

Step 10: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

Note: Bill usually packs a lot of information in first few paragraphs, outlining points, then moves into example and action of those points.

1. “As we work the first nine Steps, we prepare ourselves for the adventure of a new life.” (Pg 88, 1st sentence)
2. “But when we approach Step Ten we commence to put our A.A. way of living to practical use, day by day, in fair weather or foul.” (Pg 88, 2nd sentence)
 - a. Commence: begin, start
 - b. Practical: the concern with the actual doing or use of something rather than with theory and ideas. Relating to, or manifested in practice or action: not theoretical or ideal. Suitable for the situation in which something is used.

Note: Bill is driving home timing:

“Day by day” “Continuous” “Regular habit”

“Now” “Regular part of everyday living” “Learning daily”

Objectives/Goals:

Acid test:

1. Can we stay sober
2. Keep in emotional balance
3. And live to good purpose

Qualified by: “under all conditions?” (Pg 88, 3rd sentence)

Necessities:

“A continuous look at our assets and liabilities,” (action)

“and a real desire to learn and grow by this means,” (attitude)

Emotional Hangover: “The direct result of yesterday’s and sometimes today’s excesses of negative emotions – anger, fear, jealousy and the like.” (Pg 88, 3rd paragraph) (Echo of step 4, “To see how erratic emotions victimized us...” Pg 47, 4th paragraph, Step 8, Pg 81, 1st paragraph)

“If we would live serenely today and tomorrow, we certainly need to eliminate these hangovers.” (pg 89)

Requirement: “an admission and correction of errors now.”

How? When? Step 10 is condensing the spirit, principles and actions of Steps 4-9 for daily use with 3 types of Inventory

“It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong with us.” (Pg 90, 2nd paragraph)

- a. Spiritual: relating to or affecting the human spirit or soul as opposed to material or physical things.
- b. Axiom: An established rule or principle or a self-evident truth. A statement that is taken to be true, to serve as premise, **starting point for further reasoning.**

1. Spot check Inventory:

- A. “Taken at any time of the day, whenever we find ourselves getting tangled up.” (Pg 89, 2nd paragraph)
- B. “Today’s spot check inventory finds it’s chief application to situations which arise in each day’s march.” (Pg 90, last sentence)
- C. “The quick inventory is aimed at our daily ups and downs, especially those where people or new events throw us off balance and tempts us to make mistakes.” (Pg 91, 1st paragraph)

What is needed from us? (Pg 91)

- 1. “Self-restraint” (close your mouth)
 - a. “Our first objective will be the development of self-restraint. This carries a top priority rating.”
 - b. “Nothing pays off like restraint of tongue and pen.”
 - c. “For we can neither think nor act to good purpose until the habit of self-restraint has become automatic.”
- 2. “Honest analysis of what is involved”
- 3. A willingness to admit when the fault is ours
- 4. An equal willingness to forgive when the fault is elsewhere (Echoing 4th Step BB, Pg 58, Step 5 12 x 12, Pg 78 & 82, Step 8)
- 5. “Our first job is to sidestep the traps.”
 - a. Emotional booby traps:

Anger, Well nursed grudge (Resentment), Unkind tirade, Willful snap judgements, Quick tempered criticism, Furious, power driven arguments, Sulking, Silent scorn, Big-shot-ism, Etc.

- 6. “We should train ourselves to step back and think.”

Promises (of Spot Check Inventory)

- A. Quieting Stormy Emotions (Pg 90)
- B. “We begin to see that all people, including ourselves, are to some extent emotionally ill as well as frequently wrong.” (Pg 92)
- C. “We approach true tolerance and see what real love for our fellows actually means.”
- D. “It will become more and more evident as we go forward that it is pointless to become angry, or get hurt by people like us who are suffering the pains of growing up.” (Pg 92)
- E. “A radical change in our outlook.”

Keynotes of Harmony: Courtesy, Kindness, Justice and Love (Pg 93)

2. Balance Sheet Inventory:

“There’s the one we take at **days end**, when we review the happenings of the hours just past.” (Pg 89, 2nd paragraph)

"Here we cast up a balance sheet, crediting ourselves with things well done and chalking up debits where due." (Pg 89, 2nd paragraph)

Directions for the Balance Sheet (Debit/Credit)

1. "When evening comes, perhaps just before going to sleep, many of us draw up a balance sheet for the day." (Pg 93, 3rd paragraph)
 - a. "This is good place to remember inventory-taking is not always done in red ink."
 - b. "It's a poor day indeed when we haven't done *something* right."
 - c. "Good intentions, good thoughts and good acts are there for us to see."
2. "As we glance down the debit side of the day's ledger, we should carefully examine our MOTIVES in each thought and act that appears to be wrong." (Pg 94, 1st Paragraph)
 - a. ("The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear..." Pg 76, 2nd para Step 7)
3. "Here we need only to recognize that we did act or think badly,"
4. "...visualize how we might have done better,"
5. "and resolve with God's help to carry these lessons over into tomorrow..."
6. "...making, of course, any amends still neglected."
7. "in other instances only close scrutiny will reveal what our true motives were."
8. "search our hearts with neither fear nor favor,"
9. "Thank God and sleep in good conscience."

"Learning to spot, admit and correct these flaws is the essence of character-building and good living." (Pg 95, 1st paragraph.

Note: Where do we learn character building? How? Through daily practice of Step 10. (Pg 65, 3rd paragraph, Step 7 Pg 71,72,74 3rd paragraph)

Promises (Balance Sheet):

1. "Settle with the past."
2. "leave it behind."
3. "We have made peace with ourselves."
4. "the conviction follows that tomorrow's challenges can be met as they come."
5. "It will be so interesting and profitable..."
6. "...make all the other hours of our day better and happier."
7. "Under these conditions, the pains of failure are converted into assets."
8. "Sleep in good conscience"

Permanent Assets (we are seeking):

"An honest regret of harms done"
"a genuine gratitude for blessings received"
"a willingness to try for better things tomorrow"

3. Annual/Semi-Annual:

"Many A.A.'s go in for annual or semi-annual house cleanings." (4th Step)

"We make a careful review of our progress since the last time." (Pg 89, 2nd paragraph)

Step 11 “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.”

Note: “and” not “and/or”, not “prayer works fine, why bother with meditation?”, not “I’m too busy for meditation.” It says Prayer **AND** meditation. **Two separate actions**, significantly different from each other.

1. “Prayer and meditation are our principal means of conscious contact with God.” (Pg 96, 1st sentence)
 - a. “principal”: (adjective) most important
 - b. “means”: (noun) an action or system by which a result is brought about; a method.
 - c. “conscious”: (adjective) aware of and responding to one’s surroundings; the individual recognition of something within or without of oneself; awake to inner fact or truth.

The very first sentence is pointedly direct in defining the actions and purpose for this step.

In the 2nd paragraph, first sentence, Bill begins by sympathizing with our common arguments, justifications, objections, obstacles to meditation and prayer:

2. “We A.A.’s are active folks, enjoying the satisfactions of dealing with the realities of life, usually for the first time in our lives...”

Common arguments: (Pg 96 & 97)

- a. “Active folks” (too busy, don’t have time)
 - b. “slight serious meditation and prayer as something not really necessary” (fru-fru fluff)
 - c. “somewhat mysterious skill of clergy” (mis-placed conception of hierarchy)
 - d. “claims for the power of prayer still be unconvincing and quite objectionable” (close-mind)
 - e. “rebellion”
 - f. “strong logic” (science, philosophy)
 - g. “no justice in this scheme of things, and therefore no God at all” (atheist)
 - h. “wasn’t any evidence of a God who knew or cared about human beings”
3. “almost the only scoffers at prayer are those who never tried it.” (Pg 97, 3rd paragraph)
 - a. “Of course we finally did experiment, and when unexpected results followed, we felt different; in fact *we knew* different; and so we were sold on meditation and prayer.”
 - b. “And that, we have found, can happen to anyone who tries.”

What happens when we turn away from meditation and prayer?

- a. “we deprive our minds, our emotions and our intuitions of vitally needed support.” (pg 97, last paragraph)

What do we all need?

- a. "We all need the light of God's reality"
- b. "the nourishment of His strength"
- c. "and the atmosphere of His grace."

What happens when self-examination, meditation and prayer are logically related and interwoven?

- a. "the result is an unshakable foundation for life." (what a Promise!)

Meditation:

Note: Bill wrote that Step 11 is the most under utilized Step, gift of A.A.

Bill uses the Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi as a beginning example to meditation. (our 11th Step Prayer)

How? He instructs the beginner in meditation like this:

- a. "First, look at a really good prayer."
- b. "reread several times very slowly"
- c. "try to take in the deep meaning of each phrase and idea."
- d. "drop all resistance"
- e. "rest quietly with the thoughts of someone who knows"
- f. "relax and breathe deeply"
- g. "become willing to partake, be strengthened and lifted up"
- h. "point imagination toward right objectives"
- i. "envision our spiritual objective"
- j. "focus undisturbed on constructive imagination"
- k. "reread the prayer"

"Meditation is something that can always be further developed. It has no boundaries, either of width or height." (or Depth) (Pg 101, 3rd paragraph)

"It is essentially and individual adventure, something each of us works out in his own way." (Pg 101)

My ways – story time.

The one unchanging objective of meditation:

"to improve our conscious contact with God, with His grace, wisdom and love."

The first fruits (Promise): Emotional balance.

Prayer: “Prayer is the raising of the heart and mind to God-”, “a petition to God.” (Pg 102)

Temptations:

- a. “to ask for specific solutions to specific problems.” (Pg 102, 2nd paragraph)
- b. “ask for the ability to help other people as we have already thought they should be helped.” (Pg 102)
- c. “Asking God to do it *our* way.” (Pg 102, 2nd paragraph)
- d. “We form ideas as to what we think God’s will is for other people.”
- e. “Self-serving demand of God for replies” (Pg 103, 3rd paragraph)
- f. “Wishful thinking and rationalization” (Pg 104, 1st paragraph)

Qualification for every prayer: (Pg 102, 2nd paragraph) (Same idea expressed several ways)

- a. “...if it be Thy will.”
- b. ‘We ask simply that throughout the day God place in us the best understanding of His will that we can have for that day, and that we be given the grace by which we may carry it out.’
- c. “Thy will, not mine be done.”
- d. “We ought to pray that God’s will, whatever it is, be done for others as well as for ourselves.”
- e. “Praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.”

Promises of Step 11:

1. “Emotional balance.” (Pg 102, 1st sentence)
2. “broaden and deepen the channel between ourselves and God as we understand Him.” (Pg 102)
3. “strength not ordinarily their own.”
4. “They have found wisdom beyond their usual capability.”
5. “found peace of mind which can stand firm in face of difficult circumstances.”
6. “receive guidance for our lives”, (Qualification: “to extent we stop making demands upon God to give it to us on order and on our terms.”)
7. “his affairs have taken remarkable and unexpected turns for the better”, (Qualification: “as he tries to improve his conscious contact with God.”)
8. “new lesson for living were learned.”
9. “new resources of courage were uncovered”
10. “the conviction came that God *does* ‘move in a mysterious way His wonders to perform.’”
11. “the sense of belonging that comes to us”
12. “we no longer live in a hostile world”
13. “We are no longer lost and frightened and purposeless.”
14. “We know that God lovingly watches over us.”
15. “We know that when we turn to Him, (Qualification) All will be well with us, here and hereafter.”

“Lord, grant that I may seek rather to comfort than to be comforted – to understand, than to be understood-to love, than to be loved. For it is by self-forgetting that one finds. It is by forgiving that one is forgiven. It is by dying that one awakens to Eternal Life. Amen.”

A poem for meditation

Rilke's Book of Hours - Love Poems to God

I, 17 page 77

She who reconciles the ill-matched threads
of her life, and weaves them gratefully
into a single cloth -

where the one guest is you.
In the softness of evening
it's you she receives.

You are the partner of her loneliness,
the unspeaking center of her monologues.

With each disclosure you encompass more
and she stretches beyond what limits her,
to hold you.

This is my most favorite poem. For me, about relationship with My HP and conscious contact.