

“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 to do what it takes to live and grow on “our path” of recovery:

Steps One and Two inform me. I have the incurable illness of alcoholism. I need a spiritual restoration to recover from my alcoholism illness. (p. 30, p. 44, p. 60)

In Step Three, I decide in prayer to seek my restoration, God’s “care” of my will and my life. I “get on the path” of my spiritual recovery from alcoholism. (p. 63)

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 admit honestly the exact nature of my character defects—*motives* that drive the wrong things I do. (pp. 72-75)*

In Step Six, I am “entirely ready” to ask God to help me “let go” of my “wrongs” - “defects of character” - “shortcomings” (p. 59), “flaws in our make-up which caused our failure” (p. 64), “obstacles in our path” (p. 72), “every twist of character” (p. 75), and “things which we have admitted are objectionable” (p. 76) .

I am aware of the specifics of my “spiritual mis-alignment. I accept my need to have these removed. I accept I cannot “let go” of them on my own—even when I want to. I act in prayer as I ask God for the willingness to “let go”, to fully “offer myself” to God, in Step Six.

Step Seven. “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.” (p. 59)

“... humility, a desire to seek and do God’s will ...” (AA 12x12, p. 72)

“... humility ... move out from ourselves toward others and toward God.” (AA 12x12, p. 76)

“When ready, we say something like this: ‘My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.’

We have then completed *Step Seven*.” (p. 76)

We move on our path from Step Six to Step Seven with three major “spiritual re-alignments”:

- 1. I am aware of my unknown things as well as my known “objectionable” things.*
- 2. I act (pray) “to let go” in Step Six. I accept that I need to let God act in Step Seven.*
- 3. I move on my “path” from my illusion of “control” into the real “care” of God’s will.*

“That God could (*I am aware—I BELIEVE*) and would (*I accept—I have FAITH*) if He were sought (*I act—I develop TRUST*).”

“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 Seven. “Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.” (p. 59)

“... humility, a desire to seek and do God’s will ...” (AA 12x12, p. 72)

“... humility ... move out from ourselves toward others and toward God.” (AA 12x12, p. 76)

1. I am aware of my unknown things as well as my known “objectionable” things.

“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all off me, good and bad.” (p. 76)

“... all of me ...” *The part I know and the part I don’t know about (uncertainty).*

“... good and bad.” *As God sees “good and bad”, not necessarily as I see it.*

2. I act (pray) to “let go” in Step Six. I accept that I need “to let God” act in Step Seven.

“I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.” (p. 76)

“... you now remove from me ...” *I trust God to do it, not me (a spiritual mystery!).*

“... every single defect of character which stands in the way of ...” *God’s decision, not mine; God’s priority, not mine (uncertainty).*

“... my usefulness to [God] and my fellows.” *God knows better than I do what is best for me and others (uncertainty).*

3. I move on my “path” from my illusion of “control” into the real “care” of God’s will.

“Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.” (p. 76)

“Grant me strength ...” *This prayer echos my Step Three prayer, “Thy Power”. (p. 63)*

“... as I go out from here ...” *This introduces a prayer that I use as I “go out” from Step Seven into Steps Eight and Nine as well as a prayer I use all day every day as I “go out from” one thing into another.*

“... to do your bidding. Amen.” *I now seek to choose God’s will, not my will, in all my situations, circumstances, choices and relationships (uncertainty).*

“God’s bidding” is whatever God “bids us”, desires us, wills us, to be and to do, such as:

“God ... relieve me of the bondage of self.” Step Three, p. 63.

“God save me from being angry.” Step Four, p. 67.

“[God] ... remove our fear ... what [You] would have us be.” Step Four, p. 68.

“We asked God to mold our ideals ...” Step Four, p. 69.

“... and help us to live up to them.” Step Four, p. 69.

“... have the honest desire to let God take us to better things.” Step Four, p. 70.

“... walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” Step Five, p. 75.

“... God ... help us be willing.” Step Six, p. 76.

“Our real purpose ... fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.”

Next Time: Step Eight—be responsible for wrongs done on our former “path”.