

Spiritual Awakening and Personality Change in the Twelve Steps of AA

A Twelve-Step Study of Alcoholics Anonymous (the "Big Book")

July 3 through September 25, 2023. Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, Mo.

(Quotes from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise noted.)

The Twelve Steps of our Spiritual Awakening change our personalities from selfish "ideas, emotions and attitudes" into God-centered "ideas, emotions and attitudes". We grow spiritually in our "personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from alcoholism ..." (p. 567)

Spiritual Awakenings, Spiritual Experiences and Personality Changes.

"The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection." (p. 60)

Our individual Spiritual Awakenings, Spiritual Experiences and Personality Changes *are* unique. We each have different spiritual awakenings and personality changes. *Each is valid!* One of us isn't "better" or the other "worse". Comparisons are un-healthy and dangerous!

*Each of our **spiritual awakenings** and **personality changes** are equally valid, as long as we each try to apply the un-changing spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps to our ever-changing lives each day with willingness, honesty and open-mindedness.* (See App. II, p. 568)

Each of the Twelve Steps is an un-changing spiritual principle. Water freezing at 32 degrees Fahrenheit at sea level is an un-changing principle that is part of a change process, as water changes from liquid form to solid form at 32 degrees Fahrenheit. Likewise, we apply the un-changing spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps to our ever-changing individual lives as God enlarges our unique, personal **spiritual awakenings** and **personality changes**.

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***Personality changes** are incremental and cumulative. Each one strengthens all of them. My **personality changes** in my **spiritual awakening** in the first nine steps include: *delusion* and *dishonesty* changing to **honesty**; *defiance* and *denial* changing to **willingness**; "playing God" as a *know-it-all* changing to **open-minded**; **willing** to be **honest** about uncovering the "flaws in our make-up"; **open-mind** others; **accountable** my motives, the "nature of our defects"; **willing, honest** and **open-minded** enough to ask God to help me "let go" (discard); more **trust** and hope, less *fear*, in the uncertainty of God's will for me; **responsible** for my *wrongs* that harmed others; **accountable** to others in my amends to them for my *wrongs*.*

"The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.*" (p. 83) *I have begun to live a spiritual life:*

"... a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator ... obstacles in our path." (p. 72)

My "new attitude" is promised to me in the Step Three promises, p. 63.

My "new relationship with our Creator" is disclosed to me in the Step Five promises, p. 75.

I became willing "to discover the obstacles in my path" since Step One:

- "The delusion has to be smashed." p. 30
- "... prejudice against spiritual terms ..." p. 47
- "... we had to quit playing God." p. 62
- "... flaws in our make-up ..." (resentment, fear, inconsideration)" pp. 64-71
- "... whatever self-will has blocked you off from [God]." p. 71
- "... we ask if we have omitted anything ..." p. 75
- "... things [in us] which we have admitted are objectionable?" p. 76
- "... defect of character which stands in the way ..." p. 76
- "... sweep away the debris ... accumulated [from self-will] ..." pp. 76-83

Step Ten keeps me in the "spiritual life" each day, so I don't drift back into "self-will run riot".

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Step Ten. Pages 83-85. (*The "continue to watch for" step.*)

"Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

"We feel a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough." (p. 82)

"Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead." (p. 83)

This is a major "turning point" in the Big Book! Will I continue to ask for God's "protection and care with complete abandon"? Do I realize that there is much more to my continued **personality change** and **spiritual awakening** than simply not taking the first drink?

My spiritual foundation, my relationship with God *as I understand God*, builds in Steps One through Nine. My **personality change** is sufficient to allow me to "have entered the world of the Spirit". The "promises" disclose my **spiritual awakening** and **personality changes**:

Step Three promises: *faith* in help from my "Creator" based on other's experience; (p. 63)

Step Five promises: *affirm* my personal relationship with "the Spirit of the Universe"; (p. 75)

Step Nine promises: *hope* to continue my growing **spiritual awakening**. (pp. 83-84)

"This thought brings us to Step Ten, which suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along." (p. 84)

"... continue to take personal inventory ..." — Steps One through Seven.

"... set right any new mistakes as we go along." — Steps Eight and Nine.

*Am I **honest, willing** and **open-minded** enough to continue my one-day-at-a-time daily living in the "sunlight of the Spirit", continuing in my "spiritual life" with Step Ten?*

"We have entered the world of the Spirit."

"... grow in understanding and effectiveness ... continue for our lifetime." (p. 77) (p. 84)

"... we continue to take personal inventory ..." (p. 84)

Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear."

"... we continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along." (p. 84)

"When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them."

"We discuss them with someone immediately ...

and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone."

"... resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help."

Love and tolerance of others is our code." (See pp. 19-20)

"... ceased fighting anything or anyone—we react sanely and normally ..." (pp. 84-85)

"We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience." (p. 85)

"That is how we react as long as we keep in fit spiritual condition." (p. 85)

"The world is not a playground; it is a schoolroom. Life is not a holiday, but an education."

Experience the Enduring Power of Love, Henry Drummond, 1884

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"It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels." (p. 85)

"We are headed for trouble if we do ... we are not cured of alcoholism ... have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition."

The only thing necessary for "self-will run riot" to re-ascend as the power in control of my life is for me to stop trying to put God first in everything I think, feel, say, be and do.

"We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition."

"Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. 'How can I best serve [God]—[God's] will, not mine, be done.' These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will."

(p. 85)

Observations: Spiritual Awakening and Personality Change in Step Ten.

- * My **personality changes** in my **spiritual awakening** guide me to accept my *need* and my *responsibility* to **continue** to ask God to help me keep me out of the way of God's help for me today. I **continue** to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear.
- * I ask God to help me not do the "next wrong thing". When I "work" Step Ten so I can receive God's help to not do the "next wrong thing", I am better able to do the "next right thing".
- * I "feel" and "think" selfishly, dishonestly, resentfully or fearfully at some point every day.
Those thoughts and feelings are normal, human reactions to the uncertainties, setbacks and disappointments of life. "When these crop up", I ask God to help me deal with them at once.
Usually, God's will and God's Power are with me soon enough to prevent me from "acting in", "acting on" or "acting out", my selfishness, dishonesty, resentments or fears.
- * Step Ten protects me each day from complacently drifting back into living in my "old ideas".
My most dangerous "old idea" is the one that tells me I don't need God's help today!!!
- * I was born with competing desires for both unity and separation. I know I feel more safe and secure when I am "in unity" with God and others. Yet differences with others still triggers my desire for separation from others. I now know that God **loves, tolerates and forgives** me. Thus, I am **willing, honest and open-minded** enough to try to let God help me treat others with the same **love, tolerance and forgiveness** God treats me. Each day, I live more in unity with God and others—less in separation from God and others.
- * "It is almost as important to know what is not serious as to know what is." J. K. Galbraith
My will without the restraint, direction and guidance of God's will is simply not serious!
- * *With Step Ten, I **continue** each day to allow God to expand my **spiritual awakening**.
My **personality changes** to love and tolerance of others because God loves and tolerates me!*

Next Time Step Eleven: the "continue to seek God's help" step.