

**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 Us” 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.)

Overview of the Study: From “Powerless” to “Liberating Abandon”.

Our spiritual program of recovery begins with: “We admitted we were powerless ...” (p. 59)

Our spiritual program of recovery continues with: “... we had to stop doubting the power of God” (p. 52); and “we had to quit playing God” (p. 62).

And, *the fundamental requirement for our spiritual recovery is*: “... abandon ourselves utterly to [God]” (p. 63); “Abandon yourself to God as you understand God.” (p. 164)

In Steps Two through Twelve in our text book, we discover that *we are “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 ... people who 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 “abandon ourselves utterly” to God. *We seek spiritual “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 Ten: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.” (p. 59)

Step Eleven: “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.” (p. 59)

These are the “summary definitions” of Steps Ten and Eleven. How these two Steps spiritually “work me” in my life each day is not self-evident from these definitions.

The four pages 84-88 in our text book, Alcoholics Anonymous, teach us how to let Steps Ten and Eleven “work us” throughout our day. We learn how to let these two steps spiritually “work us”, to do before we know, from when we “awaken” until we “retire” at day’s end.

We learn how to admit more of our powerlessness over ourselves and our circumstances.

We abandon ourselves utterly to God and are liberated from our bondage of “self-will run riot”.

“Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.” (p. 77)

“... in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.” (p. 83)

“[The promises] will always materialize if we work for them.” (p. 84)

“We have entered the world of the Spirit.” “

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In this study, we combine Steps Ten and Eleven into one continuous, un-broken “Thread of Recovery—from our first awakening to our retiring at the end of our day. We *continue* to use our spiritual program of action. We **abandon** ourselves utterly to God throughout our day. We seek God’s will for us. We *seek* God’s Power (not our **powerlessness**) to carry out God’s will.

I learn more deeply that my spiritual growth depends on me being willing to “do” God’s will before I “know” the consequences of God’s will. Spiritually, “doing” God’s will in the face of uncertainty means I act (do) in faith without “knowing” the outcome. I trust God with outcomes.

“On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead.” “... we ask God ...” (p. 86)
*God, please divorce my thinking from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking **motives**.”*

“In thinking about our day we may face indecision.” “... we ask God ...” (p. 86)
*God, please grant me inspiration, an intuitive **thought** or a decision.”*

“We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer ...” “... we ask [God] ...” (p. 87)
*God, I ask for freedom from self-will ... show me what my **next step** is to be.*

“... we ask our wives or friends to join us in ... meditation.” “... a few set prayers ...” “
*God, help me **learn** from other spiritual and religious people.*

“As we go through the day we pause when agitated or doubtful, and ask [God] ...” (p. 87)
*God, please show me the “right” **thought** or **action**. [Your] will be done.*

“Continue to watch for **selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear**. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them.” (p. 84)
God, please help me make amends, if needed—and try to help someone else.

“Every day ... we must carry the vision of God’s will into all of our **activities**.” (p. 85)
“How can I best serve [You]—[Your] will, not mine, be done.”

“When we retire at night, we constructively review our **day**.” (p. 86)
God, please forgive me and disclose to me what corrective measures should be taken.

Observations: Steps Ten and Eleven “work me” as outlined on pp. 84-88:

1. I am first asking God for help with my motives before I think or act.
2. I ask God for help with uncertainty, through *inspiration, intuition and freedom from self*.
3. I am asking God for guidance with my *next step*, not all my steps at once.
4. I am asking God to help me *seek help* and *receive help* from God and others.
5. I ask God to help me *continue* with self-inventory throughout my day (Step Ten).
6. God helps me constructively review (self-inventory) my day when I retire (Step Eleven).
7. I ask God’s forgiveness and ask God to disclose to me corrective measures to be taken.

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From “Powerless” to “Liberating Abandon” in the Step Ten and Step Eleven Promises.

“They [the promises] will always materialize if we work for them.” (p. 84)

Step Ten Promises.

“We have entered the world of the Spirit.” (p. 84)

“Love and tolerance of others is our code.”

“And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—ever alcohol.” “

“... sanity will have returned ... seldom interested in liquor ... if tempted, we recoil ...” “

“We react sanely and normally ... automatically.” (pp. 84-85)

“... our new attitude toward liquor has been given us ... problem ... removed.” (p. 85)

“We are neither cocky nor or we afraid.” “

“We are headed for trouble [if we let up on the spiritual program of action] ...” “

“... daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.” “

“We can exercise our will power along this line ... the proper use of the will.” “

“... receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from [God] ...” “

“To some extent we have become God-conscious.” “

Step Eleven Promises.

“[Prayer and meditation] works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it.” (pp. 85-86)

“... we can employ our mental faculties with assurance ...” (p. 86)

“Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane ...” “

“We relax and take it easy.” “

“We don’t struggle.” “

“... hunch or ... inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind.” (p. 87)

“... thinking will ... be more and more on the plane of inspiration.” “

“... we are no longer running the show ...” (pp. 87-88)

“We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear anger, worry, self-pity or foolish decisions.” (p. 88)

“We become much more efficient.” “

“We do not tire so easily ...” “

“It works—it really does!” “

*“There is no blessing without accountability.” (Walt H.) When I am accountable to admit, accept and acknowledge my **powerlessness**, I receive the blessing of God’s Power, Love and Way of life—before I know the “spiritual awakening” is happening! When I am accountable to **abandon** myself utterly to God as I understand God, in Step Three and continuing through Steps Ten and Eleven, I experience the blessing of **liberation** of freedom from my bondage of self.*

“We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined. But this is not all. There is action and more action. ‘Faith without woks is dead’ “. (p. 88)

Next Time, Step Twelve Part 1: “We tried to carry this Message ...”