

STEP TWELVE

"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to Sexaholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs."

At this point in our recovery process, we must be practicing the first two maintenance steps, Steps Ten and Eleven, to the best of our ability. In addition, we constantly check to make sure that Steps One through Three are evident in our lives on a daily basis. If this is true, then we are ready for Step Twelve, the last maintenance step.

Step Twelve can easily be grouped into three areas. The first area concerns spiritual awakening. The second asks us to carry this message to all sexaholics. The third suggests that we practice these principles in all our affairs. What an order, but we can carry it out if we look at these three areas and what they mean.

The first portion of Step Twelve is -- "Having had a spiritual awakening as the RESULT of these steps,..." This implies, in no uncertain terms, that as a result of practicing all the steps, we have each found something called a spiritual awakening. This spiritual awakening, which has come slowly and sometimes painfully as we were living each step in sequence, is nothing more than a transformation to a new state of consciousness and being -- we have "become a new creation" through our Higher Power's work in our lives. At this point, we should find ourselves living in a new degree of honesty, tolerance, unselfishness, peace of mind and love which we had thought ourselves quite incapable of attaining. In addition, we are now aware of the havoc that the false self has caused us and are now determined to keep the thinking mind in its proper role as our servant instead of our master. Each time that we gained deeper and deeper awareness of God's presence within, our consciousness was raised and our old nature was changed. This program asks for progress, not perfection. So we must now continue daily to realize a deeper awareness of God's presence within us, or we will once again separate ourselves from God and God's plan for our lives. We are on a lifetime spiritual path. But at this point our spiritual growth is fragile and we should guard it closely. Seek truth and then live it. Truth shall set us free. Therefore, in order to allow this gift of a spiritual awakening to grow, we should look at the remainder of Step Twelve and find out what we should be doing.

The second part of Step Twelve is -- "we tried to carry this message to sexaholics,..." As we carry the message to next suffering sexaholic, this finally translates the Twelve Steps into action. In order for us to properly "twelve-step" other sexaholics, we should have a thorough foundation of this program and make sure that our own recovery process is in order. The message we carry is the one that shows how the Steps transformed our lives -- from what we used to be like, to what happened, and how this transformation occurred. In other words, we must practice this program daily before we can have a message to give away. Those of us who have done the Steps and are living them are in a unique position to carry this message of hope with love, never forgetting that this program is a spiritual program, period! Many S.A. members declare that no satisfaction has been deeper and no joy greater than a twelfth step well done. The unconditional giving and helping of others to move from darkness into light, to see their lives with new purpose and meaning, and above all to watch these people awaken to the presence of a living God in their lives -- these are the benefits that we receive as we carry the message. For those who are interested in "twelve-step" work, it is

suggested that we:

1. Read the chapter on "Working with Others" in the A.A. Big Book;
2. Become an apprentice of someone who does "twelve-stepping" regularly; and
3. Remember, "We carry the message, not the sexaholic."

There are other kinds of "twelfth-step" work. We sit in S.A. meetings and listen, not only to receive but to give the reassurance and support which only our presence can bring. If called upon to speak, we again try to carry the message. We can also give of service to S.A. by making coffee, being a group secretary/treasurer, cleaning up, and in general doing whatever the traditions suggest that needs to be done to keep S.A. together. Sponsorship, if approached rightly, can be a very rewarding experience. This is the ultimate reward. "Freely ye have receive; freely give..." is the core of this part of Step Twelve.

The third part of Step Twelve-- "...and to practice these principle in all our affairs" -- is the final section of Step Twelve. The program of recovery that each of us has developed in doing the steps, means absolutely nothing if we do not practice these principles in all our affairs. At this place in time, many things may be going well for us. Beware -- we temporarily cease to grow because we feel satisfied there is no need for ALL of S.A.'s Twelve Steps for us. Maybe we are doing fine on the first half of the first Step and that part of the Twelfth Step where we "carry the message." If this is the case, then we are "two-stepping." But, if we are again willing to receive from God that Grace which can sustain and strengthen us in any catastrophe, then we switch from "two-stepping" back to "twelve-stepping."

Our troubles are the same as everyone else's, but when an honest effort is made "to practice these principles in all our affairs," well grounded S.A.'s seem to have the ability, by God's Grace, to take these troubles in stride and turn them into demonstrations of faith. If we find ourselves still challenged by the lesser and more continuous problems of life, our answer is still more spiritual development. As we grow spiritually, we find that the old ideas and negative thinking associated with the false self slowly disappear. So in order to grow, we must continue to practice the S.A. principles in all our affairs.

In summary, we have had a spiritual awakening, in some sense, by doing and living the previous eleven steps. If we have done our job thoroughly and honestly, then we will have a message to carry. In addition, if we have been practicing the steps as we completed them, and continue to do, then it is easy to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The purpose of writing the twelfth step is to help us identify which areas of our own personal program need to be strengthened. In each of the three areas -- spiritual growth, carrying the message, and practicing the principles in all our affairs, we need to take a long hard look and see how they can be improved upon.

The following examples are to help us improve our program by recognizing the areas that still need honest and thorough practice. Remember, our program of recovery does not end with the Twelfth Step -- it is just the beginning!

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QUESTIONS FOR WRITING

1. What does "Having a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps" mean to you? In what ways have you had a spiritual awakening?
2. Has your awareness of God's presence increased since you have started this program? How?
3. What does "tried to carry this message to sexaholics" mean to you?
4. What does "practice these principles in all our affairs" mean to you?
5. If you are still having problems with aspects of your life, what is the answer? Why? (Read the Twelfth Step in the *Twelve and Twelve*.)
6. What is meant by "twelfth stepping?" How can you successfully do this? Can you write down the name of someone who might need your help?
7. Explain why we have to stop fighting anybody or anything.
8. In what ways has this program changed your life?