

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

October 11 through December 27, 2021

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

"THE ESSENTIALS" - PART 2. "HONESTY". Appendix II, and more.

"We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. *Willingness, **honesty** and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.*" (p. 568)

Honesty is an **essential** for my initial and on-going spiritual awakening for two simple reasons. First, I will not seek the help I truly need until I become honest with myself about my problem. Second, I will not seek a spiritual solution for my problem until I become honest with myself that I am powerless to solve my problem with my un-aided will alone.

I believe that God's will directed my will to change my mind about coming to AA for help. I was still being dis-honest with myself about my need for help, even while my life became so unmanageable, so uncomfortable, so dangerous being run by my will alone. My transition from *self dis-honesty to self-honesty* was a gradual one.

The beginning of honesty for me was when I became willing to admit to myself that I was being dis-honest with myself. I was dis-honest about my powerlessness over alcohol. I denied (dis-honest) my physical allergy that made it impossible for me to control my drinking once I took the first drink. I denied (dis-honest) the mental obsession that made me take the first drink. I defied (dis-honest) my inability to stop drinking once I took the first drink. I doubted (dis-honest) that help from a Power greater than me was available to me.

I had "weaponized" my dis-honesty against myself with denial, defiance and doubt:

- "... they cannot ... differentiate the true from the false." (p. xxviii)
- "... cannot start drinking without ... the phenomenon of craving." (p. xxx)
- "... concerning ... liquor ... he is incredibly dishonest and selfish." (p. 21)
- "... unwilling to admit we were real alcoholics." (p. 30)
- "Our human resources, as marshaled by the will ... failed utterly." (p. 45)
- "... stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work." (p. 52)

Willingness precedes honesty in the three "essentials" for a reason. With God's help, I become willing to admit not only my dis-honesty but my "anti-honest" attitude! Only then can I *honestly* consider seeking the help I need for my problem:

- "Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles." (p. 62)
- "Our liquor was but a symptom." (p. 64)

In AA, we are primarily dealing with self-honesty. As I work the Twelve Steps, I learn how to become honest with myself about myself. I become honest about my limitations, my defects of character, my assets and my need for help. I become honest about what in me needs to be changed for the better. I become honest about seeking and receiving God's help to let go of the things in me blocking me from God's help. so that I can be less selfish and more interested in being of service to God and others.

- "... but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be *honest*." (p. 58)
- I believe I have the capacity to work the Twelve Steps—of **honesty**.

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The “Essential” of Honesty in each Step—with God, with myself and with others:

STEP ONE. “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.”

“... we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics.” (p. 30)

To admit is to stop denying. To admit is to become *honest*. I *honestly* accept my powerlessness. My powerlessness over alcohol was the first “limitation” I accepted in recovery, the first thing I admitted that I could not change. As I continue in recovery, I discover many “limitations” with people, places and things which I am powerless to change.

STEP TWO. “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

“When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God.” (p. 52)

I can no longer doubt my need for help. When I “come to believe”, I become *honest* about my need for a Higher Power in my life. I *honestly* come to believe that a Higher Power can, and will, restore me to sane thinking, first about alcohol, and then about other things, as well.

STEP THREE. “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*.”

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

When I offer myself to God in our Step Three prayer, I have *honestly* decided to act on my need for help from my Higher Power. I need God’s help to change me from depending on self-reliance alone to manage my life, to relieve me of my “bondage of self”.

STEP FOUR. “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

“We took stock *honestly*. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self ... had defeated us ...” (p. 64)

My decision to “offer myself” to God “could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in us which had been blocking us.” In Step Four, I ask God to help me do an *honest* self-examination of my resentments, fears and inconsiderate relationships, to learn what in me needs to be changed. I become *honest* about the parts of myself that are hurting me and others.

STEP FIVE. “Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

“We must be entirely *honest* with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world.” (pp. 73-74)

“We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past.” (p. 75)

By Step Five, I am changing from a dis-honest person to an *honest* person, at least about my defects of character that are blocking me from the help I need from God. Here again, to admit is to become *honest*.

STEP SIX. “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defeats of character.”

“Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable?” (p. 76)

In Step Six, I become *honest* about my “objectionable” things. I have an *honest* desire to let God help me live without them. I *honestly* ask God to help me “let go” of them.

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The "Essential" of Honesty in each Step—with God, with myself and with others (con't):

STEP SEVEN. "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings."

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

(p. 76)

In Step Seven, I am being *honest* about my in-ability to correct or remove my defects of character by myself—*honest* about my need for God to remove them, especially those that stand in the way of my usefulness to God and others.

STEP EIGHT. "Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all."

"We have a list of all persons we have harmed ..."

(p. 76)

In Step Eight, I am being *honest* about the harms I did to others with my wrong actions. I am being *honest* about taking responsibility for these wrongs.

STEP NINE. "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."

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

(p. 76)

In Step Nine, I make *honest* amends directly to each person I harmed. I admit to "a sincere desire to set right the wrong." (p. 77) . Again, admitting is a form of *honesty*.

HONESTY PAUSE: "Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us."

(p. 77)

STEP TEN. "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

"Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them ... discuss them with someone ... make amends quickly ... turn our thoughts to someone we can help."

(p. 84)

In Step Ten, I continue to live daily in the "*honesty* of imperfection". I need the "course correction" of daily *honest* personal inventory, continuous help from God and others and the *honesty* (admit) to make amends, when needed, as I go through my day.

STEP ELEVEN. "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

"... were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid?"

(p. 86)

"... ask God to direct our thinking ... be divorced from ... dishonest motives ...".

In Step Eleven, I am living daily seeking "course direction" from God, *honestly* trying, with God's direction and guidance, to avoid being dishonest.

STEP TWELVE. "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

"Tell him exactly what happened to you. Stress the spiritual feature freely."

(p. 93)

"... meet upon the common ground of tolerance, understanding and love."

(p. 122)

In Step Twelve, I am *honestly* trying to live a sober, *honest* life, one day at a time!

Next Time: "THE ESSENTIALS" - Part 3. "Open-mindedness": Appendix II, and more.