

## STEP THREE

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

Principle	Theme	Action	Defect	Result
Faith (Keystone)	Let Him	Practice Willingness	Self-reliance	Serenity

### PRAYER

- 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! {BB, p. 63}

- God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference. Thy will, not mine, be done.

**REWARD** - COURAGE instead of FEAR.

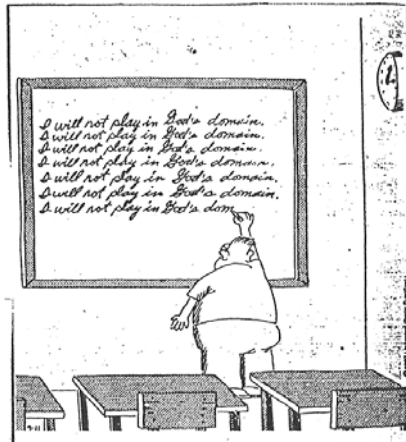
### NOTES

- STEP SIMPLIFIED: *Do I want to live or die? (If die, stop here)*
- Pre-AA STEP: *I decided to run my own life and expected my will to be carried out at all times.*
- HOW TO WORK THE STEP: **BB, p. 63**, paragraphs 2 & 3, and **12 & 12, p. 39-41**
- Steps 1, 2, and 3: "Get Right with Higher Power".
- First two steps required only acceptance; 3-12 require action
- There is only one KEY. It is WILLINGNESS!
- Paradox: more we depend on HP, more independent we are (example: electricity)
- In time, we want what God wants; our will conforms to his
- The action steps do require an act of self-will – to take the action (Faith without works is dead)

**REFERENCES:** BB - Chapter 5 - How It Works p. 60-63

### PROMISES:

- More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. {BB, p. 63}*
- As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. {BB, p. 63}*
- We were reborn. {BB, p. 63}*
- An effect, sometimes a very great one, was felt at once. {BB, p. 63}*



## Step Three

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

*Surrendering self-will totally to God's will is not an easy task, whether one believes in God, or not. Because we have to fight our own ego, this is a two-part step, 1- We need to acknowledge and believe that we are NOT all-knowing, all-powerful; 2 - We need to totally trust the Power that is. How many times have we been saved from death, bodily harm, financial pain or just plain embarrassment when we were sure that there was no escape? Have we not always been so protected? Is there a reason I am alive today that I may not know of? How much more pain do I want before I surrender to God's will, or die fighting it?* {unknown}

*. . . we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt* {BB, p. 62}

*How persistently we claim the right to decide all by ourselves just what we shall think and just how we shall act.* {12 & 12, p. 37}

*It has been said that "almost the only scoffers at prayer are those who never tried it enough* {12x12, p. 97}

*Thinking about it does not change our opinion, acting on it does.* {unknown}

*Faith, to be sure, is necessary, but faith alone can avail nothing. We can have faith, yet keep God out of our lives.* {12 & 12, p. 34}

*The more we become willing to depend upon a Higher Power, the more independent we actually are. Therefore dependence, as A.A. practices it, is really a means of gaining true independence of the spirit.* {12 & 12, p. 36}

*Today, as I practice my recovery - cutting back the weeds of alcoholism - slowly I am letting those early seeds of faith grow and bloom. Each day of recovery, of ardent gardening, brings the Higher Power of my understanding more fully into my life. My God has always been with me through faith, but it is my responsibility to have the willingness to accept His presence. I ask God to give me the willingness to do His will.*  
{DAILY REFLECTIONS, p. 225}

*If I do what the successful AA members have done, I will get what they have. So, what restricts me from following the advice of people who are "winners"? If I follow that advice I will outgrow the limits of my past. Some of my problems will become so small, as to be nothing to be upset about. A little patience, frequently practiced, will probably lead to a well thought out action and positive result. When I share my problems at a meeting, I can get good advice and often recognize, as I am speaking, exactly what the real problem is, and a reasonable way to solve it. When I put my faith in the spiritual power gained by working the program, when I trust others to teach me how to have a better life, I find I can trust myself to do what is necessary and right. I can have comfort in that and be happy.* {unknown}

*Our whole trouble had been the misuse of willpower. We had tried to bombard our problems with it instead of attempting to bring it into agreement with God's intention for us. To make this increasingly possible is the purpose of A.A.'s Twelve Steps, and Step Three opens the door.* {12 & 12, p. 40}

"I can't, he can, so let him"

"Without God I can't; Without me God won't" (*White Book*)

"I will not play in God's Domain" – Tough part: What's Gods?

### BB

- 1<sup>st</sup> requirement: learn any life run on self-will cannot succeed (ex: Actor/Director).
  - Root of our troubles: selfishness, self-centeredness.
  - Even external hurt we can trace to setting ourselves up.
  - Our troubles are of our own making.
2. Must rid selves of self-centeredness or it kills us.
  - Had to have God's help:
  - Stop playing God
  - Make God the Director
  - Result: less interest in ourselves, more in contributing to life
3. Work the step: say third step prayer out loud (with understanding person, or alone if nobody available)

### 12x12

1. Intro – 1<sup>st</sup> two steps required only acceptance; 3-12 require action
  - Key of **Willingness** opens door to path (way to a faith that works)
  - *Faith alone can avail nothing* (Faith without works is dead) [**ME: Cringe!**]
  - Effectiveness of whole program rests on how well you do this step; Persistence!  
[**ME: this step allows me to run with my will until I surrender it –pg 35**]
  - Coming into AA and staying is of itself a beginning on step 3
2. Dependence
  - Paradox: more we depend on HP, more independent we are (example: electricity) [**ME: see top of pg 35**]
  - In making decisions we insist on independence – how well has this worked? [**ME: see top of pg 37 = my pain at not being able to ask "what /how" though I knew I needed help**]
  - Normal's suffer from this too – Philosophy of self-sufficiency doesn't pay off
  - AAs are fortunate (by circumstance) to learn this; our luck to be drunks!
  - "Faulty" dependencies don't mean all dependencies are bad
  - Example: WW II vets overseas did fine depending on AA
3. By now the newbie begins to see he has many problems besides alcohol, that he cannot correct with self-will (addressed by rest of program)
4. Page 39-41 – How to do this step: persistently practice Willingness
  - At first: depend on closest AA friend; sponsor
  - Ask for help from other people in general
  - In time, we want what God wants; our will conforms to his [*Prayer of St. Francis*; what would the master do? Gut feel. *As Bill pg 55*]
  - We no longer *bombard our problems with* [our will] *instead of bringing it in agreement with God's*
  - However, ironically, all these action steps do require an act of self-will – to take the action
  - In all times of distress: say the Serenity Prayer

### Steps We Took

1. There's no way in our short life we can pick up the knowledge we need to run our life (21)

### Language of the Heart

p. 251 of *Language* - early losses of people when we proselytized OUR version of God rather than "as we understand him"

### **Clarence Snyder 1944 - A.A. Sponsorship Pamphlet on Step 3:**

*We made the decision that we needed to come under new management since our own management got us nowhere. So we turn our wills and lives over to the care of our new manager -- Jesus. He will take care of us and manage our lives since we admitted in Step 1 that our lives were unmanageable, and in Step 2, that He could restore us to a manageable state and sanity. At this point both of you get down on your knees... Both on knees, the sponsor says: "Jesus, this is \_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_, he is coming to You in all humility to ask You to guide and direct him. \_\_\_\_ (name) \_\_\_\_ realizes that*

*his life is messed up and unmanageable. \_\_\_\_\_(name)\_\_\_\_\_ is coming to You Lord in all humility to ask to be one of your children -- to work for you, to serve and dedicate his life to You and to turn his will and life over that he may be an instrument of Your love. Person repeats after sponsor:*

*"Lord, I ask that You guide and direct me, and that I have decided to turn my will and life over to You. To serve You and dedicate my life to You. I ask all this in the name of Jesus Christ. I thank you Lord; I believe that if I ask this in prayer, I shall receive what I have asked for. Thank you Jesus. Amen."*

*Now that we have gone under new management, we believe what it says in the Big Book at the end of the Steps in How It Works:*

*A: We were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives,*

*B: No human power could RELIEVE our alcoholism,*

*C: GOD COULD AND WOULD IF HE WERE SOUGHT!!!!*

*Then we have to take an inventory.*