

# Step 1

## Step 1

The first step is about recognizing that I am powerless to control life and other people.

Step 1 - Alcoholics Anonymous We admitted we were powerless over alcohol --- that our lives had become unmanageable.

Step 1 - Co-Dependents Anonymous We admitted we were powerless over others --- that our lives had become unmanageable.

Step 1 - 12 Steps for Kids I am powerless over alcohol, drugs, and other people's behavior and my life got real messed up because of it.

Step 1 - Intellectual level (my version) I acknowledge and accept that I am powerless out of ego-self to control my human life experience, and that the delusion that I should be in control has caused pain and suffering in my life.

{xtypo\_info}"We are powerless out of human ego-self to get out of this quagmire. That is the bad news. It is also the good news.

Once you let go enough times, once you becoming willing to go to any length, to do whatever it takes, once you become willing to make healing the number one priority in your life, then you will be guided all the way. You will get the tools you need when you need them. You will get the help you need when you need it. You will have Loving, supportive people come into your life when you need them. You will start making rapid, discernible progress in your healing transformation.

On the other side of powerlessness is all the power in the Universe. On the other side of powerlessness is freedom, happiness, and peace within. On the other side of powerlessness is Joy and Love!

The answer is to stop fighting it, to surrender to the Spiritual Forces at work. Surrender to the possibility that maybe, just maybe, you do deserve to be happy and Loved."

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls

When I first came to 12 step recovery I was appalled to think that I had to admit that I was powerless. Then when they told me that I had a disease I was relieved to think that all those years of insane behavior were not my fault. I still had problems with powerlessness and surrender however. To surrender meant to be a loser in my mind. What helped me was when someone told me that surrender didn't mean I was a loser, it just meant that I was smart enough to join the winning side.

One thing I sometimes say in AA meetings is that I was a 'Frank Sinatra' type of alcoholic. I used to sit in bars and get teary eyed when they played My Way - because I was doing it 'my way,' I thought. One of the first things I had to surrender to, was realizing that my way wasn't working very good. One of the next things I had to surrender was my subconscious belief that it was not possible to live life without drugs and alcohol.

Recovery is a process of learning to accept reality. Empowerment is about accepting reality as it is and making the best of it. In order to accept reality, it is necessary for me to be honest enough with myself to realize that I am not in charge of this process. I cannot make life do what I want it to - so I need to continuously surrender to the plan of The Great Spirit rather than try to force my plan on the Universe (and feel sorry for myself, or blame others, when that doesn't work.) It is not bad or shameful for me to try to make things happen the way I want - it is just human, dysfunctional, and painful. The sooner I catch myself not accepting reality as it is, the sooner I can let go of my picture of how I think things need to be, the more serenity I have in my life.

Melody Beattie says "Learn the art of acceptance - it is a lot of grief." She is right. Many times the reason I am not accepting reality is because I do not want to own the feelings involved. The grief and anger over a loved one self-destructing. The grief over having to let go of something or someone that means a lot to me. The grief over accepting that life - from my perspective - is not fair or just. One of the reasons that I try to control life is to protect myself from having to see someone I Love in pain. I cannot protect others from the reality of life, or from themselves, - and if I think that I am trying to control someone else just for their sake I am lying to myself.

The principle behind the first step, and the foundation of the twelve step, or any Spiritual program, is self-honesty. If we are not being honest with ourselves, then we are not capable of being honest with anyone. It is vital to start stripping away the layers of denial, self-delusion, disassociation, magical thinking, victim thinking, blame, resentment, and dishonesty that we learned to protect ourselves with in childhood. Again, it is not shameful or bad that we have used

these behavioral and emotional defenses to protect our self - it is because we were wounded in a variety of ways in childhood. Some of those ways include being: abandoned, betrayed, rejected, invalidated, shamed, discounted, deprived, degraded, abused, violated, damaged, put down, spiritually broken, emotionally raped, intellectually dishonored, hurt, humiliated, diminished, heart broken, molested, etc.

It is only by stripping away the defenses and false definitions of self that we had to adapt to survive that we can start getting in touch with our True Self. There is absolutely nothing wrong with who we are - it is our relationship with ourselves that got so screwed up in childhood. By learning how to be honest with ourselves we can change our relationship with ourselves.

One of the most important levels of honesty for us to strive for is emotional honesty. It is vital to owning our self that we learn to own our feelings.

{xtypo\_info}"It is necessary to own and honor the child who we were in order to Love the person we are. And the only way to do that is to own that child's experiences, honor that child's feelings, and release the emotional grief energy that we are still carrying around."{/xtypo\_info}

Quote from Codependence: The Dance of Wounded Souls

#### Step 1 - Emotional level (my version)

Admitted that I am powerless to substantially change the learned behavioral defenses and dysfunctional attitudes from childhood until I deal with the emotional wounds of my childhood experience.

Go to Step 2