

# *Big Book Sponsorship*

## **12 Step Big Book Guide**



*It only takes 4 hours to learn 'how it works'  
and a lifetime to practice it!*

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## **Introduction**

Beginners' Meetings were held throughout the U.S. and Canada during a period of time when A.A. witnessed 50-75 percent recovery rates from alcoholism. Newcomers quickly learned "How It Works". They had conversion experiences, discovered a new way of living without alcohol or drugs and carried this message of hope to others. After completing the steps, newcomers, to ensure their own sobriety, helped others through the Steps and led the Beginners' Meetings.

Ruth R., an old-timer in Miami Florida, who came into AA in 1953, gave some insight into the demise of the "Beginners' Classes". Ruth recalled that the classes were discontinued in the mid-1950s as the result of the publication of the book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions" by Alcoholics Anonymous Publishing Inc. In the Miami area the "Twelve and Twelve" replaced both the "Big Book" and the "Little Red Book" and "Step Studies" replaced the "Beginners' Classes". In the process, the period for taking the Steps was expanded and modified from 4 weeks to somewhere in between 12 and 16 weeks. The Fourth Step inventory was modified and became a much more laborious and detailed procedure. What was originally conceived as a very simple program, which took a few hours to complete, evolved into a complicated and confusing undertaking requiring several months.

Studying the Steps is not the same as taking the Steps. In the "Beginners' Classes" you take the steps. The Big Book says, "Here are the steps we took" not "here are the steps we read and talked about." The AA pioneers proved that action, not knowledge, produced the spiritual awakening that resulted in recovery from alcoholism or addiction.

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. (AA p. 58, 4th ed.)

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Of alcoholics who came to A.A. and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained that way; 25% sobered up after some relapses, and among the remainder, those who stayed on with A.A. showed improvement. Other thousands came to a few A.A. meetings and at first decided they didn't want the program. But great numbers of these--about two out of three--began to return as time passed. (AA p. xx, 4th ed.)

### ***You are going to become a teacher!***

Our primary purpose is to work the steps and teach others how to teach others how to work the steps. We connect suffering addicts to *recovered* addicts who guide newcomers through a personalized one on one study of the original, undiluted 12 step program described in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. We substitute terms and phrases related to alcoholism to include ANY obsessive compulsive addiction patterns such as, cocaine and all mind altering substances, gambling, sex, self-harm or injury, food, anorexia, bulimia, sugar, smoking, co-dependency etc. and anyone can certainly increase this list and all are welcome.

Our format quotes extensively from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (2001. 4th ed. Alcoholics Anonymous World Services Inc. New York.), our basic text for recovery. *Our notes, commentary, and gender-neutral changes are formatted in italics.* This format can be conducted in one half day or in four, one-hour sessions. For further study, it is suggested that everyone get a copy of the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous.

## Essentials of Recovery

### *Three Ingredients*

We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable. (AA p. 568 4th ed.)

*Willingness means* \_\_\_\_\_

*Honesty means* \_\_\_\_\_

*Open-mindedness means* \_\_\_\_\_

### ***Our job is to explain our approach and win their confidence***

But the ex-problem drinker (*addict or obsessive-compulsive personality*) who has found this solution (*our recipe*), who is properly armed with facts about them self, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic (*addict*) in a few hours. Until such an understanding is reached, little or nothing can be accomplished.

That the *person* who is making the approach has had the same difficulty (*lack of control*), that *they* obviously know what *they are* talking about, that *their* whole deportment shouts at the new prospect that *they are a person* with a real answer, that *they have* no attitude of Holier Than Thou (*we are not saints nor are we crusaders or mission makers*), nothing whatever except the sincere desire to be helpful; that there are no fees to pay (*big book sponsorship is free*) , no axes to grind (*we're not here to have windy arguments or frothy debates with you*), no people to please (*no "ass-kissing"*) , no lectures to be endured (*we are not here to judge or run your life*) these are the conditions we have found most effective. After such an approach many take up their beds and walk again. (AA p. 18-19)

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### ***Does your prospect want to quit***

If *they do* not want to stop drinking (*using, acting out in a obsessive-compulsive behavior*), don't waste time trying to persuade *them*. You may spoil a later opportunity. (AA p. 90).

If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it -- then you are ready to take certain steps. (AA p. 58).

*What does "go to any lengths" look like?*

---

We, in our turn, sought the same escape with all the desperation of *a drowning person*.  
(AA p. 28) (*Are you desperate - yes-no?*)

Ask *them (newcomer)* if *they want* to quit for good and if *they* would go to any extreme to do so.  
(*Are you willing to thoroughly follow the Big Book instructions - yes-no?*)

I, \_\_\_\_\_, *am willing to go to any lengths to recover from my addiction/s.*

If *they say* yes, then *their* attention should be drawn to you as a person who has recovered.  
(p. 90 A.A. 4th Edition)

Tell *them* enough about your drinking (*using or acting-out*) habits, symptoms, and experiences to encourage *them* to speak of themselves. (AA p. 91)

Tell *them* how baffled you were, how you finally learned that you were sick. Give *them* an account of the struggles you made to stop. Show *them* how the mental twist which leads to the first drink (*toke, hit, bet, puff, bite, cut, care, act, etc.*) of the spree. (AA p. 92)

**Step 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol (drugs, sugar, acting out behaviour i.e. sex, gambling, codependency), that our lives had become unmanageable.**

### ***Self-Diagnosis***

Men and women drink (*use or act-out*) essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. (*drugs, sugar, acting out behaviour i.e. sex, gambling, codependency*) (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious (*Is your behaviour hurting you - yes-no?*), they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic (*addict*) life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks--drinks (*hits, puffs, bites, bets, acts, cuts, etc. ,*) which they see others taking (*doing*) with impunity. After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*), and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink (*use or act-out*) again (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) This is repeated over and over (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*), and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery. (AA. p. xxviii 4th ed.)

**Moderate drinkers (users) (type 1)** have little trouble in giving up liquor (*substances, obsessive-compulsive behavior*) entirely if they have good reason for it. (*Do you have a good reason for stopping - yes-no?*) They can take it or leave it alone. (*Can you take it or leave it alone- yes-no?*)

Then we have a certain type of **hard drinkers (heavy users) (type 2)**. They may have the habit badly enough to gradually impair *them* physically and mentally. It may cause *them* to die a few years before *their* time. If a sufficiently strong reason: **ill health** (*Has being sick ever caused you to stop for good - yes-no?*), **falling in love** (*Can you stop for the sake of your spouse, family, friends - yes-no?*), **change of environment** (*Has moving away or avoiding triggers worked for you - yes-no?*), or the **warning of a doctor** (*Has your doctor's advice to stop ever worked for you - yes-no?*) becomes operative, this *person* can also stop or moderate (*Is this you - yes-no?*),

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although *they* may find it difficult and troublesome and may even need medical attention. (*detox, treatment, therapy, counselling*) (AA p. 20-21)

**But what about the real alcoholic.** (*addict*) (*type 3*)...at some stage of *their* drinking (*using*) career *they* begin to lose all control of *their* liquor (*drugs, gambling, sex, sugar, unhealthy relationships, etc.*) consumption, once *they* start to drink (*use, bet, smoke, act-out*). (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) (AA p. 21)

The fact is that most alcoholics (*addicts*), for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink (*obsessive-compulsive acts*). (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) Our so called will power becomes practically nonexistent. (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) 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. (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) We are without defense against the first drink (*use, pill, hit, toke, puff, bite, bet, act, cut, sweet, care, etc.*) (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) (AA p. 24)

Most of us have been unwilling to admit we were real alcoholics (*addicts*). No person likes to think *they are* bodily and mentally different from *their* fellows. Therefore, it is not surprising that our drinking (*using, acting out*) careers have been characterized by countless vain attempts to prove we could drink (*use, act-out*) like other people. (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) The idea that somehow, someday *they* will control and enjoy *their* drinking (*drinking, using, obsessive-compulsive behavior*) is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker (*user, obsessive-compulsive*). (*Is this you - yes-no?*) The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death. (AA p. 30)

We alcoholics (*addicts*) are men and women who have lost the ability to control our drinking (*using, acting-out*). (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) We know that no real alcoholic (*addict*) 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. (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) We are convinced to a

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*person* that alcoholics (*addicts*) of our type<sup>3</sup> are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better. (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) (AA p. 30)

If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when drinking (*using or acting out*), you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic (*addict*) (*Is this you - yes-no?*). If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer. (AA p. 44).

This is by no means a comprehensive picture of the true alcoholic (*addict*), as our behavior patterns vary. But this description should identify them roughly. (*Does it - yes-no?*) (AA p. 22)

### ***Step 1 Instruction***

We learned that we had to fully concede (*admit*) to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics (*addicts*). (*Do you admit it - yes-no?*) This is the first step in recovery. The delusion (*lie*) that we are like other people (*types 1 and 2*), or presently may be, has to be smashed. (*Are you convinced you that you are a real alcoholic/addict - yes-no?*) (AA p. 3)

*If you answered yes, then congratulations you have taken step one!*

### ***There is a solution...***

If you are as seriously alcoholic (*addicted*) as we were, we believe there is no middle-of-the-road solution. We were in a position where life was becoming impossible (*Is life becoming impossible? yes-no?*), and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help (*Are you ready to accept spiritual help - yes-no?*). This we did because we honestly wanted to, and were willing to make the effort. (*Are you willing to make the effort - yes-no?*) (p. 25-26, A.A. 4th Ed.)

**Step 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

Lack of power, that was our dilemma. (*Is lack of power your dilemma - yes-no?*) 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.

(AA p. 45)

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 make-up, 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. We can only clear the ground a bit. If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice, enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then, if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway. With this attitude you cannot fail. The consciousness of your belief is sure to come to you. (AA p. 55)

Some of us grow into it more slowly. But He has come to all who have honestly sought Him. When we drew near to Him He disclosed Himself to us! (AA p. 57)

***Step 2 Instruction***

We needed 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?" (*yes-no?*) As soon as a *person* can say that *they do* believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure *them* that *they are* on *their* way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built. (AA p. 47) *If you answered yes, congratulations you have taken step two and we emphatically assure you are now on your way!*

### **Step 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**

We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. Our description of the alcoholic (*addict*)... our personal adventure before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- a. That we were alcoholics (*addicts*) and could not manage our own lives.  
*(Is this you - yes-no?)*
- b. That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism (*addiction*).  
*(Are you beyond human aid - yes-no?)*
- c. That God could and would if He were sought.  
*(Do you believe or are you even willing to believe - yes-no?)*

Being convinced, we were at Step Three, which is 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?

The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. *(Are you convinced - yes-no?)* (AA p. 60)

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.

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic (*addict*) is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though *they* usually *do not* think so. Above everything, we alcoholics (*addicts*) 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

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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.

This is the how and the why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. (*Are you ready to quit playing God - yes-no?*) 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. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom. (AA p. 61-62)

### ***Step 3 Paycheck***

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 own 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. (AA p. 63)

### ***Step 3 Instruction***

We were now at Step Three. Many of us said to our Maker, as we understood Him: "God, I offer myself to Thee -- to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!"

We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him. (*yes-no?*) (AA p. 63)

*If you can answer yes, then let us take this prayer together and we will have taken step three.*

#### **Step 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

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<sup>Step 3</sup> was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once (*fast*) followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor (*substances, acting-out behaviour*) 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... We took stock honestly. 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. (AA p. 63-64)

Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics (*addicts*) than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, (*pride, jealousy, envy, selfishness, dishonesty, greed, sloth, lust, hate, etc.*) for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. (*Would you agree - yes-no?*) When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with who we were angry (*Column 1*). We asked ourselves why we were angry (*Column 2*). In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships, (including sex) were hurt or threatened. (*Column 3*) So we were sore. We were "burned up." 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? (*Column 3*) (AA p. 64-65)

We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully. The first thing apparent was that this world and its people were often quite wrong. To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got. (AA p. 65-66)

Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done (*Column 2*), we resolutely looked for our own mistakes (*Column 4*). Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard

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the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame? (*Column 4*) The inventory was ours, not the other person's. When we saw our faults we listed them (*Column 4*). We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs (*Column 4*) honestly and were willing to set these matters straight (*Column 5*). (AA p. 67)

We reviewed our fears thoroughly (*All 5 Columns*). We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them (*Column 2*). (AA p. 67-68)

Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there. But above all, we tried to be sensible on this question...What can we do about them?...We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? (*Column 4*) Whom had we hurt? (*Column 1*) Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? (*Column 2*) Where were we at fault (*Column 4*), what should we have done instead? (*Column 5*) We got this all down on paper and looked at it. (AA p. 68-69)

### ***Step 4 Instruction***

If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments (*All 5 Columns*). We have begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. We have commenced to see their terrible destructiveness....We have listed the people (*Column 1*) we have hurt by our conduct (*Column 4*), and are willing to straighten out the past if we can (*Column 5*)... If you have already made a decision<sup>Step 3</sup>, and an inventory<sup>Step 4</sup> of your grosser handicaps, you have made a good beginning. That being so you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself. (AA p. 70-71)

*Keep in mind that it is not necessary, for newcomers to talk about every resentment or selfish act, or each person he or she has ever lied to or harmed for the inventory to be thorough. The objective is to get to "causes and conditions". Sometimes it takes only a few incidents to make clear which short-comings have kept the newcomer blocked from an intimate, two-way relationship with the "One who has all power."*

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**RESENTMENTS:** We were usually as definite as this example: (p. 65, A.A. 4th Edition)

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
<b>People, Institutions &amp; Principles</b>  Towards whom am I angry?	<b>The Cause</b>  Why am I angry?	<b>This affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my...</b> self-esteem, security, ambitions pocket book, relationships (including sex)	<b>Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes?</b>  <i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, jealousy, lust, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, hate, selfishness, impatience, etc.</i>	<b>What should I have done instead?</b>  <i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience, etc.</i>
Mr. Brown (Resentment)	His attention to my wife. Told my wife of my mistress. Brown may get my job at the office.	Sex relations Self-esteem <i>Ambitions?</i> <i>Pocket book?</i> <i>Security?</i>	(fear) <i>Infidelity, Lust, Dishonesty</i> <i>False Pride</i> <i>Selfishness &amp; Self-Seeking</i> <i>Jealousy</i>	<i>Love &amp; Forgiveness</i> <i>Honesty</i> <i>Humility</i> <i>Unselfishness</i> <i>Faithfulness to her</i> <i>Trust</i>
Mrs. Jones (Resentment)	She's a nut -- she snubbed me. She committed her husband for drinking. He's my friend. She's a gossip.	Personal relationships Self-esteem	(fear) <i>False Pride</i> <i>Jealousy &amp; Suspicion</i> <i>Intolerance</i> <i>Selfishness</i>	<i>Love &amp; Forgiveness</i> <i>Humility</i> <i>Trust</i> <i>Tolerance</i> <i>Unselfishness</i> <i>Look for the good in others</i>
My employer (Resentment)	Unreasonable -- Unjust -- Overbearing -- Threatens to fire me for my drinking and padding my expense account.	Self-esteem Security <i>Pocket book</i> <i>Ambitions</i>	(fear) <i>False Pride</i> <i>Dishonesty &amp; Stealing</i> <i>Greed</i> <i>Laziness &amp; Sloth</i> <i>Selfishness, Self-seeking</i>	<i>Love &amp; Forgiveness</i> <i>Humility</i> <i>Honesty</i> <i>Generosity</i> <i>Hard &amp; Honest Work</i> <i>Unselfishness</i> <i>Restitution</i> <i>Be Helpful</i>
My wife (Resentment)	Misunderstands and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name.	Personal relationships Sex relations Security	False Pride (fear) <i>Jealousy &amp; Suspicion</i> <i>Infidelity &amp; Dishonesty</i>	<i>Humility</i> <i>Love &amp; Forgiveness</i> <i>Trust</i> <i>Honesty &amp; Faithfulness</i>

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**RESENTMENTS:** We were usually as definite as this example:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
<p><b>People, Institutions &amp; Principles</b></p> <p>Towards whom am I angry?</p>	<p><b>The Cause</b></p> <p>Why am I angry?</p>	<p><b>This affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my...</b>self-esteem, security, ambitions, pocket book, relationships (including sex)</p>	<p><b>Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes?</b></p> <p><i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, jealousy, lust, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, hate, selfishness, impatience, etc.</i></p>	<p><b>What should I have done instead?</b></p> <p><i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience, etc.</i></p>

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**FEARS:** We were usually as definite as this example:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
<b>People, Institutions &amp; Principles</b>  Who or What am I afraid of?  What am I afraid of losing or not getting?	<b>The Cause</b>  Why am I fearful?	<b>This affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my...</b> self-esteem, security, ambitions pocket book, relationships (including sex)	<b>Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes?</b>  <i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, jealousy, lust, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, hate, selfishness, impatience, etc.</i>	<b>What should I have done instead?</b>  <i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience, etc.</i>
<i>Fear of no control</i>	<i>Other people make mistakes and are incompetent - if I want anything done right I must do it myself!</i>	<i>Self-esteem Security Ambitions Pocket book Personal relationships</i>	<i>Arrogance Intolerance Inconsideration Bullying &amp; Abusive Selfishness &amp; Self Seeking Jealousy &amp; Suspicion</i>	<i>Humility Acceptance Be considerate Be helpful to others Unselfishness Trust &amp; Faith in God</i>

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**HARMFUL CONDUCT (Including SEX):** We were usually as definite as this example:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
<p><b>People, Institutions &amp; Principles</b></p> <p>Whom have I hurt by my conduct, including sex?</p>	<p><b>The Cause</b></p> <p>What did my conduct arouse?</p> <p><i>How did I affect them?</i> Jealousy? Suspicion? Bitterness?</p>	<p><b>This affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my...</b>self-esteem, security, ambitions pocket book, relationships (including sex)</p>	<p><b>Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes?</b></p> <p><i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, jealousy, lust, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, hate, selfishness, impatience, etc.</i></p>	<p><b>What should I have done instead?</b></p> <p><i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience, etc.</i></p>
<p><i>Spouse (Sex Conduct)</i></p>	<p><i>Had an affair, I aroused jealousy, resentment, distrust. I affected her self-esteem -- She felt inadequate</i></p>	<p><i>Self-esteem</i> <i>Sex relationships</i></p>	<p><i>False Pride (self-loathing)</i> <i>Lust &amp; Infidelity</i> <i>Dishonesty</i> <i>Selfishness &amp; Self Seeking</i> <i>Inconsideration</i></p>	<p><i>Humility</i> <i>Faithfulness to her</i> <i>Unselfishness</i> <i>Appreciate her</i> <i>Intimacy</i> <i>Consideration</i></p>
<p><i>My employer</i></p>	<p>Stole products from the store. Slandered his name.</p>	<p><i>Pocket book</i> <i>Self-esteem</i></p>	<p><i>Dishonesty, Stealing</i> <i>Selfish, Self-seeking</i> <i>Slander</i> <i>Resentment</i> <i>Greed</i></p>	<p><i>Honesty, Restitution</i> <i>Be helpful</i> <i>Stop slandering</i> <i>Forgiveness</i> <i>Generosity</i></p>

**Step 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**

Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it? We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, 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 (*Column 4*). 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 (*Column 4*). This brings us to the Fifth Step in the program of recovery....

This is perhaps difficult, especially discussing our defects (*Column 4*) with another person.... If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking (*using, acting-out*)... We must be entirely honest with somebody (*Big Book Sponsor*) if we expect to live long or happily in this world. Rightly and naturally, we think well before we choose the person or persons with whom to take this intimate and confidential step. Those of us belonging to a religious denomination which requires confession must, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority (*for criminal matters—see a lawyer; for mental-emotional issues—see a therapist; for medical issues see a doctor*) whose duty it is to receive it. (AA p. 72-74)

***Step 5 Instruction***

When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time. We have a written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk... We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past (*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*). (AA p. 75)

**Step 5 Paycheck**

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 (*drug, acting-out*) 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. (AA p 75)

***My Moral Inventory Checklist***

***Self-will (Column 4) Step 4 & 5  
(NO POWER)***

***God's will (Column 5) Steps 8 & 9  
(POWER!)***

***My liabilities, blocks, character defects...***

- False Pride, Arrogance, Self-loathing
- Jealousy, Distrust, Suspicion
- Envy
- Selfishness
- Self-seeking
- Dishonesty, Stealing, Lying
- Intolerance, Inconsideration
- Greed
- Lust, Infidelity
- Hate, Anger, Resentment
- Sloth, Laziness, Procrastination
- Impatience
- Fear
- Irresponsible, Blaming Others
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

***The assets I need to strive for...***

- Humility
- Trust
- Contentment
- Unselfishness
- Helpful to others
- Honesty, Integrity, Restitution
- Tolerance, Acceptance, Tact
- Generosity
- Intimacy, Chaste, Faithfulness
- Forgiveness
- Activity, Zeal, Promptness
- Patience
- Love
- Responsible, Accountable
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

**Step 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**

Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done (*All 5 Columns*). (AA p. 75)

Is our work solid so far - *yes-no*? Are the stones (*Steps 1-5*) properly in place? (*yes-no*?) Have we skimped on the cement put into the foundation? (*yes-no*?) Have we tried to make mortar without sand? (*yes-no*?) If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six. (AA p. 75)

***Step 6 Instruction***

We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things (*Column 4*) which we have admitted are objectionable? (AA p. 76)

Can He now take them all, every one?

*(Are you now ready to have God remove all these defects - yes-no?)*

If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.

(AA p. 76)

*When you can answer yes, then you will have taken step six.*

**Step 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**

*Step 7 Instruction*

When ready, we say something like this:

"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...

*(Column 4 -- list character defects, for example, "God, please remove my dishonesty, resentment, selfishness, fear...." )*

...which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength...

*(Column 5 -- list assets to strive for... "God, strengthen my honesty, forgiveness, unselfishness and love...")*

...as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen."

We have then taken Step Seven. (AA p. 76)

**Step 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.**

Now we need more action, without which we find that "Faith without works is dead." Let's look at Steps Eight and Nine. 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 - (yes-no?) (AA p. 76).

<b>Column 1 (Persons, Institutions) Who have I harmed and to whom do I need to make a direct amends? (Step 8) What did my conduct arouse? How did I affect them? (Column 2 - Harms Inventory)</b>	<b>Column 5 (What I should have done instead) What do I need to do to straighten out the past? What behaviour will convince them more than my words? (Step 9)</b>
<i>(Example) My Spouse (Relationship Conduct) Infidelity, dishonesty, inconsideration, selfishness. I aroused in her bitterness, jealousy, resentment. I affected her self-esteem and aroused feelings of inadequacy.</i>	<i>Show appreciation to my spouse by being faithful, honest, and unselfish. I will practice intimacy and be considerate of her needs and desires. I will spend more time with (her) and I will practice these principles on a daily basis.</i>
<i>(Example) My former employer (Resentment) I was angry and verbally abusive. I was dishonest and stole from him. I slandered his name to others.</i>	<i>Be forgiving. I will admit all my wrong doings in person. I will make restitution on what I stole. I will stop slandering his name. I will ask him what more can I do to right the wrong I have done.</i>

**Step 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.**

We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal. (*yes-no?*) 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. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol (*drugs, obsessive-compulsive behaviours*). (AA p. 76)

The rule is we must be hard on our self, but always considerate of others. (AA p. 74)

***Item 1 - Resentments***

Probably there are still some misgivings (*yes-no?*)...The question of how to approach the *person* we hated will arise. It may be *they* have done us more harm than we have done *them* and, though we may have acquired a better attitude toward *them*, we are still not too keen about admitting our faults (*Column 4*). Nevertheless, with a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. We go to *them* in a helpful and forgiving spirit (*Column 5*), confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret (*Column 4*). Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue...We are there to sweep off our side of the street...*Their* faults (*Column 2*) are not discussed. We stick to our own (*Column 4*). (AA p. 76-78)

***Anger/Resentment Forgiveness Prayer***

This was our course: We realized that the people (*Column 1*) who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. (*Would you agree - yes-no?*) Though we did not like their symptoms (*Column 2*) and the way these disturbed us (*Column 3*), they, like ourselves, were sick too. (*Would you agree - yes-no?*) We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience (*Column 5*) that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves, "This is a sick *person*. How can I be helpful (*Column 5*) to *this person*? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done." (AA p. 66-67)

***Item 2 - Money***

Most alcoholics (*addicts*) owe money (*yes-no?*) We do not dodge our creditors... We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink (*use, act-out*) if we are afraid to face them. (AA p. 78)

***Item 3 - Criminal Offenses***

Perhaps we have committed a criminal offense which might land us in jail if it were known to the authorities (*yes-no?*)... Although these reparations take innumerable forms (*Column 5*), there are some general principles which we find guiding. Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths (*follow the recipe*) to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing (*Column 5*), no matter what the personal consequences may be. We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything. (AA p. 80-81).

***Remove Fear Prayer***

Instead we let Him demonstrate (*Column 5*), through us, what He can do. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be (*Column 5*). At once, we commence to outgrow fear. (AA p. 68)

***Item 4 - Sex Relationships***

The chances are that we have domestic troubles (*yes-no?*) Perhaps we are mixed up with women (*others*) in a fashion we wouldn't care to have advertised. (AA p. 78-79)

***Prayer for Sex Amends***

We asked God to mold our ideals (*Column 5*) and help us to live up to them... In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come, if we want it... We earnestly pray for the right ideal (*Column 5*), for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing. If sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves the harder into helping others. We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heartache. (AA p. 69-70)

***Step 9 Instruction***

Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people we secure their consent. If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink. (AA p. 80)

Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead. A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won't fill the bill at all... The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it... Our behavior will convince them more than our words (*Column 5*). We must remember that ten or twenty years of drunkenness (*addiction*) would make a skeptic out of anyone.

There may be some wrongs we can never fully right. We don't worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could. Some people cannot be seen - we sent them an honest letter. And there may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases. But we don't delay if it can be avoided. We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble (*Column 5*) without being servile (*grovelling*) or scraping (*awkward*) (*Column 4*). As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone. (AA p. 83)

***Step 9 Paycheck***

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way 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. (AA p. 83-84)

*(Do you want this experience in your life - yes-no?)*

## **Step 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.**

Step Ten suggests we continue to take personal inventory<sup>step 4</sup> and continue to set right any new mistakes<sup>steps 8,9</sup> as we go along. (*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*) We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. (*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*) We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime. Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.<sup>step 4</sup> When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them.<sup>steps 3,7</sup> We discuss them with someone immediately<sup>step 5</sup> and make amends<sup>steps 8,9</sup> quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help.<sup>step 12</sup> Love and tolerance of others is our code. (AA p. 84)

### ***Step 10 Paycheck***

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone, even alcohol (*drugs, gambling, sex, sugar, codependency, etc*). For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor (*using, acting-out*). 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 (*drugs, gambling, sex, sugar, codependency etc.*) 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 how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition. (AA p. 84-85)

### My Daily (Step 10) Personal Inventory

<b>LIABILITIES to watch for:</b> Check for each day for: SELF-WILL (Column 4) <i>NO POWER</i>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tues</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thurs</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sun</b>
1. Resentment							
2. False Pride, Arrogance, Self-loathing							
3. Envy							
4. Jealousy, Distrust, Suspicion							
5. Dishonesty, Lying, Exaggeration, Stealing							
6. Selfishness, Self-Seeking, Self-Centeredness							
7. Laziness, Sloth, Boredom							
8. Inconsideration, Intolerance							
9. Lust, Infidelity							
10. Immoral Thinking, Vulgar Talk							
11. Hate, Wrath, Anger, Irritability							
12. Greed (money) or Gluttony (food)							
13. Slander, Gossip, Spreading Rumors							
14. Impatience							
15. Fear of...							
<b>ASSETS to strive for:</b> Check for each day for: GOD'S WILL (Column 5) <i>POWER</i>	<b>Mon</b>	<b>Tues</b>	<b>Wed</b>	<b>Thurs</b>	<b>Fri</b>	<b>Sat</b>	<b>Sun</b>
1. Forgiveness							
2. Humility							
3. Contentment							
4. Trust							
5. Honesty, Integrity							
6. Unselfishness							
7. Activity, Zeal, Promptness							
8. Tolerance, Acceptance							
9. Intimacy, Chaste							
10. Purity							
11. Love, Kindness							
12. Generosity							
13. Praise Others, Look For The Good In Others							
14. Patience							
15. Faith, Trust God							

**Step 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.**

Step Eleven suggests prayer (*talking to God*) and meditation (*listening to God*). (AA p. 85) (*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*)

***Step 11 Instruction***

***PM Focus***

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid?<sup>step 10</sup> Do we owe an apology?<sup>step 8,9</sup> Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?<sup>step 5</sup> 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?<sup>step 12</sup> But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection (*Column 4*), for that would diminish our usefulness to others.<sup>step 12</sup> After making our review we ask God's forgiveness<sup>step 7</sup> and inquire what corrective measures<sup>steps 8,9</sup> should be taken. (AA p. 8)

***AM Focus***

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. (*Column 5 - strive for assets*) Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking<sup>step 3</sup>, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives<sup>step 10</sup>. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives. (AA p. 86)

***Mid-day Focus***

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and

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take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. (AA p. 86)

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer 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. 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. (AA p. 87)

### ***Step 11 Paycheck***

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions (*Column 4*). 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. It works - it really does. (AA p. 87 - 88)

*(If the "One who has all Power" is going to supply us with the "right answers," wouldn't it be a good idea to jot down thoughts and images we receive in meditation so we can remember them?)*

***Self Will Test*** (any one characteristic)  
(*Column 4*) NO POWER

***God' Will Test*** (must have all 4 Absolutes)  
(*Column 5*) POWER

---

*Is it Dishonest?*

*Is it Honest?*

*Is there Resentment?*

*Is it Pure (i.e. Does it have Integrity?)*

*Is it Selfish?*

*Is it Unselfish?*

*Is there Fear?*

*Is it Loving?*

**Step 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking (*using, acting out*) as intensive work with other alcoholics (*addicts*). It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics (*addicts*)! (*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*) You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill. (AA p. 89)

This seemed to prove that one alcoholic (*addict*) could affect another as no nonalcoholic (*non-addict*) could. It also indicated that strenuous work, one alcoholic (*addict*) with another, was vital to permanent recovery. (p. xvi - xvii, A.A. Forward to the 2nd Edition)

...I soon found that when all other measures failed, work with another alcoholic (*addict*) would save the day. (AA p.15)

...the broker had worked hard with many alcoholics (*addicts*) on the theory that only an alcoholic (*addict*) could help an alcoholic (*addict*), but he had succeeded only in keeping sober (*clean*) himself. He suddenly realized that in order to save himself he must carry his message to another alcoholic (*addict*). (AA p.xvi, A.A. Forward to the 2nd Edition)

We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others. (AA p.132)

But if you are shaky you had better work with another alcoholic (*addict*) instead.  
(AA p. 102)

Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery. A kindly act once in a while isn't enough. (AA p. 97)

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It is important for *them (newcomer)* to realize that your attempt to pass this *(our recipe)* on to *them* plays a vital part in your recovery. Actually, *they* may be helping you more than you are helping *them*. (AA p. 94)

### ***Step 12 Paycheck***

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. (AA p. 89)

### **Summary**

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 (*drugs, obsessive-compulsive behaviour*) is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism (*addiction*). 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 (*Column 5*) 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. (AA p. 85)

Thus we grow. And so can you, though you be but one *person* with this book (*Big Book of A.A.*) in your hand. We believe and hope it contains all you will need to begin. We know what you are thinking. You are saying to yourself: "I'm jittery and alone. I couldn't do that." But you can. You forget that you have just now tapped a source of power much greater than yourself. To duplicate, with such backing, what we have accomplished is only a matter of willingness, patience and labor. (AA pp. 162-163)

*Remember, recovery from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body is possible by working 12 steps, as directed in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, everyday. There is much more work ahead, this just the beginning. Remember not to get cocky or lazy.*

*Trust God, Clean House, Help Others.*