

A Step Six willingness inventory

. . . we then look at Step Six. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all every one? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing. (76:1, 'Alcoholics Anonymous')

Steps Seven to Twelve solve alcoholism by shifting the focus from my welfare and others' conduct onto my conduct and others' welfare, starting from Step Seven:

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 which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen." We have now completed Step Seven. (76:2)

The inventory is done. The confession is done. No further analysis of self is needed.

What is needed now is action to abandon self. That requires willingness and only willingness. I cannot change myself. I can, however, take action that clears the way for God to change me. This is why willingness is indispensable.

The following passages and associated questions aim to tease out whether the individual (me or someone I am sponsoring) is or is not willing to have God remove the problem—self-centredness.

For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that. My wife and I abandoned ourselves with enthusiasm to the idea of helping other alcoholics to a solution of their problems. (14:6 et seq.)

Simple but not easy; a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all. (14:1)

Ideas, emotions, and attitudes which were once the guiding forces of the lives of these men are suddenly cast to one side, and a completely new set of conceptions and motives begin to dominate them. (27:4)

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely. (58:3)

Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it will kill us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His 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. (62:2)

But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harbouring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die.

If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. The grouch and the brainstorm were not for us. They may be dubious luxury of normal men, but for the alcoholics, these things are poison. (66:1–2)

To get over drinking will require a transformation of thought and attitude. We all had to place recovery above everything, for without recovery we would have lost both home and business. (143:1)

1. Do I believe I will die if I remain trapped in self-centredness?
2. Am I willing, without reservation, to jettison every idea, emotion, and attitude that my Steps Four and Five have shown to be the cause of my ruin, both drunk and sober?
3. Am I willing, without reservation, to forgive everyone for everything, knowing that my anger will kill me if I don't?

4. Must I be rid of my self-centredness at all costs?
5. Am I willing, without reservation, to turn to God in all matters at all times?
6. Am I willing, without reservation, to abandon myself, the way people abandon a sinking ship, with enthusiasm to work and self-sacrifice for others?
7. Am I willing, without reservation, to place the actions of Steps Eight to Twelve above everything?
8. Am I willing to focus solely on others' welfare and my conduct, leaving my welfare and others' conduct to God?

He should not be pushed or prodded by you, his wife, or his friends. If he is to find God, the desire must come from within. (95:3)

I cannot force anyone else's willingness or my own.

If I am unwilling, I need to look deep inside at my experience and face, fearlessly, the proposition that God is everything or God is nothing (53:2). There is no half-way house; there is no middle-of-the-road solution (25:3).