

Humility - Gratitude - Forgiveness - Responsibility:
Four of the Choices We Make in our Twelve Step Recovery.

A Big Book Study of Spiritual Recovery from Alcoholism
in a Twelve-Step Workshop, from July 1 through September 30, 2024.

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

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

In this Big Book Study, we will discover how *Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness* and *Responsibility* initiate, inform and inspire our Spiritual Awakening.

Introduction to the Study.

This study of the Alcoholics Anonymous Twelve Step recovery program discloses that four of our vital spiritual *choices*, *Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness* and *Responsibility*, are an implicit or explicit part of each of the twelve steps. I see these as “spiritual choices”, because they seem impossible for self-centered people like me without daily help from a Higher Power.

My choices of Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility enable me to let go of old selfish ideas, old selfish habits and old selfish motives. I become able and willing to seek God’s will instead of my will, beginning with not taking the first drink, one day at a time.

The Twelve Step recovery program of “spiritual awakening” is a program of *restoration*. My spiritual awakening *restores* my healthy relationship with God, myself and other people. I *awaken spiritually* from my “self-will run riot” *nightmare* through *choices* I make and actions I take in the steps. I try to share the message of my spiritual awakening and practice the spiritual principles. I try to live in the attitude of Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility.

I believe that in the spiritual recovery context each of these is a choice—decisions made not always with complete willingness, or even awareness, but choices nevertheless.

God enables me to leave my old ideas, habits and motives behind. God helps me decide to seek common ground and cooperation—instead of separation and competition.

My spiritual awakening is not what I can do. It is what God can do when I let Him.

These four choices *initiate, inform* and *inspire* my relationship with God. These four choices help me become a spiritual, God-centered person. I am not merely trying to do something. *I am trying to receive something—a healthy relationship with God and others.*

The *humility choice*: I need help. I am modest, not prideful or ashamed. I accept myself as I am. I seek God’s will, not my own. I desire to “move out from [myself] toward others and toward God.” (AA 12x12, p. 76)

The *gratitude choice*: I am thankful God gives me awareness, acceptance and action.
I am thankful God removes from me denial, delusion and illusion.

The *forgiveness choice*: I decide to ask God to help me stop hurting myself and others.
I decide to set aside resentments, fears, blame and revenge.

The *responsibility choice*: I decide to ask God to help me respond to situations in a trustworthy manner that helps others as well as myself. I am answerable for my choices.

I experience God’s care initially in my choices of Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility. God cares about me enough to inform me as to what not to do and what to do. The God of my understanding continues to inspire me to seek His will to know the difference.

God’s disclosures are not always linear or predictable. They are often only visible in hindsight. In seeking God’s help to make my choices of Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility, I become more humble, grateful, forgiving and responsible. My spirit awakens.

Step One: “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.” *Liberating Choices of Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility.*

Humility - Gratitude - Forgiveness - Responsibility:
Four of the Choices We Make in our Twelve Step Recovery.

A Big Book Study of Spiritual Recovery from Alcoholism
in a Twelve-Step Workshop, from July 1 through September 30, 2024.

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

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

Humility Choice: Admit the need to “move out from myself ...”

- “Certainly I was interested. I had to be, for I was hopeless.” (p. 10)
“... what he could not do for himself.” (p. 11)
“His human will had failed.” “
“... admitted for the first time that ... I was lost.” (p. 13)
“... people who normally would not mix ... fellowship ...” (p. 17)
“... the leveling of our pride ...” (p. 25)
“The delusion that we are like other people has to be smashed.” (p. 30)
“... *I had made no fight whatever against the first drink.*” (p. 41)
“I saw that will power and self-knowledge would not help ...” (p. 42)
“Our human resources, as marshalled by the will ... failed utterly.” (p. 45)
“Rather vain of us, wasn’t it?” (p. 49)
“First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn’t work.” (p. 62)

Gratitude Choice: Admit my life is unmanageable—the “gift of desperation”.

- “... our joy in escape from disaster ...” (p. 17)
“... the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it.” (p. 25)
“We were having trouble ... a basic solution of these bedevillments ...” (p. 52)
“It was impossible to say we had no capacity for faith, or love, or worship.” (p. 54)
“... if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway.” (p. 55)

Forgiveness Choice: Admit alcoholism chose me—I did not choose alcoholism.

- “... there exists among us a fellowship ... and an understanding ...” (p. 17)
“... real tolerance of other people’s shortcomings and viewpoints ...” (p. 19)
“... no such thing as making a normal drinker out of an alcoholic.” (p. 31)
“... an alcoholic mentality ... was a hopeless condition.” (p. 42)
“We talked of intolerance, while we were intolerant ourselves.” (p. 50)
“... sweep away prejudice ... think honestly ...” (p. 55)

Responsibility Choice: Admit that alcoholism doesn’t excuse my behavior.

- “We can join ...” (p. 17)
“We feel that elimination of our drinking is but a beginning.” (p. 19)
“... clear-cut directions are given showing how we recovered.” (p. 29)
“... obstinacy, sensitiveness, and ... prejudice ... had to be abandoned.” (p. 48)
“... search diligently within yourself ...” (p. 55)

*“... spiritual maturity is not about the assurance of personal strength; it is about
being joyfully willing to admit [powerlessness] ...” (P. D. Tripp)*

**Next Time, Step Two: Hopeful Choices of Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness,
Responsibility.**