

Big Book Awakening Workshop Question Guide. ALCOHOL & DRUGS.

FIRST NAME: _____ LAST INITIAL: _____

START DATE: _____

IF YOU ARE WILLING TO GO TO ANY LENGTHS,
GET YOUR BIG BOOK, SIGN YOUR NAME ON PAGE 58 THIRD PARAGRAPH
AND DATE IT WITH THIS START DATE.

Materials and Resources:

<https://recoveredfrom.com/fridaybba2026/> and <https://RecoveredFrom.com/>

Three Materials needed for the workshop:

1. Alcoholics Anonymous Big Book. We recommend you purchase a large print abridged. New book new experience!
2. Big Book Awakening (BBA) Workbook.
<https://bigbookawakening.com/product/big-book-awakening-book/>
3. A printed copy of this addiction-specific question guide.

Introduction to the Set-aside Prayer.

God please enable me to set aside everything I think I know, for an open mind and a new experience, show me the truth about my life, the Big Book, the 12 steps & this workshop.

This revision is based on the previous IGFRSP Questions and please support www.5a.org to continue their great work.

(Everyone has permission to copy this work, but it is forbidden to sell this workbook for profit)

**Additional Credits: San Diego Big Book Awakening, Lee Ann Y, Pat T & Tyla C for the inclusion of the Circle and Triangle intro page. **

Check out the great step audios & downloads at <http://www.bbaworks.com/>

CIRCLE AND TRIANGLE / PREFACE AND FOREWORDS

As you transcribe the circle and triangle into your Big Book, reflect on each triangle side: **Unity, Service, and Recovery.** Am I living in all three sides /areas of the triangle today—or as I work the Twelve Steps, am I at least willing to practice these principles?

Consider: Do I lean on just one side of the triangle while avoiding or ignoring the other parts of the triangle/program?

UNITY (Body/Fellowship) - How am I doing with my meetings?

- Do I go to enough meetings? _____
- Do I go to too many meetings? _____
- What does having a “home group” mean to me, do I have a home group?

- Do I have a commitment at a meeting? _____
- Do I get there early, and/or stay a few minutes afterwards? _____
- Do I help with meeting set up or set down? _____
- Do I welcome new people before or after the meeting, do I also text or call outside of the meetings?

RECOVERY (Mind/12-Steps) - How am I doing in working my own 12 steps?

- Do I have a sponsor I am in regular contact with? _____
- Am I actively going through the 12 steps, or when did I last complete all 12 steps?

- Have I completed all the amends on my last Step 8 list? _____
- Am I reading pages 84 to 88 daily? (Steps 10 & 11 in Big Book) _____
- Am I living Step 10 all day, from awakening to retire at night?

- Am I experiencing the promises of Step 10? _____
- Am I doing a daily practice of Step 11? _____

SERVICE (Spirit/Carrying the Message) - How am I working with others?

- Am I working with others taking them through the Big Book as I was?

- Am I checking if the way I'm taking people through the steps actually works - are they completing all 12 Steps and also helping others? _____
- Am I giving them enough time, am I explaining the process well?

- Are they now sponsoring others? _____
- Do I have a commitment, carrying the message, at (H & I) a hospital or institution?

Considerations:

- Do I believe (DIB) that if action is taken in all these three areas that I can be whole? What does that mean to me? _____
- DIB this first promise of hope? How many thousands have recovered. Am I living "recovered" or am I stuck "recovering"? _____
- In the Foreward to the First Edition, it says that we have "recovered" from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. Is this true for me? Is this even possible for me?

THE FIRST STEP

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous never tells us directly how to work the first two steps. In the portion of "How It Works" read at many meetings, we hear "Our description of the Alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas. That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives, that probably no human power could have relieved us of our alcoholism, and that God could and would if He were sought." [Pages 58-60]

What is not read is the sentence which follows: "Being convinced, we were at Step Three." Convinced of what? The answer is right there: "Convinced of these three pertinent ideas." And how do we get convinced? We read the description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and the personal experiences before and after, they are specifically designed to "make clear these three pertinent ideas."

In the original manuscript, it read that if we were not convinced, "we ought to reread the book to this point or else throw it away."

We compare our experiences; the way we thought, felt, and drank [or used] with the experiences of the people described in the book, to see how they match up, this is how we take steps one and two. Relating to their experiences may create a problem for the modern reader. The English of today is significantly different from that of 1939 when this book was first published.

Much of this workbook consists of statements from the Big Book which have been turned into questions. We found it helpful to view the book in this light rather than as a book of answers; the answers you will find only in your own experience, and within your own heart.

This workbook is not meant to replace the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, it is meant to be used along with it.

ASSIGNMENT 2 *****

"The Set Aside Prayer"

"God please set aside everything I think I know about myself, recovery, You and the Twelve Steps; that I might have an open mind and a new experience."

THE FIRST STEP - PART I: THE PHYSICAL ALLERGY

There are three parts to Step One. The first part deals with the physical allergy. This means that after we have the first drink and/or drug, we lose control over how much we drink or use after that.

The Doctor's Opinion - Pages xxv [xxi] to Page 1

The Physical Allergy

1.a. Are you the type of alcoholic and/or addict who failed completely with other methods of trying to stay permanently sober, or trying to control your drinking or using?

b. What have you tried?

Page xxv [xxi], Paragraph 5

2. Were you ever told you could not control your drinking/using because you had some form of a mental disorder?

Page xxvi [xxii], Paragraph 2

3. Does the Doctor's theory that you have an allergy to alcohol and/or drugs explain why you cannot control how much you drink or use once you start?

Page xxvi [xxii], Paragraph 3

4.a. When you put alcohol and/or drugs into your body, is there a craving for more?

b. Has this craving happened to you with alcohol? With drugs?

Page xxviii [xxiv], Paragraph 1

5.a. Was frothy emotional appeal enough to keep you sober permanently? [like someone begging you to stop]

b. If something can keep you sober must it have depth and weight? [Do you think "Just Say No" or "Just don't drink or use, no matter what" or "Do hugs not drugs" is going to have enough depth and weight?]

Page xxviii [xxiv], Paragraph 2

6.a. Did you drink and/or drug for the effect produced by alcohol and/or drugs?

b. What effect did alcohol and/or drugs have, meaning what did they do for you?

c. Was the effect so great that after a time, even though you knew it was bad for you, you could not tell the true from the false? [Like "investing in" cocaine to sell, going to the bar for a couple of beers.]

d. Did your life seem the only normal one for you? [For example: The first time you wreck a car, overdose, get arrested, or wake up covered in your own vomit is abnormal - by the twentieth time, it's normal.]

e. Did you experience a "sense of ease and comfort" when you drank or used?

Page xxviii [xxiv], Paragraph 4

Page xxix [xxv], Top Paragraph

7.a. Have you ever said to yourself or someone else, "I must stop," but you couldn't?

b. Have you ever tried to stop, or control your using on your own?

Page xxix [xxv], Paragraph 2

8. Are you the type of addict and/or alcoholic with whom the psychological approach; treatment centers, detox, counseling, therapy, etc. failed? What have you tried?

Page xxix [xxv], Paragraph 3

9. Did you only drink and/or drug only when things were going bad, when you were under stress and needed to escape; or did you also drink and/or drug when things were going good?

Page xxix [xxv], Paragraph 4

Page xxx [xxvi], Paragraph 1

10.a. Can you start drinking or drugging without developing a craving for more?

b. Did this seem strange to you, going for only a couple of drinks but ending up drunk again, or doing all the dope when you planned to save some for another day?

c. Do you believe the only hope for you is to not pick up the first one, to not start?

Page xxx [xxvi], Paragraph 5

ASSIGNMENT 3 *****

THE FIRST STEP PART I: BILLS STORY PAGES 1-8

We use Bill's Story for identification and to relate. Asking ourselves, have I felt like this, did this happen to me and did I drink or use like this? We also use Bill's story to watch for the progression of alcoholism and addiction in Bills Story. We watch Bill's alcoholism progressively get worse. Reflect on my own addictions/alcoholism and how it progressed in my personal history, these pages and questions will help you do that.

1. Did you turn to alcohol and/or other drugs when you were lonely?

Page 1, Paragraph 1

2. Were there things which happened early in your drinking and/or using career, "ominous warnings," which you failed to heed?

Page 1, Paragraph 3

3. When you were younger, did you think of yourself as a leader? (or did you believe that you *should* be the leader?)

Page 1, Paragraph 5

4.a. Were you someone driven to succeed?

b. Did you feel like you had to "prove to the world that you were important?"

c. Did you drink or drug when you were in school, screw up grades due to the drugs and or booze?

Page 2, Paragraph 1

5. Did you develop theories about how you would be successful in life while loaded?

Page 2, Paragraph 2

6.a. Did your friends sometimes think you were crazy?

b. Did you enjoy some successes early in life?

Page 3, Top Paragraph

7. Did drinking and or using become more important over time?

Page 3, Paragraph 1

8.a. Did your drinking and or drugging become serious during this time?

b. Did you fight with your spouse and friends?

c. Did you become a loner? Page 3, Paragraph 2

9. Did you begin to drink and or use in the morning?

Page 3, Paragraph 3

10. Did you start to drink and or drug to escape from problems, sometimes brought on by the drinking and or drugging?

Page 4, Paragraph 1

11. Did you become an unwelcome hanger on at your job? At the bar? At the crack-house?

Page 5, Top Paragraph

12. Did alcohol and/or drugs at some point cease to be a luxury and become a necessity?

Page 5, Paragraph 1

13.a. Did you feel a sense of impending calamity, like something bad was always about to happen?

b. Did you now have to drink or get high to be able to function at all?

Page 6, Paragraph 1

14.a. Has this, or did this, go on for years? _____

b. Did you think of suicide? (or just want it all to end?) _____

c. Did you try mixing "heavy sedatives" [downers] with the alcohol and/or other drugs? _____

d. Did you lose lots of weight? (or become bloated and unhealthy?) Page 6, Paragraph 2 Page 7, Top Paragraph

- 15.a.** Did you seek help, gain knowledge about yourself, learn your relapse triggers, get in touch with your feelings?
- b.** Did this "self knowledge" alone work, or did you get loaded again? (Perhaps even knowledge gained from going to 12 step meetings?)

Page 7, Paragraph 2

- 16.a.** Do you now realize that self-knowledge did not, and never will, keep you permanently sober?
- b.** Were you told you would die if you didn't stop?

Page 7, Paragraph 3

- 17.a.** Did you feel loneliness, despair and self pity?
- b.** Did you ever feel that alcohol and/or drugs were your master?
- c.** Did this (that you had no power) scare you? Were you afraid?
- d.** Did this fear keep you sober, or did you drink and/or drug again anyway?

Page 8, Paragraph 2

ASSIGNMENT 4 *****

- 18.a.** Has your human will failed you? [did you really "decide" to start drinking or using again, or did you just convince yourself it was your decision so you could feel like you were still in control?]

- b.** Have you been pronounced incurable? (lost cause, given up on?)_____
- c.** Are you ready to admit complete defeat? What meaning does this have for you? Page 11, Paragraph 3

19. Do you understand you can choose your own conception of God? That it only has to make sense to you?

Page 12, Paragraph 2

20. Do you understand the price of freedom will be the destruction of self-centeredness? What does that mean to you?

Page 14, Paragraph 1

21. Do you understand the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all your affairs if you want to stay sober?

Page 14, Paragraph 6

ASSIGNMENT 5 *****

THE THREE TYPES OF DRINKERS

Type 1: The Moderate Drinker/Drug User

We have all known people who would have a glass of wine with dinner and leave half of it on the table; or after a couple of drinks say something like, "Oh I'm starting to feel this, I'd better not have any more." There were also people who could stash a gram of cocaine indefinitely or did a couple of lines and quit because they had to go to work.

22.a. Do you have little trouble quitting entirely if given good reason?

b. Can you take it or leave it alone?_____

c. Does this describe you, or do you know people like this? Page 20, Paragraph 5

Type 2: The Hard Drinker/Drug User

There were those people too, who we drank or used with, who were able to keep up with us. They drank as much as we did, used the same drugs we did, but something happened which caused them to stop or moderate on their own. Perhaps they got married, had a child, got a DUI, or went back to school. They grew out of it, while we continued to grow into it. Though they may have drank or used as much or more than we did, they are very different from a real alcoholic or drug addict.

23.a. If a Doctor, employer, judge or probation officer told you to stop for good, could you do it? _____

b. If you fell in love, and they told you to stop for good could you do it? _____

c. If you moved to a different place, could you stop forever?

d. Does this describe you, or do you know people who did stop for reasons like these?

Page 20, Paragraph 6

Page 21, Top Paragraph

Type 3: The Real Alcoholic/Drug Addict

24.a. Did you at some stage of your drinking and/or drugging lose control of the amount once you started?

b. Did you do absurd, incredible, and tragic things while drinking and/or using?

c. Were you a real Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde? _____

d. Were you seldom mildly intoxicated, more or less insanely drunk/high?

e. Was the person you became when drunk or high very different from who you were sober; if so how?

f. Did you become dangerously antisocial when loaded? _____

g. Did you have a knack for getting loaded at the worst possible time?

h. Are you incredibly selfish and dishonest where alcohol and/or drugs are involved?

i. Do you use your gifts to build up a bright future, just to screw it up by getting loaded again?

j. Do you go to bed loaded, and wake up looking for a bottle, a joint or the "rest of" the cocaine or crystal?

k. Did you stash alcohol and/or drugs around the house so nobody would get it all?

l. Did you mix drugs with alcohol just so you could function?

m. Does this description "real addict" or "real alcoholic" [roughly] sound like you? In what ways?

Page 21, Paragraph 1 Page 21, Paragraph 2 Page 22, Top Paragraph

25. Based on *your own* experience, have you discovered *your own* truth, are you a real alcoholic; a drug addict, both? What does this mean for you?

Before you move on to the mental obsession, make sure you are absolutely clear on the physical allergy, what happens after I start.

THE FIRST STEP - PART II: THE MENTAL OBSESSION

Pages 23-43

The second part of Step One deals with the mental obsession. This simply means that no matter how bad it was the last time we got drunk or high, no matter how much we have to lose, no matter how much we want to quit forever; on our own unaided will; we will always drink and/or use again.

26. Did you ever decide to quit for good, to not even take one drink, one line?

Page 5, Paragraph 4 (Bills Story)

27.a. *Did this work?* [deciding to quit for good] or did you get loaded again, even though you promised yourself you would not? [Throwing away or breaking the pipe, needle, or bottle at 5:00 A.M.]

b. Did you begin to wonder if you were crazy? Page 5, Paragraph 5 (Bills Story)

28. Were there times when you stayed sober, or controlled drinking and/or drugs, only to be followed by a worse relapse? When?

Page 5, Paragraph 6 (Bills Story)
Page 6, Top Paragraph (Bills Story)

29.a. I've seen with the physical craving (allergy) that I can't stop once I start. So if that's the case, do I agree that this is all beside the point if I never take the first drink/drug? (academic and pointless p23 top)

b. Do I see that I will never lose physical control if I never *decide* to take the first drink or drug? (If I don't put it in my body, I don't have a physical reaction.) Therefore, is it becoming obvious, that the main problem centers in my mind rather than in the body? Page 23, Paragraph 1

30. Have you tried to assert your willpower to stay stopped; did it work?
How many times did I *choose not to*, or *decide not to* drink or use on a particular day and then do it anyways?

Page 23, Paragraph 3

31. Are you powerless over whether you will take the first one, have you lost control over staying stopped?
Will self-knowledge, willpower, fear, consequences, or any human power stop the mental obsession?

Page 23, Paragraph 4
Page 24, Top Paragraph

32.a. In the past, before you took the first one, did the knowledge of what might happen stop you?

b. Based on your own experience, is there any reason why "thinking through the first one" will ever work in the future? Can you simply choose or decide not to drink/drug or is there more than choice involved here?

Page 24, Paragraph 2

33. Do you believe anything less than a miracle [a spiritual experience] will save you?

Page 25, Paragraph 2

34. Do you have any choice but to die an alcoholic or addict's death or accept spiritual help?
Or am I still looking for a 3rd choice here? What are my alternatives?

Page 25, Paragraph 3

ASSIGNMENT 7 *****

35.a. In the past, have you been unwilling to admit you are a real alcoholic and/or drug addict, meaning that you could not control the amount you take when you start, and/or stay stopped for good on your own power?

b. What does being an alcoholic and/or addict mean to you?

Page 30, Paragraph 1

36. Do you have any reservations, or any lurking notion that someday you might be able to drink and/or use normally? What are your doubts here or lurking notions if any?

Page 33, Paragraph 1

37. Did you read the "Jaywalker Story" and if you apply it to your drinking and/or using career does it fit exactly?

Page 37, Paragraph 4 (through)

Page 38, Paragraph 2

Bonus Homework rewrite the Jaywalker Story from the transcription prompts (BBA pages 31 & 32) on a blank sheet of paper putting in some of the specifics from your own story. Write your own personal jaywalker story 1 or 2 pages long, looking at the progression and the insanity.

ASSIGNMENT 8 *****

38. Do you believe you could stay stopped on the basis of self-knowledge, applying all these things you have learned about yourself and your disease up to this point?

Page 39, Paragraph 1

39. Is it obvious to you that without spiritual help; the time and place WILL come and you WILL drink and/or use again, NO MATTER HOW MUCH YOU WANT TO STAY SOBER TODAY? P41, Paragraph 2 P42, Top Paragraph

KEY CONCEPT: THE MENTAL OBSESSION

Remember: The mental obsession is not about willpower or smarts. It's about a specific condition of mind—a phenomenon that happens to people who are real alcoholics and drug addicts. No amount of:

- Self-knowledge
- Will Power
- Education
- Therapy
- Good intentions
- Fear
- Consequences
- Love for family
- Career ambitions

...will stop you from eventually taking the first drink or drug if you don't address the spiritual part of your disease by completing the 12 Steps.

ASSIGNMENT 9*****

**THE FIRST STEP - PART III:
UNMANAGEABILITY OF THE SPIRIT**

Pages 44-52

The third part of the First Step deals with the unmanageability of the spirit. Why is it that no matter what the consequences, we always end up taking the first drink or doing the first line? Without something to take the place of alcohol or drugs in our lives, we are doomed.

Many of us thought that if we could just stay off the booze and/or drugs, life would be wonderful; but we later discovered this was not so. Abstinence from drinking or using alone, “staying clean” without actually working the steps is a lot like swimming underwater and holding your breath. You might be able to pull it off for a while—you might even feel strong doing it—but eventually, your need takes over. Just like you can’t force yourself to stay underwater forever without gasping for air or swallowing water, you can’t just 'will' yourself to stay sober and clean forever. No amount of training, self-awareness, or knowing the bad consequences can overpower that deep suffering need to drink or use. Eventually, without a solution, you’re going to come up for air or die trying to breath underwater. Knowing the consequences, thinking it through will not win or overpower the part of you that is going to drink and is going to drug- no matter what.

We become so "restless, irritable and discontent" that after a time, we cannot imagine how getting drunk or high could make us feel any worse, and so we do. We must somehow find a way to "experience a sense of ease and comfort" WITHOUT drinking and/or taking drugs.

This "spiritual unmanageability" is what the other 11 Steps treat. "When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically." [page 64] This part of Step 1, the unmanageability, has nothing to do with God, just us on our own power trying to run our own lives drunk or sober.

40.a. Are you having trouble with personal relationships? With whom? Page 52, Paragraph 2

b. Can you control your emotional nature? How?

c. Are you prone to misery and depression? When?

d. Can you make a living? Even if you can, are you satisfied with it?

e. Do you have a feeling of uselessness? In what way, at home, work?

f. Are you full of fear? What are you afraid of?

g. Are you unhappy? With what?

h. Do you seem unable to be of real help to other people? In what way?

i. Is a basic solution to these things more important than anything in the world around you?

Page 52, Paragraph 2

1. Do you have any other alternatives besides being doomed to an alcoholic and/or addict's death or living on a spiritual basis? (or am I still trying 3rd alternatives, what are they?)

Page 44, Paragraph 2

2. Have you faced the fact that you must find a spiritual basis of life—or else?

Page 44, Paragraph 3

3.a. Is a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life sufficient to overcome your alcoholism?

b. If it was, why didn't you stop drinking or using long ago? Page 44, Paragraph 4 | Page 45, Top Paragraph

4.a. Have you ever wished to be morally or philosophically comforted? _____

b. Have you ever willed these things with all your might? _____

c. Did you find that the needed power wasn't there? _____

d. Have you found that such codes and philosophies did not save you no matter how hard you tried?

5.a. Is lack of power your dilemma? _____

b. Do you have to find a Power by which you can live? _____

c. Does it have to be a Power greater than you? Is this obvious? _____

Page 45, Paragraph 1

SUMMARY: THE FIRST STEP

To sum up the First Step: If you are really an alcoholic and/or addict the only solution to the physical allergy is to never pick up the first drink or drug. We cannot however apply this solution because of the mental obsession, which always leads us back to the first one. Rather than give us hope, the First Step is designed to utterly destroy whatever hope we may have left that we can stay sober without spiritual help. It means that for us, the war on drugs and alcohol is over, and we lost. This is called **surrender**. In a very real way, the other eleven steps do the same thing for us slowly what the alcohol and/or drugs did quickly: they give us a sense of ease and comfort. Once we have a spiritual awakening as the result of working these steps, the mental obsession is removed. The Twelve Steps are like a recipe for a spiritual experience.

To begin with, list below the 10 most insane things you ever did when you were loaded—after you took the first drink and/or drug.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

7. _____

8. _____

9. _____

10. _____

The Twelve Promises of Alcohol

Many of us searched for years for the answer to the question: "Why did I use?" Some of us found it in the last place we ever thought to look—in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. We rephrased a few lines though. (atrib Dan S)

1. If we are painstaking about this phase of drinking alcohol, we will be amazed before we are halfway through:

2. When drinking, we will know a new freedom and a new happiness
3. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it
4. When drinking we will comprehend the word serenity and will know peace
5. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, when drinking alcohol, we will see how our experience can benefit others.
6. When drinking that feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear
7. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows
8. Self-seeking will slip away
9. When drinking our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change
10. When drinking fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us
11. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us
12. We will suddenly realize that alcohol/drugs was doing for us what we could not do for ourselves

The problem with these promises: In the end, they became lies. We had to seek a new Higher Power.

ASSIGNMENT 10*****

- 6.a.** When God is mentioned, have we reopened a subject which you thought you had neatly evaded or entirely ignored?
- b.** Does the word God bring up a particular idea of Him which someone tried to impress upon you during childhood?
- c.** Did you reject this idea of God and did you then think you had abandoned the God idea entirely?
- d.** Were you bothered with the thought that faith and dependence upon a power greater than yourself was somewhat weak and even cowardly?

Page 45, Paragraph 3 | Page 46, Top Paragraph

7. Have you discovered that you do not need to consider another's conception of God?

Page 46, Paragraph 2

8.a. Do you have your own conception of God?

b. Do you agree this is all you need to commence spiritual growth and to effect your first conscious relation with God? Page 47, Paragraph 1

The Second Step Question

9.a. Do you now believe or are you even willing to believe, that there is a power greater than yourself?

b. Why?

Page 47, Paragraph 2

10.a. Has even casual reference to spiritual things made you bristle with antagonism?

b. Do you agree this thinking has to be abandoned?

Page 48, Top Paragraph

11. Do you believe in many things for which there is good evidence, but no perfect proof?

Page 48, Paragraph 3

12.a. Did you believe you already knew everything you needed to know about living life?

b. Wasn't this rather egotistical of you?

Page 49, Paragraph 1

13.a. Did you use the shortcomings of a few as a basis to condemn them all?

b. Did you criticize them for being intolerant, while being intolerant of them yourself?

Page 50, Paragraph 1

ASSIGNMENT 11*****

14. In the past, have you stuck to the idea that self-sufficiency would solve your problems?

Page 52, Paragraph 4

15. Faced with the First Step—a self-imposed crisis you cannot evade—are you now willing to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or He is nothing?

Page 53, Paragraph 2

Consider each question below in two ways:

1. **First:** Ask yourself, "What are my prospects for the future in this area if God is nothing, and does not exist; if all I have is what I've had in the past to deal with these things?"
2. **Next:** Go back and ask yourself, "What are my prospects for the future in this area if God is everything, and does exist; and His power will deal with them?"

a. Are you having trouble with personal relationships?

If God is nothing: _____

If God is everything: _____

b. Can you control your emotional nature?

If God is nothing: _____

If God is everything: _____

c. Are you prey to misery and depression?

If God is nothing: _____

If God is everything: _____

d. Can you make a living? (was it ever satisfying enough to stay clean and sober?)

If God is nothing: _____

If God is everything: _____

e. Do you have a feeling of uselessness?

If God is nothing: _____

If God is everything: _____

f. Are you full of fear?

If God is nothing: _____

If God is everything: _____

g. Are you unhappy?

If God is nothing: _____

If God is everything: _____

h. Do you seem unable to be of real help to other people?

If God is nothing: _____

If God is everything: _____

16. Do you believe the answer to these problems is inside rather than outside of ourselves?

Page 52, Paragraph 2

17.a. Have your ideas been working as far as solving the problems listed above?

b. Do you believe the God idea might work? Are you willing to try?

Page 52, Paragraph 3

WORKSHOP EXERCISE:

Is a basic or foundational solution of these bedevilmets more important than anything we use today to distract ourselves from a spiritual life?

***Under the guidance of your sponsor or step guide, use the workshop instructions to conduct a spiritual exercise, a meditation on, a consideration this week.

Day One: From the moment you wake up until your head hits the pillow, go through your day assuming **God is nothing**. Look at every decision, every mistake, and every win, and ask yourself: 'If there is no God involved in this moment, what do my future prospects actually look like?'

Day Two: Do the exact opposite. From morning until night, operate as if **God is everything**. Look at those same types of struggles, failures, or successes, but this time ask: 'If a powerful, loving God is right here in this moment, what does my future look like now?''

see next page for same exercise phrased differently for clarity

same exercise phrased differently for clarity

The Atheist (Nothing) Perspective: Spend one full day, from waking to sleeping, analyzing every event through the lens that **God is nothing**. Whether facing a decision, a mistake, or a success, consider the situation as if no higher power exists. Ask yourself: 'If spiritual help is absent, what is the reality of my future?'

The Spiritual (Everything) Perspective: The following day, adopt the mindset that **God is everything**. Approach every decision, failure, or achievement with the belief that a powerful, loving God is fully present. Ask yourself: 'If God is all-encompassing, how does that change the outlook for my life?''

At the end of the week ask yourself the question p53 p2: God is either everything or God is nothing God either is or isn't what is my choice to be?

18. Do you agree God either is or He isn't? What is your choice to be? Page 53, Paragraph 2

19. Do you agree that deep down within every man, woman, person and child is the fundamental idea of God?
Page 55, Paragraph 2

20.a. Are you willing to search fearlessly within your own heart to find God? Are you willing to believe He is there?
b. Do you agree that it is only there that God can be found? Page 55, Paragraph 3

THE MOST INSANE DECISION

Go back and review the list of the 10 most insane things you ever did when you were loaded, which you made at the beginning of this step.

The most insane thing you ever did is probably not on this list, because you did it sober.

In all likelihood the most insane thing you ever did was this: **with the things on this list happening when you got loaded, you made a decision to drink or use drugs again; and you made this decision when you were as sober as you are right now.** Credit to Joe H. of Santa Monica, CA for this observation.

ASSIGNMENT 12*****

7-day Step 3 Assignment:

The following is taken from the Big Book and phrased in the first person. Read this out loud to someone each day for a week, and then decide if:

- a. it applies to you.
- b. you are ready to quit living like this.
- c. you are ready to accept living on God's terms.

The first requirement for Step Three is that I be convinced that my life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis I am almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though my motives are good. I try to live by self-propulsion. I am like an actor who wants to run the whole show; I am forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in my own way. If my arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as I wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including myself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful. In trying to make these arrangements I may sometimes be quite virtuous. I may be kind, considerate, patient, generous; even modest and self-sacrificing. On the other hand, I may be mean, egotistical, selfish and dishonest. But, as with most humans, I am more likely to have varied traits.

What usually happens? The show doesn't come off very well. I begin to think life doesn't treat me right. I decide to exert myself more. I become, on the next occasion, still more demanding or gracious, as the case may be. Still the play does not suit me. Admitting I may be somewhat at fault, I am sure that other people are more to blame. I become angry, indignant, self-pitying. What is my basic trouble? Am I not really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind? Am I not a victim of the delusion that I can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if I only manage well? Is it not evident to all the rest of the players that these are the things I want? And do not my actions make each of them wish to retaliate, snatching all they can get out of the show? Am I not, even in my best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony?

I am self-centered—ego-centric, as people like to call it nowadays. I am like the retired businessman who lolls in the Florida sunshine in the winter complaining of the sad state of the nation; the minister who sighs over the sins of the twentieth century; politicians and reformers who are sure all would be Utopia if the rest of the world would only behave; the outlaw safecracker who thinks society has wronged him; and the alcoholic who has lost all and is locked up. Whatever my protestations, am I not concerned with myself, my resentments, and my self-pity?

Selfishness - self-centeredness! That, I think, is the root of my troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, I step on the toes of my fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt me, seemingly without provocation, but I invariably find that at some time in the past I have made decisions based on self which later placed me in a position to be hurt.

So my troubles, I think, are basically of my own making. They arise out of myself, and I am an extreme example of self-will run riot, though I usually don't think so. Above everything, I, as an alcoholic, as an addict, must be rid of this selfishness. I must, or it will kill me! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. I had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but I could not live up to them even though I would have liked to. Neither could I reduce my self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on my own power. I have to have God's help.

This is the how and the why of it. First of all, I have to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, I will decide that hereafter in this drama of life, God is going to be my Director. He is the Principal; I am His agent. He is the Father, and I am His child. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which I will pass to freedom.

When I sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. I have a new Employer. Being all powerful, He will provide what I need, if I keep close to Him and perform His work well. Established on such a footing I'll become less and less interested in myself, my little plans and designs. More and More, I will become interested in seeing what I can contribute to life. As I feel new power flow in, as I enjoy peace of mind, as I discover I can face life successfully, as I become conscious of His presence, I begin to lose my fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. I will be reborn.

I am now at Step Three. I said to my Maker, as I understood Him: "God, I offer myself to Thee - to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!" I thought well before taking this step making sure I was ready; that I could at last abandon myself utterly to Him.

I'll find it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as my wife, best friend, or spiritual adviser. But it is better to meet God alone than with one who might misunderstand. The wording was, of course, quite optional so long as I expressed the idea, voicing it without reservation. This was only a beginning, though if honestly and humbly made, an effect, sometimes a very great one, will be felt at once.

STEP THREE QUESTIONS

1. Has the description of the alcoholic and/or drug addict, the chapter "To the Agnostic," and your personal adventures before and after- made clear these three pertinent ideas?

a. That you are an alcoholic and/or an addict and you cannot, drunk or sober, manage your own life?

b. That probably no human power can relieve your alcoholism and/or drug addiction?

c. That God can and will if He is sought?

Page 60, Paragraph 2

2.a. Are you convinced that your life, run on your will, can hardly be a success? [The first Requirement for Step Three]

b. Are you convinced that your romances, finances, friendships, marriage, career, as run on your will, can hardly be a success?

Page 60, Paragraph 4

3. On that basis [running your life on your will] are you almost always in collision with something or somebody, even when your motives are good?

Page 60, Paragraph 4

4.a. Have you tried to live by self-propulsion (your own intelligence, power & direction)?

b. Are you like an actor who wants to run the whole show? Are you forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery, and the rest of the players in your own way?

Page 60, Paragraph 4

5.a. When life doesn't treat you right, do you decide to exert yourself more?

b. Admitting you may be somewhat at fault, are you sure that other people are more to blame?

Page 61, Paragraph 1

6. Are you not really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind?

Page 61, Paragraph 1

7. Have you been a victim of the delusion that you can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if you could only get life arranged to suit yourself?

Page 61, Paragraph 1

8. Are you not, even in your best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony?

Page 61, Paragraph 1

9. Do you believe selfishness and self-centeredness is the root of your troubles?

Page 62, Paragraph 1

10. Are you driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking and self-pity?

Page 62, Paragraph 1

11. Have you found that at sometime in the past, you have made decisions based on self, which later placed you in the position to be hurt?

Page 62, Paragraph 1

12.a. Do you believe your troubles are basically of your own making, and they arise out of yourself?

b. Are you an example of "self-will run riot?"

c. If your problems are of your own making, why is this good news?

Page 62, Paragraph 2

13.a. Do you believe, above everything, you must be rid of this selfishness or it will kill you?

b. Do you agree you cannot do this on your own without God's help? What have you tried?

Page 62, Paragraph 2

14.a. Have you had moral and philosophical convictions galore?

b. Could you live up to them, even though you would have liked to?

c. Can you reduce your self-centeredness by wishing or trying on your own power?

d. Can you fix you with MORE YOU?

e. Do you have to have God's help?

Page 62, Paragraph 2

15.a. Do you have to quit playing God?

b. Does playing God work for you?

c. Can you see any part of life we are not trusting and relying on God- we are either playing God or letting fear play God?

Page 62, Paragraph 3

16. Does this description [self-will run riot] fit you? How?

17. a. Are you convinced that your life, job, relationships, marriage, friendships and everything else in your life run on self will is going to be a failure?

b. What meaning does this have in your life today?

18. Do you agree that from now on in this drama of life, God's role is going to be the Director; your role is going to be an actor in His play?

Page 62, Paragraph 3

19. Are you willing to trust that He will provide what you need, if you keep close to Him and perform His work well?

Page 63, Paragraph 1

20.a. Have you really thought about what this means before taking this step? (God is Everything or Nothing Exercise and 7-day 3rd Step reading.)
Are you sure you are ready?

b. Are you at last willing to abandon yourself utterly to Him?

Page 63, Paragraph 2

21. Are you willing to follow up this decision with the action required of you in Steps Four through Nine?

SUMMARY OF STEP THREE

The Steps help us change to fit into the world as it is, rather than continuing to try to get the world to change so we can be happy.

There is an old proverb from India which illustrates the point of the Third Step well. Two men were walking down an unpaved road, barefoot. The road was covered with small rocks which hurt their bare feet when they stepped on them. One man said to the other, "This journey would be much easier on our feet if this road was paved with leather." The wiser man replied, "Yes, this is true, but we could get the same effect by wearing a pair of shoes."

Alcoholics and addicts wish to pave the road with leather, so they don't need to wear shoes. The Twelve Steps are designed to become our shoes.

THE METAPHOR OF THREE BULLFROGS

The following joke illustrates the rest of Step Three:

Question: Three bullfrogs are sitting on a log. One bullfrog makes a decision to jump in the pond. How many are left?

Answer: Three. The bullfrog only made a decision; he hasn't done anything yet.

The way we implement the decision we made in Step Three is to complete Steps Four through Nine.

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