

**“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. Each step guides us to get on, and stay on, our “path of spiritual restoration” with *awareness*, *acceptance* and *action*.

I am *aware* that I have an incurable illness—alcoholism. I *accept* that my self-will is not powerful enough to overcome my alcoholism. I *act* to find my path of spiritual restoration.

*Steps One and Two* inform me. *Aware* of my incurable illness of alcoholism, I *accept* my need for a path of spiritual restoration to recover from my illness. (pp. i-62)

In *Step Three*, I *act* in prayer. I decide to get on the path of my spiritual restoration when I “abandon” myself to God’s Power, God’s Love and God’s Way of life. (p. 63)

In *Steps Four through Seven*, *awareness* and *acceptance* grow on my path of spiritual restoration. I *act* in healthy self-examination. I *act* in prayer. I ask God to save me from being angry toward others, to remove my fear and to help me treat others with consideration. I feel forgiven. I ask God for the willingness to “let go” and “let God” remove my defects. (pp. 63-76)

In *Steps Eight and Nine*, my *awareness* and *acceptance* grow even more as I *act* on my path of spiritual restoration. I take responsibility for the wrongs I have done. I am accountable to amend the harms I have done to others by my wrongs. My guilt, regret, remorse, and shame melt away further as I become more forgiving. (pp. 76-83)

In *Steps Ten and Eleven*, I am *aware*, *accept* and *act* to practice the spiritual principles of *Steps One through Nine* from “on awakening” to “when we retire at night”. I am living one day at a time on my path of spiritual restoration from alcoholism! (pp. 83-88)

*On my path of spiritual restoration, I have a “new Employer”, a “Higher Will, a new purpose of service, a code of love and tolerance. I learn “spiritual situational awareness”.*

*I am aware that I have “entered the world of the Spirit”. I accept my situation of daily living on my path of spiritual restoration. I continue to act with daily self-examination. I act as I seek to know God’s will for me each day. I ask God for the Power. “Thy will (not mine) be done.”*

*Now I act in Step Twelve to try to help alcoholics and to try to practice these principles. My relationship with God grows as I ask God to help me practice these principles with others.*

**Step Twelve.**

**“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”** (p. 60)

**What message? My spiritual awakening. Which principles? Those of the Twelve Steps.**

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**“... we tried ... to practice these principles [of the Twelve Steps] in all our affairs.”**

**My relationship with God grows as I ask God to help me practice these principles with others.**

**Chapter 8, “To Wives”,** guides the *couple* onto the spiritual path. (pp. 104-121)

*Living with active alcoholism:* (pp. 104-108)

“...no situation is too hopeless ... no unhappiness too great to be overcome.” (p. 104)

*Four categories of alcoholics:* (pp. 108-114)

“Meanwhile, you might try to help the wife of another serious drinker.” (p. 112)

*Problems of enabling:* (pp. 114-116)

“... adopt a spiritual way of life their road will be much smoother.” (p. 114)

*Getting on the path of spiritual restoration:* (pp. 116-119)

“If God can solve the ... problem of alcoholism, He can solve your problems too.” (p. 116)

**Chapter 9, “The Family Afterward”,** guides the family onto the spiritual path. (pp. 122-135)

*Living with a newly-sober alcoholic:* (pp. 122-130)

“... meet upon the common ground of tolerance, understanding and love.” (p. 122)

*Advantages of the path of spiritual restoration for the family:* (p. 130)

“... the family ... examine the principles by which the alcoholic ... trying to live.” (p. 130)

*Opportunities for the family on the path of spiritual restoration:* (pp. 130-135)

“... if trouble comes, cheerfully capitalize it ... demonstrate His omnipotence.” (p. 133)

**Chapter 10, “To Employers”,** guides the *employer* to aid the employee. (pp. 136-150)

*Guiding the employer to aid the employee to find the path of spiritual restoration:* (pp. 136-150)

“... this book ... full suggestions by which the employee may solve his problem.” (p. 143)

**Chapter 11, “A Vision for You”,** development of the spiritual path of the Fellowship and

Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous. (pp. 151-164)

*The Fellowship as the first alternative to drinking:* (pp. 151-152)

“Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship ...” (p. 152)

*The early growth of the Fellowship and the Twelve Step program:* (pp. 152-162)

“... the growth of the fellowship among us.” (p. 153)

“... he had begun to have a spiritual experience.” (p. 158)

“... the happiness they found in giving themselves for others.” (p. 159)

*The hope and vision of the early members for us today:* (pp. 162-164)

“Some day we hope ... thus we grow ... willingness, patience and labor.” (pp. 162-163)

“We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more ...:” (p. 164)

“See to it that your relationship with Him is right ...” “

**“... meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.”** (p. 164)

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**Our Path of Spiritual Restoration: from “self-will run riot” to Sobriety, Service and Serenity.**

**“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)

**“... seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.”** (Self-sufficiency to “self-will run riot”)

“They are restless, irritable and discontented ...” (p. xxviii)

“... unwilling to admit that he cannot take a drink.” (p. xxx)

“... cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving.” “

“The remorse, horror and hopelessness ...” (p. 6)

“I had to be, for I was hopeless.” (p. 10)

“... the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind ...” (p. 23)

“... the obsession that somehow, someday, they will beat the game.” “

“... great obsession ... persistence of this illusion ... the delusion ...” (p. 30)

“... self-deception and experimentation ... to control his drinking ...” (p. 31)

“To be doomed to an alcoholic death ... or to live on a spiritual basis ...” (p. 44)

“... was not a basic solution to these bedevilements more important ...” (p. 52)

“God either is, or He isn’t. What was our choice to be?” (p. 53)

“Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think is the root of our troubles.” (p. 62)

**“... who have recovered ...”** (Come to *believe in ... faith could ... trust would ...*)

“... we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out ...” (p. 17)

“He made a beginning ... but he failed to enlarge his spiritual life.” (p. 35)

“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.” (p. 58)

“First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn’t work.” (p. 62)

“... God was going to be our Director ... through which we passed to freedom.” “

“... new Employer ... Power ... Love ... Way of life ... abandon ourselves ...” (p. 63)

“... we launched out on a course ... the first step of which ...” “

“... discover the obstacles in our path.” (p. 72)

“... on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” (p. 75)

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

“Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead.” (p. 83)

“We have entered the world of the Spirit.” (p. 84)

“Every day ... carry the vision of God’s will into all of our activities.” (p. 85)

“... pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action.” (p. 87)

“... must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress.” (p. 100)

**“We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the road of Happy Destiny.”** (p. 164)

**Next Time: We begin a new Twelve Step Big Book study—“We had a new Employer”.**

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**“A.A. in Two Words”**

“All A.A. progress can be reckoned in terms of just two words: humility and responsibility. Our whole spiritual development can be accurately measured by our degree of adherence to these magnificent standards.

Ever deepening humility, accompanied by an ever greater willingness to accept and act upon our clear-cut obligations—these are truly our touchstones for all growth in the life of the spirit. They hold up to us the very essence of right being and right doing. It is by them that we are enabled to find and do God’s will.”

Bill W. in a Talk, 1965.

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