

**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 1:** “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps ...”  
**The Choice to “Be Aware” of our Four Choices during our Spiritual Awakening.**

The Twelve Step recovery program of spiritual awakening in Alcoholics Anonymous is based on three fundamental beliefs about God as *we 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)

*I am now aware that my choices in Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility in Steps One through Eleven enable my personal “spiritual awakening”. The “deep down” spirit in me has developed a “consciousness”, a relationship, with the God of my understanding.*

***Examples follow of a few of my choices in Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility that enable me to cooperate with God to “enlarge” my spiritual life.*** (p. 35)

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**Step Twelve-Part 1: “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps ...”**

**The Choice to “Be Aware” of our Four Choices during our Spiritual Awakening.**

*I was not always **aware** of my choices of Humility, Gratitude, Forgiveness and Responsibility during my spiritual awakening. I see them more clearly now. I am **aware** of them today.*

**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)

**My humility choices change my attitude about my relationship between God and I.**

“Certainly I was interested. I had to be, for I was hopeless.” (p. 10)  
“*Why don’t you choose your own conception of God ... make my beginning.*” (p. 12)  
“There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him ...” (p. 13)  
“Belief in the power of God ... willingness, honesty and humility ... new order ...” (p. 14)  
“... no effective mental defense ... defense must come from a Higher Power.” (p. 43)  
“Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will.” (p. 63)  
“... self-reliance failed us ... humbly rely on [God] ...” (p. 68)  
“... have the honest desire to let God take us to better things ...” (p. 70)  
“... God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him.” (p. 71)  
“We pocket our pride and go to it ...” (p. 75)  
“... we ask God to help us be willing ... now willing ... ask for [willingness] ...” (p. 76)  
“We are not cured of alcoholism.” (p. 85)  
“... we ask God ... we ask God ... that we be shown ... ask [God] for ...” (pp. 86-87)  
“Thy will be done.” (p. 88)

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

**My gratitude choices change my attitude about my circumstances—not my circumstances!**

“We ... have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.” (p. xiii)  
“*It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself.*” (p. 12)  
“... find this Power ... exactly what this book is about.” (p. 45)  
“... the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives ...” (p. 51)  
“... we saw others solve their problems ... simple reliance upon the Spirit ...” (p. 52)  
“We found the Great Reality deep down with us.” (p. 55)  
“Circumstances made him willing to believe.” (p. 57)  
“Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path.” (p. 58)  
“We feel ... walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.” (p. 75)  
“... God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.” (p. 84)  
“And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone ...” (p. 85)  
“It works—it really does.” (p. 88)

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**Step Twelve-Part 1: “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps ...”**  
**The Choice to “Be Aware” of our Four Choices during our Spiritual Awakening (con’t).**

**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.

**My forgiveness choices change my attitude about others—without needing to change them!**

- “... people... whom I feel resentment ... never was I to be critical of them.” (p. 13)
- “... real tolerance of other people’s shortcomings and viewpoints ...” (p. 19)
- “We asked God to help us show them ... tolerance, pity, and patience ...” (p. 67)
- “God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.” “
- “... God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view ... of every one.” “
- “... desire to let God take us to better things ... we will be forgiven.” (p. 70)
- “We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all ...” “
- “We go to [the man we hated] with a helpful and forgiving spirit ...” (p. 77)
- “Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue.” “
- “His faults are not discussed ... asking forgiveness.” (p. 78, p. 79)
- “... the way of good sense and loving kindness is to let by-gones be by-gones.” (p. 82)
- “... our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindliness and love.” (p. 83)
- “Love and tolerance of others is our code.” (p. 84)
- “... we ask God’s forgiveness ...” (p. 86)

**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.

**My responsibility choices change my attitude about my purpose—to serve God and others.**

- “The only relief [for the physical allergy] is complete abstinence.” (p. xxx)
- “... enlarge his spiritual life ..” (pp. 14-15)
- “*There is a solution* ... accept spiritual help ... his relationship with God.” (p. 25, p. 29)
- “... doomed to an alcoholic death ... live on a spiritual basis ... alternatives ...” (p. 44)
- “God either is, or He isn’t. What was our choice to be?” (p. 53)
- “First of all, we had to quit playing God.” (p. 62)
- “God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.” (p. 63)
- “We searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure.” (p. 64)
- “... illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past.” (p. 75)
- “Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding.” (p. 76)
- “... go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past..” “
- “... purpose ... to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” (p. 77)
- “... continue to take personal inventory ... to set right any new mistakes ...” (p. 84)
- “So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.” (p. 88)

**Next Time, Step Twelve-Part 2: “Acceptance”—Carry the Message with Four Choices.**