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# **The 7/12 Connection**

**in**

## **Addictions & Recovery**

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### **The Principles of Unitarian Universalism and**

### **The 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous and Other Recovery Programs**

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**A Suggested Workbook  
(A Work in Progress)**

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(In the hard copy of the workbook, this sheet is inserted with every step. Since this sheet is identical, I have put in just one sheet here so you have an idea of what it is and can make as many copies as you need.)

I have used this small book as an easy-to-use reference for the Principles:

**Our Seven Principles in Story and Verse: A Collection for Children and Adults** by Kenneth W. Collier. Creative responses to the seven Principles. Each Principle is illustrated with a story, a poem, and a brief essay. Published by Skinner House Books (Boston, MA) in 1997.

Suggested reading:

*Out of the Basement: Addictions ministry moves beyond AA,*  
UU World (2004) by Michelle Bates Deakin (about Denis Meacham)

You can find this article at <http://www.uuworld.org/life/articles/2936.shtml>

*Twelve Steps, Seven Principles: UUs in Alcoholics Anonymous,*  
UU World (2000) by Michelle Huneven

You can find this article at <http://www.uuworld.org/1999/0999rev2.html>

*The Liberal Church Finding Its Mission: It's Not About You* (2011) Rev. Peter C. Boullata

You can find this article on Rev. Boullata's blog at <http://peterboullata.com/2011/12/29/the-liberal-church-finding-its-mission-its-not-about-you/>

# INTRODUCTION

Unitarian Universalism is in a supremely unique position to serve in the area of addictions and recovery. This is because of its guiding Principles. Each individual is encouraged to pursue a free and responsible search for truth and meaning, free from preordained dogma. Most importantly, we cherish and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person. For those starting the journey of recovery, we can provide their entry point to the interdependent web of all existence ... that interconnection that we have lost and for which we are searching, whether we know it or not, when we are in our addiction. Our Principles can be the foundation for successful recovery from addictive substance abuse or compulsive behavior.

Many recovery programs, 12 Step programs among them, find a spiritual path or the concept of a self-defined Higher Power to be the key to recovery. Many people balk at this idea. Yet, as Denis Meacham, Unitarian Universalist minister, notes in *The Addictions Ministry Handbook*, “Our spiritual dimension is about what is most profoundly important to us in our lives – our faithfulness to an ultimate source of hope, joy, and solace.” (*The Addictions Ministry Handbook*, p. 19.) “Addiction represents a disruption in this spiritual grounding.” (*Ibid.*) Recovery is simply the process of rediscovering what is most profoundly important to us and living in alignment with that source.

SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration of the Department of Health and Human Services) recently announced a new working definition of recovery from mental health issues and substance abuse disorders. It is: “A process of change through which individuals improve their health and wellness, live a self-directed life, and strive to reach their full potential.” SAMHSA also identified four major dimensions in life that support recovery: (1) **Health** : overcoming or managing one’s disease(s) as well as living in a physically and emotionally healthy way; (2) **Home**: a stable and safe place to live; (3) **Purpose**: meaningful daily activities, such as a job, school, volunteerism, family caretaking, or creative endeavors, and the independence, income and resources to participate in society; and (3) **Community** : relationships and social networks that provide support, friendship, love, and hope. More information is available at <http://www.samhsa.gov/recovery/>.

In short, in order to recover from addiction, one must create a new design for living. Many, if not most, people have heard of "The 12 Steps." The 12 Steps were created to help recovering alcoholics created just such a design, and the practice of the 12 Steps is the practice of a spiritual program. In the 1930s, Bill W. and Dr. Bob, along with a small group of dedicated recovering alcoholics, created them. A lot of thoughtful work, writing, wrangling and negotiation went into their creation. However, due to the times and prevailing influences, the 12 Steps were essentially Christian-based and the language in the "Big Book" (AA's suggestion for a better way of living) was predominately male-oriented. For these reasons, many people struggling with addiction have avoided AA and Al-Anon, believing they would not find help or understanding there.

This workbook is for those who don't feel a complete fit with AA or Al-Anon, or are curious about what connection could possibly exist between the 12 Steps and the 7 Principles. In providing this workbook, I am not suggesting that the 12 Steps is the only way to recover from addiction. But it is a workable framework if used correctly, with compassion and sensitivity to the fact that we are all different and will better grasp the essence of a suggestion if it is phrased so we can hear it. Our Seven Principles dovetail with the 12 Steps, placing Unitarian Universalism in a unique position to help those struggling with addiction to get past what they view as barriers to exploring spirituality and a workable higher, or greater, power. It is my hope that those who are suffering from the effects of addiction will be able to see past the traditional aspects of AA or Al-Anon (or other 12 Step programs) when they look at these various versions to reach the help, love and support that are their core.

Because our 7 Principles dovetail so well with the 12 Steps, Unitarian Universalism is in a unique position to help those who are struggling with addiction and searching for meaning in recovery. Because we accommodate each individual's personal beliefs within the framework of our Principles, those who need to do some serious searching to find their own conception of a "higher power" can do so in an atmosphere less charged with Judeo-Christian overtones and assumed male predominance. These overtones are only superficial in AA -- but, for whatever reason, it seems to be enough to discourage many from proceeding further with that program. I do not mean to replace AA; I only wish to supplement, so that those searching for a satisfying life, free from mind altering chemicals, can reach the core value of the Steps which clearly have improved the lives of so many.

Thus, recovery is not just learning how to stop drinking, using, overeating, trying to control others, you-name-the-"vice" ... it is a continual process of learning how to live your life to the best of your ability, while becoming, accepting, being and loving who you are, as you are.

We, as Unitarian Universalists, have a powerful message for those in recovery: Embodied in our Principles and in the 12 Step Program is the message that "we're here, we will listen and we will support you in your journey. It is hard work, but you are not alone anymore." It is my hope that this workbook, in some small way, will help lift the silence surrounding addiction and help make our churches safe places where the matter can be discussed and people can freely ask for help.

Julie Sullwold  
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Co-Chair, UU Addictions Ministry  
Chair, USSB Addictions Ministry



## **FORMAT**

### **7/12 CONNECTION**

**Welcome** to the 7/12 meeting. I am \_\_\_\_\_ and I am leading the meeting today.

**Chalice lighting** - As someone lights the chalice, the leader reads an inspirational reading he or she has selected for the meeting.

**Preamble** (Leader reads aloud)

The 7/12 Connection is a fellowship of men and women who share our experience, strength and hope with each other that we may solve our common problems and help others to recover from addiction to substances and compulsive behaviors. We believe that addiction and compulsive behaviors involve and affect the entire family and that changed attitudes can aid recovery. Our primary purpose is to help ourselves and our families transform from cultures of misuse, misunderstanding and/or abuse into cultures of healing, wholeness, and health. We do this by practicing the 7 Principles and the 12 Steps and by welcoming and giving comfort to all those affected by addiction. We do not wish to engage in any controversy; we neither endorse nor oppose any causes. We are a group established by the Addictions & Recovery Ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ Church, a Unitarian Universalist community. We welcome, support, and celebrate all who join us in furthering our primary purpose, members and non-members alike.

**Check-in and introductions** - We will now introduce ourselves and share briefly why we are here today and how we are feeling, limiting our comments to three minutes per person. No cross-talk, please.

### **Conduct during the meeting** (Leader reads the following aloud)

In conducting this group, it is our desire to create a safe place for all. To that end, we respect and affirm anonymity. Therefore, who is here at the meeting and what is said here stays here. We do not engage in cross-talk during the meeting, do not give advice and make no judgments on others' sharing. It is also very important that everyone gets a chance to share, so please be conscious of the amount of time you are taking so we can accomplish this goal. Of course, if there are only a few people attending, there is more time for each person to share.

### **The Lead**

The leader for the meeting selects a topic related to a step (whichever version he or she prefers), tradition, principle, or source, and shares his or her experience, strength and hope on that topic, i.e., how to deal with life on life's terms. (10 min.)

### **Sharing**

Leader determines the method of sharing. (For example, leader can choose who will share, simply open it up for sharing, or select a method of sharing [e.g., going around the circle, etc.].) 5 minutes each. No cross-talk.

### **Conclusion** (Read the following aloud)

Please remember that who you saw here and what was said here, stays here. After a moment of silence for those who are still suffering due to addiction, will you join me in the Group's closing followed by, if you would like to join, the Serenity Prayer (see next page.)

### **Group's Closing:**

This group is dedicated to the proposition that behind all our differences and beneath all our diversity there is a unity which makes us one and binds us forever together in spite of time and death and the space between the stars. We pause in silent witness to that Unity.

Serenity Prayer.



# Unitarian Universalist Principles and Sources

## The Unitarian Universalist Principles:

We, the member congregations of the Unitarian Universalist Association, covenant to affirm and promote:

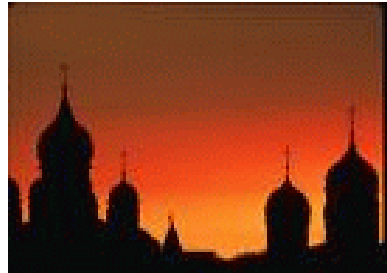
1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person;
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations;
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations;
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning;
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large;
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all;
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part.



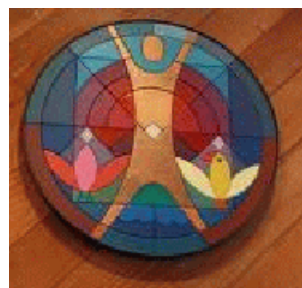
## Unitarian Universalism draws from many sources:

- Direct experience of that transcending mystery and wonder, affirmed in all cultures, which moves us to a renewal of the spirit and an openness to the forces which create and uphold life;
- Words and deeds of prophetic women and men which challenge us to confront powers and structures of evil with justice, compassion, and the transforming power of love;
- Wisdom from the world's religions which inspires us in our ethical and spiritual life;
- Jewish and Christian teachings which call us to respond to God's love by loving our neighbors as ourselves;
- Humanist teachings which counsel us to heed the guidance of reason and the results of science, and warn us against idolatries of the mind and spirit;
- Spiritual teachings of earth-centered traditions which celebrate the sacred circle of life and instruct us to live in harmony with the rhythms of nature.





# The 12 Steps of AA And Variations on the Theme



# The 12 Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW and Adult Children of Alcoholics <sup>2</sup>



1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
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.
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.



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<sup>2</sup>The 12 Steps of CEA-HOW (Compulsive Eaters Anonymous) are the same as AA's with two differences. Step 1 refers to powerlessness over food and Step 12 carries the message to other compulsive overeaters. (<http://www.ceahow.org/>) The 12 Steps of Adult Children of Alcoholics are the same as well, except Step 1 admits powerlessness over "the effects of alcoholism or other family dysfunction" and Step 12 carries the message to "others who still suffer." (<http://www.adultchildren.org/lit/Steps.s>)

# The Buddhist 12 Steps of Liberation <sup>3</sup>



1. The truth of suffering. We experienced the truth of our addictions – our lives were unmanageable suffering.
2. The truth of the origin of suffering. We admit that we craved for and grasped onto addictions as our refuge.
3. The truth of the end of suffering. We came to see that complete cessation of craving and clinging at addictions is necessary.
4. The truth of the path. We made a decision to follow the way of liberation and to take refuge in our wakefulness, our truth, and our fellowship.
5. Right view. We made a searching and fearless review of our life. We are willing to acknowledge and proclaim our truth to ourselves, another human being and the community.
6. Right thought. We are mindful that we create the causes for suffering and liberation. Our goodness is indestructible.
7. Right speech. We purify, confess and ask for forgiveness straightforwardly and without judgment. We are willing to forgive others.
8. Right action. We make a list of all persons we harm and are willing and able to actively make amends to them all, unless to do so would be harmful.
9. Right livelihood. We simplify our lives, realizing we are all interconnected. We select a vocation that supports our recovery.
10. Right effort. We realize that continuing to follow this path, no matter what, is joyful effort.
11. Right mindfulness. Through prayer, meditation and action we will follow the path of kindness, being mindful moment by moment.
12. Right concentration. Open to the spirit of awakening as a result of these steps, we will carry this message to all people suffering with addictions.

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<sup>3</sup><http://www.lionsroardharmacenter.org/recovery.php>.

# The Buddhist Non-Theistic 12 Steps <sup>4</sup>



1. We admitted our addictive craving over alcohol, and recognized its consequences in our lives.
2. Came to believe that a power other than self could restore us to wholeness.
3. Made a decision to go for refuge to this other power as we understood it.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to ourselves and another human being the exact moral nature of our past.
6. Became entirely ready to work at transforming ourselves.
7. With the assistance of others and our own firm resolve, we transformed unskillful aspects of ourselves and cultivated positive ones.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed.
9. Made direct amends to such people where possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. In addition, made a conscientious effort to forgive all those who harmed us.
10. Continue to maintain awareness of our actions and motives, and when we acted unskillfully promptly admitted it.
11. Engaged through the practice of meditation to improve our conscious contact with our true selves, and seeking that beyond self. Also used prayer as a means to cultivate positive attitudes and states of mind.
12. Having gained spiritual insight as a result of these steps, we practice these principles in all areas of our lives, and make this message available to others in need of recovery.

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<sup>4</sup> <http://www.geocities.com/b12steps/>

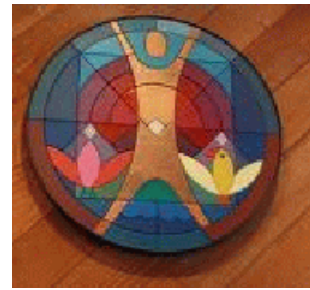
# The 12 Steps of Co-Dependents Anonymous <sup>5</sup>

1. We admitted we were powerless over others, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and for the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other codependents and to practice these principles in all our affairs.



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<sup>5</sup><http://www.lacoda.org/basics.html#steps>



# The 12 Steps for Humanists, Agnostics, and Atheists <sup>6</sup>

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe and to accept that we needed strengths beyond our awareness and resources to restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to entrust our wills and our lives to the care of the collective wisdom and resources of those who have searched before us.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to ourselves, without reservations, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to accept help in letting go of all our defects of character.
7. With humility and openness sought to eliminate our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through meditation to improve our spiritual awareness and our understanding of the AA/Al-Anon/Twelve Step Way of Life, and to discover the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

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<sup>6</sup>[www.soberdykes.org/12agnost.html](http://www.soberdykes.org/12agnost.html). This adaptation was written by a group of UU ministers.

# The Islamic 12 Steps <sup>7</sup>

1. We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction and our lives have become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that Allah could and would restore us to sanity.
3. We made a decision to submit our will to the will of Allah.
4. We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. We admitted to Allah and to ourselves the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Asking Allah for right guidance, we became willing and open for change, ready to have Allah remove our defects of character.
7. We humbly ask Allah to remove our shortcomings.
8. We made a list of persons we have harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. We sought through Salaat (prayer) and Iqraa (reading and studying) to improve our understanding of Taqwa (Consciousness of Allah) and Ihsan (although we can't see Allah, he can see us.)
12. Having increased our level of Iman (faith) and Taqwa (Consciousness of Allah), as a result of working these steps, we carried this message to addicts and began practicing these principles in all our affairs.



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<sup>7</sup>[http://www2.islamicity.com/al\\_muminun/MIFAX/mifax.htm](http://www2.islamicity.com/al_muminun/MIFAX/mifax.htm).

# The Pagan 12 Steps<sup>8</sup>

1. We admitted that we were harming ourselves and others and that our lives had become overwhelming.
2. Came to believe that a power within ourselves and our world could restore us to balance.
3. Made a decision to move our wills and our lives toward that Divine Presence.
4. Made a searching and fearless ethical inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to ourselves, to the Divine Presence, and to others the exact nature of our harm.
6. Were entirely ready to have our harmful patterns replaced by ethical coping skills.
7. Asked the Divine to transform us, giving us rebirth in our lives.
8. Made a list of all beings we had harmed, beginning with ourselves and including our world, and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to all whenever possible, except when to do so would violate the Rede.\*
10. Continued to take personal ethical inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it and corrected it.
11. Sought through action and meditation to improve our conscious knowledge and contact with the Divine Presence, seeking only to choose in harmony with the greatest good.
12. Having had spiritual awakenings as results of these steps, we offered this opportunity to others and practiced the principles in our lives.



\*The Rede is an ethical yardstick used by many Pagans, and especially Wiccans, and it means, "If it harm none, do as you will." (The Recovery Spiral, Cynthia Jane Collins, M.Div., p. 2.)

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<sup>8</sup>The Recovery Spiral, Cynthia Jane Collins, M.Div.



# The 12 Steps for Everyone <sup>9</sup>

1. We admitted our lives were out of control.
2. Accepted that a Higher Power could help us.
3. Got out of the way to let it happen.
4. Took a hard, honest look at our lives.
5. Told someone the truth.
6. Got ready to change.
7. Asked a Higher Power to help us change.
8. Remembered all the people we hurt.
9. Made it right with them wherever we could.
10. Continued to stay honest.
11. Put our Higher Power in charge every day.
12. Tried to live our values and help others.

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<sup>9</sup> From a print hanging on the wall at Thelma McMillan Chemical Dependency Treatment Center of Torrance Memorial Hospital, Torrance, California.

# SIXTEEN STEPS FOR DISCOVERY AND EMPOWERMENT

From: *Many Roads, One Journey, Moving Beyond the Twelve Steps* (1992)

By Charlotte Davis Kasl, Ph.D.

1. We affirm we have the power to take charge of our lives and stop being dependent on substances or other people for our self-esteem and security.
2. We come to believe that God/the Goddess/Universe/Great spirit/Higher Power/awakens the healing wisdom within us when we open ourselves to that power.
3. We make a decision to become our authentic Selves and trust in the healing power of the truth.
4. We examine our beliefs, addictions, and dependent behavior in the context of living in a hierarchal, patriarchal culture.
5. We share with another person and the Universe all those things inside of us for which we feel shame and guilt.
6. We affirm and enjoy our strengths, talents, and creativity, striving not to hide these qualities to protect others' egos.
7. We become willing to let go of shame, guilt, and any behavior that keeps us from loving ourselves and others.
8. We make a list of people we have harmed and people who have harmed us, and take steps to clear out negative energy by making amends and sharing our grievances in a respectful way.
9. We express love and gratitude to others, and increasingly appreciate the wonder of life and the blessings we do have.
10. We continue to trust our reality and daily affirm that we see what we see, we know what we know, and we feel what we feel.
11. We promptly acknowledge our mistakes and make amends when appropriate, but we do not say we are sorry for things we have not done and we do not cover up, analyze, or take responsibility for the shortcomings of others.
12. We seek out situations, jobs, and other people that affirm our intelligence, perceptions, and self-worth and avoid situations or people who are hurtful, harmful, or demeaning to us.
13. We take steps to heal our physical bodies, organize our lives, reduce stress, and have fun.
14. We seek to find our inward calling, and develop the will and wisdom to follow it.
15. We accept the ups and downs of life as natural events that can be used as lessons for our growth.
16. We grow in awareness that we are interrelated with all living things, and we contribute to restoring peace and balance on the planet.

# INTEGRAL RECOVERY 12 STEPS <sup>99</sup>

(Short Form)

1. I acknowledge that I have a problem and that because of \_\_\_\_\_ my life has become unmanageable.
2. I take full responsibility for this problem and am willing to do the work necessary to heal.
3. I am coming to believe that there is a way out, and that the way out consists of an Integral Recovery Practice that simultaneously exercises my body, mind heart and soul.
4. I am ready to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of my past, and find the source of my pain, fear and suffering.
5. Having found the source of this pain, I am willing to release it.
6. Having found and identified the sources of my trauma and suffering, I am willing to do the healing work that is available and necessary for my continued growth and happiness.
7. Made a list of everyone and everything that I have harmed as a result of my unconscious and compulsive behaviors.
8. Made restitution and reconciliation wherever wisely and compassionately possible.
9. As part of my awakening process, I am examining my core beliefs, my values and life callings.
10. I continue to examine my ego structure with rigorous honesty and how my unconscious maps and stories limit or empower my life's progress and unfolding.
11. Continue to evaluate my integral recovery practice and make changes or adjustments as necessary.
12. As a result of this awakening journey, I commit myself to a life of integrity and service.

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<sup>99</sup> [http://integralrecovery.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/09/integral\\_recovery\\_12steps.pdf](http://integralrecovery.com/wp-content/uploads/2007/09/integral_recovery_12steps.pdf)

## The “Five S’s” of Recovery <sup>111</sup>

The “Five S’s” encapsulate the general principles or major touchstones of the Twelve Steps, and may be effective as meditative points or discussion points in a meeting. They could also be effective principles in any recovery program. These elements can be expanded and modified as desired. The following descriptors are just triggers to help wrap your mind around the concepts.

The “Five S’s” are as follows:

- **Sobriety** - No more involvement with the addictive behavior or substance.
- **Steps** - Growing along spiritual lines.
- **Sponsorship** - Being accountable to someone other than yourself.
- **Spirituality** - Repairing or nurturing a relationship with yourself, others, and a higher power outside of yourself (nature, universal energy, God, etc.)
- **Service** - Getting outside of yourself by serving others.

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<sup>111</sup>Courtesy of Drew Brooks, Faith Partners, Rush Center.

# "Trauma-Informed SMART Universalist" Interpretation of the 12 Steps<sup>1</sup>

1. We admitted we [had abandoned ourSelves and our Life Source and looked instead to \_\_\_\_\_ (addictive substance/behavior) for relief from our emotional and psychological pain. After doing that repeatedly, we became habituated to \_\_\_\_\_ to the extent that we felt we] were powerless over \_\_\_\_\_ - that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. We came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. [That Power is a part of each one of us - it is our Life Source. It is our Love, our heart, our spirit, our connectedness with all beings in the Universe. It is that eternal part of us that we abandoned and disowned while we sought to obtain something outside ourselves that we thought would give us safety, contentment, love and happiness.]
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. [The experience of life we are having now is the evidence of our Power. By our separate and self-serving thoughts, feelings and actions, we have unconsciously created it. Therefore, by mindfully choosing different thoughts, feelings and actions in communion and cooperation with our Life Source, we CAN create something new - something Life-affirming, - something joyful and beautiful.]
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. [Carefully and consciously examined our beliefs about ourselves, other people and life, to identify those that were not aligned with our true Self and with the Oneness of Life.]
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs. [Admitted that many of our thoughts were irrational (not true) and self-defeating and that some of our behaviors were, in fact, harmful to ourselves and others.]
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. [Made the commitment to be continuously and consciously mindful of our thoughts - to dispute those that were irrational (not true) and replace them with more Life-affirming and Self-affirming thoughts.]
7. Humbly asked Him to remove our short-comings. [Let go of our guilt and shame - recognized and accepted our innocence and guiltlessness. Realized that our irrational beliefs resulted from drawing invalid conclusions about ourselves, others and about life based on our earlier life experiences. Understood that it was reasonable for us to draw those conclusions at the time given what we were experiencing, our level of knowledge and our level of psychological and emotional development. Viewed ourselves with compassion - understanding that we drew those conclusions in an effort to protect ourselves and to have life make some kind of sense, and that was neither bad nor wrong. It is just what human children do. Saw ourselves as empowered to change - we are not a children anymore. We have grown and changed. We have more knowledge and information now, and we can draw different conclusions that result in more empowering beliefs now.]
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. [Realized that our belief that we were separate and alone had caused us to view others as being in competition with us for Life's goodness. This belief caused us to behave in competitive, self-protecting and self-enhancing ways that resulted in harm to ourSelves and others. We realized that our relationships and our connectedness were our most prized assets - that they were, in fact, our Life Source. ]
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. [Made apologies and took corrective actions when appropriate. Communicated to others that we had been mistaken in our perceptions and that we intended to view life differently and thus, behave differently - with preservation of relationship and connection being our highest value.]
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. [Continued to be alert to our irrational beliefs as life experiences caused them to surface into our consciousness. Disputed them and replaced them with more Self-affirming and Life-affirming beliefs.]
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. [Made a conscious effort to see and understand the oneness of all things in our daily lives - to see ourSelves as an interconnected part of the web of Life, to see the Love and Life in all things, and to see the goodness in ourselves and all people (underneath behaviors) - to be an open channel for the giving and receiving - the circulation - of Life's Love.]
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principals in all our affairs. [Having connected with the Life Source and having been transformed and revitalized by it, we tried to share our new perspective, vision and experience with others who were still suffering and to live in harmony (in flow) with Life, such that our thoughts and actions benefit the Whole rather than ourselves alone.]

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<sup>1</sup> By Holly Hartman, Alcoholism/Addiction Recovery Ministry, Unitarian Church of Harrisburg, PA



## Comparisons of Steps

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### Step by Step

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## And Principles and Steps



# Step 1

**(AA & Al-Anon)** We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.

**(ACA)** We admitted we were powerless over the effects of alcoholism or other family dysfunction, that our lives had become unmanageable.

**(CEA-HOW)** We admitted we were powerless over food – that our lives had become unmanageable.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** The truth of suffering. We experienced the truth of our addictions - our lives were unmanageable suffering.

**(Buddhist – Non-Theistic)** We admitted our addictive craving over alcohol, and recognized its consequences in our lives.

**(CoDA)** We admitted we were powerless over others, that our lives had become unmanageable.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic or Atheistic)** We admitted we were powerless over alcohol -- that our lives had become unmanageable.

**(Islamic)** We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction and our lives have become unmanageable.

**(Pagan)** We admitted that we were harming ourselves and others and that our lives had become overwhelming.

**(“Everyone”)** We admitted our lives were out of control.

**(Integral Recovery)** I acknowledge that I have a problem and that because of \_\_\_\_\_ my life has become unmanageable.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**

# Step 2

**(AA, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW, ACA)** Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** The truth of the origin of suffering. We admit that we craved for and grasped onto addictions as our refuge.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** Came to believe that a power other than self could restore us to wholeness.

**(CoDA)** Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic or Atheistic)** Came to believe and to accept that we needed strengths beyond our awareness and resources to restore us to sanity.

**(Islamic)** We came to believe that Allah could and would restore us to sanity.

**(Pagan)** Came to believe that a power within ourselves and our world could restore us to balance.

**(“Everyone”)** Accepted that a Higher Power could help us.

**(Integral Recovery)** I take full responsibility for this problem and am willing to do the work necessary to heal.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**



# Step 3

**(AA, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW, ACA)** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** The truth of the end of suffering. We came to see that complete cessation of craving and clinging at addictions is necessary.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** Made a decision to go for refuge to this other power as we understood it.

**(CoDA)** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic or Atheistic)**

Made a decision to entrust our wills and our lives to the care of the collective wisdom and resources of those who have searched before us.

**(Islamic)** We made a decision to submit our will to the will of Allah.

**(Pagan)** Made a decision to move  
our wills and our lives toward that Divine Presence.

**(“Everyone”)** Got out of the way to let it happen.

**(Integral Recovery)** I am coming to believe that there is a way out, and that the way out consists of an Integral Recovery Practice that simultaneously exercises my body, mind heart and soul.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**

# Step 4

**(AA, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW, ACA)** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** The truth of the path. We made a decision to follow the way of liberation and to take refuge in our wakefulness, our truth, and our fellowship.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

**(CoDA)** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic or Atheistic)** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

**(Islamic)** We made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

**(Pagan)** Made a searching and fearless ethical inventory of ourselves.

**(“Everyone”)** Took a hard, honest look at our lives.

**(Integral Recovery)** I am ready to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of my past, and find the source of my pain, fear and suffering.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**

# Step 5

**(AA, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW, ACA)** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** Right view. We made a searching and fearless review of our life. We are willing to acknowledge and proclaim our truth to ourselves, another human being and the community.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** Admitted to ourselves and another human being the exact moral nature of our past.

**(CoDA)** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic, or Atheistic)** Admitted to ourselves, without reservations, and to another human being, the exact nature of our wrongs.

**(Islamic)** We admitted to Allah and to ourselves the exact nature of our wrongs.

**(Pagan)** Admitted to ourselves, to the Divine Presence, and to others the exact nature of our harm.

**(“Everyone”)** Told someone the truth.

**(Integral Recovery)** Having found the source of this pain, I am willing to release it.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**

# Step 6

**(AA, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW, ACA)** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** Right thought. We are mindful that we create the causes for suffering and liberation. Our goodness is indestructible.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** Became entirely ready to work at transforming ourselves.

**(CoDA)** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic or Atheistic)** Were entirely ready to accept help in letting go of all our defects of character.

**(Islamic)** Asking Allah for right guidance, we became willing and open for change, ready to have Allah remove our defects of character.

**(Pagan)** Were entirely ready to have our harmful patterns replaced by ethical coping skills.

**(“Everyone”)** Got ready to change.

**(Integral Recovery)** Having found and identified the sources of my trauma and suffering, I am willing to do the healing work that is available and necessary for my continued growth and happiness.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**

# Step 7

**(AA, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW, ACA)** Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** Right speech. We purify, confess and ask for forgiveness straightforwardly and without judgment. We are willing to forgive others.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** With the assistance of others and our own firm resolve, we transformed unskillful aspects of ourselves and cultivated positive ones.

**(CoDA)** Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic, or Atheistic)** With humility and openness sought to eliminate our shortcomings.

**(Islamic)** We humbly ask Allah to remove our shortcomings.

**(Pagan)** Asked the Divine to transform us, giving us rebirth in our lives.

**(“Everyone”)** Asked a Higher Power to help us change.

**(Integral Recovery)** Made a list of everyone and everything that I have harmed as a result of my unconscious and compulsive behaviors.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**

# Step 8

**(AA, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW, ACA)** Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** Right action. We make a list of all persons we harm and are willing and able to actively make amends to them all, unless to do so would be harmful.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** Made a list of all persons we had harmed.

**(CoDA)** Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic, or Atheistic)** Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

**(Islamic)** We made a list of persons we have harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

**(Pagan)** Made a list of all beings we had harmed, beginning with ourselves and including our world, and became willing to make amends to them all.

**(“Everyone”)** Remembered all the people we hurt.

**(Integral Recovery)** Made restitution and reconciliation wherever wisely and compassionately possible.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**

# Step 9

**(AA, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW, ACA)** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** Right livelihood. We simplify our lives, realizing we are all interconnected. We select a vocation that supports our recovery.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** Made direct amends to such people where possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. In addition, made a conscientious effort to forgive all those who harmed us.

**(CoDA)** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic, or Atheistic)** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

**(Islamic)** We made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

**(Pagan)** Made direct amends to all whenever possible, except when to do so would violate the Rede.

**(“Everyone”)** Made it right with them wherever we could.

**(Integral Recovery)** We express love and gratitude to others, and increasingly appreciate the wonder of life and the blessings we do have.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**

# Step 10

**(AA, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW, ACA)** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** Right effort. We realize that continuing to follow this path, no matter what, is joyful effort.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** Continue to maintain awareness of our actions and motives, and when we acted unskillfully promptly admitted it.

**(CoDA)** Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic, or Atheistic)** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

**(Islamic)** We continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

**(Pagan)** Continued to take personal ethical inventory, and when we were wrong promptly admitted it and corrected it.

**(“Everyone”)** Continued to stay honest.

**(Integral Recovery)** I continue to examine my ego structure with rigorous honesty and how my unconscious maps and stories limit or empower my life's progress and unfolding.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**



# Step 11

**(AA, Al-Anon, CEA-HOW, ACA)** 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.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** Right mindfulness. Through prayer, meditation and action we will follow the path of kindness, being mindful moment by moment.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** Engaged through the practice of meditation to improve our conscious contact with our true selves, and seeking that beyond self. Also used prayer as a means to cultivate positive attitudes and states of mind.

**(CoDA)** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic, or Atheistic)** Sought through meditation to improve our spiritual awareness and our understanding of the AA/Al-Anon/Twelve Step way of Life, and to discover the power to carry that out.

**(Islamic)** We sought through Salaat and Iqraa to improve our understanding of Taqwa and Ihsan .

**(Pagan)** Sought through action and meditation to improve our conscious knowledge and contact with the Divine Presence, seeking only to choose in harmony with the greatest good.

**(“Everyone”)** Put our Higher Power in charge every day.

**(Integral Recovery)** Continue to evaluate my integral recovery practice and make changes or adjustments as necessary.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**

# Step 12

**(AA & Al-Anon)** 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.

**(CEA-HOW)** Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to compulsive eaters and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**(ACA)** Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others who still suffer, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**(Buddhist - Liberation)** Right concentration. Open to the spirit of awakening as a result of these steps, we will carry this message to all people suffering with addictions.

**(Buddhist - Non-Theistic)** Having gained spiritual insight as a result of these steps, we practice these principles in all areas of our lives, and make this message available to others in need of recovery.

**(CoDA)** Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other codependents and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**(Humanistic, Agnostic, or Atheistic)** Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

**(Islamic)** Having increased our level of Iman and Taqwa, as a result of working these steps, we carried this message to addicts and began practicing these principles in all our affairs.

**(Pagan)** Having had spiritual awakenings as results of these steps, we offered this opportunity to others and practiced the principles in our lives.

**(“Everyone”)** Tried to live our values and help others.

**(“Integral”)** As a result of this awakening journey, I commit myself to a life of integrity and service.

**(Personal Version)**

**(Notes)**

## Comparing the Principles with Step \_\_\_\_\_

If you find a Principle that supports or otherwise informs this Step, circle the number next to the Principle and explain your thoughts.

1. The inherent worth and dignity of every person:
  
2. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations:
  
3. Acceptance of one another and encouragement to spiritual growth in our congregations:
  
4. A free and responsible search for truth and meaning:
  
5. The right of conscience and the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large:
  
6. The goal of world community with peace, liberty, and justice for all:
  
7. Respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part: