The Institute for Optimal Recovery & Emotional Sobriety

Helping People Grow to Full Recovery and Emotional Freedom

Presents

Emotional Sobriety and The Twelve Steps of AA

The Monk (Herb Kaighan, B.A.)
and The Marine (Allen Berger, Ph.D.)

Session 1
Introduction to Emotional Sobriety
Step 12

“Here we begin to practice all Twelve Steps of the program in our daily live so that we and those about us may find emotional sobriety.”


The therapeutic value of working the Twelve Steps is optimal living based on emotional sobriety. This is achieved through creating a new relationship and experience with our problem, with our self, and with others.

Bill defined emotional sobriety as “…the development of much more real maturity and balance…”

“...in a sense we create ourselves through what we are willing to take responsibility for” (p. 103, 1997)

Dr. Nathaniel Branden

“...maturing is the transcendence from environmental support to self-support.” (p. 28).


“Expectations lead to the erosion of any relationship. The myth that the resolution of loneliness will result because we have found an intimate one-on-one relationship is a cop out. It begins a toxic process which dissipates the mutual nourishment that occurs when both people are committed to sustaining nourishing interaction and growth of their separate selves.”

Earnie described Stage Two Recovery as “...rebuilding of the life that was saved in Stage One.”

“...Stage II Recovery gets at the underlying patterns and habits that caused us trouble in the first place. And if nothing changes, then nothing changes...the same results will pop up through our whole life (p. 83).”

Earnie observed that many of us “...made a First Step relative to their addiction, but have not made a First Step relative to the living problems that underlies all addictions and ultimately limits their ability to function in loving relationships.”

Emotional sobriety is the cure for sober suffering.
Definition of Emotional Sobriety

“Emotional Sobriety is when the best in you does the thinking and talking for all of you. This state of mind is achieved when what you do becomes the determining force in your emotional well being rather than allowing your emotional well being to be overly influenced by external events or by what others are or are not doing.”

Allen Berger, Ph.D. - 2016

“If our freedom depends exclusively on another person allowing it, we lose our own sense of the part we must exercise in protecting and defining our own psychological space…”


“Psychological well being and effective functioning entails the ability to be aware of the facts and requirements of external reality without sacrificing awareness of inner experience - and to be aware of inner experience without sacrificing the awareness of the facts and requirements of external reality.”

Desired change is "…produced not by resisting awareness of the individual’s immediate experience, but by the exact opposite course: by becoming open to that experience."


Dr. Nathaniel Branden

The Essence of Emotional Sobriety

"There's a space between the Stimulus and our Response. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom - try to live there."

Viktor Frankl, M.D.

S  →  R

The Shift in the Location of the Emotional Center of Gravity in Emotional Sobriety

I'm OK if _____? ____?

I'm OK even if _____?
“I believe that learning to make relationships work is at the core of full recovery (p. 15).”

Session 2
An Overview of the Therapeutic and Spiritual Effects of Working the Steps
The 12 Step Program is a people growing program that helps us mature and stand on our own two feet.

“The Twelve Steps are a unified, interdependent whole - each Step requires and builds upon the other.”

Nature of the Word “Step”

- The word "Step" is both a noun and a verb.
- Noun - Step is a static object that moves us from one place to another.
- Verb - Step is an action taken by the mind and the body. This use of the word best describes The Twelve Steps.
Summary of the Twelve Steps

- Step One - Where we are.
- Step Two - Where we want to go.
- Steps Three through Nine - How we get well.
- Steps Ten through Twelve - How we stay well and grow (Self-Actualize: Optimal Living)

“...(the false self) becomes uninterested in the process of learning, of doing, of gaining step by step, indeed tends to scorn it. He does not want to climb a mountain; he wants to be on the peak.”

Neurosis and Human Growth, the Struggle Towards Self-Realization, 1950
Karen Horney, M.D.

Problem **Addiction**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance and/or Process</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol</td>
<td>Internet</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drugs</td>
<td>Exercise</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food</td>
<td>Work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Co-dependence</td>
<td>Anger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gambling</td>
<td>Fear</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Debting/Shopping</td>
<td>Dishonesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex/Pornography</td>
<td>Religion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
History

1932
Dr. Carl Jung
Psychology/Theology  Spiritual Experience

1933
Rev. Frank Buchman/Oxford Group
Religion  Six Steps

1934
Dr. William Silkworth
Medicine  Fatal Disease

Twelve Step Spirituality

Steps  A Relationship With...
1-3  POWER
4-7  Self
8-9  Others
10-12  Our Way of Life

The Therapeutic Value of the 12 Steps = Emotional Sobriety

{ Self
{ Others
{ Self and Others

Shatters our reliance on the false-self and builds a foundation for recovery that is based on recovering the true-self and relocates our center of emotional gravity.

Helps us develop insight into our personality and helps us become aware of emotional dependency.

Increases our emotional maturity. We repair the damage we've done and develop healthier relationships with others.

Ensures that we sustain our progress, further our growth and self-actualization and integrate our experience.
Session 3
Steps One - Three

Step One

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

Problem **Powerlessness**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Substance/Process</th>
<th>Unmanageable</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1/10 ⇒ 5/10</td>
<td>10/10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmanageable Bedevilments</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ I am having trouble with personal relationships.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ I can't control my emotional natures.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ I am a prey to misery and depression.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ I can't make a living...</td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ I have a feeling of uselessness.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>✔️ I am full of fear.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ I am unhappy.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✔️ I can't seem to be of real help to other people...</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nor do I really care!</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

“We are being lived by the forces within ourselves.”

Sigmund Freud, M.D.
"Many people dedicate their lives to actualize a concept of what they should be like, rather than to actualize themselves...This is again the curse of the ideal. The curse that you should not be what you are."


True Self Model of Personal Development
“You will never find yourself in what you have built to define yourself.”

The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself (p. 130)

Michaele A. Singer

“You may assemble the most amazing collection of thoughts and emotions; you may build a truly beautiful, unbelievable, interesting, and dynamic structure; but obviously it’s not you.”

The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself

Michaele A. Singer

“Where a person experiences a loss or trauma in childhood that undermines his sense of security and self-acceptance, he would project into his image of the future the requirement that it reverse the experiences of the past.”


Alexander Lowen, M.D.
“Desperation creates illusions - illusions create desperation.”

Alexander Lowen, M.D.

“Demand, Claims and Expectations

True Self

False Self

Basic Anxiety - Desperation

Basic Solution

Appeal of Mastery

Appeal of Love

Appeal of Freedom

“If you dare to look, you will see that you have built your entire life based on the model you have built around yourself.”

The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself

Michaele A. Singer
“Basically you attempt to create a sense of stability and steadiness inside. This generates a false, but welcomed, sense of security.”

The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself

“You also want people around you to do the same thing. You want people to be steady enough so you can predict their behavior. If they aren’t it disturbs you.”

The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself

“This is because you have made your predictions of their behavior part of your inner model (expectations).”

The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself
“This protective shield of beliefs and concepts regarding the outside world acts as insulation between you and the people you interact with.”

The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself

“By having preconceived notions about other peoples behavior (Unenforceable Rules), you feel safer and more in control. Imagine the fear you would feel if you let that entire wall down.”

The Untethered Soul: The Journey Beyond Yourself (p. 131)

“At the core of this alienation from the actual-self… is the loss of the feeling of being an active determining force in our own lives.”

Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-Realization
“The fostering of the phony self is always at the expense of the real self.”

Karen Horney, M.D.

“Neurosis is not seen as the deviation of what a person ought to be, but precisely as the method the individual uses to preserve his own centeredness, his own existence.”

Rollo May, Ph.D.
The integrity of a person is impaired because of the alienation from the self, ... all these forces lead to ... a diminished capacity for being sincere with oneself.

Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-Realization

Karen Horney, M.D.

Neurosis and Human Growth: The Struggle Toward Self-Realization

Maslow (1962) argued that a characteristic must be considered a basic need if it meets the following conditions:

- It's absence breeds illness.
- It's presence prevents illness.
- It's restoration cures illness.

On the Importance of the True-Self

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952.

Step 1

“We perceive that only through utter defeat we are able to take the first steps toward liberation and strength.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952.
Step 1

“Who wishes to be rigorously honest and tolerant? Who wants to confess his thoughts to another and make restitution for harm done? ... No the average alcoholic, self-centered in the extreme, doesn’t care for this prospect - unless he has to do these things in order to stay alive himself.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952.

Step Two

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

“The therapeutic value in the disillusioning process lies in the possibility that, with the weakening of the obstructive forces, the constructive forces of the real self have a chance to grow.”


Karen Horney, M.D.
Step Two  Decision About

POWER

Step 2

“Sanity is defined as ‘soundness of mind.’ Yet no alcoholic, soberly analyzing his destructive behavior, whether the destruction fell on the dining room furniture or his own moral fiber, can claim soundness of mind for himself.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952

Step Three

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over the care of God, as we understood him.
Step Three  Decision For

RELATIONSHIP

POWER

Step 3

“The more we become willing to depend on a Higher Power, the more independent we actually are. Therefore dependence as AA practices it, is really the means of gaining true independence of the spirit.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952

Step 3

“Let’s examine for a moment this idea of dependence at the level of everyday living. In this area it is startling to discover how dependent we really are, and how unconscious we are of that dependence.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952
“We realize that the word dependence is as distasteful to many psychiatrists and psychologists as it is to alcoholics. Like our professional friends, we, too are aware that there are wrong forms of dependence.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952

**Step 3**

**Session 4**

**Steps Four – Seven**

**Step Four**

We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
“Step Four is our vigorous and painstaking effort to discover what these liabilities in each of us have been, and are. We want to find out how, when and where our natural desires have warped us. We wish to look squarely at the unhappiness that this has caused others and ourselves.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952

“By discovering what our emotional deformities are, we can move towards their correction. Without a willing and persistent effort to do this, there can be little sobriety or contentment for us...”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952
Step 4

“...For most of us self-justification was the maker of excuses; excuses of course for drinking, and for all kinds of crazy and damaging conduct. We had made the invention of alibis a fine art.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952

Step 4

“...To see how erratic emotions victimized us often took a long time...First of all, we had to admit that we had many of these defects, even though such disclosures were painful and humiliating.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952 - 1981

Step 4

“...We learned that if we were seriously disturbed our first need was to quiet that disturbance, regardless of who or what we thought caused it.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952
Step 4

“...Where other people were concerned, we had to drop the word blame from our language. This required great willingness to begin.”
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952

Step 4

“It never occurred to us that we needed to change ourselves to meet conditions, whatever they were.”
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952

Step 4

“Nearly every serious emotional problem can be seen as a case of misdirected instinct...Every time a person imposes his instincts unreasonably upon others, unhappiness follows.”
Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952 - 1981
"Demands made upon people for too much attention, protection, and love can only invite domination or revulsion…When an individual’s desire for prestige becomes uncontrolable…other people suffer and often revolt.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952 - 1981

"In these ways we are set in conflict not only with ourselves, but with other people too…”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952 - 1981

Step Five

We admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
Step Five  **Reveal Obstacles**

- Fears
- Sex
- Dishonesty
- Secrets
- Guilt
- Shame
- Self-Centeredness

"All of the A.A.’s Twelve Steps ask us to go contrary to our natural desires - they all delate our egos."


Step 5

"To those who have made progress in A.A., it amounts to a clear recognition of what and who we really are, followed by a sincere attempt to become what we could be."

Step Five

“Therefore our first practical step toward humility must consist of recognizing our deficiencies. No defect can be corrected unless we clearly see what it is.”

Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, Alcoholics Anonymous, 1952 - 1981

Step Six

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Step Six Defects of Character

- Name them
  - Resentment
  - Fear
  - Sex (Dishonesty)
  - Selfishness

- Willingness to have them removed
So Step Six...is A.A.'s way of stating the **best possible** attitude one can take in order to make a beginning of this **lifetime job**. This does not mean that we expect all our character defects to be lifted out of us … A few of them may be, but with most of them we shall have to be content with **patient improvement**.


What we must recognize now is that we exult in some of our defects. We really love them...Self-righteous anger also can be very enjoyable. In a perverse way we can actually take satisfaction from the fact that many people annoy us, for it being a comfortable feeling of superiority.


Only Step One, where we made the 100 percent admission we were powerless over alcohol, can be practiced with absolute perfection. The remaining eleven Steps state perfect ideals. These are the goals toward which we look, and the measuring sticks by which we estimate our progress.

Step 6

“If we would gain any real advantage in the use of this Step on problems other than alcohol, we shall need to make a brand new venture into open-mindedness.”


Step 6

“Maybe I can postpone dealing with some of my problems indefinitely. Of course, this won’t do. Such a bluffing of oneself will have to go the way of any other pleasant rationalization. At the very least, we shall have to come to grips with some or our worst character defects and take action toward their removal as quickly as we can.”


Step Seven

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
Step Seven  **Shortcomings**

- Accept powerlessness
- Pray for removal

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Step 7

“Never was there enough of what we thought we needed... We had lacked the perspective that character building and spiritual values had to come first, that material satisfactions (having) were not the purpose of living.”


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Step 7

“...we reluctantly come to grips with those serious character flaws that made problem drinkers of us in the first place, **flaws which must be dealt with to prevent a retreat into alcoholism once again.**

“Without some degree of humility no alcoholic can stay sober at all. Nearly all of A.A.’s have found, too, that unless they develop much more of this precious quality than may be required just for sobriety, they still haven’t much chance of becoming happy.”


“Never was there enough of what we thought we needed…We had lacked the perspective that character building and spiritual values had to come first, and that material satisfactions were not the purpose of living.”


“For us, the process of gaining a new perspective was unbelievably painful. It was only by repeated humiliations that we were forced to learn something about humility.”

Session 5
Steps Eight - Ten

Step Eight

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

Forgiveness: The Process

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name It</th>
<th>My Hurt</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Understand It</td>
<td>My Hope</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify Rules</td>
<td>My Beliefs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledge Reality</td>
<td>My Attitudes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Responsibility</td>
<td>My Acceptance/Decision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement Decision</td>
<td>My Action</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Step Eight  **List Harm(s) to Others**

1. Who did I diminish?
2. What did I do?
3. What harm did I cause?
4. What specific action is necessary?
5. Am I willing to repair damage?

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"Steps Eight and Nine are concerned with personal relations. First, we take a look backward and try to discover where we have been at fault; next we make vigorous attempt to repair the damage we have done; and third, having thus cleaned away the debris of our past, we consider how, with our newfound knowledge of ourselves, we may develop the best possible relations with every human being we know."


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"... necessary that we extricate from an examination of our personal relations every bit of information about ourselves and our fundamental difficulties. Since defective relations with human beings have nearly always been the immediate causes of our woes, including our alcoholism...Calm, thoughtful reflection on personal relations can deepen our insight."

Step Eight

“What kind of “harm” do people do one another, anyway? To define the word “harm” in a practical way, we might call it the result of instincts in collision, which cause physical, mental, emotional, or spiritual damage to people.”


Step Eight

“Having carefully surveyed this whole area of human relations, and having decided exactly what personality traits in us injured and disturbed others…. ”


Step Nine

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
Step Nine **Amends Process**

1. Describe harm
2. Ask: “Any other harm?”
3. Suggest amends
4. Ask: “Any other amends?”

“As soon as we begin to feel confident in our new way of life and have begun, by our behavior and example, to convince those about us that we are indeed changing for the better, it is usually safe to talk in complete frankness with this who have been seriously affected…”


“Above all, we should try to be absolutely sure that we are not delaying because we are afraid. For the readiness to take full consequences of our past acts, and to take responsibility for the (emotional) well being of others at the same time, is the very spirit of Step Nine.”

Extreme Ownership is a key to emotional sobriety.

Step Ten

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

Step Ten  Enter World of Spirit

- Body
- Will
- Mind
- Physical Sobriety
- Not cured
- Recovered
### Step Ten  Our Way of Life: Inventory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Watch For:</th>
<th>Take Action:</th>
<th>Results:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Resentment</td>
<td>Pray</td>
<td>Forgiveness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fear</td>
<td>Discuss</td>
<td>Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dishonesty</td>
<td>Amend</td>
<td>Honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Selfishness</td>
<td>Service</td>
<td>Love</td>
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Emotional Sobriety

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### Our Way of Life

- **Clear Channel**  Step 10 Inventory
- **Fill Channel**  Step 11 Prayer/Meditation
- **Empty Channel**  Step 12 Service

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### Step Ten

“...It is a spiritual axiom that **every time** we are disturbed, no matter **what the cause**, there is something **wrong** with us.”

Step Ten

“A spot check inventory taken in the midst of such disturbance can be of very great help in quieting stormy emotions.”

Step Ten

“The quick inventory is aimed at our daily ups and downs, especially those where people or new events throw us off balance and tempt us to make mistakes.”

Step Ten

“In all these situations we need self-restraint, honest analysis of what is involved, a willingness to admit when the fault is ours, and an equal willingness to forgive when the fault is elsewhere. We need not be discouraged when we fall into the error of our old ways, for these disciplines are not easy. We shall look for progress, not for perfection.”
Step Ten

“Our first objective will be the development of self-restraint. This carries a top priority rating… Nothing pays off like restraint of tongue and pen… we should train ourselves to step back and think. For we can neither think nor act to good purpose until the habit of self-restraint has become automatic.”


Step Ten

“Finally, we begin to see that all people, including ourselves, are to some extent emotionally ill (emotionally dependent) as well as frequently wrong, and then we approach true tolerance and see what real love for our fellows actually means. It will become more and more evident as we go forward that it is pointless to become angry, or to get hurt by people who, like us, are suffering from the pains of growing up.”


Step Ten

“We can try to stop making unreasonable demands upon those we love.”

Session 6
Steps Eleven and Twelve

Step Eleven

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.

Step Eleven  **Prayer and Meditation**

**EVENING**  
Inventory

**MORNING**  
Think  
Consider  
Listen

**ALL DAY**  
Be Awake  
Pause
Step 11

- "There is a direct linkage among self-examination, meditation, and prayer. Taken separately these practices can bring much relief and benefit. But when they are logically interwoven, the result is an unshakeable foundation for life."


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Step 11

- "...self searching is the means by which we bring new vision, action, and grace to bear upon the dark and negative sides of our natures."

Step 11

…and if at these points our emotional disturbance happens to be great, we will surely keep our balance, provided we remember, and repeat to ourselves, a particular prayer or phrase that has appealed to us in our reading or meditation.

Step 11

Just saying it over and over will often enable us to clear a channel choked up with anger, fear, frustration or misunderstanding…

Step 11

At these critical moments, if we remind ourselves that it is “better to comfort than to be comforted, better to understand than to be understood, to love than to be loved,” we will be following the intent of Step Eleven.
**Step Twelve**

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step Twelve</th>
<th><strong>Spiritual Awakening</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Change</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Think</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Feel</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Behave</td>
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<tr>
<td>Done to us</td>
<td>NOT by us</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step Twelve</th>
<th><strong>Our Way of Life</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Carry Message</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Immunization</strong></td>
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</table>
Step Twelve  Our Way of Life

Practice Principles

ª Relationships
  ª Family
  ª Work
  ª Fellowship/Community

Spirituality  Process NOT Event

Integration

BODY
- Physical Sobriety

MIND
- Emotional Sobriety

WILL
- Spiritual Sobriety

Disintegration

BODY
- Allergy

MIND
- Obsession

WILL
- Spiritual Malady

Our Way of Life

Twelve Step Spirituality
Step 12

‘Here we begin to practice all of the Twelve Steps of the program in our daily lives so that we and those about us can find emotional sobriety.’


Step 12

‘And as we grow spiritually, we find that our old attitudes toward our instincts need to undergo drastic revisions. Our desires for emotional security and wealth, for personal prestige and power, for romance, and for family satisfactions - all these have to be tempered and redirected.’


Step 12

‘If we place instincts first, we have got the cart before the horse; we shall be pulled backwards into disillusionment. But when we are willing to place spiritual growth first - then and only then do we have a real chance (for emotional sobriety).’

Step 12

“Our demand for emotional security, for our own way, had constantly thrown us into unworkable relations with other people. Though we were sometimes quite unconscious of this, the result had always been the same.”


Step 12

“Either we had tried to play God and dominate those about us, or we had insisted on being overdependent upon them.”


Step 12

“Where people had temporarily let us run their lives as though they were still children, we felt very happy and secure ourselves. But when they finally resisted or ran away, we were bitterly hurt and disappointed. We blamed them, being quite unable see that our unreasonable demands had been the cause.”

Step 12

“When we had taken the opposite tack and had insisted, like infants ourselves, that people protect and take care of us or that the world owed us a living, then the result had been equally unfortunate. This often caused the people we had loved most to push us aside or perhaps desert us entirely.”


Step 12

“Our disillusionment had been hard to bear. We couldn’t imagine people acting that way toward us. We had failed to see that though adult in years we were still behaving childishly, trying to turn everybody - friends, wives, husbands, and even the world itself - into protective parents.”


Step 12

“We had refused to learn the very hard lesson that over dependence upon people is unsuccessful because all people are fallible, and even the best of them will sometimes let us down, especially when our demand for attention become unreasonable.”

Emotional Sobriety is about growing ourselves up by discovering new possibilities in the way we cope with life, and living in the space between the Stimulus and the Response.

“We had to learn ourselves and, furthermore, we had to teach the despairing men, that it did not really matter what we expected from life, but rather what life expected from us......we needed to think of ourselves as those who were being questioned by life....Life ultimately means taking the responsibility to find the right answer to its problems and to fulfill the tasks which it constantly sets for each individual.”

Viktor E. Frankl (1959). Man’s Search for Meaning.

“...sobriety is only the bare beginning. It is only the first gift of the first awakening. If more gifts are to be received, our awakening has to go on. And if it does go on, we find that bit by bit by bit we can discard the old life – the one that didn’t work – for a new life that can and does work under any conditions whatever. Regardless of worldly success or failure, regardless of pain or joy, regardless of sickness or health or even of death itself, a new life of endless possibilities can be lived if we are willing to continue our awakening.”

Bill Wilson (1957).