

HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS WITH GOD, MYSELF AND OTHERS

An AA “Big Book” Step and Tradition Study

July 5 through October 4, 2021

(All page cites from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, except as noted)

Establish a Healthy Relationship with Ourselves, including God—Steps Four, Five and Six:

Part 1, July 19: Steps Four and Five, pp. 63-75.

When I offered myself to God in my Step Three prayer, I did not become free from my will. Rather, I made a decision to begin a process to learn how to become free of the bondage of self—free from being a slave to the excessive desires and mis-use of my will. The decision I made in Step Three, to turn my will (my decisions) and my life (the consequences of my decisions) over to the care of God, needs to be put into practice to have the desired effect.

I now have the basis for a healthy relationship with God, as I learn to practice the principles of *acceptance* and *trust*. I *accept* my part, my responsibility, in this new relationship. My role with my “new Employer” is made clear in the Step Three prayer—to “offer myself” to God, to “do [God’s] will always.” I am learning to *trust* God’s leadership role in our new, healthy relationship—“to build with me and to do with me as [God] will ... to relieve me of the bondage of self ... to take away my difficulties.” The results of God’s work with me will be for me to become a good example to others I would help of God’s Power, Love and Way of Life.

God gave us the freedom of choice—self-will. We are not robots or automatons. God has offered us limitations on our use of our will. I *accept* my need to stop doing things my way. I *accept* my need to learn to do things God’s way. I *trust* God’s way is better for me than my way. “When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. (p. 63)

“Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless followed at once by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom.” (pp. 63-64)

Blocking us from what? *The purpose of my personal inventory, my honest self-examination in Steps Four, Five and Six, is to admit and become willing to let go of the things in me that are both blocking me from offering myself to God and blocking me from receiving the spiritual help I need from God.* In doing these three steps, I practice the spiritual principles that give me a healthy relationship with myself—*acceptance* and *trust*, as well as *honesty*, *restraint* and *forgiveness*. My “spiritual awakening as the result of these steps” has begun—at least in my relationship with myself. I am learning to “practice these principles”, not just debate them.

In Steps Four, Five and Six, I continue to offer myself to God, in the form of my personal inventories of my resentments, my fears and my inconsiderate sexual conduct. As I try to “take stock honestly” of myself, I *trust* God to disclose to me, and help me *accept*, the unhealthy parts of my relationship with myself. Things in me that I thought were assets for me are revealed as liabilities to me. I use the prayers in each of these personal inventories to let God guide me to use the principle of *honesty* to “discover the truth” about myself. I let God guide me to see where I can learn to practice the principle of *restraint* with my unhealthy traits. I let God guide me to learn to practice the principle of *forgiveness* with myself and others.

God uses me and my actions of writing, praying and talking in Steps Four, Five and Six to change me—to implement my decision to seek freedom from my bondage of self. God discloses to me the unhealthy relationship I have had with myself as I admit my so-called defects of character. God guides me to establish and grow a healthy relationship with myself.

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STEP FOUR.

I brought an unhealthy relationship with myself into my AA recovery— “self-will run riot”:

I was “restless, irritable and discontented” (p. xxvii)

I was “plagued by waves of self-pity and resentment” (p. 15)

I was “disgustingly, and even dangerously, anti-social” (p. 21)

I had the “obsession”, “illusion” and “delusion” of control. (p. 30)

I suffered all of the “bedevilments” ... I doubted “the Power of God”. (p. 52)

I was “egotistical, selfish and dishonest” ... “angry, indignant,
self-pitying” ... “a self-seeker ... self-centered—egocentric”. (p. 61)

“We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.” (p. 64)

“When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.” “

“Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else ... in dealing with resentments, we set them on paper.” (*Honesty*) (pp. 64-67)

With whom and what am I angry? Why am I angry? Which of my feelings are affected? (p. 65)

“To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got ... we began to see that the world and its people really dominated us ... how could we escape?” (p. 66)

“We asked God to help us show them ... tolerance, pity, and patience ...” (p. 67)

“God save me from being angry. [Your] will be done.” (*Trust*) “

“God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one.” “

“Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done ...” (*Acceptance*) “

“Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? (*Honesty*) “

“We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.” “

I learn to practice the healthy principles of *honesty*, *restraint* and *forgiveness*—with myself!

“We reviewed our **fears** thoroughly. We put them on paper ... we asked ourselves why we had them.” “Wasn’t it because self-reliance failed us?” (*Honesty*) (p. 68)

“We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves.” (*Trust*) “

“We are in the world to play the role [God] assigns.” (*Restraint*) “

“... does [God] enable us to match calamity with serenity.” (*Acceptance*) “

“We never apologize to anyone for depending upon our Creator.” (*Honesty*) “

“We ask [God] to remove our fear and direct our attention to what [God] would have us be.” (*Honesty, Trust, Acceptance, Restraint, Forgiveness*) “

“Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt ... arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness ... we at fault, what should we have done instead?”

“We got this all [**sexual conduct**] down on paper and looked at it.” (*Honesty*) (pp. 69-71)

“We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.” (*Trust*) (p. 69)

“... we ask God what we should do about each specific matter ...” (*Restraint*) “

“... have the honest desire to let God take us to better things ...” (*Acceptance*) “

“... we earnestly pray for the right ideal ...” (*Honesty, Restraint, Forgiveness*) “

STEP FIVE.

“We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past.” Question: *Do the proud ever pray?* (p. 75)

Next Time: Establish a Healthy Relationship with Ourselves, including God: Steps 5 and 6.