

12 Steps



Women of Enlightenment

Center of Enlightenment

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History

AA was founded by Bill Wilson and his physician, Doctor Bob Smith in 1935 and eventually grew to include two more groups by 1939.² That same year, Wilson published *Alcoholics Anonymous*, a text which explained its philosophy and methods.² We know it today as the 12 Steps of recovery. Over the years, the 12 Steps have been adapted by other self-help and addiction recovery groups, such as Gamblers Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, to those struggling with other forms of addiction.

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. 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.
12. 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.

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As the Twelve Steps lay the spiritual path of recovery for individual members, the Twelve Traditions provide the principles that keep the group healthy and grounded. This is best exemplified by Tradition One which states:

"Our common welfare should come first; personal progress depends upon AA unity."

The underlying principle is simple: if the group is drawn into controversy or becomes dominated by individuals, the unity of the group will be jeopardized. This is especially true of members who feel sidelined or minimized; these are the ones who are most likely to drift away or leave the program altogether.

The Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.
2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority—a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole.
5. Each group has but one primary purpose—to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers.
6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose.
7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions.
8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever nonprofessional, but our service centers may employ special workers.
9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio and films.
12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities.

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Spiritual Principles of Recovery

1. Acceptance

Multiple times throughout the day, things may not go as planned. Practice acceptance when you've just missed the bus for work, or when they run out of coffee in the office. Acceptance is by far one of the most useful principles to practice.

2. Hope

Hope can lend itself to you in any time of need, distress, or unhappiness. Sit down for a couple of minutes quietly and express your hope that things will work out how they should. If things don't work out, have hope that you will be okay either way.

3. Faith

Practicing faith can look like praying, meditating, speaking to your higher power, etc. Putting hope into a power greater than yourself is faith.

4. Courage

Be courageous by standing up for what you believe in today, whether that be you setting a boundary or telling your boss about an idea you have. Practicing courage can be scary, but it is also rewarding.

5. Honesty

Practicing honesty is pretty straight-forward. Practice honesty today by not lying, covering up the truth, without sugar-coating or leaving anything out. Did you show up to work five minutes late? Admit it. Do you really like your friends' outfit? Tell him or her the truth. Honesty is easier the longer you practice it.

6. Patience

Instead of honking your horn at the car in front of you; take a deep, deep breath and exhale. Practice patience.

7. Humility

Instead of arguing about how you're right (even when you know you're wrong), practice humility by apologizing for your wrongs. It can feel like a defeat, but afterwards you will feel good about yourself and how you treat others.

8. Willingness

Practice willingness by saying yes to that after-work yoga class with your co-worker. Often times, we are quick to say that we want something— but we are unwilling to make changes to receive that thing. Practice willingness by showing that you will do something for the positive results!

9. Brotherly-love

Practicing brotherly-love can be as easy as helping your neighbor carry in the grocery bags. Practice brotherly love by doing anything from holding the door for someone, to supporting someone in need.

10. Integrity

Integrity is honesty with a strong set of morals. Practice integrity by not compromising your values in any situation today. Did the cashier accidentally give you \$10 extra? Practice integrity by saying something. Is your co-worker asking you to take an extra 20 minutes on your lunch break? Say no, because you should only be making decisions that fit within your personal values.

11. Self-discipline

Practice self-discipline by being a good person when no one is looking. Did you have a long day at work, and want to cancel plans with a sober support so that you can veg out on the couch for the night? Have the discipline to do what's right for you and your recovery despite what you feel like doing. Do you have the opportunity to be lazy at work because your boss is gone for the day? Practice self-discipline by doing the work despite who is there to oversee you.

12. Service

Service is the spiritual principle of recovery that many people in recovery cite as the principle that keeps them sober. You can practice service by talking to someone who is struggling, or helping your old neighborhood sort through their pictures, offering advice to someone that is having a hard time, etc. You can practice service in AA or NA by setting up the chairs for a meeting, making the coffee, or helping to clean up. You can also go old school and do community service to show your gratitude for the town you live in. Service opportunities are everywhere!

Spiritual principles of recovery are governing principles to heal us from the inside out, teaching us the importance of things like having patience and gratitude. People in recovery can practice these principles with ease, as they often need to remind themselves that their purpose as addicts and alcoholics is not just staying away from drugs and alcohol, but bettering themselves.

Part of recovery is growing as a person, and if you choose to work a 12 step program of recovery, the last step speaks to having a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps [the 12 steps] and trying to carry this message to other alcoholics while practicing these principles in all our affairs. Becoming a better person starts with being self-aware, reminding yourself of the goals you wish to achieve and the person you want to be.

Programs patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous

Fellowships in this section follow reasonably close variations of the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of Alcoholics Anonymous.

- AA – Alcoholics Anonymous <https://aa.org/>
- ACA – Adult Children of Alcoholics for those who were raised in alcoholic and other dysfunctional families. <https://adultchildren.org/>
- Al-Anon/Alateen, for friends and families of alcoholics, associated with AA. <https://al-anon.org/>
- CA – Cocaine Anonymous. <https://ca.org/>
- CLA – Clutterers Anonymous. <https://clutterersanonymous.org/>
- CMA – Crystal Meth Anonymous. <https://www.crystalmeth.org/>
- Co-Anon, for friends and family of cocaine addicts, associated with Cocaine Anonymous. <https://co-anon.org/>
- CoDA – Co-Dependents Anonymous, for people working to end patterns of dysfunctional relationships and develop functional and healthy relationships. <https://coda.org/>
- COSA – a friends and family group associated with Sex Addicts Anonymous. <https://cosa-recovery.org/>
- COSLAA – CoSex and Love Addicts Anonymous, for friends and family of people with a sex or love addiction, associated with SLAA, <https://slaafws.org/family>
- DA – Debtors Anonymous. <https://debtorsanonymous.org/>
- EA – Emotions Anonymous, for recovery from mental and emotional illness. <https://emotionsanonymous.org/>
- FA – Families Anonymous, for relatives and friends of addicts. <https://www.familiesanonymous.org/>
- FA – Food Addicts in Recovery Anonymous. <https://www.foodaddicts.org/>
- FAA – Food Addicts Anonymous. <https://www.foodaddictsanonymous.org/>
- GA – Gamblers Anonymous. <http://www.gamblersanonymous.org/ga/>
- Gam-Anon/Gam-A-Teen, for friends and family members of problem gamblers. <https://www.gam-anon.org/>
- HA – Heroin Anonymous. <https://heroinanonymous.org/>
- MA – Marijuana Anonymous. <https://marijuana-anonymous.org/>
- NA – Narcotics Anonymous. <https://www.na.org/>
- N/A – Neurotics Anonymous, for recovery from mental and emotional illness. <https://www.recovery.org/support-groups/neurotics-anonymous/>

- Nar-Anon, for friends and family members of addicts. <https://www.nar-anon.org/>
- NicA – Nicotine Anonymous. <https://www.nicotine-anonymous.org/>
- OA – Overeaters Anonymous. <https://oa.org/>
- PA – Pills Anonymous, for recovery from prescription pill addiction. <https://www.pillsanonymous.org/>
- RA – Racists Anonymous. <http://rainternational.org/>
- SA – Sexaholics Anonymous. <https://www.sa.org/>
- SAA – Sex Addicts Anonymous. <https://saa-recovery.org/>
- SCA – Sexual Compulsives Anonymous. <https://sca-recovery.org/WP/>
- SIA – Survivors of Incest Anonymous. <https://siawso.org/>
- SLAA – Sex and Love Addicts Anonymous. <https://slaafws.org/>
- SRA – Sexual Recovery Anonymous. <https://sexualrecovery.org/>
- UA – Underearners Anonymous. <https://www.underearnersanonymous.org/>
- WA – Workaholics Anonymous. <https://www.workaholics-anonymous.org/>

Programs partially patterned after Alcoholics Anonymous

Fellowships in this section use material from Alcoholics Anonymous, and credit its influence but do not necessarily follow both the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions of AA.

- Celebrate Recovery, Christian-focused twelve-step program for recovery from various behaviors. <https://www.celebraterecovery.com/>
- Courage International, Catholic ministry which ministers to homosexuals. <https://couragerc.org/>
- Family Services Addiction Recovery Program, program affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that uses twelve-step principles. <https://addictionrecovery.churchofjesuschrist.org/?lang=eng>
- GROW, a peer support and mutual aid organization for recovery from, and prevention of, serious mental illness. <http://www.growinamerica.org/>
- Pagans In Recovery (PIR), for neopagans recovering from various compulsive/addictive behaviors. <https://www.neopagan.net/PIR.html>
- Parents Anonymous (PA), for parents who have abused children. <https://parentsanonymous.org/>
- Schizophrenics Anonymous (SA), for people who are affected by schizophrenia. <https://sardaa.org/>

Other Websites

<https://www.kevinmd.com/blog/2012/01/incorporating-12step-program-concepts-cancer-survivorship.html>

<https://www.alcohol.org/alcoholics-anonymous/>

https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US

<https://royallifecenters.com/the-spiritual-principles-of-recovery-12-ways-you-can-practice-them-every-day/>

God grant me
SERENITY
to accept things
I cannot change
COURAGE
to change the
things I can and
WISDOM
to know the difference