

12 STEPS TO RECOVERY

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STEP ONE:
ADMITTED WE WERE POWERLESS OVER _____;
THAT OUR LIVES HAD BECOME UNMANAGEABLE.

Honesty is acceptance. I can handle most things once I accept them for what they really are. Denial is the inability to accept things. You can't correct the problem if there is no problem, and denial will always say there is no problem. I like to call it an inability to get honest with ourselves.

A. A. is a spiritual program of "rigorous honesty". I was an alcoholic for many years but could never get honest enough to admit it. I thought alcohol was giving me power and didn't want to admit that it was a false power. Any addiction offers a false sense of power since the only true power is that which comes from God.

My pride wouldn't let me admit that I had a problem with alcohol; but what was really behind my pride was the fear of failure. I needed some sort of power to overcome my fear of failure and thought I had found it in the alcohol. When I drank I had no fear so I couldn't let go of the only source of power I knew.

SEARCHING

Once I became addicted to the power of alcohol, my life became unmanageable. "Unmanageable" meant my life had drifted away from normal drinking, normal living, and normal thinking. The thing I had feared the most and tried to hide with pride had happened to me...I failed in managing my own life.

My next move was to go to all the profes-

sionals I could find for some sort of help. They tried to scare me into getting honest about my drinking. I went to the doctor and he said, "Mike, if you continue drinking you will die". I went to the therapist and he said, "Mike, if you continue drinking you will go insane". I went to the priest and he said, "Mike, if you continue to drink you will go to hell". What I heard was like pouring gas on a fire, "Mike, you're crazy, dying, and going to hell". I might as well drink!

By this time in my life I really believed I was an alcoholic, but refused to take any action to do anything about it. This led to a mixture of self-pity and resentment that sounded something

like this, "Poor me, I'm an alcoholic and it's your fault". Not only did I refuse to admit that I had an alcohol problem, but now I began to blame everyone else for all the other problems in my life. Not until I realized that all

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FINDING THE WRONG PLACES

In the 12-step program we say that we are going to practice these principles in all our affairs. To practice the principle of honesty in **all** our affairs means we not only get honest with ourselves, but with others as well. There is a God-given need in all of us to be accepted by others. Remember the song, *LOOKING FOR LOVE IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES*...that was me. I would say anything, do anything, or be anything just to be accepted and loved. I became a liar and a pretender so that what you saw was not what I was really like. Alcoholics and addicts

!2 Steps to Recovery - Step 1

are some of the worst liars in the world. They will lie when the truth would serve them better, and do it just to practice. Every lie I told was designed to make me look good in comparison to others.

PAINFUL TRUTH



We know that the truth, no matter how painful it may be, will always set us free. A lie, however, will have the opposite effect of putting us in bondage no matter how small it may seem. If I'm not honest with my neighbor, then I'm really not honest with myself either. If we are going to be honest with ourselves we must also be honest with others. Otherwise, we can never enjoy a loving relationship with anyone.

Once we get honest with others, and ourselves we must finally get honest with God.

I could never get honest with God simply because I was too damn busy playing God. I lived in such a fantasy world that I thought I was the next best thing to God and sometimes, even thought I was God. I took all the glory for the good and blamed God for all the bad.

For many years I thought the old saying, "to thine own self be true" meant if it feels good do it. We alcoholics are high-energy people who live on our feelings. I would do anything to make myself feel good even if it meant lying to myself, others, and God. I have since discovered that if being true to myself makes me false to God, then I am ultimately the loser because I'm really in rebellion. I must learn to be honest with God about my feelings and put His will ahead of my own selfishness.

Getting honest with God is simply putting Him first. For example, I took pride in helping

people who were in need until I discovered my motives for helping people were to glorify Mike rather than God. I had to be honest with God and admit that I really wanted the glory that belonged to him. The same kind of thing happened when I decided to study prayer. I read every book I could

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find on the subject of prayer until I realized I was studying prayer for the wrong reason. I thought that if I could figure out when and where prayer worked that I could control God anytime I wanted. Today I don't honestly know how prayer works, I just know that it does and I thank God for it every day.

To get honest with God means that we admit that our way doesn't work and that his ways do. I've learned to keep it simple...God's way works, mine doesn't. I don't try to understand His ways, I just try to learn and follow them. God's greatest gift to me is wisdom, which is applied knowledge. God's knowledge, not mine. God's ways not mine. God's attitude, not mine.

We felt we were doomed to die and saw how powerless we were to help ourselves; but that was good, for then we put everything into the hands of God, who alone could save us.

2 Corinthians 1:9 (L.A.B.)