

Reliance Upon A Higher Power Exercise

This exercise is to challenge the A.A. who has experience working the steps out of the Big Book with a Sponsor who has exact experience with the same. The participant should be convinced that they are a real alcoholic suffering from a hopeless condition of mind and body. Most importantly we should be convinced we must live on a spiritual basis or die.

The participant should take this into prayer and meditation:

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. If you are as seriously alcoholic as we were, we believe there is no middle-of-the-road solution. We were in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help. This we did because we honestly wanted to, and were willing to make the effort. Alcoholics Anonymous, Chapter 2, THERE IS A SOLUTION, Page 25, last paragraph & page 26, first line.

G-d, show me how I am not reliant upon You. Help me to see my reliance on human aid and other things. Give me the strength to actively seek reliance upon You.

Consider the following.

Main purpose of this exercise. How can I actively become reliant on G-d?

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? Alcoholics Anonymous, Chapter 4, WE AGNOSTICS, Page 53, Paragraph 2

Are you still trying to live out the "Great Lie?"

Experience shows that the reason most people in AA don't live on a spiritual basis in all areas of our lives is because they are still trying to figure life out, still living by self-will. There are areas of their life which they are relying on their own will power or human aid to help them. This is another manifestation of The Great Lie.

There is the obsession that somehow, someday, they will beat the game. But they often suspect they are down for the count. Alcoholics Anonymous, Chapter 2, THERE IS A SOLUTION, page 23, line 13?

If you find that you have a manifestation of The Great Lie in your life current, why is it there? This question may have a simple answer. Being convinced of three pertinent ideas:

(a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives. (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism. (c) That God could and would if He were sought.

Since we are beyond all human aid, if we don't live on a spiritual basis what we really want to do is drink. We are thinking about drinking. It has just manifested in another less apparently serious manner. That fact is that it is very serious. Thus to confront this we need to consider the following:

What areas of my life am I still being controlling about and not giving to G-d?

If I believe that G-d is everything, where are you experiencing fear, resentment, and acting out of self-will? These are symptoms of those areas where you may be still living the Great Lie. Remember - willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery. We cannot be honest without being willing first; we also cannot be open-minded without being honest.

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 (honesty), even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, which is God (open-mindedness). Page 46

This is what happens to real alcoholics who use HOW instead of WHO: *Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program (lack of honesty), usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves (lack of open-mindedness). There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty (lack of willingness).* Page 58

Thus it should be WHO instead of HOW and that WHO is G-d. If you have those areas of your life that you live by HOW, perhaps you are still living The Great Lie. So refer back to the question concerning these areas of your life, "Is G-d everything or is he

nothing?" Are you living by WHO or HOW? Why are you not giving these areas of your life to G-d? This answer should bring up character defects that you are still holding onto.

Now consider more symptoms of non-reliance on G-d or self-reliance:

Are you being affected by The Bedevilments?

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 these bedevilments more important than whether we should see newsreels of lunar flight?

What usually happens is that once we work the Steps out of the Big Book with a sponsor with exact experience we begin to get freedom. If we fail to continue (BALK) to complete the Step work, the ego rebuilds. Thus we take back areas of our life. We resume self-reliance.

Briefly answer the question of the bedevilments.

Are you having trouble with your personal relationships?

Are you trying to control your emotional nature?

Are you prey to misery and depression?

Are you living your life effectively?

Do you feel useless?

Are you full of fear?

Are you really happy or unhappy?

Are you really effective in helping others? Are you actively working with others?

Think specifically about what areas of your life in which you are not reliant on G-d.

What are the character defects that appear as a result of this self-reliance or defiance to being God-reliant?

List what areas of your life where you are reliant or overly reliant on humans.

Are you reliant on others physically? (sex partners, A.A.'s for meetings, Medical Providers to make you feel better, are you taking medication which possibly you don't need, prescribed or not?)

Are you reliant Mentally/Emotionally? (Current partner/lover, family members, friends, sponsor) Are you looking for others to fix you? Are you isolating even though you are with others, active in A.A., sponsoring? Are you still trying to fix yourself? Do you have a sponsor? Are you holding on to a relationship you know you should let go of (sponsee, friend, lover)? Are you really there for others or do you have expectations about your relationships? Have you made a person or a group of people your G-d (this includes AA)? Are you balking at Step work, writing inventory, making amends, etc.?

Actively provide ways you will be reliant on G-D.

Fill out the "inventory" sheet with one specific area of your life that you are self-reliant.

Look at the list of who you are reliant upon physically and/or mentally/emotionally.

1. List the people, places (institutions, including AA), and things (principles) in the first column.

2. List the area of your life (which is affected) in column two. Be specific and list each area separately. Isn't because of fears, delusions, and resentment that we do these things? Are you not just simply afraid to give up control of these things? What character defect is hurt, threatened or interfered with by this self-reliance?

3. List the character defect in column three. Be specific and list each character defect separately. Use the character defect worksheet. What bedevilments are present?

4. Look to the opposite of each reliant relationship concerning the character defect.

Now list the opposite action or what you should do instead in column four. Be specific and list each activity separately. Think of how G-d loves you today. Does G-d want you to live these character defects? Certainly through prayer and meditation we can actively rely on G-d, but what other practical action can be taken? Use the Four Absolutes to write the fourth column:

Absolute Honesty - What should I honestly do about this person, place, or thing?

Absolute Purity - Am I free from what vitiates (makes defective, faulty, or ineffective), weakens, or pollutes me? What does not properly belong? Am I free from moral fault or guilt?

Absolute unselfishness - Do I have an unselfish regard for or devotion to the welfare of others concerning this specific person, place or thing? When I am selfish, am I not holding on to resentment?

Absolute Love - Use the LOVE acronym, especially as you write the activities in the fourth column. *LOVE as an acronym: LISTEN intently to the people with whom you are traveling your journey. Listen deeply; it is a great gift. OPTIMIZE the time you have with your loved ones. The truth is, we do not know our last hour; don't postpone giving your love. VALUE the people in your life, really notice their goodness. Then, EXPRESS your gratitude, appreciation and praise.*

Kevin K.