

Reflections of Step One

My experience and attitude with steps 2-12 is simply a reflection of what I experience in step one. If I am honest with myself in step one, I cannot escape the truth. I cannot escape the reality that there is nothing I can do to keep myself sober. I will see that I am guaranteed to drink again. There is no hope in step one. I will digest the truth that I do not have the power to choose whether I will or will not drink.

Relying on my memory of suffering to keep me sober is no longer an option. My better judgment and greater intellect will not produce a mental defense against the first drink. As a result of experiencing the first step, rather than it being an intellectual exercise, I am in touch with my powerlessness at a gut level. This tends to produce discomfort.

This discomfort is a gift. This very gift promotes a desire to seek power, which I do not possess. This discomfort is not to be confused with fear being the motivation to stay sober. To rely on fear to stay sober is dangerous. For, the day will come when the fear will disappear and then there will be no reason for me to stay sober.

To be honest in my first step is to surrender completely. I am surrendering to the fact that I have no power. This surrender is what produces the hope and promises in the remaining steps. Without this surrender, I will not experience an entire psychic change nor will I experience the many gifts that the Big Book authors talk about.

As a result of now having the desire to seek power, I am much more motivated to establishing a relationship with a power greater than myself. If I have difficulty with the Higher Power concept or a belief in some kind of God in step 2, it is generally because I am clinging to the idea that I have power. It is a blatant sign I have overlooked something crucial in my first step. If I did not experience my powerlessness at a gut level, I will not be eager to seek power.

After having that first step experience, I will not balk at making a decision in step 3 to turn my will and my life over to some kind of power greater than myself. Keeping in mind that decision basically says I am willing to do steps 4 through 12 in their entirety. If step one was an intellectual exercise for me, I will not see the urgency with step 3.

This first step experience and my desire to seek power, promotes the willingness to do an honest and thorough inventory because I now know the stark reality I am facing. I must have these things removed so I can gain access to some power, which will save my life. I am willing to tell someone else my entire life story and I will not leave any stone unturned. My experience with step one will allow me to see I am facing a life and death situation. Without that experience in step one, I will not truly understand the seriousness of my malady and I will balk at doing an inventory or I will take short cuts so I can get it over with.

My first step experience promotes eagerness to share my inventory. I am eager to get to the truth so I can be free. I cannot intellectually produce this eagerness if I did not experience step one at a visceral level.

Reflections of Step One

As a result of my first step experience and the hope I experienced in steps 2 through 5, I am eager to take the exact nature of my wrongs to God in steps 6 and 7. I want them removed so I can stay sober and be free of the things that have caused me failure and defeat. Without a first step experience, I will see these steps as mere stepping-stones for bigger and better things to come.

I am much more willing to make a list of all the people I have harmed and much more willing to finish my amends as a result of experiencing the seriousness of my malady in step one. It will become crystal clear that I will die if I do not go to any lengths to repair the damage I have caused. If my experience in step one was an intellectual one, I will have a casual attitude about making amends. I will tell myself that I will make these amends when the situation presents itself or I may convince myself that I will not die if I drink again and I can always get sober again.

From my experience with making amends, as a result of my first step experience and the hope I experienced in the following steps, I am much more motivated to do a daily 10th step. My spirit knows how essential it is to maintain contact with the power that enables me to stay sober. Without a visceral experience in step one, I will see step 10 as something I can take or leave.

At this point I am eager to establish and maintain a relationship with a God of my understanding. I look forward to my meditation practices. I am energized and enthusiastic about this relationship. I want to learn more about this God that I really don't understand. Without that first step experience I will view meditation and prayer as a chore and I will not see how essential it is for me to have access to this power that I hear others talk about.

It is abundantly clear that I must pass this on to others or I will die.

I am eager to work with others. I look forward to taking others through the steps and I am enthusiastic about the process. I am energized and often feel like I am on fire with something that I never before could not even imagine. Now I understand why they say the loneliness will vanish and this will be the bright spot of my life. Without a first step experience and the experiences in the following steps, there will be minimal desire to work with others. When asked

why I don't sponsor others, I will say no one has asked me. I will not have the necessary motivation to take it upon myself to seek out the newcomer. I will be lazy. I will sit back and express how grateful I am for what the program has given me. I will lack the motivation to give back what was so freely given to me.

Even though there have been times when I have been resistive and balked at various times in the steps, the quantity of willingness and eagerness produced through the process has far outweighed my reluctance.

Now I fully understand why I was taken through the steps so quickly. I did not have time to think about my experience. I simply experienced it.

Reflections of Step One

As a result of this experience, the compulsion to drink was removed in a very short period of time. Maybe that is why they say the steps are to be experienced rather than understood and our experience through the steps will give us the understanding. For that, I am eternally grateful and I could never in my lifetime repay Alcoholics Anonymous for what you have so freely given to me.

I wish to thank all of you for your help.

I am neither cocky nor am I afraid for now I am free.

Paul F.