

# **Steps 1, 2, &3**

**What? I'm Powerless?!**

**I Have a Problem?!**

**I Need to Let Go?!**

Understanding Steps 1, 2 & 3 and using them  
regularly to deal with the problem and take  
care of ourselves

## Step 1:

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

# What? I'm Powerless?!

## Powerless over?

### The Alcoholic

## How do I try to exert power?

- A. Tried drinking with them, so they wouldn't get so intoxicated
- B. Monitored their drinking / told them to drink at home.
- C. Cleaned them up, and scolded again and again
- D. Told them to get out and invited them back home again and again
- E. Poured the alcohol down the sink
- F. Use affection/sex as a weapon to control them
- G. Threatened to leave them again and again: failed to carry out the threat
- H. Give them the silent treatment
- I. Physical and emotional abuse

## How is my life unmanageable?

- A. Woke them up for work, and required appointments, situations
- B. Covered up for them, made excuses for them
- C. Done all the chores and taken over all their bills and obligations
- D. Gone out to look for them
- E. Done all we can to please them
- F. Walked on eggshells around them
- G. Taking physical and emotional abuse
- H. Keep ourselves and homes spotless, or a total mess
- I. Stopped taking care of ourselves instead focusing only on them
- J. Made them totally responsible for our unhappiness

**\*\*\*\*Accept that there is a problem with alcohol and you can learn to deal with it. You have a right to dignity and a decent life. Remember that many things said in anger, frustration, or despair can make matters worse. Be aware that each of us can truly change only ourselves.**

## People, Places, and Things

### How do I try to exert power?

- A. Try to control other people or any of their behavior
- B. Try to get people to change
- C. Say yes when I should say no
- D. Tell them over and over again, what I feel or think to get them to listen and to agree
- E. Attacking when I don't get what I want
- F. Becoming abusive, shaming, or hurtful when I disagree

### How is my life unmanageable?

- A. I feel excessively responsible for other people and situations
- B. Spend my time trying to make things better for other people
- C. Take care of others a lot more than I take care of myself
- D. Abandon myself in body, mind, and spirit
- E. Can't sleep, always stress, health problems
- F. Have a hard time relaxing, having fun
- G. Don't have a lot of support; friends, family
- H. Have a hard time with getting things done, completing projects
- I. Having a hard time taking care of daily needs, obligations

### The 3 C's

1. Didn't **CAUSE** it
2. Can't **CONTROL** it
3. Can't **CURE** it

\*\*\* When we first come to Alan-Anon, full of hurt, frustration, and anger, we may see the qualifier as the immediate source of our pain. Our impulse maybe is to focus our discussion (sharing) on that person. We may have become so used to talking about everything but ourselves. In Al-Anon we come to realize that much of our discomfort comes from our attitudes and to learn about responsibilities to ourselves. We start discovering feelings of self-worth and spiritual growth. This emphasis is lifted from the qualifier and place where it is appropriate-on ourselves. Then when we tell our story, it's not the qualifiers' story, but the story of our recovery.

## Step 2:

**Came to believe that a power greater than myself could restore you to sanity.**

# I Have a Problem?!

## Powerlessness vs. Helplessness & Getting Help

\*\* Sanity and Serenity

## A Power greater than myself (HP) \*\* Spirituality/Religion

- A. For now, how do you define a Power greater than yourself?
- B. Do you believe that power cares about you?

Here are some suggestions from Paths to Recovery with Step 2:

- Say the Serenity Prayer every morning and evening when we feel overwhelmed. Meditate on "God, grant me the serenity," one word at a time.
- Being still and asking for help whenever a situation seems too much to take.
- Recognizing sane behavior and acknowledging it. Taking notice of small miracles - a bright eyed child, a bounding puppy, a friend's call just when it's needed. Making a phone call
- Acting as if we have faith. Being still and asking for guidance, then going about the day's business assuming it will come.
- Laughing; trying to remember some funny occurrence to share at a meeting.
- Making a list of the things beyond our understanding that has happened in life that might suggest the existence of a Higher Power.
- Try not to **Project**

## Serenity Prayer:

**God, grant me the serenity, to accept the things I cannot change,  
To change the things I can,  
And the wisdom to know the difference**

## Step 3:

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

# I Need to Let Go?!

## Detachment? How Do I detach?

**Detachment** with love **means** caring enough about others to allow them to learn from their mistakes. It also **means** being responsible for our own welfare and making decisions without ulterior motives—the desire to control others.

"Detachment is neither kind nor unkind. It does not imply judgment or condemnation of the person or situation from which we are detaching. **It is simply a means that allows us to separate ourselves from the adverse effects that another person's alcoholism can have upon our lives.**"

## One Day At A Time: September 6th

Have I been trying to live the Al-Anon program? Then I must surely be learning to overcome any tendency to control other—the directing, scheming and manipulating that can only result in my own defeat.

I will not interfere with the activities of my alcoholic, or watch over them, counsel them, or assume their responsibilities. They must have the same freedom to make their own decisions as I have, since they must suffer if the decisions are wrong.

## Courage to Change: February 12<sup>th</sup>

For me, detachment is relatively easy with people or situations where I'm not emotionally involved. I noticed that when I'm detached, I can listen to other people being critical or grumpy without being affected. But if members of my family act the same way, I often take on their negative frame of mind. My own behavior shows me that I have a choice about my response to other people's moods and attitudes.

What I've learned by comparing these situations is that detachment involves paying attention to my own mood before I have a chance to take on someone else's. Then I can simply see negativity or anger, without becoming negative or angry. I don't have to have a bad day just because someone I love is struggling. This knowledge allows me to let everyone, including myself, feel whatever they feel without interference.

## My Will

- A. Am I willing to try to turn my problems over?
- B. Do I spend a lot of time **Projecting**?
- C. What could help me be more willing?
- D. If I can't, what's holding me back?
- E. Do I trust Higher Power to care for me?
- F. How might Step 3 help me keep my hands off situations created by others?
- G. What consequences have I had by obsessing on problems and other people?
- H. If I "Let Go and let God", am I willing to follow the guidance I receive?
- I. How can I turn a situation over and let go of the results?
- J. How can I stop myself from taking my will back?
- K. How can I let loved ones find their own paths as I am finding mine?
- L. What can I do to try to see others as HP sees them?
- M. How can I express HP's will in my actions and words towards others, including the alcoholic?

The family disease is affects the family. We are not immune. But we can get inoculation shots or boosters, reach out to others; do not isolate. Do not obsess with the thoughts running around in your head. Try to stay out of your head and do something productive. And when times get tough, go to a meeting, call your sponsor, get out the phone list and talk things out.

## SLOGANS

- 1. Live and Let Live
- 2. First thing First
- 3. Easy Does It
- 4. Keep an Open Mind
- 5. Keep Coming Back
- 6. One Day At A Time
- 7. Let It Begin With Me
- 8. Let Go And Let God
- 9. How important is it?

## Remember:

- 1. Focus on yourself
- 2. Change your attitude
- 3. There is Hope
- 4. You are responsible for your own physical, spiritual, and emotional happiness

## **Open Letter from the Alcoholic**

I am an alcoholic. I need your help.

Don't lecture, blame or scold me. You wouldn't be angry with me for having cancer or diabetes. Alcoholism is a disease, too.

Don't pour out my liquor; it's just a waste because I can always find ways of getting more.

Don't let me provoke your anger. If you attack me verbally or physically, you will only confirm my bad opinion about myself. I hate myself enough already.

Don't let your love and anxiety for me lead you into doing what I ought to do for myself. If you assume my responsibilities, you make my failure to assume them permanent. My sense of guilt will be increased, and you will feel resentful.

Don't accept my promises. I'll promise anything to get off the hook. But the nature of my illness prevents me from keeping my promises, even though I mean them at the time.

Don't make empty threats. Once you have made a decision, stick to it.

Don't believe everything I tell you; it may be a lie. Denial of reality is a symptom of my illness. Moreover, I'm likely to lose respect for those I can fool too easily.

Don't let me take advantage of you or exploit you in any way. Love cannot exist for long without the dimension of justice.

Don't cover up for me or try in any way to spare me the consequences of my drinking. Don't lie for me, pay my bills, or meet my obligations. It may avert or reduce the very crisis that would prompt me to seek help. I can continue to deny that I have a drinking problem as long as you provide an automatic escape for the consequences of my drinking.

Above all, do learn all you can about alcoholism and your role in relation to me. Go to open AA meetings when you can. Attend Al-Anon meetings regularly, read the literature and keep in touch with Al-Anon members. They're the people who can help you see the whole situation clearly.

I love you.

Your Alcoholic

\*\*\* this letter appears in the Al-Anon pamphlet "Three Views of Alcoholism."