

WEEK #15 – INTO ACTION (Step 8 & Step 9) Joe and Charlie Transcript

We begin to get right in our minds through Steps 4, 5, 6 and 7. That removes just enough self-will, to begin to look at our relationship with the world and everybody in it. Now through 4, 5, 6 & 7 we got rid of these resentments, we got rid of these fears to the level that God intended for them to be. But we haven't really done anything about the storeroom back here that's filled with guilt and remorse associated with the harms we've done in the past.

If we want to get right in the physical dimension, our relationship with the world and everybody in it, it's long been known that the way you do that is to make restitution for the things done in the past.

Then the guilt and the remorse begin to disappear. I've never yet seen a newcomer come into a meeting and read the steps off the wall and say "I can hardly wait till we get to Steps 8 & 9, that looks like a lot of fun." Nobody likes to do Steps 8 and 9. Nobody that I've ever met! (Some people might but not that I know.) The only question is: **Can we afford not to do that?**

It looks like if we don't do that (Steps 8 & 9), that guilt and remorse in here *{our minds}* kind of keeps chewing at us. After a while it begins to bother our relationship with the world and everybody in it; we start getting sick in our head. After a while, that backs up and blocks us off from God and we end up drunk again

You know when we read the Foreword to the Second Edition it sounds as though Dr. Bob never took another drink after Bill visited with him the first time. That isn't true. Dr. Bob had one more drunk left in him. Not too long after Bill called on him and they began to try to work with people Bob found it necessary to go to a medical convention. His wife Anne begged Bill not to let him go. She said "Bill if he goes over there he'll get drunk, he does it every year." And Bill said, "Let him go. He's got to learn to live in society where there's always going be plenty of alcohol." Bob went to the medical convention, got drunk, came back to Akron and showed up at his nurse's home. She called Anne and said "Come and get him. He's drunk! Get him sobered up, he's got surgery in the morning and he's the only doctor on staff right now that can do this particular surgery." Dr. Bob was a proctologist. Whatever your proctologist is, I'm glad he wasn't working on mine the next morning I know that! They went over and got him and brought him back to Dr. Bob's house. They 'coffee'd him up' and they walked him around and sobered him up to the best of their ability.

The next morning Bill took Dr. Bob to the hospital to do the surgery. In the parking lot of the hospital Dr. Bob said, "Bill I can't do this surgery. I'm sick and I'm shaking and I'm trembling and I'm going to hurt somebody bad." Bill reached in the back seat of the car, brought out a bottle of beer, popped the top on it, said "Drink this and you'll be okay." Dr. Bob drank the beer, went upstairs, did the surgery and sure enough it came out okay. The only problem was he disappeared. Bill is waiting on him down in the parking lot; he waits 2, 3, 4 hours. He assumes that the beer has triggered the allergy and Bob is off and running. He goes back to Dr. Bob's house and Bill and Anne wait all afternoon. Late, late, late that evening Dr. Bob shows up and he's sober. Bill said "Where in the hell have you been?" He said "I've been going up and down both sides of the street making my amends to those I've harmed in the past."

That bottle of beer was the last drink Dr. Bob took, January 10, 1935 which is AA's birthday. He never would make amends before because he was afraid people would find out that he was alcoholic and he would lose what little practice he had left. He didn't know that everybody already

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knew he was alcoholic! The day he screwed up the courage, mustered up enough courage to make his amends was the day he took his last drink. Now I would assume if it's good enough for Dr. Bob it's probably good enough for me too.

Let's look at 8 & 9 for just a few minutes. We are not going to go through them in great detail, just a few minutes

Big Book p. 76, par. 3: ***"Now we need more action, which we find that "Faith without works is dead." Let's look at Steps Eight and Nine."***

J & C When people go to a Step Study meeting and they begin to talk about Step 8, generally the conversation will get over to how they made amends in Step 9. But Step 8 is a definite step and it's a step that needs to be done.

Big Book p. 76, par. 3: ***"We have a list of all persons we had harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory."***

J & C We simply take all those names off of Column 1 off of those 4 sheets of anyone that we've harmed and we put them on one long sheet. We haven't made any amends yet, we've just made the list. And then the book says...

Big Book p. 76, par. 3: ***"We subjected ourselves to a drastic self-appraisal."***

J & C We did that in Steps 4 & 5, a drastic self-appraisal.

Big Book p. 76, par. 3: ***"Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes."***

More prayer in Step 8... and again it's real simple. We make the list, then we become willing to the list, and if we're not willing we ask God to help us to become willing. We haven't made any amends yet. That is Step 8. When we do that, then we've completed Step 8. Everyone one of these action steps recognizes that self cannot overcome self and we have prayer in most of them and here we got it again in Step 8 that if we're not willing, we ask God to help us be willing. I had a lot of difficulty in Step 8 and Step 9 because there are some people that had harmed me just as bad as I'd ever harmed them. I didn't think it was going to be necessary for me to make any amends to them, I didn't feel like I could and I didn't want to. I told my sponsor about this, he said "okay, what I'd like to see you do is take that list that you have and divide it into four lists (columns). He said "I'd like to see you put on each list (column); 'RIGHT NOW', 'LATER', 'MAYBE' and 'NEVER'.

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RIGHT NOW	LATER	MAYBE	NEVER

He said “Those that you love and you want to make amends to them **RIGHT NOW** put them on that ‘**RIGHT NOW**’ list; those that you know you’re going to do it sooner or later or you’re not too keen about, put them on the **LATER** list those that you aren’t sure about, you may or may not, put them on the **MAYBE** list and those that you’re never going to make amends to, put them on the **NEVER** list.”

And then he said “I want you to start making your amends to the **RIGHT NOW’s**. By the time you’re through with that you’ll probably be ready to do some **LATER’s**. By the time you’re through with the **LATER’s** list, you’ll probably be ready to do some **MAYBE’s**. And he reached in his billfold and pulled out a twenty-dollar bill and said I’m going to bet you twenty dollars by the time you’re through with the Maybe’s you be ready to start on the **NEVER’s**.”

And the old fool was exactly right. I was trying to block myself off entirely from Step 8 & 9 by using three or four names (resentments, etc.) and he didn’t let me do that. He gave me a process by which I could become willing to make amends to them all, eventually. And it really did work for me.

So if you’ve got that problem, or you’re working with someone who has got that problem, try the Four (column) List. **Right Now, Later, Maybe** and **Never**. It really works.

Ok. After we’ve got the list, we’re willing, over on page 77 we begin to look at Step 9. Now Step 9 is a definite three-part step. The first part tells us the kind of amends to make.

We made direct amends wherever possible...

Direct amends is probably:

- **eyeball to eyeball**
- **face to face**
- **one on one**

So he tells us the kind of amends to make:

“...Direct amends...”

Then he tells us when to make them:

“...wherever possible...”

Then he tells us when NOT to make them:

“...except when to do so would injure them or others.”

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Now for the next three or four pages he handles each one of these things paragraph by paragraph. Page 77, that paragraph down in the middle of the page

Big Book p. 77, par. 2: ***“We don't use this as an excuse for shying away from the subject of God. When it will serve any good purpose, we are willing to announce our convictions with tact and common sense.”***

The direct amends starts right here with the words:

Big Book p. 77, par. 2 cont.: ***“The question of how to approach the man we hated will arise.”***

Let's look at this one. I think in the area of the 9th step, especially since were going to go out and make amends for the harms done, we need to talk to our sponsors and listen to our sponsors in this area to get some information about how we are going to go about making these amends. Because we can go out in our zeal to make amends and can cause a whole lot more harms than we ever intended or had ever done prior to that just trying to make amends. So check with your sponsor in this area. Lay out how you are going to it and what you propose to do and see what he says. Very, very important

Big Book p. 77, par. 2 cont.: ***“The question of how to approach the man we hated will arise. It may be he has done us more harm than we have done him and, though we may have acquired a better attitude toward him, we are still not too keen about admitting our faults. Nevertheless, with a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. It is harder to go to an enemy than to a friend, but we find it much more beneficial to us. We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.***

Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue. Simply we tell him that we will never get over drinking until we have done our utmost to straighten out the past. We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that nothing worth while can be accomplished until we do so, never trying to tell him what he should do. His faults are not discussed. We stick to our own. If our manner is calm, frank, and open, we will be gratified with the result.

In nine cases out of ten the unexpected happens. Sometimes the man we are calling upon admits his own fault, so feuds of years' standing melt away in an hour. Rarely do we fail to make satisfactory progress. Our former enemies sometimes praise what we are doing and wish us well. Occasionally, they will offer assistance. It should not matter, however, if someone does throw us out of his office. We have made our demonstration, done our part. It's water over the dam.”

Every time I read that I think about my cousin Gary. I was in the area of making amends at this time and I was in this restaurant one day. I had never been in that restaurant before or since and I looked up and Gary was at the door waiting to be seated and I motioned him over. Now he came over very reluctantly, 'cause Gary and I had been fighting and fussing, physically and verbally abusing each other all our lives. So he came over very reluctantly. He wasn't quite sure what I might do. And I asked him to sit down and he did reluctantly. And I looked at him and I said “Gary I've found out I'm an alcoholic and I'm a member of Alcoholics Anonymous and I'm trying to straighten out my life and I'm trying to make amends for the harms I've done people. And I've harmed you a whole lot over these years and I want to ask you if you will forgive me for that.” And he kind of relaxed like that and he said, “Well you know Joe I want to know if you will forgive me the things I've done to you?” That whole deal went away just like that. And that's a wonderful thing. But the best part about it is that Gary comes to Alcoholics Anonymous from time to time even now. Well he's making progress. He used to be a daily drinker and now he's a periodic drinker. So he's making progress. But he comes to the group that I attend and we'll sit down and we'll visit back and forth a little bit as much as he will allow me to. But had that not happened that

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many years ago Gary would never have come to Alcoholics Anonymous. Maybe someday he'll get sober. I hope so.

Eyeball to eyeball
Face to face
One on one

I think we've got to remember now the purpose of making the amends is not to get you to like me. I hope you will when I'm through, but the purpose is to get rid of my fear, my guilt and my remorse. If I write you a letter I'm not quite sure how you accepted it. I'm still a little concerned about what you are going to say and do the next time I run into you. I'm not sure I've done my utmost. If I call you on the telephone I've got the same situation. But, if I go to you wherever you are, your office, your home or wherever it might be, and we sit down, eyeball to eyeball, face to face, one on one, when I've made my amends I'm through with it. I'll never have to worry about it again. You've done the worst you're going to do to me, right there, and I in turn have done my utmost. No doubt that's the best way to do it.

Another kind of amend is an equal restitution or equal amounts. You know we tended to hurt a lot of people in the material area also. Some of them we stole from them and never did give them their money back. Some of them we ran up bills that we never did pay. We wrote "hot checks" that we never did pick up. We tore up automobiles that we never did fix. We've hurt a lot of people in a lot of ways in the material world. What are we going to do about that? It really wouldn't do much good for me to come to you and say "Look, you and I both know that I stole \$1200 from you when I was drinking. And I'm sorry about it. Would you forgive me?" You're probably going to say, "I'm sorry about it too. Where's my \$1200?" Equal restitution, Bill handles that in the next paragraph.

Big Book p. 78, par. 2: ***"Most alcoholics owe money."***

Now that's probably the understatement of the year right there!

Big Book p. 78, par. 2 cont.: ***"We do not dodge our creditors. Telling them what we are trying to do, we make no bones about our drinking; they usually know it anyway, whether we think so or not. Nor are we afraid of disclosing our alcoholism on the theory it may cause financial harm. Approached in this way, the most ruthless creditor will sometimes surprise us. Arranging the best deal we can we let these people know we are sorry. Our drinking has made us slow to pay. We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to drink if we are afraid to face them."***

I think what he's saying to me is this, that if I owe you money for any reason I need to come to you and say, "Look, I know I owe you the \$1200 and you know it too. I'm trying to get my life straightened out. I'm sorry I can't pay you that amount of money today. But what I'd like to do is start paying you \$5/week or \$10/week." Whatever I can live with. And I start paying you that \$5 or \$10/week or 20 or whatever we've decided on. And as the weeks go by, some morning I wake up and I say "Hey that suckers paid off." I don't have to worry about that one anymore. The fear and guilt and remorse are gone. I go to the next one. And I say; "Now you and I both know that I owe you a couple thousand dollars, can't pay you today. But I'd like to start paying you about \$20/week." And I start paying you \$20/week and some morning I wake up and that sucker's paid off too. And then I go to the next one. And then the next and then the next one and someday I'll

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wake up and by golly they're all paid off. And the fear and the guilt and remorse are gone. I feel good back here in the back of my head now after that guilt and remorse and fear is gone.

Now a guy came to me one time and we were discussing this. And he said "Charlie if I try to pay them so much a week, do you know how old I would be before I got them paid off?" You'd be the same age that you would be if you didn't pay them off. It doesn't make any difference. I've lived long enough to know that time is going to pass. I wish I could stop it but I can't. And as time passes I can use it for a worthwhile purpose, do something about these things, or I can keep putting it off and putting it off and putting it off and 5 years or 10 years or 15 years from now still be in the same situation and maybe drunk in the meantime.

We had a good friend that used to live in Tulsa but moved out here to California, he's gone now, he's dead. Name was Dan. When Dan was 29 years sober he said, "Charlie, I paid the last one of them last week." I said "Dan how do you feel". He said, "I feel about 8 foot tall". Now Dan was little bitty fellow about 5'1". He said "This is the first time in my life that I can ever remember that I don't owe somebody something for what I've stolen in the past". He said "I feel pretty good about old Dan". Dan owed a lot of money. When he was drinking he was in the oil business down in Texas. And he hooked them and he hooked them big; took him 29 years to pay them. But by golly he got it done. I'll tell you what a good con artist Dan was. When he was still drinking in Texas his wife Sara, who later became a beautiful member of Al-Anon, she took him to the state insane asylum in Big Spring, Texas to have him committed for alcoholic insanity. The head psychiatrist interviewed Sara, then he interviewed Dan and after a while Dan left and Sara was locked up. Truth! She stayed there for a year. She learned how to live better electrically and all that goody, goody stuff in there. Dan was a real con artist.

Joe...

You know Dan did pay back a lot of money. It's not a lot of money out here in California but in Oklahoma it's a lot of money. Hell of a lot of money. You guys have got plenty of money out here. We all know that. But Dan paid them all back and I spent many, many days playing bridge with Dan and Sara and he and my wife and they were teaching us the program a lot and sharing with us and they paid a lot of money back. Now you'd think that the kind of money he paid back would have kept him broke but it didn't. He prospered in other ways. He wasn't rich when he died but he had a very comfortable living throughout all those years and he prospered as a result of doing the right thing with his debts.

And again I hear some of you saying, I can hear awful good. Well Charlie that stuffs probably all right for \$1200 or \$2000 or maybe \$10,000 but what if it's a half a million? What if it's a million? What if it's 2 million? Can we pay that back? I don't know why not; we're smart enough to steal it we're probably smart enough to pay it back if we are willing to do so. You know I think we forget from step 3 on that God is with us. And if we are willing to do these things Gods going to make it possible to do so just like he did for Dan. Dan didn't die a rich man but Dan died a very comfortable man. God saw that Dan had the means to be able to pay these people back. The willingness is what it takes to do this. And it really works for people like us.

On page 79 about the middle of the page it talks about where other people are involved. And we need to really, really consider this now. Sometimes in our zeal to be forgiven for the things we've

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done in the past we make amends where we end up hurting the one we owe amends to even more. Or possibly hurt somebody else. And if we do that, then sooner or later we're going to have to go back and make amends for that too. So we have to be very, very careful where other people are involved. Over on page 80; There we have an example on page 80 where he went to the people involved and got their permission to make the amend before he made it in order to be sure that everything was going to be OK. Bottom of page 80 he starts talking about domestic troubles.

Page 81 he talks about sex outside of marriage. What are we going to do about those kinds of things? Very carefully he handles just about every conceivable situation that could come up. With the people I work with usually we can find that answer to their amends as to whether they should make them or they shouldn't and how to make it here in the big book. He covers just about all situations. The key thing I think and Joe said it a while ago is: Get somebody else's advice! I've seen too many people jump into these amends too fast, and not only hurt other people but end up destroying a family, destroying a relationship with another human being completely. You know I think that we should go to our sponsors, get their help, and get their advice before we even start making these amends; especially where it involves maybe hurting other people.

Big Book p. 83, par. 3: ***“There may be some wrongs we can never fully right.”***

You know some of these people are already dead and buried. Some of them to make the amends would hurt them or others. We can't do that.

Big Book p. 83, par. 3 cont: ***“We don't worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could. Some people cannot be seen - we sent them an honest letter. And there may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases. But we don't delay if it can be avoided. We should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping. As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone.”***

The one mistake I see us making is we got somebody and try to make our amends and they don't accept it. They didn't always accept mine. Some of them said “Charlie we didn't like you when you were drinking, not too damn crazy about you now, we'd just as soon you get out of here and leave us alone.” And when that happens to us it just crushes us. And we tend to want to go back and go back and go back and literally beg those people to forgive us. We don't need to do that. If they don't accept it there's nothing we can do about that. About all we can do is stand in readiness to make it at a later date if the opportunity comes up. But we certainly do not have to crawl before anyone. We are Gods people too.

As I said here this morning and I became painfully aware, sure fully aware this year, all those situations that I used to have that I thought needed to make amends are all taken care of, I mean every one of them and I'll tell you about two here this morning if you will.

When I was drinking I had a mobile home up north and west of Tulsa, the lake called Lake Keystone, didn't think my wife knew anything about it, nice place. One morning in the middle of the night there's a knock on the door and I finally came to the door and I opened it up and what she did... she just broke in, Phyllis did. And I really wasn't having a good time, embarrassed me in front of my girlfriend, yeah and our daughter she brought the daughter with her. I was not having a good time. Now Gail, she was affected by my drinking of course. When she was seventeen years old, just a few days after she was seventeen she got married to get away from Phyllis and I 'cause

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Phyllis was in the program of Alcoholics Anonymous some twenty-three years she's been sober thank God, but Gail was affected by this. And the book says

Big Book, pg. 83, par. 1: ***“A remorseful mumbling [that we are sorry] won't fill the bill at all.”***

Of course I tried to make a few amends verbally to Gail and you know, she said it's okay, but it wasn't until six years ago, I was sober 19 years and talking to Gail on the phone and she was living up in Columbus, Ohio and she said “Daddy a thing happened here recently...” Her sister in law had died and her husband had died unexpectedly and left two kids for someone else to raise. And she said “If something should happen like that to Jim and I would you and Mom take the kids?” That's when I knew she really had forgiven me, but it took nineteen years.

Big Book, pg. 83, par. 1: ***“A remorseful mumbling [that we are sorry] won't fill the bill at all.”***

Now I'm sober in Alcoholics Anonymous for two and a half years and Phyllis and I get back together and nine years later I'm standing at the back of the room greeting people as they come in to the meeting place that night and I look around and here's the lady of the mobile home incident. Phyllis is at the coffee pot getting coffee and she looked over her shoulder, it all happen just about that quick. I believe you'll get an opportunity to handle all these situations. God makes ***“the wherever possible”***... And some of the guys were aware of the situation and they asked what did she say and I said she didn't say anything... for about a week. And we were at another meeting and here's this lady and she was trying to get sober and coming to A.A. and again at another meeting there was this lady and Phyllis began to talk ugly to me. They'll do that you know. And I began to pay the price again, began to feel bad about it again. Well after about two or three weeks of this and one night she was settled down, she'd come back down through the ceiling and we were able to talk about this. I said “Phyllis you know I've already paid one hell of a price for this I mean I have already paid one hell of a price, physically, morally, spiritually, financially and every way you can pay. And what I'm trying to tell you is I'm not paying anymore.” I said “It's just like last months gas bill. I paid that one, and I'm not paying that one no more.”

They'll let you pay forever if you'll pay.

There comes a time when you quit paying.

We don't have to crawl before anyone.

We make our amends to the best of our ability and go on about our business.

If you're right with God in (Steps) 1, 2, and 3 (Spiritual Dimension)

If you're right with self in (Steps) 4, 5, 6 and 7 (Mental Dimension)

If you're right with you fellow man in (Steps) 8 & 9 (Physical Dimension - the world and everything in it)

For the first time as far back as we can remember we're well in all three dimensions of life. We're then put back together as God intended for us to be in the first place. If you're well in all three dimensions of life you're going to feel pretty good. I don't think it's by accident the very next thing are the promises. They come immediately after this program of action.

Big Book, pg. 83, par. 4: ***“If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through.”***

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J & C Which phase of our development? Well the (Step) 8 & 9 phase.

Big Book, pg. 83, par. 4:

“We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness.

We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace.

No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others.

That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear.

We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows.

Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change.

Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us.

We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us.

We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us, sometimes quickly (spiritual experience), sometimes slowly (spiritual awakening). They will always materialize if we work for them.”

You know I've had some very horrendous hangovers in my time and I know that you guys have too. I have thrown up sometimes something horrendously, blood and all in my drinking career. But you know those kind of experiences never caused me to want to quit drinking. What caused me to want to quit drinking were the guilt, shame and remorse that I had as a result of the harm that I did other people. And these promises began to come about in my life; they came about not in my body but in my mind. I began to experience these things in my mind and I knew of course that the program was working for me and I'm free of those things today thank God. I'm going to read them again, going to add a few words to them and the words that I'm going to add to them refer to the time when I was young, when alcohol was my friend, when I could drink it and be Fred Astaire on the dance floor and the worlds greatest lover in the backseat of a '36 Chevrolet. This is the way alcohol used to make me feel before it turned against me:

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I knew... a new freedom and a new happiness.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I did... not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I would... comprehend the word serenity and we would know peace.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol... no matter how far down the scale I had gone, I could will see how my experience would benefit others.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol... that feeling of uselessness and self-pity would disappear.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I would... lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in my fellows.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol... self-seeking would slip away.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol my... whole attitude and outlook upon life would change.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol... fear of people and of economic insecurity would leave us.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I would... intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle me.

Whenever I took a drink of alcohol I would... suddenly realize that alcohol was doing for me what I could not do for myself

Think about that a moment. No wonder I loved to drink. When you find anything that will do that much for you, you immediately become mentally addicted to the use of it, whatever it is. If it had been chocolate ice cream I would have been addicted to chocolate ice cream. If it had been Hostess Twinkies it would have been Hostess Twinkies. If it had been gambling, it would have

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been gambling. Mine was alcohol. Alcohol did for me what I could not do for myself. It was my friend and it worked for me like magic for years.

But one day alcohol turned against me and all the things I was afraid would happen to me now began to happen because of the alcohol itself. I became a very, very confused individual not knowing I was alcoholic, not knowing I would never be able to recapture these feelings from alcohol. I spent the last four, five, six years of my drinking desperately trying to get these things back from alcohol. It almost destroyed me in the process.

I came to A.A. You gave me a book. I found a little program of action in this book. I began to apply it in my life. And one day I woke up and found these promises in my head and I suddenly realized that:

The first nine steps of Alcoholics Anonymous are doing just exactly for me (promises) what alcohol used to do for me when alcohol was my friend.

See that's why I don't drink today. If I hadn't found this somewhere I would still be searching for it. I would probably have gone back to alcohol until it eventually completely consumed me and destroyed me.

But I don't need to drink because I found everything good that alcohol gave me through the first nine steps of Alcoholics Anonymous (promises).

That's the miracle of Alcoholics Anonymous.

At the same time I realize it's given me the good I also realize the first nine steps have never turned against me, alcohol did.

- I've never been placed in jail because of the first nine steps
- No lady has ever dragged me through the divorce courts because of the first nine steps
- I've never vomited, damn near did a time or two, I've never really vomited because of the first nine steps.

See, that's a miracle!

If you read those promises you'll see they all deal with the mind. None of them deal with the body.

We came here restless, irritable, discontented, filled with shame, fear, guilt, remorse, worry, anger, depression, etc.

We work the steps, we receive the promises.

**Certainly we have undergone a change in our personality.
We have undergone a spiritual awakening already.**

Now if that's true then what is the purpose of the last three steps? And many people will tell us that the last three steps are to maintain our sobriety. I will agree that they will help us stay sober.

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But the word maintenance itself is a misnomer. To maintain something is means to keep it “as is”. And another natural law applies:

Nothing in our universe ever stays “as is”.

Everything in our universe is in a constant state of change.

It's either growing or it's dying.

It's progressing or it's regressing.

It's going forward or it's going back.

Now we've made a tremendous amount of spiritual growth through the first nine steps is we've got the promises. But if we tried to maintain this eventually we start slipping back. And we start having trouble with people... then with our self... then with God. And we end up drunk all over again. Now how do I know that? I see it happen in AA over and over and over and over again. That's what happens when people like us had a good program go back and get drunk again it's because we stopped growing. And we can't stop growing, if you do you start dying. Let's look at the last three steps. Not as just maintenance steps. Not just to keep us sober, but to see if we can actually continue to grow in our relationship with God, with ourselves and with other human beings.