

**POWERLESSNESS ... "THE ESSENTIALS" ... RELATIONSHIPS ... FELLOWSHIPS**  
**A "BIG BOOK" STUDY OF FOUR "THREADS OF RECOVERY"**

**October 11 through December 27, 2021**

(Page cites from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, except as noted.)

**RELATIONSHIPS - PART 2. "WITH OURSELVES".** Chapter Five, "How It Works",  
Chapter Six, "Into Action", and more.

We alcoholics are powerless over alcohol—our *physical allergy*, the *idea of the first drink* and our *inability to stop once we start*. We need a spiritual awakening produced by the Twelve Steps to deal with our powerlessness. The *three essentials for our spiritual awakening are willingness, honesty and open-mindedness*. (See Appendix II, pp. 567-568)

Step Five presents our three types of relationships: God, myself and others. The first and most important of these is our *healthy and helpful relationship with God*. We saw *why* a healthy, helpful relationship with God was important: "We alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us. God makes that possible." (p. 62) **We** saw *how* a healthy, helpful relationship with God was possible: "So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined." (p. 88) We saw the *benefit* of a healthy, helpful relationship with God: "See to it that your relationship with [God] is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us." (p. 164)

As I work the Twelve Steps to establish and grow my healthy, helpful relationship with God, I discover that I also experience the growth of a *healthy, helpful relationship with myself*. When I look back at my early days in AA, I see that the Twelve Steps started me on a path of healthy choices. I began to lay a foundation for a *healthy, helpful relationship with myself* as soon as I sought the help of AA to stop taking the first drink of alcohol.

The **healthy choices I make** as I work the Twelve Steps produce *significant changes in my approach to life*, in my *ideas, attitudes and emotions*, that enable my *healthy, helpful relationship with myself* to take root and continue to grow, one day at a time.

**1. I choose to accept my limitations.**

When I admit that I am powerless over alcohol and that my life has become unmanageable, I begin to accept limitations about myself. My limitations are not character defects. They are not punishment. They are not failure. My limitations are simply part of being an imperfect human being. Being imperfect is not a failure.

"... an alcoholic mentality, such as I had exhibited ... was a hopeless condition ...  
I could not do the job myself." (p. 42)

**2. I choose to have hope.**

When I become desperate enough to come to AA for help, I first encounter the "happy, joyous and free" fellowship of AA. Even before I start working the Twelve Steps myself, I begin to experience a sort of "borrowed hope" from my new fellowship.

"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 had flowed into them." (p. 50)

**3. I choose to take a risk in faith.**

To come to believe in a Power greater than myself, I choose to give that Power a chance to work in my life. It is a risk, because I do not know what that will mean.

"God either is, or He isn't. What was our choice to be?" (p. 53)

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**4. I choose to seek help from the God of my understanding.**

I stop "playing God". I can't have a healthy, helpful relationship with me if I am pretending to be someone else. The worst "pretending to be someone else" mistake I can make is to "play God". When I try to "play God", I have un-healthy, un-helpful ideas, attitudes and emotions. I live with unrealistic expectations and constant disappointment.

(a) "That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.

(b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.

(c) That God could and would if He were sought." (p. 60)

"The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success." (p. 60)

"Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles." (p. 62)

"First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work." "

"I offer myself to [God], to build with me and to do with me as [God will]." (p. 63)

**5. I choose to stop trying to make other people always do as I wish.**

A healthy, helpful relationship with myself is not possible when I am trying to meet my material, emotional and sexual needs by trying to control, criticize and condemn other people. (See AA Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, pp. 42-44). I choose to accept my limitations, as well as the limitations of others.

"... if only people would do as he wished ..." (p. 61)

"We asked ourselves why we were angry. In most cases, it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships (including sex) were hurt or threatened." (pp. 64-65)

"To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got." (p. 66)

"We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us." "

"God save me from being angry." (p. 67)

"... we had [fears] ... because self-reliance failed us." (p. 68)

"We ask [God] to remove our fear and direct our attention to what [God] would have us be." "

"Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?" (p. 69)

"We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them." "

"Love and tolerance of others is our code." (p. 84)

**6. I choose to be honest, with myself, about God, myself and others.**

The self-examination process of Steps Four through Nine is the first time in my life that I choose to be honest with myself about myself and my relationship with God and others.

"We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path. Now [the weak items in our personal inventory] are about to be cast out." (p. 72)

"... not ... enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty ..." (p. 73)

**7. I choose to learn how to "let go and let God" change me—to seek to be humble.**

I am unable to change myself for the better without God's help. I choose, I am willing, to ask God to help me "not do the wrong thing" and to try to "do the right thing."

"... we ask God to help us be willing" ... to "let go" ... of the "objectionable" ... (p. 76)

"... remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows." "

"... ingredient of all humility, a desire to seek and do God's will ... (AA 12x12, p. 72)

"Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do [God's] bidding." (p. 76)

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**8. I choose to take responsibility for my wrong actions and amend my harms to others.**

I become willing in Steps Six and Seven to "let God" help me "let go" of my resentments, my self-righteousness, my sarcasm, my lack of forgiveness, my fears: of not being in control; of uncertainty; of not being "enough" or having "enough"; of failure.

Now, I admit the wrongs I did to others, become willing to amend the harms done, make restitution and commit to not do those harmful things again. I stop "lying, cheating and stealing". These choices begin to free me of the guilt, regret and remorse that result from my un-healthy, un-helpful choices in the past.

"Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past." (p. 76)

"If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes."

**9. I choose to continue to "thoroughly follow the path" of my spiritual awakening.**

The first nine steps guide me to make choices that give me a foundation for a healthy, helpful relationship with myself. But my work to become healthy with myself is not over. Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve each contain choices for me to make on a daily basis that enable me to continue to grow my healthy, helpful relationship with myself.

"Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead." (p.83)

"The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.*"

"... continue to take personal inventory ... to set right any new mistakes ..." (p. 84)

"God's will (not mine) be done ... the proper use of the will." (p. 85)

"... at night, we constructively review our day ... we ask God's forgiveness ..." (p. 86)

"On awakening ... we ask God to direct our thinking, especially that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives."

"We ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision."

"We ask especially for freedom from self-will ..." (p. 87)

"... through the day we pause ... and ask [God] for the right thought or action."

"... humbly saying to ourselves many times each day, '[God's] will be done'." (p. 88)

"Carry this message [of spiritual awakening] to other alcoholics." (p. 89)

"We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous and free." (p. 133)

**Suggestions on continuing to grow a Healthy, Helpful Relationship with Myself.**

1. Will I admit today that I no longer wish to be in my unhealthy, unhelpful "bondage of self": -  
"... no hope ... hopeless ... loneliness and despair ... that bitter morass of self-pity ... suffering and humiliation ... pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization ... any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol ... only a matter of exercising my will power ... obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice ... never gave the spiritual side of life a fair hearing ... a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity ... Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair."
2. Will I choose today to admit and accept my limitations—I do not need to "know everything"?
3. Will I choose today to seek God's help—God's direction, guidance and forgiveness?
4. Will I choose today to wait for God's help. *WAIT—Whose Agenda Is This?*
5. Will I choose today to be humble—to desire to seek and do God's will?
6. Will I choose today to be forgiving—to be loving and tolerant toward others?
7. Will I choose today to be grateful—for the good in my life and for God's help with setbacks?
8. Will I choose today to take healthy care of myself—seeking spiritual, emotional, mental, physical and nutritional nourishment—to be responsible for myself and with others.
9. Will I choose today to try "to be of maximum service to God and the people about [me]"?

Note: See "promises" on pp. 63, 75 and 83-84 for elements of healthy, helpful relationships.

**Next Time: RELATIONSHIPS - Part 3. "With Others": Chapters Seven through Eleven.**