



Step 12



A New Way of Life

Early in my sobriety I could never have imagined how important Step Twelve would be in my program. Step Twelve is a beautiful step - as Bill W. says in *The Twelve and Twelve*, "The Joy of Living is the Theme of AA's Twelfth Step". Step Twelve focuses on service, spiritual growth, and continued personal development. Step Twelve is the culmination of all of the hard work and transformations that have taken place in Steps 1 through 11. It recognizes that we have changed, through a spiritual experience, and that we are ready and willing to share with others the gratification of sober living.

Is this an easy step? Absolutely not! It requires action and effort and perseverance and willingness. But the rewards are incredible!

Step Twelve challenges us to carry the message through service. My sponsor often says that service work is the glue that helps AA stay together. She reminds me that this step calls us to get out of self and put others first - an important change for most alcoholics. Step Twelve ensures that the AA fellowship continues. Whether a member does a really big thing or just a small task, each member helping the next creates a self-sustaining cycle of recovery.

In my experience, I have had many opportunities in meeting this challenge of being of service.. As a newcomer, my "carrying the message" was merely to assist as much as I could in small ways. I did the usual chores, such as making coffee, cleaning ashtrays at the WSFC, providing rides to those who might need one, setting up for meetings and events, and of course, greeting. As I became more comfortable in my thoughts and in understanding what it takes to maintain physical and emotional sobriety, I began to share at meetings and even lead meetings!

The biggest problem or challenge I faced in accepting a service request was when I was first asked to tell my story. As much as I had experience in talking in front of large groups because of my occupation, the thought of baring all in front of my fellows was quite intimidating. With the help of my sponsor, I was able to put together some ideas that reflect experience, strength, and hope. As I did this, it provided me with the opportunity to examine where I had been, what happened, and what life is like now. It deepened my self awareness. And it reminded me of why I strive to stay sober.

Probably the most rewarding service work I have had the opportunity to experience is in being a sponsor. By explaining the steps as I understand them and reading AA literature and discussing it with a sponsee, working with others as a sponsor keeps the principles of the program fresh in my mind and in my heart. This work reminds me where I have come from, helping me stay humble and vigilant in my recovery. It also has broadened my perspective on life, exposing me to diverse people and situations, helping me build empathy. Watching others recover strengthens my faith in the program and in the possibility of change. And the bonus is having met and become close to so many amazing women.

Step Twelve supercharges recovery! There are so many personal benefits in working Step Twelve. It has helped me strengthen my own sobriety. Giving to others reinforces your own recovery, emphasizing over and over again why a sober life is the best life I can have. It offers relapse resistance. Step Twelve also creates accountability and responsibility. You live the program, not just talk about it. You show up and do what is needed. Step Twelve builds a renewed sense of purpose. Doing service work boosts your self confidence by seeing the impact of your actions. When I first came into the program, I felt unworthy and unwanted. Doing service work helped me realize that I do have some things to offer and can be a useful member of society. I can help others find freedom from addiction. Step Twelve has helped me connect with others and feel part of a community which is so different from the dark days of isolation I had suffered. (Continued on the second page.)

Step Twelve is all about finding a new way of life that is genuinely meaningful and full of happiness. This is the paradox of recovery: you receive joy by giving it away. This joy comes from applying AA's principles - honesty, humility, integrity, patience, love - in all areas of life. You begin to handle problems with grace and less fear. Daily life, with all of its ups and downs, feels worth living. There is joy in simply being present and useful. I am very grateful for the wisdom of our founding fathers in providing us with a final step that focuses on living with proper values and helping others. - Michelle H

*Back to
the Basics*



"God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and wisdom to know the difference".



When I first came into AA, I couldn't imagine life without drinking, let alone helping someone else. Step 12 talks about a "spiritual awakening," and for a long time I didn't believe that applied to me. I thought an awakening had to be dramatic, maybe even religious. But looking back, I saw it in the small, steady changes—the way I'd wake up without shame, the way I could look men and women in the eye again, and how I learned to be honest about who I was and what I'd done. That for me, is an awakening. Carrying the message has turned out to be a great gift of recovery. I remember the first time I sat down with a newcomer and told my story. I was afraid I wouldn't have much to offer. But as I spoke, I realized just how much I had changed. Sharing wasn't just for them—it reminded me of where I came from and why I can't go back. Even simple acts, like setting up chairs, making coffee, or picking up the phone when someone needs to talk, have become lifelines—for both of us. Service doesn't have to be grand; it just has to come from the heart. The hardest part, though, has been practicing these principles in all areas of my life. It's easy to talk about honesty and humility in a meeting; it's harder to live that way at work when I made a mistake, or at home, however every time I try, I feel I grow a little stronger little freer from the burdens of the past. For me, Step 12 isn't just about staying sober. It's about service, honesty, and becoming the kind of person I never thought I could be.

-Anonymous

Save the Dates!



Attention GSR's
December 13th
N.I.A. 20 District
Winter Assembly

Hosted by District 43
Doors open at 8 a.m.
Meeting begins at 9 am
Lunch will be Kebabs
\$10 Per Person
Lord of Life



Lutheran Church
40W605 IL-38
Elburn, IL. 60119

More information
can be found@
[aa-nia.org/event/
na-20-
winter-assembly](http://aa-nia.org/event/na-20-winter-assembly)

December 17th
District 43 Monthly
Business meeting

7-8 p.m.
(Third Wednesday of
each month)
ZOOM MEETING ID:
96566590236
Your voice makes a
difference!

*Season's
Greetings*



A.A. members in District 43 of Northern Illinois publish this newsletter. Admissions are to keep members informed of local events, service activities and to share experiences and strength in recovery from alcoholism, and its impact on our families. Ideas are those of the authors and not necessarily those of A.A. PLEASE SEND US any articles, ideas, or questions to groupvineeditor@gmail.com. Comments are most welcomed and encouraged!