

WEEK #16: Chapter 6 — INTO ACTION (*Steps Eight and Nine*)

READ: Page 76, paragraph 3

I think we have really **laid the groundwork in recovery**. We have gone through Steps One, Two, and Three. **In Step One, we saw the Problem. Step Two, we found the Solution to our Problem.** Then in **Step Three, we made a Decision.** That decision was vital. That decision was to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him based on Steps One and Two. Step Three (once we made this decision) was the first time that we were in a correct relationship with God in our lives. Thus we actually laid the spiritual foundation on which we were going to build our lives.

We know that **human life emanates from the inside out** and that there is a design for living. There is a design to everything on the face of this earth and there is a design to our lives. **The Big Book talks about this throughout, and gives us a design for living that really works.** We saw as a result of Steps One and Two that in Step Three we make a decision. When we made the decision, for the first time, we were in a correct relationship with God in our lives. That's the spiritual foundation. Once we laid that foundation, we went to work in Steps Four, Five, Six, and Seven where we deal with ourselves. **We learned that we're a product of our minds, not our bodies.** So, in Steps Four, Five, Six, and Seven we worked on the mind.

Now we are going out into the third dimension of life; our relationship with others.

That is a major part of human life. Now we have to go out into that area and deal with it. It is the final work we are going to do. It does not only deal with us physically but also deals with the sociological. We are talking about our relationship with everything else in the world that's physical; other people, our jobs, and anything else. Everything in life will fit into one of these areas.

This is a design for life.

We say that alcoholism is an inside job. So we started on the inside and we're working our way out. We are headed into the **third dimension**, which is our relationship with other people (Steps Eight and Nine). We have guilt and fear which will cut us off from the sunlight of the Spirit (Steps One, Two, and Three) and if that happens we're going to lose all our work we started. You know, **half measures availed us nothing.** We agreed to go all the way so we don't lose what we have done! **Steps Eight and Nine are talking about the third dimension of life** and we all know about that.



In order for us to complete the job, and completely get rid of those things in our mind that block us from God's will, it's going to become necessary now to do something about that fear, guilt and remorse associated with the past.

READ: Page 76, paragraph 4 → page 78, paragraph 1

There's no way I can become willing to make amends at all unless I have really worked a good Step Four, the way our book tells us to. Even then, some people have harmed us as badly as we have harmed them and we say to ourselves, "By golly, they had it coming and I really don't think I owe them an amends." We're going to find a few like that and it's going to be very difficult even then for us to become willing to make amends to them all, so then I can't make amends to any of them, period. Step Eight will block us off entirely from Step Nine if we aren't really careful.

My sponsor didn't let this happen to me. He said, "Some of these people on these lists, you know them and they know you, and you love them and they love you, and you would like to get things straightened out with them right now, wouldn't you?" And I said, "Sure I would." My children were on there and my brother was on there, and my mother and my father and some of my friends. I wasn't sure about my wife, she was on there, but I didn't know about her. So he said, "I'll tell you what you ought to do." Why don't you get a separate sheet of paper and start a list and put **RIGHT NOW** on it. Those people on your amends list that you're willing to do something with them, right now, take their names off of there and put them on that **RIGHT NOW** column. Then there are some people on there that you know that you're going to make amends to sooner or later. You don't particularly care about it, but you know you're going to do it. Take their names off of there, put another column labeled **LATER** on the paper and put their names under it. There are only a few on there that you aren't sure about. You may or may not make amends to them. Take their names off of there and put them in a third column and just put there at the top, **MAYBE**. Now the only ones that are going to be left on there are those that you don't ever intend to make amends to. Take them off and put them in a fourth column and title that **NEVER**. Now what I'd like you to do is start making amends to the **RIGHT NOW's**. By the time you're through with that, you're ready to do some of the **LATER's**. Then you do your **LATER's** and then you might be ready to do some of the **MAYBE's**. Probably by the time you're through with the **MAYBE's**, you'll be ready to do some **NEVER's**. He led me right into this thing and did not allow me to use the fact that there were some I did not intend to make amends to anybody at all. If you have trouble in that area, you might try this. It really does work.

RIGHT NOW	LATER	MAYBE	NEVER

READ; Page 78, paragraph 2

After we have become willing Step Nine very clearly tells us what to do. It tells us the kinds of amends to make. It says we make **DIRECT AMENDS** to such people. It tells us when to make the direct amends: "...**except when to do so would injure them or others**". The only thing I really need to truly understand is, what does it mean by "**Direct Amends**", what does it mean by, "**wherever possible**", and what does it mean by, "**except when to do so would injure them or others**"?

We start on Step Nine by looking at what it is talking about when he says "**Made Direct Amends**". Making direct amends, we're going to look at them two different ways. First, we're going to look at them as direct; **face-to-face**. That is the best way to make an amends. When we make our amends face-to-face, there's no doubt about the result. This thing really does work if we're willing to do what the book tells us to do. Sometimes it's not easy to do those things, but the book continuously reminds us that **self cannot overcome self**, and we may have to **ask for God's help to be willing to be willing to do these things**. I think we will find the benefits far, far outweigh whatever pain we are going to have in doing it.

There are many, many things that can come up in making amends. That's why we have so much in the book on Step Nine. It has paragraphs that deal with just about everything that could come up. Now we're going to talk about **past criminal offenses**, and how we handle those.

READ: Page 78, paragraph 3 → page 80, paragraph 4

Here again, **we considered other people who will be involved**, talked to them, got their okay before he made his amends. Undoubtedly, I need to make some amends to my wife or husband. In fact the only thing I can really do is say, "Look, I know what I was and you know what I was and I really hurt you while I was drinking and I'm truly sorry about that, but I'm trying to live a decent life now and with God's help, I don't intend to do those things anymore." And that's about all I can do with my children too. I tell them that I know what I was and they know what I was and I really hurt them and I'm truly sorry about it, but I'm trying to live a different life and with God's help, I'm going to try to be a decent husband/wife and a decent father/mother from now on. To some of those, these are just about all the amends we can possibly make. We don't have to keep trying to make them for the rest of our lives. **Sometimes we feel so guilty about these things so we keep on trying to make amends forever and go far beyond what we probably should do in the first place. This requires very careful consideration.**

READ: Page 80, paragraph 5 → page 83, paragraph 1

There will be some amends that we can never make. Maybe we don't know where these people are. Maybe they are dead or maybe the case would be that it would injure other people. So we have to live with those, but we will not hurt. There is no pain. We know we would do it if we could. If we are willing, this will free us. If we're willing, even if we cannot do it, then there is no guilt or remorse or anything bothering us. That's why we are doing all this, so it doesn't bother us.

A mistake we see a lot of people make in our zeal to have everybody like us, is to expect for everyone to forgive us. Sometimes, they don't accept our amends. We leave there feeling crushed, and then we tend to want to go back again and again and literally force those people to forgive us. We don't need to do that. **As God's people, we stand on our own two feet. We make our amends to the best of our ability, and if they don't want to accept our amends we are at peace anyway.** There is nothing we can do about that. All we can do is make our amends.

I think **there's one person we owe an amends to as much as anybody, and that's ourselves.** I'm not about to say that I never hurt anybody with my drinking, because I hurt everybody who came in contact with me when I was drinking. And I'm positive I hurt myself as bad as I ever hurt anybody else. I think **the finest amends that I can possibly make to me is to free myself from the past. The only way I found to do that is by making my amends to other people wherever I possibly could. Through the making of my amends to others, my guilt and my remorse and my fears associated with the past have disappeared.**

READ: Page 83, paragraph 2 → page 84, paragraph 1

Joe McQueeney, in The Big Book Comes Alive Seminar, reads the promises in the following manner and is **the way Alcohol made him feel before it turned against him:**

When I drank alcohol, I would know a new freedom and a new happiness.

When I drank alcohol, I would not regret the past, nor wish to shut the door on it.

When I drank alcohol, I would comprehend the word serenity and I would know peace.

When I drank alcohol, no matter how far down the scale I had gone, I would see how my experience could benefit others.

When I drank alcohol, that feeling of uselessness and self-pity would disappear.

When I drank alcohol, I would lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in my fellows.

When I drank alcohol, fear of people and of economic insecurity would leave me.

When I drank alcohol, I intuitively knew how to handle situations which used to baffle me.

When I drank alcohol, I suddenly realized that alcohol is doing for me what I could not do for myself.

My God, no wonder I loved to drink! Alcohol did that for me for many, many, many years. **Alcohol was my friend.** I doubt that I could have lived in normal society growing up without alcohol or some other drug as it did for me exactly what I wanted it to do.

One day it turned against me. It began to get me drunk, in trouble and it caused me to do things that I didn't want to do. From that day on, I spent the rest of my drinking career searching for a way to drink and recapture the good feelings.

- **Not knowing that I was alcoholic.**
- **Not knowing that I have a progressive disease.**
- **Not knowing that there was no way to recapture those good feelings.**

I almost destroyed me and everyone in my life.

I came to A.A. and you showed me a Big Book and nine Steps. I applied them in my life and to my absolute amazement I found that I got all the good things from these first nine Steps that I ever got from alcohol. Now if I can feel as good from the first nine Steps as I did from drinking alcohol in the beginning, then I most certainly do not need to take a drink in order to change the way that I feel. I think the amazing thing about it is this: **So far, the first nine Steps have never turned against me!** I've never been placed in jail because of the first nine Steps. I've never been drug into a divorce court because of the first nine Steps. I have never vomited from the first nine Steps. You see they have given me all the good that alcohol gave me, but none of the bad. That's why I don't need to drink. Now if I don't want to receive these promises, sooner or later my mind is going to start searching for a sense of ease and comfort. It's going to take me right back to the idea that I've got to drink to change the way that I feel. You see, that's what this is all about.

Now why did we get The Promises? We got The Promises because we have fit ourselves back into the design for living that God made us to live in the first place. And when we do that, then we're not in conflict with God. We're not in conflict with our fellow man, and we're not in conflict with ourselves. Then we can have these promises. If you'll notice, every promise in there deals with the mind. None of them deal with the body. Surely if I've had these promises then I have become a different human being. Surely my personality has changed entirely from what it used to be to what it is if I've received these promises.

We have effectively recovered from a hopeless condition of the mind and of the body at the end of Step Nine, if we have received these promises.

Isn't that great?

I did that, and I received these promises and today I realize that they make me feel exactly the way alcohol used to make me feel in the beginning. They give me all the good things that alcohol ever gave me. So, if I get all the good things in the first nine Steps that alcohol gave me, then I don't have to drink alcohol in order to feel better.

– Once Again –

The beautiful thing about the first “nine Steps” is:

They have never turned against me like alcohol did.

I've never been drug into a divorce court because of the first nine Steps.

I have never vomited ... damned near did a time or two.

This is the miracle of Alcoholics Anonymous.

Through the first Nine Steps we get all the good things alcohol ever gave us. Therefore we don't need to drink to change the way we feel and yet we receive none of the bad things from the first nine Steps that alcohol did to us.

We have recovered from a seemingly hopeless condition of the mind and body at the end of Step Nine.

Every promise in here deals with the mind, not with the body. If you receive these promises in your mind, you have become a different human being.

BIG BOOK WORKSHOP HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENT

Note: At this point the Book assumes that you made a list of people you had harmed when you did your Fourth Step Inventory. If this has not been done, you should certainly make such a list at this point and review it with your sponsor. God will provide the proper time and place if you pray for the willingness to make amends “...**Sometimes quickly sometimes slowly.**”

- 1) Read Chapter 6 “**Into Action**” (P84 par2 – P85 par.2) in the “Big Book” (1st Time) – USE HIGHLIGHTER! (Just read and highlight the 1st time you read through the chapter.)
- 2) Read Chapter 5 “**Into Action**” (P84 par2 – P85 par.2) in the “Big Book” (2nd Time). Answer the “Work Assignment Questions” below as you read the assignment the 2nd time.
- 3) Be prepared to discuss the material.

WORK ASSIGNMENT QUESTIONS "INTO ACTION – Step 10"

Always answer in complete sentences and write an example !!!

PAGE: 84

1. What are the specific instructions outlined for taking of Step Ten?
2. What do we watch for?

Note: ***"By this time sanity will have been returned - we will seldom be interested in liquor."***

3. Is this the sanity referred to in Step Two?

PAGE: 85

4. What is the proper use of will power?
5. What is the suggestion for taking the Eleventh Step on a daily basis?