

**TWO “MAGNIFICENT STANDARDS”—HUMILITY AND RESPONSIBILITY—  
and SEVEN ATTRIBUTES of our SPIRITUAL AWAKENING.**

**A “Threads of Recovery” Big Book Study Workshop: April 4 through June 27, 2022.**

(Page cites from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise noted)

“As we know, all A.A. progress can be reckoned in terms of just two words: **humility** and **responsibility**. Our whole spiritual development can be accurately measured by our degree of adherence to these magnificent standards. Ever deepening humility, accompanied by an ever greater willingness to accept and to act upon clear-cut obligations—these are truly our touchstones for all growth in the life of the spirit. They hold up to us the very essence of right being and right doing. It is by them that we are enabled to find and do God’s will.”

Bill W. speech at GSC, 1965

This Twelve Step study discloses the accuracy and wisdom of Bill’s simple statement. Steps One through Six produce enough **humility** in us for us to try to fulfill our real purpose—“to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us”. (p. 77)

“That basic ingredient of all **humility**, a desire to seek and do God’s will ...”. (T&T, p. 72)

“... **humility** ... to move out from ourselves toward others and toward God.” (T&T, p. 76)

We also see in this study how our **responsibility** grows in Steps Seven through Twelve. We have “a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps”—become responsible to share our spiritual awakening with alcoholics—we try to practice these principles in all our affairs.

“I am **responsible**. When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help, I want the hand of AA always to be there. And for that: I am **responsible**.” Al S. speech at GSC, 1965

*Our recovery depends upon our personal growth in **humility**, with God’s help.*

*Our recovery depends upon our willingness to act with **responsibility**, with God’s help.*

We also see in this study how seven attributes of the Twelve Step spiritual principles enable our “personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism ...” (p. 567):

**Honesty** grows in us in Steps One, Two and Three, and continues forward;

**Forgiveness** grows in us in Steps Four and Five, and continues forward;

**Trust** grows in us in Steps Six and Seven, and continues forward;

**Consideration** grows in us in Steps Eight and Nine, and continues forward;

**Love** and **Tolerance** grow in us in Steps Ten and Eleven, and continue forward;

**Service** grows in us in Step Twelve, and continues forward in our Spiritual Awakening.

.....  
With the information of Steps One and Two, I admit my problem: powerlessness and unmanageability—my need for help from more than my own self-knowledge and self-reliance:

“I know I must get along without liquor, but how can I? Do you have a sufficient substitute?” AA first offers the Fellowship as “a substitute” (“sense of ease and comfort”) for liquor. Then, “it is vastly more than that”—the 12-Step path to spiritual awakening: “... escape disaster together ... commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey.” (pp. 152-153)

*In Step One, I **honestly** admit my problem. I **humbly** see my need for help from more than me. In Step Two, I **honestly** believe I am not God—I **humbly** develop a desire to seek my solution.*

**“We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.”**

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**Two “Magnificent Standards”—Humility and Responsibility—and the Attribute of Honesty.**

**Humility and Honesty in Step Two.** (Alcoholics Anonymous, pp. 44-57, “We Agnostics”)

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” (p. 59)

“*Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery.*” (p. 567)

“Came to believe that ...” (Choice)

“... soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express ... willingness ...” (p. 46)

“... am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?” (p. 47)

“Every one of them ... believes in a Power greater than himself.” (p. 50)

“There is a Solution” treats my denial. “More About Alcoholism” treats my defiance. “We Agnostics” treats my doubt. “Came to believe ...” begins my spiritual journey to stop doubting my powerlessness and the unmanageability of my life—to stop doubting that a loving Power greater than myself could be my solution.

*In Step Two, I am able to **humbly** admit that I am not God. I am able to **honestly** consider the possibility that God exists—a loving Power greater than me that could help me.*

“... a Power greater than ourselves ...” (Hope)

“To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.” (p. 44)

“Lack of power, that was our dilemma ... find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.” (See p. 62 for “the root of our troubles”) (p. 45)

“... Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives ...” (p. 51)

“We had to ask ourselves ... the same **readiness to change our point of view.**” (p. 52)

Here is the center-piece of Step Two. Step Two is not simply about God! Step Two is about me **honestly** and **humbly** admitting that I am not God! *My solution is to find a way to make a Power greater than myself the most important relationship in my life.*

I wasted a lot of time and energy using Step Two to explain my previous relationships with God, childhood and otherwise. “We Agnostics” persuades me that there is a loving Power greater than me that wants to help me. I do not have to understand that Power at this point. I open my mind to the possibility of a loving Higher Power greater than me.

*In Step Two, I **honestly** and **humbly** accept that a most important relationship with a loving Power greater than myself is my spiritual solution to my illness.*

“... could restore us to sanity.” (Promise)

“... excuse for ... first drink ... sound reasoning failed ...insane idea won out.” (p. 37)

“The alcoholic ... has no effective mental defense against the first drink.” (p. 43)

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

My alcoholic illness includes the physical allergy—one drink triggers the overpowering craving for more alcohol. Yet knowledge of this could not stop me from making the “insane” choice to take the first drink. I am absolutely powerless on my own to not take the first drink when my most important relationship is with only myself!

Restoration to sanity is admitting **honestly** and **humbly** that I need help from a Power greater than myself to not take the first drink. After this, much more sanity follows.

*Sanity is seeking to make my relationship with a loving Power greater than myself the most important relationship in my life—instead of my relationship with myself.*

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**Observations on Humility and Honesty in Step Two.**

“If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.

To one who feels he is an atheist or agnostic such an experience seems impossible, but to continue as he is means disaster, especially if he is an alcoholic of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.” (p. 44)

1. I was an alcoholic of the “hopeless variety”— with a “seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.” (p. xiii) I *honestly* admit the desperate problem of my alcoholism illness in Step One. My *humble* hope appears in the truth of Step Two—a loving “Power greater than [myself]”.
2. My *humble* admission of my powerlessness in Step One leads to an a deeper *humility* in Step Two: my most important relationship needs to be with a loving Power greater than me.
3. My willingness to seek help begins in Step Two, with the attractiveness of the lives of other AA members. “If it is working for you, I hope it will work for me.” I *humbly* borrow your hope.
4. Sobriety brings immediate relief: no more blackouts, physical hangovers, “jitters”, lies about my drinking. “AA does not teach us how to handle our drinking. It teaches us how to handle our sobriety.” Bob P.’s story (p. 553) reminds me that *sobriety alone is not spiritual recovery*. I see my need for spiritual help for *honest* and *humble* living, not merely not drinking.
5. My *honesty* grows during my “doubt treatment” in Step Two. I come to understand that I *need help with what I am*—an alcoholic with an incurable illness—as well as *with what I am not*: I am *not* powerful enough—I am *not* “sane” enough—I *humbly* accept I am “*not-God*”.
6. I get *honest* about my problem in Step One so I can get *humble* about my solution in Step Two—a spiritual awakening centered in my relationship with a loving Power greater than me.
7. The verbs “admitted” in Step One and “came to believe” in Step Two are simply different aspects of *self-honesty*. I *honestly* admit what I am. I *humbly* come to believe in what I need.
8. I come to desire the sanity I see in others more than my own illusions and delusions.
9. “Coming to believe” is a *humble* concession—I am not my own solution (“Queen for a Day”).
10. In Step Two, I *honestly* see my most important relationship can no longer be with myself.
11. I *honestly* and *humbly* come to believe that my most important relationship could be with a loving Power greater than myself. *I believe the information of Steps One and Two*.
12. In Step Two, I take my second risk in the Spiritual Awakening of my recovery from alcoholism—I come to believe in the possibility of help from a Power I have only heard about from others. ***Honestly becoming willing to consider this help grows my humility***.

“When we drew near to Him He disclosed Himself to us.” (p. 57)

**Next Time: Humility and Honesty in Step Three.**