

“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” is used in Alcoholics Anonymous to describe our *Twelve Step journey of spiritual growth* from “what we used to be like”, through our “spiritual awakening”, to “what we are like now”—our “way out” of recovery from alcoholism (See p. 17). Each step guides us to get on, and stay on, “our path” of the Twelve Steps with awareness, acceptance and action.

Our spiritual awakening happens in us and for us as we stop doing things that block it from happening to us. We learn “situational awareness” on “our path” of spiritual recovery:

Steps One and Two inform me. Aware of my incurable illness of alcoholism, I accept and believe my need for a spiritual restoration to recover from my illness. In Step Three, I act in prayer. I decide to seek my restoration with faith in God’s “care” of my will and my life. I “get on the path” of my spiritual recovery from alcoholism. In Step Four I act—I write and pray—my self-examination inventories. I am aware of, and accept, my resentments, fears and inconsiderations that create my “spiritual mis-alignment”, blocking me on my path of spiritual growth and recovery (pp. 63-71) In Step Five, God and my spiritual “path-finder” help me accept honestly the exact nature of my character defects—motives that drive the wrong things I do. (pp. 72-75) In Step Six, I am aware, accept and act. I ask God to help me “let go” of my “wrongs”/ “defects of character”/“shortcomings” (p. 59), “flaws in our make-up” (p. 64), “obstacles” (p. 72), “every twist of character” (p. 75), “things ...objectionable” (p.76) In Step Seven, I am aware, accept and act. I humbly ask God in trust to remove my “objectionable” things from me and the unknown things “blocking my spiritual path”. In Step Eight, I am aware of my wrongs. I accept responsibility for the harm my wrongs have caused others. I act. I pray to God for willingness to make direct amends.

Step Nine. “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.” (p. 59)

“Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past.

We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves ... we ask [for the] will to do this ...” (p. 76)

I accepted *responsibility* for my wrongs in Step Eight. In Step Nine, the “*path*” of my *Twelve Step journey of spiritual growth* takes a very significant “turn”. My recovery “turns” from being inward—about God and I—to going outward toward others. This “turn” makes me feel uncomfortable and even afraid. I am *aware* of my fear. Now, in Step Nine, I *act*. I am *accountable* to make direct amends to others for my wrongs.

Doing Step Nine is not difficult. Acting to overcome my resistance to doing Step Nine is difficult. In Step Nine, I “go public” with my recovery in an unfamiliar and uncomfortable way. I admit I was wrong—that I am accountable for the harm I caused—to the person I harmed! I am uncomfortable, apprehensive and afraid. Yet God grants me the strength as I act in prayer for willingness to work through my pride and fear to do Step Nine.

“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.)

Step Nine. “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.” (p. 59)

“Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past.

We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to

live on self-will and run the show ourselves ... we ask [for the] will to do this ...” (p. 76)

I “go out to my fellows ... I ask [God] [for the] will to do this ...”

I pray. I *act*. I make appointments to see each “fellow” face-to-face, where possible:

- “Our fellows” (p. 76)
- “business acquaintances and friends” pp. 76-77
 - “the man we hated” pp. 77-78
 - “our creditors” p. 78
 - “a criminal offense” pp. 78-79
 - “other people are involved” pp. 79-80
 - “domestic troubles” pp. 80-82
 - “at home” pp. 82-83

Step Nine is a “spiritual re-alignment” opportunity to be humble in my relationships. I move on my “spiritual path” from interest in myself to interest in others, without needing their approval.

I “repair the damage done in the past ...”

I am *aware*, *accept* and admit I that was wrong. I am *accountable* to try to amend the harm my wrongs have caused—directly to the people I wronged and harmed.

Pride is no longer my “false God”. I humbly, without fear, act to “repair the damage done ...”

I “attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated ...”

I am *accountable* for my wrong actions and the harms they caused. I ask God to “save me from being angry” and forgive them. I try to make restitution, where possible.

My direct amends may or may not help them sweep away their “debris”.

I forgive them for the harm they caused me so that I can freely amend the harm I caused them.

I act in my amends to “sweep away” my emotional debris of guilt, regret, remorse and shame.

“... out of [my] effort to live on self-will and run the show [myself].”

“... like an actor who wants to run the whole show ...” (p. 60)

“... extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn’t think so.” (p. 62)

Doing Step Nine, I am more free of the “bondage of self” of my delusion that I am not responsible for my share of my difficulties. Now my life has purpose in God’s Power and Care.

“Our real purpose

is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” (p. 77)

Next Time: Step Ten—continue on our “spiritual path” to grow in “the world of the Spirit”.

“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.)

Step Nine. “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.” (p. 59)

“Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past.

We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to

live on self-will and run the show ourselves ... we ask [for the] will to do this ...” (p. 76)

A Step Nine “Spiritual Fitness” Prayer.

God, I thank You for disclosing to me that I need spiritual help with my alcoholism.

I thank You for my *belief* that You can relieve me of the bondage of my “self-will run riot”.

I thank You for giving me my spiritual “path” for healthy self-examination.

I thank You for giving me my “spiritual pathfinder” to guide my *faith* in healthy self-examination.

I thank You for granting me the willingness to be aware of my “objectionable things”.

I thank You for granting me the willingness to *trust* You to remove from me those defects of character in me that You see are blocking my usefulness to You and others.

I thank You for granting me the willingness and the strength to write down and become responsible for the wrongs I have done and the harms I have caused to others.

I thank You for filling me with the spirit of forgiveness for those who harmed me, so my resentments at what they have done to me do not block me from the help I need from You.,

I thank You for granting me the willingness and the strength to go personally to the people I have harmed and be accountable to them and to myself as I make amends for my wrongs and try to make restitution, where possible and appropriate, for the harm I have done.

I thank You for my spiritual awakening, which is making me less prideful and less fearful.

I thank You for giving me a healthy purpose—to let You fit me to be of maximum service to You and the people about me.

I thank You for continuing to grant me strength, as I continue to go out from here, to do Your bidding.

Amen.