

TWELVE STEPS SIMPLIFIED

- 1) **We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.**
Keep this one simple and look at the last part of the sentence and read it like this: our lives are unmanageable **if we keep drinking**. "Unmanageable" meaning that we are not living the life we want to live and we are not living a life we are proud of because of the drinking.
- 2) **Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**
The "Power" can simply be the power within you.
- 3) **Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.**
We made a promise to ourselves that we would change our lives and our patterns and stop drinking.
- 4) **Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**
Really look hard. Who am I? What are my strengths, what are my challenges? How do I want to change to become a better person?
- 5) **Admit to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.**
This is where you have to tell someone all the things you never wanted anyone to know. The things we are not proud of. Consider it "confession". It lifts a huge burden from you. The person you would typically do this with in a 12 step program would be your sponsor. Finding someone who you can completely trust is critical. Sometimes it can be a therapist or a very close friend who won't react to what you tell them.
- 6) **We're entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.**
Giving it all up, being humble in knowing you are not perfect but that you are committed to changing.
- 7) **Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.**
If you believe in God, great...ask Him/Her to remove them. Otherwise, just humbly ask yourself to remove them...as in "I know these things were not pretty and I never want to do them again." Make the promise to yourself that you will work on doing this every day.
- 8) **Make a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.**

This step is critical because it makes you look at how you have treated people. Take an honest look at yourself and your behavior and recognize who you may have harmed by being selfish, irresponsible, mean, dishonest, etc.

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

This is why it's critical—you go back to these people and humbly apologize for what you did. There are some exceptions ("except when to do so would injure them or others") so you need to get clarification from someone you trust (or who knows the program) before going out there and apologizing to people. For example, if you did something that would put you in harm's way by telling the person, you do not need to make amends simply because it's safer **not** to do so.

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

Again, another critical one. This one is ongoing. Anytime you are less than 100% honest, you admit and apologize. I've seen you do this in the past—it's a great quality and a principle that needs to be applied in all your relationships and every aspect of your life.

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.

If you don't have a relationship with a Higher Power, then instead, this step would be a check-in with yourself to stay centered, clear headed, and willing to do the work.

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.

Once you feel strong enough with some time under your belt, then you can help others in a number of ways, if only to be an example of what life can be like when you stop drinking.