

**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 (silkworth.net)

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)

Our **responsibility** grows in Steps Seven through Twelve. We become responsible to share our spiritual awakening with alcoholics—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

In this study we also see 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.

.....
My **humility** grows in Steps Four and Five—“face, and to be rid of, the things in [me] which are blocking me” from freedom from my bondage of my self. I admit the “causes and conditions” of “self-will run riot” in my resentments, fears and sexual conduct (inconsideration) inventories. I ask God to save me from being angry—to begin to **forgive** while still angry!

“Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it? We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path. We have admitted certain defects ... weak items in our personal inventory ... about to be cast out ... requires action on our part ...” (p. 72)

*I suffered trying to live without God’s help. I cannot fulfill my God-given desires for physical safety, emotional security and sexual comfort with my self-reliance alone. I decide to learn to live with God’s help to live a safe, secure and content life. I continue growing in **humility** by **honestly** admitting those things in me that are blocking me from the help I need from God to relieve me of the bondage of self. I **humbly** admit my need for God’s help to free me from being angry—from my un-forgiving nature—so I can stop blaming, shaming and condemning others and experience the freedom of **forgiveness**.*

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Two “Magnificent Standards”—Humility and Responsibility— and the attribute of Forgiveness.

Humility and Forgiveness in Step Five. (Alcoholics Anonymous, pp. 72-75)

“This requires action on our part, which, when completed, will mean that we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our defects.” (p. 72)

“We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past.” (The one-sentence instruction for “taking” Step Five!) (p. 75)

“... we have admitted to God ... the exact nature of our defects.”

“My friend promised when these things were done I would enter upon a new relationship with my Creator ... a new way of living which answered all my problems.

Belief in the power of God, plus enough willingness, **honesty** and **humility** ...” (pp. 13-14)

“This was only a beginning, though if **honestly** and **humbly** made, an effect, sometimes a very great one, was felt at once.” (p. 63)

“God save me from being angry ... God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant (**forgiving**) view of each and every one.” (p. 67)

*My **humility** grows when I ask God to save me from my anger and to help me take a kindly and tolerant [**forgiving**] view of others. I admit in Step Five the consequences to me for being unwilling to do this in the past. All my resentments result, at least in part, from my un-forgiving nature. I will pray for God to help me “let go” of this in Step Six.*

“... we have admitted ... to ourselves ... the exact nature of our defects.”

“... newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about themselves ... they never completed their housecleaning ... hung on to some of the worst items ...” (p. 73)

“They only *thought* they had lost their egoism and fear; they only *thought* they had **humbled** themselves ... had not learned enough of **humility** ...” “

*My **humility**, my “desire to seek and do God’s will”, grows when I listen to myself tell my story honestly to someone else. I hear myself admit my selfish motives, feelings and actions that have driven me in the past. My listener’s **forgiveness** helps me **forgive** myself.*

“... we have admitted ... to another human being, the exact nature of our defects.”

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

*Admitting my un-forgiving nature was difficult. I cannot be **honest** about my defects of character while I am obsessed with everyone else’s defects of character. **Humbly** admitting to another person “my part”, my defects, is possible when I stop taking pleasure in other peoples’ suffering—when I stop blaming and shaming them and begin to **forgive** them.*

“Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted ... we begin to feel the nearness of our Creator.” (p. 75)

*My restoration to sanity begins with my sane choice to not take the first drink. My restoration to sanity continues as I **humbly** and **honestly** admit the nature of my defects of character to God, myself and another person. I experience the restoration of my spirit as God helps me **forgive**.*

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Observations on Humility and Forgiveness in Step Five.

Step Five Promises.

“Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, 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 begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” (p. 75)

1. “Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted.”
I am delighted to discover the liberation of being **honest** with someone; to have **humbly** admitted my secrets; to experience **forgiveness**—from God, another person and me. I am delighted to have found a person who understands my problem and why I must share it.
2. “We can look the world in the eye.”
I have less fear since I have **humbly** admitted my defects and begun to **forgive** others.
3. “We can be alone at perfect peace and ease.”
I **humbly** “desire to seek and do God’s will”. I feel **forgivable**, with less shame and remorse.
4. “Our fears fall from us.”
I feared what other people would think of me if they really knew me. I learn to **humbly** trust God with my uncertainties. My fears lessen. I become less self-reliant, more God-reliant.
5. “We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator.”
I admit that God knows everything about me. I **humbly** seek to “trust infinite God rather than [my] finite [self]”. I ask God to “save me from being angry” and be **forgiving**. I ask God to “mold [my] ideals and help [me] to live up to them”. I have stopped running from God.
6. “... we begin to have a spiritual experience.”
I become honest about myself and others. I **humbly** desire to seek and do God’s will.
I ask God to help me “take a kindly and tolerant view (**forgiving**) of ... every one.”
I am having “the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism ...”
7. “The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly.”
My spiritual experience of **honesty**, **humility** and **forgiveness** is giving me the “sense of ease and comfort” that I once was only able to experience with alcohol. I found this relief first in the Fellowship. Now I find it in my spiritual awakening in the steps.
8. “We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.”
My faith in God grows as I experience my freedom from the bondage of my self. My “self-will run riot” submits to God’s guidance and direction. I am unafraid to “walk with God”.
9. In Step Five, I take my fifth risk in the Spiritual Awakening of my recovery from alcoholism.
I risk learning to **humbly** live seeking God’s will with a spirit of **forgiveness** toward others.

“We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better.” (p. 75)

Next Time: Humility and Trust in Step Six.