

## QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE CURRENT MYTHS OF A.A.

We ask these questions before we start to explore the program of A.A. from the Big Book to see what our beliefs and misconceptions about A.A. might be. These questions are to be answered before reading the Doctors Opinion and again before taking the Third Step Prayer. We do this to see if there has been a shift in our thinking. A before and after if you will. Answer these questions with your current beliefs.

1. In reference to the first three steps; do you believe that you should look in the Big Book for the right answers or the right questions?
2. Do you believe that the knowledge, which comes from studying the Big Book of A.A., can produce a spiritual experience sufficient to stop drinking?
3. Do you believe that doing what is in the Big Book of A.A. can produce a spiritual experience sufficient to stop drinking?
4. Do you believe that Alcoholism and Drug Addiction are the same?
5. Do you believe that Alcoholism and Drug Addiction are not the same?
6. Do you believe that a drug, is a drug, is a drug?
7. Do you believe that you will always be Recovering from Alcoholism?
8. Do you believe that you can be Recovered from the disease of Alcoholism?
9. If you believe you can be Recovered from alcoholism, do you believe you are cured from alcoholism?
10. Do you believe the purpose of the Big Book is to show Alcoholics precisely how to recover from their malady?
11. Do you believe the Big Book has some other purpose?
12. Do you believe the Big Book of A.A. is a text book?
13. If the Big Book is a text book, do you believe it has test questions like other text books?
14. Do you believe that the first nine steps of A.A. only need to be worked once and then you live in steps 10, 11 and 12 for the rest of your life?
15. Do you believe the information presented in the Big Book of A.A. is only a bunch of suggestions, or do you believe the A.A. program as a whole, is a suggestion?
16. Do you believe there are “musts” in A.A.?

The following questions are **considerations**. They require a **truly open mind**. Our goal is to answer these questions after some thought. Forget what you may now believe. Re-ask these questions for yourself with an open mind. For every question posed use consideration as your guide. **Don't jump to answer**. Consider what you think the program of A.A. says and then consider what the Big Book actually says. Only then answer the questions for yourself.

You need to find out deep inside yourself what you believe in reference to these questions because we are going to be re-laying the foundation of our recovery in this process.

The most important part of this exercise is in the pondering of what we truly believe. Be as honest as possible and hopefully you will have a new experience.

**If an obsession to drink occurred in you:**

1. Do you believe that thinking the drink through could stop you from drinking?
2. Do you think remembering the pain of your last drink could stop you from drinking?
3. Do you believe that thinking the drink through or remembering the pain of your last drunk is no protection from drinking again?
4. Do you believe you have a choice as to whether you will drink again?
5. Do you believe you don't have a choice in whether you will drink again?

Consider this but don't answer right away..

If you have a choice in whether you will drink again or not then:

A. How then can you be truly powerless?

B. If your choice = your will to choose, and you have given your will over to God then:

How do you have a choice anymore as to whether you will drink again?

6. Do you believe Alcoholism is a three-fold disease (body, mind, spirit)?
7. Do you believe Alcoholism is something other than a three-fold disease?
8. Do you believe the fellowship of A.A. by itself is enough for you to recover from alcoholism?  
(Just not drinking and going to meetings is enough to recover)?
9. Do you believe A.A. meetings treat alcoholism?
10. Is the only requirement for **membership** (the desire to stop drinking); the only requirement for sobriety?
11. Do you believe that your desire to stop drinking is your only requirement to stay sober?
12. Do you believe that your only 2 alternatives are to 1. live spiritually or 2. die an alcoholic death? In other words:
13. Do you believe you can recover from alcoholism, and stay sober on a non-spiritual basis?
14. Do you believe you are suffering from an illness that only a spiritual experience can conquer?
15. Do you believe you are suffering from an illness that something else can conquer?
16. Do you believe that "lack of power" is your problem? (powerlessness)
17. Do you believe that selfishness and self-centeredness is the root of your troubles?
18. Do you believe that something else is at the root of your troubles other than "selfishness and self-centeredness"?
19. Do you believe there are requirements in the first step?
20. Do you believe the action of the A.A. program starts in the second step or the third step?
21. Do you believe there are requirements in the Big Book before taking the third step (i.e.: part of the second step)?
22. Do you believe there are no requirements in the Big Book before taking the third step?
23. Do you believe that taking the third step is turning your will and your life over to the care of God?
24. Or does the third step require only a **decision** to turn your will and your life over to the care of God?
25. If step three is only a decision, does that decision put in place any commitment on your part to follow through with the rest of the program?

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# **A Big Book – Twelve Step Workshop**

**My experience with The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous -  
A working guide to the twelve steps of recovery...**

The following is a Big Book Workshop- it is written as a reference guide to the Big Book of A.A. and is intended as a guide for a group of A.A.'s to cover the twelve steps together. This guide is **not** intended to replace anything in the Big Book or the program of A.A., to the contrary, this guide is designed as a supplement to help explain the recovery program of A.A.

Several assumptions have been made for those who will use this guide:

1. The reader is not a newcomer to A.A.- if you are new, the guide should only be used in close conjunction with a sponsor or spiritual advisor. If this is your first experience with the twelve steps, **Do not** attempt to use this guide by yourself.
2. It is assumed the user has read the Big Book. Starting with the dust cover of the third edition up through the first 181 pages of the Big Book. (i.e.: page # 164)
3. Finally, it is assumed the user wishes to have a new experience with the twelve steps of A.A. -
4. This means you should have already had some experience with the twelve steps. If not, get a spiritual advisor or sponsor to help you and work with you, through this work.

Well...Why are we here today?

Recently, After 15 + years sober, I found out a hard truth about myself. I found myself, resting on my laurels, wondering why most of the guys I sponsored, were all having the same type of trouble at the same time? Suddenly, God allowed me to see a truth about my life. Truth, which resulted in my putting together this workshop...

What was this truth? Well, finally I realized, all of the guys who were having trouble, had come to me after they had been sober for a while. When I started to work with them, I assumed they had been taught how to work the steps formally out of the Big Book. Therefore, being the lazy self centered alcoholic I am, I worked with them out of the 12 & 12.

I didn't give these guys the same gift, as was given to me. A huge part of the recovery was missing from their lives! I had not lived up to the responsibility I assumed, when I agreed to be their sponsor. This was totally my fault and because I had neglected our basic text, they were suffering!

So, I recently started out to correct my mistake and make amends to these fellows. In the process, I Found, I had forgotten a lot of what had been given me over the years. These facts, combined with a spiritual bottom I was experiencing, gave me the push I needed. Having wanted to put the Big Book on the computer for years, here was the perfect motivation. I could kill two birds with one stone.

When I started writing this study, I had two reasons: 1<sup>st</sup> as part of an amend, and 2<sup>nd</sup> to have a new A.A. experience. I can assure you, while composing this guide, I had an experience like I never knew was possible!

I was taught in A.A., that **We** all grow from our experiences; Therefore, **my goal for this workshop is to have a new experience.** What's your goal? Think about it for a minute...

I will attempt to lead you through the Big Book as a working text and we shall want to go beyond our current knowledge of the Big Book.

To reach our goal, we will answer the questions posed in the Big Book and each of us will answer the questions for themselves, no one else...

During this process of working the steps, we will have a new experience, I guarantee it!

If this is your first time through the work or your fiftieth, just Sit back, relax and see what happens, because we never know what will happen, when we ask God to show us His will for us.

To start out, let me say **"I am not a guru, when it comes to the Big Book!!!"**. My purpose for doing this work was to have a new experience for myself, same as you. So, why the workshop? Well, I wanted to see if I could have a new experience with others. For me, it would be something new and I have to admit - I'm greedy and self-seeking. Besides, It is easy to miss something important in this work. Working the steps as a group is pretty common out west (California, Arizona, Colorado, Texas etc.) and it allows each member of the group to share their experiences with the steps. This way, we all get something new from the work and chances are, we won't miss something important.

Now you need to ask yourselves: **"What are my goals for this work?"** Let me be the first to say that **I am not here to study the big book!** I'm here to do the work the book directs and hopefully, to have a new A.A. experience. I'm not here to just learn. **I'm here to experience.** When it comes to A.A., **"Knowledge is not power... Because, knowledge found intellectually, provides no nourishment for the soul."** The nourishment and power comes from our experiences. Anyway, this is why I'm here to do the work with you, that is, if you are willing to work with me?

**Therefore, You should also be here to do the work, or you're in the wrong place!!!**

In this workshop, we will work our way through the Big Book, doing the steps as the program requires. We will answer all the questions posed for ourselves and maybe, if it's God's will, we'll have a new outlook on life when we finish.

As I already stated, I will assume you all have read the first 181 pages of the Big Book, because this workshop will cover the first 181 pages of our text, as written in 1939. We will challenge what the pages say, to see if they hold true for us.

(The 181 pages are from the dust cover through page 164)

I intend to model this study after a mid-west style of a Big Book study. I hope to help each of you question, and not judge, the A.A. program as it is written in the Big Book. There is a requirement though, as we go through the Big Book... **you must have a truly open mind and answer all the questions for yourself !!!!**

Our motto for this workshop will be: **"How do I know, what I don't know?"**

Think about that for a moment...

As we question the Big Book, for every question posed – consideration will be our guide. We don't want to jump on the answer we think we know. Only after you have considered it in your inner most thoughts and feelings should you answer the questions posed.

Since nearly all of our A.A. program is borrowed from others, I intend to borrow from a presentation by Joe Hawks and Mark Houston as a model. Like Joe and Mark, I will attempt to dispel non-A.A. cliché's and A.A. \_ truths. (see \_ truths sheet in appendix) We all hear sayings thrown around A.A. that are not part of our program. These \_ truths are used so much, that they seem to be part of our program. Let's try to dispel these falsehoods, as we trudge our way through the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Just like most of the steps, let's start off this workshop with a prayer. The prayer we shall use comes from the Hawks/Houston presentation. I have experienced the power of this prayer, while working the steps and I highly recommend it! The prayer is called The Set Aside Prayer.

We will use this prayer, because the knowledge we have today can prejudice us and be our greatest obstacle.

Prejudice, can block us from our new experiences and our new experiences in A.A. turn out to

Be some of our greatest gifts. Remember our motto: **How do I know what I don't know?**

This concept is mirrored in a quote from the Hawks/Houston presentation :

**Thomas Merton – a Trappist Monk for 26 years said “ Those who think they know from the very beginning, will in fact, never come to know anything.” And**

**You can't start a spiritual process with an answer, or you end up with that which you first started.**

Therefore, we'll use the Set Aside prayer to get us up to the Third Step Prayer...

**The Set Aside Prayer:**

**“Dear God please set aside everything I think I know about myself, the Big Book, Alcoholism, the Steps, and in spiritual terms - especially you God,**

**Father, I ask that I may have a truly open mind, so I might have a new experience with these things; please help me see the truth – AMEN.”**

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For this workshop, we will look at the Program of Recovery as written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of Alcoholics Anonymous and we will split the book into sections as we cover the steps.

The first section of the book has some very useful information. It covers the 1<sup>st</sup> promises, the Circle and triangle, The 3 legacies, A.A. history etc. This section goes from the dust cover all the way up to the Doctor's opinion.

I will cover Step one in two sections.

I will present the 1<sup>st</sup> \_ of the first step in two parts

(a.) The body

(b.) The mind

The first \_ will come from The doctors opinion through We agnostics and pages 44,45 and 52.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> \_ of the first step is powerlessness and the spiritual part of the disease. I will present the second \_ of step one, from We agnostics.

Step two is also covered in We agnostics.

Steps three and four are covered in How it works.

Steps five through eleven are covered In into action.

The 1<sup>st</sup> part of step 12 (Tried to carry **This** message) is covered in Working with others.

And the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of step 12 (practice **These** principles in All our affairs) is covered in To wives, The family afterward, To employers, and A vision for you.

When I cover these last chapters, I will pull out the specific requirements for alcoholics, as they apply to our families and I will cover them in the discussion of step nine, because with our families, I was taught, we have an ongoing amend.

To facilitate this workshop, I have selected the most important emphasis paragraphs from the Big Book. I have color coded these text selections for extra emphasis in our workshop; **Blue**, **Red**, **Green**, **Gray** and **Gold** are used for **the actual text of the Big Book**.

**Blue** – is text taken directly from the Big Book.

**Red** - is for high emphasis principles within blue Big Book Text.

**Green** - is for multiple emphasis items in a row, each relates differently to the subject at hand. I use **red** first, then **green**.

**Gray** - is for questions which come directly from the Big Book text.

**Gold** - is used for extra emphasis or to identify the origin of an A.A. slogan. Mustard is also used for emphasis within a red highlighted section. Mustard identifies life tools. Life tools, are the tools we use every day within the program and are sometimes called “golden rules”  
Later, I will build upon the mustard items, as we work through the workshop.

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**Black** - **is not from the Big Book!** - Black is my own experience, strength and hope, it is my idea or experience about the text or principle being covered.

**Teal** – Teal is used for the prayers I say, prayers which  
Are related to a concept from the Big Book but, Aren't written directly as a prayer in the text (ie: We ask God, We ask our creator). If a prayer does come directly from the text of the Big Book it is presented in **Gold**. (ie: 3<sup>rd</sup> step prayer and 7<sup>th</sup> step prayer)

**Purple** – is used for dictionary definitions and for emphasis within the black text (my comments) on the subject at hand.



- is used to mark paragraphs and principles which need to be covered during the Big Book workshop or when “carrying the message”.



- is used to emphasize the most important aspects of the steps. This is the real meat of the program and is essential to the steps.

## **Section One:**

Let's start out our workshop with the dust cover of the Big Book, which says...

“**The basic text** for Alcoholics Anonymous”

well, what is a text?

**Text** – A reference used as the starting point of a discussion. The subject matter of a discourse. A text book- a book used as a standard work for the formal study of a particular subject.

This thought is also echoed in the preface.

(xi) **The preface** says:

“Because this book has become **the basic text** for our Society”

We will use this book as the definition implies, as a text book. Start at the front and answer the questions until we get through page 164.



If you have an older version of the Big Book, you will notice the circle and triangle symbol on the dust jacket. This symbol also appears on the title page, where the words **unity**, **recovery**, and **service** are added to the sides of the triangle. This symbol is a pictograph of our fellowship. As I was taught, each member of A.A. needs all three of these aspects of the program in their lives.

We must have:

**Unity** – The basic A.A. program. Meetings, friends, coffee, fellowship etc.

**Recovery** – The spiritual awakening which comes from working the twelve steps

**Service** – Twelve stepping, speaking commitments, making coffee, setting up, putting away etc.

The program is symbolized by the triangle and just like a milking stool, without one of the legs, there can't be the necessary support to get the job done.

You should also notice on the title page, our first promise in A.A.

☸ “How Many thousands of Men and Women have **recovered** from alcoholism”

What a vision of hope for us all! Let's take a look at how these thousands “recovered”.

**Recovered – To get back; regain. To restore (oneself) to a normal state. Getting back something lost.**

The preface says:

“Therefore, the first portion of this volume, describing the A.A. recovery program, has been left untouched in the course of revisions made for both the second and the third editions. The section called "The Doctor's Opinion" has been kept intact, just as it was originally written in 1939 by the late Dr. William D. Silkworth, **our Society's great medical benefactor.**

The second edition added the appendices, the Twelve Traditions, and the directions for getting in touch with A.A.”

The Program of A.A. is covered in the Big Book from the dust cover through page # 179 in the first edition (164 in 3<sup>rd</sup> edition)

Now, Let's look at what the paragraphs in The forward of the first edition say to us. Piece by piece...

☸ (xiii) “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. We think this account of our experiences will help everyone to better understand the alcoholic. Many do not comprehend that **the alcoholic is a very sick person. And besides, we are sure that our way of living has its advantages for all.**

The Big Book starts us off slowly with telling us the purpose of the Big Book:

1. To show precisely how we have recovered (Forward 1<sup>st</sup> edition xiii)
2. To specifically answer the question “what do I have to do” (20:1)
3. To enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem. (45:2)

**It is important that we remain anonymous** because we are too few, at present to handle the overwhelming number of personal appeals which may result from this publication. Being mostly business or professional folk, we could not well carry on our occupations in such an event. We would like it understood that our alcoholic work is an **avocation.**

**Avocation - in addition to one's regular work – we don't do this for a living**

When writing or speaking publicly about alcoholism, **we urge each of our Fellowship to omit his personal name, designating himself instead as "a member of Alcoholics Anonymous."**

☸ (xiv) “The only requirement for membership is an **honest desire to stop drinking.**”

The requirement to be a member of A.A. gets you into meetings, it doesn't help with quitting drinking and being a member of A.A. has nothing to do with whether you will stay sober or not. You can be a member of A.A. and not be a part of the recovered fellowship. There are a lot of members who are just dry, not sober. As we will discover later, they are only "immune to alcohol" – they still have all the mental and emotional baggage from their past and rarely do they get a glimpse of the promises the steps have to offer. The Key to their plight lies in the word "Honest". We will find Honesty will be one of the six first step requirements.

From The Forward to the second edition we learn:

(xv) **Our earliest printing voiced the hope -that every alcoholic who journeys will find the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination.**

❁❁ (xvi) This seemed to prove that one alcoholic could affect another as no nonalcoholic could. It also indicated that **strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent recovery.**

**Permanent – Fixed and changeless; lasting or meant to last indefinitely.**

Notice it doesn't say we just don't drink "one day at a time". It says permanently. This means forever! Here is what the big book say on the subject...

(34:2) "the question is how **to stop altogether**. We are assuming, of course, that the reader desires to stop."

(90:3) "if he wants **to quit for good** and if he would go to any extreme to do so."

(181:2) "if you really and truly want **to quit drinking liquor for good and all...**"

I believe what Bill and Bob taught; when they made a twelve step call, they asked if the man would go to any lengths to quit and if he was ready to quit forever. The intention of the A.A. program is for us to permanently quit alcohol by following daily practices of spirituality, faith and service to others. So, where does the "24 hour" reference come from?

It comes from the big book... ❁ (61:2) "**faith has to work, 24 hours a day**". We have to live the program of spirituality "one day at a time" if we are to maintain permanent recovery. Where does the "one day at a time" reference come from? The "one day at a time" reference is expressed with the daily reprieve (85:1) and we will cover that later...

(xvi) To save himself **he must carry his message to another alcoholic...** This seemed to prove that one alcoholic could affect another as no nonalcoholic could. It also indicated that **strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent recovery.**

(xviii) Our Society then entered a fearsome and exciting adolescent period. The test that it faced was this: Could these large numbers of erstwhile erratic alcoholics successfully meet and work together? Would there be quarrels over membership, leadership and money? Would there be strivings for power and prestige would there be schisms which would split A.A. apart?

(xix) Soon A.A. was beset by these very problems on every side and in every group. But out of this frightening and at first disrupting experience the conviction grew that **A.A.'s had to hang together or die separately. We had to unify our Fellowship or pass off the scene.**

(xix) **Today the remarkable unity of A.A. is one of the greatest assets that our Society has.**



(xix) While the internal difficulties of our adolescent period were being ironed out, public acceptance of A.A. grew by leaps and bounds. For this there were two principal reasons: the large numbers of recoveries, and reunited homes. These made their impressions everywhere. **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, (That's a 75% success rate! What do you think our success rate is today? 3%?, 10%?, I doubt if it's as high as 10%)** 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.

(xx) **Alcoholics Anonymous is not a religious organization.** Neither does A.A. take any particular medical point of view, though we cooperate widely with the men of medicine as well as with the men of religion.

**Alcohol being no respecter of persons**, we are an accurate cross section of America, and in distant lands, the same democratic evening-up process is now going on...

(xx) At present, **our membership is increasing at the rate of about seven per cent a year.** So far, upon the total problem of several million actual and potential alcoholics in the world, we have made only a scratch. **In all probability, we shall never be able to touch more than a fair fraction of the alcohol Problem in all its ramifications. Upon therapy for the alcoholic himself, we surely have no monopoly. Yet it is our great hope that all those who have as yet found no answer may begin to find one in the pages of this book and will presently join us on the highroad to a new freedom.**

From The Forward to the third edition we learn:

❁ (xxii) **The twelve steps which summarize the program** may be called *los Doce Pasos* in one country, *les Douze Etapes* in another, **but they trace exactly the same path to recovery that was blazed by the earliest members of Alcoholics Anonymous.** (This is the exact path which Bill Wilson, Bob Smith and all the early A.A.'s followed. If you want what they had, it would be a good idea to do what they did.)

❁ (xxii) In spite of the great increase in the size and the span of this Fellowship, at its core it remains simple and personal. Each day, somewhere in the world, **recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope.**

We also get some amazing statistics from the forwards. In the period from 1939 – 1955 there were 300,000 Big Books printed and we had 150,000 alcoholics recover. That is one recovery for every two books printed. By 1976, We dropped to one for four books printed. As of the 1996 world services numbers, we had printed 14,000,000 books and there are only 3,000,000 recovered. That is not even one for 4 \_ books. What has changed? Is it that the program of A.A. is less effective? Or, Has the program of A.A. been watered down by non-A.A. rhetoric and too few people teaching the real 12 step program? The spiritual program of recovery as it is presented in the Big Book?

O.K., This is where the work begins for us. Now it's time for me to share my experience with the program of recovery...

Let's start the 1<sup>st</sup> step with an exercise to look at the malady of the body. As we read from The Doctor's opinion through page #23, we will put ourselves into the paragraphs and questions presented, to see if they hold true for us. Like any good text book, there will be a quiz at the end of this section (top of page 23). In this section we are looking at the body, so while we cover this section, ask yourself: **Am I powerless physically, after I have taken a drink? And What happens to me after I have taken a drink? Do I crave more?**

### Let's look at The Doctor's opinion:

Here is our first question. What doctor, who was he and what makes him an expert on alcoholics? Just because he treated over 51,000 alcoholics at Towns hospital, in New York City, does that mean he knows what he's talking about? **I think so...** (In case you didn't notice, that was sarcasm!)

Well, let's challenge what the doctor said and find out whether he knew what he was talking about or not. As you read his words and put yourself into the paragraphs – **Do his words describe you?** Let's see.

## Section Two: The first \_\_, of the first part, of step one

❀ (xxiii) Ten sentences from the bottom of the page: In the course of his third treatment he acquired certain ideas concerning a possible means of recovery. As part of his rehabilitation he (Bill W.) commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing upon them **that they must do likewise with still others**. This has become the basis of a rapidly growing fellowship of these men and their families. This man and over one hundred others appear **to have recovered**. (Did you notice the golden word ended in "ed"? There is often controversy in A.A. over recovered vs recovering. I'll point out several places where we are promised to be **recovered** if we work the program of A.A. as written in the Big Book.)

❀❀ (xxiv) 2<sup>nd</sup> paragraph down: The physician who, at our request, gave us this letter, has been kind enough to enlarge upon his views in another statement which follows. In this statement he (Dr. Silkworth) confirms what **we who have suffered alcoholic torture must believe that the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind**. It did not satisfy us to be told that we could not control our drinking just because we were **maladjusted to life** (could you?), that we were **in full flight from reality** (were you?), or were **outright mental defectives** (were you?). **These things were true to some extent, in fact, to a considerable extent with some of us. But we are sure that our bodies were sickened as well. In our belief, any picture of the alcoholic which leaves out this physical factor is incomplete.**

(xxiv) The doctor's theory that **we have an allergy** to alcohol interests us. As laymen, our opinion as to its soundness may, of course, mean little. But as ex-problem drinkers, we can say that his explanation makes good sense. It explains many things for which we cannot otherwise account.

Though **we work out our solution on the spiritual as well as an altruistic plane**, we favor hospitalization for the alcoholic who is very jittery or befogged.

**Altruism – Concern for the welfare of others, as opposed to egoism; selflessness.**

(Selflessness will be important when we cover the root of our problem 62:1)

(xxiv) **More often than not, it is imperative that a man's brain be cleared before he is approached, as he has then a better chance of understanding and accepting what we have to offer.**

**Imperative – Expressing a command or plea; peremptory.**

❄ ❄ (xxv) Middle of page: We doctors have realized for a long time that some form of **moral psychology** was of urgent importance to alcoholics, but its application presented difficulties beyond **our** conception. What with **our** ultra-modern standards, **our** scientific approach to everything, **we** are perhaps not well equipped to apply **the powers of good** that lie outside **our** synthetic knowledge. Say What? What in the hell is he talking about? This doesn't make much sense, does it? O.K., let's try an experiment - Let's try it again, but this time we'll substitute some words. We'll substitute **Spiritual experience** for moral psychology. **A Doctors** for our and we. **The power of God** for the power of good... Now let's read it again with these changes...

“We doctors have realized for a long time that some form of **Spiritual experience** was of urgent importance to alcoholics, but its application presented difficulties beyond **a doctors** conception. What with **a doctors** ultra-modern standards, **a doctors** scientific approach to everything, **we doctors** are perhaps not well equipped to apply **the powers of God** that lie outside **a doctors** synthetic knowledge.” (makes more sense doesn't it!)

Both Dr. Silkworth and Dr. Jung realized they could not “cure” an alcoholic - though these doctors knew the clinical problems of an alcoholic better than any other doctors of their time, they both realized a permanent “cure” required “moral psychology” or a spiritual experience, which doctors could not clinically reproduce. The medical profession can treat the symptoms of the disease, they can explain and understand the physical and mental effects of the disease, but they can't reproduce the spiritual experience of A.A. – This is what separates the recovery of A.A. from the medical treatments and rehabs. Fifteen or twenty thousand dollars buys you knowledge about the physical and mental parts of our disease but, it won't buy you a spiritual experience. You have to experience that for yourself, through the steps. Besides, we will see later that **when it comes to A.A., knowledge is not power!**

❄ ❄ (xxv) Last sentence: Of course **an alcoholic ought to be freed from his physical craving for liquor**, and this often requires a definite hospital procedure, before psychological measures can be of maximum benefit.

**Craving – To have an intense desire for. To need urgently; require. A consuming desire.**

(xxvi) First full paragraph: 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. (put the following in the form of questions.)

Dave...once having formed the habit, did you find you could not break it? Dave...did you lose your self confidence? Did you lose your reliance upon things human? once having lost your self confidence, and your reliance upon things human, did your problems pile up on you and become astonishingly difficult to solve? If you answer yes to these then you have the allergy, you have the alcoholic craving.

(xxvi) Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices. The message which can interest and hold these alcoholic people must have depth and weight. **In nearly all cases, their ideals must be grounded in a power greater than themselves if they are to re-create their lives.**

Try and put yourself in the paragraph like this:

Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices. The message which can interest and hold Dave must have depth and weight. In nearly all cases, Dave's ideals must be grounded in a power greater than himself, if he is to re-create his life.

❀❀❀ (xxvi)Last paragraph: **Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol.** The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, **they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false.** To them, their alcoholic 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** which they see others taking with impunity. 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, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change** (Spiritual experience) **there is very little hope of his recovery.**

Once again put yourself in the paragraph:

Dave drinks essentially because he likes the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while Dave admits it is injurious, he cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To Dave, his alcoholic life seems the only normal one. Dave is restless, irritable and discontented, unless he can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks-drinks which Dave sees others taking with impunity. After Dave has succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, Dave passes through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this Dave can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.

(xxvii)First full paragraph: **Once a psychic change** (spiritual experience) **has occurred,** the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, **suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules.** (simple rules = 12 steps)

Once a psychic change has occurred, Dave, who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary for Dave being that required to follow a few simple rules.

❀ (xxvii)Middle of page: **Something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change** (spiritual experience). **...we physicians must admit we have made little impression upon the problem as a whole.**

❀ (xxviii)Second sentence down: **There are many situations which arise out of the phenomenon of craving which cause men to make the supreme sacrifice rather than continue to fight.**

What supreme sacrifice? To die – die an alcoholic death, rather than follow a path to a spiritual recovery.

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**. (required in step three)

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. There is the type who always believes that after being entirely free from alcohol for a period of time he can take a drink without danger. There is the manic-depressive type, who is, perhaps, the least understood by his friends, and about whom a whole chapter could be written.

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

❄️❄️ (xxviii) 2<sup>nd</sup> to last paragraph: **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. The only relief we have to suggest is **entire abstinence**.

**All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: Dave cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving.** This phenomenon, as we have suggested, may be the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates Dave, and sets him apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated. The only relief we have to suggest for Dave is entire abstinence.

(xxix) **His alcoholic problem was so complex, and his depression so great, that we felt his Only hope would be through what We then called "moral psychology,"**  
(remember moral psychology is what I refer to as a Spiritual Experience)

(xxx) Last 2 sentences: **I earnestly advise every alcoholic to read this book through, and though perhaps he came to scoff, he may remain to pray.**

William D. Silkworth, M. D.

❄️ Here is one of the world's greatest authorities on alcoholism telling us to read the Big Book-over and over. There is always more to learn and experience with this book.

Take a look at this paragraph, if your alcoholic, you should be able to identify with it...

❄️ (151:0) FOR MOST normal folks, drinking means conviviality, companionship and colorful imagination. It means release from care, boredom and worry. It is joyous intimacy with friends and a feeling that life is good. But not so with us in those last days of heavy drinking. The old pleasures were gone. They were but memories. Never could we recapture the great moments of the past. There was an insistent yearning to enjoy life as we once did and a heartbreaking obsession that some new miracle of control would enable us to do it. There was always one more attempt-and one more failure. The less people tolerated us, the more we withdrew from society, from life itself. As we became subjects of King Alcohol, shivering denizens of his mad realm, the chilling vapor that is loneliness settled down. It thickened, ever becoming blacker. Some of us sought out sordid places, hoping to find understanding companionship and approval. Momentarily we did-then would come oblivion and the awful awakening to face **the hideous Four Horsemen -Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair...** 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. **He cannot picture life without alcohol. Some day he will be unable to imagine life either with alcohol or without it. Then he will know loneliness such as few do. He will be at the jumping-off place. He will wish for the end.**



## Most of us should be able to relate to Bill's Story :

Here is an exercise for you. Go through the first 8 pages of Bill's story and highlight, in one color, everywhere you feel, think, act or drank like Bill, to find out if you are as hopeless as Bill. Then, read the rest of Bill's story and highlight, in a different color, anything Bill did to recover which you aren't willing to do. If there is anything Bill did, which you aren't willing to do, this will probably be the thing that kills you in sobriety. If you are as hopeless as Bill, there is a solution later on. For now let's look at the following...

❁ (5:1) **Liquor ceased to be a luxury; it became a necessity.**

Nevertheless, I still thought I could control the situation, and there were periods of sobriety which renewed my wife's hope.

❁ (5:4) I woke up. This had to be stopped. **I saw I could not take so much as one drink.** I was through forever. Before then, I had written lots of sweet promises, but my wife happily observed that this time I meant business. And so I did.

**Shortly afterward I came home drunk. There had been no fight. Where had been my high resolve?** I simply didn't know. It hadn't even come to mind. Someone had pushed a drink my way, and I had taken it. **Was I crazy? I began to wonder, for such an appalling lack of perspective seemed near being just that.**

❁ (6:1) **The remorse, horror and hopelessness of the next morning are unforgettable.** The courage to do battle was not there. My brain raced uncontrollably and **there was a terrible sense of impending calamity.**

❁ ❁ (7:1) I met a kind doctor who explained that though certainly selfish and foolish, **I had been seriously ill, bodily and mentally.**

It relieved me somewhat to learn that **in alcoholics the will is amazingly weakened when it comes to combating liquor**, though it often remains strong in other respects. My incredible behavior in the face of a desperate desire to stop was explained. **Surely this was the answer-self-knowledge.**

**But it was not, for the frightful day came when I drank once more.**  
**Knowledge does not equal power, not when it comes to Alcoholism...**

❁ (8:1) No words can tell of the loneliness and despair I found in that 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.** (This is Bill's description of Step 1)

**Does this describe you? (step 1 = powerlessness) Almost every alcoholic can identify with this. Then came the insidious insanity of that first drink ... I was off again.**

**Insidious – Working or spreading harmfully in a subtle or stealthy manner. Intended to entrap; wily; treacherous. Lying in wait.**

(8:2) How dark it is before the dawn! In reality that was the beginning of my last debauch. **I was soon to be catapulted into what I like to call the fourth dimension of existence. I was to know happiness, peace, and usefulness, in a way of life that is incredibly more wonderful as time passes. (What promises!!! That's the stuff I want!)**

(8:4) My musing was interrupted by the telephone. The cheery voice of an old school friend asked if he might come over. **He was sober. It was years since I could remember his coming to New York in that condition. I was amazed.** Rumor had it that he had been committed for alcoholic insanity. **I wondered how he had escaped...** The door opened and he stood there, fresh-skinned and glowing. There was something about his eyes. He was inexplicably different. **What had happened?**

(9:2) I pushed a drink across the table. He refused it. Disappointed but curious, I wondered what had got into the fellow. **He wasn't himself.** "Come, what's all this about?" I queried. He looked straight at me. Simply, but smilingly, he said, "I've got religion."...

❀ (9:7) **He had come to pass his experience along to me - if I cared to have it. (a twelve step call except, in 1935 the Oxford group only had six steps) I was shocked, but interested. Certainly I was interested. I had to be, for I was hopeless.**

(10:3) How could there be so much of precise and immutable law, and no intelligence? **I simply had to believe in a Spirit of the Universe**, who knew neither time nor limitation. But that was as far as I had gone.

With ministers, and the world's religions, I parted right there. **When they talked of a God personal to me, who was love, superhuman strength and direction, I became irritated and my mind snapped shut against such a theory...** the power of God in human affairs was negligible, the Brotherhood of Man a grim jest. If there was a Devil, he seemed the Boss Universal, and he certainly had me.

❀ (11:3) But my friend sat before me, and he made the pointblank declaration that **God had done for him what he could not do for himself.** His human will had failed. Doctors had pronounced him incurable. Society was about to lock him up. Like myself, he had admitted complete defeat. (Sounds like a bottom, **Powerlessness** - the necessary component of step one, the **Admission** of the problem (30:2)) Then he had, in effect, been raised from the dead, suddenly taken from the scrap heap to a level of life better than the best he had ever known!

**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.**

That floored me. It began to look as though religious people were right after all. **Here was something at work in a human heart which had done the impossible.** My ideas about miracles were drastically revised right then. Never mind the musty past; here sat a miracle directly across the kitchen table. He shouted great tidings.

I saw that my friend was much more than inwardly reorganized. **He was on a different footing. His roots grasped a new soil. (fertile spirituality)**

❀❀ (12:1) Despite **the living example** of my friend there remained in me the vestiges of my old prejudice. (Ebby was living his creed- it makes all the difference in the world. We show how to recover, we don't tell how to recover.) The word God still aroused a certain antipathy. **When the thought was expressed that there might be a God personal to me this feeling was intensified. I didn't like the idea.** I could go for such conceptions as Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind or Spirit of Nature but I resisted the thought of a Czar of the Heavens, however loving His sway might be. I have since talked with scores of men who felt the same way.

My friend suggested what then seemed a novel idea. He said, "*Why don't you choose your own conception of God?*"

**That statement hit me hard. It melted the icy intellectual mountain in whose shadow I had lived and shivered many years. I stood in the sunlight at last.**

This is an important statement. Notice, Bill says Ebby was **a living example**. This is the ideal for all A.A. members. We are supposed to live our creed and carry the principles of A.A. into all areas of our lives. As members of A.A., we are supposed to become walking Big Books for others to emulate. We don't tell others how to get sober, we show them how it's done. Let's look at the rest of the explanation of the steps Bill offers us.

❄️❄️ (12:4) *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.* (sounds like step 2 to me) **I saw that growth could start from that point. Upon 1.) a foundation of complete willingness** (1<sup>st</sup> requirement of step 1) **I might build what I saw in my friend.** Would I have it? **Of course I would!** Thus was I convinced that God is concerned with us humans when we want Him enough. At long last I saw, I felt, I believed. Scales of pride and prejudice fell from my eyes. A new world came into view.

**Complete** – Having all normal parts. Entire; Whole. Thorough; Consummate; Perfect.

**Willingness** – Of or resulting from the process of choosing; volitional. Acting or ready to act gladly; eagerly compliant.

This is the first of our construction references and it is also the first requirement of step one. Why construction references? Because, Bill Wilson is going to give us the parts of an arch through which we will pass to new freedom. We are going to find them...

Foundation = Complete Willingness (12:4)

Cement = \_ Common Peril, \_ Common Solution (17:2)

Cornerstone = Willing to believe that there is a Power greater than yourself (47:2)

Keystone = God is our Director (62:3)

Foundation Stone = (Complete Willingness) to Help Others (97:1)

❄️ (12:6) *The real significance of my experience in the Cathedral burst upon me. For a brief moment, I had needed and wanted God. There had been a humble willingness to have Him with me and He came.* But soon the sense of His presence had been blotted out by worldly clamors, mostly those within myself and so it had been ever since. **How blind I had been.**

At the hospital I was separated from alcohol for the last time. Treatment seemed wise, for I showed signs of delirium tremens.

❄️ (13:2) *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.* (Sounds like step 3) I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost (step 2). I ruthlessly faced my sins (step 4) and became willing to have my new found Friend take them away, root and branch. (Steps 6&7) I have not had a drink since.

My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies. (Step 5) We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment. (Step 8) I 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 matters to the utmost of my ability. (Step 9)

I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense. (Step 10) I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure. (Step 11)



✿✿ (13:5) 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. 2.) **Belief in the power of God, plus enough 1.) (complete)willingness, 3.) honesty (remember Honest Desire?) and 4.) humility to establish and maintain the new order of things, were the essential requirements.**

**Essential-** Constituting or part of the essence of something; basic or indispensable.  
**Requirements –** Something obligatory; a prerequisite.

Did you notice that the first step has **requirements**? Bill just listed them for us. First, Bill gave us his example of a bottom with **Powerlessness and hopelessness**, Then he gave us our Requirements:

1. Complete Willingness (12:4) and (13:5)
2. Belief in the Power of God (13:5)
3. Honesty (honest desire) (13:5)
4. Humility to establish and maintain a new order of things (13:5)
5. Concede we are Alcoholic (Admission) (30:2)
6. Lack of Power (Powerlessness) (45:1)

We now have 4 of 6 requirements for step one. Bill will repeat these again later so, let's move on...

✿ (14:1)**Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid. (Steps 4 Thru 9) It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all.**

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 mountain top blew through and through. God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound.

(14:4)Finally he shook his head saying, “**Something has happened to you I don't understand. But you had better hang on to it.** Anything is better than the way you were.” The good doctor now sees many men who have such experiences. He knows that they are real.

While I lay in the hospital the thought came that there were thousands of hopeless alcoholics who might be glad to have what had been so freely given me. Perhaps I could help some of them. They in turn might work with others. (step 12)

✿✿ (14:6)My friend had emphasized **the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs.** Particularly was it **imperative** to work with others as he had worked with me. **Faith without works was dead**, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! (Step 12) For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that.

**Absolute –** Not limited by restrictions or exceptions; unconditional.

**Necessity –** Something needed for the existence, effectiveness, or success of something; a Requirement. Something that must inevitably exist or occur.

**Imperative –** Expressing a command or plea; Peremptory. Obligatory; Mandatory.

## **The Big book gives us four specific times when we will drink:**

1. If we fail to enlarge our spiritual life (14:6, and 35:3 )
2. If we do not rid ourselves of selfishness. (62:2)
3. If we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the spirit with resentment (66:1)
4. With respect to sex, If we are not sorry and continue to harm others (70:1)

(15:1)My wife and I abandoned ourselves with enthusiasm to the idea of helping other alcoholics to a solution of their problems. It was fortunate, for my old business associates remained skeptical for a year and a half, during which I found little work. **I was not too well at the time, and was plagued by waves of self pity and resentment. This sometimes nearly drove me back to drink, but I soon found that when all other measures failed, work with another alcoholic would save the day.** Many times I have gone to my old hospital in despair. On talking to a man there, I would be amazingly lifted up and set on my feet. **It is a design for living (twelve stepping) that works in rough going.**

(15:2)We commenced to make many fast friends and a fellowship has grown up among us of which it is a wonderful thing to feel a part. **The joy of living we really have, even under pressure and difficulty.** I have seen hundreds of families set their feet in the path that really goes somewhere; have seen the most impossible domestic situations righted; feuds and bitterness of all sorts wiped out. I have seen men come out of asylums and resume a vital place in the lives of their families and communities. Business and professional men have regained their standing. **There is scarcely any form of trouble and misery which has not been overcome among us.** In one western city and its environs there are one thousand of us and our families. We meet frequently so that newcomers may find the fellowship they seek. At these informal gatherings one may often see from 50 to 200 persons. We are growing in numbers and power.\*

(16:1)**An alcoholic in his cups is an unlovely creature. Our struggles with them are variously strenuous, comic, and tragic.** One poor chap committed suicide in my home. He could not, or would not, see our way of life.

❀(16:2)**There is, however, a vast amount of fun about it all. I suppose some would be shocked at our seeming worldliness and levity. But just underneath there is deadly earnestness. Faith has to work twenty-four hours a day in and through us, or we perish. Most of us feel we need look no further for Utopia. We have it with us right here and now. Each day my friend's simple talk in our kitchen multiplies itself in a widening circle of peace on earth and good will to men.**

**Once again, Is there anything Bill did, which you are not willing to do to stay sober? Are you willing to go to any lengths?**

**If there is, it is probably what will cause you to drink and as such, it will kill you...**

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### **There is a solution :**

Ask yourself **“Am I as hopeless as Bill?” “Do you lose control once you start to drink?” and “Why am I physically powerless over alcohol once I start to drink?”** If these questions describe you - then there is a solution! We will be focusing on these questions in this next section.

❄ ❄ (17:1) **We of Alcoholics Anonymous, know thousands of men and women who were once just as hopeless as Bill. Nearly all have recovered. They have solved the drink problem.**

We are average Americans. All sections of this country and many of its occupations are represented, as well as many political, economic, social, and religious backgrounds. We are people who normally would not mix. **But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful.** We are like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table. Unlike the feelings of the ship's passengers, however, **our joy in**

**escape from disaster does not subside as we go our individual ways. The feeling of having shared in a**

**common peril** is one element in **the powerful cement** (cement will be referenced again on page 75 it is equal parts : peril & solution) which binds us. But that in itself would never have held us together as we are now joined.

❄ ❄ (17:3) **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. (God and a spiritual awakening as found through the twelve steps)

This is our second construction reference:

**Foundation = Complete Willingness (12:4)**

**Cement = \_ Common Peril, \_ Common Solution (17:2)**

**Cornerstone = Willing to believe that there is a Power greater than yourself (47:2)**

**Keystone = God is our Director (62:3)**

**Foundation Stone = (Complete Willingness) to Help Others (97:1)**

(18:1) **An illness of this sort-and we have come to believe it 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 annihilation of all the things worth while in life. It engulfs all whose lives touch the sufferer's. (This is why the program can mean life and death for an Alanon.) It brings misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad wives and parents-anyone can increase the list.**

(18:2) **We hope this volume will inform and comfort those who are, or who may be affected.**

There are many.

Highly competent psychiatrists who have dealt with us have found it sometimes impossible to persuade an alcoholic to discuss his situation without reserve. Strangely enough, wives, parents and intimate friends usually find us even more unapproachable than do the psychiatrist and the doctor.

*But the ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with facts about himself, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic in a few hours. Until such an understanding is reached, little or nothing can be accomplished.*

That the man who is making the approach has had the same difficulty, that he obviously knows what he is talking about, that his whole deportment shouts at the new prospect that he is a man with a real answer, that he has no attitude of Holier Than Thou, nothing whatever except the sincere desire to be helpful;

that there are no fees to pay, no axes to grind, no people to please, no lectures to be endured-these are the conditions we have found most effective.

❁ (19:1) We feel that elimination of our drinking is but a beginning. A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations and affairs.

❁ ❁ (19:4) Of necessity there will have to be discussion of matters medical, psychiatric, social, and religious. We are aware that these matters are, from their very nature, controversial. Nothing would please us so much as to write a book which would contain no basis for contention or argument. We shall do our utmost to achieve that ideal. **Most of us sense that real tolerance of other people's shortcomings and viewpoints and a respect for their opinions are attitudes which make us more useful to others. Our very lives, as ex-problem drinkers, depend upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs.**

Doubtless you are curious to discover how and why, in the face of expert opinion to the contrary, **we have recovered from a hopeless condition of mind and body.** If you are an alcoholic who wants to get over it, you may already be asking-"What do I have to do?"

**Hopeless – Having no hope; Despairing; Bleak; Insoluble; Discouraging; Impossible.**

❁ (20:2) **It is the purpose of this book to answer such questions specifically. We shall tell you what we have done.** Before going into a detailed discussion, it may be well to summarize some points as we see them.

(20:5) **Moderate drinkers** have little trouble in giving up liquor entirely if they have good reason for it. They can take it or leave it alone.

(20:6) Then we have a certain type of **hard drinker.** He may have the habit badly enough to gradually impair him physically and mentally. It may cause him to die a few years before his time. If a sufficiently strong reason-ill health, falling in love, change of environment, or the warning of a doctor-becomes operative, this man can also stop or moderate, although he may find it difficult and troublesome and may even need medical attention.

❁ ❁ (21:1) But what about **the real alcoholic?** He may start off as a moderate drinker; he may or may not become a continuous hard drinker; but at some stage of his drinking career he begins to lose all control of his liquor consumption, once he starts to drink.

Here is the fellow who has been puzzling you, especially in his lack of control. **He does absurd, incredible, tragic things while drinking. He is a real Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde. He is seldom mildly intoxicated. He is always more or less insanely drunk.** His disposition while drinking resembles his normal nature but little. 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.** He has a positive genius for getting tight at exactly the wrong moment, particularly when some important decision must be made or engagement kept. **He is often perfectly sensible and well balanced concerning everything except liquor, but in that respect he is incredibly dishonest and selfish.**

(21:2) 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. **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.** 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. **As matters grow worse, he begins to use a combination of high-powered sedative and liquor to quiet his nerves so he can go to work.** Then comes the day when he simply cannot make it and gets drunk all over again. Perhaps he goes to a doctor who gives him morphine or some sedative with which to taper off. **Then he begins to appear at hospitals and sanitariums.**

❁ (22:1) This is by no means a comprehensive picture of the true alcoholic, as our behavior patterns vary. But this description should identify him roughly.

(22:2) Why does he behave like this? If hundreds of experiences have shown him that one drink means another debacle with all its attendant suffering and humiliation, why is it he takes that one drink? Why can't he stay on the water wagon? What has become of the common sense and will power that he still sometimes displays with respect to other matters?

(22:3) Perhaps there never will be a full answer to these questions. Opinions vary considerably as to why the alcoholic reacts differently from normal people. We are not sure why, once a certain point is reached, little can be done for him. We cannot answer the riddle.

❁❁ (22:4) We know that while the alcoholic keeps away from drink, as he may do for months or years, he reacts much like other men. We are equally positive that once he takes any alcohol whatever into his system, something happens, both in the bodily and mental sense, which makes it virtually impossible for him to stop. The experience of any alcoholic will abundantly confirm this.

**Does your experience confirm this?** I would hope so, if you are an alcoholic. The whole first half of step one hinges on this concept. If you are not sure, re-read what I have presented here, keeping in mind the question of a physical craving, the malady of the alcoholic's body... We have covered the Doctor's opinion through page #23, to answer one question for ourselves...

❁❁ **Does my experience abundantly confirm that once I put alcohol into my system, something happens which makes it virtually impossible for me to stop ?**

If you can answer "yes" to this fact, then you have the physical craving of the body, which occurs in the alcoholic. As promised this is the first \_ of the first step.

Now we can go ahead and look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the first step; The Mind. To go forward from here we only have to be clear on the physical craving. If you answered "Yes" to the question at the end of section two, then we are ready to proceed...

# Section Three :

## The second \_\_, of the first part, of step one

In this section we will look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> \_\_ of the first step – the mind. Let's continue where we left off at the top of page 23 and continue to turn statements into questions and put ourselves into the paragraphs. We will cover 23 – 43 and the 5 examples of drinkers to see if there will come a time for us where we will have no effective mental defense against the first drink. We will look at the idea that we have lost the power of choice with respect to alcohol. While we look at this section ask yourself: **Why am I powerless mentally even before I take the drink?**

❄ ❄ (23:1) **These observations would be academic and pointless if our friend (Dave) never took the first drink, thereby setting the terrible cycle in motion. Therefore, the main problem (with Dave) of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body.** If you ask him (Dave) why he started on that last bender, the chances are he (Dave) will offer you any one of a hundred alibis. Sometimes these excuses have a certain plausibility, but none of them really makes sense in the light of the havoc an alcoholic's drinking bout creates.

(23:2) Once in a while he (Dave) may tell the truth. And the truth, strange to say, is usually that **he (Dave) has no more idea why he took that first drink than you have.** Some drinkers have excuses with which they are satisfied part of the time. But in their hearts they really do not know why they do it. Once this malady has a real hold, they are a baffled lot. There is the obsession that somehow, someday, they (Dave) will beat the game. But they often suspect they are down for the count.

❄ (23:4) **He (Dave) has lost control. At a certain point in the drinking of every alcoholic, he (Dave) passes into a state where the most powerful desire to stop drinking is of absolutely no avail.** This tragic situation has already arrived in practically every case long before it is suspected. We hear it at meetings all the time - "just think the drink through" or "don't drink and go to meetings" or "even if your ass falls off just don't drink" What a bunch of crap! If your like the description in the Big Book, you haven't got enough control not to drink. You are powerless over alcohol.

If you are using your head to figure out A.A. you are using the wrong organ...

So, **where do we get the power not to drink?** Well, that's covered in just a minute. For now let's finish this thought...

❄ ❄ (24:1) **The fact is that most alcoholics (Dave), for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so-called will power becomes practically nonexistent. We are (Dave is) unable, at certain times, to bring into our (his) consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are (Dave is) without defense against the first drink.**

The almost certain consequences that follow taking even a glass of beer do not crowd into the mind to deter us. If these thoughts occur, they are hazy and readily supplanted with the old threadbare idea that this time we shall handle ourselves like other people. **There is a complete failure of the kind of defense that keeps one from putting his hand on a hot stove.**

If remembering the pain and humiliation could prevent behavior, then childbirth would be a form of contraception...

(24:3) **Perhaps he doesn't think at all.** How often have some of us begun to drink in this nonchalant way, and after the third or fourth, pounded on the bar and said to ourselves, "For God's sake, how did I ever get started again?" Only to have that thought supplanted by "Well, I'll stop with the sixth drink." Or "What's the use anyhow?"



❄ ❄ (24:4) When this sort of thinking is fully established in an individual with alcoholic tendencies, he has probably placed himself beyond human aid, and unless locked up, may die or go permanently insane. (Locked up, Sobered up, or Covered up) These stark and ugly facts have been confirmed by legions of alcoholics throughout history. **But for the grace of God**, there would have been thousands more convincing demonstrations. **So many want to stop but cannot.**

So much for “just think the drink through”...

**We have looked at 35 pages of the book to look at two concepts :**

- 1. When I take a drink do I loose control? and**
- 2. Without alcohol in me– never wanting to touch the stuff again – did I drink again?**

❄ ❄ This is what separates alcoholics from others. From this point on all recovering people (A.A., Alanon, NA, OA, CA, DA etc.) are the same and the steps apply universally. All these other groups have a powerlessness, a mental obsession, a spiritual malady which results in unmanageability – the separating factor for the alcoholic is the physical craving.

So, now what?

Well, let’s look at what our text book has to offer, keeping in mind this question: **“Do I believe that A time may come where I will have no effective mental defense against the first drink?”**

❄ (25:1) ***There is a solution.*** Almost none of us liked the selfsearching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. (The process sounds like the 12 steps to me) 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, **there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. 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 Fourth dimension is a fancy way to describe a spiritual experience.

❄ (25:2) 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.

❄ ❄ (25:3) 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: 1.) One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could; and 2.) the other, to accept spiritual help. This we did because we honestly wanted to, and were willing to make the effort.**

Once again, we only have two choices, 1.) Die an alcoholic death or 2.) Live spiritually

So what is a spiritual experience anyway? Carl Jung describes one on page (27:4).

Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called **vital spiritual experiences.** To me these occurrences are phenomena. They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional

displacements and rearrangements. Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them.

(28:2) We, in our turn, sought the same escape with all the desperation of drowning men. What seemed at first a flimsy reed, has proved to be the loving and powerful hand of God. A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, “a design for living” that really works.

(28:3) We have no desire to convince anyone that there is only one way by which faith can be acquired. If what we have learned and felt and seen means anything at all, it means that all of us, whatever our race, creed, or color are the children of a living Creator with whom we may form a relationship upon simple and understandable terms as soon as we are willing and honest enough to try. Those having religious affiliations will find here nothing disturbing to their beliefs or ceremonies. There is no friction among us over such matters

(29:3) We believe that it is only by fully disclosing ourselves and our problems that they will be persuaded to say, “Yes, I am one of them too; I must have this thing.”

The crux of the whole program is how we can form our own relationship with the God of our understanding.

❄️ (30:1) 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.

❄️ ❄️ (30:2) We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. (This is called Admission – We first must admit we have the disease) The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.

Here is another First step requirement, Admission that we are alcoholic. Let’s add it to the list:

1. Complete Willingness (12:4) and (13:5)
2. Belief in the Power of God (13:5)
3. Honesty (honest desire) (13:5)
4. Humility to establish and maintain a new order of things (13:5)
5. Concede we are Alcoholic (Admission) (30:2)
6. Lack of Power (Powerlessness) (45:1)



**(30:3)** We alcoholics are men and women who have lost the ability to control our drinking. We know that **no real alcoholic ever recovers control.** (meaning, we have no choice when it comes to drinking – once a pickle, never a cucumber again) 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. **We are convinced to a man that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better.** We are like men who have lost their legs; they never grow new ones. Neither does there appear to be any kind of treatment which will make alcoholics of our kind like other men. We have tried every imaginable remedy. In some instances there has been brief recovery, followed always by a still worse relapse.

**Progressive – Moving forward; Ongoing; Advancing. Continuously spreading or increasing in severity.**

**(31:1)** Despite all we can say, many who are **real alcoholics** are not going to believe they are in that class. **By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule, therefore nonalcoholic.** 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!

**(31:3)** 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.**

☼ **(33:1)** We have seen the truth demonstrated again and again: **"Once an alcoholic, always an alcoholic."** Commencing to drink after a period of sobriety, we are in a short time as bad as ever. **If we are planning to stop drinking, there must be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol.**

**(33:3)** **To be gravely affected, one does not necessarily have to drink a long time nor take the quantities some of us have.** This is particularly true of women. Potential female alcoholics often turn into the real thing and are gone beyond recall in a few years.

☼ **(34:1)** If anyone questions whether he has entered this dangerous area, **let him try leaving liquor alone for one year.** If he is **a real alcoholic** and very far advanced, there is scant chance of success. ... We think few, to whom this book will appeal, can stay dry anything like a year. Some will be drunk the day after making their resolutions; most of them within a few weeks.

☼ ☼ **(34:2)** For those who are unable to drink moderately the question is how **to stop altogether.** We are assuming, of course, that the reader desires to stop. **(Do I want to stop altogether?) Whether such a person can quit upon a non-spiritual basis depends upon the extent to which he has already lost the power to choose whether he will drink or not. (Have I lost the power to choose?)** Many of us felt that we had plenty of character. There was a tremendous urge to cease forever. Yet we found it impossible. **This is the baffling feature of alcoholism as we know it-this utter inability to leave it alone, no matter how great the necessity or the wish.**

If I had choice, then I would have control over alcohol, I could choose whether I would drink or not and if I had power over it, I wouldn't need A.A.!

My only problem is, I have lost the power of choice, so that means I have no power over alcohol. It is vitally important for me to believe in the concept that I am powerless over alcohol.

**Do I believe that I don't have power over alcohol?**

I sure hope so...well, where does that leave us?

We have looked at the powerlessness of the body (physical craving) and we have started to look at the powerlessness of the mind (lack of choice) so, Let's continue looking at what the Big Book has to say about the mind...

(35:1)What sort of thinking dominates an alcoholic who repeats time after time the desperate experiment of the first drink? Friends who have reasoned with him after a spree which has brought him to the point of divorce or bankruptcy are mystified when he walks directly into a saloon. Why does he? Of what is he thinking?

(35:3)We told him what we knew of alcoholism and the answer we had found. He made a beginning. His family was re-assembled, and he began to work as a salesman for the business he had lost through drinking. **All went well for a time, but he failed to enlarge his spiritual life.** To his consternation, he found himself drunk half a dozen times in rapid succession. On each of these occasions we worked with him, reviewing carefully what had happened. He agreed he was a real alcoholic and in a serious condition.

(36:3)*He had much knowledge about himself as an alcoholic. Yet all reasons for not drinking were easily pushed aside in favor of the foolish idea that he could take whiskey if only he mixed it with milk!*

❁ (37:1)Whatever the precise definition of the word may be, **we call this plain insanity.** How can such a lack of proportion, of the ability to think straight, be called anything else?

**Do I believe that when it comes to drinking or not, that I have no choice and therefore, I am at times insane? I have done things (including drinking) that can only be called insane. This has been proven to me, time and again...**

(37:2)To us it is not far-fetched, for **this kind of thinking has been characteristic of every single one of us.** We have sometimes reflected more than Jim did upon the consequences. But **there was always the curious mental phenomenon that parallel with our sound reasoning there inevitably ran some insanely trivial excuse for taking the first drink. Our sound reasoning failed to hold us in check. The insane idea won out.** Next day we would ask ourselves, in all earnestness and sincerity, how it could have happened.

(37:3)In some circumstances we have gone out deliberately to get drunk, feeling ourselves justified by nervousness, anger, worry, depression, jealousy or the like. But even in this type of beginning we are obliged to admit that **our justification for a spree was insanely insufficient in the light of what always happened.** We now see that when we began to drink deliberately, instead of casually, there was little serious or effective thought during the period of premeditation of what the terrific consequences might be.

❁ (37:4)Our behavior is as **absurd and incomprehensible** with respect to the first drink as that of an individual with a passion, say, for jaywalking.

❁ (38:2)However intelligent we may have been in other respects, where alcohol has been involved, we have been **strangely insane**. (Do I believe I have been Insane?)

❁ ❁ (39:1)Certain nonalcoholic people who, though drinking foolishly and heavily at the present time, are able to stop or moderate, because their brains and bodies have not been damaged as ours were. But **the actual or potential alcoholic, with hardly an exception, will be absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge**.

Do you remember what I said about knowledge and power during the workshop opening? **Knowledge does not equal power**, for us self-knowledge can't keep us from drinking! This is why Big Book and Step studies can be a waste of time. Unless these studies motivate you to want to work the steps, the knowledge is no protection. It's our experiences with working the Big Book and the steps, it's our taking action which provides our protection from the drink...

❁ (41:2)I now remembered what my alcoholic friends had told me, how they prophesied **that if I had an alcoholic mind, the time and place would come-I would drink again**. They had said that though I did raise a defense, it would one day give way before some trivial reason for having a drink. Well, just that did happen and more, for what I had learned of alcoholism did not occur to me at all. I knew from that moment that I had an alcoholic mind. **I saw that will power and self-knowledge would not help in those strange mental blank spots**. I had never been able to understand people who said that a problem had them hopelessly defeated. I knew then.

❁ (42:2)But **the program of action**, though entirely sensible, was pretty drastic. It meant I would have to throw several lifelong conceptions out of the window. That was not easy. But **the moment I made up my mind to go through with the process, I had the curious feeling that my alcoholic condition was relieved, as in fact it proved to be**.

**"Quite as important was the discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems. I have since been brought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before**. My old manner of life was by no means a bad one, but I would not exchange its best moments for the worst I have now. I would not go back to it even if I could."

(43:1)Most alcoholics have to be pretty badly mangled before they really commence to solve their problems.

❁ ❁ (43:3)Once more: The alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. **His defense must come from a Higher Power**.

Do I believe that there will come a certain time when I will have no effective mental defense against the first drink? Do I believe that my defense must come from a Higher Power? These are two of the most important questions of this workshop! We need to answer truthfully, if we are to take step one completely. Our solution is a spiritual one, therefore, we must get these questions answered correctly.

We are now up to, the second half of step one. The book has spent 53 pages on the first half of the first step, just to look at the symptoms of the disease; that we are sick in the body and the mind. At this point we need to be convinced of two things:

1. Does my experience abundantly confirm that once I put alcohol into my system, something happens which makes it virtually impossible for me to stop ?”  
(I loose control over the amount I will drink and have a craving for more.)
2. Do I believe that a time will come, where I will have no effective mental defense against the first drink? And that As an alcoholic my defense must come from a higher power? (that power being God)  
(No matter how long since my last drink (1 year, 10years etc.) eventually I will get a mental obsession to drink, over which, I will have no mental control. My only defense must come from God)

## Section Four : The second \_ of step one

Let's look at why our lives are unmanageable. **Unmanageability is the spiritual malady of the disease.** This is the condition which takes place before, during and after we start to drink. The problems of the body and the mind are but symptoms. It is the spiritual malady which is the root of our disease (selfishness and self-centeredness). To discover this, we will look at unmanageability ... we will look at all of pg. 44, \_ of 45 and one paragraph on pg. 52.

Even after taking the first 53 pages to get two points across; Bill Wilson, repeats the two points we need to be clear on, on the top of page 44. Let's take a look...

❁ ❁ (44:1)In the preceding chapters you have learned something of alcoholism. We hope we have made clear the distinction between the alcoholic and the non-alcoholic. **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. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.**

Did you notice the power of that paragraph? If you believe...“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.”

Well then, **Do I believe I am an alcoholic?** Yes or No? If I do, then I am...

❁ ❁ (44:1)suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.

What an ominous statement! That is until you read the next paragraph. Here we are given the only two outcomes for **an alcoholic of the hopeless variety.** The next paragraph says:

❁ ❁ (44:2)To be **doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.**

**Do I believe that these are my only two alternatives?** Could I have gone on, maybe for a long time, feeling the way I felt when I came to A.A.? Living the way I was, when I came into A.A.? Of course not. Unmanageability, is why we come to A.A. in the first place! Here at least we are given an out, other than suffering an alcoholic death. The book says we can **live on a spiritual basis.** The book continues...

(44:3)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.** Or else what? We are doomed to face an alcoholic death.

❀ (44:3)Perhaps it is going to be that way with you. But cheer up, something like half of us thought we were atheists or agnostics. Our experience shows that you need not be disconcerted. **If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried.** We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could will these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn't there. **Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly.** Unmanageability? I think so.

❀ ❀ (45:1)**Lack of power, that was our dilemma.** (Do I believe that lack of power is my 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?

This is the last requirement of step one:

1. Complete Willingness (12:4) and (13:5)
2. Belief in the Power of God (13:5)
3. Honesty (honest desire) (13:5)
4. Humility to establish and maintain a new order of things (13:5)
5. Concede we are Alcoholic (Admission) (30:2)
6. Lack of Power (Powerlessness) (45:1)

(45:2)**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. That means we have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God.** What a promise! If I can find a power greater than myself, the power will solve my problem! They are promising me that if I follow what is in the book (**doing, not studying**) and find a higher power(through working the steps), my problems will be solved! Now let's jump to page 52 for one paragraph to confirm powerlessness.

❀ (52:2)We had to ask ourselves why we shouldn't apply to our human problems this same readiness to change our point of view. **We (Dave was) were having trouble with personal relationships, we (Dave) couldn't control our (his) emotional natures, we were (Dave was) a prey to misery and depression, we (Dave) couldn't make a living, we (Dave) had a feeling of uselessness, we were (Dave was) full of fear, we were (Dave was) unhappy, we (Dave) couldn't seem to be of real help to other people - was not a basic solution of these bedevilements more important than whether we (Dave) should see newsreels of lunar flight? Of course it was.**

Does it describe you? Remember what the doctor told us: (xxvi) **To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented.**

How is that for a description of alcoholic unmanageability? If this isn't untreated alcoholism I don't know what is. What's so scary is this, our problems and unmanageability can happen drinking or dry. It just depends on, whether you do the step work or not. **Dry time around A.A. is not a protection from drinking or alcoholic unmanageability!**



Now consider this. On my own power, could I change my behavior or feelings described in this paragraph? No, that's why I came to A.A.; I don't know about you, but I sure didn't want to be here. If I could have handled my own unmanageability, I wouldn't have started a search for the recovery A.A. provides.

(52:3) **When we (Dave) saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we (Dave) had to stop doubting the power of God. Our (Dave's) ideas did not work. But the God idea did.**

So, let's take all three parts of step one together...

1. **Do you believe that the physical craving would happen, if you took a drink today? (could you take 2 drinks a day for 30 days no more no less? Can you or could you, control your drinking?)** If you are new, this question about craving is easy, but what about if you have 15 years sober? We need to keep this question current, in today's terms. Keeping our memory green is a must, that's why "Constant work with newcomers" is required, it keeps our memory green. We can't forget what the first drink will do to us, because a drink will bring back the craving as if we had never stopped.
2. **Does my experience confirm that there will come a time, where I will have no effective mental defense against the first drink? Did I ever drink when I really didn't want to? Did I ever drink and not know why? Knowing full well, that for me, drinking was wrong? That drinking was killing me?**
3. **Do I believe that I have a spiritual malady, which creates unmanageability in my life? Which only a spiritual experience can conquer? Do I believe that lack of power is my problem? That if I don't find a power greater than myself, I am doomed to a life of unmanageability and an alcoholic death?**

I have just described to you the necessary questions for our beginning. This is Step 1. We just learned, Alcoholism is **an allergy of The body, Mind and Spirit** and as stated on page thirty, **admission of our alcoholism** is where we must start the process of our recovery in the steps. Step one also has the requirements of: **Complete Willingness, honesty and Humility.**

❄️❄️ Alcoholism is also **self-diagnosed**, therefore we need to look at the questions the Big Book gave us. Does this describe you?

1. **"Did you try to prove to yourself you could drink like other people?" (30:1) & (31:1)**
2. **"Could you drink and stop abruptly?" (31:3)**
3. **"Could you leave alcohol alone for one year?" (34:1) & (34:2)**
4. **"If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely?" (44:1) , or**
5. **"If when drinking, (do) you have little control over the amount you take? (44:1)**  
(then...)

❄️ (44:1) **"you are probably alcoholic. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer."**

You must be clear on these points before we can move forward. We have covered 65 pages to convince us of just one thing...that we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.... Now let's look at step 2 and see what we have to do next...

We are going to look at the whole chapter of WE AGNOSTICS 44 – 57. We are going to look at the second step and continue to consider what the Big Book says. We'll still turn statements into questions; putting ourselves into the paragraphs. Let's look at step 2 in two parts. First, up to page 47 to find the second step question. Then I'll add some questions for those of us who have been sober for a while.

Lastly, we'll look at the second \_ of step two; a proposition on page 53 (the second step choice) to see if step 2 requires any action on our part.

## Section Five : The first \_ of step 2

We have already covered 44&45 so I will start off with the points, which overlap into step 2.  
(44:3) **We had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life.**

❁ ❁ (45:1) **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?**

This is the question we need to answer. Agnostic or not the Big Book is clear...

❁ ❁ (46:1) **Let us make haste to reassure you. We found that as soon as we were able to 1.)lay aside prejudice and 2.)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.**

❁ ❁ (46:2) **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. (The rest of the 12 steps) We found that God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him. (Notice it says seek, not find. Step two is the start of our search for God in our lives and it begins with the basics of daily prayer for help) To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who 3.)earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all men.**

❁ ❁ (47:1) **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. Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from 4.)honestly asking yourself what they mean to you. At the start, this was all we needed to commence spiritual growth, to effect our first conscious relation with God as we understood Him. Afterward, we found ourselves accepting many things which then seemed entirely out of reach. That was growth, but if we wished to grow we had to begin somewhere. So we used our own conception, however limited it was. Step two is where we learn - "to commence spiritual growth". We do this with daily prayers, to the God of our understanding, for help. When I started this process, I didn't have much faith so my prayer was a simple "please help me" in the morning and a "thank you" at night. In the beginning, I couldn't even pray God- all I could say was just the word "please". I wasn't sure about the God question. Even so, this start was enough to get me through the fifth step. Upon completion of the 5<sup>th</sup> step it says - we now begin to have a "spiritual experience and it was after the 5<sup>th</sup> step that I realized I too had had a new spiritual experience. I was a different person because I had followed this path.**

When we get to the 10<sup>th</sup> step, it says we have "entered the world of the spirit". This "Realm of the Spirit", I now know, is our true goal. As a matter of fact, the whole purpose of A.A. and the twelve steps, is to help us find and maintain a conscious contact with God as we understand Him.

So, **where and how were we to find this "Power greater than ourselves"?** Through **action**. I always hear that the action part of the program starts with step three. Well, not according to the Big Book! The last paragraph we covered gave us several directions which take action:

**1. We have to lay aside our prejudice.**

2. We have to **express a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves.**
3. We have to **earnestly seek the Realm of the Spirit.**
4. We have to **Honestly ask ourselves what spiritual terms mean to us.**

What does all this mean? Let's start out with, the terms we are using.

**Lay Aside** – To put off to one side; Abandon.

**Prejudice** – An adverse judgement or opinion formed beforehand or without knowledge or examination of the facts.

**Express** – To make known; To manifest or communicate, as by a gesture; depict. (Prayer)

**Willingness** – Disposed to accept or tolerate; consenting. (Doing the correct thing even when you don't want to. It says tolerate, it doesn't say we have to like it!)

**Earnestly** – Determined; eager; of an important or vital nature; not trivial or petty.

**Seek** – To try to locate or discover; search for. To move to; go to or toward. Request.

**Realm of the spirit** – A kingdom or province of God.

**Honestly** – Not lying, cheating; sincere; genuine

If we can find the things described here and apply them to our four instructions, we have taken the first part of step two! At the start, this will be all we need **“to commence spiritual growth”**, to effect our first conscious relation with a “God of our understanding”. Our whole purpose in the program and for this book, is for us to find and maintain this conscious contact with God, but this is just the beginning, we still need to know the where and how of it. Now for the 2<sup>nd</sup> step question!

❁ ❁ (47:2) “Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?” **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.\***

This is the first \_ of step 2: We must be willing to answer yes to the 2<sup>nd</sup> step question before we are ready to move to the 2<sup>nd</sup> \_ of step 2.

"Does Dave believe, or is Dave even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than himself?" This seems fairly basic and easy, but as you can see in the four requirements above, it does take action.

You should have noticed that I pointed out the cornerstone. Why the cornerstone?

Well, in step one, we found the foundation on which we shall build (willingness – 12:4).

We found the cement (equal parts of sharing in a common problem and sharing in a common solution – 17:2).

Here is the Cornerstone (the belief in a power greater than myself – 47:2) and we shall find

The Keystone in the third step (God is going to be our director – 62:3).

We are finding the parts to build an arch through which we shall pass to freedom!

Lastly, after we have worked the steps and built our arch, Bill will give us the Foundation stone (97:1) upon which, we will maintain our new found freedom.

So, why do I need all this stuff about pieces of an arch?

Because, the arch parts will be referenced to and revisited during **The quiet hour** in step 5.

Now, what about the questions for those of us who have been in recovery for a while?

After all the work we have done in A.A.; after 5, 10, or even 20+ years in A.A., With all the tools and power we think the program has given us; we need to ask ourselves this:

- 1.) **What are my current experiences with willingness to believe in a power greater than myself?**



- 2.) Is my conscious contact with my higher power all that it can be? Or,
- 3.) Am I willing to believe that God can take me beyond where I currently am, in every area of my life?
- 4.) What is my current agnosticism? I believe, if the answer to question three is “No”, then you have already answered question four... Think about it?...

Don't take these questions lightly. If these questions seem far fetched ask yourself this:

**Has my ego rebuilt itself enough to convince me that I have the answers to my own sobriety?**

When I formally work the steps 1-12, I answer these questions and I have found powerful new Experiences each time in considering step two in my life.

Now let's move forward and look at the promise given to us after the 2<sup>nd</sup> step question:

☼ ☼ (47:2) 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.\*

Now the Book gives us some things to be wary of:

☼ (47:4) Besides a seeming inability to accept much on faith, we often found ourselves handicapped by obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice. (Does this describe me?) Many of us have been so touchy that even casual reference to spiritual things made us bristle with antagonism. **This sort of thinking had to be abandoned.** Though some of us resisted, we found no great difficulty in casting aside such feelings.

**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.** Do I believe I have been persuaded? Am I in a state of reasonableness? If not what is my alternative? (alcoholic destruction by dying an alcoholic death

(44:2) Sometimes this was a tedious process; we hope no one else will be prejudiced for as long as some of us were. **Now more cautions:**

(49:2) **We, who have traveled this dubious path, beg you to lay aside prejudice, even against organized religion.** We have learned that whatever the human frailties of various faiths may be, those faiths have given purpose and direction to millions. People of faith have a logical idea of what life is all about. Actually, we used to have no reasonable conception whatever. We used to amuse ourselves by cynically dissecting spiritual beliefs and practices when we might have observed that many spiritually-minded persons of all races, colors, and creeds were demonstrating a degree of stability, happiness and usefulness which we should have sought ourselves.

(50:1) Instead, we looked at the human defects of these people, and sometimes used their shortcomings as a basis of wholesale condemnation. We talked of intolerance, while we were intolerant ourselves. We missed the reality and the beauty of the forest because we were diverted by the ugliness of some of its trees. **We never gave the spiritual side of life a fair hearing.**

(50:2) Experience has taught us that these are matters about which, for our purpose, we need not be worried. **They are questions for each individual to settle for himself.**

On one proposition, however, these men and women are strikingly agreed. **Every one of them has gained access to, and believes in, a Power greater than himself. This Power has in each case accomplished the miraculous, the humanly impossible.**

❁ ❁ (50:4) 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.** (What a series of promises!) This happened soon after they wholeheartedly met a few **simple requirements.**

What requirements? Let's look:

❁ ❁ (51:0) Once confused and baffled by the seeming futility of existence, they show the underlying reasons why they were making heavy going of life. 1.) **Leaving aside the drink question,** 2.) **they tell why living was so unsatisfactory.** 3.) **They show how the change came over them.** When many hundreds of people are able to 4.) **say that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith.**

The requirements are why we do the 12 steps. Just as was done for us, we need to help others find "a God of their understanding", a power who can help them recover. This need to unselfishly help others will come clear later in step 10, 11 and 12.

For now we need to recognize that to stay sober an alcoholic needs to:

❁ ❁ (51:0)

1. Leave aside the drink question.
2. Tell why living was so unsatisfactory (**what it was like**).
3. Show how the change came over them (**what happened**).
4. Share why the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives (**what it's like now**).

Sounds like what we say before we speak at a speakers meeting. **What it was like, what happened, and what it's like now.** Page 29 tells us **why we tell our story** and here on page 51 we learn **how to share the story of our experience with others.**

Look carefully at this next paragraph, it describes most alcoholics!

❁ ❁ (52:2) **We had to ask ourselves why we shouldn't apply to our human problems this same readiness to change our point of view. We were (Dave was) having trouble with personal relationships, we (Dave) couldn't control our (his) emotional natures, we were (Dave was) a prey to misery and depression, we (Dave) couldn't make a living, we (Dave) had a feeling of uselessness, we were (Dave was) full of fear, we were (Dave was) unhappy, we (Dave) couldn't seem to be of real help to other people - was not a basic solution of these bedevillments more important than whether we should see newsreels of lunar flight? Of course it was.**

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

(52:4) We agnostics and atheists were sticking to the idea that self-sufficiency would solve our problems. When others showed us that **"God-sufficiency" worked with them**, we began to feel like those who had insisted the Wrights would never fly.

(53:1) We agnostically inclined would not feel satisfied with a proposal which does not lend itself to reasonable approach and interpretation. Hence we are at pains to tell why we think our present faith is reasonable, why we think it more sane and logical to believe than not to believe, why we say our former thinking was soft and mushy when we threw up our hands in doubt and said, "We don't know."

Now for the 2<sup>nd</sup> step proposition:

❖ ❖ (53:2) **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?

What self imposed crisis? We already learned it was Lack of power! This is the second step question. **Do I believe that God is everything? or Do I believe God is nothing? God either is, or He isn't. Where do I stand?**

(53:3) Arrived at this point, we were squarely confronted with the question of faith. **We couldn't duck the issue.**

(53:4) Without knowing it, had we not been brought to where we stood by a certain kind of faith? For did we not believe in our own reasoning? Did we not have confidence in our ability to think? What was that but a sort of faith? Yes, we had been faithful, abjectly faithful to the God of Reason. So, in one way or another, we discovered that faith had been involved all the time!

(54:3) Hence, We saw that reason isn't everything. Neither is reason, as most of us use it, entirely dependable though it emanate from our best minds. What about people who proved that man could never fly?

(55:1) **Yet we had been seeing another kind of flight, a spiritual liberation from this world, people who rose above their problems.** They said God made these things possible, and we only smiled. **We had seen spiritual release, but liked to tell ourselves it wasn't true.**

Well, if spiritual release is possible, how and where do we find it? As with all the questions in the Big Book; our text answers the question for us:

❖ ❖ (55:2) **Actually we were fooling ourselves, (How have I been fooling myself?) 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. (How do we find faith in God or spirituality?) Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were. (Where do we find faith in God or spirituality?) 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.**

What a great place for God to hide! Inside us, the last place we would ever look!

❖ (55:4) **We can only clear the ground a bit. If our testimony helps (Dave) sweep away prejudice, enables you (Dave) to think honestly, encourages you (Dave) to search diligently within yourself, then, if you wish, you (Dave) can join us on the Broad Highway. With this attitude you cannot fail. The consciousness of your belief (Dave) is sure to come to you.**

What a promise! If I sweep away prejudice, think honestly and diligently search I'll have **the proper attitude**. We hear it all the time in A.A. – We need to have the proper attitude. In

fact the whole 11<sup>th</sup> step is about this proper attitude. Well, if you are like me you didn't know what the proper attitude was until you read this.

☸ (57:2) Even so has God restored us all to our right minds. To this man, the revelation was sudden. 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!**

Dave, are you honestly willing to seek God?

"Yes", then we can go on... Let's look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> step:

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

What does it mean? Well, Let's break it apart...

**Came** – "**Came**" Past tense of come; over time.

**to believe that a power greater than ourselves** – "**Believe**" To accept as true or real; have confidence in; trust.

We saw we had to face the fact, that we must find a spiritual basis of life. We may believe that, But where and how do we find this power? Well, we just answered those questions. We have to "**search fearlessly**" – that's how (this phrase will be repeated in the 4<sup>th</sup> step). Now where do we find it -We found "**the Great Reality deep down within us.**"

Step two requires action:

1. We have to **lay aside** our prejudice.
2. We have to **express** a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves.
3. We have to **earnestly** seek the Realm of the Spirit.
4. We have to **Honestly** ask ourselves what spiritual terms mean to us.

**could restore us to sanity** – "**Sanity**" Soundness of judgement and reason.

This says could; not will. There are certain requirements we must meet. After we meet the requirements, **if God chooses**, then we will be restored to sanity. So, what are the requirements? (51:0)

1. Lay aside the drink question.
2. Share why living was so unsatisfactory (what it was like).
3. Share what change came over them (what happened).
4. Share that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives ( what it's like now).

Only by doing this do we have a chance at being restored to sanity.

We have confirmed our need to find a power greater than ourselves. We know we need willingness to believe. We know where to find the power. We know how to find the power. We have our cornerstone and we know the requirements for step 2. Now what?...

We are now at step Three where we will discover more requirements. Technically, we are still on step two until we meet the rest of the requirements and make our decision to say the step three prayer. Since it makes it easier to look at the rest of the requirements as part of taking step three, let's move on to step three...

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## Section Six : Step Three

Step three starts out on page 58 and is covered in chapter 5 up through page 63. We will continue to do what we have been doing so far with questions and paragraphs.

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. Notice I have underlined a decision. Taking step three is not about turning your will over, it is about making a decision. This decision comes before we say the prayer and after we have met the third step requirements. Actually, we are still on step two until we meet the requirements...Step three starts out with How It Works. Right here we need to ask some questions: How what Works? ... The program of Alcoholics Anonymous; or if you like, the steps. O.K., who then is Bill Wilson talking about? Is he talking about you? Put yourself into the paragraph and see if he is talking about you. Answer these questions after reading this section.

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Ask yourself... “Is it me that Bill Wilson is talking about or some other poor slob, who drinks too much. Someone who isn’t going to make it in sobriety?”

Through this section I will be referencing the original manuscript of the Big Book and I will be highlighting the differences( **in bright Green**) as we find the Big Book today. I think the original manuscript makes the A.A. proposition much clearer than the one we find today.

❄❄ (58:1)Rarely have we seen a person fail who has **thoroughly** followed **our directions**. 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**.

(Is that you Dave?) There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way.

(58:1)They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a **way of life** which **demand rigorous honesty**. (I have found when I am dishonest in any area of my life, I am being dishonest in all areas of my life. Dishonesty in one area, leads to dishonesty in other areas. I can’t separate myself into more than one person, if I am dishonest, not just part of me is dishonest, all of me is dishonest.) Their (Dave’s) **chances are less than average**. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders,(Is this you Dave?) but **many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest**.

❄❄ (58:2)Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. (Dave)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 follow directions**. (What is it we have, that you would want? I hope you want a spiritual awakening through working the steps and working with newcomers. Notice it says “willing to go to any length” This means work, maybe a lot of work-prayer, introspection, inventory, sleepless nights, phone calls, amends, meetings, commitments, change, etc.)

(58:3)At some of these we balked. **We thought we could find an easier, softer way. We doubt if you can**. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be **fearless and thorough** from the very start. **Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely**. (That’s right ! we have to absolutely abandon our old way of thinking or we get nothing! Remember, Half measures avail us nothing, not half. If you do a half ass job here you get squat, nix, nil nunca, nada, nothing!)



(58:4)Remember that we deal with alcohol-cunning, baffling, powerful! **Without help it is too much for us.** But **there is One who has all power-that One is God.** **You must find Him now!** **Half measures Will avail you (Dave) nothing.** We (Dave)stood at **the turning point.**(the third step decision) (Dave)**Throw yourself under** His protection and care with complete abandon. Did Dave asked for Gods protection and care today?

**Now we think you can take it!** Here are the steps we (Dave) took, which are **suggested as Your program of recovery:**

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care **and direction** of God *as we understood Him.*
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly, **on your knees**, asked Him to remove our shortcomings **—holding nothing back.**
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make **complete** amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve **our contact with God** *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual **experience** as the result of **this course of action**, we tried to carry this message to **others, especially alcoholics**, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." **Do not be discouraged.** No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is, that we (Dave is) are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We (Dave) claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

❀ ❀ (60:2)Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after, **have been designed to sell you** three pertinent ideas:

- (a) **That you are (Dave is) alcoholic and cannot manage your (his) own life.**
- (b) **That probably no human power can relieve your (Dave's) alcoholism.**
- (c) **That God can and will.**

**If you are not convinced on these vital issues, you ought to re-read the book to this point or else throw it away!**

❀ ❀ This section here is known as **The ABC's** and will be referenced later. These are powerful statements and really need to be considered at length. Do you remember the questions we asked before we started this work?

1. **Do you want what we have?** (Spirituality, fellowship, promises, peace of mind, serenity etc.) 2. **Are you willing to go to any lengths?** (remain teachable and follow specific directions )
3. **Are you ready to take certain steps?** (All 12 steps in order, completely – the program is not a smorgasbord, you don't get a choice as to which steps you will do!)

The steps are the true "easier and softer way". If I am not willing to surrender to the steps, then I am not willing to surrender my will and life over to the care of God as I understand Him. Remember the warning we just read; **Half measures availed us nothing, not half.** If we do a half ass job on the steps, we get nothing; not half of the recovery.

This doesn't usually make sense to those who haven't done all the work from the doctors opinion up to page 58. If we do the work up to here; we will now be at a turning point. What turning point?

Where we turn toward God or Booze; the only two true powers in our lives. We are always headed toward one or the other if we are real alcoholics.

Now, back to the ABC's: Do they apply to me? Ask yourself:

A) **Do I believe I am alcoholic? Do I believe I cannot manage my own life? Am I powerless?**

B) **Do I believe that probably no human power could relieve my alcoholism?**

C) **Do I believe that God can and will if I seek Him?**

If I can answer "Yes" to these questions, look at what it says...

❀ ❀ (60:3) **Being convinced, we were at Step Three** (answering these questions truthfully has brought us to step three), **which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him.**

Now we get asked some more questions:

(60:3) just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do? This is also called "the how and why of it" Our text will again answer our questions for us, it will give us the first requirement, then a life example, finally, we are given the root of our disease. Only after all of this explanation does Bill give us the rest of our requirements. Remember, we are still working step two! We are only up to step three, we have to meet some requirements before we can make our decision. Let's look at it...

Here are **The Requirements of step three:**

❀ (60:4) **(1) The first requirement is that we (Dave) be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success.** On that basis we are (Dave is) almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. Most people try (Dave tries) to live by self-propulsion. Each person (Dave) is like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way. If his (Dave's) arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as he (Dave) wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including (Dave) himself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful.

(61:0) In trying to make these arrangements (Dave) our actor may sometimes be quite virtuous. He (Dave) may be kind, considerate, patient, generous; even modest and self-sacrificing. On the other band, he (Dave) may be mean, egotistical, selfish and dishonest. But, as with most humans, he (Dave) is more likely to have varied traits.

(61:1) What usually happens? The show doesn't come off very well. He (Dave) begins to think life doesn't treat him right. He (Dave) decides to exert himself more. He (Dave) becomes, on the next occasion, still more demanding or gracious, as the case may be. Still the play does not suit (Dave) him. Admitting he may be somewhat at fault, he (Dave) is sure that other people are more to blame. He (Dave) becomes angry, indignant, self-pitying. What is his (Dave's) basic trouble? Is he (Dave) not really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind? Is he (Dave) not a victim of the delusion that he can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if he (Dave) only manages well? Is it not evident to all the rest of the players that these are the things he (Dave) wants? And do not his (Dave's) actions make each of them wish to retaliate, snatching all they can get out of the show? Is he (Dave) not, even in his best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony?

(62:1) **Our actor (Dave) is self-centered-ego-centric**, as people like to call it nowadays. He is like the retired business man who lolls in the Florida sunshine in the winter complaining of the sad state of the nation; the minister who sighs over the sins of the twentieth century; politicians and reformers who are sure all would be Utopia if the rest of the world would only behave; the outlaw safe cracker who thinks society has wronged him; and the alcoholic who has lost all and is locked up. Whatever our protestations, are not most of us concerned with ourselves, our resentments, or our self-pity? If you are alcoholic this next paragraph applies to you...

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

Here comes one of the greatest promises of the entire Big Book!

❀❀ (62:2) So our (Dave's) troubles, we think, are basically of our (Dave's) own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic (Dave) is an extreme example of **self-will run riot**, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics (Dave) 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 (Dave) had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we (Dave) could not live up to them even though we (he) would have liked to. Neither could we (Dave) reduce our (his) self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our (his) own power. We (Dave) had to have God's help.

Do I believe what we just read? I had better!

**Remember, the Big Book gives us four specific times when we will drink:**

4. If we fail to enlarge our spiritual life (14:6, and 35:3)
5. If we do not rid ourselves of selfishness. (62:2)
6. If we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the spirit with resentment (66:1)
7. With respect to sex, If we are not sorry and continue to harm others (70:1)

Here are the rest of the requirements to take step three:

❀❀ (62:3) This is the how and why of it. (2) **First of all, we (Dave) had to quit playing God. It didn't work.** (3) **Next, we (Dave) decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our (Dave's) Director.**

(Notice the underlined word? This is the decision we have to make in step three)

❀❀ (62:3) **He is the Principal; we are (Dave is) 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.**

What concept? That "God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children." This concept is the key to our new freedom. This is the decision we need to make. Without the keystone the arch will not stand; it falls in on itself. The same is true for us. Without God, our lives fall in on us. Remember, There is a difference between the decision and the commitment which follows the decision.

This is our Fourth construction reference:

**Foundation = Complete Willingness (12:4)**

**Cement = \_ Common Peril, \_ Common Solution (17:2)**

**Cornerstone = Willing to believe that there is a Power greater than yourself (47:2)**

**Keystone = God is our Director (62:3)**

**Foundation Stone = (Complete Willingness) to Help Others (97:1)**



Now look at the 2<sup>nd</sup> step promises we get, if we are willing to make the decision:

✿ (63:1) **When we (Dave) sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We (Dave) had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we (Dave) needed, if we (Dave) kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we (Dave) became less and less interested in (himself) ourselves, our (his) little plans and designs. More and more we (Dave) became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we (Dave) felt new power flow in, as we (Dave) enjoyed peace of mind, as we (Dave) discovered we (he) could face life successfully, as we (Dave) became conscious of His presence, we (Dave) began to lose our (his) fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter.**

**We were (Dave was) reborn.**

✿✿ **We were now at Step Three.**

So, What have we learned about step three? We have covered 63 pages of the Big Book just to be convinced of the ABC's and we must be convinced of the ABC's to be at step three.

Are you convinced? O.K., Then what?...

Now, we have to meet certain requirements:

1. **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.**
2. **We had to quit playing God. It didn't work.**
3. **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.**

If we can meet these requirements and make the decision to let God be the director, then we get the third step promises.

We know there is a difference between the decision and the commitment which follows the decision. I'm sure you have all heard of the three frogs on the log? Two decide to jump off, now how many are left? Three, the frogs only made a decision. They haven't followed through with the commitment their decision requires!

Are you ready to make the commitment to God? Are you ready to take the back seat and let God drive, let God be your director? If you are, then you are ready to take the third step prayer. Before we do, heed the warnings; In the Big Book, the prayer comes before the warnings but, I believe I can't take the prayer truthfully until I have considered the warnings...

✿ (63:2) **We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him.**

Am I sure, I am ready to do this work with **all it's consequences**? If so, how do we proceed?

✿ (63:3) **We found it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as our wife, best friend, or spiritual adviser. But it is better to meet God alone than with one who might misunderstand. The wording was, of course, quite optional so long as we expressed the idea, voicing it without reservation. This was only a beginning, though if honestly and humbly made, an effect, sometimes a very great one, was felt at once.**

Now it's time for some tough questions to see where I stand...

**Am I ready to voice without reservation my willingness to have God as my director? Am I ready to have God as my Father? Am I ready to be one of God's agents? Am I ready to have a**

new Boss and a new “Employer” ? Am I ready to have God do with me as He will? Am I ready to live a life where, “what I want does not matter”; where I have to remember, it is Gods will that I need to live? If we can answer “yes” to these questions then, we are ready to take step three completely. We are ready to offer ourselves to God through the third step prayer.

Well, where does this leave us? Joe Hawks and Mark Houston suggest we review. We review to make sure we have the correct materials from which we will build our arch ; The new and triumphant arch through which we will pass to freedom. We must be sure we haven’t missed anything before we take step three because once we do, there is no turning back! We have covered up through pg. 63 and what did we find?

**From xiii – 23:** We have a physical craving and we have to answer the questions... “Does my experience abundantly confirm that once I take a drink I loose control over the amount I will drink?”

**From 23 – 43:** We have an obsession (mental) which leads to unmanageability... “Do I believe that a time will come where I will have no effective mental defense against the first drink and that my defense must come from a higher power?”

**From 44 – 57:** We are suffering from a spiritual illness (malady)... “Do I believe that I am suffering from an illness only a spiritual experience can conquer? Do I believe that I have only two choices; to live a spiritual life or, to die an alcoholic death? Do I believe that God is everything or he is nothing? Do I believe that the only way I can be restored to sanity is for me to search fearlessly for the Great Reality deep down within myself?”

**From 57- 63:** Lack of power is our problem (unmanageability) and we must make a decision about where to find the power we need... Am I willing to meet the third step requirements so I may make the decision? Am I convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis I am almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though my motives are good? Do I believe, I have to quit playing God. It doesn't work? Am I ready to decide that hereafter in this drama of life, God is going to be my Director. He is the Principal; I am His agent. He is the Father, and I am His child. Having made the decision, Am I willing to follow through with the commitment my decision put into place? Am I willing to take the third step prayer?”

If you can answer all of these questions and meet the requirements, then you are ready to take the prayer.

At this point we get on our knees and pray:

❁ ❁ (63:2)“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!”

Well, we have made the decision and taken the third step prayer, Now where do we stand? We stand ready to turn it over:

How exactly do we turn our will and lives over to the power greater than ourselves?

This is one of the toughest questions of A.A. . This question has perplexed thousands. New comers, as well as, old timers have for years pondered this question until they either decided to get honest or died an alcoholic death. This question must be answered, if we hope to have peace, serenity, and sobriety under God. We will answer this question in section seven.

## Section Seven : How we turn our will and life over...

Here we follow through with the commitment our decision put into place for us.

The Big Book say's:

❁ ❁ (63:4)Next we (Dave) 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 (Dave's) decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves (Dave) which had been blocking us (him). Our liquor was but a symptom. So we (Dave) had to get down to causes and conditions.

What is it that I highlighted in gold?

It is our third step decision and it can have little effect unless...

**AT ONCE FOLLOWED** by a strenuous effort to face, and be rid of, the things which have been blocking us. This doesn't mean we wait a week, month, year, or until we feel like it. We do it right after we get off the floor from saying the third step prayer! My first step sponsor said to me “you had better stay on step two until you think you are ready to work, because once we get to three there will be no turning back or resting on your laurels”.

When I told him I was ready to take three, we started. No waiting - off we went.

Now what about the symptom - liquor. Can the alcoholic symptom be treated? Yes – stop drinking; Not very effective for an alcoholic, is it?

We have to treat the disease if we are to have a lasting serenity. Therefore, as Bill puts it, we have to treat the causes and conditions.

What causes? What conditions? Well we don't know at this point. This is why we have to search fearlessly. We have to find the causes and conditions; But how?

Once again, our text tells us...

❁ (64:1)Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. *This was Step Four*

It will be through our personal inventory, where we will find the causes and conditions. To do this inventory we will look at the examples we are given in the Big Book. For years, many A.A.'s have had a hard time with the explanation of the fourth step in the Big Book. Why is this explanation so hard to understand? Well, for one reason, a large part of it was edited out of the Big Book. Bill Pittman wrote in A.A. The Way It Began, that Bill W.'s secretary Ruth edited out a lot of what we find in the Big Book. (As a side note, Ruth wrote the chapter "Lone Endeavor", which only appeared in the first printing. "Lone Endeavor" dealt with how to sober up on the Big Book alone). We know too, that the accomplished magazine editor Tom Uzzel edited the manuscript down, from 1200 pages to the 400 we were left with in the first printing. So what? You ask...What does all this mean to me? It means a lot!

A whole bunch of the descriptions for exactly how to write and do a forth step were edited out by Ruth and Tom!

So, where does that leave us? Well, let's look at what we have to work with and then let's do this step the way others have; Others who have been doing this work for years! Just like therest of A.A., We are going to follow the experiences of those who have passed before us. O.K., here we go!

❖ (64:1) **Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. This was Step Four**

What is a personal inventory? Bill makes the analogy to a business inventory.

(64:1) A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking a commercial inventory is a **fact-finding and a fact-facing process**. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret. If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values.

O.K., this is what a business does. Now, what do we do?

We do exactly the same thing! The only difference is we search our character, we search fearlessly for facts about ourselves and our behavior. We must find out the things which make us tick. Bill writes:

❖ (64:2) **We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our (Dave's) make-up which caused our (his) failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us (Dave), we considered its common manifestations.**

First we search out the flaws in our makeup, the common manifestations of self.

What does that mean? What common manifestations of self?

Bill tells us what he means, he gives us the major areas of flaws in "self": Resentments, Fears and Harms done to others.

First, we will have a look at our Resentments and how they have effected us.

Next, we will look at Fears, the corroding evil which somehow touches every aspect of our lives.

Then, we will look at the harms we have done others; with special emphasis on our sex conduct.

We will be looking at these three separate areas in this fourth step to find out one thing... The **truth about ourselves**.

Remember, we are following those who have gone before us. We are going to do a four column inventory on our resentments; just like the Big Book tells us. Before we begin, we need to remember what we have just done. We have decided to turn our will and life over to our higher power. Now is when we need His help! The time has come to ask God to direct us, to show us the truth. Here we need to sit quietly for a moment and clear our minds (meditation).

Then we pray something like this(a pre-fourth step prayer):

“God please come into me and direct me.

Father, Show me your will. Help me see beyond what I think I know about myself. Show me your Truth Father; the real Truth about myself.

God, please give me the patience, tolerance, faith, strength and courage I need to do this work. Remove my fears of what I may find out about myself.

Help me God... Help me to see and experience the Truth about myself. ”

Now we begin...

❁ ❁ (64:3) **Resentment is the "number one" offender.** It (resentments) destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it (resentments) stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have (Dave has) been not only mentally and physically ill, we have (Dave has) been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we (Dave will) straighten out mentally and physically. In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We (Dave) listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were (Dave was) angry.

❁ (65:3) 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 (Dave) ever got. The usual outcome was that people continued to wrong us (him) and we (Dave) stayed sore. (Do I believe this? I had better. Not only do I need to believe, I need to change my behavior unless I want the same outcome I have always gotten.) Sometimes it was remorse and then we were sore at ourselves. But the more we (Dave) fought and tried to have our (his) own way, the worse matters got. As in war, the victor only *seemed* to win. Our (Dave's) moments of triumph were short-lived.

❁ (66:1) It is plain (to Dave) that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we (Dave) permit these, do we (does Dave) squander the hours that might have been worth while. But with (Dave) the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. (This is “the hope” we speak of in A.A.; the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience.)

❁ (66:1) We (Dave) found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feelings we (Dave) shut ourselves (himself) off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we (Dave) drink again. And with us (Dave), to drink is to die.

Do I believe this? I must, if I hope to have a chance at a sober, serene life!

If we (Dave) were to live, we (Dave) had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us (Dave). They may be the dubious luxury of normal men, but for alcoholics (Dave) these things are poison.

Once again, Do I believe this? Absolutely ! I have years of drinking and sober living experience which confirms these facts.

From this point, and for the rest of the book, we won't go past an instruction until, we have done the work the instruction requires. Here is our first instruction:

(64:3) In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper.

So, we start off with paper. We are going to need lots of ruled paper and we will also need a pencil with a large eraser, because chances are, we will need to change a few things as we get more honest with ourselves. We also may need to rearrange the spacing of our list, as we start to think of those with whom we are angry.

As we work on the four columns, I will lead you through this work by the numbers. Follow my lead and stick with the order I suggest and I think you will find this work will be presented in a form which is as painless as possible. My experience has taught me that the order of how this work is done makes a real difference in how hard this work is to do. Therefore, I suggest you stick to the numbers and follow along step by step. Oh, I almost forgot my guarantee... By the time you have finished this work, you will be so sick of doing lists, you will want to scream! Just hang in there. I guarantee it will be worth it! Besides, this is the only way I know of, to get to the eight promises which come as the direct result of doing the fourth and fifth steps. O.k. here we go...

**1.** Take the first sheet and draw a line about 1 \_ inches from the left margin. We title this first sheet RESENTMENTS and then we fill in the first column of our list. We fill in the entire first column before we start on the second column.

O.K., we fill in the first column, but with what? Well, Bill tells us...

⚙ (64:3) **We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry.**

**IE: Mom, Dad, Brothers, Sisters, Employers, Alcohol, Authority, Blacks, Drunks, Ego maniacs, courts, police, Mr. Jones, liberals, people in A.A. who are dry; not sober, hate, failure, intolerance, women, lying by omission, Military etc.**

Be sure to leave enough lines between each name, for multiple resentments with the same person, institution or principle. If you have a lot of resentments against one, space accordingly. Our list also needs to be neat, An alcoholic can hid the truth in sloppy work, then all we have to do is blame it on the fact that we can't read our own writing! Here is an example...

<b>RESENTMENTS</b> <b>EXAMPLE #1</b>	
<b>Person or thing or principle</b>	<b>The cause or event – why I am angry?</b>
MOM	1. 2. 3. 4. 5.
DAD	1. 2. 3. 4.
ALCOHOL	1.
AUTHORITY	1.
WORK	1. 2. 3.
MR. JONES	1. 2.

Notice we have only filled in column one. **We fill in column one all the way before we move on to column two.**



**2.** Next, we will work on column two. As we fill in the resentments, we number them so we will know which one we are working on later in column three and four. Here, in column two, we ask the question:

❁ **Why am I angry?** Bill W. gave us several ways to do the second column. For me, there are too many resentments lumped together under the Mrs. Jones example, I can't keep all the resentments straight. I prefer to look at each resentment separately. Therefore, I am going to teach you the way of the Mr. Brown example.

There is something very important we need to know about column two before we start. This column is where **we must tell the truth**. We must ask God to help us be rigorously honest because, When it comes to column two, alcoholics tend to lie to themselves. We lie by making broad statements under which, we hide the truth. We tend to explain and justify why we are all screwed up, all in one sentence. We have been doing this our entire drinking lives and we have used this great tool to keep ourselves from seeing things as they truly are. Not only that, it has given us justification for our unacceptable behavior! What we are really saying is...

“it's because of them, that I am, the way I am”.

**If you can't be honest here, I can guarantee, you will not get the release and freedom this step has to offer!** Not to mention, we can either be honest now or later, If we are blessed enough, to get a next time...

Therefore, Let me give you the classic alcoholic example of how we can lie in column two :

**MOM - She was never there for me.**

Come on, unless you were abandoned as a child, your mother was there. She may not have been there the way you wanted, but she was there. How was she not there? She didn't meet your needs? What needs? We have to be specific! Oh, She left you at the store once by mistake and that's why you are mad at her. Now that's specific. The more honest and to the point you can become the better!

Here is another one: **DAD - He beat me.**

When? Every day? Once a week? Three times? Oh, he beat you after you broke his car. Now that is specific. If there were other times list them. While we do this work in column two, we have to get to the truth about what and why we are angry. Broad statements, are not only a lie, they are worthless. These statements are how we justify our bad feelings. They are where an alcoholic hides the truth. Remember, If we can't be specific we will not get the desired results. Painting with a broad brush, doesn't help get us to the truth. Freedom requires the truth.

If you don't believe me just ask any therapist. Therapists often spend years trying to get alcoholics to be honest enough, to see the truth.

As alcoholics, we spent years lying to ourselves, and everyone around us, with just this kind of justification. Hasn't it always been someone else or something else that is the cause of why we did or felt a certain way? Column two is where it takes all the honesty we can muster!

Remember, We already learned back on page 62...

❁ **(62:2) So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves.**

If we believe this to be true, then everyone who ever hurt us can stay the same! They don't have to change one bit. Our recovery will not depend on them ever changing! We have to change. If we don't, alcohol will eventually kill us.

Remember, we have only two choices:

1. **Live spiritually, or**
2. **Die an alcoholic death.**

Therefore, we have to search fearlessly and for the first time in our lives, we have to be honest. We have to look for where we were the cause of our problems. It's time to clean our side of the street, after all, it is our inventory.

Another trap we tend to fall into is to list old resentments. A current resentment is one that still touches us. What does that mean? Well, resentment means to re-feel. Therefore, a resentment is still alive if the thought of it brings up anger and other feelings. We must cover our current resentments, the ones which are still alive. I use "the hair on back of my neck" test. If the mere thought of the event causes the hair to bristle, then it's a "live" resentment. If you try to cover old resentments you will probably find it very hard to do column three and four. It is hard to get in touch with the old effects, the old anger had on us. I'm not saying you can't learn from your old resentments, I'm saying it's better to not get sidetracked by them. After you get used to inventory taking, you can always go back and cover the old stuff to see if it holds any pearls of wisdom for you.

If in doubt, list the resentment and try to work through it. If it flows, it's alive. If it doesn't then it's probably old. Listen to the hair on your neck and the little voice God sends (intuition) after all, we did ask God to show us what we need to see...

Now, fill in all of column two before we move onto column three. Take a look at this example:

<b>RESENTMENTS EXAMPLE #2</b>	
<b>Person or thing</b>	<b>The cause or event – why I am Angry</b>
MOM	1. Forgot me at the store as a child 2. Beat me with a wooden spoon when I came home late after trick or treating. 3. 4. 5.
DAD	1. Beat me after I broke his car. 2. Missed my championship game because he was too drunk to get out of bed. 3. Threatened to kill me that time when he was drunk. 4.
ALCOHOL	1. It stopped working for me
AUTHORITY	1. The cop who gave me a ticket on the turnpike.
WORK	1. My boss reprimanded me in front of my coworkers 2.
MR. JONES	1. Tried to block the addition I added to my house. 2.

**3.** Now, let's make our third column. Take your first resentment, under the first person on our list. For our example, take resentment #1, under MOM and place it on the top of a second piece of paper. We take this second piece of paper and we divide it into two columns. We label it RESENTMENTS, MOM, #1, forgot me at store.

On the left side we place the seven areas which could be effected by this anger. On the right side we answer the question: **“How has this anger effected me in the following areas?”**

We break down columns two and three this way, to keep our thoughts going in the right direction and it keeps our inventory nice and neat. Again, we do all of column three first, before we look at column four.

O.K., But where do we get the seven areas which could be effected by our anger? Bill writes:

❁ (64:3) In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships (including sex) were hurt or threatened. 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?

These 6 areas and to them we add pride. We find pride in the example “my wife” on pg. 65. For my inventory, I add (EGO) to pride, because pride and ego go “hand in hand” in my life. Here again Bill gives us a warning:

(65:3) **We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty.**

Am I prepared to be truly honest and thorough? If so, then I am ready to proceed. We now go through all of column three. We are looking for where we were **Hurt, Threatened or Interfered With** in each of the seven areas. We take each of the seven possible areas and ask ourselves if it was effected. In our minds we say: “I know I am angry about this particular event. How has this anger effected me in the area of - Self esteem?”

Then you write short bullet statements on how this specific event effected your self esteem. Then you repeat this process for pocketbook, ambition etc.

Here is how I question myself in my mind...

I'm angry at MOM because she left me at the store. Did this effect my self esteem? Did it hurt, threaten or interfere with how I see or feel about myself? If the answer is “Yes” then I write down what the effect was to my self esteem. I then repeat the “hurt threatened or interfered with” questioning for each of the seven areas. If you are new at inventory and you can't express the effect but, you know you were effected, just write “yes” in the blank and see if the effect becomes clear in the fourth column.

Notice the instructions says pocketbook, not money. Pocketbook, is a much larger area than just money. It is my experience, that fears can effect my Job, my work, My career, etc. all the while, I am making the same amount of money. The point is, my pocketbook is effected, not just money. If we are truly honest and specific in column two; column three will flow easily. Remember, We should be careful to not prejudge what we will put in column three. This is why we fill in all of column two before we start three and so on. Prejudice here will cost us dearly, I have learned this the hard way.

If you are open, you will notice things you didn't think possible. ie.: how a mother or a boss could effect the sex life and or the pocketbook. I know, for me, there have been times where, I have been so angry, I didn't want to have sex, where my anger effected my job performance etc. – Anger can carry across into all seven areas, without us realizing it. This is why the inventory must be searching and one place where The Set Aside prayer really comes in handy.

Remember, ❁ ❁ (65:3) **Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty.** Here is an example, so we can get started.

<b>RESENTMENTS</b> <b>MOM - #1 Column Three</b> <b>Forgot me at store</b> <b>How was I HURT, THREATENED or INTERFERED WITH in the following 7 areas?</b>	
<b>EFFECTS MY:</b>	<b>How was I effected in these 7 areas?</b>
Self esteem- How I see or feel about myself	I felt unloved. How could she forget me? I couldn't have been very important to her if she forgot me.
My Pocketbook - anything involved with my money, job or financial system.	Not a player. I was too young to be effected here. Or was I? Didn't I always need to have money in my pocket after this. Just in case it happened again. I was effected. Ever since, I have had a terrible fear of abandonment.
My Ambition – What I want for myself.	If I'm not very important to my own mom, I must not be too worthwhile so, why try to have ambition?
My Personal Relationships – With friends, Co-workers, family, or neighbors	How can I trust my mom. She left me out there all by myself. This shook me to the core; the most important relationship I had as a child. I can't trust my own Mom.
My Sex Life – People with whom you have been sexually involved.	Not a player. I was too young to be effected here. But, maybe not. It had an effect on me in the way I chose my wife. I wasn't going to have the mother of my children act that way. Imagine that? I guess it did effect me here after all.
Security – What I think I need.	I felt unloved. Triggered an intense fear of abandonment. I felt like I couldn't trust my own parents. I saw my relationship with them differently.
Pride – (Ego) How I feel others see or feel about me.	How could she leave me? I'm her child. I should mean everything to her and she forgot about me? I'm important! I didn't deserve that kind of treatment.

**Let's not forget the warnings we are given in (66:1)... It is one of the four places the Big Book tells us we will drink again,,,**

1. If we fail to enlarge our spiritual life (14:6, and 35:3 )
2. If we do not rid ourselves of selfishness. (62:2)
3. If we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the spirit with resentment (66:1)
4. With respect to sex, If we are not sorry and continue to harm others (70:1)

Now what? Column Four, is what ... If we didn't do a column four, we would be only be left with our pain, fear and anger. So, Where did I get the idea of a fourth column?

From the Big book, here is what it says:

❁ ❁ (66:3) **We turned back to the list, for it held the key to the future. We were prepared to look at it from an entirely different angle. We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrong-doing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill. How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol.**

❁ ❁ (66:4) **This was our course: (1) We realized that the people (column one) who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. Though we did not like their symptoms (column two) and the way these disturbed us (column three), they, like ourselves, were sick too. (2) We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves, "This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done."**

**(3) We avoid retaliation or argument. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. We cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one.**

These are three distinct things we need to do and they require action on our part. We had better learn them, because we will be doing these items with every resentment. Not just for this fourth step, but for all our resentments as we go forward in sobriety. These tools are called **Resentment - life skills.**

If we can use these simple tools, we are given a promise:

**(67:1) God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one.**

Now, it is often said by people, the example in the Big Book only has three columns. Well, they are right, but they didn't read far enough. What does the Big Book say in reference to column four?

❄ ❄ (67:2) **Referring to our list again** (The first three columns). **(4.) Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes.**

More important though, is where were we to blame? Look at the next line:

**(67:2) Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?**

Notice it says where had we been! Not, have we been?

Bill Wilson knew, if we were angry, we had to have been effected in some way. No alcoholic wants to look at this aspect, but it is true, we have chosen to stay angry. It is fact, if we are angry for a long time, we must have played a part in it, or it would have passed a long time ago. We are getting something from this anger, else why would we hold on to it for so long? The root meaning of resentment is to re-feel anger. If I am angry about the same situation for a long time, I am re-feeling this anger, again and again. My job now, is to take a truly honest look at my part in the anger that I am holding on to. What does this mean?

It means, before we start to answer the four questions we, in essence, have to throw away column two! We don't care why you are angry, we only care about how that anger has effected you.

If you can't see your part, you need to A.) review what the Big Book says and B.) again ask God for help. Then, C.) take the person with whom you are having a problem and ask the fourth step prayer:

**"God please help me show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. Help me to see that, This is a sick man. Show me how can I be helpful to him. God save me from being angry.**

Lord help me to avoid retaliation or argument. I know I cannot be helpful to all people, but at least show me how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one. Thy will be done." (from the thoughts on 67:0)

So, now what? Now, we look at where and how we were at fault...

❄ (67:2) **Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, (1) we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. (2) Where were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other man's. (3) When we saw our faults we listed them. (4) We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.**

These things are four more **Resentment - life skills** which every recovered alcoholic needs, we have to do all four on every resentments we get; both old and new alike. Let's look at all four requirements starting with (4).

Number four is where we get the instruction for the fourth column!

**(4) We placed them before us in black and white.** Placed what?

(3) **Our faults we listed them.** Oh, that's what. Our faults!

Well, haven't we already done that in column three? ... We already know where we were effected - In the seven areas.

O.K. we have already done the third requirement. So, now what?

We ask ourselves: (2) **Where were we to blame?** Not only that, Bill gives us the exact four questions to ask ourselves and he tells us where and how to ask this question. (1) **we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely.** This is the how of it.

The goal here is to find out, where were we to blame? In relation to the seven areas, where have we been effected; we ask ourselves:

❄❄(67:2)

**A. Where had we been selfish?**

**B. Where had we been dishonest?**

**C. Where had we been self – seeking?**

**D. Where had we been frightened?**

This is the where of it.

Bill asks these questions in the “we”, but I have to change the questions to the “I” when I do the work. After all, it's my inventory. I ask these questions about my behavior before, during, and after the resentment took place. By the way, These questions are in this order for a reason so...answer them in order. Don't forget, neatness counts. You will need to be able to find your way through these lists later during the fifth step.

Speaking of Fear (D)...We may not only find just one type of fear on our lists; several distinct types of fear may be associated or behind our resentment. These are called themes. You will be looking for this type of common area in all of your resentments. There will probably be certain themes, which come to light during this process. These themes may show up as behaviors which you experienced, the same way, in every relationship of the same type. ie: Your ego is involved in all our resentments. Or maybe, a certain fear like abandonment is involved. Who knows? Maybe you are one of those alcoholics who finds both ego and fear, as part of all your resentments. Nah, not you...

For example, Here's another type of theme; One of my biggest themes came to me in this way... I found that, if you take me in a relationship with a woman, and add a fear; I act out the same character defects, every time. First, I used to drink, then I would get a wondering eye and/or I'd spend money I didn't have, then I'd get angry and leave, all the while, my anger fully justifying my behavior.

At first, I thought this theme was a major problem for me, but now, knowledge of this theme has become a major preventative tool for me. Look at what I mean... I found this theme as I went over my lists during my fifth step and here is the power it holds for me. If I'm in this type of circumstance, and I get afraid, I already know what character defects to watch out for. I at least know how part of my disease will try to react in me and I can head it off at the pass. I can be on the look out, stay spiritually centered, go to a meeting and share it, call my sponsor, and/or throw myself into working heavily with newcomers. Above all, I can ask God to remove the fear! I now have a whole set of tools to help me be rid of these character defects, before I react and make a mess of my life. Get the idea?

This is why, we must do our own inventory; We have to find out what makes us tick and of all four questions, number four is most important. We need the fears we find here, because they are the triggers of our character defects.



That's why FEARS are the second set of lists we make. Therefore, be as honest, and specific as you can, as you work through your resentments. The extra work here will pay off later on the second set of lists, The Fear inventory.

✿✿ As a review, Let's put all of the 4<sup>th</sup> step tools about **resentments** in one place. These skills become a necessary **life tools** for a recovered alcoholic!

1. **We set them on paper.** (64:3)
2. **First I must realize, they are spiritually sick.** (66:4)
3. **Next, I must ask God;** meaning I pray for the spiritually sick person.  
Bill even tells us what to pray for: **tolerance, pity, and patience.** (67:0)
4. **Ask yourself "How can I be helpful to him?"** (67:0)
5. **Pray, "God save me from being angry. Thy will be done."** (67:0)
6. **Then, I must, Avoid retaliation and argument.** (67:1)
7. **Put out of your mind the wrongs others had done.** And look for your **own mistakes.** (67:2)
8. **Then I ask myself, Where had I been selfish?** (67:2)
9. **Then I ask myself, Where had I been dishonest?** (67:2)
10. **Then I ask myself, Where had I been self – seeking?** (67:2)
11. **Then I ask myself, Where had I been frightened?** (67:2)
12. **Then, I must try, to disregard the other person involved entirely** (67:2)
13. **Then ask yourself, where was I to blame?** (67:2)
14. **When I see my faults, I list them. I place them before me in black and white.** (67:2)
15. **I admit my wrongs honestly and am willing to set these matters straight.** (67:2)

When I get resentful today, I have several tools I can use from the tenth and eleventh steps, to help me get back on track in quick order. If these tools don't work, I have to use the ten items here. If this still doesn't work, I have to pray for the person or institution I'm resentful about.

The prayer technique I use, comes from (552:3) and thankfully, it is a rare time when I'm in bad enough shape to have to use this technique, but it does work. If you don't believe me, try it yourself.

**4.** So, let's make column four. Take another piece of paper. Divide it into two columns. The first line should be about two inches from the left margin. On the left, we list the seven areas effected. On the right, we ask the four questions with respect to each of the seven areas.

Now, we can go about answering the four questions about each of the effected areas. Here, I like to place my third column sheet next to this new, fourth column sheet. By doing it this way, I can read and work straight across. This not only makes it easier to keep my work neat, it keeps my thinking going in the right direction and it helps me to not stray mentally. Not to mention, doing it this way makes me do all of the third column, before I start the fourth column.

So, let's recap. What is my goal for my inventory?

My overall goal for this inventory is to break apart my resentments and find the truth about myself. What truth?

The truth my resentments hold for me, the truth I have been running from for my entire life. The truth I am searching for is my FEARS –

I have been angry in order to cover up the fact I am afraid. The reality I have found about myself, by doing this work is that I am a scared little boy, inside a man's body. What's worse is both the anger and the fear block me from God. So, what can I do?

If I can find the fears and be rid of them with God's help, the triggers of my character defects including my anger disappear.

**That's right! The character defects, which have been blocking me from God, will have been removed. It may sound strange but, the process works, it worked for me and I know it will work for you, if you try it...**

**Therefore, write your inventory out and find your fears. Once you have identified a truth (fear) and extricated it from your resentment, put it on your fears inventory list. I'm sure you'll be surprised when you find how many fears run your life and your resentments.**

**So, what are we going to do with this big pile of fears we uncover?**

**Relax, We'll be given instructions for getting rid of our fears in the next section. For now, just finish the fourth column.**

**I know this process may seem strange and like a lot of work, but it will be worth it! Remember, we are following those who went before us and by the way, didn't we say we would go to any lengths?**

**Take a look at this example of column four...**

<b>RESENTMENTS</b> <b>MOM - #1 Column Four</b> <b>Left me at the store</b>	
<b>AREAS EFFECTED:</b>	<b>WHERE WAS I TO BLAME?</b>
Self – esteem : See third column	1. Where was I selfish?
	2. Where was I dishonest?
	3. Where was I self – seeking?
	4. Where was I frightened?
My Pocketbook: See third column	1. Where was I selfish?
	2. Where was I dishonest?
	3. Where was I self – seeking?
	4. Where was I frightened?
My Ambition: See third column	1. Where was I selfish?
	2. Where was I dishonest?
	3. Where was I self – seeking?
	4. Where was I frightened?
My personal relationship: See third column	1. Where was I selfish?
	2. Where was I dishonest?
	3. Where was I self – seeking?
	4. Where was I frightened?
My Sex Life: See third column	1. Where was I selfish?
	2. Where was I dishonest?
	3. Where was I self – seeking?
	4. Where was I frightened?
Security: See third column	1. Where was I selfish?
	2. Where was I dishonest?
	3. Where was I self – seeking?
	4. Where was I frightened?
Pride (Ego): See third column	1. Where was I selfish?
	2. Where was I dishonest?
	3. Where was I self – seeking?
	4. Where was I frightened?

Now let's talk about "FEAR". Bill writes:

❄ ❄ (66:2) **If we were to live, we had to be free of anger...**

❄ (67:3) 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.

(68:1) **...We reviewed our fears thoroughly.**

We have just listed a whole bunch of fears during our resentment inventory. We know this because of the fourth question, in the fourth column. Well, what now?

Now, we take the fears out of the fourth column and put them on a new list. Yes, we make another list!

**5.** We take another piece of paper and make two overall columns. Split both columns into two sub-columns. Now, place the fears you found from column four of the resentment inventory on the left hand side of the first fear column. As always, fill in all of column one before starting on the second half of column one. On the right side of column one, we place the opposite fear. Look at the fear on the left and see if you suffer from its opposite fear. (We may not always suffer from the opposite fear, but it often saves us time to look for the opposite fear now.

Why do we look for the opposite fear?

Well, as I already said, I have found it saves me time and I tend to be like most alcoholics – I look for the easier softer way. I found, after searching for my fears, that I was often afraid of one thing and later on I'd find I was afraid of it's opposite. Therefore, it made sense to me to look for the opposite fear when I discovered a primary fear. If I could save myself some work, I would and since we are looking for all our fears anyway, it seemed like a quick way to get the job done. What do I mean by opposite fear? Well, let's look at some opposites... I'm afraid of: Loneliness & intimacy, Drinking & living sober, Isolation & crowds, Not being liked & friendship, To love & of hating, Getting fired & working, Failure & success, Death & life, Conflict & peace, Not working the steps & working the steps... etc. So, If I do have the opposite fear then, I place the opposite fear in the right column.

Now we have to follow the rest of the instructions:

❄ (68:1) **We put them on paper** (left side of fear column one), **even though we had no resentment in connection with them.** (then we look for the opposite fear-right side of fear column one)

**We asked ourselves why we had them.** (left side of fear column two) Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? Self-reliance was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough. Some of us once had great self-confidence, but it didn't fully solve the fear problem, or any other. When it made us cocky, it was worse.

So, now what? Well, we do what we are asked. We search our lives for any other fears we might have; those fears which are not connected to resentment. We are looking for as complete a list of fears, as we can make. We are looking for every fear in our lives. Why?

Because, it's the fears, which trigger our character defects. We add every fear to the left side of the first column and their opposites to the right side of the first column. That is, if we suffer from the opposite fear as well.

By now, we should have a complete list of our current fears. We now need to take this huge fear list and boil it down to what I call the "hit parade" of fears.

We need to boil down this huge list of fears to make it manageable. If we have a manageable list, we can take the list to God and ask for the fears to be removed. Since most of us find that our smaller fears are just an offshoot of our larger fears, if we can be rid of the larger fears, the smaller fears will be removed as well.

Most alcoholics find several of the fears on their lists are all related to one major type of fear (ie: Death, Abandonment, looking bad, Isolation, intimacy, Pain, Rejection... etc.) Your Goal for the fear inventory is to find the major fears for you. You might ask yourself this question: Which major fears am I haunted by?

The top ten (or so) fears, which haunt every alcoholic, I call the “Hit Parade”. Everyone’s “hit parade” of fears is different. It is your personal list of fear triggers, which activate your character defects. These “hit parade” fears, are the ones that we put in the right side of column two on our fear inventory.

Well, hold on a second - exactly how do I boil my list down, to find the “Hit parade”?

Bill says: (68:1) **We asked ourselves why we had them.** (The fears)

O.K., so, let’s look at our list. Column two is split in half. On the left side we fill in the answer to the question “Why do I have this fear?” We answer this question first for the original fear, then we separate with “///” and we answer the same question for the opposite fear.

Take a look at this example:

Column one		Column two	Hit Parade
Fear	Opposite fear	Why I’m afraid	
Rejection	Acceptance	I’ll be alone, It’s painful, I’ll drink and I’ll die /// Eventually I’ll get found out, Unknown feeling	Alone, Pain Fake , Die
Isolation	Relationships	I’ll be alone. It’s painful, I’ll drink and I’ll die /// Eventually I’ll get found out, Unknown feeling	Alone, Pain Fake, Die
Intimacy	Being found out	Unknown feeling, They’ll see the truth, I’ll be found out /// It’s painful, I feel like I’ll just die.	Fake, Pain Unknown
Death	Living	Unknown, It’s the end /// It’s painful, Eventually I’ll get found out	Unknown Fake, Pain
Pain	Pleasure	It’s painful, I’ll drink and I’ll die /// Greedy feeling and Eventually I’ll get found out	Pain, Die Fake

As I go through the list, I see themes develop. In the example I’ve used, we see the theme of (pain, being alone, dying and being a fake or getting found out). When we see these types of themes appear again and again, these are the “hit parade”. These are my root fears, which trigger all of my lesser fears and we know fear is the trigger of our character defects. Therefore, **if we can find the root fear and be rid of it, we will be rid of the trigger of our defects!** This critical exercise, is the beginning of our walk toward freedom. This is why we must be honest and find all of our fears. After I am all done with my list, I take a separate piece of paper and I write out my “hit parade”, then I number them .

Ie: 1.) death 2.)being alone 3.)getting found out as a fake 4.)fear of the unknown. Etc.

After we have done all this work on our fears, now what?

Once again, Bill tells us:

✿ ✿ (68:2) Perhaps there is a better way-we think so. **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.**

☸ ☸ (68:3) **We never apologize to anyone for depending upon our Creator. We can laugh at those who think spirituality the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. (What a great definition of courage! They trust their God!) We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.**

We ask God to remove our fear! This a another **life tool** and look at it's promise! **"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."**

Now that we have the "Hit parade", we ask God to remove it, before we attempt our next inventory. We pray something like this:

**" God, Thank you for helping me be honest enough to see the truth about myself. Thank you for showing me my fears and now that you have shown me my fears, please remove them from me. Lord, help me outgrow my root fears; The fears which have haunted me and blocked me from doing thy bidding. Direct my attention to what you would have me be and Help me become that, which you would have me be. Demonstrate through me and Help me do thy will always. Amen"** (from the thoughts on 68:3)

There is another way to do a fear inventory: Just like the resentment inventory, it's four columns. I suggest you use the first method for your first couple inventories. After you have done an inventory or two using the first method; you may want to try the four column method to see what you might experience about yourself. The four column method is just like the resentment form and goes like this : 1<sup>st</sup> column is the fear, second column you answer "why am I afraid", third column you look at the seven areas effected, in the fourth column you answer the 4 questions. What I have found using this method is that there are only a few fears. You may find that just a couple are true for you (living – dying, drinking – Sobriety, pain – pleasure) If you subscribe to what the Big Book says, the list is even shorter. Remember the two choices Bill gave us? **1. Die an alcoholic death 2. Live spiritually.** Aren't we afraid of both and aren't all the other choices just other forms of these two fears? Think about it and see if this isn't true for you too. Well, it's just a thought...

Now we are ready to move on to our last type of inventory, Harms done to others.  
Bill writes about two distinct areas: **A.) Sex, B.) Other harms done to others.** We will start off with sex.

**(68:4) Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there.** But above all, we tried to be sensible on this question. **It's so easy to get way off the track.** Here we find human opinions running to extremes-absurd extremes, perhaps. One set of voices cry that sex is a lust of our lower nature, a base necessity of procreation. Then we have the voices who cry for sex and more sex; who bewail the institution of marriage; who think that most of the troubles of the race are traceable to sex causes. They think we do not have enough of it, or that it isn't the right kind. They see its significance everywhere. One school would allow man no flavor for his fare and the other would have us all on a straight pepper diet. **We want to stay out of this controversy.**

❄️ (69:0) **We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct.** We all have sex problems. We'd hardly be human if we didn't. What can we do about them? Once again Bill answers his own question!

**6. (69:1) We reviewed our own conduct over the years past.**

Here we do well to remember, we have just asked God to free us from our fears. Now that we are free of these fears, we ask God to show us what we need to see about our sex relationships.

We start by taking another piece of paper and Once again, we make a list. We list all of our sex relationships and we place all of the people with whom we have had sexual relationships with on the list. (Relationships not just sex ie: it's not necessary to list each one night stand) We pray for God's help and trust that God will show us which relationships we need to look at.

**"God please help me to be free of fear as I attempt to shine the spotlight of truth across my past sex relations.**

**Lord, please show me where my behavior has harmed others and help me to see the truth these relationships hold for me. Help me see where I have been at fault and what I should have done differently."** (From the thoughts on pg. 69)

We need a complete list, but we don't need to go crazy in the process. Trying to list all of our one night stands, for example, may not be practical. Instead, list them as a group...just write "one night stands". The important thing is that we include all of our major sex relationships. As always, we fill in the whole list of names first.

Next, we take the first person off our list, and on a separate piece of paper we start off writing about our sex conduct, **we write this inventory in paragraph form.** We want to start off with our history. We write about... How we met, motives for getting involved in this relationship, how it began, major points throughout the relationship, our specific sex conduct, and how it ended or where it is today.

Then we draw a line across the page and we answer these nine questions:

❄️❄️ **I find it easier to personalize the questions...(69:1)Where had we (I) been :**

**1.)selfish, 2.) dishonest, or 3.) inconsiderate? 4.)Whom had we (I) hurt?**

**Did we (I) unjustifiably arouse 5.) jealousy, 6.) suspicion or 7.) bitterness?**

**8.) Where were we (was I) at fault, 9.) what should we (I) have done instead?**

While you do this inventory, keep a separate piece of paper handy. This other piece of paper is the start of your eighth step list. As you answer question 4., when you list a name, also write this name on the eighth step list. Also, while answering question 4., Ask yourself if you hurt anyone else in relation to this person. (ie their: mom, dad, sister, brother, boss, neighbor, lover, husband, friend etc.). We answer all nine questions in paragraph form for each person on our sex harms list. Bill writes...



❁ ❁ (69:1) **We got this all down on paper and looked at it.**

Now we look at question nine more thoroughly, for it holds the key to our “sex ideal”. Let’s read what Bill writes about it, then I’ll break it down piece, by piece:

❁ ❁ (69:2) **In this way we tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life.** We subjected each relation to this test—was it selfish or not? **We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.** We remembered always that our sex powers were God-given and therefore good, **neither to be used lightly or selfishly nor to be despised and loathed.**

Whatever our ideal turns out to be, **we must be willing to grow toward it.** God alone can judge our sex situation. Counsel with persons is often desirable, but we let God be the final judge. We realize that some people are as fanatical about sex as others are loose. We avoid hysterical thinking or advice.

**Let’s back up a bit. Remember what we read:**

❁ ❁ (69:2) **In this way we tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life.**

**SANE - Mentally healthy, showing sound judgement; reasonable.**

**SOUND - Free from defect, decay or damage; in good condition.**

**IDEAL - A conception of something in its perfection; an ultimate endeavor; a goal.**

O.K., this is what we are looking for...But, how do we find it?

1. We look at our past and see where we were at fault. (from our sex paragraphs)
2. We see where we should have done things differently. (question #9)
3. We ask God for help. (sex prayer)
4. We ask for him to help us shape what we know to be **Mentally healthy, Reasonable, and Free from defect.** (sex prayer)
5. We ask God to help shape our **sex goal**, We ask Him to show us what we are to strive toward. (sex prayer)

All of our future sex relationships should be toward this new **ultimate endeavor**. We get **our ideal** from answering question nine and we need to put this ideal down on paper. Remember, this goal (**sex ideal**) is your choice and it’s between you and your God.

Therefore, we focus on question nine. In question nine, we answered what we should have done instead, this becomes the basis for our new sex ideal. We already know the way we behaved in our past relationships was wrong, now we look at the opposite behavior or trait, and try to learn from our past. Let me give you an example...

If immediately sleeping with a person was part of your problem, then your ideal should read “a person with whom, I won’t immediately jump in bed”. If violence was a problem in your past, then your ideal should read “a person with whom, I won’t get violent”. If having no things in common was a problem in your past, then your ideal should read “a person with whom, I have something in common”. If love at first sight was a problem in the past, then your ideal should read “a person with whom I can get to know over a long time before we date.”

If having no spiritual or 12 step program was a problem in your past, then your ideal should read “a person who has a spiritual or 12 step program”. Etc, etc, etc... What ever your problems were for you, you just identified them on your sex inventory. Take their opposite and it will guide you toward your ideal. Once again, the main part of a sex ideal comes from our answers to question number nine and remember, it’s between you and God.

If you do decide to get help in this area, make sure they are offering you sound advice. I know I wouldn't go to a prison to get advice on how to obey the law. I also wouldn't go to a bunch of socially dysfunctional people to get advice on relationships. Alcoholics tend to be masters on how to have broken relationships, so if you need advice, choose the advice very, very carefully. Enough said...let's move on.

So, how do we grow toward our ideal?

The Book says from now on:

✿ (69:2) **We subjected each relation to this test-was it selfish or not? We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them....**

Here, we learn that we do not tell others what their sex ideal should be. This is a matter between them and their God. ✿ (69:0) **“We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct.”** Yes, we do hear in the program, that we should stay out of new relationships for the first year and I have found this to be sound advice. I have seen it proven through the experiences of others over and over, but the final choice is left up to them. It is between them and their God. Worse comes to worse, their relationship will be just like all of their past relationships and they will learn from the pain this new relationship brings. We can only hope that their “sexcapades” don't get them drunk in the process. Eventually, the truth will come out and either way.

Here is the warning Bill gives us about our future sex conduct:

✿ ✿ (70:1) **“If we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to drink.** We are not theorizing. These are facts out of our experience.”

Therefore,

✿ (69:3) **Whatever our ideal turns out to be, we must be willing to grow toward it.**

✿ (70:1) Suppose we fall short of the chosen ideal and stumble? Does this mean we are going to get drunk? Some people tell us so. But this is only a half-truth. It depends on us and on our motives. **If we are sorry for what we have done, and have the honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven and will have learned our lesson. If we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to drink.** We are not theorizing. These are facts out of our experience.

The Big book gives us four specific times when we will drink:

1. If we fail to enlarge our spiritual life (14:6, and 35:3 )
2. If we do not rid ourselves of selfishness. (62:2)
3. If we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the spirit with resentment (66:1)
4. With respect to sex, If we are not sorry and continue to harm others (70:1)

As we already covered, the Book gives us five **life tools** to use. We are to use them in the form of a prayer.

Here, are the tools Bill gave us...

☸ ☸ (70:2) **To sum up about sex:** 1. We earnestly pray for the right ideal, 2. for guidance in each questionable situation, 3. for sanity, and 4. for the strength to do the right thing. If sex is very troublesome, 5. 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.

This is an example of the **life tools** in the form of a prayer:

“God, please mold my ideals and help me live up to them. Lord, help me find the right sex ideal for me and in each questionable sex situation, please guide me. Give me sanity, that I may see your truth and give me the strength to do the right thing in all areas of my life. If my sex ideal proves very troublesome for me, help me throw myself the harder into helping others. Help me think of their needs and help me work for them. Father, please take me out of myself and quiet my imperious urge for improper sexual conduct, help me yield to your will and keep me from heartache. Amen” (from the thoughts on pages 69 and 70)

**Imperious – Domineering; Overbearing. Urgent; Pressing. Dictatorial.**

Now Bill sums up our work so far. He writes:

(70:3) **If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot.** We have (Dave) listed and analyzed our (His) resentments. We have (Dave has) begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. We have (Dave has) commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. We have (Dave has) begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our (his) enemies, for we (Dave looks) look on them as sick people. We have (Dave has) listed the people we (He has) have hurt by our (His) conduct, and are (Dave is) willing to straighten out the past if we (He) can.

**7.** This last sentence is only half true. I have listed the people I have harmed with relation to my sex conduct, but what about the rest of the people I have harmed in my past?

Here again, I must trust in God, that He will show me where I have harmed others. I must ask for His help and then shine the spotlight of truth across my life, adding to my list the rest of the people I have harmed. (ie: Where have I caused harm to others by: lying, drinking, cheating, stealing, self-seeking, mistrusting etc.) I look at these damaged relationships and I add their names to my harms list, as well as, to my eighth step list. I write in paragraph form, just like in the sex inventory and as I write about these damaged relationships, I ask myself the same nine questions.

As a technique – I also write a life ideal. As in the sex ideal, when I answer question #9 about those I have harmed (not connected to sex), I can take the opposite behavior and create an outline for my future behavior.

This ideal becomes the outline toward which I try to move, it is a way for me to become “a friend among friends and a worker among workers.” Here again, I try to learn from my past behavior.

Remember, if you have faith and willingness, God will show you where you have harmed others.

Bill writes...

☼ (70:4) 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, and an inventory 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.

How will you know when you have finished your inventory?

Well, the old timers I know say “when you are saying your fifth step, you are done with your inventory”. I believe that if you ask God to show you what you need to see, you will know when your inventory is complete. How do you know? You just know, because it feels right. I know this sounds strange, but it has always worked for me.

Since I know I can’t ever get my inventory perfect, I fall back on the expression “**Any step worth doing is worth doing wrong!**”. If I leave something off, eventually the pain will get to me and I’ll have to do another inventory. Remember, “this is the beginning of a lifetime practice”. When we finish searching for those we have harmed, we will have completed our inventory process, But there is more we need to do, this was only a beginning. So, let’s get started...

## STEP FIVE:

☼ (72:1) Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it? **We have been trying to get a new attitude (step 2), a new relationship with our Creator (step 3), and to discover the obstacles in our path (step 4). 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. 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.** This brings us to *the Fifth Step* in the program of recovery mentioned in the preceding chapter.

☼ ☼ (72:2) This is perhaps difficult—especially discussing our defects with another person. We think we have done well enough in admitting these things to ourselves. There is doubt about that. **In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further.** We will be more reconciled to discussing ourselves with another person when we see good reasons why we should do so. **The best reason first: 1.) 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 5.) egoism and fear; they only *thought* they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of 2.) humility, 3.) fearlessness and 4.) honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else all their life story.

So, what is Bill saying? He is saying... **1.) If we skip this step we will not overcome drinking. Until we tell our entire life story to someone else, 2.) we will not find humility.**

3.) We will not find fearlessness. 4.) We will not find honesty. 5.) We will be plagued by egoism and fear. These are five ominous statements. Taking inventory is good, but it is incomplete. Until we share with someone what we have found we have only done our job half way. So, how do we proceed?

☸ (73:4) **We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world.** (So, with whom do we share our true life story? Bill gives us several choices...) Rightly and naturally, we think well before we choose **the person or persons** with whom to take this intimate and confidential step.

That's right! We don't have to read our fifth step to just one person. Bill gives us the option of reading our inventory to one or more people, because there is tremendous power in sharing with a group. You may find the need to share your inventory with more than one person. There is something terribly "freeing" in doing multiple fifth steps with some of your closest spiritual advisors. If you decide this option, I think you'll find this a powerful experience. Anyway, back to the Big Book...

Bill gives us these choices:

☸ (74:0) 1.) **Those of us belonging to a religious denomination which requires confession must, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority whose duty it is to receive it.** 2.) **Though we have no religious connection, we may still do well to talk with someone ordained by an established religion.** We often find such a person quick to see and understand our problem. Of course, we sometimes encounter people who do not understand alcoholics.

☸☸ (74:1) 3.) **If we cannot or would rather not do this, we search our acquaintance for a close-mouthed, understanding friend.** 4.) **Perhaps our doctor or psychologist will be the person.** 5.) **It may be one of our own family, but we cannot disclose anything to our wives or our parents which will hurt them and make them unhappy.** **We have no right to save our own skin at another person's expense.** Such parts of our story we tell to someone who will understand, yet be unaffected. **The rule is we must be hard on ourself, but always considerate of others.**

Your sponsor should have already offered to help you with this part of step five, because of what Bill tells us in Working With Others.

(96:2) **Let him know you are available if he wishes to make a decision and tell his story.**

If you don't feel comfortable with telling your fifth step to your sponsor, find someone else using the guidelines described on pg. 74...

Though I have never seen anyone justifiably fall into this particular category, Bill now gives one exception to the rule. He writes...

(74:2) **Notwithstanding the great necessity for discussing ourselves with someone, it may be one is so situated that there is no suitable person available.**

The only cases where I could see this option as a justifiable outcome, would be for an A.A. loner (ie: a merchant marine, a scientist on the polar ice cap, a submariner etc.)

☸ (74:2) **If that is so, this step may be postponed, Only, however, if we hold ourselves in complete readiness to go through with it at the first opportunity.**

This means that the first time they hit the shore, they follow through with this step. This paragraph was not meant as an excuse to bypass this step.

Remember...

❁ ❁ (72:2) **If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking.**

O.K. , we think we might know with whom we will take this step. How can we be sure they are the right person? Bill gives us a few points to look for:

❁ (74:2) 1.) It is important that he be able to keep a confidence; 2.) that he fully understand and approve what we are driving at; 3.) that he will not try to change our plan. But **we must not use this as a mere excuse to postpone.**

I found that I needed anonymity when I took my first fifth step. I was terribly afraid.

Therefore, I went to a person I didn't know and who didn't know me. As it turns out, I went to a person who could not tell anyone what I had shared. The man I chose happened to be a priest. (Who says God doesn't have a plan?) Since that time, I have done other inventories and I find that I need to do my fifth step with someone who has done the work, as it is presented in the Big Book. After all, how can a person tell if I have been truly honest in the second, third and fourth columns, if they have never been through the work themselves? The next thing I need to mention is, you will not get this steps perfect, no one does and besides I don't think it matters. The point is that you try to do it the best you can, be as honest as you can, and get the relief step five brings. I firmly believe what Bob Bisanz says ... **"any step worth taking, is worth taking wrong"**. Perfectionism here may keep us from doing this step and as a result, it ends up killing us. Follow the cautions Bill offers and as the Nike commercial says "Just do it". But, how do we do it? Well, just like the rest of the steps, we need to pray to God for help. For God to give us the honesty, courage and faith we need to do this work and then we put into action what the Big Book says...

❁ (75:1) When we decide who is to hear our story, 1.) **we waste no time.** **We have a written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk.** 2.) **We explain to our partner what we are about to do and why we have to do it.** 3.) **He should realize that we are engaged upon a life and death errand.** Most people approached in this way will be glad to help; they will be honored by our confidence.

4.) **We pocket our pride and go to it,** 5.) **illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past.**

Here are five things I need to do. **I must do all five items, if this step is to work properly.** It has always amazed me what I learn about myself when I try to explain what I'm about to do and why I am doing this step. As Bill suggested earlier, This is where it comes in handy if the person is a friend and a person who has done this work for themselves.

Now look at the eight promises we get from doing this work!!!

❁ ❁ (75:2) **Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing,** 1.) we are delighted. 2.) We can look the world in the eye. 3.) We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. 4.) Our fears fall from us. 5.) We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now 6.) we begin to have **a spiritual experience.** 7.) The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. 8.) We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.



Now comes the **Quiet hour**. Bill writes about nine things we still need to do (pg75):

❁ ❁ (75:3) Returning home we find a place where we can 1.) **be quiet for an hour**, 2.) **carefully reviewing what we have done**. 3.) **We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better**. 4.) Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. (pg 59) Carefully reading **the first five proposals** 5.) **we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last**. 6.) **Is our work solid so far?** 7.) **Are the stones properly in place?** 8.) **Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation?** 9.) **Have we tried to make mortar without sand?**

**If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six.**

Hold on ! What in the world is Bill talking about? Well let's go through what he says. First we need a quiet hour, no kids, no T.V., no radio etc. Then we pray:

“God, Thank you for helping me through this work and for showing me the truth about myself. Lord, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, for helping me know you better. Amen”

Now what are the five proposals Bill mentioned? They are the first five steps! So, we review all of the questions presented up to the third step decision and we ask the third step prayer again. (See the step review on pg. 36 of this guide) Then, we review what we have written, we go over all of our fourth step sheets looking for thoroughness and honesty. We ask ourselves if there is anything we have omitted on this fourth step.

Well, then, what is the arch Bill mentions? It's the arch of spirituality.

O.k., but what are these construction references? Well, Bill is doing what he has done throughout the Big Book. After Bill finishes a concept, he reviews and we already covered the arch references back at the beginning.

The stones are, the cornerstone (47:2) and the keystone (62:3), The cement comes from common peril and common solution (17:2). The foundation was found on (12:4) and is used to get us up to step five. When we get to step twelve, Bill will give us last stone in the arch, the Foundation stone (97:1).

Bill is trying to get us to focus on why we have been doing all this work and he is using the stones, as a way to review our work.

Ask yourself this...

What is our fifth step work all about? It's about humbling ourselves.

The best way to ensure sobriety is to make sure you cover all of your character defects with total honesty. We can't afford to keep any secrets when it comes to fifth step work.

When we have been totally honest with another human being, it confirms that we have been honest with ourselves and with God. So, how do we know if we have been honest?

Well, I use the hair on the back of my neck as a test. If I have held back or been dishonest, the hair on the back of my neck will start to crawl. This is why, people who hear a lot of fifth steps, often start out with “ why don't we start this off with all the things you are planning on taking with you to the grave? Let's cover those things, which you are never going to tell anyone, including me!” this helps insure every secret gets exposed for what it truly is. It's just fear...As I am asked these same questions, if I am being honest, the hair on the back of my neck will be the true test for me.

So, after we review our work, If we can answer the nine questions to our satisfaction, we go on to step six!

## **STEP SIX:**

The Big Book says...

☸ (76:1) We have emphasized **willingness** as being indispensable. 1.) Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? 2.) Can He now take them all—every one? **If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.**

Here again Bill asks us questions... Well, what are your answers? First ask yourself, am I willing? If not, then you had better go back to your decision at step three. God either is or he isn't; you either have a new director or you're trying to run the show.

The second question is this, am I ready to let God remove from me all the things, which I have admitted are objectionable? What admission is Bill talking about? Well, it's the truth we just uncovered on our inventories, those things we admitted during the fifth step. We go back through your entire inventory, piece by piece, through all of column three, the fear hit parade and the sex/harms paragraphs and ask ourselves "Am I willing to let these harmful character defects go?" If our answer is Yes, then we can go on. If our answer to this question is No, Bill gives us more directions. He tells us to ask God to help us be willing. We pray until the willingness comes. If stuck, we might try a prayer like this:

**"God, please remove the fear from me, the fear which blocks me from the truth about myself. Father, help me find the willingness I need, to ask you, to remove from me, all my objectionable characteristics and defects. Amen"**

By the way, **"Willing to let go... is not the same as, Ready to stop doing".**

Hold on, I know what you're thinking... This statement is not an excuse to justify your bad behavior. Also, this statement is not a license to stop and rest on your laurels.

We all falter a little bit, that's why it's "progress, not perfection". But, we have to move ahead in recovery, if we don't the pain will often become excruciating and we get drunk.

Out West, they refer to steps Six and Seven as "the great oasis", because so many people stop here and rest. They rest until the pain gets too great or they drink. It is much easier to get willing and move forward to the true freedom the rest of the steps provide. Besides, I have found that if you rest here too long, avoiding the truth, your life's pain will convince you to get willing pretty quickly. Keep in mind, "pain is the touchstone of all spiritual progress".

If you find you are still stuck, try to meditate on this... **"Does my lack of willingness have anything to do with whether I will drink again?"** and don't forget, If you sit here too long, you may have to start this work all over again, from the beginning. Trust me, it's easier to keep on moving forward... So, let's move on...

Now we are ready for **Step Seven: (pg76)**

Here again, My experience has shown me that it can be tremendously powerful to take this step with someone else, like a sponsor. **(from the original manuscript of the Big Book) We get down on our knees and ...**

☸ ☸ (76:2) **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 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*.**

That is all there is to it! I will refer to this prayer again later, when we cover steps 10 and 11.

Now, we go on to **Step Eight: (pg76)** Bill writes...

☸ (76:3) **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. We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal.**

The eighth step list should be accomplished either during the fourth step and/or as we read our fifth step. We pull off the people we have harmed (question #4 under the harms inventory) and create the list. Once we have the list, we say a simple prayer...

**“God please remove my fear and show me the truth, Show me all of the people I have harmed with my behavior. Amen”**

Now we review the list again asking ourselves “Is there anyone I have left off the list?”

If we can honestly answer “No” to this question, we can move on...

For the eighth step, I am going to take a page from Joe Hawks. I wasn't sure at first, but I now see his idea of how to organize the eighth step list is really a great way to go.

We start by taking the list, and we put each person from the list in the upper left corner of a 3"x 5" card.

Next, ask yourself **“Am I willing to do whatever this person asks of me, in order to right the wrongs I have done and make this relationship whole again?”** If our answer is “Yes”, place a plus (+) in the upper right corner of the card. If the answer is “No”, place a minus (-) on the upper right corner of the card.

If you know how to contact this person, put the address and/or phone number under their name. If you don't know how to reach them, we put “FIND” under their name.

Next, write the things Bill tells us to do during every amend on the card (ie: 1. Tell them this is why I'm here: I will not get over drinking until I straighten out the past. 2. I am not to emphasize spirituality unless asked; if so, I will use tact and common sense. 3. If an enemy-I will confess my ill feeling and my regret. 4. I will not tell him what to do; only my faults are discussed. 5. I will be Calm, frank, open. 6. If I owe money, I will make the best deal I can.)

Next, write “I know I have caused you this harm:” on the card and fill in the harms you are aware of.

Now, write these questions on the card:

7.) “Are there any more harms I have caused you, which I may not know about?”

8.) “Do you need to tell me how any of this hurt you?”

When the time comes, where we accomplish the amend, this is where we shut up and listen! We never argue.

If you need more room, use the back of the card or fill in a new card with their name at the top left corner. Finally, we write this question on the card:

9.) “Is there anything I can do to correct this wrong?”

If they say “Yes”, write down what they say on the card! This will prevent you from getting selective amnesia when you actually go to correct the wrong.

Here is an example of a 3"x 5" 8<sup>th</sup> step card, front and back:

<p>John Smith (FRONT) (+)</p> <p>125 south st. Madison, NJ (973) 555-5555</p> <p><b>Tell Him:</b> I will not get over drinking until I straighten out the past. If an enemy- confess my ill feeling and regret. <b>Don't:</b> emphasize spirituality unless asked; if so - use tact and common sense. Don't tell him what to do; only my faults are to be discussed.</p> <p>Be Calm, frank, open. If I owe money, I will make the best deal I can.</p>
<p>(BACK)</p> <p><b>I know I have caused you this harm:</b> I beat you up, stole your money, slept with your wife</p> <p><b>Q:</b> "Are there any more harms I have caused you, which I may not know about?" <b>Q:</b> "Do you need to tell me how any of this hurt you?" <b>shut up and listen!</b> <b>Q:</b> "Is there anything I can do to correct this wrong?"</p> <hr/> <p><b>A:</b></p>

After all of the cards are complete, sit down with your sponsor and number the cards.

First, take all the (+) cards and number them. Then, take the (-) card and number them. We number them in the order we will accomplish the amends, easiest to hardest. When it comes to making the amends, the positive experiences of the (+) cards will help you want to finish the (-) cards. Now we are ready for step nine...

## Step Nine: (pg76)

Bill gives us several examples of how we handle step nine and Bill covers most every type of amend possible. First, he covers general conditions for all amends. Then, he covers specific types: business acquaintances(76), friends(76-77), enemies(77), people to whom we owe money(78), and criminal offences(78). After these areas are covered, Bill addresses general rules for amends, in which other people will be affected. Particularly Criminal offences (79), Theft (80), and Infidelity (81). Bill covers the family (82-83), Wrongs we can never fully right (83) and finally people who can't be seen (83). The rules for amends are fairly straight forward and I'll throw in a couple, from my own from my experiences.

First Bill gives us our General instructions for step nine, he writes:

☸ (76:3) Now 1.) we go out to our fellows and 2.) repair the damage done in the past. 3.) We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. 4.) 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.

This is our instruction. 1.) We go out. 2.) We repair the damage done and in so doing, 3.) We sweep away the debris. 4.) If we haven't the will, we pray until it comes.

Well, just how do we accomplish this?

Bill gives us 28 general principles to follow when making our amends and they are....

☸ ☸ (77:0) Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us. Therefore...

1. (76:4) We may feel diffident (**Diffident - Lacking self-confidence; timid**) about going to some of them on a spiritual basis. Let us be reassured. **To some people we need not, and probably should not emphasize the spiritual feature on our first approach.** We might prejudice them... it is seldom wise to approach an individual, who still smarts from our injustice to him, and announce that we have gone religious.
2. (77:0) Our man is sure to be impressed with a sincere desire to set right the wrong. He is going to be more interested in a demonstration of good will than in our talk of spiritual discoveries.
3. (77:1) We don't use this as an excuse for shying away from the subject of God. **When it will serve any good purpose,** we are willing to announce our convictions **with tact and common sense.**
4. ☸ (77:1) (With the enemy:) We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit, **confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.**
5. ☸ ☸ (77:2) **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.
6. (77:2) We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that **nothing worth while can be accomplished until we do so.**
7. ☸ ☸ (78:0) **Never trying to tell him what he should do.**
8. ☸ ☸ (78:0) **His faults are not discussed. We stick to our own.**
9. ☸ ☸ (78:0) Our manner is **calm, frank, and open.**
10. ☸ (78:2) **We do not dodge our creditors.**
11. ☸ (78:2) Telling them what we are trying to do, **we make no bones about our drinking.**
12. (78:2) **Nor are we afraid of disclosing our alcoholism** on the theory it may cause financial harm.
13. ☸ (78:2) **Arranging the best deal we can**
14. (78:2) **We let these people know we are sorry.**
15. ☸ (78:2) **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.**
16. (79:1) Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, **we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. (see prayer sheet)**
17. ☸ (79:1) We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but **we are willing. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything.**
18. (79:2) **We are not to be the hasty and foolish martyr** who would needlessly sacrifice others to save himself from the alcoholic pit.
19. ☸ (80:1) Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people **we secure their consent.**
20. (77:2) If we have **obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink.**
21. ☸ ☸ (81:1) **Undoubtedly we should admit our fault.**
22. (82:2) (With regard to the family:) There is plenty we should do at home... **We feel a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough.**
23. (83:1) We ought to **sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past as we now see it, being very careful not to criticize them.**
24. ☸ ☸ (83:1) **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.** (This is a required daily step we must take as a continuing amend to our family.) (see prayer sheet)

25. (83:2) Unless one's family expresses a desire to live upon spiritual principles we **think we ought not to urge them. We should not talk incessantly** to them about spiritual matters.

26. (83:3) We don't delay if it can be avoided.

27. (83:3) **We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping.**

28. ✨ (83:3) **As God's people** we stand on our feet; **we don't crawl before anyone.**

✨ ✨ Now here I'll add my experience...

- 1.) The general rule is **"always make amends face to face if at all possible"**.
- 2.) Before making any amend, always run the amend past a sponsor. This keeps you from having ulterior motives and ensures you will not inadvertently hurt anyone with the amend.
- 3.) Pray for (79:1) **"strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be."** To this, I add a request... I ask God to remove my fear and give me courage to face this amend. The prayer looks like this...

**"God, with regard to this amend, please remove my fear and give me strength, courage and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. Amen"**  
(from the thoughts on pg. 79)

What do we do for the people we can not find or who are dead?

We follow the instruction:

(83:3) **Some people cannot be seen-we send them an honest letter.**

Alright, But how?

We write to them, as if we were saying the amend to them, just as if they were right there with us. If the amend is to someone we can't find, we pray for guidance and then we send our amend letter to their last known address. If the letter comes back, we treat it just like we treat a person who is dead. How do we do that, you ask?

We go to where we feel a connection to this person. We pray for God to let them hear our words and we read them our amend letter. The crucial thing for every alcoholic is to prove their willingness to right the wrong. We have to do more than just talk the talk, this is where we have to walk the walk and a demonstration of willingness is a paramount part of our recovery. As I said...

**In every amend, we first ask God for guidance** (see prayer sheet). Then, we run the amend past our sponsor or spiritual advisor, to make sure we are headed in the right direction. Lastly, We review all 28 points Bill gives us for amends. Also, I like to read pages 76-84 before I head out.

When we head out, we are armed with our 3" x 5" cards. These cards have all the information we need for success. They are small, so they do not distract us while we do our work and they are a great reference. If we start to choke up during our amend, these 3"x5" cards will be invaluable and lead us through.

So, what now? Now, we set out to correct **ALL of our wrongs**. Remember, The most important word in the eighth step was the last word, "All". We must make all our amends. There is no half way. It says in the Big Book – "half measures availed us nothing"... not half measures availed us half. We have to go through with all of our amends.

We start with the number one, (+) card. We set up an appointment to see the harmed party and follow through with our amend. If the person is a member of A.A., there is a caveat. With members of this fellowship(A.A.), we have to let them know why we are coming before we get to the amend. It is very common for A.A.'s to drop by and chat or have a cup of coffee and we don't want this meeting to be misconstrued. So, the rule for A.A.'s is, we let them know we need to get together for a 9<sup>th</sup> step amend before we show up to do the work. For other people, not in A.A., our call will be warning enough. Most likely they haven't heard from us since we hurt them and they will know something is up, when we ask for a meeting. Personally, I ask for a chance to get together and talk over a cup of coffee. This let's them know I want to talk and it limits the time available, so I don't get long winded and avoid why I'm there. If I know I only have so much time, then I have to get down to business pretty quickly, I don't dawdle.

As I said, we start with the (+) cards first because, we are already willing to make these amends. Also, I have found the positive experiences of the (+) cards motivates me to change the (-) cards to (+) cards. If this isn't enough motivation to change the (-) card then, **we have to pray until the willingness comes**. Keep in mind, we said we would go to any length to get this program, not to mention we made a decision to turn our will and our life over to God...

If you still doubt as to whether you need to finish **ALL** your amends, Joe Hawks suggests this prayer...



**“Dear God, please show me if finishing my amends has anything to do with my drinking again or not...”**

I think the answer will come, if you can be honest enough to try.

By the way, remember the promises from 83-84, which everybody likes to talk about? They come after the ninth step. If we have been honest and attempted to correct all of our wrongs, the promises can come true for us. Who knows, Maybe the promises will be the motivation you need to finish all your amends? After all, self-seeking has been known to motivate an alcoholic or two...

So, how do you know when you are all finished with the ninth step?

When you are out of amend letters and 3"x 5" cards, then you are done. You are as current with the world as you can be. You should be able to look the world in the eye or bump into anyone from your past and feel o.k. about it, without the hair on the back of your neck crawling. If you honestly feel this way, then you are done with step nine. That is, until your next house cleaning...

Before we move on to step ten, let's look at one more question, which needs to be covered in depth. What about the family amends? I think these are the hardest amends to make, in fact, family amends are probably the hardest part of the entire A.A. program.

Family amends require daily attention because of the damage an alcoholic causes, drinking or not. Just because you put down the booze, it doesn't mean your disease doesn't effect your family any more. To the contrary, it's just that now, we don't have an obvious reason for our behavior. We are still sick and we can still roar through others lives like a tornado out of control, but what's our excuse now? We have none...

Before, we had booze; now, we have a spiritual program, complete with steps. The A.A. program will keep us from doing further damage and will help us repair the damage done, but we have to use the tools the program offers...

I belong to a group where we have an expression...

**“If you think you are working the A.A. program, show us your family and we will tell you, if you are working the program”.** This thought is echoed on...

❀ ❀ (83:2) **The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it...Our behavior will convince them (the family) more than our words.**

There is a lot that needs to be done to make amends to the family and this is where my grandmother would say...“the proof of the pudding, is in the eating”.

But, don't worry, Bill gives us directions for making amends with our family in Into Action, Working With Others, as well as, the chapters To Wives, and The family afterward. I will try to pull the important, family specific items, out of these chapters and put them here. Your job will be to read the chapters and to see the big picture as to how to implement the suggestions with your family. In my sober life, the single greatest tool this program has given me for working with my family has been the ninth step prayer. I can tell you from my heart, this prayer has changed my life with my family and I believe it can do the same for you...

The ninth step prayer comes from this paragraph...

❀ ❀ (83:1) **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. We ought to sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past as we now see it, being very careful not to criticize them. Their defects may be glaring, but the chances are that our own actions are partly responsible. 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.**

The prayer I say looks like this:

**“God, please show me how to find Patience, Tolerance, Kindness and Love in my Heart, my Mind and my Soul. Lord, please help me show these attributes to my family and also, to those about me. Amen”**

❀ ❀ (83:2) **The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it. Unless one's family expresses a desire to live upon spiritual principles we think we ought not to urge them. We should not talk incessantly to them about spiritual matters. They will change in time. Our behavior will**

**convince them more than our words.** We must remember that ten or twenty years of drunkenness would make a skeptic out of anyone.

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❁ (98:3) **When your prospect has made such reparation as he can to his family, and has thoroughly explained to them the new principles by which he is living, he should proceed to put those principles into action at home.** Though his family be at fault in many respects, he should not be concerned about that. **He should concentrate on his own spiritual demonstration.** **Argument and fault-finding are to be avoided like the plague.** In many homes this is a difficult thing to do, but it must be done if any results are to be expected. If persisted in for a few months, the effect on a man's family is sure to be great...

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❁ ❁ (99:1) After they have seen tangible results, the family will perhaps want to go along. **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.** Of course, we all fall much below this standard many times. But **we must try to repair the damage immediately lest we pay the penalty by a spree.**

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❁ (111:1) **The first principle of success is that you should never be angry...** you should, if you can, go without rancor. Patience and good temper are most necessary.

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❀ ❀ (118:2) Your husband knows he owes you more than sobriety. He wants to make good. Yet you must not expect too much. His ways of thinking and doing are the habits of years. **Patience, tolerance, understanding and love are the watchwords.** Show him these things in yourself and they will be reflected back to you from him. **Live and let live is the rule.** If you both show a willingness to remedy your own defects, there will be little need to criticize each other.

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❀ ❀ (119:0) **When resentful thoughts come, try to pause and count your blessings.** After all, your family is reunited, **alcohol is no longer a problem** and you and your husband are working together toward an undreamed-of future. (sounds like a gratitude list to me!)

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(120:3) If a repetition is to be prevented, **place the problem, along with everything else, in God's hands.**

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❀ (122:1) **All members of the family should meet upon the common ground of tolerance, understanding and love.** This involves a process of deflation. The alcoholic, his wife, his children, his "in-laws," each one is likely to have fixed ideas about the family's attitude towards himself or herself. Each is interested in having his or her wishes respected. We find the more one member of the family demands that the others concede to him, the more resentful they become. This makes for discord and unhappiness.

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❀ (122:3) **Cessation of drinking is but the first step away from a highly strained, abnormal condition.** A doctor said to us, "Years of living with an alcoholic is almost sure to make any wife or child neurotic. **The entire family is, to some extent, ill.**" Let families realize, as they start their journey, that all will not be fair weather. Each in his turn may be footsore and may straggle.

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(123:2) But the head of the house has spent years in pulling down the structures of business, romance, friendship, health—these things are now ruined or damaged. **It will take time to clear away the wreck.** Though old buildings will eventually be replaced by finer ones, the new structures will take years to complete.

Father knows he is to blame; it may take him many seasons of hard work to be restored financially, but he shouldn't be reproached. Perhaps he will never have much money again. But **the wise family will admire him for what he is trying to be, rather than for what he is trying to get.**

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❀ ❀ (124:1) **We grow by our willingness to face and rectify errors and convert them into assets.** The alcoholic's past thus becomes the principal asset of the family and frequently it is almost the only one!

This painful past may be of infinite value to other families still struggling with their problem. We think **each family which has been relieved owes something to those who have not, and when the occasion requires, each member of it should be only too willing to bring former mistakes, no matter how grievous, out of their hiding places.** Showing others who suffer how we were given help is the very thing which makes life seem so worthwhile to us now. Cling to the thought that, **in God's hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have—the key to life and happiness for others.** With it you can avert death and misery for them.

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❀ ❀ (124:3) It is possible to dig up past misdeeds so they become a blight, a veritable plague... So we think that unless some good and useful purpose is to be served, **past occurrences should not be discussed.**

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❀ (125:1) We families of Alcoholics Anonymous keep few skeletons in the closet... We do talk about each other a great deal, but **we almost invariably temper such talk by a spirit of love and tolerance.**

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❀ (125:2) Another principle we observe carefully is that **we do not relate intimate experiences of another person unless we are sure he would approve.** We find it better, when possible, to stick to our own stories. A man may criticize or laugh at himself and it will affect others favorably, but criticism or ridicule coming from another often produces the contrary effect. Members of a family should watch such matters carefully, for **one careless, inconsiderate remark has been known to raise the very devil. We alcoholics are sensitive people. It takes some of us a long time to outgrow that serious handicap.**

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(125:3) **Many alcoholics are enthusiasts. They run to extremes...** We think it dangerous if he rushes headlong at his economic problem. The family will be affected also, pleasantly at first, as they feel their money troubles are about to be solved, then not so pleasantly as they find themselves neglected.

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❀ ❀ (127:0) ... **his periods of crankiness, depression, or apathy, which will disappear when there is tolerance, love, and spiritual understanding.**

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❀ ❀ (127:1) **The head of the house ought to remember that he is mainly to blame for what befell his home. He can scarcely square the account in his lifetime. But he must see the danger of over-concentration on financial success. Although financial recovery is on the way for many of us, we found we could not place money first. For us, material well-being always followed spiritual progress; it never preceded.**

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❀ ❀ (127:2) Since the home has suffered more than anything else, it is well that a man exert himself there. **He is not likely to get far in any direction if he fails to show unselfishness and love under his own roof. We know there are difficult wives and families, but the man who is getting over alcoholism must remember he did much to make them so.**

As each member of a resentful family begins to see his shortcomings and admits them to the others, he lays a basis for helpful discussion. These **family talks will be constructive if they can be carried on without heated argument, self-pity, self-justification or resentful criticism.** Little by little, mother and children will see they ask too much, and father will see he gives too little. **Giving, rather than getting, will become the guiding principle.**

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❀ (129:1) **life which does not include his family obligations may not be so perfect after all.**

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❀ (130:1) Those of us who have spent much time in the world of **spiritual make-believe** have eventually seen the childishness of it. This dream world has been replaced by a great sense of purpose, accompanied by a growing consciousness of the power of God in our lives. We have come to believe He would like us to keep our heads in the clouds with Him, but that **our feet ought to be firmly planted on earth.** That is where our fellow travelers are, and that is where our work must be done. These are the realities for us. **We have found nothing incompatible between a powerful spiritual experience and a life of sane and happy usefulness.**

(131:2) At the very beginning, the couple ought to frankly face the fact that each will have to yield here and there if the family is going to play an effective part in the new life. Father will necessarily spend much time with other alcoholics, **but this activity should be balanced.**

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✿ ✿ (132:1) 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. **We absolutely insist on enjoying life. 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. But those of us who have tried to shoulder the entire burden and trouble of others find we are soon overcome by them.

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✿ ✿ (132:1) **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? **We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others.**

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. We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free.** 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. Avoid then, the deliberate manufacture of misery, but if trouble comes, cheerfully capitalize it as an opportunity to demonstrate His omnipotence.**

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(134:2) The alcoholic may find it hard to re-establish friendly relations with his children. Their young minds were impressionable while he was drinking. Without saying so, they may cordially hate him for what he has done to them and to their mother. The children are sometimes dominated by a pathetic hardness and cynicism. They cannot seem to forgive and forget. This may hang on for months, long after their mother has accepted dad's new way of living and thinking.

**In time they will see that he is a new man and in their own way they will let him know it.** When this happens, they can be invited to join in morning meditation and then they can take part in the daily discussion without rancor or bias. From that point on, progress will be rapid. Marvelous results often follow such a reunion.

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✿ ✿ (135:1) **Whether the family goes on a spiritual basis or not, the alcoholic member has to if he would recover.** The others must be convinced of his new status beyond the shadow of a doubt. **Seeing is believing to most families who have lived with a drinker.**

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✿ ✿ (135:4) **We have three little mottoes which are apropos.** Here they are:

*First Things First  
Live and Let Live  
Easy Does It.*

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✿ ✿ (145:3) **The greatest enemies of us alcoholics are resentment, jealousy, envy, frustration, and fear.**

These are but a few of the passages from the Big Book, which apply to the family and making the lifetime amends at home. My point is, **We must change our behavior and carry these principles home, if we are to find the true essence of recovery.** This means facing responsibility, changing, and becoming better people while we work the steps in our home.

When we finish all our amends, the ninth step promises (pg. 83-84) can come true for us, but there are other promises...

In the tenth step there is also a set of promises, the difference is, the tenth step promises can only be realized through the steps and only after completing all our amends. Let's take a look...

## Step Ten: (pg84)

(84:2) This **thought** brings us to *Step Ten*, What thought?

The thought that "They (The promises) **will always materialize if we work for them**"

This is a confirmation, that we must finish our ninth step completely. If we are going to get to this thought and to the meaning of all the ninth step promises, we must finish all of our ninth step. That's right, the whole thing, every amend, because without all of your ninth step complete, you can't fully comprehend the true thought of the ninth step promises, you will still be blocked by your unfinished amends. Therefore, if you haven't completed the work so far, you aren't ready for the tenth step!

O.K., What if you have completed ALL of our ninth step amends? Then what?

❁ ❁ (84:2) **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.**

**Vigorously – Robustly; Hardy. Energetically; lively.**

Notice it says "as we cleaned up the past". This means, we must be doing tenth step work right after we started on step nine, but we can start working on our new mistakes even sooner! I start the guys I work with, on tenth step work, as they work on step four! Inventory work is not just for our past, it's for our present lives as well. By the time we get to step ten we should have a clean slate and now that we have cleaned the slate, we have to keep the slate clean.

It doesn't do us any good, to finish all the pages of searching inventory and amends, if we end up creating 10 extra pages of work, before the original work is complete. Remember, it's only by keeping the slate clean, that we get the promise...

❁ ❁ (84:2) **"We have entered the world of the Spirit."**

Think of the power of that statement! This is why I teach, the way I was taught. We start out on the tenth and eleventh step inventory process (daily), as we work on our fourth step inventory process (past), hopefully this way, we won't have a whole new pile of garbage to clean up when we get up to step ten. So how do we keep our "slate clean"?

We do the daily exercises the Big Book gives us. The exercises start in step ten on page 84 and continue into step eleven. This is why most people pair steps ten and eleven together. Take a look at what the Big Book gives us...



❄ ❄ Here are our daily exercises for our tenth step, which Bill gives us:

1.) (84:2) **Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.**

2.) (84:2) **Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.**

What do we do if these things crop up? Once again, Bill gives us **Life Tools...**

When these crop up,

3.) (84:2) **We ask God at once to remove them.**

4.) (84:2) **We discuss them with someone immediately and**

5.) (84:2) **Make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone.**

6.) (84:2) **Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help.**

**Resolutely – Characterized by firmness or determination; Pursuing a fixed purpose; Unwavering; Faithfully.**

O.K., be honest, how many people in A.A. actually do this? Not many! Some people have been in the program for years and have rarely done these things, much less have done them on a regular or daily basis.

For my first several years in the program, when I was frightened, resentful, dishonest or selfish, I rarely thought to ask God to remove the feeling right away.

It usually took me a day or more to talk to my sponsor about it (if I had one) and quite often, it was a while before I made amends for my actions. I had to learn the hard way...

Eventually, pain would always win me over, I would hit a spiritual bottom and I would get back to basics. I would get a new sponsor and start following what our text requires. I would start to do these exercises on a daily basis again and an amazing thing would always happen. **My life would get better!**

Now, I am back on the beam. I'm back into the recovery of A.A. (the steps) and all I have to do is a few simple daily things...

As instructed by the Big Book, I start every morning with prayer and meditation. I meditate and take the third step prayer daily. I also say other prayers each day and I will include these prayers, as we continue with this workshop. All of the prayers I use come from the thoughts and prayers in the Big Book.

For example, from the thoughts on (84:2) I made up a prayer and I include this prayer in my morning prayers and meditation...

**“God, please remove from me: selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. If these feelings crop up, help me to immediately share these feelings with others. Help me quickly make amends to others for my wrongs, that I might live serenely with them. Lord, Help me to not think of myself, instead, help me think of others and help me be loving and tolerant toward them. Father, Keep me spiritually fit today, by helping me to not fight with anything or anyone - especially alcohol. Please God, help me not to drink alcohol today.”**

With the inclusion of prayer and meditation in my life, my life is totally changed today. The ninth step promises have come true for me and after I had done **ALL of the work**, Made all of my amends, every single one of them, I came to experience the tenth step promises. To me, the tenth step promises are some of the best promises we get. They promise Sanity, Normal behavior, Feeling Safe and Protected, and best of all, it is by this point we become Recovered. Don't believe me? Let's take a look at what the Big Book says...

❄ ❄ Check out these twelve promises!...

1. (84:2) **Love and tolerance of others is our code.**
2. (84:3) **We have ceased fighting anything or anyone even alcohol.**
3. **For by this time sanity will have returned.**
4. **We will seldom be interested in liquor.**
5. **If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame.**
6. **We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically.**
7. **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.**
8. **We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation.**
9. **We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality-safe and protected.**
10. **We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us.**
11. **We are neither cocky nor are we afraid.**
12. **That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.**

Look at promise number Ten, This is where “**recovered**” comes from. Think of it like a broken leg. If we follow certain steps (See a doctor, cast, crutches, take it easy, rehab etc.) The leg gets better and we are recovered. This fact does not mean we can’t re-break our leg!

Therefore, If the problem has been removed, If the problem does not exist any more, then we must be recovered from the hopeless state of mind and body!

How could we be “recovering” if the problem doesn’t exist anymore? The problem is removed so we must be Recovered! Let’s not get too excited yet. Just because the problem of alcohol is removed, it doesn’t mean we are all better. Here again, Bill gives us a warning and then he gives us the path to follow to avoid the pitfalls our Ego can produce. He writes...

❄ ❄ (85:1) **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.**

(Do I believe this? And, what the hell is resting on our laurels anyway?)

**Laurels- To be content with past achievements and cease effort.**

Well, I’m living proof that you can let up on this spiritual program of action! I’ve done it several times in sobriety and it’s only by God’s grace, that I didn’t get drunk in the process. Besides, who cares what you did when you were drinking or when you first came in to A.A. for that matter? Where are you now? How are you working these steps in your life, this month, this week? When you get right down to it, none of these questions matter.

The only question that matters is: **How are you working the steps of A.A. in your life TODAY?** The rest, is just you resting on your laurels... Remember what Bill tells us:

❄ ❄ (85:1) **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.**

Do I believe this?

If so, Who’s vision is Bill talking about?

He is talking about our vision. Bill is telling us, we must be centered with God and carry **what we believe is God’s will for us**, into our lives. Look at what Bill writes about our will power...

❁ ❁ (85:1) **We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will. What line?**

The line of **our vision of God's will for us**. That's right folks, It's our vision of what we believe is God's will for us... This is why, it is so very important for us to maintain our spiritual connection to God. Without the connection to God, we live our will, not our vision of God's will, for us. This is a vitally important difference and it can mean the difference between life and death!

Once again, do I believe **I must carry the vision of God's will into all of my activities?**

I had better, because those of us who miss this subtle difference will drink again and for us, to drink, is to die.

If you are like me (still self centered and greedy) you might ask: what's the payoff for me, if I follow God's will for me? What do I get?

You get more promises, that's what! Once again, Bill gives us more promises!

❁ (85:2) Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power.

- 1.) **If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us.**
- 2.) **To some extent we have become God-conscious.**
- 3.) **We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense.**

**Vital – Necessary to the continuation of life; life-sustaining. Having immediate importance; essential; indispensable.**

What sixth sense? The sense of intuition & God consciousness

With all of these great promises available to us, who wouldn't want to do a little work to get them?

Me, that's who...What was I thinking?

To miss these great gifts for so long, when they were right at my feet the whole time! Sometimes I can be such a fool, to think of how long I suffered in A.A. needlessly!

There are lots and lots of A.A. members who are suffering in a dry life, without the only power they have ever known – alcohol. These dry members of A.A. suffer, because they have not found the other power, The Power which can remove their alcoholic problem. What is this Power I'm talking about?

I'm talking about the power of a spiritual life.

Ah, but there is more. Bill writes...

(85:2) **But we must go further and that means more action.**

## This brings us to **Step Eleven: (pg85)**

Bill starts out describing step eleven, talking about the evening meditation and prayer. He follows it, with a description of morning meditation and prayer. Let's look at what he says...

(85:3) **Step Eleven suggests prayer and meditation. We shouldn't be shy on this matter of prayer. Better men than we are using it constantly. It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it.** It would be easy to be vague about this matter. Yet, we believe we can make some definite and valuable **suggestions**.

What suggestions? The suggestion of prayer and meditation. But, where did Bill Wilson get these suggestions?

Like the rest of the program, Bill Wilson borrowed them! From where?

❀ Well, let me give you a little of our history as it was given to me...

Prayer and meditation, as well as the basis of the steps, were borrowed from the Oxford Group. The Oxford Group was a religious group which professed 28 spiritual principles including, “the four absolutes”, “the five C’s” and reading the Bible. Bill learned about the six basic principles (steps) from Ebby, who got them from the Oxford Group through Rolland Hazard. But, Bill didn’t learn spirituality from Ebby, so there must be a caveat. Where then, did Bill Wilson learn about the spiritual principles? From Dr. Bob! Bob was much more spiritual than Bill, but where did Bob get exposed to the Oxford groups teachings? From his wife, Ann Smith! That’s right folks, Ann Smith taught Dr. Bob his early spirituality. Ann Smith had one of the greatest influences on the program of A.A. – Ann taught the Oxford Groups teachings to both Bill and Bob when they all lived together in Akron during the first months of A.A.’s existence. It’s not a stretch to say, Ann Smith taught A.A. it’s early spirituality. This is why Bill and Bob both called her **“The Mother of A.A.”**. As a matter of fact, a copy of Ann Smith’s journal is at stepping stones, in which, she writes about the basic principles of A.A. several years before Bill and Bob even met! Well, if Ann had the spiritual key, why couldn’t Bob stay sober before he met Bill? Because he was missing the missing the vital ingredient Bill Wilson provided – Service. Bill was all about carrying the message and after he shared his experience with Bob, the rest was history!

So, when someone says “who were the founders of A.A.?” To be honest we have to include Bill, Bob, Ebby, Rolland, Dr. Silkworth, Dr. Jung, Rev. Shoemaker and Ann Smith. Without any one of these vital players, A.A. may never have been born or succeeded. And, it’s thanks to Ann Smith that after Bill and Bob met, they both continued on with the Oxford Group. Bill with Sam Shoemaker in New York, Bob and Ann in Akron. Well, enough history, back to the task at hand. What prayers and meditation?...

Bill gives us several prayers and meditations in step eleven. First, Bill gives us tools to use at night in the form of questions. These questions are the eleventh step nightly inventory. We answer these questions each night to see if we have lived God’s will for us. And as Bill puts it

❀ ❀ (85:3) **“It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it.”**

In the nightly questions, I split Kind and Loving into two questions. I have found that I may be one and not the other or vice versa. Either way, I find I can be more honest about my day if I have two separate questions to answer.

So, what are the nightly questions?

❀ ❀ I have taken them from the paragraph on page 86, separated them, numbered them and they follow ...(86:1)

1. Were we resentful?
2. Were we selfish?
3. Were we dishonest?
4. Were we afraid?
5. Do we owe an apology?
6. Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?
7. Were we kind toward all?
8. Were we Loving toward all?
9. What could we have done better?
10. Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time?
11. Were we thinking of what we could do for others?
12. Were we thinking of what we could pack into the stream of life?

❁ ❁ (86:1) **But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others.**

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

O.K., These are our instructions, but how does one put them into practice?

Here's what I was taught to do and what I do...

I keep a pad of paper next to the bed for my nightly review. During my review, I change the questions from "were we" to "was I". If I answer "yes" to any of the Questions or feel I need to make amends, I write the situation down on my pad of paper.

After I get through with question twelve, I ask God's forgiveness for the wrongs I have just written about. Then, I pray for God to show me his will. I ask to be shown the corrective measures I need to make these wrongs right. It goes something like this...

**"God, Please forgive me for the things I have just discovered and written down. I know these wrongs have diminished my usefulness to you today and for that I am truly sorry.**

**Father, please Give me the strength, Courage, Faith and willingness I need, that I might right these relationships tomorrow and please show me how I might make amends for my wrongs. Amen"**

(From the thoughts on pg. 86)

I now meditate and I try to think of what God would have me do to make these relationships right.

When I have a vision of what I feel is God's will for me, I write out a list of amends I need to make the next day.

Lastly, before I go to sleep, I thank God for the day, for the chance to live in a decent way and I go to bed, knowing full well, I will be able to sleep soundly.

Next, Bill gives instructions for what we are to do when we start our day. Unfortunately, Bill gets ahead of himself in the Big Book. He tells us the first thing we should do third. I know this doesn't make much sense, but let's take a look and see if we can't figure it out. Bill writes...

❁ ❁ (86:2) 1.) **"On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. 2.) We consider our plans for the day. 3.) Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives."**

So, we are supposed to begin with item number three. To do this, I say this prayer...

**"God, please direct my thinking today and keep my thinking divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.**

**Father, please help me employ my mental faculties, that my thought-life might be placed on the higher plane of inspiration and help me pay attention to this vital sixth sense."**

(From the thoughts on pg. 86)

Now, I am ready to do the first two items.

1.) I think about the 24 hours ahead – Here I meditate about what I would like to be and I think about what God wants me to be. (a better: person, father, husband, a friend among friends and a worker among workers)

2.) I consider my plans for the day - Here I think about what God wants me to do and how I am to live His will. I come up with my vision for what God's will is for me today. I already have a list of amends from last night's 11<sup>th</sup> step. I plan to start out my day with this list of amends and I ask myself, what else would God want me to do today?

Here's a technique, I was taught to do what it says on the Just for Today card. Ie: I try to do two things, I don't want to do – just for practice. I also try to do something nice for another person, without getting found out – if I get found out, it doesn't count and I have to find something else nice to do for someone else.

Now, Bill gives instructions for us when we have a hard day or face indecision. He gives us another prayer...

✿ (86:3) **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.**

This is the prayer I say...

**“God please give me inspiration, help me have an intuitive thought or a decision. Help me lord, not to struggle, instead, help me to relax and take it easy.”**

(From the thoughts on pg. 86)

Bill goes on to say...

✿ (86:3) **We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. 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. 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.**

(Finally, Bill gives us a prayer to end our period of meditation with. He writes...)

✿ ✿ (87:1) **We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer...**

This is the prayer I say...

**“God, please show me all through this day, what my next step is to be. Give me the strength, faith and courage I need to take care of the problems in my life today. I ask especially Lord, that you free me from self-will and fear.”**

(From the thoughts on pg. 86)

(Bill then gives us some things to watch outfor, while considering this prayer...)

✿ ✿ (87:1) **We 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.**

Now, we are supposed to go out and live our day, doing God's will for us. Bill already gave us a tool for indecision but, what are we to do when things start to go wrong for us? Bill writes...

✿ ✿ (87:3) **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."**

In the form of a prayer, it could look like this...

**“God, please give me an intuitive thought or decision to help me with this problem. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful, that you are running the show. Free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done always. Amen”**

(From the thoughts on pg. 86)

Bill gives us this prayer as a precaution, he says it will keep us from danger. With the prayer, Bill also gives us more promises. He writes...

✿ ✿ (88:0) **We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions.**

Did you notice, he said in essence **“excitement is dangerous for an alcoholic”**? How many of us thrive on excitement? I know I have...Think about it.



Anyway, on to more promises...

- 1.) ❄️ (88:0) **We become much more efficient.** 2.) **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. 3.) **It works-it really does.** 4.) **We alcoholics are undisciplined.** So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.

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*.

Let's recap for a minute – In step eleven we have been given some very specific **life tools** to get us through the day. These tools help us keep our slate clean.

>From my experience, after all the hard work I spent on steps four through nine, I find the easier softer way for me, is to grow into being a better person on a daily basis. If I can keep current with my relationships I am far better off, than having to go in for annual or semi-annual housecleaning.

Unfortunately, I tend to rest on my laurels. When I do, my ego rebuilds, my growth stops, my pain increases and I'm forced to do the formal housecleaning again. The nice thing about my sobriety is that the time gap is increasing. The longer I'm sober, the less frequently I have to do the formal housecleaning process because, I can keep the slate clean with the daily use of the tenth and eleventh steps. Today, my goal is to keep my relationships current and grow daily, with the hopes of lessening the frequency of having to do another long, four through nine process. The program is working better in my life because I am actually learning to practice these principles in all my affairs!

So, the big question for those of us who have been sober for a while is this: **How do you know when you have to do another formal four through nine?**

When your ego has rebuilt itself, it will be time for the formal process again. Usually for me, my first clue is that I can't or won't do steps ten and eleven daily. When this happens, I know something is bothering me, my ego has rebuilt itself to where it is blocking me from seeing the truth about my life. When this happens, the pain returns and I'm forced to start the formal process again.

This brings us up to **Step Twelve: (pg89)**

Bill Wilson gives us some of our most difficult and gratifying work in the twelfth step. As Bill puts it...

❄️ ❄️ (97:1) **"Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery."**

This is our Last construction reference:

Foundation = Complete Willingness (12:4)

Cement = \_ Common Peril, \_ Common Solution (17:2)

Cornerstone = Willing to believe that there is a Power greater than yourself (47:2)

Keystone = God is our Director (62:3)

Foundation Stone = (Complete Willingness) to Help Others (97:1)

Step twelve is about helping others and we are given very explicit directions for us to follow in the chapter Working With Others. One of the greatest **"Life Tools"** and promises, of the entire program, comes as the first lines of this chapter. It reads...

❄️ ❄️ (89:1). **"Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail."**

Think about that... This statement explains why so many alcoholics can come into the rooms, not work the steps and yet, still not drink. They live in the pain and misery of untreated alcoholism, but they don't drink. How can this be?

It's because as sick as they stay, they help other alcoholics. **They are immune to the alcoholic compulsion while helping others.** If they stop helping others, they quickly fall into real danger. If only they would clean house, then they too, would get the invaluable, limitless, treasures which all of the twelve steps promise. (See promises sheet)

Anyway, enough of that. Let's see what the twelfth step has for us...

❀ ❀ (89:1) **Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail.**

You may be the only Big Book, a person ever sees. You could very well be their last hope, So remember the A.A. creed of responsibility:

**"I am responsible... when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible."**

In the group I got sober in, we said this creed as a group, at the opening of every meeting and I thank God for that group being there for me when I needed help. Someone was there for you too, when you needed help and now it's your turn to give the gift of sobriety. Besides, look at all the gifts you get by doing twelve step work. Here are some of the promises ...

❀ ❀ (89:2) **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.**

All of these promises will come true for each of us, if we do the work the program requires. Now, Bill gives us specific instructions for how to do a twelve step call. Here are the rules and there are a lot of them, so bear with me and I will try to list them logically, with highlights. Remember, these rules were formed over sixty years ago. Your experience may be different than these rules because of the advent of treatment centers, rehabs, half way houses, etc. Though the times have changed, the basic principles have not...

As we begin talking about a twelve step call, let me say, the chapter Working With Others should be read and understood before you try to work a twelve step call. It also helps, if you can go through a call with someone who has experience, like a sponsor or an old timer. Bill starts out with general rules for all twelve step calls. But, before we get to that I need to comment on rule 14.

In rule 14, Bill talks of going alone to the first visit. As I was taught, and as my experience confirms, I think we need to update this rule. This rule was written very early in A.A.'s experience. Since the Big Book was written, it has been commonly taught, as I was taught by my first sponsor, that **you never go alone on a twelve step call.** Why the contradiction? Well, this contradiction evolved after several A.A.'s had bad experiences going it alone. In the old days things were different than today. Times have changed, drugs other than alcohol are often involved and handguns are more common place in people's homes. Today, the average drunk tends to know more about addiction because, he often has had exposure to a rehab or

therapy or even A.A.. As a result, these drunks tend to be a tougher nut to crack. Therefore, I have found, it is much safer for all involved, if two people go on the call. Here is how it was taught to me...

Bill Wilson had the right concept. One person should take the lead and this person should do almost all of the talking. They are **the twelfth stepper**, and they are there to win the confidence of the newcomer. Bill writes:

❄️ (18:4) **But the ex-problem drinker who has found this solution, who is properly armed with facts about himself, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic in a few hours. Until such an understanding is reached, little or nothing can be accomplished.**

If the situation is calm and secure, the second person on the call should just blend into the background and be sure not to distract the newcomer or twelve stepper.

The real purpose of having the other person on the call is mainly **safety** and to help if needed.

Today, it's not uncommon to find a prospect drunk, maybe armed and/or thinking of suicide.

This is not a good place to go it alone. Therefore, I was taught three general rules for all twelve step calls. They are:

- 1.) **Ask God to direct your actions and the outcome of the call.**
- 2.) **Be prepared for anything.**
- 3.) **If you don't get drunk on the call – it's a successful twelve step call.**

With this in mind, let's look at the rules the Big Book gives us...



- 1.) (89:3) **Don't start out as an evangelist or reformer.** Unfortunately a lot of prejudice exists. You will be handicapped if you arouse it.

- 2.) ❄️ (89:3) **Cooperate; never criticize. To be helpful is our only aim.**

- 3.) (90:1) When you discover a prospect for Alcoholics Anonymous, **find out all you can about him.**

- 4.) ❄️ ❄️ (90:1) **If he does not want to stop drinking, don't waste time trying to persuade him.**

That's right. Ask him if he wants to stop. If he says "No", Leave! Let him know you will come back when he is willing to go to any lengths, but for now, others need your help...

- 5.) (90:2) If there is any indication that he wants to stop, **have a good talk with the person most interested in him usually his wife.**

Bill gives several examples of what we need from this conversation on page 90 so, I won't list them here.

- 6.) (90:3) **Sometimes it is wise to wait till he goes on a binge. The family may object to this, but unless he is in a dangerous physical condition, it is better to risk it... Wait for the end of the spree, or at least for a lucid interval. This gives you the best chance of getting a "yes" to rule number 4.**

- 7.) (90:3) **Don't deal with him when he is very drunk, unless he is ugly and the family needs your help.**

- 8.) ❄️ ❄️ (90:3) **Let his family or a friend ask him if he wants to quit for good and if he would go to any extreme to do so. If he says yes, then his attention should be drawn to you as a person who has recovered. You should be described to him as one of a fellowship who, as part of their own recovery, try to help others and who will be glad to talk to him if he cares to see you.**

- 9.) ❄️ (90:4) **If he does not want to see you, never force yourself upon him. Neither should the family hysterically plead with him to do anything, nor should they tell him much about you. They should wait for the end of his next drinking bout.**

- 10.) (90:4) You might place this book where he can see it in the interval. Here no specific rule can be given. **The family must decide these things. But urge them not to be over-anxious, for that might spoil matters.**

- 11.) (91:1) **Usually the family should not try to tell your story. When possible, avoid meeting a man through his family. Approach through a doctor or an institution is a better bet. If your man needs hospitalization, he should have it, but not forcibly unless he is violent.**

On a call, you may have to get a bottle for the prospect, this may be the only way to get him to detox without him shaking apart. One or two drinks should do the trick. All you need to do is to keep them from a seizure or D.T.'s until you get to the detox.

I was also taught to carry candy on a call, booze has lots of sugar and the candy tends to calm fraying nerves. A bottle of water and a barf bag have also come in quite handy, as I tried to get a prospect to detox or a meeting. In this situation, another person and another set of hands becomes invaluable.

12.) (91:2) Though you have talked with **the family, leave them out of the first discussion.** Under these conditions your prospect will see he is under no pressure.

Here, Bill begins to differentiate between the first and second calls to a rummy. The first call, is just to see if the man is willing. **Does he want to stop for good and is he willing to go to any lengths?** If he is willing, but in really bad shape, we get him to detox. If he is O.K., We "plant the seed", maybe even take him to a meeting and then **we leave him with the Big Book to read.** This reading will be his first test of willingness.

Will he read the first 164 pages of the Big Book before we return?

If he does, then we have the second meeting because, he has shown willingness. If he doesn't do the reading, remember rule #4. Others need our help and we don't want to ruin a future chance with this prospect. Let him know we are willing to help, when he is ready to go to any lengths.

Once the prospect has read the first 164, we have visit #2. This visit is the real "twelve step call" and I'll talk more about that later. For now, let's continue with the setup of our first visit...

13.) ✿ (91:2) **Call on him while he is still jittery. He may be more receptive when depressed.**

14.) (91:3) **See your man alone, if possible. At first engage in general conversation. After a while, 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.**

15.) ✿ (91:3) If he is not communicative, **give him a sketch of your drinking career up to the time you quit. But say nothing, for the moment, of how that was accomplished. If he is in a serious mood dwell on the troubles liquor has caused you, being careful not to moralize or lecture. If his mood is light, tell him humorous stories of your escapades. Get him to tell some of his.**

16.) ✿ ✿ (91:4) When he sees you know all about the drinking game, **commence to describe yourself as an alcoholic. Tell him how baffled you were, how you finally learned that you were sick. Give him an account of the struggles you made to stop. Show him the mental twist Which leads to the first drink of a spree. We suggest you do this as we have done it in the chapter on alcoholism.** If he is alcoholic, he will understand you at once. He will match your mental inconsistencies with some of his own. **If you are satisfied that he is a real alcoholic, begin to dwell on the hopeless feature of the malady. Show him, from your own experience, how the queer mental condition surrounding that first drink prevents normal functioning of the will power. Don't, at this stage, refer to this book, unless he has seen it and wishes to discuss it. And be careful not to brand him as an alcoholic. Let him draw his own conclusion.**

17.) ✿ (92:1) If he sticks to the idea that he can still control his drinking, **tell him that possibly he can-if he is not too alcoholic. But insist that if he is severely afflicted, there may be little chance he can recover by himself. Continue to speak of alcoholism as an illness, a fatal malady. Talk about the conditions of body and mind which accompany it. Keep his attention focussed mainly on your personal experience. Explain that many are doomed who never realize their predicament...** you may talk to him about the hopelessness of alcoholism because you offer a solution.

- 18.) ❄️ (93:0) *Tell him exactly what happened to you.*
- 19.) (93:0) **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.** When dealing with such a person, you had better **use everyday language to describe spiritual principles.** There is no use arousing any prejudice he may have against certain theological terms and conceptions about which he may already be confused. **Don't raise such issues, no matter what your own convictions are.**
- 20.) (93:2) **Let him see that you are not there to instruct him in religion.** Admit that he probably knows more about it than you do, but **call to his attention the fact that however deep his faith and knowledge, he could not have applied it or he would not drink.**
- 21.) ❄️ (94:1) **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.**
- 22.) (94:1) **Make it plain he is under no obligation to you,** that you hope only that he will try to help other alcoholics when he escapes his own difficulties. Suggest how important it is that he place the welfare of other people ahead of his own. **Make it clear that he is not under pressure, that he needn't see you again if he doesn't want to.**
- 23.) ❄️ (94:1) **The more hopeless he feels, the better.** He will be more likely to follow your suggestions.

- 24.) (94:2) 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. On your first visit tell him about the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous. If he shows interest, lend him your copy of this book..
- 25.) ❄️ (95:1) Unless your friend wants to talk further about himself, **do not wear out your welcome. Give him a chance to think it over.** If you do stay, **let him steer the conversation** in any direction he likes.
- 26.) ❄️ (95:1) Sometimes a new man is anxious **to proceed at once**, and you may be tempted to let him do so. **This is sometimes a mistake.** If he has trouble later, he is likely to say you rushed him. 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.**
- 27.) ❄️ ❄️ (95:3) If he is sincerely interested and wants to see you again, **ask him to read this book in the interval.** After doing that, **he must decide for himself** whether he wants to go on. He should not be pushed or prodded by you, his wife, or his friends. **If he is to find God, the desire must come from within.**

This is where we **leave him the Big Book with the instruction to read the first 164 pages.** If he is willing to go to any length, then he will read the book...

- 28.) (95:4) 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.**
- 29.) ❄️ ❄️ (96:1) **Do not be discouraged if your prospect does not respond at once. Search out another alcoholic and try again.** (Notice Bill says we search them out! We offer ourselves to them, we call on them. We don't just give them our phone number and say call me if you need help. We are to call on them! We guide them until they can guide themselves. If a man comes to A.A., he is asking for help and we have a responsibility to help him. I think it's a crime to just give a guy your phone number and say "don't drink and go to meetings". Try getting his number and call him, follow these rules, ask these questions, if your sure he is alcoholic, offer to be his sponsor until he gets on his feet, and most importantly show him the steps out of the Big Book! If he is not willing to go to any lengths, explain to him the progression, suggest some controlled drinking, explain that he is always welcome **when he is ready to go to any lengths** and go work with the next guy.) **You are sure to find someone desperate enough to accept with eagerness what you offer. We find it a waste of time to keep chasing a man who cannot or will not work with you. If you leave such a person alone, he may soon become convinced that he cannot recover by himself. To spend too much time on any one situation is to deny some other alcoholic an opportunity to live and be happy.**

❄️ ❄️ Now for call number two...



If he has read the first 164, then he has shown willingness. Bill writes...

❄️❄️ (96:2) “Suppose now you are making your **second visit** to a man. He has read this volume and says he is prepared to go through with the Twelve Steps of the program of recovery.”

Now comes visit #2, This is the real “twelve step call”. The call got it’s name from what we do on the call, not just from the step we are working. On our second meeting with the prospect we start the steps! That’s right, on the second visit to the man, we give him an overview of all “twelve steps” and we start him off on the first few.

The second visit is where we begin the work with the new man and we take him through the first few steps. As a minimum, we go from the dust cover promise up through the A B C’s and if he can say “yes” to them, and he is ready, **we offer to take the third step together!** What, you don’t believe me?

In just a second, I’ll show you just where this idea came from. I know this may sound strange to most, but this is the way the program was started and meant to be carried to others. Remember, both Dr. Bob and Bill were out doing ninth step work in under a week!

The reason this sounds strange to most of us is, that we have all experienced the program of A.A. in it’s watered down state. Because of all the crap and rehab jargon thrown around meetings, **the original A.A. program, as it is written in the Big Book**, seems strange to most of us. The problem in A.A. today is, there are so few people who have been given the gift as it was intended. We hear all the half - truths of rehabs and therapists in the rooms, until we confuse falsehoods with the true A.A. program. I’m talking about **the spiritual program**, the one which can’t be bought at a rehab or therapist office. Some of the greatest doctors in the history of psychology and Alcoholism, Silkworth, Tiebout, and Jung, all admit, A.A. has something they can’t duplicate. The thing they can’t produce, is called the spiritual experience. **Recovered alcoholics have had that experience and can share it with others.** We have found the way to help others find their own spiritual experience, it’s called the program of A.A., the one found in our text, the Big Book.

I know what you’re thinking, you weren’t twelve stepped that way and you made it in A.A...

Well, **The newcomer to A.A. doesn’t have to suffer like we did.** It is not a requirement to wallow around in A.A. for a few years, slipping or narrowly missing getting drunk, until we hurt so bad, we either work the steps or kill ourselves. There is no reason we can’t carry the message as it was intended. As much as I hate statistics, look at what they suggest; over 95% of the A.A.’s who commit suicide, do so sober! If that’s not suffering in A.A., and dying an alcoholic death, I don’t know what is? That’s called a permanent solution, to a temporary problem and it doesn’t have to be, nor should it be, that way.

**The steps of A.A., as a program of recovery, are the answer.** The steps work and the sooner a person gets to the steps, the sooner the miracle of recovery occurs. If you still don’t believe me, try it! I have and **my experience** is, if a man is **ready to go to any lengths**, the steps will take hold. You aren’t going to scare him off, besides I have never heard of anyone being harmed from trying to be a better, more spiritual person...

If you have made it to this part of this workshop, my guess is that you have surely felt the presence of God somewhere in your life. You have had an awakening of your spirit and you have changed because of the steps.

**Don’t cut God short.** Who know what wonders He can perform? Or if you like... **“How do you know, what you don’t know?”**

Let’s learn and share from **our experiences**, not react because we think it sounds right...

I believe, each of us has a higher power and none of us can know what will work with an active alcoholic. Only God knows, so let’s give Him a shot. The steps aren’t something to be frightened of, they are something to be embraced. Bill and Bob gave us this gift from God. Why not give back the gift, which was so freely given to us.

Bill writes...

❄️❄️ (96:2) **Having had the experience yourself**, you can give him much practical advice. 1.)**Let him know you are available if he wishes to make a decision** and 2.)**tell his story**, but do not insist upon it if he prefers to consult someone else.

What’s Bill talking about? I’ll tell you.

Earlier, I said I’d show you where it says to work the steps with the new prospect. Here it is...

Bill says we are to make ourselves available to him, to work the steps.

1.) Make a decision - This is the third step. (see also pg. 47)

2.) Telling your story - This is the fifth step. (see also pg. 74)

In other words, if your prospect says he is ready, we make sure he is clear on steps one and two. We ask him the questions from the big book. (See pg. 36 of this guide)

We bring our prospect up to the third step and offer ourselves to him to do step three. **If he is willing to make the decision required of step three**, we get down together and say the third step prayer. Right there and then. When we leave, he at least, should be up to and working on the fourth step!

Don't worry about whether he is going to get step four right. Remember, this is the beginning of a life process, He will revisit these steps again. The most important part of the whole step process, is that the newcomer be on a pathway toward finding a relationship with God.

The real power of the program comes from the prayers and meditation we use. It's the prayers and meditation that help us find God and I believe it's more important to try the steps, get them wrong and **in the process find God**, than to not try the steps because you don't want to get them wrong. Remember, don't underestimate the power of God...

O.K., Let's move on ...

Bill gives us some guidelines, on pg. 96, for our prospect with respect to money, jobs and housing. Therefore, I won't cover those topics here. What I do want to cover is the warnings Bill gives us...

- 30.) ❄️❄️ (97:1) **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. A kindly act once in a while isn't enough.** You have to act the Good Samaritan every day, if need be. It may mean the loss of many nights' sleep, great interference with your pleasures, interruptions to your business. It may mean sharing your money and your home, counseling frantic wives and relatives, innumerable trips to police courts, sanitariums, hospitals, jails and asylums. Your telephone may jangle at any time of the day or night. Your wife may sometimes say she is neglected. A drunk may smash the furniture in your home, or burn a mattress. You may have to fight with him if he is violent. Sometimes you will have to call a doctor and administer sedatives under his direction. Another time you may have to send for the police or an ambulance.

The program of A.A. is a gift and it has been given to you. The price tag of your gift, your continued sobriety, peace, serenity and a happy useful life is described in this last paragraph. Live up to the commitment, do the work A.A. requires and you will be given gifts of which you could never have even dreamed! **This is my experience.**

- 31.) ❄️ (97:3) **Though an alcoholic does not respond, there is no reason why you should neglect his family. You should continue to be friendly to them. The family should be offered your way of life. Should they accept and practice spiritual principles, there is a much better chance that the head of the family will recover. And even though he continues to drink, the family will find life more bearable.**

This means Alanon. If we are going to do twelve step work, and we have to do twelve step work, we need to have Alanon contacts for the family. I carry a meeting book, which shows Alanon meetings, as well as, A.A. meetings. I also maintain several Alanon contacts, who might be helpful with the prospect's family. If you can't find any helpful Alanon twelve steppers, you can teach the steps to the family. Alanon uses the same twelve steps and you are welcome to attend Alanon meetings. I have to admit, I have learned a lot from Alanon and I highly recommend you try it before you knock it!

- 32.) ❄️❄️ (98:2) **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.**
- 33.) ❄️❄️ (99:3) **Remind the prospect that his recovery is not dependent upon people. It is dependent upon his relationship with God.**
- 34.) ❄️❄️ (100:1) **Both you and the new man must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress. If you persist, remarkable things will happen. When we look back, we realize that the things which came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands were better than anything we could have planned. Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances! (Talk about powerful promises! If this is what you get, I really want this stuff!)**
- 35.) (100:2) **When working with a man and his family, you should take care not to participate in their quarrels. You may spoil your chance of being helpful if you do. But urge upon a man's family that he has been a very sick person and should be treated accordingly.**
- 36.) ❄️ (100:3) **If you have been successful in solving your own domestic problems, tell the newcomer's family how that was accomplished. In this way you can set them on the right track without becoming critical of them. The story of how you and your wife settled your difficulties is worth any amount of criticism.**

- 37.) ❄️❄️ (101:3) **So our rule is not to avoid a place where there is drinking, if we have a legitimate reason for being there.** That includes bars, nightclubs, dances, receptions, weddings, even plain ordinary whoopee parties. You will note that we made an important qualification. Therefore, **ask yourself on each occasion, "Have I any good social, business, or personal reason for going to this place? Or am I expecting to steal a little vicarious pleasure from the atmosphere of such places?" If you answer these questions satisfactorily, you need have no, apprehension. Go or stay away, whichever seems best. But be sure you are on solid spiritual ground before you start and that your motive in going is thoroughly good.**
- 37.) ❄️ (100:1) **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!**
- 38.) ❄️❄️ (102:2) **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.**
- 39.) (102:3) Many of us keep liquor in our homes. We often need it to carry green recruits through a severe hangover.
- 40.) ❄️ (103:1) **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. **A spirit of intolerance might repel alcoholics whose lives could have been saved, had it not been for such stupidity.** We would not even do the cause of temperate drinking any good, for not one drinker in a thousand likes to be told anything about alcohol by one who hates it.
- 41.) ❄️❄️ (103:3) *After all, our problems were of our own making. Bottles were only a symbol. Besides, we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. We have to!*

With these rules to guide us, we are sure to have some success, if it's God's will. Remember, everyone has a higher power. **Our job is not, to second guess God.** We don't get to decide who this approach will work for. **We don't decide who makes it and who doesn't.** I'm sure you have heard the old A.A. saying **"stick with the winners" – this means that there are losers!** We are all an example to someone, some are good examples, some bad. Even the ones who die provide a powerful, needed example, their death reminds us of the serious nature of our work. We are truly on a life and death errand and we need always remember "But for the grace of God, go I". The old adage is true: "If you don't get drunk on a twelve step call, it was a successful twelve step call"...

Now, about the newcomer to the rooms. As I already stated, much more needs to be done.

When I came to A.A., every A.A. meeting had greeters, people who welcomed the newcomers to the meeting. If a newcomer showed up to their first meeting, they were directed to someone to spell out exactly what A.A. was and what it was not. Newcomers didn't get the - I'm too lazy to carry the message or I don't know the real message is so I'll give you the bullshit line - "don't drink and keep coming back".

The old timers took responsibility for carrying the message. They took the newcomers phone number and they called it the next day. They asked the new man the questions, to see if the man was willing to go to any lengths and then they gave him a Big Book and offered to show him the program. They offered to pick the man up, ride with him to the meetings, they went to the diner after the meetings and they provided a "living example" to the new man. They were walking Big Books as they carried the message.

I know this may sound strange but, when A.A. was like I just described we had a 75%, long term sober success rate. What do you think our success rate is today?

10%?, 20%? - I doubt it's that high...

I believe the key to our future lies in our past. We need to remember our history...

Did Ebby ask Rolland to call on him about his drinking? No. Did Bill ask Ebby to call on him? No. Did Dr. Bob ask Bill to call on him? No. Did alcoholic #3 (Bill D.) ask Bill W. and Dr. Bob to call on him? No.

All of the early A.A.'s carried the spiritual message of A.A.'s twelve step because they had to! And, guess what happened to them? Those who did continue to carry the message and work the steps, stayed sober!

The time has come for us all to get back to basics, back to the program as written in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. It's time for us to become like Ebby when he called on Bill Wilson. We need to become **"A Living Example"** (12:1) and carry the true message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

In closing: Remember, **Knowledge is of no value to the alcoholic**, it is **our experiences, which are miraculous**. The Big Book has more, much more in it, than what is presented here. Avail yourself of all it's wisdom and have your own unique experiences with the wonders of the program because, I have only scratched the surface. As we close...

**Please keep these thoughts in mind...**

✿ ✿ (164:2) **We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.**

**Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. 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.**

**May God bless you and keep you-until then.**

I am reminded of a poem, which was read by Gene, at the 9<sup>th</sup> international convention of A.A. Marathon Big Book meeting in Seattle, Washington. This poem was passed down to Gene by an old timer, the same way the program has been passed down to us. I like to call the poem "Show The Way" and it goes like this...

**I would rather see a sermon - than to hear one, any day.  
I would rather one walk with me - than merely tell the way.**

**For the eye is a better pupil - more willing than the ear.  
Fine council is confusing - but example is always clear.**

**I can soon learn to do it - if you let me see it done.  
I can watch your hands in action - but your tongue, too fast may run.**

**And the best of all the preachers - are the men who live their creed.  
For seeing good in action - is what everybody needs.**

**I may misunderstand you - in the high advise you give.  
But there is no misunderstanding - in how you act and how you live.**

**To close our Big Book Workshop, I would like to cover a little read but, very Important original part of our fellowship...**

**A Declaration of Unity**

**This we owe to A.A.'s future:**

**To place our common welfare first;**

**To keep our fellowship united.**

**For on A.A. unity depend our lives,**

**And the lives of those to come.**

**If you get nothing else from this study, please always remember...**

**“I am responsible... when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.”**

**May God bless you and keep you - until we meet again.**

**Dave F.**

|                                                    |                                             |
|----------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <p><b>RESENTMENTS</b></p> <p><b>EXAMPLE #1</b></p> |                                             |
| <b>Person or thing or principle</b>                | <b>The cause or event – why I am angry?</b> |



|  |                                  |
|--|----------------------------------|
|  | 3.<br>4.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5.<br>6. |
|  | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5.       |
|  | 1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.             |
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## RESENTMENTS

**Person, Institution or Principal:** \_\_\_\_\_ - # \_\_\_\_\_ **Column Three**

**Why I'm angry** \_\_\_\_\_

**What 7 areas of my life were HURT, THREATENED OR INTERFERED WITH?**

**EFFECTS MY:                      Where was I Hurt, Threatened or Interfered with in these 7 areas?**

**Self esteem** - How I see or feel about myself.

**My Pocketbook** – Anything involved with my Money, Job or financial system.

**My Ambition** – What I want for myself

**My Personal Relationships** – With my friends, coworkers and family.

|                                                                                          |  |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--|
| <p><b><u>My Sex Relations</u></b> –<br/>People with whom I am<br/>sexually involved.</p> |  |
| <p><b><u>Security</u></b> – What I think I<br/>need.</p>                                 |  |
| <p><b><u>Pride</u></b> – (Ego) How others<br/>see or feel about me.</p>                  |  |

| RESENTMENTS : _____ #                               |                                | Column Four           |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|
| AREAS EFFECTED:                                     |                                | WHERE WAS I TO BLAME? |
| Self – esteem<br>:<br>See third<br>column           | 1. Where was I selfish?        |                       |
|                                                     | 2. Where was I dishonest?      |                       |
|                                                     | 3. Where was I self – seeking? |                       |
|                                                     | 4. Where was I frightened?     |                       |
| My<br>Pocketbook:<br>See third<br>column            | 1. Where was I selfish?        |                       |
|                                                     | 2. Where was I dishonest?      |                       |
|                                                     | 3. Where was I self – seeking? |                       |
|                                                     | 4. Where was I frightened?     |                       |
| My<br>Ambition:<br>See third<br>column              | 1. Where was I selfish?        |                       |
|                                                     | 2. Where was I dishonest?      |                       |
|                                                     | 3. Where was I self – seeking? |                       |
|                                                     | 4. Where was I frightened?     |                       |
| My personal<br>relationship:<br>See third<br>column | 1. Where was I selfish?        |                       |
|                                                     | 2. Where was I dishonest?      |                       |
|                                                     | 3. Where was I self – seeking? |                       |
|                                                     | 4. Where was I frightened?     |                       |
| My Sex Life:<br>See third<br>column                 | 1. Where was I selfish?        |                       |
|                                                     | 2. Where was I dishonest?      |                       |
|                                                     | 3. Where was I self – seeking? |                       |
|                                                     | 4. Where was I frightened?     |                       |
| Security:<br>See third<br>column                    | 1. Where was I selfish?        |                       |
|                                                     | 2. Where was I dishonest?      |                       |
|                                                     | 3. Where was I self – seeking? |                       |
|                                                     | 4. Where was I frightened?     |                       |
| Pride (Ego):<br>See third<br>column                 | 1. Where was I selfish?        |                       |
|                                                     | 2. Where was I dishonest?      |                       |
|                                                     | 3. Where was I self – seeking? |                       |

[illegible]

# WORKSHOP REFRESHER

The Set Aside Prayer:

“Dear God please set aside everything I think I know about myself, the Big Book, Alcoholism, the Steps, and in spiritual terms - especially you God,

Father, I ask that I may have a truly open mind, so I might have a new experience with these things; please help me see the truth – AMEN.”

## Step One

### Step One Questions:

1. Physical Craving –“Does you experience abundantly confirm that once you put alcohol into your system, something happens in the bodily and mental sense, which makes it virtually impossible for you to stop?” (22:4)
2. Mental Obsession –“Do you believe you have lost the power of choice in drink?” (24:1)
3. Unmanageability –“Do you believe you have only two choices?” (25:3)  
A. Live spiritually B. Die an alcoholic death
4. Spiritual Malady –“Do you believe that you will be unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge?” (39:1)
5. Mental Obsession –“Do you believe that a time may come where you will have no effective mental defense against the first drink?” (24:1) & (43:3)
6. Mental Obsession –“Do you believe your defense must come from a Higher Power?” (43:3)

### Self Diagnosis:

1. “Did you try to prove to yourself you could drink like other people?” (30:1) & (31:1)
2. “Could you drink and stop abruptly?” (31:3)
3. “Could you leave alcohol alone for one year?” (34:1) & (34:2)
4. “If, when you honestly want to, can you quit entirely?” (44:1)
5. “If, when drinking, do you have little control over the amount you take?” (44:1)

### Step one Requirements:

1. Complete Willingness (Foundation) - (12:4) , (13:5) & (28:3)
2. Belief in the power of God- (13:5)
3. Honesty (honest desire) - (Forward xiv)(13:5)(28:3)
4. Humility to establish and maintain a new order of things – (13:5)
5. Concede we are alcoholic(Admission) – (30:2)
6. Lack of power(Powerlessness) – (45:1)

### Purpose of The Big Book:

1. To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered. (Forward xiii)
2. To answer the question “What do I have to do?” for the alcoholic who wants to get over it. (20:2)
3. To enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem. (45:2)

### Construction References:

1. Foundation = Complete Willingness (12:4)
2. Cement = \_ Common peril & \_ Common Solution (17:2)
3. Cornerstone = Willing to believe there is a Power greater than you (47:2)
4. Keystone = God is going to be our director (62:3)



**Foundation Stone = Complete Willingness to help others (97:1)**

# Step Two

## Four Requirements to Commence Spiritual Growth:

1. Lay aside prejudice (46:1)
2. Express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves (46:1)
3. Earnestly seek God (46:2)
4. Ask yourself what spiritual terms mean to you (47:1)

## 'Cornerstone' Question:

"Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?" (47:2)

## 3 Barriers to Spiritual Growth:

1. Obstinacy (48:0)
2. Sensitiveness (48:0)
3. Unreasoning Prejudice (48:0)

## Four Step Two Requirements to get 2<sup>nd</sup> Step Promises and for Long Term Sobriety :

1. Leave aside the drink question (51:0)
2. Tell why living was so unsatisfactory (What it was like) (51:0)
3. Show how the change came over you (What happened) (51:0)
4. Share why the Presence of God is today the most important fact of your life (What it's like now) (51:0)

## 2<sup>nd</sup> Step Proposition :

" Either God is everything or else He is nothing.      God either is, or He isn't.  
What was our choice to be?" (53:2)

The A B C's :

- A.) That *you* are alcoholic and cannot manage your own life. (60:3 original manuscript)
- B.) That probably no human power *can* relieve your alcoholism. (60:3 original manuscript)
- C.) That God *can and will*. (60:3 original manuscript)

*If you are not convinced on these vital issues, you ought to re-read the book to this point or else throw it away!* (60:3 original manuscript)

## Three Keystone Requirements before taking the Third Step:

1. We are convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. (60:4)
2. We had to quit playing God. It didn't work. (62:3)
3. 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, we are His children. (62:3)

# Step Three

## 3<sup>rd</sup> Step Prayer:

*Get down upon your knees and say to your Maker, as you understand Him:* (63:2 original manuscript)

**"God, I offer myself to thee - to build with me and 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!"**

# Step Four

Bob Bisanz says... “ Any step worth taking is worth taking wrong...”

## A Pre-Inventory prayer:

**“God please come into me and direct me.**

**Father, Show me your will. Help me see beyond what I think I know about myself. Show me your Truth Father; the real Truth about myself.**

**God, please give me the patience, tolerance, faith, strength and courage I need to do this work.**

**Remove my fears of what I may find out about myself.**

**Help me God... Help me to see and experience the Truth about myself. ”**

**The fourth step is really three separate inventories:**

- 1. Resentments (64:3)**
- 2. Fears – starting with our resentment inventory, column four, question 4. (67:3)**
- 3. Harms done to others– with special emphasis on sex harms. (68:4)**

**Resentment inventory**

## Four columns- set on paper:

Column One – People, Institutions, Principles with whom we are angry.

Column Two – Why we are angry. This is where we must tell the truth! Or the rest will be built on a lie.

Column Three – Ask if resentment hurts, threatens or interferes in any of seven areas of our lives:

Self-esteem, Pocketbook, Ambition, Personal relations, Sex relations, Security or Pride(ego)

Column Four – We answer the questions: Were was I Selfish, Dishonest, self-seeking, and Frightened? for

Each of the effected areas which were listed in column three.

The 4<sup>th</sup> step tools for **resentments**. These skills are necessary **life tools** for a recovered alcoholic!

- 1. We set them on paper. (64:3)**
- 2. First I must realize, they are spiritually sick. (66:4)**
- 3. Next, I must ask God; meaning I pray for the spiritually sick person.**  
**Bill even tells us what to pray for: tolerance, pity, and patience. (67:0)**
- 4. Ask yourself “How can I be helpful to him?” (67:0)**
- 3 5. Pray, “God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.” (67:0)**
- 4 6. Then, I must, Avoid retaliation and argument. (67:1)**
- 7. Put out of your mind the wrongs others had done. And look for your own mistakes. (67:2)**
- 8. Then I ask myself, Where had I been selfish? (67:2)**
- 9. Then I ask myself, Where had I been dishonest? (67:2)**
- 10. Then I ask myself, Where had I been self – seeking? (67:2)**
- 11. Then I ask myself, Where had I been frightened? (67:2)**
- 12. Then, I must try, to disregard the other person involved entirely (67:2)**
- 13. Then ask yourself, where was I to blame? (67:2)**
- 14. When I see my faults, I list them. I place them before me in black and white. (67:2)**
- 15. I admit my wrongs honestly and am willing to set these matters straight. (67:2)**

**The Resentment prayer:** Asked when we are resentful, or during step 4.

**God please help me show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. Help me to see that , This is a sick man. Show me how can I be helpful to him. God save me from being angry.**

**Lord help me to avoid retaliation or argument. I know I cannot be helpful to all people, but at least show me how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one. Thy will be done. (from the thoughts on 67:0)**

## **Fear inventory**

Done in columns like resentments. List fears and then look at opposite fears. After fears listed, boil fears down to “Hit parade” with question “ why do I have this particular fear?” (see question three below)

1. We put them (fears) on paper (68:1)
2. We reviewed our fears thoroughly. (68:1)
3. We ask ourselves why we had them. (68:1)
4. We let God demonstrate, through us, what He can do. (68:3)
5. We ask Him (God) to remove our fear. (68:3)
6. We ask God to direct our attention to what He would have us be. (68:3)

**An example of The Fear Prayer:** Asked during step 4 after we finish Fears.

“ God, Thank you for helping me be honest enough to see the truth about myself. Thank you for showing me my fears and now that you have shown me my fears, please remove them from me.

Lord, help me outgrow my rootfears; The fears which have haunted me and blocked me from doing thy bidding.

Direct my attention to what you would have me be and Help me become that, which you would have me be.

Demonstrate through me and Help me do thy will always. Amen” (from the thoughts on 68:3)

## **Harms done others inventory - (Sex emphasized)**

**An example of The pre-harms Prayer:** Asked during step 4 before we start harms.

“God please help me to be free of fear as I attempt to shine the spotlight of truth across my past sex relations.

Lord, please show me where my behavior has harmed others and help me to see the truth these relationships hold for me. Help me see where I have been at fault and what I should have done differently.” (From the thoughts on pg. 69)

Harms inventory is done in paragraph form. We first cover all our sex relationships. Write a chronological history of the relationship. From how you met through the relationships end, hitting all high and low points of the relationship, followed by nine questions about the relationship.

After all sex relationships are covered, check the rest of your life to see if you have other harms outstanding (ie: stealing, cheating, lying, adultery, assault, verbal abuse, damaged property etc.) to family, friends, employers, co-workers, neighbors, acquaintances etc.

Nine questions asked about past sex relationships: (69:1)

1. Where was I selfish?
2. Where was I dishonest?
3. Where was I Inconsiderate?
4. Whom did I hurt?
5. Did I unjustifiably arouse jealousy?
6. Did I unjustifiably arouse suspicion?
7. Did I unjustifiably arouse bitterness?
8. Where was I at fault?
9. What should I have done instead?

## **An example of The Sex Ideal Prayer: Asked during step 4 before harms inventory**

**“God, please mold my ideals and help me live up to them. Lord, help me find the right sex ideal for me and please guide me in each questionable sex situation. Give me sanity, that I may see your truth and give me the strength to do the right thing in all areas of my life. If my sex ideal proves very troublesome for me, help me throw myself the harder into helping others. Help me think of their needs and help me work for them. Father, please take me out of myself and quiet my imperious urge for improper sexual conduct, help me yield to your will and keep me from heartache. Amen”** (from the thoughts on pages 69 and 70)

**The Sex Ideal – formed between you and God. Take the high points from your past sex relation experiences and transfer them to your ideal. Take all the negatives and low spots from your past sex experiences and take their opposite. Transfer the opposites to your ideal.**

## **An example of A Pre-Fifth Step Prayer: I ask this before I take the Fifth step...**

**“God, please remove my fear and help me be completely Honest in what I am about to do. Please God, give me the Courage, Faith and Strength I need to share with this person my whole truth; starting with the things I swore I’d take with me to the grave. Amen”**

## **Step Five**

With whom do we take the fifth step?

1. Those belonging to a religious denomination which requires confession must, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority whose duty it is to receive it. (74:0)
2. Though no religious connection, we may still do well to talk with someone ordained by an established religion. (74:0)
3. search our acquaintance for a close-mouthed, understanding friend. (74:1)
4. Perhaps our doctor or psychologist will be the person. (74:1)
5. It may be one of our own family, but we cannot disclose anything to our wives or our parents which will hurt them and make them unhappy. (74:1)

### **When we decide who is to hear our story:**

- 1.) **we waste no time. We have a written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk. (75:1)**
- 2.) **We explain to our partner what we are about to do and why we have to do it. (75:1)**
- 3.) **He should realize that we are engaged upon a life and death errand. Most people approached in this way will be glad to help; they will be honored by our confidence. (75:1)**
- 4.) **We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past. (75:1)**

Returning home we find a place where we can :

- 1.) be quiet for an hour, (75:3)
  - 2.) carefully reviewing what we have done. (75:3)
  - 3.) We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better. (75:3)
  - 4.) Taking this book down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. (pg 59)
- Carefully reading the first five proposals. (75:3)
- 1.) we ask if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. (75:3)
  - 6.) Is our work solid so far? (75:3)
  - 7.) Are the stones properly in place? (75:3)
  - 8.) Have we skimped on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand? (75:3)

## **An example of the Quiet Hour Prayer: asked during the quiet hour...**

**“God, Thank you for helping me through this work and for showing me the truth about myself. Lord, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, for helping me know you better. Amen” (from the thoughts on pg. 75)**

## **Step Six**

- 1.) **Are you now ready to let God remove from you all the things which you have admitted are objectionable? (76:1)**

## 2.)Can He now take them all-every one? (76:1)

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

**An example of the Sixth Step Prayer:** asked during the sixth step...

**“God, please remove the fear from me, the fear which blocks me from the truth about myself. Father, help me find the willingness I need, to ask you, to remove from me, all my objectionable characteristics and defects. Amen”** (from the thoughts on pg. 76)

**An example of a Sixth Step Meditation:** asked during the sixth step when we are unwilling...

**“God, Does my lack of willingness have anything to do with whether I will drink again?”**

## Step Seven

(from the original manuscript of the Big Book) We get down on our knees and ...

❖ ❖ (76:2)**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 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."**

**An example of a pre - eighth Step Prayer:** asked before the eighth step...

**“God please remove my fear and show me the truth, Show me all of the people I have harmed with my behavior. Amen”**

Step eight

Step eight comes from our fourth step inventory. The list is compiled with our sponsor during the fifth step and is expanded, reviewed, labeled + for willing, - for unwilling, and finally all our eighth step cards are numbered in each category (+ or -) easiest to hardest.

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |         |     |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|-----|
| John Smith<br>125 south st.<br>Madison, NJ (973) 555-5555<br><b>Tell Him:</b><br>I will not get over drinking until I straighten out the past.<br>If an enemy- confess my ill feeling and regret.<br><b>Don't:</b> emphasize spirituality unless asked; if so - use tact and common sense.<br>Don't tell him what to do; only my faults are to be discussed.<br><br>Be Calm, frank, open.<br>If I owe money, I will make the best deal I can. | (FRONT) | (+) |
| <b>I know I have caused you this harm:</b><br>I beat you up, stole your money, slept with your wife<br><br><b>Q:</b> “Are there any more harms I have caused you, which I may not know about?”<br><b>Q:</b> “Do you need to tell me how any of this hurt you?” <b>shut up and listen!</b><br><b>Q:</b> “Is there anything I can do to correct this wrong?”<br><b>A:</b>                                                                       | (BACK)  |     |



# Step Nine

Armed with our cards we start making appointments and we make our amends. The general rule is “**always make amends face to face if at all possible**”.

- 1.) Before making any amend, always run the amend past a sponsor. This keeps you from having ulterior motives and ensures you will not inadvertently hurt anyone with the amend.
- 2.) Pray for strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be.

On the amend we have our card and we:

- 1.) We go out to our fellows (76:3)
- 2.) repair the damage done in the past. (76:3)
- 3.) We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. (76:3)
- 4.) 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.* (76:3)

**An example of a pre - ninth Step Prayer:** asked before attempting amends...

**“God, with regard to this amend, please remove my fear and give me strength, courage and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. Amen”** (from the thoughts on pg. 79)

**An example of a Ninth Step Meditation:** asked when we are unwilling...

**“Dear God, please show me if finishing my amends has anything to do with my drinking again or not...”**

With our family we have ongoing amends which require daily attention and prayer.

**An example of a Ninth Step Prayer:** asked daily as an ongoing amend...

**“God, please show me how to find Patience, Tolerance, Kindness and Love in my Heart, my Mind and my Soul. Lord, please help me show these attributes to my family and also, to those about me. Amen”** (from the thoughts on pg. 83)

**Other ongoing ninth step passages from the Big Book:**

- 1.) The alcoholic continues to demonstrate that he can be sober, considerate, and helpful, regardless of what anyone says or does. (99:1)
- 2.) Patience and good temper are most necessary. (111:1)
- 3.) Live and let live is the rule. If you both show a willingness to remedy your own defects, there will be little need to criticize each other. (118:2)
- 4.) When resentful thoughts come, try to pause and count your blessings. (gratitude list) (119:0)
- 5.) We grow by our willingness to face and rectify errors and convert them into assets. (124:1)
- 6.) It is possible to dig up past misdeeds so they become a blight, a veritable plague... So we think that unless some good and useful purpose is to be served, past occurrences should not be discussed. (124:3)
- 7.) He is not likely to get far in any direction if he fails to show unselfishness and love under his own roof. We know there are difficult wives and families, but the man who is getting over alcoholism must remember he did much to make them so. (127:2)
- 8.) Giving, rather than getting, will become the guiding principle. (127:2)
- 9.) We have three little mottoes which are apropos. Here they are:  
*First Things First*  
*Live and Let Live*  
*Easy Does It.* (135:4)
- 10.) The greatest enemies of us alcoholics are resentment, jealousy, envy, frustration, and fear. (145:3)

## Step Ten

The Big Book says...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. This means that once we start the fourth step we set out on a journey to do daily inventory. From now on, We clean up our messes as we go along. We do this through action (spot check inventory) and it all starts with prayer.

**An example of a Tenth Step Prayer:** asked daily to help us stay on the beam...

“God, please remove from me: selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. If these feelings crop up, help me to immediately share these feelings with others. Help me quickly make amends to others for my wrongs, that I might live serenely with them. Lord, Help me to not think of myself, instead, help me think of others and help me be loving and tolerant toward them. Father, Keep me spiritually fit today, by helping me to not fight with anything or anyone - especially alcohol. Please God, help me not to drink alcohol today.” (from the thoughts on pg. 84)

Step Eleven

❁ ❁ (85:1) **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.**

**Bill gives us the daily action we need to take in the form of a nightly review and morning prayers. Here are the twelve nightly questions:**

1. Were we (was I) resentful?
2. Were we (was I) selfish?
3. Were we (was I) dishonest?
4. Were we (was I) afraid?
5. Do we (do I) owe an apology?
6. Have we (have I) kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?
7. Were we (was I) kind toward all?
8. Were we (was I) Loving toward all?
9. What could we have done better?
10. Were we (was I) thinking of ourselves most of the time?
11. Were we (was I) thinking of what we could do for others?
12. Were we (was I) thinking of what we could pack into the stream of life?

**An example of a Eleventh Step Prayer:** asked daily after our nightly questions review...

“ God, please forgive me for my failings today. I know that because of my failings, I was not able to be as effective, as I could have been for you. Please forgive me and help me live thy will better tomorrow. Father, I ask you now to show me how to correct the errors I have just outlined. Guide me and direct me, remove my arrogance and my fear, show me lord how to make my relationships right and grant me the humility and strength to do thy will. Amen” (from the thoughts on pg.86)

**I now make a list of the ways in which I intend to correct my wrongs. If I was resentful, I write out the resentment as specified in the Big Book. If dishonest, selfish, unkind, unloving, I owe an apology or if I have kept things to myself, I write out the amend I will make tomorrow. As for the rest of the questions, I meditate on how I can improve in those areas. If an answer comes to me, I write it down so I won't forget and when I say my morning prayers, I ask God for help in those areas - if it is His will...**

**For the morning we have several prayers:**

**“God, please direct my thinking today and keep my thinking divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.**

**Father, please help me employ my mental faculties, that my thought-life might be placed on the higher plane of inspiration and help me pay attention to this vital sixth sense.”** (From the thoughts on pg. 86)

**“God please give me inspiration, help me have an intuitive thought or a decision. Help me lord, not to struggle, instead, help me to relax and take it easy.”** (From the thoughts on pg. 86)

**“God, please show me all through this day, what my next step is to be. Give me the strength, faith and courage I need to take care of the problems in my life today. I ask especially Lord, that you free me from self-will and fear.”**

(From the thoughts on pg. 86)

**“God, please give me an intuitive thought or decision to help me with this problem. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful, that you are running the show. Free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done always. Amen”** (From the thoughts on pg. 86)

**I place all the daily prayers together which works very well for me (see prayer sheet) and by doing it that way, If I can remember to say these prayers on a daily basis, the Big Book says...**

**We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. (88:0)**

#### Step Twelve

**Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. (89:1) and**

**Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery. (97:1) Therefore, Step twelve is of vital importance to long term sobriety. Not to mention the A.A. creed:**

**“I am responsible... when anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of A.A. always to be there. And for that: I am responsible.”** Here are the basic directions for twelve step calls:

- 1.) Ask God to direct your actions and the outcome of the call.**
- 2.) Be prepared for anything.**
- 3.) If you don't get drunk on the call – it's a successful twelve step call.**
- 4.) Always go with someone, it is safer that way. One person is the twelve stepper and the other is the safety.**
- 5.) Take along booze, meeting book, candy, water, plastic bags and paper towels.**
- 6.) Cooperate; never criticize. To be helpful is our only aim. (89:3)**
- 7.) If he does not want to stop drinking, don't waste time trying to persuade him. (90:1)**
- 8.) Don't deal with him when he is very drunk (90:3)**
- 9.) If he does not want to see you, never force yourself upon him. (90:4)**
- 10.) Call on him while he is still jittery (91:2)**
- 11.) Show him the mental twist Which leads to the first drink of a spree. (91:4)**
- 12.) Talk about the conditions of body and mind (92:1)**
- 13.) Tell him exactly what happened to you (93:0)**
- 14.) Outline the program of action, It is important for him to realize that your attempt to pass this on**

to him plays a vital part in your own recovery. Make it plain he is under no obligation to you (94:1)

15.) 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. (95:1)

16.) If he is sincerely interested and wants to see you again, ask him to read this book in the interval.

After doing that, he must decide for himself whether he wants to go on. (95:3)

#### Call Number Two:

1.) Suppose now you are making your second visit to a man. He has read this volume and says he is prepared to go through with the Twelve Steps of the program of recovery. (96:2)

The second visit is where we begin the work with the new man and we take him through the first few steps. As a minimum, we go from the dust cover promise up through the A B C's and if he can say "yes" to them, and he is ready, **we offer to take the third step together!**

2.) 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. (98:2)

3.) Remind the prospect that his recovery is not dependent upon people. It is dependent upon his relationship with God. (99:3)

4.) Both you and the new man must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress. If you persist, remarkable things will happen. (100:1)

5.) So our rule is not to avoid a place where there is drinking, *if we have a legitimate reason for being there.* (101:3)

6.) 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. (102:2)

7.) 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. (103:1)

8.) *After all, our problems were of our own making. Bottles were only a symbol. Besides, we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. We have to!* (103:3)

9.) We need to become **"A Living Example"** (12:1) and carry the true message to the alcoholic who still suffers.

**"Show The Way" ...**

**I would rather see a sermon - than to hear one, any day.**

**I would rather one walk with me - than merely tell the way.**

**For the eye is a better pupil - more willing than the ear.**

**Fine council is confusing - but example is always clear.**

**I can soon learn to do it - if you let me see it done.**

**I can watch your hands in action - but your tongue, too fast may run.**

And the best of all the preachers - are the men who live their creed.  
For seeing good in action - is what everybody needs.

I may misunderstand you - in the high advise you give.  
But there is no misunderstanding - in how you act and how you live.

**A Declaration of Unity**

**This we owe to A.A.'s future:  
To place our common welfare first;  
To keep our fellowship united.  
For on A.A. unity depend our lives,  
And the lives of those to come.**

## Cliché's & Half Truths of the Program

All of the following statements are Middle of the road solutions (pg.25:3) ; they may work for a time but, in the end they deceive and keep one from finding the strength needed to seek a true recovery in the spiritual experience of the twelve steps...

1. Don't drink and go to meetings.- If I could do that I wouldn't need meetings!
  - A. it's don't drink, go to meetings, get a sponsor, read the literature, work the steps and hopefully you will come to know a spiritual power that will keep you sober.
1. A.A. teaches me to live life on life's terms.
  - A. A.A. teaches me to live life on **God's** terms.
2. The Steps and the Big Book will keep you sober.
  - A. it's the spiritual power we come to know while working the program that keeps us sober.
3. If you are in the rooms then you are in the right place.
  - A. a lot of people go to treatment who are not alcoholic – they just have good insurance. Judges send people to A.A. who are just heavy drinkers – they just got caught. People come to A.A. to get their spouse off their back – doesn't make them a drunk.
  - B. The truth is there are people in A.A. who are not alcoholics and they are not in the right Place if it is a closed meeting. This isn't to say the steps will not help them with their problems If they can find out what it is that they are powerless over. If you are alcoholic the Big Book Has a solution for you.
4. When your sponsor says "we need to talk"
  - A. You need to shut up and listen
5. When you sponsor says "wait just a second"
  - A. In just a few minutes your sponsor will completely destroy what you currently believe.
6. I no longer have a problem with alcohol, I just have a living problem.
  - A. Then I guess you can go out and drink safely if alcohol is no longer a problem.
7. My worst day sober is better than my best day drunk.
  - A. Bullshit, we all had some great times in the beginning it was just after we lost control That it got really bad. I wouldn't trade sobriety today but, there have been some pretty Bad days in sobriety.
8. A.A. is just about not drinking
  - A. pg. 18 says elimination of alcohol is just a beginning. There is a whole lot more to the program than just not drinking.
9. I don't know how it works, I just know it works.
  - A. Read How it works– that's how it works... It starts on pg. 58 in the Big Book.
10. It's a selfish program.
  - A. No way! Pg.#62 Selfishness-Self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles...Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us!



11. Just think the drink through (like that is some sort of defense against the next drink?)
  - A. At a certain point in the drinking of every alcoholic, he passes into a state where **the most powerful desire to stop drinking is of absolutely no avail**. This tragic situation has already arrived in practically every case long before it is suspected.  
*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.* (pg.24)
12. Meeting makers make it.
  - A. Yes, if they work the program of A.A. as written in the Big Book; have a Spiritual Awakening as the results of working the steps. If they just come to meetings eventually alcohol will get them and they die an alcoholic death.
13. Just put the plug in the jug. Or Just don't drink.
  - A. If I could do that with any success I wouldn't need A.A. !
14. If it's God's will it feels good.
  - A. Obviously you have never done a 4<sup>th</sup> step or had to make amends because that's God's will and it doesn't feel good.
15. Knowledge is power.
  - A. Not when it comes to alcoholism. You can not think yourself into sobriety. Our best thinking got us here to A.A.. If we could have thought our way to sobriety we would have. Our ego's would have seen to that, just so we wouldn't have to humble ourselves.
16. The newcomer is the most important person in the room.
  - A. No, the newcomer is the best example in the room of why we had better do what the Big Book says and the program requires. The newcomer needs help and for that we are responsible, but they are only a perfect example of why we should be grateful. Thank God that isn't us anymore!
17. We in A.A. need to love ourselves a whole lot more.
  - A. Not if we have done a thorough inventory! We find we have loved ourselves far too much! Our real problem is to learn how to love others more!!!
18. Steps 10, 11, and 12 are the maintenance step...
  - A. No way, they are the growth steps. If you are willing to do the work to get to step ten then you have grown dramatically. The tenth step promises start to come true and if you do what the Text requires on steps 10, 11, and 12 you will grow in the realm of the spirit. You will develop the vital sixth sense the Big Book talks about. There is no maintenance about it; it's all growth of your spirit.
18. A drug is a drug is a drug or I'm just an addict and alcohol is just another drug.
  - A. What happens when the addict takes their drug, their craving goes away. Not so for the alcoholic. He wants more.

For years I have heard in A.A. that “there are no musts only suggestions”. Well, like most half truths in A.A., if you hear them long enough you begin to believe them...

**So, what does the program really say? It says...**

“We have concluded to publish an anonymous volume setting forth the problem as we see it. We shall bring to task our combined experience and knowledge. This should suggest a useful program for anyone concerned with a drinking problem.” (19)

So, it's the whole program that is suggested. The Big Book says there are other ways you might recover from alcoholism and if you so choose, have at it. But it also says, that this is the only way we know to recover. You don't have to take the A.A. program, only if you want what we have. If you do want what we have, then the program has some very definite requirements. The Big Book is very clear. It says...

“If you are an alcoholic who wants to get over it, you may already be asking – What do I have to do?  
It is the purpose of this book to answer such questions specifically.”

The Big Book is a Text Book and by its own admission, it offers us specific instructions for recovery from alcoholism. If you want our program, the program of A.A., these are instructions not suggestions. The only suggestion we have to offer is our whole program and our program is full of musts, have to's and requirements. I have pulled several out of our text and they follow...

Oh, by the way, to me, “Never” is just like a must, it's just that “never” points us in a positive direction...

### **MUSTS OF THE BIG BOOK:**

1. Convincing testimony **must** surely come from medical men who have had experience with the sufferings of our members and have witnessed our return to health.(xxiii)
2. "Doctor, I cannot go on like this! I have everything to live for! **I must** stop, but I cannot! **You must** help me!" (xxvii)
3. Faced with this problem, if a doctor is honest with himself, **he must** sometimes feel his own inadequacy. (xxvii)
4. Though the aggregate of recoveries resulting from psychiatric effort is considerable, we **physicians must** admit we have made little impression upon the problem as a whole. (xxvii)
5. In the course of his third treatment he acquired certain ideas concerning a possible means of recovery. As part of his rehabilitation he (Bill W.) commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing upon them that **they must** do likewise with still others. This has become the basis of a rapidly growing fellowship of these men and their families. This man and over one hundred others appear **to have recovered.** (xxiii)
6. In this statement he (Dr. Silkworth) confirms what we who have suffered alcoholic torture **must** believe that the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind. (xxiv)
7. More often than not, **it is imperative** that a man's brain be cleared before he is approached, as he has then a better chance of understanding and accepting what we have to offer. (xxiv)
8. The message which can interest and hold these alcoholic people **must** have depth and weight. In nearly all cases, their ideals **must** be grounded in a power greater than themselves if they are to re-create their lives. (xxvi)
9. I simply **had to** believe in a Spirit of the Universe, who knew neither time nor limitation (10)
10. I **must** turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all.(14)
11. Particularly was it **imperative** to work with others.(14)
12. **Of necessity** there will have to be discussion of matters medical, psychiatric, social, and religious.(19)
13. **Our very lives**, as ex-problem drinkers, **depend** upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs. (19)
14. Almost none of us liked the selfsearching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings **which the process requires** for its successful consummation.(25)
15. **There was nothing left for us but** to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our Feet. (25)
16. It is only by fully disclosing ourselves and our problems that they will be persuaded to say, "Yes, I am one of them too; **I must** have this thing." (29)
17. We learned that **we had to** fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, **has to** be smashed. (30)
18. If we are planning to stop drinking, **there must** be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol. (33)
19. But after a while we had to face the fact that **we must** find a spiritual basis of

- Life - or else.(44)
20. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. (45)
  21. Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you. (47)
  22. Many of us have been so touchy that even casual reference to spiritual things made us bristle with antagonism. This sort of thinking had to be abandoned. (48)
  23. We had to ask ourselves why we shouldn't apply to our human problems this same readiness to change our point of view. (52)
  24. 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. (52)
  25. 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. (53)
  26. 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. (55)
  27. The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. (60)
  28. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! (62)
  29. We had to have God's help.(62)
  30. First of all, we had to quit playing God. (62)
  31. Our liquor was but a symptom. We had to get down to causes and conditions. (64)
  32. If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. (66)
  33. We saw that these resentments must be mastered. (66)
  34. Whatever our ideal turns out to be, we must be willing to grow toward it. We must be willing to make amends where we have done harm, provided that we do not bring about still more harm in so doing. (69)
  35. We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. (73)
  36. Those of us belonging to a religious denomination which requires confession must, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority whose duty it is to receive it. (74)
  37. The rule is we must be hard on ourself, but always considerate of others. (74)
  38. It is important that he be able to keep a confidence; that he fully understand and approve what we are driving at; that he will not try to change our plan. But we must not use this as a mere excuse to postpone. (75)
  39. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. (76)
  40. Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue. (77)
  41. 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. (78)
  42. We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything. (79)
  43. 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. (80)
  44. Sometimes we hear an alcoholic say that the only thing he needs to do is to keep sober. Certainly he must keep sober, for there will be no home if he doesn't. But he is yet a long way from making good to the wife or parents whom for years he has so shockingly treated. (82)
  45. Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead. (83)
  46. The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it. (83)
  47. We must remember that ten or twenty years of drunkenness would make a skeptic out of anyone. (83)
  48. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. (85)
  49. "How can I best serve Thee-Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. (85)
  50. 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. (85)

51. But **we must** be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. (86)
52. 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. (89)
53. The family **must** decide these things. (90)
54. To be vital, **faith must** be accompanied by self sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action. (93)
55. **Never** talk down to an alcoholic from any moral or spiritual hilltop; simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools for his inspection. (95)
56. If he is sincerely interested and wants to see you again, ask him to read this book in the interval. After doing that, **he must** decide for himself whether he wants to go on. (95)
57. He **should not** be pushed or prodded by you, his wife, or his friends. If he is to find God, the desire **must** come from within. (95)
58. **Never avoid** these responsibilities, but be sure you are doing the right thing if you assume them. (97)
59. A kindly act once in a while isn't enough. You **have to** act the Good Samaritan every day, if need be. (97)
60. Argument and fault-finding are to be avoided like the plague. In many homes this is a difficult thing to do, but **it must** be done if any results are to be expected. (98)
61. But **we must** try to repair the damage immediately lest we pay the penalty by a spree.(99)
  
62. If their old relationship is to be resumed **it must** be on a better basis, since the former did not work. (99)
63. Both you and the new man **must** walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress.(100)
64. People have said **we must** not go where liquor is served; **we must** not have it in our homes; **we must** shun friends who drink; **we must** avoid moving pictures which show drinking scenes; **we must** not go into bars; our friends **must** hide their bottles if we go to their houses; **we mustn't** think or be reminded about alcohol at all. Our experience shows that this is not necessarily so. (101)
65. But some of us think we should not serve liquor to anyone. We **never** argue this question. (102)
66. We are careful **never** to show intolerance or hatred of drinking as an institution. (103)
67. Besides, we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. **We have to!** (103)
68. Wait until repeated stumbling convinces him **he must** act, for the more you hurry him the longer his recovery may be delayed. (113)
69. But sometimes **you must** start life anew. (114)
70. While you need not discuss your husband at length, you can quietly let your friends know the nature of his illness. But **you must** be on guard not to embarrass or harm your husband. (115)
71. You will no longer be self-conscious or feel that **you must** apologize as though your husband were a weak character. (115)
72. These family dissensions are very dangerous, especially to your husband. Often **you must** carry the burden of avoiding them or keeping them under control. (117)
73. **Never** forget that resentment is a deadly hazard to an alcoholic. (117)
74. Your husband knows he owes you more than sobriety. He wants to make good. Yet **you must** not expect too much. (118)
75. Though it is infinitely better that he have no relapse at all, as has been true with many of our men, it is by no means a bad thing in some cases. Your husband will see at once that **he must** redouble his spiritual activities if he expects to survive.(120)
76. We **never, never** try to arrange a man's life so as to shield him from temptation; The slightest disposition on your part to guide his appointments or his affairs so he will not be tempted will be noticed. (120)
77. **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.(127)
78. He can scarcely square the account in his lifetime. But **he must** see the danger of over-concentration on financial success. Although financial recovery is on the way for many of us, we found we could not place money first. For us, material well-being always followed spiritual progress; it never preceded. (127)
79. We know there are difficult wives and families, but the man who is getting over alcoholism **must** remember he did much to make them so. (127)

80. We have come to believe He would like us to keep our heads in the clouds with Him, but that our feet ought to be firmly planted on earth. That is where our fellow travelers are, and that is where our work **must be** done. These are the realities for us. We have found nothing incompatible between a powerful spiritual experience and a life of sane and happy usefulness. (130)
81. Whether the family goes on a spiritual basis or not, the alcoholic member **has to** if he would recover. **The others must** be convinced of his new status beyond the shadow of a doubt. Seeing is believing to most families who have lived with a drinker. (135)
82. State that you know about his drinking, and that **it must stop**. You might say you appreciate his abilities, would like to keep him, but cannot if he continues to drink. (141)
83. For most alcoholics who are drinking, or who are just getting over a spree, a certain amount of physical treatment is desirable, even **imperative**. (142)
84. Though you are providing him with the best possible medical attention, he should understand that **he must** undergo a change of heart. To get over drinking will require a transformation of thought and attitude. We all had to place recovery above everything, for without recovery we would have lost both home and business. (143)
85. While on the subject of confidence, can you adopt the attitude that so far as you are concerned this will be a strictly personal matter, that his alcoholic derelictions, the treatment about to be undertaken, will **never** be discussed without his consent? (143)
86. When the man is presented with this volume it is best that no one tell him **he must** abide by its suggestions. **The man must** decide for himself. (144)
87. An alcoholic who has recovered, but holds a relatively unimportant job, can talk to a man with a better position. Being on a radically different basis of life, he will **never** take advantage of the situation. (146)
88. For he knows **he must** be honest if he would live at all. (146)
89. The old pleasures were gone. They were but memories. **Never** could we recapture the great moments of the past. (151)
90. I know **I must** get along without liquor, but how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute?" Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous. (152)
91. They will approach still other sick ones and fellowships of Alcoholics Anonymous may spring up in each city and hamlet, havens for those who **must find** a way out. (153)
92. But what about his responsibilities-his family and the men who would die because they would not know how to get well, ah-yes, those other alcoholics? There **must be** many such in this town. He would phone a clergyman. His sanity returned and he thanked God. (154)
93. He saw that he would **have to** face his problems squarely that God might give him mastery. (155)
94. Both saw that **they must** keep spiritually active. (156)
95. Though they knew **they must** help other alcoholics if they would remain sober, that motive became secondary. It was transcended by the happiness they found in giving themselves for others. (159)
96. God will determine that, so **you must** remember that your real reliance is always upon Him. He will show you how to create the fellowship you crave. (164)

# 11<sup>th</sup> Step Nightly Questions

Evening Meditation Questions : I put the questions in the form of “was I”...

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1. Were we (was I) resentful?
2. Were we (was I) selfish?
3. Were we (was I) dishonest?
4. Were we (was I) afraid?
5. Do we (do I) owe an apology?
6. Have we (have I) kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?
7. Were we (was I) kind toward all?
8. Were we (was I) Loving toward all?
9. What could we have done better?
10. Were we (was I) thinking of ourselves most of the time?
11. Were we (was I) thinking of what we could do for others?
12. Were we (was I) thinking of what we could pack into the stream of life?

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

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

“ God, please forgive me for my failings today. I know that because of my failings, I was not able to be as effective, as I could have been for you. Please forgive me and help me live thy will better tomorrow. Father, I ask you now to show me how to correct the errors I have just outlined. Guide me and direct me, remove my arrogance and my fear, show me lord how to make my relationships right and grant me the humility and strength to do thy will. Amen”

**I now make a list of the ways in which I intend to correct my wrongs. If I was resentful, I write out the resentment as specified in the Big Book. If dishonest, selfish, unkind, unloving, I owe an apology or if I have kept things to myself, I write out the amend I will make tomorrow. As for the rest of the questions, I meditate on how I can improve in those areas. If an answer comes to me, I write it down so I won't forget and when I say my morning prayers, I ask God for help in those areas - if it is His will...**



# 11<sup>th</sup> Step Morning Meditations

Morning Meditation

**“God please direct my thinking today and keep my thinking clear of dishonest or self-seeking motives.**

**Lord, please keep me divorced from self-pity and help me employ my mental faculties, that my thought-life might be placed on a higher plane, the plane of inspiration.”**

Now, I am ready to do the first two items.

3.) I think about the 24 hours ahead – Here I meditate about what I would like to be and I think about what God wants me to be.

4.) Consider my plans for the day - Here I think about what God wants me to do and how I am to live His will. I come up with my vision for what God's will is for me today.

I already have a list of amends from last night's 10<sup>th</sup> step. I plan to start out my day with this list of amends and I ask myself, what else would God want me to do today?

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.

This is the prayer I say...

**“God please give me inspiration, help me have an intuitive thought or a decision about this problem I face. Help me lord, not to struggle, instead, help me to relax and take it easy.”**

(from the thoughts on pg. 86)

Finally, Bill gives us a prayer to end our period of meditation with. He writes...

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer...

This is the prayer I say...

**“God, please show me all through this day, what my next step is to be. Give me the strength, faith and courage I need to take care of the problems in my life today. I ask especially Lord, that you free me from self-will and fear.”**

Bill then gives us some things to watch out for, while considering this prayer...

We 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**.

Now, we are supposed to go out and live our day, doing God's will for us. What are we to do, when things start to go wrong for us? Bill writes...

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."**

In the form of a prayer, it could look like this...

**“God, please give me an intuitive thought or decision to help me with this problem. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful, that you are running the show. Free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done always. Amen”**

# **Dave's Daily Prayers**

**During my morning meditation, I say the following prayers as a minimum: To start off with the big book gives us a prayer...**

**“God, please direct my thinking today and keeping it divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.**

**Father, please help me employ my mental faculties, that my thought-life might be placed on the higher plane of inspiration and help me pay attention to this vital sixth sense.”**

“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!”

**“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.”**

**“God, please show me how to find Patience, Tolerance, Kindness and Love in my Heart, my Mind and my Soul. Father, please help me show these attributes to my family and to those about me.”**

**“God, please remove from me: selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. If these feelings crop up, help me to immediately share these feelings with others. Help me quickly make amends to others for my wrongs, that I might live serenely with them. Lord, Help me to not think of myself, instead, help me think of others and help me be loving and tolerant toward them. Father, Keep me spiritually fit today, by helping me to not fight with anything or anyone - especially alcohol and please God, help me not to drink alcohol today.”**

“God please help me live the twelve steps, twelve traditions and all the principles of A.A. in my entire life. Remove from me my character defects, specifically profanity, dishonesty, arrogance, false pride, sarcasm, \_\_\_\_\_ and fear. Watch over me, protect me and care for me. Give me the strength, Courage and faith I need to do thy bidding. Keep me mindful of thy presence Lord and help me know you better.”

**“God, should I find myself agitated, doubtful or indecisive today, please give me inspiration, help me to have an intuitive thought or a decision about this problem I face. Father, help me not to struggle, instead, help me to relax and take it easy. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful, that you are running the show. Lord, free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done always.”**

“God, please show me all through this day, what my next step is to be. Give me the strength, faith and courage I need to take care of the problems in my life today. I ask especially Lord, that you free me from self-will and fear. Amen”

The Big Book says...

“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. That means we have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God.”**

Well, I was taught that if you were talking to God, You were praying and if you were listening, You were meditating.

Therefore, the problem becomes, How do we talk to God? Well, the Big Book gives us some thoughts and direct prayers for just this reason. I have enclosed them here as they relate to taking the steps...

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## Prayers of the Big Book :

### The Third step prayer:

**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!”** pg. 63

**An example of A Pre - Fourth Step Prayer:** To be said before starting step 4.

**“God please come into me and direct me.**

**Father, Show me your will. Help me see beyond what I think I know about myself. Show me your Truth Father; the real Truth about myself.**

**God, please give me the patience, tolerance, faith, strength and courage I need to do this work.**

**Remove my fears of what I may find out about myself.**

**Help me God... Help me to see and experience the Truth about myself. ”**

**The Resentment prayer:** Asked when we are resentful, or during step 4.

**God please help me show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend. Help me to see that , This is a sick man. Show me how can I be helpful to him. God save me from being angry.**

Lord help me to avoid retaliation or argument. I know I cannot be helpful to all people, but at least show me how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one. Thy will be done. **(from the thoughts on 67:0)**

**An example of The Fear Prayer:** Asked during step 4 after we finish Fears.

**“ God, Thank you for helping me be honest enough to see the truth about myself. Thank you for showing me my fears and now that you have shown me my fears, please remove them from me.**

**Lord, help me outgrow my root fears; The fears which have haunted me and blocked me from doing thy bidding. Direct my attention to what you would have me be and Help me become that, which you would have me be. Demonstrate through me and Help me do thy will always. Amen”** (from the thoughts on 68:3)

**An example of The pre-harms Prayer:** Asked during step 4 before we start harms.

**“God please help me to be free of fear as I attempt to shine the spotlight of truth across my past sex relations.**

**Lord, please show me where my behavior has harmed others and help me to see the truth these relationships hold for me. Help me see where I have been at fault and what I should have done differently.”** (From the thoughts on pg. 69)

**An example of The Sex Ideal Prayer:** Asked during step 4

“God, please mold my ideals and help me live up to them. Lord, help me find the right sex ideal for me and please guide me in each questionable sex situation. Give me sanity, that I may see your truth and give me the strength to do the right thing in all areas of my life. If my sex ideal proves very troublesome for me, help me throw myself the harder into helping others. Help me think of their needs and help me work for them. Father, please take me out of myself and quiet my imperious urge for improper sexual conduct, help me yield to your will and keep me from heartache. Amen” (from the thoughts on pages 69 and 70)

**An example of A Pre-Fifth Step Prayer: I ask this before I take the Fifth step...**

“God, please remove my fear and help me be completely Honest in what I am about to do. Please God, give me the Courage, Faith and Strength I need to share with this person my whole truth; starting with the things I swore I’d take with me to the grave. Amen”

**An example of The Fifth Step Prayer: asked after the fifth step...**

“God, Thank you for helping me through this work and for showing me the truth about myself. Lord, I thank you from the bottom of my heart, for helping me know you better. Amen”

**An example of The Sixth Step Prayer:**

“God, please remove the fear from me, the fear which blocks me from the truth about myself. Father, help me find the willingness I need, to ask you, to remove from me, all my objectionable characteristics and defects. Amen” (from the thoughts on pg76)

**An example of A Sixth Step Meditation : said if we are unwilling...**

“Does my lack of willingness have anything to do with whether I will drink again?”

**The Seventh step prayer:**

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 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.” (pg76)

**An example of An Eighth Step Prayer:**

“God please remove my fear and show me the truth, Show me all of the people I have harmed with my behavior. Amen”

**The First Ninth Step Prayer: Asked before we attempt every amend...**

**“God, with regard to this amend, please remove my fear and give me strength, courage and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. Amen”** (from the thoughts on pg. 79)

**The Second Ninth Step Prayer: To clean house with our family we pray each morning...**

“God, please show me how to find Patience, Tolerance, Kindness and Love in my Heart, my Mind and my Soul. Lord, please help me show these attributes to my family and also, to those about me. Amen” (from the thoughts on pg. 83)

**An example of A Tenth Step Prayer:**

**“God, please remove from me: selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. If these feelings crop up, help me to immediately share these feelings with others. Help me quickly make**

amends to others for my wrongs, that I might live serenely with them. Lord, Help me to not think of myself, instead, help me think of others and help me be loving and tolerant toward them. Father, Keep me spiritually fit today, by helping me to not fight with anything or anyone - especially alcohol and please God, help me not to drink alcohol today.” (from the thoughts on pg. 84)

**An example of An Eleventh Step Prayer: Said during evening meditation**

“God, Please forgive me for the things I have just discovered and written down. I know these wrongs have diminished my usefulness to you today and for that I am truly sorry.

Father, please Give me the strength, Courage, Faith and willingness I need, that I might right these relationships tomorrow and please show me how I might make amends for my wrongs. Amen” (from the thoughts on pg. 86)

**An example of An Eleventh Step Prayer: Said during morning meditation**

“God, please direct my thinking today and keeping it divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.

Father, please help me employ my mental faculties, that my thought-life might be placed on the higher plane of inspiration and help me pay attention to this vital sixth sense.” (from the thoughts on pg. 86)

**An example of An Eleventh Step Prayer: Said at a time of indecision...**

“God please give me inspiration, help me have an intuitive thought or a decision about this problem I face. Help me lord, not to struggle, instead, help me to relax and take it easy.” (from the thoughts on pg. 86)

**An example of An Eleventh Step Prayer: Said at the end of our morning meditation...**

“God, please show me all through this day, what my next step is to be. Give me the strength, faith and courage I need to take care of the problems in my life today. I ask especially Lord, that you free me from self-will and fear.” (from the thoughts on pg. 87)

**An example of An Eleventh Step Prayer: Said when agitated or doubtful...**

“God, please give me an intuitive thought or decision to help me with this problem. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful, that you are running the show. Free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done always. Amen” (from the thoughts on pg. 86)

**An example of An twelfth Step Prayer:**

“God, please give me the words I should share with this person. Guide me and direct me as I try and help them find a way to sobriety. Lord, watch over me, protect me and keep me free from alcohol and if it be thy will, work through me to help them. Amen”

# Prayers in the Big Book

**During my morning meditation, I say the following prayers as a minimum:** These prayers come directly from the thoughts in the big book...

**“God, please direct my thinking today and keeping it divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.**

**Father, please help me employ my mental faculties, that my thought-life might be placed on the higher plane of inspiration and help me pay attention to this vital sixth sense.”**

**“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!”**

**“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.”**

**“God, please show me how to find Patience, Tolerance, Kindness and Love in my Heart, my Mind and my Soul. Lord, please help me show these attributes to my family and also, to those about me.**

**“God, please remove from me: selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. If these feelings crop up, help me to immediately share these feelings with others. Help me quickly make amends to others for my wrongs, that I might live serenely with them. Lord, Help me to not think of myself, instead, help me think of others and help me be loving and tolerant toward them. Father, Keep me spiritually fit today, by helping me to not fight with anything or anyone - especially alcohol and please God, help me not to drink alcohol today.”**

**“God please help me live the twelve steps, twelve traditions and all the principles of A.A. in my entire life. Remove from me my character defects, specifically profanity, dishonesty, arrogance, false pride, sarcasm, \_\_\_\_\_ and fear. Watch over me, protect me and care for me. Give me the strength, Courage and faith I need to do thy bidding. Keep me mindful of thy presence Lord and help me know you better.”**

**“God, should I find myself agitated, doubtful or indecisive today, please give me inspiration, help me to have an intuitive thought or a decision about this problem I face. Father, help me not to struggle, instead, help me to relax and take it easy. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful, that you are running the show. Lord, free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done always.”**

**“God, please show me all through this day, what my next step is to be. Give me the strength, faith and courage I need to take care of the problems in my life today. I ask especially Lord, that you free me from self-will and fear. Amen”**