



Step Work Guide

IMPORTANT: Always complete your Step Work according to your sponsor's guidance and methods. This serves only to provide the reader with a general understanding of the Step Work process.

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

THE FIRST ONE GETS US DRUNK.

12&12: Why all this insistence that every A.A. must hit bottom first? The answer is that few people will sincerely try to practice the A.A. program unless they have hit bottom. For practicing A.A.'s remaining eleven Steps means the adoption of attitudes and actions that almost no alcoholic who is still drinking can dream of taking. Who wishes to be rigorously honest and tolerant? Who wants to confess his faults to another and make restitution for harm done? Who cares anything about a Higher Power, let alone meditation & prayer? Who wants to sacrifice time and energy in trying to carry A.A.'s message to the next sufferer? No, the average alcoholic, self-centered in the extreme, doesn't care for this prospect—unless he has to do these things in order to stay alive himself.

THE TRUTH OF THE FIRST STEP: SURRENDER AND SANITY

The foundation of all recovery is the absolute acknowledgment that our addiction has defeated us and that our self-led life is destructive. The necessity for hitting bottom is not arbitrary; it is the condition required to instill the "rigorous honesty and tolerance" necessary for the remaining eleven Steps.

- **The Problem of the Obsession and Craving (Pg. xxviii):** The core problem is the phenomenon of craving—the physical allergy that differentiates the alcoholic/addict. Once the first drink or drug is taken, a physical craving is triggered that cannot be controlled by willpower. Since this condition has never been permanently eradicated by any known treatment, **the only relief we have to suggest is abstinence.**

I. POWERLESSNESS (The Physical & Mental Truth)

The first half of the Step focuses on the fundamental lack of power over the substance.

- **Definition of Powerless:** Being without the power to do something or prevent something from happening.
- **The Obsession:** The mental aspect is the "obsession that somehow, someday, they will beat the game." (Big Book, Page 23)
- **Examples of Powerlessness:**
 1. Once I take the first drug/drink, I cannot stop, and the craving takes over.

2. My inability to control the destructive outcomes of my actions (e.g., my family's reaction when I make amends).
3. Losing control over external consequences (e.g., the court's decision on my upcoming case).

II. UNMANAGEABILITY (The Spiritual & Emotional Chaos)

The second half of the Step focuses on the disastrous results of our self-will.

- **Definition of Unmanageable:** Not manageable; difficult or impossible to control or manage.
- **The Reality of Self-Centeredness:** The average alcoholic, "self-centered in the extreme," does not desire the spiritual life—unless they have to do these things in order to stay alive themselves. Our self-will creates a life that is difficult and chaotic.
- **Examples of Unmanageability:**
 1. Serious health issues directly resulting from my addiction.
 2. Complete chaos with my family, relationships, and work life.
 3. An almost unmanageable amount of data, debt, or legal problems created by my choices.

Step One Instructions (Action Plan):

- Call your sponsor every day.
- Commit to abstinence from drinking and drugging for life, focusing on the principle: "one day at a time" or "Just getting to midnight."

Written Assignments (To Be Shared with Your Sponsor):

1. **Read The Doctor's Opinion:** Write two full pages on how this particular chapter relates to your personal drinking and drug use.
2. **Read Bill's Story:** Write two full pages on how this particular chapter directly relates to your personal drinking and drug use.
3. **List all examples of powerlessness on paper:** Provide a minimum of 10 examples from your life that demonstrate your inability to stop once you started.
4. **List all examples of unmanageability on paper:** Provide a minimum of 10 examples from your life that clearly illustrate the chaos and destruction of your life due to your self-centered, self-willed actions.

Step Two:

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

THE TRANSITION TO HOPE: RESTORATION TO SANITY

Step Two serves as the bridge from the absolute defeat of Step One (powerlessness and unmanageability) to the spiritual solution of the remaining Steps. It asks us to open our minds to the possibility of a power outside of ourselves that can succeed where our self-will has failed.

- **The Principle of Willingness:** The core requirement is not full belief, but willingness to believe. As the Big Book states: “Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power Greater than myself? As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way.” (Page 47)
- **The Cornerstone:** Upon this simple cornerstone of willingness, a "wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built" to manage the obsession and self-centeredness that have defined our addiction.
- **Restoration to Sanity:** The ultimate goal is the return to a rational, sane way of thinking and living, free from the self-destructive patterns of addiction.

The Nature of Sanity and Insanity

- **Insanity Defined:** In the context of addiction, insanity is often defined as repeating the same self-destructive behaviors while expecting a different, positive result. This step is about ending that cycle.
- **Restoration to Sanity:** The ultimate goal is the return to a rational, sane way of thinking and living, free from the self-destructive patterns of addiction. This restoration comes from a Power outside of our own failed will.

Embrace Fellowship (The Practical Path to Belief)

The collective strength of the group—the fellowship—often becomes the first tangible evidence of a Power greater than ourselves.

Incorporating these elements is crucial for a profound psychic transformation:

- **Meetings:** Many Meetings, Many Chances
- **Sponsor:** Receive personal guidance and experience through the steps.
- **Home Group:** Get involved and go often
- **Service:** Always be there to help

- Support Network: Build healthy, sober relationships.
- Working with Others: Go above and beyond for anyone that wants help

Step Two Instructions (Action Plan):

1. Continue to call your sponsor every day.
2. Commit to attending one meeting a day to fully see the Power of the Group in action.
3. Cultivate and verbalize the willingness to work the entire recovery program.
4. Begin actively memorizing the Third Step Prayer as preparation for the next Step.

Third Step Prayer to Memorize

"God, I offer myself to Thee—

To build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.

Relieve me of the bondage of self,

That I may better do Thy will.

Take away my difficulties,

That victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power,

Thy Love, and Thy Way of Life. May I do Thy always will!"

Step Three:
“Made A Decision to turn your will and lives over to the care of God as we understood him”

Step 3 in the context of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) refers to the decision to turn one's will and life over to the care of a higher power, as understood by the individual. This step is part of the 12-step program utilized by AA and is a significant point in the recovery process.

The word "God" appears 142 times in the first 164 pages of the main text of the Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. Across both the Big Book and the 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, the word "God" is mentioned a total of 315 times. The document also notes that some sources provide a count of 281 times for the word "God".

Step 3: Make a Decision

- God's will can be spoken by and through the “Group Of Drunks”
- Stating the third prayer with a sponsor. Giving your life over to the care of god as we understood him.

Two Wills:

God's Will = Happy, Joyous, and Free

Self-Will = Leads to Jails, Institutions, and Death

Understanding God's Will:

1. Avoid the first drink.
2. Take the next right step.
3. Help others.
4. Complete the remaining steps.

“If we follow the same path that the earliest members of AA followed, we will most likely get the same results that they got – sobriety.”

Pg.46: We found that God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him.

Pg.45: Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power?

Pg.45: Well, that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem.

Pg.45: And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God.

Pg.46: We found that as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, we commenced to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, which is God.

Third Step Prayer (Contract with God):

"God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always."

The "contract" is a heartfelt, ongoing commitment to **surrender self-will** and embrace a spiritual approach to life, characterized by humility, trust, and service to others. It is the decision to shift from "my will" to "Thy will."



Sign your life over to the care of god as you understood him:

Name: _____

Date: _____

Step Four:
“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves”

Moral Inventory Step Four is all about taking a "searching and fearless moral inventory." Think of it as a deep, honest look at yourself.

- **What is the Goal? Key take away: Victims don't recover**
The main purpose is to uncover the root causes of your past problems and addiction. You look honestly at your actions, behaviors, and how they have affected you and others.
- **Why is it Important?** By facing your mistakes and destructive patterns, you prepare for major personal change, which is the key to the later steps, especially making amends.
- **The Biggest Danger: Resentment** The AA Big Book calls **resentment the "number one offender."** Holding onto anger and grudges is a major block to emotional healing and sobriety. Step Four requires you to confront these feelings directly so you can protect your recovery.
- **Get it on Paper:** This is a direct encouragement to start the inventory and write everything down, not just think about it.
- **Your Side of the Street:** This slogan is specifically relevant to the resentment portion of the inventory, reminding the individual to focus only on their own behavior and fault, not the actions of others.
- **No Pain, No Gain:** Acknowledges that the Fourth Step is difficult and emotionally challenging, but necessary for spiritual growth.
- **The Truth Will Set You Free:** Emphasizes that honest self-examination is the beginning of emotional liberation.

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.I. Resentments (The Column Inventory)

1. **List:** Write down every person, place, or thing you know. Then highlight anyone of those you may have an ill feeling towards.
2. **Cause:** Clearly state *what* they did that made you angry.
3. **Affects My... (Seven Parts of Self):** Identify how this resentment impacted your:
 - Self-Esteem
 - Pride
 - Pocketbook
 - Personal Relations
 - Ambition
 - Emotional Security
 - Sex Relations
4. **My Part:** Humbly identify your specific part and responsibility in the conflict.

I'm resentful at:	The Cause:	Affects my...	Where was I to blame?
People, Places, Things, Institutions, Ideas or Principles with whom you are angry, resent, feel hurt or threatened by.	What happened? Be specific as to why you were angry.	How did it make me feel? Specifically, how did it affect the seven parts of self?	What's the truth here? Where was my responsibility in this relationship? What might I have done instead? Where was I at fault?

II. Fears Example Fears for Your Inventory

- abandonment
- aging
- anger
- authority figures
- being alone

The goal is to recognize and surrender to your Higher Power for relief:

1. **List:** Write down every fear you are currently carrying.
2. **Analyze:** Write about the underlying cause of each fear and acknowledge how your self-reliance has failed to resolve it.

III. Sexual Conduct / Harm Done to Others

The goal is to catalog past behavior to prepare for amends:

1. **List:** Detail specific instances of past conduct (including sexual behavior) that caused harm to others.
2. **Analyze:** Note what happened in each situation and how that conduct made you feel (guilt, shame, regret, etc.).

Great fourth step links:

<https://www.aacle.org/docs/Fourth-Step-Guide.pdf>

https://12step.org/docs/Step4_WS.pdf

Step 5:
“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”

he Fifth Step: Your Spiritual Housecleaning

The Fifth Step—**“Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs”**—is the core action for finding freedom and lasting sobriety.

- **It is essential:** It moves you from thinking about your past (Step Four) to a deep, therapeutic release by presenting this to GOD and your sponsor
- **It's Soul Cleansing:** It is the moment you stop living a secret life and step out of the shadows of guilt and fear.
- **VICTIM DONT RECOVER-** This STEP helps us realize we played a role in everything we have done.

II. The Core Act of Humility and Honesty

The Step Five admission is a complete spiritual and psychological release through a three-part surrender:

- **Admitted to Ourselves:** You solidify the knowledge of who you are, making self-deception and denial impossible to maintain.
- **Admitted to God (or a Higher Power):** This is the spiritual surrender, recognizing that your own will has failed. It is a humble prayer, asking your Higher Power to guide your progression.
- **Admitted to Another Human Being (Sponsor):** This is the foundation of accountability and emotional release. Sharing the "exact nature of our wrongs" with a trusted sponsor breaks the isolation of addiction and teaches you the honesty, fearlessness, and humility required for sobriety.

III. The Results: Emotional Release and Foundation for Change

The emotional and spiritual shift that comes from completing this step is immense:

- **Emotional Release:** You feel immediate feelings of peace, relief, and a sense of being grounded.
- **Losing Burdens:** By confronting and sharing feelings of guilt, shame, or regret, you begin to let go of those self-imposed burdens.

- **Foundation for Growth:** It immediately sets the groundwork for the next stage of recovery (Steps Six and Seven), where the character defects are directly addressed.
- **Living in Truth:** You are ready to leave the double life behind. Your fears begin to fall away, allowing you to achieve a state of perfect peace and ease, "having fully and truthfully swept off our side of the street."

Big book on Step 5: Do a 5th or Drink a 5th

"We will be more reconciled to discussing ourselves with another person when we see good reasons why we should do so. The best reason first: If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they got drunk. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. They took inventory all right, but 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 humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else all their life story."

The Big Book suggests reflecting in a quiet place for an hour of meditation immediately following the Fifth Step. This practice is essential for processing the experience and preparing for the next phases of recovery.

- **Purpose:** To process the emotional experience of the Fifth Step, find relief, integrate the honesty you shared, and connect with your Higher Power for guidance. It is specifically preparation for Step Six (character defects) and Step Eight (making amends).
- **Practices:**
 - **Quiet Reflection:** Sit quietly and simply notice the sense of relief.
 - **Mindfulness:** Focus on the present moment without judging thoughts or feelings.
 - **Focusing on the accomplishments** you just experienced completing this vital step and becoming a better person in the future.

Step Six: The Willingness to Let Go

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

Step Six of the Alcoholics Anonymous program is entirely about **letting go** of the old attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that no longer work in your life. It is the moment where you take the faith you found in Step Three and put it into action.

This step is often called **"the Step that separates the men from the boys."** It requires a deep level of willingness and honesty that shows a sincere effort to grow.

The core of this step is being **"entirely ready"** to change. It's like standing at a doorway: you have seen your flaws in Steps Four and Five, and now you have to be truly willing to walk through the door and let them go. The key principle is the willingness to change.

The wise saying for this step is: **“The important thing is this: to be able at any moment to sacrifice what we are for what we could become.”**The Paradox of Alcoholism vs. Other Defects

The experience with alcohol provides a clear foundation for this step:

- **The Miracle of Release:** The obsession to drink was completely lifted when you became willing and asked a Higher Power.
- **The Difference with Other Flaws:** With your other flaws, called **"defects of character,"** the process is different. God usually does not take them away all at once. You need to **cooperate** with your Higher Power and work on them.
- **The Goal is Patient Improvement:** Perfection is not the goal. We should aim to be the very best we can be, but for most of our defects, we have to be happy with **“patient improvement.”** It is a lifetime job.

The main defects & seven deadly sin....Let's focus on making these right

- **Resentment**
- **Self-centeredness**
- **Intolerance**
- **Dishonesty**
- **Lack of humility**

The Seven Deadly Sins

The seven deadly sins are a classification of vices that have been used since early

Christian times to educate and instruct followers concerning humanity's tendency to sin.

1. **Pride** (or *Superbia*)
2. **Greed** (or *Avaritia*)
3. **Lust** (or *Luxuria*)
4. **Envy** (or *Invidia*)
5. **Gluttony** (or *Gula*)
6. **Wrath** (or *Ira*)
7. **Sloth** (or *Acedia*)

The Problem: Not Letting Go

The biggest challenge in Step Six is facing the flaws that you might secretly enjoy or feel you cannot yet give up. The defects are the flaws that keep you spiritually sick, such as resentment, self-centeredness, intolerance, dishonesty, and a lack of humility.

The text warns us that we often find a "**sticking point**"—a flaw we are unwilling to release:

- **Never say "Never!":** The moment you say, "I will never give this up," your mind closes, and God cannot help you.
- **Delay is dangerous:** You might not be able to let go of a defect right now, but you must be **willing to be willing** to let it go someday.

Step Six is the point where you stop running the show and let your Higher Power take over your character defects. It is your promise to try your best to become a better person.

After completing Steps Four and Five, you have clearly identified your character defects and flaws. Now, Step Six moves you into action:

- **Partner with Your Higher Power:** Stop trying to change yourself through sheer willpower. Make a firm decision to allow your Higher Power to remove the deeply rooted flaws that have been causing self-destruction.

Questions for Reflection on Step Six

You can begin the action of this step by answering the following:

- What are my character defects?
- How have these defects affected me or others?
- Can I admit to these defects?
- How have they fueled my addiction?

- How can I be more humble about them?

Example: Addressing the Defect of "Anger"

1. **Identify:** Admit that you frequently get angry, especially when things feel difficult or unfair.
2. **Analyze:** Notice how your anger shows up in your words, actions, and thoughts.
3. **Impact:** Think about the bad effects your anger has on your relationships, your job, and your overall peace.

After making your list of defects and reflecting on them, you are ready to move on to Step Seven.

Step Seven:

Step 7: "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings"

"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 thing which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me the strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen."

Step 7 of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is the crucial action step that immediately follows Step 6, marking the shift from mental preparation to spiritual action.

Step 6: Willingness (The Mind)- The focus is on becoming entirely ready to have a Higher Power remove your shortcomings. It is the mental and emotional preparation—accepting the need to let go of your flaws and standing at the "door of change."

Step 7: Humility and Surrender (The Action) The focus is on turning that willingness into reality. It requires humility—recognizing that pure willpower is insufficient—to actively ask your Higher Power to remove the shortcomings.

The Key Difference: Step 6 vs. Step 7

<u>Step</u>	<u>Focus</u>	<u>What It Means</u>

Step 6	WILLINGNESS (The Mind)	You become completely ready to let go of your defects. You are standing at the door.
Step 7	HUMILITY (The Action)	You actually ask your Higher Power to take the defects away. You open the door.

- In essence, the transition is from a state of Readiness (Step 6) to a state of Asking and Receiving (Step 7). It is moving from saying, "I'm ready for these defects to go," to the humble prayer, "I can't remove these on my own; please help me."

Working a Character Defect: The Example of Anger

1. The Definition of Anger

A strong feeling of irritation, displeasure, or hostility.

2. What It Was Like

"I used to feel a deep, burning resentment toward my mother for the choices she made when I was young. The anger was intense, and because I didn't have answers for her behavior, it only made it harder to forgive."

3. What It Is Like Now

"I still get angry when things trigger me. I find myself thinking about past events, which lights the fire again. **But the difference now is my awareness.** I consciously stop myself, pause, and ask my Higher Power for help instead of acting on the anger."

4. Future Action Plan: When Anger Rises

- **Admit It:** Immediately say, "I am angry right now."
- **Analyze It:** Notice how the anger is affecting you. Is it in your voice, your thoughts, or tension in your body?
- **Evaluate the Cost:** Think about what this anger will cost you today. Will it hurt your peace, your job, or your relationships?
- **Connect:** Immediately reach out to your sponsor and pray. Bring your Higher Power into the moment to take away the weight of the defects.

Step Eight

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

Step 8 in AA involves creating a list of everyone you've harmed, becoming ready to apologize, honestly acknowledging how your drinking affected them, and taking responsibility.

Remember your progress, and seek support from your sponsor and AA group if needed. Step 4 provides a helpful list of those you've harmed, which can be used to develop Step 8 as a plan to address past damage and change your life. Involve God in this step. Add anyone missing from your list to Step 8. Step 8 is about strategizing amends, while Step 9 is about taking action.

Here are the key features of Step 8, condensed:

1. Preparation, Not Action

Step 8 is about planning. You are organizing your thoughts and getting your heart ready. You do not actually contact anyone until Step 9.

2. The Written List

You create a comprehensive list of everyone you harmed. This is usually pulled directly from your Step 4 inventory, shifting the focus from how they hurt you to how you hurt them.

3. Total Responsibility

You ignore the other person's flaws and focus 100% on your side of the street. This includes financial, emotional, and social harm (like lying or gossip).

4. The Willingness Factor

The hardest part is becoming willing to make things right with people you still dislike. If you aren't ready, the Big Book suggests you pray for the "willingness to be willing."

5. Categorization

You prioritize the list into four groups:

* Now: Immediate priority.

* Later: Needs more time or stability.

* Partial: Complicated or sensitive cases.

* Never: Cases where contact would cause more pain to them.

The Bottom Line: Step 8 is the "internal housecleaning" that makes it possible to rejoin society with a clear conscience.

Step Eight			
Amends List			
Name of people I have harmed:	What I did that was harmful	Where was I at fault	Are you ready to make amends?

Create columns: person harmed, harm done, and possibly amends.

Divide your list: amends now, partial amends, amends later, amends that may never be made.

PRAY FOR THE WILLINGNESS TO CARRY OUT STEP 9.

Step Nine:

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

- The Text of the Step: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others." (p. 59)
- The Spiritual Necessity: "We tell him that we will never get over our drinking until we have done our utmost to straighten out our past." (p. 77)
- The Attitude: "We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that nothing worthwhile can be accomplished until we do so, never, never trying to tell him what he should do. His faults are not discussed. We stick to our own." (p. 77-78)

As we continue our recovery journey, Step Nine encourages us to reflect on our past and the harm we've caused.

Key Points to Remember:

- Examine Your Past: Identify those we've harmed and be ready to make amends.
- Address Debts: If you owe money, offer to pay what you can or express your intention to do so in the future.
- Seek Input: When making amends, ask the person about the harm you've done and if they remember any others. Be open to their feedback and ask for forgiveness for all your actions, not just the ones you recall.

Understanding Amends:

- Amends involve actions that reflect a commitment to change, aligning our values with our actions. Unlike apologies, which are just words, amends are about demonstrating a new life in recovery.
- In addition, our intentions often don't match our actions. Step Nine requires us to align both.

Before Making Amends:

1. Pray: Invite a higher power into the process.
2. Consult Your Sponsor: Discuss your intentions with your sponsor beforehand.
3. Prepare Mentally: Understand that the conversation may not go as you expect.

When Possible, Have a Face-to-Face Conversation:

- Discuss the wrongs you've done without leaving out details.
- The more thorough and honest you are, the better the chance for healing.

If Face-to-Face Isn't Feasible:

Consider sending a message. Here's a template you can use:

Dear [Recipient's Name],

I am writing this letter to you as part of a deep personal commitment to change my life. I have been rigorously examining my past behavior and the harm I have caused others, and I am now sober and dedicated to making amends wherever possible.

This letter is not an attempt to explain away my actions, nor is it meant to revisit your role in any past situation. It is only for me to take **100% responsibility** for my part and to acknowledge the damage I did to you.

I need to be completely honest about my behavior. Specifically, I want to address the following things I did that were hurtful, dishonest, or irresponsible:

- **Financial Harm:** I was irresponsible with money when I [State the specific action, e.g., "borrowed money and never repaid it," or "caused you to lose money due to my unreliability"]. I understand this caused [State the impact, e.g., "financial stress" or "a breakdown of trust"].
- **Emotional Harm / Dishonesty:** I repeatedly [State the specific action, e.g., "lied about where I was," or "broke my promises to you"].
- **Neglect / Self-Centeredness:** I was emotionally absent and self-centered during [State the time period or situation]

An apology is just words, but a true amendment is a promise to change. I am committed to making this right and demonstrating my recovery to you through action.

- **The Living Amends:**
- **Specific Action to Repair:**
- **Is there anything else I have done that hurt you that I need to acknowledge?**

I understand that you may not be ready to forgive me, or you may not want a response, and I respect whatever decision you make. My hope is simply that by writing this, I can begin to let go of the guilt and shame and that it can offer you some measure of peace.

Thank you for taking the time to read this.

Sincerely,
(Your Name)

Step Ten

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

The Action Plan

According to pages 84 and 85 of the Big Book, there is a specific four-part process to follow when we face emotional disturbances:

1. Watch: Be mindful of when resentment, selfishness, dishonesty, or fear crop up.
2. Ask: Immediately ask God (or a Higher Power) to remove these feelings.
3. Discuss: Talk to someone else about it right away to get an objective perspective.
4. Amend: If we have harmed anyone, we make amends quickly.

Daily Inventory:

This step highlights the importance of regularly checking your actions, thoughts, and feelings throughout the day. It's like taking stock of your emotional state to see if you're feeling balanced. It helps you spot any potential issues early on.

Promptly Admitting Wrongdoing:

It's not about being perfect. Instead, it's about admitting when you haven't met your goals, made errors, or acted in hurtful or selfish ways. This means recognizing and owning up to your mistakes without making excuses.

Honesty and Self-Awareness:

Step 10 is about building honesty and self-awareness, which are vital for staying sober and growing spiritually. By being honest with yourself and others, you can spot patterns that might lead to addictive behaviors or slow down your recovery.

Ongoing Process:

Step 10 isn't a one-time thing. It's a continuous practice that should be part of your daily routine. It helps you build character and creates a strong base for living a sober life.

Focus on Progress, Not Perfection:

The aim isn't to be perfect, but to steadily improve your self-awareness and personal growth. Admitting mistakes and taking steps to correct them shows progress in your recovery journey. Here are some good questions to ask.

Questions to always ask yourself.....

Resentment & Fear:

What triggered my resentment/fear? Unmet needs?

How did it show in my behavior?

How can I release it (prayer, etc.)?

Did I take responsibility for my part?

Was the fear real, or projected?

Harm (Self & Others):

Did I gossip or speak negatively? Why?

Broken promises?

Any dishonesty, even small?

Improvements:

Express gratitude?

Could I have been more patient/compassionate?

Could I have used recovery tools better?

What did I learn? How to apply it?

How can I better communicate?

How to make amends tomorrow?

The Promises of Step Ten

The Big Book suggests that by practicing Step Ten, we enter a state of "neutrality" regarding our addictions. Key highlights include:

- Sanity Returns: We cease fighting anything or anyone.
- A New Reaction: Instead of struggling with temptation, we react with "recoil as from a hot flame."
- Daily Reprieve: Our sobriety is not a permanent "cure" but a daily reprieve contingent on our spiritual condition.

Step 11

"Sought through prayer and meditation, improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

Step 11: Improving Conscious Contact with a Higher Power

Step 11 of the 12-Step Program of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is centered on the ongoing practice of spiritual maintenance. The core idea is to deepen and improve one's personal, conscious relationship with a "God as we understand Him" through prayer and meditation.

This step shifts the focus of prayer away from personal requests for material gain or convenience and toward seeking spiritual guidance. The goal is to align one's own will with the Higher Power's will, ensuring actions are motivated by service and love rather than self-seeking, dishonest, or fearful motives.

Key Daily Practices of Step 11

The spiritual work of Step 11. It works if you work it. All about routine.

1. Morning Routine (On Awakening)

The day begins with a focus on preparation and prevention. The goal is to lay a spiritual foundation for the next 24 hours.

- **Planning & Preparation:** Think about the day ahead, including a to-do list, and consider plans for positive actions such as attending meetings or performing AA service.
- **Directing Thoughts:** Pray to the Higher Power for direction, asking specifically to keep thoughts free from destructive motives like self-pity, dishonesty, or self-seeking.
- **Seeking Inspiration:** Ask for "inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision" as a guide, particularly when facing feelings of agitation, doubt, or indecision.

2. Throughout the Day

The practice continues outside of formal prayer and meditation times, integrating conscious contact into daily life and interactions.

- **Pausing for Direction:** When feeling "agitated or doubtful," the instruction is to pause immediately and ask for the right thought or action to guide the next move.
- **Humble Acceptance:** The core of this practice is a continuous surrender of personal control, frequently reminding oneself, "we are no longer running the show," and acknowledging this by saying, "Thy will be done."
- **Relaxation:** When seeking direction, one is guided to "relax and take it easy" and

"don't struggle," trusting that the necessary guidance will be provided.

3. Meditation

If prayer is the act of speaking to a Higher Power, meditation is the complementary act of listening. It is a time for stillness and contemplation, where one seeks a deeper connection and wisdom.

- Contemplative Focus: Time is spent reflecting on how one can be of maximum service to others during the day.
- Practice: This can involve reading inspirational literature (*24 Hours a Day*, *Daily Reflections* are common examples) or simply sitting quietly for 5 to 10 minutes.
- Listening: The practice involves allowing thoughts to flow in and out without holding onto them, often using the observation of breathing or concentrating on a point (like a candle flame) to let go of conscious thought and listen for wisdom.

4. Evening Routine (At Night)

The day concludes with a thorough, constructive inventory and a prayer for forgiveness and future guidance.

- Constructive Review (Inventory): A detailed review of the day is conducted by answering specific questions to identify shortcomings and positives:
 - Where were you Resentful, Selfish, Dishonest, or Afraid?
 - Do you owe an apology?
 - Did you keep a secret that should be discussed?
 - What Kind Actions and Loving Thoughts did you have toward all?
 - Where is Improvement Possible?
 - Was your focus Self-Focused, Others-Focused, or Impact-Focused?
- Prayer for Forgiveness and Guidance: The inventory is followed by a prayer for forgiveness for any failings and an earnest request to the Higher Power to "Guide me and direct me" in the future.

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 insure 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.”

The Core Purpose (The 'Why')

- **Spiritual Awakening:** The culmination of working the previous 11 Steps is a profound inner change that enables a new, sober way of life.
- **Immunity from Drinking:** "Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics."
 - Carrying the message is not merely charity; it is the most vital step in securing and maintaining one's own sobriety.

Two Pillars of Step 12 (The 'What')

1. **To Carry the Message:** Sharing the solution with the next suffering alcoholic or addict.
2. **To Practice the Principles:** Applying the spiritual principles (honesty, humility, integrity, willingness, etc.) learned in Steps 1 through 11 to **all** areas of life, not just addiction.

Key Components of Carrying the Message

- **Sharing Experience, Strength, and Hope (ESH):** This involves telling your story—the "what it was like, what happened, and what it's like now"—to help others understand the potential for recovery.
- **Sponsoring:** Providing mentorship and one-on-one guidance to a newcomer as they navigate the 12 Steps.
- **Helping newcomers:** Offering practical support, a friendly face, and integration into the recovery community (e.g., attending meetings with them).

Practicing the Principles in All Our Affairs

Applying the principles means living by the spiritual values in daily life, work, and relationships. It includes:

- **Honesty & Integrity:** Moving beyond the dishonesty of active addiction into full truthfulness.

- **Willingness & Humility:** Maintaining the openness and acceptance developed in Steps 6 and 7.
- **Being of Service (Service Work):** Giving back to the community, which emphasizes principles over self. This can include:
 - Volunteering for tasks at meetings (setting up chairs, making coffee).
 - Serving on committees or in group leadership roles.

Maintaining Spiritual Growth

Step 12 is not an end point, but a new beginning that requires continuous upkeep. This maintenance involves using the spiritual tools developed in Step 11:

- **Seek Spiritual Guidance:** Continuously developing your connection with a Higher Power.
- **Prayer and Meditation:** Utilizing these practices to deepen conscious contact and seek "knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out."

How to Perform Step 12 Today

The daily practice of Step 12 is what creates a sustainable, sober life:

- **Attend Meetings Regularly:** This provides ongoing opportunities to share your ESH and to learn from others.
- **Consider Sponsoring:** When stable in your own recovery, guide a new member through the process.
- **Share Your Story:** Be willing to be open about your experience, both in group settings and one-on-one.
- **Volunteer:** Offer your time and energy to ensure the meetings and groups you attend continue to function for those who need them.