

SAA of New York City



Workshop Handout

Garment District
Sunday May 10th, 3:00 pm



Taking the Third
Step every day
-asking for help-

NOTE: SAA in NYC does not endorse, finance or oppose any of the above non-SAA material. The views reflected on this document are the ones of the SAA member who presented the workshop. The SAA member who presented the workshop does not speak for SAA.

By John K

FIVE QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT



What Does Willfulness Mean To YOU?

What Does Willingness Mean To YOU?

What Does Dependence Mean To YOU?

What Does Surrender Mean To YOU?

Which Of These Questions Triggered Negative Reactions In YOU?

STEP THREE – BIG BOOK



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

BIG BOOK

Any life run on **self-will** can hardly be a success... **We are almost always in collision with something or somebody**, even though are motives are good.

[The actor... virtuous or not... like most individuals, varied traits...] The show doesn't come off very well. [A variety of responses, but ultimately] a producer of confusion... What is the problem?

Our actor is self-centered – egocentric... Selfishness – self-centeredness! That we think is the root of our troubles. [Yes others are involved, but] ... invariably we find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt.

Above everything we must be rid of this selfishness. We must or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid.... **WE** had to have **God's help**.

STEP THREE – BIG BOOK



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.**

This concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch **through which we passed to freedom.**

He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well.

Established on such a footing we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow, or the hereafter.

Editorial Note: These are the freedoms – **the Promises**... It is a **gradual process**, not all at once.

STEP THREE – BIG BOOK



We thought well before taking this step making sure we were ready; that we could at last abandon ourselves utterly to Him.

End with **THE THIRD STEP PRAYER:**

God, I offer myself to Thee to do – to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I might better do Thy Will. Take away my difficulties that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy Will always!

STEP THREE – 12 & 12



Practicing Step Three is like the opening of a door which to all appearances is still closed and locked. All we need is a key, and the decision to swing the door open. **There is only one key and it is called willingness.**

This is the way to a faith that works.

Step Three calls for affirmative action, **for it is only by action that we can cut away the self-will which has always blocked the entry of God – or, if you like, a Higher Power – into our lives.**

[Faith not enough] How and by what specific means shall we be able to let him in? Step Three represents our first attempt... the effectiveness of the whole AA program will rest upon how well and earnestly we have tried to come to... **THE LANGUAGE** of Step 3...

At first looks hard... Fortunately, we who have tried it, and with equal misgivings, can testify that anyone, anyone at all, can begin to do it. We can further add that a beginning, even the smallest, is all that is needed. Once we have placed the key of willingness in the lock and have the door **ever so slightly open**, we find that **we can always open it some more.** Though self-will may slam it shut again, as it frequently does, **it will always respond the moment we again pick up the key of willingness.**

STEP THREE – 12 & 12



Every man and woman who has joined AA and intends to stick has, without realizing it, made a beginning on Step Three.

[Showing up] demonstrates a willingness has been achieved to cast out one's own will and one's own ideas about the alcohol problem in favor of those suggested by AA.

[Maybe just alcohol willingness but nowhere else] ...instinct plus logic always seek to bolster egotism.

The facts seem to be these: **The more we become willing to depend upon a Higher Power, the more independent we actually are.**

Therefore dependence, as AA practices it, is really a means of gaining true independence.

[**The example of electricity** => dependence and much greater freedom to live and we accept it readily.]

[But put mental and emotional independence in the mix, we jump] How persistently we claim the right to decide all by ourselves just what we shall think and just how we shall act...

This brave philosophy, wherein each man plays God, sounds good in the speaking, but it still has to meet the acid test: how well does it work?

STEP THREE – 12 & 12



...he might first take a look at the results normal people are getting from self-sufficiency. Everywhere he sees people filled with anger and fear, society breaking into warring fragments. Each fragment says to the other, “We are right and you are wrong.”... And everywhere **the same thing is done on an individual basis. The sum of all this mighty effort is less peace and less brotherhood than before. The philosophy of self-sufficiency is not paying off.**

[Editor’s Note: sounds like the actor directing all parts of a play.]

[We alcoholics have reached our rope already and have the start of the rudiments of faith.]

[Dependence sounds bad to a psychiatrist or a psychologist. And we all know the wrong kind of dependence – still depending on parents or treating spouse like parent.] But dependence upon an AA group or upon a HP hasn’t produced any baleful results. [Look at WWII experiences of alcoholics – exemplary service and behavior even with dependence on a HP.] And far from it being a weakness, this dependence was their chief source of strength.

STEP THREE – 12 & 12



He made a beginning, we have seen, when he commenced to rely upon AA for the solution of his alcohol problem. By now, though, the chances are that he has become convinced that he has more problems than alcohol, and that some of these refuse to be solved by all the sheer personal determination and courage he can muster.... [Examples] His lone courage and unaided will cannot do it alone. Surely, he must now depend upon Somebody or Something else.

[Probably he'll turn to a fellow AA, who will give him some assurances but also say hey, your life is still unmanageable even if you have some sobriety.] it's a far cry from permanent sobriety and a contented, useful life. [That's where all the remaining Steps come in]

...That the other Steps of the AA program can be practiced with success only when Step Three is **given a determined and persistent trial.**

But now it appears that there are certain things that only the individual can do. All by himself, and in light of his own circumstances, he needs to develop the quality of willingness. **When he acquires willingness, he is the only one who can make the decisions to exert himself.** Trying to do this is an act of his own will. All of the Twelve Steps require sustained and personal exertion to conform to their principles, and so, we trust, to God's will.

STEP THREE – 12 & 12



Editor's Note: Here it is...

It is when we try to make our will conform with God's that we begin to use it rightly. ***Our whole problem had been the misuse of willpower. We had tried to bombard our problems with it instead of attempting to bring it into agreement with God's intention for us.***

[The Steps help us do this and] Step Three opens the door.

In all times of emotional disturbance and indecision, we can pause, and ask for quiet and in the stillness simply say:

THE SERENITY PRAYER

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change, courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.

[Editor's Note: This is not an all like the Third Step Prayer!]

STEP THREE – GREEN BOOK



The Third Step is a turning point... we find the **willingness to allow** a God of our understanding to work in our lives... we make a leap of faith, **turning to that Power for assistance**. Our understanding of this Power need not be perfect or complete in order for us to take this step. We need only have **an open mind and a willingness to try something new**.

Taking the Third Step means acting on our belief that a Higher Power can relieve our addiction and restore us to sanity... faith that something better will be revealed... When we **surrender** to a Power greater than ourselves, **we don't always know where we're going, but we can be sure it will be better than where we were**.

What does it mean to turn over our will and our lives?... [our will – plans and intentions... our lives – the full scope of everything we do, think and say...] [We turn over] because our self-directed thoughts and actions have so often lead us to acting out, negative consequences and despair... we let a Power greater than ourselves help guide out daily decisions, opening ourselves to the possibility that we may not know what is best for us and letting go of the belief in our own power to manage our lives... **In so doing, we find God's care {is not just about our addictive sexual behavior} but to the entire course of our daily lives and to every aspect of our existence.**

STEP THREE – GREEN BOOK



We may be afraid of taking this step.... Impossible to surrender control and allow a caring Higher Power... all we are doing is *making a decision* to turn our will and lives over... we are simply willing to move forward... We decide to make a commitment to recovery, and spiritual growth. [For most] **the actual turning of our will and lives... will take place gradually**, as we work the remaining nine steps.

The Third Step invites us to turn our will and our lives **over to the care of God, not to the control of God... not ... some powerful taskmaster** forcing us to do things not of our own choosing. Instead, **we become open to making new choices for ourselves in the light of a Higher Power's transforming love and care**... a way of gentleness and compassion.... Become open to new solutions. We are **free to make different choices, gradually learning to care for ourselves as our Higher Power cares for us.**

Taking this step, **we become willing to walk through all experiences and emotions, including painful ones. We discover that turning our lives over is not the end of our problems...**

STEP THREE – GREEN BOOK



... we may also begin to practice opening ourselves up to guidance of a Higher Power... prayer... help with abstinence... insight in how to be of use to others... Our specific words are less important than our willingness to make contact with a Power greater than ourselves and to let God's care into our lives.

Surrender... We give up the belief that our intellect, our knowledge, our judgement, and our will could successfully guide our lives.... **This profound surrender... is something we learn to renew every day.**

...*God as we understand God.* ...we have the opportunity to develop our own understanding of God, and the right to grow and recover in ways that match this understanding... our relationship... our concept... This freedom of understanding has opened the door to spirituality for many...

With small but significant actions, we can work Step Three by establishing a commitment to the program... Meetings... We come to believe that it is God's will that we not act out... **We work the Third Step whenever we choose recovery over addiction.**

STEP THREE – GREEN BOOK



With **surrender**, we say goodbye to our old way of life and prepare to make a transition to the new.... **Facing life without acting out involves feelings of grief and loss.**

... 'taking back' our will... attempting to control things again by only surrendering in certain areas of our lives and not in others... We need not be discouraged.... **As long as we believe in the process of recovery... we can return to Step Three.**

... we begin to notice signs of growth and transition, evidence that the program is working. We find ourselves being more honest, more willing to share the truth about ourselves with others... We ask for and accept help, reaching out to other recovering sex addicts on a regular basis, instead of living in secrecy.... Abstinence as a gift from HP rather than white knuckled efforts... We start to value and enjoy **a new sense of spirituality.**

WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THE THIRD STEP.... TODAY.... JUST FOR TODAY



Fear is still in my life.

I will not get what I want and this will cause me pain.

I take the Third Step when I Ask For Help.

Asking For Help can be Asking For Help or it can be actually Asking For Help.



Questions & Answers