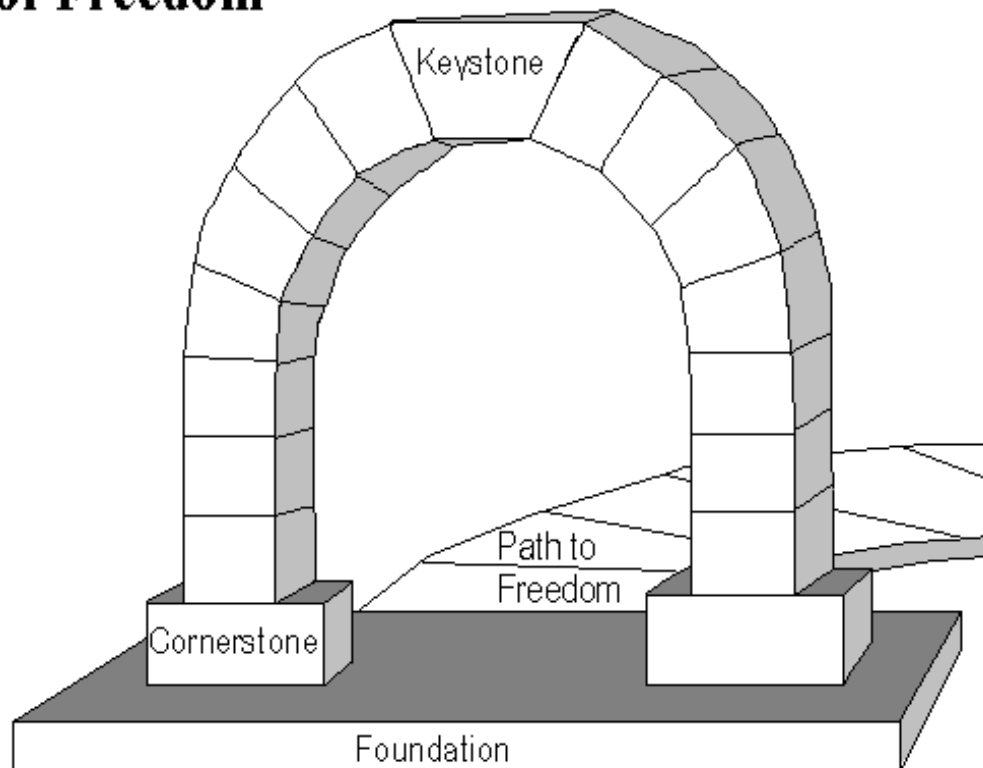


The Arch of Freedom



From *Alcoholics Anonymous*, the Big Book:

Foundation (page 12, Bill's Story): Step One -- Willingness through despair

It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more way required of me to make my beginning. I saw that growth could start from that point. Upon a foundation of complete willingness I might build what I saw in my friend. Would I have it? Of course I would!

(page 25, There is a Solution)

There is a solution. Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling 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 for us to do but 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.

Cornerstone (page 47, We Agnostics): Step Two -- Belief through hope

We needed to ask ourselves 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. (Related to page 53 and the story on page 56, crossing from the Bridge of Reason to the shore of faith.)

Keystone (page 62, How it Works): Step Three -- Direction through decision

This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are his agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.

Path (page 75, Into Action): Steps Four through Nine -- Freedom through action

Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask ourselves if we have omitted anything, for we are building an arch through which we shall walk a free man at last. Is our work solid so far? Are the stones properly in place? Have we skimped on the cement put into the foundation? Have we tried to make mortar without sand?