

Our Method

Secular version for the AA group "Esprit Ouvert" (Adapted from How It Works, Chapter 5 in Alcoholics Anonymous)

Our Method is a recovery program for alcoholics who want to stop drinking and come to the "Esprit Ouvert" group for help. This method requires that we be thoroughly honest with ourselves and assume full responsibility for our behaviors and attitudes. These are crucial elements for our recovery. The stories of our lives reveal, in a general way, what we were like, what happened to us, and what we are like now. If we really want to recover, if we are willing to step out of our comfort zone and if we are willing to work very hard to change our behavior and our way of life, we are ready to put this simple program into practice.

Some of the steps in this program seemed very intimidating. Many of us thought we could find easier, gentler ways, but it was a waste of time. Half-measures did not give us anything. Here are the steps that we followed and that we suggest as a recovery strategy:

1. We admitted that we were helpless in the face of alcohol - that we had lost control of our lives.
2. We came to accept that we needed help to deal with our drinking problem.
3. We decided to join a group of people who managed to stop their alcohol consumption.
4. We proceeded without fear to do a thorough moral inventory of ourselves: recognizing that our egocentric behaviors, our fears, our self pity, our resentments and our weaknesses may well have contributed to our alcoholism.
5. We have confessed, without reservation, to ourselves and to another person, the details of our inventory.
6. We have agreed to give up our destructive behavior towards ourselves and others.
7. We have sought, with humility, honesty and open-mindedness, to change our behavior and lifestyle so as to remain abstinent.
8. We made a list of all the people we had harmed and we agreed to undo the wrongs towards each of them.
9. We have repaired our wrongs directly to these people to the extent possible, except when in doing so we risked harming them or harming others.
10. We continued take a personal inventory and promptly admitted our wrongs as soon as we realized them.
11. We sought within ourselves our legitimate place in life as well as the strength to realize ourselves in this way.
12. Having been restored by the practice of these steps, we have tried to transmit this message to other alcoholics and put these principles into practice in all areas of our lives.

Many of us exclaimed, "It's too difficult! I will not be able to do it!" Do not be discouraged. None of us has been able to perfectly put these principles into practice. What matters is that we are willing to make progress in our program. The principles outlined above are only guides. We aim for progress rather than perfection. Our deepest wish is that every alcoholic can, one day at a time, be happy, joyous and free.

The Twelve Traditions

Secular version for the AA group "Esprit Ouvert" (Adapted from the AA Twelve Traditions)

1. Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends on AA unity.
2. In pursuit of our common goal, there is only one ultimate authority - the spirit of self-help and humanity that reigns in our group consciousness. Our leaders are but trusted servants, they do not govern.
3. The desire to stop drinking is the only requirement for being an AA member.
4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or the AA movement as a whole.
5. Each group has only one primary goal, to convey its message to the alcoholic who is still suffers.
6. A group should never endorse or fund other organizations, be they related or foreign to AA, or lend them the name of AA, lest problems of money, property or prestige concerns distract us of our primary purpose.
7. All groups should fully self support themselves and decline outside contributions.
8. The AA movement should always remain unprofessional, but our service centers can hire qualified employees.
9. As a movement, AA should never have a formal structure, but we can set up councils or service committees directly responsible to those they serve.
10. The AA movement has no opinion on outside issues; hence the name of AA should never be a part of any public controversy.
11. Our public relations policy is based on attractiveness rather than advertising; we must always maintain personal anonymity in the written and spoken press as well as in the cinema.
12. Anonymity is the basis of all our traditions and reminds us constantly to place principles before personalities.

In order to dispel any doubt, our intention is not to change the original versions of How It Works, the 12 Steps or the 12 Traditions as published by Alcoholics Anonymous. These secularized texts are only addressed to members of the group "Esprit Ouvert" in St-Jean-sur-Richelieu, Québec.

I AM RESPONSIBLE...

***When anyone, anywhere, reaches out for help,
I want the hand of AA always to be there,
and for that***

I AM RESPONSIBLE.
