

The 12 Step Program

By Bob Shortby

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Alcoholics Anonymous is an organization that is famous for helping people with addiction problems. The 12 step program is the foundation for their program. Countless people attribute their success to the program. Many individuals have incorporated the 12 step program into their lives for all kinds of addictions in addition to alcoholism and drug problems. Anyone who wants to take control may benefit from a 12 step program.

Of course, there are twelve levels to the program. The first step is to relinquish power. In other words, the person's life spins out of control when the alcohol, drug or other damaging element is present. People like to think that they can control the situation, but there are certain cases that make control impossible. Admitting that is the first step.

The next two steps urge the person to appeal to a higher power. Many critics of the 12 step program assert that the system is too religious in nature. The second step asserts that the person needs to believe in a higher power and the third contends that the person needs to turn his life over to God.

The fourth step is the moral inventory. This step is another one closely tied to religion as anyone who has sat in a confessional will attest. The moral inventory leads to the fifth level of the 12 step program in which the individual admits his wrong-doing to himself, those close to him and to God as well.

The sixth step is ironically similar to step one. The individual relinquishes power. Instead of being powerless to the harmful element, he becomes powerless to God. The higher being is responsible for removing the negative aspects of their character. This passive approach to recovery has been criticized as well.

The next three levels involve apologizing and making amends for the wrongs the individual had committed. From there, the tenth level seeks another moral inventory and the eleventh step encourages prayer and closeness with God. The twelfth level of the 12 step program promises a spiritual awakening and encourages the individual to spread the word of his success.

People who disagree with the 12 step program say that the system is too religious in nature. Others criticize the program because the individual is viewed as helpless. He does not really take matters into his own hands when he leaves everything up to a higher power.

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