

**“Limitless Expansion through the Practice of THESE Steps,  
a Lifelong Adventure”**

*“12 Steps for happiness, joy and freedom”*

*The Ever-Grateful JEB from Freethinkers in AA, Denver*

*James Earle Barrett. MS. MA. Retired Licensed Professional Counselor*

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What's it all about, Alpie?

Let go of what was.

Accept what is, and

Have faith in what will be.

---Sonia Ricotti in “Unsinkable”

It didn't come to stay; it came to pass.

--- Heard around the rooms

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**HUMILITY**

“To those who have made progress in A.A., it amounts to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be.” 12 & 12, page 58

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### *A Disclaimer*

- ▶ No one person speaks for A.A. as a whole. (That includes Bill, Bob, you and me.)
- ▶ I don't pretend to know more than I know, or that only my way is the path for everyone. I only share what has worked for me over the past 40-some years, what my experience has taught me.
- ▶ A.A. has done for me what nothing and no one could do.
- ▶ AA has helped me learn from what others and my own experience have taught me.
- ▶ This is a program of action.

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### Some key thoughts from the literature.

- ▶ *Alcoholics Anonymous*
- ▶ *As Bill Sees It*
- ▶ *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*

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### There is a solution.

" There is a solution. "Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation (fulfillment). But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet.

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## A Program of Limitless Expansion from Sylvia K.

"A.A. is not a plan for recovery that can be finished and done with. It is a way of life, and the challenge contained in its principles is great enough to keep any human being struggling for as long as he lives, we do not, cannot, out-grow this plan. As arrested alcoholics, we must have a program for living that allows for limitless expansion. Keeping one foot in front of the other is essential for maintaining our arrestment. Others may idle in a retrogressive groove without too much danger, but retrogression can spell death for us. However, this isn't as rough as it sounds, as we do become grateful for the necessity that makes us toe the line, for we are more than compensated for a consistent effort by the countless dividends we receive.

"A complete change takes place in our approach to life. Where we used to run from responsibility, we find ourselves accepting it with gratitude that we can successfully shoulder it. Instead of wanting to escape some perplexing problem, we experience a thrill of challenge in the opportunity it affords for another application of A.A. techniques and find ourselves tackling it with surprising vigor." From THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM, 3rd Edition, p. 311

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### ▶The Beginning of Humility

▶"There are few absolutes inherent in the Twelve Steps. Most Steps are open to interpretation, based on the experience and outlook of the individual.

▶"Consequently, the individual is free to start the Steps at whatever point he or she can or will... If... (we) will relax and practice as many of the Steps as (we) can, (we are) to grow spiritually." --As Bill Sees It, page 191

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## Spirituality Minus Religion. . .

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*I had to first find the Power of Desire.*

"The only requirement for A.A. membership is an (honest) desire to stop drinking."

- ▶ I had come to feel bad about myself.
- ▶ I felt disconnected, isolated, unhappy.
- ▶ I experienced terror, bewilderment, frustration, despair.
- ▶ My life was not the life I longed for, so I had to concede to my innermost self that I felt powerless to change for the better on my own.

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*A personality change sufficient to bring about recovery, most of the "educational variety."*

No one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. *Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery, but these are indispensable.*

"There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation." -- most likely William Paley (1743-1805) British philosopher, and utilitarian.

"We alcoholics are undisciplined. Therefore, we allow *our inner wisdom and memories* to discipline us in the simple way just outlined."

"After all, *evolution* gave us brains to use."a

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*"The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it."*

- ▶ "A.A.'s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole." - *Foreword to Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*
- ▶ "Only Step One, where we made the 100 percent admission, we were powerless over alcohol, can be practiced with absolute perfection. The remaining eleven Steps state perfect ideals. They are goals toward which we look and are the measuring sticks by which we estimate our progress." - *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 68*
- ▶ "The joy of living is the theme of A.A.'s Twelfth Step, and action is its key word. . . . Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety. . . we have each found something called a spiritual awakening. . ." - *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, page 106*

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“What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition.”

*Alcoholics Anonymous, p.85*

“It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision . . . into all of our activities. . . These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.” *–Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 85*

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This is the process *as I understand it* and try to live it.

- In the 1939 chronicle of experience, strength and hope, Bill Wilson attempted to represent the various things early members were doing to stay sober, but also added some prophetic thoughts, suggestions from other sources.
- There is no reason to suggest or assume that anyone did all the things Bill outlined as his suggested program of recovery.

***SO, TAKE WHAT YOU CAN USE AND LEAVE THE REST!***

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*Finding Power through the Step process*

- ▶ “The main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body.” (p.23)
- ▶ “Lack of power, that was our dilemma. . . But where were we to find this Power? Well, that’s exactly what this book is about. . .Its main object is to enable you to find Power greater than yourself’ which will solve your problem.” p. 45
- ▶ We learn how to learn from our own experience what doesn’t work, so we can find what does work, but we have been undisciplined.
- ▶ We get to be happy!
- ▶ It takes work, desire, intention and planning. That’s precisely what the journey of recovery is all about!

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### 12 Steps for tapping into unsuspected inner resources

*When it got my attention, I found within the Power of Desire, from the Great Reality deep within*

*This is my experience as each Step helps me tap into more unexpected inner power.*

I must remember that step and principle mean "a course action." There is no difference. These 12 Steps and the only principles Bill referred to in Step 12.

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### A 12-Step Checklist

- ▶ Measuring our progress, a checkup.
  - ▶ How am I doing today?
  - ▶ What questions can I ask myself?
  
- ▶ "All successful women and men have a plan."

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### Let's make this a workshop, not a lecture.

Now, as we go through the Steps, I invite you to offer additional questions I or we can ask ourselves (to measure our progress on this adventure of recovery).

I think Tony is going to take notes for me to add to the list. I will then offer to send all of you the expanded list. You need only write me at [freethinkersinaa@gmail.com](mailto:freethinkersinaa@gmail.com).

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### STEP 1

#### *Tapping into the Power of Self-Honesty*

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

**“I concede to my innermost self that I am alcoholic—that on my own I am powerless to confront and resolve my addictions.”**

“My life was not the life I had longed for, so I had to concede to my innermost self that I was powerless to change for the better on my own.”

(I’m only powerless over it if I pick up that first drink. “Put the plug in the jug! You can do it.”)

- ▶ *Am I trying to do it alone?*
- ▶ *Do I recall what it did for me and what it did to me?*
- ▶ *Am I convinced that I am powerless over alcohol if I pick up that first drink or am I willing to start lying to myself again?*
- ▶ *Am I abstinent today?*

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### STEP 2

#### *Tapping into the Power of Identification and Hope*

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

**“I learned to trust and hope that a new course of action, practice of these Twelve Steps in a supportive fellowship, can and will restore me to sanity.”**

“If they can do it, maybe I can also!” I identify with others and suddenly feel at home, a part of and connected.

- ▶ *Am I continuing to attend meetings to learn from others and my own experience?*
- ▶ *Am I at least trying to use the tools and the Fellowship to keep me on track?*
- ▶ *How is my life better?*
- ▶ *Am I comparing my sanity today to others, or to myself before?*
- ▶ *How to I estimate my progress? [By continuing practice of Step 4.]*

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### STEP 3

#### *Tapping into the Power of Choice, taking back power.*

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*

• **“I make a daily decision to turn my will and my life over to this 12-Step process and development of the inner resources they help me find and follow.”**

- *How am I executing my plans?*
- *Do I recognize and respect my limits?*
- *Am I still judging myself on past habits and reactions?*
- *Is my sobriety still my priority, or is sobriety losing its priority (SLIP)?*
- *Do I or don't I buy this deal?*

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Dependence	Managing/controlling	Kind
Neediness	Refracting	Considerate
Malcontent	Taking	Patient
Self-will run riot	Producing confusion	Generous
In collision	Self-centered—Egocentric	Modest
Self-propulsion	Correct	Self-sacrificing
Actor	Jealousy	Gracious
Arranger	Carelessness	Power within
Idealist	Intolerance	Moral & philosophical convictions
Mean	Ill-tempered	Love
Egocistical	Sarcasm	Joy
Selfish	Pride	Peace
Dishonesty	Greud	Patience
Self-Esoteric	Lust	Kindliness
Demanding	Anger	Goodness
Malcontent	Cluttony	Gentleness
Blamer	Envy	Trustworthiness
Anger	Skoth	Tolerance
Indignant		Self-control
Self-pity		

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### A DAILY THIRD STEP DECISION

“Inner wisdom, love, compassion, protection and understanding, I now offer myself to you and this 12-Step process, to build with me and to do with me as you will. Relieve me of the bondage of self-limiting and self-defeating attitudes, emotions, ideas, opinions, understandings, yearnings, beliefs and behaviors, that stand in the way of my usefulness, happiness, joy and freedom. Take away my difficulties that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of the power, the love, and the way of life available to all who are willing to Accept, Begin and Continue this work.”

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### STEP 4

#### *Tapping into the Power of Reflection and Remembering*

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.  
 “I learned how to take a searching, fearless, and honest inventory of myself, my thoughts, beliefs, emotions and actions.

- ▶ *What is hurt or threatened: self-esteem, pocketbook, ambitions, relationships, security? SPARKS*
- ▶ *What am I running from, what am I still hiding?*

I am still learning what my feelings are telling me. Inventory is a fact-finding process. Finding what my innermost self would have me be. “What could I have done instead?”  
 And, Practice makes Progress!

- ▶ *Am I continuing to learn from past and present experiences, reactions and responses?*
- ▶ *How is my sane and sound ideal for future relationships expanding? (Do I even have one or am I working on one? That’s the person my innermost self would like me to become and respect.)*

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*The 5 columns*

- ▶ Grudges, blaming people, institutions and principles/Steps.
- ▶ What they did or do.
- ▶ What is hurt or threatened, self-esteem, pocketbook, ambition, relationships, security? SPARS I get to see my insecurity, immaturity and vulnerability.
- ▶ Where was I at fault? (Trusting the untrustworthy, expecting other, imagined or real, to take care of me.)
- ▶ What could I have done instead? (What can I do differently in the future?)

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*Grady List*

PEOPLE		INSTITUTIONS	PRINCIPLES
Father (Step)	Husbands	Marriage	12 Step Life
Mother (Step)	Wives	Church	Step 3
Sisters (Step)	Creditors	Religion	Step 5
Brothers (Step)	Childhood Friends	Races	Step 7
Aunts	School Friends	Laws	Step 11
Uncles	Teachers	Authorities	Step 12
Cousins	Life-Long Friends	Government	
Clergy	Best Friends	Education Systems	Laws of Nature
Police	Acquaintances	Correctional System	
Lawyers	Girl Friends	Mental Health System	
Judges	Boy Friends		
Doctors	Parole Officers		
Employers	Probation Officers		
Employees	A.A. Friends		
Co-Workers	N.A. Friends		
In-Laws	U.S. Service		
	Neighbors		

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**COMMON HUMAN WEAKNESSES & DEFENSES**

Anger	Gluttony	Projection
Blaming	Greed	Retaliation
Carelessness	Idealism	Sarcasm
Chronically Malcontent	Ill-temper	Self-centeredness—
Conceit	Indignation	egocentricity
Delusion/Self-delusion	Intolerance Jealousy	Self-doubt
Denial	Lust	Self-pity
Demanding	Managing/controlling	Self-seeking
Dependence	Meanness	Self-will run riot
Dishonesty	Neediness	Selfishness
Egotism	Pride	Sloth/laziness
Envy	Procrastination	Taking

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**COMMON HUMAN STRENGTHS**

Good motives	Goodness	Trustworthiness
Idealism	Gentleness	Tolerance
Virtuousness	Gratitude	Self-control
Kindness	Honesty	Self-reliance
Empathy	Sensitivity	Self-confidence
Compassion	Love	Self-efficacy
Thoughtfulness	Joy	Self-sacrifice
Generosity	Peace	Altruism
Modesty	Patience	
Grace	Kindliness	

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**FEARS**

Fear of God or no god	Fear of Self-Expression	Fear of Doctors
Fear of Dying	Fear of Authority	Fear of Stealing
Fear of Insanity	Fear of Heights	Fear of Creditors
Fear of Insecurity	Fear of Unemployment	Fear of Being Found Out
Fear of Rejection	Fear of Employment	Fear of Homosexuals & Lesbians
Fear of Loneliness	Fear of Parents	Fear of Failure
Fear of Disease	Fear of Losing a Wife	Fear of Success
Fear of Alcohol	Fear of Losing a Husband	Fear of Losing something I have
Fear of Drugs	Fear of Losing a Child	Fear of Responsibility
Fear of Relapse	Fear of Animals	Fear of Physical Pain
Fear of Sex	Fear of Insects	Fear of Fear
Fear of Sin	Fear of Police	Fear of Drowning
	Fear of Jail	

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*“Take away my fear and show me what you would have me be” (and do differently).*

- ▶ Next, I look at relationships, but not only sexual and romantic relationships.
- ▶ Recovery is essentially about growth in awareness, followed by growth in responsibility through constant change?

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*(Step 4 continued)*

### What Children Need

Acceptance	Affection	Direction
Nurturing	Respect	Discipline
Love	Validation	Structure
Safety	Humor	Honesty
Stability	Guidance	Concern
Caring	Forgiveness	Hope
Affirmation	Understanding	Faith
Education	Intellectual Stimulation	Compassion
Attention	Comfort	Empathy
Trust	Security	
Warmth	Soothing	

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### WHAT PEOPLE NEED

Acceptance	Affection	Direction
Nurturing	Respect	Discipline
Love	Validation	Structure
Safety	Humor	Honesty
Stability	Guidance	Concern
Caring	Forgiveness	Hope
Affirmation	Understanding	Faith
Education	Intellectual Stimulation	Compassion
Attention	Comfort	Empathy
Trust	Security	
Warmth	Soothing	

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In this way, I form a sane and sound ideal for my future relationships.  
*"Whatever my ideal turns out to be, I must be willing to grow toward it."*

Accepting	Flexible/Tolerant	Intellectually Stimulating	Self-assured
Affectionate	Forgiving	Joyful Kind	Self-confident
Affirming	Fun	Loving	Self-sacrificing
Attentive	Funny	Nurturing	Sober
Caring	Generous	Open-minded	Stable
Comforting	Gentle	Optimistic	Tolerant
Concerned	Helpful	Patient	Trusting
Considerate	Honest	Protective	Trustworthy
Disciplined	Hopeful	Prudent	Understanding
Emotionally Available	Humble	Respectful	Validating
Faithful			Warm
			Etc.

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**STEP 5**

*Tapping into the Power of Telling and Listening*

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

**"I admit to myself and to another person what I learn about myself, sharing my life story—withholding nothing."**

•We are only as sick as our secrets. No more secrets!  
•What is my story? That's what is truly important. Is it changing with time and continued sobriety?

•Others share enough of their stories, encouraging me to tell mine.

- ▶ *Am I practicing openness and honesty with myself and others?*
- ▶ *Am I keeping any secrets?*
- ▶ *Am I open and honest with at least one other person?*
- ▶ *Have I found such a person to trust?*

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**STEP 6**

*Tapping into the Power of Willingness, Real Desire*

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

"I become willing to let go of anything and everything holding me back."

Thinking about doing it and making the decision is what this step is really about. Think, think, think . . . Using the brains *evolution* has given me.

- ▶ *Am I convinced that certain human weaknesses & defenses can hold me back?*
- ▶ *Am I watching out for shifting to other addictions to escape or distract me from my discomfort?*

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*Tapping into the Power of Letting Go*  
*Tapping into the Power of No*  
*Tapping into the Power of Courage*

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

**"I use whatever personal power and resources I find to help me confront self-limiting liabilities and defenses when they crop up"**

I learn to say NO to self, others, temptations, fear, self-limiting and self-destructive attitudes, emotions, ideas, opinions, understandings, yearnings, beliefs and behaviors.

- ▶ *Am I decisive in letting go and saying no to old knee-jerk reactions, that sense of being driven?*

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**A SEVENTH STEP DECISION or DISCIPLINE**

“Innermost self, I am now willing that you have all of me, good and bad. I ask that you now remove from me every character weakness and defense which stands in the way of my usefulness, happiness, joy and freedom. As I go out from here, may I find the strength I need to stay of this path.”

*I am not asking something or someone outside myself, imagined or real, to do anything for me. Rather, I am talking to myself, the Great Reality deep within, my true and innermost self.*

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**STEP 8**  
*Tapping into the Power of Willingness*

Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

“I list all persons I have harmed and become willing to make things right.”

- ▶ *Are there still persons to whom I owe something and am I willing to try making things right?  
Who are they?*
- ▶ *Am I willing to make restitution/amends (compensation for loss or injury) to those I have harmed?*

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**STEP 9**  
*Tapping into the Power of Restitution*

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

“I make things right with all I have harmed, wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.”

- ▶ *Can I make or plan to make restitution today without opening old wounds or causing additional harm?*

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### THE HOUSECLEANING PROMISES

"We will not *mourn the loss of* the past, nor wish to shut the door on it."

► The Big Book uses a misunderstood word, "regret," confused by contemporary usage. What the founders really meant was "mourn the loss of, poignantly miss." (from a 1939 dictionary)

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### STEP 10

#### *Tapping into Powers of Mindfulness, Reminder and Repetition*

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

"I continue to take personal inventory and when I am wrong promptly admit it."

- *Am I being mindfully attentive to my word and actions?*
- *Do I review my list of common human weaknesses and defenses most days?*
- *Have I become comfortable with promptly admitting when I am wrong?*

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### Step 10 & Step 11 Inventories

"When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves that we ought to discuss with another person at once? Were we kind and loving to all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? . . ." p. 86 at night

"After making our review . . . we ask what corrective measures should be taken."

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I'm learning to think, meditate, use the brains evolution gave me.

Thus, I continue to grow in awareness, understanding and effectiveness.  
 [Here we are reminded of Penny's talk]  
**Awareness!**  
**Attention!**  
**Mindfulness!**

**"Limitless expansion!" [from *The Keys of the Kingdom*]**

*The Power of Now – Eckhart Tolle*  
*The Power of Intention – Dr. Wayne W. Dyer*  
*Be Here Now – Ram Dass*

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**STEP 11**  
*Tapping into the Power of Intent/Intention*

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.

**"I seek through meditation and self-examination to increase awareness of my deepest thoughts and feelings, seeking only for the knowledge of what is right and the power to carry that out."**

- ▶ How is the "upon awakening" morning practice of planning the day working for me?
- ▶ Am I writing out the plan most days and trying to follow it? Are those days more efficient?
- ▶ Does it feel good to check things off as I go through the day?
- ▶ Does this practice help me feel better about the person I am, have become?

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All successful men and women have a plan! Knowing without doing is as useless as not knowing at all.

IS Experience the best teacher?

"On awakening, I think about the twenty-four hours ahead, consider my plans for the day. Before I begin, I ask that my thinking be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives." p.86 alt.

"In thinking about my day, I may face indecision. I may not be able to determine which course of action to take. Here I ask . . . for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. I relax and take it easy. I don't struggle." p.86 alt.

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"I usually conclude the period of meditation [asking] that I be shown throughout the day what my next step is to be, that I be given whatever I need to take care of such problems. I ask especially for freedom from self-will. . ." p.87 alt.

"As I go through the day I pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. I constantly remind myself that I (my old self) is no longer running the show [disconnected from my inner goodness], saying to myself many times each day 'Thy will be done.' I am then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. I become more efficient. I do not tire so easily, for I am not burning up energy foolishly as I did when I was trying to arrange life (only) to suit myself." p.88 alt.

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*Other reminders from THE BOOK...*

We end our morning meditation asking that we be shown "the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love." p.83

"We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let *this process* discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined." p.86

"But this is not all. There is action and more action. "Faith (or hope) without works is dead." p.86

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**STEP 12**  
*Tapping into the Power of Listening, Sharing and Purpose*

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.

"Awakening through the practice of these Steps to the spiritual and non-material in my life, I try to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all of my affairs."

- ▶ *Is this the message of recovery I try to share?*
- ▶ *Is it clear that each Step suggests a clear course of action for my daily living?*
- ▶ *This rewards me with "the joy of good living." 12 & 12, p. 125*

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"Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety." 12 & 12, p. 106

"The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.*" p.83

"It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels (what we have accomplished to this point). We are headed for trouble if we do, for *addiction* is a subtle foe. We are not cured. . . What we have is a daily reprieve contingent upon the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of our inner *wisdom* into all of our activities. . . These are thoughts that must go with us constantly."

"We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will." p.85

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### A 12-Step Checklist

Measuring our progress, a checkup.

How am I doing today?

What questions can I ask myself?

"All successful women and men have a plan."

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### The Great Reward: YOU GET TO BE HAPPY!

- ▶ *Bottles were only a symbol. . . we have ceased fighting anybody or anything. We have to!*
- ▶ I get to feel good about yourself! feel I experience connection!
- ▶ This is my mental test.

"Will it make me happy? For how long?"  
"Will I feel good about myself if I do or say this?"  
(Let your conscience be your guide!)

**SO BE IT!**

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### Another wise lesson from the Big Book

► "For me, A.A. is a synthesis of all the philosophy I've ever read, all of the positive, good philosophy, all of it is based on love. I have seen that there is only one law, the law of love, and there are only two sins; the first is to interfere with the growth of another human being, and second is to interfere with one's own growth." HE WHO LOSES HIS LIFE, AA, p. 542 in Edition 3

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### WORKING WITH OTHERS . . .

*"Tell . . . exactly what happened to you. Stress the spiritual feature freely.*

*"If persons be agnostic or atheist, make it emphatic that they do not have to agree with your conception of the power they can and will find. They can choose any conception they like, provided it makes sense to them.*

*"The main thing is that they be willing to trust and hope in finding an unsuspected inner resource and live by spiritual (not religious) principles." p.93, altered*

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*Take what you can use and leave the rest.*

*&*

*"Unto thine own self (your innermost self) be true!"*

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It is all based on love.

► "For me, A.A. is a synthesis of all the philosophy I've ever read, all of the positive, good philosophy, all of it is based on love. I have seen that there is only one law, the law of love, and there are only two sins; the first is to interfere with the growth of another human being, and second is to interfere with one's own growth." HE WHO LOVES HIS LIFE, AA, p. 542 in Edition 3

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and  
just imagine (🧠...)

"How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world."  
from *The Secret Annex* - Anne Frank

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*SOME WISE WORDS FROM JOHN LENNON*

"When I was 5 years old, my mother always told me that happiness was the key to life.  
"When I went to school, they asked me what I wanted to be when I grew up. I wrote down 'happy.'  
"They told me I didn't understand the assignment, and  
"I told them they didn't understand life."

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➤ “Co-founder Dr. Bob wrote, ‘I spend a great deal of time passing on what I learned to others who want and need it badly. I do it for four reasons:

1. Sense of duty.
2. It is a pleasure.
3. Because in so doing I am paying my debt to the man who took time to pass it on to me.

AND

4. Because every time I do it I take out a little more insurance for myself against a possible slip.’

➤ **SO, take what you can use and leave the rest.**

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Charlie Chaplin school of life “You’ll never find a rainbow if you’re looking down.”

**We are not broken; we are wounded and need to be healed.**

**Human beings are members of a whole,**

**In creation of one essence and soul.**

**If one member is afflicted with pain,**

**Other members uneasy will remain.**

**If you've no sympathy for human pain,**

**The name of human you cannot retain!**

[Inscribed on United Nations Building Entrance.]

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**Points to ponder:**

**Point 1:** The basic text is a chronicle of early members’ experience, strength and hope.

**Point 2:** Bill Wilson wrote that in 1939 AA consisted of more than one hundred men and women *who had recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.* (50-60)

**Point 3:** Dated religious language and literal interpretations distract from the processes and actions Bill outlined before adding his 12 Step summary. *Words are only symbols.*

**Point 4:** A pragmatic, nonreligious summary of the process provides a “common solution.”

**Point 5:** We have been led to believe we are weak and powerless, but following *the step process* enables us to take back unsuspected personal power.

**Point 6:** No one person speaks for AA as a whole. I speak for myself, how it works for me:

- 1) Changed “we” to “I”
- 2) Remove all reference to deities or G-O-D!
- 3) I need to focus on the personal powers each Step helps me find.

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