

Steps by the Big Book

12 Step Flowcharts

Let's talk about the 12 Steps!

This pamphlet supplements the larger Steps by the Big Book workbook (available free of charge from <stepsbybigbook.net>), and it offers a practical way to get discussions going on the Steps.

Here are schematic **flowchart outlines** which make use of key points from the Big Book, *Alcoholics Anonymous*, to spark conversations about how the Steps play out in each of our lives. Why not make your own?

On the facing pages are sketched illustrations borrowed from the AA pamphlet, *The Twelve Steps Illustrated*, # P-55, Alcoholics Anonymous, <www.aa.org>.

The 12 STEPS of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS

[Optional: the point ; Spiritual Principles]

STEP 1 We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.
[Honesty I have a problem!]

STEP 2 Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
[Hope There's help for my problem.]

STEP 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him. [Trust I make a commitment to follow ALL of the suggestions.]

STEP 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
[Courage Who am I?]

STEP 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
[Integrity I share who I am with someone else.]

STEP 6 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
[Willingness As a result of Step 4, I see things about myself I would like to change.]

STEP 7 Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
[Humility I start trying to change!]

STEP 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
[Compassion As a result of Step 4, I make a list of people that I mistreated, or for whom I had ill feelings.]

STEP 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. [Justice If possible, I mend things with these people so that I can get rid of my bad feelings.]

STEP 10 Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. [Perseverance I look at ME daily. How am I doing: physically, mentally, emotionally, and spiritually?]

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. [Spiritual awareness I continue to grow as a human being daily.]

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.
[Service I try to help other alcoholics/addicts, and to practice what I have learned in all areas of my life.]

Step 1

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.
[Honesty I have a problem!]

POWERLESS

Body (Step 1)

“Physical craving” (xxviii)
~one drink = a drunk ~When I
drink I break out in a binge

The disease:
Taking that first drink =>
Physical Compulsion

UNMANAGEABLE

Mind (Steps 2 - 12)

”Restless irritable and
discontent” (xxviii)

“If I had an alcoholic mind
I would drink again” (41: 2)

“The riddle” (22: 3)
Mental Obsession =>
To take that first drink

ADMIT

~Incorporate into body, mind, soul
“A desperate desire to stop” (7: 2)

Take step 1: Surrender

How can 'I' do it?

WE

“Fellowship – a common solution –a way out” (17: 2, 3)
One alcoholic talking with another

Step 2

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

[Hope There's help for my problem.]

Came to believe

Came... Came to... Came to believe...

On the basis of my own experience

The power of the program

A power greater than ourselves

It is beyond me

“An unsuspected inner resource” (567: 4)

“Choose your own conception” (12: 2)

Restore to sanity

Sanity = healthy = whole (We are not all there)

I was insane to think I could do it alone.

“Can get well” (98: 2)

I can get well or more well

I can become whole

STEP 3

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him. [Trust I make a commitment to follow ALL the suggestions.]

DECISION

- ~To make up one's mind to act
- ~To settle a dispute in one stroke
- ~Today

TURN OVER

- ~To reverse; do about face
- ~To have recourse to help
- ~Surrender

WILL

- ~The control the **MIND** has over desires and actions
- ~"Quit playing God" (62: 3)

LIFE

- ~The resilience of the **BODY** to persevere and endure
- ~"Our troubles are of our own making" (62: 2)

CARE OF

- ~Offer concern and place of **refuge**
- ~"Relieve me of the bondage of self" (63:2)

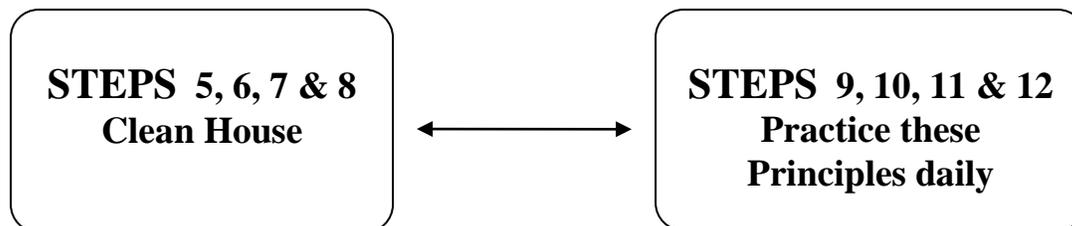
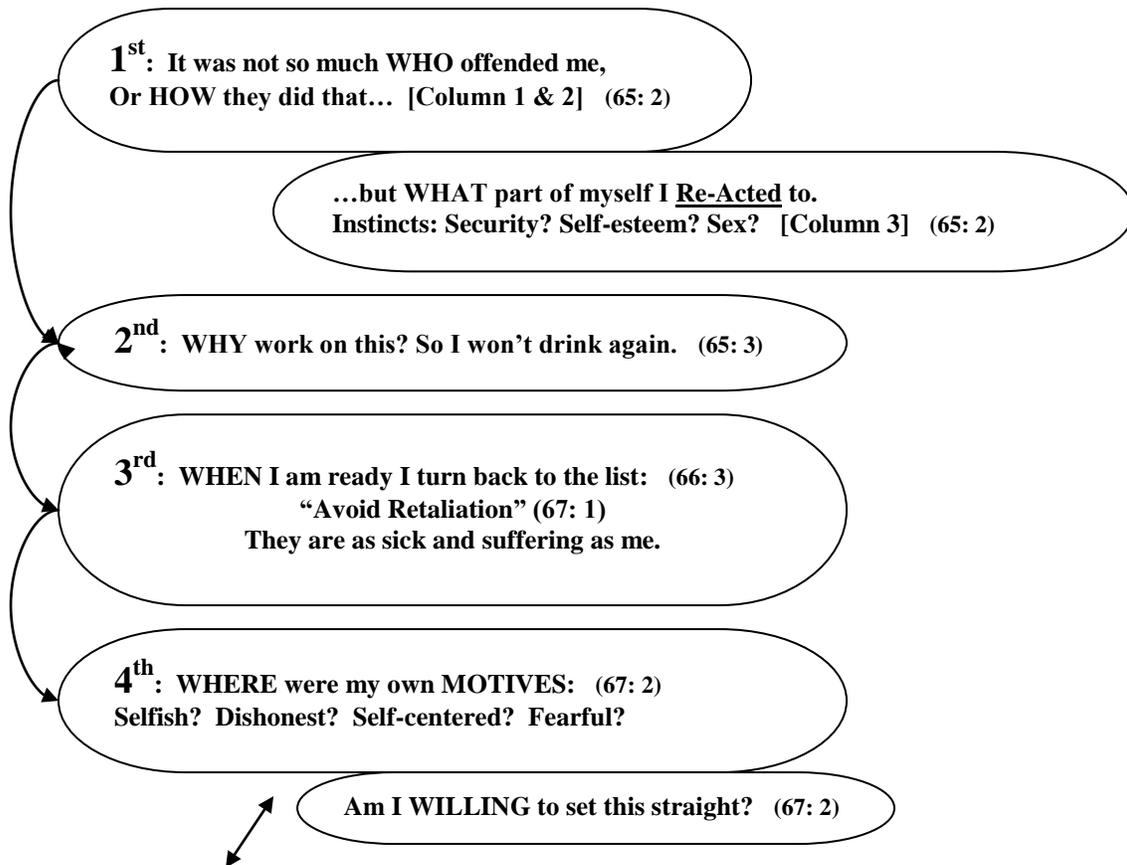
OF OUR UNDERSTANDING

- ~What we can stand before, be close to, or grasp
- ~"An unsuspected inner resource" (567: 4)

- ~"Safe harbor" (12&12 35: 2)
- ~"peace of mind and lose fear" (63: 1)



STEP 4
Inventory: Assets & Defenses
“Who Am I?”
 Work GRUDGE LIST 1-2-3-4 Ways
 Big Book pp. 63-67 Resentments, etc.



STEP 5

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. [Integrity I share who I am with someone else]

Admit

“Every dark cranny of the past” (75: 2)
“Withholding nothing” (75: 2)

The Exact nature:
the true reasons we drank

“Twist of character” (75: 2)
“Self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives” (86: 2)

To God (of our understanding)

“Good is in us all, even the worst of us” (12&12, 98: 3) **Sense**
of connection

To **Ourselves**

D-E-N-I-A-L Don't Even kNow I Am Lying
Discover what is right for us

To **Another human being**

“A close-mouthed, understanding friend” (74: 1)
We are worth listening to

“The end of isolation from our fellows and from ourselves”(12&12, 82:1)

STEP 6

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

[Willingness As a result of Step 4, I see things about myself I would like to change.]

STEP 7

7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

[Humility I start trying to change!]

“**Let go**” (76: 1)

READY - Convinced: overcome by life evidence

~We were sick and tired, worn out, exhausted; our way did not work

“Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid?” (86: 1)

Step 6 action: ~ Allow me to NOT do what I 'want' to do. ie: don't drink. etc.

"My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen." (76: 2)

ASK - Conversion: to turn around, return, transform, change

~a spiritual enlightenment leading to a new life

~“Were we kind and loving toward all?” (86: 1)

~“Practice spiritual principles” (97: 3)

~“It meant destruction of self-centeredness” (14: 1)

Step 7 action: ~ Allow me to DO what I do 'not want' to do, ie: go to meetings, etc.

“**Let God**” (76: 1)
[of our understanding]”

STEP 8

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. [Compassion List people I mistreated, or had ill feelings for.]

“We are trying to put our lives in order” (77: 0)

“Never get over drinking until straighten out the past” (72: 2)

“If haven’t the will to do this, ask until it comes” (76: 3)

Step 8: willing to try

“**IF** we are painstaking...” (83: 4) “Made a list” (59: 2)

“Like a tornado roaring his way
through the lives of others” (82: 3)

“We have a list of persons we have harmed...” (76: 3)

- ✓ “Business acquaintances,
- ✓ “friends (76: 4);
- ✓ “the man we hated (72: 1);
- ✓ “owe money (78: 2);
- ✓ “criminal offense (78: 3);
- ✓ “domestic troubles (80: 5);
- ✓ “some people cannot be seen” (83: 3)
- ✓ “harm we have done ourselves” [12&12, (79: 3)]

“**We have to do something**” (81: 1)

“We are willing to make amends” (76: 3)

~Consult with sponsor what an amend might look like

STEP 9

9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. [Justice Mend things to get rid of my bad feelings.]

Step 9: making the try

“A sincere desire to set right the wrong” (77: 0)
~Consult with sponsor

“Now we go out and repair the damage done in the past” (76: 3)

- ✓ “Mumbling we are sorry won’t fill the bill” (83:1)
- ✓ ~An amend = apology + change
- ✓ “Our behavior will convince them more than our words” (83: 2)

“Obtained permission, consulted with others, asked God for help”
(80: 1)

- ✓ “Calm, frank, and open” (78: 0)
- ✓ “Sweep off our side of the street” (77: 2)
- ✓ “Confessing ill feeling and expressing regret” (77: 1)

“The way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love” (83: 1)

“...IF we work for them” (84: 1)

“The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it” (83: 2)

“We ask we be given strength to do the right thing” (79: 1)

“We will comprehend the word **serenity** and we will know **peace**” (83: 4)

STEP 10

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

[Perseverance I look at ME daily]

“We continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along” (84: 2)

“Discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly” (84: 2)

“We have ceased fighting anything or anyone – even alcohol” (84: 3)

“Love and tolerance of others is our code” (84: 2)

“A daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition” (85: 1)

“Continue to **WATCH** for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. We **ASK** God [of our understanding] at once to remove them. We make amends quickly. We **TURN** our thoughts to someone we can help” (84: 2)

~Step 10 turns the slogan 'One Day at a Time' into a philosophy of life

STEP 11

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. [Spiritual awareness I continue to grow daily.]

“**On awakening** let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead.

Ask God [of our understanding] to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives” (86:2)

To seek

“Prayer
and
meditation”
(85: 3)

“In thinking about **our day**; we relax and take it easy (86: 3);
...pause & ...ask (87: 3); we let God (88: 2); ‘Thy will be done’ ” (88: 0)

“When we **retire at night** - Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? What could we have done better?” (86:1)

“It works - it really does” (88: 1)

Step 12

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.

[Service I try to help other alcoholics/addicts, and to practice what I have learned in all areas of my life]

"Be sober, considerate, and helpful, regardless of what anyone says or does" (99: 1)

"Spiritual Awakening as **THE** Result of These Steps" (60: 0) **Awakening** to a connected life

"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" (89: 2)

"Blessed fact of sobriety" (100: 2) *Connection & acceptance / Becoming whole; finding a calm center; turning inward*

"Program of action" (94: 1)

"The self-searching, leveling of our pride, confession of shortcomings which the process requires" (25: 1)

"Carry **THIS** Message" (60: 0) **Talk the talk** / Keep it by giving it away / You are not alone

"Nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics" (89: 1) "**How you got well**" (93: 0)

"Desperate enough" (96: 1) "The mental twist which leads to the first drink of a spree" (92: 0)

"One of a fellowship" (90: 3) "He may be helping you more than you are helping him" (94: 1)

"Practice **THESE** Principles"(60:0) **Walk the walk**

"An approach that worked" (95: 4)

"Kit of spiritual tools" (25: 1; 95: 1) "Live by spiritual principles" (93: 0)

"Put those principles into action" (98: 3) "Day by day" (99: 2) / *Staying in today*

"You can be uniquely useful to other alcoholics" (89: 3)

The Twelve Steps Illustrated

This is A.A. General Service Conference-approved literature



ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS[®] is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

- The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking. There are no dues or fees for A.A. membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.
- A.A. is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organization or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.
- Our primary purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

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To find out more about A.A. write to
General Service Office
Box 459, Grand Central Station,
New York, NY 10163
—or look up A.A. in your phone book.

www.aa.org

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



The bottle has me down.
My life is a mess.

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



There is help.

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



I let a Higher Power take over.

4 *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*



I need to look at my life.

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



I admit all I did wrong.

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



I want to be free.

7 *Humbly asked Him to
remove our shortcomings.*



I ask a Higher Power
to help me be free.

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



I ask: Who did I hurt?
How can I fix it?

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



I try to fix things if I can.

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



I check up on myself. I am honest.

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.*



I ask a Higher Power for help
to live the right way.

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.*



I live by these Steps and get better.
I try to help other alcoholics.

To find out more about A.A. write to
General Service Office
Box 459, Grand Central Station,
New York, NY 10163
—or look up A.A. or Alcoholics Anonymous
in your phone book

I am responsible. . .

When anyone, anywhere,
reaches out for help, I want
the hand of A.A. always to be there.
And for that: I am responsible.

This is A.A. General Service
Conference-approved literature