

## HOW IT WORKS

An agnostic adaptation from Chapter 5 of *Alcoholics Anonymous* ©1939, *Alcoholics Anonymous World Service Inc.*

Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates, They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living that demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it—then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thought from the very start. Some of us had tries to hold on to our own ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with alcohol—cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. Here are the Steps we took which are suggested as a program of recovery:

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

2. Came to accept and to understand that we needed strengths beyond our awareness and resources to restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of the A.A. program.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to ourselves without reservation, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were ready to accept help in letting go of all our defects of character.
7. Humbly sought to have our shortcomings removed.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through mindful inquiry and meditation to improve our spiritual awareness, seeking only for knowledge of our rightful path in life and the power to carry that out.
12. 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.

Many of us exclaimed, "What an order! I can't go through with it." Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.

"The wording was, of course, quite optional, so long as we expressed the idea, voicing it without reservation." Alcoholics Anonymous p. 63