

The 12 Steps & Buddhist Beliefs

Buddhist 12 Steps...

The Buddhist 12 Steps is a concept being developed to provide individual people with a Buddhist philosophy dealing with recovery issues a reference place for ideas, thoughts, perspectives, experiences and a channel of support and sharing.

Our initial sharing on the 12 Steps is designed to share and inspire thoughts and dialogue. The 12 Steps sharing here creates a foundation and a beginning.

Recovery, human revolution, enlightenment is our common bond. The vibrant life energy we are born with is often covered up by the karmic causes we chose or create. This covers our Buddha nature. There are many symptoms of fundamental darkness in our world. Addictions, obsessions, and compulsions are powerful and visible symptoms and because individuals coping with these diseases are visible, programs have been designed to help overcome our fundamental darkness.

We hope to gather a group of people to build this site (www.buddhist12steps.com) and articles to help ourselves and those who still suffer inside and outside of the 12 Step programs.

Many Buddhists, or people who do not embrace western religious concepts, need foundation for dealing with the 12 Steps wording and some of the concepts expressed at 12 Step meetings.

The Buddhist 12 Steps are a concept that needs your help and contribution to blossom as it spirals to express the vibrant principles found in both Buddhism and the 12 Steps.

Twelve Step programs are about recovery from our fundamental darkness. This may manifest as alcoholism, drug addiction, compulsive overeating, gambling, or many other ways. Working the 12 Step concepts synergise well with living Buddhist beliefs.

The concepts of Honesty, Openness, and Willingness form a repeating pattern through the 12 Steps. Have you noticed how the 12 Steps are a spiral building on Honesty, Open-mindedness, and Willingness?

Honest = Steps 1, 4, 7, 10

Open = Steps 2, 5, 8, 11

Willing = Steps 3, 6, 9, 12

Step 1 - Honest Admission and Realization

We admitted that by ourselves we were powerless to overcome our own fundamental darkness and live what we truly believe.

We admitted we were powerless over _____ (fill in the blank(s) that fits you - alcohol, drugs, overeating, debt, sex, anger, ...) and that our lives had become unmanageable.

There are no dues or fees, no requirement for membership in the 12 Step programs other than the admission that by ourselves we were powerless to overcome our own fundamental darkness.

We realize that we want something different than the life we have and are willing to take action, we start looking for a way to overcome this. This realization could be thought of as the step leading to Step one. It is usually at a profound level and involves becoming willing to change the direction of our life.

The feeling of personal defeat is not pleasant but yet Step One is admitting that the past can no longer be the basis for our future. The path we walked, our pattern of choices, will not get us to where we want to go. The pain of admitting we were wrong becomes less than the pain of staying in our fundamental darkness (disease of alcoholism, overeating, drugs, codependency, etc.) Admitting powerlessness may feel like surrender, but surrender and victory are only concepts that were killing us.

Step One is the bedrock to be able to take actions to recover. We need to realize the truth before we can build something different - before we can live a happier life. Step One talks about "A mental obsession so subtly powerful that no amount of human willpower could break it." The fundamental darkness Buddhism speaks of is the illusion that we are not part of the universe (or Mystic Law). The delusion that we are separate is part of our disease. This image of self that is separate, alone, and/or isolated has to use it's own resources and does not use the Mystic Law for the needed support. Step one is admitting that this delusion no longer works for us. The 12-Step programs have been called "a new therapy based on the kinship of man's common suffering". Since the steps were developed in the American 1930 culture the wording of the steps is not in Buddhist terms, yet the concepts are very Buddhist.

The Twelve Steps are written with "we", not with "I". It recognizes a collective "we". The sharing of our experiences, strength and hope let us know that we are not alone. The lesser "I", "I, by myself", will not get me to where, what, and/or who I want to be.

Regardless of how our fundamental darkness manifests, we have tried to change unsuccessfully before. We have naturally chanted to overcome these obstacles. We could say that our many failures at changing have lead us to the 12-Step programs or we could say that the Mystic Law has lead us to the 12 Steps which will not only support and help our practice and enlightenment to progress with awesome progress.

Since we may be very successful in some areas of our lives we may not want to conclude that our lives had become unmanageable. Fortunately, we do not have to reach the conclusions before we start the process. By quitting the debating society long enough to consider these steps we can see hope where we had despair.

Step 2 - Open to Believe and Hope

We open to leaving our self-imposed isolation and raise our life condition. We release the delusion that we are alone or unsupported in an indifferent, or hostile, world. We come to believe "we are many in body and one in spirit".

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

Each person's life is based on belief of some kind - that includes our life before the Twelve Steps. To recover we leave our self-imposed isolation and raise our life condition.

Perhaps the greatest delusion for us is the feeling or belief that we are alone and unsupported in an indifferent, or hostile, world. We may have felt that we came into life unprepared. Life seemed like a tool without an owner's manual. We may have felt we did not know how to live. We can reduce, or eliminate, this fundamental ignorance of life (fundamental darkness).

Step Two is a process - an inner action. We become open to being willing to believe in something more than the resources under our skin. We start with yearning for something greater than what we currently have and start seeking purity and clarity. Becoming open to start a quest with our entire being - this is Step Two.

We may chose to call this process connecting with our ninth level of consciousness, a higher power, god, gods, or leave the power unnamed. We came to awaken to enlightenment (the wisdom originally inherent in the lives of each).

More on the Step 2 phrases:

"Came to believe" - is an example where the original AA writers took the Oxford group's religious words and used everyday language to reach as many of us as they could. A basis in faith makes possible this quest which involves our entire being.

Three other words for faith may help here: "*To open*", "*to arouse faith*", "*to possess curiosity about*", or "to yearn for" are all meaning of the Sanskrit word, *sraddha*, often translated as faith or belief. *Sraddha* includes the meanings of awe and yearning for an object of astonishment. Buddhist practice begins here with curiosity and yearning for. As we practice, we acquire wisdom from experiencing that, which was formerly inconceivable, and we proceed toward enlightenment and its benefits.

Prasada is another term for faith which expresses the idea of purity and clarity. This pure faith in which we are at peace, not disturbed by circumstances, allows us to realize the dignity and equality of all living things. The proper function of faith is to cleanse the mind and make it pure so our inherent wisdom can come forth. The impulse of true reason is to transcend the confines of the present self. It aims to reach beyond its grasp, always improving and surpassing itself. The source of energy and foundation for that constant search is faith in something larger than oneself - the power of the universe does not stop at the boundary of my skin.

To summarize: start with yearning to arousing faith, develop with *adhimukto* (belief and understanding, wisdom), cultivate and polish our lives toward pure faith or enlightenment. In the process we can reduce, or eliminate, the fundamental ignorance of life (fundamental darkness) and awaken to enlightenment (the wisdom originally inherent in the lives of each). We can come to realize that we are not alone and unsupported in an indifferent, or hostile, world.

Faith opens, doubt closes. When we open to life, life opens to us for we are one.

"That a Power greater than ourselves" - As Buddhists we know that the normal human image of "self" is not all there is. Modern science each day discovers that we, and all of life, are energy. While enlightenment is beyond reason, it is not irrational, nor does it resist rational examination. In the *Wisdom of the Lotus Sutra*, SGI President Ikeda writes "The source of energy and foundation for that constant search is faith in something larger than oneself."

In 1935, the book *Alcoholics Anonymous* wrote "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..." "When, therefore, we speak to you of God; we mean your own concept". Their wording does not need to prevent us from using the concepts to make a revolutionary change in our way of living and thinking.

Everything of value can be found within our own being. Buddhist faith can mean admitting, accepting, and establishing one's true self. It is the recognition that the infinite horizon of the cosmos extends within and without the self. One's life opens out toward the cosmos and is enfolded in it; at the same time, one's life encompasses the cosmos. We are in constant exchange and communication with the cosmos, our lives reverberating with it as one living entity.

We each have all the power in the universe when we choose to connect to/use the Mystic Law. In Bill's story it says "Had this power originated in him? Obviously it had not. There had been no more power in him than there was in me at that minute; and this was none at all." From the viewpoint of helplessness or hopelessness, it is easy to see the denial of our own true power. When we see ourselves as separated from the universe, isolated from myself and from others as well, then we are not able to generate power to overcome the fundamental darkness.

In my practice, our first daily prayer is "I offer appreciation to the functions in life and in the environment that serve to protect us night and day. I pray these protective powers be further strengthened by my practice of the Law." We are part of the universe. All the resources of the universe are our own to use when we understand and accept this fact. Sometimes it is people who offer protection, and sometimes protection comes from forces we can not see. Regardless of how the protection manifests, it is waiting for us to accept it.

We can come to believe that we have to connect beyond what we currently conceive. When we open our entire being, including our intellectual faculties, then Buddha nature manifests in our lives. All of life reflects the Mystic law. We are energy, just as the Mystic Law is energy. The Mystic Law is a power greater than our deluded self.

"Could restore us to sanity" - When we held to an image of self, which is separated from the others or our environment and think that self has to use our "own resources", we were in denial and delusion.

"Could restore us to sanity" implies we were not sane. In alcoholism, addiction, or compulsions, our previous choices were not the choices that we associate with sanity. With our disease, we were in compulsive slavery. Do sane people do the things to themselves that we have done?

Since we know we can chant for anything and get the benefits we are seeking, the phrase "Could restore us" does not need to be an issue. There are protective forces in the universe if we will accept help.

Our problem has been our being willing to change or knowing how to get out of our own way. These steps help us through our Human Revolution.

The steps and tools of the 12-Step recovery programs help support our practice. Our practice supports the program.

Step 3 - Willing to Make a Determination and to Accept

We vow to allow our true self to manifest. This is a determination that aligns our lives with the rhythm of the living cosmos, or Mystic Law.

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood him.

While the concept is as Buddhist as it is Christian, the wording of this step makes little sense in Buddhist terms.

Determined to realign our individual lives with the rhythm of the living cosmos.

Determined to open up to the Mystic Law. Determined to quit isolating and denying life. Determined to open to life and feeling.

The Third Step concept is we become present, aware, do the work, accept that the results are not our job and trust that the protective forces of the universe support us.

The decision is to return to our true selves and stop believing past false information of ourselves. Let go of the struggle to prevent our true selves from emerging.

The power is within and outside ourselves, yet the distinction of within and outside are delusions. Within SGI, the example would be our physical Gohonzons. Nicherin clearly says the power of the Gohonzon is found within ourselves. It is the connection of the inner and outer that is the power of life.

Dedicating our lives to the Law and trusting in all our affairs sounds like a large order. Yet Buddhism teaches the innate value and goodness of life when we return to our true selves. Returning to our true selves is what this step is about.

The Zen of Recovery says "The words 'God' and 'Him' are merely convenient catchphrases easily understood by people in a predominately Christian, male-centered culture and era. The inclusion of the phrase 'as we understood' underscores the complete spiritual democracy of recovery. It is left up to each of us to reach an understanding about the nature of our true self, Higher Power, God or even no Higher Power at all. That understanding becomes the basis for our reintegration into a life founded upon eternal patterns".

Buddhism describes gods as beneficial forces innate in social and natural surroundings, which work to protect human beings. "God" can be considered the inclusion of benefic forces innate in our world. Whatever names are used for the power in this universe, there are protective forces - the Law, the truth, underlying all phenomena which supports each individual and our environment. We do not need to use, nor object to the use of, the word "God" per se. At 12-Step meeting our sharing can reflect our choices and understanding. Do the choice of words matter? Yes and No. The Buddhist principle of *zuiho bini* is the precept to follow the customs of the locality -- which states that, even if one must depart in minor details from the Buddhist teaching, one should avoid needlessly violating the rules of society. Such flexibility is characteristic of Buddhism, which concerns itself with enabling people to awaken to the fundamental truth of all things, and not with governing the details of their lives. Buddhism has skillfully adapted its peripheral aspects to the time and place, embracing local customs, while maintaining its essential message intact. Shakamuni Buddha adapted the gods in the Indian culture of his time to support Buddhist concepts. As Buddhism spread from India to China and Tibet and through Korea to Japan, it adapted to many customs, manners and traditions of these cultures. In China, Buddhism adopted terms and concepts from Taoism, the local religion, to explain the Buddha's teaching. In Japan, many ceremonies, deities and observances native to Japanese spiritual life were also incorporated into Buddhism. Buddhism has adopted each culture's protective forces (the God or gods) into Buddhism because Buddhism is universal and all-inclusive. Each culture's truth is part of the Mystic Law.

As individuals, our lesser selves may want the delusion of being in the driver, or director's seat. The delusions of this life (with the pain and suffering from our disease) can help us focus and open up to what we actually are looking for. The song, "Looking for Love in all the Wrong Places", fits us. We have used alcohol (over-eating, drugs, inappropriate relationships, etc.) to fulfill us. This denial of life brings pain. Joy is the emotion evoked by living in harmony with the Mystic or universal Law. Life is joy when we open up and connect. Willingness is a key. What would living in harmony with the Law look like? Imagine the tremendous joy we will feel as we live our mission. We know that chanting for what we desire will lead us to enlightenment. When we chant, we seek fulfillment, joy and completeness and a release from pain for others and ourselves. Step Three is a determination to join with the protective energy of the universe and promote human joy and world peace.

Step 3 is both the determination and the trust.

Many people ask how to relieve the fundamental darkness that has become obsessive. The definition of obsession is "a persistent disturbing preoccupation with an often-unreasonable idea or feeling". The 12 Step programs have books with details and stories to help relieve the obsession. There are meetings throughout the world. Meeting with others can let us realize we are not alone with this disease. There are people waiting to help and there are no fees to attend. Some diseases go away with treatment. Other diseases may never go away, but they can be overcome if we chant/pray/meditate and take action. As we recover, we can help others, who have problems similar to our own, tap their enlightened life.

Modern science is finding that the basic stuff of the universe is a kind of pure energy malleable to human intention and expectation - it defies the old mechanistic model of the universe. The AA book on page forty says "Our whole trouble had been the misuse of willpower. We had tried to bombard our problems with it instead of attempting to bring it into agreement with God's intention for us."

Our misuse of willpower and other things is a reflection of Step Three is a determination to Human Revolution. The first three steps really are faith, study and practice:

Study (or gaining knowledge of the facts) is Step One. Build a foundation on honesty. Faith is Step Two with willingness and openness to hope. Practice is Step Three as it is the willingness to trust that life is intended for good and joy. Taking Step 3 is connecting to life with trust. This will relieve our own pain and suffering.

We might not want to build a house without a blueprint in our hand, yet our mission is already within. We know something good is waiting for us as we release our fundamental darkness and change our causes.

Without action, we can not practice. The first Three Steps are internal action. This prepares us for external action in the next Steps.

Step 4 - Honestly Confronted Ourselves

This inventory must be as honest as we can be at this time. We must include our good, or bad, thoughts and actions. As Buddhists we know good and evil are two, but not two. Can we be as through in listing our basic goodness as the times we have been angry, full of self-pity, guilty, resentful or spiteful?

"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves"

Step 4 is part of the spiral lifting us from our disease.

The words "moral inventory" may trigger associations with judgmentalness, less than, separateness. Memories of events or feelings tied to, or even triggers of, our disease.

Good and evil are two, but not two, in Buddhist beliefs. Honestly accepting our disease is the first step of moving to our honest fourth step inventory. Where are we? This inventory must be as honest as we can be at this time. We must include our good, or bad, thoughts and actions. Can we be as through in listing our basic goodness as the times we have been angry, guilty, or resentful?

The following notes from a Pascual SGI talk. It was not a talk intentionally directed towards program nor the fourth step. Yet it seemed the whole talk was to take fourth step action.

Even if we chant & think we believe in Buddhism, our beliefs can be diametrically opposed to the truth of Buddhist teachings & overcoming. Our beliefs can be what are holding us back in life. Stop! Look directly at the devils (our beliefs)! Walk through them! That is when their power source is cut. We gain our own power back by chanting & seeing a "new scenario" in spite of what things around us look like.

We can pray to see our fundamental darkness clearly & face it squarely. This inventory looks at our resentments, fears, anger, shame, or other issues connected to our past and present.

Anything that drains our hope & life force is part of darkness. Their purpose in life is to make us run. They feed on our old scenarios (beliefs) about ourselves and are based on our fears - the limits of what we think are possible. We need to STOP RUNNING, to face the obstacle - the belief that our life is OK as it is & that running & avoiding problems is an OK way to live.

These are "false beliefs" in terms of tapping our limitless life potential & these limits that we set are diametrically opposed to changing karma.

Our problems are actually our tools for enlightenment. Our determination that we will break the mold of what is NOT working for us in terms of "old scenarios" in the present moment is the beginning of writing our new scenario. We erroneously worshiped the scaffoldings of our lives. The scaffoldings are what supported us before we began to chant. These old beliefs/patterns used to work & helped us survive before. Now we have Nam-Myoho-Renge-Kyo to strengthen and support us. Our old belief systems, with its limits, are not only no longer needed. As we tear down the scaffolding, our problems will begin to surface. We will get stronger with each problem we face. It may not be easy but so beneficial!

Isolation & the four walls of our limitations have been our home. Within that small room we need to look for the door when we chant, throw it open & pray about the life beyond that door. Do not be afraid to see the impossible problem within our life changing into exactly what we want & we need to experience happiness in this existence. It ALL takes place internally first, when we chant. Prayer is the most important thing. Our Revolution of Thought Is What Transforms the Body, the poverty, whatever limits our imagination, or our dreams, from becoming reality.

As other people in recovery contribute to this site and this step, the Pasqual notes will move to the article section. At this time, they seem to fit here.

Step 5 - Openness to Share

Mel Ash wrote that this step "is a big step towards realizing our whole self." We no longer blame people, places and things for our lack of progress. "By admitting our defects to another being, we are admitting our interdependence." It was our denial of our interdependence that led to our original dysfunction."

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

Step 5 is releasing the past. We have concerns, guilt, suffering, loneliness, depression and other results from our past. We do not need to simply think that this is our Karma, the effects of the causes we have made. We no longer need to allow our past to determine our future. Step five is turning poison into medicine.

When we take Step five, we get rid of the terrible sense of isolation we have had. Another benefit is humility. Humility is accepting who we are today and a sincere desire to be who we really are (allowing our true selves to emerge as the Treasure Tower emerged from within the earth).

Mel Ash in *The Zen of Recovery* states the pain we inflicted on the larger world was a reflection of the very real pain we ourselves were drowning in. "Just as we were fearless in examining our inventory, we must now be fearless in admitting to ourselves the nature of its contents and their effects on our lives. Admission is the left hand of this work. Acceptance is the right. One leads to the other and together they guide us through the labyrinth of our denial back to our real self....If we have truly come to grips with these things in our own being, we have also made them know to our Higher Power. It is a big step towards realizing our whole self.... By admitting our defects to another being, we are admitting our interdependence. It was our denial of this that led to our original dysfunction."

Step 6 - Ready and Willing

Entirely ready to let your true self reassert itself in the world.

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character

The Twelve Steps are Honesty, Openness, and Willingness repeated in a spiraling pattern.

In Step 6 the spiral lifting us from our addiction has returned to willingness for the second time.

Mel Ash in Zen of Recovery says "Having God remove these defects means, in Zen terms, to become willing to have your true self reassert itself in the world. As it does so, your old habits and skewed modes of perception realign themselves with this restored vision of things as they really are. The defects have not so much been removed as they have been put to a better use and reintegrated into the whole. Ask anyone who has returned to their active disease. They will tell you that the defects reappear like mushrooms after a storm" SGI might say that we become entirely ready for human revolution. The karma of our previous actions in thought, words, and deeds can be erased as we trust that our "defects of character" are no longer thought or actions that we believe in any more.

We have not viewed many of our characteristics as "defects of character" yet, as we work through the steps, we realize the harm that these characteristics have brought ourselves and/or others.

Are we ready to let go of the delusions and willing to accept our true nature?

Step 7 - Honestly Ready/Change to Our Karma

As we allow our true nature to emerge, our thought and actions change.

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

Chant for our Buddha nature to remove our fundamental darkness and the character traits attached to this darkness.

We created our shortcomings by deluding ourselves about our true selves and universal right order. We thought we were all - thus shouldering the responsibility of all creation.

Chanting, meditation, mindfulness, compassion, awareness, human revolution - all of these start eroding our sense of separateness. All allow our true nature to emerge. Karma evaporates as we begin, and go through, our recovery process.

We realize we are already enlightened. Thus, we are already free of karma.

Our disease of delusion will want to sneak back in if we cease to be thankful, to be mindful, to be willing to experience life. As program says, our recovery depends on our spiritual condition.

Step 8 - Open to Amends - Open Again

Changing the poison of our past into medicine for today. This step is a reflective step showing ourselves the effects of our disease and denial on others. We can not longer say that we did not hurt anyone except ourself. We are preparing to change our karma. We become responsible for our own spiritual evolution.

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

This step is a reflective step showing ourselves the effects of our disease and denial on others. We can not longer say that we did not hurt anyone except ourself. We are not, and were not, islands.

The Dalai Lama once described Buddhism as a practice of helping others. During our disease, others have been hurt.

We need to stop the momentum of our actions, stop the karmic effects of our actions, or lack of action.

The list needs to include ourselves among the people we have harmed.

In facing the consequences of our denial and working to clean up the effects of our past, we provide space for our true selves today.

Step 9 - Amending

Mel Ash in the Zen of Recovery states: "Although we may feel powerless when making amends, we discover that we've always had the real power to change for the better and wake up. By seizing the moment and making amends, we are ensuring that our disease becomes fully integrated into the whole, real human being we are becoming." We embrace the world and the universe itself by recovering our true nature, which was betrayed by our denial. "The only amend that the universe will accept is your consent to become a real human being and resume your correct job of being attentive to this moment." .

Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

A Gentle Path Through the Twelve Steps says "Step Nine challenges us to stop seeking approval and to pursue integrity by making amends for harm we have done."

Phillip Z., in A Skeptic's Guide to the 12 Steps says "the central motivation for making our amends is because such actions transform us. As the Big Book puts it, "At the moment we are trying to put our lives in order. But this is not an end in itself. Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people around us." The broadening of our awareness, our mindfulness.

Mel Ash in the Zen of Recovery states, "these actions help to clean the dusty mirror that is our true reflective nature. Although we may feel powerless when making amends, we discover that we've always had the real power to change for the better and wake up. We have become responsible for our own spiritual evolutions. We can no longer blame people, places and things for our lack of 'progress'. By seizing the moment and making amends, we are ensuring that our disease becomes fully integrated into the whole, real human being we are becoming." We embrace the world and the universe itself by recovering our true nature, which was betrayed by our denial. "The only amend that the universe will accept is your consent to become a real human being and resume your correct job of being attentive to this moment."

Step 10 - Continued Daily Honesty

Anything that drains our hope & life force limits of what we think is possible. Living with Awareness. Honest awareness is key.

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

Step 10 is the four cycle of honesty lifting us from our disease. Just as the repeating art pattern of spirals build, so our lives build on the patterns of our daily thoughts and actions.

Daily inventories allow us to be in the moment.

I recently re-committed to the program after almost 12 years of relapse. Since recommmiting,I have not completed a fourth step. I feel my tenth steps are currently weak. This web site is created to help myself, as well as others.

Step 11 - Open/Connecting/Awareness

Twelve Step programs grants us the freedom to discover our own meaningful definitions, ones that will work for us. Mel Ash wrote "If our Higher Power is present and implicit in each moment, then we can gain conscious contact by becoming aware of our place in the universe."

Sought through prayer and mediation 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.

In the Zen of Recovery, Mel Ash writes "This book was written to address questions raised by this step."...He states recovery insists "the real work is right at hand and that the answers to our deepest questions are right on the end of our nose....we've forgotten our true nature and our real work...Zen and the Twelve Step programs show us how to recovery the answers to these questions. They don't hand us a list, but instead grant us the freedom to discover our own meaningful definitions, ones that will work for us. ...Rigid anything, including recovery, religion, and politics, can only break and not bend with the curves of our natures...Allowing anyone or anything else to make decisions for your about these intensely personal issues only betrays your deepest needs. March to your own drummer, as Thoreau said, and you'll never deviate from your path and eventual destination, your original self freed from suffering. The answers about God and His will for us are everywhere. Zen and recovery are only tools to help uncover these things for you.... If our Higher Power is present and implicit in each moment, then we can gain consious contact by becoming aware of our place in the universe."

He goes on to say that we must take the qualities and attitudes of prayer and meditation with us. The physical act of praying or meditating is not enough. Mindfulness and awareness in every moment and being present in our life is part of recovery. With these we can shed the habits of fear, anxiety, and anger.

Step 12 - Attaining Wisdon/Connecting

This is the bodhisattva step in recovery. We came into this life to share our recovery, our awakening, our enlightenment. As we attain a way of life that is in agreement with the deepest dictates of our being, we know joy.

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics (fill in appropriate disease), and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Sought through chanting, prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with the universal and mystic Law.

The knowledge of our true selves and the power and direction to carry that out.

To tap within ourselves, knowing that good things we can not conceive of today will happen.

To share with those willing to hear/see us.

This can be considered the bodhisattva step in recovery.

We came into this life to share our recovery, our awakening, our enlightenment.

As we attain a way of life that is in agreement with the deepest dictates of our being, we know joy.

Happy and useful lives are part of the promises.