

Sunday September 25 2016  
**“Twelve Steps to Freedom”**  
#1 “From legal pad to printed page”

*“In May 1938, when Bill W. began work on the first draft of what is now the Big Book, Alcoholics Anonymous, in New York City and Newark, New Jersey, he had been sober about three and a half years. Dr. Bob was sober a few months less than three years, and the other 100 early members who contributed in one way or another to the writing of the book had been sober for periods ranging from a couple of years to a couple of months.*

*The early members realized the book would need a “story” section. “We would have to produce evidence in the form of living proof, written testimonials of our membership itself. It was felt also that the story section could identify us with the distant reader in a way that the text itself might not.*

...

*More than 100 titles were considered, but in the end, it came down to “Alcoholics Anonymous” or “The Way Out,” and when the two groups voted, “The Way Out” received a slight majority. At this point, one of the A.A.s visited the Library of Congress to research the number of books titled “The Way Out” versus those called “Alcoholics Anonymous.” There were 12 with the former title, none with the latter, and since nobody wanted to make the book the thirteenth “Way Out,” the problem was solved. “That is how we got the title for our book, and that is how our society got its name.” So, this somewhat shaky, often fearful group of men and women somehow brought to publication, on April 10, 1939, the book Alcoholics Anonymous” – pp. 2&4 A Brief History of the Big Book ([http://www.aa.org/assets/en\\_US/f-166\\_BigBook\\_BriefHistory.pdf](http://www.aa.org/assets/en_US/f-166_BigBook_BriefHistory.pdf))*

(AJRN – pg. 16 ‘The Aftermath’ ‘The Book That Started It All)

M. Scott Peck, psychiatrist and author, credits Bill Wilson with initiating an integration of spirituality and science, as well as originating the self-help and community movements. MSP even associates AA with divine revelation, proposing that the revolution it started “is going to be the salvation... not only for alcoholics but... for us all” (Addiction-The Sacred Disease).

## Approaching the Steps

Chapter 5 HOW IT WORKS (AA pp. 58-60)

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 who 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 which 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 thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old 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. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. 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:*

1

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

2

*Came to believe that a Power greater than our selves 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 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 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.

Both Dr. Bob Smith and Bill Wilson were, for considerable periods of time, active members of the Oxford Group – founded by Frank Buchman in 1921 using the name "A First Century Christian Fellowship"—and they were greatly influenced both by its structure and beliefs. Bill Wilson clearly acknowledged the Oxford Group's influence on AA "early AA got its ideas of self-examination, acknowledgment of character defects, restitution for harm done and working with others straight from the Oxford Group... and from nowhere else." (Bill W. A Biography – Francis Harrigan 2001)

**October 2: Steps 1-3: The Basic and Healthy Soil for Freedom**