

Step 2 Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

**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 my need to come to believe in a power greater than myself.*

<b>Principle</b>	<b>Problem</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Process</b>	<b>Practice</b>	<b>Promise</b>
Hope (Cornerstone)	Insanity, doubt, disbelief, defiance	Make a decision to have faith	Think of your own conception of God as YOU understand Him	Be receptive, reasonable & open- minded; change your thinking.	When you look for God, you will find Him.

Step 2 **Prayer:** BB pp. xxvii, pp. 25, 28, 42-43, 44-60, Chapter 4 “We Agnostics”, Appendix II (pages 567-568) and pages 9-16.

Step 2 **Promise:** what often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves. (PP 569-570)

The spiritual principle of this step is hope.

(98: 2) Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well regardless of anyone. No person on this earth can stop his recovery from alcohol, or prevent his being supplied with whatever is good for him. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house.

The first aspect of this step is that we admit that on our own, we are powerless over our addiction, and on our own, this is no hope for us to recovery from this seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.

If on my own, I have no Power, then the only hope for my recovery is a Power greater than myself who can restore me to sanity

**The Second Step consists of 4 main questions for consideration:**

1) Do you believe or are you even willing to believe that there is a Power that will solve your problem? (First of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Step Proposition). Here we need to lay aside prejudice and to express a willingness to believe.

2) Do you have a conception of that Power which makes sense to you and works for you? What is your own conception of God as YOU understand Him?

3) 3 Barriers to Spiritual Growth: Obstinacy, Sensitiveness and Unreasoning Prejudice (48:0)

4) Is that Power, which the Big Book quite often refers to God, everything, or, if not, is He nothing? (53:2). At this point, we will have to make a choice. (2<sup>nd</sup> Step second proposition).

5) The last thing we need to look at in the Second Step is: where do we find God? Where are we going to find this Power? To do so, we have to honestly seek that Power.

Now we know what the problem is the mental obsession with alcohol. We also know that our physical allergy will never go away. We admitted to ourselves we were powerless over alcohol. So, how to we fix it?

## **What the solution is not: AA fellowship is not the Big Book Solution**

17:1 We, of ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, know one hundred men who were once just as hopeless as Bill. All have recovered. They have solved the drink problem.

17:2 We are ordinary Americans. All sections of this country and many of its occupations are represented, as well as many political, economic, social and religious backgrounds. We are people who normally would not mix. But there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful. We are like the passengers of a great liner the moment after rescue from shipwreck, when camaraderie, joyousness and democracy pervade the vessel from steerage to Captain's table. Unlike the feelings of the ship's passengers, however, our joy in escape from disaster does not subside as we go our individual ways. The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us. But that in itself would never have held us together as we are now joined.

17:3 The tremendous fact for every one of us that we have discovered a common solution.~ We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer alcoholism.

Those who have recovered have all found a common solution. That solution is a **vital spiritual experience**. The fellowship of AA is great. In fact, it is awesome. But the fellowship of AA is not sufficient to keep us sober. In other words, if just going to meeting is your program of recovery, you will not stay sober.

In Step 1 we learned:

xxvi:4 Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks - drinks which they see others taking with impunity. After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery.

xxvii:1 On the other hand - and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand - once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for alcohol, the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules.

xxvii:2 Men have cried out to me in sincere and despairing appeal: "Doctor, I cannot go on like this! I have everything to live for! I must stop, but I cannot! You must help me!"

xxvii:3 Faced with this problem, if a doctor is honest with himself, he must sometimes feel his own inadequacy. Although he gives all that is in him, it often is not enough. One feels that something more than human power is needed to produce the essential psychic change. Though the aggregate of recoveries resulting from psychiatric effort is perhaps considerable, we physicians must admit we have made little impression upon the problem as a whole. Many types do not respond to the ordinary psychological approach.

43:3 Once more: the alcoholic at certain times has no effective mental defense against the first drink. Except in a few rare cases, neither he nor any other human being can provide such a defense. His defense must come from a higher Power.

23:3 If you are seriously alcoholic, we believe you have no middle-of-the-road solution. You are in a position where life is becoming impossible, and if you have passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, you have but two alternatives: one is to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of

your intolerable situation as best you can; and the other, to find what we have found. This you can do if you honestly want to, and are willing to make the effort.

At this point in the recovery process all we need is a desire and some willingness. God is the solution to my hopeless and insane behavior around food. Our solution must be spiritual. On our own, we are powerless.

25: 1 There is a solution. Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the levelling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence, of which we had not even dreamed.

**What is the simple kit of spiritual tools? The Big Book.**

**What is the Fourth Dimension? Living in steps 10, 11 and 12, Spirit of the Sunlight.**

**The Solution is a vital spiritual experience, a relationship with your Creator and access to a Power greater than myself who can restore me to sanity.**

25:2 The great fact is just this, and nothing less: that we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences, which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows, and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.

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The Big Book emphasizes that the only hope for the addict is a vital spiritual experience.

27:4 "Yes," replied the doctor, "there is. Exceptions to cases such as yours have been occurring since early times. Here and there, once in a while, alcoholics have had what are called **vital spiritual experiences**. To me these occurrences are phenomena. They appear to be in the nature of huge emotional displacements and rearrangements. 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. In fact, I have been trying to produce some such emotional rearrangement within you. With many individuals the methods which I employed are successful, but I have never been successful with an alcoholic of your description."

What is your own conception of God as YOU understand Him?

The Big Book is clear that each person needs to come to believe in a Higher Power which makes sense and works for each individual person. We need to choose our own conception of God as we understand Him. There is no one right way to connect to God and the essence of one's soul. The 12 Steps are a spiritual in nature, not religious.

Definition: Spirituality is something that is found deep **within oneself**. It is whatever gives an individual meaning, purpose and fulfillment in life. Spiritual is reflected in how you love, accept and relate to the world and the people around you.

Definition: Religion is one way that we express our spirituality. It refers to beliefs, practices and traditions with a particular group of people who share the same creed (beliefs), code (rituals and rites) and code (rules for living/ethics and morals).

28:3 The distinguished American psychologist, William James, in his book, "Varieties of Religious Experience," indicates a multitude of ways in which men have found God. As a group, we have no desire to convince anyone that there is only one way by which God can be discovered. If what we have learned, and felt, and seen, means anything at all, it means that all of us, whatever our race, creed or color, are the children of a living Creator with whom we may form a relationship upon simple and understandable terms as soon as we are willing and honest enough to try. Those having religious affiliations will find here nothing disturbing to their beliefs or ceremonies. There is no friction among us over such matters.

28: 4 We think it no concern of ours, as a group, what religious bodies our members identify themselves with as individuals. This should be an entirely personal affair which each one decides for himself in the light of past association, or his present choice. Not all of us have joined religious bodies, but most of us favor such memberships.

The purpose of this step is to come to believe in a HP which makes sense and works for each individual person. Developing and deepening our understanding of a Higher Power is what the remaining steps will accomplish.

42:2 "Then they outlined the spiritual answer and program of action which a hundred of them had followed successfully. Though I had been only a nominal churchman, their proposals were not, intellectually, hard to swallow. But the program of action, though entirely sensible, was pretty drastic. It meant I would have to throw several lifelong conceptions out of the window. That was not easy. But the moment I made up my mind to go through with the process, I had the curious feeling that my alcoholic condition was relieved, as in fact it proved to be.

42:3 "Quite as important was the discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems. I have since been brought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before. My old manner of life was by no means a bad one, but I would not exchange its best moments for the worst I have now. I would not go back to it even if I could."

43:2 Most doctors and psychiatrists agree with our conclusions. One of these men, staff member of a world-renowned hospital, recently made this statement to some of us: "What you say about the general hopelessness of the average alcoholic's plight is, in my opinion, correct. As to two of you men, whose stories I have heard, there is no doubt in my mind that you were 100% hopeless, apart from Divine help. Had you offered yourselves as patients at this hospital, I would not have taken you, if I had been able to avoid it. People like you are too heartbreaking. Though not a religious person, I have profound respect for the spiritual approach in such cases as yours. For most cases, there is virtually no other solution."

Bill Wilson, our New York City co-founder, had a great deal of difficulty accepting this spiritual solution to alcoholism. In "Bill's Story" he describes how he "came to believe".

(8:1) (From Bills Story) No words can tell of the loneliness and despair I found in that bitter morass of self-pity. Quicksand stretched around me in all directions. I had met my match. I had been overwhelmed. Alcohol was my master.

(8:2) Trembling, I stepped from the hospital a broken man. Fear sobered me for a bit. Then came the insidious insanity of that first drink, and on Armistice Day 1934, I was off again. Everyone became resigned to the certainty that I would have to be shut up somewhere, or would stumble along to a miserable end. How dark it is before the dawn! In reality that was the beginning of my last debauch. I was soon to be catapulted into

what I like to call the fourth dimension of existence. I was to know happiness, peace, and usefulness, in a way of life that is incredibly more wonderful as time passes.

(8:3) Near the end of that bleak November, I sat drinking in my kitchen. With a certain satisfaction I reflected there was enough gin concealed about the house to carry me through that night and the next day. My wife was at work. I wondered whether I dared hide a full bottle of gin near the head of our bed. I would need it before daylight.

(8:4) My musing was interrupted by the telephone. The cheery voice of an old school friend asked if he might come over. He was sober. It was years since I could remember his coming to New York in that condition. I was amazed. Rumor had it that he had been committed for alcoholic insanity. I wondered how he had escaped. Of course he would have dinner, and then I could drink openly with him. Unmindful of his welfare, I thought only of recapturing the spirit of other days. There was that time we had chartered an airplane to complete a jag! His coming was an oasis in this drear~ desert of futility. The very thing - an oasis! Drinkers are like that.

(9:1) The door opened and he stood there, fresh-skinned and glowing. There was something about his eyes. He was inexplicably different. What had happened?

(9:2) I pushed a drink across the table. He refused it. Disappointed but curious, I wondered what had got into the fellow. He wasn't himself.

(9:3) "Come, what's all this about?" I queried.

(9:4) He looked straight at me. Simply, but smilingly, he said, "I've got religion."

(9:5) I was aghast. So that was it - last summer an alcoholic crackpot; now, I suspected, a little cracked about religion. He had that starry-eyed look. Yes, the old boy was on fire all right. But bless his heart, let him rant! Besides, my gin would last longer than his preaching.

(9:6) But he did no ranting. In a matter of fact way he told how two men had appeared in court, persuading the judge to suspend his commitment. They had told of a simple religious idea and a practical program of action. That was two months ago and the result was self-evident. It worked!

(9:7) He had come to pass his experience along to me - if I cared to have it. I was shocked, but interested. Certainly I was interested. I had to be, for I was hopeless.

(10:1) He talked for hours. Childhood memories rose before me. I could almost hear the sound of the preacher's voice as I sat, on still Sundays, way over there on the hillside; there was that proffered temperance pledge I never signed; my grandfather's good natured contempt of some church folk and their doings; his insistence that the spheres really had their music; but his denial of the preacher's right to tell him how he must listen; his fearlessness as he spoke of these things just before he died; these recollections welled up from the past. They made me swallow hard.

(10:2) That war-time day in old Winchester Cathedral came back again.

(10:3) I had always believed in a power greater than myself. I had often pondered these things. I was not an atheist. Few people really are, for that means blind faith in the strange proposition that this universe originated in a cipher, and aimlessly rushes nowhere. My intellectual heroes, the chemists, the astronomers, even the evolutionists, suggested vast laws and forces at work. Despite contrary indications, I had little doubt that a mighty purpose and rhythm underlay all. How could there be so much of precise and immutable law, and no intelligence? I simply had to believe in a Spirit of the Universe, who knew neither time nor limitation. But that was as far as I had gone.

(10:4) With ministers, and the world's religions, I parted right there. When they talked of a God personal to me, who was love, superhuman strength and direction, I became irritated and my mind snapped shut against such a theory.

(11:1) To Christ I conceded the certainty of a great man, not too closely followed by those who claimed Him. His moral teaching - most excellent. For myself, I had adopted those parts which seemed convenient and not too difficult; the rest I disregarded.

(11:2) The wars which had been fought, the burnings and chicanery that religious dispute had facilitated, made me sick. I honestly doubted whether, on balance, the religions of mankind had done any good. Judging from what I had seen in Europe and since, the power of God in human affairs was negligible, the Brotherhood of Man a grim jest. If there was a Devil, he seemed the Boss Universal, and he certainly had me.

(11:3) But my friend sat before me, and he made the point-blank declaration that God had done for him what he could not do for himself. His human will had failed. Doctors had pronounced him incurable. Society was about to lock him up. Like myself, he had admitted complete defeat. Then he had, in effect, been raised from the dead, suddenly taken from the scrap heap to a level of life better than the best he had ever known!

(11:4) Had this power originated in him? Obviously it had not. There had been no more power in him than there was in me at that minute; and this was none at all.

(11:5) That floored me. It began to look as though religious people were right after all. Here was something at work in a human heart which had done the impossible. My ideas about miracles were drastically revised right then. Never mind the musty past; here sat a miracle directly across the kitchen table. He shouted great tidings.

(11:6) I saw that my friend was much more than inwardly reorganized. He was on a different footing. His roots grasped a new soil.

(12:5) Thus was I convinced that God is concerned with us humans, when we want Him enough. At long last I saw, I felt, I believed. Scales of pride and prejudice fell from my eyes. A new world came into view.

(12:6) The real significance of my experience in the Cathedral burst upon me. For a brief moment, I had needed and wanted God. There had been a humble willingness to have Him with me - and He came. But soon the sense of His presence had been blotted out by worldly clamors, mostly those within myself. And so it had been ever since. How blind I had been.

**Optional:** Our primary character defect is selfishness. We need to practice the opposite and become unselfish.

14:1 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.

Here Bill W. describes his spiritual awakening:

14: 2 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.

The purpose of program is to practice these principles in all our affairs and to be of service to others. We can't keep it unless we give it away. This is not a self-help program. It is a spiritual program of recovery. The goal is to continue to grow along spiritual lines.

14:5 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.

14:6 My friend had emphasized the absolute necessity of my 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 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.

### **Ask yourself what spiritual terms mean to you**

**(44:1) In the preceding chapters, you have learned something of alcoholism. We hope we have made clear the distinction between the alcoholic and the non-alcoholic. If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if, when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.**

**44:2 To one who feels he is an atheist or agnostic such an experience seems impossible, but to continue as he is means disaster especially if he is an alcoholic of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to an alcoholic hell or be "saved" - not easy alternatives to face.**

We have a choice!! Find a spiritual basis of life or else... We don't always find this choice acceptable, or it's hard to see, or we don't always want to follow this spiritual path. There is NO middle of the road solutions. Now, let's take a look at the spiritual solution.

44:3 But it isn't so difficult. About half our fellowship were of exactly that type. At first some of us tried to avoid the issue, hoping against hope we were not true alcoholics. But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life - or else. Perhaps it is going to be that way with you. But cheer up, something like fifty half of us thought we were atheists or agnostics. Our experience shows that you need not be disconcerted.

**44:4- 45:0 If a mere code of morals, or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome alcoholism, many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how much we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could will these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn't there. Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly.**

**45:1 Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be A Power Greater Than Ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power?**

45:2 Well, that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself, which will solve your problem. That means we have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God. Here difficulty arises with agnostics. Many times we talk to a new man and watch his hope rise as we discuss his alcoholic problems and explain our fellowship. But his face falls when we speak of spiritual matters, especially when we mention God, for we have re-opened a subject which our man thought he had neatly evaded or entirely ignored.

**Optional quote on the problem of being Anti-Religious 45:3- 46:0 We know how he feels. We have shared his honest doubt and prejudice. Some of us have been violently anti-religious. To others, the word "God" brought up a particular idea of Him with which someone had tried to impress us during childhood. Perhaps we**

rejected this particular conception because it seemed inadequate. With that rejection we imagined we had abandoned the God idea entirely. We were bothered with the thought that faith and dependence upon a Power beyond ourselves was somewhat weak, even cowardly. We looked upon this world of warring individuals, warring theological systems, inexplicable calamity, with deep skepticism. We looked askance at many individuals who claimed to be godly. How could a Supreme Being have anything to do with it all? And who could comprehend a Supreme Being anyhow? Yet, in other moments, we found ourselves thinking, when enchanted by the starlit night, "Who, then, made all this?" There was a feeling of awe and wonder, but it was fleeting and soon lost.

(46:1) Yes, we of agnostic temperament have had these thoughts and experiences. Let us make haste to reassure you. We found that as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, we commenced to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, which is God.

**(46:2) Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another's conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, A Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps. We found that God does not make hard terms with those who seek Him. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding. It is open, we believe, to all men.**

We don't have to know everything about this power. We just have to believe or even be willing to believe in this power. There must be something instead of ourselves that can or will put us in a position to live life and enjoy it. Consider this; When it comes to using power to help us in our everyday living, most of us don't or can't fully comprehend the power of common household electrical lighting... but we don't sit around in the dark until we figure it out do we?

### **Ask yourself what spiritual terms mean to you**

**(47:1) When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own conception of God. This applies, too, to other spiritual expressions which you find in this book. Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you. At the start, this is all you will need to commence spiritual growth, to effect your first conscious relation with God, as you understand Him. Afterward, you will find yourself accepting many things which now seem entirely out of reach. That is growth, but if you are going to grow, you have to begin somewhere. So use your own conception, however limited it may be.**

**(47:2) You need ask yourself but one short question. "Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?" As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built.**

Optional 47:3 That was great news to us, for we had assumed we could not make use of spiritual principles unless we accepted many things on faith which seemed difficult to believe. When people presented us with spiritual approaches, how frequently did we all say: "I wish I had what that man has. I'm sure it would work if I could only believe as he believes. But I cannot accept as surely true the many articles of faith which are so plain to him." So it was comforting to learn that we could commence at a simpler level.

### **3 Barriers to Spiritual Growth:**

**47:4- 48:0 Besides a seeming inability to accept much on faith, we often found ourselves handicapped by obstinacy, sensitiveness, and unreasoning prejudice. Many of us have been so touchy that even casual reference to spiritual things made us bristle with antagonism. This sort of thinking had to be**

**abandoned. Though some of us resisted, we found no great difficulty in casting aside such feelings. Faced with alcoholic destruction, we soon became as open minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect alcohol was a great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness. Sometimes this was a tedious process; we hope no one will be prejudiced as long as some of us were.**

Once we realized that all we had to look forward to was alcoholic destruction or the spiritual path, the path becomes a lot easier to take. Let's look at the reasons for taking this spiritual path.

50:2 In the stories which follow you will find wide variation in the way each teller approaches and conceives of the Power which is greater than himself. Whether you agree with a particular approach or conception seems to make little difference. Experience has taught that these are matters about which, for our purpose, we need not be worried. They are questions for each individual to settle for himself.

50: 3 On one proposition, however, these men and women are strikingly agreed. Every one of them has gained access to, and believes in a Power greater than himself. This Power has in each case accomplished the miraculous, the humanly impossible. As a celebrated American statesman puts it, "Let's look at the record."

50:4-51:0 Here are one hundred men and women, worldly and sophisticated indeed. They flatly declare to you that since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking. They tell you that in the face of collapse and despair, in the face of the total failure of their human resources, that a new Power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction has flowed into them. This happened soon after they whole-heartedly met a few simple requirements. Once confused and baffled by the seeming futility of existence, they will show you the underlying reasons why they were making heavy going of life.

51:0 Leaving aside the drink question, they tell why living was so unsatisfactory. They will show you how the change came over them. When one hundred people, much like you, are able to say that consciousness of The Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why you too should have faith.

**52: 2 We had to ask ourselves why we shouldn't apply to our human problems this same readiness to change the point of view. We were having trouble with personal relationships, we couldn't control our emotional natures, we were a prey to misery and depression, we couldn't make a living, we had a feeling of uselessness, we were full of fear, we were unhappy, we couldn't seem to be of real help to other people - was not a basic solution of this bedevilment more important than whether we should see newsreels of lunar flight? Of course it was.**

**52:3 When we saw others solve their problems by simple reliance upon the Spirit of this universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did.**

Optional 52:4 The Wright Brothers' almost childish faith that they could build a machine which would fly was the mainspring of their accomplishment. Without that, nothing could have happened. We agnostics and atheists were sticking to the idea that self-sufficiency would solve our problems. When others showed us that "God-sufficiency" worked with them, we began to feel like those who had insisted the Wrights would never fly.

**The second proposition of Step 2 is: Is that Power, which the book quite often refers to God, everything or else is He nothing?**

**53:2 When we became alcoholics, crushed by a self-imposed crisis we could not postpone or evade, we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn't. What was our choice to be?**

**Next, we need to know where to find this Power.**

**55:1 Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself.**

**So, now we know where to find God – deep down within ourselves.**

**55:2 We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were. And we are sure you will find the Great Reality deep down within you. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. It was so with us; why not with you?**

**55:3 We can only clear the ground a bit for you. If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice, enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then you will have joined us on the Broad Highway. With this attitude you cannot fail. The consciousness that you do believe is sure to come to you.**

50:3 On one proposition, however, these men and women are strikingly agreed. Every one of them has gained access to, and believes in a Power greater than himself. This Power has in each case accomplished the miraculous, the humanly impossible. As a celebrated American statesman puts it, "Let's look at the record."

50:4- 51:0 Here are one hundred men and women, worldly and sophisticated indeed. They flatly declare to you that since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking. They tell you that in the face of collapse and despair, in the face of the total failure of their human resources, that a new Power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction has flowed into them. This happened soon after they whole-heartedly met a few simple requirements. Once confused and baffled by the seeming futility of existence, they will show you the underlying reasons why they were making heavy going of life. Leaving aside the drink question, they tell why living was so unsatisfactory. They will show you how the change came over them. When one hundred people, much like you, are able to say that consciousness of The Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why you too should have faith.

Hope, Faith, and Belief

55:5 In this book you will read the experience of a man who thought he was an atheist. His story is so interesting that some of it should be told now. His change of heart was dramatic, convincing, and moving.

56:1 Our friend was a minister's son. He attended church school, where he became rebellious at what he thought an overdose of religious education. For years thereafter he was dogged by trouble and frustration. Business failure, insanity, fatal illness, suicide - these calamities in his immediate family embittered and depressed him. Post-war disillusionment, ever more serious alcoholism, impending mental and physical collapse, brought him to the point of self-destruction.

56:2 One night when confined in a hospital, he was approached by an alcoholic who had known a spiritual experience. Our friend's gorge rose as he bitterly cried out: "If there is a God, He certainly hasn't done anything for me." But later, alone in his room, he asked himself this question: "Is it possible that all the religious people I have known are wrong?" While pondering the answer, he felt as though he lived in hell. Then, like a thunderbolt, a great thought came. It crowded out all else:

56:3 "WHO ARE YOU TO SAY THERE IS NO GOD?"

56:4 This man recounts that he tumbled out of bed to his knees. In a few seconds he was overwhelmed by a conviction of the Presence of God. It poured over and through him with the certainty and majesty of a great tide at flood. The barriers he had built through the years were swept away. He stood in the Presence of Infinite Power and Love. He had stepped from bridge to shore. For the first time, he lived in conscious companionship with his Creator.

56:5 Thus was our friend's cornerstone fixed in place. No later vicissitude has shaken it. His alcoholic problem was taken away. That very night three years ago it disappeared. Save for a few brief moments of temptation, the thought of drink has never returned; and at such times a great revulsion has risen up in him. Seemingly he could not drink even if he would. God had restored his sanity.

57:1 What is this but a miracle of healing? Yet its elements are simple. Circumstances made him willing to believe. He humbly offered himself to his Maker - then he knew.

57:2 Even so has God restored us all to our right minds. To this man, the Revelation was sudden. Some of us grow into it more slowly. But He has come to all who have honestly sought Him.

57:3 Draw near to Him and He will disclose Himself to you!

## **Taking Step 2:**

**Do you now believe, or are you even willing to believe in a power greater than yourself?**

If you do not now believe in a power greater than yourself, are you willing to change your mind?

**If you can answer yes, you have taken Step 2.**

We have completed the first two Steps in the Program of Recovery. In order for God to disclose Himself to us, we have to draw near to him. That means we have to move forward to Step 3.

Steps two and three transition to man's relationship with God, first recognizing that the Creator of the Universe can in fact change my behavior (step two) if I take the requisite actions (step three). Simply put: "I can't. He can. I think I'll let Him." Without God's help, we are truly powerless.

Program teaches us that not only are we powerless over food, we are powerless over EVERYTHING. The only control that we have in this world is how we RESPOND to what happens to us. The sole autonomy we possess in this world is our we perceive ourselves in relation to the Creator of the Universe, with the subsequent awe that results from that observation. We have the freedom of choice, but it's entirely up to the Almighty to allow that choice to successfully develop into action.

Without God's help, we are truly powerless.

Recovery is not a question of ability; after all there are millions in recovery, but rather persistence and application.

## **WATER**

Water is everywhere & in all living things - we cannot be separated from water. No water, no life. Period. Water comes in many forms - liquid, vapor, ice, snow, fog, rain, hail. But no matter the form, it's still water.

Human beings give this stuff many names in many languages, in all its forms. It's crazy to argue over what its true name is. Call it what you will, there is no difference to the water. It is what it is.

Human beings drink water from many containers - cups, glasses, jugs, skins, their own hands, whatever. To argue about which container is proper for the water is crazy. The container doesn't change the water.

Some like it hot, some like it cold, some like it iced, some fizzy, some with stuff mixed in with it - like alcohol, coffee, whatever. No matter. It does not change the nature of the water.

Never mind the name or the cup or the mix. These are not important. What we have in common is thirst. Thirst for the water of Life! As it is with water, so it is with God.

Robert Fulghum

In the chapter "We Agnostics" in the Big Book, there are two groups of people mentioned. Which one more closely describes your CURRENT experience?

**1 - (page 50-51) -- Group 1** -- "Here are thousands of men and women, worldly indeed. They flatly declare that since they have (1.) come to believe in a Power greater than themselves (Step 2), (2.) to take a certain attitude toward that Power (Step 3), and (3.) to do certain simple things (Steps 4 through 12), there has been a **revolutionary** change in their way of **living and thinking**. In the face of collapse and despair, in the face of the total failure of their **human resources** (Step 1), they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them. This happened soon after they (4.) wholeheartedly met a few simple requirements (the Twelve Steps). Once confused and baffled by the seeming futility of existence, they show the underlying reasons why they were making heavy going of life. Leaving aside the drink question, they tell why living was so unsatisfactory. They show how the change came over them. When many hundreds of people (5.) are able to say that the **consciousness** of the Presence of God is today the **most important fact** of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith." (This is also called living in the solution.)

**2 - (page 52) -- Group 2** -- "We were having trouble with personal relationships, we couldn't control our emotional natures, we were a prey to misery and depression, we couldn't make a living (which includes not being able to make a successful life), we had a feeling of uselessness, we were full of fear, we were unhappy, we couldn't seem to be of real help to other people." (These are also called the bedevilments, which means, **"to torment maliciously"**. They are the results of living a self-centered life, drinking or not, and describes the inner unmanageability mentioned in Step One. They are the mental state that precedes the first drink and are the result of untreated alcoholism, whether we are drinking or not. **They are the root of the problem.** )

Second Step Proposition Exercise & What is your conception of God as you understand Him? Exercise.

your way of loving, accepting and relating to the world and people around you. that is personal and unique to that person. connect to There is no one right way to there This is a higher power of our own understanding.