

“WHAT AN ORDER! I CAN’T GO THROUGH WITH IT.”

An Alcoholics Anonymous “Big Book” Twelve Step Study Workshop.

“Threads of Recovery” on Zoom at 10 am CDT Fridays, from May 23 to June 6, 2025

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

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

“What an order! I can’t go through with it” is a typical reaction of many of us when presented with the summary of the Twelve Step spiritual program for recovery from alcoholism.

Each of us, from time to time in our recovery, seem to experience this *defiance* and/or *denial*, regarding something we are called *to do*, *or to stop doing*, in the Twelve Steps.

Alcoholics Anonymous acknowledges this resistance. Step by step, we discover the reasons people have for resisting the method by which the book suggests we “take the steps”.

“What an order! I can’t go through with it.” (p. 60). What does the book mean by “order”?

“An ‘order’ is an authoritative command, direction or instruction.”

Alcoholics Anonymous has the *authority* of the real experience of alcoholic men and women who suffered the life-threatening effects of the alcoholism illness—who also experienced the life-saving spiritual recovery program of the Twelve Steps. The Twelve Steps, with the *authority* of personal experience, provide *direction* and *instruction* for our spiritual recovery from alcoholism.

“An ‘order’ is an arrangement of actions to be taken in a particular sequence or method.

The Twelve Steps are most effective when “taken” in the *sequence* (order) and with the *methods* as instructed in Alcoholics Anonymous.

New to AA, I read the steps on the wall of the P-3 AA Club in Kansas City. I disliked and ignored “powerless” or “unmanageable”; lack of “sanity”; God!; a “moral inventory”; admitting my “wrongs”; God again in Steps 6 and 7; making amends; admitting I was wrong and asking God for help! Spiritual awakening?!? “*What an order! I can’t (or won’t) go through with it.*”

I become willing in Steps One, Two and Three. I *decide* to ask God to help me learn how to “go through with it”, to relieve me of my “bondage of self”, in Step Three. *I learn how* to go through with it in Steps Four through Nine—to enlarge my spiritual awakening.

“Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked [God’s] protection and care with complete abandon.” (p. 59)

Three points are vital to success in each of the Steps going forward:

1. *Each step warns me against using “half-measures” to avoid “going through with it”.*
2. *In each step I face a turning point—to turn away from “I can’t go through with it”.*
3. *Each step shows me how to “go through with”, with God’s protection and care.*

In Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve, I learn how to continue to “go through with it”.

Step Ten: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.” (p. 59)

The “half-measure” (“I can’t go through with it”) I avoid in Step Ten:

“It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels.” (p. 85)

The “turning point” (CHOICE) I face in Step Ten:

“Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.” (p. 84)

The way to “go through with it” in Step Ten is:

“Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we have harmed someone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help.” (p. 84)

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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)

The “half-measure” (“I can’t go through with it”) I avoid in Step Eleven:

“We shouldn’t be shy on this matter of prayer.” (p. 85)

The “turning point” (CHOICE) I face in Step Eleven:

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

The way to “go through with it” in Step Eleven is:

“When we retire at night, we constructively review our day ... we ask God’s forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.” (p. 86)

“On awakening, let us ... ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.” (p. 86)

“... we may face indecision ... we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don’t struggle.” (p. 86)

“We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be ... freedom from self-will ... (p. 87)

“As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask [God] for the right thought or action.” (p. 87)

Step Twelve: “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.” (p. 60)

The “half-measures” (“I can’t go through with it”) I avoid in Step Twelve:

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

“... nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics.” (p. 89)

“... a sufficient substitute [for liquor] ... fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous.” (p. 152)

“... if your own house is in order ... your relationship with [God] is right ...”. (p. 164)

The “turning point” (CHOICE) I face in Step Twelve:

“... you must remember that your real reliance is always upon [God].” (p. 164)

The way to “go through with it” in Step Twelve is:

“Abandon yourself to God as you understand God.” (p. 164)

“Continuing” to “Seek” and “Try” to “go through with it”: Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve.

1. Alcoholics Anonymous discloses God’s will for us with instructions, directions and “musts”.
2. We “continue” daily in Step Ten to let God help us do spiritually-centered self-examination to “go through with it”, watching out for our selfishness, dishonesty, resentments and fears.
3. We “seek” in Step Eleven through prayer and meditation to receive God’s forgiveness, to avoid selfish motives and to learn to be in and receive God’s will and Power in all we do.
4. We “try” in Step Twelve to live as a good example of God’s Power, God’s Love and God’s Way of life; to carry the message of our spiritual awakening to other alcoholics; to live out our “real purpose”—fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us;
5. We “continue” to “seek” and “try” each day to “be”, “do” and “live” our code :
“Love and tolerance of others”. “What an order! I can go through with it, with God’s help!”