

## STEP THREE

“Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood *Him*”



Some thoughts and pointers from an AA member  
[Personal view text in blue](#), quotes from 12 & 12 in  
black.

### STEP 3

“Made a decision to **turn** our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood *Him*”

Many AA members refer to this process as “handing over” their will and lives, or indeed handing over their lives before their will... so note carefully... Hand over means to deliver or surrender possession of , whereas turn or turn over means to transfer the care of, therefore it is in this sense the more accurate and intended definition - an alcoholic will always be subject to the ebb and flow of daily life and dealing with his responses to it, He is always responsible for these actions.

When I exert myself and re-affirm on a daily basis the decision to turn my will over to the care of God as I understand *Him* I retain responsibility for how I do act throughout the day, it has the effect of reminding me that I am a recovered alcoholic and need to live by spiritual principles, to be careful not to lapse into self willed actions. A prime fact is that if I am an alcoholic and God has given me AA, then God wills me to be sober... In general His will for me on a daily basis will relate to “practicing these principles in all my affairs”

**“Like all the remaining steps, Step Three calls for affirmative action, for it is only by action that we can cut away the self-will which has always blocked the entry of God – or, if you like, a higher power – into our lives. Faith, to be sure, is necessary, but faith alone can avail nothing. We can have faith yet keep God out of our lives...”**

We find elsewhere in the 12 and 12 this sentiment:-

**“Indeed the attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of each of AA’s 12 steps. For without some degree of humility no alcoholic can stay sober at all.”**

So then I must a day at a time be in pursuit of humility. How do I do that? Well if I am a diligent student of the two volumes, the Big Book and the 12 and 12 – The two central books in AA thought, I will know that reading these two works over and over again provides an ever-fresh source of new insights. If I **am** one of these AA’s then I will have discovered that “a basic ingredient of humility is to desire, see and do God’s will”

***“Step three represents our first attempt to do this. In fact, the effectiveness of the whole AA programme will rest upon how well and earnestly we have tried to come to ‘a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him’... ”***

While navigating our way through a sober life, one day at a time, a sponsor whose only interest is sharing the programme as it is laid down in the two key volumes may well draw our attention to these points:-

***“All by himself, and in the light of his own circumstances, he needs to develop the quality of willingness. When he acquires willingness, he is the only one who can make the decision to exert himself. Trying to do this is an act of his own will. All of the Twelve Steps require sustained and personal exertion to conform to their principles and so, we trust God’s will...”***

The following really is the oil for the hinges on the door that we need to open:-

***“It is when we make our will conform with God’s that we begin to use it rightly... To make this increasingly possible is the purpose of AA’s Twelve Steps, and Step Three opens the door...”***

***“Then it is explained that other steps of the AA programme can be practiced with success only when Step Three is given a determined and persistent trial...”***

***“... The sponsor points out that our friend’s life is still unmanageable even though he is sober, that after all only a bare start on AA’s programme has been made. More sobriety brought about by the admission of alcoholism and by attendance at a few meetings is very good indeed, but it is bound to be a far cry from permanent sobriety and a contented, useful life. That is just where the remaining steps of the AA programme come in. Nothing short of continuous action upon these as a way of life can bring the much desired result....”***

At all times that great and simple prayer can be used:-

***God grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change,  
The courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know  
the difference.***



**Alcohol found me...**



**I provided the  
Incredibly  
Self-centered  
Me**