

AA ON THE ROCKS JULY 2023 4-WEEK STEP-STUDY SERIES

(Quotes from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Ed., except where noted)

July 12, 2023. Steps Four and Five. *I use spiritual help to learn what in me blocks me from seeking and receiving spiritual help!*
“Big Book” pp. 63-75. *An observation—Directions: what to do and when to do it. Suggestions: how to do it.*

A Review of Steps One, Two and Three. (See pp. 60-63)

The “a,b,c’s”; *Step Three Promises and “decision” Prayer: “God, I offer myself to you ...”*
I offer myself to God in Step Three. I seek God’s care for my choices and their consequences.

“Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless **at once** followed by a strenuous effort **to face**, and **to be rid of**, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom.” (Bold mine) (p. 64)
I begin to take action in Steps Four and Five to turn my will (my choices) and my life the consequences of my choices) over to God’s care. I will continue through Step Twelve.

Step Four. “Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory.” (p. 64)
“... a strenuous effort to face ... the things in ourselves ... blocking us.”

“First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure.” (p. 64)
“Being convinced that self ... defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.” (p. 64)
“... harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit ...” (p. 66)

*God helps me deal with my resentments (past angers) so God can help me in the **present**.
God helps me deal with my fears (about the **future**) so God can help me in the **present**.
I face my resentments and fears— God helps me deal with my inconsideration in the **present**.*

Resentment. “ ‘number one’ offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else.” “
“We asked ourselves why we were angry.” (“We set [our answers] on paper.”) (pp. 64-66)
“To conclude that others were wrong was as far as most of us ever got.” (p. 66)
“... more **we fought and tried to have our own way**, the worse matters got.” “
“How could we escape [our resentments]?” We could not wish them away ...” “
“We asked God to help us ...” “God save me from being angry ... show us ...” (p. 67)
“... our own mistakes ... **selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?**” (p. 67)
Fear. “... evil and corroding thread ... Wasn’t it because **self-reliance failed us?**” (pp. 67-68)
“We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves ... humbly rely on Him ...” (p. 68)
“We ask Him to remove our fear ... what He would have us be.” “
Sex. “We reviewed our own conduct ... selfish, dishonest, or **inconsiderate?**” (p. 69)
“We ask God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.” “
“... we ask God what we should do ...” “
“God alone can judge ... let God take us to better things ... be forgiven ...” (pp. 69- 70)

Step Five. “We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path.” (p. 72)
“They only *thought* they had lost their egoism and fear ...humbled themselves.” (p. 73)
“We pocket out pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past.” (My **motives** behind my thoughts, words and deeds.) (p. 75)
Step Five Promises and the Five Questions. “

Next Time: Steps Six, Seven Eight and Nine—seek willingness to “let go”, “let God,” become responsible and accountable.

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HOW TO MOVE FROM BLAME AND RESENTMENT TO FORGIVENESS

“It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worthwhile. But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die.” (p. 66)

Our *moral inventory*, Steps Four and Five, is sandwiched in between our *self-surrender* of Step Three and Steps Six and Seven. In our “searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”, we seek to *uncover*, *discover* and *discard* those things in us that are blocking us from our life-saving spiritual awakening. The first and most deadly of these are our resentments. As we listed our resentments and how they have negatively affected us, not the other person, “we began to see that the world and its people really dominated us.” (p. 66)

“How could we escape?” (p. 66)

The “escape” from self-destroying resentment is forgiveness. A simple and powerful process that will move us from blame and resentment toward forgiveness is spelled out in the Big Book on p. 66-67. Here is the “how-to” of that process:

DIAGNOSIS (p. 66) (Change them, hurt them, punish them so I will feel better!!!!)

1. “We were prepared to look at [our resentment list] from an entirely different angle.”
(Begin to stop blaming.)
2. “ ... people really dominated us.” **We are powerless over them...**
(We are letting them live “rent-free” in our head!)
3. Their “wrong-doing ... had the power to actually kill.” **... our life is unmanageable.**
(We drink the “poison” of our own resentment, expecting them to die!)
4. “We could not wish [our resentments] away any more than alcohol.” **Need a Higher Power.**
(I am powerless over my own resentments, even after I know they are harming me.)

TREATMENT (pp. 66- 67) (God, help me let go of them and let You help me!)

1. “We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick.”
2. “We asked God to help us show them ... tolerance, pity and patience ...”
3. “This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him?”
4. “God save me from being angry.”
5. “Thy will be done.”
6. “We avoid retaliation or argument.”
7. “God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one.”

“Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes ... selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened.” (Column 4 of the Resentment Inventory)