

“WE CLAIM SPIRITUAL PROGRESS RATHER THAN SPIRITUAL PERFECTION.”

A Big Book Twelve Step Study of our “Happy, Joyous and Free” Journey of Recovery,
April 3 through June 26, 2023 Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, Mo.
(All quotes from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise noted.)

“We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.” (p. xiii)

“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps ...” (p. 60)

“We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.” (p. 60)

“We are sure God wants us to be happy, joyous, and free.” (p. 133)

How do I get from “seemingly hopeless” to a “spiritual awakening” filled with “spiritual progress”—living a life where I can be “happy, joyous and free”?

My journey of spiritual awakening begins in Steps One, Two and Three as a faint **HOPE for spiritual help** that grows as I begin to move away from “the gates of insanity and death” of my hopelessness. (“... conscious of His presence...” p. 63)

My spiritual journey continues in Steps Four and Five as I grow in **RELATIONSHIP with the Spirit**. (“... walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” p. 75)

I grow spiritually in Steps Six through Nine as I strengthen my **FAITH in God as I understand God**. (“... God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.” p. 84)

God enlarges my spiritual life each day with Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve as I learn to live **LIFE in God’s care**. (“See to it that your relationship with Him is right ...” p. 164)

In this Twelve Step “Big Book” study workshop, we consider the essential contribution each step makes in our “Happy, Joyous and Free” journey of recovery and spiritual progress.

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RELATIONSHIP with the Spirit. “... walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.”

Step Five. “Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

(p. 59)

“This is perhaps difficult—especially discussing our defects with another person.” (p. 72)

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

I “became conscious of [God’s] presence” in Step Three—using it in Step Four.

Now, in Step Five, my consciousness of God’s “presence” guides my second major admission on my journey of spiritual recovery. In Step One, I *admit* I am powerless over alcohol and that my life is unmanageable. In Step Five, I *admit* that I am also powerless over my *selfish motives*, i.e., resentment, fear and inconsideration: “We could not wish them away ...” (p. 66)

In Step Five, my relationship with the Spirit grows as I continue “walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” “... these [defects] are about to be cast out”. (p. 75)

RELATIONSHIP with the Spirit. “... walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.”

Step Five. “Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.” (p. 59)

“Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it?” (p. 72)

“... another human being ...” “

“This is perhaps difficult—especially discussing our defects with another person.” “

Why do I need to share my defects of character with another person?

“... we may not overcome drinking.” (p. 72)

“... keep to themselves certain facts about their lives ... avoid this humbling experience ...” “

“... they never completed their housecleaning.” (p. 73)

“They only *thought* they had lost their egoism and fear ...” “

“... only *thought* they had humbled themselves.” “

“... had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness, and honesty ...” “

“That basic ingredient of all humility, a desire to seek and do God’s will ...” (AA 12x12, p. 72)

“... humility ... move out from ourselves toward others and toward God.” (AA 12x12, p. 76)

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

“More than most people, the alcoholic leads a double life.” (p. 73)

“... choose the person ... we take this intimate and confidential step.” (p. 74)

“... able to keep a confidence ... fully understand and approve what we are driving at ... not try to change our plan ...a life-and-death errand.” (pp. 74-75)

What is it to “admit the exact nature of [my] wrongs”?

I learn to *admit*, not excuse, my own wrong, harmful behavior. (Treats my fear and my pride.)

I learn to be *honest* about the wrongs I did that harmed others. (Treats my fear.)

I learn to be *humble*, to admit my wrongs, regardless of what others think. (Treats my pride.)

Motive (nature of wrong) ... leads to Choice ... leads to Action ... leads to Consequences!
(Selfish, inconsiderate **greed**) (Steal) (Rob a store) (Get Caught)

“We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past.” (p. 75)

“Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted.” (p. 75)

The Step Five Promises include “walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” “

“Returning home ... we ask:” (Humility: less self-centered ... more God-centered!) (p. 75)

Have I omitted anything?	Lied.
Is my work solid so far?	Honest.
Are the stones properly in place?	Nature of my wrongs.
Have I skimmed on the cement put in the foundation?	Told partial truth.
Have I tried to make mortar without sand?	Omitted the prayers.

Next Time: Step Six. “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.”