

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.)

(Note that *spiritual principles* are noted in italics throughout the text.)

Growing Healthy Relationships with God, Ourselves and Others—Steps Ten and Eleven.

Part 1. August 16: Step Ten, pp. 83-84.

“The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.*” (p. 83)

I now have a healthy “spiritual life”. I have established healthy relationships: with God in Steps One, Two and Three, using the spiritual principles of *acceptance*, *trust* and *honesty*; with myself in Steps Four, Five and Six, using the spiritual principles of *restraint* and *forgiveness*; with others in Steps Seven, Eight and Nine, using the spiritual principles of *responsibility* and *consideration*. *My motive has changed, from selfishness to service to God and others.*

“If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through.” (p. 83)

“Painstaking”—it meant I had to do work—there would be some pain. I learned “halfway through” meant these promises had started happening in me before I even knew it. Before I was halfway through the first nine steps, I was experiencing my “spiritual awakening”:

PROMISES

Step Three, p. 63
(Past tense,
encouragement to
offer myself to God.)

CONDITION

“We had a new Employer.”

BENEFITS. (“Promises”)

God provided what we needed.
We became less self-interested.
We became interested in contributing.
We felt new power flow in.
We enjoyed peace of mind.
We became conscious of God’s presence.
We began to lose our fear.

Step Five, p. 75.
(Present tense,
awareness of my
spiritual progress.)

“We pocket our pride ...”

We are delighted.
We can look the world in the eye.
We can be alone at perfect peace and ease.
Our fears fall from us.
We ... feel the nearness of our Creator.
We begin to have a spiritual experience.
... walking hand in hand with [Spirit].

Step Nine, pp. 83-84. “If we are painstaking ...”
(Future tense,
hope in continued
spiritual growth
with God, myself
and others.)

We will be amazed ... know a new freedom.
We will not regret the past.
We will comprehend serenity/ know peace.
Our experience will benefit others.
Uselessness and self-pity will disappear.
Lose interest in selfish things/self-seeking.
Will gain interest in our fellows.
Our whole attitude ... will change.
Fear of people will leave us.
Fear of economic insecurity will leave us.

Promises result from less me, more God—less selfishness, more service to God and others.

“We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”

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STEP TEN.

“We have entered the world of the Spirit.” (p. 84)

“Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.” (p. 84)

I began my “continue for my lifetime” spiritual growth when I followed the direction on p. 83: “... asking each morning in meditation that [my] Creator show [me] the way of *patience, tolerance, kindness* and *love*.” I benefit from four more spiritual principles that help me grow in healthy relationships with God, myself and others:

- *Patience* is my willingness to seek God’s direction and wait for God’s guidance.
“Waiting on God is NEVER a waste of my time!”
- *Tolerance*. “Most of us sense that real tolerance for other people’s shortcomings and viewpoints and a respect for their opinions are attitudes which make us more useful to others.” (pp. 19-20)
- *Kindliness* is my desire to be considerate of others, even when they are inconsiderate.
- *Love* is when I sincerely desire what is best in God’s eyes for the other person.

I think of my spiritual life as a garden. I want to grow healthy principles in my spiritual garden, “fitting myself to be of maximum service.” Yet, my spiritual garden grows weeds—every day! Though I begin my day asking God to fill my “garden” with *patience, tolerance, kindness* and *love*, I still need to “weed the garden” every day. And, as I realized in Step Three when I “had a new Employer”, I now have a new “Gardener”. The “world of the Spirit” comes with its own “Gardener”—I am the “garden”, spiritually speaking. I am not the “Gardener”!

With Step Ten, I act throughout each day to grow “in understanding and effectiveness”:

“Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. When these crop up, we ask God **at once** to remove them.” (p. 84) These are “EGO”—“Easing God Out”!

I don’t remove them—I ask God (my spiritual “Gardener”) to remove them:

Selfishness is an EGO weed—“the root of our troubles”. (p. 62)

Dishonesty is an EGO weed—“where had we been ... dishonest”? (p. 67, p. 69)

Resentment is an EGO weed—“Resentment ... destroys more alcoholics ...” (p. 64)

Fear is an EGO weed—“... fear ... was an evil and corroding thread ...” (p. 67)

I am an imperfect human being. I will always need God’s help to admit and try to be rid of these defects of my character (too much EGO) that block and choke my spiritual growth. I ask God to “weed my garden” throughout the day, not just in the evening or when I feel bad.

I cannot grow spiritually unless I let God help me reduce the things in me that block my growth.

The direction in Step Ten continues:

“We discuss them with someone **immediately** and make amends **quickly** if we have harmed anyone.” (p. 84)

I need another trusted person’s opinion to help me see if I have harmed anyone. If we decide that I owe an amend, I make the amend “quickly”, to stop the “weeds” from growing.

“Then we **resolutely** turn our thoughts to someone we can help.” (p. 84)

“Resolutely”—whether I want to or not! Once again, this helps me move from selfishness to service. “Someone” doesn’t just mean another alcoholic. It could be anyone—
“fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.”

“Love and tolerance of others is our code.”

“And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol.” (p. 84)

Next Time: “So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.” (p. 88)
(Using Steps Ten and Eleven as a continuous, daily “design for living”).