

“WE HAD A NEW EMPLOYER.”
Humility, Responsibility and Hope in Our New Relationship with Our “New Employer”

A Big Book Study of Spiritual Recovery from Alcoholism
in a Twelve-Step Workshop, from April 1 through June 24, 2024.

Facilitator: Bill H., St. Louis, Mo. USA

(All page numbers from Alcoholics Anonymous, Fourth Edition, unless otherwise noted.)

Introduction to the Study.

In Alcoholics Anonymous, the Twelve Steps take us from unhealthy, worsening relationships with our selves, and others, into a healthy relationship with a “new Employer”.

We discover how this relationship with our new Employer becomes *desirable, possible and fulfilling*. We experience our *belief* strengthening; our *faith* growing; and our *trust* ever-increasing. We learn how to experience *humility*, exercise *responsibility* and grow in *hope*.

Steps One, Two and Three make our relationship with our new Employer *desirable*—
we discover a need and an opportunity to decide to work for our new Employer.

Steps Four through Nine make our relationship with our new Employer *possible*—
we come to work for, and learn to enjoy working for, our new Employer.

Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve make our relationship with our new Employer *fulfilling*—
we are enriched in spirit, mind and body as we work for our new Employer.

What are the characteristics of my new Employer?

- knows more than I do about my spiritual needs, and my other needs, as well;
- has a plan of spiritual success for me and a proven path for me to follow;
- cares for me—wants to help me succeed on my path of spiritual restoration;
- “can remove whatever self-will has blocked [me] off from Him”;
- when I disagree with my new Employer, my new Employer still cares for me.

I learn to have a healthy relationship with my new Employer:

- in which my new Employer is in charge—and I am not in charge;
- in which I learn to have and enjoy *humility, responsibility and hope*;
- in which I learn to deal with all uncertainty in my life in a healthy way;
- in which I learn to live in forgiveness, love, tolerance and serenity.

In Step One, Alcoholics Anonymous presents information to me that convinces me that my former employer, “alcoholic me”—“self-will run riot”—is not a healthy “employer”.

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

In Step Two, Alcoholics Anonymous presents information to me that convinces me that I should stop doubting the possibility that a new spiritual Employer would be good for me.

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

**Step Three. “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God
as we understood Him.”**

(p. 59)

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

(p. 62)

“When we sincerely took such a position ... we had a new Employer.”

(p. 63)

I humbly admit I am powerless over alcohol—physically and mentally.

I admit my life is unmanageable when I try to control my alcoholic mental obsession.

I come to believe in my need to act responsibly to find help from a Power greater than me.

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Step Three. “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.” (p. 59)

“Besides a seeming inability to accept much on faith, we often found ourselves handicapped by obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice ... touchy (pp. 47-48)

To aid my Step Three decision, I find it helpful to consider how the early members of AA perceive their “new Employer”, a Power greater than themselves, a God of their understanding.

How did they come to *believe* that a caring God existed? How did their understanding of God’s character enable them to have *faith* in God and hope to *trust* God in their relationship with God? Can I find my freedom from my “bondage of self” in the care of a “new Employer”?

Here are several examples of our early members describing their understanding, their perceptions and conceptions of the nature and character of their “new Employer”:

- “... believe in ... the Power ... pulls chronic alcoholics back from the gates of death.” (p. xxvii)
- “... more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change.” (p. xxix)
- “I had always believed in a Power greater than myself.” (p. 10)
- “I simply had to believe in a Spirit of the Universe who knew neither time nor limitation.” “
- “... Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind or Spirit of Nature ...” (p. 12)
- “*Why don’t you choose your own conception of God?*” “
- “... *being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself ... to make my beginning.*” “
- “... [we] are the children of a living Creator with whom we may form a relationship ...” (p. 28)
- “His defense must come from a Higher Power.” (p. 43)
- “... Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.” (p. 45)
- “... willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves ...” (p. 46)
- “Our own conception [of God] ... was sufficient to make the approach ...” “
- “... admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe ...” “
- “To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding ...”. “
- “... we mean your own conception of God ...” (p. 47)
- “... am I even willing to believe that there is a Power greater than myself?” “
- “... believe in a Power greater than himself.” (p. 48)
- “... there is an All Powerful, Guiding, Creative Intelligence ...” (p. 49)
- “Every one of them has gained access to, and believes in, a Power greater than himself. This Power has in each case accomplished the miraculous, the humanly impossible ... believe in a Power greater than themselves ... a simple attitude toward that Power ...” (p. 50)
- “... consciousness of the Presence of God is ... most important fact of their lives ...” (p. 51)
- “... others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe ...” (p. 52)
- “... we had to stop doubting the power of God.” “
- “We found the Great Reality deep down within us.” (p. 55)
- “... overwhelmed by a conviction of the Presence of God ... Infinite Power and Love.” (p. 56)

One thing becomes very clear. No member describes a god of their personal creation. “*Conception of God*”—*perception of God*— *does not mean “creation of a god”*.

“But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now!” (p. 59)

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“Working” Step Three. “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.” (p. 59)

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

“... express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves ...” (p. 46)

“... we mean your own conception of God.” (p. 47)

“Every one of them ... believes in, a Power greater than himself.” (p. 50)

“... the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives ...” (p. 51)

“... a basic solution to these bedevilements more important ...” (p. 52)

“Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.” (See a, b, c., p. 60) (p. 59)

“Being convinced, *we were at Step Three*, which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him.” (p. 60)

Note that pages 60 thru 62 disclose to us one more time in really dramatic fashion why—“self-will run riot”—we need to turn our will and our life over to “a new Employer”!

“... the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn’t think so.” (p. 62)

“Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us.” “

“When we sincerely took such a position ...” (p. 63)

Step Three Prayer. (*Action*) (p. 63)

“God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always.”

Step Three Promises. (*Results in Step Three ... and beyond!*) (p. 63)

“We had a new Employer... provided what we needed ... less interested in ourselves ... what we could contribute to life ... felt new power flow in ... peace of mind ... face life successfully ... conscious of His presence ... lose the fear ...”

“We thought well before taking this step ...at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him.” (p. 63)

In my humility, I pray to God as I understand God to relieve me of my self-bondage.

I take responsibility for believing that God exists and cares about me.

I pray in the hope to have faith in God’s character and trust God with my care.

I take Step Three in a new or renewed belief with the support of the AA Fellowship.

Next Time, Step Four: Self-examination, Faith in God and Trusting God’s Care.