

Believe – trust God - as we understand a higher power - **Belong** – clean house - working on our hurts and hunger

Become – help others – giving away what we have received

Step Dancing thru the 12 steps of Recovery!

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

Powerlessness

- Power is at best in weakness
- God makes sure that several things will come your way that you cannot manage on your own
- Spirituality, in one sense or another, is about letting go and unlearning

2. *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

Desperate Desiring

- #2 step is necessary longing, delaying, and backsliding that precedes the full blown leap of faith
- God comes to us disguised as our life
- Your heart needs to be broken, and broken open, at least once to have a heart for others

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

Sweet Surrender

- Surrender will always feel like dying, and yet it is necessary path to liberation
- What makes so much religion innocuous, is that there has seldom been a concrete 'decision to turn our lives over to the care of God

4. *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

Light

- Begin some honest 'shadow boxing' which is at the heart of all spiritual awakening
- The goal is.. the struggle itself, and the encounter and wisdom that comes from it
- God uses our own sins in our own favor!

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

Accountability is Sustainability

- You cannot heal what you do not acknowledge
- Forgiveness is to let go of our hope for a different or better past
- God does not love us if we change; God loves us so that we can change
- The “unbound” ones are best prepared to unbind the rest of the world

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

What comes first? Chicken or the Egg

- We have to fully acknowledge that God alone can do the ‘removing’
- We must first fully own and admit – but then equally, step back and do nothing about it, as it were, until we are ‘entirely ready’ to let God do the job?
- It seems we must both surrender and take responsibility

7. *Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*

Asking

- We ask not to change God but to change ourselves. We pray to form a living relationship, not to get things done
- Prayer is.. a synergy which creates a result larger than the exchange itself
- Life is a gift, totally given to you without cost – life’s waiting

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

Payback

- It is a self-serving concern to alleviate just our own guilt; it is a loving question to say, ‘How can I free others from theirs?’
- All healers are wounded healers

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

Skill

- I’m afraid that common sense wisdom, or skillful means, is no longer common sense. We are a culture with many elderly people but not so many elders passing on wisdom
- One often needs time, discernment, and good advice from others before one knows the when, how, who and where to apologize or make amend

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

Overkill

- Most churches gave people the impression they would 'get' the Holy Spirit as a reward for good behavior
- Don't judge, just look can be our motto – and now with the eyes of God
- To be fully conscious would be to love everything on some level and in some way – even our mistakes
- People who know who they are find it the easiest to know who they aren't

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

A different mind

- Prayer and meditation – code for an entirely different way of processing life
- Positive widening of your lens for a better picture

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.*

What comes around – goes around

- Energy cannot really be created or destroyed; it is merely converted to different uses
- God loves and respects and freedom – to the final and full and riskiest degree
- Good religion keeps God free for people and keeps people free for God
- Awakening just happens, as certain as the dawn, when the two great freedoms meet
- We were made to breathe the air – that always surrounds u, feeds us, and fills us. Some call it God.

Be willing to let God change you

Watch your thoughts; they become words

Watch your words; they become actions

Watch your actions; they become habits

Watch your habits; they become character

Watch your character; it becomes your destiny

DROP THE ROCK - REFLECTION

Seems there was this group of Twelve Step members taking a boat ride to this island called *Serenity*, and it was truly a happy bunch of people. As the boat pulled away from the dock, a few on board noticed Mary running down the street trying to catch up with the boat. One member said, "Darn, she's missed the boat." Another said, "Maybe not. Come on, Mary! Jump in the water! Swim! Swim! You can make it! You can catch up with us!"

So Mary jumped into the water and started to swim for all she was worth. She swam for quite a while and then started to sink. The members on board, now all aware that Mary was struggling, shouted, "Come on, Mary! Don't give up! Drop the rock!" With that encouragement, Mary started swimming again, only to start sinking again shortly afterward. She was going under when she heard all those voices shouting to her, "Mary, drop the rock! Let go and drop the rock."

Mary was vaguely aware of something around her neck, but she couldn't quite figure out what it was. Once more, she gathered her strength and started swimming. She was doing quite well, even gaining a little on the boat, but then she felt this heaviness pulling her under again. She saw all those people on the boat holding out their hands and hollering for her to keep swimming and shouting, "Don't be an idiot, Mary! Drop the rock!"

Then she understood when she was going down for the third time: This thing around her neck, *this* was why she kept sinking when she really *wanted* to catch the boat. This thing was the "rock" they were all shouting about: resentments, fear, dishonesty, self-pity, intolerance, and anger were just some of the things her "rock" was made of. "God help me get rid of the rock," she prayed. "Now! Get rid of it!"

Mary managed to stay afloat long enough to untangle a few of the strings holding that rock around her neck, realizing as she did that her load was easing up. Then, with another burst of energy, *she let go*. She tore the other strings off and *dropped the rock*.

Once free of the rock, she was amazed how easy it was to swim, and she soon caught up with the boat. Those on board were cheering for her and applauding and telling her how great she was, and how it was so good having her with them again, and how now they could get on with the boat ride and have a nice time.

Mary felt great and was just about to indulge in a little rest and relaxation when she glanced back to shore. There, a ways back, she thought she saw something bobbing in the water so she pointed it out to some others. Sure enough, someone was trying to catch the boat, swimming for dear life but not making much headway. In fact, it looked like the person was going under.

Mary looked around and saw the concern on the faces of the other members. She was the first to lean over the rail and shout, "Hey, friend! Drop the Rock!"