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The Step Nine Promises

If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway through.

We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past, nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word Serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away.

Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations that used to baffle us.

We will suddenly realise that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us - sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialise if we work for them.

The Serenity Prayer

**God Grant me the Serenity
To accept the things I cannot change
Courage to change the things I can
And Wisdom to know the difference**

Acceptance is the Answer

And acceptance is the answer to *all* my problems today.

When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing or situation – some fact of my life – unacceptable to me and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment.

Nothing, absolutely nothing happens in God's world by mistake. Until I could accept my alcoholism, I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life's terms, I cannot be happy.

I need to concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world, as what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.

Shakespeare said, "All the world's a stage, all the men merely players." He forgot to mention that I was the chief critic. I was always able to see the flaw in every person, every situation. And I was always glad to point it out, because I knew you wanted perfection, just as I did.

AA and acceptance have taught me that there is a bit of good in the worst of us and a bit of bad in the best of us; that we are all children of God and we have a right to be here.

When I complain about you, I am complaining about God's handiwork. I am saying that I know better than God.

For years, I was sure that the worst thing that could happen to a nice guy like me would be that I would turn out to be an alcoholic. Today, I find it's the best thing that's ever happened to me.

And if I don't know what's good for me, then I don't know what's good or bad for you or for anyone.

So I'm better off if I don't give advice, don't figure I know best and just accept life on life's terms, as it is today – especially my own life.

Before AA, I judged myself by my intentions while the world was judging me by my actions.

"Acceptance was the answer" – p.417 (Fourth Edition)

A Vision for You

Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realise we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us.

Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the alcoholic who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order.

But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got.

See to it that your relationship with Him is right and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to Him and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us.

We will be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.

May God bless you and keep you – until then



AA 'MEETING IN A POCKET' KIT

The Preamble of AA

Alcoholics Anonymous is a fellowship of men and women who share their experience, strength and hope with each other that they may solve their common problem and help others to recover from alcoholism.

The only requirement for membership is a desire to stop drinking.

There are no dues or fees for AA membership; we are self-supporting through our own contributions.

AA is not allied with any sect, denomination, politics, organisation or institution; does not wish to engage in any controversy; neither endorses nor opposes any causes.

Our Primary Purpose is to stay sober and help other alcoholics to achieve sobriety.

Chapter 5

How It Works

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 programme, 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 baulked. 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 programme of recovery

The Twelve Steps

- 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 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.

Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas

- [a] **that we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives**
- [b] **that probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism**
- [c] **that God could and would if He were sought**

The Twelve Traditions

- 1 Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on AA unity
- 2 For our group purpose, there is but one authority – a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern
- 3 The only requirement for AA membership is a desire to stop drinking
- 4 Each group should be autonomous, except in matters affecting other groups or AA as a whole
- 5 Each group has but one primary purpose – to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers

- 6 An AA group ought never endorse, finance or lend the AA name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose
- 7 Every AA group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions
- 8 Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centres may employ special workers
- 9 AA as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve
- 10 Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinions on outside issues; hence the AA name ought never be drawn into public controversy
- 11 Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, films and TV
- 12 Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities

The Pledge of Alcoholics Anonymous

"I am responsible ...

When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of A.A. always
to be there.

And, for that I am responsible"

