

## **The 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous**

- 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.**
- 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**
- 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**
- 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**
- 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**
- 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**
- 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**
- 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 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.**
- 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry the message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

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reference that is larger than your own addictive mentality; that it is possible to understand what has happened to you and to learn what you need to do in order to recover. And, most important, you need to believe that you can tap into a source of courage, strength and hope that will allow you to cope. After the Second Step, you can say with complete honesty,, “”We can’t, but somebody else can.” (Understanding the Twelve Steps, Terence T. Gorski)

#### **ADDICTION AND GRACE: Gerry May**

“It is important to note that the spiritual growth process involves far more relinquishment than acquisition. In our culture we are conditioned to expect growth to involve the acquisition of new facts and understandings...But spiritual growth is different. It cannot be packaged, programmed or taught...the essential process is one of transformation, not education. It is, if anything, an unlearning process in which our old ways are cleansed, liberated, and redeemed.” (105)

“we cannot conduct spiritual growth. At bottom it is God’s work. It is grace.” (106)

“In brief, I think our participation is threefold. First, we pray. Our prayer may be formal words or a simple silent turning toward God, but it acknowledges our source of hope, expresses our true desire, unites us with the rest of humanity and commits our willingness to God.

“Second, insofar as we can, we attend to the heart sense with us; we try to keep returning to it in whatever ways are possible and staying with it as long as we can”...

“Third, we try to live the spiritual reality as best we can. This means taking risks of faith, trying to trust the incomprehensibly, loving presence of God whether we feel it or not, and being as loving of ourselves and others as we possibly can... it leads toward a deepening trust in God.” (106)

**RICHARD ROHR: BREATHING UNDER WATER, CHAPTER TWO, STEP TWO**

**“Step Two is the necessary longing, delaying, and backsliding that invariably precedes the full blown leap of faith”...use an ‘active’ verb –**

**‘We *came* to believe’. “The surrender of faith does not happen in one moment, but is an extended journey; a trust walk, a gradual letting go, unlearning and handing over.” (9)**

**“To finally surrender ourselves to healing, we must have three spaces opened within us – and all at the same time: our opinionated head, our closed down heart, and our defensive and defended body. That is the work of spirituality – and it is work. Yes, it is finally the work of ‘a Power greater than ourselves,’ and it will lead to great luminosity and depth of seeing. That is why true faith is one of the most holistic and free actions a human can perform.” (9)**

**Q.: WHAT HAS BEEN A SIGNIFICANT MOMENT ON YOUR JOURNEY OF FAITH TO THIS POINT. WHO DID YOU HAVE TO TRUST IN THAT MOMENT: ANOTHER PERSON? GOD? YOURSELF?**

**Q.: WHERE DO YOU INSTINCTIVELY MAKE DECISIONS? IN YOUR HEAD? HEART? OR GUT? Which do you think is most trustworthy?**

**“As hard as it is to believe, many formally religious people do not believe in the reality of the Spirit in any active or effective way. They think it is their job to somehow teach, introduce, or win Spirit, and they never get around to enjoying what is already and always there – and actively on their side.” (10)**

**“As Jesus said in his many banquet stories, we all find our very proper excuses why we *cannot* come to anything so free, so spacious and so available to all” (10)**

**“To keep the mind space open, we need some form of contemplation or meditation practice”**

**Q.: WHAT FORMS OF MEDITATION AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES DO YOU INCLUDE IN YOUR SPIRITUAL HABITS?**

**“authentic spirituality is invariably a matter of emptying the mind and filling the heart at the same time.” (11)**

**“To keep the heart space open, we need several things. First, we almost all need some healing in regard to the hurts we have carried from the past...Also we need to be in right relationship with people, so that others can love us and touch us at deeper levels, and so we can love and touch them.” (12)**

**Q.: WHAT EXPERIENCES HAVE YOU HAD OF LETTING GO OF A PAST HURT?**

**“All we can do is keep our egos out of the way, note and weep over our defensive behaviours, keep our various centers from closing down, and the Presence that is surely the Highest Power is then obvious, embracing and immediately effective” (19)**

**Q.: HOW DO YOU GET IN THE WAY OF YOUR OWN HEALING AND GROWTH? WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR DEFENSIVE BEHAVIOURS? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO CHANGE AT LEAST ONE? WHAT HELPS YOU TO STAY OPEN TO LIFE?**

**Q.: HOW HAS YOUR BODY BEEN TOUCHED BY YOUR SPIRITUAL JOURNEY? DOES YOUR RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE INCLUDE THE REGARD FOR YOUR PHYSICAL BEING? HOW DO YOU ASK YOUR GOD TO ATTEND TO YOUR BODY?**