

“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.”

“Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.”
“Love and tolerance of others is our code.”

A Big Book Study of Spiritual Recovery from “Self-will Run Riot” to Service and Serenity.
A Twelve-Step Workshop from January 1 through March 25, 2024
Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, Mo. USA
(All page numbers from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise noted.)

The term “path”, and other analogies and metaphors, are used throughout the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Steps to describe our *journey of spiritual growth* from “what we used to be like”, through our “spiritual awakening”, to “what we are like now”.

Each step guides us to get on, and stay on, “our path” of recovery from alcoholism, our spiritual journey of awareness, acceptance and action. Our *spiritual awakening* is something that happens *in us*, as we learn how to let it happen *for us* and to stop doing certain things that block it from happening *to us*. *We decide to learn to do what it takes to live on “our path”.*

Step Three: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as *we understood God.*” (p. 59)

Am I ready to “turn” off of my “old path” and “turn” onto a “new path”?

Step One Recap: Awareness—my “path” is no longer working.

“He had come to pass his experience along to me—if I cared to have it. I was shocked, but interested. Certainly I was ... I had to be, for I was hopeless.” (pp. 9-10)

“But what about the real alcoholic ... begins to lose all control of his liquor consumption, once he starts to drink.” (p. 21)

“... great obsession ... this illusion ... insanity or death ... the delusion ...” (p. 30)

Step Two Recap: Acceptance—I need, and hope there is, a new “path”.

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

“Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a *Power greater than ourselves* ... a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.” (p. 45)

“God either is, or He isn’t. What was our choice to be?” (p. 53)

.....
“At the hospital I was separated from alcohol for the last time ... There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would.” (p. 13)
.....

“Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:
(a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.
(b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.
(c) That God could and would if he were sought.” (p. 60)

*Am I ready to **learn how to** “turn” off of my “old path” and “turn” to seek a new spiritual path?*

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Step Three. “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God
as we understood Him.” (p. 59)

“Being convinced, we were at *Step Three* ... the first requirement is that we be
convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success.” (p. 60)

“... we are almost always in collision ... try to live by self-propulsion ...” “

“... if only people would do as he wished ... other people are more to blame.” (p. 61)

“... “... victim of the delusion ... if he only manages well?” “

“... producer of confusion rather than harmony ... self-centered—ego-centric.” “

“Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think is the root of our troubles.” (p. 62)

“Driven by ... fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity ...” “

... we have made decisions based on self ...” “

“... alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot ... usually doesn’t think so.” “

“Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it
kills us. God makes that possible.” “

“... no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid.” “

“Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own
power. We had to have God’s help.” (p. 62)

Failure to enlarge my spiritual life is a deliberate choice to avoid help—not an oversight.

“First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn’t work.” (p. 62)

Next, we decided that hereafter ... God was going to be our Director.” “

Step Three: Decide to “turn” onto the “Entrance Ramp” to our Path of Recovery.

“... this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch
through which we passed to freedom.” (p. 62)

Step Three Promises.

“When we sincerely took such a position ... we had a new Employer.” (p. 63)

(See p. 3 of this outline)

The Step Three “Decision” Prayer: Action—I “merge” with “our [spiritual] path”.

“God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.

Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.

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. May I do Thy will always.” (p. 63)

*When I decide to ask God to relieve me of the bondage of self, I have come up the entrance
ramp to our Path of Recovery from alcoholism—merging with our Path of Spiritual Awakening.*

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The Promises of “When we sincerely took such a position ...”: Step Three, and beyond.

“... all sorts of remarkable things followed.” (p. 63)

I stop being, or pretending to be, a know-it-all.

I am *aware* of my powerlessness; *accept* my limitations; *act* in my opportunity.

“We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed ...”

I become willing to let God be God.

I learn to utilize God’s Power to help me seek to know and do God’s will.

“... if we kept close to Him and performed His work well.”

I learn to let God into my life by stopping doing the things that shut God out of my life.

I learn to let God help me become who God wants me to be.

I learn that God will do what God says He will do when I do what He says I need to do.

“Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves ...”

I learn that God knows better than I do what is good for me, and for you.

“... our little plans and designs.”

I learn to trust God with uncertainty so that I can stop trying to control uncertainty.

“More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life.”

I learn I am in a process of restoration, replacing selfishness with desire to be of service.

I become spiritually “awake”—*aware* of reality; *accept* situations; *act* in consideration.

“As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence ...”

I learn to let God’s Power supplement and supersede my power.

I learn to experience serenity, even in the midst of uncertainty and turmoil.

I learn to *respond* with pauses and patience, not *react* in anger and fear.

I learn that the circumstances of my daily life are situations and choices, not problems.

“... we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.”

I learn to relate to God on God’s terms, not my terms—“God’s will, not mine, be done”.

I learn to *trust*, not always understand, *God’s character* of Power, Love and Way of life:

God’s Power—fuels my *awareness*; the source of growth of my spiritual awakening.

God’s Love—infuses my *acceptance* of God’s care for me in my spiritual awakening.

God’s Way of life—directs and guides my daily *actions* as I seek to live in God’s will.

Next Time: Step Four—proceed on our spiritual path with “fact-finding and fact-facing”.