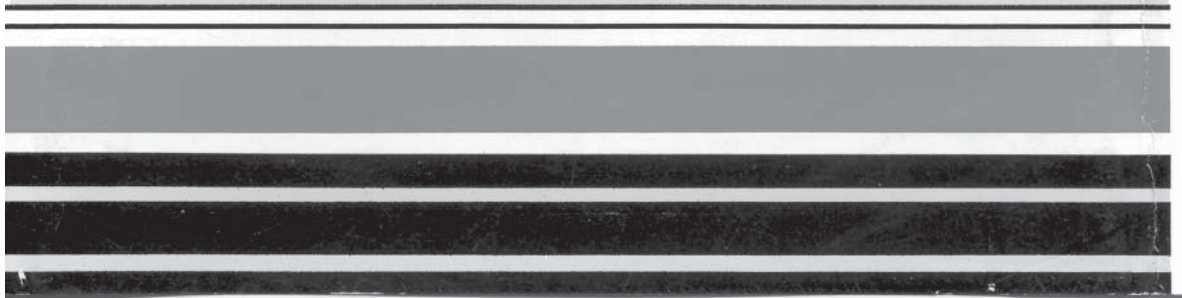


# Alcoholics Anonymous



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## **Intro for all classes**

**Chairperson:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a recovered alcoholic. Let's have a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

We would like to welcome you to Back to the 1940's, how AA worked in the beginning. More than fifty years ago after the publication of the Big Book, the recovery rate was 75%. AA's program, as practiced then, was very different from the program that is practiced today. The AA program is unchanged, but the way it is practiced has changed (repeat). To produce such an astounding recovery rate, what was done in the early days of AA?

Well, we are going to take an in-depth look at how AA worked in the 1940's. We've asked \_\_\_\_\_ (**commentator**) to read the AA Preamble as it appeared in the first edition of the Big Book in 1939:

**Commentator:** We are not an organization in the conventional sense of the word. There are no fees or dues whatsoever. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted.

**Chairperson:** Thank you \_\_\_\_\_. And with that statement, let's get started.

## **For first class only:**

**Chairperson:** Sponsorship is mandatory; you must have a sponsor through these four classes, not only to keep in line with the early AA's and the program which produced a 75% recovery rate, BUT, our experience shows, that sponsorship is vital to your success in recovery from alcoholism. If you do not have a sponsor then get one! If you do not have a sponsor for these four classes please raise your hand. If you are here and would be willing to be a sponsor please raise your hand. These classes are going to be kept as close as possible to the one hour time period. We will be doing a lot of jumping around within the pages of the Big Book. Quite a bit of movement, back and forth. We will be covering a lot of information and content. Let's be patient and tolerant and work together so we can explore the parameters of this class in the time frame allotted. Class is in session!

## **Opening statement for all classes:**

**Reader:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a recovered alcoholic, contingent on the maintenance of my Spiritual Condition daily.

**Commentator:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a recovered alcoholic, contingent on the maintenance of my Spiritual Condition daily. We are not experts, nor are we authorities on the Big Book of AA. We are just 3 ex-drunks who love to study the Big Book. Any commentary that is made throughout this study is just our opinions based on our interpretation of the Big Book. We do not need to open our books at this time, but we will let you know. On page 164 of the Big Book it reads...

**Reader:** "Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will disclose more to you and to us."

**Commentator:** Before we begin this class we will need to address one more thing. There is always going to be controversy when it comes to this book and it's message for one reason or another. Some will say it has to be rewritten, changed, or updated and then there is the God issue that it is written in the male gender and a lot of other controversial issues. It's as if the book should be changed to meet our own personal agendas. On page XI, the book tells us....

**Reader:** "There exists a sentiment against any radical changes being made in it."

**Commentator:** The point is, let's leave the book alone, and change our own attitudes toward the book, and from that perspective learn the recovery program that produced a 75% success rate back in the 1940's. Remember to keep an open mind, and don't worry 'cause nothing important will fall out!

**Chairperson:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am the **chairperson**, I will read from the 1944 pamphlet and we can listen to what is being read, take notes, use a highlighter, and if you have any questions, write them down, submit them to your sponsor or see one of us after the meeting to discuss them at length.

**Reader:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am the **reader**. I will read excerpts from the Big Book and we will follow along.

**Commentator:** And finally, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I will read **commentary** to what is studied, and give directions: Page numbers, line numbers, or paragraph numbers. That is how these classes are taught. Now listen carefully as \_\_\_\_\_ (**chairperson**) reads a very interesting item.

### THE TWELVE STEPS OF INSANITY

1. I believed I could control my drinking, and that I was master of my own life.
2. I believed that I was all-powerful, the center of the universe, and that I was sane and rational in every respect.
3. I decided to run my own life and expected my will to be carried out at all times.
4. I made a thorough and searching inventory of everyone else and found them lacking.
5. I admitted to no one, including myself, that there was anything wrong with me.
6. I sought through alcohol to remove all my responsibility and to escape the responsibility that is life.
- 7 I got drunk to remove all these shortcomings.
8. I made a list of all persons who had harmed me; whether real or imagined, and swore to get even.
9. I got even whenever possible, except when to do so would injure me.

10. I continued to find fault with the world and the people in it and swore I was always right.

11. I sought through lying, cheating, and stealing to improve myself at the expense of others, seeking only to get drunk and stay drunk.

12. Having had a complete moral physical, emotional and financial breakdown as a result of this kind of thinking and living, I tried to drag everyone I loved down to my level. And practiced these principles in all of my affairs.

**Chairperson:** These steps describe the practicing alcoholic. Can anyone identify with these? Do these steps sound familiar? Perhaps these 12 Steps of Insanity are so accurate you could add your name to each and every one?? The point is, that we hear a lot of talk about the idea that “Times have changed over the years”, “That things are different today”, AA needs to change with the times”. The truth about statements like these is that the illness of alcoholism produces the exact same symptoms that it has throughout the history of mankind .... Since man first crushed grapes. These 12 Steps of insanity, if you’re honest with yourself about them, give evidence beyond any doubt that there is an irrefutable connection between alcoholism in the 2000’s and alcoholism in the 1940’s. It is precisely the same and if that is true, then the solution to alcoholism must hold true also. Let’s take a look at how it was done so we can do it today.

**Commentator:** We are going back Into AA’s History to see how AA was practiced in the 1940’s. The program most of us are being exposed to day is not that same program. We have lost touch with that program which produced a 75% recovery rate. So, let’s try to reestablish that link with our AA past. It has been said that whenever a civilization or society declines or it perishes, there is always one condition present. **THEY FORGOT WHERE THEY CAME FROM.** With that statement let’s take a look at where the early AA’s come from. In the 1940’s most people that come into AA went to Introduction Classes. That is what this group is about: a basic classroom schoolbook study of the 12 steps of AA’s program of recovery. To keep in step with the early AA’s we will be referring to the pamphlet titled “Alcoholics Anonymous, an interpretation of the 12 Steps”, printed September 1944 (show pamphlet). This pamphlet is not conference approved. There was no conference and no traditions back in our history when this pamphlet and the Big Book were published and were being used. We will be taking the entire study of AA’s 12 steps out of the book titled “Alcoholics Anonymous”, first published April 1st, 1939 (show book). Now, let’s listen to what the pamphlet has to say about the pamphlet.

**Chairperson:** This is the preface to the 1944 pamphlet  
**“Preface”**

The following pages contain the basic material for the discussion meeting for Alcoholics only. These meetings are held for the purpose of acquainting both old and new members with the 12 Steps on which our program is based. So that all Twelve Steps may be covered in a minimum of time, they are divided into four classifications, and one evening each week will be devoted to each of the four subdivisions. Thus in one month any new man or woman can get the basis of our 12 suggested steps.

This is the Disclaimer to the 1944 pamphlet.

**“Disclaimer”**

The material contained herein is merely an outline of the program and is not intended to replace~~~

~~~~or supplant these 6 major items.

**Reader:** Item A

**Chairperson:** The careful reading and re - reading of the Big Book.

**Reader:** Item B

**Chairperson:** Regular attendance at weekly Group meetings.

**Reader:** Item C

**Chairperson:** Study of the Program

**Reader:** Item D

**Chairperson:** Daily practice of the program.

**Reader:** Item E

**Chairperson:** Reading of approved printed material on alcoholism.

**Reader:** Item F

**Chairperson:** Informal discussion with other members.

**Commentator:** So, this is how it used to be back in the 1940's...

**Reader:** First

**Commentator:** You were sponsored through the four classes.

**Reader:** Second

**Commentator:** You became an active member of Alcoholics Anonymous.

**Reader:** Third

**Commentator:** You sponsored the newcomer through the classes, and did this a couple of times.

**Reader:** Fourth

**Commentator:** You taught the classes. That's why it worked. That's why so many people got sober and stayed sober. There is no better way to learn and keep this program, than to teach it!! Let's listen as \_\_\_\_\_ (**chairperson**) reads from the 1944 Pamphlet. Here the pamphlet tells us what our part must be if we want to pursue our recovery from alcoholism.

**Chairperson:**

“Discussion Number 1”--“The Admission Phase”

This meeting covers Step Number One—”We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.”

This instruction is not a short cut to AA. It is an introduction, a help, a brief course in the fundamentals.

In order to determine whether or not a person has drifted from “social drinking” into pathological drinking, it is well to check over a list of three questions, which each member may ask himself and answer for himself. **WE MUST ANSWER, ONCE AND FOR ALL, THESE THREE PUZZLING QUESTIONS:**

**Reader:** Number one.

**Chairperson:** WHAT IS AN ALCOHOLIC?

**Reader:** Number two.

**Chairperson:** WHO IS AN ALCOHOLIC?

**Reader:** Number three.

**Chairperson:** AM I AN ALCOHOLIC?

To get the right answer, the prospective member must start this course of instruction with— THE THREE ESSENTIALS FOR RECOVERY.

**Reader:** Number one.

**Chairperson:** A WILLINGNESS TO LEARN. We must not have the attitude that “You’ve got to show me.”

**Reader:** Number two.

**Chairperson:** AN OPEN MIND. Forget any and all ideas or notions we already have. Set our opinions aside.

**Reader:** Number three.

**Chairperson:** COMPLETE HONESTY. It is possible, not at all probable, that we may fool somebody else. But, we MUST be honest with ourselves, and it is a good time to start being honest with others. Now, let’s open our books to Page XI, second paragraph, to read what the Big Book has to say about the Big Book.

Because this book has become the basic text for our society and has helped such large numbers of alcoholic men and women to recovery, there exists a sentiment against any radical changes being made in it. Therefore, the first portion of this volume, describing the AA recovery program.

**Reader:** which is the Chapter, “The Doctor’s Opinion” and the first 103 pages has been left untouched.

**Commentator:** In commentary to this: The information in this book has helped large numbers of alcoholics to recovery. It is our text book, and this text book describes the AA recovery program. Go to Page XIII, line 1, to continue to read what the book says about the book.

**Chairperson:** This is the Foreword as it appeared in the first printing of the first edition in 1939. We of Alcoholics Anonymous are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics Precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book. For them, we hope these pages will prove so convincing that no further authentication will be necessary.

**Commentator:** The book tells us we can learn precisely how to recover from alcoholism The book is our teacher, this meeting is the classroom,, and we are the students. Learning to show other alcoholics Precisely how we recovered is the main purpose of this book. The word precisely means: NO VARIATION!! Now, there are a lot of interesting ideas about recovery from alcoholism floating around the rooms of AA, but, be forewarned that a lot of these interesting ideas are not in this book. Consider this, the early AA’s pioneered this recovery program. They lived it first, worked out all~~~



~~~the kinks, and then wrote it down in this book. The program in this book works precisely the way it is outlined. The only thing we can add to this proven recovery program is action. Let's take another look at what the book says about the book. Go to Page 17, last paragraph.

**Reader:** The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer from alcoholism.

**Commentator:** The book tells us what we can absolutely agree upon: That the AA program is in this book. Our concern is that a lot of people don't know this or don't hear about AA's program. This is why we are using this book, for it carries the only solution to alcoholism. Go to Page 18, line 1, to read about our illness and let's see if you can identify with this paragraph.

**Reader:** An illness of this sort—and we have come to believe it is an illness—involves those about us in a way no other human sickness can. If a person has cancer, all are sorry for him and no one is angry or hurt. But not so with the alcoholic illness, for with it there goes...

**Commentator:** Number one..

**Reader:** annihilation of all the things worthwhile in life.

**Commentator:** Number two..

**Reader:** It engulfs all whose lives touch the sufferer's.

**Commentator:** Number three..

**Reader:** It brings misunderstanding,

**Commentator:** Number four..

**Reader:** fierce resentment,

**Commentator:** Number five.,

**Reader:** financial insecurity,

**Commentator:** Number six..

**Reader:** disgusted friends and employers,

**Commentator:** Number seven..

**Reader:** warped lives of blameless children,

**Commentator:** Number eight..

**Reader:** sad wives and parents—anyone can increase the list.

**Commentator:** Can you identify or maybe add to the list???

**Reader:** We hope this volume will inform and comfort those who are, or who may be, affected. There are many.

**Commentator:** So, the Big Book informs and comforts us. Now, let's continue to read and study about our illness. Go to Page 44, line 4.



**Reader:** If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if, when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic.

**Commentator:** Let's read this again but look at this statement in terms of the definition of an alcoholic... Ask yourself these TWO questions...Number one

**Reader:** If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely...

**Commentator:** And number two...

**Reader:** or, if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic. If that is the case, you may be suffering from an illness, which only a spiritual experience will conquer.

**Commentator:** What we just read tells us what constitutes an alcoholic, and it also tells us what the solution is; a spiritual experience. We are going to read and study about the spiritual solution, because that is what is talked about throughout this whole book. Go to Page 45, line 9, to read about the problem.

**Reader:** 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 enable you to find a Power greater than yourself, which will solve your problem.

**Commentator:** What is its main object?? Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself, which will solve your problem. 'That means we have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. Moral meaning truthful.

**Reader:** And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God.

**Commentator:** So you see, this book provides a spiritual solution to the illness of alcoholism. Lack of Power is the problem, then we need to find the power to overcome powerlessness. The book tells us exactly where this Power is to be found. Go to Page 55, second paragraph.

**Reader:** Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself. We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our makeup; just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis, it is only there that He may be found. It was so with us.

**Commentator:** To put this another way, in terms of the solution to our alcoholism, we are looking for a Power greater than ourselves, and that Power is inside of us. In terms of the problem, the book tells us that we are blocked off from this Power. It tells us it may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, first and foremost, ALCOHOL!! It blocks us off from the Power. We are living on self-will by drinking alcohol. The whole idea is to get from self-will, the problem, to~~~

~~~God's-will, the solution. Alcohol is blocking us. We will take care of that in Step One. The other things that are blocking us will be dealt with later on, so that we can break through the barrier of self-will, and find out what God's plan is for us. Go to the Title Page.

**Reader:** Alcoholics Anonymous-The Story of How Many Thousands of Men and Women Have Recovered from Alcoholism

**Commentator:** HAVE WHAT??

**Reader:** Have recovered from alcoholism!!

**Commentator:** This is a powerful statement, but misunderstood. Notice the word Recovered, it is not by mistake that it is mentioned; it is mentioned 23 times in this Book

**Chairperson:** Trivia. The word Recovering is mentioned two times in the Big Book. it does not occur at all in the part of the text that has to do with the Recovery Program, (Page XXIII through Page 103). Whereas the word RECOVERED is masterfully used twelve times within this part of the volume to describe the alcoholic who has completed the process of recovery and continues to persevere ...to grow. Interesting fact isn't it.

**Commentator:** Lets look at what the word recovered means. The book tells us that there are four ways of categorizing the alcoholic.

**Reader:** Number one...

**Commentator:** "Real"

**Reader:** Number two...

**Commentator:** "Dry"

**Reader:** Number three...

**Commentator:** "Recovering"

**Reader:** Number four...

**Commentator:** 'RECOVERED'. Go to page 21 line 8, to read about the REAL alcoholic. The book gives us three pieces of evidence, a test, if you will, of what qualifies as an alcoholic?

**Reader:** But what about the real alcoholic?

**Commentator:** Number one...

**Reader:** He may start off as a moderate drinker;

**Commentator:** Number two...

**Reader:** He may or may not become a continuous hard drinker;

**Commentator:** Number three...

**Reader:** but at some stage of his drinking career he begins to lose all control of his liquor consumption, once he starts to drink.

**Commentator:** And next, here are eleven points to consider:

**Reader:** Here is a fellow, who has been puzzling you.

**Commentator:** Number one...

**Reader:** especially in his lack of control.

**Commentator:** Number two..

**Reader:** He does absurd, incredible, tragic things while drinking,

**Commentator:** Number three...

**Reader:** He is a real Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde.

**Commentator:** Number four...

**Reader:** He is seldom mildly intoxicated. He is always more or less insanely drunk.

**Commentator:** Number five...

**Reader:** His disposition while drinking resembles his normal nature but little.

**Commentator:** Number six...

**Reader:** He may be one of the finest fellows in the world. Yet let him drink for a day, and he frequently becomes disgustingly, and even dangerously anti-social.

**Commentator:** Number seven...

**Reader:** He has a positive genius for getting tight at exactly the wrong moment, particularly when some important decision must be made or engagement kept.

**Commentator:** Number eight...

**Reader:** He is often perfectly sensible and well balanced concerning everything except liquor, but in that respect he is incredibly dishonest and selfish.

**Commentator:** Number nine...

**Reader:** He often possesses special abilities, skills, and aptitudes, and has a promising career ahead of him. He uses his gifts to build up a bright outlook for his family and himself, and then pulls the structure down on his head by a senseless series of sprees.

**Commentator:** Number ten...

**Reader:** He is the fellow who goes to bed so intoxicated he ought to sleep the clock Around. Yet early next morning he searches madly for the bottle he misplaced the night before.

**Commentator:** Number eleven...

**Reader:** If he can afford it, he may have liquor concealed all over his house to be certain no one gets his entire supply away from him to throw down the waste pipe.

**Commentator:** CAN ANYONE IDENTIFY?? This is the real alcoholic. Someone who does not have control over their drinking. A real Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. I'm sure we all know about ~~~

~~~this type of alcoholic. Go to Page 151, last paragraph, to continue to explore the four categories, and the book tells us about the dry alcoholic.

**Reader:** Now and then a serious drinker, being dry at the moment says, “I don’t miss it at all. Feel better. Work better. Having a better time.” As ex-problem drinkers, we smile at such a sally. We know our friend is like a boy whistling in the dark to keep up his spirits. He fools himself. Inwardly he would give anything to take half a dozen drinks and get away with them. He will presently try the old game again, for he isn’t happy about his sobriety.

**Commentator:** Now, this means: If we are not working and living AA’s program of recovery, precisely shown to us in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, then we are dry and we will try the old game again. We are living with untreated alcoholism. Next, we will read about the recovering alcoholic. The word recovering is clearly defined. Go to Page 122, line 1. This is where the word recovering is mentioned. (It is also mentioned on Page 334. These are the only two places in the whole Big Book where the word occurs... interesting isn’t it?)

**Reader:** Our women folk have suggested certain attitudes a wife may take with the husband who is recovering.

**Commentator:** Go to the last paragraph on this page, and one of these attitudes is: the stopping of drinking, or....

**Reader:** Cessation or drinking is but the first step away from a highly strained, abnormal condition.

**Commentator:** For the definition of the recovering alcoholic, go to Page 127, top of the page.

**Reader:** The family must realize that dad, though marvelously improved, is still convalescing. They should be thankful he is sober and able to be of this world once more. Let them praise his progress. Let them remember that his drinking wrought all kinds of damage that may take long to repair. If they sense these things, they will not take so seriously his periods of crankiness, depression, or apathy, which will disappear when there is tolerance, love, and spiritual understanding.

**Commentator:** So, what we just read tells us there is more to the solution to our alcoholism, than just stopping drinking. Just stopping, is only the first step away from the problem, and only part of the first step to the solution. The definition reads: Recovering is marvelously improved, convalescing, sober, able, progress, may take long to repair periods of crankiness, depression, or apathy. It also says these things will disappear when there is spiritual understanding. Now, let’s read the definition of recovered. Let’s take a very close look at what it means to be a recovered alcoholic. There are eighteen points to consider. Go to the bottom of Page 84, last paragraph.

**Chairperson:** Number 1

**Reader:** And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol.

**Chairperson:** Number two..

**Reader:** For by this time sanity will have returned.

**Chairperson:** Number three..

**Reader:** We will seldom be interested in liquor.

**Chairperson:** Number four..

**Reader:** If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame.

**Chairperson:** Number five

**Reader:** We react sanely and normally,

**Chairperson:** Number six..

**Reader:** and we will find that this has happened automatically.

**Chairperson:** Number seven..

**Reader:** We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it.

**Chairperson:** Number eight..

**Reader:** We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation.

**Chairperson:** Number nine..

**Reader:** We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality—safe and protected.

**Chairperson:** Number ten..

**Reader:** We have not even sworn off.

**Chairperson:** Number eleven..

**Reader:** Instead, the problem has been removed.

**Chairperson:** Number twelve..

**Reader:** It does not exist for us.

**Chairperson:** Number thirteen..

**Reader:** We are neither cocky nor are we afraid.

**Chairperson:** Number fourteen..

**Reader:** That's how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

**Chairperson:** Number fifteen..

**Reader:** It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels.

**Chairperson:** Number sixteen..

**Reader:** We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe.

**Chairperson:** Number seventeen..

**Reader:** We are not cured of alcoholism.

**Chairperson:** Number eighteen..

**Reader:** What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.

**Commentator:** Let me offer the group an analogy about the recovered alcoholic...Take the gunshot victim for example. He gets shot, goes through a period of recovery, survives the affliction, is recovered from the gunshot, BUT, is not bullet proof. Get the idea? Interesting, isn't it? This is the mind-set, attitudes and definition of the recovered alcoholic: sane, neutral, safe, protected, and in fit spiritual condition. WE ARE NOT CURED of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. We have broken down the alcoholic into four categories, and the question is, WHICH CATEGORY DO YOU FIT INTO??

**Reader:** Number one...

**Commentator:** "Real"

**Reader:** Number two...

**Commentator:** "Dry"

**Reader:** Number three...

**Commentator:** "Recovering"

**Reader:** Number four...

**Commentator:** "Recovered". Go to the page marked Contents. As we continue to study, let's keep in mind that the Big Book is written in such a way that it assumes the reader knows nothing about the subject: Recovery from Alcoholism.

**Reader:** We will be covering Steps 1 through 12 in these four classes, which are found the Big Book, Pages XXIII through 103. This is AA's program of recovery from alcoholism. 111 pages are broken down into three main parts... The contents give an outline being:  
THE DOCTOR'S OPINION (Beginning on Page xxiii) CHAPTER I—BILL'S STORY

**Commentator:** These discuss the problem, lack of power and alcoholism.

**Reader:** CHAPTER 2—THERE IS A SOLUTION  
CHAPTER 3—MORE ABOUT ALCOHOLISM  
CHAPTER 4—WE AGNOSTICS

**Commentator:** These discuss the solution: GOD —the Power to overcome powerlessness.

**Reader:** CHAPTER 5—HOW IT WORKS  
CHAPTER 6—INTO ACTION  
CHAPTER 7—WORKING WITH OTHERS (ending on Page 103)

**Commentator:** These discuss AA's program. The Twelve Steps—or the action necessary to recover How to find the Power, use it, and keep it. Go to Page XXVI, first paragraph, to read what the Doctor's Opinion states about our alcoholism.

**Reader:** We believe, and so suggested a few years ago, that the action of alcohol on these chronic alcoholics is a manifestation of an allergy; that the phenomenon of craving is limited to this class and never occurs in the average temperate drinker. These allergic types can never safely use alcohol in any form at all; and once having formed the habit and found they cannot break it, once having lost their self-confidence, their reliance upon things human, their problems pile up on them and become astonishingly difficult to solve.

**Commentator:** The Doctor tells us, in terms of the physical aspect of our alcoholism; we have a physical allergy to alcohol and a physical craving as the direct result of consuming alcohol. So why do we drink? Let's see if anyone can identify with these eight symptoms. The last paragraph on this page tells us... Number one...

**Reader:** Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol.

**Commentator:** Number two...

**Reader:** The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate true from the false.

**Commentator:** Number three...

**Reader:** To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one.

**Commentator:** Number four...

**Reader:** They are restless, irritable, and discontented,

**Commentator:** Number five...

**Reader:** unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks—drinks which they see others taking with impunity.

**Commentator:** Number six...

**Reader:** After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree

**Commentator:** Number seven...

**Reader:** emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again.

**Commentator:** Number eight...

**Reader:** This is repeated over and over,

**Commentator:** CAN ANYONE IDENTIFY?? Let's continue...and the Doctor offers us a glimpse of the solution.

**Reader:** and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.

**Commentator:** Consider this, there are many reasons for taking a drink, and many reasons for continuing to drink. One thing for sure, when it comes to alcoholics, we have one thing in common, WE ABSOLUTELY CANNOT START DRINKING WITHOUT DEVELOPING THE PHENOMENON OF CRAVING. Now, let's explore this phenomenon a little further. The last~~~



~~~~paragraph on this page reads:

**Reader:** I do not hold with those who believe that alcoholism is entirely a problem of mental control. I have had many men who had, for example, worked a period of months on some problem or business deal, which was to be settled on a certain date, favorably to them. They took a drink a day or so prior to the date, and then the phenomenon of craving at once became paramount to all other interests so that the important appointment was not met. These men were not drinking to escape; they were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control.

**Commentator:** Could you please repeat this phrase again?

**Reader:** These men were not drinking to escape; they were drinking to overcome a craving beyond their mental control. There are many situations, which arise out of the phenomenon of craving, which cause men to make the supreme sacrifice rather than to continue to fight.

**Commentator:** Next, the Doctor tells us about the classifications of the alcoholic. He describes in brief, five types. Let's continue reading. Start with the 2nd paragraph this same page.

**Reader:** The classification of alcoholics seems most difficult, and in much detail is outside the scope of this book.

**Commentator:** Number one...

**Reader:** There are, of course, the psychopaths who are emotionally unstable. We are all familiar with this type. They are always "going on the wagon for keeps." They are over-remorseful and make many resolutions, but never a decision.

**Commentator:** Number two...

**Reader:** There is the type of man who is unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink. He plans various ways of drinking. He changes his brand or his environment.

**Commentator:** Number three...

**Reader:** There is the type who always believes that after being entirely free from alcohol or a period of time he can take a drink without danger.

**Commentator:** Number four...

**Reader:** There is the manic-depressive type, who is, perhaps, the least understood by his friends, and about whom a whole chapter could be written.

**Commentator:** Number five...

**Reader:** Then there are types entirely normal in every respect except in the effect alcohol has upon them. They are often able, intelligent, friendly people.

**Commentator:** So, WHICH TYPE ARE YOU??

**Reader:** Number one...

**Commentator:** The one who is always going on the wagon for keeps?

**Reader:** Number two...

**Commentator:** The one who is unwilling to admit?

**Reader:** Number three...

**Commentator:** The one who abstains for a while?

**Reader:** Number four...

**Commentator:** The least understood type?

**Reader:** or, Number five...

**Commentator:** The one who is entirely normal, but affected. Go to the next to the last paragraph on this same page. The Doctor tells us in summary...

**Reader:** All these, and many others have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy, which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated.

**Commentator:** So, we cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. We have an allergy to alcohol. But, that is not the whole story. Let's read about the mental component of our alcoholism. Go to Page 30, line one.

**Reader:** MOST OF US have been unwilling to admit we were real alcoholics. No person likes to think he is bodily and mentally different from his fellows. Therefore, it is not surprising that our drinking careers have been characterized by countless vain attempts to prove we could drink like other people. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death.

**Commentator:** We shouldn't be drinking alcohol but our minds tell us it is O.K. to drink. That is what kills so many alcoholics. The mental obsession that some day, some how, some way, they will be able to drink normally. IT IS NEVER GOING TO HAPPEN!! Go back to Page XXVIII, count six lines up from the bottom, to get a glimpse of Step One.

**Reader:** The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence.

**Commentator:** Skip down, two lines.

**Reader:** the general opinion seems to be that most chronic alcoholics are doomed.

**Commentator:** These two medical opinions from the 1940's, were true then and are true today!! So, we have established that as alcoholics we have a physical allergy, and a mental obsession and this illness leaves us doomed. Let's sum this up by looking at two points of major importance.

**Reader:** Number one...

**Commentator:** THE FACT FOR ALCOHOLICS.

**Reader:** Number two..

**Commentator:** THE MAIN PROBLEM FOR ALCOHOLICS. Go to Page 24, first paragraph. This is the FACT FOR ALCOHOLICS.

**Reader:** The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so-called will power becomes practically nonexistent. We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink.

**Commentator:** Let's read this whole statement again.

**Reader:** The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so called will power becomes practically nonexistent. We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink.

**Commentator:** We are not normal and are never gonna be! We are abnormal drinkers! Go back a page to Page 23 to read about THE MAIN PROBLEM FOR US ALCOHOLICS. Count down five lines from the top at the page.

**Reader:** The main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body.

**Commentator:** Did you know that for most alcoholics, skid row is between our ears?

**Chairperson:** Trivia time...Did you know that the word "I" is mentioned 7,214 times in this book? We are going to go through the steps and recover from this hopeless state of "I" and hopeless state of mind and body. In Bill's Story, Chapter 1, we briefly explore the problem as well as the solution. In overview, Bill describes his recovery process. He was a low bottom drunk. He was hopeless. He had been to the hospital for detox three times. Prior to his final trip, in December 1934, he had not worked in years. His wife supported him. All he did was drink. Some of us might say, I never went down that far, or I was never that bad. When it comes to alcoholism this attitude of being unique can kill!! AA is not about comparing or competition. You can save those attitudes for the sports arena. The key here is similarities! Listen and identify. For it is the things that we have in common that will aid us on the road to recovery. Bill took the steps in Chapter One. Let's look carefully and we will see the essence of the Twelve Steps in Bill's personal recovery. Go to Page 8, line 8, Bill's First Step.

**Reader:** No words can tell of the loneliness and despair I found in the bitter morass of self-pity. Quicksand stretched around me in all directions. I had met my match. I had been overwhelmed. Alcohol was my master.

**Commentator:** Go to Page 12, fourth paragraph. Bill's Second Step.

**Reader:** It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning. I saw that growth could start from that point.

**Commentator:** And on Page 13, Bill takes the rest of the steps with his sponsor, Ebby Thatcher,~~~

~~~at Towns Hospital, New York, December of 1934. We will start with the second paragraph and continue through the rest of this page, just follow along moving down the page. Step Three...

**Reader:** There 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.

**Commentator:** Same line, Step Four...

**Reader:** I ruthlessly faced my sins

**Commentator:** Same line, Steps Six and Seven..

**Reader:** and became willing to have my newfound Friend take them away, root and branch.

**Commentator:** Next paragraph, Step Five...

**Reader:** I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies.

**Commentator:** Same line, Step Eight..

**Reader:** We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment.

**Commentator:** Same line, Step Nine..

**Reader:** Expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals, admitting my wrong. Never was I to be critical of them. I was to right all such matter to the utmost of my ability.

**Commentator:** Next paragraph, Step Ten..

**Reader:** I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within.

**Commentator:** Next line, Step Eleven..

**Reader:** I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems, as He would have me.

**Commentator:** Next paragraph, Step Twelve..

**Reader:** My friend promised when these things were done I would enter upon a new relationship with my Creator; that I would have the elements of a way of living which answered all my problems.

**Commentator:** Turn to Page 14, second paragraph. Bill describes his spiritual experience.

**Reader:** These were revolutionary and drastic proposals, but the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric. There was a sense of victory, followed by such a peace and serenity, as I had never known. There was utter confidence. I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountaintop blew through and through. God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound.

**Commentator:** Let's look at this process in terms of timing. Bill checked into the Towns Hospital in New York, on December 11, 1934 and was discharged on December 18, 1934. This means he was detoxed, completed the steps with his sponsor, and had a spiritual awakening in seven days! Now, there were no twelve Steps at that time, there were six tenants or beliefs from the "Oxford Group", that our Twelve Steps of today are based upon. If you want to know more about the~~~

~~~~Six Original Steps, they are found on Page 292 of the Big Book. The point is that Bill wrote the book. He wrote the book on how to take the steps and when to take the steps. Bill never drank again. This idea of taking a step a year, or don't bother with the steps your first year, or just do the steps whenever or however you want, and a whole lot of do it yourself methods and interesting ideas about the steps, NONE OF THIS IS IN THE BOOK!! What is in this book is: precise directions, requirements, time lines, and promises for each individual step. Let's follow these carefully so we can complete the process, and bring about the psychic change sufficient enough to produce our recovery from alcoholism. Next, let's listen as ( ) (Chairperson) reads a summary from the 1944 pamphlet. This reading condenses everything we have studied up to this point and brings this study to 12 points of resolve.

**Chairperson:** "WE ADMIT" If, after carefully considering the foregoing, we ADMIT we are an alcoholic, we must realize that—Once a person becomes a pathological drinker, he can never again become a controlled drinker; and—from that point on, is limited to just two alternatives:

**Reader:** Number one...

**Chairperson:** TOTAL PERMANENT ABSTINENCE.

**Reader:** Number two...

**Chairperson:** CHRONIC ALCOHOLISM WITH ALL OF THE HANDICAPS AND PENALTIES IT IMPLIES. In other words—we have gone past the point WHERE WE HAD A CHOICE. All we have left is a DECISION to make. We resolve to do something about it!!! And here we have the Twelve Points of Resolve:

**Reader:** Number one...

**Chairperson:** WE MUST CHANGE OUR WAY OF THINKING.

**Reader:** Number two...

**Chairperson:** We must realize that each morning when we wake, we are potential drunkards for that day.

**Reader:** Number three...

**Chairperson:** We resolve that we will practice AA for the 24 hours of that day.

**Reader:** Number four...

**Chairperson:** We must study the other eleven Steps of the Program and practice each and every one.

**Reader:** Number five...

**Chairperson:** Attend the regular Group Meeting each week without fail.

**Reader:** Number six..

**Chairperson:** Firmly ..believe that by practicing AA faithfully each day, we will achieve sobriety.

**Reader:** Number seven...

**Chairperson:** Believe that we can be free from alcohol as a problem.

**Reader:** Number eight...

**Chairperson:** Contact another member before taking a drink—NOT AFTER. Tell him what bothers you—talk it over with him freely.

**Reader:** Number nine...

**Chairperson:** Work the Program for ourselves alone—not for our wife, children, friends or for our job.

**Reader:** Number ten...

**Chairperson:** Be absolutely honest and sincere.

**Reader:** Number eleven...

**Chairperson:** Be fully open minded—no mental reservations.

**Reader:** Number twelve...

**Chairperson:** Be fully willing to work the program. Nothing good in life comes without work. Go to Page 30, second paragraph, for Step One.

**Commentator:** Here the book gets to the heart of Sep One. We are shown six requirements to Step One. Number one...

**Reader:** We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery.

**Commentator:** Again, what step is this?

**Reader:** This is the first step in recovery.

**Commentator:** Number two...

**Reader:** The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.

**Commentator:** Number three...

**Reader:** We alcoholics are men and women who have lost the ability to control our drinking.

**Commentator:** Number four...

**Reader:** We know that no real alcoholic ever recovers control. All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals—usually brief—were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization.

**Commentator:** Number five...

**Reader:** We are convinced to .a man that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness.

**Commentator:** Number six...

**Reader:** Over any considerable period we get worse, never better.

**Commentator:** Let's continue to study some conclusions about Step One. Next paragraph, same page, there are eight conclusions. Number one...

**Reader:** We are like men who have lost their legs; they never grow new ones.

**Commentator:** Number two...

**Reader:** Neither does there appear to be any kind of treatments, which will make alcoholics of our kind like other men.

**Commentator:** Number three...

**Reader:** We have tried every imaginable remedy.

**Commentator:** Number four..

**Reader:** In some instances there has been brief recovery, followed by a still worse relapse.

**Commentator:** Number five...

**Reader:** Physicians who are familiar with alcoholism agree there is no such thing as making a normal drinker out of an alcoholic. Science may accomplish this, but it hasn't done so yet.

**Commentator:** Number six...

**Reader:** Despite all we can say, many who are real alcoholics are not going to believe they are in that class.

**Commentator:** Number seven...

**Reader:** By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule, therefore nonalcoholic.

**Commentator:** Number eight....

**Reader:** If anyone who is showing inability to control his drinking can do the right-about-face and drink like a gentleman, our hats are off to him. Heaven knows we have tried hard enough and long enough to drink like other people!

**Commentator:** Do YOU fully concede? Have YOU learned YOUR lesson when it comes to alcohol? Have YOU finally admitted these conclusions to yourself? Have YOU achieved self-honesty? Let's make a final review of Step One. Consider these following statements...

**Reader:** Number one...

**Commentator:** "We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics."

**Reader:** Number two...

**Commentator:** "That the delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed."

**Reader:** Number three...

**Commentator:** "Have lost the ability to control our drinking."

**Reader:** Number four...

**Commentator:** "That no real alcoholic ever recovers control."



**Reader:** Number five...

**Commentator:** “That alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness.”

**Reader:** Number six...

**Commentator:** “Over any considerable period we get worse, never better.”

**Commentator:** If we can identify with these statements and honestly believe them to be the truth about ourselves and our lives, in other words, with the principle of self-honesty, then THIS IS WHO WE ARE!! The time line and requirements for Step One have been met. But, if you are not convinced of Step One, then let’s read from Pages 31 and 32, and you can draw your own conclusions. Beginning with the last paragraph on Page 31.

**Reader:** We do not like to pronounce any individual as alcoholic, but you can quickly diagnose yourself. Step over to the nearest barroom and try some controlled drinking. Try to drink and stop abruptly. Try it more than once. It will not take long for you to decide, if you are honest with yourself about it. It may be worth a bad case of jitters if you get a full knowledge of your condition.

**Commentator:** What we want to do right now is ask the group—ARE WE READY TO TAKE STEP ONE? It is decision-making time! Yes or No. We have explored the requirements and time line for Step One and the directions read “We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.” Let’s go around the room individually and take Step One. You can pass or play, NO ONE IS BEING FORCED, maybe you are not ready. My name is \_\_\_\_\_, I am powerless over alcohol and could not manage my own life.

(Go around the room, take Step One)

That’s it!! That is Step One, right out of the Big Book. But we are promised something as the result of Step One. Go to Page 58, line one. This is the First Step Promise.

**Reader:** RARELY HAVE we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

**Commentator:** So, we are promised that rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path, and that many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

**Chairman:** In summary, Step One is that we conclude and concede to our innermost selves that we are the problem and the road we took in life developed into a total mess. Step One is discovering who we are: an alcoholic! Step One is self-honesty, self-reflection, self-knowledge, admission, powerlessness and unmanageability, physical, mental, emotional, social, sexual, financial, and spiritual bankruptcy.

Now, nowhere in the Big Book does it tell us to stop drinking. If we are powerless, have met ~~~

~~~~our match have been overwhelmed, and alcohol is our master, then in no way, shape, or form can we drink alcohol successfully. Nor, can we NOT drink alcohol successfully. We are powerless and beyond human aid on both sides of the fence!! To drink or not to drink is simply impossible for us. Remember, alcoholism comes in people, not in bottles!

And that leaves us with an obvious suspicion, and a major question to be answered... if we cannot, and nothing human can, what's the solution to all of this? The solution is simple and easy: Take all the rest of the Steps as soon as possible, immediately, nonstop, till they are completed. Do the best you can with what you have. The most important thing is that we do not need to understand all of this 12 Step stuff. We get sober and stay sober by one thing only ~ACTION~!!

So, we get active first in the steps while attending meetings as a secondary priority, then as time passes, we will begin to feel better, think better, and live the good life, a life of spiritual understanding and growth and effectiveness. 1st we imitate, 2nd we feel better, 3rd we think better, 4th we live better and 5th we repeat the process for the rest of our lifetimes in Steps 10, 11 & 12, then we are recovered alcoholics contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.

Next week's class will be Steps 2, 3, 4, and 5. Homework for this class is: read and discuss with your sponsor, the Chapter—"The Doctor's Opinion" and Pages 1 through 43. This way you will be current with the class when we move on from Step One. If you have any question or comments, or points of discussion, talk with your sponsor. Thank you.

Tradition number 7 says we are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. We will now pass the basket in honor of the 7th tradition.

**Close with the Lord's Prayer**

## Intro for Class Two

**Chairperson:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a recovered alcoholic. Let's have a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

We would like to welcome you to Back to the 1940's, how AA worked in the beginning. More than fifty years ago after the publication of the Big Book, the recovery rate was 75%. AA's program, as practiced then, was very different from the program that is practiced today. The AA program is unchanged, but the way it is practiced has changed (repeat). To produce such an astounding recovery rate, what was done in the early days of AA?

Well, we are going to take an in-depth look at how AA worked in the 1940's. We've asked \_\_\_\_\_ (**commentator**) to read the AA Preamble as it appeared in the first edition of the Big Book in 1939:

**Commentator:** We are not an organization in the conventional sense of the word. There are no fees or dues whatsoever. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted.

**Chairperson:** Thank you \_\_\_\_\_. And with that statement, let's get started.

**Reader:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a recovered alcoholic, contingent on the maintenance of my Spiritual Condition daily.

**Commentator:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a recovered alcoholic, contingent on the maintenance of my Spiritual Condition daily. We are not experts, nor are we authorities on the Big Book of AA. We are just 3 ex-drunks who love to study the Big Book. Any commentary that is made throughout this study is just our opinions based on our interpretation of the Big Book. We do not need to open our books at this time, but we will let you know. On page 164 of the Big Book it reads...

**Reader:** "Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will disclose more to you and to us."

**Commentator:** Before we begin this class we will need to address one more thing. There is always going to be controversy when it comes to this book and it's message for one reason or another. Some will say it has to be rewritten, changed, or updated and then there is the God issue that it is written in the male gender and a lot of other controversial issues. It's as if the book should be changed to meet our own personal agendas. On page XI, the book tells us....

**Reader:** "There exists a sentiment against any radical changes being made in it."

**Commentator:** The point is, let's leave the book alone, and change our own attitudes toward the book, and from that perspective learn the recovery program that produced a 75% success rate back in the 1940's. Remember to keep an open mind, and don't worry cause nothing important will fall out!

**Chairperson:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am the **chairperson**, I will read from the 1944 pamphlet and we can listen to what is being read, take notes, use a highlighter, and if you have any questions, write them down, submit them to your sponsor or see one of us after the meeting to discuss them at length.

**Reader:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am the **reader**. I will read excerpts from the Big Book and we will follow along.

**Commentator:** And finally, my name is \_\_\_\_\_. I will read **commentary** to what is studied, and give directions: Page numbers, line numbers, or paragraph numbers. That is how these classes are taught. Now listen carefully as \_\_\_\_\_ (**chairperson**) reads a very interesting item.

### As We See It

**Chairperson:** A fellow is sitting talking to his sponsor about the second step. He tells his sponsor, "I just don't believe there is a God. I gave Him a chance to prove himself to me. I just don't believe there is a God." His sponsor replies, "You gave him a chance? Just what kind of a chance did you give him?" The newcomer replies, "I was lost up in the snowfields of Alaska. I knew there was no way out, so I just looked up and said, "God, I don't believe you are really up there, but if you are, here's your chance. Save me!" The sponsor, looking rather incredulous says, "Well, then, how can you say there is no God? You are here!" The newcomer replies, "Oh, come on! God didn't save me! Some Eskimo came along!"

And by the way, here's some more food for thought:  
The Big Book doesn't need to be re-written, it needs to be re-read!!

**Commentator:** We are going to take our second trip back into AA's history. Back to the 40's when the recovery rate was 75%. To relive the days when people took the steps in four one hour classes. This is the second class based on the pamphlet from September 1944. (Show the pamphlet). The primary objective was to present the 12 steps right out of the book titled "Alcoholics Anonymous", (Show big book), so that each new person could find the spiritual solution to the illness of alcoholism. Let's get into the book because that is where the solution is! In review, this is what we discovered...

**Reader:** 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? We also established where the power is... We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found.

**Commentator:** So, the question that needs answered is; How do we find this Power? Step 2 tells us how. Let's listen as (\_\_\_\_\_) (**chairperson**) reads step number 2 from the 1944 pamphlet.

**Chairperson:** STEP NO. 2—"Came to believe that a Power greater than our selves could restore us to sanity." Our drinking experience has shown two conclusions:

**Reader:** Number 1.

**Chairperson:** That as we strayed away from the normal SOCIAL side of life, our minds became confused and we strayed away from the normal MENTAL side of life.

**Reader:** Number 2.

**Chairperson:** An abnormal MENTAL condition is certainly not SANITY in the accepted sense of the word. We have acquired or developed a MENTAL DISEASE. Our study of AA shows that——

**Reader:** Point A.

**Chairperson:** In the MENTAL or tangible side of life we have lost touch with, or ignored, or have forgotten the SPIRITUAL values that give us the dignity of MAN as differentiated from the ANIMAL. We have fallen back upon the MATERIAL things of life and these have failed us. We have been groping in the dark.

**Reader:** Point B

**Chairperson:** No HUMAN agency, no SCIENCE or ART has been able to solve the alcoholic problem, so we turn to the SPIRITUAL for guidance. Therefore, we “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” And——We must believe with a great FAITH!! Lets open our book’s to page 25, last paragraph...And here the book gives us 2 alternatives.

**Reader:** If you are as seriously alcoholic as we were, we believe there is no middle-of-The-road solution. We were in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives.

**Commentator:** One...

**Reader:** ..was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could,

**Commentator:** Two...

**Reader:** ...to accept spiritual help.

**Commentator:** At this point in the recovery process, all we need is a desire and some willingness. That is a willingness to reconsider our position about our lives... Lets turn to page 44, look for line 13.

**Reader:** To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face. But it isn’t so difficult. About half our original fellowship were of exactly that type. At first some of us tried to avoid the issue, hoping against hope we were not true alcoholics. But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life—or else. Perhaps it is going to be that way with you.

**Commentator:** We have a choice!! Find a spiritual basis of life or else... We don’t always find this choice acceptable, or it’s hard to see, or we don’t always want to follow this spiritual path. There is NO middle of the road solution. Now, let’s take a look at this spiritual solution. Go to page 46, line 15.

**Reader:** We found that as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, we commenced to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, ~~~

~~~which is God. Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another's conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe, underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps. We found that God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all-inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all men. When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own conception of God. This applies, too, to other spiritual expressions which you find in this book.

**Commentator:** We don't have to know everything about this power. We just have to believe or even be willing to believe in this power. There must be something instead of ourselves that can or will put us in a position to live life and enjoy it. Consider this; When it comes to using power to help us in our everyday living, most of us don't or can't fully comprehend the power of common household electrical lighting...but we don't sit around in the dark until we figure it all out do we? Go to Page 48, line 7.

**Reader:** Faced with alcoholic destruction, we soon became as open minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect alcohol was a great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness.

**Commentator:** Once we realized that all we had to look forward to was alcoholic destruction or the spiritual path, the path becomes a lot easier to take. Lets look at the - reasons for taking this spiritual path. Turn to page 50, last paragraph.

**Chairperson:** Here are thousands of men and women, worldly indeed. They flatly declare that since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking. In the face of collapse and despair, in the face of the total failure of their human resources, they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them. This happened soon after they whole-heartedly met a few simple requirements.

**Commentator:** If we are not convinced yet, lets look at where we were. An honest appraisal of our alcoholic lives. Go to page 52, line 15.

**Chairperson:** We were having trouble with personal relationships, we couldn't control our emotional natures, we were a prey to misery and depression, we couldn't make a living, we had a feeling of uselessness, we were full of fear, we were unhappy, we couldn't seem to be of real help to other people.

**Commentator:** This reads like the definition of a dry drunk. Lets continue, beginning with the next paragraph, same page.

**Chairperson:** When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did.



**Commentator:** “Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did.” Lets continues reading, pg. 53, second paragraph.

**Chairperson:** When we became alcoholics, crushed by a self-imposed crisis we could not postpone or evade, we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn’t. What was our choice to be?

**Commentator:** Step 2, this is our choice. Now, notice the time-line for Step 2. “We could not postpone or evade.” Notice the requirement for Step 2. “We had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or he is nothing.” “God either is or he isn’t.” keep in mind, though, your own conception of God. Go to page 47, second paragraph.

**Chairperson:** We need to ask ourselves but one short question. “Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe that there is a Power greater than myself?”

**Commentator:** And here we have the Second Step promise.

**Chairperson:** As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built.

**Commentator:** Here is Step 2. One short question to consider and then answer. Lets take Step Two together. As “precisely” shown to us, right out of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. This is Step Two: Yes or No, do you believe or are you even willing to believe in a power greater than you? My name is: ( ) I am an alcoholic. Yes I do believe in a power greater than myself.

(Go around the room and take step two)

**Commentator:** That’s it. That is Step Two, for now, but remember the 2nd Step Promise...

**Reader:** As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built.

**Commentator:** Lets move on to Step 3. But, before we study from the Big Book, lets listen to the pamphlet.

**Chairperson:** STEP NO. 3—”Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.” In the first step we learn that we had lost the power of CHOICE and had to make a DECISION.

**Reader:** Lets consider these 4 points. Point No. 1...

**Chairperson:** What DECISION could we make better than to:

A. Turn our very WILL over to GOD, realizing that our own use of our own will had resulted in trouble.



B. As in the Lord's Prayer you must believe and practice THY WILL BE DONE.

**Reader:** Point number 2...

**Chairperson:** God as we understand Him....

**Reader:** Point number 3...

**Chairperson:** RELIGION is a word we do not use in AA We refer to a member's relation to GOD as SPIRITUAL. Religion is a FORM of worship—not the worship itself.

**Reader:** Point number 4...

**Chairperson:** If a man cannot believe in GOD, he can certainly believe in SOMETHING greater than himself if he cannot believe in a power greater than himself he is a rather hopeless egotist. Go to page 60, line 13, for Step 3..

**Reader:** Our description of the alcoholic,

**Chairperson:** Which are the chapters, The Dr.'s Opinion and Bill's story..

**Reader:** The chapter to the agnostic,

**Chairperson:** Which is about step two

**Reader:** and our own personal adventures before and after

**Chairperson:** We came to AA

**Reader:** make clear three pertinent ideas..

**Chairperson:** Step One, A.

**Reader:** That we were alcoholics and could not manage our own lives.

**Chairperson:** The principle of self-honesty. Step Two, B.

**Reader:** That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.

**Chairperson:** And Step Two, C.

**Reader:** that God could and would if He were sought.

**Chairperson:** The principle of Hope.

**Reader:** Being convinced ...

**Chairperson:** Of what? The three pertinent ideas, A. B. & C., the time line says...

**Reader:** we were at Step Three

**Chairperson:** And the explanation of Step Three reads:

**Reader:** that we decided to turn our will and our life~ over to God as we understood Him. Just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do..

**Chairperson:** Here we have a requirement..

**Reader:** The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good.

**Chairperson:** If we continue to read, we look at this person who lives by self-propulsion, the actor who wants to run the whole show . . .and reading further, this person is described at length; the self-centered person!! For an in-depth look at the problem, and an honest appraisal of what our position must be, if we want to continue on this spiritual path to recovery, go to page 62, first paragraph...and here the book explains that our problems occurred from the inside out!!!

**Reader:** Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self, which later placed us in a position to be hurt.

**Commentator:** So, we were professional victims!! Continue, next paragraph.

**Reader:** So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help.

**Commentator:** Continuing with the last paragraph on this same page, the book tells us of some more requirements for Step Three.

**Reader:** This is the how and why of it. First of all,, we had to quit playing god. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life. God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children.

**Chairperson:** And next we have one of the many promises that are in this book.

**Reader:** Most good ideas are simple. and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.

**Chairperson:** Lets continue reading page 63, line one. And again more promises...

**Reader:** When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer, being all-powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs~ More and more we became interested in seeing what ~~~

~~~~we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.

**Chairperson:** And at the beginning of the next paragraph, we have a time-line to step three that reads...

**Reader:** We were now at Step Three.

**Commentator:** Before we take Step Three, lets explore the precise instructions.. .Step Three is a major turning point on this road to recovery. So, lets carefully examine Step Three. Same page, line 20... The time-line is:

**Reader:** We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready.

**Commentator:** The requirement says:

**Reader:** That we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him.

**Commentator:** The directions read:

**Reader:** We found it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as our wife, best friend, or spiritual advisor.

**Commentator:** Here we have a warning...

**Reader:** It is better to meet God alone than with one who might misunderstand.

**Commentator :** Lets continue with the directions.

**Reader:** The wording was, of course, quite optional, so long as we expressed the idea.

**Commentator:** This is the Third Step promise

**Reader:** This was only a beginning, though if honestly and humbly made, an effect, sometimes a very great one, was felt at once.

**Commentator:** Lets take Step Three together, voicing it without reservation. We can take this step by repeating the prayer found on page 63, second paragraph. If you would, let's say the prayer together. You can pass or play, nobody's being forced.

**Reader:** We were now at Step Three. Many of us said to our Maker, as we understood Him. All together now

(Class now reads together):

"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."

**Commentator:** That's it! That is Step Three. But,— this was only a beginning... All we have done so far is made three decisions.

**Reader:** Step One

**Commentator:** We decided to get honest with ourselves and make admission.

**Reader:** Step Two

**Commentator:** We decided to believe there is some hope for ourselves and a solution to our alcoholism.

**Reader:** Step Three

**Commentator:** ‘We decided to put our will and our lives in God’s hands and to put some faith in the A. A. program. Try doing these 3 steps on getting a drivers license and see what happens. EXAMPLE: STEP ONE: ADMIT YOU NEED A DRIVERS LICENSE STEP TWO: BELIEVE YOU CAN GET ONE... AND STEP THREE; DECIDE TO GET ONE... THE RESULT OF THESE THREE STEPS: YOU’LL STILL BE TAKING THE BUS!!

The first three steps are 25% of nothing. The point is, it takes immediate action, through the rest of the 12 Steps, to conquer alcoholism. Lets listen to (\_\_\_\_\_) (**chairperson**) as he reads Step Number 4 out of the 1944 pamphlet.

**Chairperson:** Step 4 —“made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. The intent and purpose of this step is plain. All alcoholics have a definite need for a good self-analysis — a sort of self - appraisal. Other people have certainly analyzed us, appraised us, criticized us and even judged us. It might be a good idea to judge ourselves, calmly and honestly. We need inventory because...

**Reader:** Let’s consider these two reasons: Reason number one...

**Chairperson:** Either our faults, weaknesses, defects of character —are the cause of our drinking OR...,

**Reader:** Reason number two...

**Chairperson:** Our drinking has weakened our character and let us drift into all kinds off wrong action, wrong attitudes, wrong viewpoints. In either event we obviously need an inventory and the only kind of inventory to make is a GOOD one. Moreover, the job is up to US. WE created or WE let develop all the anti - social - actions that got US in wrong. So we have got to work it out. WE must make out a list of our faults and then WE must do something about it. The inventory must be 4 things...

**Reader:** 4 requirements. Requirement number 1...

**Chairperson:** It must be HONEST. Why waste time fooling ourselves with a phony list. We have fooled ourselves for years. We tried to fool others and now is a good time to look ourselves squarely in the eye.

**Reader:** Requirement number 2...

**Chairperson:** It must be SEARCHING. Why skip over a vital matter lightly and quickly. Our trouble is a grave mental disease, confused by screwy thinking. Therefore, we must SEARCH diligently and fearlessly to get at the TRUTH of what is wrong with us—just dig in and SEARCH.

**Reader:** requirement number 3...

**Chairperson:** It must be FEARLESS. We must not be afraid we might find things in our heart, mind and soul that we will hate to discover. If we do find such things they may be the ROOT of our trouble.

**Reader:** Requirement number 4...

**Chairperson:** It must be a MORAL inventory. Some, in error, think the inventory is a lot of unpaid debts, plus a list of unmade apologies. Our trouble goes much deeper. We will find the root of our trouble lies in—Resentment—False Pride—Envy—Jealousy—Selfishness—and many other things.

Laziness is an important one. In other words we are making inventory of our character—our attitude towards others—our way of living. We are not preparing a financial statement. We will pay our bills all right, because we cannot even begin to practice AA without HONESTY. Lets begin reading with the last paragraph, page 63...This Is Step Four.

**Commentator:** Here we have another time-line and requirement, these are for Step 4.

**Reader:** Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision...

**Commentator:** Step Three

**Reader:** ..was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect....

**Commentator:** And here we have a major time-line and an explanation to Step Four.

**Reader:** ...unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions. Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. This was Step Four..

**Commentator:** With the principle of courage, here begins the directions for Step Four. Lets continue, line 18, same page.64

**Reader:** First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up, which caused our failure. Being convinced that self; manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.

**Commentator:** The common manifestations of self, or demonstrations of self, or evidence of self, or proof of self are:

**Reader:** Resentment:

**Commentator:** Which is wrong judgment.

**Reader:** Fear

**Commentator:** Which is wrong believing.

**Reader:** Conduct:

**Commentator:** Which is wrong action. Lets continues, last paragraph, same page.

**Reader:** Resentment is the “number one offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick.

**Commentator:** This is the Fourth Step promise:

**Reader:** When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically

**Commentator:** Here are the directions to resentments:

**Reader:** In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry. We asked ourselves why we were angry.

**Commentator:** Let's continue on page 65, line 3. Here are more directions to the resentments inventory.

**Reader:** On our grudge list we set opposite each name our injuries. Was it our self-esteem, our security, our ambitions, our personal or sex relations, which had been interfered with?

**Commentator:** Go to the last paragraph on this same page, and here we have a requirement.

**Reader:** We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty.

**Commentator:** Let's continue, go to Page 67, line 14.

**Reader:** Referring to our list again. 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? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other man's. When we saw our faults we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white.

**Commentator:** Some more requirements.

**Reader:** We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.

**Commentator:** Next paragraph, same page, we have another inventory.

**Reader:** Notice the word fear.

**Commentator:** Skip a line..

**Reader:** This short word somehow touches about every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion trains of circumstances, which brought us misfortune we felt we didn't deserve. But did not we, ourselves, set the ball rolling? Sometimes we think fear ought to be classed with stealing. It seems to cause more trouble.

**Commentator:** Here are the directions for the fear inventory. Next paragraph.

**Reader:** We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them.

**Commentator:** Next we have the directions for another inventory, our own conduct. There are many kinds of conduct: sex, financial, social, physical, mental, emotional, the list goes on and ~~~



~~~~on. The book tells us what to do. Lets read page 69, line 12.

**Reader:** We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? Where were we at fault, what should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it.

**Commentator:** There is a lot of fear and pain associated with the Fourth Step inventory.. Fear and pain did not get you drunk. You had to drink alcohol to get drunk. No alcohol, no drunk. No action, no drunk. No action on taking the steps, no sobriety. That's how it is. That is what it takes, action, not feelings.... Back in the 40's people blasted through the steps, so the newcomer was just moving out of the problem and just getting a glimpse of the solution in Step Four. The newcomer was still living in all the pain of being alcoholic. The point is that there will be left-overs that we forget to list in Step 4. Don't beat yourself up wallowing in the past. You can deal with the left-overs later on in Step 10, while looking at them from the solution's point of view. Do the best you can but move forward into the solution. Don't stop until you are finished with the Fourth Step. Go back to Page 68, line 11.

**Reader:** For we are now on a different basis; the basis of trusting and relying upon God. We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. We are in the world to play the role He assigns. Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity.

**Commentator:** If we have taken Steps 2 & 3, we are on a different basis. We are looking at Step 4 from a different perspective. We can fill out these inventories without having to spend a lot of time worrying. Remember we trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. The directions, time lines, requirements and prayers are in the Big Book, pages 63 through 71 for Step 4. The forms are based upon the directions that are in the Big Book. Use God, your sponsor and the Big Book to complete the inventory process. It is quite simple to do, just follow the directions. Answer the questions and do one column at a time. (SHOW FORMS) The interesting thing is, that the inventory process, the forms you've been provided with, and the whole deal in the Big Book, everything has already been figured out!! We are not going to add anything to this process except action. It works PRECISELY THE WAY IT IS!! The end result of this proven inventory process is: You will have the analyzed truth about you, you will be armed with the facts, and will have the components you need to complete the rest of the steps. Now lets read what the book tells us in summary to the 4th Step inventory. Go to Page 70, line 23.

**Reader:** If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments. We have begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. We have commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our enemies, for we look on them as sick people. We have listed the people we have hurt by our conduct, and are willing to straighten out the past if we can. In this book you read again and again that faith did for us what we could not do for ourselves. We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him. If you have already made a decision,

**Commentator:** Step Three.



**Reader:** and an inventory of your gross handicaps,

**Commentator:** Step Four.

**Reader:** you have made a good beginning. That being so you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself

**Commentator:** By writing this Fourth Step inventory, the things that have been blocking us are in the process of being removed. We are not going to take Steps Four and Five in this class. We suggest that over the next week, you fill out these inventories and discuss them with your sponsor. Then take Steps 4 & 5 with you sponsor's guidance and the directions from the Big Book. That way you will be current with the class when we move on from the Fourth and Fifth Steps. For those of you who are going to take Steps 4 & 5 over the next week, for your benefit, let's look at Step 5. Before we get into the Big Book, let's listen as ( ) (**chairperson**) reads Step 5 from the 1944 pamphlet.

**Chairperson:** STEP NO. 5—"Admitted to GOD, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."

**Reader:** Let's take a look at these six points. Point number 1.

**Chairperson:** There is nothing new in this step. There are many sound reasons for "talking over our troubles out loud with others".

**Reader:** Point number 2.

**Chairperson:** The Catholic already has this medium readily available to him in the Confessional. But—the Catholic is at a disadvantage if he thinks his familiarity with confession permits him to think his part of AA is thereby automatically taken care of. He must, in confession, seriously consider his problems in relation to his alcoholic thinking.

**Reader:** Point number 3.

**Chairperson:** The non-Catholic has the way open to work this step by going to his minister, his doctor, or his friend.

**Reader:** Point number 4.

**Chairperson:** Under this step it is not even necessary to go to a priest or minister. Any understanding human being, friend or stranger, will serve the purpose.

**Reader:** Point number 5.

**Chairperson:** The purpose and intent of this step is so plain and definite that it needs little explanation. The point is that we MUST do EXACTLY what the Fifth Step says, sooner or later. We must not be in a rush to get this step off our chest. Consider it carefully and calmly. Then get about it and do it.

**Reader:** Point number 6.

**Chairperson:** "Wrongs" do not necessarily mean "crime". It can well be wrong thinking—selfishness—false pride—egotism—or any one of a hundred such negative faults. Go to page 72, line 29 and here we have a warning that says we may not overcome drinking if we skip this vital step.

**Reader:** If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they got drunk. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only thought they had lost their egoism and fear; they only thought they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else all their life story.

**Commentator:** Go to page 74, line 2. Here are some options on who is to hear our story. Also a requirement that is a warning.

**Reader:** We think well before we choose the person or persons with whom to take this intimate and confidential step.

**Commentator:** Skip a line.

**Reader:** go to the properly appointed authority.

**Commentator:** Next line.

**Reader:** Talk with someone ordained.

**Commentator:** Skip 4 lines.

**Reader:** a close-mouthed, understanding friend.

**Commentator:** Same line.

**Reader:** doctor or psychologist.

**Commentator:** Next line.

**Reader:** One of our own family.

**Commentator:** Skip 3 lines for a warning.

**Reader:** Such parts of our story we tell to someone who will understand, yet be unaffected.

**Commentator:** Same line a major requirement.

**Reader:** The rule is we must be hard on ourselves, but always considerate of others.

**Commentator:** Next paragraph, skip one line, the time line says:.

**Reader:** it may be one is so situated that there is no suitable person available. If that is so, this step may be postponed..

**Commentator:** Requirement.

**Reader:** only, however, if we hold ourselves in complete readiness to go through with it at the first opportunity.

**Commentator:** Skip a line, more requirements.

**Reader:** It is important that he be able to keep a confidence; that he fully understand and approve what we are driving at...

Commentator: Go to Page 75, line 3, for another time-line.

Reader: When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time.

Commentator: Here we have some directions.

Reader: We have written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk. We explain to our partner what we are about to do and why we have to do it. He should realize that we are engaged upon a life-and-death errand.

Commentator: Next paragraph, more directions.

Reader: We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past.

Commentator: Let's explore the time-line requirements, and directions for after we complete Step Five. Skip to the last paragraph on this same page.

Reader: Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done.

Commentator: Here we have the 5th Step Prayer.

Reader: We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better.

Commentator: Let's continue studying, same line.

Reader: Carefully reading the first five proposals..

Commentator: Meaning to re-read the book, pages XXIII to page 75. Let's continue with the next line.

Reader: we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have tried to make mortar without sand?

Commentator: Step 5 teaches us the spiritual principle of integrity. In summary, the directions are very clear on why, when, and how to take Step 5, as are the time-lines and requirements. This is what happens as the result of taking Step 5, the 5th step promises, page 75, line 12.

Chairman: Once we have taken this step, WITHHOLDING NOTHING, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.

This is the end of the 2nd class. Next week's class will cover Steps 6, 7, 8, & 9. Homework for this class is: Read and discuss with your sponsor Pages 44 through 75 and do Steps 4 & 5. If you have any questions, comments or points of discussion, talk with your sponsor.

Tradition number 7 says we are fully self-supporting through our own contributions. We will now pass the basket in honor of the 7th tradition.

**Close with the Lord's Prayer**

### Intro for Class Three

**Chairperson:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a recovered alcoholic. Let's have a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

We would like to welcome you to Back to the 1940's, how AA worked in the beginning. More than fifty years ago after the publication of the Big Book, the recovery rate was 75%. AA's program, as practiced then, was very different from the program that is practiced today. The AA program is unchanged, but the way it is practiced has changed (repeat). To produce such an astounding recovery rate, what was done in the early days of AA?

Well, we are going to take an in-depth look at how AA worked in the 1940's. We've asked \_\_\_\_\_ (**commentator**) to read the AA Preamble as it appeared in the first edition of the Big Book in 1939:

**Commentator:** We are not an organization in the conventional sense of the word. There are no fees or dues whatsoever. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted.

**Chairperson:** Thank you \_\_\_\_\_. And with that statement, let's get started.

**Reader:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a recovered alcoholic, contingent on the maintenance of my Spiritual Condition daily.

**Commentator:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a recovered alcoholic, contingent on the maintenance of my Spiritual Condition daily. We are not experts, nor are we authorities on the Big Book of AA. We are just 3 ex-drunks who love to study the Big Book. Any commentary that is made throughout this study is just our opinions based on our interpretation of the Big Book. We do not need to open our books at this time, but we will let you know. On page 164 of the Big Book it reads...

**Reader:** "Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will disclose more to you and to us."

**Commentator:** Before we begin this class we will need to address one more thing. There is always going to be controversy when it comes to this book and it's message for one reason or another. Some will say it has to be rewritten, changed, or updated and then there is the God issue that it is written in the male gender and a lot of other controversial issues. It's as if the book should be changed to meet our own personal agendas. On page XI, the book tells us....

**Reader:** "There exists a sentiment against any radical changes being made in it."

**Commentator:** The point is, let's leave the book alone, and change our own attitudes toward the book, and from that perspective learn the recovery program that produced a 75% success rate back in the 1940's. Remember to keep an open mind, and don't worry cause nothing important will fall out!

**Chairperson:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am the **chairperson**, I will read from the 1944 pamphlet and we can listen to what is being read, take notes, use a highlighter, and if you have any questions, write them down, submit them to your sponsor or see one of us after the meeting to discuss them at length.

**Reader:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am the **reader**. I will read excerpts from the Big Book and we will follow along.

**Commentator:** And finally, **my name** is \_\_\_\_\_. I will read **commentary** to what is studied, and give directions: Page numbers, line numbers, or paragraph numbers. That is how these classes are taught. Now listen carefully as \_\_\_\_\_ (**chairperson**) reads a very interesting item.

**Chairperson:** Here is some food for thought:

1. If I blame others for my failures I must also credit them for my successes.
2. Making amends is a good way to have the last word!!
3. An alcoholic is a master mathematician. He has a fraction of his sanity, a percentage of his marbles; he multiplies his troubles, subtracts from his wallet, adds to his miseries, and divides his family. After joining Alcoholics Anonymous, he subtracts his miseries, multiplies his blessings, adds to his happiness, and divides his time into twenty-four hour days, One Day at a Time.
4. The soul would have no rainbows, had the eye no tears.
5. Tact is the ability to close my mouth before someone else wants to!!
6. The ability to be big enough, is to be small enough, to let the other guy be as big as he wants to be, or thinks he is.
7. Happiness is contagious. Don't wait to catch it from others. Be a carrier!!
8. Sometimes my feet have trouble following my mouth!
9. You wouldn't be so concerned about what other people think of you ~if you would only stop to think of how seldom they do!

**Commentator:** Thank You. This is the third class in a series of four classes based upon the 1944 pamphlet, "AA an interpretation of our Twelve Steps". It was re-printed through-out the United States, and as the result of the way the 12 steps were taught, it was instrumental in the 75% recovery rate back in the 40's. These are classes where we take the steps together. We cannot get this AA program through effortless absorption of ideas. It takes action.

Back in the 1940's, the AA groups that were established would have a secretary. The secretary would greet the newcomer at the door. As soon as the newcomer came through the door, the secretary would go down the group's list of members, and appoint the newcomer a sponsor. It was the sponsor's responsibility to take the newcomer through the four classes. The sponsor would guide the newcomer through the classes and through the step assignments right out of the Big Book. There was no hesitation in the recovery process. They blasted through it! There was a 75% success rate. There was no time wasted on problems outside of alcoholism, just non-stop action in the solution. Let me repeat, there was no time wasted on problems outside of alcoholism, just nonstop action in the solution.~~~~

~~~There are several benefits to look forward to in AA. We won't discover them, sorry to say, if we don't do the work and continue to do the work. If we just wallow around, living with untreated alcoholism, we will go back out and die an alcoholic death. This is always a life and death situation. Our lives are always in the balance.

In review of the last two classes, let's look at what we have done, and where we are, in this recovery process.

**Reader:** We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator...

**Commentator:** Which are Steps 1, 2, & 3.

**Reader:** ...and to discover the obstacles in our path. We have admitted certain defects; we have ascertained in a rough way what the trouble is; we have put our finger on the weak items in our personal inventory.

**Commentator:** Which is Step 4.

**Reader:** Now these are about to be cast out. This requires action on our part, which, when completed, will mean that we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our defects.

**Commentator:** Which is Step 5. Now that we have taken Steps 1, 2, 3, 4, & 5, let's consider these pertinent questions...

**Reader:** We ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand?

**Commentator:** Remember, always progress, not perfection!! We consider these questions very carefully, keeping in mind that more will be revealed as we go forward into the recovery process. So, if this is the best you can do, then that is good enough! Let's listen as ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) (**chairperson**) reads Steps number 6 & 7 from the 1944 pamphlet.

**Chairperson:** STEP NUMBER 6—"We were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."

**Reader:** Let's consider these 7 points. Point number 1...

**Chairperson:** After admitting our wrong thinking and wrong actions in Step 5, we now do something more than "admit" or "confess."

**Reader:** Point number 2...

**Chairperson:** We now become READY and WILLING to have God remove the defects in our CHARACTER.

**Reader:** Point number 3...

**Chairperson:** Remember it is OUR character we are working on. Not the other fellows. Here is a good place to drop the CRITICAL attitude toward others—the SUPERIOR attitude toward others.



**Reader:** Point number 4...

**Chairperson:** We must clean our mind of wrong thinking—petty jealousy—envy—self-pity—remorse, etc.

**Reader:** Point number 5...

**Chairperson:** Here is the place to drop RESENTMENTS, one of the biggest hurdles the alcoholic has to get over.

**Reader:** Point number 6...

**Chairperson:** What concerns us here is that we drop all thoughts of resentment—anger—hatred—revenge.

**Reader:** Point number 7...

**Chairperson:** We turn our WILL over to God and let HIS WILL direct us how to patiently remove, one by one, all defects in our character.

**Reader:** Lets listen as ( ) (chairperson) reads Step 7 from the pamphlet.

**Chairperson:** STEP NUMBER 7 —“Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.”

**Reader:** The meaning of this step is clear. Prayer—Humility. There are three points to consider. Point number 1

**Chairperson:** Prayer. No man can tell another HOW to pray. Each one has, or works out for himself, his own method. If we cannot pray, we just talk to God and tell Him our troubles. Meditate—think clearly and cleanly—and ask God to direct our thoughts. Christ said “ask and ye shall receive.” What method is simpler—merely “ask”. If you cannot pray ask God to teach you to pray.

**Reader:** Point number 2.

**Chairperson:** Humility. This, simply, is the virtue of being ourselves and realizing how small we are in a big world full of its own trouble. Drop all pretense. We must not be Mr. Big Shot—bragging, boasting. Shed false pride. Tell the simple, plain, unvarnished truth. Act, walk and talk simply. See the little bit of good that exists in an evil man. Forget the little bit of evil that exists in the good man. We must not look down on the very lowest of GOD’S creatures or man’s mistakes. Think clearly, honestly, fairly, generously.

**Reader:** Point number 3.

**Chairperson:** The shortcomings we ask GOD to remove are the very defects in character that make us drink. The same defects we drink to hide or to get away from. Open our books to page 76, line 1. Here we have the time-line, requirements, directions, and explanation to Step 6.

**Reader:** If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all—every one? If we still cling to something we will not let go....



**Commentator:** And here we have the 6th Step prayer.

**Reader:** We ask God to help us be willing.

**Commentator:** It tells us if we are satisfied, willing, and ready, then the requirements, time-line, and directions have been met for Step Six. Just be willing and you can proceed. If not, pray for willingness and move on. Remember this equation from here on out; willingness – action= procrastination... The things that are objectionable, meaning our grosser handicaps which are resentments, fears, and harms done, are God's business to remove in His time, these three things are the exact nature of our wrongs. These have been blocking us. Our defects of character, or shortcomings, are that we've been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, frightened, and inconsiderate throughout our lives. This is how we reacted and responded throughout our drinking careers. These defects are our business! This is the turning point with the principles of willingness and humility we are guided to do our part and we realize now, that we desperately need God's help and the rest of the steps and all of His loving advisors, if we are going to change for the better. So, if you are ready, let's take Step 7 together. We can do this by repeating the Prayer found on page 76, line 8. The time-line requirements and directions read...

**Reader:** When ready we say something like this...

**Commentator:** All together, let's take Step Seven...

**Reader:** "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." We have then completed Step Seven.

**Commentator:** Next paragraph, on this same page, we have a time-line, and a requirement, and a warning...

**Reader:** Now we need more action, without which we find that "Faith without works is dead." Let's look at Steps Eight and Nine.

**Commentator:** Let's listen as (\_\_\_\_\_) (**chairperson**) reads Steps 8 & 9 from the 1944 pamphlet.

**Chairperson:** STEP 8 "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all." Under this step we will make a written list of those we have harmed. We ask God to let His Will be done, not OUR will, and ask for the strength and courage to become willing to forget resentments and false pride and make amends to those we have harmed. We must not do this step grudgingly, or as an unpleasant task to be rid of quickly. We must do it WILLINGLY, fairly and humbly—without condescension.

STEP 9 "Make direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. "

Here is where we make peace with ourselves by making peace with those we have hurt. The amends we make must be direct. We must pay in kind for the hurt we have done them.

If we cheated we must make restitution.

If we have hurt their feelings we must ask forgiveness from them.

The list of harms done may be long but the list of amends is equally long.  
For every “wrong” we have done, there is a “right” we may do to compensate.  
There is only one exception. We must develop a sense of justice, a spirit of fairness, an attitude of common sense. If our effort to make amends would create further harm or cause a scandal we will have to skip the “direct amends” and clean the matter up under Step Five.  
Stay on Page 76, look for line 17; this is Step Eight.

**Reader:** We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory. We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal.

**Commentator:** The four kinds of amends are:

**Reader:** Number 1

**Commentator:** Now

**Reader:** Number 2

**Commentator:** Later

**Reader:** Number 3

**Commentator:** Maybe

**Reader:** Number 4

**Commentator:** Never

Lets continue with Line 20. This is Step Nine.

**Reader:** Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. ~We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves.

**Commentator:** Next we have the 8th Step Prayer.

**Reader:** If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes.

**Commentator:** Here we have a major requirement for sobriety.

**Reader:** Remember it was agreed at the beginning we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.

**Commentator:** Faith in this context simply means: it doesn’t matter what happened to you, as much as what you do now, about it. The work begins here. Steps 8 and 9 are not about fixing the recovering individual. They are about repairing the damage that was done and taking responsibility for our lives and our actions from here on out. We do this by the principles of: Justice and Brotherly Love. Good Judgment and Self-discipline. Go to Page 77, line 3. This is our real purpose in sobriety.

**Reader:** Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.

**Commentator:** This is the main attitude we need to carry with us from here on out. This is the reason, requirement, and goal in our lives. To continue, maintain, and grow in the recovery process. So, lets read about Step Nine and look at some key words, attitudes, approaches, warnings, requirements, prayers, and directions to the restitution phase....And, these are the tools that we use and the attitudes we carry for the amends process.  
Go to line 13, same page.

**Reader:** a demonstration of good will...

**Commentator:** Skip 2 lines...

**Reader:** When it will serve any good purpose, we are willing to announce our convictions with tact and common sense.

**Commentator:** Skip 3 lines

**Reader:** a better attitude

**Commentator:** Go to line 26 for another requirement.

**Reader:** We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.

**Commentator:** Next paragraph, we have a warning.

**Reader:** Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue. Simply we tell him that we will never get over drinking until we have done our utmost to straighten out the past. We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that nothing worth while can be accomplished until we do so, never trying to tell him what he should do. His faults are not discussed. We stick to our own.

**Commentator:** These are 12 Steps down to humility. Remember to use the spiritual principles of justice and brotherly love, good judgment and self-discipline. Lets continue, go to Line 12, and here we have a requirement.

**Reader:** We have made our demonstration, done our part. It's water over the dam.

**Commentator:** We take the action, that's our part; God's part is the outcome. Next we have a warning, go to Line 14.

**Reader:** We do not dodge our creditors. Telling them what we are trying to do, we make no bones about our drinking.

**Commentator:** Continue, Line 17, another warning.

**Reader:** Nor are we afraid of disclosing our alcoholism.

**Commentator:** And on Line 21, another requirement.

**Reader:** Arranging the best deal we can we let these people know we are sorry.

**Commentator:** Line 23, a warning.

**Reader:** we must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them.

**Commentator:** We must go to any lengths; this is a life and death errand!! Next we have some situations we may have to face in sobriety. Line 26 the book tells us of 10 such situations. Number 1.

**Reader:** committed a criminal offense.

**Commentator:** Skip a line numbers 2 & 3.

**Reader:** short in our accounts and unable to make good.

**Commentator:** Next line numbers 4 & 5.

**Reader:** we would be imprisoned or lose our job.

**Commentator:** Next line, situation number 6.

**Reader:** a petty offense.

**Commentator:** Line 1, Page 79, situation number 7 & 8.

**Reader:** Maybe we are divorced and have remarried

**Commentator:** Next line, number 9.

**Reader:** haven't kept up the alimony

**Commentator:** Next line, here we have the last situation.

**Reader:** has a warrant out for our arrest.

**Commentator:** Remember Step 9 is not about fixing me; it is about making the world in which we live better. Now, in summary the book tells us... Next paragraph, same page.

**Reader:** Although these reparations take innumerable forms, there are some general principles, which we find guiding. Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience.

**Commentator:** The 9th Step Prayer.

**Reader:** We ask to be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be.

**Chairperson:** Continue reading Line 11, here we have another requirement.

**Reader:** We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything.

**Chairperson:** We must be willing to make amends wherever possible. And on line 15 we have a warning.

**Reader:** we are not to be the hasty and foolish martyr who would needlessly sacrifice others to save himself from the alcoholic pit.

**Chairperson:** Remember the 9th Step Prayer. Now go to Page 80, line 1 and the book tells us of some more directions and a couple of options to consider before making amends.

**Reader:** Before taking drastic action

**Chairperson:** Skip a line.

**Reader:** have consulted with others, asked God to help.

**Commentator:** Think about this, when making amends, there are a couple of options to consider, you can go stand in the corner and count yourself and see what you come up with, or run it by your sponsor, and loving advisors, and pray on it! Line 24, same page, we have a warning.

**Reader:** He saw that he had to place the outcome in God's hands or he would soon start drinking again.

**Commentator:** You've heard about faith without works, well this is works with faith. Go to Page 81, line 17, here we have a requirement.

**Reader:** Whatever the situation, we usually have to do something about it.

**Commentator:** We take action, but use caution. Go to line 25 and here we have a prayer.

**Reader:** We are sorry for what we have done and, God willing, it shall not be repeated. More than that we cannot do.

**Commentator:** A prayer that says, we have limitations so, "Keep It Simple"!!! Go to the last paragraph.

**Reader:** Our design for living is not a one-way street.

**Commentator:** "A heart that beats only in one direction, eventually dies..." Go to Page 82, line 11 for more directions.

**Reader:** Good generalship may decide that the problem be attacked on the flank rather than risk a face-to-face combat.

**Commentator:** Use caution! Ask yourself, is it helpful or harmful?. Next, we have a warning. Skip a line, to line 15.

**Reader:** Sometimes we hear an alcoholic say that the only thing he needs to do is to keep sober. Certainly he must keep sober.

**Commentator:** Stopping drinking isn't the cure to what is wrong with us. Alcohol is just a symptom and, as we continue to read, the book explains what we have wrought over our drinking careers. Continue reading with the last paragraph on this same page.

**Reader:** The alcoholic is like a tornado roaring his way through the lives of others. Hearts are broken. Sweet relationships are dead. Affections have been uprooted. Selfish and inconsiderate habits have kept the home in turmoil. We feel a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough. He is like the farmer who came up out of his cyclone cellar to find his home ruined. To his wife, he remarked, "Don't see anything the matter here, Ma. Ain't it grand the wind stopped blowing?"

**Commentator:** Go to line 1, Page 83, here we have another requirement.

**Reader:** Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead.

**Commentator:** take responsibility, but give it time. Next, we have another Prayer, the Family Prayer, Line 7.

**Reader:** So we clean house with the family asking each morning in meditation that our~~~

~~~Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.

**Commentator:** Go to the next paragraph, and here we have a major factor for sobriety.

**Reader:** The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it.

**Commentator:** It is better to act your way into right living than it is to think and feel your way into right living. Go to line 15 for another major fact.

**Reader:** Our behavior will convince them more than our words..

**Commentator:** take it easy, but do it! Remember, actions are louder than words. Go to Line 25, and here are some final requirements.

**Reader:** We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone.

**Commentator:** Remember always, that these are 12 steps down to humility, not 12 steps up to Mr. or Mrs. Magnificent!-Humility isn't thinking less of me, it's thinking of me less. -To be so humble that you can't be humiliated.. in summary; there are a lot of components to consider in the restitution phase, the amends process. These all must be studied and explored. Use God, the Big Book, and your sponsor. And as long as we do the work and continue to do the work, wherever possible, and remain entirely willing to do our part, this is what will happen, the 9th Step Promises as found on Page 83, last paragraph. Let's listen as ( ) (**chairperson**) reads the 9th step promises.

**Chairperson:** 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 know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience 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 of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which 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.

**Commentator:** What phase of our development?

**Reader:** Steps 8 & 9, the restitution phase...

**Commentator:** Amazed before we are halfway through what?

**Reader:** Step Nine, the amends process.

**Commentator:** They will always materialize if we work for them. What work?

**Reader:** Steps 10, 11,& 12 daily. This is the work we must do.

**Commentator:** Trivia: Did you know that there are over 500 promises in the Big Book!!

Found within the Title Page and up to and including Page 164!!

In overview of what we have done, up to and including this class, we look at therecoveryprocess in terms of phases and spiritual principles...

**Reader:** Step One, The ADMISSION PHASE

**Commentator:** The spiritual principle of SELF-HONESTY.

**Reader:** Next is the SUBMISSION PHASE. Step Two

**Commentator:** The spiritual principle of HOPE.

**Reader:** Step Three

**Commentator:** The spiritual principle of FAITH.

**Reader:** Step Four

**Commentator:** The spiritual principle of COURAGE.

**Reader:** Step Five

**Commentator:** The spiritual principle of INTEGRITY.

**Reader:** Step Six

**Commentator:** The spiritual principle of WILLINGNESS.

**Reader:** Step Seven

**Commentator:** The spiritual principle of HUMILITY.

**Reader:** And next is the RESTITUTION PHASE. Step Eight

**Commentator:** The spiritual principle of JUSTICE & BROTHERLY LOVE.

**Reader:** Step Nine

**Commentator:** The spiritual principle of GOOD JUDGMENT & SELF-DISCIPLINE.

**Commentator:** Next weeks class is the CONSTRUCTION PHASE

**Reader:** Steps 10, 11, & 12. The 12th Step reads; 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.

The spiritual principles we just stated will do 4 things...

**Commentator:** Number 1

**Reader:** Remove the obsession to drink.

**Commentator:** Number 2

**Reader:** Allow the sufferer to become happy.

**Commentator:** Number 3

**Reader:** Allow us to become useful.

**Commentator:** Number 4

**Reader:** Allow us to become whole.



**Chairperson:** So, we do not practice the 12 Steps over and over again, we practice the principles that we just stated over and over again! Homework for this class is to read and discuss with your sponsor, Pages 76 through Page 84, from the Big Book and complete Step 8 and start Step 9. This way you'll be current with the class when we move on to the construction phase of AA's program of recovery.

We will use the extra time in this class to go over the inventory. But first, A.A.'s tradition number seven states: every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. We will now pass the basket in observance of the 7th tradition.

**Close with the Lord's Prayer**

## Intro for Class Four

**Chairperson:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I'm a recovered alcoholic. Let's have a moment of silence followed by the Serenity Prayer.

We would like to welcome you to Back to the 1940's, how AA worked in the beginning. More than fifty years ago after the publication of the Big Book, the recovery rate was 75%. AA's program, as practiced then, was very different from the program that is practiced today. The AA program is unchanged, but the way it is practiced has changed (repeat). To produce such an astounding recovery rate, what was done in the early days of AA?

Well, we are going to take an in-depth look at how AA worked in the 1940's. We've asked \_\_\_\_\_ (**commentator**) to read the AA Preamble as it appeared in the first edition of the Big Book in 1939:

**Commentator:** We are not an organization in the conventional sense of the word. There are no fees or dues whatsoever. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop drinking. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted.

**Chairperson:** Thank you \_\_\_\_\_. And with that statement, let's get started.

**Reader:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a recovered alcoholic, contingent on the maintenance of my Spiritual Condition daily.

**Commentator:** Hello, my name is \_\_\_\_\_, and I am a recovered alcoholic, contingent on the maintenance of my Spiritual Condition daily. We are not experts, nor are we authorities on the Big Book of AA. We are just 3 ex-drunks who love to study the Big Book. Any commentary that is made throughout this study is just our opinions based on our interpretation of the Big Book. We do not need to open our books at this time, but we will let you know. On page 164 of the Big Book it reads...

**Reader:** "Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will disclose more to you and to us."

**Commentator:** Before we begin this class we will need to address one more thing. There is always going to be controversy when it comes to this book and it's message for one reason or another. Some will say it has to be rewritten, changed, or updated and then there is the God issue that it is written in the male gender and a lot of other controversial issues. It's as if the book should be changed to meet our own personal agendas. On page XI, the book tells us....

**Reader:** "There exists a sentiment against any radical changes being made in it."

**Commentator:** The point is, let's leave the book alone, and change our own attitudes toward the book, and from that perspective learn the recovery program that produced a 75% success rate back in the 1940's. Remember to keep an open mind, and don't worry cause nothing important will fall out!

**Chairperson:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_. I am the **chairperson**, I will read from the 1944 pamphlet and we can listen to what is being read, take notes, use a highlighter, and if you have any questions, write them down, submit them to your sponsor or see one of us after the meeting to discuss them at length.

**Reader:** My name is \_\_\_\_\_ I am the **reader**. I will read excerpts from the Big Book and we will follow along.

**Commentator:** And finally, **my name** I \_\_\_\_\_. I will read **commentary** to what is studied, and give directions: Page numbers, line numbers, or paragraph numbers. That is how these classes are taught. Now listen carefully as \_\_\_\_\_ (**chairperson**) reads a very interesting item.

### **I'm Your Disease**

I hate meetings. I hate Higher Power. I hate anyone who has a program. To all who come in contact with me, I wish you death and I wish you suffering. Allow me to introduce myself. I am the disease of Alcoholism.

Cunning, baffling, and powerful. That's me. I have killed millions, and I am pleased. I live to catch you with the element of surprise. I love pretending I am your friend and lover. I have given you comfort, have I not? Wasn't I there when you were lonely? When you wanted to die, didn't you call me? I was there. I love to make you hurt.

I love to make you cry. Better yet, I love when I make you so numb you can neither hurt nor cry. You can't feel anything at all. This is true glory. I will give you instant gratification and all I ask of you is long term suffering. I've been there for you always. When things were going right in your life, you invited me. You said you didn't deserve these good things and I was the only one who would agree with you. Together we were able to destroy all things good in your life.

People don't take me seriously. They take strokes, heart attacks, even Diabetes seriously, fools that they are. They don't know that without my help, these things would not be made possible. I am such a hated disease. And yet, I do not come uninvited. You choose to have me. So many have chosen me over reality and peace.

More than you hate me, I hate all of you who have a 12 Step Program. Your program, your meetings, your Higher Power. All weaken me and I can't function in the manner I am accustomed to.

Now I must lie here quietly. You don't see me. But I am growing, bigger than ever. When you only exist, I may live. When you live, I only exist. But I am here...until we meet again. If we meet again. . I wish you death and suffering.

**Commentator:** Welcome to the fourth and final class of back to the 40's, how alcoholics Anonymous worked in the 1940's. We have been taking the steps as they were taken back in the 40's. Our teacher has been the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, which is our textbook for recovery. We learned earlier that we are suffering from an illness which only a spiritual solution will conquer. We are well on our way to that spiritual awakening, which will produce the personality change that will bring about our recovery from alcoholism. Before we get into this class, which is about the growth steps, 10, 11, & 12, let's look at our progress so far... In the first class, we made two admissions.

**Reader:** Number one...

**Commentator:** That we were alcoholic.

**Reader:** Number two...

**Commentator:** That we could not manage our lives. And we learned that we have a physical allergy and a mental obsession, an illness called alcoholism and the only relief is entire abstinence. In the second class we answered two questions.

**Reader:** Number one...

**Commentator:** Were we willing to believe in a power greater than ourselves?

**Reader:** Number two...

**Commentator:** Were we willing to surrender ourselves to whatever concept we had of God? We learned that God was within us, and we needed to make contact with him. Also, we discovered the things that were blocking us off from God and we explored the paramount importance of sitting in counsel with God and another, sharing our life story. In the third class we learned that the work begins here. We had to have God's help and all of his lovin~ advisors through the rest of the steps if we were going to change for the better. Also, we learned we must make restitution for harms done, to do our part in eliminating our defects of character and short comings. So, this is where we are tonight:

**Reader:** First

**Commentator:** We are going to learn about personal inventory.

**Reader:** Second

**Commentator:** We are going to learn about contact with God.

**Reader:** Third

**Commentator:** We are going to explore the exact, precise result of the twelve steps. Nowhere in this book does it say to take Steps I through 9 over and over again? The early A.A.'s were quite outspoken about this. They told us to take Steps 1 through 9 once and to take Steps 10, 11, & 12 daily for the rest of our lifetime. Steps 1 through 9 bring us up into recovery and get us sober, they do not keep us sober. Steps 10, 11, & 12 keep us sober through the spiritual principles of perseverance...

**Reader:** Which is Step. 10

**Commentator:** awareness and belief..

**Reader:** Which is Step 11

**Commentator:** and love and service.

**Reader:** Which is Step 12

**Commentator:** Daily. That's how it was done back in the 40's and it worked! Consider this, in Chapter 5, "How it Works", pages 59 and 60, the 12 Steps are displayed. If we look closely we will find some interesting facts. Notice the words, continued, sought and improve, carry and practice. These, key action in Steps 10, 11, & 12, our daily reprieve as the book calls it, are actions that we do in the "now" time-frame and all the previous steps, Step 1 through 9, are actions that were done in the "Past" time-frame. So, according to the Big Book, we do Steps 1 through 9 once, and then do~~~

~~~Steps 10, 11, & 12 for the rest of our lifetime. Interesting isn't it? Before we get into Step 10 in the Big Book, let's listen to Step Number 10 from the 1944 pamphlet.

**Chairperson:** Step 10— — “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

**Chairperson:** In coming to A. A. we usually will have a pretty big inventory to work on, as in Steps 4, 8, & 9. But even after that, we will not be perfect. We have a long way to go. We will continue to make mistakes and will be inclined to do some more wrong thinking and wrong doing. So ,at intervals, we CONTINUE to take inventory. Here the purpose is to check on progress. We certainly cannot be perfect so the need for regular inventory is apparent. These Inventories are PERSONAL. We confine the inventory to ourselves. We are the one who needs it. Never mind the other fellow. He too, is probably troubled and will have to make his own inventory. When we make these inventories, probably the best way to start is to go over, one by one, each of the twelve steps and try to discover just what, in these Steps, we are not following. The businessman HAS to make a physical inventory from time to time. We have to make a personal inventory of ourselves from time to time if we want to recover from a serious mental illness. Let's open to Page 84, line 16, for Step 10, and here we have a timeline this is to Step Ten...

**Reader:** This thought brings us to Step 10, which suggests

**Commentator:** The explanation of Step 10

**Reader:** we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world of the Spirit.

**Commentator:** Next is the 10th Step requirements....

**Reader:** Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness.

**Commentator:** The Timeline says

**Reader:** This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.

**Commentator:** Next we have the 10th Step directions....

**Reader:** Continue to watch for selfishness dishonesty, resentment and fear.

**Commentator:** Which is Step 4.

**Reader:** When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them.

**Commentator:** Which are Steps 6 and 7

**Reader:** We discuss them with someone immediately

**Commentator:** Which is Step 5

**Reader:** . . . and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone.

**Commentator:** Which are steps 8 & 9. Remember our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us. Continue reading same line.

**Reader:** Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code.

**Commentator:** The time-line and requirements are given. The 10th Step is actually using the following steps daily as needed, Steps 4 through 9. This daily action, through the spiritual principle of perseverance provides growth in understanding and effectiveness in our personal lives. This is how God wants us to live; to stay sober and to keep spiritually, mentally, emotionally, socially and physically fit. To live to good purpose under all conditions on an ongoing basis. And as the precise result of this daily action of Step Ten, this is what happens; The 10th Step promises. Go to the last paragraph on this same page. Here we have the 10th Step promises.

**Reader:** And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone, even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned.

**Commentator:** This is where Step Two is completed. We are restored to sanity. So, we don't really take Step Two - Step Two takes us. Our belief and hope in God has paid off. Let's continue reading the 10th Step Promises. Line 32, same page.

**Reader:** We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality, safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

**Commentator:** And here we have a warning. Remember, that our lives are always in the balance. Go to the next paragraph, same page.

**Reader:** It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities, "How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.

**Commentator:** Remember, we gave our will and our lives over to the care of God in Step 3, when we decided to go through with the steps. Now, in Step 10, He gives our will and our lives back because we know what to do to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us. We cannot stay sober on the past action we took in Steps 1 through 9; the steps that brought us this far. We cannot keep sober on yesterday's spiritual experiences. We must create new spiritual experiences daily. So, this fit spiritual condition is only temporary. This daily action of Step 10 is one third of the way to create that temporary condition. One third of the "precise" way to a daily reprieve. Let's take Step Ten together. For all of those who have done the work so far, we can take Step Ten by repeating the quote on Page 85, lines 19 and 20, "How can I best serve thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." (Go around the room and say quote). That is Step Ten. But, the 10th Step alone won't keep this fit spiritual condition. Stay on Page 85. Look for the next to the last paragraph. Here the book gives us a summary or an over-view of where we are in the recovery process.

**Reader:** Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action.

**Commentator:** So, in summary of everything we have done, Steps 1 through 10, the book tells us: If we have carefully followed these directions, we will have received the following spiritual gifts: strength, inspiration, direction, knowledge, power, His Spirit, God-consciousness, and have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. The time-line says: we must go further, more action. Let's move on to Step Eleven. Let's listen as ( ) (chairperson) reads Step Number 11 from the 1944 pamphlet.

**Chairperson:** STEP 11——“Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.”

**Reader:** Lets consider these three points. Point number one...

**Chairperson:** We pray each night——every night——a prayer of thanks.

**Reader:** Point number two...

**Chairperson:** We pray each morning——every morning——for help and guidance.

**Reader:** Point number three...

**Chairperson:** When we are lonely, confused, uncertain, we pray. Most of us find it well to:

**Reader:** And here we have 8 items to consider. Number one..

**Chairperson:** Choose, for each day, a “quiet time” to meditate on the program, on your progress in it.

**Reader:** Number two...

**Chairperson:** Keep conscious contact with God and pray to make the contact closer.

**Reader:** Number three...

**Chairperson:** Pray that our will be laid aside and that God's will direct us.

**Reader:** Number four...

**Chairperson:** Pray for calmness——quiet——relaxation——rest.

**Reader:** Number five...

**Chairperson:** Pray for strength and courage to enable us to do today's work today.

**Reader:** Number six...

**Chairperson:** Pray for forgiveness for yesterday's errors.

**Reader:** Number seven...

**Chairperson:** Ask for hope for better things tomorrow..



**Reader:** Number eight...

**Chairperson:** Pray for what we feel we need. We will not get what we “want.” We will get what we “need”—What is good for us. Let’s look at Step 11 in the Big Book, last paragraph, Page 85. Here we have some more requirements. These are definite and valuable requirements.

**Reader:** Step eleven suggests prayer and meditation. We shouldn’t be shy on this matter of prayer. Better men than we, are using it constantly.

**Commentator:** next we have the Eleventh Step promise.

**Reader:** It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it.

**Commentator:** lets continue, same line.

**Reader:** It would be easy to be vague about this matter. Yet, we believe we can make some definite and valuable suggestions.

**Commentator:** Prayer and meditation is simply spending time with God as you understand Him. Prayer is talking with God, asking of God, confessing to God, and thanking God. Meditation is listening to God, thinking about God, reading about God, writing about God and working through, with and In God. So, basically prayer and meditation is putting God in on everything. Thought, action, word and deed. Everything!! So, what is our part or purpose in doing this prayer and meditation daily? To gain the wisdom to know the difference between Gods will for us and our will for us. To feed ourselves with spiritual nourishment and to allow God to guide us. The sentiment down through the ages has been summed up in this saying: Pray (p-r-a-y) or be Prey (p-r-e-y). So, these are the directions on how to continue to build our way to being spiritually fit for one day. Let’s take a look at, Step 11 ... Page 88, line 8, and here we have a timeline, explanation, requirements, and directions.

**Reader:** When we retire at night, we constructively review our day.

**Commentator:** Next is Step Four

**Reader:** Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid?

**Commentator:** Followed by steps Eight end Nine...

**Reader:** Do we owe an apology?

**Commentator:** Next we have Step Five

**Reader:** Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?

**Commentator:** And the following questions are all Step Four...

**Reader:** Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?

**Commentator:** And here we have a warning.

**Reader:** But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for That would diminish our usefulness to others.

**Commentator:** Next we have Steps Six & Seven, and the Forgiveness Prayer.

**Reader:** After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

**Commentator:** The paragraph we just studied is actually Step Ten. Next, we have another time - line and some more directions. Next paragraph, same page.

**Reader:** On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin...

**Commentator:** And here we have The Thinkers prayer

**Reader:** ... we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that It be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.

**Commentator:** Next we have a Promise....

**Reader:** Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance....

**Commentator:** Followed by a Major requirement....

**Reader:** ...for after all God gave us brains to use.~

**Commentator:** ... And Another Promise

**Reader:** Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is of wrong motives.

**Commentator:** Next we have another time - line and some more directions. Last paragraph, same page (Page 86).

**Reader:** In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take.

**Commentator:** The Indecision Prayer.

**Reader:** Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision.

**Commentator:** More Requirements..

**Reader:** We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle.

**Commentator:** Another Promise

**Reader:** We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this

**Commentator:** Let's continue our study of Step 11, Page 87, line 1, and here we have another promise...

**Reader:** What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind.

**Commentator:** Now we have a Warning!!

**Reader:** Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas.

**Commentator:** Promise..

**Reader:** Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it.

**Commentator:** Next paragraph on this same page, we have another time-line and some more precise direction.

**Reader:** We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer;..

**Commentator:** The All Day Prayers...

**Reader:** ...that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom. from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped.

**Commentator:** Warning...

**Reader:** We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and it doesn't work. You can easily see why.

**Commentator:** Next paragraph, we have some options for Step 11..

**Reader:** If circumstances warrant, we ask our wives or friends to join us in morning meditation. If we belong to a religious denomination which requires a definite morning devotion, we attend to that also. If not members of religious bodies, we sometimes select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Make use of what they offer.

**Commentator:** So, pray, read, write, and get advice. More directions and another time-line, last paragraph, same page...

**Reader:** As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful...

**Commentator:** This is The Doubter's Prayer...

**Reader:** ... and ask for the right thought or action.

**Commentator:** And a Requirement...

**Reader:** We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show...

**Commentator:** Next The All - Purpose Prayer...

**Reader:** humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done."

**Commentator:** Another promise.

**Reader:** 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.

**Commentator:** Next line, we have a major promise for Step 11...

**Reader:** It works, it really does.

**Commentator:** Next line, we have a major fact for us alcoholics..

**Reader:** We alcoholics are undisciplined.

**Commentator:** Same line, we have the major requirement to sobriety...

**Reader:** So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.

**Commentator:** Next line, we find the time - line to Step 12, also a major warning to sobriety...

**Reader:** But this is not all. There is action and more action. "Faith without works is dead." The next chapter is entirely devoted to Step Twelve.

**Commentator:** In Summary, Step Eleven is an exclusive relationship with God, a life of prayer and meditation. Step Eleven equips us to live in harmony with, and to rightly relate ourselves to God and our Fellows. Step Eleven also prepares us through the principles of awareness and belief, to be of some value to some drunk along the line. Study this book, don't just read it!! It gives us clear-cut direction on how to find the Power, on how to use the Power, and how to keep the Power that is greater than us...GOD!! Let's take Step Eleven together. We will have a moment of silent meditation and listen for God's guidance, that quiet voice, God's message....(1 minute of silence). That is Step Eleven. ..Now let's look at Step Twelve. Let's listen as (\_\_\_\_\_) (**chairperson**) reads Step Number 12 from the 1944 pamphlet.

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

**Reader:** This step logically separates into three parts. PART NUMBER ONE: THE SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE.

**Chairperson:** The terms "spiritual experience" and "spiritual awakenings" used here and in the book Alcoholics Anonymous, mean, upon careful reading, that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism has manifested itself among us in many forms. DO NOT get the impression that these personality changes, or spiritual experiences, must be in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals. Happily for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous.

Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule. Most of our experiences are what psychologist William James calls the "education variety~ because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before he is himself. The new man gradually realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than ourselves. Most emphatically we wish to say that any alcoholic capable of honestly facing his problem in the light of our experience can recover provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial. We find that no one need have difficulty with the spiritual principles. Willingness, Honesty, and Open Mindedness are the Essentials of Recovery. But these are indispensable.

**Reader:** PART NUMBER TWO: CARRY THE MESSAGE TO OTHERS

**Chairperson:** This means exactly what it says. Carry the message actively. Bring it to the man who needs it. We do it in many ways.

**Reader:** And here we have eleven requirements to follow. A.

**Chairperson:** By attending EVERY meeting of our own group.

**Reader:** B.

**Chairperson:** By making calls when asked.

**Reader:** C.

**Chairperson:** By speaking at Group Meetings when asked.

**Reader:** D.

**Chairperson:** By supporting our Group financially to make group meeting possible.

**Reader:** E.

**Chairperson:** By assisting at Meetings when asked.

**Reader:** F.

**Chairperson:** By setting a good example of complete sobriety.

**Reader:** G.

**Chairperson:** By owning, and loaning to new men, our own copy of the big AA Book.

**Reader:** H.

**Chairperson:** By encouraging those who find the way difficult.

**Reader:** I.

**Chairperson:** By serving as an officer or on group committees or special assignment when asked.

**Reader:** J.

**Chairperson:** By doing all of the foregoing cheerfully and willingly.

**Reader:** K.

**Chairperson:** We do any or all of the foregoing at some sacrifice to OURSELVES WITH DEFINITE THOUGHT OF DEVELOPING UNSELFISHNESS IN OUR OWN CHARACTER.

**Reader:** PART NUMBER THREE: WE PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

**Chairperson:** This last part of the TWELFTH STEP is the real purpose that all of the twelve steps lead to—"a new way of life"; a "design for living." It shows how to live rightly, think rightly and to achieve happiness.

**Reader:** How do we go about it? Here we have seven components for sobriety. A.

**Chairperson:** We resolve to live our life, one day at a time—just 24 hours.

**Reader: B.**

**Chairperson:** We pray each day for guidance that day.

**Reader: C.**

**Chairperson:** We pray each night—thanks for that day.

**Reader: D.**

**Chairperson:** We resolve to keep our heads and to forego any anger, no matter what situation arises.

**Reader: E.**

**Chairperson:** We are patient.

**Reader: F.**

**Chairperson:** We keep calm——relaxed.

**Reader: G.**

**Chairperson:** Now, and most important, whatever LITTLE ordinary situation as well as BIG situations arise, we look at it calmly and fairly, with an open mind. Then act on it in exact accordance with the simple true principles that AA has taught and will teach us.~ In other words, our SOBRIETY is only a correction of our worst and most evident faults. Our living each day according to the principles of AA will also correct all of our other lesser faults and will gradually eliminate, one by one, all of the defects in our character that cause frictions, discontents, and unhappy rebellious moods that lead right back to our chief fault of drinking. Let's go to Page 89, line 1, and the book tells us of some more promises to look forward to, as we continue to build our way to a daily reprieve, The 12 Step Promises.

**Commentator:** Here the book tells us the major requirement for sobriety and a promise.

**Reader:** PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics..

**Commentator:** Another major promise...

**Reader:** It works when other activities fail,

**Commentator:** The directions...

**Reader:** This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics.

**Commentator:** What message? The chapter, the Doctors Opinion, and the first 103 pages of this book. Lets read the rest of the promises. Continue with line 5

**Reader:** You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill. Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.



**Commentator:** The rest of this chapter is clear-cut directions on how to work with other alcoholics. It is a sponsors guide. Lets take a look at the directions. They are very clear so, when you go out to work with other alcoholics you'll be armed with the facts! Lets begin on this same page, line 23 Here we have a major fact, and some major requirements for Step Twelve.

**Reader:** ...because of your own drinking experience you can be uniquely useful to other alcoholics. So cooperate; never criticize. To be helpful is our only aim...

**Commentator:** Go to Page 90, line 1, to continue to read and study Step 12.

**Reader:** When you discover a prospect for Alcoholics Anonymous, find out all you can about him. If he does not want to stop drinking, don't waste time trying to persuade him, You may spoil a later opportunity.

**Commentator:** It's been said, that what ever gets your attention first, gets you.. .So, we just plant the seed... .and realize, at the least, you've ruined their drinking. Go to line 12.

**Reader:** ...put yourself in his place, to see how you would like him to approach you if the tables were turned.

**Commentator:** Each and every alcoholic, sober or not, teaches us very valuable lessons about ourselves and about our own personal recovery. Carrying the message is always a win-win situation. -We have nothing to lose except our egotism. So, humbly and gratefully, we considerately carry AA's message.. Go to the last paragraph.

**Reader:** If he does not want to see you, never force yourself upon him.

**Commentator:** WE carry the message, we don't force it. Some of us change when we see the light. Most of us change when we feel the heat. Go to page 91, line 18..

**Reader:** See your man alone, if possible. At first engage in general conversation. After awhile we turn the talk to some phase of drinking. Tell him enough about your drinking habits, symptoms, and experiences to encourage him to speak of himself. If he wishes to talk, let him do so.

**Commentator:** We gain their confidence. Remember that the one who makes light of things is least likely to stumble around in the dark.' Go to Page 92, line 1.

**Reader:** Tell him how baffled you were, how you finally learned that you were sick. Give an account of the struggles you made to stop. Show him the mental twist which leads to the first drink of a spree.

**Commentator:** We share our story. We tell of the obsession of the mind and the insanity of the first drink. It's been said that an alcoholic is like a whiskey bottle—all neck and belly and no head. . . . interesting analogy isn't it? Go to line 15.

**Reader:** And be careful not to brand him as an alcoholic. Let him draw his own conclusion.

**Commentator:** Prospects learn self-honesty in their own time. Remember recovery is an inside job. Go to line 21.

**Reader:** ...speak of alcoholism as an illness, a fatal malady. Talk about the conditions of body and mind which accompany it.

**Commentator:** We tell of the allergy, the obsession, and the phenomenon of craving. That alcoholism is an illness, affliction, and a malady that carries over into sobriety. Go to Page 93, line 3.



**Reader:** Tell him exactly what happened to you. Stress the spiritual feature freely. If the man be agnostic or atheist, make it emphatic that he does not have to agree with your conception of God. He can choose any conception he likes, provided it makes sense to him. The main thing is that he be willing to believe in a Power greater than himself and that he live by spiritual principles.

**Commentator:** It is easier to stay out of a situation than it is to get out of a situation. So we stay out of controversy. Go to Page 94, line 4.

**Reader:** Outline the program of action, explaining how you made a self-appraisal, how you straightened out your past and why you are now endeavoring to be helpful to him. It is important for him to realize that your attempt to pass this on to him plays a vital part in your own recovery.

**Commentator:** We talk of the Steps, the solution, and our honest motives. Realize this: eventually every alcoholic takes their last drink. Those of us in AA, sober, have lived to tell others about it. Go to the last paragraph.

**Reader:** Your candidate may give reasons why he need not follow all of the program. He may rebel at the thought of a drastic housecleaning which requires discussion with other people. Do not contradict such views. Tell him you once felt as he does, but you doubt whether you would have made much progress had you not taken action.

**Commentator:** Remember when we first came to AA? We heard people talking about things that we, personally, were trying to keep everyone else from finding out about....interesting but funny. Go to Page 95, line 8.

**Reader:** You will be most successful with alcoholics if you do not exhibit any passion for crusade or reform. Never talk down to an alcoholic from any moral or spiritual hilltop; simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools for his inspection. Show him how they worked with you. Offer him friendship and fellowship. Tell him that if he wants to get well you will do anything to help.

**Commentator:** We don't lecture. We look them in the eye. Give them a copy of the Big Book. Tell them your story. Take them to meetings. The only time we look down on another alcoholic is when we are bending over to help them up. Go to the next paragraph.

**Reader:** If he is not interested in your solution, if he expects you to act only as a banker for his financial difficulties or a nurse for his sprees, you may have to drop him until he changes his mind.

**Commentator:** We do not enable!! Remember when we first came to AA; we knew the price of everything, but the value of absolutely nothing. Go to the last paragraph.

**Reader:** If he thinks he can do the job in some other way, or prefers some other spiritual approach, encourage him to follow his own conscience.

**Commentator:** We support and encourage them. From Page 31, line 12—"If anyone who is showing inability to control his drinking can do the right about face and drink like a gentleman, our hats are off to him." And just a personal note: we've taken our hats off at many a grave side. Go to Page 96, line 4.

**Reader:** We find it a waste of time to keep chasing a man who cannot or will not work with you.

**Commentator:** Sponsorship is a two way street. Cooperation is essential. Remember that sometimes prospects just get homesick for hell. Go to line 16.

**Reader:** He has read this volume and says he is prepared to go through with the Twelve Steps of the program of recovery. Having had the experience yourself you can give him much practical advice. Let him know you are available if he wishes to make a decision and tell his story, but do not insist upon it if he prefers to consult someone else.

**Commentator:** We offer them temporary sponsorship. Remember back when we were drinking, we didn't care much who we drank with. Ironical that we can be particular about who we get sober with. Go to Page 97, line 3.

**Reader:** Never avoid these responsibilities, but be sure you are doing the right thing if you assume them. Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery.

**Commentator:** Ask yourself: Is it helpful, or harmful? Remember, when I help another dig their way out of their own trouble, the hole that is left over, is the grave for my own sorrow. Go to line 25.

**Reader:** Though an alcoholic does not respond, there is no reason why you should neglect his family

**Commentator:** Alcoholism has many faces....many, many casualties...it is a family illness, besides our aim is only to be helpful.. not conditional... Go to Page 98, line 2.

**Reader:** The men who cry for money and shelter before conquering alcohol, are on the wrong track.

**Commentator:** This is the wrong approach, when the spiritual malady is straightened out, then we straighten out mentally and physically. Go to line 8.

**Reader:** It is not the matter of giving that is in question, but when and how to give. That often makes the difference between failure and success.

**Commentator:** Use the 4 Absolutes: Ask yourself:

**Reader:** Number One-Absolute Honesty

**Commentator:** Is it true or false?

**Reader:** Number Two-Absolute Purity

**Commentator:** Is it right or wrong?

**Reader:** Number Three-Absolute Unselfishness

**Commentator:** Is it helpful or harmful?

**Reader:** Number Four-Absolute Love

**Commentator:** Is it beautiful or ugly? Go to line 16.

**Reader:** ... learn this truth: Job or no job—wife or no wife—we simply do not stop drinking so long as we place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God. 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.

**Commentator:** This is the right track..."Our ideas did not work but the God idea did." Think about this: for most alcoholics skid row is between their ears. Go Page 99, line 10.

**Reader:** These things will come to pass naturally and in good time provided, however, the alcoholic continues to demonstrate that he can be sober, considerate, and helpful, regardless of what anyone says or does.

**Commentator:** We tell them that it takes time and don't give up before the miracle happens. Besides, we didn't get drunk with everyone out there, so, we're not going to get sober with everyone in here. Go to the last line on this page.

**Reader:** Remind the prospect that his recovery is not dependent upon people. It is dependent upon his relationship with God.

**Commentator:** God is everything, he is the solution....period!!! Go to line 5.

**Reader:** Both you and the new man must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress. If you persist, remarkable things will happen.

**Commentator:** What we just read, is one of the finest descriptions of sponsorship in this book. Food for thought...If you want to leave footprints in the sand, be sure to wear your work boots. Go to the last paragraph.

**Reader:** Assuming we are spiritually fit, we can do all sorts of things alcoholics are not supposed to do.

**Commentator:** What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. We are recovered. Go to Page 101, line 7.

**Reader:** We meet these conditions every day. An alcoholic who cannot meet them, still has an alcoholic mind; there is something the matter with his spiritual status.

**Commentator:** We change ourselves to meet life's conditions its not the other way around, remembering always that our problems occur from the inside out. It's been said that if you find yourself in a hole, all you need to do is stop digging. Go to line 23.

**Reader:** So our rule is not to avoid a place where there is drinking, if we have a legitimate reason for being there.

**Commentator:** Anyone can get drunk, it takes effort to be an alcoholic. The point is that we are pursuing spiritual principles and motives in Step 12. Ask yourself: Is it God's will, good-will, or is it my-will, ill-will. Go to Page 102, line 3.

**Reader:** But be sure you are on solid spiritual ground before you start and that your motive in going is thoroughly good. Do not think of what you will get out of the occasion. Think of what you can bring to it. But if you are shaky, you had better work with another alcoholic instead!

**Commentator:** The difference between a stumbling block and a stepping stone is how you use it. Think about it! Go to line 23.

**Reader:** Your job now is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others, so never hesitate to go anywhere if you can be helpful. You should not hesitate to visit the most sordid spot on earth on such an errand. Keep on the firing line of life with these motives and God will keep you unharmed.

**Commentator:** We made an application for the job in Steps 1, 2, and 3 ...We made a resume for the job in Step 4...We made an interview for the job in Step 5...We made a trial period of employment for the job in Steps 6, 7, 8, and 9...And now our job description is Steps 10, 11, and 12 daily...The Job Title: Recovered Alcoholic...The place of employment: the firing line of life....and the job: sobriety....Go to Page 103, line 3.

**Reader:** We are careful never to show intolerance or hatred of drinking as an institution. Experience shows that such an attitude is not helpful to anyone. Every new alcoholic looks for this spirit among us and is immensely relieved when he finds we are not witch burners.

**Commentator:** We are all, as recovered alcoholics, living examples of spiritual principles, ideals, and attitudes. We are, each individual, AA. We are light houses not foghorns...We are God's loving advisors and loving sponsors.... the definition of what AA is all about is simply the art of helping another alcoholic grow up without putting them down. Lets continue studying, line 14.

**Reader:** Some day we hope that Alcoholic Anonymous will help the public to a better realization of the gravity of the alcoholic problem but we shall be of little use if our attitude is one of bitterness or hostility. Drinkers will not stand for it. After all, our problems were of our own making. Bottles were only a symbol. Besides, we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. We have too!!.

**Commentator:** Remember always that alcoholism comes in people, not in bottles. So, as members of AA it is our duty to carry AA's message and to keep the message pure. There's more than meet the eye when it comes to alcoholism, be careful, carry AA's message and not your own mess. Just another bit of food for thought: That the difference between us and God, is that God doesn't try to play us. Now, let's have some final thoughts about AA's program of recovery. Go to Page 164, line 12, here we will find a major promise to our sobriety.

**Reader:** God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.

**Commentator:** Followed by the Twelve Step Prayer.....

**Reader:** Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick.

**Commentator:** Next we have a major Promise...

**Reader:** The answers will come, if your own house is in order.

**Commentator:** Next we have a Major warning...

**Reader:** But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got.

**Commentator:** Followed by A Major requirement...

**Reader:** See to it that your relationship with Him is right...

**Commentator:** here we have another Major promise...

**Reader:** and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

**Commentator:** Now, the next paragraph contains the whole deal. The timelines, requirements, directions and explanation of sobriety. Step 11...

**Reader:** Abandon yourself to God as you understand God.

**Commentator:** Next is Step 10... which reads

**Reader:** Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your Past.

**Commentator:** And step 12 which reads

**Reader:** Give freely of what you find and join us.

**Commentator:** And here we are given AA's Final Promise, Number 569...

**Reader:** We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

**Commentator:** and the last line is a simple AA prayer.... and our Hope For All of you

**Reader:** May God bless you and keep you until then.

**Commentator:** This is Step 12: the principles of love and service to God and our fellows. This is the highest level of living. Nothing is higher. This is the main reason for our existence. This is why we have been spared.. "We have what the next alcoholic needs, the kind of love that has no price tag." Let's go back into the book to Page 132, line 13, for another look at what sober living is all about .... and some final instructions for sobriety.

**Reader:** We have been speaking to you of serious, sometimes tragic things. We have been dealing with alcohol in its worst aspect. But we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it.

**Commentator:** And here is another main requirement for sobriety....

**Reader:** We absolutely insist on enjoying life.

**Commentator:** Let's continue, more requirements...

**Reader:** We try not to indulge in cynicism over the state of the nations, nor do we carry the world's troubles on our shoulders. When we see a man sinking into the mire that is alcoholism, we give him first aid and place what we have at his disposal. For his sake we do recount and almost relive the horrors of our past.

**Commentator:** Next, we have a warning...

**Reader:** But those of us who have tried to shoulder the entire burden and trouble of others find we are soon overcome by them.

**Commentator:** Next paragraph, more requirements...

**Reader:** so we think cheerfulness and laughter make for usefulness. Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past. But why shouldn't we laugh?

**Commentator:** Consider this equation when it comes to sobriety: Tragedy plus time equals comedy. Continue reading next line, here we have the big pay off!!

**Reader:** We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others.

**Commentator:** Lets read this again.

**Reader:** We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others.

**Commentator:** Continue, last paragraph, fact....

**Reader:** Everybody knows that those in bad health, and those who seldom play, do not laugh much. So let each family play together or separately, as much as their circumstances warrant.

**Commentator:** Another main requirement...

**Reader:** We are sure God want us to be happy, joyous, and free.

**Commentator:** Warning...

**Reader:** We cannot subscribe to the belief that this life is a vale of tears, though it once was just that for many of us. But it is clear that we made our own misery. God didn't do it.

**Commentator:** Final requirement...

**Reader:** Avoid then, the deliberate manufacture of misery, but if trouble comes, cheerfully capitalize it as an opportunity to demonstrate His omnipotence.

**Commentator:** Go to Page 25, line 4, to sum up AA's program of recovery. This summary says it all.

**Reader:** There is a solution. Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for it's successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved.

**Commentator:** (Stand up, drop the book, and say: ) "There was nothing left for us to do but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet".....( pick up the book, ) continue reading, line 13.

**Reader:** We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed. The Great Fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences, which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way, which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us, which we could never do by ourselves.

**Commentator:** Welcome, to each of you, who have completed the 12 steps. Congratulations! May God bless you and keep you, as you trudge the road of happy destiny. Homework for this class is to read and discuss with your sponsor, pages 84 through 103. If you have any question, comments or points of discussion, talk with your sponsor or God.

**Chairperson:** A.A.'s tradition number seven states: every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. We will now pass the basket in observance of the 7th tradition.

**Close with the Lord's Prayer**

