

“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.)

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- January 1. Study Overview: Our “Path” of Recovery—a Spiritual Journey of Awareness.
What does Alcoholics Anonymous mean by “our path”?
What does Alcoholics Anonymous mean to have “seen a person fail”?
Does Alcoholics Anonymous guide us to “get on” and “stay on” our *path*?
- January 8. Step One. Admit we are on a *path* that “doomed me to an alcoholic death”.
Step Two. Come to believe that there is a *path* to “live on a spiritual basis”.
- January 15. Step Three. Decide to enter the “triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom” on our spiritual *path* with our “new Employer”.
- January 22. Step Four. Proceed on our spiritual *path* with “fact-finding and fact-facing”.
- January 29. Step Five. “Discover the obstacles in our *path*” to “the Broad Highway”.
- February 5. Step Six. Were entirely ready to “let go” of the “objectionable things” blocking us from continuing on our *path*.
- February 12. Step Seven. Humbly ask God for strength to “go out from here” on our *path*.
- February 19. Step Eight. Be willing to be responsible for wrongs done on our former *path*.
- February 26. Step Nine. Be willing to be accountable to others for harms done to them as we “sweep away the debris” of our past from our *path*.
- March 4. Step Ten. Continue on our *path* to grow in the “world of the Spirit” by watching for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear.
- March 11. Step Eleven. Seek to go further on our *path* to increase “the flow of His Spirit into us” and become more “God-conscious, using prayer and meditation each day from “on awakening” to “when we retire”.
- March 18. Step Twelve. Having had a Spiritual Awakening, we try to carry the message of our spiritual awakening to other alcoholics to help them come to our *path*; we try to practice the principles of our spiritual awakening with others so that we are an attraction to our *path*.
- March 25. *Spiritual Recovery*: Our Path—“self-will run riot” to Sobriety, Serenity, Service.

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

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Study Overview.

What does Alcoholics Anonymous mean by “our path”? (p. 58)

What does Alcoholics Anonymous mean to have “seen a person fail”? (p. 58)

The purpose of this Twelve Step study is to examine the Big Book Alcoholics Anonymous for answers to these questions, and others. We hope to improve our awareness and capability of enlarging our spiritual life. We hope to become more spiritually fit so that we can love, tolerate and be of maximum service to God and the people about us, every day.

The symbolic use of “path”, and other “journey” analogies and metaphors, are used throughout our “basic text” to describe our *journey of spiritual growth* from “what we used to be like”, through our “spiritual awakening”, to “what we are like now”—as in these examples:

What does Alcoholics Anonymous mean by “thoroughly followed our path”? (Italics mine)

- “... the *high road* to a new freedom.” (p. xxi)
- “... families set their feet on the *path* that really goes somewhere ...” (p. 15)
- “We have a *way out* ...” (p. 17)
- “... clear cut directions ...*the way* ... his relationship with God.” (p. 29)
- “... 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)
- “... decided you want ... to go to any length ... to take *certain steps*.” “
- “... we *launched out on a course* of vigorous action ...” (p. 63)
- “... to discover the obstacles in our *path*.” (p. 72)
- “... *Broad Highway*, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” (p. 75)
- “... which *stands in the way* of my usefulness to you and my fellows.” (p. 76)
- “... *sweep away the debris* which has accumulated out of ... self-will ...” “
- “We are there to sweep off our side of the *street* ...” “
- “*We do not dodge* our creditors.” (p. 78)
- “... ask God to help and the *drastic step* is indicated ...” (p. 80)
- “Our design for living is *not a one-way street*.” (p. 81)
- “Yes, there is a long period of *reconstruction* ahead.” (p. 83)
- “We have *entered* the world of the Spirit.” (p. 84)
- “But we must *go further* and that means more action.” (p. 85)
- “... shown all through the day what our *next step* is to be ...” (p. 87)
- “Both ... must *walk day by day* in the *path* of spiritual progress.” (p. 100)
- “... adopt a *spiritual way* of life their *road* will be smoother.” (p. 114)
- “... upon the *common ground* of tolerance, understanding and love.” (p. 122)
- “... firmly planted on earth ... where our *fellow travelers* are ...” (p. 130)
- “Will he take every necessary *step* ...” (p. 142)
- “... you will commence shoulder to shoulder your *common journey*.” (p. 153)
- “... in the Fellowship of the Spirit ... trudge the *Road of Happy Destiny*.” (p. 164)

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What does Alcoholics Anonymous mean to see “a person fail”? (Italics/bold mine)

- “... joining that endless *procession* of sots ...” (p. 8)
- “Quicksand stretched *around me ... stumble along* to a miserable end.” “
- “... **failed ... enlarge his spiritual life** ... not survive ... low spots ...” (pp. 14-15)
- “... we believe there is *no middle-of-the-road* solution.” (p. 25)
- “Many *pursue it* into the gates of insanity or death.” (p. 30)
- “... taking a trip, not taking a trip ...” (p. 31)
- “He made a *beginning* ... but he **failed to enlarge his spiritual life.**” (p. 35)
- “... the thought crossed my mind ... 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 path* ...” (p. 49)
- “... underlying reasons why they were making *heavy going* of life.” (p. 51)
- “Perhaps we had been leaning too heavily on reason *that last mile* ...” (p. 53)
- “... ready to take *certain steps* ... at some of these we *balked.*” (p. 58)
- “Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the *turning point.*” (p. 59)
- “... life run on self-will ... almost always in *collision* ...” (p. 60)
- “*Driven* by ... self ... we step on the toes of our fellows ...” (p. 62)
- “... the things in ourselves which had been *blocking* us.” (p. 64)
- “Now about sex ... it’s so easy to get way off the *track.*” (p. 68)
- “... God can remove whatever self-will has *blocked you* off from Him.” (p. 71)
- “... alcoholic is like a tornado *roaring his way* through the lives of others.” (p. 82)
- “We have traveled a *rocky road* ...” (p. 104)
- “Cessation of drinking is but the *first step away from ... abnormal ...*.” (p. 122)
- “... alluring shortcuts and by-paths ... *wander and lose their way.*” (p. 123)
- “Some of us *sought out sordid places* ...” (p. 151)
- “... know loneliness ... be at the *jumping-off place* ... wish for the end.” (p. 152)

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In this Twelve Step Big Book study, we let each step guide us to *get on*, and *stay on*, the *path* of our *spiritual journey of recovery from the fatal malady of alcoholism*. We also see how each step provides warnings to alert us when we are tempted to stray from our *path of spiritual awakening*. The following is a general outline of how our Twelve Steps teach us to live spiritually-centered on our *path* of the “three A’s” of Awareness, Acceptance and Action:

- How do I know *there is* a path—and that I’m *not on it*? Steps One - Two.
- What do I need to do to *get on* our path? Steps Three - Nine.
- What do I need to do to *stay on* our path? Steps Ten -
- Twelve.
- How do I know when I am *failing to stay* on our path? Steps Ten -
- Twelve.
- Should we *try to help* other alcoholics find our path? Step Twelve
- Should we *try to practice* the principles of our path with everyone? Step Twelve

**Next Time: Living “off” of the Spiritual Path and the “On-ramp” to the Spiritual Path—
Steps One and Two**