

Step 12: *“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.”*

3 components of Step 12:

- a. “Having had a spiritual awakening as **the** result of these steps”
- b. “we **tried** to carry this message to alcoholics”
- c. “and to **practice** these principles in **all** our affairs”

Again, the first paragraph is Bill’s concise summary of what we are focusing on in this reading and throughout chapter Bill expands those points. (Pg 106)

1. “The joy of living is the theme of A.A.’s Twelfth Step, and action is its key word.”
 - a. Are you living in joy?
 1. Joy, by Bill’s standards is what we, alcoholics, find by the following actions.
 - a. **Joy:** a feeling of great pleasure and happiness caused by something exceptionally good or satisfying.
 - b. **Keyword:** Action
 1. “Here we turn outward toward our fellow alcoholics who are still in distress.”
 - a. Outward: out of ourselves, “freedom from bondage of self”
 2. “Here we begin to practice the kind of giving that asks no rewards.”
 - a. “the kind of love that has no price tag on it.”, “give away what has been so freely given to us”
 3. “Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety.”
 - a. What? “we practice daily “all Twelve Steps”
 - b. When? “daily”
 - c. Why? “so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety.” (Pg 106)
(What did he say?) We have moved from focus on physical sobriety for ourselves to practicing these steps to find EMOTIONAL SOBRIETY for us and others!

Spiritual Awakening:

2. Our Twelfth Step also says that as a result of practicing **all** the Steps, we have found something called a spiritual awakening.” (Pg 106, 2nd paragraph)
 - a. **Spiritual awakening versus Spiritual experience:**
 - i. **Awakening:** awaken from sleep; revival of interest or intention; a recognition, realization or coming into awareness of something.

- ii. **Spiritual Experience:** belief in or experience of a reality surpassing human understanding; direct intuitive experience of the divine; belief in the existence of realities beyond perceptual or intellectual constructs that are directly accessible by subjective experience.
 - 1. **Subjective:** to each person, their experience outside of others. Based on or influenced by personal feelings, tastes or opinions.

So here we are talking about our awakening, waking from sleep, out of the dark night to the sunlight of the spirit versus a sudden spiritual experience as discussed in Appendices II in the Big Book, Spiritual Experiences.

Growing into God. Growing into a spiritually centered life. Growing through service. Growing by the practice of these 12 steps.

“Not an overnight matter.” (Pg)

Grow, growth, growing: A stage or condition in increasing, developing or maturing.

“Genuine spiritual awakening” commonalities as defined by Bill. (Pg 106-107)

- a. “the most important thing of it is that (we) have now become able to do, feel, and believe” that which (we) could not do before on (our) own unaided strength and resources alone.
- b. “(we) have been granted a gift which amounts to a new state of consciousness and being.”
- c. “(we) have been set on a path which tells (us) (we) are really going somewhere, and that life is not a dead end, not something to be endured or mastered.”
 - a. Endured: suffer (something painful or difficult) patiently (reminds me of Martyrdom)
 - b. Mastered: acquire complete knowledge or skill in.
- d. “In a very real sense, (we) have been transformed because (we) have laid hold of a source of strength which one way or another, (we) have had hitherto denied (ourselves).
- e. “(we) find (ourselves) in possession of a degree of honesty, tolerance, unselfishness, peace of mind, and love of which (we) thought (ourselves) incapable.

“What he has received is a free gift, and yet usually, at least in some small part, he has made himself ready to receive it.” (Pg 107, last sentence of first paragraph)

How? Reader: Recap of all 12 Steps (Pgs 107-109)

“So, practicing these Steps, we had a spiritual awakening about which finally there was no question.” (Pg 109) (proof of our spiritual awakening listed above)

Service:

““Freely ye have received; freely give...” is the core of this part of Step Twelve””

(Pg 110, end last paragraph)

3. The “payoff, the magnificent reality, of Alcoholics Anonymous”? (Pg 109, 3rd paragraph)

- a. “The wonderful energy it releases”
- b. “the eager action by which it carries our message to the next suffering alcoholic”
- c. “which finally translates the Twelve Steps into action upon all our affairs”

“Even the newest of newcomers finds undreamed rewards as he tries to help his brother alcoholic, the one even blinder than he.” (Pg 109, last paragraph)

- a. The “divine paradox”:
 - i. “this kind of giving he has found his own reward, whether his brother has yet received anything or not.”
 - 1. What kind of giving? “the kind of giving that actually demands nothing.”, “does not expect pay or even love”

“The substance of what we receive as we carry A.A.’s message to the next alcoholic.”?

- a. “no satisfaction has been deeper and no joy greater than in a Twelfth Step job well done.”
- b. “To watch the eyes of men and women open with wonder as they move from darkness into light,”
- c. “to see their lives quickly fill with new purpose and meaning,”
- d. “to see whole families reassembled,”
- e. “to see the alcoholic outcast received back into his community in full citizenship”
- f. “**above all** to watch these people awaken to the presence of a loving God in their lives”

“Nor is this the only kind of Twelfth Step work.” (Pg 110, 2nd paragraph)

- a. “We sit in meetings and listen, not only for ourselves, but to give reassurance and support”
- b. “Speaking” (whether our audience is one or many)
- c. “Coffee and cake”

Note: this list of types of AA service has greatly expanded.

“Temporarily off the beam...”

- a. “discouraged”
- b. “seem to have been successful”
- c. “possessive of these newcomers”
- d. “advice”
- e. “overmanage”

“But in the long run we clearly realize that these are **only the pains of growing up**, and **nothing but good** can come from them **if we turn more and more to the entire Twelve Steps for the answers.**” (pg 111) (Bold emphasis for the conditional qualification of “good”)