

**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.

.....
In Steps One, Two and Three, I become **honest** about my alcoholism illness and my need for a spiritual solution. I stop separating myself from God. In Step Four, I discover my selfish desires and motivations. I **trust** God to “save me from being angry”, to become **forgiving**; to remove my fear ... what God “would have [me] be”; I **trust** God to “mold [my] ideals and help [me] live up to them”, to be **considerate** of others. In Step Five, I admit my shortcomings. I stop separating myself from me. In Steps Six and Seven, I **humbly** “let go” and **responsibly** “let God” remove my shortcomings. In Step Eight, I take **responsibility** for the harm my shortcomings caused others. I become willing to make amends to those I wronged.

In Step Nine, I **responsibly** admit to those I harmed that my shortcomings caused me to do wrong and cause them loss. I attempt to make restitution to them. With **consideration**, I commit that, with God’s help, I won’t harm them again. I stop separating myself from others.

*In Step Nine, I am **responsible** to make my direct amends “wherever possible”. I am **considerate** to make my direct amends without criticizing them or others. I am no longer separated from God, myself or other people. I am free of the secrets of my shortcomings!*

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

Responsibility and Consideration in Step Nine.

“Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves.” (p. 76)

Our book guides me in my **responsibility** for the general categories of my amends (“our fellows”), and the people (“such people”) that require my **consideration**:

“As we look over the list of business acquaintances and friends ...” (p. 76)

“The question of how to approach the man we hated will arise.” (p. 77)

“We do not dodge our creditors.” (p. 78)

“Perhaps we have committed a criminal offense.” (p. 78)

“Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people ...” (p. 80)

“The chances are that we have domestic troubles.” (p. 80)

“... there is plenty we should do at home.” (p. 82)

I use the “amends template” on p. 77 (“man we hated”) to guide all my direct amends:

“... he has done us more harm than we have done him ...” (p. 77)

“... we are still not too keen about admitting our faults.” “

“... harder to go to an enemy ... much more beneficial to us.” “

“We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit ... expressing our regret.” “

(I review the forgiveness guidelines from Step Four—see this outline, p. 3.)

(Forgiveness restores the relationship—it does not eliminate consequences.)

“Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue.” (p. 77)

“We are there to sweep off our side of the street ...” “

“His faults are not discussed.” (p. 78)

“... if someone does throw us out of his office. We have ... done our part.” “

*In Step Nine, I am **responsible** to make **considerate** amends to every person in each category, “except when to do so would injure them or others”. If the risk of harm exists, to me or to someone else involved in a direct amend, I ask God and my sponsor to help me decide.*

“If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes.” (p. 76)

I use this prayer for each person in my Step Nine direct amends, as well as:

“... in a helpful and forgiving spirit ...”. (*God save me from anger*) (p. 77)

“We must lose our fear of creditors ...”. (*God remove my fear*) (p. 78)

“... ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing ...” (p. 79)

“... we are willing.” “

“... he was perfectly willing to go to jail ...” “

“... asked God to help ...” (*God help me be considerate*) (p. 80)

“... place the outcome in God’s hands ...” “

“... God willing, it shall not be repeated.” (p. 81)

“Each might pray ... the other one’s happiness uppermost in mind.” (p. 82)

*In Step Nine, I make direct amends **responsibly**, where possible and safe, to each person I harmed by my wrong actions. I make my direct amends **considerately** with a forgiving and non-critical attitude, offering to make restitution where possible. My “faith and works” in Steps One through Nine have enabled me to stop separating myself from God, myself and others.*

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Observations on Responsibility and Consideration in Step Nine.

1. I ask God to “relieve me of the bondage of self” in Step Three. I ask God in Step Four to “save me from being angry. Thy will be done ... to avoid retaliation or argument ... to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and everyone.” (p. 67) I am **responsible** to continue this prayer for a forgiving attitude in my **considerate** Step Nine direct amends.
2. “We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us ... how could we escape ... the wrongdoing of others ... we could not wish them away ...” (p. 66)
Forgiveness (**consideration**) begins as I pray “God save me from being angry.” (p. 67)
Forgiveness does not pretend that harm wasn’t done or that the harm didn’t hurt.
Forgiveness does not mean that there are no consequences for the wrong-doer.
Forgiveness means the consequences for the wrong-doer are not my responsibility.
Forgiveness does not “let them off the hook”—I never had them “hooked” at all!
Forgiveness restores me to health, whether the relationship continues or not.
Forgiveness “clears my emotional vision” so that I can take **responsibility** for my part.
3. I am **responsible** to stop separating myself from God, myself and others. I seek God’s help to relieve me of my un-forgiving nature, to stop separating myself from God with my “self-will run riot”. I no longer separate from myself because of guilt and remorse, nor separate from others because of fear and anger. I make **considerate** Step Nine direct amends.
4. In my spiritual awakening, I find that my **responsibility** is, in fact, my “ability to respond to God’s ability”. In Step Nine, the greater the harm someone has done to me, the more I need God’s “ability” to help me forgive them with **consideration** and make my direct amends.
5. My application of **responsibility** in Step Nine is to:
 - a. admit my wrong directly to the person I harmed, including the harm and loss I caused;
 - b. attempt to make restitution, where possible, to repair the harm and restore the loss;
 - c. commit, with God’s help, that I will not do this wrong again;
 - d. not attempt to rationalize or justify my actions, listening to their response without rebuttal.
6. My application of **consideration** in Step Nine is to:
 - a. avoid the other person’s wrong-doing; don’t justify my actions based on their wrongs;
 - b. not “water-down” my amends based on my pain from their wrongs;
 - c. not involve others;
 - d. ask their forgiveness, wherever appropriate, without an expectation of receiving it.
7. I am **responsible** to **consider** ways my direct amends “would injure them or others”:
 - a. naming someone else without their permission;
 - b. naming a partner in an affair;
 - c. putting myself or another person at physical risk.
8. In Step Nine, I take my ninth risk in the Spiritual Awakening of my recovery from alcoholism. I risk trusting God to help me admit my shortcomings to others—to not fear their judgement of me—to not be angry at their response to my direct amends.

“The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it.” (p. 83)

Next Time: Humility and Responsibility with Love and Tolerance in Step Ten.

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