

**Our A.A. Legacy
to the Faith Community**
*A Twelve-Step Guide
for Those Who Want to Believe*

By Three Clarence Snyder
Sponsee Old-timers
and Their Wives

Compiled and Edited by Dick B.

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Foreword

Three A.A. old-timers and their wives tell precisely what they learned from their sponsor, Clarence H. Snyder, who was sponsored by A.A. co-founder Dr. Bob Smith. Clarence later became the member of Alcoholics Anonymous with the most years of sobriety.

These authors have taken hundreds through the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, faithfully following the basic ideas passed to them by Clarence.

These Old-timers have carried on the spiritual retreats for AAs and their families that Snyder founded in the 1960's. And, in those retreats, they have presented the spiritual history of pioneer A.A., the materials AAs borrowed from the Bible and the Oxford Group, and have taught participants how to take the Twelve Steps in an afternoon. Since 1980, they have led retreats in Florida and Wisconsin, and helped start more in the United States, England, Scotland, and Australia. And their ideas have also been presented in what was formerly called the USSR.

They have shown, and here demonstrate for you, how people can with certainty “come to believe” what the Creator can and will do in curing alcoholics and their families of alcoholism’s “curse.”

Dick B.
Kihei, Maui, Hawaii
February, 2005

The Purpose and Plan *of This Guide*

Input From Dr. Bob—Co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous

There is little doubt that the founding and attractiveness of early A.A.'s spiritual program of recovery was due to the leadership of Dr. Robert H. Smith of Akron, Ohio. It was Dr. Bob and his wife Anne who awed Bill Wilson with their spiritual reading and knowledge. Both Dr. Bob and Anne had done an immense amount of reading recommended by the Oxford Group. It was Dr. Bob who had, by his own statement, received excellent training in the Bible as a youngster. It was Dr. Bob who considered it necessary, and who took the action, to refresh his Biblical knowledge in the pre- and early A.A. days—to the extent of reading the entire Bible three times. And it was Dr. Bob and Anne who believed that the guidance of God, through prayer and listening, should be utilized in every phase of early A.A. activity. It was the principles that Dr. Bob had learned in his youth—particularly from Christian Endeavor—that formed the heart of early Akron A.A.'s Christian Fellowship (as Dr. Bob called it), stressing belief in God, acceptance of Christ, study of the Bible, obedience to God's will, prayer, Quiet Time, the reading of Christian literature, fellowship, and witness.

Early members of the fellowship in Akron spent many hours with Anne Smith teaching and reading from the Bible. Fortunately for us, she kept a journal of these days and lessons that we can appreciate today. Robert Smith, son of Dr. Bob and Anne Smith, wrote in the foreword to *Anne Smith's Journal*, First Edition, by Dick B., that "Dick B. has painstakingly researched the...notebook Anne kept so faithfully, and, in doing so, has made the spiritual depth of that astonishing, lovely person available to all of us." (p. ix)

It was Dr. Bob who was the acknowledged leader of the Akron program. It was Dr. Bob who was interviewed along with other Akronites by Frank Amos as representative of John D. Rockefeller Jr. It was Dr. Bob who received the 'Triple A' rating for the Akron program of cures. It was Dr. Bob's program, with its 75% success rate among seemingly hopeless "medically incurable" alcoholics, that received headlines all over the United States as the new cure for alcoholism the AAs had developed, with God as their "medicine." And it was Dr. Bob, with his wife Anne, who ultimately worked—personally and without charge—to help over five thousand alcoholics in their steps toward recovery.

Input of the Big Book and the Twelve Steps

Notwithstanding the Smiths' vital role, it was the basic text of *Alcoholics Anonymous* (affectionately called "the Big Book") that laid out the accepted steps to becoming a 'recovered' alcoholic. And it was that same Big Book which specifically described what was to be done to take the Twelve Steps and achieve what A.A. co-founder Bill Wilson called the solution: a 'spiritual experience,' later to be called a 'spiritual awakening.'

Through its various editions since 1939, the Big Book has stood for the program of recovery (as distinguished from the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous). And those in A.A. who profess to have recovered from the disease of alcoholism all stand, virtually as one, claiming that their recovery came as the result of their *taking* the Twelve Steps.

Those who think that 'not drinking,' or 'going to meetings,' or participating in A.A. conferences and events amount to recovery work are simply out of the loop. The helpful ideas of A.A.—abstinence, fellowship, and service—are appealing but not representative, even today, of recovery, of having recovered, or of cure.

Regrettably, however, the message of how to take the Steps has been blurred by private interpretations; endless and diverse methods; inadequate coaches; inexperienced counselors and therapists; new philosophies about the nature of alcoholism; and a growing antipathy toward religion, church, the Bible, God, Jesus Christ, and a Scriptural believing and healing emphasis.

Unique Role of Clarence Snyder and the Cleveland AAs

Since the Big Book's publication in the spring of 1939, A.A. has done lots of rockin' and rollin'. Significant personal stories in the First, Second, and Third Editions have been eliminated. New stories and more Big Book editions seem to be the promise of the future—with battles yet to come over foreign language editions, copyrights, trademarks, gender-free language, godless emphasis, "singleness of purpose" viewpoints, and splinter groups for police, attorneys, physicians, airline pilots, atheists, gays, and others.

That being said, what of the original program? It began with the Bible. It flirted with and eventually codified the life-changing ideas of the Oxford Group. It achieved uncommon success in the Akron and Cleveland area. But solid teaching and examples like those available in the earliest days have become a thing of the past. These were replaced by any number of diverse pamphlets, basics, programs, offshoots, and a host of other diluting forces.

This guide represents our effort to teach the "roots" of early A.A., as taught in the Akron/Cleveland area.

The Purpose and Plan of This Guide

The formation of A.A.'s first alcoholics-only group occurred in Cleveland, Ohio only weeks after the Big Book was published. It started from dissent. Roman Catholics from Cleveland were uncomfortable with the Protestant leanings of Oxford Group ideas and literature, as well as their emphasis on the original Akron program. The Big Book had not eliminated the hostility over fellowship with non-alcoholic religious people. And Clarence H. Snyder, though new in the program and loyal to Dr. Bob as his sponsor, insisted on starting a new group in Cleveland, Ohio. The group was to include alcoholics and family members only. Though Akronites objected, Cleveland adherents persisted.

Cleveland AAs began wholeheartedly embracing the Big Book and the Twelve Steps. Clarence Snyder became the leading promoter of hands-on alcoholic meetings. He publicized A.A. He personally chased newcomers out of their alcoholic holes. He placed advertisements for A.A. using his own name. He was largely responsible for the growth of Cleveland A.A. from one group to thirty in a year. And this was acknowledged to be the fastest-growing A.A. area in existence.

Newcomers, attracted by A.A. success, publicity, and aggressive activities poured into the society. They and their spouses were given Bible emphasis, the Oxford Group's "Four Absolutes," baseball teams, newsletters, real growth vitality, and the Big Book and Twelve Steps. In fact, as numbers grew, it became impossible for individual sponsors to take individual newcomers through the Steps. So classes began. Groups were taken through the Steps in a day or so. *And the result was a documented 93% success rate in Cleveland.*

The Significance of Clarence's Later Spiritual Retreats for AAs and Their Families

As the A.A. years rolled on, A.A. began growing and expanding to its present level of about one million in-and-out members in the United States at any given time. But the emphasis on the spiritual waned and diminished. The emphasis on treatment, therapy, endless recovery books, separate groups for family members, and dealing with outside issues played a large part in the fact that A.A. actually stopped growing.

As these same years rolled on, Clarence Snyder not only became the longest living sober person, in point of years of sobriety, but he also—though he had encountered much hostility—became a champion in his own right of twelfth-step work; Big Book emphasis; stress on God, Jesus Christ, and the Bible; and sponsorship of new members.

Clarence faithfully adhered to the A.A. Big Book and its directions for taking the Twelve Steps. He took thousands through the Steps over the years. He never flinched on mentioning that the Bible and the Oxford Group were the real sources of A.A. ideas. He planted his feet on 2 Corinthians 5:17 (“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”) as the key to recovery. He said he had learned the verse from A.A. pioneer William Van Horn, author of the Big Book, First Edition story, “A Ward of the Probate Court.”

In his earlier years, Clarence spoke little of Bible specifics, but often to what he called ‘rummy stories’ in the Bible. He claimed that the first rummy was Noah, “since he planted a vineyard and got drunk as his first act.” (See *Genesis 9:18–21*.) The second was the story of the Prodigal Son, who “squandered his estate with loose living.” (See *Luke 15:11–32*.) The third was The Good Samaritan, in that he made, according to Clarence, “the first A.A. Twelfth Step call on record.” (See *Luke 10:30–37*.) Clarence felt that these stories maintained interest in what AAs called “the Good Book.”

In the 1960's, his beliefs were translated into action by the spiritual retreats that were and have been founded in many places. And a paramount feature in the retreats is taking willing participants through all twelve steps in an afternoon, to the end that they may come to believe and receive the truth, healing, and recovery available through A.A. and the Good Book.

By the mid 1970's Clarence was to marry Grace Moore—a devoted Christian, Bible student, and recovered AA. Thereafter, the Bible, bringing people to Christ, and prayer and healing became much larger factors in the contribution of the pair to A.A.

The Purpose and Plan of This Guide

The Authors of This Guide

From their home in Casselberry, Florida, during their later years, Clarence and Grace reached out to several dedicated Christian AAs, their spouses, and often their children. Clarence sponsored them. He took them through the Steps, and he encouraged them to start their own retreats. Clarence helped Dale and Carol M. start a retreat in 1981 in Amery, Wisconsin.

Just hours before he died in 1984, he anointed his wife Grace, along with Steve and Sue F., as shepherds of the Leesburg, Florida retreat. His sponsees continued to conduct and encourage new retreats. Jack and BJ R. took over leadership of one of the semi-annual retreats in Leesburg in 1990.

More important for our purposes, these Old-timers stayed sober, stayed active, stood solidly on their Christian beliefs, and, by our definition, were fully recovered and said so. They sought to preserve Clarence's Step technique, his retreats, and the successes he had achieved with his sponsees. And they introduced the practice of taking all willing participants at the retreats through the Twelve Steps, *exactly as Clarence had taught and taken them through.*

Which brings us to this Guide. Here the somewhat varied approaches of the three retreats have been combined into a single format for taking people through the Steps and helping them to believe, to change their lives, to recover, and to live the more abundant life that Jesus Christ came to make possible (*John 10:10*). These leaders have collaborated to produce this Step guide to the end that other leaders, retreats, one-on-one sponsor sessions, and newcomers may use it as the vehicle for their spiritual deliverance. You can use it with the knowledge that the authors have endeavored faithfully to tell it just the way that Clarence told it to them.

Each of the contributors to this guide is an A.A. old-timer. Each is a born-again Christian. Each has maintained active membership in Alcoholics Anonymous with 25 to 41 years of recovery as of February 2005. Each was sponsored by Clarence Snyder. Each has sponsored dozens of men and women, taking them through the Twelve Steps in the same manner that Clarence Snyder presented the program to them. Each knew Clarence and Grace Snyder well. Each has been a churchgoer and Bible student. Each has traveled widely to all the Snyder retreats and has conducted and continues to conduct spiritual retreats. Each has taken the participants through the Twelve Steps in an afternoon.

Each is familiar with the question uttered frequently at these retreats upon dealing with Chapter Five ("How it Works") of the Big Book. They ask: "How does it work?" And the participants always responded with a loud reply: "Real good!" And they believe it does. They believe that the Twelve Steps explain how it works. And they earnestly believe this Guide will help you to achieve the same cure and victory that has characterized their lives.

See Appendix One for a brief and accurate summary of the history, roots, beginnings, and founding of Alcoholics Anonymous.

What It Means to “Take” the Twelve Steps

When Alcoholics Anonymous began, there were no ‘Steps.’ There was no ‘Big Book’ and no Al-Anon. And the program in Akron was very different from the program later used on the East Coast. Therefore, despite the language in A.A.’s basic text that “Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery,” (BB, p. 59) there were no steps that had been taken.

However, Bill Wilson, Dr. Bob, and Anne Smith had discussed the Bible together, and they had discussed the principles of the Oxford Group. When A.A. was founded in Akron, the emphasis was on the Bible and, more specifically, some basic ideas in the Book of James, the Sermon on the Mount, and 1 Corinthians 13. And a very simple and highly successful program was produced in Akron’s ‘old fashioned prayer meetings’ and Christian fellowship. Its basic ideas have already been discussed. Yet when Bill Wilson was commissioned to write a basic text, he fashioned its language and program by adopting the language and codifying the life-changing program of the Oxford Group as taught him primarily by the Rev. Sam Shoemaker Jr. (See *Appendix Three.*)

In his basic text, Bill discussed in great detail the problem of alcoholism. He also attempted to enable alcoholics to find God and to establish a relationship with Him by taking and engaging in a program of action closely resembling the Oxford Group’s methods of achieving spiritual experience. Bill sought to explain precisely what needed to be done, and to provide explicit directions and exact answers to the questions presented him. As a result, Bill penned the Twelve Steps that he believed were a summary of the actions necessary to produce a spiritual experience, and a *spiritual solution* to the problem of alcoholism.

Note that each Step is phrased in the past tense. For example, in the First Step, “we admitted.” In the Second Step, we “came to believe.” And just how do you do the things that enable you to admit and come to believe? You follow the instructions in the Big Book. Once you have completed the instructions with reference to each Step, you can then say that you have “taken” that Step.

This Guide also contains specific instructions for taking the Steps. It is based on the Big Book. It is based on the Bible. It is based on the codified ideas of the Oxford Group. And it is based on the successful teachings and leadership of the authors of this book, as their sponsor, Clarence H. Snyder, first inspired them.

This Guide is also a workbook, in that it provides space for you to write down certain things when instructed. It is therefore a guide, a notebook, a workbook, and a means of completing the Steps in the way they were intended.

How It Works:

Background, Instructions, and Qualifying Questions for “Taking” the Twelve Steps—as inspired by Clarence H. Snyder

The Background

When Clarence Snyder met Dr. Bob Smith, the Akron-area alcoholics were meeting jointly with a small number of people from the Oxford Group.

In 1938, with approximately forty alcoholics sober, most were attending the Oxford Group meetings. These alcoholics began the writing of our Big Book. Clarence was one of the original forty, and he was sponsored by Dr. Bob, who had first put Clarence in the Akron City Hospital.

Dr. Bob and Clarence told how our A.A. program had come mostly from the Bible, especially Matthew 5–7 (the Sermon on the Mount), 1 Corinthians 13 (referred to as ‘the love chapter’), and the Book of James (referred to as ‘the healing book’).

By early 1939, Clarence, who lived in Cleveland, was sponsoring about a dozen men and taking them every week to the Oxford Group meetings in Akron. Seven or eight of these men were Roman Catholics, and as they started to get their lives together, they went back to the Church. The Roman Catholic Church, however, disapproved of its members’ attendance of the Oxford Group meetings, objecting to, among other things, their open confessions and their participation in an outside religious organization.

Clarence got so much heat from these men that in May of 1939 he arranged to use the Cleveland home of Al Golrich for a new type of meeting. The Big Book, formally “*Alcoholics Anonymous*,” had just been printed. The Cleveland alcoholics adopted its name, and their meetings were thereafter known as “A.A. meetings.”

In addition to bringing the new Big Book to their fellowship, they brought from the Oxford Group the Four Absolutes:

Absolute Honesty,
Absolute Purity,
Absolute Unselfishness, and
Absolute Love.

They used these Four Absolutes as a yardstick for measuring their conduct and, in effect, as a means of taking their moral inventory. Believing correctly that the Twelve Steps in the Big Book had come from Oxford Group teachings, Clarence taught those Steps using four simple phases:

Step One: Admission;

Steps Two through Seven: Submission (where we are submitting our will and life to God's care);

Steps Eight and Nine: Restitution;

Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve: Construction and Maintenance.

When people would ask Clarence, "When do I do these steps?" he would answer, "When do you want to get well?" or "How long do you want to be sick?" pointing out that Jesus would sometimes ask, "Do you want to be healed?"

Clarence told of how Dr. Bob had ordered him to get out of bed and onto his knees to pray with him before he left the hospital.

As to the expression, "*God as we understood Him*," just how *did* they understand God? Since the "we" refers to the authors of the Big Book, we need to know how they understood Him.

Clarence reminded us that alcohol is mentioned just once in the Steps—the rest is a living program. He said A.A. is to be a life-changing program so that we may live a better life.

Of the first 260 people who came into A.A. in Cleveland, ninety-three percent never drank again!

In Cleveland, because of the articles in *The Plain Dealer* newspaper and other publications, people were coming into A.A. so fast that the members couldn't take all these newcomers through the Steps on a one-on-one basis. So Clarence started to pray for a place where he could teach and take them through the Steps as a group. He soon received an inquiry card from a Walter Bielstien, with the address, "Bielstien Funeral Home." On his arrival, Clarence found that Walter lived over the carriage house in the back; and Clarence found Walter quite drunk. Right away, Clarence saw the answer to his prayer. Walter's hobby was conducting an amateur theater out of his home: He lived at one end of a very large room, and on the other end was a stage with a couple hundred old movie house seats fastened to the floor.

Clarence exclaimed to Walter, "You are a gift from heaven!" Walter said, "I am?" Clarence told Walter that they were going to fill the seats every night. And that was all Walter wanted to hear. At that point, he didn't know what he was going to get the seats filled with, but he knew he was going to get the seats filled. Clarence made Walter a 'Captain' in A.A.—the first and only Captain in A.A. history—and they used Walter's place to teach the program as we do today.

Statements in the 3rd Edition of the Big Book that affirm what Clarence told us:

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

p. xxx	Though perhaps he came to scoff, he may remain to pray.
p. 14	I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all.
p. 19	We feel that the elimination of our drinking is but a beginningOf necessity there will be discussion of matters medical, psychiatric, social, and religious.
p. 25	<i>There is a solution.</i> Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed.
emphasis added	<i>The great fact is just this, and nothing less:</i> That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. <i>The central fact of our lives today</i> 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.
p. 30	We alcoholics are men and women who have lost the ability to control our drinking. We know that no real alcoholic <i>ever</i> recovers control.

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS (CONTINUED):

- pp. 42–43 | [*Fred's story:*] Quite as important was the discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems. I have since been brought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before. My old manner of life was by no means a bad one, but I would not exchange its best moments for the worst I have now. I would not go back to it even if I could.
- p. 181 | If you think you are an atheist, an agnostic, a skeptic, or have any other form of intellectual pride which keeps you from accepting what is in this book, I feel sorry for you. If you still think that you are strong enough to beat the game alone, that is your affair. But if you really and truly want to quit drinking liquor for good and all, and sincerely feel that you must have some help, we know that we have an answer for you. It never fails, if you go about it with one half the zeal you have been in the habit of showing when you were getting another drink.
Your Heavenly Father will never let you down!
- p. 570 | We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. *Willingness, honesty and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.*
“There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation.” -Herbert Spencer
- p. 64 | When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.

Group Instructions:

1. Who may do these Steps today? You do them if you or a family member or loved one has a problem with alcohol.
2. We don't have a lot of time for discussion, but will try to include some as we go along.
3. If you disagree with something, you might write it down; we can talk about it afterward.
4. If you decide to leave, please leave quietly.
5. You may get up and get coffee or other beverage while we are going along.
6. We will be showing you what the Old-timers did; and it worked for them.
7. We had to keep in mind that if we continued to do what we had always done, we would get what we had always gotten.
8. References cited are from *Alcoholics Anonymous*, 3rd ed. (also referred to as "the Big Book" or "BB"), *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers* (referred to as "DBOT"), and the Bible, *New American Standard* version (also called "The Good Book").
9. As we complete each Step and I ask for your agreement, please say "yes," and nod your head up and down. Practice once.

Qualifying Questions:

1. Do you think you have a drinking problem?
2. Do you want to do something about it?
3. What are you willing to do about it?

And now to getting our lives changed by doing the Steps.

The Admission Phase

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

- p. 24 | *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.*
- p. 30 | We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were alcoholics. This is the first step in recovery.
- p. 30 | We alcoholics are men and women who have lost the ability to control our drinking.
- p. 44 | If, when you honestly want to, you find that you can't quit entirely, or if when drinking, you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably alcoholic.
- p. 142 | Will he take every necessary step, submit to anything to get well, to stop drinking forever?

The Admission Phase

Step One is your Admission Step, and it has two parts:

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol and
2. [We admitted] that our lives had become unmanageable.

Let's review our Qualifying Questions, asked earlier:

1. Do you have a drinking problem?
2. Do you want to do something about it?
3. What are you willing to do about it?

If you answered these questions with something close to "Yes," "Yes," and "Anything," you have completed the first phase of our program. By signing and dating the statement below, you acknowledge your completion of Phase One: Admission.

I have taken the First Step.

Signature _____ Date _____

The Submission Phase

Step Two

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

- p. 44 | To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face ...
- But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life—or else.
- p. 45 | 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?
- Well, that's exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem. That means we have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God. Here difficulty arises with agnostics. Many times we talk to a new man and watch his hope rise as we discuss his alcoholic problems and explain our fellowship. But his face falls when we speak of spiritual matters, especially when we mention God, for we have re-opened a subject which our man thought he had neatly evaded or entirely ignored.
- We know how he feels. We have shared his honest doubt and prejudice. Some of us have been violently anti-religious.
- p. 46 | As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps.

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS (CONTINUED):

p. 47 | We needed to ask ourselves but one short question. Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe that there is a Power greater than myself? As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built.

pp. 50–51 | Here are thousands of men and women, worldly indeed. They flatly declare that since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking. In the face of collapse and despair, in the face of total failure of their human resources, they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of direction flowed into them. This happened soon after they whole-heartedly met a few simple requirements. Once confused and baffled by the seeming futility of existence, they show the underlying reasons why they were making heavy going of life. Leaving aside the drink question, they tell why living was so unsatisfactory. They show how the change came over them. When many hundreds of people are able to say that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith.

p. 52 | 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.

p. 53 | 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?

Arrived at this point, we were squarely confronted with the question of faith. We couldn't duck the issue. Some of us had already walked far over the Bridge of Reason toward the desired shore of faith. The outlines and the promise of the New Land brought lustre to tired eyes and fresh courage to flagging spirits. Friendly hands had stretched out in welcome. We were grateful that Reason had brought us so far. But somehow, we couldn't quite step ashore. Perhaps we had been leaning too heavily on Reason that last mile and we did not like to lose our support.

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS (CONTINUED):

p. 55 | Actually we were fooling ourselves, for 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. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself. We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were. We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found. It was so with us.

We can only clear the ground a bit. 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.

p. 56 | One night, when confined in a hospital, he was approached by an alcoholic who had known a spiritual experience. Our friend's gorge rose as he bitterly cried out: "If there is a God, He certainly hasn't done anything for me!" But later, alone in his room, he asked himself this question: "Is it possible that all the religious people I have known are wrong?" While pondering the answer he felt as though he lived in hell. Then, like a thunderbolt, a great thought came. It crowded out all else.

"Who are you to say there is no God?"

The man recounts that he tumbled out of bed to his knees. In a few seconds he was overwhelmed by a conviction of the Presence of God. It poured over and through him with the certainty and majesty of a great tide at flood. The barriers he had built through the years were swept away.

p. 57 | Even so has God restored us all to our right minds. To this man, the revelation was sudden. Some of us grow into it more slowly. But He has come to all who have honestly sought Him.

When we drew near to Him He disclosed Himself to us!

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

Hebrews 11:1	<i>Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.</i>
Hebrews 11:6	<i>And without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is and that He is a rewarder of those who seek Him.</i>
Matthew 6:33	<i>But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.</i>
Luke 1:37	<i>For nothing will be impossible with God.</i>

*Step Two means we are preparing to **submit** our lives to God. It has three parts:*

1. We became entirely willing to take the action necessary to believe in God.
2. We firmly acknowledged that we did believe in God and what He could do.
3. We understood sanity as the ability, with God's help, to resist deadly temptation and insanity as repeating the same behavior over and over, knowing that the result would always be the same—a drink, a drunk, a disaster.

REFLECTIONS BY THE OLD-TIMERS:

Step Two is the *faith* step.

Our Question: Can you come to the point of faith where you are willing to believe that a Living, Loving, Healing God can restore you to sanity?

Our Suggestion: If you are willing to believe in a “god,” pick the one that is living. Pick an alive God. For Jesus, the son of God, taught: “... You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures or the power of God ... have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, ‘I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.” (Matthew 22: 29–32)

Our Challenge: If you have decided you want what we have, then take a small step of faith to build on your belief that if it worked for us, it may just work for you.

REFLECTIONS BY THE OLD-TIMERS (CONTINUED):

Clarence Snyder said he came to believe by the example of the men who came to see him in the hospital and assured him that the same power that helped them would help him. He wanted to believe it; and, said he, that's how he came to believe.

We all have "a power greater than ourselves"—many times it was booze or pills.

Harold Hill said: "If you don't have a God of your own, borrow mine. If you don't believe, make believe. Fake it until you make it."

The Big Book says, "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path."(BB, p. 58) Both Clarence Snyder and Bill Wilson said: "Only one word should be changed in the Big Book. In this passage, "Rarely" should be changed to "NEVER." Because, as the Big Book also says, "there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now." (BB, p. 59)

"Being convinced, we were at Step Three...." BB, p. 60)

I have taken the Second Step.

Signature _____ Date _____

The Submission Phase

Step Three

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him.*

CLARENCE SNYDER'S COMMENTS:

“Here’s where you’re going to hire a New Manager, since you haven’t done a very good job managing yourself.”

“This Step will determine whether we are going to be in A.A. or around A.A. This is where the reservations begin. If we don’t hurt badly enough we are not going to take this Step.”

“I wanted the whole dessert of A.A. and not just to settle for the crumbs under the table.”

Step Three requires action—making a decision. The Step has five parts:

1. Acknowledging that any life run on self-will is doomed to failure.
2. We define this trait as self-centeredness, egocentricity, playing God.
3. First we decided to quit playing God ourselves.
4. Next we decided to let God—our Heavenly Father, the Creator—be God.
5. Finally, we solemnized the decision with a prayer, called the *Third Step Prayer*.

The Third Step calls for a surrender to God “as we understood Him.” And the A.A. Founders and Pioneers made it clear that they had an understanding of God. The following statements from the Big Book, Third Edition, tell what they believed in, their reliance on God—the one, true, living God—about Whom they were given understanding by what the Bible said about Him. And we will be talking about how Bill Wilson, Dr. Bob, Bill D., Clarence, and the Pioneers *understood* God (past tense).

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

Here is What the Big Book Says about Bill Wilson, AA Number Three (Bill Dotson), and the “Golden Text of A.A.” A.A. Member Number Three wrote about Bill Wilson’s cure in his personal story in the Big Book:

p. 191

“It would be hard to estimate how much A.A. has done for me. I really wanted the program, and I wanted to go along with it. I noticed that the others seemed to have such a release, a happiness, a something that I thought a person ought to have. I was trying to find the answer. I knew there was even more, something I hadn’t got, and I remember one day, a week or two after I had come out of the hospital, Bill [Wilson] was over to my house talking to my wife and me [Bill Dotson]. We were eating lunch, and I was listening and trying to find out why they had this release that they seemed to have. Bill [Wilson] looked across at my wife, and said to her, ‘Henrietta, the Lord has been so wonderful to me, curing me of this terrible disease, that I just want to keep talking about it and telling people.’

“I thought, I think I have the answer. Bill [Wilson] was very, very grateful that he had been released from this terrible thing and he had given God the credit for having done it, and he’s so grateful about it he wants to tell other people about it. That sentence, ‘The Lord has been so wonderful to me, curing me of this terrible disease, that I just want to keep telling people about it,’ has been a sort of golden text for the A.A. program and for me.”

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS (CONTINUED):

Here is what the Big Book said about Bill Wilson, Clarence Snyder, Al G. of Cleveland, and the Biblical account of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane:

pp. 216–217 | One evening I [Al G.] had gone out after dinner to take on a couple of double-headers and stayed a little later than usual, and when I came home Clarence was sitting on the davenport with Bill W. I do not recollect the specific conversation that went on but I believe I did challenge Bill to tell me something about A.A. and I do recall one other thing. I wanted to know what this was that worked so many wonders, and hanging over the mantel was a picture of Gethsemane [See Luke 22:39–46 for the account of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane] and Bill pointed to it and said, “There it is....”



Al G. was Al Golrich, who was the author of the Big Book chapter, “He Thought He Could Drink Like a Gentleman.” It was at Al’s house in Cleveland Heights that Clarence Snyder called the first meeting of alcoholics only, enabling them to leave the Oxford Group.

The conclusion of their understanding: “We were reborn.” (BB, p. 63)

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS (CONTINUED):

- p. 60 | Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas: (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives. (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism. (c) That God could and would if He were sought. Being convinced, we were at Step Three, which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him. Just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do? The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success.
- p. 62 | We had to have God's help.
This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work.
Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.
- p. 63 | When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. 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.

p. 63
emphasis
added

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

John 3:3	<i>Jesus answered and said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."</i>
John 3:16	<i>For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life.</i>
John 14:6	<i>Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father, but through me."</i>
Romans 10:9	<i>If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved.</i>
Ephesians 4:22–24	<i>That, in reference to your former manner of life, you lay aside the old self, which is being corrupted in accordance with the lusts of deceit, and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and put on the new self, which in the likeness of God has been created in righteousness and holiness of the truth.</i>

ABOUT THE SURRENDERS TO GOD THAT WERE REQUIRED IN EARLY A.A.,
FROM *DR. BOB AND THE GOOD OLDTIMERS*:

p. 96	Dr. Bob, noting that there were no Twelve Steps at the time and that "our stories didn't amount to anything to speak of," later said they were convinced that the answer to their problems was in the Good Book. "To some of us older ones, the parts that we found absolutely essential were the Sermon on the Mount, the 13th chapter of First Corinthians, and the Book of James," he said.
p. 101	The surrender was more than important; it was a must. Bob E., who came into A.A. in February 1937, recalled that after five or six days in the hospital, "when you had indicated that you were serious, they told you to get down on your knees by the bed and say a prayer to God admitting you were powerless over alcohol and your life was unmanageable. Furthermore, you had to state that you believed in a Higher Power who would return you to sanity."
p. 118	[Bob E.:] "I enjoyed those men coming to see me. Dr. Bob came at least once a day. The last thing I did at the hospital was make a surrender, which I think was very important. You had to be on your knees with another person, praying and sharing out loud. You know, in the first draft of the Twelve Steps, people were to be on their knees when they surrendered. But other drunks made Bill take it out."

ABOUT THE SURRENDERS TO GOD THAT WERE REQUIRED IN EARLY A.A.,
FROM *DR. BOB AND THE GOOD OLDTIMERS* (CONTINUED):

p. 143–144 [Clarence Snyder:] “Doc Smith came in later and took over. He sat on the edge of my bed and said, ‘Well, what do you think of all this?’ Then he paused and looked at me doubtfully. ‘I don’t know if you’re ready yet. You’re kind of young.’ I was down to 135 pounds, no job, no clothes, and no money. I didn’t know how much more ready I could be, recalled Clarence. Still, I had to convince them I was ready....”

[Doc Smith] ““Do you believe in God, young fella?’ (He always called me ‘young fella.’ When he called me Clarence, I knew I was in trouble.)

[Clarence] ““What does that have to do with it?’

[Doc Smith] ““Everything,’ he said.

[Clarence] ““I guess I do.’

[Doc Smith] ““Guess, nothing! Either you do or you don’t.’

[Clarence] ““Yes, I do.’

[Doc Smith] ““That’s fine,’ Dr. Bob replied. ‘Now we’re getting somewhere. All right, get out of bed and on your knees. We’re going to pray.’

[Clarence] ““I don’t know how to pray.’

[Doc Smith] ““I guess you don’t, but that’s all right. Just follow what I say, and that will do for now.””

“I did what I was ordered to do,” Clarence said. “There was no suggestion.”

“Dr. Bob was always positive about his faith,” Clarence said. “If someone asked him a question about the program, his usual response was: ‘What does it say in the Good Book?’ Suppose he was asked, ‘What’s all this *First Things First*?’ Dr. Bob would be ready with the appropriate quotation: ‘Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.’ (Matthew 6:33)”

REFLECTIONS BY THE OLD-TIMERS:

We submit ourselves to the care of God to become different on the inside (our will) and on the outside (our life). And that is a life changing experience!

Clarence Snyder's faith in the Steps was based on his favorite Bible verse, 2 Corinthians 5:17: *"Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come."*

Harold Hill said: "Where God says 'therefore,' He is saying, 'Now get a load of this.'" Harold also said he had studied about a lot of gods including Buddha, Zoroaster, Zen, Confucius, Yoga, Edgar Cayce, and found they were all dead. He needed a live God, and Jesus was the only one that came back from the dead and appeared to more than five hundred. (*I Cor. 15:3-6*)

Now that we have made a decision to turn our will and lives over to the care of God, we have come to the same point that Clarence, Dr. Bob, Bill Wilson and these Old-timers did. We have to decide whether Jesus is who He said He was, or He was a liar. Clarence said, "at this point we hire a New Manager."

Now we take our Third Step Prayer on our knees, just as the Old-timers did. First, take a minute to read the prayer to yourself. Then, read the following prayer out loud, all together, on our knees:

THIRD STEP PRAYER

Dear God,

I come to You in the name of Jesus. I'm sorry about the mess I've made of my life. I want to turn away from all of the wrong things I've ever done and all the wrong things I've ever been. Please forgive me for it all.

I know You have the power to change my life and can turn me into a winner. Thank You, Lord, for getting my attention long enough to interest me in trying it Your way.

God, please take over the management of my life, my affairs, and everything about me. I am making this conscious decision to turn my will and my life over to Your care and am asking You to please take over all parts of my life. I surrender my will to Your will and ask You to take over the decision-making for me, because I haven't done too well on my own. Thank You, Jesus, for understanding how hard it is for me to give myself up.


Please, God, move into my heart, through Jesus Your Son, the one who died for me and whom You raised from the dead. However You do it is Your business, but make Yourself real inside me and fill my awful emptiness. Fill me with Your love and Holy Spirit and make me know Your will for me. And now, Lord, help Yourself to me and keep on doing it. I'm not sure I want You to, but do it anyhow.

I rejoice that I am now part of Your people; that my uncertainty is gone forever and that You have control of my will and my life. Thank You for saying in Your Word that You'll never leave me or forsake me. Praise Your Name!
Amen!

We have now taken the Third Step. According to Clarence, we are now “in A.A.”

DO NOT DEPEND ON FEELINGS

The Promise of God’s Word, the Bible—not our feelings—is our authority. The Christian lives by the faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God Himself and His Word. This train diagram illustrates the relationship between **fact** (God and His Word), **faith** (our trust in God and His Word), and **feeling** (the result of our faith and obedience) (John 14:21).



The train will run with or without the caboose. However, it would be useless to attempt to pull the train by the caboose. In the same way, we, as Christians, do not depend on feelings or emotions, but we place our faith (trust) in the trustworthiness of God and the promises of His Word.

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This illustration helps us understand that, the day we pray this prayer, God has taken over our life, whether we feel like it or not. We don’t have to be good enough to turn our lives over to God, only willing. He will be with us, to help us change, as we take the following steps. It is just as if we had made a legal commitment. Emotions are not an issue. We sign this to confirm in our own mind that we now have a New Manager.

2 Corinthians
5:17

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.

I have taken Step Three.

Luke 15:10

In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Signature _____ Date _____

The Submission Phase

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

We continue the phase of Submission with less fear, having turned our lives over to a loving and forgiving God. Now we identify the defects that have kept us in bondage.

CLARENCE SNYDER'S COMMENTS:

“This is the most misunderstood Step. We are talking about the ‘nature’ of our wrongs—not necessarily all the details of each act we have done. Steps Four through Seven talk about our moral inventory: the nature of our wrongs, defects of character, and shortcomings. They do not say we are to make a list of all the dirt, scum, etc. The Steps are to remove the NATURE of our wrongs or character defects.”

“It is very important that we have good guidance with our list when we do this Step, so that we don’t justify things we have done. We don’t want to mess up this inventory. It can save our life someday.”

CLARENCE SNYDER'S COMMENTS (CONTIUNED):

“If we are a new person, why do we need to do Steps four through nine? Our spirit is renewed, but our soul (that is our emotions and mind) is still full of habits we have been practicing. We need to be willing to have God remove them. Sometimes people continue to have a lot of problems after they turn their lives over to the Lord because they don't allow their soul to be renewed.”

“When I accepted the idea of a Higher Power, I had also to acknowledge that there is a ‘lower power’ that works against my recovery and keeps condemning me for my past. In Revelation 12:9–10, the Bible calls Satan ‘the accuser of the brethren.’ And don't be surprised if the devil tries to bring doubt to our minds that God has forgiven us and is with us in clearing away the wreckage of our past.

“For example: If we did a lot of stealing or other dishonest things, the nature or root of our problem is dishonesty. When we pull weeds out of the garden and leave them out in the open, the sun will dry them up so they don't take root again and grow back. We pull out dishonesty—that's the root.”

“We were forgiven of the deeds in our Third Step. We need also to be rid of the defects that caused us to do the deeds.”

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

p. 13 | There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction. I admitted for the first time that of myself I was nothing; that without Him I was lost. I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch. I have not had a drink since.

pp. 63–64 | Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which was a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. 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. So we had to get down to causes and conditions.

Therefore, we started upon a personal inventory. *This was Step Four.* A business that takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking a commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods, to get rid of them promptly and without regret. If the owner of the business is to be successful, he cannot fool himself about values.

We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.

p. 67 | Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other man's. When we saw our faults we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.

p. 71 | We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him. If you have already made a decision, and an inventory of your grosser handicaps, you have made a good beginning. That being so you have swallowed and digested some big chunks of truth about yourself.

The Submission Phase

We find another confirmation of the Fourth Step method we experienced with Clarence in the personal story of Earl T. in the Third Edition of the Big Book. The account shows the kind of detailed personality traits and character defects that Dr. Bob actually reviewed with his sponsees such as Clarence Snyder and Earl T.:

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

p. 291–292
emphasis
added

The day before I was due to go back to Chicago, a Wednesday and Dr. Bob’s afternoon off, he had been down to the office and **we spent three or four hours formally going through the Six-Step program** as it was at that time. The six steps were:

1. Complete deflation.
2. Dependence and guidance from a Higher Power.
3. Moral inventory.
4. Confession.
5. Restitution.
6. Continued work with other alcoholics.

Dr. Bob led me through all of these steps. At the moral inventory, he brought up some of my bad personality traits or character defects, such as selfishness, conceit, jealousy, carelessness, intolerance, ill-temper, sarcasm and resentments. We went over these at great length and then he finally asked me if I wanted these defects of character removed. When I said yes, we both knelt at his desk and prayed, each of us asking to have these defects taken away.

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

Mark
7:18–23

And He said to them, “Are you so lacking in understanding also? Do you not understand that whatever goes into the man from outside cannot defile him; because it does not go into his heart, but into his stomach and is eliminated?”... And He was saying, “That which proceeds out of the man, that is what defiles the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed the evil thoughts, fornications, thefts, murders, adulteries, deeds of coveting and wickedness, as well as deceit, sensuality, envy, slander, pride and foolishness. All these evil things proceed from within and defile the man.”

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE (CONTINUED):

Galatians
5:19–23

Now the deeds of the flesh are evident, which are: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing, and things like these, of which I forewarn you just as I have forewarned you that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.

1 John
1:8–9

If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

Following is the Fourth Step Moral Inventory that was used by Clarence. Write your answers on the inventory sheet when instructed to do so. You will use your answers to guide you in doing the Fifth Step, as part of the Seventh Step prayer, and as a guide for the Eighth and Ninth Steps.

Watch for your defect ‘pets’, meaning those defects that affect you the most. We all surely have some of the good qualities listed under the asset side of the list, but today we are dealing with the ones that have given us problems and that we want to get rid of.

As we go through the list, check or circle the defects you have, and write an example of what effect the defect has. If you believe you have a defect that is not on the list, just write it in the space provided. Don’t be concerned if you have a lot of them. That is what we will ask God to remove in Step Seven.

Fourth Step Moral Inventory Worksheet

Liability (Negative) _____ **Example** _____ **Asset (Positive)** _____

Resentment _____ **Forgiveness (Peace of Mind)** _____

 Hanging on to injury or anger; Refusing to accept what has already been done.

Fear _____ **Courage** _____

 Holds us back from doing worthwhile things. Healthy fear helps avoid danger. Courage is fear that has said its prayers. Everything we do is done out of love or fear. (Love is positive things; fear is negative things.)

Self-Pity _____ **Self-Forgetfulness** _____

 "Poor me" attitude; Thinking like a victim. Holds us back from doing something positive about our situation, like taking the Steps today.

Self-Justification _____ **Humility** _____

 Defending ourselves rather than admitting our faults. Prevents taking an honest inventory.

Self-Importance (Egotism) _____ **Modesty** _____

 Putting ourselves first. Self-centeredness. Sometimes shyness comes out of it because we are focused on ourselves rather than others.

Self-Condemnation (Guilt) _____ **Self-Valuation** _____

 Putting ourselves down; Condemning what God has made. Bad self talk.

Dishonesty (Lying & Evasiveness) _____ **Honesty** _____

 To others and to ourselves. Stealing or cheating. Pretending that things are different than they are; this keeps us from coping with life (unrealistic).

Impatience _____ **Patience** _____

 Wanting what I want when I want it; expecting too much too soon. Refusal to surrender self-will (impatience with others). Remember how long it took us to get this way.

Hate _____ **Love** _____

 Continued anger, murderous feeling toward someone. Extremely strong dislike toward someone. Prejudice or hate for a group. Continued resentment leads to hate.

False Pride (Phoniness & Denial) _____ **Unpretentious** _____

 Doing things for appearance rather than effectiveness. Trying to make other people think we are better than we are. Why am I afraid to tell you who I am? Won't ask for help. Pride is a character defect that causes shame because we are ashamed of how things are. Pride causes self-condemnation. Pride causes feelings of guilt.

Jealousy _____ **Trust** _____

 Fear of losing someone or something. Leads to anger or hatred toward anyone who threatens our claim to someone or something; Possessiveness. Jealousy is related to fear.

Envy _____ **Satisfaction** _____

 Wanting what someone else has and thinking how to get it. Envy is related to greed.

Liability (Negative) _____ **Example** _____ **Asset (Positive)** _____

Laziness _____

Activity _____

Unwilling to work. Undisciplined. Proverbs 26:13-15 "The sluggard says, 'There is a lion in the road! A lion is in the open square!' As the door turns on its hinges, so does the sluggard on his bed. The sluggard buries his hand in the dish; He is weary of bringing it to his mouth again."

Procrastination _____ **Promptness** _____

Putting things off. Leaves burdens on others. Energy drain.

Insincerity _____ **Straight Forwardness** _____

Putting up false front; People pleasing. Two-faced and deceitful. Hypocritical; Acting like we care when we don't.

Negative Thinking _____ **Positive Thinking** _____

Dwelling on why things can't work. Pessimistic attitude. Discouraging others.

Immoral Thinking _____ **Spiritual, Clean Thinking** _____

Lust, use of pornography, dirty jokes. (Some of us have to change our humor and clean it up.) Immoral thinking includes: sexual perversion, adultery, fornication, astrology, horoscopes, witchcraft, devil worship. If you have been involved in devil worship, talk to me afterwards.

Intolerance (Perfectionism) _____ **Tolerance** _____

Never being satisfied with a result (nothing is ever good enough). Expecting too much of others and of ourselves.

Criticizing and Gossip (Loose Talk) _____ **Praise for Others** _____

A fault-finding attitude. Repeating criticism of others. Malicious or careless gossip. Never criticize another person until you have walked a mile in that person's shoes.

Greed (Gluttony) _____ **Generosity** _____

Wanting more than our share. A selfish motive. We can deceive ourselves into thinking we are doing a service rather than doing it for ourselves.

If not covered above, the thing you thought you would never tell anyone:

Don't be concerned if you have a lot of them. We ask God to remove them in Step Seven.

I have taken the Fourth Step.

Signature _____ **Date** _____

The Submission Phase

Step Five

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

pp. 72–73

Having made our personal inventory, what shall we do about it? We have been trying to get a new attitude, a new relationship with our Creator, and to discover the obstacles in our path. We have admitted certain defects; we have ascertained in a rough way what the trouble is; we have put our finger on the weak items in our personal inventory. Now these are about to be cast out. This requires action on our part, which, when completed, will mean we have admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our defects. This brings us to the Fifth Step in the program of recovery....

This is perhaps difficult—especially discussing our defects with another person. We think we have done well enough in admitting these things to ourselves. There is doubt about that. In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further. We will be more reconciled to discussing ourselves with another person when we see good reasons why we should do so. The best reason first: If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome drinking. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they got drunk. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their housecleaning. They took inventory all right, but they 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.”

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS (CONTINUED):

p. 75 | We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past. Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the drink problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

**James
5:16** | *Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.*

**Matthew
18:20** | *For where two or three have gathered together in My name, there I am in their midst.*

Your instructions for taking this Step:

As we were going through the list of our character defects, we were admitting to ourselves the exact nature of our wrongs. Now we are going to admit to God and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

1. If there is something that stands out in your mind that requires extreme confidentiality, see me after this meeting, and I will either discuss it with you personally, or point you to someone else I know in the room with whom you can discuss the matter.
2. We begin by selecting someone with whom we will go over our list. *It is best not to do this with a spouse.*
3. We will allow about 20 minutes for this exercise. It may be that there is time only to read your defects and examples, especially if two of you are hearing each other's Fifth Step. This is fine, as it constitutes *admitting to God and to another human being*. If time runs short, you may return to this Step later to finish up.
4. Get together with another person, and go to it!

If there is something you've been holding back on discussing, please see one of us. We don't want anyone leaving here with a heavy heart.

I have taken the Fifth Step.

Signature _____ Date _____

The Submission Phase

Step Six

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

CLARENCE SNYDER'S COMMENTS:

“Remember Matthew 21:22: ‘And all things you ask in prayer, believing, you shall receive.’”

“There are some of these defects of character that we don’t want to get rid of because they might be interesting or fun. But when we come to A.A., we don’t have that prerogative. We are extremists: we go all the way, or we don’t go anyplace. So we are entirely ready to have Him remove them. We can’t remove them. He is going to remove them. We have turned our will and our lives over to God’s care.”

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

- p. 58 | Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.
- p. 59 | Half measures availed us nothing.
- p. 72 | Now these are about to be cast out.
- p. 76 | We then look at *Step Six*. We have emphasized willingness as being indispensable. Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all—every one? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.

The Submission Phase

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

**Matthew
17: 19–21**

Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, “Why could we not drive it out?” And He said to them, “Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith as a mustard seed, you shall say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it shall move; and nothing will be impossible to you. But this kind does not go out except by prayer and fasting.”

REFLECTIONS BY THE OLD-TIMERS:

Harold Hill, author and recovered alcoholic, said, “We have been in prayer and are fasting from alcohol and drugs.”

Many times, before Jesus healed someone in the Bible accounts, he would ask if they were willing to be healed. Sometimes we are afraid to let go of these defects — be healed — because we have gotten so used to them.

As to willingness:

Harold Hill suggested, “Lord, make me willing to be willing—and if I don’t mean it, go ahead and do it anyway.”

We are asking for the desire to be planted in our hearts to have our defects removed. Remember our part is to be willing; it’s God’s part to remove the defects and shortcomings.

In other words, *let your New Manager manage.*

If you believe that God can move a mountain, why not also believe He will remove the defects just listed. And not only that, but believe that He can and will replace them with His assets: His fruit of the Spirit.

Question: Are you willing to have God remove all these defects of character, and let God do for us what we can’t do for ourselves?

I have taken the Sixth Step.

Signature _____ Date _____

The Submission Phase

Step Seven

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

CLARENCE SNYDER'S COMMENTS:

“We are not making any deals with God like we did when we were drinking. It’s simple. We are humbly asking Him to remove our shortcomings; and He will do it, if we ask in that fashion.”

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

**Matthew
7:7–12**

Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, he will not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in Heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE (CONTINUED):

James 5:13–16

Is anyone among you suffering? Let him pray. Is anyone cheerful? Let him sing praises. Is anyone among you sick? Let him call for the elders of the church and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil in the name of the Lord; and the prayer offered in faith will restore the one who is sick, and the Lord will raise him up, and if he has committed sins, they will be forgiven him. Therefore, confess your sins to one another, and pray for one another, so that you may be healed. The effective prayer of a righteous man can accomplish much.

Psalms 103:12

As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.”

1 John 1:9

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

FROM DR. BOB AND THE GOOD OLDTIMERS:

An early member in Chicago describes his experience with this Step.

p. 179

Among the earliest of the pioneers to go home from Akron was Earl T. of Chicago. Recalling the afternoon he spent with Dr. Bob in his office, Earl said, “He very carefully helped me through my moral inventory, suggesting many, many personality traits and character defects. When this was finished, he asked me if I would like to have these defects removed.

“Without much thought, I said, ‘Yes, I would.’ And then he asked me to get down on my knees at the desk with him, and we both prayed audibly to have these defects of character removed.”

Now we will pray the Seventh Step Prayer. When you get to the fourth paragraph, read the things from your moral inventory list that you want removed. We will then return to the prayer.

As we did with the Third Step Prayer, take a minute to read the Seventh Step prayer to yourself. Then we will read the prayer all together, on our knees.

SEVENTH STEP PRAYER

Dear God,

We come to You in the name of Jesus. Thank You for taking complete control of my life in Step Three, and thank You for this opportunity to wipe my slate clean and start my life over anew. I am coming to You on my knees in all humility to humbly ask You to forgive all my past wrongs and remove all my shortcomings.

I acknowledge that my past was sinful, and I ask You now, God, to please forgive all my past sins. I am so thankful that You have promised to do this and that You have the power to do it if I but ask. I want to start a new life today, and I ask You to help me to do so and to keep helping if I keep asking.

In Step Three I turned my will and my life over to Your care. 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, Lord, and I am entirely ready to have You remove all my defects of character.

I am entirely ready and ask and pray that You remove from me every single defect of character. Specifically, I ask You to remove the following defects of character listed in my Fourth Step Moral Inventory:

[Take your Fourth Step Moral Inventory and read aloud those defects you listed.]

Thank You, God, for removing all my defects of character. Please help me learn how to keep them out of my life through the effective use of Step Ten.

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 from here to do Your work and live the victorious life You designed for me. Thank You, Jesus, for these Twelve Steps which will make Your plan for my life clear to me.

Thank You and Praise Your Name. Amen.

For the next 30 days keep thanking God for removing these defects of character.

The Submission Phase

REFLECTIONS BY THE OLD-TIMERS:

We have gotten rid of a load of trash today—for some of us, pretty heavy loads.

Again, we have reinforced 2 Corinthians 5:17, which says:
“Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.”

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

Following is one of the most powerful and hope-filled statements to be found in the entire text of The Big Book.

p. 25 | The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God’s universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do for ourselves.

Are we today so far removed from our Founders’ recovery program that these words are nothing more than a ‘nice thought’ or an exaggeration due to artificially elated emotions? If so, we obviously cannot transmit something we don’t have. We cannot give guidance we have never gotten. We cannot share a vision of a God we have never seen. Our lack, thereby, becomes the newcomer’s lack, and he may die because of it!

This completes the Second Phase, the Submission Phase, of our program.

At this point, Clarence would often say that we are “as clean as a hound’s tooth.” We have erased our past just like erasing a tape. These defects of character have been removed like an unwelcome guest that we had in our home. They probably will try to come back; but as of right now, they are gone.

Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve teach us how to keep them out of our lives.

When we reach this point, the Big Book tells us: “We have then completed Step Seven” (BB, p. 76).

I have taken Step Seven and completed the phase of Submission.

Signature _____ Date _____

The Restitution Phase

Step Eight

**Made a list of all persons we had harmed,
and became willing to make amends to
them all.**

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

p. 76 | Now we need more action, without which we find that “Faith without works is dead.” [James 2:26.] Let’s look at *Steps Eight and Nine*. We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory. We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal. Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning *we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.*

The Restitution Phase

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

Matthew 5:25	<i>Make friends quickly with your opponent at law while you are with him on the way, so that your opponent may not deliver you to the judge, and the judge to the officer, and you be thrown into prison.</i>
James 2:8	<i>If, however, you are fulfilling the royal law according to the Scripture, “YOU SHALL LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF,” you are doing well.</i>
1 John 4:20–21	<i>If someone says, “I love God,” and hates his brother, he is a liar; for the one who does not love his brother whom he has seen, cannot love God whom he has not seen. And this commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also</i>

REFLECTIONS BY THE OLD-TIMERS:

Maximum service is a work that reflects God’s love through us. Steps Eight and Nine are action steps. Things need to be done—Faith without works is dead.

It is important that we keep our communication line open between us and God and also between us and other people, so this is how we unclog that line.

When doing the Steps one-on-one, we would suggest that you take a break here, make your list at home, and come back in a couple of days to discuss it.

Part of the Eighth Step requires that we be willing to make amends. Making our list is one thing. The willingness to do something about it is another. Without the willingness, you’ll never get to Step Nine. Remember Harold Hill’s prayer: “God make me willing to be willing; and if I don’t mean it, do it anyway.”

Instructions for Homework Assignment

1. Make a list of all the people you have harmed.
2. Names on your list might include: (1) Yourself—because if you don't have a good regard for yourself, you won't value other people. (2) Parents, spouse, children, aunts, uncles, grandparents, neighbors, employers, employees, school friends, creditors, members of the opposite sex, childhood friends, teachers, business associates, people with whom you might have caused trouble or from whom you have stolen. (3) Anyone as to whom you get an uncomfortable feeling when you think of them. (4) There were probably people that came to your mind as we were doing the Fourth Step.
3. You should ask God to bring to your remembrance anyone you should include.
4. **It is important that you make your list as soon as possible.** Because of our limited time today, you will need to do this as homework, after you leave this retreat. Do this right away when you get home, in the next 24 to 48 hours if at all possible, and no longer than a week from now.
5. After you have made your list, take it to someone who has some good knowledge of the steps and go over it with them. This might be your sponsor, someone you have met here this weekend, or, if you are from our area, you may contact me. It is probably best not to go over this with a spouse.
6. It is very important that we don't just go out to the people listed until we have discussed our list with someone, as stated above.

Question: Are you willing to make out this list so that you can complete Step Eight?

I am willing to take the Eighth Step.

Signature _____ Date _____

I have taken the Eighth Step.

Signature _____ Date _____

The Restitution Phase

Step Nine

**Made direct amends to such people
wherever possible, except when to do so
would injure them or others.**

You hear a lot of excuses for not doing this Step. Some say that just being dry is enough to show people we have changed. This, of course, shows people we are trying to change. Suppose I have hit you and given you a bloody nose or black eye and, later—when I see you and perhaps give you a big smile—you may see that I am dry. But that is not the same as if I came to you and said that I am sorry for my behavior. There are a lot of people whom, though we didn't hurt them physically, we did hurt psychologically.

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

The author of our Big Book saw the importance of Step Nine. So much so, that he wrote about it, starting with the last paragraph of page 76 and continuing through the middle of page 84. You should read it all.

- | | |
|-----------|---|
| p. 77 | 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 |
| p. 83 | The spiritual life is not a theory. <i>We have to live it</i> |
| pp. 83–84 | [About the promises at the conclusion of Step Nine:]
If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. |

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

Matthew 5:23–24	<i>If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.</i>
Matthew 6:14–15	<i>For if you forgive men for their transgressions, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive men, then your Father will not forgive your transgressions.</i>
Matthew 7:1–5	<i>Do not judge lest you be judged. For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. And why do you look at the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Or how can you say to your brother "let me take the speck out of your eye," and behold, the log is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your brother's eye.</i>

Instructions

1. "Except when to do so would injure them or others":
 - i. We don't go to the spouse of a person with whom we might have had an affair and cause that spouse hurt.
 - ii. We can't involve another person who perhaps committed a crime with us. We are only responsible for ourselves.
2. We hear a lot of talk about when we should expect to experience and receive the promises that we have quoted above from Big Book, page 84. And the Big Book tells us that we can expect them to come true when we are doing Step Nine. (See Big Book, p. 83.)
3. Apologize to yourself first so that you don't feel guilt or self-condemnation.
4. When you go to a person, tell them: "You probably know I had a drinking problem. I have now gone into A.A., and the Eighth Step of the program is [you might actually read the step]. I have made a list. You are on that list, and that's why I am here. The Ninth Step says I'm to make amends, and I would like to apologize for what I did wrong."

The Restitution Phase

Question: Are you willing to do Step Nine after you have made your list?

This will complete the third phase of our program—the Phase of Restitution.

Clarence Snyder would have said: “We have completed—get that—*completed* nine steps. I hear people say there are no musts in A.A.—What do you call those first nine steps? Every one of them requires something of us. We have taken these steps and done them, not merely dreamed about them. *Done them!!!* We have gotten our old life behind us. This is a foolproof proposition: If we do it, we can’t get drunk again. We have turned our will and our lives over to the care of God, and He isn’t going to cause us to get drunk; we get *ourselves* drunk because we violate these things.”

From here, we are going into the steps by which we construct our new life. The next phase, the Construction and Maintenance Phase, provides the steps we will live by. We are learning how to live our new life.

I am willing to take the Ninth Step.

Signature_____ Date_____

I have taken the Ninth Step.

Signature_____ Date_____

2 Corinthians
5:17

Therefore if any man is in Christ, he is a new creature: the old things passed away; behold, new things have come

The Construction & Maintenance Phase

Step Ten

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

CLARENCE SNYDER'S COMMENTS:

“It is almost impossible to get an alcoholic to admit to anything. He won't even admit it is raining outside. It might involve him in something. This step is a daily check on ourselves, and I guarantee you, if a person has taken his Nine Steps, and if he conscientiously takes his Tenth Step every night before he goes to sleep, he will never, never get drunk. It is not the big things that happen to us in life that cause us to get drunk. We get drunk because we neglect our Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Step work. Our values change. If we watch the little things we do, day by day, we are going to be all right.”

“The Tenth Step is there for the same reason that they put erasers on pencils. We are going to make mistakes, but we can correct them.”

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

p. 84–85
emphasis
added

This thought brings us to *Step Ten*, which suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. **This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.** Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. **When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them.** We discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code.

And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even alcohol. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in liquor. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. 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. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality—safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for alcohol is a subtle foe. We are not cured of alcoholism. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities. "How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done." These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.

Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action.

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

1. Know your enemy: At the same time we came to believe that the power of the Holy Spirit would restore us and set us free, we came to believe that there is a power trying to defeat and destroy us. And ***that power is the devil.***

1 Peter 5:8–9 | *Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world.*

James 4:7–8 | *Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double minded.*

2. Use Step Ten to keep your house clean: We got our house clean in Step Seven and Step Nine; yet we have all heard of someone who has gone back to drinking after a period of being dry; and it's worse than it was before.

Matthew 12:43–45 | *Now when the unclean spirit goes out of a man, it passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and does not find it. Then it says, "I will return to my house from which I came"; and when it comes, it finds it unoccupied, swept, and put in order. Then it goes and takes along with it seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they go in and live there; and the last state of that man becomes worst than the first.*

3. Note how Jesus resisted Satan and temptation through the authority of God's Word: When the devil tempted Jesus, Jesus simply used the authority of God's own Word as His way of resisting and forcing the devil to flee:

Matthew 4:8–11 | *Again, the devil took Him to a very high mountain, and showed Him all the kingdoms of the world, and their glory; and he said to Him, "All these things will I give You, if You fall down and worship me." Then Jesus said to him, "Begone Satan! For it is written, 'YOU SHALL WORSHIP THE LORD YOUR GOD, AND SERVE HIM ONLY.'" Then the devil left Him; and behold, angels came and began to minister to Him.*

John 14:12–14 | *Truly, truly, I say to you, he who believes in Me, the works that I do shall he do also; and greater works than these shall he do; because I go to the Father. And whatever you ask in My name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If you ask Me anything in My name, I will do it."*

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE (CONTINUED):

4. To win the battle, we are required to continue resisting temptation:

Matthew 26:41	<i>Keep watching and praying, that you may not enter into temptation; the spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.</i>
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5. God's Word tells us to put on the whole armor of God to win the spiritual battle and keep from sliding back into our old habits and lifestyle:

Ephesians 6:10–18	<i>Finally, be strong in the Lord, and in the strength of His might. Put on the full armor of God, that you will be able to stand firm against the schemes of the devil. For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places. Therefore, take up the full armor of God, that you may be able to resist in the evil day, and having done everything, to stand firm.</i> <i>Stand firm therefore, HAVING GIRDED YOUR LOINS WITH TRUTH, and HAVING PUT ON THE BREASTPLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, and having shod YOUR FEET WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE; in addition to all, taking up the shield of faith with which you shall be able to extinguish all the flaming missiles of the evil one. And take THE HELMET OF SALVATION, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints.”</i>
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REFLECTIONS BY THE OLD-TIMERS:

Matthew 12:43–45 cautions us as to why this step is so important. It tells us what happens when this step is not taken. Ephesians 6:12 tells us clearly that our battle is not against flesh and blood. It is spiritual, and it is serious.

The armor of God protects us from the missiles of the devil, among which are our character defects, and which he is shooting back at us every day. Living after asking to have our character defects removed can be compared to the phantom body limb. When a limb is amputated, it is gone. Yet, for a time, the amputee feels as if it were there. His nervous system is used to having it there. Though we have adopted a new lifestyle, we lived with our character defects for a long time. While the healing is taking effect, the old habits will drop away.

When those character defects come up, kick them out in the name of JESUS! Ask God. Take the offensive! Put “ol’ dirt face” in his place. The accuser no longer has any say over you! Do not let sin sneak back in. The Big Book says: “We ask God at once to remove them.” Seek counsel, as the rest of page 84 of the Big Book says.

Dr. Bob stated that your ‘Quiet Time’ is essential. Ephesians 6:10–18 is about putting on the whole armor of God. It is not just recommending that you put on your armor in the midst of the battle. We are in enemy territory. We need to be prepared daily. And use the heavy artillery (verse 18). It’s to help others. When all else fails, work and pray for another.

These are some of the things we can do to keep our slate clean:

1. *Use the authority of Jesus’ name to rebuke a defect right when it appears.* “You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.” (1 John 4:4)
2. *Use your own Power Phrase at the first sign of attack.* Tell the defect that is trying to cause you trouble, “Be gone in the name of Jesus, self pity, dishonesty, resentment, fear, *etc.*” (or any of the defects named in the Fourth Step). When doubt, anxiety, or temptation comes on you, repeat your power phrase until you feel the heaviness leave.
3. *Stand firmly with God and apply James 4:7.* “Submit therefore to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” Play offense against the evil one and your character defects. Do not be on the defense.

4. *Make it your priority promptly to make any currently needed amend.*
Using the same principles as in Step Nine, “when we were wrong, promptly admit it” to yourself, God and the person you offended. In Matthew 5:23–24 Jesus said, “If therefore you are presenting your offering at the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your offering there before the altar, and go your way; first be reconciled to your brother, and then come and present your offering.”
5. *Make forgiveness your priority.*
6. In Mark 11:25, Jesus said: “And whenever you stand praying, forgive, if you have anything against anyone; so that your Father also who is in heaven may forgive you your transgressions”

Things to watch for:

- Watch your thoughts because they become your actions.
- Watch your actions because they become your habits.
- Watch your habits because they form your character.
- Watch your character because it is your destiny.

As we go along, remember that we are dealing with:

- Laws of nature.
- Laws of man.
- Laws of God.

At the end of his day, in quiet meditation, Clarence used to ask himself: “Was I a good boy today or a bad boy today?” We use and recommend this technique.

Look at your Fourth Step “pets.” Did they try to creep back in? Did situations arise which require immediate attention through confession and restitution? Did His fruits manifest in the lives of those around you? Was there room for giving Him praise? Use the spiritual tools of confession and praise. One of your jobs is to keep your house clean. Sweep it every night!

I understand the Tenth Step and will continue to use it daily.

Signature _____ Date _____

The Construction & Maintenance Phase

Step Eleven

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for the knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

CLARENCE SNYDER'S COMMENTS:

“This step will lead us into a prayer life. Prayer is talking to God; meditation is listening to God. The good Lord provided us with one mouth and two ears, and that ought to tell us something.”

“How do we listen? God’s revealed will and love for us are in the Bible. Reading and learning God’s word gives us the material on which to meditate.”

“Many of us get into trouble by getting too smart. We need to ‘keep it simple’ and not get into the paralysis of analysis.”

“We all know how to meditate; if you have worried, you have meditated. Worry is meditating on the negative. A positive slogan or an uplifting Bible truth can be run through your mind in the same way... as a positive meditation.”

“We can choose to meditate on the positive. We must watch what we allow to be taken in through our five senses, reading, TV, music, and people with whom we associate.”

“When we get receptive, God speaks to us through other people, through answered prayers, and through opened and closed doors. If it’s from God, it will not disagree with or contradict the Bible.”

Remember how the following truth in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount supported Step Seven. Note that it also applies to Step Eleven:

**Matthew
7:7-11**

Ask, and it shall be given to you; seek, and you shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it shall be opened. Or what man is there among you, when his son shall ask him for a loaf, will he give him a stone? Or if he shall ask for a fish, will he not give him a snake, will he? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more shall your Father who is in Heaven give what is good to those who ask Him!

Step Eleven has four parts:

1. What we do when we retire at night.
2. What we do on awakening in the morning.
3. What we do to grow spiritually through prayer, devotions, and reading.
4. What we do throughout the day when the devil's arrows fly.

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

pp. 13-14

[Bill W's story:] I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense. I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me. Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure.

My friend promised when these things were done 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.

Simple, but not easy; a price had to be paid. It meant destruction of self-centeredness. I must turn in all things to the Father of Light who presides over us all.

The following material from pages 85–88 of the Big Book explains how Steps Ten and Eleven blend:

pp. 85–88

Step Eleven suggests prayer and meditation. 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. It would be easy to be vague about this matter. Yet, we believe we can make some definite and valuable suggestions.

When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life? But we must be careful not to drift into worry, remorse or morbid reflection, for that would diminish our usefulness to others. After making our review we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, 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. Our thought-life will be placed on a much higher plane when our thinking is cleared of wrong motives.

In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. 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.

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS (CONTINUED):

pp. 85–88
continued

We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped. 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. You can easily see why. If circumstances warrant, we ask our wives or friends to join us in morning meditation. If we belong to a religious denomination which requires a definite morning devotion, we attend to that also. If not members of religious bodies, we sometimes select and memorize a few set prayers which emphasize the principles we have been discussing. There are many helpful books also. Suggestions about these may be obtained from one's priest, minister, or rabbi. Be quick to see where religious people are right. Make use of what they offer.

As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. 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. We become much more efficient. 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.

It works—it really does.

We alcoholics are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.

But this is not all. There is action and more action. "Faith without works is dead."

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

1. First Things First.

Matthew 6:33 | *But seek first His kingdom and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added to you.*

2. One Day at a Time:

Matthew 6:34 | *Therefore do not be anxious for tomorrow; for tomorrow will care for itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.*

3. Renew your mind by changing your thinking to what God says:

Romans 12:2 | *And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.*

4. God's guide as to what we should be thinking:

Philippians 4:8 | *Finally, brethren, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is of good repute, if there is any excellence and if anything worthy of praise, let your mind dwell on these things.*

Colossians 3:1–2 | *If then you have been raised up with Christ, keep seeking the things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your mind on the things above, not on the things that are on earth.*

REFLECTIONS BY THE OLD-TIMERS:

Attending Church:

“*We’re King’s Kids.*” Harold Hill, an author who used to speak at our retreats, coined that phrase as a label for believers. And we are!

To get fuel to power our new lives, find a live, Bible-believing church, and attend. Bill Wilson said: “Fortunate is the man who finds the church of his choice.”

Clarence Snyder also stated he was not like some of these AAs who thought they could take or leave church. For he found church attendance necessary for his spiritual growth, as did Dr. Bob.

The Big Book calls us undisciplined. It takes self-discipline to seek out and attend church regularly, but there are good reasons to do so:

1. We demonstrate our thanks to God for all He has done for us, by obeying His directive:

Hebrews
10:24–25

Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another; and all the more as you see the day drawing near.

2. We build our faith:

Romans 10:14

How then shall they call upon Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?

Romans 10:17

So, faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ.

3. In a church where testimonies are given, we can hear and share God’s victories in the lives of others and in our own lives—much as did the meetings of the Oxford Group, out of which A.A. sprang.

We want to grow into our God-given potential, developing the talents He has given us.

Harold Hill called the Bible the “Manufacturer’s Handbook.” He said that the God who made us knows what we need in order to function, and loves us with the involvement that an inventor has in his creation.

Don’t let spiritual pride keep you from going to a church. You might consider a church where worship flows in the different ways described in the Bible, including the raising of hands, clapping, and practicing the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Or revisit the church of your traditions. You might experience it differently as a sober and reborn Christian. This is how many of us have grown along spiritual lines.

CLARENCE SNYDER’S COMMENTS:

On Prayer, Praise, and Thanksgiving:

“We went all out holding back nothing in our drinking. Why not go all out, praising God for our recovery, and thanking Him for His blessings on us! It is easy to get all excited at a sports event; so let’s do the same for the God who created us and has given us everything. Become a ‘FAN-atic.’”

He said we don’t have to pray for sobriety –we have that. We should thank God for our sobriety and pray for someone else’s sobriety.

On meditating:

Another thing Clarence said about this step is that whenever you went into one of the early member’s ‘john,’ you would see copies of *The Upper Room* and the Bible. That is where a lot of them did their meditating.

On conscious contact:

To Clarence, the conscious contact meant to him that he came to feel and believe that God was as close to him as the person standing by him.

He reminded us that God’s Word says He is as close as your hands and feet.

He would also mention that God’s Word says He will never leave us nor forsake us.

On faith-stealing:

“Don’t let faith-stealers compromise your spiritual growth with doubts and contradictions about God’s Word. They may mean well, but they are being used to inhibit your spiritual growth. Watch what you see, hear, and say.”

CLARENCE SNYDER'S COMMENTS (CONTINUED):

Malachi
3:10-11

On acting on your faith:

“Your faith will grow as you learn and trust God’s promises.”

On the tithe:

Many of us have found this to be an act of faith. In being obedient to God’s direction to give a tenth of our income to God’s work, we find He meets our needs.

“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me in this,” says the Lord of hosts, “if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

“Then I will rebuke the devourer for you, so that it may not destroy the fruits of the ground; nor will your vine in the field cast its grapes,” says the Lord of hosts.

About your reading:

Read a good devotional book daily.

“The changes you make in the next five years depend mainly on the people you meet and the books you read.” This is a famous quote for good reason.

Suggested reading for growth in the Twelve Step programs is contained in the Bibliography of this guide. Begin with a modern translation of the Bible and, of course, the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, Third Edition. Look for any book by Harold Hill or Dick B. and the many books that the early members read

A Word About Growth:

As we progress in the program, our confidence and self worth can be rebuilt. Don't hesitate to improve your life through developing your God-given talents. We can do this by taking courses in a community college, going to the library, improving a present skill or developing a new one. Our social contacts in A.A. and Al-Anon give us a lot of opportunity to grow socially, as well.

We can never sit in neutral in A.A., or in Al-Anon, or life in general. We are either growing or going backward.

Here's what our Creator offers to you:

If you want better insight and discernment, and if you search for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure, then wisdom will be given you, and knowledge of God Himself. And you will soon learn the importance of reverence for God and of trusting Him.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. In all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight.

I understand Step Eleven and will continue to use it daily.

Signature _____ Date _____

The Construction & Maintenance Phase

Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

CLARENCE SNYDER'S COMMENTS ON TWELFTH STEP WORK:

When Clarence was asked when we should do Twelfth Step work, he said that it is "*after* we have had a spiritual awakening."

"None of us is here because we deserve it; We are here by the grace of God. This is a gift to us. We didn't get the gift just to sit on."

Step Twelve has three parts:

1. The spiritual awakening that results from taking the Steps.
2. The message that is to be carried to others.
3. The principles that are to be practiced in our lives.

Step Twelve, Part One: A spiritual awakening

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

Acts 1:8 | *Jesus said: "but you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth."*

Rev. Sam Shoemaker said, at A.A.'s International Convention in Long Beach, that a spiritual awakening involves four things:

1. Prayer,
2. Conversion,
3. Fellowship, and
4. Witness.

Signs of a Spiritual Awakening:

- A tendency to think and act spontaneously, rather than on fears based on past experiences
- An unmistakable ability to enjoy each moment.
- A loss of interest in judging people.
- A loss of interest in judging self.
- A loss of interest in interpreting the actions of others.
- A loss of interest in conflict.
- A loss of ability to worry. (This is a very serious symptom!)
- Frequent, overwhelming episodes of appreciation.
- Contented feelings of being connected with others and nature.
- Frequent attacks of smiling.
- An increased tendency to let things happen rather than make them happen.
- An increased susceptibility to love extended by others, accompanied by the uncontrollable urge to extend it.
- A tendency to be thankful to God for all of the above.

Step Twelve, Part Two: Carrying a message to those who still suffer

Please read the article written in 1944 by Clarence Snyder on sponsorship in Appendix Two as part of your homework after the Steps.

WHAT THE BIG BOOK SAYS:

Your homework is to read Big Book Chapter Seven, “Working With Others,” (pp. 89–103).

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

2 Corinthians
1:3–4

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and God of all comfort; who comforts us in our affliction so that we will be able to comfort those who are in any affliction with the comfort with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

REFLECTIONS OF THE OLD-TIMERS:

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

Now it is your responsibility to give this message to others as you have received it. Not changed, not watered down, and not 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. And in no other way!

There is no easier, softer way. This is it. This is the Program of Recovery as it was in the 1930's and '40's in Ohio, as Dr. Bob and Clarence gave it. You can and do recover. You don't have to stay sick. **You can get well!** This is how it works!

We may have come to get, but have been able to stay to give.

Remember: Hurting people hurt people, but helped people help people.

Step Twelve, Part Three: Practicing these principles in all our affairs

From *Serenity:
A Companion
for Twelve Step
Recovery*,
pp. 76–77

The Final phase in Step 12 emphasizes practicing the twelve step principles in ‘all our affairs.’ This means that if we have been spiritually transformed, people will begin to observe it in our financial lives, in our relationships, in our community lives, in our sexual conduct; and the list goes on and on. Our transformation will be apparent in all areas of our lives. Healing our addictions or co-dependencies is not the only goal of recovery. Rather, it is the starting place. We must remember that this growth is a process with one of the growth directions being toward God. Bill Wilson left the door open, saying, “It is God as I understand Him.” But he was very explicit about who his God was. He was the God of our fathers and of the Lord Jesus Christ.

The spiritual principles we need to practice are found in Matthew 5–7; in 1 Corinthians 13 (*the love chapter*); in the Book of James; and in the Oxford Group’s Four Absolutes—which were derived from the four cardinal principles in the teachings of Jesus Christ, as they were reconstructed by Dr. Robert E. Speer, in his book, *The Principles of Jesus*.

Use these Four Absolutes as your gauge for successful daily living:

1. Absolute Honesty,
2. Absolute Purity,
3. Absolute Unselfishness, and
4. Absolute Love.

BASICS FROM THE BIBLE:

2 Corinthians
12:9

And He has said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness.” Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me.

Matthew
5:11–12

Blessed are you when men cast insults at you, and persecute you, and say all kinds of evil against you falsely, on account of Me. Rejoice, and be glad, for your reward in heaven is great, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Philippians
4:6, 9

Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God ... The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you.

REFLECTIONS BY THE OLD-TIMERS:

An attitude of gratitude affects and improves all our actions.

Practice, practice, practice. An athlete doesn't excel if he doesn't practice.

When we share the pain of our past failures and the joy of our recovery, which is seen in our daily lives, it helps others to have hope. Many people feel they are not good enough for God to love or save, but our stories of transformation may be the key that opens the door of God's love to a struggling friend.

Often, the way we live our lives is our best message; principles may be more caught than taught.

In addition to the foregoing ideas, we practice these principles in all our affairs by replacing the word "alcohol" in the First Step with words describing the specific problem we're dealing with. And we remember that we have a New Manager in God through His son Jesus Christ, and that we have turned all our affairs over to Him. We ask Him to deal with this problem as He did with the alcohol problem.

You possibly will not be well received when you share the program as we have experienced it here this weekend. This could be because your listeners have not had the opportunity to know where the program came from.

Harold Hill said: "Let it look good on you; and when they ask you what happened, they deserve an answer. Share your experience, strength, and hope with them and explain how you went through these steps."

A person with an experience is never at the mercy of a person with an opinion.

When the devil reminds you of your past, remind him of his future!

Dr. Bob said it quite simply: "Trust God, clean house, and help others."

I understand Step Twelve and will continue to use it daily.

Signature _____ Date _____

Appendix One:

Some History

A Brief and Accurate Summary of the Roots, Beginnings, and Founding of Alcoholics Anonymous

Alcoholics Anonymous was founded on June 10, 1935 in Akron, Ohio at the home Anne and Dr. Robert Holbrook Smith (affectionately known as “Dr. Bob” by AAs). Its two founders were Dr. Bob and William Griffith Wilson (known by AAs as “Bill W.”).

Dr. Bob stated often that A.A.’s basic ideas were taken from their study of the Bible. He stressed the Book of James, Jesus’ Sermon on the Mount, and 1 Corinthians 13 as “absolutely essential” to the program of recovery. By contrast, Bill W. often stated that nobody “invented” A.A. and that its ideas were borrowed primarily from the life-changing program of the Oxford Group, as led in America by the Episcopal Rector Samuel M. Shoemaker Jr. Bill also borrowed some basic concepts from Harvard psychology professor William James, and from certain medical views about alcoholism.

An accurate understanding of A.A.’s history requires knowledge of A.A.’s two, very distinct, religious sources. We say “religious sources” because A.A.—despite many recent claims to the contrary—began as a religious organization that changed in the course of the years from a Christian fellowship in Akron, Ohio, to a society that no longer requires religious beliefs. Yet it has at the heart of its basic text and recovery program the necessity for finding and establishing a relationship with the Creator.

First, one must realize that the early A.A. Christian fellowship really acquired most of its Bible ideas from the extensive studies and knowledge of Dr. Bob. As a youngster in St. Johnsbury, Vermont, Dr. Bob frequently attended church functions and services at St. Johnsbury’s North Congregational Church. He participated actively in a New England-based organization known as “Christian Endeavor.” His most enduring and fundamental religious ideas involved reliance on the Creator, confession of Jesus Christ, study of the Bible, prayer and prayer meetings, seeking God’s guidance, Christian fellowship, and witness. Christian Endeavor called them “love and service.” So did Dr. Bob. These basics were to dominate the A.A. scene in Akron from its founding in 1935 to the plan to expand that original program in 1938.

Second, one must realize that A.A. had a far different source beginning in the experiences of its other co-founder Bill W, who had been a self-declared “conservative atheist.” Bill had never become an active church member. He had never studied the Bible. And he had expressed very uncomplimentary views of Christianity. Nonetheless, he obtained most of his basic recovery ideas from a chain of associations with members of the Oxford Group, A First Century

Christian Fellowship founded by Lutheran Minister Frank N. D. Buchman. The Oxford Group was avowedly a life-changing fellowship. It espoused belief in God and in Jesus Christ. It held to the idea that sin was what separated man from God and left him a sick soul. “Soul-surgery” was its watchword for an art involving initial belief in and ‘surrender’ to God, accompanied by a desire to obey Him. It taught recognition of sin and elimination of sin by a five-fold process of **“Confidence, Confession, Conviction, Conversion, and Continuance,”** which was virtually incorporated into Bill W.’s A.A. Steps. It stressed making amends and restitution for harms done by the sins; establishing a daily checking pattern which would implement the new birth with obedient deeds; and adopting a daily fellowship-with-God program of Bible study, prayer, seeking of guidance, reading religious literature, and using devotionals. And to this regimen there was to be added Christian witness to others; Christian fellowship with others; and teamwork—with loyalty to the group’s life-changing endeavors.

The traditional—yet only partial—story of A.A.’s New York roots begins with the visits of alcoholic Rowland Hazard to Dr. Carl Jung in Switzerland. There Hazard learned he could not be cured at the hands of the famous psychiatrist, but needed a conversion through religious association. The search for such a conversion led him to the Oxford Group, and his drinking days were over. This association led him to help other alcoholics by their applying Oxford Group principles, and ultimately reached Bill W. through a side-kick named Ebby Thacher. Bill W. was inspired to make the same decision for Christ that Ebby had made, at Calvary Rescue Mission in New York, and to receive further Oxford Group indoctrination from Ebby, Hazard, and two others. Bill then checked into Towns Hospital in New York, there to have what he called his “hot flash” conversion experience. Bill could well have been suffering hallucinations, but he validated his experience through reading documentation of similar bona fide experiences in Professor William James’s *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. And Bill never drank again.

Bill, as a zealot, set out on a religious mission to pass his conversion experience on to others. He was armed with:

- (1) the thesis from Dr. Carl Jung that conversion was required to overcome alcoholism;
- (2) the thesis from Towns Hospital psychiatrist Dr. William D. Silkworth that the real alcoholic was afflicted with a seemingly hopeless malady of mind and body and was medically incurable;
- (3) the conversion-oriented, life-changing objectives of the Oxford Group; and
- (4) the conviction that passing along these points to others would help him and the others recover.

A different wind was blowing in Akron, where Dr. Bob had also become involved with a small gathering of Oxford Group folks. He loved them and loved their ideas, but he was a drinker—something his fellowship friends all knew. They also, like Bob, were believers.

A principal in the group was Henrietta Seiberling, who had received revelation from Almighty God, and this she passed on to Dr. Bob. The revelation was that *he must not take one drink*. Henrietta believed that this idea was given her by Almighty God, and it was to become a foundation stone of the recovery-movement-to-be.

Dr. Bob felt he didn't have what it takes. He confided to Henrietta that he was just a "want to-want to" guy, but couldn't quit. Henrietta remonstrated that he just hadn't found the answer yet. In consequence, she convened a special Oxford Group meeting where Dr. Bob confessed that he was a secret drinker—news that was hardly a surprise to those present. Bob was asked to join the group in prayer for his healing, which he did. All joined him on their knees.

Then the wind blew again. Out of the blue, came Bill Wilson to Akron on what was to be an ill-fated stock venture. Seeing the worst, Bill seriously considered drinking. Yet Bill was propelled to a church directory in the Mayflower Hotel. Through persistent phone calls, one to Oxford Group supporter Dr. Walter Tunks (Rector of St. Paul's Episcopal Church), Bill was finally put in touch with, of all people, Henrietta Seiberling. Bill told her he was a "rum hound from New York," a member of the Oxford Group, and needed to talk to another drunk to try to help him. Ecstatic at this miraculous happening, Henrietta arranged for Bill to meet Bob at her Gatehouse home on the Seiberling estate. She called Bill's phone call "manna from heaven."

At Henrietta's home, Bob and Bill talked for some six hours. Bill thought he was conveying a weighty message about alcoholism and Oxford Group principles. But Bob was later to say that he had heard it all before and that what had impressed him was Bill's knowledge of the *problem* and his emphasis on *service*. Bill accepted an invitation to live with Dr. Bob and his wife Anne, and for three months, the two men talked until the wee hours of the morning. Anne Smith read the Bible to them daily. They discussed Bible principles, prayer, Oxford Group ideas, love, and service. And they shortly set out to find drunks to help. After one brief relapse, Dr. Bob took his last drink, the date said to be June 10, 1935. And so A.A. was founded.

Very shortly thereafter, Bill and Bob carried their message of cure to a hospitalized and very sick alcoholic attorney, Bill Dotson. At the behest of his visitors, Dotson turned to Almighty God for help. He too recovered, and never drank again. Thus was formed A.A.'s first group. It later became known as A.A. Number One, and still later the King School Group, which continues to this day.

By 1938, primarily at the hands of Dr. Bob, Anne Smith, and Henrietta Seiberling, some forty real alcoholics, mostly from the Akron area, were sober.

And what was their program?

John D. Rockefeller, Jr., dispatched an agent to Akron to find out. After a week of interviews and observations, the agent, Frank Amos, gave a detailed report to Rockefeller on the program's seven points:

- (1) Abstinence from alcohol.
- (2) Absolute surrender to God.
- (3) Elimination from their lives of sins often accompanying alcoholism.
- (4) Morning devotions, Bible study, prayer, and reading religious literature.
- (5) Helping other alcoholics get straightened out to strengthen their own willpower and convictions.
- (6) Social and religious comradeship.
- (7) At least weekly attendance at a religious service.

The first five points were musts. The last two were strongly favored. And this simple program, which much resembled the principles Dr. Bob had embraced in Christian Endeavor, produced astonishing cures. All the diligent alcoholics said they were "cured," and knew what that word meant. And for more than a decade, A.A. was widely publicized for producing a cure for alcoholism.

In another development, Bill Wilson came to Akron to plead the case for writing a book about the cure. By a narrow vote, he received authorization. Per his plan, the book was to consist of personal stories of the cures; but that is not how it turned out. Instead, the personal stories, from the very first manuscript draft, were given second place. The original personal stories were edited down, supplemented, deleted, and virtually obliterated in the four editions of the basic text that were to follow in later years.

The original manuscript contained mention of God, Jesus Christ, the Bible, sin, religious literature, and deliverance, but these terms were ultimately eliminated or replaced with such revisionist phrases as "higher power," "spirituality," and "shortcomings." By the final publication in the spring of 1939, Bill Wilson had placed his own 'hot flash' story first. He covered the nature of alcoholism quite well, and he inserted ideas about belief that were thought to appeal to atheists and agnostics. The heart of his book he devoted to a description of the twelve steps that, he said, the original AAs had taken to find God and establish a relationship with Him.

These steps were almost entirely presented in language or ideas derived directly from the teachings of Reverend Samuel M. Shoemaker, Jr., rector of Calvary Episcopal Church in New York. Bill ultimately acknowledged this and dubbed Sam Shoemaker a co-founder of A.A.¹

¹ See *Appendix Three* for a description of how Shoemaker's teachings were incorporated into the Steps.

In the critical period between the institution and initial success of the Akron program, and the completion of the basic text of Alcoholics Anonymous, a new figure appeared on the scene. That figure was Clarence H. Snyder, a man who got sober in February of 1938. Clarence was sponsored by Dr. Bob, was a witness to the writing events, embraced the basic text that Bill Wilson wrote, and in May of 1939, founded a splinter group of AAs in Cleveland. Clarence's Cleveland group was limited to alcoholics and their families, and it was the first to use the name of Alcoholics Anonymous, thus earning it the distinction, according to Clarence, as the first meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Unquestionably, Clarence earned plaudits as a mover and shaker who played a critical role in making A.A. and its program widely known. He wrote the first A.A. publication on sponsorship², and as a leader, he helped the Cleveland program grow from one to thirty groups in just one year. Most remarkably, this program had a documented *ninety-three percent success rate*, something not equaled since.

The Cleveland program frequently mentioned the Bible, the Oxford Group, and the Oxford Group's "four absolutes" of honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love—said to be the cardinal principles of Jesus Christ. It reached out to drunks of all variety through news articles, food events, sports events, meetings, a newsletter, and advertisements. It emphasized work with newcomers. And it took people through the Twelve Steps in short order, in groups rather than one-on-one, to handle the great number of newcomers as the Cleveland movement grew by leaps and bounds.

² See *Appendix Two* for the text of Clarence Snyder's Sponsorship pamphlet.

Appendix Two: *Supplementary Material on the Steps*

1. 1944 Sponsorship Pamphlet by Clarence Snyder
2. Resentment Inventory Prompt Sheet
3. Fear Inventory Prompt Sheet
4. Daily Diet: 10 Life-Changing Attitudes for King's Kid Living

The Evolution of the "Moral Inventory" involved in the Fourth Step:

The Oxford Group's Inventory Process: The Four Absolutes, also called the Four Standards, were a key target in the Oxford Group's life-changing process. The Oxford Group called for a moral inventory, whereby the participant looked for and acknowledged his part in any wrongdoing. They advocated writing down the Four Absolutes, listing under each the areas in which he had fallen short. This enabled the life-changer to see what was separating him from God and therefore constituted a 'sin' to be cut out and removed. The inventory items gave the life-changer the targets, based on Jesus' absolute standards, toward which he was to aim in finding and establishing a relationship and fellowship with God through obeying His commandments. Hence he was to devote himself to "spiritual progress" by eliminating conduct that the yardsticks showed to be his shortfall.

In early Akron A.A. the Four Absolutes were accepted as the goals for a changed Christian life. And, there was great stress on asking for God's help in living up to these four standards.

But the roots of the Akron Program were in the Bible—not the Oxford Group; and Dr. Bob said so very plainly. And nowhere is the Biblical influence on the Akron Program more evident than with the inventory course Dr. Bob used. Thus you find the 'sins' in the Akron inventory much more detailed, much more Biblically measured, and much different from those discussed in the Oxford Group inventory literature.

The roots of Bill's inventory items were neither Oxford Group nor Biblical, though mention of his character defects could be found in both sources. Bill simply fashioned his own inventory guides. Bill interjected into his Big Book and Twelve Steps his own list of character defects, which are five in number: (1) Selfishness and "selfish" sex; (2) Resentment; (3) Fear; (4) Dishonesty; (5) Harms done to others.

Clarence Snyder apparently noted the differences between: (1) An Oxford Group inventory based on the Four Absolute standards, and (2) Bill's self-constructed list of five shortcomings—which were not particularly highlighted in the Bible, the

Oxford Group, or even the so-called Seven Deadly Sins which Bill later mentioned in his *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*.

Clarence also turned to the detailed Biblical injunctions that were covered in inventories [such as the one recounted by Earl T.] conducted under Dr. Bob's leadership. In fact, Clarence actually quoted sin lists from the New Testament and led his sponsees through items covered in correlative Bible verses, a procedure paralleled in Dr. Bob's moral inventory and in the instructions Clarence passed along to the authors of this guide and to those who attended his retreats.

The Biblical inventory guides used in Akron AA for identifying sinful and immoral conduct were—according to Clarence Snyder's own experience as a pioneer and according to what he was directed to cover in his inventory—much more explicit and detailed than the four in the Oxford Group or the five in the Big Book's review. And Clarence's list, with a correlative list of correct behavior items, is what is used in these instructions in the Fourth Step Moral Inventory Worksheet.

(1) 1944 A.A. Sponsorship Pamphlet by Clarence Snyder

This is the first pamphlet ever written concerning sponsorship. Clarence H. Snyder wrote it in early 1944. Its original title was to be "A.A. Sponsorship...Its Obligations and Its Responsibilities." It was printed by the Cleveland Central Committee under the title: "A.A. Sponsorship ... Its Opportunities and Its Responsibilities."

Preface

Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is a potential sponsor of a new member and should clearly recognize the obligations and duties of such responsibility.

The acceptance of an opportunity to take the A.A. plan to a sufferer of alcoholism entails very real and critically important responsibilities. Each member, undertaking the sponsorship of a fellow alcoholic, must remember that he is offering what is frequently the last chance of rehabilitation, sanity, or maybe life itself.

Happiness, Health, Security, Sanity, and Life of human beings are the things we hold in balance when we sponsor an alcoholic.

No member among us is wise enough to develop a sponsorship program that can be successfully applied in every case. In the following pages, however, we have outlined a suggested procedure, which supplemented by the member's own experience, has proven successful.

Personal Gains of Being a Sponsor

No one reaps full benefit from any fellowship he is connected with unless he whole-heartedly engages in its important activities.

The expansion of Alcoholics Anonymous to wider fields of greater benefit to more people results directly from the addition of new, worthwhile members or associates.

Any AA who has not experienced the joys and satisfaction of helping another alcoholic regain his place in life has not yet fully realized the complete benefits of this fellowship. On the other hand, it must be clearly kept in mind that the only possible reason for bringing an alcoholic into A.A. is for that person's gain.

Sponsorship should never be undertaken—

- (1) To increase the size of the group.
- (2) For personal satisfaction and glory.
- (3) Because the sponsor feels it his duty to re-make the world.

Until an individual has assumed the responsibility of setting a shaking, helpless human being back on the path toward becoming a healthy, useful, happy member of society, he has not enjoyed the complete thrill of being an AA.

Source of Names

Most people have among their own friends and acquaintances someone who would benefit from our teachings. Others have names given to them by their church, by their doctor, by their employer, or by some other member, who cannot make direct contact.

Because of the wide range of A.A. activities, the names often come from unusual and unexpected places. These cases should be contacted as soon as all the facts such as marital status, domestic relations, financial status, drink habits, employment status and others readily obtainable are at hand.

Is the Prospect a Candidate?

Much time and effort can be saved by learning as soon as possible if –

- (1) The man* really has a drinking problem?
- (2) Does he know he has a problem?
- (3) Does he want to do something about his drinking?
- (4) Does he want help?

** The masculine form is used throughout for simplicity, although it is intended to include women as well.*

Sometimes the answers to these questions cannot be made until the prospect has had some A.A. instruction, and an opportunity to think. Often we are given names, which, upon investigation, show the prospect is in no sense an alcoholic, or is satisfied with his present plan of living. We should not hesitate to drop these names from our lists. Be sure, however, to let the man know where he can reach us at a later date.

Who Should Become Members?

A.A. is a fellowship of men and women bound together by their inability to use alcohol in any form sensibly, or with profit or pleasure. Obviously, any new members introduced should be the same kind of people, suffering from the same disease.

Most people can drink reasonably, but we are only interested in those who cannot. Party drinkers, social drinkers, celebrators, and others who continue to have more pleasure than pain from their drinking, are of no interest to us.

In some instances, an individual might believe himself to be a social drinker when he definitely is an alcoholic. In many cases more time must pass before that person is ready to accept our program. Rushing such a man before he is ready might ruin

his chances of ever becoming a successful AA. Do not ever deny future help by pushing too hard in the beginning.

Some people, although definitely alcoholic, have no desire or ambition to better their way of living; and, until they do . . . A.A. has nothing to offer them.

Experience has shown that age, intelligence, education, background, or the amount of liquor drunk, has little, if any, bearing on whether or not the person is an alcoholic.

Presenting the Plan

In many cases, a man's physical condition is such that he should be placed in a hospital, if at all possible. Many A.A. members believe hospitalization, with ample time for the prospect to think and plan his future, free from domestic and business worries, offers distinct advantage. In many cases, the hospitalization period marks the beginning of a new life. Other members are equally confident that any man who desires to learn the A.A. plan for living can do it in his own home or while engaged in normal occupation. Thousands of cases are treated in each manner and have proved satisfactory.

Suggested Steps

The following paragraphs outline a suggested procedure for presenting the A.A. plan to the prospect, at home or in the hospital. [Headings, in bold type, were not in the original draft for this pamphlet. They were added for the first and subsequent printings.]

Qualify [Yourself] as an Alcoholic

(1.) In calling upon a new prospect, it has been found best to qualify oneself as an ordinary person who has found happiness, contentment, and peace of mind through A.A. Immediately make it clear to the prospect that you are a person engaged in the routine business of earning a living. Tell him your only reason for believing yourself able to help him is because you yourself are an alcoholic and have had experiences and problems that might be similar to his.

Tell Your Story

(2.) Many members have found it desirable to launch immediately into their personal drinking story, as a means of getting the confidence and whole-hearted co-operation of the prospect.

It is important in telling the story of your drinking life to tell it in a manner that will describe an alcoholic, rather than a series of humorous drunken parties. This will enable the man to get a clear picture of an alcoholic, which should help him to more definitely decide whether he is an alcoholic.

Inspire Confidence in A.A.

(3.) In many instances the prospect will have tried various means of controlling his drinking, including hobbies, church, changes of residence, change of associations, and various control plans. These will, of course, have been unsuccessful. Point out your series of unsuccessful efforts to control drinking . . . their absolute fruitless results and yet that you were able to stop drinking through application of A.A. principles. This will encourage the prospect to look forward with confidence to sobriety in A.A. in spite of the many past failures that he might have had with other plans.

Talk About “Plus Values”

(4.) Tell the prospect frankly that he cannot quickly understand all the benefits that are coming to him through A.A. Tell him of the happiness, peace of mind, health, and in many cases, material benefits which are possible through understanding and application of the A.A. way of life.

Show Importance of Reading the Big Book

(5.) Explain the necessity of reading and re-reading the A.A. book. Point out that this book gives a detailed description of the A.A. tools and the suggested methods of application of those tools to build a foundation of rehabilitation for living. This is a good time to emphasize the importance of the Twelve Steps and the Four Absolutes.

Qualities Required for Success in A.A.

(6.) Convey to the prospect that the objectives of A.A. are to provide the ways and means for an alcoholic to regain his normal place in life. Desire, patience, faith, study, and application are most important in determining each individual’s plan of action in gaining full benefits of A.A.

Introduce Faith

(7.) Since the belief in a Power greater than oneself is the heart of the A.A. plan, and since this idea is often very difficult for a new man, the sponsor should attempt to introduce the beginnings of an understanding of this all-important feature.

Frequently this can be done by the sponsor’s relating his own difficulty in grasping a spiritual understanding and the methods he used to overcome his difficulties.

Listen to His Story

(8.) While talking to the newcomer, take time to listen and study his reactions in order that you can present your information in a more effective manner. Let him talk too. Remember . . . Easy Does It.

Take to Several Meetings

(9.) To give the new member a broad and complete picture of A.A., the sponsor should take him to various meetings within convenient distance of his home. Attending several meetings gives a new man a chance to select a group in which he will be most happy and comfortable; and it is extremely important to let the prospect make his own decision as to which group he will join. Impress upon him that he is always welcome at any meeting and can change his home group if he so wishes.

Explain A.A. to Prospect's Family

(10.) A successful sponsor takes pains and makes any required effort to make certain that those people closest and with the greatest interest in their prospect (mother, father, wife, etc.) are fully informed of A.A., its principles, and its objectives. The sponsor sees that these people are invited to meetings and keeps them in touch with the current situation regarding the prospect at all times.

Help Prospect Anticipate Hospital Experience

(11.) A prospect will gain more benefit from a hospitalization period if the sponsor describes the experience and helps him anticipate it, paving the way for those members who will call on him.

Consult Older Members in A.A.

(12.) These suggestions for sponsoring a new man in A.A. teachings are by no means complete. They are intended only for a framework and general guide. Each individual case is different and should be treated as such. Additional information for sponsoring a new man can be obtained from the experience of older men in the work. A co-sponsor, with an experienced and newer member working on a prospect, has proven very satisfactory. Before undertaking the responsibility of sponsoring, a member should make certain that he is able and prepared to give the time, effort, and thought such an obligation entails. It might be that he will want to select a co-sponsor to share the responsibility³ or he might feel it necessary to ask another to assume the responsibility for the man he has located.

If you are going to be a sponsor...be a good one.

³ Clarence later said he wanted people he was sponsoring to not have more than one sponsor. He felt we needed to tell our whole story to one person. If someone he sponsored had a question, he said to ask it of him and that if he didn't know the answer, he would find someone who did, and then get back to the sponsee himself.

(2) Resentment Inventory Prompt Sheet

Here is a list of people, institutions and principles that may be helpful in your resentment inventory. Feel free to add to the lists if you need to.

<u>People</u>	<u>Institutions</u>	<u>Principles</u>
Spouse (Ex)	Marriage	God / Deity
Father (Step)	Bible	Retribution
Mother (Step)	Church	Ten Commandments
Sisters (Step)	Religion	Jesus Christ
Brothers (Step)	Races	Satan
Aunts	Law	Death
Uncles	Authority	Life after death
Cousins	Government	Heaven
Clergy	Education System	Hell
Police	Correction System	Sin
Lawyers	Mental Health System	Adultery
Judges	Nationalities	Golden Rule
Doctors	Philosophies	Original Sin
Employers	Military Service	
Employees	War	
Co-workers		
In-laws		
Creditors		
Childhood Friends		
School Friends		
Teachers		
Life-long Friends		
Best Friends		
Acquaintances		
Girlfriends/Boyfriends		
Parole Officers		
Probation Officers		
AA Friends		
Small Group Friends		
US Armed Services Friends		

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(3) Fear Inventory Prompt Sheet

Here is a list of Fears. The list may be helpful to you in your Fear Inventory. Please feel free to add to the lists if you need to.

Fear of God	Fear of Drowning
Fear of Dying	Fear of (Other) Men
Fear of Insanity	Fear of (Other) Women
Fear of Insecurity	Fear of Being Alone
Fear of Rejection	Fear of Other People
Fear of Loneliness	Fear of Crying
Fear of Diseases	Fear of Poverty
Fear of Alcohol	Fear of Other Races
Fear of Drugs	Fear of the Unknown
Fear of Relapse	Fear of Abandonment
Fear of Sex	Fear of Intimacy
Fear of Sin	Fear of Disapproval
Fear of Self-Expression	Fear of Confrontation
Fear of Authority	Fear of Sobriety
Fear of Heights	Fear of Hospitals
Fear of Unemployment	Fear of Employment
Fear of Employment	Fear of Your Feelings
Fear of Getting Old	Fear of Parents
Fear of Losing a Spouse	Fear of Having a Child
Fear of Losing a Child	Fear of Writing This Inventory
Fear of Relationships	Fear of Jail
Fear of Violence	Fear of Being Alive
Fear of Police	Fear of Going Outdoors
Fear of Stealing	Fear of Wealthy People
Fear of Creditors	Fear of Guns
Fear of Being Found Out	Fear of Homosexuals and Lesbians
Fear of Change	Fear of Success
Fear of Failure	Fear of Physical Pain
Fear of Responsibility	Fear of Fear
Fear of Emotional Pain	Fear of Rejection
Fear of Military Service	Fear of War

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(4) Daily Diet: 10 Life-Changing Attitudes for King’s Kid Living

What is the process recommended by God himself for entering into this state of high victory—this rest of God wherein all struggles, stresses, and strains cease to affect us?

Begin right now to start doing the Word of God.

- (1) Wrap everything in praise and turn it over to Jesus as joint heirs with Him of the results.
- (2) Refuse to be impressed by appearances.
- (3) Do the next thing, and trust Jesus for guiding your paths (Proverbs 3:6).
- (4) Form the habit of praise in the midst of, in spite of, or on account of, whatever is going on (1 Thess. 5:16–18; Eph. 5:20; Heb. 13:15).
- (5) Learn to listen to God. Frequently say, “Speak, Lord, I’m listening for further instructions.” [1 Sam. 3:9] But first be sure you’ve carried out the last instructions He gave you.
- (6) Don’t ask anyone else’s opinion about the guidance God gives you. Wait for confirmation from another source if you are in doubt.
- (7) Stop doubting that God really did speak to you.
- (8) When God’s guidance comes, act immediately, praising Him for results.
- (9) When doubt enters, tell Him, “I’m going into action, Lord. If I’m on the second-best course of action, it’s up to you to block me. But if I’m on the right road, open all doors and benefit everyone concerned.”
- (10) I find this to be a good prayer: “Lord, make me as holy as you can make a sinner saved by grace.” (Origin unknown.)

The peace of God which Jesus promised in John 14:27 is that special inner foundation of the King’s Kid who knows his rights and privileges through being a doer of the Word in all his affairs. Then our attitude will be, “As far as I’m concerned—whether it takes a day or a thousand years—I’m trusting God for who He is. What He does about me is entirely His affair.”

Important: Before starting your Daily Bible reading, pray this Holy Spirit-inspired prayer, asking God to reveal His will to you (from Ephesians 1:17–23):

“That the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give to me the spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of Him;

“That the eyes of my heart may be enlightened; that I may know what is the hope of His calling, and what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints.

“And what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe, according to the working of His mighty power.

“Which He brought about in Christ, when He raised Him from the dead, and seated Him at His right hand in the heavenly places,

“Far above all rule and authority, and power, and dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this age, but also in the one to come;

“And He put all things in subjection under His feet, and gave Him as head over all things to the church.

“Which is His body, the fullness of Him who fills all in all.”

Appendix Three: *Studying the Steps and Looking at Sam Shoemaker's Language* by Dick B.

Teachings of Rev. Sam Shoemaker That Inspired Each Step: The Impact of Shoemaker on Ideas Incorporated into A.A.

Every AA who stays in our fellowship long enough to be exposed to its Big Book, its Twelve Steps, and its meeting buzzwords will readily recognize thoughts that seem to have come directly from the books and other writings of Sam Shoemaker.

This should not be a surprise. Bill Wilson said that A.A.'s step ideas came directly from the Oxford Group as it was led in America by Rev. Sam Shoemaker of Calvary Church. In fact, Bill actually asked Shoemaker to write the steps, but Shoemaker declined, saying that they should be written by an alcoholic. Many years along the line, Bill specifically dubbed Sam Shoemaker a co-founder of A.A.

And here is just a partial listing of the many ideas from Sam Shoemaker's books, writings, and sermons that were incorporated into the A.A. Big Book and Steps:

These include: (1) Self-surrender. (2) Self is not God. (3) God either is, or He isn't. (4) "Turning point." (5) Conversion. (6) Prayer. (7) Fellowship. (8) Willingness. (9) Self-examination. (10) Confession of faults to God, self, and another. (11) Amends. (12) "Thy will be done." (13) Spiritual Experience. (14) Spiritual Awakening. (15) The unmanageable life. (16) Power greater than ourselves. (17) God as you understand Him. (18) The Four Absolutes— honesty, purity, unselfishness, and love. (19) Guidance of God. (20) "Faith without works is dead." (21) "Love thy neighbor as thyself." (22) Clear references to Almighty God (using Bible terms) as our "Creator," "Maker," "Father," "Spirit," "God of our fathers," and "Father of Lights." (23) The Lord's Prayer. (24) Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. (25) Self-centeredness. (26) Fear. (27) Grudges. (28) Quiet Time. (29) Reliance on God. (30) Relationship with God. (31) "Giving it away to keep it." (32) "News, not views." (33) God has a plan. (34) Seeking God first. (35) Belief in God. (36) Born again. (37) Marvel at what God has done for you. (38) Let go! (39) Abandon yourself to Him [God]. (40) "Not my will but Thine be done."

You can find the foregoing documented in my title *New Light on Alcoholism: God, Sam Shoemaker, and A.A.*, where I quote 149 Shoemaker expressions that very closely parallel A.A. language. Many more can be found in specific quotations from Shoemaker's books—books that have been fully reviewed in my *New Light on Alcoholism* title on Shoemaker.

Shoemaker and Our Twelve Steps

Make no mistake. Whatever Bill Wilson may have said or implied from time to time, Sam Shoemaker was not the only source of A.A.'s spiritual ideas. Wilson often steered applause for A.A. ideas in Sam's direction in an effort to avoid Roman Catholic and other objections to the Oxford Group from which A.A.'s ideas also came and of which early A.A. was a part. Moreover, Bill never mentioned A.A. specifics from Dr. Bob, Anne Smith, the Bible, Quiet Time, God's direct guidance, or Christian literature that was daily fare in early A.A.

Remember also: Dr. Bob said he did not write the Twelve Steps and had nothing to do with writing them. Those Steps represented Bill's personal interpretation of the spiritual program that had been in progress since 1935. Dr. Bob emphasized, on more than one occasion, that A.A.'s basic ideas had come from study of the Bible. Dr. Bob studied the Bible. For three months, Anne Smith read the Bible daily to Bill and Bob. Bob read the Bible to AAs. He quoted the Bible to AAs. He gave them Bible literature. And he frequently stressed Bible study, stating that the Book of James, 1 Corinthians 13, and Jesus' Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5 to 7) were considered absolutely essential in the early spiritual recovery program. Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob both said that Jesus' Sermon on the Mount contained the underlying philosophy of A.A.

Nonetheless, Sam's own imprint is on the Steps. Every one of them. His imprint was on the presentation of Oxford Group ideas that Ebby Thacher made to Bill Wilson in Towns Hospital. And we will briefly take a look at just where Shoemaker's language parallels the language of the Twelve Steps. In fact, our third chapter in *New Light on Alcoholism* provides further details and complete documentation.

On Step One:

Shoemaker spoke of the gap between man and God which man is powerless to bridge, man having lost the power to deal with sin for himself. As to the unmanageable life, Sam referred to the prayer in the Oxford Group so often described in "Victor's Story" and quoted by Anne Smith in her journal: "God manage me, because I can't manage myself."

On Step Two:

Basics from the Oxford Group attributed to Rev. Sam Shoemaker:

I asked him to commit himself this time to nothing, but only to accept in faith the great fact of salvation from God. I told him that I knew that if he would make that act in faith, he would find himself not the possessor of, but possessed by, a Force outside himself, greater than himself, independent of his moods and his sudden seizures of temptation.

Religion is a risk. The romance of religion is the romance of a risk . . . Faith is not sight: it is a high gamble. There are only two alternatives here. God is, or He isn't. You leap one way or the other. It is a risk to take to bet everything you have on God. So is it a risk not to.

"Give in, admit that I am God." I see in these words, too, not only the truth of our capacity for God and of our estrangement from Him, but a vigorous emphasis upon God's lordship over every man. God is God, and self is not God—that is the heart of it.

Sam spelled out the need for a "Power greater than ourselves." He quoted Hebrews 11:6 for the proposition that "God is." He declared: "God is God, and self is not God; and man must so believe." Sam urged seeking God first, from Matthew 6:33. He espoused an "experiment of faith" by which man believes that God is; seeks God first in his actions, then knows God by doing God's will and seeing that God provides the needed power. For this idea, Sam frequently cited John 7:17.

On Step Three:

Basics from the pen of Reverend Samuel M. Shoemaker, Jr.:

"I just gave my life over to God," or "I surrendered to Christ."

"Self-surrender has always been and always must be regarded as the vital turning point of the religious life so far as the religious life is spiritual and no affair of outer works and ritual and sacraments."

"Surrender is not conversion, we cannot convert ourselves; but it is the first step in the process."

"Make a Decision: There must be decision . . . We must help people to make an act of self-surrender to Christ, which renounces all known sins, accepts Him as Savior, and begins the Christian life in earnest."

"Before the week-end was over, he had made the greatest decision of his life, to surrender himself unconditionally and for always to the will of God . . . That night I decided to 'launch out into the deep;' and with the decision to cast my will and my life on God, there came an indescribable sense of relief, of burdens dropping away."

"God sent him help. He found faith. He found God . . . God will come through to you and make Himself known.... Any honest person can begin the experiment by surrendering as much of himself as he can, to as much of Christ as he understands."

"Thy will be done." (Matthew 6:10)

Sam taught about the crisis of self-surrender as the turning point for a religious life, quoting William James's *Varieties of Religious Experience*. Sam said it involved being born again, and declared that man must make a decision to renounce sins, accept Jesus Christ as Savior, and begin Christian life in earnest. Sam illustrated the surrender using language similar to that in A.A., namely, a "decision to cast my will and my life on God." Many times, Sam said one need only surrender as much of himself as he understands to as much of God as he understands. This expression was clearly a precursor of A.A.'s "God as we understood Him"—which has unfortunately been misunderstood and has been attributed to other sources.

On Step Four:

The Four Absolute Standards—taken from the teachings of Jesus:

Absolute Honesty: "You [the Pharisees] are of your father the devil, and you want to do the desires of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar, and the father of lies." (John 8:44)

Absolute Purity: "You have heard that it was said, 'YOU SHALL NOT COMMIT ADULTERY,' but I say to you, that everyone who looks on a woman to lust for her has committed adultery with her already in his heart. And if your right eye makes you stumble, tear it out and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand makes you stumble, cut it off, and throw it from you; for it is better for you that one of the parts of your body perish, than for your whole body to go into hell." (Matthew 5:27–30)

Absolute Unselfishness: "So therefore, no one of you can be My disciple who does not give up all his own possessions." (Luke 14:33)

Absolute Love: "A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another, even as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13:34)

Sam wrote of a self-examination to find where one's life fell short of the Oxford Group's Four Absolute Standards of Jesus. He recommended that one write down exactly where he had "fallen short" of the standards. There was a "moral obligation" to face these facts, recognize them as blocks to God, and be "ruthlessly, realistically honest."

On Step Five:

Shoemaker taught of honesty with self and honesty with God. He quoted James 5:16 for the importance of confession to others and stressed the need for detailed sharing of secrets.

Illustrative Confession teachings by Rev. Sam Shoemaker:

“The thing to do next is to face your sins . . . I found it necessary to go to someone I could trust, and make a clean breast of my sins.”

“Many quite respectable people have hidden things in their past and their present that need to come out in confidence with someone. A sin often does not appear in all its “exceeding sinfulness” until it is brought to light with another; and it almost always seems more hopelessly unforgivable, and the person who committed it more utterly irredeemable, when it remains unshared. The only real release and hope for many bound and imprisoned and defeated people lies in frank sharing. It is not only costly to share our problems, or even our comfortable sin, but it is costly to share the worst thing we ever did, the deepest sin in our life, the besetting temptation that dogs us.”

“If the person is honest with himself and with God, he will be honest also with us and be ready to take the next step, which is a decision to surrender these sins, with himself, wholly to God.”

On Step Six:

Though the fact of Bill’s borrowing of this “conviction” step from the Oxford Group 5 C’s seems to have been overlooked, Shoemaker taught often about the need for man’s conviction that he is suffering from spiritual misery, has (by his sins) become estranged from God, and needs to come back to God in honest penitence. Sam urged willingness to ask God exactly where one is failing and then to admit that sin.

On Step Seven:

Sam clarified this as the “conversion” step of the 5 C’s. It meant a new birth, he said. It meant humility. It meant, for Shoemaker, the assumption upon ourselves of God’s will for us and the opening of ourselves to receiving the “grace of God which alone converts.” It meant “drawing near and putting ourselves in position to be converted . . . utter dedication to the will of God.”

Shoemaker often defined sin as that which blocks us from God and from others. So, originally, did Big Book language. And each of the foregoing life-changing steps hangs on early A.A.’s definition of sin and on the removal process of examining for sin, confessing sin, becoming convicted of sin, and becoming converted through surrendering it. The conversion experience, according to Shoemaker and early A.A., established or enabled rediscovery of a relationship with God and initiated the new life that developed from the

relationship with God which conversion opened. Since both the Sixth and Seventh Steps were new to A.A. thinking and added something to the original surrenders to Jesus Christ, these Steps cannot easily be understood at all without seeing them in terms of the complete surrender, the new relationship, the new birth, and giving the sins to God, as Shoemaker saw the process and as Bill attempted to write it into the recovery path.

On Step Eight:

Bill added this step to the Oxford Group's "restitution" idea. Bill also incorporated the Shoemaker talk of willingness to ask God's help in removing the blocks, being convicted of the need for restitution, and then being sent to someone with restoration and apology.

On Step Nine:

Sam said the last stand of self is pride. There can be no talk of humility, he said, until pride licks the dust, and one then acts to make full restoration and restitution for wrongs done. As AAs in Akron did, Sam also quoted from the Sermon on the Mount those verses enjoining the bringing of a gift to the altar without first being reconciled to one's brother (Matthew 5:22-24).

Restitution was not merely a good deed to be done. It was a command of God from the Bible that wrongs be righted as part of the practicing the principle of love. Sam taught that the required amends were not about works. They were not about guilt. They were about love!

Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve

Historical background: The form for these Steps comes from the last of the Oxford Group's "Five C's." The last "C" stood for "Continuance." It meant continuing the Oxford Group's life changing principles and practices covered in the first four "C's": Confidence, Confession, Conviction, and Conversion. The Big Book backdrop incorporates the same process—a decision, followed by self-examination, confession, conviction as to the need for change, and a plea to God to remove the sins that block us from God. The Big Book's last three Continuance steps mean continuing to do the things learned in the preceding steps; improving your relationship with God; and being awakened to what God has done for you, the message of that fact that you are to carry, and the commandments of God that you are to practice.

On Step Ten:

This step concerned daily surrender and the Oxford Group idea of Continuance. Sam taught that it was necessary to continue self-examination, confession, conviction, the seeking of God's help, and the prompt making of amends. This continued action was to follow the new relationship with God and others that resulted from removal of the sin problem in the earlier steps.

On Step Eleven:

Sam wrote eloquently about Quiet Time, Bible study, prayer, and meditation (listening for God's guidance). Sam urged daily contact with God for guidance, forgiveness, strength, and spiritual growth. So does A.A.'s Big Book.

Quiet Time was a must in early A.A. And Shoemaker defined every aspect of Quiet Time from the necessity for a new birth to a new willingness to study the Bible, pray, listen, and read rather than to speak first and lead with the chin.

On Step Twelve:

This step comprehends:

A spiritual awakening, the exact meaning of which Shoemaker spelled out in his books and in his talks to AAs. Sam said a real spiritual awakening involved four things: conversion, prayer, fellowship, and witness.

A message about what God has accomplished for us, a phrase which Shoemaker himself used, saying, in several ways: "**You have to give Christianity away to keep it.**"

Practicing the new way of living in harmony with God's will and in love toward others, an idea easily recognized from Sam's teachings that a spiritual awakening comes from conversion, that the gospel message concerns God's grace and power, and that the principles to be practiced are defined in the Bible.

Sadly, our Twelfth Step language, without input from Sam's own writings, has become ill-defined and illusory. For A.A. Big Book students know that none of the three Twelfth Step ideas is set forth or explained in the chapter of the Big Book dealing with the Twelfth Step. To be frank, A.A. left Christianity in the dust in its Twelfth Step discussion.

In so doing, AAs lost an understanding of what Sam Shoemaker taught and Dr. Bob emphasized: that conversion, the gospel message, and love and service were defined in the Book of Acts, the Four Absolutes, 1 Corinthians 13, Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, the Book of James, and other specific parts of the Bible. Sam discussed them all in detail in his writings.

Appendix Four:

Leader Guide

Sponsor, Leader, or Panel Outline for taking one or a group through the steps

Notes to the Sponsor, Leader, or Panel

- (1.) When multiple readings are listed, you may want to pre-select some of the material, reading only what time permits.
- (2.) Before the workshop, review and mark reading assignments in reference books or this guide. All readings are included in the 12 Step Guidebook.
- (3.) Reference book abbreviations:
BB—Big Book / *Alcoholics Anonymous, Third Edition*
DBOT—*Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*
Book and Verse number—Good Book (the Bible).
- (4.) **In a group session**, we try to complete all the steps in a 4-hour period, with one break at the end of Step Five.

When going through one-on-one, we usually take two 3–4 hour sessions on different days, breaking at Step Seven. The person taking the steps goes home and makes their Eighth Step “people-we-have-harmed” list and brings it to the second session for review. In the group settings, Steps Eight and Nine become homework.
- (5.) Appoint a panel member to monitor the time.

Administrative Notes

- (1.) Introduce the Panel.
- (2.) Materials to be used:
AA Big Book. The Third Edition is preferred due to pertinent stories being left out in the 4th Edition. Readings in the Twelve Step Guidebook are from the Third Edition.
Pencil (and a highlighter if you have one)
The Twelve Step Guidebook for each participant
The Bible (References are to the New American Standard version.)
- (3.) There will be one break. It should be taken during Step Five in a group session.
- (4.) There’s a lot to cover in a little time. Please try to wait for the scheduled break.

Ground rules for taking a group through the steps:

As we go through each step:

- (1.) The Leader will read the Step and explain it according to the Guidebook. The members of the panel will add-to/clarify what the Leader says.

- (2.) The Leader asks for questions. This is the opportunity for participants to ask questions.
- (3.) Because of the limited time and the size of the group, please keep your questions relevant to the Step at hand.
- (4.) If the question requires a one-on-one discussion or a long, detailed answer, get together after the session and discuss it with the participant. Do not get bogged down with questions that are difficult or disruptive.
- (5.) At the end of each Step, ask if everyone is in agreement and willing to accept and take the step. This is when you ask them to nod their heads up and down. This way you will know where they stand. Have them sign their Guidebooks at the end of each Step.

Suggested Comments to explain “How the Steps are done”:

“I’ll be taking you through the steps as Clarence took hundreds of others through the steps and as Dr. Bob took Clarence through the steps.”

“If you have some other way that works for you, that’s OK; and I would like to hear about it after this session.”

“As Clarence said many times: ‘If they do what I tell them, they get better. They don’t have to drink again!’”

“I ask that you keep an open mind and withhold judgment.”

As the Big Book says in “Appendix II: Spiritual Experience”:

“We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. *Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.*

‘There is a principle which is a bar against all information, which is proof against all arguments and which cannot fail to keep a man in everlasting ignorance—that principle is contempt prior to investigation.’ –Herbert Spencer” (BB, p. 570)

Set the Stage

Clarence called himself a fundamentalist—which to him meant that he practiced the program as he learned it from Dr. Bob.

Dr. Bob and Bill Wilson obtained their basic ideas from the Good Book. And they practiced the concepts and spiritual principles from the Oxford Group, which also obtained its principles from the Good Book. And from these teachings, the Big Book was written, and our 12 Step program was formulated.

In *Appendix One* of this Guidebook, covering the History of AA, you will find discussion of the Oxford Group, which sought to recapture the power of first-century Christianity and actually was called “A First Century Christian Fellowship.” Its founder was a Lutheran Minister, Dr. Frank N. D. Buchman.

From *Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers*

pp. 54–55

“Members of the Oxford Group sought to achieve spiritual regeneration by making a surrender to God through rigorous self-examination, confessing their character defects to another human being, making restitution for harm done to others, and giving without thought of reward—or, as they put it: ‘No pay for soul surgery.’ They did, however, accept contributions.

Emphasis was placed on prayer and on seeking guidance from God in all matters. The movement also relied on study of the Scriptures and developed some of its own literature as well.

At the core of the program were the ‘four absolutes’: absolute honesty, absolute unselfishness, absolute purity, and absolute love.

(In 1948, Dr. Bob recalled the absolutes as ‘the only yardsticks’ Alcoholics Anonymous had in the early days, before the Twelve Steps....)

In addition to the four absolutes, the Oxford Groupers had the ‘five C’s’ and the ‘five procedures.’ The C’s were confidence, confession, conviction, conversion, and continuance, while the procedures were: Give in to God; listen to God’s direction; check guidance; restitution; and sharing—for witness and for confession.” (DBOT, pp. 54–55)

Remember that our disease has three parts—physical, emotional, and spiritual.

What the Big Book Says:

p. 64

When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.

[Leader] Lead a prayer asking for God’s presence and the Holy Spirit’s guidance for each person during the Steps.

When Clarence met a person just “who was waiting until it felt right to work the steps” or “who was doing a step a year,” he would say to them: “How long do you want to be sick?”

“The steps are like a medicine capsule with 12 ingredients.” You must take all 12 ingredients of the capsule to make you better and not just the ingredients that taste good or make you feel good.”

“You should take them all—if recovery is your goal.”

“The Big Book states: ‘Half measures availed us nothing.’” (BB, p. 59)

“The Steps consist of 200 well-chosen words—but only one word deals with alcohol. The rest of the Steps are to help us get our lives changed.”

For the steps to work, there must be action from us and from God:

From us:

- (a) Surrender.
- (b) Submission.
- (c) Service.

From God:

- (a) He gave us the Principles.
- (b) He teaches us how to Practice the principles.
- (c) He gives us the Power to do them.

There were three qualifying questions that Clarence would ask a person. If he did not get the right answers, he wouldn't waste his time taking that person through the Steps. There were too many people who were ready, willing and eager.

I'm going to ask you those three questions now:

- (1) Do you think you have a drinking problem? (Ask them to answer)
- (2) Do you want to do something about that problem? (Ask them to answer)
- (3) What are you willing to do about it? (Ask them to answer)

The answers should be: "Yes, Yes, and ANYTHING."

Great. You are QUALIFIED to take the steps.

The Steps can be divided into four groups or phases. They are:

Step One: Admission

Steps Two through Seven: Submission

Steps Eight and Nine: Restitution

Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve: Construction and Maintenance

Read from the Big Book:

p. 59 | We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery.

p. 25 | The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.

You are now ready to go to the Twelve Step Guidebook

Appendix Five:

Starting Your Own Retreat

If you have a burning desire to demonstrate the A.A. program as Dr. Bob and Clarence Snyder taught, start your own retreat. Understand that our program is intended to be a life-changing program, not a drunk-sober program. The retreats are designed primarily for the newcomer, or any A.A. member who wants to believe. Remember that we cannot be all things to all people.

As a leader, you make the final decisions. It's good to delegate routine duties to volunteers and to welcome and consider input from others. However, final decision-making and responsibility need to rest on the leader and be measured against the original aims. The leaders from all the retreats make up a great team to support and advise one another, and they are available to help you.

First Find a Location

- (1) It's good to have a retreat center that is familiar with and supportive of A.A.
- (2) If possible, choose a facility that allows husbands and wives to stay together, rather than a camp/dorm style.
- (3) It's best to be close to the primary area of potential retreatants.
- (4) Keep in mind that some speakers and retreatants may need to be picked up at an airport.

Then Pick a Date

The retreats are generally held on a non-holiday weekend, beginning with dinner on Friday night and ending at lunch on Sunday. Check out the calendar on cametobelieve.org, of course, but usually your date will be determined by the availability of your selected facility.

Financial Considerations

The retreat price should be figured so that the retreat breaks about even. To figure out what fee to charge each person, include the following:

- (1) Retreat facility—cost for room and board per person.
- (2) The registration fee for the speakers and their spouses. (Fees are usually waived unless they are local people who support the retreat regularly.)
- (3) Travel expenses for speakers coming from a distance. (Sometimes speakers will pay their own way, but we don't expect it.)
- (4) Enough drinks (water and sodas), meals, and snacks for the weekend. The facility must supply a lot of coffee—including having it ready for check-in on Friday afternoon and early (6:30 or 7:00) in the morning. Explain to the facility that A.A. groups drink more coffee than most, and it should be made available upon arrival and throughout the weekend.
- (5) Cost of flyers plus postage and envelopes.
- (6) Cost of programs, name tags, and other clerical/registration materials.
- (7) Cost of tapes or CDs, if you plan to distribute a Clarence Snyder "How It Works" to each new person.

A special collection may be taken for a Saturday night wiener roast or ice cream social.

Some retreats raise funds for “scholarships,” and many old-timers either sponsor individuals they know or simply make anonymous donations for the leadership team to distribute to those in need.

Many retreat centers require a deposit. Historically, these monies have come from individual leaders or home groups who ‘adopt’ the retreat to get it started. Established retreats have even been known to send start-up money to a new retreat to help with initial costs. After the retreat gets going, these monies are earmarked for scholarships.

Selecting Speakers

Choose speakers who believe, as Clarence did, that we do Steps One through Nine to get our old life behind us, and live on steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve as maintenance and construction.

Hear the prospective speakers in person or on tape before inviting them to speak.

Try to have speakers who can stay for the full retreat (except for very unusual circumstances). Their being there through the retreat makes them available for one-on-one help and fellowship.

If the retreat is being advertised for A.A. and Al-Anon, be sure to have an Al-Anon speaker with a good story of recovery using the Al-Anon program.

The first speaker (on Friday) should be one who easily picks up from where people are in current A.A. and gently turns the focus to how our program was originally done. Too sudden a departure from what the A.A. people are used to can be disorienting to some.

The speaker should emphasize the high rate of recovery experienced by these early members. Of course, except in telling history, the speaker should keep the focus on what has happened to him or her by the use of the program.

The speaker should be one who is not afraid to give God the credit.

Things to Avoid

- (1) Clarence said no cards, swimming, fishing, canoeing, etc, during the retreat so we would not lose our focus.
- (2) Because of the enthusiasm of people whose lives have been changed at a previous retreat, there may be urging to start the current retreat at the point the last retreat ended, on a high spiritual peak. Clarence made it clear that the retreat was for newcomers. We recommend the format designed by Clarence.

We are there to introduce the original A.A. concepts to these first time retreatants. We don't want to turn them off by unintentionally representing it as a religious retreat. We want to give them time to learn the ways of the early people in A.A. who had high recovery rates.

Remember that newcomers may be people who have been missing something in A.A. or Al-Anon at their regular meetings.

- (3) Encourage people to attend the whole retreat. Partial attendance may leave gaps in their understanding of how it works, and this may cause someone to miss the opportunity for change in their lives. A partial or mistaken understanding can also cause erroneous reports about the retreat, leading others to forgo attendance as well.
- (4) Both Clarence and Grace emphasized the importance of telling all speakers to avoid use of vulgar or profane language, including misusing God's name or "potty language."

Remember our spiritual roots. James 3:10 says "From the same mouth come both blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not to be this way." We don't want to confuse those who are seeking.

- (5) Clarence stated, "No altar calls." However, he always made it known that there were people available to pray with anyone who wanted it. Those willing should have some advance preparation should they be called upon to pray with retreatants.

Just follow the format as much as possible for your specific location.

We suggest a prayer meeting prior to the first meeting for everyone involved in planning the retreat. This should be conducted in a discreet location, out of view of the newcomers.

It's a good idea to have a Sunday morning ecumenical service, inclusive of all denominations. A Catholic priest suggested this early on, and Clarence put it into practice. Calling it an ecumenical service rather than church also helps retreatants focus on spiritual matters, rather than religion. This service might be held before breakfast or at the beginning of the morning meeting.

Retreats traditionally end after the noon meal on Sunday. There are those who like to stay for a time after lunch to pray. This has come to be known as "Prayer and Praise," and is not an official part of the retreat.

Encouragement

Don't be surprised if you feel discouraged from time to time. Remember, we're dealing with people who have needs. They are not always used to hearing this type of spiritual answer.

Matthew 5:11–12 tells us to rejoice when others don't receive us well, and we will be blessed. The prophets experienced the same thing. Remember that the retreat and its results are the Lord's.

Sample Retreat Format

FRIDAY

3:00–7:00 PM	Registration
6:00 PM	Dinner
6:45 PM	Leaders' Prayer Session
7:00 PM	Welcome and Introductions
7:30 PM	Opening Speaker
9:00 PM	Break
9:15 PM	Small Group Meetings
10:00 PM	Optional choices of meetings: A.A. Candlelight Meeting Al-Anon Meeting Clarence Snyder Video

SATURDAY

7:30–8:30 AM	Breakfast
9:00 AM	Al-Anon Speaker
10:00 AM	Break
10:15 AM	A.A. Speaker
11:15 AM	Break
11:30 AM	Small Group Meetings
12:00–1:00 PM	Lunch
1:15 PM	Twelve Step Class—The core experience of the retreat. It is highly recommended for every first-timer.
1:15 PM	Simultaneous, optional workshops for folks who have already done the Steps. Sample titles are “King’s Kids Class” and “Love, Relationships, and Spiritual Growth.”
5:00 PM	Choir Practice
6:00–6:45 PM	Dinner
7:00 PM	A.A. Speaker
8:30 PM	Break
9:30 PM	Small Group meeting, if desired and time permits
10:00 PM	A.A. and Al-Anon Meetings

SUNDAY

7:30–8:30 AM	Breakfast
8:45 AM	Ecumenical Service
9:45 AM	“Came To Believe” Testimonies (Allow about 5 minutes per person.)
11:45 AM	Retreat Close by Retreat Leader
12:00 NOON	Lunch

An unofficial, non-retreat time known as “Prayer and Praise” begins around 1:15 PM. A qualified elder teaches and leads the team, who pray with and for individuals requesting it. This usually lasts until the prayer requests of all participants have been accommodated.

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Abbreviations:

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DBOT	<i>Dr. Bob and the Good Oldtimers</i>
The Good Book	The Bible, New American Standard version

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