

Alcoholics Anonymous Basic Text – Steps Handout

This document was produced as an aid to studying and working through the Basic Textbook of Alcoholics Anonymous either with a sponsor or in a formal book study session.

It is suggested that this document be used in conjunction with a Sponsor and the Basic Textbook of Alcoholics Anonymous.

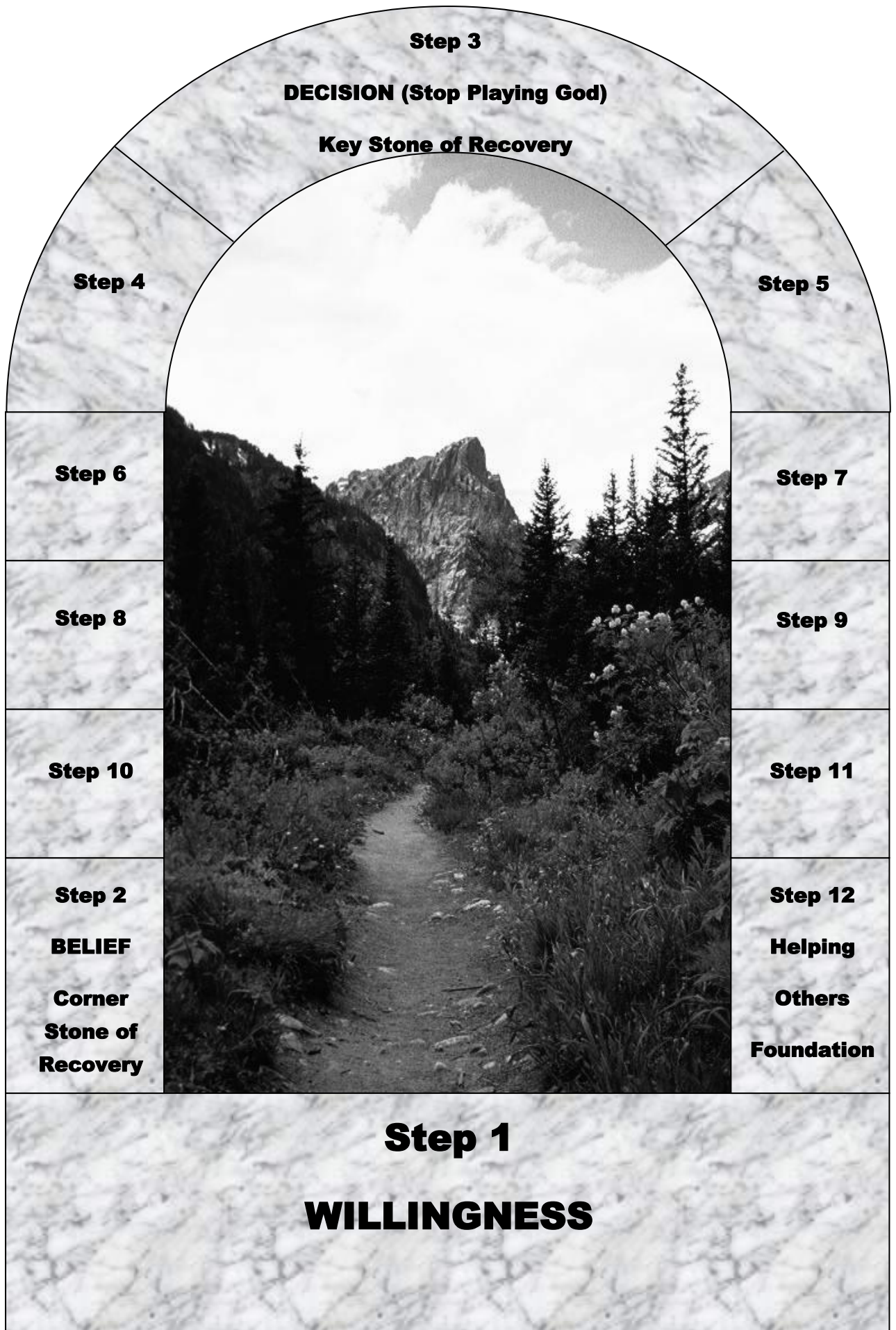
“We feel that elimination of our drinking is but a beginning. A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations and affairs”.

Excerpts from the Basic Textbook of Alcoholics Anonymous have been used in producing this text. In some instances, abbreviations have been used only to minimize the size of this publication. It will always be of ***paramount importance*** to fully cover all the information in the Basic Textbook of Alcoholics Anonymous for full clarification.

It is our primary purpose to carry this message to alcoholics who still suffer, and to help guide members attending through the Alcoholics Anonymous 12 Step program of recovery.

Set Aside Prayer

“God, please set aside everything I think I know about myself, The Steps, the Big Book, sobriety, and you. Please help me to have an open mind so I may have a new experience and discover the truth”



The Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book Table of Contents

Goal 1

Goal 2

Goal 3

PROBLEM

SOLUTION

ACTION STEPS

<p>Doctor's Opinion</p> <p>Chapter 1 – Bill's Story (Case Study)</p> <p>Chapter 2 – There is A Solution (pages 17 – 25)</p> <p>Chapter 3 – More About Alcoholism</p>	<p>Chapter 2 – There is A Solution (pages 25 – 29)</p> <p>Chapter 4 – We Agnostics</p> <p>Appendix 2 – Spiritual Experience</p>	<p>Chapter 5 – How It Works</p> <p>Chapter 6 – Into Action</p> <p>Chapter 7 – Working With Others</p>
<p>STEP 1</p>	<p>STEP 2</p>	<p>STEPS 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12</p>

MENTAL

PHYSICAL

Cannot after a time
differentiate the true from
the false

"MENTAL OBSESSION"

Action of alcohol on these chronic
alcoholics is a manifestation of an
allergy ...

"PHYSICAL ALLERGY"

The alcoholic at certain times has
no effective mental defense against
the first drink. Except in a few rare
cases, neither he nor any other
human being can provide such a
defense. His defense must come
from a Higher Power.

They are restless, irritable and
discontented, unless they can
again experience the sense of
ease and comfort which comes at
once by taking a few drinks

Restless

Irritable

Discontented

Emerging remorseful with a
firm resolution not to drink
again.

The *phenomenon of craving* is
limited to this class and never
occurs in the average temperate
drinker.

Pass through the
well-known stages of
a spree.

Step 1: Problem: **"PHYSICAL ALLERGY"** coupled with a **"MENTAL OBSESSION"**
(Powerless & Unmanageable)

Step 1 Questions:

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol— that our lives had become unmanageable.”

- Did I have an abnormal reaction to alcohol?.....
.....
- Did I crave alcohol when I put alcohol in my body?.....
.....
- Am I restless irritable & discontent, unless I can again experience the sense of ease & comfort which comes at once when taking a few drinks?.....
.....
- Can I take or leave alcohol alone?.....
.....
- Was sufficient reason enough for me to stop or moderate – keep me sober?
.....
- Is my so called will power practically non-existent?.....
.....

- Am I unable at certain times to bring into my consciousness with sufficient force the memory of suffering & humiliation of even a week or month ago?.....
.....
- Am I without defense against the first drink?.....
.....
- Can I stop drinking on the basis of self knowledge?.....
.....
- Am I willing to concede to my innermost self that I have no power and I need a new manager?.....
.....

Step 2 Questions:

“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”

- Am I willing to believe that I am suffering from an illness that only a spiritual experience will conquer?.....
.....
- Do I have the power to conquer my alcoholism?.....
.....

- Do I have the power to not drink?.....
.....
- Did I become an alcoholic?.....
.....
- Was I crushed by a self imposed crisis?.....
.....
- Do I now believe or am I willing to believe that there is a power greater than myself?.....
.....
- Am I having trouble with personal relationships?.....
.....
- Can I control my emotional nature?.....
.....
- Am I a prey to misery and depression?.....
.....
- Can I make a living?.....

.....
• Do I have a feeling of uselessness?.....

.....
• Am I full of fear?.....

.....
• Am I unhappy?.....

.....
• Can I be of real help to other people?.....

.....
• Am I willing to consider that unless I experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of recovery?.....

.....
• What is my choice – god is either everything or nothing.....

.....

Step 3 Questions: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.”

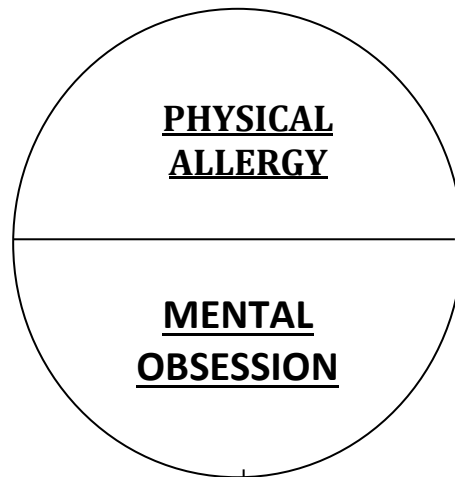
- Am I willing to go to any length to have a spiritual experience?.....
.....
- Am I convinced that I can't manage my own life?.....
.....
- Am I convinced that no human power could relieve me of my alcoholism?.....
.....
- Am I convinced that god could and would if sought?.....
.....
- Am I willing to consider that selfishness and self-centeredness is the root of my troubles?.....
.....
- Am I willing to consider that my troubles are of my own making?.....
.....
- Am I willing to make a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of god as I understand him?
.....

Road Chart to a Decision

Step 1: The Problem: **LACK OF POWER - POWERLESS.**

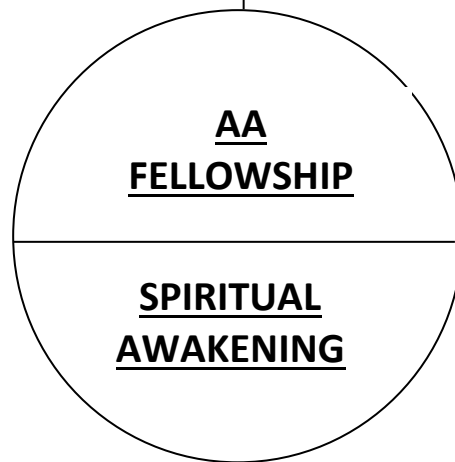
Step 2: The Solution: **A POWER GREATER THAN SELF.**

Step 1:
PROBLEM



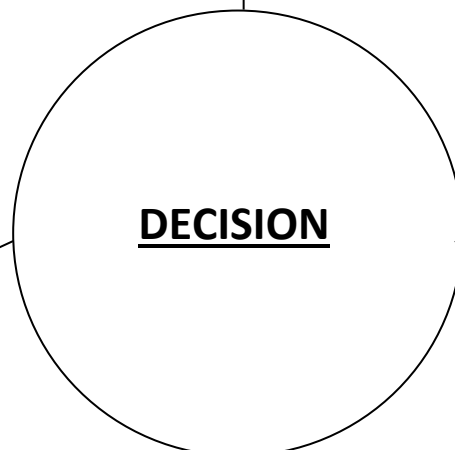
POWERLESS

Step 2:
SOLUTION



**A POWER
GREATER
THAN SELF**

Step 3:



REMAIN SOBER &
WORK THE REMAINDER
OF THE 12 STEPS

DRINKING, JAILS,
INSTITUTIONS, INSANITY,
DEATH

SOBRIETY, HAPPILY &
USEFULLY WHOLE, PEACE,
FREEDOM, LIFE

Principles of Step 4

Step 4: Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Step 4 is 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. So we had to get down to causes and conditions.

Note:

Fact Finding	=	Searching
Fact Facing	=	Fearless
Moral	=	Conveying or expressing truth
Inventory	=	Written list of items

Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. This was Step Four. A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret. If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values.

We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. 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.

See inventory sheets for instructions

Resentments Inventory List

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Prayer</u>	<u>Column 4</u>
<p><u>Resentful Of</u></p> <p>We listed people, Institutions or principles with whom/which we were angry.</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Complete column 1 from top to bottom before commencing column 2.</p>	<p><u>The Cause</u></p> <p>We asked ourselves why we were angry?</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Complete column 2 from top to bottom before commencing column 3.</p>	<p><u>Affects My</u></p> <p>On our grudge list we set opposite each name our injuries. Was it our self-esteem, our security, our ambitions, our personal, or sex relations, which had been interfered with?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Self Esteem ➤ Pocketbook ➤ Ambitions ➤ Security ➤ Personal Relationships ➤ Pride ➤ Sex Relations <p><i>Note:</i> Complete column 3 from top to bottom before commencing column 4.</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Prayer</u></p> <p><i>“We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend.”</i></p> <p>When a person offended we said to ourselves,</p> <p><i>“This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.”</i></p>	<p><u>My Mistakes (Defects)</u></p> <p>(Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our <i>own mistakes.</i>) Where had we been</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Selfish? ➤ Dishonest? ➤ Self-seeking?

We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty.

Note:
Read from The Alcoholics Anonymous Basic Text book, from page 63 and follow directions all the way to page

Resentments Inventory List

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Prayer</u>	<u>Column 4</u>
<u>Resentful Of</u>	<u>The Cause</u>	<u>Affects My</u>		<u>My Mistakes (Defects)</u>
			<p style="color: red; text-align: center;"><i>“We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend.”</i></p> <p>When a person offended we said to ourselves,</p> <p style="color: red; text-align: center;"><i>“This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.”</i></p>	

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<u>Resentful Of</u>	<u>The Cause</u>	<u>Affects My</u>	<p><i>“We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend.”</i></p> <p>When a person offended we said to ourselves,</p> <p><i>“This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.”</i></p>	<u>My Mistakes (Defects)</u>

Fears Inventory List

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Column 4</u>
<p><u>Fearful At</u></p> <p>We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Complete column 1 from top to bottom before commencing column 2.</p>	<p><u>The Cause</u></p> <p>We asked ourselves why we had them?</p> <p>(Where have we been</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Selfish? ➤ Dishonest? ➤ Self-seeking?) <p><i>Note:</i> Complete column 2 from top to bottom before commencing column 3.</p>	<p><u>Question:</u></p> <p>Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us?</p> <p><i>Note:</i> Complete column 3 from top to bottom before commencing column 4.</p>	<p><u>Prayer</u></p> <p>We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do.</p> <p><i>We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be.</i></p> <p>At once, we commence to outgrow fear.</p>

We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty.

Note: Read from The Alcoholics Anonymous Basic Textbook, page 63, to, and through page 65 before beginning. When finished, read and follow directions on page 68

Fears Inventory List

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Column 4</u>
<u>Fearful At</u>	<u>The Cause</u>	<u>Question:</u>	<p><u>Prayer</u></p> <p>We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do.</p> <p><i>We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be.</i></p> <p>At once, we commence to outgrow fear.</p>

Fears Inventory List

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Sex - Harms List

<u>Column 1</u>	<u>Column 2</u>	<u>Column 3</u>	<u>Column 4</u>	<u>Column 5</u>
<u>Whom Had we hurt?</u>	<u>Where had we been?</u> (Defects)	<u>Where were we at fault?</u>	<u>What should we have done instead?</u>	<u>(Reflecting on column 4)</u> We tried to shape a sane and sound ideal for our future sex life. We subjected each relation to this test - Was it selfish or not? <i>We asked God to mold our ideals and help us to live up to them.</i>

The Fifth Step

“Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs”

- “a solitary self – appraisal insufficient”
- “If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking”
- “Trying to avoid this humbling experience..... Almost invariably they got drunk”
- “.. hung on to some of the worst items in stock”
- “They only *thought* they had lost their egoism and fear; they only *thought* they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else *all* their life story”
- We need to entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world.”

1. Is our work solid so far?
2. Are the stones properly in place?
3. Have we skimped on the cement put into the foundation?
4. Have we tried to make mortar out of sand?

Steps Six

“Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character”.

Step 6 Questions: (things to consider when searching for defects)
(A.A 12*12 pg. 65..67)

Am I willing and “entirely ready” to aim for the very best we know or can learn?

Could I be scorned a braggart?

Am I gluttonous enough to ruin my health?

Do I like to feel just a little superior to the next fellow, or even quite a lot superior?

Am I paralysed with sloth?

Do I let greed masquerade as ambition?

Do I hide lust in a dark corner of my mind?

Are my imaginary sex excursions (porn etc) apt to be all dressed up as dreams of romance?

Do I find Self-righteous anger enjoyable and do I take satisfaction from the fact that many people annoy me? Do I use this to feel superior and proclaim my self righteousness?

Am I riddled with envy?

Do I have a talent for procrastination?

Have I come to grips with some of our worst character defects and take action toward their removal as quickly as I can?

We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all—everyone? If we still cling to something we will not let go, ***we ask God to help us be willing.***

Source: A. Column No 4 Resentments inventory list.

B. Column No 2 Fears inventory list.

C. Column No 2 Sex Harms inventory list.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Step 7

“Humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings”.

Note: Shortcomings = Defects = Exact Nature of our Wrongs

Step 7 Questions (A.A. 12*12 pg. 76):

Do I want to live at peace with myself and with my fellows?

Would I like to be assured that the grace of God can do for me what I cannot do for myself?

Can I see that character defects based on short sighted or unworthy desires are the obstacles that block my path towards these objectives?

Ask about other harms -

“Is there anything else I’ve done that has caused you harm?”

Amends Letter

Dear _____,

I’m writing this letter to make amends for the harm I caused you. I was wrong when I... I am truly sorry. You did not deserve to be treated this way. Please let me know what I can do to right these wrongs with you. Also let me know if there are other way’s I have harmed you.

Sincerely,
John Smith
Phone number
Mailing address

Ninth Step Card Format

(note, not in the book, only a suggested)

Amends Card admitting

Make amends as per your harms done - then

1. Have I harmed you in any other way?

Shut up and listen

2. Is there anything that I can do to make this right?

Shut up and listen

3. Do you want to tell me how that made you feel?

Shut up and listen

The Tenth Step

“Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

It is a spiritual axiom that every time we are disturbed, no matter what the cause, there is something wrong *with us*. (AA 12*12 pg.90)

Page 84 AA Basic Text Book

1. Continue to **Watch** for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment and fear (Step 4)
2. When these crop up, we **Ask** God at once to remove them. (Step 6 - 7)
3. We **Discuss** them with someone immediately (Step 5)
4. Make **Amends** quickly if we have harmed anyone. (Steps 8 - 9)
5. Then we resolutely **Turn** our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code. (Step 12)

W.A.D.A.T.

1. **W**atch
2. **A**sk
3. **D**iscuss
4. **A**mends
5. **T**urn

Step 11

“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.”

Morning Routine: page 86 - 87.

“On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, ***we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives***.....

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here ***we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision***. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while.....

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, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. ***We ask especially for freedom from self-will***, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ***ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped***. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends.....

There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.”

During the day: page 87 - 88

“As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ***ask for the right thought or action***. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day ***“Thy will be done.”*** We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves. It works—it really does. We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.”

Step 11- Nightly Review Sheet

1. **Were we resentful?** (provide written examples) Yes / No, if the resentment fails to shift complete inventory as per instructions **(Step 4)** in the basic textbook pages 64 - 65
2. **Were we selfish?** (provide written examples) Yes / No, if yes – Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character **(Step 6)** Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. **(Step 7)**
3. **Were we dishonest?** (provide written examples) Yes / No, if yes – Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character **(Step 6)** Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. **(Step 7)**
4. **Were we afraid?** (provide written examples) Yes / No, if yes – We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be **(Step 4)**
5. **Do we owe an apology?** (provide written examples) (amends) Yes / No, if yes, – Made direct amends wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. **(Step 9)**
6. **Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once?** (provide written examples) Yes / No, if yes, – Admitted to God, to ourselves, and another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. **(Step 5)**
7. **Were we kind and loving towards all?** (provide written examples) Yes / No
8. **What could we have done better?** (provide written examples)
9. **Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time?** (provide written examples) Yes / No.
10. **Were we thinking of what we could do for others?** (provide written examples) Yes / No
11. **Were we thinking of what we could pack into the stream of life?** (provide written examples) Yes / No.

But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review ***we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.***

The Twelfth Step

Step 12. 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.

Practical experience shows that nothing will so much ensure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. This is our *twelfth suggestion*: Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill.

Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends – this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.

(Be sure to read the whole chapter)

12 Step Calls (page 89 - 96)

Sponsorship (page 96 - 100)

Principles (page 100 - 103)

After all, our problems were of our own making. Bottles were only a symbol. Besides, we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. We have to!