

CHANGE

- *from compulsion to choice - a life or death decision.*

Drugs and Alcohol Manual

Tutors' text



The Three Graces – see p 16

“The only way to stop is to stop... but it’s the staying stopped...”

“Any addict can recover provided he does not close his mind to spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial. **Willingness, honesty and open-mindedness** are the essentials of recovery. Accept things on faith, even if they are difficult to believe”.

(NA “It works, how and why”; AA Big Book)

Preface

Our intention in writing this is to share our experience in various teaching situations, both in a prison here in the UK, where over 80% of inmates may be found to suffer from major addiction; and also in various communities and healthcare teaching programs in Africa, where alcohol abuse, drugs and gambling lead to so much poverty and disease, notably malnutrition and HIV/AIDS.

The problem is worldwide.

Our aim when teaching has been to give understanding, dispel misconceptions, and to encourage sufferers and their families to obtain the support of organisations such as Alcoholics Anonymous and Narcotics Anonymous, who use the 12 Step Program; or where these organisations do not operate, to form self-help groups who will follow the program, and to put into place the structure and processes necessary for recovery.

The program is for each individual sufferer to use at his or her own pace, guided perhaps by a mentor, but joined to others on the same journey in group situations. Work is needed, but simplicity is the watchword; it is not enough for the purpose of change to attend meetings merely to swap stories and reminisce.

The sources drawn upon for our teaching material may be found in the Bibliography and includes our own experience.

Pat & Chris Blackburn

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The title is “Change”.

Q – What needs to change?

A – The heart.

As an illustration - John, a member of the Hong Kong triads, living in the “Walled City”, writes:

“I had been on heroin for over 15 years and had relapsed again and again. Many times I had been ‘cured’ in my body at drug centres, but my heart was never changed”.

What made the difference was **healing of his ‘Inner Self’**, or his ‘heart’. This is the result of a spiritual transformation, effected by God or a “Higher Power”, rather than an intellectual exercise.

In addition to this essential inner change of the heart, for people who encounter problems stopping their habit, the only tried and tested solution is to join a **group** of like-minded individuals.

Q - Why join a group?

A – Many reasons including:

- 1) It is more powerful than the individual
- 2) Sharing – openness/honesty/identification
- 3) Social interaction and forming relationships
- 4) Learning from each other
- 5) Mutual support and encouragement, especially for the new member
- 6) Hope

Joining a group is an essential for recovery, and this has been recently highlighted in an article in the British Medical Journal (BMJ 2015 No7996 pp27-31) quoting NICE guidelines.

The 12 Step Program has stood the test of time, and is the basic framework for not only sufferers, but also their families and those closely affected by the problem.

The founders of Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) adopted this program in the 1930’s and it was seen as pivotal to recovery. On its own simply joining a group and focusing on “the problem” did not achieve long term sobriety; but having a structured step by step process which also required the development of interpersonal relationships did result in recovery – to date of millions of people all around the world.

This 12 Step Program has also proved successful in breaking many other habits and addictions, e.g. pornography, eating disorders and gambling.

The elements of this program were initially taken from the Spiritual Exercises of St Ignatius, i.e. they come from a Christian background. Some churches use the 12 Step Program simply as a Christian model of living a holier life, and not necessarily for an addictive issue.

It is a “Spiritual Program” resulting in a “Spiritual Awakening”, as referred to in Step 12. Through practising the steps **spiritual** aspects of our humanity are strengthened, which in turn allows control of mind and body.

The program teaches that it is **not a necessity** to sort out all the deep issues from your past to remove your craving; also it can be used by any person of **any faith or no faith**, therefore does not require you to attend a church. Anyone can be healed as long as they are **willing** to accept that a **“Power greater than yourself”** will heal (who most people call God), as long as they try to follow the “Steps”, i.e. **change course** from “my will” to “His will”.

Do I have a problem with alcohol or drugs?

You have a problem if your habit is affecting your physical, mental, spiritual health or behaviour **or** if others are affected or concerned about your habit. Usually you have a problem if you are feeling **guilty** about your habit or try to **hide** your habit, or the extent of it.

For the purpose of helping yourself, no-one but you can decide if you have a problem. But you should definitely ask for help if you have tried your hardest, yet been unable to **stay stopped**.

The term “addiction” is best not used, but applies to the END point of a process which is:

- 1) Physical – with changes in brain structure
- 2) Mental – seen as “mind tricks” – “stinking thinking” – which are the result of mental defences
- 3) Spiritual – putting “it” – your habit before relationships.

Full blown addiction is when you have major loss of self-control and your habit rules your life.

Loss of control starts insidiously, going from:

DESIRE → HABIT → ATTACHMENT → ADDICTION

This process may take months or years.

If you need help to stop it means you probably are in the process of an addiction, which is **recognised by the World Health Organisation as an illness**.

Once you have admitted the extent and implications of your problem (**Step 1**) you learn that **you are not to blame** for your present sickness, but **you are responsible for getting well (Step 2)**.

Nature of the illness/sickness/disease

As in any illness there is **progression over time**.

Desire increases because of the **memory of pleasure**. This triggers responses which are:

- 1) **Physical** - repetition of behaviour → **habit**
- 2) **Mental** - pre-occupation of thoughts → **obsession**
- 3) **Spiritual** - neglect of self and others – relationships suffer
 - gradual loss of ability to enjoy or appreciate art, nature, music, etc.
 - lack of honesty, dignity, community, responsibility
 - loss of self - the who you are.

AA & NA call this “**spiritual bankruptcy**”.

As a consequence of the disease there are subtle, permanent changes in brain chemicals and nerve endings, which result in the sufferer **never being able to drink/ take drugs/ gamble again** in safety. If an attempt is made to return to the old habit, in almost all cases relapse is quick and suffering worse than before.

It may be considered a form of insanity! After all you are doing what you really don't want to do, knowing that drinking or taking is not in your best interests. (Rom 7:19-20)

Yet in law you are responsible for the decisions you make; whereas in the case of the mentally ill, with a true psychosis, you are deemed to be **not responsible**.

Q – What are the causes of alcohol & drug misuse?

A – Multifactorial including:

- 1) **Genetic** pre - disposition
- 2) **Rewards/satisfaction** gained from the behaviour – “feel good” - pleasure
- 3) **Social** – peer pressure, social confidence
- 4) **Psychological** – defence against pain/ fear/ anxiety/ anger/ guilt /shame /loss /rejection, etc
- 5) **Spiritual** – “filling the space” – reaching for “something beyond”, bigger - power of nature, universe, our mortality, eternity, life's purpose, solving “the Mystery”.

Descent into slavery – of addiction

Good feeling → draw closer → repetition → habit (physical)

→ **Pre-occupation** of thoughts (mental)

Some habits: no choice → **compulsion** (loss of freedom)

Your action is now not because you choose to – but because you have to.

You then repeat the action not because you love the feeling, but because **you don't want to lose the feeling**, i.e. you do it because of **fear of loss** of pleasure or pains of withdrawal.

This is draining us of time, energy and attention to the extent that the habit becomes an **idol** – a substitute for God.

The idol controls you, and **what you love**.

It also steals your life because instead of being focused on building self, and relationships with family and others, all your energy is focused on **self** – and furthermore it is focused **in a destructive way**.

Life gradually becomes empty:

- Loss of connection to others – i.e. intimate relationships
- Loss of ability to appreciate and enjoy the beauty of nature, art, music
i.e. those spiritual things which determine **quality of life**
- Loss of purpose
- Loss of sense of self
- Loss of sense of right and wrong
- Loss of **honesty, dignity, community, responsibility**

i.e. you become a **lost soul**.

Treatment or management

There is **no cure**.

But the disease can be arrested if the 12 Step Program is followed in relationship with another person, preferably in a **group situation**, and with a **Higher Power**.

It is a process of reconnection.

The program addresses all three components of the illness – physical, mental & spiritual.

The only way to stop is to stop...but it's the staying stopped...

Q - Why is that so difficult?

Q - And if it's an illness why is there nothing that can be done in this age of modern medicine and science?

A -The **trigger** to relapsing, or becoming ill again, is the **first** drink/drug/gamble, not the 5th, 10th, 20th etc. So **stopping totally** is a must.

Working against our **good intentions** are our **desires**, the strongest form of which is **craving**, which has a physical component.

What is experienced is **learned behaviour**, i.e. what gives us **pleasure** – and this gives **energy** or “drive” to the **emotion** which we recognise as **desire**.

It is necessary, therefore, to **change our desires**.

Change

Q - What?

A - Putting things very simply there are some things you **can change**, and some things you **can't**.

What can we change? Many things - circle of friends, how we spend our time, etc

What can't we change? Many things - family, culture, past, etc

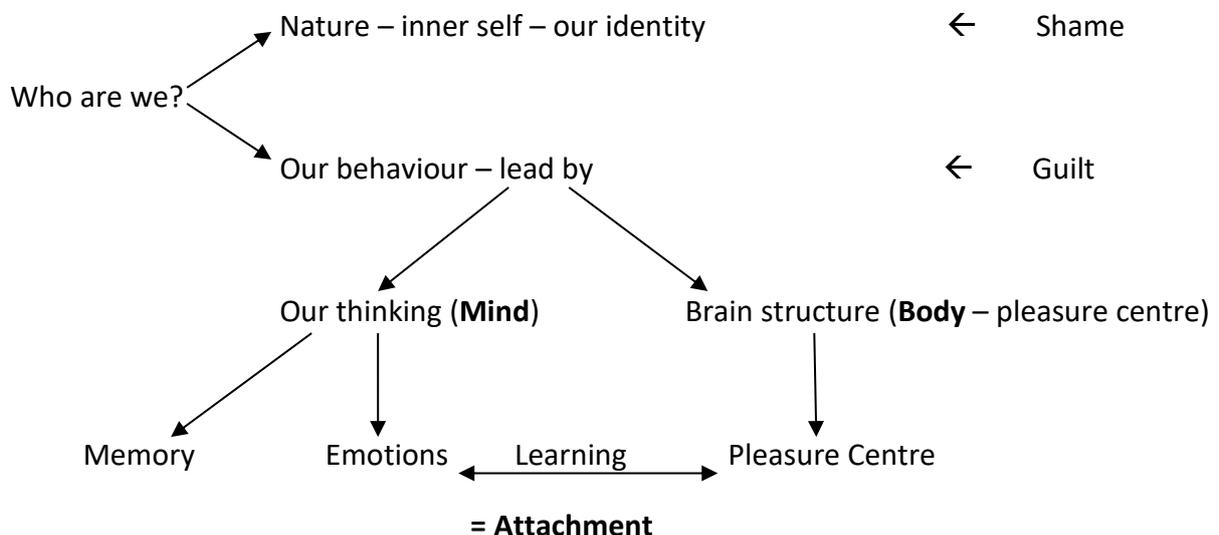
What should we change? In terms of body, mind and spirit:

- 1) Physical (body) – behaviour & habits
- 2) Mental – fantasy to reality
- 3) Spiritual – from people being objects to people being individuals with whom you form relationships – close or distant.

A prayer used by many recovery groups is the “Serenity Prayer”:

**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.**

Relationship with our own self:



Attachment affects the **choices** we make, i.e. our own **willpower** will never overcome a strong attachment.

Q – Why not?

A – Because there are two competing systems controlling behaviour, i.e. **mind & brain**. Willpower is **mind over matter**.

Your **mind** might reason that you should exert **self-control and stop** (allturistic area of soul – see later); but the **pleasure centre** in your **brain** (i.e. body) wants you to keep the **pleasant sensation of “it”** (animal part of soul); so it persuades your mind that it should re-configure and think instead of good reasons for **continuing the behaviour** which gives **pleasure** and gratifies **desire**.

...and so you keep on struggling and failing!

Sometimes it works, or it can seem to work for a while, but it will always **fail** in the end – usually when you are at a low point and vulnerable.

Throughout our lives we are **learning**, especially what might give us **pleasure** or **pain**.

- this makes us **desire** what **feels good**.
- this brings about **attachment** to what **feels good**.
- this **repetition of behaviour** causes whole **brain systems** to change.

Bonds are formed between cells. →

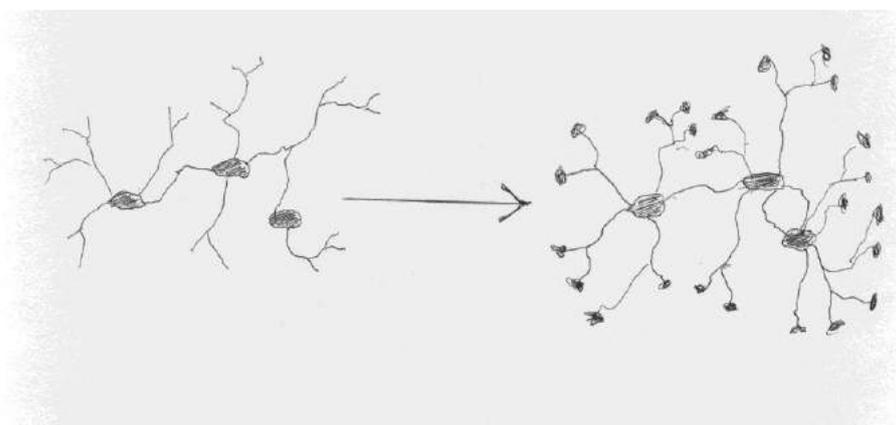


Figure 1: To show changes in brain cells in pleasure centre as a result of repetition of habit – no increase in number of cells (black ovals), but increased branching of cell processes, and abnormalities of the receptors at the ends of the branches (see p21).

Q - So, what will work?

As soon as you accept that another power – your **Higher Power** – can overcome your **own power**, and you have **made a decision** to allow this **Higher Power to be in charge of your whole life**, then your own addictive brain power will be defeated.

Q – Why do we want to change a behaviour such as a drugs or alcohol problem?

A – Because we feel guilty – *talk about the guilt centre* (see below)

Conscience – window to the spirit

Psychologically the change needed is:

It's not that you decide to stop – rather, and much better - it's that you no longer want to take the next drink/fix.

It's not about stopping – anyone can do that for a period – **it's about staying stopped.**

It is an intention = laudible aim or plan, allowing God to do it; but not willpower = fighting/struggle/own effort.

But you need group support to remain vigilant and aware – a group who have been through it and can lend strength – a community of fellow-believers such as a church is not enough for most people.

Remorse or repentance?

Remorse is an emotion, something you feel as a result of having done something you are ashamed of, or regret; feeling sorry; often it is based in **self-pity**;

Repentance is a decision – to **change direction** – you were heading in one direction, but you decide to **change course** to go a different way. People may struggle with the word if they are not of Judaic-Christian faith, yet it is easy enough to understand.

To sum up:

- 1) You must have a dream – carry a “picture” of what you want to be - **vision**.
- 2) “Position yourself” to gradually make that dream possible – **set goals** by:
 - a) Willingness to **change** self and behaviours.
 - b) Associate with helpful people.
- 3) Accept what you **cannot change**.
- 4) **Change** what you can - repent.
- 5) Give **love** and let others give you love. This is the **power** that will **change** and heal you.

Description of the 12 Steps

Consider the **first step**, which is **the most essential**:

We admitted we were powerless over (whatever it may be, why not call it “the enemy”) – that our lives had become unmanageable.

Until this step is clearly understood and accepted by the individual sufferer, healing cannot take place.

The whole process consists of **acceptance** of a **lack of power**, a **willingness to believe in a power greater than ourselves**, a **decision to trust** by turning both **life** and **will** over to that power, then following a process which culminates in a **“spiritual awakening”**.

It is a program which works through the **conscience** to recognise and strengthen the **spirit** which we all possess, taking charge over the competing **demands and temptations** arising from **mind and body**.

For those who are sceptical or unsure when spiritual matters are being considered, perhaps through various notions about religion, the book “It Works” by Narcotics Anonymous and also AA’s “Big Book”, state that **“the only thing which leads to a failure of recovery using the program is a reluctance to acknowledge the spiritual dimension of the illness”**.

The success of AA and NA has shown that for the program to work it is **not essential to believe in God or to adhere to any particular faith**; it is sufficient for individuals to have a **willingness to believe** that there **is** a power greater than themselves. It is for the individual to determine the nature of their “Higher Power” **by their own experience**. For the purposes of stopping and staying stopped **all concepts of a “Higher Power” are valid** at group meetings, if they work for the person who is speaking.

The founders of AA considered themselves to be **agnostics**, with no special grasp of “spiritual” whatever that might be, or any concept of God. In Chapter 4 of the “Big Book” they write:

“Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another’s conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient...we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction...We found that God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him...When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own conception of God...Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you...if we wished to grow we had to begin somewhere...”

Throughout the account in the pages that follow we use “God” to signify whatever is understood to represent a Higher Power.

The 12 Steps:

STEP ONE is about recognizing our brokenness:

We admitted we were powerless over (whatever it is) – that our lives had become unmanageable.

STEP TWO is about the birth of faith in us:

Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

STEP THREE involves a decision to let God be in charge of our lives:

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

STEP FOUR involves self-examination:

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

STEP FIVE is the discipline of confession:

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

STEP SIX is an inner transformation sometimes called repentance:

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

STEP SEVEN involves the transformation or purification of our character:

Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

STEP EIGHT involves examining our relationships and preparing ourselves to make amends:

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

STEP NINE is the discipline of making amends:

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

STEP TEN is about maintaining progress in recovery:

Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

STEP ELEVEN involves the spiritual disciplines of prayer and meditation:

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

STEP TWELVE is about ministry to other people:

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Five words may be useful to summarise:

Honesty	Step 1
Dignity	Steps 2 & 3
Community	Steps 4 - 7
Responsibility	Steps 8-10
Simplicity	Step 11 and 12 - overarches all the steps

Will, Purposes, Choices and Desires

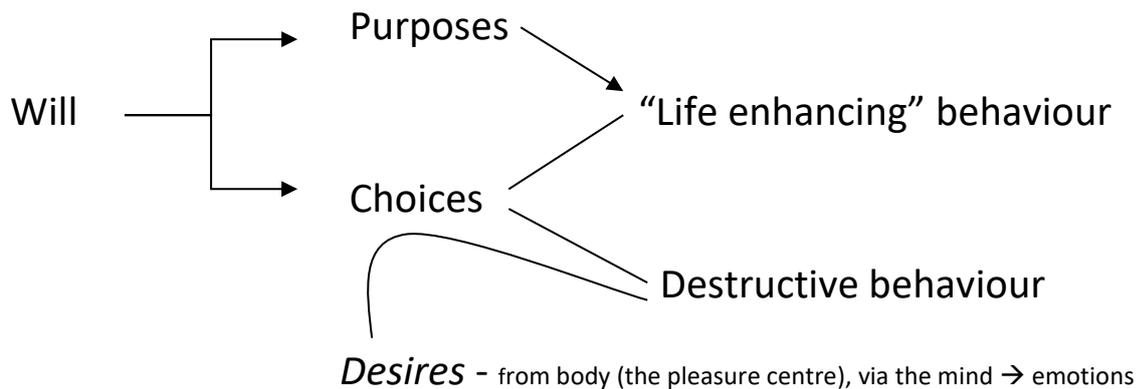
Our life experiences depend on many aspects, such as the culture or economy we are born into, who our parents are, and so forth; but a central factor determining the pattern of our lives is our **will**, which may be described in terms of:

(a) our **purpose** or vision, and

(b) the **choices** we make.

Take a moment to review **Steps 3 & 11**.

In the following schema consider that “purpose” is planned – e.g. the vision we hold for our life tends to be thought out - but that “choices” that we make day to day, or moment by moment, are often reactive or emotional.



Q - Do you have a **vision or purpose**?

The two are not the same. “Purpose” relates to what lies ahead in our future, but sometimes may be only our present objectives; whereas “vision” requires consideration of what has already occurred, an **understanding** of what our present circumstances are, and how they arose, so as to be able to determine a **strategy for change**, and to succeed in reaching our **preferred future**.

When there is no vision people perish. *(Prov 29:18)*

Q - If you have a purpose or vision, have you come to identify any **goals** which need to be achieved to enable you to reach your ambition?

If you have, the choices you make are likely to be **active**, and more likely to be **life-enhancing**.

The alternative is a **passive will**, with **no particular goal or purpose**, other than achieving:

- a) **comfort** - perhaps through receiving the **approval of others**; and
- b) **pleasure** - through fulfilling our **desires**.

Choices will then follow whatever option will lead to pleasure or comfort, and attempts to do otherwise are likely to fail; the outcomes are likely to be destructive.

It follows that when it comes to making choices:

- 1) You must **“have a dream”** – carry a “picture” of what you want to be;
- 2) This needs to include understanding of the past – not a holding onto bad memories – but as an important part of the narrative – your story – how you got here.
- 3) **“Position yourself”** to gradually make your dream possible by:
 - (a) Setting **goals**;
 - (b) Having a **willingness to change** self and behaviours – being teachable = wise hearted;

(c) **Get alongside “helpful” people** – who do you want to associate with?

Recoverers or those who are still captive? **Winners or losers?**

4) **Accept what you cannot change** – including other people;

5) **Change what you can;**

6) **Give love** & let others give you love – being alert to others and their needs, rather than to your own emotions. This is the **power** that will change and heal you.

With alcohol/drug problems the power to make safe life-enhancing choices is being lost – consider the statement of **Step 1**.

Changes have occurred in **body, mind and spirit** such that the desire to indulge is compelling:

Body – physical changes to body, especially the brain – **pleasure and guilt centres**

Mind – **mind tricks** -> choice-less **compulsions**

Spirit – attachments -> idols -> enslavement -> **spiritual poverty/depletion/bankruptcy** - attachments bind spiritual energy to self and idol, so that less energy is available for relationships and other people – **lack of love**.

The 12 Step recovery program tackles addiction by recognising physical, mental and spiritual components. Healing occurs through freeing up the spiritual energies to care about the well being of self and others.

There is a process of “**LETTING GO**” – to stop trying to do it yourself, because you now rely on a **HIGHER POWER**.

It is a matter of **FAITH** and **HOPE** – encapsulated in **Step 2**;

and **LOVE** – **Step 3**.

All help free us from attachments:

Faith – empties the intellect

Hope – frees the memory – knowing from testimonies that things will get better

Love – frees the will – there is healing in helping one another

= Three Graces – see cover.

By letting go of your attempts at self control you become **less of you**, and **more of others**.

What is your aim in life?

- Physical? – wealth, good health, family?
- Mental – fulfilled ambitions, social standing?
- Spiritual – peace, contentment, wisdom, love, joy?

Desire

The reason people drink or take drugs is essentially because they **desire** to do so, and this desire can progress to a **craving** which takes away the person's **choice**, i.e. the **power of free will is lost**. The desire has mastered that person – enslavement – so often resulting in anger, sadness and depression (*Gen 4:7*).

When this has occurred they may consider themselves to be **addicted**.

We are born with **free will** - we are able to decide what we **want** to do. In childhood we learn what we **ought** to do, as a result of parental and social influence.

- An early stage is the age of 2 – “terrible 2’s” – self assertiveness (pre-reason).
- Then there comes the vulnerable stage of being teenagers - with **peer pressure** – lack of wisdom makes us **vulnerable to temptation**.

However, behaviour and choices can come to be determined by the **pleasure centre**, aided by **mind tricks**.

i.e. we control our own will

we become Masters (gods?)

Changes take place in the brain:

Inclination/ appetite/ desire → habits → attachments → addiction

At the stage of addiction – no use of will is required – behaviour is now learned and has become automatic – much like driving a car; now the life that is experienced is **not reality**.

Normal needs – job, food, relationships; keeping up appearances – cleaning, gardening, cooking; all these things go by the wayside, because our behaviour has become totally about self – **satisfying the demands of the pleasure centre!**

All our energies are focused on this attachment.

You have less and less choice or willpower to break free from the attachment (a love affair with yourself?) – your over-riding desire is for one thing.

Q - So – how do we draw on the strength of a Higher Power/God?

- 1) **Decide** to change your thoughts - from self to other sources/influences for **satisfaction** – a vow if you wish (Step 3).
- 2) **Faith** – trust that your Higher Power can help (Step 2).
- 3) **Hope** – you can have a better future life (Steps 2 & 3).
- 4) **Love** – for others will take over = root of healing (Steps 6-12).



Pride is giving ourselves over to what we think, feel or desire



Q – Desire and craving - where do they come from?

This is the “I want” which comes from the **self/ego** – part of your personality (from psychoanalytic theory). There is a tension between **reality** and **whatever gives you pleasure**, which is usually tied up in **fantasy**.

Desires may be:

Physical - gratifying the pleasure centre

Mental - approval of others and self, to be accepted

Spiritual - to give love and to receive love in return

Our desire is the only part of our being which is limitless.

Consider for example how the very wealthy can never have enough money, or so it is said. The drive and desires which empowered them to create their wealth continues to operate. The investment bankers whose activity caused the crash of 2008 said that it was not about the money, but “the buzz” they experienced in acquiring it.

The only thing which can restrict our desires is our conscience.

Your **conscience** is shaped by your parents and by the society in which you live. It is governed by what gets you **loved and approved** or causes you to be **rejected**; because as the **self** develops, the **greatest fear** is **abandonment**. This is the reason we try to **conform to some group**, e.g. a gang.

However, our **conscience** becomes damaged when **mind tricks** become a way of life, which act to serve and protect indulgence in those things which give **pleasure**.



Our desire is the only part of our being which is limitless.

Our conscience is the only thing which can limit our desires



We have to realize that **everyone is damaged** through:

- a) nature - referred to as genes and
- b) nurture - life experiences.

This affects our **ability to choose**.

Habits and addictions make things much worse. This is because of the vast extent of the use of **mind tricks**, which are the defences we use to protect our fragile egos. This in combination with the demands of the **pleasure centre** makes for a **catastrophic failure of willpower**.

Attachments cause displacement of **desire**, the essence of which is **love** (Theresa of Avilla, John of the Cross, quoted in Dark Night of the Soul, p73).

So that:

- 1) If your **desire** is focused on something, then that is **where your love goes**;
- 2) The greater the **attachment** – the more the desire – the more the love that is lost;
- 3) Attachments **limit freedom to choose**, i.e. free will;
- 4) This results in **love which is focused & bound**, so that it is not available for other things; our body and mind, particularly the **emotions**, are all preoccupied with **satisfying the desire**.

The start of recovery is to change your desires – so that the selfish aspects of our being are replaced by expressions of love. Self love, self esteem and self seeking are set aside – indeed all the “selves”, with the possible exception of self examination; this should be limited to what is required to work the program, and not become a habit of “navel gazing”.

The 12 STEP program opens with Steps 1-3, which is a **commitment** to make the **necessary changes to your life**.

You are not able to do this in your own **weakened power**, and a “**Higher Power**” is sought. You make a **decision to trust that Power with your life and your will**, to direct your choices.

You then seek to repair your **damaged conscience** through the help of others (**Steps 4-10**), in which you learn to **forgive** yourself and others.

Q - Why?

A - So that you can once more **live in reality**, in the present, freed from damaging negative memories and thoughts. You can move forward to living a full, purposeful life, **making free choices**.

Craving

This is an extreme form of **desire**, where the **unconscious** systems result in a by-passing of **conscious decision making** and **normal thought**. Then the physical sensations of **needing a drink/fix** take over.

Mental and physical processes act together to **prevent reality-based decision making**. They do this through:

- 1) Pleasure centre;
- 2) Mind tricks;
- 3) Poor sense of self – **guilt & shame**.

The impulse leading to take, in other words a slip, may appear to come “out of the blue”; although often emotions play a part.

Body, Mind and Spirit

Body and mind are easily understood, but the part of us which is spirit is less easy for many to understand, and may be dismissed as smacking of religion. Human beings differ from animals through having a spirit. (1 Thess 5:23)

Plants, trees and vegetables - have bodies

Animals - have bodies and minds

Human beings - have bodies, minds and spirits

Bodies - need nurture – food, water, clothes, etc;

Minds - need pleasure and acceptance – concern is self;

Spirit – concern is outside of self – others – relational - compassion. The part of our being which allows knowledge of God and through which we may have communication with Him.

This is considered more later, but for now our spirit can be understood as being that part of us which is **creative, intuitive, and concerns itself with relationships**.

The “**Higher Power**” may be considered as the **spirit source of “life energy”**, who may be relied upon completely, who always wants the best for us, who loves us as a parent loves their child, and who is keenly interested in our lives.

For the purposes of the program **all concepts of a Higher Power are valid**, provided they are consistent with the shared objectives and can be seen to work.

Faith starts with **hope**, and develops through the process of “**came to believe**”; through hearing the stories and witnessing the **changes in others** who follow the program.

It is a product of the spirit – not of the mind; intellect, rather than being a strength in this matter, is a hindrance.

In our teaching we use flip charts and the following is the common schema used for continuous reference:

Mind

Spirit

Will = purpose & choices → behaviour

BODY

Body

The **brain** like any organ is part of the body, and consists of billions of nerves cells, which interconnect in many ways. Signals travel along nerve fibres electrically, at the end of which they cause the release of chemicals to transmit to the next cell. The brain experiences the world by means of **five senses – sight, hearing, taste, smell and touch.**

Physical desires are met using these five senses.

The nerves which transmit these sensations pass to a central region of the brain which is called the **pleasure centre**. This is a region of the brain which has been shown to become active when we experience sensations which we enjoy.

PLEASURE CENTRE

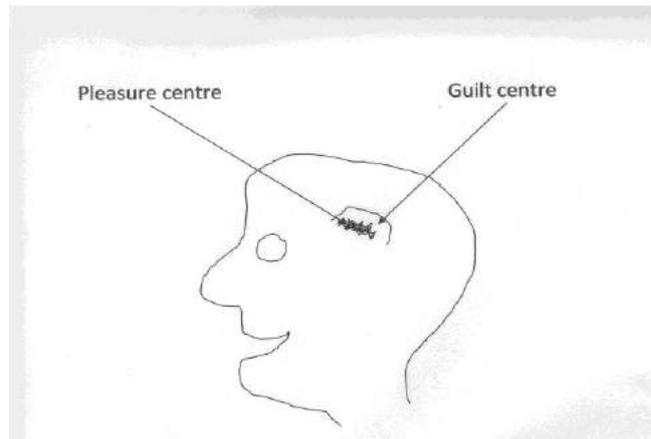
1. From when we are infants we learn what gives us pleasure.

2. If we then repeat this over a period of time it will result in a **habit**.
3. By exercising the habit we hope to obtain happiness, a sense of security, and peace.
4. The result of that process is called an **attachment**.
5. **Cells in our brain adapt** – they **change** - by multiplying the connections between cells.
6. When the behaviour which causes **pleasure** is stopped, the changes have been so great that the body becomes **stressed**, and the whole body goes into **overdrive**; this causes **withdrawals**.

This is a multisystem response – it is all biological and automatic – not capable of being controlled – so using **willpower** to try to stop it **will not work**.

The pleasure centre makes you **desire** to drink or use drugs, etc., so to overcome this you must **change your desires**.

This is the **KEY TO SUCCESS**.



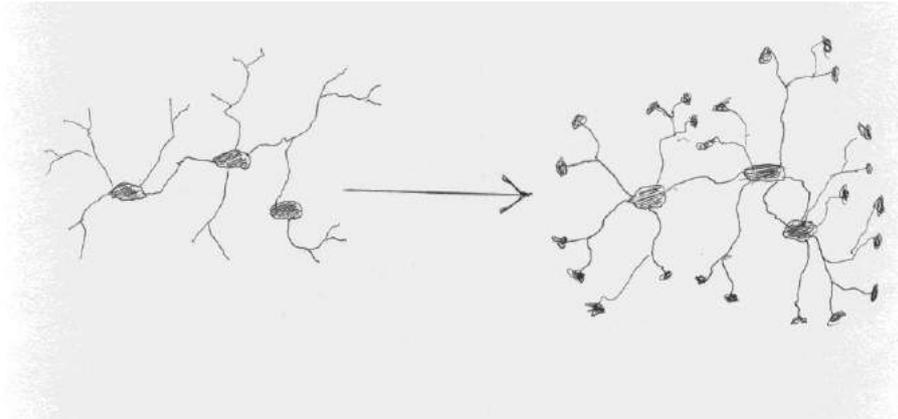
The 12 Step program if it is followed will do this, but the problem is **multi-system**, so it is not only your **behaviour** that is **changed**, but **your whole life is changed**.

N.B. **The brain never forgets**. Conscious memories may fade over time but every experience leaves an imprint under the surface of consciousness; that is why you don't forget over the years how to swim or ride a bike; and why "recoverers" may relapse very quickly no matter what the length of their sobriety has been.

The brain literally becomes **rewired** as a result of the habit – call it **enemy action**. It may also be viewed as an "**allergy effect**", as it is non-reversible and further exposure will always have an adverse effect.

This is the reason why you can't ever drink/take again – because the brain has been "**primed**" to start the pattern of **compulsive behaviour** and **craving**. Basically the **structure of the tissues** within the brain have been altered, and this combined with the **brain's cell "memory"**, along with our own **conscious memory**, together with **mind tricks** (see below), results in a full **relapse** of illness being set to occur.

With certain chemicals such as alcohol, the classified drugs and poisons, another thing may happen which is potentially fatal – **the nerve endings themselves change their structure**.



This causes the **craving** that keeps the sufferer wanting the chemical, even though they want to stop, or **realise that it is killing them**. So it is a bit like a cancer, in that **the cell structure is out of control**.

However these cells are all inside the brain. More easily recognised is the fact that this condition causes damage to many other parts of the body, e.g. skin, liver, kidney, gut, etc .

Withdrawals are experienced when the substance is stopped or reduced drastically, and are the body's reactions as a consequence of it having had to **adapt** to the alien substance in the first place.

GUILT CENTRE

Only as recently as 2011 was it established that the brain has what is called a **guilt centre**. It is located close to the **pleasure centre**, in the part of the brain which processes **emotions**.

This was demonstrated using MRI (magnetic resonance imaging), in which chemicals are used at the time of the scan, to show which parts of the brain are active at any one time, in this case in response to things likely to give rise to a feeling of guilt.

In certain disorders people are liable to feel more guilt, e.g. Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), but this is not the same as an addiction, and cannot be used as a substitute name for the problem, as no structural change takes place in the nerve endings, i.e. in OCD the nerves only multiply, rather than change, and it is only for this reason that the behaviour gets repeated.

Guilt is recognised to have a corrosive effect on a person's **soul** or personality.

Feelings of guilt result in **shame**, in which relationships are difficult – if you have offended someone, or believe you have offended them, it can be difficult to look them in the eye. Such feelings may also spoil our relationship with God if we do not know what He is like, or what He promises us. **Steps 4-9** address feelings of guilt and shame, allowing relationships to be restored.

Alcohol and drugs over time cause **alterations in the functioning of the guilt centre** – swings of numbing of emotion, or of excessive guilt feelings, particularly **“false guilt”**.

In addition the many millions of **nerve endings multiply**, and **tightly bind the cells**. This makes the behaviour difficult to break. The **memories of hurts** and violations, both to self and to others, evoke **self-pity**. This is what causes the brain cells and connections to bind together very closely.

To loosen these memories may take many months of therapy or counselling. However, by **using a Higher Power to release the bound cells**, i.e. the thoughts which give rise to feelings of guilt, this process can be more immediate and effective.

Q – Why?

A - This is the repeated experience and testimony of all who have “**handed over**” their **attachment to past memories**.

Forgiveness

This is an issue of paramount importance in recovery.

a) Physical:

The **guilt centre** in the brain contains millions of cells which are all connected.

Thoughts and memories produce **emotions** - good ones, such as happiness; and bad ones, such as anger, sadness, guilt, shame, etc.

Of course, we have no issues with good memories, but bad memories can cause **relapses**.

The reason is that the energy of these memories is stored within the cell circuitry. Each time the memory is accessed there is a build up of potential energy binding the cells closer together. Sooner or later the energy will be discharged as an outburst of emotion, **inwards** against self, or **outwards** against others.

b) Mental:

Over time patterns of thinking have developed and each one of us has got into the **habit** of dealing with issues in a certain way; this is known as self – programming. With a **belief system change** that says your **Higher Power** is in charge, you **change** your focus to 12 STEP programming.

The mind always wants **balance**, and any **stress** with **loss of peace** disturbs this balance, indeed all stress is experienced as **loss**.

The mind tries to **restore balance** by **gain**, i.e. trying to take back – but can't as it is lost.

The usual outlet is **revenge**, which may take many forms.

How to change the dynamic to restore balance – i.e. peace:

- 1) Recognise the issue
- 2) Change starts from within
- 3) You can control this – you can't control others
- 4) You may have to renegotiate the relationship i.e. sometimes forgive but don't forget.

Forgiveness
starts with a
decision - the
feeling
follows

c) Spiritual:

If you believe in a Higher Power that is good, loving, in charge and running your life, then you can **release all the memories** for Him to deal with.

This form of **memory discharge** causes **relief** to now be the dominant emotion, not a negative one. In addition there is a **vital physical change in your brain**, as a physical loosening of cell cohesion in the memory cells of the brain limbic centre, which is the seat of emotion and guilt.

Let go and let God

Summary

Forgiveness is the **letting go of feelings**, as you have **no power** to change the past as stated in the **Serenity Prayer**

Complete forgiveness is a cosmic event which belongs to a Higher Power. Human forgiveness is a **decision** to give your Higher Power the **authority** to handle things His way.

Q - Why is this so important?

A – PHYSICAL CHANGES NEED TO BE REVERSED.

The **guilt centre** in the brain has been activated and cell connections have multiplied; **mental processes** need to be altered. This includes your **sense of self worth**, i.e. how you see yourself. Your very core identity has contributed to the whole process.


Unforgiveness is like
taking poison in the
hope it will kill your
enemy



Guilt + Shame → Binds thoughts
 (memory & emotion) (bad person = deserves punishment) (bonding)

Another power needs to operate to **loosen the thoughts** and to **release the memories**.

But the mind never forgets – there is always an imprint on the memory.

Q - To try to undo guilt is very difficult – who can undo a bad thing?

A - The 12 Step Program provides a means – the only way we can deal with it is in **forgiveness** & making amends – **the antidote**.

This is the closest we will get to having **peace**.

“Accept the things you cannot change ... change the things you can”.

You can restore balance in your mind to obtain peace.

To cause this release of impact of memory on thoughts and emotions you first must be:

- 1) **Willing** to let go of the anger/stress
- 2) **Desire** healing for your hurt
- 3) **Recognise** that a Higher Power has cosmic authority to judge/punish another person – not you
- 4) The Higher Power has the final authority on justice
- 5) You can now have relief and a sense of peace that the matter is being dealt with by a far greater power in the universe than you
- 6) This **sets you free to choose to forgive**, the thoughts and emotions will follow.

Thus forgiveness is important because now you can move forward knowing that past hurts are dealt with, and **you are free to grow**.

If you cannot forgive yourself, then you are just playing God.

If God forgives you, then you are just trying to be more righteous and powerful than God.

It is your **pride** that is getting in the way. You have to **humble** yourself to **trust** that God has forgiven you.

In practical terms:

- 1) **Speak it** – to yourself and to another person
- 2) **Desire it** – ask Higher Power
- 3) **Believe it** – a decision made, rather than an emotion felt

Stinking thinking leads to drinking

- 4) **Counter vengeful thoughts** by asking Higher Power to bless the other person
- 5) **Understand** that it is your healing, not theirs, so accept that:
 - other people foul up
 - it is not a process of reconciliation – that takes 2 or more people
 - the greater your capacity to forgive, the **more power** you are able to channel

Mind

Spirit

Will = purpose & choices → behaviour

Pleasure Centre - desire

BODY

Mind

Functions include:

- 1) **Thoughts** - (a) reality - reason, understanding.
 (b) fantasy – protects against pain – also uses **mind tricks**

Defenses - usually unconscious e.g. denial, rationalizations

- 2) **Emotions**
- 3) **Memory**

Thoughts & memories → emotions → desires → actions

- 4) **Will** = decisions and choices
- 5) **Sense of self** – personality which you believe is yours, and may be the one which you hope to project – product of thoughts, emotions, choices and desires.

Whoever or whatever directs our thinking will direct our lives.

All the above act on the

- 6) **Conscience** – the part of us that discriminates what is **right and wrong** according to our understanding and beliefs. It acts as a window on our spiritual element.

Alcohol / drug misuse affects the proper working of the conscience, which affects the **sense of self**, i.e. the person experiences **low self-esteem/ guilt / shame**.

Q - What are guilt and shame?

A - **GUILT**:

- 1) forms between the ages of 3-5;
- 2) You do something wrong;
- 3) You owe somebody something;
- 4) There is a need to pay back

i.e. it is about your **actions**, whereas:

SHAME:

- 1) forms around 18 months;
- 2) relates to your sense of self;
- 3) need to hide part of self;
- 4) impacts your **identity** - who you are

i.e. it is about your **sense of self worth** – failure.

*Deny the pleasure centre and change your desires:
Therefore, I urge you...to offer your bodies as living sacrifices...Do not conform...but be transformed by the renewal of your mind...Rom 12:1-2*

Q - Why are they important?

A - **Guilt** is basically a good thing - “a warning light on the dashboard of the conscience”.

However it can result in “hiding”/ “cover up”; or a sense of a **need for punishment and atonement**.

It can trigger **shame** in the form of self – attacking thoughts – it is what your actions **say about you**, so we try to defend our integrity by using **mind tricks**, usually in the form of **fantasy thinking**.....stretching the truth, half truths, lying, justifying.

Guilt is essentially **selfish** – about **“How I feel”**; whereas **forgiveness** is about the other person – **“How they feel”**.

Forgiveness releases all the “baggage” associated with guilt – such as hiding and also negative emotions, e.g. anger, revenge feelings, wanting punishment, etc.

Time is not a healer of guilt.

Q - Why is your sense of self so important?

A - Psychologists are in agreement that **our biggest fear is rejection and abandonment.**

1) Thoughts & Mind Tricks

Our brain – which is part of our **body** – contains the pleasure centre which is a powerful drive to obtain **pleasure and satisfaction**.

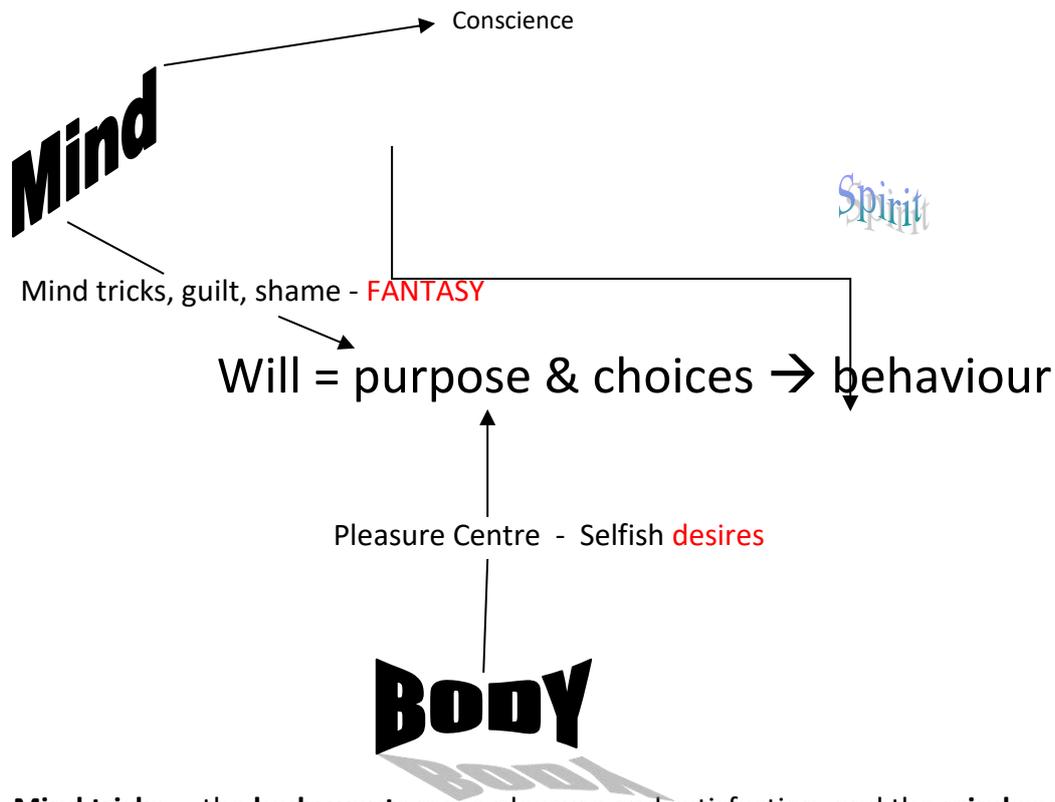
However, our **mind** – by means of **mind tricks** – aids and abets our pleasure centre.

The result is that our **conscience** then becomes overpowered by these strong forces – it becomes dulled and this saps the **spirit**.

So our mind is in **“two minds”** causing **tension** (Rom 7:19-20).

The more the tension, the more you need relief from this – so you do what you know will bring relief.

Over time your willpower becomes less, because your brain structure has changed as a result of **memory, learning and repetition**, which leads to **habit**; also the **brain chemicals** have altered.



Mind tricks - the **body wants** more pleasure and satisfaction, and the **mind** seeks to **satisfy the body**.

This is healthy in the case of e.g. hunger, but when the body wants an unnatural substance, reason does not operate. This is why people lie, steal even kill for their addiction.

Mind tricks are used when the will fights against itself. The journey to addiction involves considerable mental tension and struggle to control the behaviour. When control is being lost the mind adopts defences to justify behaviour which we know is wrong.

Self deception is the aim of mind tricks.

Q – Why do we need to deceive ourselves and others?

- 1) Self esteem – the need to feel we are good people
- 2) Protection against guilt & shame – these make us feel bad
- 3) Defend against fear and abandonment.

Mind tricks when fully formed lead to the person:

- a) Deceiving self as well as others
- b) Forgetting about God
- c) Displacing love to only loving their habit
- d) Dulls the conscience – blurring of right and wrong

Mind tricks also act as defences against mental pain, e.g. against abandonment through denial, repression, etc. They stem from **fear**; our deepest and most basic root fear is fear of **abandonment/rejection**.

Guilt and especially **shame** make us feel **unworthy** as a person. To protect our **self-esteem** – how we think about ourselves – we use defences like lying, denial and rationalisation, and also by using of chemicals.

Gambling and non-chemical habits/addictions are ways of using our mental energies by focusing on other things that give us pleasure, i.e. **distractions**, which produce the **feel-good-factor brain chemicals**; psychologists call this **displacement**.

Mind tricks lead to **fantasies**.

Fantasies are not reality, they are not you.

“Evil”, “sin”, “demons” - call it what you will – enters here.

You are not your true or real self.

You are living a false or fantasy life.

In our teaching we spend time with this issue, inviting people to give examples of any mind tricks they can think of, or that they might have used. Enactment of a drama is useful – perhaps the process of conjuring an argument between husband and wife to justify eventual behaviour of going drinking with friends who will “understand things better”, “know how I feel”, etc.

Fantasies v Reality:

Fantasies include processes in which we imagine things which reflect our conscious or unconscious wishes; day dreaming would be a mild form; whereas delusions are a severe form, in which the **fantasy becomes reality** for the person. In between these two extremes are all sorts of distortions, created by wrong thinking, emotions and attitudes.

It is through our fantasies that we experience temptations, which some would describe as the entry of evil, or the “devil”, “the enemy” or “sin”; thoughts, memories or imaginings that lead to a tension in inner being.

Many of us try to escape from reality for periods of time every day, e.g. by reading fiction, or by watching television or films. In this we are entering into other peoples’ fantasies which are expressed in the stories being told. Computer games are another form and are known to have the potential for addiction.

The taking of drugs or alcohol is a more potent form of escape – and may lead to a **false reality** which may eventually become a **nightmare**.

Misusers who have **recovered** have **changed** their **old reality** - which they have discovered was really **fantasy** - to another **new reality** which is **real** and is **manageable**.

The old reality needs to be recognised and exposed before it can be replaced.

Q – What is your “current reality”? Is it real? Do you have control? If not who does? Do you want to change it? How do you change it? How have others successfully changed their reality? What is the cost?

A – The cost is **surrender and humility (Step 3)**.

You are admitting your problem and become willing to listen to others who have found the solution. **Only those who have experienced the same mind tricks can help you** – to identify your own tricky thoughts and lead you through the process of **change**.

Q – What is surrender?

A - Process of “**letting go**” – you can stop trying to do it yourself, because you now rely on a **Higher Power**, i.e. having **faith** - no logic

having **hope** – listening to others, role models.

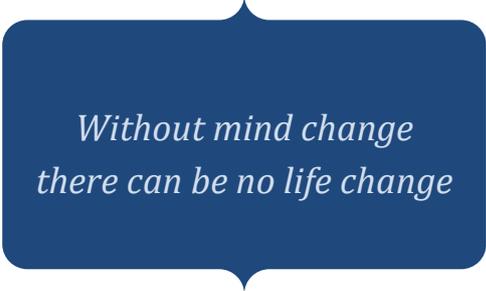
Right desires → love – which will replace selfishness.

By letting go of your attempts at **self control**, you become **less of you, and part of others** (the universe). By changing your focus from self image to self worth, you find your role and value in life.

Q – How?

A – To **change from fantasies to reality** involves change in a number of areas:

- 1) Social – friends, lifestyle, groups;
- 2) Personal – body, mind, spirit.



*Without mind change
there can be no life change*

The **starting point** is to **want** to change your desires – to desire to “**have what they have**”.

Prayer will result in a **change** in the way you think, and will influence your emotions for the better (**Step 11**).

This will result in two **paradigm shifts**:

The first is the “**reality shift**” – from **fantasy to reality** - in how you think and the emotions you experience as a result.

Perhaps you have seen the scene in the film “**The Matrix**”? It is similar to an unplugging of the feed from the back of your head, moving you **from fantasy to reality**.

The rules you live by need **changing**, and who decides the rules? Is it you – i.e. your pleasure centre and mind tricks? Can they be trusted to work in your best interests? How have they done so far?

Guidance is needed if your **new reality** is to become real, which comes from:

- 1) Prayer – your Higher Power
- 2) Listening to others, who are trying to help you.

The **Second paradigm shift** to make your reality real is to “**help yourself by wanting to help others**”. This takes the focus from living selfishly to using your experiences to heal others (**Step 12**).

The changes which occur are **spiritual** and give you the necessary “kick start” to recovery.

But you need continuing **power** to move forward with these changed basic attitudes and mind sets in place.

The power is not your own willpower, which can change moment to moment and day to day, but another, additional **Higher Power**, which is **always available** to those who **sincerely desire and ask**.

With this Higher Power you can **change**. The changes will be in the social and personal sphere as described above.

To summarise:

You cannot make all the necessary changes yourself, i.e. using your own **body and mind**; you need to access the resources which act through your **spirit**, with your Higher Power – “**God as you understand Him**” as the energy or source of power. Guidance from the Higher Power will unfold through your **prayer life**, in conjunction with contact with others who you trust, who are able to stand alongside you for your good.

For **change** to work you must move over from being the font of all knowledge, and let yourself be guided and influenced by others who have overcome the same problem as you.

This requires **humility**.

The **deepest spiritual change** is in love of self and others.

But with the problem drinker and user the deepest love is for a **chemical** to give that “feeling”; or the **adrenaline** of gambling, pornography, etc - i.e. there is:

An **idol** – inanimate – which is feeding off your emotions – taking life, destroying you and those you care for – which is in place of

God – who cares about you, wants to relate to you, and gives life, energy, health, etc.

Change your mind!

- 1) Mind tricks – defences against reality – these have to go
- 2) Changing the way we interpret past events, hurts, etc. This will change our **emotions**, especially anger and guilt
- 3) Changes in our brain circuits due to memories – see the diagrams regarding physical changes seen on brain scans (MRI) – reconcile guilt and set shame aside.

When we learn that these things are happening we can decide to change things. But the power and motivation comes from our **Higher Power**, at work through our **conscience** and **spirit**; and also through others – groups, family & friends.

2) Emotions

These are what we feel or experience and may be triggered both by conscious and unconscious thoughts.

Recent research has shown that 95% of the choices we make are made on the basis of our emotions – hence the effectiveness of advertising.

Q – Are you an emotional person? Are you ruled by your emotions? Do you rule other people by using your emotions? Are the emotions of others important in your life? Have other people's emotional problems impacted your life?

Q – What makes you happy?

If you live life out of your emotions – your behaviour is determined by how you react to people or situations – the result can be a like a “yo-yo”.

The effect of the pleasure centre is to keep emotions positive; but life has problems, and emotions may become negative.

Some people dampen their emotions so that they don't feel the pain of anger, hurt, frustration, etc.

Even drugs which give us a “high” will result in a worse “low” as the body rebalances its own natural chemicals.

Whenever we try to dampen our emotions, especially through chemicals, suppression of any negative emotions such as anger or resentment, will result in **dampening of positive ones as well, such as joy, happiness, peace, etc; all of which are rooted in love.**

These are the **root casualties of chemical harm.** Look at the end result – people become emotionally detached from others, even to their own being, i.e. self neglect.

Unexpressed emotions never die. They are “buried alive” and will surface sooner or later (S.Freud). They form the origins of guilt.

The only solution is through **change of our inner selves.**



Happiness

Contentment = peace
and happiness

What do you want? What makes you happy? What would make you content?



*Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the **desires** and **secret petitions** of your **heart**. (Ps 37:4)*

Does everything around you have to be the way you want it – people too? If you can fix the problems around you then will you have peace inside you?

But – life and people will never be perfect. As soon as you fix one thing another problem will crop up.

Life has tribulations – you can't change this, but you can change the effect these things have on you.

You cannot change the world, but you can overcome it.

Most people live on their emotions – “emotionally enslaved” – reacting to circumstances. If their lives are full of sad circumstances, e.g. poverty & death, then alcohol and drugs may be rife.

Solution – open your heart and mind to the fact that God loves you as a perfect father would, and has a good plan for your life (Step 3).

Love is not just a feeling – an emotion – it is a substance! It is put into your heart, where your body can then take action.

Here we are not meaning other commonly conceived forms of love – erotic (*eros*), brotherly (*filial*), or family (*storge*); but God's *agape* Love, which is unconditional, not related to emotions; *racham* when shared by us.

This is important to grasp, because wisdom teaches that **emotions, far from revealing the heart, are the main culprits that conceal it.** Emotions arise in the mind, and are not related to the heart.

Love is imparted – something you may receive and pass onto others – something that is channelled, shared and experienced. It can be demonstrated through words and actions; it is not just a cosy, sentimental feeling.

It is not something that can be obtained by learning (mind) or through physical means (body) – it is a spiritual entity.

“God is love”. (1 Jn 4:7)

“Perfect love casts out fear, for fear has to do with punishment”.

This is the root of guilt. Love is the antidote. Then you can forgive yourself and others, but first you have to know that **God is love, and that He loves you (Step 2).**

It is **love** that **changes the heart**, obtained through **wisdom**, with **understanding**.

1) Memories

Our brains contain billions of cells. Each cell has its own memory function. However memory about past events and experience form a specialised group located on the outer layers of the brain itself. Scientists don't know how thoughts are created: do thoughts create chemicals and hormones which are stored as memories, or do the chemicals or hormone action create our own thoughts?

But we do know that different people can interpret the same thought differently.

Memories can enter into our awareness by stimulating brain areas by electrical charge, or through the action of chemicals, including drugs. True memories can also be distorted by a number of factors, such as mood, length of time since the event, peer pressure, illness – particularly psychosis, and dementia.

People misuse alcohol and drugs because they have memories of good feelings associated with their use. They conveniently choose to “forget” bad memories or at least select the good times to outweigh the bad times.

Gradually this selective thinking becomes a **mind trick**, i.e. a fantasy.

In recovery the person now focuses on the fact that there were bad feelings associated with the memories; now they are in **reality**.

These bad feelings cause **guilt**, which needs to be dealt with, otherwise the person will drink or use again.

This issue of guilt is addressed as part of the Twelve Step Program – in particular **Steps 8-10**. But while it is helpful to remember the outcome of our habit, in terms of our **lack of power** and the resulting chaos, which is **Step 1**; other things **should not be remembered**, in particular the pleasure, the buzz, experienced through using whatever it was that we craved. This we should **remember to forget**; it is **stinking thinking**, as are any other things which negatively influence our emotions.


Remember to forget



Therefore memories have the potential to hold considerable power over our thoughts and emotions.

Some memories may be good such as: happy childhood memories, supportive family, love shared, achievements, etc.

Others may be described as bitter: abusive parents, broken relationships, bankruptcy, rejection by peers, death of a loved one, etc.

We can control what we choose to remember, which will affect our emotions and therefore our actions.

By joining a 12 Step group, having a mentor and praying to your “Higher Power” you will learn how to overcome any issues.

Addiction memory:

Once a person asks for help in stopping their habit, this is a sign that certain parts of the brain structure have been altered permanently. Even with many years of total sobriety the cells in the brain “remember” previous attachments. **Should the person drink or use again very soon there will be a massive over-reaction of the brain cells, with de-compensation, and the drink or drug problem will be worse than before.**

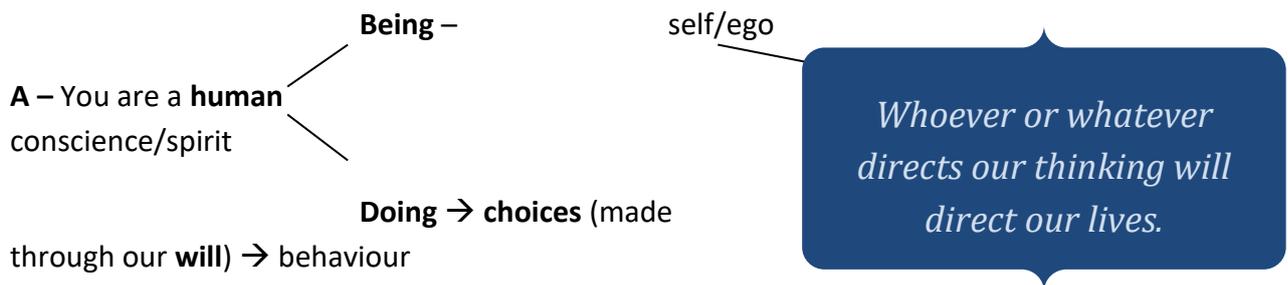
Can we change who we are?

A – Yes, by changing our desires.

Q - What is the EGO? - the “I”, the self?

A - Mixture of nature (genes) and nurture (life experiences).

Q – What makes you YOU?



- a) **Being** – self/ego – spirit: this describes the essence of your **life force**. We all have a **unique blueprint of identity** in our genes and in our spirit. Even identical twins are biologically distinct and have separate aspects of personality and temperament.

In this sense **we cannot change** who we are, **but we can change its expression**, by changing our:

- b) **Doing**

Q - How do we exert our will?

A - **Through the choices we make.**

Q - How do we make choices?

A – Many forces act at a conscious, subconscious and unconscious level.

Conscious – we are aware of the issues we face and make our own choices.

Subconscious – our reasoning is affected by other things that have happened in the past, or are happening in the present, e.g. childhood trauma, bad relationships, etc.

Unconscious – deeper forces which alter our perception of reality, also the biological structure and programming in the brain and body. These **biological effects** act on your **will**, but only through your **conscience**.

If your conscience is dulled, by drink or drugs, then your spirit – your life force – becomes damaged and **the power of your will is depleted**.

Your spirit – the part of our being that distinguishes us as human – is unable to act.

Q- Who or what is in control of our lives?

The mind subconsciously creates a **sense of identity** which protects us from what is going on around us. It uses thoughts to create **fantasies** i.e. **mind tricks**.

The mind constructs a picture of **who we are**, and uses **emotions** to protect us from things around us which might threaten us by spoiling that image, e.g. fear, anger, resentment.

As the mind and body absorb most of our attention, we don't think of ourselves as **human beings**, but rather as **human doings**.

We have therefore a **false sense of self**.

Our **real self** is the uniqueness which defines us as individuals.

Drinking and taking drugs are **attempts to escape** from what is going on around us. It is a means of **evading reality** and entering the realms of **fantasy**. We escape from ourselves and who we are.

With the 12 Step Program we discover **who we really are** by:

- 1) Engaging with others – relationships
- 2) Doing things
- 3) Working together to build lives – ourselves and others.

Our **basic personality** or “temperament” is established by the **age of six**. There is always some room for change, but our habitual ways of relating to the world are rooted in these early years. There are two foremost aspects:

- 1) Trust v mistrust - this is reflected as optimism or pessimism
- 2) Self appraisal - whether we see ourselves as having value or being worthless.

Much of what is established in our early development can be changed, but not all!

For **change** to occur requires **openness & willingness**.

Trust v mistrust - use the evidence of those who have recovered.

Self appraisal – resulting perhaps in **new self image** – by definition it is subjective, so it **may not be the truth!** This is why it is important to involve another human being whom you can trust in **Step 5**.

The image you have of yourself changes as you change and this affects your sense of **self worth**. But, more importantly, when it comes to accessing the source of power which will heal you:-

Q - What is your image of God?

Q - Is it the all-powerful creative force in the Universe – a force for good?

Q - A force you can depend on, i.e. trust?

Q - If not – what can you depend on? Yourself? Others? Who are those others?

Q – What is your image of yourself? Bad? Defeated?

Q - How can you get a better sense of **self worth** to help you cope better with yourself, others and life in general?

- 1) By recognising “**God as you understand Him**” you can obtain a better feeling of your own worth and significance, resulting in **dignity**, such that you can take better care of yourself.
- 2) Following this, because you are a worthwhile person you can help others, by means of your presence, concern, “**experience, strength & hope**” (as in the AA & NA literature).
- 3) By actually following the Program, concerns about “am I doing this to help myself or help others?” diminish. Your motives become “higher”, and you discover yourself doing things because you have a “**higher purpose**” in life – a positive role in making the World a better place to live in.

In the **Serenity Prayer** – “**accept the things I cannot change**” - refers to:

- certain general aspects, such as race, skin colour, gender, etc.,
- but also **your past**.

“**courage to change the things I can**” would include:

- your way of seeing things i.e. the way you think of yourself & others
- the meaning you give to your various life experiences
- the way you react to circumstances and people.

You are now progressing **from fantasy to reality**.

The “enemy” robs us of the **bigger picture** of our lives – by causing us to live in a narrow world of **self-satisfaction**, defined by the pleasure and guilt centres – rather than living in the **real world**, alongside other people, in the joyous task of finding solutions to everyday problems.

In effect, in the fantasy produced by alcohol/drugs – **YOU are the problem**.

In recovery groups you find your **purpose in life**.

If you have a **purpose** you have a **reason for living**.

If you haven’t got a role, you will get lost in life.

Willpower

Q – What is it?

A – Efforts of the **mind** to control **behaviour**

Q – Why does it fail to keep your enemy under control?

A – Your mind is in **two minds!** That is, your **power to choose** is sabotaged by **body needs** and **mind tricks**.

There is a **struggle** between your **thoughts or reasoning**, and the **drive of your pleasure centre**, whose nature and instinct is quite simply to **obtain pleasure**.

As a result of memory, learning and repetition (habit) **your brain structure has changed**.

So, any attempt of your mind, in terms of thinking or reasoning, to overcome these changes causes **tension and stress in your brain systems**.

The power of thought is eventually overcome by the power of brain changes, which have occurred over a long period of time.

Many people don't know about these physical changes as the research is relatively new. So they continue to believe that "someday" they will be able to control their behaviour. This is simply a **mind trick, doomed to failure**.

Step 7

This is a threshold Step into the spiritual, with a deep, deep change in terms of our character flaws.

Q - What do you want?

Q - Where do you want to go?

Q- Who do you want to be?

The removal of shortcomings results in transformation – **a new creation/person** – at a deep level, that only a Higher Power can achieve.

You can now become anchored to a new set of moral values.

You need **humility** to take this step of faith in God/ your Higher Power – to go "**from me to thee**" as a guide to living.

Humility is necessary for you to realise that you cannot change so radically on your own. Also to know what needs changing you have to listen and learn from others.

Total change will take a long time.

You will develop a relationship with your Higher Power and know that there is a loving power there to help. Many others have found this.

Q – How do the Steps help sobriety?

A - You have already accepted in Step 1 that you are powerless, but as others in the group can show, the Higher Power will help you to get well. The more you **trust your Higher Power**, the more the **fear of change will go** – and love will gradually take its place.

In summary, you have shortcomings – mind tricks, etc. – which have led to faulty thinking and behaving. Over time, with the addition of your harmful habit/addiction this has overcome you, and if not stopped you will die or go mad. You are a very sick person.

In order to get well you have to believe that there is a healing, loving power in the universe, which most people call God, but you can decide for yourself what you want to call Him.

This Higher Power will transform you in the same way it has others.

Fear → Defences:-

Mind tricks/fantasy → non-adaptive behaviour

- Poor conscience functioning
- Loss of will power to control behaviour (Step 1)
- Need a greater power to change your brain functioning

So you don't rely on yourself, rely on Higher Power → tension relief

Conscience

Our conscience is described in the “Guilt Book” as “our ability for making **moral**, i.e. right or wrong, judgments on the basis of our values and principles”. It is influenced by parental and social factors. A Christian conscience is a conscience which is influenced by God, the Bible and the Holy Spirit.

It is concerned with **sincerity** and **truth**, rather than hypocrisy and falsehood.

Just as our eye brings light to our bodies, and with it understanding, so our conscience brings spiritual light and understanding to our souls. (Lk 11:34)

Peace of conscience is to the soul, what good health is to the body.

A troubled or anxious soul can be understood in terms of disturbed thoughts and emotions resulting in **wrong desires**. The peace that can be obtained through the action of God's Spirit allows clarity of thought, pleasant emotions and **right desires**.

The addicted person has a dulled conscience, totally wrapped up in self. This leads to a **loss of sensitivity** towards others and God.

Our conscience is the “window” to the spiritual side of our being; it is through this that we are able to gain insights, wisdom and understanding; and this is the means through which our Higher Power communicates with us – in short it allows **two-way communication**.

It links to what is intuitive rather than reasoned.

It follows that examination of our conscience, to discover what it is that is **spoiling our peace** in whatever situation, **will allow us to use the strength needed by our will**, that can be **obtained through our spirit** to come to bear, so that we can have the right desires and to become an overcomer. (*Isa 27:5, Heb 10:16, Jn 14:27*)

Our spirit linked to God’s Spirit is the means to **change our heart, change our thinking, heal our emotions, and form right desires**. (*Rom 12:2*)

In short, **we are re-created**.

There are parts of us that we will never understand without God’s help. On one hand we know ourselves better than anyone else, as we (together with God) have access to our inner or unexpressed thoughts and feelings; on the other hand, **we know ourselves worse than anyone else does, because we rationalise, justify, minimise, forget and embellish, without even knowing that we are doing it!**

“Wad that some po’er hae the grace to gi’ us, to see wirsels as ithers see us” – the Bard (Robert Burns).

We are ready to claim credit, but reluctant to accept blame.

This is why our memories cannot be trusted.

Only God can see past our defences into our hearts, which direct our souls – i.e. our mind, emotions and desires. (*Ps 19:12*)

This is where God’s Spirit can work – clearing the window which is our conscience – allowing us to see those parts of us that spoil – so that we may enjoy fellowship with Him, with all that is implied – **a changed heart**, restoration, healing, peace, joy. He does this through knowledge of His (agape) love, and the realisation of the price He paid to restore our relationship with Him.

It is vital to distinguish between:

repentance – which is a **decision**, perhaps involving a vow; and

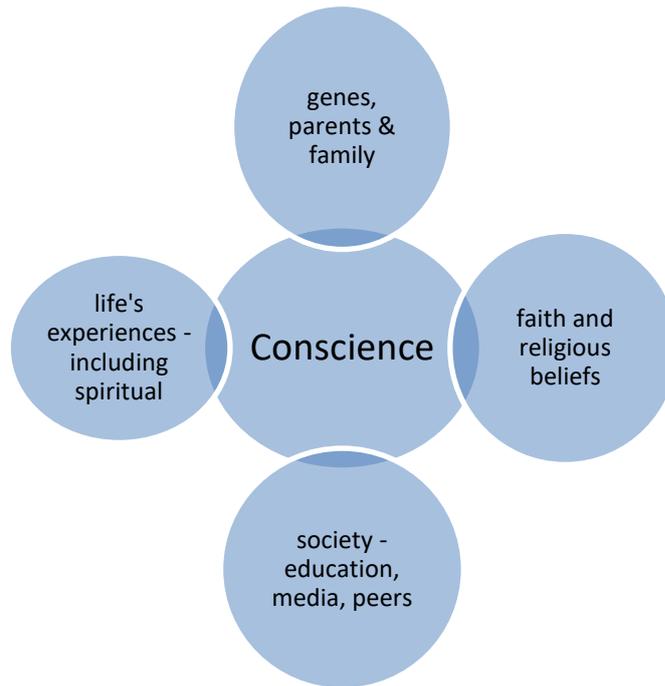
remorse – which is an **emotion** felt by everybody when we have done something which we are ashamed of, or which has adversely affected our life – eg being caught in adultery – you may feel remorse, especially if your spouse leaves home taking the children and demanding maintenance, but would it result in repentance – would you look to restore the relationship,

and then would you stop “looking”, or flirting, or sharing/spending time with those you find attractive?

How about your thoughts? Did you change your mind? Has your mind been changed?

The peace of God is the key to the heart – that is, a clear conscience realised in truth, not one that is clouded by things which we imagine we should have priority.

Our conscience begins to develop in infancy and is influenced by several factors:



It becomes damaged by drink/ drugs/ other addictions – “the enemy” – and is also subject to **manipulation**.

Q - Why? Mind – living in fantasy not reality - **mind tricks**

Body - living to satisfy **pleasure centre**

To change our conscience **we need to change:**

Genes - can't be changed

Family - can change to another family - by means of the group = source of nurture

Society - can change - walk with fellow sufferers who are overcomers

Experiences - avoid/deal with temptation - practical advice/practical help – agencies

Address character issues - when following the 12 Step Program you develop strategies for coping with day to day life – e.g with anger, forgiveness of hurt, etc., leading to a “spiritual awakening”, and removal of any desire to drink or take drugs. The journey takes you to a new heart, a changed heart where you want relationship with God and with other people.

It starts with prayer and meditation (Ps 119:15), linked to God’s word – reading and meditating on scripture (Ps 119:9) – so that His word can enter your heart (Ps 119:11) – expressing delight through worship (Ps 37:4). These are the elements – prayer, reading scripture, worship and meditation – which allow God’s power to operate on our hearts.



Healing comes when
we look to the solution
instead of the problem

Soul



Our soul is the essential part of our inner being, over which we do have some control. **It is the most important part of us** and consists of:

- a) Our thoughts – which may be applied to real situations or fantasies – in reasoning and problem solving; to internal dialogue; to creative or artistic work; to the recollection of memories; engaged in musing or day dreaming; appreciation of music, etc.
- b) Our desires;
- c) Our emotions – resulting from the above list, or from sub/unconscious thoughts;
- d) Our conscience - which is the window through which our spirit operates, and which should determine the actions in our lives.

The nature of the soul is to need.

It is therefore vulnerable – to our thinking, particularly fantasies; wrong desires; emotions, in particular unforgiveness; and guilt or shame.

Our desires are infinite; we can never have enough. Sin is fulfilling our our desires with anything which distances us from God.

Our soul seeks relationship and acceptance; this may be a person, or a group of people, or God; but once found it behaves as if it orbits around the “something else”, which may be called worship. Anything other than God which inspires worship is an **idol**, and leads to **sickness of the soul**, with bondage or **loss of freedom** to make choices.

Grace operates to overcome this. It is not possible to succeed merely by turning away from the idol, as it will draw you back. It is **essential to turn to the “something else”** which gives healing, ultimately recognised as Father God revealed through Jesus.

i.e. **don't look at the problem; look at the solution.**

We start to grow when we acknowledge our neediness, then we require sustenance, that is **soul food**, through **spiritual practices**, which may include **appreciation of beauty, creation or nature, music, relationships, community; as well as prayer, fasting, scripture.**

Peace and restfulness – not being hurried – is an inward condition, and different from busyness – **one may be busy without being hurried.** We cannot rest in God with a hurried soul.

Most importantly **our souls need rest.** This is part of the nurture the soul requires and is most easily found in solitude (not loneliness). Without rest and refreshment **soul fatigue** will occur, at which time our soul becomes more vulnerable, eg to wrong desires. For those who discover this truth it is found in Shabbat.

Change - starts with changes we make initially in the first two aspects of our soul:

- 2) **Changing our desires** – what do you want? Good relationships? – needs work.
Spiritual growth? – ditto.
- 3) **Changing our thoughts** – eradicate the negative, acquire the positive –
 - a) negative by working the Steps that deal with admission, confession, restitution;
 - b) positive by gaining hope, sharing with the group, helping others, etc.

3) **Changing our emotions** – this occurs as our brain becomes rewired or reprogrammed.

Our brains function as a result of electrical and chemical activity, which can be altered by changes in our thinking, emotions and desires; in much the same way that the reverse is true, that is that our brain processes can be affected by external electrical currents, e.g. using scalp electrical electrodes, and chemical substances.

With these **changes within the soul**, love for self and others will gradually increase, and in time will become **the power to maintain your sobriety.**

Repentance – this will follow on from changing your thoughts.

Repentance simply means turning around, i.e. changing direction.

You change your position/stance/mindset:

From – thinking and acting out of the needs of your pleasure centre,

To - thinking and acting out of doing the right thing.

You will become aware of your character flaws and seek to remedy these, as well as forgive and restore broken relationships.

As soon as you repent (change direction or turn around your thinking) you are open to receive God's gift of healing.

This is you **positioning yourself to receive**.

He does it – not you – but you must **desire it then ask**.

He is the source of power and is on your side.

Q – How do you know whether you are in the right place to receive?

A – Are you loving of yourself and others?

God is Love so you put Him in His rightful place as No 1 in your life – in the past you and your pleasure were No 1.

If we show love towards others we will be given more love – that is the power to heal, yourself and others.

As Christians the power we are talking about is Holy Spirit Power.

The soul is wired for ecstatic love. *Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart – Psalm 37:4*

You've had the courage to try alcohol and/or drugs. Now find the courage to try worship.

When teaching these concepts to a group with the triangle of Body / Mind / Spirit displayed it is helpful to point to the area within the triangle as a representation of the soul. Using this the soul may be considered to have three areas:

- a) The **animal soul** – joined to Body, with its appetites;
- b) The **altruistic soul** – linked to Mind, with its good intensions – for abstinence, new life, etc., but also all its weaknesses through mind tricks, fantasies, etc;
- c) The **spiritual soul** – or transcendent soul, also known as "**Yechidah**" – linked of course to Spirit - the part of the soul which relates to God – supra-rational, beyond our reasoning, by means of which we may experience **God's presence** in our lives.

This is the part of the soul which needs to be "fed" and developed. Habits such as those which lead to addiction (body) and emotions (mind) work against this area of the soul Gal 5:16-25.

In describing such things these three areas of the soul may be illustrated by a flame:

- a) *The dark area of the flame is the result of soot – black deposits arising from the burning wick = **animal soul**.*
- b) *The bright part of the flame is easily seen – what we like to show = **altruistic soul**.*

c) The **yechidah** cannot be seen – it is the area just above the flame – invisible – the hottest part of the flame – it is here that **power** resides – the power to release and to heal.

Prayer, meditation, worship, good relationships with friends and family, rest, music/art, appreciation of nature/ beauty are all things which may be considered nutritious **soul food**.

Spirit

Step 12 – Having had a spiritual awakening.... What! You mean we've been asleep?

Step 11 - Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

God doesn't make it too hard – the healing is in the seeking – through prayer and meditation – to “God as we understand Him”. (*Seek and you will find... Luke 11:9*)

Our **body** is sense conscious, our **mind** is self conscious, our **spirit** is God conscious.

Our spirit acts on our body through the soul.

Our heart meditates, and our spirit searches. (Ps 77:6)

Our spirit was “breathed into us” by God when we were created, and is therefore capable of direct union and communion with His Spirit. (*1 Cor 6:17*). It should relate “upward” to God and “downward” to our soul. That is the way God communicates with our soul – our mind, our emotions and our desires. Together our spirit and soul express themselves through our bodies, but if we are out of harmony with God we become **soulish**, given over to our thoughts, emotions and desires (*1 Cor 2:14-15*).

Our mind knows the condition of our bodies through our senses, by means of sensory nerves, preventing injury and relating our “feelings” – pleasure/discomfort, hunger, warmth, etc.

But how does our mind discover the state of our spirit? Many people appear to live their lives being entirely unconscious of their spiritual state, or even being prepared to acknowledge that they have a spirit. Christians use God's Word, which acts as a mirror. (2 Cor 3:18; Jas 1:23-25).

Yet the spirit of man is the lamp of the Lord, searching all his innermost parts. (*Prov 20:27*)

It is through our spirit, not our minds, that God is able to recreate or renew our hearts. (*Exe 36:26*).

However we have to choose to allow this to happen – a process of surrender, **complete surrender**, not merely submission, not double mindedness. **Step 3.**

It is a case of choosing to change and being sincere, perhaps involving witnesses. (*Josh 24:15; 24:22*) **Steps 4,5,6 &7.**

Without a spiritual awakening our heart becomes numb. (Ps 143:4) Our “heart” in this sense is not our physical heart, which pumps the blood round our bodies (unless you want to imagine it so), but rather **the very centre of our being** – of who we are.

When we surrender ourselves to God His Spirit comes into our heart and our spirit is renewed, or “re-created”. It remains removed or unaffected by what we do even if we lapse back into old behaviour.

To experience the change which has occurred in our spirit – in our minds and bodies – we have to make right choices; it is entirely up to us. **If we do nothing our soul remains exactly the same, our old behaviour will continue, and we will feel disappointed. However, God wants our minds to be transformed as well.** (Rom 12:2)

Our new life in our spirit must be drawn out into our soul.

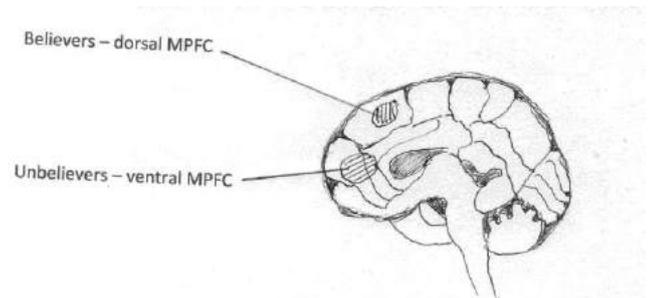
The **change** in our **spirit** must be followed by **changes** in our **mind**.

Then we will experience the “fruit of the spirit” – love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, self control. (Gal 5:22-23)

This can only be achieved by faith – by believing with our mind what has occurred in our spirit – **claiming the new reality** – by examining ourselves in the mirror of God’s Word, mediating on what we read, and prayer. Then our mind will align itself with what we read.

Alternatively our mind can align itself with what our senses tell us – what we see on TV, what others say to us, and what we like to taste, smell and feel.

The spirit of a person is the very essence of their personality. Suppose for example if you had the spirit of Mozart – you would perform and compose music with ease.



Areas of the brain have been identified by using functional MRI scans – the same method used to demonstrate the pleasure and guilt centres - which are active when conscience and judgemental issues are being considered, both in relation to ourselves and to others (See Biblio - Soc Neuro 2008). The findings in two groups were compared – Christians and non-

believers. It was found that the Christians were using a different part of their brain, which led the investigators to conclude that spiritual belief led to weakened operating of thoughts relating to guilt and self, but increased activity in terms of making evaluations.

In short, their faith had **rewired their brains** and **changed** the way they made judgments of themselves and others.

The significance of the imaging is that it demonstrates that by using spiritual means physical **changes** can be produced in our bodies which will influence how our minds function.

The 12 Step Program provides the means of making these changes possible as a result of honesty – Step 1; “came to believe” – Step 2; confession – Steps 4-10; prayer and meditation – Step 11; sharing with others – Step 12.

Your spirit expresses your instinct to pray.

Q – How many people on board the S.S. Titanic do you suppose felt a need to pray before the iceberg struck ... and afterwards...?

It is said that “There are no atheists in a foxhole”; consider the crew and passengers in the aircraft as they flew towards the Twin Towers.

Learning to pray:

If God is Father:

- 1) “whose son or daughter are you?”
- 2) “When love comes in it will heal - everything that **lack of love** has done to you will be reversed.”

To open your **heart** to this healing power – **just ask = pray.**

Forgiveness – is not about the will. Yes, you choose to forgive, but **to really forgive it has to be from the heart.** Forgiveness is a process which starts with willingness, and is then re-affirmed at intervals.

Your spirit is the part of your being that opens up through your relationships with others. This is particularly the case in your relationship with other sufferers through group meetings and mentorship.

The **reason for groups** is not for a continuing focus on a uniting misbehaviour, but rather a building of a people with **integrity**; who walk the same road focusing on **honesty**, having **dignity**, in **community**, sharing **responsibility** and keeping things **simple**, so that others may be drawn in.

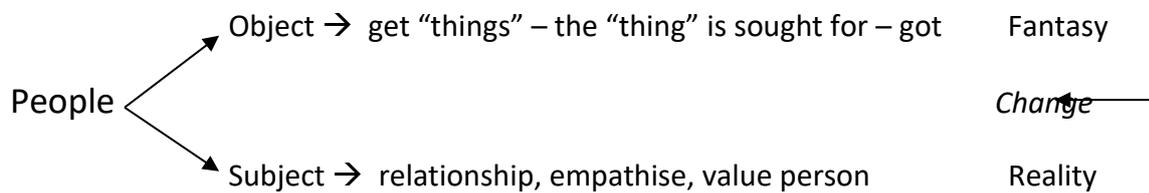


Living this way, relating to others on the same journey of recovery, puts you in touch with **reality**, i.e. your **mind tricks** and **fantasy world** are gradually knocked down.

When teaching about the importance of groups and mentoring we usually refer to the type of grip used by trapeze artists, in which each person grips the wrist of the other. The point being made is that if one person lets go – because he wants to drink, use drugs, etc. – he is still held, allowing community strength to bear.

When enacting this you might use 2 people, to show the value of a mentor; or 3 or more people standing in a ring, each gripping two others across the circle while you try to pull out individuals, to demonstrate the strength of the group.

Think of the attitudes you might have towards people:



The *camaraderie* of the drinking/drug culture is based on the “thing”, and not on the “person”. People are simply those you want to be around to make you feel better about your addiction.

But N.B. – note well – once you stop drinking you discover that **you never lose that desire and ability for connection with others.**

Once you start to move in reality you can find your inner essence, i.e. your **purpose** and **meaning in life.**

The sheer fact that you stop an addiction means that you will regain **Freedom of Choice.**

Through associating with others and finding out you are valuable in this area, and that through your experiences you can **help others**, this will help you keep well, i.e. you will go from:

Overcomer



When you are misusing drugs or alcohol:

- 1) Your desire uses up psychological energy so that there is little left for “ higher purposes”, especially for loving relationships, physical and emotional intimacy with others, and loving, respecting and caring for oneself.
- 2) **Your harmful attachment – your enemy - affects your FREEDOM and FREE WILL. You are in BONDAGE to a “thing” - an IDOL.**

That is your god!

But ... an idol is a god with all of God taken out; it is god de–personalised, de–relationalised, an “it”, entity or thing.

You can fantasize about it, or manipulate and control an idol.

An idol reverses the God/ creature relationship; now **YOU are the god and the IDOL is the creature.**

So the idol serves **self**, i.e. it is **destructive** - in place of a loving God, who builds up yourself and others.

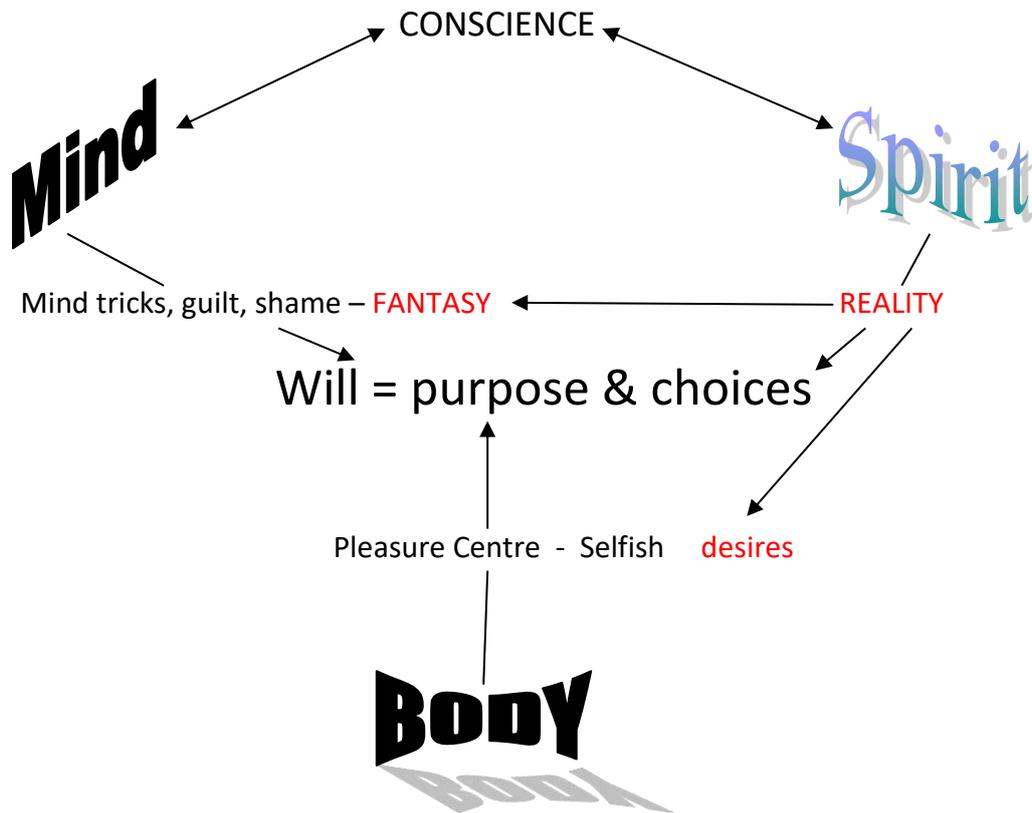
- 3) It is not just the alcohol / drugs problem that needs to be dealt with, **it is the spiritual part of your very self that needs addressing.**

Then the mental and physical healing will follow.

Remember **faith** is not a matter of believing whether God exists or not; it is a matter of knowing Him and **believing that He is faithful** and relying on Him to keep His promises. “Came to believe...” (**Step 2**) is a process – a realisation, one of gaining understanding.

Q – How does that work?

A - The **conscience** is the “window” into the **spiritual**. The 12 Step program works to clear the window through honesty, dignity, a sense of community as a result of groups, and restored relationships. By this means **reality overcomes fantasies** and **desires are changed**.



Q – Why is a spiritually based recovery program necessary?

A – Because your “problem” is more than just alcohol or drugs.

Q - Do people say, “You are a great lad. Your only problem is your drinking/ drug taking. If only you could stop the habit you would be OK.”?

Not true!

By the time people are saying these things damage has been done **spiritually**, i.e. your relationship with yourself - your true character and nature - your higher self, others and God, have all been changed. Your rehab will have to concentrate on repairing all these things.

Q - How?

A - Through the 12 step Program, which was designed by early Christians and adapted to suit addictive people.

Q - How does it help?

A - It helps you find what your **true needs** are in life, i.e.:

1. A search for the **meaning to life** – developing your spirit to direct your mind, particularly over negative thoughts and emotions which lead to substance misuse;
2. True relationships with compassion and empathy - understanding and sharing feelings with others;
3. Imagination and creativity;
4. Faith and hope in a fulfilling future;
5. Growing towards belief and trust in a loving God.

The above is just a brief summary of what is included.

If we can't stop misusing chemicals we are effectively living as slaves to our cravings. The way to freedom is:

- 1) To **change our desires**.
- 2) **Repair our conscience**.
- 3) **Forgive self and others** – we need this to **live in the present**.
- 4) Rely on a **higher spiritual power to heal** you.

The 12 Step program shows us how we may do these things.

Q - So **what is the root of the problem of drug/alcohol addiction?**

Wrong desires – having the over-riding desire to please **self** - through the pleasure centre, mind tricks, etc.

We have to change these **selfish personal desires** into **spiritual desires and goals** - relationships and finding a purpose in life – having a vision.

What gets people into trouble, in a life lived for personal satisfaction, is a failure to realise (= recognise the truth) that **worldly things will never satisfy** – we always want more, and more, and more.

True satisfaction can only be found in fulfilling the desires of the spirit – joy, peace, good relationships, any creative instincts we may have; but above all love, and knowing you are loved, and “worth it”.

It is through our spirit that we experience and share love.

Love cannot be taught – it is not a product of the mind or intellect – but rather it is imparted, therefore we need others to give substance and reality to these feelings..

This is why relationships are so important – with family, friends, the group, church and God.



Without a group nothing is possible.

Groups



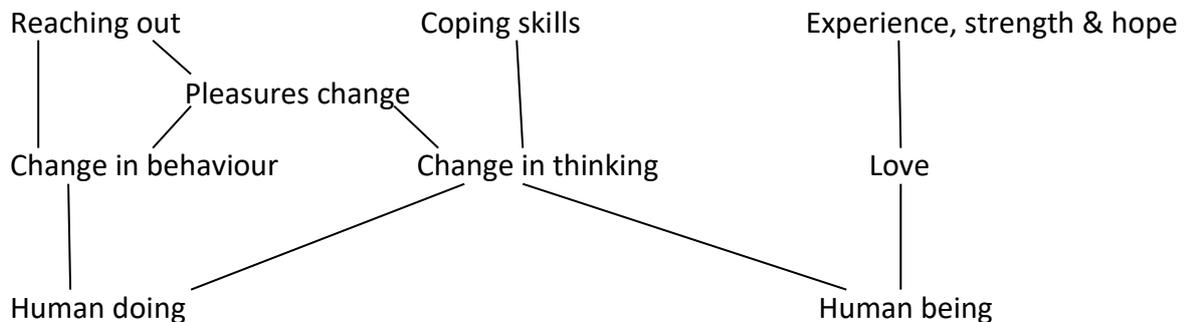
Without a group nothing is possible.

Working with other people, particularly those whose experience exceeds your own, dramatically increases the energy and power available for change.

This is important to grasp, and may require reflection.

Reasons for benefits:

Physical	Mental	Spiritual
Social – refreshments	mind tricks dealt with	relationships
Physical contact	overcoming guilt	support & friendships
Getting out – meeting	learning from others	sharing



The Law of the Group:

We associate with people who are like ourselves – e.g.:

Gossips like to associate with gossips

Complainers “ complainers

Negative people “ negative people



As iron sharpens iron,
so one man sharpens
another. Prov 27:17



Victorious people “ victorious people

Successful people “ successful people

Eagles “ eagles

Find friends who bring out the best in you.

Our teaching usually concludes with the creation of groups, which is the most important part of the process in Africa. Those we are teaching are asked to divide into those with the problem, and those living with someone who has the problem – spouses, sisters, etc. They are asked to determine:

- a) A name for their group*
- b) A Chairman, Secretary and Treasurer – the secretary arranges meetings and informs people, keeps a list of members, etc.; the treasurer should have been sober for a reasonable period.*

Office holders should rotate at agreed intervals, say six months, so that everyone has the opportunity to experience responsibility, and no-one becomes too dominant.

- c) They need to agree how often they should meet and where. Important to determine the date of the first meeting.*

This is all written down and photographed – including the list of members.

We advise them to try to keep groups small – about a dozen members – although people may attend more than one group, especially when they are struggling to obtain sobriety. As the group grows they should form new ones.

They should discuss the effect the problem has had on their lives and those they love, and the hope they share by the grace and power of God through following the program, rather than dwelling on the past and their experiences. Look to the answer, not the problem.

We recommend regular “Step Meetings” when the whole of a meeting is devoted to one particular step.

We also advise that Pastors who have attended our training should continue to have input into the spiritual side of things. They should not attend the meeting itself, unless they have the problem, but could be there before or after to lead prayer and worship for those who wish share this.

Above all the meetings should be enjoyable. This should not be something heavy and undesirable, but something shared to be enjoyed. The treasurer gathers small sums of money from each person to provide refreshments – not beer!

They might have open days when spouses and families may join in, as a social occasion – perhaps a sports day.

Transformation of communities occurs when it is realised that recovery is occurring. We have encouraged the groups to continue in enterprise by means of a small donation, and the result has been the planting of crops in rented fields, leading to ownership of the fields, furniture making, tabletop banking, and social developments looking to the care of widows and orphans, of which there are a lot.

Heart

Your heart is you – it determines your life.

You have a mind, you have emotions, you have a will – they are all yours, but your heart is you.

You can make **choices**, because your **will** is yours; you are not your mind, because **you can change your mind**; you are not your emotions, **because you can change your emotions**, and they can be so easily influenced by what occurs around you.

Your mind is yours, your will is yours, your feelings are yours, but:

your heart is you – and only God can change it.

Each heart is unique – we all live in different “worlds”:

“The way your heart has been affected by life experiences determines who you are at that time.” (Jack Winter)

We all live in different “worlds” because each of our hearts has been conditioned to experience life differently.

Changing the process described earlier - of thoughts → emotions → desires → actions – will not change who you are in your true self.

Real and lasting change will only occur with a changed heart.

“God is in the business of changing our hearts.”

“The key to spiritual growth is to get rid of the things that hinder us from experiencing the reality of His love.”

Everything you are is because of the condition of your heart. You may be able to change your behaviour by means of determination and willpower; you may make the right choices, attending meetings, reading the literature, smiling and staying “clean”; but one day

something may happen to your world and **you suddenly go back to who you really are**, using language you thought you had forgotten.

This is sometimes seen in unfortunate people who have been “clean” for many years, but with a change in their circumstances, for whatever reason, they return to old destructive behaviour.

This is termed a **slip** or a **relapse**. Slips are common during recovery and require love and support – they are often part of the journey.

If sobriety is a struggle it is because of fantasy – you are not living as who you really are. But when God changes your heart, you will automatically fulfil everything that God asks of you. You will automatically be everything you should be, and were designed to be, without even thinking about it, because your life is lived from your **renewed heart**.

You no longer have to struggle because sobriety is natural and therefore automatic to you – you have experienced God’s love and entered into His rest. (*Prov 4:23*)

You will no longer have any **cravings or desire** for these chemicals.

This is why the program is so important, and why you must continue to actively practise the Steps and attend meetings. In the case of substance misuse your heart will be changed to lead others to their own healing. This is **your gift**, which shows how **good may come out of bad**.

Only God is able to change our hearts. (*Exe 36:26-30*)

We are unable to do it because our hearts deceive us. (*Jer 17:9*). **If we try to work from our minds we will fail**, because we fool ourselves and are prone to fantasies and excuses. (*Gen 2:9*)

Furthermore, the more we self-examine to try to change ourselves in our own strength the worse it gets.

Introspection is like quick-sand – the more you struggle, the faster you go down.

The secret to overcome is not to look towards yourself – with all attention on your desires, your feelings or emotions – but to God or “your Higher Power”, the program, the group, and to others such as family and friends (*Look at the solution, not the problem*).

Q - Are you good company to be with? **What are your thoughts, your emotions, your internal dialogue** – what **memories** do you reach into? How do they impact your emotions and ultimately your actions? Are they **good company for you** to fulfill your enjoyment of life; **for your spirit; for His Spirit?** (*Jn 10:10*) Or is your life spoiled by anxiety and fear?

James Jordan writes: ***“When God changes your heart, you begin to love what God loves; you begin to feel as God feels; you begin to think as God thinks; you begin to do as God does – automatically!”***

“The wonderful news is that when love comes in, everything that the lack of love has done to you is reversed. The holes in your heart are healed” – you don’t have to identify them and do the work yourself. It is simply a matter of surrender, making a decision to trust.

Steps 2 & 3. (1 Thess 5:13)

A strong grasp of these issues is so important; other key scriptures are listed in “Perspectives for Pastors” Section B on page 60.

To illustrate these concepts of the heart the following may be useful, drawn up as “Heart Attitudes” – four types of broad attitude through which we may live our lives. It is taken from the website www.heartstyles.com, and gives something which may provoke self-searching leading to acceptance that there are things that are outwith our control, but of which we need to be aware.

Heart Attitudes

Growth

LOVE Growing Others			
Relating	Encouraging	Developing	Compassionate

HUMILITY Personal Growth			
Authentic	Transforming	Reliable	Achieving

Focus: Others
 Experience: Compassion
 Behaviour: Effective

Self

FEAR Self Protecting			
Approval Seeking	Easily Offended	Dependent	Avoiding

PRIDE Self Promoting			
Sarcastic	Competitive	Controlling	Striving

Me
 Emotions
 Ineffective

www.heartstyles.com

In Conclusion:

The starting point of the 12 Steps is an admission of **reality**, and a coming out of **fantasy & mind tricks** thinking – dropping the defences.

What is needed is a **change of heart**.

This can only be achieved through:

repentance, i.e. changing course, as opposed to **remorse i.e feeling sorry**; and

surrender to your Higher Power or God, to live according to His will, as opposed to mere **submission**.

The repentance required is not just of things which trouble us, but those hidden things (cf chedar) which can only be spiritually discerned. (*Ps 19:12*) (**Steps 5-7**)

Only you and God know what is in your thoughts or emotions, unless you speak about them, or share them through your actions. But it is **your heart that needs to be changed** – and yet the human heart is full of deceit, so that only God can understand it. (*Jer 17:9*)

And only God can change it. (*Eze 36:26*)

Past experience has included desperate attempts at stopping which have resulted in **failure of will power**.

Q - Why?

A - As a result of the **power of the pleasure centre**, aided by the **guilt centre**, operating with the support of **mind tricks**, in a situation of **obscured conscience** resulting in **spiritual depletion**.

Power from another source is needed.

This Power has worked for many others – **listen to their testimonies and believe**.

Every meeting you go to, with **strengthening** of your **right desire**, will give you **more power**.

Your connections with others will be greater the more you have suffered in the past. You will be able to **identify** more and **understand the suffering** of others.

This is important in the **healing process**, i.e. caring and giving of yourself. It is known as **compassion**. This is **spiritual** and the **fuel** for your **spiritual journey**.

This is **love in action**.

It has nothing to do with religion, but many people do find a “faith” during their journey. Around the world people of all religions, or no religion, get healed – because **the power is spiritual, not religious**. Remember what the founders of AA wrote – “...**God does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him**”. He wants you to recover, and then perhaps you may find Him.

Step 3 requires a decision to surrender to “God as you understand Him”.

Q - Why?

- 1) Your own efforts in the past have failed and are willing to try a Higher Power
- 2) You have been living in your own “world” – a **fantasy**.
- 3) But the **reality** is:
 - life going downhill
 - loss of job, relationships, etc.
 - can’t control habit/addiction
 - feeling bad about yourself and others – guilt & shame

You need another and others that you can **trust more than yourself** – God will help you through other people.

In therapy groups there is **wisdom** – gained through experience – which is a higher force for good, and can **heal**.

To be healed is to **leave the old life of fantasy** – which had been your reality – and **step into a new life of reality** without the need for drugs or alcohol.

Group participation involves being prepared to relate to another, or to others, the honest truth about your life. You will form relationships which will help expose your mind tricks which have been agents to keep you drinking or using.

Step 5 - This step is no turning back.

You are a **new creation** with a **new conscience**.

The “**old self**” was wrapped up in the pleasure centre and operating on mind tricks to justify addictive behaviour.

The “**new self**” is relying on a Higher Power to change your life. The Higher Power now has control – not you.

Everyone’s greatest fear is abandonment/rejection

Therefore: **Everyone’s greatest need is love.**

Faith, Hope & Love – all help free the spirit from its attachments:



Faith – empties the intellect

Hope – frees the memory

Love – liberates the will

Leave fantasy behind
and live in reality



So what is the root of the problem of drugs and alcohol misuse?

Wrong desires – a desire to please self.

This is pleasure centre & mind tricks dependant.

The solution is to change desires – to spiritual ones – relationships & purpose in life.

The soul is wired for ecstatic love. *Delight yourself in the Lord, and He will give you the desires of your heart – Psalm 37:4*

You've had the courage to try alcohol and/or drugs. Now find the courage to try worship and find the way of Love.

Perspectives for Pastors

A) Temple & tabernacle as a blueprint for inner being

What has been described so far is drawn largely on literature which may be found in the Bibliography, presented as far as possible in terms which may be acceptable even for people with no faith. In both the Narcotics Anonymous book "IT Works" and the Alcoholics Anonymous "Big Book" the authors acknowledge that God is very gracious and does not make it too difficult for those who wish to find Him.

However, for a full understanding of the processes we are examining it is necessary to refer to the bible, and in particular to understand our "internal architecture". In what follows we draw on "Be Ye Transformed" by Chuck and Betty Missler, and "Sonship – A Journey into Father's Heart" by James Jordan.

In their book the Misslers state that our internal architecture, that is the relationship of our body, mind, soul, heart and spirit, can be understood in terms of the structure of the tabernacle / Solomon's temple; processes to be followed are those of the Levitical priesthood, with substitution of the cross for the holocaust alter. They make the point that God has preserved so much detail for us in His Word for a structure that no longer exists, and a system of sacrifice no longer followed, and that there must be a reason. They provide a full account, including the ritual followed by the priests in worship, the significance of the

furnishings, the relevance of the structure to the sevenfold Spirit of God in Isaiah 11:2, and the related scriptures throughout the entire bible.

The following diagrams are copied from the book:

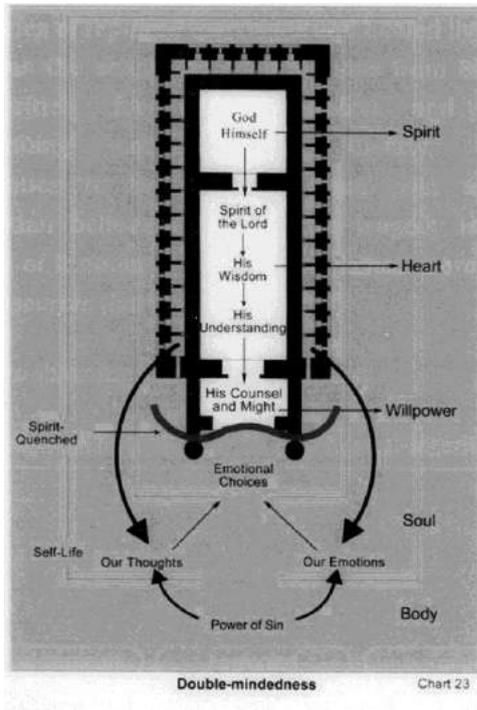


Figure 1 – a plan drawing of the temple

This figure illustrates that our soul, consisting of our thoughts, emotions and desires or choices, can be affected by the power of sin, arising from our bodies, and our memories, seen to be arising from the chedars, or storerooms situated on three levels around the outside of the sanctuary. Our spirit and heart empowered by God's Holy Spirit is unable to act through us because of our choices which stifle our heart at the threshold.

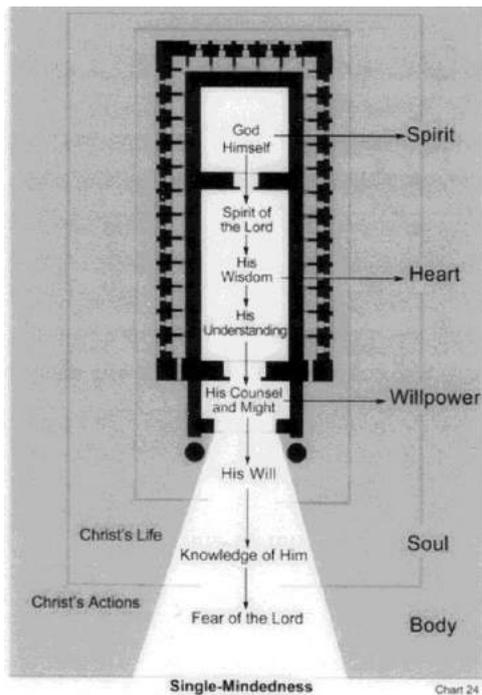


Figure 2 – in which our actions are spiritually determined

When our will – our choices and desires - are surrendered to God, His Spirit is unhindered in acting through us. We are single minded and useful instruments, His power working fully in our lives.

Note the distribution of His sevenfold Spirit, God Himself in the Holy of Holies, His Wisdom (the menorah) and Understanding (showbread) in the Holy Place = our heart, His Counsel = Jachin, and Might = Boaz are the bronze pillars in the porch, His Knowledge = lavers & holocaust alter & molten sea, in the Inner Court, and lastly Fear of the Lord in the Outer Court, where choices are made.

B) Key scriptures relating to the heart:

- 1) Prov 4:23 – Keep and **guard your heart** with all vigilance and above all that you guard, for out of it flow the springs of life.
- 2) Jn 7:38 - ...come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, streams of living water will flow from within him.
- 3) Prov 23:26 – My son, **give me your heart** and let your eyes observe and delight in my ways.
- 4) Matt 6:21-22 – **For where your treasure is, there will your heart be** also. The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is sound, your entire body will be full of light. (cf conscience)
- 5) Eph 1-17-18 – that He may grant you a spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him by having the **eyes of your heart** flooded with light, so that you can know and understand the hope to which He has called you, and how rich is His glorious inheritance in the saints.

- 6) Phil 4:4-7 – Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near. Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And **the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus.**
- 7) Eph 1:18 – I pray also that the **eyes of your heart** may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which He has called you, the riches of His glorious inheritance in the saints and His incomparably great power for us who believe.
- 8) Jer 17:9-10 – **The heart is deceitful above all things** and beyond cure. Who can understand it? **I the Lord search the heart** and examine the mind, to reward a man according to his conduct, according to what his deeds deserve.
- 9) 1 Ki 8:39 – then hear from heaven, your dwelling-place. Forgive and act; deal with each man according to all he does, **since you know his heart (for you alone know the hearts of all men).**
- 10) 1 Sam 16:7 – But the Lord said to Samuel, “Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things man looks at. Man looks at the outward appearance, but **the Lord looks at the heart.**
- 11) Eze 36:26-7a – **I will give you a new heart** and put a new spirit within you, and you will be clean; I will remove from you your **heart of stone** and give you a **heart of flesh.** And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees...
- 12) 1 Ki 3:9-10 – So give your servant a **discerning heart...**to distinguish between right and wrong...The Lord was pleased that Solomon had asked for this...
- 13) Heb 4:12 – For the word of the Lord is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it **judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.**
- 14) Ps 139:23-4 – Search me, O God, and **know my heart**; test me and know my anxious thoughts. See if there is any offensive way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.
- 15) Ps 143:4 – “So my spirit grows faint within me, **my heart within me is dismayed**” – there follows in verses 5-12 what to do in this case, which echoes the ritual of Levitical priests:

I remember the days of old; I meditate on all your doings; I ponder the works of your hands. I spread forth my hands to you. My soul longs for you like a thirsty land for water. Answer me speedily O Lord, for my spirit fails. Hide not your face from me, lest I become like those who go down into the pit. Cause me to hear your loving-kindness in the morning, for on You do I lean, and in You do I trust. Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, for I lift up my inner self to You.

Deliver me O Lord from my enemies. I flee to You to hide me, Teach me to do Your will for You are my God. Let Your good Spirit lead me into a level country, into the land of up-rightness. And in Your mercy and loving-kindness cut off my enemies, and destroy those who afflict my inner being; for I am Your servant.

Other useful passages:

Eze 37:1-10 – Valley of dry bones

Jer 18:1-10 – house of the potter

Gen 2:9 & 15 - 17 & 3:8

Session outlines

Some of the diagrams used in the text could be drawn on a flip chart or whiteboard during the sessions to demonstrate what is described.

The flow of our teaching is as follows:

- 1 Establish that addiction is a disease – recognised by WHO since 1949(?). Therefore should not feel guilt or shame, but should recognise that you have a responsibility to get well, like any other illness.
- 2 It is a problem in every country in the world – talk about the effects on the sufferer, their family and their community.
- 3 It is a case of each sufferer deciding for themselves whether or not they have a problem – consider the effect on their lives in terms of health, relationships, ability to earn a living, loss of memory, etc.
Ask spouse, friends or near relatives how their habit affects them.
- 4 Describe process of desire – habit – dependency – addiction.
Distinguish between desire and craving – addicts will understand craving.
Describe process of habit in response to triggers: desire or perceived need -> action -> reward - eg cleaning teeth: mouth feels dirty – clean teeth – mouth feels fresh = good habit. Bored – eat something – sugar rush = bad habit. When still a habit - avoidance of trigger situations and change actions. But does addict want to avoid? Opportunity for drama.
Establish **Step 1 – honesty.**
- 5 Explain it is an illness which affects body, mind and spirit. Draw in triangular pattern on board with “will” in centre.
Describe will in terms of vision/purposes – long-term – and goals – how we get there – choices - distinctions between.
- 6 Description of **body** – 5 senses – through which body makes demands – act on “Pleasure Centre” – in centre of brain – Limbic System.

Changes in cell structure and function when habit progresses to addiction – seen under microscope – increased branching of cells and changes in receptors – improve if stop habit, but if take alcohol or drug again immediately “light up” – so lifelong total abstinence necessary.

These physical and chemical changes exert very powerful demands on person’s will – experienced as craving. Describe physical effects on with-drawl to aid understanding.

- 7 Description of **mind** – thoughts, emotions and memories.
All also exert powerful force on person’s will to keep them drinking/taking.
Talk about mind tricks - about distorted thoughts & emotions. Fantasies versus reality.
Effects of habit on memory. Memories themselves – what people have said about them – labels.
Guilt – major factor in continuing drink/drugs. “Guilt centre” in Limbic system (body).
Unforgiveness a major factor. Effect of memories – good and bad – effect on emotions - dealing with troublesome memories.
How 95% of choices we make are on basis of emotions.
- 8 Establish **Steps 2&3 – dignity.**
- 9 Description of **spirit** – only humans have a spirit – creative, relational, intuitive, the part of our being that recognises and communicates with God – through prayer & worship – and by means of which He communicates with us – through His word – wisdom & understanding – giving discernment and strength – source of power.
- 10 Role of **conscience** – window into spiritual, mirror to examine ourselves – requirement is stillness of conscience – examen and making amends.
- 11 Establish **Steps 4-7 - community.**
- 12 Description of **heart** – who we really are - only God can change heart – we are deceived by our own understanding. When we align our will/desires/choices/goals with His, then the changes He has made in our hearts become evident in our minds and we can experience reality/truth – His power operates in our thoughts and emotions. Compassion – for others – rather than emotions – which are self centred arising out of pride and fear – govern our lives.
Our heart is what needs to be changed – results in change in our thoughts, emotions and desires i.e. our soul – re-created – “born again”. He does it! But we have to choose.
- 13 Establish **Steps 8 – 10 - responsibility.**
- 14 Description of all these elements in terms of tabernacle structure and how it functions in practice.
- 15 Establish **Steps 11&12 – simplicity.**
- 16 Relevance of the **Lord’s Prayer.**
- 17 How to confront sufferer with their illness – two people, when sober, explanation of how their habit affects the lives of other people and what is required – drama.
- 18 Formation of groups and how they might operate.

Session 1

1) Who are you? Why are you here? What do you want?

Who would you like to be? What is your purpose or vision? What are your goals?

What is in the way?

2) What is it that makes us human – that distinguishes us from say, a Brussels sprout?

3) What are our basic needs, that are essential for survival?

a) Physical – food, shelter, clothing, etc.

b) Mental – safety, security

- Acceptance, education

c) Spiritual – to love and be loved – not for what we do, but for who we are.

4) Change – may be physical, mental or spiritual; or any combination. But we need motivation.

Where do we find that? Where is the starting point?

What are the things you want most in life?

What are the things you *should* want most in life?

Do you think you can get this?

What things do you need to change – about yourself, about your position or surroundings?

What things can you not change?

What is stopping you from changing things that you might change?

First session - questions that might be posed:

Who are you?

What do you want?

What is your vision?

What are your goals?

What is in the way?

What do you want to be part of?

Who do you want to identify with?

Can you describe who would you like to be?

What makes you happy?

What would make you content?

By way of introduction:

Imagine that inside you there are two dogs:

A brown dog – call it Diablo – mangy, never grooms himself, fights a lot, eats anything it finds, not house trained, bites it's owner and owner's family/friends, barks all day and night, pees everywhere, and...

A white dog – call it Oscar – grooms himself, sniffs other dog’s bits politely, eats only what he is given, house trained, protects his owner and his family, only barks at strangers and squirrels.

Every day the brown dog and the white dog fight.

Q - which one will win?

A - the one you nurture.

So it follows:

Physical – take care of your health – respect your body in terms of what you allow in and the demands you make of it, make sure you have enough rest and sleep, groom yourself – don’t be mangy

Mental – control thoughts & emotions – don’t bark, bite, fight or try to piss on things you shouldn’t – live in reality, not in some fantasy world of fear, anxiety, anger or any other negative stuff. Stay calm.

Spiritual – good relationships, walk with winners, forgive, trust, seek your God/Higher Power.

Desire right things – change your desires – right/wrong- feed the white dog, not the brown.

Aim for reality, forget fantasies.

It is so easy to slip into fantasy, for comfort, to address anxieties – the “what if...”.

Change – all changes in the quality of your life grow out of a change in your “vision of reality”. (Ragamuffin Gospel p239).

Get real!

Description of Terms Used:

The following are not intended as dictionary definitions, but rather to flesh out the way in which various terms are used in the text.

Choices: Many factors operate when **decisions** are being made, but in terms of spiritual program there arises a tension between Higher Power and human power – situated in the conscience; the winner will depend on which one is best fed.

Conscience: Your internal monitor for what is right or wrong. Depends on many factors – social/ lifestyle/ culture/ upbringing/ experience, etc. A window between mind and spirit.

Desire: Controls emotions – causes increased thoughts i.e. preoccupation

And behaviour – learning -> habit -> attachment -> addiction

Ego: Higher mental function which determines behaviour. Reality and self-awareness operate to counter basic instincts.

False guilt: Mind trick which leads to prolongation of guilt – causes anxiety, depression and rebellion – ultimately suicide.

Forgiveness: the letting go of feelings as you have no power to change the past (as in the Serenity Prayer), and the Higher Power is the perfect love which will still be there whether you relapse again or not.

Guilt: Emotion when you know you have done something wrong. A work of the conscience – triggers a mental re-balancing of trying to right the wrong by various means; also a sense of wanting punishment. (see false guilt)

Heart: Who you are – your heart is you – yet only God knows it and only God can change it.

Higher Power: Source of power outside ourselves; spiritual energy; works through conscience; understood in terms of love, relationships, beauty, art & nature.

Human Power: Body – strength, appetites, desires - pleasure centre v reality

Mind – thoughts, memories, emotions, IQ – fantasies v reality

Spirit – by which our soul might become a living reality

Id: Basic instincts governed by the “pleasure principle” – all animals have this.

Idols: God de-personalised/ “de-relationalised”; an “it” you can control; reversal of the God/creature relationship.

Personality: Combination of id, ego and superego.

Self: A person’s essential being that distinguishes them from others.

Self identity: Who we think and feel ourselves to be.

Self image: Who we think and feel ourselves to be, what we say and do, i.e. our total mental “self portrait”.

Self esteem: What we think of ourselves – do we like or dislike ourselves?

Shame: Injury/insult to sense of self – who you think you are – causes feelings of failure/low self worth.

Soul: Part of self – who you are conscious of being as a person, i.e. your personality – how you project your inner self; seat of self-awareness; formed in part by the mind – emotions, thoughts (both conscious and unconscious), memory, desires – and also the conscience.

Spirit: The essential part of our being, creative and intuitive, appreciative of non-material things such as relationships, love, compassion, and beauty, through which we are able to draw the necessary strength and guidance of our “Higher Power” to enable recovery. It is “the energy/force which brings the soul into a living reality” – Gerald May.

Good spirit – a power of and towards God – positive energy - Life.

Evil spirit – force directed away from a realisation of God – negative energy – death.

Superego: Conscience/morals – shaped by parents/society – governed by a tug of war between love/approval (= our greatest need - *primal*) versus rejection/abandonment (=our greatest fear – *primal*).

Will: Decision maker – enables us to make choices. Affected by physical and mental effects of desire.

Appendices

1) The 12 Steps explored

In the account of the 12 Steps that follows Bible references are included, to assist in teaching groups who are Christian.

Step 1 - is about recognizing our brokenness:

We admitted we were powerless over “the enemy” – that our lives had become unmanageable.

The starting point is an admission of **reality** and a coming out of **fantasy & mind tricks** thinking – a dropping of defences.

It is an acknowledgment that **you have an enemy that is trying to kill you.**

Desperate attempts at stopping have resulted in a failure of will power.

Why? – pleasure centre, mind tricks, spiritual depletion – conscience not working properly.

(ROMANS 7:18)

Step 2 - is about the birth of faith in us:

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Power from another source is needed.

Faith – starts with acceptance – a need to believe.

This **Higher Power** has worked for others, so listen and believe – how others have been helped.

Every meeting you go to with your **right desire** gives you **more power.**

Your connections with others will be greater the more you have suffered in the past. You will be able to identify more and understand the suffering of others.

This is important in the **healing process**, i.e. caring, and giving of yourself.

This is **spiritual** and the fuel for your **spiritual journey**. This is **love in action**.

It has **nothing to do with religion**, but many people find a faith during their journey. Around the world people of all religions or no religion get healed, because the power is **spiritual** and not religious.

(PHILLIPIANS 2:13)

Step 3 - involves a decision to let God be in charge of our lives:

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

Why?

Because your own power is not enough – there are changes in your brain – to stand securely against the enemy you need **His greater power**. It is important to be decisive – stand firm – no turning back.

Reality – life going downhill

- Loss of job/ relationships, etc.
- Can't control habit/ enemy
- Feeling angry about yourself & others
- Guilt & shame
- Need another/others that you can **trust more than yourself**.

People are just that – human.

But in support groups there is **wisdom**, gained through experience, which is a higher force for good and can heal. Many come to view healing – emotionally and in nature – as the higher power of God.

To be healed is to leave the old life of fantasy, which had been your reality, and change into a new life of reality by relating to other/others the honest truth about your life.

This step is a commitment to change. You are a more powerful person developing a new conscience.

The old “fantasy self” was wrapped up in pleasure centre and operating in mind tricks to justify addictive behaviour. The new “reality self” is relying on a Higher Power to change your life. The Higher Power now has control, not you.

(ROMANS 12:1)

Step 4 - involves self-examination:

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

Here our **conscience** can be considered to be kicking in, because we are now moving into **reality mode**.

To be recognised is that there is **true guilt** and **false guilt**.

Admitting guilt is actually a breaking down of the defences, seeing the mind tricks for what they are:

- use “notes to self” – where are they?
- mind tricks – defences against abandonment.

(LAMENTATIONS 3:40)

Step 5 - is the discipline of confession:

Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

Being open – not secret, i.e. come out of hiding.

N.B. – need people and the group to support you through this.

They will not abandon you in this process. It is usually the other way round. You may bottle out of the group.

You then realise that no matter what you have done your Higher Power never abandons you. In fact the more you confess things, the more people (& the H.P.) respect you!

Steps 4 & 5 go together – by sharing you gain confidence, and can gradually admit more things.

(JAMES 5:16)

Step 6 - is an inner transformation sometimes called repentance:

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Through submission to God or your Higher Power, you are now **“in position” to change** – both the **power** to change the things you can change, and the **wisdom** to accept and hand over to Him the things you cannot change.

You are now ready to **overcome** the assaults of **the enemy**.

(JAMES 4:10)

Step 7 - involves the transformation or purification of our character:
Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings.

This is a threshold Step into the spiritual, with a deep, deep change in terms of our character flaws.

Q - What do you want?

Q - Where do you want to go?

Q- Who do you want to be?

The removal of shortcomings results in transformation – a new creation/person – at a deep level, that only a Higher Power can achieve.

You can now become anchored to a new set of moral values.

You need **humility** to take this step of faith in God/ your Higher Power – to go “from me to thee” as a guide to living.

Humility is necessary for you to realise that you cannot change so radically on your own. Also to know what needs changing you have to listen and learn from others.

Total change will take a long time.

You will develop a relationship with your Higher Power and know that there is a loving power there to help. Many others have found this.

You have already accepted in Step 1 that you are powerless, but as others can attest, the Higher Power will help you to get well. The more you **trust your Higher Power**, the more the **fear will go** – and love will gradually take its place.

In summary, you have shortcomings – mind tricks, etc. – which have led to faulty thinking and behaving. Over time, with the addition of your harmful habit/addiction this has overcome you, and if not stopped you will die or go mad. You are a very sick person.

In order to get well you have to believe that there is a healing, loving power in the universe, which most people call God, but you can decide for yourself what you want to call Him.

This Higher Power will transform you as it has done with others.

Fear → Defences:-

Mind tricks/fantasy → non-adaptive behaviour

- Poor conscience functioning
- Loss of will power to control behaviour (Step 1)
- Need a greater power to change your brain functioning

So you don't rely on yourself, rely on Higher Power → tension relief

(1JOHN 1:9)

Step 8 - involves examining our relationships and preparing ourselves to make amends:

Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.

(LUKE 6:31)

Step 9 - is the discipline of making amends:

Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. (MATTHEW 5:23-24)

Listing things helps you to accept the **full reality**.

Making amends is about restoring relationships. You will need to develop **forgiveness** – both self and others.

Unforgiveness causes resentment and relapses. (See section on Why Forgiveness)

Step 10 - is about maintaining progress in recovery.

Continued to take personal inventory, and when we were wrong, promptly admitted it.

Daily review keeps you grounded in reality.

Dealing with reality in this way keeps at bay the enemy, in the form of mind tricks through “stinking thinking”.

(1 CORINTHIANS 10:12)

Step 11 - involves the spiritual disciplines of prayer and meditation.

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out.

Prayer is how you keep in touch with your Higher Power – you will always need His guidance. Your brain systems have been “primed” to abuse certain substances and this needs to be kept reined in by the Power greater than yourself.

(COLOSSIANS 3:16)

Step 12 - is about ministry:

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Service is the outworking of your victory over the enemy. It is the proof that you have **changed**. The negative emotions you felt towards others have been transformed to love for others, and you are now able to love yourself i.e. you have **dignity**, and are able to see your own **self worth**. You are now in a position to discover, and to live out, your **true purpose** in life.

(GALATIANS 6:1)

2) Serenity Prayer:

God grant me the Serenity
To accept the things I cannot change,
Courage to change the things I can,
And the wisdom to know the difference.

3) Prayers to Receive Strength in the Inner Man:

Mike Bickle, founder of the International House Of Prayer in Kansas City, wrote a book "Growing in Prayer", in which he advocates quoting God's Word to Him in prayer for greater effectiveness. He developed an acronym "FELLOWSHIP" when praying for strength in the inner man as follows:

F – Fear of God: Father, release the spirit of the fear of God into my heart (Ps 86:11),

E – Endurance: Strengthen my spirit with endurance to do your will (Col 1:11),

L – Love: Father, pour out Your love in my heart in a greater measure (Phil 1:9),

L – Light of glory: Father, let me see more of the light of Your glory (Acts 22:6-11; Exod 33:18; Ps 4:6),

O – One thing: In my life focus, I choose to be a person of one thing who sits at your feet (Ps 27:4),

W – Count me Worthy: Strengthen me to have a worthy response to God in my life (2 Thess 1:11),

S – Speech: Father, set a guard over my lips that I may walk free from unclean speech (Eph 4:29; Ps 141:3),

H – Humility: Jesus, I want to learn from you how to walk with a lowly heart (Matt 11:29),

I – Insight (wisdom): Give me insight into Your Word, will, and ways (Col 1:9-10),

P – Peace and Joy: Strengthen my heart with peace and joy that overpower fear (Phil 4:7).

4) The Lord's Prayer

Most of the above "Fellowship" prayer is contained in the prayer that Jesus taught us:

In this we are praying in His will, which is a guarantee for an answer. Sometimes we pray for bad things, but God is good and will not grant these requests.

We must be careful not to misuse it, e.g. praying with wrong motives, or rattling it off instead of meaning it.

The **purpose** of praying is to be "heard" and "rewarded".

Why pray? It puts our pride in its place. Also prayer changes things.

The prayer does not have power in itself, like casting a curse or a spell, but rather it is **the effect on the desires in the person's heart** – aligning them with God's.

It is the foundational prayer for all our other prayers, in that it might be used as a pattern for all our other prayers.

In this prayer we align our will with His will; our desires with His; acknowledging His reign in our lives, trusting in His mercy and grace.

"Our Father" – as Father everyone is in God's family – He loves all & does not want dissent.

God's justice has been satisfied for all time – by the cross.

So He holds no grudges or mood swings.

"in heaven" – puts things in perspective – we → He – intimacy with the awesome Creator and King of the Universe.

"hallowed be thy name" – reminder to seek His guidance rather than material things

1st – God's prayer list – name hallowed, Kingdom come, His will, seek mercy & grace

2nd – our prayer list

What did God say His name is? "I am"

No-one else has that name – alpha & omega.

Make a pledge to honour/be loyal to His name through your personal life. The whole world will bow down before Him. Advance His glory and reputation.

“Thy Kingdom come” – focus on God’s interest first before our own. What are God’s interests?

- 1) His name is Holy.
- 2) Coming of His Kingdom

By focusing on God we take our eyes off self, and all our own worries.

Kingdom of God – “blessed are the poor in spirit” means that when your spirit is broken, God is near – i.e. when you recognise that you need God’s help (**Steps 1-3**).

God’s Kingdom – God’s domain – God’s conscious presence and enabling grace – i.e. Holy Spirit i.e. Higher Power.

“Thy will be done” – His will is always the best for us.

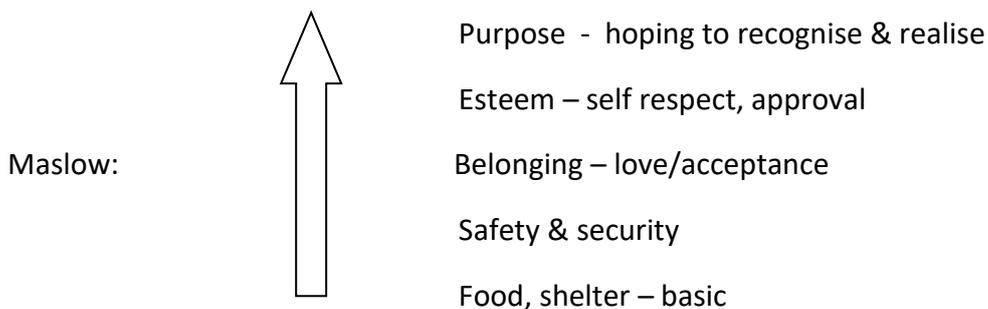
How do you know His will? Revealed in His Word – the bible – and by spending time with Him.

N.B. not *my* will be done.

“give us this day our daily bread” – hard to be spiritual if hungry, unwell, etc.

Request is for “us” – family & others.

Asking for essential needs – necessities:



“this day” – warning against greed (manna)

N.B. – not our daily alcohol drink or fix

“forgive us....as we forgive...” – control bad feeling – unforgiveness – anger, resentment, hate of self and others.

Christmas time + drugs & alcohol frees you from these feelings – false heaven, nirvana.

The enemy's trick is to make us think that the feeling is the best we can have – but in reality it kills.

Heaven is unimaginably beautiful - ?group activity – think about feeling you get with drugs or alcohol, but it makes you a slave.

“deliver us from evil” – we recognise that the greatest evil in our lives is succumbing to the enemy.

“for Thine is the Kingdom” – this is the **reality** – not our own mind tricks and fantasies.

This is our **changed way of living**.

5) Alcohol Statistics

In England in 2009, there were 150,445 prescription items for drugs for the treatment of alcohol dependency prescribed in primary care settings or NHS hospitals and dispensed in the community. This is an increase of 12 per cent since 2008 when there were 134,423 prescription items and 46 per cent since 2003 when there were 102,741 prescription items.

In England in 2008, there were 6,769 deaths directly related to alcohol. An increase of 24 per cent from 2001. Of these alcohol related deaths, the majority (4,400) died from alcoholic liver disease.

In 2009/10, there were 1,057,000 alcohol related admissions to hospital. This is an increase of 12 per cent on the 2008/09 figure (945,500) and more than twice as many as in 2002/03 (510,800).

In 2007, 33 per cent of men and 16 per cent of women (24 per cent of adults) were classified as hazardous drinkers. This includes 6 per cent of men and 2 per cent of women estimated to be harmful drinkers, the most serious form of hazardous drinking, which means that damage to health is likely.

When it comes to crime, alcohol use has a big impact. Recent crime statistics show that:

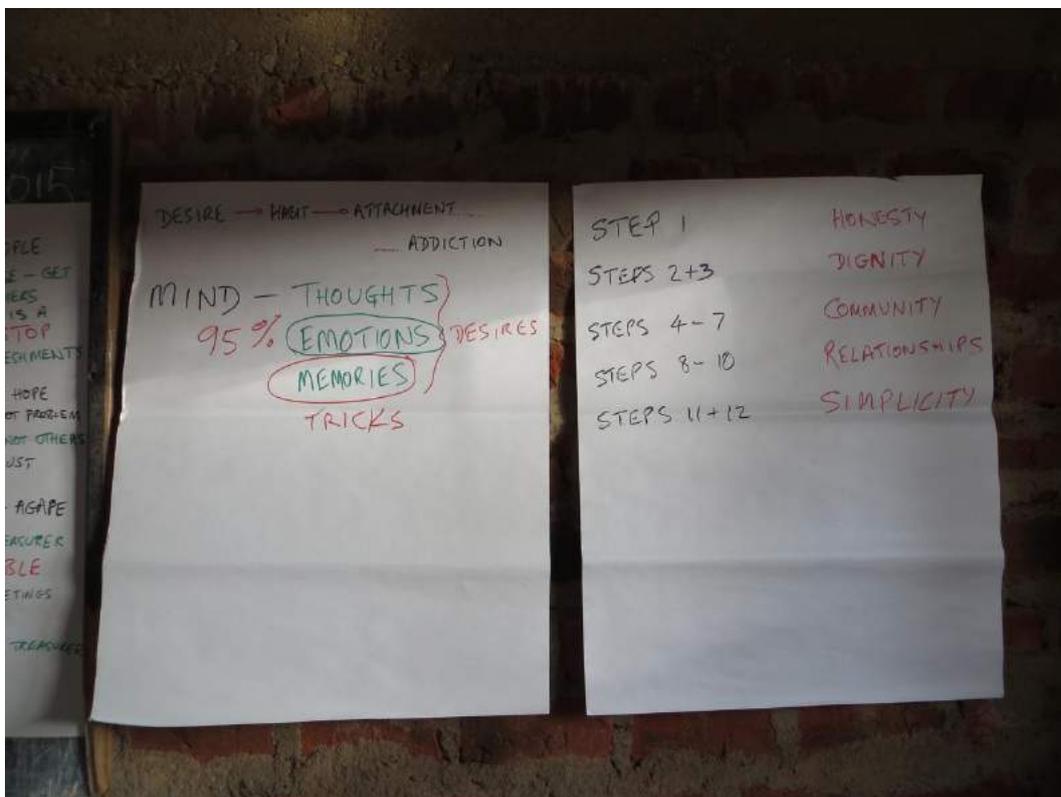
- in 45 per cent of all violent crimes, the victims believed their attackers had been drinking
- 37 per cent of domestic violence cases involve alcohol
- in 2007-08, more than a million crimes involved alcohol use in some way

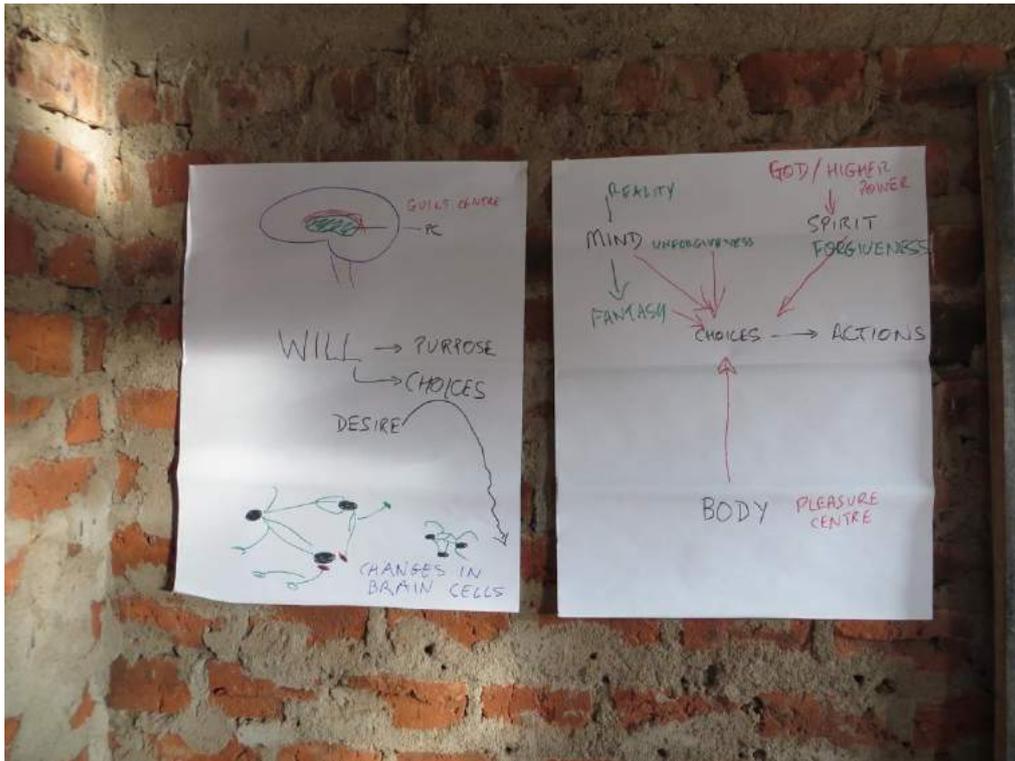
The prison population:

Of the estimated 60,000 sentenced prisoners in the UK, just over 40,000 are hazardous alcohol users.

Almost half of these have severe alcohol problems (Home Office 2004 and Singleton, 1999). In young offender institutions many young male offenders have alcohol problems, often related to binge drinking. For example at Castington YOI in Northumberland the Chief Inspector of Prisons found that 'the majority of young people entering Castington has used large quantities of alcohol'. A survey carried out in 2003 showed that of the nearly 300 prisoners 42 per cent of the 18 to 21 year olds in the prison and 30 per cent of the juveniles aged 16 to 18 said they had alcohol problems (HM Chief Inspector of Prisons, 2003).

- 6) Photos of Flip Charts – to illustrate what we ended up with at the end of our teaching sessions:





SUNDAY SERVICE - 9-2015

HEART - SPIRIT RELATIONSHIPS - GOD + OTHERS

WISDOM UNDERSTANDING

CONSCIENCE - PRAYER WORD WORSHIP

MIND - MEMORIES → MIND TRICKS
EMOTIONS → MIND TRICKS
THOUGHTS → MIND TRICKS

DESIRES → CHOICES

BODY - SENSES - PLEASURE CENTRE

HELPING OTHERS

GROUPS - ABOUT 8 PEOPLE

- ESTABLISH PURPOSE - GET SERVED + HELP OTHERS
- ONLY REQUIREMENT IS A DESIRE TO STOP
- DISCUSSIONS, REFRESHMENTS BUT NO ALCOHOL
- SHARE EXPERIENCE + HOPE
- TALK ABOUT ANSWERS NOT PROBLEM
- TALK ABOUT YOURSELF NOT OTHERS
- USE OF MENTORS + FRIEND YOU CAN TRUST
- CORRECT ANY MIND TRICKS
- SHOW LOVE TO ONE ANOTHER - AGAPE
- STRUCTURE - CHAIRMAN, SECRETARY, TREASURER
- MEETINGS SHOULD BE ENJOYABLE
- INVOLVE PASTORS IN SOME MEETINGS
- ROTATE OFFICE HOLDERS
- MONEY ISSUES - SMALL → SERVED TREASURER

MEMBERS OF THE GROUP (MEMBERS)

1. JAMES 2. JANE 3. JOHN 4. JILL

5. JIM 6. JANE 7. JON 8. JANE

9. JANE 10. JANE 11. JANE 12. JANE

13. JANE 14. JANE 15. JANE 16. JANE

17. JANE 18. JANE 19. JANE 20. JANE

GROUPS AND VISIONS

1. JANE 2. JANE 3. JANE 4. JANE

5. JANE 6. JANE 7. JANE 8. JANE

9. JANE 10. JANE 11. JANE 12. JANE

13. JANE 14. JANE 15. JANE 16. JANE

17. JANE 18. JANE 19. JANE 20. JANE

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