

“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*.

Our path of spiritual restoration leads us to a remarkable, exciting and comforting place!!!

“We have entered the world of the Spirit.”

Steps One and Two inform me. Aware of my incurable illness of alcoholism, I accept and believe my need for a “path of 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” my path of my spiritual restoration 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”, “steering me wrong” on my path of spiritual restoration.

In Step Five, God and my spiritual “path-finder” help me honestly accept the nature of my character defects—motives, “objectionable” things, blocking my spiritual path.

In Step Six, I am aware, accept and act. I ask God to help me “let go” of my “objectionable things” that hinder progress on my path of spiritual of restoration.

In Step Seven, I am aware, accept and act. I pray, asking 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 so that I may continue my progress on my path of spiritual restoration.

In Step Nine, I am aware of and accept my wrongs. I act with accountability to make direct amends and restitution to those I have harmed. I ask God to save me from being angry at them so I can forgive and feel forgiven. I become free of my feelings of guilt, regret, remorse and shame at my wrongs. I am being spiritually restored!

In Step Ten, I continue to practice the spiritual principles of Steps One through Nine.

My spiritual awakening happens in me and for me as I continue to apply the spiritual principles of Steps One through Nine. 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 spiritual path!

I continue to apply and act on the spiritual living principles of the first nine steps in my life each day— by continuing to act and follow the directions of Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve.

Step Eleven. “As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask [God] for the right thought or action.” (“Rest stops” on our Path!) (pp. 87-88)

Step Eleven work blends with my Step Ten work throughout my day. *I learn to pause. Yet, I face one of my biggest obstacles on my path of spiritual restoration—I do not like to wait!*

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I do not like to wait because it makes me aware that I am not in control!

In Step Eleven, I accept my path of spiritual restoration. I act to learn to wait while God works as I do the daily spiritual discipline of prayer and meditation and grow in the world of the Spirit.

Step Eleven. “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.” (p. 58)

“... receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him ... the flow of His Spirit into us ... we have become God-conscious ... vital sixth sense ... more action.

Step Eleven suggests prayer and meditation.” (“Rest stops” on our Path.) (p. 85)

“When we retire at night, we constructively review our day.” (p. 86)

At day’s end, I pause (wait) and ask God to help me meditate on how well I practiced my daily discipline (spiritual routine) of Step Ten throughout my day. I ask for God’s forgiveness. I ask to know “corrective measures”. Then I sleep ... and wait while God works.

“On awakening ... we think ... we consider ... we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dis-honest or self-seeking motives.” (p. 86)
I begin my day in directed meditation, pausing (waiting) to ask God to direct my thinking. I ask ... and ask ... and ask ... as long as it takes to learn to wait while God works.

“In thinking about our day we may face indecision ... ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision ... we relax ... don’t struggle ... as time passes ...” (pp. 86-87)
I continue in my directed morning meditation, pausing (waiting) as I ask God to help me make decisions about my day. I ask ... and ask ... and ask ... as I wait while God works.

“We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer ...” (p. 87)
Alcoholics Anonymous defines everything prior to this in Step Eleven as meditation! Now I pray (ask and wait) that God show me my “next step” ... give me what I need to “take care of such problems” ... for “freedom from self-will”. I pray and wait while God works.

“If circumstances warrant, we ask [others] to join us in morning meditation.” (p. 87)
Praying with one or more other people strengthens my ability to wait while God works.

“As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask [God] for the right thought or action ... no longer running the show ... in much less danger ...” (pp. 87-88)

“We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.” (p. 88)

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**Pausing on our Path of Spiritual Restoration (using the “Rest Stops”):
Learning to be Aware and Accept before we Act—from the Beginning of our Journey.**

- “Yes, I am one of them. I must have this thing.” (p. 29)
- “To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis ...” (p. 44)
- “When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance on the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God.” (p. 52)
- “God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me ...” (p. 63)
- “God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.” (p. 67)
- “We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be.” (p. 68)
- “We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.” (p. 69)
- “... our motives. If we are sorry ... we believe we will be forgiven ...” (p. 70)
- “We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him.” (p. 71)
- “Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it?” (p. 72)
- “Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour ...” (p. 75)
- “If we can answer to our satisfaction ...” (p. 76)
- “When ready ...” (p. 76)
- “If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes.” (p. 76)
- “... asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.” (p. 83)
- “And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone ...” (p. 84)
- “How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done.” (p. 85)
- “As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask [God] for the right thought or action.” (p. 88)

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Observations. My path of spiritual restoration: “self-will run riot” to “Thy will be done”.

- * I have come to *believe* that God exists—to have *faith* that God can help me—to *trust* that God’s care for me is the best care of all.
- * My path of spiritual restoration is a journey in an ever-growing relationship with God as I *understand God*. Every other good thing in my life flows from this relationship.
- * From Step One going forward, God discloses to me that God’s Power is necessary for me, that God’s Love is desirable for me and that God’s Way of life is possible for me.
- * On my path of spiritual restoration, I “find God” as I ask God to care for me and change me.
- * I improve my relationship with God by asking God what I should do, not by telling God what God should do.
- * God discloses to me to *pause* and be *patient* before I *perform*—to use spiritual “rest stops”.
- * I become less self-reliant and more God-reliant. I am comfortable living within my limitations.
- * Forgiveness begins with suffering. Suffering continues as I *accept* the loss of my illusion of control. Forgiveness gives me freedom from the self-bondage of my resentments. With God’s help, I set aside the hurt, forgive them and feel forgiven myself in my spiritual restoration.
- * Step Ten saves me from complacency. Step Eleven saves me from over-confidence.
- * I ask in the morning, “God, what would You have me do in my life today?”
I ask in the evening, “God, did I do what You wanted me to do in my life today?”
- * In my daily Step Ten and Eleven work, when troubled, I ask God to help me stay on my path of spiritual restoration so that I will create fewer troubles of my own on my path.
- * Learning to “pause in prayer and meditation” is vital for me to stay on my path of spiritual restoration. I paused to pray, to ask God for help, in Step Three—in Step Four—in Steps Five through Nine—in Step Ten. Step Eleven IS pausing to meditate and pray..
- * I receive the benefits of God’s will in my life when I try to follow God’s will with my life on my path of spiritual restoration.
- * I have always been in “the world of the Spirit ... “self-will run riot” blinded me to it. *Now I see.*

Next Time—Step Twelve: “Having had a spiritual awakening ... we try ... “