



## ▲ A Life of Principles and Purpose

Rebuilding Our Morality - *By Rick R.*

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are placed in numerical order for a reason. Each step is preparatory to the next step and requires a certain amount of attention before we can successfully move on to the next step.

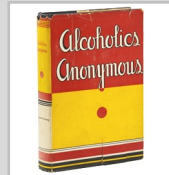
Simply put, Step One is acknowledging that we have a problem. Step Two is about accepting outside help. Step Three is where we surrender to that outside help (a Power greater than ourselves). Step Four is the beginning of the action steps, where we acknowledge and document the ~~immoral~~ behaviors of our past and those we offended.

Step Five may be the most difficult step, where we must admit “the exact nature of our wrongs” to God, to ourselves and to another human being. It was that other human being part that I found to be the most difficult thing. This delayed my progress for a short time.

We cannot change one moment of the past, but we can change our habits and behavior as we begin our journey into the future.

That is where Steps Six and Seven come in. To simplify my understanding of these two steps, it occurred to me that most of my faulty behaviors

## Big Book Published



The Big Book, written by Bill W. —and first published on April 10, 1939, laid the foundation for the 12-step movement that helped millions of people get and stay sober. With more than 37 million copies sold, the Big Book is one of the bestselling works of all time.

## One Step At A Time



“... character-building and spiritual values had to come first.”

Twelve Steps Twelve Traditions, p 71

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(shortcomings) are the result of my (defective) thinking. Once I discovered the defects in my motives, it was not too difficult to change my behaviors.

On the last page of Step Seven in 12 Steps and 12 Traditions, it says: "The chief activator of our defects has been self-centered fear." Most of my fears were of the irrational variety. I discovered that my fears and insecurity stemmed from experiences in my youth, which caused me to do things that were morally wrong. Those actions were the shortcomings that stemmed from my irrational fears.

Once I recognized the defects (fears), my shortcomings (behaviors) were much easier to change. "Selfishness—Self-Centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate." (Big Book pg. 62)

If, in fact, Selfishness—self-centeredness is the root of my problems, it is plain to see that unselfishness just might be solution to them. I could not have understood this line of thinking when I was still using alcohol to mask these problems.

The proper completion of Step Five was the most humbling experience of my life, but it opened the door to the rest of the program. I do not believe that I would have been strong enough to follow those guidelines had I not completed Step Five and admitted my faults to God, to myself, and to another human being. I could never have taken my ego out of the game, and the rest of the program may have been a shallow facade.

The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking. Those words, which are read as part of the Preamble at meetings, give members the opportunity to choose their own degree of thoroughness when it comes to practicing the AA principles.

I am so thankful that I did not let my ego stand in the way of my spiritual development and all of the progress that I have made in the program. I have experienced all of the promises.

I encourage anyone who is still caught up in the fear of Step Five to take the leap of faith, revisit it, get their ego out of the way, and clear their conscience. We only live once, and it would be a shame to waste this precious gift.

## ▲ Who's to Know

*The following article was referenced in last month's Central Bulletin in an article titled "The Rite of Writing" by the same author. It was originally printed in the March 1988 edition of Central Bulletin (Vol. 46 #6).*

On a dreary day two years ago, I was in downtown Detroit handling some very unpleasant personal business. My plans and expectations had suddenly dissolved in the worst possible manner, leaving me despondent and alone—and when I'm alone, I'm in bad company! I wanted to escape in any manner possible.

I unpacked my luggage at a local motel and discovered that I hadn't packed a toothbrush, of all things. I asked the desk clerk for directions to the nearest drugstore.

When I arrived, I suddenly discovered something I didn't know about Michigan drugstores—they sell liquor. I found myself staring at a wall of old friends. Rows of colored glass bottles had become friends in my drinking. At the end of my drinking, they were my only friends.

A thought occurred to me. Who's to know? I wouldn't meet anyone I knew for a couple of days. Wouldn't a little drunk help me through this time? I wouldn't have to tell anyone. Would a fifth be enough, or would I need a half-gallon?

I didn't have long to think. There was a disturbance right next to me. A teenager was arguing with a pharmacist that his grandmother really needed to refill her prescription for a drug long before it was due. I was familiar with the drug. It was something I'd used as "solid alcohol" when the liquid stuff was unavailable. The pharmacist knew what was going on and refused to do it. I knew, too.

I bought the first toothbrush I could grab and raced back to the motel. I redoubled my efforts to get to Detroit AA meetings. I called my sponsor. I read the Big Book. I prayed. And I stayed sober!

Who's to know? That face staring back at me when I brush my teeth would know. That Power greater than myself that crossed my path with the teenager would also know. Who matters more?

By Bob M., Community Sunday

## ▲ Tolerance

*Reprinted from Vol. 1 #12 September, 1943. An editorial series on Tolerance, Self-Control and Cooperation.*

Many of us have learned, through our moral inventories, to guard against resentment. We discover that the sense of personal injury that makes us resentful often is imagined. Where it is not, it is almost always the result of our own misconduct. There, self-pity and anti-resentment, the worst forms of self-love, go hand in hand. As long as we yield to resentment, we are in trouble.

But how many of us, while trying to control resentment, still allow ourselves to suffer torment because of our lack of tolerance?

Tolerance begins with our being liberal minded when the acts and words of others do not square with our own firm convictions. Tolerant people recognize they can be wrong, even with strong convictions. And they recognize that it is wrong to try to keep others from trying to express themselves.

We have to look beyond this, however. Too many of us, as alcoholics, insist on having our own way. That's how

many of us became alcoholics.

And many of us, while dry, still insist on having our own way in everything. We want to do it by high-handed methods: By shutting up those who disagree with us or by removing those who stand in our way. Too many of us become resentful when we fail to get our own way.

Intolerance becomes vicious when it results from jealousy. Then, it turns into resentment.

Some people show intolerance because they resent leadership in others. Some are jealous of the attention that others receive. Some can't stand a new idea. Some are intolerant of anything a certain person does because they had a difference with that person in the past.

An intolerant attitude is a serious thing for an alcoholic who is trying to find a new way of life. It harms the intolerant person. Sometimes, it harms others. We have, on occasion seen it be a hindrance to AA.

Most intolerance is petty. And while such intolerance may not be socially important, it keeps one from enjoying life and from having friends.

## ▲ Rule 62



## ▲ A Quote

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FROM MY SPONSOR

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“Go to a meeting, now.”

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For details or to add an event, call us at (216) 241-7387 or go online [aacle.org/events](http://aacle.org/events). Deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of each month for next issue.