

STEP STUDY OUTLINE AND ASSIGNMENT SHEET

This Step Study Outline has been passed from hand to hand at meetings over the years and is posted here as an assistance to you. It does not represent an officially endorsed program of the Betty Ford Center.

Following is a suggested assignment sheet and outline for use by the Step Study Team. The time given for any particular study can be extended or shortened as each team chooses. It is suggested that before the study is completed, each team member will have read the entire text of the book, *ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS* (referred to in this Outline as the Big Book).

This Step Study is a suggested format for members of a group wishing to DO the steps exactly as it is suggested in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. By committing to do this Step Study process, each member must understand that they are committing to do ALL the steps. The outline is thorough and comprehensive. Some groups have reported a continual rotation through these Steps for a number of years with profound results. Typically groups meet 1½ hours per week, on a designated night, for 16 weeks. Some groups adapt the schedule to extend for a year. Others report that once the team concludes the 16-week process, members then pass it on by starting new groups. The group conscious can guide the decisions that work best for you.

This Step Study Outline, widely used, has supported groups with as few as 4 participants and up to 16 participants. It should be understood that everyone will probably have one or more absences, and perfect attendance is not absolutely required. A smaller group may have more flexibility in planning around participants' schedules. It is most helpful that everyone be present as often as possible and that communication develop among the team members so they know how the other team members are progressing and how they are feeling about the team study.

WEEK #1

At the initial meeting, the team members should have read the Preface and Forewords at the beginning of the Big Book

Read and discuss the Doctor's Opinion at the meeting. Were you aware that your illness affected both your mind and your body? Do you believe or can you accept the concept of an allergic reaction to alcohol? What is an allergy? Do you agree with the concept of hospitalization? Have you ever experienced the phenomena of craving as described on page 26? Did you like the effect of alcohol? Did you reach the point where you could not differentiate the "true from the false"? Did your alcoholic life seem normal? The doctor seems to say that a "psychic change" must occur - - what is a psychic change?

Can you accept the fact that alcoholism "has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated"? These and other questions will occur to the group, and each should be discussed in some depth.

WEEK #1 ASSIGNMENT

Begin to note your own reaction to the matters set forth in the Doctor's Opinion. In summary, begin to write "how was I powerless over alcohol". It is equally important to write any reservation you may have that you are, in fact, powerless over alcohol.

Read "Chapter One, Bill's Story" and be prepared to discuss this matter as it applies to your life in the second week.

WEEK #2

Chapter One, "Bill's Story". Did you ever ask "Was I crazy" (page 5)? Did you ever feel the remorse, horror and hopelessness of the next morning (page 6)? Did your mind ever race uncontrollably (page 6)? Did you ever seek oblivion (page 6)? Did you feel lonely (page 8)? Did you feel fear (page 8)?

What was your reaction to religion, the church and God? (page 10)

Note what happened to Bill's prejudice when he began to apply his own concept of God (on page 12). Did you know that "nothing more was required of me to make my beginning" than willingness or a willingness to believe? Doesn't Bill essentially take the First through Eleventh Step at this time (page 13)? (Has your common sense changed as described on page 13)? Bill really takes the Twelfth Step on page 14, doesn't he? The program worked in all of Bill's affairs (page 15).

The foregoing are simply samples of questions that may occur or points that may be raised. What was of particular significance to you in this chapter? What did you find that you could not agree with or which you could not accept?

WEEK #2 ASSIGNMENT

Read Chapter Two and be prepared to discuss how you react to this chapter the following week. Continue to write how you are powerless over alcohol and begin to consider what you can truly "manage" in your life. As thoughts occur to you about whether you can or cannot manage life – and in particular your life - write down your thoughts in your notebook.

WEEK #3

Chapter Two, "There Is A Solution". Again, having read this chapter, what parts of the chapter can you apply to your life? What is your reaction to the membership of Alcoholics Anonymous? Did your alcoholism "engulf all whose lives touched the sufferer's" (page 18)? What was their reaction? Do you see how you can reach another alcoholic (page 18)? Note on page 20 the book answers the question, "What do I have to do"? How you been asked the questions on page 20 by yourself or other people? What were the answers? From your examination of yourself in the past weeks and your reading of this chapter, are you a "real alcoholic" (page 21)? If not, why not? Discuss this with your team. Did you have control over alcohol; did you do absurd, incredible and tragic things while drinking? Were you a Jekyll and Hyde? These questions and observations on page 21 may help you answer the questions you have been writing about your powerlessness over alcohol.

Why did we drink the way that we did (page 22)? Why do we take that one drink? Why can't we stay on the wagon? What has become of the common sense and willpower that we still sometimes display with respect to other matters? Did you ask yourself these questions? Had you lost the power of choice described on page 24? Have you ever said, "What's the use anyhow" (or something similar)? There is a solution (page 25). The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences. Read and understand Appendix II and the rest of this paragraph because it is an outstanding summary of what happens in the program.

Our alternative to the solution is found on page 25. We either accept help or remain in denial.

Note that Appendix II is referred to again on page 27.

WEEK #3 ASSIGNMENT

Read Chapter 3 and discuss how it applies to your life for the next week.

WEEK #4

Chapter Three, "More About Alcoholism." Did you have the obsession as described on page 30? Did you know that was an illusion?

Did you try to control your drinking, and can you diagnose yourself (page 31)? Has your writing listed those things you attempted to do to control your use of alcohol and your failures? Do you have a reservation of any kind or lurking notion that you will some day be immune to alcohol (page 33?)

Can you identify with the mental states that precede a relapse into drinking, and do you understand that these mental states are the crux of the problem (page 35)? Do you understand why an actual or potential alcoholic will be absolutely unable to stop drinking on the basis of self-knowledge (pages 39, 40, 41 and 42)?

Note the doctor's reaction to alcoholism on page 43. Also note the solution at the bottom of page 43.

WEEK #4 ASSIGNMENT

Read and be prepared to discuss Chapter Four next week. By now you should have completed writing most of your memories about why you are powerless over alcohol and why your life is unmanageable. If you have difficulty with these problems, discuss this with the team members or your sponsor.

WEEK #5

Chapter Four, "We Agnostics." Do you accept the fact that you have only two alternatives if you are an alcoholic - - an alcoholic death or to live a life on a spiritual basis (page 44)?

Have you lacked power to manage life (page 45)? Note that the main object of this book is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself that will solve your problem.

Have you had honest doubts and prejudices about God (page 45)? What has been your reaction to the word "GOD"? What will He look like, what will it be like when you find Him, and where did you get these ideas? Had you abandoned the idea of God entirely (page 45)? Are you willing to lay aside your previous beliefs or prejudice and express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than yourself? What is your concept of God (page 46)?

Do you now believe or are you even willing to believe that there is a Power greater than yourself (page 47)? Note that the book once again refers you to Appendix II at this point. What is it that Appendix II says that is indispensable?

Have you been open-minded or have you been obstinate, sensitive and unreasonably prejudiced about discussions about God (page 48)?

What reservations do you have when you have read this chapter?

Have you been biased and unreasonably prejudiced about the realm of the spirit (page 51)?

Did your ideas work - - will the God idea work (page 52)?

DO YOU FEEL YOU'RE PREPARED TO ABANDON FEAR AND SEEK AN ANSWER TO THE CONCEPT THAT GOD IS EITHER ALL OR NOTHING?

Do you believe that when we are close to God, He reveals Himself to us (see page 57). Remember what it said on page 28? If what we have learned, felt and seen means anything at all, it means that all of us, whatever our race, creed or color are children of a living Creator with whom we may form a relationship upon simple and understandable terms as soon as we are willing and honest enough to try.

WEEK #5 ASSIGNMENT

In your notebook write what you can believe about a Power greater than yourself. On another page, write what you cannot believe about God. As you go forward from this point, it is those things that you believe or which fit into your concept of God which you will be using and you can be comforted in knowing that there is guidance on page 46 about how our concept of God affects the process. Read and be prepared to discuss Chapter Five in the book next week.

WEEK #6

Chapter Five, "How It Works". Discuss the materials contained in this chapter from page 58 to page 63 (i.e., through the part which concludes Step 3).

Do you question whether you are capable of being honest with yourself? (If you do - - you're not.) Note the state of mind you're asked to have when you start the Steps - - honesty, fearlessness, thoroughness, and a willingness to go to any length. What do half measures avail us? Are you convinced that a life run on self-will can hardly be a success (page 60)? Can you

see the effects of self-centeredness in your life? How have you been self-centered? List examples in your workbook and discuss them with the group.

Did you know that you could not reduce self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on your own power (page 62)? Are you willing to make the decisions set forth at the bottom of page 62?

Note the promises that follow the taking of Step 3 as described at the top of page 63. Are you willing to take this step?

Many groups at this point commit one to the other that they are going to take this Step and recite the prayer that is set forth on page 63 together.

WEEK #6 ASSIGNMENT

Continue to list places where you can see that you are self-centered in your workbook and commence the Fourth Step by simply making a grudge list. To accomplish this, use the step-by-step summary of the inventory process, and your assignment this week is to take Instruction 1 of that process.

WEEK #7

Discuss Instruction 1 of the inventory process and the material referred to in the Step 4 guide. Next week you should take Instructions 2,3,4,5 and 6.

WEEK #8

Discuss the findings you have made on Instructions 1 through 6 of the inventory process and any problems you are having. Then take Instruction 7 and complete any work you have not completed on Instruction 1 through 7 for the next week.

WEEK #9

Discuss the work you have done in Instructions 1 through 7 of the inventory process and any problems that you are having. The group should assist anyone in taking the inventory that is having difficulty, and this may include spending some time with them during the week.

WEEK #9 ASSIGNMENT

Assignment for the next week is to do Instructions 8 and 9 on the step-by-step summary of the inventory process.

WEEK #10

Review your writing about Instructions 8 and 9 and discuss any problems that you or any other member of the group is having.

WEEK #10 ASSIGNMENT

Assignment for the next week is to complete Instructions 10, 11 and 12 of the step-by-step summary of the inventory process.

WEEK #11

Review and discuss your writing on sex in generalities - - no specifics and “no war stories” are needed, lest matters of pride and self-centeredness become involved in the meeting.

WEEK #11 ASSIGNMENT

Your assignment for the next week is to find someone to take a 5th Step with and make a specific date for this event. Also, read Chapter Six and be prepared to discuss this chapter.

WEEK #12

Chapter Six, “Into Action.” Discuss page 72 through page 75. Has everyone had a good experience with this Step? Are there reservations about doing the 5th Step and, if so, what are they? Have you skimmed on the program to this point? Take your 5th Step.

WEEK #12 ASSIGNMENT

Read Chapters Six and Seven, “In the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.”

WEEK #13

Chapters Six and Seven, “In the Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions.” Discuss these chapters along the lines you have previously discussed the earlier chapters in the book, “Alcoholics Anonymous”. Particularly, you should attempt to itemize and list those defects of character which you have and that you recognize stand in the way of your usefulness to your fellows. Which defects of character do you have which do not stand in the way of your usefulness to your fellows? Discuss willingness and humility and what they mean in context with these Steps.

WEEK #13 ASSIGNMENT

Next week be prepared to discuss the material on page 76 through 84 and read the Eighth and Ninth chapters in the “Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions”.

WEEK #14

Discuss the material you have read. Do you have misgivings about these Steps (page 76)? Do you feel different about going to some of these people? What is your real purpose (page 77)? Is timing important in this Step?

Can you approach the people on your eighth Step list in a helpful and forgiving spirit (page 77)? See pages 66-67. Do you recognize that nothing worthwhile can be accomplished until you clean your side of the street (page 78)? Is it important that you be praised for your ninth Step efforts (page 78)? Do you understand the importance of losing your fear of creditors (page 78)? Have you discussed any criminal offenses you may have committed and which may still be open with your sponsor? If not, you certainly should do so (see page 79). Do you understand how your ninth Step may harm other people (see page 79)? Have you studied your domestic troubles and the harm that may have been caused in these areas? Do you understand the importance of not creating further harm by creating further jealousy and resentment in a “tell all” session (page 81)?

What does the author mean when he says that the spiritual life is not a theory - - we have to live it (page 83)?

Do you see that in making the ninth Step calls you should be sensible, tactful, considerate and humble without being servile or scraping (page 83)?

Are you experiencing the promises set forth on pages 83 and 84?

WEEK #14 ASSIGNMENT

Note at this point the book assumes that you made a list of people you had harmed when you did your fourth Step inventory. If this has not been done, you should certainly make such a list at this point.

Next week, discuss the balance of Chapter Six.

WEEK #15

What are the specific instructions outlined for the taking of Step 10? Note the changes that occur in our lives as described on page 84. Is this the sanity referred to in Step 2? What is the proper use of willpower (page 85)?

What is the suggestion for taking the eleventh Step on a daily basis? What do you watch for? Do you practice this Step on a daily basis?

Do you follow the procedure outlined on pages 86 and 87 regarding your daily morning meditations and the way you proceed through the day? Has your attitude about a Power greater than yourself changed since you studied the chapter, “To the Agnostics”?

Do you believe the process works as described on page 88?

WEEK #15 ASSIGNMENT

Read the chapter, “Working with Others”.

WEEK #16

Read and discuss the chapter, “Working With Others” at this meeting. What are the step-by-step requirements for a twelfth Step? Have you ever tried this? Share your experience with the group. In cases where the alcoholic has not responded, have you worked with his family? Did you offer them your way of life, and what results did you have in this situation?

Do you believe that you should get well without regard to the people around you? Is this the basis of the statement that this is a “selfish program”? Is it really a selfish program in the true sense of those words?

Chapter Eight, “To the Wives”, Chapter Nine, “The Family Afterwards”, Chapter Ten, “To Employers”, and Chapter Eleven, “A Vision for You”, are all chapters designed to teach you how to practice these principles in all your affairs. These chapters contain many spiritual truths, which apply to all of us and should be read. Your group may decide whether or not you wish to discuss one or more of these chapters to conclude your Step study.

A reading of the last portion of the book on page 164 is a fitting way to end your Step study team. Haven’t you really had the benefit of a contact with those who wrote this book? Don’t you know now where you should really rely?

WEEK #16 ASSIGNMENT

Find some new members of Alcoholics Anonymous who need this program and do another Step team study with them.