

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.)

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.

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.

In these choices, I cooperate with God in my spiritual awakening. I let God do what only God can do. My spiritual awakening is what God can do with me when I choose to seek God’s care and ask for God’s help to initiate, inform and inspire my 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.

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Step Four: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” (p. 59)

“Though our decision was a vital ... step ... little permanent effect ... unless at once ...” (p. 64)

“Resentment is the number one offender.” (Answer questions pp. 64-67) (p. 64)

The Humility Choice in the Resentment Inventory.

“... searched out the flaws in our makeup ... self ... common manifestations.” (p. 64)

The Gratitude Choice in the Resentment Inventory.

“... God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of ... every one.” (p. 67)

The Forgiveness Choice in the Resentment Inventory.

“God, save me from being angry ... show ... tolerance, pity, and patience ...” (p. 67)

The Responsibility Choice in the Resentment Inventory.

“In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper.” (p. 64)

“Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened ... where were we to blame?” (p. 68)

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Step Four: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” (Con’t) (p. 59)

“... fear ... was an evil and corroding thread ...” (Answer questions pp. 67-68) (p. 67)

The Humility Choice in the Fear Inventory.

“But did not we, ourselves, set the ball rolling?” (p. 67)

“Wasn’t it because self-reliance failed us?” (p. 68)

“... humbly rely on [God] ...” “We ask [God] to remove our fear ...” “

The Gratitude Choice in the Fear Inventory.

“...on a different basis ... of trusting and relying upon God.” (p. 68)

“... to match calamity with serenity ... we commence to outgrow fear.” “

The Forgiveness Choice in the Fear Inventory.

“Self-reliance was good as far as it went, but it didn’t go far enough.” (p. 68)

“We are in the world to play the role [God] assigns.” “

The Responsibility Choice in the Fear Inventory.

“We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper ...” (p. 68)

“We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves.” “

“... we do as we think [God] would have us ... what [God] would have us be.” “

“Now about sex.” (Answer questions pp. 69-71) (p. 68)

The Humility Choice in the Sexual Conduct (Inconsideration) Inventory.

“... needed an overhauling there ... hardly be human if we didn’t.” (pp. 68-69)

“We ask God what we should do about each specific matter.” (p. 69)

The Gratitude Choice in the Sexual Conduct (Inconsideration) Inventory.

“... our sex powers were God-given ... good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly nor to be despised or loathed.” (p. 69)

The Forgiveness Choice in the Sexual Conduct (Inconsideration) Inventory.

“... have the honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven ...” (p. 70)

The Responsibility Choice in the Sexual Conduct (Inconsideration) Inventory.

“Where were we at fault ... got this all down on paper and looked at it.” (p. 69)

“Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt ... arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness ...” “

“... convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him.”

Next Time, Step Five: The Illuminating Choices of Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility.