

**The “Work” of the Twelve Steps in *Alcoholics Anonymous*.
From “Admitted We were Powerless” to “Abandon Yourself to God”.**

A Workshop on “How the Twelve Steps Work” in Alcoholics Anonymous,
from October 7 through December 30, 2024.

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

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

Summary: From “Powerless” to “Liberating Abandon”.

Our spiritual program of recovery begins with *admitting powerlessness*: “We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.” (p. 59)

Our spiritual program of recovery uses “*abandon*” as *the fundamental requirement for our spiritual recovery*: “Abandon yourself to God as you understand God.” (p. 164)

We admit we are “**powerless**” over alcohol as part of the First Step in our recovery. And, in Steps Two through Twelve in our text book, we discover that *we are often “powerless” over more than merely the physical allergy and mental obsession of alcohol.*

Consider the term “**abandon**”. To “abandon” in the Big Book means more than simply “admit” or even “surrender”. *With our choice to abandon, there are no “ifs, ands or buts”.*

Consider the term “**liberation**”, the “act of setting someone free from imprisonment”:

“... a spiritual liberation ... rose above their problems.” (p. 55)

We ask God as *we understood God* in Step Three to “relieve me of the bondage of self”.

We decide to “abandon ourselves utterly” to God. *We seek “liberation” from our own self-will!*

In this study, we see how the Twelve Steps in Alcoholics Anonymous “work us” with the “Thread of Recovery” from “Powerless” to “Liberating Abandon”. We participate in the work of our spiritual awakening—we learn to let God be in charge of our spiritual awakening. We seek to understand the “liberating” effect in, and on, our lives of the harder-to-grasp, spiritual aspects of our Twelve Step process of “restoration”, such as “fourth dimension”; “sixth sense”; “Spirit”.

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Step Two: “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” (p. 59)

As I move into my Step Two work of my spiritual recovery, I try to **abandon** some “old ideas” and “old actions”. I remember my commitment from my Step One experience:

I will “let go” of my *illusion* that I have power over alcohol—to not take the first drink.

I will “let go” of my *delusion* that my life is not unmanageable—to seek spiritual help.

I will begin to “let go” of my *obsessive* desire to control—beginning with alcohol.

“... restore us to sanity.”

“... unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.” (p. xxix)

“... the main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind.” (p. 23)

“I have never seen one single case recover, where that state of mind existed ...” (p. 27)

“... the great obsession ... this illusion ... into the gates of insanity or death.” (p. 30)

“... real alcoholics are not going to believe they are in that class.” (p. 31)

“... nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to alcohol.” (p. 33)

“... insanity ... insanely trivial excuse ... insane idea ... strangely insane.” (pp. 37-38)

My restoration to sanity— liberation from self— begins: “God help me not take the first drink.”

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Step Two: “Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” (p. 59)

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves ...”

“... something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change.” (p. xxix)

“*Why don’t you choose your own conception of God.*” (p. 12)

“*It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself.*” “

“Simple, but not easy: a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light ...” (**Abandon**) (p. 14)

“... we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life ...” (p. 25)

“*There is a solution ... accept spiritual help.*” “

“His defense must come from a Higher Power.” (p. 43)

“... suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.” (p. 44)

“... to be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis ...” “

“... this book[s] ... main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.” (p. 45)

(See p. 62 for definition of “problem”—“self-will run riot”)

“... we did not need to consider another’s conception of God.” (p. 46)

“... possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe ...” “

“... Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive ... to those who earnestly seek.” “

“... am I even willing to believe that there is a Power greater than myself?” (p. 47)

“When we saw others ... we had to stop doubting the power of God.” (p. 52)

“God either is, or He isn’t. What was our choice to be?” (p. 53)

My restoration to sanity continues as I face my doubt. I see others believe in a Higher Power.

“... could ...”

“We know how he feels. We have shared his honest doubt and prejudice.” (p. 45)

(“... abandoned the God idea entirely.”) “

“Faced with alcoholic destruction ... open minded on spiritual matters ...” (p. 48)

(“... this sort of thinking had to be abandoned.”) “

“Every one of them has gained access to, and believes in, a Power greater than himself.” (p. 50)

“... the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith.” (p. 51)

“When we drew near to Him, He disclosed himself to us.” (p. 57)

My restoration to sanity grows when I let the “mystery” of God replace my alcoholic obsessions.

I begin to consider the possibility that God knows better than I do what is good for me!

My “liberating abandon” will continue when I decide to “abandon [myself] utterly to [God]”.

Next Time: “Made a Decision” of Self-Liberation to “abandon ourselves utterly to [God]”.