

# The Principles Behind the 12 Steps of AA/NA

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# What are these “principles?”

- Step 12 states, “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these 12 steps we tried to carry this message to other alcoholics, and to practice these PRINCIPLES in all of our affairs.” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, p.59)

# What are these “principles?”

- Definition of principles (Retrieved from Google Dictionary 7/16/2019)
  - 1. a fundamental truth or proposition that serves as the foundation for a system of belief or behavior or for a chain of reasoning.  
Some synonyms: truth, proposition, concept, idea, theory, postulate
  - 2. a rule or belief governing one's personal behavior.  
Some synonyms: morals, morality, moral standards, moral values, ethics, code of ethics, beliefs, credo, ideals, standards, integrity, uprightness, high-mindedness, righteousness, virtue, sense of honor, honor, decency, conscience, sense of duty, scruples
  - 3. morally correct behavior and attitudes.


# More about the principles:

- “AA’s Twelve Steps are a group of principles, spiritual in their nature, which if practiced as a way of life, can expel the obsession to drink and enable the sufferer to become happily and usefully whole.”
- “Many people, nonalcoholics, report that as a result of the practice of AA’s Twelve Steps, they have been able to meet other difficulties of life. They think that the Twelve Steps can mean more than sobriety for problem drinkers. They see in them a way to happy and effective living for many, alcoholic or not.” (Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, Foreword, pg. 13, 14)



# Why do I need to do the steps in order?

- Because the steps and the spiritual principles that they are based on build upon themselves. For instance a person needs to acquire the principles of courage (Step 4) and integrity (Step 5) before trying to make amends (Step 9).
- **THE TWELVE STEPS ARE THE PROGRAM OF RECOVERY!!!!**



Step 1: We admitted that we are powerless over alcohol (drugs)--that our lives had become unmanageable.

- Honesty and acceptance.
- Step 1 is the PROBLEM. Until a person can honestly admit and accept that they have a problem they will not seek or see the need for a SOLUTION (steps 2-12).
- Unmanageable? I have a job, I'm still married, I pay my bills on time, etc., etc., etc.

## Step 2: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

- Hope—that with HELP I can do this, but I can't do it alone!
- “Came to believe...” indicates a process.
- Restored to sanity? You mean I've been insane! What exactly is the nature of my insanity?
- What is a Power greater than me? Me<????


# Step 3: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.”

- Faith—that this process ***WILL*** work.
- What is the decision that I am making?
- Lives is plural....why is that?
- The 5 most important words in the programs of AA and NA.
- Good Orderly Direction?



# Step 4: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”

- Courage
- Why do I have to ***write*** it?



Step 5: Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

- Integrity
- Why do I need to tell another person?
- It's like cleaning out the garage....


# Step 6: Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

- Willingness
- Realizing that I can't wish my defects of character away.

# Step 7: Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.


- Humility
- “To those who have made progress in AA, it amounts to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be.” (Twelve Steps & Twelve Traditions, pg. 58)
- Definition of humility: freedom from pride or arrogance : the quality or state of being humble.  
(<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/humility>)





Step 8: Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

- Justice/Brotherly love
- Just making a list
- Why did we need to determine the exact nature of our wrongs in step 5?




Step 9: Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

- Self discipline/Good judgment
- Sponsorship is SO important
- Except when to do so.....
- Self-forgiveness begins

# Step 10: Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.


- Perseverance
- I cleaned up my side of the street, now I need to keep it clean.
- This is the “walking around” step.
- Watch for 4 things, do 4 things (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition, p.84)
- This is where the miracle happens!



Step 11: Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

- Awareness
- How do we get to know someone? How do we build a relationship?
- It works. It really does. (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4th Edition, p.88)





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.

Love and service

“A much more important demonstration of our principles lies before us in our respective homes, occupations, and affairs.” (Alcoholics Anonymous, 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, p.19)

Spiritual awakening= personality change=psychic change

We have to give it away in order to KEEP IT! (Leading by example!)

Practice—We LEARN by TEACHING others

# What are the principles of addiction?

Remember that thing about “Good Orderly Direction?”

## 12 Steps of Recovery

- Honesty and acceptance
- Hope
- Faith
- Courage
- Integrity
- Willingness
- Humility
- Justice/Brotherly love
- Self discipline/Good judgment
- Perserverance
- Awareness
- Love and service

## Addiction

- Dishonesty
- Doubt and despair
- Uncertainty
- Fear
- Deceit, dishonor, corruption
- Apathy, indifference
- Self-justification
- Partiality, unethicalness
- Indulgence, misunderstanding
- Idleness, lethargy
- Ignorance, disregard
- Animosity, ill will

# Relapse is like working the steps backwards.....

- Let's start at step 5....

Integrity goes.....

Courage is next....

Now my faith begins to go...

Hope begins to wane....

The last to fall are honesty and acceptance.....when that happens I no longer have the ability to be honest with myself and accept that I am an alcoholic/addict and return to drinking/using



# The good news is....

- Working the Twelve Steps will not only keep me sober and remove the obsession to drink/use, but it will produce the fruits of:

PEACE and SERENITY and  
enable me to become HAPPY,  
JOYOUS and FREE!!!!



# Where do I go from here?

- Questions?
- Comments?
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