**Step 3 inventory sheets**

**Step Three** “Made a decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God as I understand Him.”

**Set aside prayer**: *God please enable me to set aside everything I think I know for an open mind and a new experience. Help me see the Truth about the failure of my life run on self-will and my decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of God.*

**Instructions**: read and highlight:

1. BB pages 58-63
2. Step 3 in the 12 & 12 (can also look at NA 12 & 12 and OA 12 & 12)

Step 3 consists of:

- A decision
- We try to determine what constitutes our will and our lives. (Action)
- We seek an understanding of God by placing our will and our life in His care. (Solution)
- We reveal our problem which is our defect of character: selfishness and self-seeking

**Third Step Prayer**

"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!"  
(p. 63 BB) God, Take my will and my life. Guide me in my recovery. Show me how to live. AMEN (the step on p. 59 BB)

**Serenity Prayer**

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference.

**Third Step Promises – When you stop playing God and let God direct your life, amazing things will happen:**

1. God will direct your life and give you what you need.  
2. You will become less selfish and genuinely care for others.  
3. You will be interested in making a positive contribution to life.  
4. You will feel power flow in.  
5. You will enjoy peace of mind.  
6. You will face life successfully.  
7. You will begin to Spiritually Awaken.  
8. You will begin to lose your fear.  
9. You will become a different person.
Below are 2 ways to conceptualize this step:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Theme/Solution</th>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Defect</th>
<th>Result</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Faith (Keystone)</td>
<td>Let Him God-Dependence</td>
<td>Practice Willingness</td>
<td>Self-reliance Self Sufficiency</td>
<td>Serenity A new relationship that begins the “turning” from self to God.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Process</th>
<th>Experience</th>
<th>Result</th>
<th>Promise</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Decide on a relationship with God</td>
<td>Identify the relationship you need to have with God</td>
<td>Make a decision to have this relationship, which makes it happen.</td>
<td>Begin to act as if it has been established</td>
<td>I will comprehend the word serenity and I will know peace</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Step 3 seems to require more of us than the first 2 steps. In this step, we take affirmative action as a result of the developing awareness we have gained from working the first 2 steps. We are now asked to turn ourselves over to a Higher Power with total abandon. It is in these first 3 steps that we set the foundation for working all of the steps and for achieving the peace and security we are looking for.

List ways in which step 1 prepared you for step 3
List ways in which step 2 prepared you for step 3.
How does the Third Step allow me to build on the surrender I’ve developed in Steps One and Two?

**There are 3 requirements** in doing Step 3:

*We become convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success.*

*We must stop playing God.*

*We let God direct our lives: He knows better than we do.*

*As an alcoholic, you must get rid of selfishness or face death. There is no way of getting rid of selfishness without God. You must have God’s help.*
This is how. It’s simple:
1. Stop playing God.
2. Let God direct your life.

Page 62 bottom paragraph:

“This is the how and the why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn’t work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most Good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.”

WRITTEN INVENTORY “We made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

Write down your definition of each word in the step. Then look up each word individually in the dictionary and write down what you learn about the difference between what you thought it meant and the dictionary says it means.

**Decision:**

What does it mean to make a decision?

What is the significance for deciding to turn over our will to a loving God?

Why is making a decision central to working this step?

Am I ready to make this decision to let go, and let God take a hand in managing my life?

**Will**

What do you think your self-will is?

What does it mean to give your will over to the care of God?

Where do you use your will?

How have I acted on self-will? What were my motives?

How has acting on self-will affected my life? How has my self-will affected others?

Describe the times when my will hasn’t been enough. (For example, I couldn’t stay abstinent on my own will.)

Have there been times in my recovery when I’ve found myself subtly taking back my will and my life? What alerted me?
Life

What is your Life?

What does it mean to give your life over to the care of God?

What do I expect will happen to my life when I do actually turn my life and my will over to a God of my understanding?

Over to the care of God as we understood Him

What does "to the care of" mean to me?

What is your understanding of God?

What is the difference between my will and God's will?

Have there been times when I have been unable to let go and trust God to care for the outcome of a particular situation? Describe.

Have there been times when I have been able to let go and trust God for the outcome? Describe.

Step 3 questions:

What is the difference between the statements “We turned our will and our lives over to the care of God,” and “We made a decision to turn over our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him?”

How would the meaning of the step change if the words were changed to (WE) made a decision to turn our (SELF) will and our (UNMANAGEABLE) lives over to the care of God?”

What role could a sponsor play in helping me in this decision process?

Write on the idea that having taken Step One and Two-the degree of your success in the whole program depends on how far you take Step Three.

Principles, Belief & Faith: There is a spiritual progression from hope to faith to trust in the Third Step.

What does the word “faith” mean to you? What does faith have to do with reliance?

How have hope, faith, and trust become positive forces in my life?

What further action can I take to apply the principles of hope, faith, and trust in my recovery and to my life?

Do I really believe that God can and will take care of me? Why or why not?
“Dependence on God is really a means of gaining true independence.” What does this mean to you?

Discuss the implications of the phrase, “I can’t, God can, God will if I let Him.”

**Action**

In what way does Step Three call for action on your part?

How might you act differently now if God, your Higher Power were your guide?

How will I try to express God’s will in all my actions and words toward others?

The way we implement the decision we made in Step Three is to complete Steps Four through Nine. Are you willing to continue with the Steps in order to discover and build a working relationship with your own Higher Power?

Every day, write on events that you thought about longer than you needed to and the events that you left in God’s hands.

**Activities**

1. To remember this Step, you may find it helpful to write it down in the form of an affirmation. For example; “I have turned my life and my will over to the care of God today. All is well.”

2. If you knew that all was well and on schedule in your life today, how would you feel? If you knew that things were being managed by a power great than yourself in a way that would work out to your best interests, how would you act differently?

3. If you knew you had no power to control events, outcomes, or a particular person, how would you behave differently? What would you say or do? What would you stop saying or doing? What would you do differently for yourself in order to enjoy your own life now, to live in the present moment?

**Concluding Remarks on Step Three**

When we turn our lives over to the care of god as we understand Him, one of two things will happen:

If we are living in the first 3 steps in our lives and in all things, we are living maturely and responsibly, and then our Higher Power will work things out for us.

If we aren’t living in the first 3 steps in our lives, our Higher Power will allow us to feel the consequences of our actions, so we can learn from them and then act mature and responsible.

Note: this step says only that you are making a decision. The remaining steps help you to actually turn over your feelings about the situation and to find relief. You are not expected to know how to solve your problems all by yourself, or by willpower. Step 12 reminds us that the
“spiritual awakening” happens “as the result of these steps”. It is not a precondition for using the steps. Some 12-Step members interpret this step as a meaning that we are turning the problem over to the step process itself.

There is an old proverb from India which illustrates the point of the Third Step well. Two men were walking down an unpaved road, they were barefoot. The road was covered with small rocks which hurt their bare feet when they stepped on them. One of the men said to the other, “This journey would be much easier on our feet if this road was paved with leather.” The wiser of the two men replied, “Yes, this is true, but we could get the same effect by wearing a pair of shoes.” Alcoholics and addicts wish to pave the road with leather so they don’t need to wear shoes. The Twelve Steps are designed to become our shoes. The Steps help us change to fit into the world as it is, rather than continuing to try to get the world to change so we can be happy.

The following joke illustrates the rest of Step Three:
Question: Three bullfrogs are sitting on a log. One bullfrog makes a decision to jump in the pond. How many are left?
Answer: Three. The bullfrog only made a decision, he hasn't done anything yet.