

ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS PROMISES: AFFIRMATION and MOTIVATION, Part One.

An Alcoholics Anonymous “Big Book” Workshop

“Threads of Recovery” on Zoom at 10 am ct October 24 and October 31, 2025

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

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

As we travel our “path” of spiritual awakening, learning *from*, to live *with*, and to live *by*, the Twelve Steps of our spiritual awakening, we sometimes get tired or have doubts.

As on any long journey, we periodically need *affirmation* that we are following the right path. We need *motivation* to continue the journey.

As we progress on our path of spiritual recovery, the “Big Book” Alcoholics Anonymous gives us “promise pauses” along our way to *affirm* our work and *motivate* us to continue to to enlarge our spiritual life—to “trudge the Road of Happy Destiny”.

A *promise* is a declaration or assurance that a particular thing will happen, i.e., “... find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.” (p. 45)

The promises in our Twelve Steps combine *affirmation* with *motivation*:

Affirmation. Positive statements to thwart negative feelings, thoughts and situations.

Motivation. Fuel our desire to choose to *pray* and *act* in service to our spiritual purpose.

This Big Book study focuses on six sets of promises in the book:

The Promises of Steps One, Two and Three, p. 63.

The Promises of Steps Four and Five, p. 75.

The Promises of Steps Six through Nine, pp. 83-84.

The Promises of Step Ten, pp. 84-85.

The Promises of Step Eleven, pp. 86-88

The Promises of Step Twelve, pp. 89-164.

These are not the only promises in our spiritual awakening. After all, the very first sentence in the book is a promise of sorts: “We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.” (p. xiii)

Yet these six sets of promises are powerful examples of how Alcoholics Anonymous continues to *affirm* that we are indeed on “our path”, and to *motivate* us to continue to seek and try to enlarge our spiritual life—to grow our spiritual awakening—one day at a time.

THE PROMISES OF STEPS ONE, TWO AND THREE, p. 63.

“(c) That God could and would if He were sought.” (p. 60)

This “promise” is both affirmation AND motivation—*God’s care is real and available.*

AFFIRMATION (Positive statements to thwart negativity):

“When we sincerely took such a position [quit playing God, p. 62], all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer ... He provided what we needed ... established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs ... we felt new power flow in ... became conscious of His presence ...”

MOTIVATION (Desire to *pray* and *act* in service to our spiritual purpose):

“... if we kept close to Him and performed His work well.”

“... “... we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life.”

“... as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully ...”

“... we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.”

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THE PROMISES OF STEPS FOUR AND FIVE, p. 75.

AFFIRMATION (Positive statements to thwart negativity):

“We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past. Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted.”

“We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator ... to have a spiritual experience.”

“The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly.”

“We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.”

MOTIVATION (Desire to *pray* and *act* in service to our spiritual purpose):

“We can look the world in the eye.”

“We can be alone at perfect peace and ease.”

“Our fears fall from us.”

THE PROMISES OF STEPS SIX THROUGH NINE, pp. 83-84.

AFFIRMATION (Positive statements to thwart negativity):

“If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through.”

“We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.”

“No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.”

“That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.”

“We will suddenly realize that God its doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”

MOTIVATION (Desire to *pray* and *act* in service to our spiritual purpose):

“We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.”

“We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.”

“We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in ourselves.

“Self-seeking will slip away.”

“Our whole attitude and outlook on life will change.”

“Fear of people and economic insecurity will leave us.”

“We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.”

“They will always materialize if we work for them.”

“We have entered the world of the Spirit.”

(p. 84)

During our *work* and *prayer* in Steps One through Nine, we have come to realize—and to *believe* in—this promise of affirmation AND motivation!

Next Time: Living in the “world of the Spirit”—Promises of Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve.