

Intensive Step Study - Step 2

(October 2017, VSB Website Resources Sub-Committee: The readings are from the AA book "Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions." "D & R" mean Discuss and reflect. Quotes from AA material have been updated to reflect alcohol, as written. OA only has permission to change the wording to "compulsive overeater" in OA Steps and OA Traditions. In one's private reading and writing, one can substitute the words "food" and "compulsive overeater" for "alcohol" and "alcoholism.")

1. Read Step 2. Write for 15 minutes on your reaction to what you have read. Keep this assignment.
2. Read the first paragraph of Step 2 in the 12 and 12 and the first two pages of We Agnostics in the Big Book, ending with the words "entirely ignored." D&R on "The moment they read Step Two, most A.A. newcomers are confronted with a dilemma, sometimes a serious one.", pg. 25, 12 and 12, as it relates to your food addiction. Include in your discussion:
 - a. What is your dilemma?
 - b. How have you been reduced to a state of helplessness when it comes to food?
3. Read from the top of page 25 in the 12 and 12 and ending with the words, "...driven to A.A. we learned better.", pg. 30. Discuss and reflect on "Some of us won't believe in God, others can't, and still others who do believe that God exists have no faith whatever He will perform this miracle.", pg. 25.
 - a. Which of the described categories do you identify with and why?
 - b. Write the definition for the words indifference, self-sufficiency, and defiance. Then relate what role they have played in your accepting a power greater than yourself.
4. Re-read Step 2. D&R upon your childhood exposure to any religious concept. On a 2-columned balance sheet list on one side your negative feelings and on the other positive feelings as they relate to your early religious experience. What conclusions have you reached?
5. Re-read Step 2. Create another balance sheet. On one side list all the reasons you can for believing in God. On the other side list all the reasons for disbelieving.
6. Read page 26, paragraph 4 in the 12 and 12. D&R on, "Listen, if you will, to these three statements. First, A.A. does not demand that you believe in

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anything. All of its Twelve Steps are but suggestions. Second, to get sober and to stay sober, you don't have to swallow all of Step Two right now. Looking back, I find that I took it piecemeal myself. Third, all you truly need is an open mind.", pg. 26, as it relates to your food addiction.

Include in your discussion:

- a. Your reaction to OA not demanding that you believe in anything;
- b. Which part of Step Two do you want to work on first — the coming to believe in a Higher Power or restoration to sanity? Go to the section whose title corresponds to your answer.

Coming to Believe

7. Read page 45 in the Big Book, starting with "Lack of power..." and ending with "...simpler level." on the bottom of page 47. D&R on "We found that as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express a willingness to believe in a power greater than ourselves, we commenced to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power, which is God.", pg. 46. Include in your discussion:
 - a. Define the word "willingness." Are you willing to look at the possibility of there being a Power greater than you? How are you willing?
 - b. What is your concept of a Higher Power? Could your concept be holding you back from spiritual growth? Does your concept put limitations on God?
 - c. Review your last answer. Write a description of what you would like in a Higher Power. Why can't this be your Higher Power?
8. Read page 10 to 13 in the Big Book ending with "How blind I had been." D & R on the following: "The word God still aroused a certain antipathy. When the thought was expressed that there might be a God personal to me, this feeling intensified. I could go for such conceptions as Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, or Spirit of Nature, but resisted the thought of a Czar of the Heavens, however loving His sway might be.", pg. 12.
 - a. What are your feelings in response to the word "God?"
 - b. Is there a personal God in your life?

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- c. In the preceding quote, there are many names for God. What names come to mind for you? By which of these names do you want to call the God of your understanding?
9. Read page 47 in the Big Book, starting with the last paragraph, “Besides a seeming inability to accept much on faith,...” to page 49 ending with the words, “. . . means nothing and proceeds nowhere.” Discuss and reflect on “Faced with alcoholic destruction, we soon became as open-minded on spiritual matters as we tried to be in other questions. In this respect alcohol was a great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness.”, pg. 48. Include in your discussion:
 - a. How has compulsive overeating persuaded you to be willing to look for a solution in a Higher Power?
 - b. Make a two-columned balance sheet. Include on one side all the advantages of believing in a power greater than yourself and on the other side the disadvantages.
10. Read page 49 in the Big Book starting with, “Instead of regarding ourselves...” to the end of this chapter. Discuss and reflect on, “We found, too, that we had been worshippers. What a state of mental goose flesh that used to bring on. Had we not variously worshipped people, sentiments, things, money and ourselves?”, pg. 54. Include in your discussion:
 - a. Your power and its limitation.
 - b. What other Higher Powers have you allowed to rule your life?
 - c. What will you have to give up to acknowledge a power greater than yourself?
11. Read the first two pages of Dr. Bobs Nightmare, ending with the words, “...when circumstances made it seem unwise to absent myself.”, pg. 173, BB 4th edition. D & R on:
 - a. Your childhood exposure to any religious concept. Make a two-columned balance sheet. On one side list your negative feelings and on the other side your positive feelings as they relate to your early religious experience. What conclusions have you reached?

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- b. How are the ways you related to your Higher Power similar to the ways you related to your parents?

(This is the end of 'Coming to Believe' section. Continue on to "Insanity" if you have not already done this section. If you have already done "Insanity", then go to question 13.)

Insanity

12. Read page 35 in the Big Book starting with the words "What sort of drinking dominates ..." and ending on page 39 with the words "Let us take another illustration." D & R on "Whatever the precise definition of the word may be, we call this plain insanity. How can such a lack of proportion of the ability to think straight be called anything else...", pg. 37. Include in your discussion:
 - a. Define the word 'insanity.
 - b. What are some of the "insanely trivial excuses" you have used for taking that first bite?
 - c. Have you ever given serious thought to the consequences while you were contemplating your next binge?
 - d. Has self-knowledge helped you to not eat compulsively?
13. Read page 404 in the Big Book 3rd edition. [The story "Stars Don't Fall does not exist in BB,4th edition] starting with the words 'The first night I blacked out at a large dinner party.' and ending on page 412 with the words, "... and there was no one to commit me." D & R on "I did not know that I had no power over alcohol, that I, alone and unaided, could not stop; that I was on a downgrade, tearing along at full speed with all my brakes gone, and that the end would be a total smash up, death or insanity...", pg. 408. Include in your discussion:
 - a. What are some of the most insane things you have done with food?
 - b. What are some of the most insane things you have done because of food?
 - c. What were some of the promises and vows you made to stop eating compulsively?

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- d. What were some of the insane methods you used to stop eating compulsively?
14. Read the Chapter on “A.A. Taught Him to Handle Sobriety”, starting on page 554 in the Big Book 3rd edition. [starting on page 553 in BB 4th edition.] Discuss and reflect on, “As the sober days grew into sober months, and then into sober years, a new and beautiful life began to emerge...”, pg. 559. [pg. 558 BB 4th edition] Include in your discussion:
- a. What are some of the ways you abused your body with food? Would a sane person have done this?
 - b. What role have bewilderment, fear, and resentment played in your life because of compulsively overeating?
 - c. What are you willing to do so that a new and beautiful life can emerge for you?

(This is the end on the section on Insanity. Go to the questions on “Coming to Believe” if you have not already done them. If you have done them, then continue with question 15.)

15. Read page 32 in the 12 and 12 starting with, “Clergymen, doctors and friends...” to the end of the chapter. D & R on “True humility and an open mind can lead us to faith, and every A.A. meeting is an assurance that God will restore us to sanity if we rightly relate ourselves to Him.”, pg. 33. Include in your discussion:
- a. The definition of the words humility and open-mindedness.
 - b. In what ways has your pride prevented you from accepting a Higher Power?
 - c. What more do you need to do in order to be willing to be open-minded enough to accept a power greater than yourself?
 - d. How do you see humility and open-mindedness as requisites for recovery from compulsive overeating?

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16. Re-read Step Two. Write on your reaction to for 15 minutes. Keep this assignment.
17. Re-read your answers to questions 1 and 16 and relate on differences in these two writings.