

A BRIEF INTERPRETATION OF THE TWELVE STEPS

1. WE ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER ALCOHOL(And Drugs) ** THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGABLE.

On the surface this step appears comparatively easy since all alcoholics are powerless over alcohol, and all persons are powerless over drugs so far as addiction is concerned. However it is a noted characteristic of all drug addicts to rationalize that they are keener, more alert, and happier when they are taking drugs. Honest introspection will readily convince us that such a school of thought is false.

2. CAME TO BELIEVE THAT A POWER GREATER THAN OURSELVES COULD RESTORE US TO SANITY.

Everyone who has habitually used alcohol or drugs has sometimes said to himself, "Well, just this once, and then tomorrow I will quit." Tomorrow never comes. Every addict has been pleaded with by his loved ones to 'please stop'. Even strangers have tried to reason him into quitting. Likewise, threats are of no avail. In short there is no mere human power great enough. It takes a Power greater than ourselves.

3. MADE A DECISION TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER TO THE CARE OF GOD, AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM.

The existence of a God (call Him what you will) must be taken for granted and on faith. For him who can honestly say, "I do not believe in God," our profound pity". To such a person this program is of little value. It is beyond the scope of this discussion to point out or even suggest proof of God's existence.

4. MADE A SEARCHING AND FEARLESS MORAL INVENTORY OF OURSELVES.

This step is the most difficult one so far. In each of our minds are hidden corners and recesses, closed to even our own consciousness. The doors to these recesses must be opened to root out their contents. We must be honest with ourselves. Here should be listed all our faults and our shortcomings.

5. ADMITTED TO GOD, TO OURSELVES, AND TO ANOTHER HUMAN BEING THE EXACT NATURE OF OUR WRONGS.

It has been said by teachers and philosophers ever since God, admonished us to confess our sins and repent, that confession is "good for the soul." This confession will bring into our consciousness our misdeeds and shortcomings, and thereby compare them with the shortcomings and misdeeds for which we blame our fellow man.

6. WERE ENTIRELY READY TO HAVE GOD REMOVE THESE DEFECTS OF CHARACTER.

Having recognized our faults and shortcomings, we naturally want them removed, and since it is beyond the power of mere man to relieve them, we must appeal to the Higher Power to do so and then stand ready to do the foot-work, as we may be directed.

7. HUMBLY ASKED HIM TO REMOVE OUR SHORTCOMINGS.

In asking this Power for help and to remove these shortcomings, we must do so humbly and with contrition, and in a quiet manner. Here one must exercise his own individuality, it has been proven if we seek we shall find.

8. MADE A LIST OF ALL THE PERSONS WE HAD HARMED AND BECAME WILLING TO MAKE AMENDS TO THEM ALL.

A mental memo is not enough for this step. We must make a written list to which may be added from time to time, and from which may be erased when amends have been made. Attention is called to the fact that we only need to become willing. In other words, the will is the important part so far as this step is concerned.

9. MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE, EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.

If only further injury would result from asking amends, we would only further our own selfish ends by doing so. If the hurt is only to our own pride, then amends must be made no matter how great that hurt might be, nor how severe the consequences -- they should be faced if they are to be conquered.

10. CONTINUED TO TAKE PERSONAL INVENTORY AND WHEN WE WERE WRONG PROMPTLY ADMITTED IT.

An early admission of our wrongs is much easier -- the longer we nurse them, the harder it is to admit them. Any successful business man will tell you that a perpetual inventory is by far the best -- and what greater business is there than living?

11. SOUGHT THROUGH PRAYER AND MEDITATION TO IMPROVE OUR CONSCIOUS CONTACT WITH GOD, AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM, PRAYING FOR KNOWLEDGE OF HIS WILL FOR US AND THE POWER TO CARRY THAT OUT.

We all have our own ideas about prayer but only a few know how to pray. When we ask God to grant certain wishes or bring about certain things, be sure that they are the right things. If these things are for our own good, they will be granted without asking, we should pray for knowledge of His will, not that He will grant that our will be done. We should pray His will be known to us and we will be granted the knowledge to carry it out intelligently and faith enough to carry on when that knowledge ends.

12. HAVING HAD A SPIRITUAL AWAKENING AS A RESULT OF THESE STEPS WE TRIED TO CARRY THIS MESSAGE TO ALCOHOLICS, AND TO PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS.

This is the practical application of these steps. It is a known fact an alcoholic will listen to another alcoholic, or an addict will listen to another addict, even if they be strangers. We will listen to our own kind quicker than to loved ones or strangers. In relating to a newcomer this program, don't be afraid to tell the truth about yourself no matter how gruesome the details. This will accomplish two things; 1. It will let him know that you have been "through the mill" thereby building up his trust in you. 2. It will help strengthen your own position and renew your own faith.