

District 41 Messenger

FALL – 2018

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The 12 Steps ...STEP THREE

Editor Note: This series is focusing on the The Twelve Steps of our Fellowship ...One Step at a Time. This month we explore Step Three.

*“Deep down in every man, woman and child
is the fundamental idea of God” BB55*

**“Made a Decision to Turn Our Will and Our Lives Over to
the Care of God as We Understood Him ”**

***“We found
the Great
Reality
Deep
Within Us”
BB55***

▣ We can think and make decisions. This is our blessing and our curse. We sometimes make decisions based on old information and find ourselves in trouble...again. Our great problem is that WE are trying to make ourselves better. Perhaps we can make a decision that hereafter GOD is going to direct our lives. This is not a magical ritual, only a commitment to follow a higher purpose. An open heart; an open mind.

▣ Step Three can be a giant obstacle for some of us. We may feel betrayed or disillusioned by our religious upbringing. Or we choose to deny the existence of anything which cannot be proved scientifically. We become afraid to commit and afraid to go it alone. “Who Knows?” can be a powerful way to work with the God idea. Let God be God ...a mystery which cannot be solved by the human mind. It is not important that we understand God ...but rather that we simply comprehend the sense of A Power Greater than Us. We are striving for a sincere and healthy opening of the heart ... a sense of connection which will enrich our lives.

▣ Be Still and Know that I Am God. We can have faith God will do all that is necessary as painlessly as possible, but we must be willing to be open to His assistance even if we cannot sense the meaning or purpose of it. New answers do not come from what we already know. They come from a change of heart; a fundamental shift in perception.

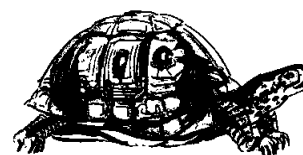
▣ Our thinking is faulty. If God will direct our will (thoughts), and our lives (actions) we might become better people and live in peace. The price to be paid for sobriety is the destruction of self-centeredness. Unless we discard self-will, we will always feel the pain and humiliation of destructive collisions with people, places and things.

(Continued on next page)

**IF NOT NOW,
WHEN ?**

***Do Not Wait Until
The Opportunity Passes***

**Your speed
doesn't matter,
forward is
forward.**



Step 3 is Like a Handshake with God

(Continued from first page)

▣ We must remind ourselves we have decided to go to any lengths to find an awakening of our spirit. We ask to be given strength and direction to do the right thing no matter what the personal consequences might be. Step Three is only a decision. Unless we take action, the changes we want to see in our lives will not happen. Step Three is a decision which must immediately be followed by action.

▣ "God's will is unknowable and it is our desire to do that will which is most important. We aspire daily to practice the Steps intelligently, with Honesty, Openness, and Willingness. We aspire to be kind. We may fail more often than we succeed. We hope, however, never to lose that aspiration. We desire to move from Great Thirst to Great Compassion and to Listen and Understand Deeply. (William Alexander, "Cool Water".)

▣ "The past is just this...the past. I cannot undo the past, although I can undo my shame-based attachment to it. Although I may know nothing of what God's will should mean, I can choose to say that it is to be kind". (Cool Water)

▣ There are a series of things we must do after making a decision to buy a house before we actually buy it. We have to find a house, get a realtor, a lawyer, a banker, check taxes, check a certificate of title, and do all kinds of other things. Finally, at the end of the process, we've bought the house and are living in it. In taking Step 3, we make a decision to turn our will and life over to God, making a conscious commitment. Steps 4 through 12 help us understand and complete this commitment. WE made the decision, not our addictions, not our families, not a probation officer, judge, therapist or doctor. WE made it. For the first time since that first high, we have made a decision for ourselves.

▣ "Relieve me of the bondage of self" does not mean we ignore or deny our needs. In fact, the reverse is true. If we can discover healthy, God-directed ways to meet our emotional and physical needs, then we become less needy, less selfish, less pre-occupied individuals. Discovering what our needs are and asking to have those needs met may be one of the most unselfish things we do. All of us have needs, and all of us have choices as to how those needs are to be met. With God's help we can find genuine ways of satisfying them.

▣ We make a decision to live a life based on the principles of compassion, awareness and openness. We completely give ourselves to this simple program. We commit to sobriety. We step into the unknown of spiritual work.

▣ Turning our will and our lives over to this Power Greater than Ourselves means living in accordance with what is True. It means acting out of Kindness and Compassion, pursuing noble goals, seeking Truth in all things; striving for perfection of heart and mind while bowing to the Truth of who we are, with all of our imperfections and failings. We do our best to help others who suffer and to be gentle with our own pain. We act less self-centered and find ways to serve others.

▣ Honor the word "God" and "Him" as written by our founders. We may find our own language as long as we don't forget the original intent. Step 3 is an opportunity to start over with our own understanding of God.

Sit with the winners, the conversation is different.

@iHearts143Quotes ■ INSTAGRAM

*It is Better
to be Nice
than to be Nasty.
To be nice, to be kind
to your neighbor,
that is God's will.*

**IF I FAIL TO
CHANGE THE
PERSON I WAS
WHEN I CAME
IN... THAT
PERSON WILL
TAKE ME OUT!**

AddictToday.com

**Every next level
of your life
will demand
a different
version of you.**

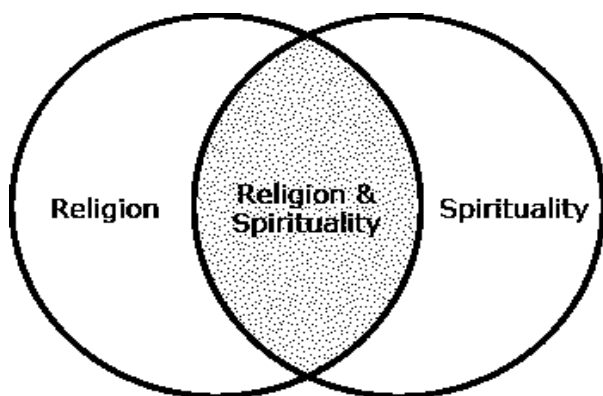
1940 AA Preamble

"We are gathered here because we are faced with the fact that we are powerless over alcohol and unable to do anything about it without the help of a Power Greater than Ourselves.

We feel that each person's religious views, if any, are his own affair. The simple purpose of the program of Alcoholics Anonymous is to show what may be done to enlist the aid of a Power Greater than Ourselves regardless of what our individual conception of that Power may be.

In order to form a habit of depending upon and referring all we do to that Power, we must at first apply ourselves with some diligence. By often repeating these acts, they become habitual and the help rendered becomes natural to us.

We have all come to know that as alcoholics we are suffering from a serious illness for which medicine has no cure."



**TRY IT OUT
FOR
YOURSELF.**

**DON'T TAKE
MY WORD
FOR IT.**

As Bill Sees It...

When we became alcoholics, crushed by a self-imposed crisis we could no longer 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. We couldn't duck the issue. BB53

We simply do not stop drinking as long as we place material dependence upon others ahead of dependence on God. BB98

GSR Meetings

Monthly GSR Meeting is held on the third Thursday of every month (*except July*) at 7 pm in the Rear Room of Anona East

Gatherings and Workshops

22nd National AA Archives Workshop

September 28, 29th and 30th

"Principles before Personalities"
Handle with Care

**The Westin Hotel
Yorktown Center, Lombard**

More information
Chicagoarchives1939@gmail.com

Featuring a focus on Dr. Bob's early years in Chicago and his connection to NY and Akron. Oral History Project. Hospitality Suites.

*Information on the
recovery and care of our
Fellowships' History*

WORKSHOP

Traditions for Our Relationships

Introducing a better way to "be" in your most important relationships based on the 12 Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous and Al-Anon. (*not recommended for children*)

Saturday, October 13th
9 am to 12-30 pm
Light breakfast at 8:30 am

Church of the Brethren
1S071 Luther Avenue, Lombard

Email: district41email@gmail.com

Faith and the Third Step

A prayer by Thomas Merton

My Lord God, I have no idea where I am going. I do not see the road ahead of me. I cannot know for certain where it will end. *Nor do I really know myself, and when I think I am following your will it does not mean I am actually doing so. But I believe the DESIRE to please you DOES please you. And I hope that I will never do anything apart from that desire.* And I know if I do this you will lead me by the right road, though I may know nothing about it. Therefore I will trust you always when I may seem to be lost and in the shadow of death. I will not fear, for you are ever with me, and you will never leave me to face my perils alone.

**To change
your life,
you need
to change
your
priorities.**

The Decision

The Third Step decision may be too big to make in one leap. Our fears of the Third Step, and the dangerous thinking to which these fears lead, can be eased by breaking this step down into a series of smaller, separate hurdles. Step 3 is just one more brick on the path to recovery.

Fundamental changes in our lives happen gradually as we work on our recovery, and all such changes require our participation. We don't have to be afraid that this step will do something to us we are not ready for or won't like. By practicing Step 3, we are allowing someone or something to care for us, not control us or conduct our lives for us. This step does not suggest we must become mindless robots with no ability to live our own lives.

Instead, we are making a simple decision to change direction, to stop rebelling at the natural and logical flow of events in our lives, to stop wearing ourselves out trying to make everything happen as if we were in charge of the world. We are accepting that a Power Greater Than Ourselves will do a better job of caring for our will and our lives than we have done. We are beginning to explore what we understand the word "God" means to us as individuals.

District 41 Messenger is published quarterly by District 41 of Alcoholics Anonymous. It is intended as a service letter to inform district members of service opportunities, events, and experiences relevant to carrying the AA message, in and through service. Opinions expressed herein are those of the contributors and do not necessarily express or reflect the thinking of Alcoholics Anonymous, District 41, or the editor. This newsletter is a confidential document. Please do not take it to jails, treatment centers, etc.

Editor's Note: The words of guidance in this newsletter are taken from years of scribbling in notebooks after listening to meeting comments and reading books. I don't often remember exactly where comments come from, and every paragraph has a little from one place and a little from another to promote fluidity. BUT, I can make a list of some references from my book shelf. "Shift Happens" by Robert Holden, Ph.D. "Drop the Rock" by Bill P. and Todd W. "Carry this Message" by Joe McQ. "The Steps We Took" by Joe McQ "Understanding the 12 Steps" by Terrence Gorski. "Emotional Resilience" by David Viscott, Ph.D. "The Spirituality of Imperfection" Kertz & Ketcham, Joe & Charles Big Book Studies and The Twelve & Twelve and The Big Book.

Third Step Prayer

God, I offer myself to you –
to build with me and
to do as you will.

*Relieve me of the
bondage of self
so I may better do your will.*

Take away my difficulties,
that victory over them may
bear witness to those I would
help of your power, your love,
and your way of life.

May I do your will always.



Whenever you do not
understand what's
happening in your life,
just close your eyes,
take a deep breath
and say,
"God I know it is your
plan. Just help me
through it."

(Editor Note) Information on upcoming workshops, reports, contacts, and other information can be found on our D41 website. It is the responsibility of GSRs (Group Service Representatives) to provide flyers and information to their groups. If you do not have a GSR for your group please choose your representative so they may attend the monthly meetings on the Third Thursday of every month (except July).



Good, sober is.