

The Principles of the Program

- 1) **Defeat** (Step 1)
Here the acceptance of our powerlessness and the knowledge of our *defeat* are paramount, I cannot make it on my own; “We” begin a life-long process. Ego deflation is the removal of a belief in separation. We are not alone or separate.
- 2) **Open Mindedness** (Step 2)
Step 2 is the smallest beginning of a pattern of faith *and open mindedness* that builds; first *faith* in the program, where we first see *a power greater than ourselves* at work. To be Open Minded is the key.
- 3) **Surrender** (Step 3)
When we walk through the doors of our first meeting or even with our first call for help something begins to happen. That “something” begins to become clear by the time of our decision in Step 3. These Principles became clearer when we decided to *surrender* to, and *trust* in the process of the steps, *a power greater than ourselves*.
- 4) **Honesty** (Step 4)
It can be argued that each of these “Principles” is buried in all the steps; “Honesty” is the key. However, Step 4 begins a lifetime of *honesty* and *self-survey*.
- 5) **Confession** (Step 5)
Our AA journey begins with the *courage* to come to AA and ask for help. For some of us this journey begins with our first meeting. For others of us when we ask for help from a sponsor, but certainly for all of us that courage is there by the time we begin the *confession* of our “short comings” in Step 5.
- 6) **Willingness** (Step 6)
All our answers will be found deep inside, *willingness* is the key. We must be willing to go against our will and the demand of our self-will to use our defects of character.
- 7) **Humility** (Step 7)
Step 7 reminds us to give up our attempts at fixing ourselves and turn it over to God, an act of *humility* and open-mindedness that most of us never understood.
- 8) **Forgiveness** (Step 8)
Forgiveness begins here when we release our resentments and hurts “real or imagined” and become ready to make our amends.
- 9) **Restitution** (Step 9)
Amend, means “to mend” our past behaviour. Our new found life long experience of “mending” and making *restitution* for our past (and not so past) actions begins on Step 9. This is where the “promises” are received giving us an experience of **freedom** never before experienced.
- 10) **Stewardship** (Steps 10)
The so-called “maintenance steps” of the program begin with Step 10, teaching us perseverance and stewardship. *Perseverance* is just plain “keeping on, keeping on. Where *stewardship* is the learning of the necessity for the maintenance of the “Promises” gained by working the previous 9 Steps.
- 11) **Consciousness** (Step 11)
Prayer and meditation are a wonderful source of *enlightenment*. Our enlightenment can only come to a conscious mind. Great benefit comes from the *patient* use of these tools as we give up our desire for instant gratification. We must “Let Go and Let God”. We become more conscious of our beliefs, of our actions, and attitudes. And most importantly we become more and more conscious of God. “A spiritual awakening.”
- 12) **Service** (Step 12)
We learn the true meaning of the word *charity*, as we carry the message through *service* and become a beacon to others in AA, by the obvious changes that begin to take place in our lives. In step twelve it is made clear that we must “give it away to keep it”. “Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.”