

“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 One and Step Two: How do I know there is a path—and that I’m not on it?

I won’t seek a new path until I give up trying to stay on my current path.

Step One. Becoming Aware that I’m Not on the “Right Path”.

AWARENESS of Hopelessness: “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol ...”

- “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)
- “... an alcoholic of a type [physical allergy/mental obsession] ... hopeless.” (p. xxv)
- “He frankly admitted and believed that for him there was no hope.” (p. xxxi)
- “The patient had made his own diagnosis ... deciding his situation hopeless ...” “
- “The remorse, horror and hopelessness of the next morning are unforgettable.” (p. 6)
- “My weary and despairing wife ... give me over to the undertaker or the asylum.” (p. 7)
- “... joining that endless procession of sots ...” (p. 8)
- “Quicksand stretched around me in all directions.” “
- “... the certainty that I would ... stumble along to a miserable end.” “
- “... thousands of men and women who were once just as hopeless as Bill.” (p. 17)
- “... obsession ... illusion ... delusion ... into the gates of insanity or death.” (p. 30)
- “... begin to dwell on the hopeless feature of the malady.” (p. 92)
- “... talk to him about the hopelessness of alcoholism ...” “
- “... unable to imagine life ... with alcohol or without it ... the jumping-off place.” (p. 152)

Causes of Hopelessness: “—that our lives had become unmanageable.”

- “... the alcoholic illness ... brings misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad wives and parents ...” (p. 18)
- “... thought crossed my mind ... whisky ... one more journey to the asylum ...” (p. 36)
- “I know little of where I went or what I said and did.” (p. 41)
- “... human intelligence was the last word ... this dubious [unreliable] path ...” (p. 49)
- “...they were making heavy going of life.” (p. 51)
- “We were having trouble with personal relationships ... these bedevilmings ...” (p. 52)
- “... leaning too heavily on Reason that last mile ...” (p. 53)
- “... sordid places ... the awful awakening to face the hideous Four Horseman— Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair.” (p. 151)

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Step Two. ACCEPTANCE, part 1: I see a New Path—“Came to believe ...”

- “... join us on the high road to a new freedom.” (p. xxi)
“... recovery begins ... one alcoholic talks with another ... sharing ...” (p. xxii)
“... set their feet on the path that really goes somewhere ...” (p. 15)
“We have a way out ...” (p. 17)
“... clear-cut directions ... the way ... established his relationship with God.” (p. 29)
“To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.” (p. 44)
“... if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway.” (p. 55)
“When we drew near to Him, He disclosed Himself to us.” (p. 57)
“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.” (p. 58)
“If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it—then you are ready to take certain steps.” “
“... substitute [for alcohol] and ... more ... fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous.” (p. 152)

Step Two. ACCEPTANCE, part 2: a Path of Power— “... that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” (“Entrance Ramp” to “Our Path”.)

- “For if an alcoholic **failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life** through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and certain low spots ahead.” (pp. 14-15)
“He made a beginning ... but he **failed to enlarge his spiritual life.**” (p. 35)
“Cessation of drinking is but the first step away from ... abnormal condition.” (p. 122)
“But life was not easy for the two friends ... must keep **spiritually active.**” (p. 156)

Failure to enlarge my spiritual life is a failure of motive and desire—leading eventually to a drink!

Benefits Promised to Me—if I decide to take ACTION to get on “Our Path of Recovery”.

“When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. 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, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.” (p. 63)

“Our true wealth is not in what we have. Our true wealth is in what we can give away.”

Next Time. Decide to Get on Our “Path of Recovery” with our New Employer: Step Three.