

Going Through The Steps by Clarence Snyder

(For those of you who don't know, Clarence started AA group #3 in Cleveland, Ohio and for the first few years after the Big Book came out he had more success with drunks than Bill W. and Dr. Bob combined.)

Before beginning the steps the sponsor must first qualify the person who has requested to follow the path. Find out if they really are alcoholic and, just as important, if YOU feel that they willing and ready to go to any lengths to change their lives and not drink forever. (Page 142, Big Book: "Will he take every necessary step, submit to anything to get well, to stop drinking forever?")

Ask your prospect 3 qualifying questions:

- (1) Do you think you have a drinking problem?
- (2) Do you want to do anything about the problem?
- (3) What are you willing to do about it?

If you get the answers: (1) yes, (2) yes, and (3) anything, and you feel that the person is ready to follow directions without question, you both are ready to continue all the way. If you feel that they are not ready, tell them so and go on to the next person. (Page 96, Big Book: "To spend too much time on any one situation is to deny some other alcoholic an opportunity to live and be happy.") The program and your own recovery are not dependent upon winning friends and influencing people.

If you feel that they are ready, then you start. There are five phases to the Steps:

1. STEP 1: ADMISSION,
2. STEPS 2 and 3: SUBMISSION,
3. STEPS 4, 5, 6, and 7: CONFESSION,
4. STEPS 8 and 9: RESTITUTION,
5. STEPS 10, 11 and 12: THE LIVING STEPS, CONSTRUCTION AND MAINTENANCE

STEP ONE: Who's boss -- them or the alcohol? (The above qualification should pretty much answer the first half of the step)... That our lives had become unmanageable, not only our drinking -- all phases of our existence were and are unmanageable. It stands to reason that if we can't manage our lives and we are acting in a manner that is not very sane (unmanageability is not sane living) then we have to take...

STEP TWO: Come to believe that a power GREATER than ourselves, something other than us can manage our lives. A power that can bring sanity back to the way we live. Who are we to believe that WE are the greatest? When we did Step 1, we admitted that we couldn't manage our own lives. When we took Step 2, we said that someone greater than us could manage us and restore us. We needed new to have a new manager, a living, loving God.

STEP THREE: We made the decision that we needed to come under new management since our own management got us nowhere. So we turn our wills and lives over to the care of our new manager -- Jesus. He will take care of us and manage our lives since we admitted in Step 1 that our lives were unmanageable, and in Step 2, that He could restore us to a manageable state and sanity. At this point both of you get down on your knees... Both on knees, the sponsor says: "Jesus, this is ___(name)___, he is coming to You in all humility to ask You to guide and direct him. ___(name)___ realizes that his life is messed up and unmanageable. ___(name)___ is coming to You Lord in all humility to ask to be one of your children -- to work for you, to serve and dedicate his life to You and to turn his will and life over that he may be an instrument of Your love. Person repeats after sponsor: "Lord, I ask that You guide and direct me, and that I have decided to turn my will and life over to You. To serve You and dedicate my life to You. I ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ. I thank you Lord; I believe that if I ask this in prayer, I shall receive what I have asked for. Thank you Jesus. Amen."

Now that we have gone under new management, we believe what it says in the Big Book at the end of the Steps in How It Works:

- A: We were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives,
B: No human power could RELIEVE our alcoholism,
C: GOD COULD AND WOULD IF HE WERE SOUGHT!!!!
Then we have to take an inventory.

STEP FOUR: Take a searching and fearless moral inventory. We must find out what we've got, what we need to get rid of, and what we need to acquire. There are 20 character defects to ask about -- the individual wrongs are not necessary to go over, just the defects that caused them. Going over the questions, you ask that the person be honest and admit his defects to himself, to you, and to God (where two or more are gathered in His name, there shall He be.) By admitting, the person also takes.

STEP FIVE: The inventory is of our defects, not our incidents. Here are the defects:

- 1 Resentment, Anger
- 2 Fear, Cowardice
- 3 Self pity
- 4 Self justification
- 5 Self importance, Egotism

- 6 Self condemnation, Guilt
- 7 Lying, Evasiveness, Dishonesty
- 8 Impatience
- 9 Hate
- 10 False pride, Phoniness, Denial
- 11 Jealousy
- 12 Envy
- 13 Laziness
- 14 Procrastination
- 15 Insincerity
- 16 Negative Thinking
- 17 Immoral thinking
- 18 Perfectionism, Intolerance
- 19 Criticizing, Loose Talk, Gossip
- 20 Greed

Now that you've admitted these defects, ask, "Don't you want to get rid of them?" These same defects caused your life to be unmanageable. How can you ask God to get rid of the THINGS you did in your past? YOU CAN'T!! You can ask to get rid of the defects, which caused you to act in the manner you did by taking...

STEP SIX: You were ENTIRELY ready (not almost, not just about, not partially) to have God remove ALL (not some) of these defects. He cannot remove things that have already happened. You are ready to get rid of ALL of them, even the ones that are fun. REMEMBER, YOU TURNED YOUR WILL AND LIFE OVER TO GOD IN STEP THREE. Now comes...

STEP SEVEN: On your knees you ask that these defects be removed, these shortcomings listed in your inventory... Both on knees, the sponsor says: "Lord, here is your child, ___(name)__. He is coming to you in all humility to humbly ask your forgiveness, believing that anything he asks in prayer, he humbly shall receive. Person repeats after sponsor: "I, ___(name)__, 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 Jesus, Amen." Sponsor: "Your sins are removed in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit." Both: "Thank you Jesus, Amen."

STEP EIGHT: You make a list of all persons you have harmed, starting with yourself, family, friends, employers, employees, etc. If the person was involved in the occult, God's forgiveness must be asked. We discuss briefly this list, and ask if they are willing to make restitution and amends. (Since the sponsor is boss - you really don't ask... it is assumed.) Then restitution is made to all as soon as possible, except in certain instances where it is turned over to God. They will have done STEP NINE: by making restitution. After doing these 9 steps, your slate is wiped clean. You are reborn as it says in the Big Book on page 63, "We were reborn." II Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things are passed away; behold, all things are made new!"

STEP TEN: We continued to take personal inventory every night: did you harm anyone, have you done something wrong? Do you deserve a gold star or a black mark? You ask forgiveness honestly, and all is forgiven by the Lord -- clean slate. When you are wrong, promptly admit it. When you don't, use the inventory at night to do so. Deal with your life by the four absolutes: ABSOLUTE LOVE, ABSOLUTE HONESTY, ABSOLUTE UNSELFISHNESS, and ABSOLUTE PURITY. Did you act out of Love? Were you honest? Were you unselfish? Were your motives pure? All things must be based on these four things...

STEP ELEVEN: Prayer is talking to God -- meditation is listening to Him. Pray, go to church, read the bible, read the Big Book. Get to know the Word of God so that you will understand it when you meditate. Thy will, not mine, be done!!!!

STEP TWELVE: A spiritual awakening is THE RESULT of working, doing, and LIVING, ALL of the 12 Steps! Then you have this message to carry to others. There is no message unless you have done the first 9 Steps and are living the last three. You can't give what you don't have. You must practice these principles in ALL your affairs.

Now it is your responsibility to give this message to others as you have received it. Not changed, watered down, or how others may want it in their lives. If they want what you have, they must do what you did. It is now your legacy to hand down, AS IT WAS GIVEN TO YOU -- NO OTHER WAY!!!! It is recommended that two people work with the newcomer through the steps whenever possible, so that both may learn as well as give.

There is no easier, softer way -- this is it. This is the PROGRAM OF RECOVERY as it was in the 1930's in Ohio, as Dr. Bob gave it. You can and DO recover, you don't have to stay sick -- you can and do get WELL!!! This is the solution; this is HOW IT WORKS.

Don't trudge the Happy Road to Recovery; walk with your head high, knowing that through you, God will help others to RECOVER as you have. May God bless and be with you.