

Unselfishness: [Selflessness, Altruistic, Considerate, Thoughtful, Concerned for others]

“Unselfishness is the stream in which our sober life must flow...the greatest gift we bestow on others is the example of our life as a whole.

“Our unselfishness must include not merely that which we do for others, but that which we do for ourselves...Yet we know that we must give of ourselves to others in order to maintain our own sobriety, in a spirit of complete selflessness with no thought of reward...We must be unselfish even in our pursuits of self-preservation. Not the least of our aid to others comes from examples of our own lives...those whose unselfish love guided us in the beginning, and those whom we in turn guided later on.”

“Selflessness for which we must strive in our way of life...which is our spiritual cornerstone, the real significance of our anonymity...in judging what you are about to do, say, think or decide, “how will this affect the other fellow?”

What does it look like in your life when you are absolutely Unselfishness? Write out a vision for yourself....

Selflessness

The Big Book says: “... our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of our selves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn’t think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must or it kills us!” Then it points us toward the solution, “God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid.... We had to have God’s help.”

Most dictionaries will define selflessness as: “The act of sacrificing personal interest for the good of others.” There are 3 components to developing selflessness: self awareness, self control, and self confidence. Below is an explanation of the 3 components.

Self awareness: One needs to be aware of one’s inner drives and motivations which result in one’s actions. The goal of selflessness is to emulate God rather than be selfish and self-centered. However, we need to know who we are and what we need before we move out into the world of others. We can be of no service to others unless we first take care of ourselves. If nothing else, we need to know why we want to give and be more selfless. If we need to give in order to feel validated, then we are serving our own selfish need to be needed rather than meeting the needs of the other person.

It is one of the mysteries of program: the more we give of ourselves, the less self-centered we become and the happier we are. However, it is also about boundaries and balance. If we give too much and get resentful or lack the necessary resources to take care of ourselves, we have set ourselves up for failure and to relapse.

Self Control: Program is based on the belief that our acts are outer manifestations of our thoughts. Therefore, we need to have self control of our selfish self-centered thinking in order to become more selfless.

Watch your thoughts, they become your words.
Watch your words, they become your actions.
Watch your actions, they become your habits.
Watch your habits, they become your character.
Watch your character, it becomes your destiny. ~ Author Unknown

The TWELVE STEPS AND TWELVE TRADITIONS puts it this way:

A tiny kernel of locked-in feelings began to unfold when I first attended A.A. meetings and self-knowledge then became a learning task for me. This new self-understanding brought about a change in my responses to life's situations. I realized I had the right to make choices in my life, and the inner dictatorship of habits slowly lost its grip (pg 61-62)

Sometimes, we cannot get what we want. We need to work on gaining the coping skills to delay our need for instant gratification. As addicts, this is the greatest challenge: accepting and living life on life's terms, rather than living for the satisfaction of our desires and impulses.

Self-Confidence: if we are not able to accept and be happy with ourselves the way we are, we will turn to other people to validate us, and then we get into the emotional dependencies that block us from being emotionally sober.

Therefore, to practice selflessness and gain self-confidence do the following:. The first place to start is to notice where we are selfish. Then, when we notice a selfish thought or a desire to take a selfish action, we stop and do the opposite of what we were intending to do. With practice, doing the right thing, the selfless thing, starts to become a habit.

When we grow ourselves on the inside, change then occurs on the outside. And, when we connect to others from a place of humility, love and selflessness, rather than from egotism, pride and judgment, we fill ourselves up, and like a glass that overflows, our essence spills over and seeps into everything around us. And then, when faced with adversity, we become not only better people but change the world around us.

When we practice being unselfish, we focus on giving, rather than on getting. When we practice being unselfish, we are able to be happy and grateful for everything that we have. When we are selfish, we keep a running tally of who gives what and when which sets us up for feelings of resentment, anger and unfulfilled expectations. As it says in the AA BB "my serenity is inversely proportional to my expectations. The higher my expectations of other people are, the lower is my serenity. I can watch my serenity level rise when I discard my expectations. I have to discard my 'rights', as well as my expectations, by asking myself, "How important is it, really? How important is it compared to my serenity, my emotional sobriety?" (p420) Therefore, selflessness is the key to a life of happiness and gratitude.

I am being selfless when

- I look to be of service to others: focus on giving rather than what I am going to get.
- Practice empathic listening and remain open to the suffering of other people.
- Seek to be loving, patient, kind and tolerant and forgiving
- Look for the good in others and practice being grateful for everything that I have.
- Be compassionate and try to see things from another person's point of view.

- Don't make myself the center of things.
- Do my best.
- Do not make assumptions about other people and their behavior or what their motives might be.
- Do not take what other people do or do not do personally.
- Be polite and show respect.

<http://zacsky.com/2012/02/practice-selflessness/>

<http://frumi.com/images/uploads/thefouragreements.pdf>

http://www.clas.ufl.edu/users/ardelt/Self-sevelopment_through_selflessness.pdf

<http://2travel.org/Files/AA/BigBook.pdf>

<http://www.ccaa.org.au/The%2012-Steps%20and%2012%20traditions.pdf>

<http://www.letusbepositive.com/archives1-2>

<http://www.amylsullivan1.com/2010/08/random-acts-of-selflessness.html>

http://www.ehow.com/how_2107122_act-ethically

<http://detoxtreatmentsoberliving.com/gratitude-and-selflessness/>