

AA can NEVER be just a miracle. The single act of surrender can produce sobriety by its stopping effect upon the ego. Unfortunately, that ego WILL return unless the individual learns to accept a disciplined way of life, which means the tendency toward ego comeback is PERMANENTLY checked.

This is not news to AA members. They have learned that a SINGLE surrender is NOT enough. Under the wise leadership of the AA "founding fathers" the need for CONTINUED endeavor to maintain that miracle has been steadily stressed. The Twelve Steps urge REPEATED inventories, NOT JUST ONE, and the Twelfth Step is in itself a routine reminder that one MUST work at preserving sobriety are all essential. Moreover, it is referred to as Twelfth Step work—which is exactly what it is. But THIS time, the miracle is for the OTHER person.

“The 12 Steps as Ego Deflating Devices” By Dr. Harry M. Tiebout, M.D.

I CANNOT get by on what I did a few years ago. We go to maintaining & growing on Steps 10, 11 & 12 and these ARE important Steps. But they are NO substitute for repeated work with Steps 1 through 9.

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This week, do three things for others (that THEY would want to have done) without letting anyone knowing you did it.

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Speaking for Peace:

Today, the purpose of speaking is to create happiness in the listener. Have this intention: Today every word I utter will be chosen consciously. I will refrain from complaints, condemnation, and criticism.

Your practice is to do at least one of the following:

-Tell someone how much you appreciate them.

-Express genuine gratitude to those who have helped and loved you.

-Offer healing or nurturing words to someone who needs them.

-Show respect to someone whose respect you value.

If you find that you are reacting negatively to anyone, in a way that isn't peaceful, refrain from speaking and keep silent. Wait to speak until you feel centered and calm, and then speak with respect.

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Well I was once mad, now I am glad. Yes, glad to be alive.

At times I feel so much joy that it seems like a dream.

Recently I went to 7 funerals in a very short space of time. My Dad, my Brother, my Sponsor, a cousin killed himself, my partner's Mother, a sponsee who I had sponsored for 10 years died. I was buckling under, the grief, panic attacks started to hit me. I kept thinking, "Feel the grief, don't try and repress it". I would not be human if I did not feel grief. Those 7 funerals, on reflection, made me realize that life is to be enjoyed. I would sit and meditate on grief. This, what I see as spiritual awakening, is about to realize that if our happiness depends on what other people say or do, then we are going to be miserable for the rest of our lives. Spiritual awakening is to see that I am the problem, my reactions to life's events.

Well, today I know my experience had helped people. I have 12 stepped people. One recently celebrated 25 years of sobriety. I pass the message when I can, where I can, to who wants to listen.

My pain has helped other people not to do what I did.

I practice these spiritual principles in every area of my life. Emotionally, sexually, financial, workplace, home, meeting room. I try my best. I tried one time, to try and save the world. My intentions were honorable, but I burnt out. So, today I would sooner do good, than bad. Today I would sooner kiss someone's feet, rather than fight them!

I owe my life to David B, the man who 12 stepped me and took me through the Steps. (A lovely man, I miss him). He put a lot of effort into passing the 12 Step message, he accepted life, a life's term, and in doing so, had peace of mind.

I owe so much to my Buddhist teacher, Ajahn Sumedho, whose caring non religious message goes hand in hand with my 12 Step path. Today I know what the spiritual path is about. It is not about religion, but about understanding life, understanding people and understanding that the more you want your own way, the more you suffer!

We all have peace of mind, it may be buried under the dust of defect of character. Blow that dust away and there is your peace of mind. If you are miserable now, then practice opposites. It is as simple as that.

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Have you been able to reach out to another recovering addict? If so, describe the situation and how it feels to you.

What kind of approach would you like to have had when you first started the program? How can you implement that type of approach in your life to others now?

What you say if someone asked how the 12 Step program has worked for you?

How do you usually handle conflict? Do you know of any way to be more effective in conflict resolution? If so, how would you become more effective? What would be the steps?

How much time do you want to and are able to allow for working with others on their program? How will you go about setting that time aside?

What outside resources can you call on when you need help as a sponsor?

How do you know if you are suited to helping another person work a 12 Step program?

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Step 12 Reflection Questions

After prayerful consideration, write out the answers to the following questions:

- 1) Do I really believe/have I fully experienced that the root source of all my trouble is selfishness/self-centeredness?
- 2) Am I convinced that the solution to my self-centeredness is OTHER/other-centeredness?
- 3) Do I feel resistance to basing my life on the principle of service to others?
- 4) In what ways am I ACTUALLY of service to others now?
- 5) What are the principles I need to practice in my daily life?
 - a) With my spouse/significant relationship?
 - b) In my family?
 - c) In my work?
 - d) In my community?

Final Reflection

“We are in the world to play the role He has assigned” (BB page 68).
What is your role?

Our Job

“Your job now is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others...” (BB page 102).

The natural way for God to manifest and work in this world is through people, through us.

We have intellect and will, which lead to knowledge and action. The proper use of the intellect is to seek KNOWLEDGE of God’s will. Ask yourself: WHAT IS MY VISION OF GOD’S WILL FOR ME? When we use our will properly, we align our will with God’s will. Therefore, our prayer is “THY WILL BE DONE.”

When we are in HARMONY with Creative Intelligence, the Spirit of the Universe which underlies all, our Higher Power is revealed to us and through us to others. We are possessed with a new sense of power and direction (BB page 46).

Therefore, because our job is to seek KNOWLEDGE of His will and the POWER to carry it out, we:

- “...grow in understanding...” (BB page 84) – KNOWLEDGE.
- “...grow in...effectiveness...” (BB page 84) – POWER.
- ...stay in ACTION and SERVICE.
- “...perfect and enlarge (our) spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others...” (BB page 14 and 15).

Here is the “Big Book’s” simplified formula:

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| 1) Clean house – Step Ten | Remove obstacles (as they appear) to conscious contact with God deep down within ourselves. |
| 2) Trust God – Step Eleven | Improve our conscious contact with the Source of Power. |
| 3) Help others – Step Twelve | Live or fulfill our purpose; our mission. |

Periodically many will go through the entire process again with a DIFFERENT sponsor or step guide. Some do it annually. Bill Wilson recommended “...annual or semiannual housecleanings” (12 & 12 page 89). My rhythm is about every three years. In prayer, be led by the Spirit to find your own rhythm and step guide.

“We will be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit...” (BB page 164) and someday perhaps we’ll meet as we “...trudge the Road of Happy Destiny” (BB page 164).

Meanwhile, let us all “...live in thankful contemplation of Him who presides over us all” (Tradition Twelve, long form. BB page 566).

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We ask ourselves three questions before speaking (re: what we thought of absolute, dramatic necessity to utter):

1. Is it true?
2. Is it necessary?
3. Is it kind?

Might be titled Freedom From Speech. Also contains a built-in 'pause.' As I considered this practice it occurred to me that if I use it, even when not bothered or not displaced, all my speech will be truthful, necessary and kind!

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The Oxford Group "five C's":

- 1) Confidence
- 2) Confession
- 3) Conviction
- 4) Conversion
- 5) Continuance

The first thing in trying to help another alcoholic is to get their confidence. We do this by telling them our own experiences with drinking, so that they see that we know what we are talking about. If we share our experiences frankly, they will know that we are sincerely trying to help them. They will realize that they are not alone in their illness and that others have had experiences as bad or worse than theirs. This gives them confidence that they can be helped.

The second thing is to encourage their confidences and their confession of their own experiences. By frankly sharing with the prospect, we get them talking about their own experiences. They will open up and confess things to us that they haven't been able to tell other people. And they feel better when this confession has got these things out into the open. It's the things that are kept hidden that fester in the heart and weigh on the mind. They feel a sense of release and freedom after they have opened up their hearts to us.

The third thing is to convince the prospect and encourage this conviction. The prospect must be convinced that their lives have become unmanageable and are seriously disturbed by their drinking. They must face the fact that they must try to be honest with themselves and try to face themselves as they really are. They must be convinced that they must do something about their drinking and they must be made to see that their whole life may depend upon this conviction.

The fourth thing is to bring about a change in the prospect, so that they experience a form of conversion. Conversion means change. The prospect must learn to change their way of thinking. Until now, almost everything they have done has been connected in some way with drinking. Now they must face a new kind of a life - without liquor. They must be made to feel that they can't overcome their drinking by their own will power - that they can't fight liquor - so they must turn to a power greater than themselves for the strength they need. This conversion to a belief in a Higher Power comes gradually, as they try it and find that it works.

The fifth thing is to continue with the prospect as long as is necessary. Continuance means our staying with them until they have a foothold in this new way of living. We should stay with them and encourage them to attend meetings regularly. They will soon learn that following the program is a lot easier in fellowship with others who are trying to do the same things. We should continue to help them by keeping in touch with them, so that they don't get out of touch with A.A. Continuance is another name for good sponsorship.

7 Points of Alcoholics Anonymous, pages 91-93

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STEP 12

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

I was brought up to look after others. I just got tired of being responsible for others. Who cared about me. Nobody helped me... but again I never asked anybody for help. I had to grow up. When I asked for help I got it. Now I like to help others. I like to go to meetings.

QUESTIONS

1. Do I believe I have experienced a spiritual awakening in my life?
Was it as a result of the eleven previous steps?
Can I describe how this spiritual awakening came about?
How did it change me?
2. Do I ever carry the message to other alcoholics?
How and when do I do this?
How would I describe some of these experiences?
How do I feel about these experiences?
3. Do I believe it is necessary for us to share our experience, strength and hope with other alcoholics?
How can this be done?
4. While introducing recovery principles into my life what areas need more healing, more growth or change?
5. How has my relationship with myself changed since I began recovery?
What do I think about myself now? What has changed the most in my life?
6. Do I wish to bring the spirit of love and tolerance into all parts of my life?
7. Do I still want to grow spiritually?
Do I recognize that it is important to grow along spiritual lines and that I need not be perfect to go with God?

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What is the best thing that ever happened to you?

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Unknown - My integrity is not based on your behavior.

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A life of total dedication to the truth also means a life of willingness to be personally challenged. The only way we can be certain our map of reality is valid is to expose it to the criticism and challenge of other mapmakers. Otherwise we live in a closed system - within a bell jar, to use Silva Path's analogy, rebreathing our own stinking air, more and more subject to delusion. Yet because of the pain inherent in the process of revising our map of reality, we mostly seek to avoid or ward off any challenges to its validity. The tendency

to avoid challenging is so omnipresent in human beings that it can properly be considered a characteristic of human nature. But calling it natural does not mean it is essential or beneficial or unchangeable behavior. It is also natural to defecate in our pants and never brush our teeth. Yet we teach ourselves to do the unnatural. Until the unnatural becomes second nature. Indeed all self-discipline might be defined as teaching ourselves to do the unnatural. Another characteristic of human nature - perhaps the one that makes us most human - is our capacity to do the unnatural, to transcend and hence transform our own nature. - M. Scott Peck

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