

"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 in our 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"—our "way out". (See p. 17)

Each step guides us to get on, and stay on, "our path" of recovery from alcoholism. The Twelve Steps, "our path", enlarge our spiritual life with 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 things that block it from happening *to us*. *We decide to learn to do what it takes to live and grow on "our path" of recovery from alcoholism, our journey of spiritual growth.*

Steps One and Two inform me about my incurable illness of alcoholism; the promise of and my need for a spiritual restoration to recover from my alcoholism illness. (p. 44, p. 60)

In Step Three, I decide in prayer to learn how to seek my restoration, to "get on the path" of my spiritual recovery from alcoholism. (p. 63)

In Step Four I act—I write and pray—in my self-examination inventories. I am aware of, I accept, my resentments, my fears and my inconsiderations that create my "spiritual mis-alignment", blocking me on my new 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 have done. (pp. 72-75)

Step Six. "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." (p. 59)

What does it mean "were entirely ready"? How can I be "ready to have God remove"?

"We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past." (Step Five *action of sharing*) (p. 75)

"Once we have taken this step ... we are delighted ...". (Step Five Promises)

"... carefully reviewing what we have done." (Aware and accept my need for God's help)

In Step Six, I become willing to seek God's help to learn to live without my defects of character that are causing my "spiritual mis-alignment". I ask God to help me be willing to "let go" of my defects of character that "steer" me away from continuing on my path of spiritual growth..

I act in Step Six as I pray two prayers and answer eight questions. In doing so, I enlarge my relationship with God. My belief in God grows as I learn to trust God with my care.

First Prayer.

"We thank God from the bottom of our heart that we know Him better." (Bold mine). (p. 75)

"Carefully reading the first five proposals: (First Five Questions)

- we ask if we have omitted anything;	<i>Have I lied?</i>
- is our work solid so far;	<i>Have I been honest?</i>
- are the stones properly in place;	<i>Have I admitted my motives?</i>
- have we skimped on the cement ...;	<i>Have I told partial truth?</i>
- have we tried to make mortar without sand?"	<i>Have I omitted prayer?</i> (p. 75)

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Step Six. "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." (p. 59)

"If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at *Step Six.*" (p. 76)

"We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable." (p. 76)

 "… with a willingness he had never before been able to muster." (p. xvi)

 "… *matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself.*" (p. 12)

 "… a humble willingness to have Him with me …" "

 "… expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals …" (p. 13)

 "Belief in the power of God, plus enough willingness …" "

 "… even willing to believe that there is a Power greater than myself?" (p. 47)

 "… say that he does believe, or is willing to believe …" "

 "… show a willingness to remedy your own defects …" (p. 118)

 "… willing to bring former mistakes … out of their hiding places." (p. 124)

 "To duplicate what we have accomplished … a matter of willingness …" (p. 163)

 "*Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness … are indispensable.*" (p. 568)

Question Six. "Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable?" (p. 76)

I am aware of the personal damage my "objectionable" character defects cause in my life. I accept my need to have these underlying defects of character, my unhealthy and harmful motives, removed from me. I also accept that I cannot ignore or remove these unhealthy, harmful motives on my own. I still "fight with myself" to do the "right" thing instead of the "wrong".

I am ready to ask God to help me "let go"—to "walk my path" without these motives.

Question Seven. "Can He now take them all—every one?" (p. 76)

I am aware that God is certainly able to remove them. I accept that I cannot remove them by myself. I cannot do my own spiritual re-alignment!

I accept that I "could not wish them away any more than alcohol". (See p. 66)

I am now willing to trust my path, my journey of spiritual growth, to God's care.

Question Eight. "If we still cling to something we will not let go,

Second Prayer. we ask God to help us be willing. (p. 76)

I act in prayer. I ask God to help me be willing to "let go" of my motives of pride and fear that lead me to lie, cheat, steal, refuse to forgive, to treat others with inconsideration, to be critical, judgmental and sarcastic.

I ask God to help me "let go" of unhealthy motives that "steer" me to do "wrongs".

Next Time: Step Seven—Humbly ask God for strength to "go out from here" on our path.