

## 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)

### Establish a Healthy Relationship with Ourselves and Others, including God—Steps Seven, Eight and Nine.

#### Part 2. August 9: Steps Seven, Eight and Nine, pp. 76-83.

“At the moment we are trying to put our own lives in order. But this is not an end in itself. **Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.**” (p. 77)

Note “our real purpose” and the definition of defect of character in Step Seven—“remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to [God] and my fellows”. For me to grow in healthy relationships, God will “remove” those things in me that are blocking me from fulfilling my primary purpose of being of “maximum service”.

#### **The priority in my life is changing—from being selfish to being of service.**

What is “fit ourselves to be”? AA and God have been preparing me to “fit myself to be of maximum service” before my Steps Seven, Eight and Nine work. Sobriety treats my first problem, or “symptom”—drinking. Recovery is much more than sobriety. “Fitting myself to be of service to God and others” treats my real problem—selfish, self-centered “self-will run riot”:

“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.” (p. 19)

“... real tolerance of other people’s shortcomings and viewpoints and a respect for their opinions are attitudes which make us more useful to others.” (p. 19)

“*There is a solution* ... to accept spiritual help.” (p. 25)

“... alcoholics have had what are called vital spiritual experiences.” (p. 27)

“... we couldn’t seem to be of real help to other people ...” (bedevilments) (p. 52)

“... we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life.” (Step 3) (p. 63)

“How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.” (p. 67)

“We ask [God] to ... direct our attention to what [God] would have us be.” (p. 68)

“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.” (p. 69)

“We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from [God].” (p. 71)

“... we shall walk a free man at last.” Free from the “bondage of self”. (Step 5) (p. 75)

Also, note the phrase “at the moment”. All recovery is “at the moment”. I *accepted* my powerlessness and unmanageability, and *trusted* God, “at the moment” of Steps One, Two and Three, establishing a healthy relationship with God. I did my Steps Four, Five and Six self-examination inventories with *honesty*, *restraint* and *forgiveness* “at the moment”, establishing a healthy relationship with myself as I sought willingness from God to let go of my objectionable things “at the moment”. I offered all of me, good and bad, as of that moment, to God’s “inventory” in Step Seven. I made my list in Step Eight, accepting *responsibility* for the wrongs I have done to others and becoming willing to make amends to them all, “at the moment”.

“**Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past.**” I am asking God for the willingness to make my direct amends, now, one at a time. I take my next step to have healthy, *considerate* relationships with others. I am ready for Step Nine.

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#### **STEP NINE.**

My direct amends work in Step Nine requires me to let go of my unhealthy relationship behaviors and replace them with healthy behaviors. These changes in my behavior result from me changing from selfish motives to a motive of God-centered service, of being *considerate* of the other person and taking *responsibility* for my conduct, whether they are *considerate* or not.

I review the types of direct amends I am making:

“business acquaintances and friends;	(p. 76)
“the man we hated”;	(p. 77)
“our creditors”;	(p. 78)
“criminal offense”;	(p. 78)
“other people are involved”;	(p. 79)
“domestic troubles”;	(p. 80)
“at home”.	(p. 82)

As I consider the approach suggested in each of these types of amends, I discover the unhealthy, inconsiderate relationship behaviors that I should avoid. Also, I discover the behaviors which contribute to healthy, *responsible*, *considerate* relationships:

#### **Unhealthy Relationship Behaviors.** (pp. 76-83)

Living on self-will ... running the show ourselves.	(p. 76)
Hurting others.	“
Criticize them ... argue with others.	(p. 77)
Short in my accounts ... fear my creditors ... haven’t paid my alimony.	(pp. 78-79)
Criminal offense ... padding the expense account ... denying my faults.	“
Sacrifice others to save me; discredit others.	(p. 79)
Let pride [or fear] prevent me from admitting my wrongs.	“
“Cheating” in the marriage.	(pp. 80-81)
Feeling sorry for myself.	“
“The only thing I need to do is keep sober!”	(p. 82)
“Selfish and inconsiderate habits.”	“
“We feel a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough.”	“
“Remorseful mumbling” that I am sorry.	(p. 83)

#### **Healthy Relationship Behaviors.** (pp. 76-83)

Pray for willingness to repair damage caused by my self-will.	(p. 76)
Desire to set right the wrong.	(p. 77)
We go to [them] in a helpful and forgiving spirit.	“
“His faults are not discussed.”	(p. 78)
Ask [God] for strength and direction to do the right thing.	(p. 79)
Willing to be responsible for my mistakes.	“
Admit my faults, ask forgiveness.	“
Ask God for help ... placing the outcome in God’s hands.	(p. 80)
“Sorry” (regret) what we have done—God willing, it won’t be repeated.	(p. 81)
Pray about it.	(p. 82)
Keeping the other one’s happiness in mind.	“
“Making good” (living amends) to others who I treated badly.	“
Ask each morning that God show me the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.	(p. 83)
“We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble ...”	“

**Next Time: “The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it.”**

**Growing Healthy Relationships with God, Ourselves and Others—Steps 10/11.**