

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)

We each have unique **Spiritual Awakenings** and **Personality Changes**. *Each is valid!*

Each Step is an un-changing spiritual principle. Water freezing is an un-changing principle that is part of a change process, water changing from liquid form to solid form. Likewise, we apply the un-changing spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps to our changing individual lives so that God can enlarge our **spiritual awakenings** and **personality changes**.

We 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)

.....

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps ..."

My **personality changes** in my **spiritual awakening** in the first eleven 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** to uncover the *"flaws in our make-up"*; **open-minded** to discover 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*; **willing** to **continue** to **seek** to improve my relationship with God each day, to avoid "self-will run riot".

Step Twelve, Part III: the "in all our affairs" step.

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried ... to practice these principles in all our affairs."

"All my affairs", all my relationships—with God, myself and others—vital from the start:

- *with God*—"We have been trying to get ... a new relationship with our Creator ..." (p. 72)
- *with myself*—"We can be alone at perfect peace and ease." (p. 75)
- *with others*—"... God will show us how ... kindly and tolerant view of ... every one." (p. 67)

I awaken *today* to a new opportunity to apply the unchanging spiritual principles of the Twelve Steps in my on-going **spiritual awakening**. I ask God *today* to help me nourish my healthy **personality changes**. *Today*, I desire to continue to improve my relationship with God, with myself and with every one I am with *today*—"in all my affairs".

*There is a wonderful synergy between my **spiritual awakening** and my **personality changes**. I continue to seek God's help to try to apply my positive, healthy God-centered **personality changes** in all my relationships. This application helps my **spiritual awakening** grow. My recovery grows as I continue to seek God's help to enlarge my spiritual life!*

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"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried ... to practice these principles in all our affairs."

I try to practice the *spiritual principles of the steps* each day—so that God can enlarge my **spiritual awakening** and my positive **personality changes** can continue to grow each day.

"In all my affairs", *all my relationships*—with God, myself and others—even in this meeting!

*My daily application of Steps Ten and Eleven guide me to continue to do my part to strengthen **my relationship with God**. My thought-life is more God-centered and less self-centered. My emotional life is calmer. I am less prone to act in anger, fear, or inconsideration.*

"We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime." (p. 84)

"Love and tolerance of others is our code." "

"And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol." "

" 'How can I best serve [God]—[God's] will, not mine, be done.' " (p. 85)

"On awakening ... we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives." (p. 86)

"We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown [by God] all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given [by God] whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask [God] especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ask [God] for ourselves, however, if others will be helped." (p. 87)

*My daily application of Steps Ten and Eleven guide me to continue to do my part to strengthen **my relationship with myself**.*

"We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day '[God's] will be done'. We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves." (pp. 87-88)

*My daily application of Steps Ten and Eleven guide me to continue to do my part to strengthen **my relationship with others**.*

"When a person offended ... be helpful ... God save me from being angry." (p. 67)

"... avoid retaliation or argument ... take a kindly and tolerant view ..." "

"We ask [God] to remove our fear ... what [God] would have us be." (p. 68)

"We ask God to mold our ideals ... tolerance, patience and good will ..." (pp. 69-70)

"... patience, tolerance, kindness and love." (p. 83)

"So cooperate; never criticize. To be helpful is our only aim." (p. 89)

"... be of maximum helpfulness to others." (p. 102)

"Patience, tolerance, understanding and love are the watchwords." (p. 118)

"... meet upon the common ground of tolerance, understanding and love." (p. 122)

"... temper such talk by a spirit of love and tolerance." (p. 125)

"... not bear business tales or criticize his associates." (p. 145)

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Observations on Spiritual Awakening and Personality Change "in all our affairs"—today.

* We have a **purpose**:

"Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us." (p. 77)

I have an opportunity *today* to live in my **spiritual awakening**. My healthy **personality changes** continue as I try to trust God with the care of my life *today* and try to be of some service to every person in my life *today*.

My **spiritual awakening** began with my gift of sobriety, yet my life is full of many more gifts than being sober. I am responsible *today* to try to share my gifts with others.

* We have a **code**:

"Love and tolerance of others is our code." (p. 84)

I have an opportunity *today* to live and grow in my **spiritual awakening** and **personality change** as I try to love and tolerate each person I am with *today*.

My understanding of love and tolerance today is to simply want God's best for the other person and to be willing to "meet them where they are". As we pray in Step Three, "take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life."

Love = desire God's best for them.

Tolerance = don't do harm to them.

* We have a **vision**:

"See to it that your relationship with [God] is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us." (p. 164)

I have an opportunity *today* to "ask [God] in my morning meditation what I can do each day for the man who is still sick

... to abandon myself to God as I understand God

... to give freely of what I find

... to be in the Fellowship of the Spirit ..." (p. 164)

Our vision is not an afterthought. It has been with our recovery from the beginning!

"We had a new Employer ... we felt new power flow in ..." Step Three Promises, p. 63.

"... walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe." Step Five Promises, p. 75.

"... God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves." Step Nine Promises, p. 84.

- * "When a man or a woman has a spiritual awakening ... has been granted a gift ... has been transformed ... in possession of a degree of honesty, tolerance, unselfishness, peace of mind, and love ... a free gift ... ready to receive it." AA 12x12, pp. 106-107.

- * "... 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." AA 12x12, p. 106.

*"God, please help me to **listen** before I act; to **think** before I react; to **earn** before I spend; to **wait** before I criticize; to **pray** so that I can forgive; to **try** before I quit."*

Next Time: Spiritual Awakening, Personality Change and Emotional Sobriety.