

**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”.

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

“... incapable of being honest ... rigorous honesty ... capacity to be honest ...

fearless and thorough from the very start ... we let go absolutely.” (p. 58)

“Though our decision [Step 3] was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor was but a symptom.” (p. 64)

“First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure.” “

“Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.” “

“Blocking us” ... from the help I need from God to “relieve me of the bondage of self ...”

“Caused our failure” ... as in the diagnosis of “an extreme example of self-will run riot ...”

“What had defeated us” ... could not “reduce our self-centeredness ... on our own power.”

“Admitting” I am powerless does not remove my desire to control—it removes the delusion.

“Coming to believe” in help from my Higher Power does not make me feel less vulnerable.

“Deciding” to abandon my self to God’s care does not mean I have surrendered all my fears.

I decide to “discover” what in me blocks me from God’s liberating spiritual help.

**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.)

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

The “Fear Inventory” and the “Sexual Conduct Inventory” are continuations of my “Resentment Inventory”. These two inventories “uncover” and “discover” more of what I need to “abandon ... utterly to God”, namely, my selfish fears and my selfish, inconsiderate treatment of others that block me from God’s liberating care.

Step Four, Part Two: “[Fear] was an evil and corroding thread ...” (p. 67)

“We reviewed our fears thoroughly ... on paper, even though we had no resentments in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them.” (p. 68)

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

“Self-reliance was good ... didn’t go far enough ... didn’t solve the fear problem.” “

“When [self-confidence] made us cocky, [the fear problem] was worse.” “

“Perhaps there is a better way ... the basis of trusting and relying on God.” (p. 68)

“We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves.” (*Trust God with Uncertainty.*) “

“... play the role [God] assigns ... we do as we think [God] would have us, and humbly rely on [God], does [God] enable us to match calamity with serenity.” “

“... let [God] demonstrate, through us, what [God] can do.” (p. 68)

“We ask [God] to remove our fear and direct our attention to what [God] would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.” (*Abandon myself to surrender fear.*) “

In my Resentment Inventory, I ask God to “save me” from being angry. In my Fear Inventory, I ask God to “remove” my fear. I trust and rely more on God in the face of hurt and uncertainty. I abandon myself more to God as I am liberated more from too much self-reliance “run riot”.

Step Four, Part Three: “Now about sex. Many of us needed an overhauling there.” (p. 68)

“We reviewed our conduct over the years past ... on paper and looked at it.” (p. 69)

“Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?” (p. 69)

“Whom had we hurt ... arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness ... at fault ...” “

“We subjected each relation to this test—was it selfish or not?” “

“We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.” (p. 69)

“We must be willing to grow toward [our ideal] ... make amends where ... harm ...” “

“In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter.” “

“The right answer will come, if we want it.” (*Do I desire to be considerate to others?*) “

“If we are sorry ... desire to let God take us to better things ... be forgiven.” (p. 70)

I trust and rely upon God to liberate me from my powerlessness over my anger, resentments, fears and my inconsiderate treatment of others. I ask God to help me show others “tolerance, pity and patience”. I ask God to “remove [my] fear and direct my attention to what [God] would have [me] be”. I ask God to “mold” my relationship “ideals”. I begin to feel “forgivable”.

**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.)

Steps One through Four “Work Me” from “Powerless” into “Liberating Abandon”.

1. God discloses my *powerlessness* to me in several ways in Step One:
 - I dislike feeling “restless, irritable and discontent”, so I turn to alcohol to feel better;
 - I believe I am “in control”—of my drinking as well as my circumstances (p. 30);
 - I do not believe my life is unmanageable—my problems are “their” fault (p. 52);
 - I finally suffer enough in my self-reliant delusion of control that I look for release.
2. God offers me *hope for liberating help* for my *powerlessness* in Step Two:
 - “... who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.” (p. xiii);
 - “*There is a solution* ... to accept spiritual help.” (p. 25);
 - “His defense must come from a Higher Power.” (p. 43);
 - “... stop doubting the power of God.” (p. 52);
 - “God either is, or He isn’t. What was our choice to be?” (p. 53);
 - “When we drew near to [God], [God] disclosed Himself to us.” (p. 57);
3. I decide to seek *God’s care* in Step Three:
 - “... decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood [God].” (p. 60);
 - “First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn’t work.” (p. 62);
 - “God was going to be our Director ... we had a new Employer.” (pp. 62-63);
 - “God, I offer myself to [You], to build with me and to do with me as [You] will.” (p. 63);
 - “Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do [Your] will.” (p. 63);
 - “Take away my difficulties ... witness to [God’s] Power, Love and Way of Life.” (p. 63);
 - “... at last abandon ourselves utterly to [God].” (p. 63)
4. I “*abandon*” myself to God in the *uncertainty* of my searching and fearless moral inventory:
 - “... face ... things in ourselves ... blocking us [from God’s Power, Love, Way].” (p. 64).
 - I surrender my resentments—so I can be more forgiving and less a victim:*
 - “We asked God to help us ... God save me from being angry. [Your] will be done.” (p. 67);
 - “... God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of ... everyone.” (p. 67).
 - I surrender my fears—so I can be more trusting and less a “blamer”:*
 - “We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves.” (p. 68);
 - “... we do as we think [God] would have us ... humbly rely on [God] ...” (p. 68);
 - “We ask [God] to remove our fear and ... what [God] would have us be.” (p. 68);
 - “At once, we commence to outgrow fear.” (p. 68).
 - I surrender my inconsideration—so I can be more vulnerable and less a “shamer”:*
 - “We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.” (p. 69);
 - “... ask God what we should do ... God be the final judge ... better things ...” (p. 69, 70);
 - “We ... pray for the right ideal, for guidance ... for sanity ... for strength ...” (p. 70).
 - “*We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from [God] ... made a decision and an inventory ... a good beginning.*” (p. 71)

Next Time, Step Five: “We admitted to God, ourselves and another ...”