 Problem → Self Indulgence

Step 1 Solution → Surrender and Abstinence

Step 1 Prayer → God, Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, Spirit of Nature or Spirit of the Universe my name is _____, And I'm a real alcoholic ... and I need your help today. (pg.. 10-2, 46, & Chp. 3 BB)

Step 1 Principle → Honesty - The operative principle behind Step 1 is honesty. If you cannot get honest about the scope of your problem, and honest about a sincere effort to resolve it you will not succeed. How about a definition of honesty as the absence of the intention to deceive? Who do we try to fool? Ourselves

Step 1 Promise → I am going to know a new freedom and a new happiness (☺)

New Practice

“Tend Your Own Garden”

- *Attend to your life – no one else’s*
- *Let Go and let other’s be themselves*
- *Get out of the center of everyone else’s lives*
- *Take No Hostages*

Live and Let live.

Release yourself from the affairs of others.

Practice the principles of peaceful living no matter where you go.

Step Two

“Came to Believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity”

Step 2 Problem → Defiance

Step 2 Solution → Open-Minded Willingness

Step 2 Prayer → **God, I'm standing at the turning point right now. Give me your protection and care as I abandon myself to you and give up my old ways and my old ideas just for today. AMEN (p. 59 BB)**

Step 2 Principle → Hope - In order to engage in a course of addiction recovery, we must have hope of success. If there is no hope, why try? Perhaps we have failed on our own, how about enlisting some help? A way to instill hope is to realize recovery is not a question of ability; after all there are millions in recovery, but rather persistence and application.

Step 2 Promise → I will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

New Practice

Allow Solutions to Emerge

- *Quit making a big deal out of ordinary situations*
- *Stop Overreacting*
- *Do nothing*
- *Disengage from the Chaos*
- *How important is it?*

We can focus our mind on solutions...

Step Three

“Made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand Him.”

Step 3 Problem → Self Sufficiency

Step 3 Solution → God-Dependence

Step 3 Prayer → **"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!" (p. 63 BB)**
God, Take my will and my life. Guide me in my recovery. Show me how to live. AMEN (the step on p. 59 BB)

Step 3 Principle → Faith: This stage of action is to begin to employ the recovery skills being learned. You can seek out help, but it is also necessary to utilize it. Our job is to become willing to do the right thing. A simple way to view the 'next right thing' is don't engage in your behavior. Have faith it will work.

Step 3 Promise – I will comprehend the word serenity and I will know peace

New Practice

Let Go of Outcomes

- *You are responsible for making the effort, nothing more*
- *Don't look past your nose*
- *Stop worrying about the future*
- *Find joy right here, right now*

Step Four

“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of myself”

Step 4 Problem → Ignorance

Step 4 Solution → Honest Data Gathering

Step 4 Prayer → Dear God, it is I who have made my life a mess. I have done it, but I cannot undo it. My mistakes are mine and I will begin a searching and fearless moral inventory. I will write down my wrongs but I will also include that which is good. I pray for the strength to complete the task. **WHEN IN DOUBT**

"I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure." (BB p.13)

Step 4 Principle → Courage: This step is really about courage to honestly (see step 1) look at ourselves. Take a look at how our behavior has become warped to justify our continued behavior. We are here to take an honest assessment of ourselves.

Step 4 Promise → No Matter how far down the scale I have gone, I will see how my experience will benefit others

New Practice

Change your Mind

- *Recognize that YOU choose your thoughts*
- *If your thoughts are making you unhappy, change them*
- *Believing is Seeing*
- *Shift away from negatively thoughts instantly*

Additional 4th Step Prayers:

WHEN I AM DISTURBED BY THE CONDUCT (SYMPTOMS) OF OTHERS

"This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done."

(p. 67 BB)

God help me to show this person the same tolerance, pity and patience that I would Cheerfully grant a sick friend. This is a sick person, how can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.

(see above and p. 141 of 12&12)

WHEN I AM AFRAID

"We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be."

(p. 68 BB)

God, relieve me of this fear and direct my attention to what you would have me be. AMEN

(see above)

WHEN I AM AWARE OF MY OWN DEFECTS AND SEEKING GOD'S HELP TO CHANGE

"We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them. . . we ask God what we should do about each specific matter."

(p. 69 BB)

God mold my ideals in this particular area of my life and help me to live up to them. What should I do in each specific matter? Guide me God and give me strength to do right. AMEN

(see above)

Step Five

***“Admitted to God, to myself and to another human being
the exact nature of my wrongs”***

Step 5 Problem → Fear

Step 5 Solution → Acceptance, Courage

Step 5 Prayer → Higher Power, my inventory has shown me who I am yet I ask for your help in admitting my wrongs in another person and to You. Assure me and be with me in this step for without this step I cannot progress in my recovery. With Your help, I can do this and I will do it. **God I thank you from the bottom of my heart that I know you better. Help me become aware of anything I have omitted discussing with another person. Help me to do what is necessary to walk a free man at last. Amen (p. 75 BB)**

Step 5 Principle → Integrity: If we have truly done a thorough job of introspection and evaluation of our assets and shortcomings do we have the integrity to own up to it? It can be very difficult to be open and honest about our past behaviors. We accept the need for a dose of humility.

Step 5 Promise → That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear

New Practice

Responding vs. Reacting

- *Stop being so dependent on the opinions of others*
- *Avoid knee-jerk reaction – it is almost always wrong*
- *Detach from other people’s business*
- *Stop looking for someone to blame including yourself*
- *Don’t let the mood swings of others determine how you feel*

Step Six

“I am entirely ready to have God remove all my defects of character”

Step 6 Problem → Denial

Step 6 Solution → Trust

Step 6 Prayer → **God help me become willing to let go of all the things to which I still cling. Help me to be ready to let You remove all of these defects, that Your will and purpose may take their place. AMEN (p. 76 BB)**

Step 6 Principle → Willingness: Now that we have accomplished an inventory of the good and not so good aspects of our character and behavior, are we willing to change them? All of them? The important part in this 12th step principle is the willingness to let go of old behaviors.

Step 6 Promise → I will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in my fellows

New Practice

Give Up your Judgments

- *Your judgments reflect poorly on you*
- *Root out fear*
- *Your judgments imprison you*
- *Your judgments hinder your relationships*
- *Choose to be peaceful rather than right*
- *Stop judging – for your own sake*

Step Seven

“Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings”

Step 7 Problem → Arrogance

Step 7 Solution → Simplicity

Step 7 Prayer → **"I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost. I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch."(BB p. 13) "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." (BB p. 76)**

Step 7 Principle → Humility: Here we move further into action, in step 6 we became willing to let go of our old behaviors, now we ask for help in actually letting go. Can we learn to forgive ourselves?

Step 7 Promise → Self seeking will slip away

New Practice:

Remember you are Not in Control

- *Back off*
- *Attempt to control and you will fail*
- *Unburden yourself*
- *You chose the journey, now deal with it*
- *Your efforts at control only lead toward disharmony*

Step Eight

*“Made a list of all people I have harmed
and became willing to make amends to them all”*

Step 8 Problem → Guilt

Step 8 Solution → Restitution

Step 8 Prayer → Higher Power, I ask your help in making my list of all those I have harmed. I will take responsibility for my mistakes and be forgiving to others as you are forgiving to me. Grant me the willingness to begin restitution. **"We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes."(BB p. 76) God help me to become willing to sweep away the debris of self will and self reliant living. Thy will be done for this person as well as for me. AMEN (see above)**

Step 8 Principle → Discipline and Action: We are continuing to remove the barriers that can block forward sober growth. We are getting ready to sweep our side of the street clean. Make a list of all those people we have harmed both through actions and not being present to live up to obligations

Step 8 Promise → My whole attitude and outlook upon life will change

New Practice

Discover your Own Lessons

- *Get a life*
- *With someone else on your mind, you miss your own lesson*
- *You cannot hear your inner voice if your mind is on someone else*
- *Obsessing about others will make you sick*

Step Nine

*“I Made direct amends to such people wherever possible
except when to do so would injure them or others”*

Step 9 Problem → Ego

Step 9 Solution → Kindness, tolerance and love

Step 9 Prayer → Higher Power, I pray for the right attitude to make my amends, being ever mindful not to harm others in the process. I ask for your guidance in making direct amends. Most important I will continue to make amends by staying abstinent, helping others and going in spiritual progress. **God give me the strength and direction to do the right thing no matter what the consequences may be. Help me to consider others and not harm them in any way. Help me to consult with others before I take any actions that would cause me to be sorry. Help me to not repeat such behaviors. Show me the way of Patience, Tolerance, Kindliness, and Love and help me live the spiritual life. AMEN (p. 78-80 BB)**

Step 9 Principle → Forgiveness: Asking for the forgiveness of those we have intentionally or unintentionally injured is the order of the day. A key point here is to try to correct those injuries through action, not just words. It is highly recommended that guidance and help is utilized here. Asking forgiveness is not a gift to the other person, but rather an act of kindness from you.

Step 9 Promise → Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave me.

New Practice

Do No Harm

- *Do no verbal harm*
- *Make a daily commitment*
- *Criticism is not loving – refrain from it*
- *Do no physical harm*
- *Choose always to be helpful never hurtful*
- *No action, either harmful or helpful is not without effect*
- *Give up arguing, one argument at a time*

Step Ten

**“I continue to take personal inventory
and when I am wrong, promptly admit it.”**

Step 10 Problem → Procrastination

Step 10 Solution → Take Action

Step 10 Prayer → God, I pray I may continue to grow in understanding and effectiveness **God remove the Selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear that has cropped up in my life right now. Help me to discuss this with someone immediately and make amends quickly if I have harmed anyone. Help me to cease fight anything and anyone. Show me where I may be helpful to someone else. Help me react sanely; not cocky or afraid. How can I best serve You - Your will, not mine be done. AMEN(p. 84-5 BB). "How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." (p. 85 BB)**

Step 10 Principle → Acceptance: To be human is to make mistakes. Hopefully our journey has led us to the point where we can readily admit mistakes and accept ourselves for being imperfect. We must also learn not to judge others but accept them for who they are, not our vision of who they should be.

Step 10 Promise → I will intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle me.

New Practice

Quiet Your Mind

- *Any thought can be released*
- *Choose your thoughts wisely*
- *If a thoughts is Troubling you, choose another*
- *You cannot hear your inner guide without a quiet mind.*

Step Eleven

**“I sought through prayer and meditation
to improve my conscious contact with God as I understand Him,
praying only for His will for me and the power to carry that out”**

Step 11 Problem – Distrust

Step 11 Solution – Trust, Discipline

Step 11 Prayer – Higher Power as I understand You, I pray to keep my connection with you open and clear from daily confusion of life. **"As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day 'Thy will be done.' "**(p. 87-8 BB) **God, I'm agitated and doubtful right now. Help me to stop and remember that I've made a decision to let You be my God. Give me the right thoughts and actions. God save me from fear, anger, worry, self-pity or foolish decisions that Your will not mine be done. AMEN (BB pg 87-88)**

Step 11 Principle – Knowledge and Awareness: Here we search and become aware of following our path being aware of our purpose in life and actively pursuing it. I view this principle as just being aware, not being got up in the rush of life, making conscious effort to do the right thing and to be at peace.

Step 11 Promise – I will suddenly realize that God is doing for me what I could not do for myself

New Practice

Every Encounter is a Holy Encounter Respond Accordingly

- *No experience is accidental*
- *Try to find the lesson in every experience*
- *Everyone we meet is destined to be on our Journey*
- *Be Grateful for every experience*
- *Through our relationships with others, we heal our minds*

Step Twelve

*“Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps,
I tried to carry this message to alcoholics a
and to practice these principles in all my affairs”*

Step 12 Problem – Sloth

Step 12 Solution – Gratitude, trust, faith, tolerance, kindness, consideration

Step 12 Prayer – Dear God, my spiritual awakening continues to unfold.

Step 12 Principle – Service and Gratitude: Having brought about a personality change sufficient to remain in recovery; we are empowered to demonstrate the new principles by which we live, in our daily life through example. We seek out and are available to help others in need.

Step 12 Promise – Are these extravagant promises, I think not. They are being fulfilled in me – sometimes slowly, sometimes quickly, they will always materialize if I work for them.

New Practice

There are 2 voices in Your Mind – One is Wrong

- *Be vigilant about your choices*
- *Be ready to ask yourself, would I rather be peaceful or right?*
- *Become willing that is all it takes*
- *Each Day the process for change can begin again*
- *When you begin is up to you*

QUICK REVIEW – TAKE “IT THROUGH THE STEPS”....

Step 1. I AM POWERLESS OVER (fill in or write as a sentence):

(my feeling(s) _____ about (situation) _____)

AND MY LIFE HAS BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.

Step 2. Came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore me to sanity.

(Fill in or write as a sentence)

Feeling(s) _____ about _____

Step 3. MADE A DECISION to turn my (feeling(s) _____ about (situation) _____)

AND MY LIFE OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS I UNDERSTAND GOD.

Step 4. MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY (of my feelings regarding this situation)

A. I am feeling _____ about _____

B. Because: List all the causes _____

C. This affects my: _____

D. 1. What is my part in it? _____ 2.

What is my “payoff” or benefit for staying stuck in The Step 1 feelings and problem?

Step 5. ADMITTED TO GOD, TO MYSELF AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF MY WRONGS. Identify my defenses. List in a column, condense to 5 or less.

Step 6. WAS ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE ALL THESE “DEFECTS OF CHARACTER” (for this situation now) (go back to Step 1 if you need to)

Step 7. HUMBLY ASK GOD TO REMOVE MY SHORTCOMINGS. List the opposites for the “shortcomings” identified in Step 5.

Step 8. MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WHOM I HAD HARMED (with this specific issue) AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL.

Step 9. MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS. (within 24 hours)

Step 10. CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY (with an awareness of this as well as other issues) AND WHEN I AM WRONG PROMPTLY ADMIT IT.

Step 11. SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE MY CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD AS I UNDERSTAND GOD, PRAYING ONLY FOR THE KNOWLEDGE OF GOD’S WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT. (prayer and meditation for more knowledge, guidance and power regarding this issue as time passes and the situation as I evolve)

Step 12. HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS I TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO OTHERS AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL MY AFFAIRS. I need to practice using the principles of the Steps for all aspects of my life.

WORKING “IT” THROUGH THE STEPS

STEP 1. I ADMITTED I AM POWERLESS OVER (fill in or write whole sentence)

My feeling(s):

About (situation):

AND MY LIFE IS UNMANAGEABLE.

FOR EXAMPLE: I admit I am powerless over my resentment and frustration about Sally’s complaining all morning and my life has become unmanageable.

STEP 2

CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN MYSELF COULD RESTORE ME TO SANITY about my (Fill in or write as a sentence)

My feelings(s) of _____

about _____

SANITY: Seeing situations the way they really are and acting appropriately, rather than reacting only from my emotions.

STEP 3

MADE A DECISION TO TURN

My Feeling(s)

_____ about _____

AND MY LIFE OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD AS I UNDERSTAND GOD.

Note: this step says only that you are making a decision. The remaining steps help you to actually turn over your feelings about the situation and to find relief. You are not expected to know how to solve your problems all by yourself, or by willpower. Step 12 reminds us that the “spiritual awakening” happens “as the result of these steps”. It is not a precondition for using the steps. Some 12-Step members interpret this step as a meaning that we are turning the problem over to the step process itself.

You may use the **Third Step Prayer** (BB pg 63) and add the feeling(s) and situation as part of the prayer:

God I offer myself (and my feeling(s) of _____)
to Thee, to build with me and do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self
(and my feeling(s) of _____)
that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties (and my feeling(s) of _____)
witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love and Thy way of life. May I do Thy will always?

STEP 4.

MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY (of my feelings regarding this situation) The following inventory format follows the guidelines on pgs 64-68 in the Big Book

A. I am feeling _____ about _____

Often people find that by this step they have identified different feelings from those written in Step 1.
For example: I am really furious about Sally and her complaining.

B. Because: List all the causes (BB pg 65) You do not have to be rational or reasonable here. Give yourself room to write all the causes.

For example,

**She complained all morning.
And she always complains,
and I cannot stand complainers.
She should know better.
I liked having quiet in the morning and I miss that now.
She does not respect my space or consider my feelings
The other people are sympathetic to her and I am jealous about that
She reminds me of my sister who always whines to get her way
I am afraid that if I say anything, everyone will be mad at me.**

C. This affects my: (circle from the list and add others specific to this situation): self-esteem, self-image, security, ambition, pride, fear power, relationship with myself, relationship with others, relationship with my Higher Power, sex relations, guilt, ability to work, finances, serenity, usual way of doing things, etc., etc. (Big Book pages 64-65).

For example:

**This affects my self-esteem, fear, my relationship with Sally,
my ability to work, my relationships with other people, my
mornings, my serenity.**

D. 1. What is my part in it? **THIS IS THE KEY TO CHANGING YOURSELF AND RECOVERING.** How did I set myself up for this? Is my self-image causing me a problem? Check for expectations (or "should-ing" on yourself or others). "THE HIGHER MY EXPECTATIONS, THE LOWER MY SERENITY"

For Example:

**I expect her to be positive, to be quiet and not complain
I expect her and the others to know what I want and to give it to me**

**I expect her to know what I am thinking, even though I have not told her.
 I see myself as considerate and patient and she pushes my buttons
 I stay in the room with her and resist her and did not speak up.
 I let my feelings about my sister confuse how I see Sally.
 I expect myself to be strong enough to be able to deal with this.**

2. What is my payoff? Or, seeming benefit for staying stuck in the Step 1 feelings and problem? (circle those that apply, and add any others).

Some common payoffs:

- I don't have to say anything about how I feel.
- I can just blame
- I don't have to hold up a mirror to myself
- I don't have to change
- I can avoid taking risks
- If I change, I might have to see things differently.
- I get an excuse for being angry
- I can feel in control or powerful
- I don't have to be responsible for my part
- I can feel superior
- I can maintain my image
- I can procrastinate
- I can play a victim role
- I can get some people to agree with me or support me or connect with me in some way
- I can stay in a relationship or situation that has given me some security
- I don't have to risk honest communication
- It helps me set boundaries
- I can make others feel guilty
- It helps me not to experience (circle one)

Fear

&/or sadness

&/or helplessness

&/or hopelessness

&/or pain

&/or disappointment

&/or joy

&/or abandonment

&/or anger

&/or insecurity

&/or grief

&/or guilt

&/or other feelings, etc., etc.

Bottom Line: I Can Get an Excuse for My Addictive Behavior

STEP 5.

ADMITTED TO GO, TO MYSELF AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF MY WRONGS.

I reviewed all that I wrote for Step 4 to help identify my “wrongs” which are **involved in this specific situation.**

It is often appropriate to think of them not as “wrongs” or “defects” but as “defenses”. They are tendencies or traits I want to look at because they are not working well in my life now. In the past, they might have been, or seem to have been useful in protecting me. Now they are depriving me of serenity.

“Putting out of our minds the wrongs others have done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely... the inventory was ours, not the other man’s.” (BB page 67) ‘

For example: My traits are being judgmental, low self-esteem, expecting mind-reading, fear of saying how I feel and what I want, jealousy.

List traits here in a column
use

This space is for later

Then condense them to 5 or less

for Step 7 opposites

(You can use the back of pg 2 as a worksheet)

I do not need to beat myself by thinking I am bad and have defects.

However, I do need to acknowledge to my Higher Power, to myself and to another person that I have these traits. I try to do this within 24 hours. I do not have to give details of the situation to the other person, on the ‘exact nature’ of my “wrongs.”

STEP 6.

WAS ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE ALL THESE “DEFECTS” OF CHARACTER (only for this situation right now)

Sometimes this is the hardest of the steps. These traits have made my life unmanageable. Am I ready to let go of them **in this situation?** The next step can replace my old defenses with feelings and behaviors that **will enhance my life.** But, I must first be willing to let go of my present “defects”. I won’t have to remove these by myself. My Higher Power will help me if I become entirely ready and willing. The key is not **willpower** but **willingness.**

Sometimes I need to start the Step process again at this point with Step 1 being: **I am powerless over my unwillingness to let go of (specific traits) and my life has become unmanageable. (Bb pg 76)**

STEP 7.

HUMBLY ASKED GOD TO REMOVE MY SHORTCOMINGS.

List the opposites for the “shortcomings” or “defects” in the space across from them in the Step 7 space on the previous page. Reflection, meditation, and/or prayer can often help us know what the opposite traits are for each situation. (For example, the opposite of fear often is trust or faith; sometimes it is self-esteem; less often it is courage)

PRAYER IS CRUCIAL HERE. WE DO NOT DO THIS BY WILLPOWER.

Ask God to remove each shortcoming, then to replace each trait with its opposite. This request must be done humbly. Demands of God or of you will not bring true growth.

The Serenity Prayer can be very helpful. For example, “**God, grant me the serenity to accept that I am judgmental of Sally, and grant me the courage to have compassion and acceptance of her.**” Etc.

You can also use the 7th step pray (BB pg 76) filling in appropriately for each separate defect and its opposite:

“God 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 (and especially my (trait)....) Grant me the strength (and the opposite of the trait....) as I go from here, to do your bidding.”

You can also make your own personal prayer to God to remove your shortcomings. Write your Step 7 on the previous page.

For example:

Step 5

- being judgmental
- low self-esteem
- expecting mind-reading
- being defensive or expectations
- fear (of saying how I feel and what I want)
- jealousy

Step 7 sample opposites

- having compassion for Sally and acceptance of her
- belief that I am enough, does enough, and am lovable
- ability to know and express myself clearly, without attacking. Letting go of
- faith that I will be okay, no matter how others respond
- compassion for myself, and further Steps about jealousy

STEP 8.

MADE A LIST OF ALL PERSONS WHOM I HAD HARMED (with this specific issue) AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL.

Whom did I harm?

Usually I am on the list.

Pray for willingness to make amends.

Remember that the promises of the program come when you start to make amends.

Design a God who is strong enough to hold you while you make amends. See chapter “We Agnostics”: in the Big Book or Step 2 in the Step Book.

For example: Sally, myself and people around us

STEP 9.

MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.

Make amends within 24 hours if possible. Amends are more than just apologies. Often they are not apologies at all, but rather are a change in behavior or attitude. Any confession without changing behavior is a game.

Examine my intentions behind any sharing of information.

Does it support my new growth in any way?

Is it dumping?

Is it Masochistic?

Watch out for tendencies to be passive/aggressive.

Change means going into the unknown. I may find fear, anger, guilt or other feelings arising, tempting me to return to old habits. Such feelings can ruin my program if I do not recognize that I have choices. I can use the Steps again, focusing on these feelings.

I need to practice the opposite of each character defect even if I do not feel it. If I don not “act as if” I will not change. It may seem uncomfortable and fake at first, but it will work – the feeling will become genuine.

For example, If I do not feel like talking to Sally, I pray and do it anyway. I need to do the footwork and turn the results over to God.

Page 552 in the Big Book describes praying for the person you resent. Doing this when I have a resentment can help me transform my shortcomings and give me serenity.

If I always do what I always did, I will always get what I always got

The promises in the Big book with Step 9 PPS 83-84:

“If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness; We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will now

peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experiences can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle us. 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.

Examples of amends:

-I am going to pray and work to increase my compassion for both Sally and myself.

-I am going to make amends to myself and to Sally for being dishonest with her the next time she complains. I will be sure that I do not do any “put-downs” of her, but that I will be gentle.

-I am going to treat myself to a bath tonight

-I am going to keep praying to have the Step 7 traits replace the Step 5 ones

- I am going to be more pleasant at work.

Plans for amends:

STEPS 10, 11 and 12 are ongoing.

STEP 10.

CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY (with an awareness of this, as well as other issues) AND WHEN I AM WRONG PROMPTLY ADMIT IT.

In my daily inventory I review my recovery as seen in my attitudes and behaviors.

Am I working and praying to have the Step 7 positive traits and actions more a part of my life?
Have I made the amends I intended?

Or, are my “defects” growing strong again and my life become unmanageable?

A separate inventory checklist, made after writing Step 9 is a powerful tool. It can be written on the back of this page or on a separate sheet, or in a notebook. Remember “progress not perfection”.

Using the Steps brings great serenity and sanity about formerly troublesome issues. However it is unlikely that I will either completely or permanently “recovered” About all aspects on this issue. Overall I am “recovering” not “recovered” I need to continue in the future to take my own inventory about this issue and/or similar situation and when I am wrong promptly admit it.

STEP 11.

SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE MY CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD, AS I UNDERSTAND GOD, PRAYING ONLY FOR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD'S WILL FOR ME AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT.

This can include prayer and meditation for more knowledge, guidance and power regarding this issue as time passes and the situation and I evolve.

STEP 12.

HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS THE RESULT OF THESE STEPS, I TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO OTHERS AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL MY AFFAIRS.

Remember that the deepest, truest recovery and the spiritual awakening in a 12 Step Recovery Program comes “as a result of these steps.”

In order to maintain what I have and keep it growing I need to carry the message about my experience, strength and hope of using the Steps. I need to share it with others. And I need to practice using the principles of the Steps for all aspects of my life.