

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 my 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.

With 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 help—to initiate, inform and inspire my relationship with God and others.

Review. My **choices** of *Humility*, *Gratitude*, *Forgiveness* and *Responsibility* in Steps One through Eleven enable my “**real purpose**”—“to fit [myself] to be of maximum service to God and the people about [me]” (p. 77). I try to live by “our **code**” of “love and tolerance of others”.

My *initial* healthy relationship with God and others grows. I am spiritually *informed* and *inspired*.

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

Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve.

I **choose** God’s help each day with *Humility*, *Gratitude*, *Forgiveness* and *Responsibility* to “continue” to live within healthy limitations for me with Step Ten; to “seek” God’s inspiration and intuitive thoughts with Step Eleven; to “try” to practice spiritual principles in Step Twelve.

*My **real purpose**, my **code** and Step Twelve all guide me to let God help me serve others.*

Step Twelve-Part 2: “... we tried to carry this message to alcoholics ...” (p. 60)

To “Accept” our Four Choices as We Share the Message of our Spiritual Awakening.

My *acceptance* of the AA Twelve Steps and my recovery of spiritual awakening is based on three fundamental beliefs about God as *I understand God*:

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

“... deep down in every man, woman, and child is the fundamental idea of God.” (p. 55)

“... God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from [God].” (p. 71)

My choices in Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility in the Steps enable my personal “spiritual awakening”—“deep down”, “consciousness”, a relationship, with my God.

*My spiritual awakening as the result of the steps made me **aware** of my four choices.*

*Now I **accept** my opportunity and responsibility to help other alcoholics as I have been helped.*

“... immunity from drinking ... fellowship grow ... want to recover ...to be helpful ...” (p. 89)

In “Working with Others”, the Four Choices apply to sponsorship and as member to member.

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Chapter 7, “Working with Others”, shows me how to use my Four Choices to be helpful.

Note: Each of the recommended actions actually uses some or all of the Four Choices.

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)

“... humility, a desire to seek and do God’s will ...” (AA 12x12, p. 72)

With *humility choices*, “... we tried to carry this message to alcoholics ...”

“So cooperate; never criticize. To be helpful is our only aim.” (p. 89)

“... one of a fellowship who, as part of their own recovery, try to help others ...” (p. 90)

“... do this as we have done it in the chapter on alcoholism.” (p. 92)

“If he is to find God, the desire must come from within.” (p. 95)

“We have no monopoly on God ... have an approach that worked with us.” “

“... you and the new man ... walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress.” (p. 100)

The Gratitude Choice: I am thankful God gives me awareness, acceptance and action.

I am thankful God removes from me denial, delusion and illusion.

With *gratitude choices*, “... we tried to carry this message to alcoholics ...”

“Life will take on new meaning ... this is an experience you must not miss.” (p. 89)

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

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

“... he can be sober, considerate, and helpful, regardless of ... anyone ...” (p. 99)

“... his recovery ... dependent upon his relationship with God.” (pp. 99-100)

“... ourselves in God’s hands were better than anything we could have planned.” (p. 100)

The Forgiveness Choice: I decide to set aside resentments, fears, blame and revenge.

I decide to ask God to help me stop hurting myself and others.

With *forgiveness choices*, “... we tried to carry this message to alcoholics ...”

“Don’t start out as an evangelist or a reformer.” (p. 89)

“... faith ... accompanied by self-sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action.” (p. 93)

“Outline the program of action ... self-appraisal ... straightened out your past ...” (p. 94)

“... your talk has been sane, quiet and full of human understanding ...” “

“Do not be discouraged ... waste of time to keep chasing ...” (p. 96)

“We are careful never to show intolerance or hatred of drinking ...” (p. 103)

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.

With *responsibility choices*, “... we tried to carry this message to alcoholics ...”

“Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can.” (p. 89)

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

“... speak of alcoholism as an illness, a fatal malady ... your personal experience.” “

“... use everyday language to describe spiritual principles.” (p. 93)

“... tell him about the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous.” (p. 94)

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

“He should not be pushed or prodded ...” “

“... you are available if he wishes to make a decision and tell his story...” (p. 96)

“Your job ... be ... where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others ...” (p. 102)

Next Time, Step Twelve-Part 3: “Acting” to use our Four Choices in “All our Affairs”.