

The Alcoholics Anonymous Beginners' Meetings

Handouts for the Four One-Hour Sessions

Session # 1: Overview and Step One

Handouts for the Four One-Hour Sessions

Minneapolis Record Indicates that 75% are Successful in A.A.

Suggested Guidelines for Beginners' Meetings

Directions for Taking the Twelve Steps

Session # 2: Steps Two, Three and Four

Moral Inventory (Blank)

Moral Inventory (Example)

Explanation of Terms-Assets and Liabilities Checklist

Session # 3: Steps Five, Six, Seven, Eight and Nine

Test for Self-will vs. God's Will

How to Listen to God Pamphlet

Session # 4: Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve

(No Handouts)

Note: Many Meeting Leaders distribute the handouts as a stapled packet along with separate Moral Inventory sheets for Session # 2.

MINNEAPOLIS RECORD INDICATES THAT 75 % ARE SUCCESSFUL IN A.A.

The Minneapolis Group, in March, 1943, inaugurated a system for keeping a record of the sobriety of members from three months on up. As a result, the following exact percentages have been arrived at:

For the Year 1945

5-yr. members	100 %	successful	0 %	slipped
4-yr. "	100 %	"	0 %	"
3-yr. "	100 %	"	0 %	"
2-yr. "	89 %	"	11 %	"
18-mo. "	90 %	"	10 %	"
1-yr. "	80 %	"	20 %	"
9-mo. "	82 %	"	18 %	"
6-mo. "	70 %	"	30 %	"
3-mo. "	48 %	"	52 %	"

(Of those who slipped in 1945, only 16½ % have worked back to any degree of sobriety.)

Over-all Percentages

1943	78 %	successful	22 %	slipped
1944	83 %	"	17 %	"
1945	77 %	"	23 %	"

Suggested Guidelines for Beginners' Meetings

For the Newcomer:

1. Your primary obligation is to attend all four sessions. If you need assistance with transportation, your sponsor or sharing partner will help you make the necessary arrangements.
2. We will read the appropriate parts of the "Big Book" to you, specifically those passages that relate to taking the Twelve Steps.

If you have brought a "Big Book" and are able to follow along, please do so. We will announce each passage by page number and paragraph before we read it.

If you don't have a book, we ask that you participate by listening. We will guide you through all Twelve Steps as written by the "Big Book" authors. Please follow their directions, as we read them to you, and you too will recover from alcoholism.

3. Although a written inventory is part of the process, this doesn't mean you have to do the writing. The person who is sponsoring you through these sessions can help you write your inventory, or he or she can write it for you.

For the Sponsor or Sharing Partner:

1. Your time commitment to the newcomer is approximately four weeks. After that, both you and the newcomer will be expected to assist others through the Twelve Steps.
2. During the next month, call or visit the newcomer frequently to offer encouragement and moral support.
3. Attend the weekly Beginners' Meetings with the newcomer.
4. Offer to help the newcomer with his or her inventory. If necessary, fill out the checklist based on what the newcomer tells you. Keep in mind, the newcomer may not be able to complete the inventory without your help.
5. Share your guidance with the newcomer so he or she can see how two-way prayer is working in your life.
6. Based on your personal experience, answer any questions the newcomer may have about the A.A. program or the A.A. way of life.

The Directions for Taking the Twelve Steps

Step 1 *We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.*

This Step is described on Roman numeral pages 25–32 (xxv–xxxii) and on pages 1–43.

[The directions for taking Step One are on page 30, paragraph 2, lines 1–3.]

Step 2 *Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.*

This Step is described on pages 44–60.

[The directions for taking Step Two are on page 47, paragraph 2, lines 1–3.]

Step 3 *Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.*

This Step is described on pages 60–63.

[The directions for taking Step Three are on page 63, paragraph 2, lines 1–8.]

Step 4 *Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.*

This Step is described on pages 63–71.

[The directions for taking Step Four are on page 64, paragraph 1, lines 1–9; paragraph 2, lines 1–6 (*Assets and Liabilities Checklist*); page 64, paragraph 3, lines 1–2, 6–9 (*Resentments*); page 68, paragraph 1, lines 1–3 (*Fears*); and page 69, paragraph 1, lines 1–6 (*Harms*).]

Step 5 *Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*

This Step is described on pages 72–75.

[The directions for taking Step Five are on page 75, paragraph 1, lines 1–4; paragraph 2, lines 1–2.]

Step 6 *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*

This Step is described on pages 75–76.

[The directions for taking Step Six are on page 76, paragraph 1, lines 3–5.]

Step 7 *Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.*

This Step is described on page 76.

[The directions for taking Step Seven are on page 76, paragraph 2, lines 1–7.]

The Directions for Taking the Twelve Steps

(Continued)

- Step 8** *Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.*
This Step is described on page 76.
[The directions for taking Step Eight are on page 76, paragraph 3, lines 2-5.]
- Step 9** *Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*
This Step is described on pages 76-84.
[The directions for taking Step Nine are on page 76, paragraph 3, lines 6-11.]
- Step 10** *Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*
This Step is described on pages 84-85.
[The directions for taking Step Ten are on page 84, paragraph 2, lines 1-14.]
- Step 11** *Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.*
This Step is described on pages 85-88.
[The directions for taking Step Eleven are on page 86, paragraph 1, lines 1-14 (*When We Retire*); paragraph 2, lines 1-5 (*Upon Awakening*); page 87, paragraph 3, lines 1-3, page 88, lines 1-7 (*Throughout The Day*).]
- Step 12** *Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*
This Step is described on pages 89-103 and pages 567-568.
[The directions for taking Step Twelve are on page 89, paragraph 1, lines 4-5.]
(Instructions on how to carry A.A.'s lifesaving message of recovery to others can be found throughout pages 89-103.)

Fourth Step Inventory

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book"

pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

<u>Liabilities</u> Watch for—															<u>Assets</u> Strive for—	
Resentment																Forgiveness (Purity)
Fear																Faith (Love)
Selfishness																Unselfishness
Dishonesty																Honesty
False Pride																Humility
Jealousy																Trust
Envy																Contentment
Laziness																Action

Blank Assets and Liabilities Checklist

Fourth Step Inventory

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book"
pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

<u>Liabilities</u> Watch for—															<u>Assets</u> Strive for—
		<i>Mother</i>	<i>Father</i>	<i>Wife (Ex)</i>	<i>Sister</i>	<i>God</i>	<i>Uncle</i>	<i>Child</i>	<i>Brother</i>	<i>Friend</i>	<i>Boss</i>	<i>Co-worker</i>	<i>Police</i>		
Resentment		✓	✓		✓										Forgiveness (Purity)
Fear		✓			✓		✓								Faith (Love)
Selfishness	✓		✓		✓		✓					✓			Unselfishness
Dishonesty		✓													Honesty
False Pride		✓	✓					✓			✓				Humility
Jealousy															Trust
Envy									✓						Contentment
Laziness	✓														Action
<i>Shame</i>					✓										<i>Self-respect</i>

Example of Completed Assets and Liabilities Checklist

Explanation of Terms

Fourth Step Assets and Liabilities Checklist

In the late 1930's, Dr. Bob, one of the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, developed an Assets and Liabilities Checklist, which he used to take thousands of newcomers through the inventory and restitution process. Since then, various checklists have been used by sponsors, spiritual advisors and sharing partners to bring those "interested in a spiritual way of life" to a greater understanding of the shortcomings that have prevented them from finding a spiritual solution to their difficulties, a solution that is based upon establishing an intimate, two-way relationship with the "One who has all power."

We have defined these shortcomings—the liabilities that have been blocking us from this "Power"—in a way that, hopefully, will provide a clearer understanding of their meaning:

RESENTMENT is the consequence of being angry or bitter toward someone for an extended period of time over some real or imagined insult. It is a hostile or indignant attitude in response to an alleged affront or personal injury.

FEAR is being afraid of losing something we have or not getting something we want. It manifests itself in many ways including phobia, terror, panic, anxiety and worry.

SELFISHNESS is concern only for ourselves, our own welfare or pleasure, without regard for, or at the expense of, others.

DISHONESTY involves theft or deception. It includes taking things that don't belong to us, cheating people out of what is rightfully theirs, and lying to or withholding the truth from others.

FALSE PRIDE is either feeling better than or less than someone else. Feelings of superiority include prejudice about race, education or religious beliefs, and sarcasm—putting someone else down to make us feel better about ourselves. Feelings of inferiority include self-pity, which is excessive concern about our own troubles, and low self-esteem—the lack of self-worth or self-respect.

JEALOUSY has to do with people—being suspicious of another's motives or doubting the faithfulness of a friend.

ENVY has to do with things—wanting someone else's possessions.

LAZINESS means lacking the will or the desire to work. Procrastination, which is postponing or delaying an assigned job or task, is a form of laziness.

Test for Self-will vs. God's Will

From the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous

Self-will

God's Will

Fourth Step Test

Selfish(ness)	←————→	Unselfishness
Dishonest(y)	←————→	Honesty
Self-seeking	←————→	Purity
Frightened	←————→	Love

"Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?"
(A.A., p. 67, para. 2, lines 3-4)

Tenth Step Test

Selfishness	←————→	Unselfishness
Dishonesty	←————→	Honesty
Resentment	←————→	Purity
Fear	←————→	Love

"Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear."
(A.A., p. 84, para. 2, lines 8-9)

Eleventh Step Test

Resentful	←————→	Purity
Selfish(ness)	←————→	Unselfishness
Dishonest(y)	←————→	Honesty
Afraid	←————→	Love

"Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid?"
(A.A., p. 86, para. 1, lines 2-3)

HOW TO LISTEN TO GOD

These are a few simple suggestions for people who are willing to make an experiment. You can discover for yourself the most important and practical thing any human being can ever learn—how to be in touch with God.

All that is needed is the willingness to try it honestly. Every person who has done this consistently and sincerely has found that it really works.

Before you begin, look over these fundamental points. They are true and are based on the experience of thousands of people.

1. God is alive. He always has been and He always will be.
2. God knows everything.
3. God can do anything.
4. God can be everywhere—all at the same time. (These are the important differences between God and us human beings).
5. God is invisible—we can't see Him or touch Him—but, God is here. He is with you now. He is beside you. He surrounds you. He fills the room or the whole place where you are right now. He is in you now. He is in your heart.
6. God cares very much for you. He is interested in you. He has a plan for your life. He has an answer for every need and problem you face.
7. God will tell you all that you need to know. He will not always tell you all that you want to know.
8. God will help you do anything that He asks you to do.
9. Anyone can be in touch with God, anywhere and at any time, if the conditions are obeyed.

These are the conditions:

- To be quiet and still
- To listen
- To be honest about every thought that comes
- To test the thoughts to be sure that they come from God
- To obey

So, with these basic elements as a background, here are specific suggestions on How to Listen to God:

1. **Take Time**

Find some place and time where you can be alone, quiet and undisturbed. Most people have found that the early morning is the best time. Have with you some paper and pen or pencil.

2. **Relax**

Sit in a comfortable position. Consciously relax all your muscles. Be loose. There is no hurry. There needs to be no strain during these minutes. God cannot get through to us if we are tense and anxious about later responsibilities.

3. **Tune In**

Open your heart to God. Either silently or aloud, just say to God in a natural way that you would like to find His plan for your life—you want His answer to the problem or situation that you are facing just now. Be definite and specific in your request.

4. **Listen**

Just be still, quiet, relaxed and open. Let your mind go "loose." Let God do the talking. Thoughts, ideas, and impressions will begin to come into your mind and heart. Be alert and aware and open to every one.

5. **Write!**

Here is the important key to the whole process. Write down everything that comes into your mind. Everything. Writing is simply a means of recording so that you can remember later. Don't sort out or edit your thoughts at this point.

Don't say to yourself:

This thought isn't important;
This is just an ordinary thought;
This can't be guidance;
This isn't nice;
This can't be from God;
This is just me thinking..., etc.

Write down everything that passes through your mind:

Names of people;
Things to do;
Things to say;
Things that are wrong and need to be made right.

Write down everything:

Good thoughts - bad thoughts;

Comfortable thoughts - uncomfortable thoughts;
"Holy" thoughts - "unholy" thoughts;
Sensible thoughts - "crazy" thoughts.

Be honest! Write down everything! A thought comes quickly, and it escapes even more quickly unless it is captured and put down.

6. **Test**

When the flow of thoughts slows down, stop. Take a good look at what you have written. Not every thought we have comes from God. So we need to test our thoughts. Here is where the written record helps us to be able to look at them.

- a. Are these thoughts completely honest, pure, unselfish and loving?
- b. Are these thoughts in line with our duties to our family—to our community?
- c. Are these thoughts in line with our understanding of the teachings found in our spiritual literature?

7. **Check**

When in doubt and when it is important, what does another person who is living two-way prayer think about this thought or action? More light comes in through two windows than one. Someone else who also wants God's plan for our lives may help us to see more clearly.

Talk over together what you have written. Many people do this. They tell each other what guidance has come. This is the secret of unity. There are always three sides to every question—your side, my side, and the right side. Guidance shows us which is the right side—not who is right, but what is right.

8. **Obey**

Carry out the thoughts that have come. You will only be sure of guidance as you go through with it. A rudder will not guide a boat until the boat is moving. As you obey, very often the results will convince you that you are on the right track.

9. **Blocks**

What if I don't seem to get any definite thoughts? God's guidance is as freely available as the air we breathe. If I am not receiving thoughts when I listen, the fault is not God's.

Usually it is because there is something I will not do:

- something wrong in my life that I will not face and make right;
- a habit or indulgence I will not give up;

- a person I will not forgive;
- a wrong relationship in my life I will not give up;
- a restitution I will not make;
- something God has already told me to do that I will not obey.

Check these points and be honest. Then try listening again.

10. *Mistakes*

Suppose I make a mistake and do something in the name of God that isn't right? Of course we make mistakes. We are humans with many faults. However, God will always honor our sincerity.

He will work around and through every honest mistake we make. He will help us make it right. But, remember this! Sometimes when we do obey God, someone else may not like it or agree with it. So when there is opposition, it doesn't always mean you have made a mistake. It can mean that the other person doesn't want to know or to do what is right.

Suppose I fail to do something that I have been told and the opportunity to do it passes? There is only one thing to do. Put it right with God. Tell Him you're sorry. Ask Him to forgive you, then accept His forgiveness and begin again. God is our Father—He is not an impersonal calculator. He understands us far better than we do.

11. *Results*

We never know what swimming is like until we get down into the water and try. We will never know what this is like until we sincerely try it.

Every person who has tried this honestly finds that a wisdom, not their own, comes into their minds and that a Power greater than human power begins to operate in their lives. It is an endless adventure.

There is a way of life, for everyone, everywhere. Anyone can be in touch with the living God, anywhere, anytime, if we fulfill His conditions:

***When man listens, God speaks.
When man obeys, God acts.***

This is the law of prayer.

God's plan for this world goes forward through the lives of ordinary people who are willing to be governed by Him.

*Written in the late 1930's by John E. Batterson
(A personal friend of Dr. Bob's—co-founder of A.A.)*