

HEARING 5th STEPS

(Compliments of the “Men's Step Application Group”, Bellevue, WA)

Big Book - Chapter Seven - “Working With Others” (page 96):

“Suppose you are making your second visit to a man. He has read this volume and says he is prepared to go through with the Twelve Steps of the program of recovery. Having had the experience yourself, you can give him much practical advice. Let him know you are available if he wishes to make a decision and tell his story ...”

We find reference to Doing the Third Step with your new man and offering to HEAR his Fifth Step. All the references in Chapter 6 to doing it with non alcoholics are there because there was no Fellowship - the book was for “mail order” sobriety; it was hoping you, the reader, would begin to “create the Fellowship you crave.”

In Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Bill writes on Step Five:

“We shall want to speak with someone ... who has not only stayed dry...” and “Until we talked with complete candor of our inner conflicts, and had listened to someone else do the same, we still didn’t belong.”

Here we find more information along the same lines, encouraging us to HEAR a Fifth Step so we can “belong.” It is our opinion that the “Step process” is incomplete without HEARing at least one Fifth Step. Little is written in our “textbooks” on this, so we are sharing here a course of action that has worked effectively for us.

In our view, to qualify, it helps to have done a 4th & 5th Step (& preferably not stopped there!). We have met many who have avoided this opportunity (responsibility) for Spiritual growth through fear, laziness or disinterest. Another often used “reason” for not hearing a Fifth Step is something like: “Well, I really don’t know him that well.” That can be turned to an advantage in the fact that you can be even more objective, which is defined as impartial, fair or unbiased. Of course, when this process is done, you will know him (her) as a reflection of yourself! We could write pages (maybe a book) on how we are “all cut from the same cloth” and “tarred with the same brush.” These are experiential conclusions that will come after you have heard a Fifth Step.

We are doing more than just hearing. We believe that we are asking to be a “channel” for God in this highly personal aspect of another person’s recovery. It is an attempt to get “ourselves out of the way” for as long as it takes. We are not being asked to “play the role” of doctor, minister, psychiatrist, judge or counselor. In fact, it’s a good idea to qualify ourselves out loud that we DO NOT possess these qualifications. Merely one alcoholic with another alcoholic attempting to get closer to Him by DOing the Steps.

Praying for Guidance and Direction, we “set the stage” by taking the phone off the hook or turning the ringer off. If there is a likelihood of knocks on the door, leave a note asking not to be disturbed. Together, we pray to have God join us, to bring about this “channel” state of consciousness. We pray for our hearts and minds to be open, that we be given whatever is necessary to accomplish our individual roles.

Ask if you may take notes. Ask if you may give “feedback.” Most people are pleased that we are willing to make more of an effort than “just listen.” Notes help us for several reasons; we don’t have to keep trying to remember stuff, which allows more of our undivided attention. We will, with no seeming effort, often be able to detect patterns of behavior that “just seem to appear” from these notes. Often certain words will “leap out” and form the basis of a “Step 6 & 7 list.” We make certain that they know the notes will become their property as soon as we are done.

The “feedback?” If we are trying to be like a “conference call to God” then just do what “feels” right. We gently share what has been “revealed” to us in the HEARing. It may seem prudent to ask: “Is there any last dirty rotten little secret that you are withholding and will take YOU to the grave?”

Moving toward “Trusting God” is an experiential process. To quote a line from the Big Book on page 63: “He provided what we needed if we kept close to Him and performed His work well.”

When done, we pray together in the Spirit of Thankfulness for this priceless opportunity to clean house, “live out loud” for perhaps the first time in our lives, and move another Step along the Path. Next, the questions on page 75 of the Big Book “Returning home ...” are answered. (Again: the Big Book was written for “mail order” sobriety – there was no Fellowship.)

At this point, we allow the “giver” of the 5th Step the opportunity to decide if they would like to perform a “ceremonial burning” of the paperwork (including notes but excluding Step 6 and 8 “lists”). If these have not been organized, we let this be the opportunity to do so. Regardless of what course is decided, we, as the HEARers of Step 5, thank the “giver” for their trust and dedication to action. We ask that we be called if “more is revealed” and openly share in their exhilaration as the dark burdens are lifted.

Time? Step 5 takes as long as it takes. We usually set aside the entire day, so there is no haste to be “done” at any certain time. We do all that we can to avoid rigidity and expectations. We Trust God with the rest. If we need to eat, we eat. If we need to rest, we rest. Sometimes it “feels right” to take a break. We must remind ourselves often that this Step is a process that means the difference between life and death – or insanity / incarceration; between happiness and misery; between isolation and a sense of unity.

Results? What we experience is very individual, so we try not to “set ourselves up” with a list of expectations. Generally, the “giver” feels a very strong sense of relief and the “hearer” feels tired and spiritually energized at the same time. Please remember, there’s no such thing as a BAD Fifth Step for either party if this is approached from a Spiritual Perspective. We remind ourselves that this is a very individual experience.

Specific results for those HEARING 5th Steps are: a sense of belonging, a spiritual reminder that we are more alike than different, and a deeper sense of commitment, understanding and effectiveness. Prejudice becomes transformed into compassion, and the power of “shared suffering” cuts through resentment with ease. This can be a landmark on the road to spiritual humility; by placing ourselves in God’s Hands we begin to truly experience “freedom from the bondage of SELF.”

It’s about Spirituality .

It’s about Brotherly Love.

It’s about Compassion.

It’s about Understanding.

It’s about Love.

It’s about the ‘magic’ of one alcoholic with another alcoholic.

It’s about Forgiveness.

It’s about God.

It’s about the preparation to be of Service to others and ...

Like the rest of the “instructions:”

JUST DO IT !

JUST HEAR IT!

It is “an experience YOU MUST NOT MISS !”

Excerpted from <http://www.msag.org/>

Some Thoughts on Steps Six through Nine

It's a lot easier to make the scariest amends that you have, than to live the rest of your life in active alcoholism.

Seems there was this group of 12 Step members taking a boat ride to this island called SERENITY, & they were truly a happy bunch of people. As the boat pulled away from the dock, a few on board noticed Mary running down the street trying to catch up with the boat. One said, "Darn, she missed the boat." Another said, "Maybe not. Come on, Mary! Jump in the water! Swim! Swim! You can make it! You can catch up with us!" So Mary jumped into the water & started to swim for all she was worth. She swam for quite a while, & then started to sink. The members on board, now all aware that Mary was struggling, shouted, "Come on, Mary! Don't give up! Drop the rock!" With that encouragement, Mary started swimming again, only to start sinking again shortly afterward. She was going under when she heard all those voices shouting to her, "Mary, drop the rock! Let go, & drop the rock!" Mary was vaguely aware of something around her neck, but she couldn't quite figure out what it was. Once more, she gathered her strength & started swimming. She was doing quite well, even gaining a little on the boat, but then she felt this heaviness pulling her under again. She saw all those people on the boat holding out their hands & hollering for her to keep swimming & shouting, "Don't be an idiot, Mary! Drop the rock!" Then she understood, when she was going down for the third time. This thing around her neck, THIS was why she kept sinking when she really WANTED to catch the boat. This thing was the "rock" they were all shouting about: self-centeredness, resentment, fear, dishonesty, self-pity, intolerance & anger, just some of the things her "rock" was made of. "God help me get rid of the rock," she prayed. "Now! Get rid of it!"

So Mary managed to stay afloat long enough to untangle a few of the strings holding that rock around her neck, realizing as she did that her load was easing up; and then, with another burst of energy, SHE LET GO. She tore the other strings off & DROPPED THE ROCK.

Once free of the rock, she was amazed how easy it was to swim, & she soon caught up with the boat. Those on board were cheering for her & applauding & telling her how great she was, & how it was so good having her with them again, & how now we can get on with our boat ride & have a nice time.

Mary felt great & was just about to indulge in a little rest & relaxation when she glanced back to shore. There, a ways back, she thought she saw something bobbing in the water, so she pointed it out to some others. Sure enough, someone was trying to catch the boat, swimming for dear life but not making much headway. In fact, it looked like they were going under.

Mary looked around & saw the concern on the faces of the other members. She was the first to lean over the rail & shout, "Hey, friend! Drop the rock!"

I did more damage accidentally with this sharp tongue of mine than I ever did with my hands.

Humility is realizing the "all-ness" of God and the nothingness of self.

Sometimes our readiness to have our character defects removed depends on what we call them. If misnaming our defects makes them seem less "defective," we may be unable to see the damage they cause. And if they seem to be causing no harm, why would we ever ask our Higher Power to remove them from our lives?

Take "people pleasing," for example. Doesn't really sound all that bad, does it? It just means we're nice to people, right? Not quite. To put it bluntly, it means we're dishonest and manipulative. We lie about our feelings, our beliefs, and our needs, trying to soothe others into compliance with our wishes.

Or perhaps we think we're "easygoing" But does "easygoing" mean we ignore our housework, avoid confrontations, and stay put in a comfortable rut? Then a better name for it would be "laziness," or "procrastination," or "fear".

Many of us have trouble identifying our character defects. If this is the case for us, we can talk with our sponsor or our program friends. We clearly and honestly describe our behavior to them and ask for their help in identifying our defects. As time passes, we'll become progressively better able to identify our own character defects, calling them by their TRUE names.

As I look back over my last year of sobriety (my seventh), I realize it was my best year ever. It was linked inextricably with the Seventh Step and with the unshakable law in the Universe that says that what isn't growing is dying.

Dr. Silkworth pointed out in the Big Book that unless an alcoholic can "experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of his recovery." "An entire psychic change" is nothing short of continual growth. Growth is almost always uncomfortable for me.

Last year I was frequently confronted with pain and the need to change. I resisted a lot of this change because it is difficult for me. I'm addicted to my comfort zone. When I am confronted with yet another character defect, I usually find pain. I usually try to rationalize the defect away, then try to blame it on somebody else (this is one of my favorite ways of denying), and finally I resort to promises that I'll never give this up totally.

Last week, I came up against a defect that took me to that point. So, I decided to go to a meeting. It was on exactly what I needed to hear (funny how that works out) - Step Seven. As I listened to the members of the group share their practical

experience with this Step I became increasingly aware that I didn't want to give up this particular defect because I was afraid - afraid of what would become of me, afraid of what God might change me into. What if I didn't like what happened?

When it came my turn to talk, I found myself unburdening my soul to the group. And I shared my first real experience with Step Seven that had happened during my third year of sobriety. I'd been working on Six and Seven for a long time and was getting nowhere with it. My sponsor realized I was stuck and wrangled an invitation for me to talk at a speakers meeting about the Sixth and Seventh Steps. I spent the rest of the week in a panic, knowing I had the words but lacked a true understanding of the Steps because of my fear of change.

The morning of the Friday I was going to speak I was met at the back door of the college where I work. Two of my students were waiting for me with big grins on their faces and an air of secrecy. Part of an assignment I'd given them was to supply examples of poetry in action. They obviously felt they had a good one.

They led me into my desk, where a vase was sitting with a string attached, and floating above the vase was a big yellow balloon. It was a very nice looking arrangement, with a juxtaposition of balloon for flower in the composition. They had written a poem on the balloon. Both of the students were brimming with fun and confidence. Then, they told me to pop the balloon!

I couldn't. I hate to pop balloons! I hate the noise. It really bothers me to see a balloon pop. It scares me. Usually I let out a little screech when it happens. They handed me a hatpin and said, "Pop it." They weren't going to take no for an answer. Finally, I took the pin, put one hand over my ear and closed my eyes. I lunged forward with the pin and heard the balloon pop. I didn't screech.

I opened my eyes and saw an amazing sight. Concealed inside the now disintegrated balloon was a flower. I had no idea how they got it inside the balloon. I felt my eyes fill with tears of joy.

At last I understood the Seventh Step. I am just like that balloon. I am so full of hot air, I am afraid to let God pop the balloon and let the flower out. My pride and fear keep me from discovering my own flower and the flowers of others. That night I shared my story with a roomful of grateful drunks and saw lots of flowers in the room. It was like being in God's garden. I, too, am part of that garden.

I have learned to look at others and see the flower. I may not always see my own, yet through trusting God and practicing the Six and Seventh Steps I can change and grow. By seeing how my fellow travelers in recovery continue to blossom and grow I can develop faith that I, too, am growing and changing.

The trouble some of us have with Step Seven, humbly asking God to remove our shortcomings, is that we really do want to be rid of our troublesome traits, but not until we've wrung everything we can from them. There are plenty of reasons we may give for not being in any hurry: we're too young; we haven't lived enough; there are things we haven't done yet; we haven't really hurt people that much. What are we so afraid of losing?

We don't have to be saints to please God. God knows we're only human. Maybe God just wants us to be free of the things that come between God and us.

Someone has said that humility is to see ourselves as God sees us. God loves us as we are, so what is there to lose except false pride?

I ask for freedom from the shortcomings that come between God and me.

The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear -- primarily fear that we would lose something we already possessed or would fail to get something we demanded. Living upon a basis of unsatisfied demands, we were in a state of continual disturbance and frustration.

The Seventh Step is where we make the change in our attitude which permits us, with humility as our guide, to move out from ourselves toward others and toward God."

When Michelangelo was asked how he created a piece of sculpture, he answered that the statue already existed within the marble. God Himself had created the Pieta, David, and Moses. Michelangelo's job, as he saw it, was to get rid of the excess marble that surrounded God's creation.

So it is with you. The perfect you isn't something you need to create, because God already created it. Your job is to allow your Higher Power to remove the shortcomings that prevent your real self from shining through, just as excess marble surrounded Michaelangelo's perfect statue.

When you are willing to make a specific amend, pray to see if this is the right time. Then when you get together with the person you need to "set right the wrong" with, tell them: 1 - why you are doing this, 2 - what you did or did not do, 3 - ask if you harmed them in a way that you are not aware of, 4 - ask them if they need to tell you how what you did effected them, and 5 - ask what you can do to make it right (if they request something that is not "reasonable", talk it over with your sponsor/support group to see what they think).

In Step 7 (Big Book, page 76) it says: "I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to You and my fellows." Then Step 9 (Big Book, page 77) says: "At the moment we are trying to put our lives in order. BUT THIS IS NOT AN END IN ITSELF. Our REAL purpose is to FIT OURSELVES to be of

MAXIMUM service to God and the people about us." So our making amends is part of how God (Love) brings fulfillment to what we're praying for in Step 7!

One of the key words in the Eighth Step is the word "all" (which is mentioned twice!). I am not free to select a few names for the list and to disregard others. It is a list of all persons I have harmed. I can see immediately that this Step entails forgiveness because if I'm not willing to forgive someone, there is little chance I will place his name on the list. Before I placed the first name on my list, I said a little prayer: "I forgive anyone and everyone who has ever harmed me at any time and under any circumstances."

It is well for me to contemplate a small, but very significant, two-letter word every time the Lord's Prayer is said. The word is "as". I ask, "Forgive us our trespasses, AS we forgive those who trespass against us." In this case, "as" means, "in the same manner." I am asking to be forgiven in the same manner that I forgive others. As I say this portion of the prayer, if I am harboring hatred or resentment, I am inviting more resentment, when I should be calling on the spirit of forgiveness.

The cheerful little girl with bouncy golden curls was almost five. Waiting with her mother at the checkout stand, she saw them, a circle of glistening white pearls in a pink foil box. "Oh please, Mommy. Can I have them? Please, Mommy, please?"

Quickly the mother checked the back of the little foil box and then looked back into the pleading blue eyes of her little girl's upturned face. "A dollar ninety-five. That's almost \$2.00. If you really want them, I'll think of some extra chores for you and in no time you can save enough money to but them for yourself. Your birthday's only a week away and you might get another crisp dollar from Grandma."

As soon as Jenny got home, she emptied her penny bank and counted out 17 pennies. After dinner, she did more than her share of chores and she went to the neighbor and asked Mrs. McJames if she could pick dandelions for ten cents. On her birthday, Grandma did give her another new dollar bill and at last she had enough money to but the necklace. Jenny loved her pearls. They made her feel dressed up and grown up. She wore them everywhere, Sunday school, kindergarten, even to bed. The only time she took them off was when she went swimming or had a bubble bath. Mother said if they got wet, they might turn her neck green.

Jenny had a very loving Daddy and every night when she was ready for bed, he would stop whatever he was doing and come upstairs to read her a story. One night as he finished the story, he asked Jenny, "Do you love me?"

Oh yes, Daddy. You know that I love you." "Then give me your pearls." "Oh Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have Princess, the white horse from my collection, the one with the pink tail. Remember, Daddy? The one you gave me. She's my very favorite." "That's okay, Honey, Daddy loves you. Good night."

About a week later, after story time, Jenny's Daddy asked again, "Do you love me?"

"Daddy, you know I love you." "Then give me your pearls." "Oh Daddy, not my pearls. But you can have my baby doll. The brand new one I got for my birthday. She is beautiful and you can have the yellow blanket that matches her sleeper." "That's okay. Sleep well. God bless you, little one. Daddy loves you." And as always, he brushed her cheek with a gentle kiss.

A few nights later when her Daddy came in, Jenny was sitting on her bed with her legs crossed Indian-style. As he came close, he noticed her chin was trembling and one silent tear rolled down her cheek.

"What is it, Jenny? What's the matter?"

Jenny didn't say anything but lifted her little hand up to her Daddy. And when she opened it, there was her little pearl necklace. With a little quiver, she finally said, "Here, Daddy, this is for you." With tears gathering in his own eyes, Jenny's Daddy reached out with one hand to take the dime-store necklace, and with the other hand he reached into his pocket and pulled out a blue velvet case with a strand of genuine pearls and gave them to Jenny. He had them all the time. He was just waiting for her to give up the dime-store stuff so he could give her the genuine treasure.

So it is with God. He is waiting for us to give up the cheap things in our lives so that He can give us beautiful treasures. Isn't our Higher Power good? Are you holding onto things that our Creator wants you to let go of. Are you holding on to harmful or unnecessary relationships, habits and activities that you have come so attached to that it seems impossible to let go? Sometimes it is so hard to see what is in the other hand but do believe this one thing:

God will never take away something without giving you something better in its place!

People sometimes accept the idea that a change of thought, plus turning to God in prayer, will transform their lives into harmony and freedom. The logic of this principle appeals to them, and they set to work upon it in earnest. Then, after a few days, they say, "Nothing has happened after all," and they drop back into their old negative thinking. That is extremely foolish. The results of many years of general negative thinking are seldom corrected in a few days. No one who goes upon a new physical diet or medical regimen expects to reap the advantages in so short a time. You must keep up the new way of thinking and refuse to be discouraged by seeming failures at first. The right motive for adopting right thinking is that it is right, and that wrong thinking is wrong; and we should do right whether it seems to pay dividends or not. Of course, it does pay dividends - fabulous dividends - but it usually takes a little perseverance in the face of preliminary slowness.

FROM HEAD TO HEART

I have always struggled with feelings of inadequacy - I always had an ideal of who and what I was suppose to be and the sad fact was that I never came close to reconciling my inner and outer worlds. I fell short in thought, word, and deed. So I gave up trying and settled deeper into the bottle. As my disease took a greater hold and my life became a living hell, I reached out for some form of relief, namely AA and the Twelve Steps. The fog began to clear. I began to see the light at the end of a very long alcohol sodden tunnel. A fierce determination to be somebody, to be something, returned. My inner critic that I had locked up had sprung loose and began to wreak havoc. By then I had done a 4th and 5th Step and I saw how I fell short in all areas in my life. My selfishness was blatant and I was ruled by fear. I understood that it wasn't everyone else's fault; there was a part I played. I knew I didn't want to live like that anymore; I didn't want the consequences! I didn't want to drink so I said the Seventh Step prayer and moved on to my amends.

Life went on and I was wondering why I wasn't enjoying as much relief as the Big Book promised - I tried to live what I thought was a good life - I tried to behave kindly, (kill 'em with kindness) I faked it 'till I could make it every day. Something was missing. I still thought the same, I had this parallel thought process; on one hand I had the selfish, the fearful, resentful, and judgmental fighting with the patient, loving, tolerant thoughts, but that was as far as it went. I was still in so much pain. Torn between what I wanted and what I thought God wanted. My inner critic was kicking my butt. I had so many rules, standards, judgments and fears. I didn't outgrow fear. I converted it into a prison of politeness, superiority and judgment. While, deep down inside, I still felt inadequate afraid and lonely.

The question is, "how did all of this change?" The fact that I am writing this proves that although I was closer to drinking that I had ever been, I didn't. By the grace and love of infinite God I sit here sober happy and free. After four years of inner torture in recovery I am enjoying all of promises of our book, and have been for a while. It started with one sentence in the Big Book; it changed my whole perception of the Steps. Recovery took on a whole new meaning. That fateful sentence can be found in WE AGNOSTICS:

Pp53:2 - *"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?"* I always took that to mean God was every thing - you know the trees, rocks, you, and me. One day I was listening in a meeting and it occurred to me that God has to be everything to me - He has to be involved in everything I do. My sponsor always says, "Get God involved, invite Him in". And I did. When I thought I couldn't handle something, I would say out loud, "Okay God, get involved " and things would be okay until next time. But I never offered ALL of me to ALL of God. I just offered what I couldn't do. What didn't occur to me was that I couldn't do anything relying on my own power, (remember the miserable results?). My relationships with myself, God, you, everything, had to be totally in his care because they weren't mine anyway, they were His. HE IS EVERYTHING! So with this lightning bolt up my butt, I looked at the book again.

While reading How It Works with a protégé I had an epiphany, I saw a paragraph in a way I had never seen it before:

Pp62:2 - *"So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help."*

Then it occurred to me that I had been trying to moralize or philosophize myself into unselfishness. As I thought about it, I remembered that there were other places in the book that echoed such sentiments. My book just opened to them:

Pp66:4 - *"We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than alcohol."*

I never thought that I was just as powerless over resentment or self as I was over booze. I always just looked at it as a matter of character defects. And that if I knew what they were, I could work on them, with God's help of course. I saw that I was not in control of my emotional nature - that was God's job. I was under qualified. Next I turned to:

Pp44:4 and 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 marshaled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly. 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?"*

With all of these things running around my mind, I asked myself what they meant. My answer was rather profound to me. This may be something you guys have already grasped but to me it was news. I had always known it in my head but never integrated it as part of my soul. At that moment it became part of me. I knew that I couldn't control any relationship in my life; I was just borrowing God's love in these things. His loving hands and the invisible threads of His grace hold my life together. My life had been shot though with the evil and corroding thread of fear, which is now equally balanced with Gods' loving mesh. With that, I was able to go beyond human power, to grab a hold of something that truly allowed me to see myself as I am. After having finished an intense (long form) inventory I took my quiet hour, while reflecting on the first 5 steps and what I just learned, I got the idea of applying all of this to Step Seven. So instead of just saying the prayer, I thought about what I was asking for. I was asking God to have all of me, not just my character, my soul, my fate, but ALL that I am - a mother, a wife, a daughter, a sister, a friend, an A.A., a human being, all of these things. To allow Him to guide and direct me, to truly be his agent, to offer all that I may be, along with everything that I once was, to a God who was with me every step of the way. So I made a list from my 4th Step of all the places that I had utterly failed under my own power (where I brought confusion) and asked Him to have it ALL. I placed this list in to my God box and knelt down to say the prayer with a deeper understanding of what I was doing. I was asking God to live in and through me, and for the first time I felt what I said. The results are apparent - I don't talk at meetings to sound good, I ask God to speak if I open my mouth, I don't give crap to protégés because I trust God to guide them as he has me, I don't try to manipulate to get what I think I need. Furthermore, I have found the grace to transcend years of abuse and fear in order to trust and love the members of the opposite sex without guile or fear. To communicate with fellow children of our infinite God on a level that I couldn't have dreamed of (I no longer fear being found out). Today I truly see myself and everyone else as a child of God. So for me, that change was pretty profound. I hope that this little story may help someone else to bridge the gap between his or her inner and outer world.

Kerry C., Harrison, NJ

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character...

Check off the defects that you found when you took Steps 4 & 5:

☐ Abusing others	☐ Fear *	☐ Pessimism
☐ Anger (7)	☐ Filthy-mindedness	☐ Prejudice
☐ Arguing	☐ Gluttony (7)	☐ Pride (7)
☐ Arrogance	☐ Gossiping *	☐ Procrastination *
☐ Boasting	☐ Greed (7)	☐ Recklessness
☐ Cheating	☐ Hate *	☐ Resentment *
☐ Closed-mindedness	☐ Hopelessness	☐ Revenge
☐ Cold-heartedness	☐ Immodesty	☐ Sarcasm
☐ Complaining	☐ Impatience *	☐ Secretiveness
☐ Controlling others	☐ Injustice	☐ Self condemnation *
☐ Corrupt companions	☐ Insincerity *	☐ Self-indulgence
☐ Cowardice	☐ Insulting	☐ Self-justification *
☐ Criticizing *	☐ Intolerance	☐ Self-pity *
☐ Dependency	☐ Irresponsibility	☐ Selfishness *
☐ Destructiveness	☐ Jealousy *	☐ Sloth (7)
☐ Deviousness	☐ Laziness *	☐ Theft
☐ Dishonesty *	☐ Lewdness	☐ Thrill-seeking
☐ Enviousness * (7)	☐ Lust (7)	☐ Thoughtlessness
☐ Exaggeration	☐ Lying *	☐ Uncleaness
☐ Excess	☐ Meddling	☐ Vulgarity *
☐ Fanaticism	☐ Miserliness	☐ Waste
☐ Favoritism	☐ Negative thinking *	

* = One of 20 character defects identified by Clarence Snyder, who was about the fortieth man sponsored by Dr. Bob.

(7) = One of the "Seven Deadly Sins" mentioned in the "Twelve & Twelve"

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings...

<u>Wrongs / Defects / Shortcomings</u>	<i>Ask God to Replace them with</i>	<u>Assets / Positive Traits</u>
Resentment, Anger		Forgiveness
Fear, Cowardice		Courage
Self-Pity		Self-Forgetfulness
Self-Justification		Humility
Self-Importance, Egotism		Modesty
Self-Condensation, Guilt		Self-Valuation
Lying, Evasiveness, Dishonesty		Honesty
Impatience		Patience
Hate		Love
False Pride, Phoniness, Denial		Unpretentiousness
Jealousy		Trust
Envy		Satisfaction
Laziness		Activity, Industriousness
Procrastination		Promptness
Insincerity		Straightforwardness
Negative Thinking		Positive Thinking
Immoral Thinking		Spiritual, Clean Thinking
Perfectionism, Intolerance		Tolerance
Criticizing, Loose Talk, Gossip		Praise for Others
Greed		Generosity

SEVENTH STEP PRAYER

Page 76, Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous

**“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad.
I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character
which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.
Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.”**

ORIGINAL SEVENTH STEP PRAYER

Used by Dr. Bob

Dear God, I am coming to You on my knees in all humility
to humbly ask You to forgive all my past wrongs
and to remove all my defects of character.
I want to start a new life today,
and I ask You to help me do so
and to keep helping if I keep asking.

In Step Three, I turned my will and my life over to Your care.
Thank You for taking complete control of my life,
and thank You for this opportunity to wipe my slate clean and start my life anew.
In Steps Four, Five and Six I have completed my moral inventory
and admitted to myself and another person the exact nature of my wrongs.
I now admit these wrongs to You, God.

I am entirely ready to ask and pray now
that You please remove from me every single defect of character.
Specifically, I ask You to remove the following shortcomings
listed in my Fourth Step moral inventory:

(Read aloud here those defects from your list.)

Thank You, God, for this opportunity for a new beginning in my life
and a chance to be a part of the solutions in life instead of the problems.

Please grant me wisdom, knowledge and strength
as I go out from here to do Your work
and live the Victorious Life You designed for me.

Thank You, God, for the steps
which will make Your plan for my life clear to me.
Thank You and praise Your name.
Amen.

SEVENTH STEP PRAYER

Used by Clarence Snyder

(Both sponsor and protégé on knees...)

Lord, here is your child, _____... He is coming to you in all humility to humbly ask your forgiveness,
believing that anything he asks in prayer, he humbly shall receive.

(Protégé repeats after sponsor...)

I, _____, humbly ask you oh Lord, to remove my shortcomings and forgive me, my sins and trespasses,
and ask in all humility that you will remove my defects and shortcomings because I am one of your children and
I truly believe. Thank you, God. Amen.

(Sponsor says...)

Your sins are removed... if you truly believe. Thank you, Lord. Amen.

Important Points Regarding Amends & Restitution

Excerpted from the Big Book's explanation of Step 9, pages 76 - 83

Amend type (a) – *The people we hated / resented:*

- ▲ It may be some have done us more harm than we have done them. With a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. It is harder to go to an enemy than a friend, but the benefit is greater.
- ▲ We go to them in a helpful, forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.
- ▲ Under NO condition do we criticize or argue.
- ▲ We are there to sweep off OUR side of the street, realizing that nothing worthwhile can be accomplished until we do so.
- ▲ NEVER try to tell them what they should do. Discuss YOUR faults, not theirs.
- ▲ Be calm, frank, and open.
- ▲ It doesn't matter if they accept the apology or throw us out of their office. We've made our demonstration, done our part.

Amend type (b) – *The people / institutions owed money:*

- ▲ Most (All?) alcoholics owe money.
- ▲ We do not dodge our creditors.
- ▲ In some cases, some of us had to disclose our alcoholism by way of explaining what drove us and what we are now trying to do.
- ▲ We do not try to beat anyone out of anything, but we arrange a deal that we can live up to. Arranging time payments has worked for many of us.
- ▲ Let them know we are sorry. Drinking has made us slow to pay.
- ▲ We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them.

Amend type (c) – *Incidents of criminal offense:*

- ▲ Some of us padded expense accounts, fell behind on child support, wrote bad checks, and committed other offenses of the law, which might land us in jail if it were known to the authorities.
- ▲ We remind ourselves that we MUST be willing to go to ANY lengths to set right these wrongs if we are to stay sober. We don't have the power to do this so we ask God for strength and direction to do the right thing.
- ▲ No matter what the personal consequences may be, we know God will protect us if we try to do the right thing (for a change).
- ▲ We may lose our position or reputation or face jail (though most of us had already experienced that), but we are willing anyway. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything.

Amend type (d) – *When others are involved:*

- ▲ We are not to be the hasty and foolish martyr who would needlessly sacrifice others to save ourselves.
- ▲ Before taking drastic action, which might implicate other people, we secure their consent.
- ▲ If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink.
- ▲ Sometimes it is better to take these risks than to stand before our Creator guilty of our wrongs.
- ▲ We have to place the outcome in God's hands or we may soon start drinking again, and then all would be lost anyhow.

Amend (e) – *Domestic troubles:*

- ▲ We may be mixed up sexually in a fashion we wouldn't care to have advertised. After years with a drunk, spouses get worn out, resentful, and uncommunicative.
- ▲ We begin to feel lonely, sorry for ourselves. So we look around for "someone who understands", feeling justified, when WE were really the source of the problem in the first place. If we are involved in this way, we often feel very remorseful at times and we have to do something about this.
- ▲ If the spouse does not know, we do not always say it is best to tell them. If they know in a general way that we have been wild, we admit our fault.

- ▲ We feel we ought to say that we have no right to name the people involved even if our spouse insists on knowing all the particulars. We are sorry for what we have done and, God willing, it shall not be repeated. It is better that one does not needlessly name a person upon whom our partner can vent jealousy.
- ▲ Perhaps there are some cases where the utmost frankness is demanded. No outsider can appraise such an intimate situation.
- ▲ It may be that both of you will decide that the way of good sense and loving-kindness is to let by-gones be by-gones. Each might pray about it, having the other one's happiness uppermost in mind.
- ▲ Keep it always in mind that we are dealing with that most horrible human emotion: jealousy. Don't risk more combat over this.
- ▲ Even if we have no such complication as sex outside of the relationship, there is plenty we should do at home.
- ▲ Some alcoholics say that the only thing we need to do is to just keep sober. This isn't true because we are yet a long way from making good to our spouse and family whom for years we have so shockingly treated. Sobriety without amends is NOT enough.
- ▲ We have been like a tornado roaring our way through the lives of others. Hearts are broken. Sweet relationships are dead. Affections have been uprooted. Our selfish and inconsiderate habits have kept the home in turmoil.
- ▲ A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won't fill the bill at all. We sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past as we now see it, being very careful not to criticize any of them. Yes, they may have defects, but the chances are that our own actions are partly responsible for a lot of them.
- ▲ We set right our wrongs with the family, asking each morning in meditation that God show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness, and love. The spiritual life is not a theory. WE HAVE TO LIVE IT.
- ▲ Unless one's family expresses a desire to live upon spiritual principles we think we ought not to urge them. Our behavior will convince them more than our words.

Amend type (f) – *Wrongs we can never fully right:*

Be **very careful** about listing anyone or anything here. We only list someone here if we can HONESTLY say that the wrong cannot be righted, usually when to do so would further injure them or another person. We are **willing** (or pray for the willingness to become willing) to make the amend if we could. This should also be discussed with others practicing this way of life because we are very good at justifying just about anything.

- ▲ We don't worry about them if we can HONESTLY say to ourselves that we would right them if we could.
- ▲ If the case is that they cannot be seen, we write them an honest letter. If they are alive, we send it to them; if they are not we read it to them (perhaps at a place or with a person that we associate with them).
- ▲ There may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases but we don't delay if it can be avoided.
- ▲ We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. We don't crawl before anyone.

9th Step Prayers from the Big Book

- “Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, *we ask [God] that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be.*” (pg. 79, ¶ 1)
- “If we have obtained permission [from other people who might be affected by us making this amend], have consulted with others, *asked God to help* and the drastic step is indicated we must not shrink.” (pg. 80, ¶ 1)
- “*Each might pray about it* [in cases of domestic problems], *having the other one's happiness uppermost in mind.*” (pg. 82, ¶ 1)
- “So we clean house with the family, *asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.*” (pg. 83, ¶ 1)

Examples of 9th Step Prayers

- **Asked before we attempt every amend:** "God, with regard to this amend, please remove my fear and give me strength, courage and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. Amen" (from the thoughts on pg. 79, ¶ 1)
- **Cleaning house with our family, we pray each morning:** "God, please show me how to find **patience, tolerance, kindness and love** in my heart, my mind and my soul. Please help me show these attributes to my family and also, to those around me. Amen" (from the thoughts on pg. 83, ¶ 1)

Amends & Restitution List

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

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

* “+” (plus sign) = Willing to make the amend, “-“ (minus sign) = Not willing (If you have any minuses, continue to pray for the willingness.)

** There may be additional harms you've caused this person. Ask them, "Is there any other way I've harmed you that I'm not aware of?"

*** Fill this space in **after** you've made your initial approach to the person and you've asked them "What can I do to **right this wrong?**"

[illegible]

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[illegible]

Promises, promises!

How often we hear the incorrect phrase “The Twelve Promises of AA” used in meetings when referring to the Ninth Step promises on pages 83 & 84. What about all the OTHER promises found in the Big Book, like the ones associated with working Steps 3, 4, 5, 10, 11, and 12? As a matter of fact, the Ninth Step promises are only SOME of the better ones! Well, Dave F. was taught to consider all statements of hope in the Big Book, which guarantee a result, through our sober actions, in the working of the steps, to be a “promise”. Therefore, by this definition (although some of the groupings may be a stretch), here are 238 promises of the Big Book...

First Step Promises:

1. How many thousands of men and women have recovered from alcoholism. (Title page).
2. Who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. (foreword 1st edition xiii)
3. **To show** other alcoholics *precisely how we have recovered* is the main purpose of this book. (foreword 1st edition xiii)
4. We are sure that our way of living has its advantages for all. (foreword 1st edition xiii)
5. Our earliest printing voiced the hope -that every alcoholic who journeys will find the Fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous at his destination (foreword 2nd edition xv)
6. It also indicated that strenuous work, one alcoholic with another, was vital to permanent recovery (xvii)
7. A.A.'s had to hang together or die separately. We had to unify our Fellowship **or** pass off the scene.(xix)
8. Today the remarkable unity of A.A. is one of the greatest assets that our Society has.(xix)
9. It is our great hope that all those who have as yet found no answer may begin to find one in the pages of this book and will presently join us on the highroad to a new freedom. (xxi)
10. ...recovery begins when one alcoholic talks with another alcoholic, sharing experience, strength, and hope. (xxii)
11. We who have suffered alcoholic torture must believe that the body of the alcoholic is quite as abnormal as his mind (xxiv)
12. We are sure that our bodies were sickened as well. (xxiv)
13. We work out our solution on the spiritual as well as an altruistic plane. (xxiv)
14. 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)
15. There are many situations which arise out of the phenomenon of craving which cause men to make the supreme sacrifice rather than continue to fight. (xxviii)
16. 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. (8:2)
17. 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. (13:5)
18. 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. (14:6)
19. It is a design for living that works in rough going. (15:1)
20. The joy of living we really have, even under pressure and difficulty. (15:2)
21. There is scarcely any form of trouble and misery which has not been overcome among us. (15:2)
22. I have seen hundreds of families set their feet in the path that really goes somewhere; have seen the most impossible domestic situations righted; feuds and bitterness of all sorts wiped out. I have seen men come out of asylums and resume a vital place in the lives of their families and communities. Business and professional men have regained their standing. (15:2)
23. There is, however, a vast amount of fun about it all. I suppose some would be shocked at our seeming worldliness and levity. But just underneath there is deadly earnestness. Faith has to work twenty-four hours a day in and through us, or we perish. (16:2)
24. Most of us feel we need look no further for Utopia. We have it with us right here and now. Each day my friend's simple talk in our kitchen multiplies itself in a widening circle of peace on earth and good will to men. (16:3)
25. ...there exists among us a fellowship, a friendliness, and an understanding which is indescribably wonderful. (17:2)
26. Our joy in escape from disaster does not subside as we go our individual ways. (17:2)
27. The feeling of having shared in a common peril is one element in the powerful cement which binds us... The tremendous fact for every one of us is 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 from alcoholism. (17:2)
28. An illness of this sort-and we have come to believe it an illness-involves those about us in a way no other human sickness can. (18:1)
29. For with it (the alcoholic illness) there goes annihilation of all the things worth while in life. It engulfs all whose lives touch the sufferer's. It brings misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad wives and parents-anyone can increase the list. (18:1)
30. Most of us sense that real tolerance of other people's shortcomings and viewpoints and a respect for their opinions are attitudes which make us more useful to others. Our very lives, as ex-problem drinkers, depend upon our constant thought of others and how we may help meet their needs. (19:4)
31. The alcoholic reacts differently from normal people. We are not sure why, once a certain point is reached, little can be done for him. We cannot answer the riddle. We know that while the alcoholic keeps away from drink, as he may do for months or years, he reacts much like other men. We are equally positive that once he takes any alcohol whatever into his system, something happens, both in the bodily and mental sense, which makes it virtually impossible for him to stop. (22:3)

32. The main problem of the alcoholic centers in his mind, rather than in his body. (23:1)
33. At a certain point in the drinking of every alcoholic, he passes into a state where the most powerful desire to stop drinking is of absolutely no avail. (24:0)
34. The fact is that most alcoholics, for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in drink. Our so-called will power becomes practically nonexistent. We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first drink. (24:1)
35. There is a solution. (25:1)
36. We saw that it really worked in others. (25:1)
37. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed. (25:1)
38. 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. (25:2)
39. A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, "a design for living" that really works. (28:2)
40. 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. (28:3)
41. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his drinking is the great obsession of every abnormal drinker. (30:1)
42. We alcoholics are men and women who have lost the ability to control our drinking. We know that no real alcoholic ever recovers control. All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals-usually brief-were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization. We are convinced to a man that alcoholics of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period we get worse, never better. (30:3)
43. To be gravely affected, one does not necessarily have to drink a long time nor take the quantities some of us have. This is particularly true of women. Potential female alcoholics often turn into the real thing and are gone beyond recall in a few years. (33:3)
44. The actual or potential alcoholic, with hardly an exception, will be *absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge*. (39:1)
45. That if I had an alcoholic mind, the time and place would come-I would drink again. (41:2)
46. I saw that will power and self-knowledge would not help in those strange mental blank spots. (42:0)
47. The program of action, though entirely sensible, was pretty drastic (42:0)
48. Most alcoholics have to be pretty badly mangled before they really commence to solve their problems. (43:1)
49. 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. (43:3)
50. If he is an alcoholic of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face. (44:2)
51. We had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life -or else. (44:3)
52. Our human resources, as marshalled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly. (45:0)
53. 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*. (45:1)

Second Step Promises:

54. We did not need to consider another's conception of God. (46:2)
55. God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him. (46:2)
56. 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. (46:1)
57. The Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all men. (46:2)
58. 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.* (47:2)
59. In the face of collapse and despair, in the face of the total failure of their human resources, they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them. (50:4)
60. When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did. (52:3)
61. 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. (55:2)
62. If our testimony helps sweep away prejudice, enables you to think honestly, encourages you to search diligently within yourself, then, if you wish, you can join us on the Broad Highway. With this attitude you cannot fail. The consciousness of your belief is sure to come to you. (55:4)
63. He has come to all who have honestly sought Him. When we drew near to Him He disclosed Himself to us! (57:3)

Third Step Promises:

64. Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. (58:1)
65. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. (58:1)
66. Their chances are less than average. (58:1)
67. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely. (58:3)
68. Without help it is too much for us. (59:0)
69. But there is One who has all power-that One is God. (59:0)
70. Half measures availed us nothing. (59:1)
71. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. (60:1)
72. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection. (60:1)
73. We were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives. (60:2)

74. Probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism. (60:2)
75. God could and would if He were sought. (60:2)
76. that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. (60:4)
77. Selfishness-self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. (62:1)
78. We invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt. (62:1)
79. So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. (62:2)
80. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have God's help. (62:2)
81. We had to quit playing God. It didn't work. (62:3)
82. 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. (62:3)
83. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. (63:1)
84. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. (63:1)
85. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. (63:1)
86. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn. (63:1)

Fourth Step Promises:

87. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. (64:0)
88. Our liquor was but a symptom. (64:0)
89. Resentment is the "number one" offender. It destroys more alcoholics than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease, for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. (64:3)
90. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically. (64:3)
91. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. (65:3)
92. But the more we fought and tried to have our own way, the worse matters got. As in war, the victor only *seemed* to win. Our moments of triumph were short-lived. (66:0)
93. It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these (resentments), do we squander the hours that might have been worth while. (66:1)
94. But with the alcoholic, whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it (resentment) is fatal. For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of alcohol returns and we drink again. And with us, to drink is to die. (66:1)
95. If we were to live, we had to be free of anger. (66:2)
96. We turned back to the list, for it held the key to the future. (66:3)
97. We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrong-doing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill. (66:3)
98. This was our course: We realized that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick.
99. Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too. (66:4)
100. We cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one. (67:4)
101. "Fear" This short word somehow touches about every aspect of our lives. It was an evil and corroding thread; the fabric of our existence was shot through with it. It set in motion trains of circumstances which brought us misfortune. (67:3)
102. Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity. (68:2)
103. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear. (68:3)
104. If we are sorry for what we have done, and have the honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven and will have learned our lesson. (70:1)
105. If we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to drink. (70:1)
106. If we have been thorough about our personal inventory, we have written down a lot. (70:3)
107. We have listed and analyzed our resentments. (70:3)
108. We have begun to comprehend their futility and their fatality. (70:3)
109. We have commenced to see their terrible destructiveness. (70:3)
110. We have begun to learn tolerance, patience and good will toward all men, even our enemies, for we look on them as sick people. (70:3)
111. We have listed the people we have hurt by our conduct, and are willing to straighten out the past if we can. (70:3)

Fifth Step Promises:

112. In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. (72:2)
113. If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking. (72:2)
114. They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only *thought* they had lost their egoism and fear; they only *thought* they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else all their life story. (73:0)
115. We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. (73:4)
116. Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. (75:2)
117. We can look the world in the eye. (75:2)

- 118. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. (75:2)
- 119. Our fears fall from us. (75:2)
- 120. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. (75:2)
- 121. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. (75:2)
- 122. The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. (75:2)
- 123. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe. (75:2)

Sixth Step Promises:

None in the Big Book... See the 12 & 12 for promises.

Seventh Step Promises:

None in the Big Book... See the 12 & 12 for promises.

Eighth Step Promises:

- 124. Now we need more action, without which we find that "Faith without works is dead." (76:3)

Ninth Step Promises:

- 125. We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that nothing worth while can be accomplished until we do so, never trying to tell him what he should do. (77:2)
- 126. If our manner is calm, frank, and open, we will be gratified with the result. (78:0)
- 127. In nine cases out of ten the unexpected happens. (78:1)
- 128. Rarely do we fail to make satisfactory progress. (78:1)
- 129. We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them. (78:2)
- 130. Perhaps there are some cases where the utmost frankness is demanded. No outsider can appraise such an intimate situation. (82:1)
- 131. Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead. A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won't fill the bill at all. (83:1)
- 132. If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. (83:4)
- 133. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. (83:4)
- 134. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. (83:4)
- 135. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. (83:4)
- 136. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. (84:0)
- 137. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. (84:0)
- 138. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. (84:0)
- 139. Self-seeking will slip away. (84:0)
- 140. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. (84:0)
- 141. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. (84:0)
- 142. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. (84:0)
- 143. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. (84:0)
- 144. Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us-sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them. (84:1)

Tenth Step Promises:

- 145. We continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. (84:2)
- 146. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. (84:2)
- 147. We have entered the world of the Spirit. (84:2)
- 148. Love and tolerance of others is our code. (84:2)
- 149. We have ceased fighting anything or anyone even alcohol. (84:3)
- 150. For by this time sanity will have returned. (84:3)
- 151. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. (84:3)
- 152. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. (85:0)
- 153. We will see that our new attitude toward liquor has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. (85:0)
- 154. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. (85:0)
- 155. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality-safe and protected. (85:0)
- 156. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. (85:0)
- 157. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. (85:0)
- 158. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition. (85:0)
- 159. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. (85:1)
- 160. We are not cured of alcoholism. (85:1)
- 161. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. (85:1)
- 162. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. (85:1)
- 163. "How can I best serve Thee-Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. (85:1)
- 164. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will. (85:1)
- 165. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. (85:2)
- 166. To some extent we have become God-conscious. (85:2)
- 167. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action. (85:2)

Eleventh Step Promises:

168. We shouldn't be shy on this matter of prayer. Better men than we are using it constantly. It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it. (85:3)
169. We ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives. Under these conditions we can employ our mental faculties with assurance, for after all God gave us brains to use. (86:2)
170. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives. (86:2)
171. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. (86:3)
172. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. (87:0)
173. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it. (87:0)
174. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and it doesn't work. (87:1)
175. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done." We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. (87:3)
176. We become much more efficient. (88:0)
177. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves. (88:0)
178. It works-it really does. (88:1)
179. "Faith without works is dead." (88:3)

Twelfth Step Promises:

180. Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from drinking as intensive work with other alcoholics. It works when other activities fail. (89:1)
181. Carry this message to other alcoholics! You can help when no one else can. (89:1)
182. You can secure their confidence when others fail. (89:1)
183. Life will take on new meaning. (89:2)
184. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives. (89:2)
185. Unfortunately a lot of prejudice exists. You will be handicapped if you arouse it. (89:3)
186. Ministers and doctors are competent and you can learn much from them if you wish, but it happens that because of your own drinking experience you can be uniquely useful to other alcoholics. (89:3)
187. To be vital, faith must be accompanied by self sacrifice and unselfish, constructive action. (93:2)
188. You should not be offended if he wants to call it off, for he has helped you more than you have helped him. (94:1)
189. You will be most successful with alcoholics if you do not exhibit any passion for crusade or reform. (95:1)
190. We have no monopoly on God; we merely have an approach that worked with us. (95:4)
191. Helping others is the foundation stone of your recovery. (97:1)
192. A kindly act once in a while isn't enough. You have to act the Good Samaritan every day, if need be. (97:1)
193. The men who cry for money and shelter before conquering alcohol, are on the wrong track. (98:0)
194. Some of us have taken very hard knocks to learn this truth: job or no job-wife or no wife-we simply do not stop drinking so long as we place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God. (98:1)
195. Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house. (98:2)
196. Remind the prospect that his recovery is not dependent upon people. It is dependent upon his relationship with God. (99:3)
197. If you persist, remarkable things will happen. (100:1)
198. When we look back, we realize that the things which came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands were better than anything we could have planned. (100:1)
199. Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances! (100:1)
200. Assuming we are spiritually fit, we can do all sorts of things alcoholics are not supposed to do. (100:4)
201. An alcoholic who cannot meet them, still has an alcoholic mind; there is something the matter with his spiritual status. (101:1)
202. In our belief any scheme of combating alcoholism which proposes to shield the sick man from temptation is doomed to failure. (101:2)
203. At a proper time and place explain to all your friends why alcohol disagrees with you. If you do this thoroughly, few people will ask you to drink. (102:1)
204. Keep on the firing line of life with these motives and God will keep you unharmed. (102:2)
205. We would not even do the cause of temperate drinking any good, for not one drinker in a thousand likes to be told anything about alcohol by one who hates it. (103:1)
206. After all, our problems were of our own making. Bottles were only a symbol. (103:3)
207. Besides, we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. We have to! (103:3)

Miscellaneous Promises:

208. The power of God goes deep! (114:1)
209. If God can solve the age-old riddle of alcoholism, He can solve your problems too. (116:2)
210. You will lose the old life to find one much better. (120:0)
211. All problems will not be solved at once. Seed has started to sprout in a new soil, but growth has only begun. In spite of your new-found happiness, there will be ups and downs. Many of the old problems will still be with you. This is as it should be. (117:1)
212. The faith and sincerity of both you and your husband will be put to the test. These work-outs should be regarded as part of your education, for you will be learning to live. You will make mistakes, but if you are in earnest they will not drag you down. Instead, you will capitalize then better way of life will emerge when they are overcome. (117:2)
213. You and your husband will find that you can dispose of serious problems easier than you can the trivial ones. (118:1)

214. Patience, tolerance, understanding and love are the watchwords. Show him these things in yourself and they will be reflected back to you from him. (118:2)
215. Live and let live is the rule. If you both show a willingness to remedy your own defects, there will be little need to criticize each other. (118:2)
216. Both of you will awaken to a new sense of responsibility for others. (119:2)
217. We grow by our willingness to face and rectify errors and convert them into assets. The alcoholic's past thus becomes the principal asset of the family and frequently it is almost the only one! (124:1)
218. Cling to the thought that, in God's hands, the dark past is the greatest possession you have-the key to life and happiness for others. With it you can avert death and misery for them. (124:2)
219. We alcoholics are sensitive people. It takes some of us a long time to outgrow that serious handicap. (125:2)
220. But we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life. We try not to indulge in cynicism over the state of the nations, nor do we carry the world's troubles on our shoulders. (132:1)
221. We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others. (132:2)
222. We have three little mottoes which are apropos. Here they are: First Things First, Live and Let Live, Easy Does It.(135:4)
223. The greatest enemies of us alcoholics are resentment, jealousy, envy, frustration, and fear. (145:3)
224. As a class, alcoholics are energetic people. They work hard and they play hard. (146:1)
225. Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in Alcoholics Anonymous. (152:2)
226. There you will find release from care, boredom and worry. (152:2)
227. Your imagination will be fired. (152:2)
228. Life will mean something at last. (152:2)
229. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus we find the fellowship, and so will you. (152:2)
230. You will be bound to them with new and wonderful ties, for you will escape disaster together and you will commence shoulder to shoulder your common journey. (152:4)
231. Then you will know what it means to give of yourself that others may survive and rediscover life. (153:0)
232. You will learn the full meaning of "Love thy neighbor as thyself." (153:0)
233. The practical answer is that since these things have happened among us, they can happen with you. Should you wish them above all else, and be willing to make use of our experience, we are sure they will come. The age of miracles is still with us. Our own recovery proves that! (153:1)
234. He will show you how to create the fellowship you crave. (164:1)
235. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. (164:2)
236. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. (164:2)
237. See to it that your relationship with Him is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us. (164:2)
238. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. (164:3)

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