

Some groups use the number of the month to focus on the corresponding number of a Step or Tradition. January is the 1st month of the year so here is Step 1 and Tradition 1, and some associated readings.

The Big Book -- Alcoholics Anonymous

Step 1

“We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.”

WHO cares to admit complete defeat? Practically no one, of course. Every natural instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness. It is truly awful to admit that, glass in hand, we have warped our minds into such an obsession for destructive drinking that only an act of Providence can remove it from us. No other kind of bankruptcy is like this one. Alcohol, now become the rapacious creditor, bleeds us of all self-sufficiency and all will to resist its demands. Once this stark fact is accepted, our bankruptcy as going human concerns is complete. But upon entering A.A. we soon take quite another view of this absolute humiliation. We perceive that only through utter defeat are we able to take our first steps toward liberation and strength. Our admissions of personal powerlessness finally turn out to be firm bedrock upon which happy and purposeful lives may be built. We know that little good can come to any alcoholic who joins A.A. unless he has first accepted his devastating weakness and all its consequences. Until he so humbles himself, his sobriety—if any—will be precarious. Of real happiness, he will find none at all. Proved beyond doubt by an immense experience, this is one of the facts of A.A. life. The principle that we shall find no enduring strength until we first admit complete defeat is the main taproot from which our whole Society has sprung and flowered.

Alcoholics Anonymous World Service Inc. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (pp. 21-22). AA World Services, Inc.

[Additional reading](#)

Tradition 1

“Our common welfare should come first; personal recovery depends upon A.A. unity.”

THE unity of Alcoholics Anonymous is the most cherished quality our Society has. Our lives, the lives of all to come, depend squarely upon it. We stay whole, or A.A. dies. Without unity, the heart of A.A. would cease to beat; our world arteries would no longer carry the life-giving grace of God; His gift to us would be spent aimlessly. Back again in their caves, alcoholics would reproach us and say, “What a great thing A.A. might have been!” “Does this mean,” some will anxiously ask, “that in A.A. the individual doesn’t count for much? Is he to be dominated by his group and swallowed up in it?” We may certainly answer this question with a loud “No!” We believe there isn’t a fellowship on earth which lavishes more devoted care upon its individual members; surely there is none which more jealously guards the individual’s right to think, talk, and act as he wishes. No A.A. can compel another to do anything; nobody can be punished or expelled. Our Twelve Steps to recovery are suggestions; the Twelve Traditions which guarantee

A.A.'s unity contain not a single "Don't." They repeatedly say "We ought..." but never "You must!"

"Alcoholics Anonymous World Service Inc. *Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions* (p. 129). AA World Services, Inc."

Additional Reading...