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What are the 12 principles of aa

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The journey to addiction recovery may not be linear, and it most definitely isn't always easy. Getting treatment for addiction means putting a lot of hard work and effort into maintaining sobriety and improving your health. A person who struggles with addiction is likely going through hard times and could use guidance during the process. Many people who attempt sobriety and addiction recovery opt for using the 12-step method practiced by Alcoholics Anonymous (AA). These 12 principles aren't just for people who struggle with alcohol addiction. Anyone suffering from addiction can use these 12 principles to seek recovery. If you or a loved one are interested in learning more about the main 12 principles of AA, keep reading! History of the 12 Principles of AA Alcoholics Anonymous was created in 1935 by two men, Bill Wilson and Robert Smith, who were both struggling with alcohol dependency. The group was founded to bring together a sense of community within the disease and to use that community to become successful in recovery. The two men attributed their success in overcoming alcohol dependence to the fact that they were able to work with other alcoholics. There is an ease in discussion and sharing when everyone around you has gone through similar struggles. This group believed that alcohol affected the body, mind, and spirit and that all three needed to be treated to recover. In 1939, Wilson and Smith wrote a book called "The Big Book," which outlined 12 principles for recovery. These were heavily inspired by Christianity when first written, but many AA groups have modernized the interpretations of the principles to be more accepting and functional to a diverse audience. The 12 Principles of AA When given an outline, people release the anxiety of coming up with guidelines to follow on their own. A structure is already laid out for you when you follow AA's 12 steps. You may tweak them to fit in with your personal beliefs and needs, but overall, they allow you to follow a pretty straightforward process. Additionally, a person can always refer back to these 12 steps when they feel their recovery is hitting a rough patch and need extra guidance. 1. Honesty and Acceptance Honesty and acceptance - "We admitted that we were powerless over alcohol - that our lives had become unmanageable." It's a great first step to admit that you need help. Being honest with yourself will be key - and you can do it. Once you understand that you are not in total control and that your addiction is calling the shots, you can begin to release some of your shame. The first inklings of doubts might begin to appear when you recognize that you are doing more harm to yourself than good. You might experience a moment of clarity where seeking help becomes the only obvious choice. And that is a beautiful thing. 2. Hope Hope - "Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity." This step is about finding a great power to put your faith in. You shouldn't give up hope for recovery even during setbacks because you have faith that something greater than you is looking out for your well-being. Many moments that you experience in recovery are going to test your faith. You might feel like things aren't going your way and that you are constantly struggling. It can be hard to overcome, but you have to trust that there is a solution and that you will be free from addiction one day.



And don't forget - you can put your faith in anything bigger than yourself. More on that in the next step! 3. Surrender Surrender - "Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him." During this step, you surrender to a higher power, whatever that might be for you. This is when you decide to move forward in recovery for that higher being despite the selfishness of addiction. You put your faith in the fact that someone out there is giving you a new chance. If you are not religious or spiritual, some people find their higher power is their Higher Self - the self free from addiction. 4. Courage Courage - "Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves." This step can be tough, but it is possible with support and self-compassion. Looking at the ways in which you have contributed to the hardship of your loved ones is key, and we know it's hard. Courage is the strength to admit that you have been wrong and let others know about your wrongdoings. It can be difficult to face your biggest regrets, but moving on from things that hold you back will allow a healthy recovery to take place. 5. Integrity Integrity - "Admitted to a God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs." You want to live honestly. Recovery is about living in your truth and sharing that truth with others around you. You can take the courage from step four and admit your regrets to a higher being, to yourself, and to others. If you can practice this, you can help to eliminate shame as your recovery progresses. 6. Willingness Willingness - "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." Are you ready to move past your hardships? This is when it's important to ask for help. This takes work and vulnerability, but nothing feels better than moving forward surrounded by love. Accept that to move forward, you have to work towards becoming a better person. Accepting that outside help is necessary for recovery is crucial. You cannot be fearful of what treatment will look like, because the end result is your goal. This is your comeback story! 7. Humility Humility - "Humbly ask Him to remove our shortcomings." During this step, it's important to look to your higher power to help free you from your past.



Once willing to remove feelings of shame and guilt, we can begin to let go of the things in the past that we wish to hide.



Who we were in the past does not have to be a reflection of where we want to go in the future. This step also helps to teach us that we are not more important than the next person, but that doesn't mean that we aren't deserving of health and happiness. Every single person is worthy without conditions. 8. Love Love - "Made a list of all the persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to all of them." Not only is it important to make a list of all the wrongdoings you have done toward people you love, but be willing to make amends and ask for forgiveness. Much of our inability to recover is because of the shame we feel from letting loved ones down. If you want to move forward, building a safe community for yourself is essential. If you've hurt someone, apologizing and working toward mending the relationship will build a solid foundation for your future recovery. 9. Responsibility Responsibility - "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others." Taking responsibility for your past actions is a form of love. Actively working towards building your relationship with people shows them that you are respectful of their time and energy and don't wish to make things harder for them. You understand that you are deserving of love, but that you need to treat the people around you with respect. 10. Discipline Discipline - "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it." This principle is something that you will need to work on daily. Once you can admit your wrongdoings and start to make the changes in your life to build a better future, keep practicing them. Work on the discipline of taking care of yourself and those around you every day so that you can maintain your sobriety and your community of support. 11. Awareness Awareness - "Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out." Make everyday about living in your truth and giving yourself to your higher power. Once you begin your recovery journey, it can be easy to lose focus on what is important. When you continue to seek guidance from a higher power you can better maintain your recovery. You will see better results if you can maintain awareness in this sense of oneness with something outside of yourself. 12. Service Service - "Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs." You want to pay all of your knowledge forward. AA wants you to share your understanding of recovery with other people who are struggling. You can extend your efforts to people who are in the same place that you used to be. Within AA, paying it forward is an important responsibility toward the community. Seeking Help Through Sober Sidekick The 12 principles of AA help to guide people and give them a sense of community during their recovery. Addiction is a terrifying and isolating disease that impacts all people. AA is a community-led space that promotes health and well-being to people who are in need. If you are seeking more than just a couple meetings a week, consider joining the app Sober Sidekick. Not only can you access AA meetings 24/7, but you can work to support other sober individuals who are seeking guidance. Practice the 12th step by downloading Sober Sidekick on Android or iPhone and join the community today! Sources: What is A.A.? | Alcoholics Anonymous Relationship Of Hope, Sense Of Community, And Quality Of Life | NCBII 12-Step Interventions and Mutual Support Programs for Substance Use Disorders: An Overview | NCBII The Twelve Traditions provide guidelines for relationships between the groups, members, the global Fellowship and society at large. Questions of finance, public relations, donations and purpose are addressed in the Traditions. There is both a short form and a long form of the Traditions. The Traditions were first published in the April 1946 AA Grapevine under the title "Twelve Points to Assure Our Future." PDF version (Short Form) > PDF version (Long Form) > The Twelve Steps > 1. Our common welfare should come first: personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity. 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority - a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. Our leaders are but trusted servants; they do not govern. 3. The only requirement for A.A. membership is a desire to stop drinking. 4. Each group should be autonomous except in matters affecting other groups or A.A. as a whole. 5. Each group has but one primary purpose - to carry its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. 6. An A.A. group ought never endorse, finance, or lend the A.A. name to any related facility or outside enterprise, lest problems of money, property, and prestige divert us from our primary purpose. 7. Every A.A. group ought to be fully self-supporting, declining outside contributions. 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional, but our service centers may employ special workers.



9. A.A., as such, ought never be organized; but we may create service boards or committees directly responsible to those they serve. 10. Alcoholics Anonymous has no opinion on outside issues; hence the A.A. name ought never be drawn into public controversy. 11. Our public relations policy is based on attraction rather than promotion; we need always maintain personal anonymity at the level of press, radio, and films. 12. Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our traditions, ever reminding us to place principles before personalities. 1. Each member of Alcoholics Anonymous is but a small part of a great whole. A.A. must continue to live or most of us will surely die. Hence our common welfare comes first. But individual welfare follows close afterward. 2. For our group purpose there is but one ultimate authority-a loving God as He may express Himself in our group conscience. 3. Our membership ought to include all who suffer from alcoholism. Hence we may refuse none who wish to recover. Nor ought A.A. membership ever depend upon money or conformity. Any two or three alcoholics gathered together for sobriety may call themselves an A.A. group, provided that, as a group, they have no other affiliation. 4. With respect to its own affairs, each A.A. group should be responsible to no other authority than its own conscience. But when its plans concern the welfare of neighboring groups also, those groups ought to be consulted. And no group, regional committee, or individual should ever take any action that might greatly affect A.A. as a whole without conferring with the Trustees of the General Service Board. On such issues our common welfare is paramount. 5. Each Alcoholics Anonymous group ought to be a spiritual entity having but one primary purpose-that of carrying its message to the alcoholic who still suffers. 6. Problems of money, property, and authority may easily divert us from our primary spiritual aim. We think, therefore, that any considerable property of genuine use to A.A. should be separately incorporated and managed, thus dividing the material from the spiritual. An A.A. group, as such, should never go into business. Secondary aids to A.A., such as clubs or hospitals which require much property or administration, ought to be incorporated and so set apart that, if necessary, they can be freely discarded by the groups. Hence such facilities ought not to use the A.A. name. Their management should be the sole responsibility of those people who financially support them. For clubs, A.A. managers are usually preferred. But hospitals, as well as other places of recuperation, ought to be well outside A.A.- and medically supervised. While an A.A. group may cooperate with anyone, such cooperation ought never go so far as affiliation or endorsement, actual or implied. An A.A. group can bind itself to no one. 7. The A.A. groups themselves ought to be fully supported by the voluntary contributions of their own members. We think that each group should soon achieve this ideal; that any public solicitation of funds using the name of Alcoholics Anonymous is highly dangerous, whether by groups, clubs, hospitals, or other outside agencies; that acceptance of large gifts from any source, or of contributions carrying any obligation whatever, is unwise. Then too, we view with much concern those A.A. treasures which continue, beyond prudent reserves, to accumulate funds for no stated A.A. purpose. Experience has often warned us that nothing can so surely destroy our spiritual heritage as futile disputes over property, money, and authority. 8. Alcoholics Anonymous should remain forever non-professional. We define professionalism as the occupation of counseling alcoholics for fees or hire. But we may employ alcoholics where they are going to perform those services for which we may otherwise have to engage nonalcoholics. Such special services may be well recompensed. But our usual A.A. "12th Step" work is never to be paid for. 9. Each A.A. group needs the least possible organization. Rotating leadership is the best. The small group may elect its secretary, the large group its rotating committee, and the groups of a large metropolitan area their central or intergroup committee, which often employs a full-time secretary. The trustees of the General Service Board are, in effect, our A.A. General Service Committee. They are the custodians of our A.A. Tradition and the receivers of voluntary A.A. contributions by which we maintain our A.A. General Service Office at New York. They are authorized by the groups to handle our over-all public relations and they guarantee the integrity of our principle newspaper, the A.A. Grapevine. All such representatives are to be guided in the spirit of service, for true leaders in A.A. are but trusted and experienced servants of the whole. They derive no real authority from their titles; they do not govern. Universal respect is the key to their usefulness.

