

STEP TWELVE

WEEK THREE

STEP TWELVE:

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.

THIS WEEKS THEME: How the Founders practiced these principles.

(How The Founders Worked The Steps)

Bill D. - Alcoholic Number Three- 2nd Edition Big Book Story

The next question they asked was, "You can quit twenty-four hours, can't you?" I said, "Sure, yes, anybody can do that, for twenty-four hours." They said, "That's what we're talking about. Just twenty-four hours at a time." That sure did take a load off of my mind. Every time I'd start thinking about drinking, I would think of the long, dry years ahead without having a drink; but this idea of twenty-four hours, that it was up to me from then on, was a lot of help.

It was in the next two or three days after I had first met Doc and Bill, That I finally came to a decision to turn my will over to God and to go along with this program the best that I could. Their talk and action had instilled me with a certain amount of confidence, although I was not too absolutely certain. I wasn't afraid that the program wouldn't work, but I still was doubtful whether I would be able to hang on to the program, but I did come to the conclusion that I was willing to put everything I had into it, with God's power, and that I wanted to do just that. As soon as I had done that I did feel a great release.

I knew that I had a helper that I could rely upon, who wouldn't fail me. If I could stick to Him and listen, I would make it. Then I remember when the boys came back, that

I told them, "I have gone to this Higher Power and I have told Him that I am willing to put His world first, above everything. I have already done it, and I am willing to do it again here in the presence of you or I am willing to say it any place, anywhere in the world from now on and not be ashamed of it." And this, as I said, certainly gave me a lot of confidence, seemed to take a lot of the burden off me.

I remember telling them too that it was going to be awfully tough, because I did some other things, smoked cigarettes and played penny ante poker, sometimes bet on the horse races and they said, "Don't you think you're having more trouble with this drinking than with anything else at the present time? Don't you believe you are going to have all you can do to get rid of that?" I said, "Yes," reluctantly, "I probably will." They said, "Let's forget about those other things, that is, trying to eliminate them all at once, and concentrate on the drink." Of course, we had talked over quite a number of failings that I had and made a sort of an inventory, which wasn't too difficult, because I had an awful lot of things wrong that were very apparent to me, because I knew all about them. Then they said, "There is one more thing. You should go out and take this program to somebody else that needs it and wants it."

The Man Who Mastered Fear – Archie Trowbridge – Founder AA Detroit

Here, while in a hospital bed, men with clear eyes, happy faces, and a look of assurance and purposefulness about them, came to see me and told me their stories. Some of these were hard to believe, but it did not require a giant brain to perceive that they had something I could use. How could I get it? It was simple, they said, and went on to explain to me in their own language the program of recovery and daily living which we know today as the **Twelve Steps of A.A.** Dr. Bob dwelt at length on how prayer had given him release, time and time again, from the nearly overpowering compulsion to take a drink. He it was who convinced me, because his own conviction was so real, that a Power greater than myself could help me in the crises of life, and that the means of communicating with this Power was simple prayer. Here was a tall, rugged, highly educated Yankee talking in a matter of course way about God and prayer. If he and these other fellows could do it, so could I.

He Sold Himself Short – Earl T. Founder AA Chicago

I stayed in Akron two or three weeks on my initial trip trying to absorb as much of the program and philosophy as possible. I spent a great deal of time with Dr. Bob, whenever he had the time to spare, and in the homes of two or three other people, trying to see how the family lived the program. Every evening we would meet at the home of one of the members and have coffee and doughnuts and spend a social evening.

The day before I was due to go back to Chicago, a Wednesday and Dr. Bob's afternoon off, he had me down to the office and we spent three or four hours formally going through the Six-Step program as it was at that time. The six steps were:

1. Complete deflation.
2. Dependence and guidance from a Higher Power.
3. Moral inventory.
4. Confession.
5. Restitution.
6. Continued work with other alcoholics.

Dr. Bob led me through all of these steps. At the moral

inventory, he brought up some of my bad personality traits or character defects, such as selfishness, conceit, jealousy, carelessness, intolerance, ill-temper, sarcasm and resentments. We went over these at great length and then he finally asked me if I wanted these defects of character removed. When I said yes, we both knelt at his desk and prayed, each of us asking to have these defects taken away.

This picture is still vivid. If I live to be a hundred, it will always stand out in my mind. It was very impressive and I wish that every A.A. could have the benefit of this type of sponsorship today. Dr. Bob always emphasized the religious angle very strongly, and I think it helped. I know it helped me. Dr. Bob then led me through the restitution step, in which I made a list of all of the persons I had harmed, and worked out ways and means of slowly making restitution.

I made several decisions at that time. One of them was that I would try to get a group started in Chicago; the second was that I would have to return to Akron to attend meetings at least every two months until I did get a group started in Chicago; third, I decided I must place this program above everything else, even my family, because if I did not maintain my sobriety I would lose my family

anyway. If I did not maintain my sobriety, I would not have a job. If I did not maintain my sobriety, I would have no friends left. I had few enough at that time.

worldly clamors, mostly those within myself. And so it had been ever since. How blind I had been.

At the hospital I was separated from alcohol for the last time. Treatment seemed wise, for I showed signs of delirium tremens.

There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost. I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch. I have not had a drink since.

My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies. We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment. I expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals, admitting my wrong. Never was I to be critical of them. I was to right all such matters to the utmost of my ability.

I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense. I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure.

My friend promised when these things were done I would enter upon a new relationship with my Creator; that I would have the elements of a way of living which answered all my problems. 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. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all.

These were revolutionary and drastic proposals, but the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric. There was a sense of victory, followed by such a peace and serenity as I had never known. There was utter confidence. I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through. God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound.

For a moment I was alarmed, and called my friend, the doctor, to ask if I were still sane. He listened in wonder as I talked.

Finally he shook his head saying, "Something has happened to you I don't understand. But you had better hang on to it. Anything is better than the way you were." The good doctor now sees many men who have such experiences. He knows that they are real.

While I lay in the hospital the thought came that there were thousands of hopeless alcoholics who might be glad to have what had been so freely given me. Perhaps I could help some of them. They in turn might work with others.

My friend had emphasized the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs. Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me. Faith without works was dead, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his