

When I was a kid I was happy, joyous, & free. But I always felt like everything was a little off. It seems like I was always a half a step behind everybody else. I was shy, insecure & afraid. I thought EVERYBODY was thinking about me & I found out later that NOBODY was thinking about me. That's called self-centeredness. The problem centers in the mind & I don't live in the real world with you. I'm uncomfortable in my own skin & I'm always looking for something to make that feel better. Drinking alcohol helps me with that.

I was raised in a home where spiritual principles were taught. In our house they told us that honesty is the best policy, a real man is always honest with himself & other people. We got automatic punishment when we were caught lying. That's Step One. My Mom asked me to look out the window & I saw trees, grass, Sky, birds, cats, & people. She said, "Did you think this just popped up out of nowhere?" She told me that there's a Power greater than me created all this & all that you have to do is believe that and that's Step Two. In our house they told us that if you would make a decision to put your life in the hands of the Power that created all this, & in my house they called that power God. She said you will always have what you need no matter what happens outside or around you. My Momma was telling me that my answer was inside not outside - Step Three. In our house they told me that anytime I have a problem no matter how bad YOU think it is, come talk to us about it, a problem shared is a problem half solved, you're only as sick as your secrets, my mother used to say, "No man is an island." I used to say, "I'm going to be the first." That's Steps Four & Five. In our house my Momma used to say that the biggest room in a person's life is the room for improvement. If you can make Cs you can make Bs (grades), if you can make Bs you can make As, & if you can ask the Power that created all this to help you in ANY positive thing you want to do to make your life go forward HIS way He will always do so. That's what the Power will do & that's Steps Six & Seven. In our house they told us that anytime you hurt, harm or wrong somebody else, go make right the wrong you've done. If you owe money, pay it. If you owe time, give it. If you owe an apology, make it. Clean up your mess, that's what responsible people do, that's Steps Eight & Nine. My mother used to say you can never go forward in this life if you don't know where you are & what you need to work on to get where it is you want to go. Try going somewhere if you don't know where you are at. It's impossible. Socrates said that an uninventoried life is a waste - Step Ten. Our Grandmother said that the secret to having a good day is very simple, when you wake up in the morning slide out of the bed & get on your knees & say one thing, "Please". As you go throughout the day & you don't know what to do, ask the Power that created all this to help you. And at night before you get back into bed hit your knees again & say two words, "Thank you" - Step Eleven. And in our house they told me that the greatest thing I can do with our lives is not acquire money & material things, it was to be of service to other people. We were taught the Golden Rule, talk to folks the way you want to be talked to, treat folks the way you want to be treated, respect your elders, & offer to share what you have with your friends, cousins or brothers before you have your own, be of service to your fellow man - Step Twelve.

When I got on the bus to go to Kindergarten, I was ALREADY armed with a set of principles, spiritual in nature, that I know now as the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. It did not originate in Akron OH. Those principles are ancient, & there are people out there that live this way & they don't expect a pat on the back for it either. The results speak for themselves.

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