

Workshop – reframing the steps for flipside of Bill’s egomaniac personality – if you are on the flipside or sponsoring someone who is. Does not take the place of working with therapist on family of origin issues. Does not go into detail about how we became this way. Based on my personal experience, not an expert. A lot of it is an adjunct to the steps – not saying skip the parts I don’t talk much about.

<b>Egomaniac tendencies</b>	<b>Shame-based tendencies</b>
Sense of entitlement, the world’s their oyster	Feel unworthy, undeserving, leave the good stuff for someone else
Feel superior to others	Feel inferior to others, defective, unlovable. Not guilt (something I did) but shame (who I am)
Seek praise from others to validate inflated sense of self; “I’d prove to the world I was important.” (Bill’s story)	Avoid attention by fitting in, for fear of being found out (as defective)
Can’t handle criticism, perceive criticism even when not there because everything is about them	Can’t handle praise because undeserved; can’t handle criticism because too painful
Lack empathy, use other people as supporting cast where they are the star.	Very in tune with other people’s feeling but not their own; try to control how others feel towards them to make up for hole inside (use esteem of others as substitute for self-esteem)
Create the egomaniac false self to avoid conscious or unconscious feelings of inferiority	Create false personas that look good on the outside to prevent others from seeing the (believed) ugliness within
Behavior is driven by largely unconscious defense mechanism of I’m the best to avoid feeling I’m the worst	Behavior is driven largely by internalized feelings of shame, being unworthy, defective, unlovable
Don’t care what most people think. Think they know better. Play God.	Care way too much about what anyone might think. Hypervigilant to avoid being blind-sided (complex PTSD). Treat others like they are God in the sense that others have the power to determine our worth
Don’t ask for help because they think they don’t need it; it would be an admission of weakness.	Don’t ask for help because they don’t want to bother anyone, feel they don’t deserve it

Always have to be right. Unable to see the world from other people's point of view. Differences of opinion are seen as right/wrong, and theirs is right.	Point of view depends on whose approval is needed at the moment. Lack a solid sense of self. Do a lot of second-guessing of themselves – their thoughts, feelings, opinions. Chameleon.
Always want more – driven by need to succeed, to top others, anything that feeds the ego	Never feel like they've done enough (or are enough)
Don't respect authority	Need approval from authority

Big Book written for people like Bill – because he thought everyone else was like him. His ego needed deflating. It was humiliating to him to admit defeat.

My holdout was that I didn't know if I could even survive having one more thing wrong with me.

Commonalities – need to get & stay sober; need to move toward the center in how we see ourselves; same underlying shame but different awareness of it

BUT - You don't talk to shame-based people the same way.

Not for shame-based people -

- Take the cotton out of your ears & put it in your mouth.
- Quit playing God.
- It's your pride & ego that keeps you from believing in God
- You're looking at the problem.
- Let's talk about your defects
- Selfishness – self-centeredness
- Self-will run riot
- You have the same big ego, only you feel special because you think you're worse than everyone
- Nazi sponsors

These trigger shame responses and we aren't listening anymore or are getting defensive. We won't want to come back.

Gentler approach to recovery - start with building self-esteem right away. We can't do the steps in their shaming language while feeling that all we are is one big defect and we're being told we need to really be hard on ourselves (we're already too hard on ourselves)

Affirmation tapes to counteract the negative self-talk. Make list of critical things we say to ourselves. Write affirmative statements that say the opposite. Record ourselves reading them in our own voice. Play at least twice a day to get comfortable hearing ourselves be kind to ourselves. Doesn't matter if you don't believe it. Just play it. It breaks a taboo.

Treat ourselves to things other people do but we normally wouldn't – take a bath (too self-indulgent); buy something (money better spent on someone else); enjoy nature (idle time – time not spent doing things to justify my existence); call someone and see if it really bothers them or we just assume it; try to peacefully coexist with the rest of the world for 5 minutes; start or restart a hobby (frivolous); take a walk

Give ourselves permission to feel and express our feelings (but use help of a sponsor to express feelings appropriately). All of them. They're not right or wrong, and they pass.

Give ourselves pats on the back for big and little accomplishments and decisions – another day sober, picked up the phone, trying to change our lives

Start learning to treat ourselves as well as we would treat a friend. Describe a situation I'm in, imagine what I'd say to a friend who is telling me that; then say to myself what I would say to them.

<b>What I'd say to a friend in this situation</b>	<b>What I say to myself</b>
Sounds like you're going through a really tough time. Take it easy on yourself.	You brought this on yourself, you deserve it.
It's not your fault, there are many factors beyond your control.	You suck. You can't handle anything. Why do you bother to get up in the morning?
You look fine. No one pays any attention to the little things we focus on about ourselves.	Everyone is staring at you because of your glaring imperfections. You shouldn't go out in public.
Came in second? That's fantastic, congratulations!	LOSER!!! What a wasted effort.
Another job will come along, your friends and family will stand by you	You're unemployable. Don't let anyone know you're out of work

Everyone's kids have problems. I'm sure you'll work this out.	You're a complete failure as a parent. Why don't you off yourself and maybe they'll get someone better.
It's ok to cry, I'll listen and be there for you.	Stop crying. You look even uglier with your face all contorted like that.

We have great skill in knowing what other people need, just never used it on ourselves. Praise, encouragement, acknowledge that it's hard but we can do it. Learn to esteem ourselves. We have to change that negative self-talk. Say to yourself what you would say to a friend.

The steps are going to make us look at some parts of ourselves we're not proud of. Take stock of what we DO have to be proud of FIRST, so we don't lose sight of it.

1. Powerlessness & unmanageability – not just alcohol but other people. Try to control how people relate to us, feel responsible for things we can't control. Life unmanageable long before started drinking. Begin to straighten out what's mine to do and what is not mine. Power we do have – to set our own standards, not let others determine our worth, not take responsibility for things we can't control. Only power we give up is the power we don't actually have. We become more empowered, not less.
2. Need resources beyond my own – neural pathways formed in childhood are what my brain does. Need some new input - books, doctors, AA. Know how to be responsible and self-sufficient, don't know how to be emotional, social, or interdependent. AA meetings and AA people are a great place to try out new behavior, check whether a long-held assumption is actually true, see if people are really thinking what I think they're thinking. Find a group that will love you until you learn to love yourself.
3. Decision to be in recovery – abstinence the sine qua non, feel my feelings, pay conscious attention to my life and take corrective actions where needed. If I decide to change which is my dominant hand – it's possible but takes a lot of conscious effort. When not paying attention, revert to old habit. Same with recovery – requires conscious effort to change ingrained undesired thoughts and behaviors. Building new neural pathways. Requires taking actions outside our comfort zone.

4. We don't need to be hard on ourselves and easy on others. We need to be honest about ourselves and others.

Add section - Harm to self

Who have I called the ugliest names? Who have I been hypercritical of all the time? How many times have I smiled and said yes when I wanted to say no? Whose successes have I sabotaged? Whose achievements have I failed to acknowledge? Whose faults have I blown all out of proportion? Who have I attempted to destroy physically? Whose life have I taken dangerous risks with? Who have I told they don't have a right to exist? Who have I told that whatever they do, it's not enough. Who have I not stood up for when they needed it?

3<sup>rd</sup> column – how it affects me –

I learned these behaviors and beliefs when I was a child; behaving or believing differently was met with consequences (usually further shaming). It was an unfortunate necessity with lasting effects.

4<sup>th</sup> column – my part in it. None as a child. But as an adult, my responsibility to stop doing it and treat myself better.

5. Get rid of secrets -shame is about fear of being known (and found defective). Once our secrets are exposed we find we really aren't so bad.
6. Don't use the word defects – triggers a shame response. Call them survival skills – don't feel, don't trust, don't talk, don't think well of yourself, don't do anything unless you're the best, etc. They just don't serve us anymore, not in the same environment.

Some undesirable behaviors that stem from shame

- Judgmental of others who don't live up to our very high shame-based standards
- Putting others down to feel better about ourselves
- Questioning people's motives when they're nice, generous, or complimentary
- The "I reject you first defense" – contempt for people and groups that we believe would never accept us
- Self-deprecating talk so no one can hurt us because we already know
- Rage because we feel threatened when not reality

7. Thank our low self-esteem and its many offshoots for getting us through our difficult childhoods. Tell them we appreciate what they did for us, but we don't need them anymore. We are adults and can choose who we want to be, set our own standards, not live in fear because we are not dependent on unhealthy people anymore. Yes, change the behaviors, but don't fault ourselves for having them or feel that there's some bad part of us that has to be removed.

8. Persons we had harmed – include self

9. Amends to self – for the rest of our lives

- Continue all the esteem-building work we did before beginning the steps
- Apologize out loud for critical thoughts – I'm sorry, I should not have criticized you like that. You didn't deserve it. You're just being human.
- Look over our past accomplishments – graduations, promotions, events, whatever. Take a minute or several to feel proud and acknowledge it instead of dismissing it as nothing. (What would we have said to someone else?)
- Look in the mirror and say something nice every day.
- Wreckage of past – do the things we denied ourselves. Maybe back to school, career change, mend broken relationships, more attention to our health
- Say no when asked to do something we really don't want to do – we make our own choices and accept the consequences
- Take better care of ourselves physically, emotionally, socially (stay connected!)
- Stand up for ourselves when we don't want to be a part of something. Need to make waves, rock the boat sometimes for our own integrity

10. Inventory

- What did I do right today? Pat on the back, give myself credit
- What did I do better than I used to do – credit for progress, perfection not required
- What underlying thinking or feelings motivated the behaviors I didn't like? Try to make the unconscious conscious so I can work on it.

- Challenge my thinking – when I judge whatever I did as not enough – enough for what? For who? Some fictitious, unidentified “what people think” that is really just me projecting my old shame-based standards?
- Learn about defense mechanisms – deny, minimize, rationalize, intellectualize, project, justify, etc. Their purpose is to protect us from things we can’t face, but I want to face them rather than continue to act them out. When I’m doing one of these - Why am I being defensive? In what way do I feel threatened? (an ad hoc step 4 – how does it affect me?) Is it a realistic fear? Does it really threaten my self-esteem or only how I may look to others? Self-esteem comes from within.

11. Take time to be at peace with ourselves. Know that we belong, we’re just like other people – frustrating and glorious, imperfect and magnificent. OK to have a quiet mind and just be.
12. Personality change sufficient to overcome alcoholism – when I don’t live in constant pain and fear, I don’t need to self-medicate. When I express instead of stuffing my feelings, I don’t need alcohol to numb me. When I’m not painfully self-conscious, I don’t need to take the edge off. When I acknowledge that I have a place here, I don’t need to be self-destructive.

Working with others - only time I really see my progress. A joy to watch other women begin to claim their power and take back their lives. My past is useful to others like me.

Didn’t have a God-sized hole. Had a Beth-sized hole. Now I’m full of myself.

## **Bibliography**

There’s tons of stuff out there. These are just some of the ones I’ve drawn on for myself and for this presentation.

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