

Making a Decision

Being convinced, we were at Step Three, which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him. Just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do?

The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collusion with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. Most people try to live by self-propulsion. Each person is like an actor who tried to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery, and the rest of the players in his own way. If his arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as he wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including himself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful. In trying to make these arrangements our actor may sometimes be quite virtuous. He may be kind, considerate, patient, generous; even modest and self-sacrificing. On the other hand, he may be mean, egotistical, selfish, and dishonest. But as with most humans, he is likely to have varied traits.

What usually happens? The show doesn't come off very well. He begins to think life doesn't treat him right. He decides to exert himself more. He becomes, on the next occasion, still more demanding or gracious, as the case may be. Still the play does not suit him. Admitting he may be somewhat at fault, he is sure that other people are more to blame. He becomes angry, indignant, self-pitying. What is his basic trouble? Is he not really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind? Is he not a victim of the delusion that he can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if he only manages well? Is it not evident to all the rest of the players that these are the things he wants? And do not his actions make each of them wish to retaliate, snatching all they can get out of the show? Is he not, even in his best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony?

Our actor is self-centered egocentric, as people like to call it nowadays. He is like the retired business man who lolls in the Florida sunshine in the winter complaining of the sad state of the nation; the minister who sighs over the sins of the twentieth century; politicians and reformers who are sure all would be Utopia if the rest of the world would only behave; the outlaw safe cracker who thinks society has wronged him; and the alcoholic who has lost all and is locked up. Whatever our protestations, are not most of us concerned with ourselves, our resentments, or our self-pity?

Selfishness self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which has placed us in a position to be hurt.

So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it will kill us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid. Many of us had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but we could not live up to them even though we would have liked to. Neither could we reduce our self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on our own power. We had to have Gods help. This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.

Some Examples of Fears

Abandonment	Dying	Losing Jobs Losing
AIDS	Economic Insecurity	Wife
Alcohol	Failure	Men or Women Not
Animals Authority	Future	Fitting In
Being Bad	Getting Old	Not Being Enough Of
Being Found Out	God	The Unknown
Being alone Being	Government Heights	Parents
on My Own Being	Homosexuality	Past
Stupid Being Ugly	Hostility	Physical Pain Police
Confrontation	Humiliation	Poverty
Creditors	Inadequacy	Races (other)
Crying	Insanity	Rejection
Darkness	Insects	Relapse
Death Disapproval	Insecurity	Responsibility
Disease	Intimacy	Self Expression Sex
Doctors Drowning	I.R.S.	Sin
Drugs	Jails	Stealing
	Loneliness	Success
	Losing Children Losing	Violence
	Husband	

Some Examples of Defects With Abbreviations

Apathy (AP)	Immaturity (IMM)	Playing Victim (PV)
Arrogance (AR)	Insecure (INS)	Projecting (PJ)
Abusive (AB)	Intolerant (INT)	Rage (RA)
Competitive (COM)	Impatient (I)	Procrastinating (PC)
Critical (CR)	Intolerant (IT)	Selfish (S)
Cruelty (CU)	Jealousy (JE)	Self Centered (SC)
Defensive (D)	Manipulative (M)	Self Pity (SP)
Defiance (DEF)	Over-reactive (O)	Self Righteous (SR)
Dishonest (DIS)	Over-Responsible (OR)	Self Seeking (SS)
EGO (E)	Overly Sensitive (OS)	Spiritual Snotty (SSN)
Envious (ENV)	Passive (PS)	Stubborn (STB)
Grandiosity (G)	People Pleasing (PP)	Teasing (T)
Hostility (H)	Perfectionism (PF)	Vindictive (V)
Hypocrisy (HYP)	Playing God (PG)	Violent (VIO)

Don't forget the original defects, the 7 Deadly Sins

Pride is excessive belief in one's own abilities, that interferes with the individual's recognition of the grace of God. It has been called the sin from which all others arise. Pride is also known as Vanity.

Envy is the desire for others' traits, status, abilities, or situation.

Gluttony is an inordinate desire to consume more than that which one requires.

Lust is an inordinate craving for the pleasures of the body.

Anger is manifested in the individual who spurns love and opts instead for fury. It is also known as Wrath.

Greed is the desire for material wealth or gain, ignoring the realm of the spiritual. It is also called Avarice or Covetousness.

Sloth is the avoidance of physical or spiritual work.

4th Step Sex Inventory Worksheet

Taken from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

Whom had we hurt? (Page 69)	Where had we been selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate? (Page 69)	Did we arouse jealousy, suspicion or bitterness? (Page 69)	Where were we at fault? Was it selfish or not? (Page 69)	What should we have done instead? (Page 69)

4th Step Resentment Inventory Worksheet taken from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous

I'm Resentful At; List people, institutions & principles - Page 64	The Cause Asked ourselves why are we angry - Page 64	Affects My: (S) Self-Esteem, (P) Pocketbook (A) Ambitions, (PR) Personal Relations (SR) Sex Relations - Page 65					Where Was I to Blame? Whenwesaw ourfaults we listed them (defects of character) - Page 67	Fears; Whether resentment was in connection or not. Why did we have them? - Page 68
		S	P	A	P	S		