



JENNIFER BALLERINI, PSY.D

Helping People Build Better Relationships

SECULAR 12 STEPS

Many people struggling with substance abuse find themselves wanting to participate in a 12-step recovery program, but are put off by the overtly religious language of traditional AA/NA programs. Here are a few versions of the 12 steps that may speak to you, courtesy of the SOS Sobriety web site...

1. We accept the fact that all our efforts to stop drinking have failed.
2. We believe that we must turn elsewhere for help.
3. We turn to our fellow men and women, particularly those who have struggled with the same problem.
4. We have made a list of the situations in which we are most likely to drink.
5. We ask our friends to help us avoid those situations.
6. We are ready to accept the help they give us.
7. We honestly hope they will help.
8. We have made a list of the persons we have harmed and to whom we hope to make amends.
9. We shall do all we can to make amends, in any way that will not cause further harm.
10. We will continue to make such lists and revise them as needed.
11. We appreciate what our friends have done and are doing to help us.
12. We, in turn, are ready to help others who may come to us in the same way.



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1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe and to accept that we needed strengths beyond our awareness and resources to restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to entrust our wills and our lives to the care of the collective wisdom and resources of those who have searched before us.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to ourselves, without reservation, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. We are ready to accept help in letting go of all our defects of character.
7. With humility and openness sought to eliminate 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 meditation to improve our spiritual awareness and our understanding of the AA way of life and to discover the power to carry out that way of life.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principals in all our affairs.



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1. I have a life threatening problem. My past efforts to establish sobriety have been unsuccessful. I believe that I have choices and that my life no longer need be unmanageable. I accept responsibility for myself and my recovery.
2. I believe that a power within myself in tandem with supports and strengths beyond my own awareness and resources can restore me to a healthier, more balanced, and positive state of mind, body and soul.
3. I make a decision to entrust my will and life to the care of myself, the collective wisdom of those who have struggled with the same problem, and those in support of me.
4. I make a searching and fearless inventory of myself, of my strengths and weaknesses. I choose not to permit problems to overwhelm me, rather to focus on personal growth and the unconditional acceptance of others and myself.
5. I admit to myself, and if I choose, to another person or persons the exact nature of the negative, injurious aspects of my thinking and behavior. I explore the goodness within myself: the positive, courageous, and compassionate.
6. I focus on healing, abolishing self-blame and shame, and understanding the boundaries of my responsibilities. I remain open to the help and support of others as I address the challenge of change.
7. I embrace introspection and work towards alleviating my shortcomings. I strive for personal growth and fulfillment over perfection, and to become integrated with collective humanness.
8. I will consider those that I have harmed and those that have harmed me. I will become willing to explore my feelings regarding those harms.
9. I will make direct amends, as I deem appropriate and not injurious, to those whom I have harmed or negatively impacted and to myself.

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10. I will continue sincere and meaningful self-evaluation, and strive for personal betterment.

11. I will seek to improve my awareness and understanding of myself, my addiction, and of other individuals and organizations with the common goal of arresting alcohol addiction.

12. With newfound acceptance and insight I will try to keep awareness, and compassion for others and myself, in the fore.