

Big Book Sponsorship

The Twelve Step Program - Big Book Guide



It only takes a day to learn 'how it works' and a lifetime to practice it!

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This Twelve Step Workbook Guide¹ substitutes terms and phrases related to alcoholism to include ANY acting-out or obsessive-compulsive addiction patterns such as, drugs and all mind altering substances, sugar/food/overeating, nicotine, gambling, sex / love / fantasy / pornography, over / working / tasking, electronic media (i.e. video games) social media, self-harm / mutilation, anorexia, bulimia, over-spending / debting, under-earning, cluttering / hoarding, emotions, codependency—and anyone can certainly increase this list and all are welcome. Our format quotes from the book, Alcoholics Anonymous, our basic recovery text. Our notes, commentary, and gender-inclusive changes are formatted in italics. For further study, it is suggested that you get a copy of the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous.

You are going to become a Sponsor! (See Baltimore, Maryland Drug Study)²

Helping others (*newcomers*) **is the foundation stone of your recovery.** A kindly act once in a while isn't enough (AA p. 97).

To show other alcoholics (*addicts*) precisely how we have recovered³ is the main purpose of this book. For them (*newcomers*), we hope these pages will prove so convincing that no further authentication will be necessary (AA p. xiii).

Outline the program of action (*recovery recipe*), explaining how you made a self-appraisal, how you straightened out your past and why you are now endeavouring to be helpful to *them* (*newcomers*). It is important for *them* (*newcomers*) to realize that your attempt to pass this on to *them* plays a vital part in your recovery. Actually, *they* may be helping you more than you are helping *them*. Make it plain *they are* under no obligation to you, that you hope only that *they* will try to help other alcoholics (*addicts*) when *they escape their* own difficulties. Suggest how important it is that *they* place the welfare of other people ahead of *their* own. (AA p. 94)

We hope no one will consider these self-revealing accounts in bad taste. Our hope is that many alcoholic (*addict*) men and women (*newcomers*), desperately in need, will see these pages, and we believe that it is only by fully disclosing ourselves and our problems that they will be persuaded to say, "Yes, I am one of them too; I must have this thing" — *A recipe for permanent recovery.* (AA p. 29)

Step 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol (*drugs, acting-out behaviour*—that our lives had become unmanageable. (A.A. p. 59)

Identification — “How to share an effective 'war' story.”

The message which can interest and hold these alcoholic (*addicted*) people must have depth and weight. (AA p. xxviii)

Tell *them* (*newcomers*) enough about your drinking (*using, acting-out*) habits, symptoms, and experiences to encourage *them* to speak of themselves. (AA p. 91) Tell *them* how baffled you were, how you finally learned that you were sick. Give *them* an account of the struggles (*failed strategies*) you made to stop. Show *them* (*newcomers*) the mental twist (*how my mind lies to me*) which leads to the first drink (*drug, obsessive-compulsive act*) of the spree. (AA p. 92)

Men and women drink (*use or act-out*) essentially because they like the effect (*body allergy*) produced by alcohol (*drugs, obsessive-compulsive acts*) (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*). The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious (*yes-no?*), they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic (*addict*) life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented (*bored, depressed, anxious*), unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort (*body allergy*) which comes at once by taking a few drinks—drinks (*drugs, acts*) which they see others taking (*doing*) with impunity. After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*), and the phenomenon of craving (*body allergy*) develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink (*use or act-out*) again (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) This is repeated over and over⁴ (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*), and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of their recovery. (AA. p. xxviii)

Analogy: *Addicts are like drowning men and women. If we don't find some way of keeping our heads above water, we are going to drown. So we look for some kind of power to keep us afloat. We notice there are "logs" floating on the surface. These logs look like they're capable of keeping our heads above water, but when we reach for one of these logs we find that we can only hold on for maybe a day, a week, a month, a year, maybe longer, but at some point, the logs fails us as a power and we slip and drown. "Logs" are best described as "easier softer ways," "middle of the road solutions," "half measures" and "human aids."*

My "LOG & LOSER LIST"^{4a} MY rap sheet.^{4b} <i>My modus operandi (M.O.) as an untreated addict.</i>	
<p style="text-align: center;">Admitting Powerlessness</p> <p>My Log List: Check those "easier softer ways," "middle of the road solutions," half measures" and "human aids" that failed to keep you permanently abstinent.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> will power <input type="checkbox"/> resolutions, oaths, promises, contracts <input type="checkbox"/> controlled using, drinking, thinking, behaving <input type="checkbox"/> harm reduction, substitution strategies <input type="checkbox"/> ill health, sickness <input type="checkbox"/> ominous warnings from a doctor, judge, lawyer, employer, priest, rabbi, counsellor <input type="checkbox"/> change of environment, trigger lists, avoiding people, places, things <input type="checkbox"/> counselling, therapy, group therapy, behavioural modification <input type="checkbox"/> detox, treatment centres, rehab, spas, spiritual retreats <input type="checkbox"/> war stories, fear, horror <input type="checkbox"/> relationships, friends, spouse, children, family, sex, pregnancy <input type="checkbox"/> getting a pet (dog, cat) <input type="checkbox"/> church, prayer (faith without works) <input type="checkbox"/> having a sponsor, body-guard, mentor, life coach / recovery coach <input type="checkbox"/> meetings, 90 meetings in 90 days, "meeting makers make it" <input type="checkbox"/> yesterday's spiritual experience <input type="checkbox"/> self-help books, personal development courses <input type="checkbox"/> recovery knowledge, recovery slogans <input type="checkbox"/> reading / studying the <i>Big Book</i> <input type="checkbox"/> intelligence / education <input type="checkbox"/> frothy emotional appeals, interventions, threats, ultimatums <input type="checkbox"/> positive thinking, affirmations, self-talk, gratitude lists <input type="checkbox"/> poetry: <i>Yesterday, Today & Tomorrow</i> <i>The Man In the Glass</i> <input type="checkbox"/> guilt, shame, remorse <input type="checkbox"/> good days/bad days <input type="checkbox"/> keeping busy <input type="checkbox"/> money / no money <input type="checkbox"/> memory strategies "remember when," "think, think, think," "play the tape all the way through" <input type="checkbox"/> jail, incarceration, detention, arrested <input type="checkbox"/> good reasons to stop, sufficiently strong reasons to stop, consequences <input type="checkbox"/> moral & philosophical convictions, reputation <input type="checkbox"/> suffering, humiliation, pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization <input type="checkbox"/> sobriety time <input type="checkbox"/> exercise, holistic medicine, acupuncture, hypnotism, healthy diet, vitamins, fasts, cleansings 	<p style="text-align: center;">Admitting My Life is Unmanageable</p> <p>My Loser List: Check what you've lost due to your inability to stay stopped.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> time <input type="checkbox"/> family <input type="checkbox"/> spouse <input type="checkbox"/> children <input type="checkbox"/> friends <input type="checkbox"/> money <input type="checkbox"/> home / residence <input type="checkbox"/> health <input type="checkbox"/> safety <input type="checkbox"/> hygiene <input type="checkbox"/> opportunities <input type="checkbox"/> careers, jobs, employment <input type="checkbox"/> licence (vehicle, professional) <input type="checkbox"/> education <input type="checkbox"/> quality of life <input type="checkbox"/> hope <input type="checkbox"/> courage <input type="checkbox"/> intelligence <input type="checkbox"/> mental acuity <input type="checkbox"/> self-respect <input type="checkbox"/> respect from others <input type="checkbox"/> self-esteem <input type="checkbox"/> self-confidence <input type="checkbox"/> self-improvement <input type="checkbox"/> self-control <input type="checkbox"/> emotional security <input type="checkbox"/> responsibility for myself / others <input type="checkbox"/> volition & agency <input type="checkbox"/> reputation <input type="checkbox"/> freedom <input type="checkbox"/> morality <input type="checkbox"/> spirituality / God <input type="checkbox"/> peace of mind <input type="checkbox"/> sanity <input type="checkbox"/> faith <input type="checkbox"/> humanity <input type="checkbox"/> * my life (not yet) <i>Big Loser!</i>
<p><i>The Log and Loser list is a summary of the first 43 pages of the Big Book.</i></p>	

If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely (*Do you honestly want to stop drinking, using or acting out - yes-no? And based on your log list, have you been able to stay stopped - yes-no?*), or if when drinking (*using or acting out*), you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic (*addict*). (*Do you exhibit little control, when drinking, using or acting out - yes-no?*) If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer. (AA p. 44)

This is by no means a comprehensive picture of the true alcoholic (*addict*), as our behavior patterns vary. But this description should identify *them* roughly (*Based on your log and loser list does this description of an alcoholic/addict describe you - yes-no?*). (AA p. 22)

Step One Instruction (self-diagnosis): We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics (*addicts*). (*Do you fully concede the fact that you're an alcoholic/addict - yes-no?*) This is the first step in recovery. The delusion (*lie*) that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed. (*Are you convinced you're an alcoholic/addict-yes-no?*) (AA p. 30)

The Bad News: We are without defence against the first drink (*drug, obsessive-compulsive act*) (*Based on your log list, is this your experience - yes-no?*) (AA p. 24) The idea (*lie*) that somehow, someday *they* will control and enjoy *their* drinking (*using, acting out behaviour*) is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker (*user, obsessive-compulsive*). Over any considerable period we get worse, never better. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death⁵ (AA p. 30). (*Based on your loser list is this your experience - yes-no?*)

You are now properly armed with the facts about yourself.

The Good News: There is a solution... (AA p. 25). If you are as seriously alcoholic (*addicted*) as we were, we believe there is no middle-of-the-road solution (*Would you agree yes-no?*). We were in a position where life was becoming impossible (*Based on your loser list, is life becoming impossible? yes-no?*), and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid (*Based on your log list, are you beyond human aid? yes-no?*), we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation (*see my loser list*) as best we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help. This we did because we honestly wanted to, and were willing to make the effort (AA p. 25-26). (*Are you ready to accept spiritual help and are you willing to make the effort - yes-no?*) ...and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand—once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems *they* despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds *themselves* easily able to control *their* desire for alcohol (*drugs, acting-out behaviour*), the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules (*our recovery recipe*). (AA. p. xxix) (See Appendix I - Wheel of Misfortune)

The Essentials of Recovery

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path (*recipe*). Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program (*recipe*), usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves... We thought we could find an easier softer way. But we could not... (*Based on your log list, is this your experience - yes-no?*) Half measures availed us nothing. (AA p. 58-59)

Of alcoholics who came to A.A. and really tried, 50% got sober at once and remained that way; 25% sobered up after some relapses, and among the remainder, those who stayed on with A.A. showed improvement. Other thousands came to a few A.A. meetings and at first decided they didn't want the program. But great numbers of these—about two out of three—began to return as time passed (AA p. xx).

We find that 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. (AA p. 568)

Our understanding as one addict working with another addict:

Willingness: *Are you willing to show-up and do the work - (yes-no?)*

Honesty: *Will you answer questions honestly with a simple yes or no - (yes-no?)*

Open mindedness: *Will you lay aside any prejudices, experience the program and assess the results for yourself - (yes-no?) “When I know I don’t know, then I know I’m ready to know!”*

Our job is to explain our approach and win their confidence.

But the ex-problem drinker (*addict*) who has found this solution (*our recovery recipe*), who is properly armed with facts about them self, can generally win the entire confidence of another alcoholic (*addict*) in a few hours. Until such an understanding is reached, little or nothing can be accomplished. (AA p. 18)

That the *person* who is making the approach has had the same difficulty (*see your log & loser list*), that *they* obviously know what *they are* talking about, that *their* whole department shouts at the new prospect that *they are a person* with a real answer, that *they have* no attitude of Holier Than Thou (*we are not saints, preachers, crusaders or mission makers*), nothing whatever except the sincere desire to be helpful; that there are no fees to pay (*big book sponsorship is free*), no axes to grind (*no windy arguments or frothy debates*), no people to please (*no "ass-kissing" or grovelling*), no lectures to be endured (*we don't run your life*)—these are the conditions we have found most effective. After such an approach many take up their beds and walk again. (AA p. 18-19)

If *they do* not want to stop drinking (*using, acting out*), don't waste time trying to persuade *them*. You may spoil a later opportunity (AA p. 90). The more hopeless *they feel*, the better. *They* will be more likely to follow your suggestions (*recovery recipe*). (AA p. 94)

Most alcoholics (*addicts*) have to be pretty badly mangled before they really commence to solve their problems. (*Is this your experience - yes-no?*) (AA p. 43) We, in our turn, sought the same escape (*recovery recipe*) with all the desperation of a drowning *person*. (AA p. 28)
(*Based on your loser list, Are you desperate - yes-no?*)

...we favor hospitalization for the alcoholic (*addict*) who is very jittery or befogged... is imperative that *their* brain be cleared before *they are* approached, as *they have* then a better chance of understanding and accepting what we have to offer. (AA p. xxvi-xxvii)

If you have decided you want what we have (*a recovery recipe - yes-no?*) and are willing to go to any length to get it (*to follow the recipe - yes-no?*)—then you are ready to take certain steps. (AA p. 58). Ask *them* (*newcomer*) if *they want* to quit (*drinking, using, acting-out*) for good (*yes-no?*), and if *they* would go to any extreme to do so (*Will you thoroughly follow the instructions in the Big Book of A.A. - yes-no?*). If *they say* yes, then *their* attention should be drawn to you as a person who has recovered. (AA p. 90)

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. (AA p. 25)
(*Are you now ready to pick up your simple kit of spiritual tools - yes-no?*)

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

(A.A. p. 59)

Lack of power, that was our dilemma (*yes-no? - when in doubt, see your log & loser list*). 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? 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. (AA p. 45)

What seemed at first a flimsy reed (*a Power greater than ourselves*), has proved to be the loving and powerful hand of God. A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, "a design for living" (*a recovery recipe*) that really works. (AA p.28) In nearly all cases, *the newcomer's* ideals must be grounded in a power greater than themselves, if they are to re-create their lives. (AA p. xxviii)

...deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God⁶. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as *humankind itself*. We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but *It* was there (*See Fish Story*⁷). *It* was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that *It* may be found. It was so with us. We can only clear the ground a bit. If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice (*See Dog Story*⁸), enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then, if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway (*yes-no?*). With this attitude you cannot fail. The consciousness of your belief is sure to come to you (AA p. 55). Some of us grow into it more slowly. But *It* has come to all who have honestly sought *It*. When we drew near to *It*, *It* disclosed *Itself* to us! (*See Michelangelo Story*⁹) (AA p. 57) With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power Greater than themselves. (AA p. 567-568)

Step 2 Instruction:

We needed to ask ourselves but one short question. "Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?" (*yes-no?*) As soon as a *person* can say that *they do* believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure *them* that *they are* on *their* way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built. (AA p. 47)

Step 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood *It*. (A.A. p. 59)

We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. Our description of the alcoholic (*addict*)... our personal adventure before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- a. That we were alcoholics (*addicts*) and could not manage our own lives.
(*Based on your loser list, is this you - yes-no?*)
- b. That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism (*addiction*).
(*Based on your log list, are you beyond human aid - yes-no?*)
- c. That God could and would if *It* were sought.
(*Are you willing to believe - yes-no?*)

Being convinced (*of a, b, c*), we were at Step Three, which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood *It*. Just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do?

The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. (*Based on your log & loser list, are you convinced your life run on self-will is hardly a success - yes-no?*) (AA p. 60)

Selfishness, self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt.

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic (*addict*) is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though *they* usually *do not* think so. Above everything, we alcoholics (*addicts*) must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without *Its* aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help.

Belief in the power of God, plus enough willingness, honesty and humility to establish and maintain the new order of things, were the essential requirements. Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness (A.A. pp 13-14).

This is the how and the why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. (*Would you agree - yes-no?*) Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director (*yes-no?*). *God* is the Principal; we are *Its* agents. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom. (AA p. 61-62)

Step 3 Promises

When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, *It* provided what we needed, if we kept close to *It* and performed *Its* work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our own little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of *Its* presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn. (AA p. 63)

We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to *God - yes-no?* (AA p. 63) Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us (AA. p. 77). (See Appendix III).

We were now at Step Three. Many of us said to our Maker, as we understood *It*: "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!" (*Then meditate on what is God's will for you today?*)

Step 3 Instruction (*Every morning - Are you willing to do this - yes - no?*)

If you can answer yes, then let us take this prayer together and we will have taken step three.

Step 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. (A.A. p. 59)

(Getting right with myself) ...Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision^{Step 3} was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our liquor (*drugs, obsessive-compulsive behaviour*) was but a symptom. So we had to get down to causes and conditions. Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. This was Step Four... 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. (AA p. 63-64)

Manifestation 1: Resentment is the "number one" offender (See Appendix II). It destroys more alcoholics (*addicts*) than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. (*Would you agree - yes-no?*)

<i>Causes and conditions, defects of character, short-comings, flaws in our make-up, the root of our troubles, bondage of self, cited in the BB, p. xxv - 164).</i>				
<input type="checkbox"/> pride	<input type="checkbox"/> insincerity	<input type="checkbox"/> crankiness	<input type="checkbox"/> infidelity	<input type="checkbox"/> scraping (quarrelsome)
<input type="checkbox"/> vanity	<input type="checkbox"/> dishonesty	<input type="checkbox"/> bitterness	<input type="checkbox"/> inconsideration	<input type="checkbox"/> irresponsibility
<input type="checkbox"/> egotistical	<input type="checkbox"/> lying	<input type="checkbox"/> hate	<input type="checkbox"/> anti-social	<input type="checkbox"/> careless
<input type="checkbox"/> self-pity	<input type="checkbox"/> exaggeration	<input type="checkbox"/> antipathy	<input type="checkbox"/> uncommunicative	<input type="checkbox"/> unreasonableness
<input type="checkbox"/> morbidness	<input type="checkbox"/> self-delusion	<input type="checkbox"/> lethargy	<input type="checkbox"/> slander	<input type="checkbox"/> apathy
<input type="checkbox"/> jealousy	<input type="checkbox"/> self-centeredness	<input type="checkbox"/> impatience	<input type="checkbox"/> gossip	<input type="checkbox"/> martyr
<input type="checkbox"/> envy	<input type="checkbox"/> self-justification	<input type="checkbox"/> fear	<input type="checkbox"/> prejudice	<input type="checkbox"/> squandering
<input type="checkbox"/> suspicion	<input type="checkbox"/> callousness	<input type="checkbox"/> worry	<input type="checkbox"/> criticism	<input type="checkbox"/> obstinacy
<input type="checkbox"/> selfishness	<input type="checkbox"/> cruelty	<input type="checkbox"/> cowardice	<input type="checkbox"/> ridicule	<input type="checkbox"/> maudlin (self-pityingly, tearfully sentimental)
<input type="checkbox"/> self-seeking	<input type="checkbox"/> anger, grudge	<input type="checkbox"/> intolerance	<input type="checkbox"/> cynicism	
<input type="checkbox"/> unthinking	<input type="checkbox"/> rancor	<input type="checkbox"/> lust	<input type="checkbox"/> diffidence (shyness)	
			<input type="checkbox"/> servility (grovelling)	

When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. We alcoholics (*addicts*) are sensitive people. It takes some of us a long time to outgrow that serious handicap (*liability*) (AA p. 125). In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry (*Column 1*). We asked ourselves why we were angry (*Column 2*). In most cases it was found that our self-esteem, our pocketbooks, our ambitions, our personal relationships, (including sex) were hurt or threatened. (*Column 3*) So we were sore. We were "burned up." 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? (*Column 3*) (AA p. 64-65) We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully. (AA p. 65)

Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done (*Column 2*), we resolutely looked for our own mistakes (*Column 4*). Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? (*Column 4*) Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person (*Column 1*) involved entirely. Where were we to blame? (*Column 4*) The inventory was ours, not the other person's. When we saw our faults we listed them (*Column 4*). We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs (*Column 4*) honestly and were willing to set these matters straight (*Column 5*). (AA p. 67)

Manifestation 2: We reviewed our fears thoroughly (*5 Columns*). We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them (*Column 2*). Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? (*Column 4*) (AA p. 68)

Manifestation 3: We reviewed our own conduct (*all harms to others, including sex conduct*) over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? (*Column 4*) Whom had we hurt? (*Column 1*) Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? (*Column 2*) Where were we at fault (*Column 4*), what should we have done instead? (*Column 5*) We got this all down on paper and looked at it. (AA p. 69)

Step 4 Instruction: If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. We have listed and analyzed our resentments (*5 Columns*). We have begun to comprehend their (*Column 4*) futility and their fatality. We have commenced to see their (*Column 4*) terrible destructiveness. We have listed the people (*Column 1*) we have hurt by our conduct (*Column 4*), and are willing to straighten out the past if we can (*Column 5*)... If you have already made a decision^{Step 3}, and an inventory^{Step 4} of your grosser handicaps, you have made a good beginning. That being so you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself. (AA p. 70-71)

Note: *It is not necessary, for newcomers to talk about every resentment or selfish act, or each person they have ever lied to or harmed for the inventory to be thorough. The objective is to get to "causes and conditions." Sometimes it takes only a few incidents to make clear which shortcomings have kept the newcomer blocked from an intimate, two-way relationship with the "One who has all power." (Wally P. Back to Basics)*

RESENTMENTS: We were usually as definite as this example: (p. 65, A.A. 4th Edition)

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
People, Institutions & Principles Towards whom am I angry?	The Cause Why am I angry?	This affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my...self-esteem, security, ambitions pocket book, relationships (including sex)	Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes? <i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, lust jealousy, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, selfishness, impatience, irresponsible, hate</i>	How can I set matters straight? <i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, faith, courage, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience, responsible</i>
Mr. Brown (Resentment)	His attention to my wife. Told my wife of my mistress. Brown may get my job at the office.	Sex relations Self-esteem Ambitions Pocket book Security	<i>Anger/Resentment Dishonesty & Infidelity Lust False Pride, Selfishness Self-Seeking Jealousy & Suspicion Irresponsibility Fear of divorce, losing my job, no sex, etc.</i>	<i>Acceptance, Forgiveness, Love Honesty & Faithfulness Intimacy, Humility, Unselfishness Helpfulness to Others Trust Be Responsible Faith, Courage</i>
Mrs. Jones (Resentment)	She's a nut -- she snubbed me. She committed her husband for drinking. He's my friend. She's a gossip.	Personal relationships Self-esteem	<i>Anger/Resentment False Pride Jealousy & Suspicion Intolerance, Selfishness Irresponsibility Fear of rejection</i>	<i>Acceptance, Forgiveness, Love Humility Trust, Tolerance, Unselfishness Be Responsible Faith, Courage</i>
My employer (Resentment)	Unreasonable -- Unjust -- Overbearing -- Threatens to fire me for my drinking and padding my expense account.	Self-esteem Security Pocket book Ambitions	<i>Anger/Resentment False Pride Dishonesty, Stealing Greed, Laziness, Sloth Selfishness Self-seeking Irresponsibility Fear of losing his job</i>	<i>Acceptance, Forgiveness, Love Humility Honesty & Restitution Generosity, Action, Zeal, Unselfish Be Helpful to Others Be Responsible Faith, Courage</i>
My wife (Resentment)	Misunderstands and nags. Likes Brown. Wants house put in her name.	Personal relationships Sex relations Security	<i>Anger/Resentment False Pride Jealousy, Suspicion Dishonesty, Infidelity Irresponsibility Fear of divorce, no money, being unworthy</i>	<i>Acceptance, Forgiveness, Love Humility, Trust Honesty, Faithfulness Be Responsible Faith, Courage</i>

FEARS: We were usually as definite as this example:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
<p>People, Institutions & Principles</p> <p>Who or What am I afraid of?</p> <p>What am I afraid of losing or not getting?</p>	<p>The Cause</p> <p>Why am I fearful?</p>	<p>This affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my...</p> <p>self-esteem, security, ambitions pocket book, relationships (including sex)</p>	<p>Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes?</p> <p><i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, jealousy, lust, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, hate, selfishness, impatience</i></p>	<p>What should I have done instead?</p> <p><i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, faith, courage, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience</i></p>
<p><i>Fear of no control</i></p>	<p><i>Other people make mistakes and are incompetent - if I want anything done right I must do it myself!</i></p>	<p><i>Self-esteem Security Ambitions Pocket book Business Relationships</i></p>	<p><i>Arrogance Intolerance Inconsideration Bullying, Abusive Selfishness Self Seeking Jealousy, Suspicion Irresponsibility Fear of not getting what I want. Fear of being taken advantage of.</i></p>	<p><i>Humility Tolerance, Acceptance Considerate of Others Kindness & Courtesy Unselfishness Be Helpful to Others Trust Be Responsible Faith & Courage</i></p>
<p><i>Fear of Rejection</i></p>	<p><i>My parents were never there for me. My wife left me. It hurts when people reject me. People don't seem to like me.</i></p>	<p><i>Self-esteem Security Ambitions Pocket book Relationships Sex</i></p>	<p><i>False Pride - self-loathing Selfish Self-seeking motives: center of attention, recognition, validation Irresponsible - people pleasing and martyring myself. Dishonesty Suspicion Fear of being unworthy, invisible, unacceptable</i></p>	<p><i>Humility Unselfish Be Helpful to Others: recognize and validate others Be Responsible and Accountable Congruence & Honesty Trust Faith & Courage</i></p>

HARMFUL CONDUCT (Including SEX): We were usually as definite as this example:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4 (Blocks)	Column 5 (Power)
<p>People, Institutions & Principles</p> <p>Whom have I hurt?</p>	<p>How did I harm them? What did I unjustifiably arouse:</p> <p>Jealousy? Suspicion? Bitterness?</p>	<p>What did I affect, threaten, hurt or interfere with? (About them)</p> <p>Self-esteem, security, ambitions pocket book, relationships (including sex)?</p>	<p>Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes?</p> <p><i>Identify character defects, liabilities, shortcomings, blocks i.e. false pride, jealousy, lust, dishonesty, envy, greed, fear, sloth, hate, selfishness, impatience, etc.</i></p>	<p>What should I have done instead? How can I set matters straight?</p> <p><i>Identify assets to strive for i.e. humility, trust, intimacy, honesty, contentment, generosity, love, zeal, forgiveness, unselfishness, patience</i></p>
<p><i>Spouse (Harmful Sex Conduct)</i></p>	<p><i>Had an affair; I unjustifiably aroused jealousy, resentment, distrust. She felt inadequate.</i></p>	<p><i>Self-esteem Sex relationships Security Ambitions Pocket book</i></p>	<p><i>False Pride Lust Infidelity, Dishonesty Selfishness Self Seeking Inconsideration Irresponsibility Fear of no sex, intimacy, divorce, being alone</i></p>	<p><i>Humility Intimacy Faithfulness, Honesty Unselfishness Be Helpful to Others Consideration Responsibility Faith, Courage</i></p>
<p><i>Employer (Harmful Conduct)</i></p>	<p><i>Padded the expense account. Slandered their name. I unjustifiably aroused, anger, resentment and loss of money.</i></p>	<p><i>Pocket book Self-esteem Business Relationships</i></p>	<p><i>Dishonesty, Stealing Selfishness Self-seeking Slander Irresponsibility Blame Anger/Resentment Greed Fear of poverty, not paying my bills, unworthiness, etc.</i></p>	<p><i>Honesty Restitution Unselfishness Be helpful to others Speak well of others Responsibility, Accountability Forgiveness Generosity Faith, Courage</i></p>

Step 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. (*Column 4*) (A.A. p. 59)

(Getting right with myself) ...Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it? We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path (*Column 4*). We have admitted certain defects (*Column 4*); we have ascertained in a rough way what the trouble is; we have put our finger on the weak items in our personal inventory (*Column 4*). Now these are about to be cast out. This requires action on our part, which, when completed, will mean that we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our defects (*Column 4*). This brings us to the Fifth Step in the program of recovery.

This is perhaps difficult, especially discussing our defects (*Column 4*) with another person... If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking, *using, or acting-out*. (AA p.72) We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. Rightly and naturally, we think well before we choose the person or persons with whom to take this intimate and confidential step ...which requires confession must, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority whose duty it is to receive it. Such parts of our story we tell to someone who will understand yet be unaffected. (AA p.74) (*criminal matters—see a lawyer; mental-emotional issues—see a therapist; medical issues—see a doctor; financial matters—see an accountant, tax lawyer, debt counsellor; moral matters—see a spiritual advisor/sponsor*)

Step 5 Instruction

...talk to the right person. It is important that *they* may be able to keep a confidence; that they understand and approve what we are driving at; that *they* will not try to change our plan. When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time. We have a written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk... We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character (*Column 4*), every dark cranny of the past (*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*). (AA p.74-75)

Step 5 Promises

Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience (*Preacher Story*¹⁰). The feeling that the drink (*using, acting-out*) problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe. (AA p 75)

My Moral Inventory Checklist	
Self-will (Column 4) Step 4 & 5 (NO POWER) Bondage of Self	God's will (Column 5) Steps 8 & 9 (POWER!) ...May I do thy will always
My liabilities, blocks, character defects...	Spiritual principles to strive for...
__ False Pride, Arrogance, Self-loathing __ Bigotry, Misogyny/Misandry, Rudeness __ Jealousy, Distrust, Suspicion __ Envy, Coveting __ Selfishness __ Self-seeking (<i>self-centered motives...</i>) __ Dishonesty, Stealing, Lying, Exaggeration __ Intolerance, Inconsideration __ Greed __ Lust, Infidelity, Philandering __ Hate, Anger, Resentment __ Sloth, Laziness, Procrastination __ Impatience __ Fear of...(<i>rejection, no control, authority, etc.</i>) __ Irresponsible, Blaming, Enabling, Martyring __ Vulgar Talk, Immoral Thinking __ Gossip, Slander, Vilifying _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	__ Humility __ Respectfulness, Courtesy, Politeness __ Trust __ Contentment, Gratitude __ Unselfishness __ Helpfulness to others __ Honesty, Integrity, Restitution __ Tolerance, Acceptance, Tact __ Generosity __ Intimacy, Faithfulness, Chaste __ Forgiveness, Love __ Activity, Zeal, Promptness __ Patience __ Faith, Courage __ Responsible, Accountable __ Purity, Kindness __ Praise the good in others _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____
<i>My resume as an untreated addict!</i>	<i>My job description under God's employment</i>

Step 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character (*Column 4*).

(A.A. p. 59)

(Getting right with God) ...we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing *(meditate and reflect)* what we have done (*All 5 Columns*). (AA p. 75)

Is our work solid so far? *(yes-no?)* Are the stones (*Steps 1-5*) properly in place? *(yes-no?)* Have we skimmed on the cement put into the foundation? *(yes-no?)* Have we tried to make mortar without sand? *(yes-no?)* If we can answer to our satisfaction, we then look at Step Six.

(AA p. 75)

Step 6 Instruction

We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things (*Column 4*) which we have admitted are objectionable? (AA p. 76)

(Do you see how futile, fatal and destructive Column 4 is in your life - yes-no?)

Can *God* now take them all (*Column 4*)—every one? (AA p. 76)

(Are you now ready to have God remove all of your defects of character - yes-no?)

When I argue for my character defects, congratulations I get to keep them!

If we still cling to something (*Column 4*) we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.

(AA p. 76)

When you can answer yes, then you will have taken Step Six.

Step 7. Humbly asked *God* to remove our shortcomings (Column 4). (A.A. p. 59)

(Getting right with God) ...When ready, we say something like this:

"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... "*God, please remove my...*" *(list the character defects you identified in your column 4 inventory)*... which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.

Grant me strength..."*God, strengthen my...*" *(list spiritual principles to strive for you identified in your column 5 inventory...)* ...as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen

Step 7 Instruction *(Every evening - Are you willing to do this - yes - no?)*

We have then taken Step Seven. (AA p. 76)

Step 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. (AA p. 59)

(Getting right with others) ...Now we need more action, without which we find that "Faith without works is dead." Let's look at Steps Eight and Nine. We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom *(Column 1)* we are willing to make amends - yes-no? We made it when we took inventory - yes-no? (AA p. 76)

<p>(Step 8) List Persons and Institutions (Column 1) I have harmed and to whom do I need to make a direct amends? What did my conduct (Column 4) arouse (Column 2)? How did I affect them? (Column 3)</p>	<p>(Step 9) What I should have done instead (Column 5) What do I need to do to straighten out the past? What behaviour will convince them more than my words?</p>
<p><i>(Example) Spouse (Relationship Conduct) (Column 1) Infidelity, dishonesty, inconsideration, selfishness, self-seeking. (Column 4) I affected their self-esteem and sex relationships. (Column 3) I aroused bitterness, jealousy, resentment, and feelings of inadequacy (Column 2 - harm done to others).</i></p>	<p><i>Show appreciation and respect to my spouse by being faithful, honest, and unselfish and helpful. I will practice intimacy and be considerate of my spouse's needs and desires. I will spend more time with my spouse. I will help out with the household chores and expenses. I will practice these principles on an ongoing basis. I will ask this person what more can I do to right the wrong I have done.</i></p>
<p><i>(Example) Former employer (Column 1) I was angry and resentful and was verbally abusive. I was dishonest. I slandered their name to others. I stole from this person. (Column 4) I affected their pocketbook, relationships and security. (Column 3) I aroused feelings of resentment and loss of money (Column 2 - harm done to others).</i></p>	<p><i>I will forgive this person. I will admit all my wrong doings and make restitution on what I stole. I will stop slandering their name and speak well of them to others. I will ask this person what more can I do to right the wrong I have done.</i></p>

Step 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. (AA p. 59)

(Getting right with others) ...Sometimes we hear an alcoholic (*addict*) say that the only thing *they need* to do is to keep sober *or clean*. Certainly *they* must keep sober *or clean*, for there will be no home if *they do not*. But *they are* yet a long way from making good to *those* whom for years *they have* so shockingly treated (AA p. 82). The rule is we must be hard on our self, but always considerate of others. (AA p. 74)

We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal.^{step 4} (*yes-no?*) Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris (*harm done*) which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning we would go to any lengths (*yes-no?*) for victory over alcohol (*drugs, obsessive-compulsive behaviours*). (AA p. 76)

Item 1 - Resentments

Probably there are still some misgivings (*yes-no?*)...The question of how to approach the *person* we hated will arise. It may be *they have* done us more harm than we have done *them* and, though we may have acquired a better attitude toward *them*, we are still not too keen about admitting our faults (*Column 4*). Nevertheless, with a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. We go to *them* in a helpful and forgiving spirit (*Column 5*), confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret (*Column 4*). Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue...We are there to sweep off our side of the street...*Their* faults (*Column 2*) are not discussed. We stick to our own (*Column 4*). (AA p. 76-78)

Anger/Resentment Forgiveness Prayer

This was our course: We realized that the people (*Column 1*) who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. (*Would you agree - yes-no?*) Though we did not like their symptoms (*Column 2*) and the way these disturbed us (*Column 3*), they, like ourselves, were sick too. (*Would you agree - yes-no?*) We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience (*Column 5*) that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves, "This is a sick *person*. How can I be helpful (*Column 5*) to *this person*? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done." (AA p. 66-67)

Item 2 - Money (See an accountant, debt counsellor)

Most alcoholics (*addicts*) owe money (*yes-no?*) We do not dodge our creditors...Arranging the best deal we can we let these people know we are sorry. We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink (*use, act-out*) if we are afraid to face them (AA p. 78).

Item 3 - Criminal Offences (See a lawyer)

Perhaps we have committed a criminal offence which might land us in jail if it were known to the authorities (*yes-no?*)...Although these reparations take innumerable forms (*Column 5*), there are some general principles which we find guiding. Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths (*yes-no?*) (*follow the recipe*) to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing (*Column 5*), no matter what the personal consequences may be. We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything. (AA p. 78-79)

Remove Fear Prayer

Instead we let *God* demonstrate (*Column 5*), through us, what *It* can do. We ask *God* to remove our fear and direct our attention to what *It* would have us be (*Column 5*). At once, we commence to outgrow fear. (AA p. 68)

Item 4 - Sex Relationships

The chances are that we have domestic troubles (*yes-no?*) Perhaps we are mixed up with women (*others*) in a fashion we wouldn't care to have advertised. (AA p. 80-81)

Prayer for Sex Amends

We asked God to mold our ideals (*Column 5*) and help us to live up to them...In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come, if we want it...We earnestly pray for the right ideal (*Column 5*), for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing. If sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves the harder into helping others. We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heartache.

(AA p. 69-70)

Step 9 Instruction

Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people we secure their consent. If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others (*criminal matters—see a lawyer; mental-emotional issues—see a therapist; medical issues—see a doctor; financial matters—see an accountant, tax lawyer, debt counsellor; moral matters—see a spiritual advisor/sponsor*) asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink. (AA p. 80)

Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead. A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won't fill the bill at all... The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it... Our behavior (*Column 5*) will convince them more than our words. We must remember that ten or twenty years of drunkenness (*addiction*) would make a skeptic out of anyone.

There may be some wrongs we can never fully right (*yes-no?*). We don't worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could (*yes-no?*). Some people cannot be seen - we sent them an honest letter. And there may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases. But we don't delay if it can be avoided. We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble (*Column 5*) without being servile (*grovelling*) or scraping (*quarrelsome*) (*Column 4*). As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone. (AA p. 83)

Step 9 Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase ^{step 8,9} of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. (AA p. 83-84)

(Do you want this experience in your life - yes-no?)

Step 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. (AA p. 59)

Step Ten suggests we continue to take personal inventory ^{step 4} and continue to set right any new mistakes ^{step 8,9} as we go along. (*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*) We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past.^{step 9} (*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*) We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime. Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.^{step 4} When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them.^{step 3,7} We discuss them with someone immediately ^{step 5} and make amends ^{step 8,9} quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help.^{step 12} Love and tolerance (*Column 5*) of others is our code. (AA p. 84)

Step 10 Promises (*Description of a recovered alcoholic/addict*)

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone, even alcohol (*drugs, obsessive-compulsive behaviour*). For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor (*drugs, acting-out behaviour*). If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor (*drugs, obsessive-compulsive behaviour*) has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition. (AA p. 84-85)

Be mindful throughout your day and ask yourself, Am I living in column 4 (self-will - no power) or in column 5 (God's will - Power)? Remember to correct your course (Flight Story¹¹).

My Daily (Step 10) Personal Inventory

1) brush it off - let it go | 2) pause and pray | 3) put pen to paper

LIABILITIES to watch for: Check for each day for: SELF-WILL (Column 4) <i>NO POWER</i>	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1. Resentment							
2. False Pride, Arrogance, Self-loathing							
3. Envy							
4. Jealousy, Distrust, Suspicion							
5. Dishonesty, Lying, Exaggeration, Stealing							
6. Selfishness, Self-Seeking, Self-Centeredness							
7. Laziness, Sloth, Procrastination							
8. Inconsideration, Intolerance							
9. Lust, Infidelity, Philandering							
10. Immoral Thinking, Vulgar Talk							
11. Hate, Wrath, Anger, Irritability							
12. Greed (money) or Gluttony (food)							
13. Slander, Gossip, Spreading Rumors							
14. Impatience							
15. Fear of...							
ASSETS to strive for: Check for each day for: GOD'S WILL (Column 5) <i>POWER</i>	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
1. Forgiveness							
2. Humility							
3. Contentment							
4. Trust							
5. Honesty, Integrity							
6. Unselfishness							
7. Activity, Zeal, Promptness							
8. Tolerance, Acceptance							
9. Intimacy, Faithfulness, Chaste							
10. Purity							
11. Love, Kindness							
12. Generosity							
13. Praise Others, Look For The Good In Others							
14. Patience							
15. Faith, Courage							

Step 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood *It*, praying only for knowledge of *Its* will for us and the power to carry that out. (AA p. 59)

Step Eleven suggests prayer (*talking to God*) and meditation (*listening to God*). (AA p. 85)
(*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*)

Step 11 Instruction

PM Focus

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? ^{step 10} Do we owe an apology? ^{step 8,9} Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? ^{step 5} Were we kind and loving toward 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? ^{step 12} But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection (*Column 4*), for that would diminish our usefulness to others. ^{step 12} After making our review we ask God's forgiveness ^{step 7} and inquire what corrective measures ^{steps 8,9} should be taken. (AA p. 86)

AM Focus

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. (*Column 5*) Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking ^{step 3}, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives (*Column 4*) ^{step 10}. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane (*Column 5*) when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives (*Column 4*). (AA p. 86)

Mid-day Focus

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. (AA p. 86)

Remember to Check Your Motives

Self will test: *Is it dishonest, resentful, selfish or fearful? (needs only 1 defect - Col. 4)*

God's will test: *Is it honest, pure, unselfish and loving? (must have all 4 principles - Col. 5)*

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step (*Column 5*) is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will (*Column 4*), 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. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and it doesn't work. (AA p. 87)

Step 11 Promises

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" (*Column 5*). We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions (*Column 4*). 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. (AA p. 87 - 88)

Step 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics (*addicts*) and to practice these principles in all our affairs. (AA p. 60)

Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking (*using, acting out*) as intensive work with other alcoholics (*addicts*). It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other alcoholics (*addicts*)! (*Are you willing to do this - yes-no?*) You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. Remember they are very ill. (AA p. 89)

This seemed to prove that one alcoholic (*addict*) could affect another as no nonalcoholic (*non-addict*) could. It also indicated that strenuous work, one alcoholic (*addict*) with another, was vital to permanent recovery. (p. xvi - xvii, 4th ed.)

...I soon found that when all other measures failed, work with another alcoholic (*addict*) would save the day. (AA p.15)

...the broker (*Bill W. and the early old-timers*) had worked hard with many alcoholics (*addicts*) on the theory that only an alcoholic (*addict*) could help an alcoholic (*addict*), but *they* had succeeded only in keeping sober (*clean*) *themselves*. *They* suddenly realized that in order to save *themselves* *they* must carry *their* message to another alcoholic (*addict*). (AA p.xvi, 4th ed.)

We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others (*Starfish Story*¹²). (AA p.132)

But if you are shaky you had better work with another alcoholic (*addict*) instead (AA p. 102).

Step 12 Promises

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. (AA p. 89)

A Vision For You

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 (*drugs, obsessive-compulsive behaviour*) is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism (*addiction*). 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 of God's will (*Column 5*) into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee, Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts (*Column 5*) 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. (AA p. 85)

We feel that elimination of our drinking (*using, acting out*) is but a beginning. A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations and affairs (AA p. 19).

Thus we grow. And so can you, though you be but one *person* with this book (*A.A. Big Book*) in your hand. We believe and hope it contains all you will need to begin. We know what you are thinking. You are saying to yourself: "I'm jittery and alone. I couldn't do that." But you can (*yes-no?*). You forget that you have just now tapped a source of power much greater than yourself. To duplicate, with such backing, what we have accomplished is only a matter of willingness, patience and labor (AA pp. 162-163).

Remember, recovery from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body is possible by working the Twelve Steps, as directed in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, everyday. There is much more work ahead, this is just the beginning. Remember not to get cocky or lazy.

Trust God, Clean House, Help Others.

Appendix I - The Wheel of Misfortune

THE GOOD NEWS

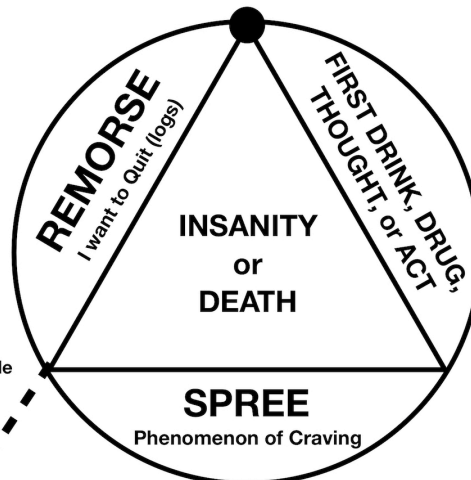
Once the psychic change has occurred I can easily control my desire to drink, use or act out.



The World of Spirit
Power

THE BAD NEWS

The Mental Blank Spot
The Liar always wins the argument.




The World of Self
No Power

Sponsor / Guide

• MY BOTTOM
• THE CROSSROADS
• THE JUMPING OFF PLACE
• THE TURNING POINT

Appendix II - Responsibility/Accountability <i>For and To</i>		
	For MySelf	To Others
RESPONSIBLE Accountable Proactive Centered / Leader Functional / Loving Independent/Inter-dependent	I am responsible FOR myself: MY thoughts/thinking MY feelings/emotions MY behaviours/action	I am responsible TO others: To be an effective: sponsor, mentor, leader, teacher, parent, spouse, employer, friend, partner, trusted servant.
IRRESPONSIBLE Unaccountable Reactive / Uncentered Victim / Dysfunctional Fearful / Codependent	I blame others for the way I think, feel and behave: "YOU" made me think that! "YOU" hurt my feelings! "YOU" embarrassed me! "YOU" caused me to do that!	I take responsibility for others: I try to change other people's thoughts, feelings, actions by: people-pleasing, enabling, protecting, micro-managing, manipulation, over-controlling, avoiding, martyring, uncommunicative and bullying behaviours
<i>When I am irresponsible for myself or irresponsible to others, resentment is always the result! And, RESENTMENT is the NUMBER ONE offender. (A.A. p.64)</i>		

Appendix III - Spiritual Bootcamp

POWER: I had to find a power greater than myself which will solve my problem.				
You, Me & God			Steps 8 & 9 Amends: Spiritual Principles	
	<p>*Agape - Unconditional / Spiritual Love</p> <p>Philia - Brotherly / Sisterly Love</p> <p>Eros - Erotic / Physical Love</p>	<p>Physically - Relaxed</p> <p>Emotionally - Calm</p> <p>Mentally - Serene</p> <p>Spiritually - Centered</p>	<p>Patient</p> <p>Responsible</p> <p>Active</p> <p>Intimate</p> <p>Generous</p> <p>Content</p> <p>Trusting</p> <p>Humility</p> <p>Helpful to others</p> <p>Unselfish</p> <p>Forgiving</p> <p>Honest</p>	<p>I am of maximum usefulness to God and my fellows.</p> <p>I make spiritual progress.</p> <p>I am recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.</p>
God's Will	▲	▲	▲	▲
Step 3 Decision	My Thinking ▶	◀ My Feeling ▶	◀ My Behaviour ▶	◀ My Being
Self Will	▼	▼	▼	▼
<p>ME</p> <p>ME ME ME</p> <p>ME</p>	<p>Fear</p> <p>I am always afraid of losing what I have or not getting what I want.</p>	<p>Hurt & Threatened</p> <p>Self-esteem</p> <p>Pocketbook (Money)</p> <p>Security</p> <p>Ambitions</p> <p>Relationships</p> <p>Sex</p>	<p>Dishonest</p> <p>Resentful / Angry / Hateful</p> <p>Selfish</p> <p>Self-seeking</p> <p>Arrogant / Self-deprecating</p> <p>Jealous/Suspicious</p> <p>Envious</p> <p>Greedy</p> <p>Lustful</p> <p>Slothful</p> <p>Irresponsible</p> <p>Impatient</p>	<p>I am restless, irritable, bored, discontented, depressed, anxious</p> <p>I harm others.</p> <p>I harm myself.</p> <p>I succumb to the desire again and I drink, use or act out.</p>
Bondage of Self			Step 4 & 5: A Moral Inventory of character short-comings or defects	
NO POWER: Lack of Power that was my dilemma.				

Appendix IV - **MY RESENTMENTS**: Use one sheet per resentment.

Come prepared to admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Column 1: Towards whom am I angry? A Person? An Institution? or a Principle?

Column 2: Why am I angry?

Column 3: This affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my... (Circle all that apply)

Self-esteem Security Ambitions Pocketbook (Money) Relationships Sex

Column 4: Where am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes? *Identify causes and conditions, defects of character, short-comings, flaws in our make-up, the root of our troubles, the bondage of self.*

Selfish & Self-Seeking: What was my motive? What did I want? What keeps me tied to this resentment?

Fear: What Am I afraid of losing or not getting?

List and explain other defects of character? (i.e. false pride, arrogance, self-loathing, impatience, greed, laziness, lust, dishonesty, irresponsibility, blaming, enabling, etc.)

Column 5: What should I have done instead? How can I set these matters straight? What is God's will for me today? *Invert character shortcomings into spiritual principles. i.e. Selfish becomes Unselfish. Hatred becomes Love & Forgiveness, Fear becomes Faith & Courage, Arrogance/Self-Pity becomes Humility.*

Appendix V - **MY FEARS:** Use one sheet per fear.

Come prepared to admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Column 1: Who or what Am I afraid of? *i.e. rejection, failure, authority, no control, poverty, success, etc.*

Column 2: Why Am I fearful?

Column 3: Fear affects, threatens, hurts or interferes with my... (Circle all that apply)

Self-esteem Security Ambitions Pocketbook (Money) Relationships Sex

Column 4: Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? *Identify causes and conditions, defects of character, shortcomings, flaws in our make-up, the root of our troubles, the bondage of self.*

Selfish & Self-Seeking: What was my motive? What did I want? What am I afraid of losing or not getting? *i.e. recognition, validation, success, money, reputation, etc.*

What other fears arise out of this fear? *i.e. I fear rejection because I fear I am not worthy of love.*

List and explain other defects of character? (i.e. false pride, arrogance, self-loathing, impatience, greed, laziness, lust, dishonesty, irresponsibility, blaming, enabling, etc.)

Column 5: What should I have done instead? How can I set these matters straight? What is God's will for me today? *Invert character shortcomings into spiritual principles. i.e. Selfish becomes Unselfish. Hatred becomes Love & Forgiveness, Fear becomes Faith & Courage, Arrogance/Self-Pity becomes Humility.*

Appendix VI - **ALL HARMS INCLUDING SEX HARMS:** Use one sheet per harm.

Come prepared to admit to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Column 1: Whom have I hurt?

Column 2: What did I unjustifiably arouse? jealousy, suspicion, bitterness, worry, fear, etc.?

Column 3: How did I affect, threaten, hurt or interfere with their... (Circle all that apply)

Self-esteem Security Ambitions Pocketbook (Money) Relationships Sex

Column 4: Where Am I at fault? Where am I to blame? What are my mistakes? *Identify causes and conditions, defects of character, short-comings, flaws in our make-up, the root of our troubles, the bondage of self.*

Selfish & Self-Seeking: What was my motive? What did I want?

Fear: What Am I afraid of losing or not getting?

List and explain other defects of character? (i.e. false pride, arrogance, self-loathing, impatience, greed, laziness, lust, dishonesty, irresponsibility, blaming, enabling, etc.)

Column 5: What should I have done instead? How can I set these matters straight? What is God's will for me today? *Invert character shortcomings into spiritual principles. i.e. Selfish becomes Unselfish. Hatred becomes Love & Forgiveness, Fear becomes Faith & Courage, Arrogance/Self-Pity becomes Humility.*

Appendix VII - Our Notes, Commentary, Allegories, Analogies and Aphorisms

¹ Since May 27, 2007, this English Workbook has been translated in 12 different languages: French, Spanish, Dutch, Swedish, Russian, Ukrainian, Punjabi, Yiddish, Arabic, Portuguese, Slovenian and Tamil.

² **The Baltimore, Maryland Drug Study:** The relationship between sponsorship and abstinence, the study evaluated NA/AA sponsorship over a 1-year period in a longitudinal study of 500 former and current injection drug users in the inner-city of Baltimore, Maryland USA. Over the year, those who were “NOT SPONSORED” showed a 44.7% abstinence rate and those who were “SPONSORED” showed a 39.1% abstinence rate, but 75% of those who SPONSORED OTHERS maintained abstinence. (p. 296). Over the 1-year study period, having a sponsor in NA/AA was *not* associated with sustained abstinence. There was no statistical nor substantial difference in sustained abstinence rates between those NA/AA members without a sponsor and those with a sponsor...receiving of support and direction by a sponsor seems ineffectual (p. 298). In multivariate logistic regression analysis, being-a-sponsor was very strongly associated with sustained abstinence (Crape et al., 2002 p. 298).

³ **The Big Book uses the word “recovered” 16 times.**

1. View BB p.xxv ... recovered. BB The Doctor's Opinion, p.xxv This man and over one hundred others appear to have recovered.
2. View BB p.17 ... recovered. BB There Is A Solution, p.17 Nearly all have recovered.
3. View BB p.29 ... recovered. BB There Is A Solution, p.29 Further on, clear-cut directions are given showing how we recovered.
4. View BB p.90 ... recovered. BB Working With Others, p.90 If he says yes, then his attention should be drawn to you as a person who has recovered.
5. View BB p.113 ... recovered. BB To Wives, p.113 He knows that thousands of men, much like himself, have recovered.
6. View BB p.xv ... recovered alcoholics. BB Foreword to Second Edition, p.xv In that brief space, Alcoholics Anonymous has mushroomed into nearly 6,000 groups whose membership is far above 150,000 recovered alcoholics.
7. View BB p.132 ... recovered, and have been given the power ... BB The Family Afterward, p.132 We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others.
8. View BB p.146 ... recovered, but holds a relatively unimportant job, ... BB To Employers, p.146 An alcoholic who has recovered, but holds a relatively unimportant job, can talk to a man with a better position.
9. View BB p.xxxi ... recovered from a gastric hemorrhage and seemed ... BB The Doctor's Opinion, p.xxxi He had but partially recovered from a gastric hemorrhage and seemed to be a case of pathological mental deterioration.
10. View BB p.20 ... recovered from a hopeless condition of mind ... BB There Is A Solution, p.20 Doubtless you are curious to discover how and why, in the face of expert opinion to the contrary, we have recovered from a hopeless condition of mind and body.
11. View BB p.xiii ... recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of ... BB Foreword to First Edition, p.xiii We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.
12. View BB p.133 ... recovered from serious drinking, are miracles of ... BB The Family Afterward, p.133 We, who have recovered from serious drinking, are miracles of mental health.
13. View BB p.xvii ... recovered immediately and became A.A. number three. BB Foreword to Second Edition, p.xvii Their very first case, a desperate one, recovered immediately and became A.A. number three.
14. View BB p.xiii ... recovered is the main purpose of this ... BB Foreword to First Edition, p.xiii To show other alcoholics precisely how we have recovered is the main purpose of this book.
15. View BB pp.44-45 ... recovered long ago. BB We Agnostics, pp.44-45 If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago.
16. View BB p.96 ... recovered, of their chance. BB Working With Others, p.96 He often says that if he had continued to work on them, he might have deprived many others, who have since recovered, of their chance.

There are generally two recovery genres: The “Recovered Addict” versus the “Recovering Addict” narrative. Recovery stories are consequential for the person’s experience of recovery, since it seems that the telling and retelling of an empowered “*Recovered*” narrative, with its clear beginnings, turning points, and felicitous, institutionally condoned endings may well be critical for recovery to remain a stable condition in life. Such narration articulates, but also facilitates, the teller’s consistent affiliation with and appropriation of institutional master narratives (Cain 1991). Alternatively, the telling and retelling of ambiguous “*always recovering*” narratives, in which protagonists question received wisdom, ponder hypothetical life paths not actually pursued, and envision abstinence as both good and bad, may perpetuate a cyclical life course in which relapse recurs and permanent recovery eludes the narrator as protagonist (Shohet, Merav 2007).

Central to the 12 Step recovery culture is the personal story of the recovered addict—“Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now” (A.A. 2001:58). The Member’s personal story reinforces the figured world of 12 Step recovery. These narratives maintain the boundaries that structure and empower the 12 Step recovery culture. By sharing their personal stories of “what they used to be like”, members identify as addicts. Their “war stories” convey important criteria for potential members to identify and label themselves as addicts (Holland 2001:71). Furthermore, personal testimonies are significant to newcomers because the storylines of recovered addicts objectify the central cultural elements of the 12 Step world, such as the importance of attending meetings, getting a sponsor, helping other suffering addicts, doing service work for the 12 Step Group. By listening to the narratives of recovered members, newcomers learn the culture of 12 Step recovery. The newcomer learns the model of a 12 Step testimonial by listening to other members and through telling their own story, the newcomer comes to understand their own life as a member of a 12 Step program (Holland 2001:71). The 12 Step rhetorical language provides an attractive element that connects the newcomer to the 12-step culture and assures them that the drinking/using/acting-out problem can be solved—resulting in behavioural transformations of newcomers (Waldram 1997:74).

⁴ *The untreated addict is a like a dog that returns to its own vomit.* This is a variation of Proverbs 26:11 — “Like a dog that returns to his vomit is a fool that repeats his folly.”

^{4a} **The Log & Loser List.** On page 92 of the Big Book it says, “Give them (newcomer) and account of the struggles (failed strategies) you made to stop.” The “log list” represents a comprehensive list of all those failed strategies the addict uses in an attempt to stop or curtail their addiction pattern. Moreover, a log list is a summary of the first 43 pages of the Big Book, including the *Doctor’s Opinion* which focuses entirely on Step 1 and that can take a long time working one on one with a newcomer to complete. Taking a newcomer through the “log list” takes only a minimal amount of time. As the newcomer checks off the “logs” they have “burned,” the Sponsor also shares the “logs” they have tried and burned. When the newcomer and Sponsor both share their log list with one another an identification develops and the newcomer realizes, “Hey I’m just as powerless as you and you’re just as powerless as me, but you don’t do it anymore.” That’s a very compelling scenario to one who wants to stop but cannot. Furthermore, the log list is a universal approach to identifying one addict with another. All addicts regardless of their addiction pattern, be it drugs, alcohol, food, sex, love, fantasy, codependence, gambling, etc., they all burn the same logs! Thus any addict can identify with any other kind of addict just by sharing their log list with one another.

Unfortunately, it wasn’t the log list that drove us into the rooms. Many of us realized we had a problem but somehow we could still function and live. It wasn’t until the pain and suffering became so great, so unmanageable that we sought out a potential solution to what ailed us. The “loser list” records all the things we’ve lost when drinking, using and or acting out. It is the “loser list” that motivates the addict to work the Steps. The log list tells the newcomer they are powerless over their addiction pattern and the likelihood of relapse is very high. And, once the untreated addict commences to the drink, use or act out again, the suffering addict goes on a losing spree pursuing their addiction pattern to “gates of insanity or death.” All addicts regardless of their addiction pattern, (drugs, alcohol, food, sex, love, fantasy, codependence, gambling, etc.) lose the same things—externally and internally! Thus any addict can identify with any other kind of addict just by sharing their “loser list” with one another. Lastly, the log and loser list can now be used by the Sponsor as the newcomers “Rap Sheet,” their modus operandi (M.O.) as untreated addicts. When a newcomer balks at any of our suggestions, we simply refer them back to their log and loser list and ask them, “What does your log and loser list have to say about that?”

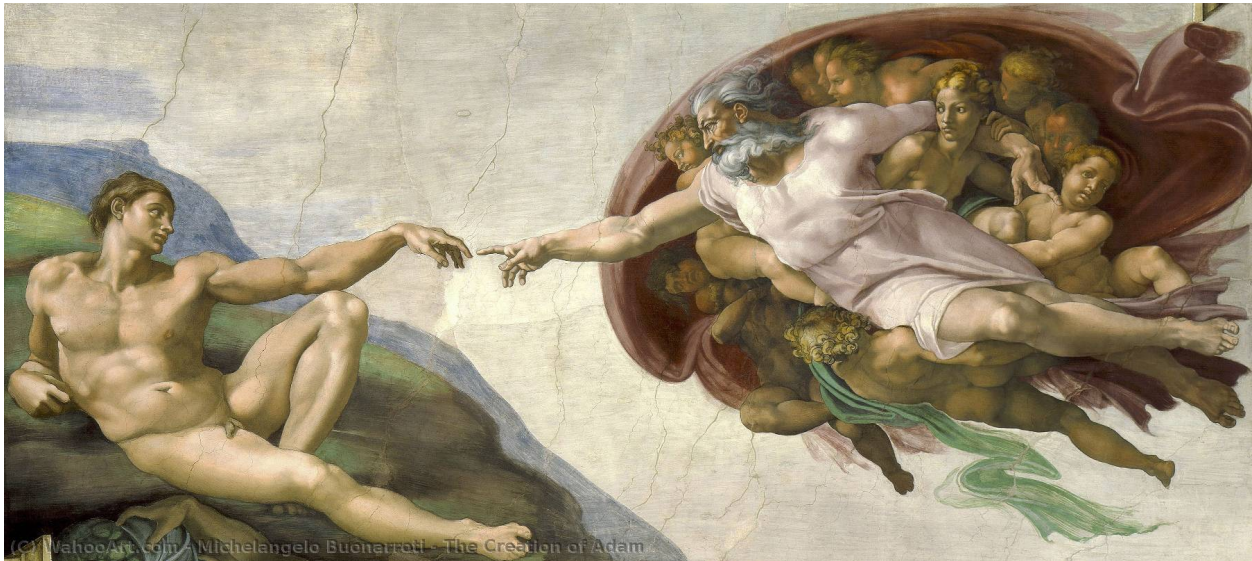
^{4b} **RAP Sheet:** “Record of Arrests and Prosecutions.”

⁵ **Alcoholics and drug dependent patients suffer a high risk of suicide.** The incidence of suicide in 5 year follow-up of untreated addicts was found to be 80 times that of the general population (Gelder et al., 1983:402). In my experience of working with others, I have found that some alcoholics and addicts enter into what I call “SO-DRIETY” where they can’t live with alcohol or drugs or their obsessive compulsive behaviour, but have no idea how to live without it. So they enter into SO-DRIETY, never working a 12 Step program, just remaining abstinent and progressively getting more restless, irritable, discontented, bored, depressed and anxious until the pain is so bad that they either relapse or take their own lives by suicide.

⁶ **Intuition Analogy:** Human evolution has given us five senses through which we discern reality through precepts which in turn are conceptualized and abstracted into an understanding of reality that has enabled us humans to become the dominant species on the planet. However, there is also a sixth sense—intuition, a gut feeling, that “spidey-sense” that subtly speaks to us. Have you ever had an intuitive thought or feeling and when you listened to it, in hindsight it was exactly what you needed to do? Conversely have you had an intuitive thought or gut feeling and didn’t listen to it and in hindsight found yourself saying, “Why didn’t I listen to that “friendly feeling” deep down within me? Is this not the voice of the Divine trying to guide us safely along a path in life? And, what is great about our Twelve Step program is we offer three spiritual tools: 1) a concept of a Power Greater than ourselves; 2) Prayer by which we communicate to this reality deep down within us; and 3) Meditation whereby we can listen and hear guidance from a Higher Conscience within.

⁷ **Fish Story:** This story is about being asleep versus being awake and was adapted from a story in Chuck C.’s book “*A New Pair of Glasses*” on page 111. A couple of fish were hanging out in the ocean when a third fish swam by saying, “Hey fellas, isn’t the water great!” and swam off. The one fish said to the other fish, “What is water?” The other fish replied, “I don’t know, I’ve never heard of water.” “Let’s go find out!” said the other fish. So the two fishes swam the seven seas asking everyone they encountered, “Do you know what water is?” The answer was always the same, “No I’ve never heard of water, what is it?” Why don’t the fish know what water is? They’re swimming in it! It’s all around them, yet they are unaware of the water. The analogy applies to our Step Two: *Came to believe in a Power Greater than ourselves that could restore us to sanity.* Most untreated addicts come into the rooms as barely “toilet trained apes,” they eat, defecate and fornicate and that’s about all they can do. They are basically living in their lower reptilian brains - pursuing their base desires, hand to mouth in flight or fight mode. They are unaware of the presence of a Higher Power. Like the fish who are unaware of what water is, most untreated addicts are caught up in the pursuit of happiness chasing their whims which often leads to either a hedonistic life or worse an addictive one. Most untreated addicts are *unconscious incompetents* unaware of a deeper reality, never awakening to that sixth sense, that intuitive knowing capable of solving the most baffling situations or problems. What is most amazing about the Twelve Step program is it is a process of waking up, of raising one’s thought life to a higher level of consciousness—a God Consciousness whereby the addict is able to connect to a power capable of easily controlling their desire to drink, use or act out by fulfilling a new purpose in life—to be of maximum service to God and their fellow human beings.

⁸ **Dog Story:** This is about witnessing the Higher Power at work. Mark Houston (Texas) an A.A. Sponsor who passed away February 9, 2010 at the age of 63, used to tell a story of a man who goes duck hunting with his friend. The man brings his dog along with him and when he shoots a duck it drops into the middle of the pond, whereby his dog gets up and walks across the water, picks up the duck and returns with it. His buddy doesn’t say a word. He shoots another duck which falls into the middle of the pond and once again his dog gets up, walks on the water, picks up the duck and returns with it and still his buddy doesn’t say anything. So finally he says to his friend, “Hey do you see anything wrong with my dog?” And his buddy says, “Yeah, that dog can’t swim!”—missing the miracle of a dog walking on the water. When we meet people in the rooms who are self-admitted addicts who were once powerless over their addictions, but now seem to be able to easily control their desire to drink, use or act out and have done so for many years—THAT’S THE DOG WALKING ON WATER! Let the testimony of others in the rooms bear witness to God doing for them that which they could not do themselves. Thus, coupled with the ability to think honestly and search diligently within ourselves, we start that process of coming to believe in a Higher Power.



⁹ **Michelangelo Story:** “The Creation of Adam” a fresco painting by Italian artist Michelangelo di Lodovico Buonarroti Simoni, which forms part of the Sistine Chapel's ceiling, painted c. 1508–1512. This image signifies God reaching out to Adam, straining to connect with humankind. You can see that God’s arm and finger is stretched taut. Adam on the other hand is sitting on earth like a chaise lounge chair with his arm lackadaisically held out with his wrist and fingers limp. One might suggest that Michelangelo is depicting the SLOTH of human beings in their effort to connect to the Divine. M. Scott Peck, M.D. (1936 - 2005) an American psychiatrist and author, (*The Road Less Traveled*) posits the notion of laziness as the original sin (Peck M. Scott. 1978:272). We, as human beings are too lazy to initiate the efforts to make conscious contact with God. However when you look closely at Michelangelo’s painting you can see that the distance between God’s finger and Adam’s finger is but an inch away signifying that the Divine is very close. And, with The Twelve Step program — a program of “Faith with Works”—a program of “Into Action” the addict can reach out and touch God and have a direct experience with the Divine Consciousness.

¹⁰ **Preacher Story:** A preacher is walking up the aisle of his church with pews on either side and he comes to one pew with a husband on one side and his wife on the other side and several children between them. The preacher asks the husband, “Are these your children?” The man replies, “I believe they are.” The preacher then asks the wife, “Are these your children?” The wife replies, “I KNOW they are!” Is there a difference? Sure, short of a DNA test the husband has only faith that the children are his, but the wife bore these children through her loins and knows by empirical fact that they are her children. The preacher story illustrates the difference between having faith that there is some kind of Higher Power at work in Step Two, but upon the completion of Step Five, the addict draws closer to this Power through the work of a spiritual and moral inventory and begins to have a direct experience.

¹¹ **Flight Story:** Did you know that airplanes are off-course 90 percent of their flight time due to turbulence and other conditions? Despite this fact most flights arrive at the correct destination at the intended arrival time. The reason for this phenomenon is quite simple—the pilot and co-pilot are constantly conferring with one another, communicating regularly with air traffic control as to the air-craft’s heading and location, and by continuously checking in with the plane’s internal guidance system the pilot makes many course corrections so that the plane arrives on time and at the intended destination. This is a great analogy for Step Ten: “*Check yourself before you wreck yourself.*” I start my day with a Step Three prayer and meditation and make a decision just for this day that I am going to do God’s will in all my affairs—with family, business, in the rooms of recovery and when I am in public. As I execute my day under God’s employment it is important that I remain cognizant of my motives and behaviours. Am I doing God’s will? I ask myself, Am I contributing to life OR am I thinking about myself 90 percent of the time. When I am off course I correct my actions through prayer, meditation, doing inventories, discussing my defects with others, making amends when necessary and carrying the message to those that still suffer. If I am diligent and employ a program of faith with works coupled with a no half measures attitude, I usually

end my day on God's terms. I conclude my day with the Step Seven prayer and meditation followed by a peaceful sleep knowing that the my Higher Power is at work enabling me to easily control my desire to drink, use or act out.

¹² **Starfish Story:** Being recovered and given the power to help others it is not feasible that we can save every suffering addict. Thousands are dropping into oblivion everyday. Many could recover if they had the opportunity we have enjoyed. How then shall we present that which has been so freely given us? (A.A. p. 19). The starfish story provides an answer. A couple folks are walking along the shoreline during low tide. It's a very hot day and there are thousands of exposed starfish suffering under the sun's burning rays, drying them up and killing them by the thousands. One fellow is constantly bending over many times picking up starfish and throwing them into ocean. The other asks, "What are doing?" and he replies, "I'm saving the starfish." The other fellow says, "Saving the starfish? Look around you there are thousands of dead starfish and many more are going to die under this incredibly hot sun, you're not making any kind of difference so why bother?" To which the other fellow replied while picking up another starfish, "I suppose you are correct in that assessment, but I think it makes a big difference to this starfish I have right here" and tosses the starfish back into the ocean. We can't save all the suffering addicts, but we can make a difference by sharing our story of recovery and win the newcomer's confidence so that we can take them through the miracle of the Twelve Step program ONE ADDICT AT A TIME.

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