

“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 have an incurable illness—alcoholism. Whether my alcoholism is God’s will or an unexplainable consequence of DNA doesn’t matter. I have the illness of alcoholism. My self-will is not powerful enough to overcome my alcoholism. *My illness requires a spiritual solution.*

On our path of spiritual restoration, we have a “new Employer”, a “Higher Will”, a new purpose of service, a code of love and tolerance. “We have entered the world of the Spirit.” We have entered and are growing in our healthy relationship with God as we understand God.

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 get on my path of my spiritual restoration.

In Step Four I act—I write and pray—my self-examination inventories of resentments, fears and inconsiderations that “steer 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 have faith that God will help me “let go” of my “objectionable things” that hinder my progress on my path of spiritual of restoration.

In Step Seven, I am aware, accept and act. I pray to “let 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, accept responsibility and act (pray) for the will to amend harms I have caused others. I proceed on my path of spiritual restoration.

In Step Nine, I act with accountability to make direct amends to those I have harmed. I ask God to save me from being angry so I can forgive them and feel forgiven. My path of spiritual restoration is less cluttered with guilt, regret, remorse and shame.

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, and pausing, each day on my path of spiritual restoration from alcoholism!

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. Now I act in Step Twelve to try to help others get on their path of spiritual restoration and try to practice these principles in all of my relationships. My relationship with God grows as I ask God to help me help 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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“Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps ...”

Pain got me to AA. Hope kept me in AA. My desire for more spiritual growth is my reason for staying in AA today. I have had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps. Thanks to God and AA, I am on my path of spiritual restoration from the illness of alcoholism.

The Step Three Promises and the Step Three Prayer embody the beginnings of my journey on my path of spiritual restoration. I am aware—I accept—I act to seek the spiritual help I need.

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

Step Three Promises. “We had a new Employer ... He provided what we needed.” (p. 63)

Step Three Prayer. “Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.” “

The Step Five Promises and Prayer embody my progress on my path of spiritual restoration.

“We have been trying to get ... a new relationship with our Creator ...” (p. 72)

Step Five Promises. “We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator.” (p. 75)

Step Five Prayer. “We thank God ... that we know Him better.” “

The Step Nine Prayer and Promises embody my progress in doing my foundation work to be equipped to continue to grow on my path of spiritual restoration.

“Our real purpose ... be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” (p. 77)

“The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.*” (p. 83)

Step Nine Prayer. “... the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.” (p. 83)

Step Nine Promises. “... God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.” (pp. 83-84)

The Step Ten Prayers and Promises mark my progress as I continue each day with God’s help to stop blocking myself on my path of spiritual restoration.

“... entered the world of the Spirit ... Love and tolerance of others is our code.” (p. 84)

Step Ten Prayers. “We ask God at once to remove them.” “Thy will (not mine) be done.” “

Step Ten Promises. “... ceased fighting anyone or anything ...” ... daily reprieve ...” (pp. 84-85)

The Step Eleven Prayers and Promises mark my progress as I seek more help from God each day to improve my relationship with God and stay on my path of spiritual restoration.

“We have become God-conscious.” (p. 85)

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

Step Eleven Prayers. “... forgiveness ... thinking ... freedom ... Thy will be done.” (pp. 86-88)

Step Eleven Promises. “... thinking cleared of wrong motives ... inspiration ... less danger ...”

“But this is not all ... action and more action ... ‘Faith without works is dead’.” (p. 88)

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“... we tried to carry this message [of our spiritual awakening] to alcoholics ...”

My relationship with God grows as I ask God to guide me in how I can help other alcoholics.

Chapter 7, “Working with Others”, guides us in how to stay on our spiritual path while we try to help other alcoholics get on, and stay on, their spiritual path. (pp. 89-103)

Chapter Introduction: (p. 89)

“Carry this message to other alcoholics!” “

“Life will take on new meaning ... people recover ... loneliness vanish ... “

fellowship grow up around you ... to have a host of new friends ...” “

Suggestions for meeting with a newcomer for the first time are covered on pp. 89-96:

“To be helpful is our only aim ... as part of their own recovery, try to help others.” (pp. 89-90)

“Tell him enough about your drinking habits, symptoms, and experiences ...”. (p. 91)

“... dwell on the hopeless feature of the malady.” (p. 92)

“... talk ... about the hopelessness of alcoholism ...because you offer a solution.” “

“Tell him exactly what happened to you. Stress the spiritual feature freely.” p. 93)

“The main thing ... believe in a Power greater than himself ... live by spiritual principles.” “

“Outline the program of action ... the more hopeless he feels, the better.” (p. 94)

“... tell him about the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous ... copy of this book.” “

“Tell him that if he wants to get well you will do anything to help.” (p. 95)

“If he is to find God, the desire must come from within.” “

Suggestions for continuing “12-Step work” are covered on pp. 96-103:

“Let him know you are available ... make a decision ... tell his story ...” (p. 96)

“Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery.” (p. 97)

“The only condition is he trust in God and clean house.” (p. 98)

“Now, the domestic problem ...” (See also pp. 80-83, pp. 104-135, pp. 159-161) (p. 98)

“... be sober, considerate, and helpful, regardless of what anyone says or does.” (p. 99)

“Both you and the new man must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress ...

remarkable things will happen ... put ourselves in God's hands ... follow the

dictates of a Higher Power ... live in a new and wonderful world ...” (p. 100)

“Assuming we are spiritually fit ...” (pp. 100-102)

“Your job now is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness

to others ...” (See p. 77, “Our real purpose ...”) (pp. 102-103)

“God will constantly disclose more to you and to us ... see to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others.” (p. 164)

Next Time: Step Twelve “practice these principles” and our path of spiritual restoration.