

Problem solving for problem people

One job as AAs is to identify problems and ask God for help in solving them. Our job is also to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and others (page 77 of the book 'Alcoholics Anonymous'). When I have a problem in any area, page 69 suggests how to solve it.

In Step Twelve, every area of my life must be looked at. 'All my affairs' means precisely that. To work Step Twelve involves periodically reviewing each area to identify problems. A problem is any block to my being happy, joyous, and free, and of maximum service.

Here is a template to help with this, based on pages 69–70.

- (1) Ask God to mould sane and sound ideals.
- (2) Ask, 'am I being selfish?'
- (3) Ask God to help me live up to them.
- (4) Remember my abilities, attributes, and faculties are God-given and therefore good, neither to be used lightly or selfishly not to be despised and loathed.
- (5) Be willing to grow towards the ideal (recognising this will not be an overnight matter).
- (6) Be willing to make amends except where to do so would injure them or others.
- (7) Ask God what to do about each specific matter.
- (8) Counsel with others.
- (9) Let God be the judge, not others.
- (10) Avoid hysterical thinking or advice.
- (11) Earnestly pray for the right ideal, for guidance in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing.
- (12) If the problem is very troublesome, I throw myself the harder into helping others. I think of their needs and work for them.

Suppose we fall short of the chosen ideal and stumble? Does this mean we are going to get drunk? ... If we are sorry for what we have done, and have the honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven and will have learned our lesson.

(70:1)

There is an important teaching here: it is not the degree of attainment that determines whether we will get drunk but our willingness and action to take us towards the ideal, wherever we are on the path.