

STEP ONE: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable. (6-7 min)

Key Points to Touch On:

- Powerlessness doesn't mean helplessness.
 - "It just means alcohol had more control over me than I wanted to admit."
 - "The drink wasn't the problem — it was the solution to problems I couldn't name."
- Unmanageability is more than chaos.
 - "Even when things looked okay on the outside, I was falling apart inside."
 - "Some of us hit a dramatic bottom; others had an emotional or spiritual one."
- Realization vs. admission.
 - "Realizing I was powerless was different than admitting it out loud — that's where the healing began."

Sponsor/Sponsee Angle:

- "A sponsor helps us see what powerlessness and unmanageability look like in our own story."

Big Book - Dr Opinion

Powerlessness Defined — Page xxvii:

"Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their alcoholic life seems the only normal one."

This explains the mental obsession — the irrational thinking that leads us to drink even when we know it's harmful.

The Hopeless Cycle — Page xxix:

"All these, and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start drinking without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon... is the manifestation of an allergy which differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity."

This speaks directly to the first half of Step One: "We admitted we were powerless over alcohol..."

Unmanageability Implied — Page xxv:

"They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few drinks..."

This line foreshadows the unmanageability part — the emotional and spiritual sickness that fuels the obsession.

STEP TWO: Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. (6-7 min)

Key Points to Touch On:

- “Came to believe” is a process, not a one-time event.
 - “I didn’t have to define my Higher Power right away — I just had to stay open.”
 - “For some, it’s God; for others, it’s the group, nature, or love.”
- Restoration to sanity means new ways of thinking.
 - “Sanity wasn’t about being crazy — it was about repeating self-destructive patterns and expecting different results.”
 - “I needed a power greater than my own willpower.”
- Faith is flexible.
 - “The beauty of AA is it doesn’t demand belief — just the willingness to explore.”

Sponsor/Sponsee Angle:

- “A sponsor doesn’t tell you what to believe — they share how they found their own concept of a Higher Power.”

Big Book Notes

Big Book: Pages 44–47 Highlights

Here’s why it’s a good fit for Step Two:

- Page 44:

“To be doomed to an alcoholic death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.”

Sets up the idea that belief in a higher power isn’t about religion but survival.

- Page 45:

“Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves.”

Expresses the core of Step Two: acknowledging we need help beyond self-will.

- Pages 46–47:

“We found that as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice... we began to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that Power.”

“Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you.”

These pages are especially affirming for LGBTQ+ folks or anyone with trauma related to religion — emphasizing a personal, inclusive path to spirituality.

STEP THREE: Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. (6-7 min)

Key Points to Touch On:

- This is a decision, not an action step — the action comes later.
 - “Step 3 is about willingness — am I willing to stop playing God in my own life?”
 - “It’s not about perfection. It’s about trust.”
- ‘As we understood Him’ is the invitation.
 - “This step is inclusive — it meets you where you are.”
 - “You don’t need to believe in a bearded man in the sky — just something that isn’t you.”
- Turning it over is a daily thing.
 - “Sometimes I have to turn it over five times before lunch.”

Sponsor/Sponsee Angle:

- “Step 3 is often when the sponsor/sponsee relationship deepens — it’s about trust, surrender, and continuing together.”

Page 60 – The Step is Introduced:

“Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:

- (a) That we were alcoholic and could not manage our own lives.
- (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our alcoholism.
- (c) That God could and would if He were sought.”

This leads directly into the decision made in Step Three.

Page 62 – Self-Will vs. God’s Will:

“Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles.”

“Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us!”

These lines lay the spiritual groundwork: turning from self-will to a Higher Power.

Page 63 – The Third Step Prayer:

“We were now at Step Three. Many of us said to our Maker, as we understood Him:

‘God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt.

Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may 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!’”

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

This is often recited aloud with a sponsor, marking a significant moment of surrender.