

And now for something completely different...

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

Step 3 is probably the easiest step in the program. Making a decision requires no action at all. The lyrics from "Freewill" by the band Rush state "You can choose a ready guide in some celestial voice; if you choose not to decide, you still have made a choice." I can decide to quit drinking, lose weight or go back to college, but if I take no action, I make no progress. The phrase "God as we understood Him" gives each of us the freedom to select a Higher Power. No one is forced to compromise their personal beliefs to continue on with the program.

If we have put any effort at all into steps 1 and 2, it should be readily apparent that our self directed efforts were not working. Early in my sobriety, simply putting the plug in the jug was enough to eliminate a good deal of the problems in my life. However, living life on life's terms quickly revealed my inability to cope with life without the escape provided by alcohol and drugs. If I were to remain sober (and reasonably content) for any length of time, it was going to be done by trying something completely different.

Step 3 was the gateway to a new way of living. Making the decision was easy. Turning one's will and life over to the care of God, however, is easier said than done. Unlike making a decision, it cannot be done without action. Early in sobriety, finding God's will for me was simply a matter of eliminating the things that obviously weren't God's will. To make any spiritual progress at all, I had to "launch(ed) out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning," (Pg 63 of the Big Book). Proceeding with the remaining steps of the program IS how we begin to turn our will and lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

When it comes to my understanding of God, I was born and raised as a Catholic. While I had a basic grasp of my faith, I obviously applied very little of it to my life. After being in the program for a while, I returned to church with a different perspective and found the perfect complement to the "Design for Living" presented by AA. I need a well defined concept of God to follow as much as I need to follow a well defined program of recovery. Below is a brief selection from Matthew Kelley's "Rediscover Catholicism" dealing with confessing one's sin to a priest that I feel applies to one's understanding of God.

"When it is just me and God it is all too easy to project my own qualities and biases upon God. Then, rather than being created in the image of God, we begin to create God in our own fallen image. There are two truths of self-knowledge for us to consider here. The first is that as human beings we all have an incredible ability to deceive ourselves. The second is that we almost never see things as they really are."

"I can't speak for anyone else, but when using, I have a different perception of reality. This is not immediately corrected with abstinence from alcohol and drugs. Who among us can honestly say they have never rationalized that "this time I will be able to control my drinking" even knowing that the consequences of using would be severe? Mine is only one experience and I am the judge of no man so I will recommend the following from Pg 28 of the Big Book.

“We have no desire to convince anyone that there is only one way by which faith can be acquired. If what we have learned and felt and seen means anything at all, it means that all of us, whatever our race, creed, or color are the 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. Those having religious affiliations will find here nothing disturbing to their beliefs or ceremonies. There is no friction among us over such matters.

We think it no concern of ours what religious bodies our members identify themselves with as individuals. This should be an entirely personal affair which each one decides for himself in the light of past associations, or his present choice. Not all of us join religious bodies, but most of us favor such memberships.”

See how well they present this in the Big Book? Get a sponsor and go through the Book. It may not be easy, but it really is that simple.

- *Anonymous* -