

12 Steps in 12 Months: A Practical Guide to Implementing the Principals of the 12 Step Program into Your Life

Most people say that they're excited and hopeful about the principal ideas outlined in the twelve step program, but never truly develop the discipline to incorporate each step into their daily lives.

So many people are living proof, that if you develop the habits to truly make these philosophies part of your existence, then permanent sobriety and a life of joy, love, and happiness are absolutely possible.



Step Three: Make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

The purpose of step three in achieving a sober life

What exactly is step three trying to teach us and how does it have any effect over our will to remain sober? The most important lesson that step three reveals is that we are not the center of the universe and it is imperative that we quit playing God in our lives and in the lives of others. If you believe that you are the center of the universe, then you will constantly be frustrated and angry that the world is not operating according to your plans. Step three shows us that in order to be restored to sanity we must make a decision, followed by action in the rest of the steps, to turn our Will and our Life over to God as we understood Him/Her.

If you really want to change, you must do more than just acknowledge that these steps are good ideas. You must take actions to incorporate them into your everyday life.

Anyone can read through the 12 steps and agree that they are sound in principal. What separates the person that can rise above addiction from those who fail to, is the continuous practice of actions that work to help you embrace the teachings in each step. The Spiritual life is not a theory, we have to live it. This means day in and day out—not just when you feel like you have the strength to do so. Not 'wanting' to take part in your daily disciplines each day is not a good reason to avoid them. What could be more important really than owning your life again?

Living a sober life is a choice and something you will have to work at. It won't be easy at first. There will be tremendous ups and downs, but they will pass. And in the end, finally living free of addiction will feel glorious. Your life can be better than it was before the addiction took hold—you can design your life however you choose. But first, you must create a plan for yourself to ensure that you fully embrace and incorporate each of the 12 steps into your every day life.

Practical ways to incorporate Step Three into your life:

- If you already have a spiritual doctrine or a Higher Power you believe in begin on a daily basis to practice the disciplines of that belief. Then follow through with your plans.
- Acquire books from the bookstore or the library that focus on ways to incorporate your spiritual doctrine into your life. Commit at least 20 minutes **each day** to reading these books in a quiet place.
- Make a **written** list of all of the things that are weighing heavily on you right now. Below each item, list the actionable steps that you can take to help resolve this problem. Then set goals for accomplishing each of these tasks. After you've done all that you can do, turn the rest over to your Higher Power. Instead of allowing worry and anxiety over these problems to occupy your mind, adopt a sense of peace that these issues will resolve themselves as they were meant to in the grand scheme of things. Remember to take the action you need to take and leave the rest to the Creator.

The universe is too vast and complex to conform to your self centered interests. The only way to cure the “dis-ease” caused by this flawed expectation is to change your perception of your place within the universe.

Things don't happen **to us**, they just happen, and it's up to each one of us to interpret those things and to deal with them. It's not our role to control the things that happen around us. That is impossible and only leads to the type of insanity and frustration that sends us running for the comfort of our addiction. Drugs and alcohol cause you to turn inward, creating a false sense that you have some control over your very small space in the world.

In order to eliminate the “dis-ease” that comes from attempting to control things that are completely out of your control, you must re-evaluate your place in the grand scheme of things. If the entire universe were to function around the self interest of each individual within it, things would be an absolute mess, perhaps like your life has become. Allow yourself to trust that there is a higher purpose for the things that happen around you. You may find that when you accept that change and inconsistency are a natural part of the universe, that you experience an unmatched sense of peace and strength in the ebbs and flows in life.

Information Provided by the Mark Houston Recovery Center

The Mark Houston Recovery Center offers a 90-day program for males designed around the principals of the traditional 12 steps to recovery. The Center's unique approach to drug and alcohol addiction have been featured on the Dr. Phil Show and have caused the center to double its bed capacity after just 6 months after opening its doors. The 12 Step Program is at foundation of the teachings at the Mark Houston Recovery Center. Residents don't only learn about the 12 steps, but practice these disciplines along with important life skills, fitness, and proper nutrition throughout the entire drug and alcohol recovery program.