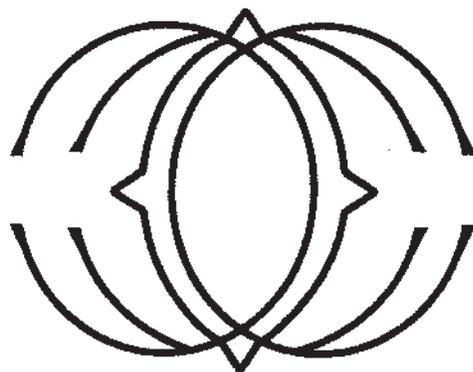


This printable version of the DRA Online Resource Center Fellowship Step Discussion, will be modified and updated from time to time. Some of the information included is from individual members of our Fellowship and may not accurately reflect the opinions of DRA World Services Inc. or the Fellowship of DRA as a whole.

Dual Recovery Anonymous



DRA TM

For those of us
who experience both
chemical dependency
and an emotional
or psychiatric illness

DRA Online Resource Center Fellowship Step Discussion

Internet Version, revised 2/2003

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The discussion and information about DRA's 12 Steps on the next several pages is general in nature and is merely suggestive. It is based on the combined practical experience of various DRA members. Members also offer some of the techniques they have used while using the Steps as guidelines to their personal dual recovery. It is intended to help stimulate group discussion of DRA's Steps and/or to be used to expand one's personal dual recovery through added insights and possibilities regarding the Twelve Steps of Dual Recovery Anonymous.

This booklet, copied from a section of the DRA Online Resource Center, is dedicated to increasing understanding of DRA's 12 Steps. It is meant to be a dynamic document. As our Fellowship grows and shares its experience, we will add new insights and techniques. Please feel free to send your comments and ideas to the webmaster via email at: webmaster@draonline.org Or send them to the DRA World Services Central Office at the address on the front of the book.

The Twelve Steps Of Dual Recovery Anonymous*

1. We admitted we were powerless over our dual illness of chemical dependency and emotional or psychiatric illness—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Higher Power of our understanding could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power, to help us to rebuild our lives in a positive and caring way.
4. Made a searching and fearless personal inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to our Higher Power, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our liabilities and our assets.
6. Were entirely ready to have our Higher Power remove all our liabilities.
7. Humbly asked our Higher Power to remove these liabilities and to help us to strengthen our assets for recovery.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when wrong promptly admitted it, while continuing to recognize our progress in dual recovery.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power, praying only for knowledge of our Higher Power's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others who experience dual disorders and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

*Adapted from the Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous.

*The Twelve Steps of AA are reprinted and adapted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that AA has reviewed or approved the contents of this publication, nor that AA agrees with the views expressed herein. AA is a program of recovery from alcoholism only – use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities that are patterned after AA, but that address other problems, does not imply otherwise. THE TWELVE STEPS OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS * 1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people where ever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11. Sought thorough 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. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

What are the Twelve Steps for dual recovery?

The Twelve Steps offer a simple plan for dual recovery. The plan is divided into twelve parts or steps. They are adapted from the principles of the traditional Twelve Steps, the personal experiences of men and women in dual recovery, and on the principles of personal freedom and choice.

The Twelve Steps of DRA are specifically designed to help members stop using alcohol and other intoxicating drugs, maintain their recovery, and prevent relapse. The Twelve Steps of DRA encourage members to develop and follow a healthy and constructive plan to manage their emotional or psychiatric illnesses. By practicing the Twelve Steps for dual recovery, members find that they are better able to improve the quality of their lives.

DRA members are free to develop their own beliefs and lifestyles to support their dual recovery. Each Step is open to personal interpretation. DRA members are encouraged to personalize the Twelve Step program in a way that will meet their needs for dual recovery. DRA members are also encouraged to work the Steps at their own pace.

The Twelve Steps of DRA are designed to help members in several ways:

Acceptance: Learn to accept the dual disorder of chemical dependency and emotional or psychiatric illness, and to accept the need to develop and practice a personal program for dual recovery that focuses on recovery from both illnesses.

Help: Choose a source of help and decide to use that source of help for dual recovery. That source of help may be referred to as a Higher Power or any other name that feels comfortable.

Identity Assets and Liabilities: Identify the personal assets (attitudes, actions, and experiences) that can strengthen dual recovery. Identify the personal liabilities (attitudes, actions, and experiences) that pose a risk for dual recovery.

Change: Work with a personal source of help (Higher Power) to strengthen the personal assets for dual recovery and remove the personal liabilities that pose a risk for dual recovery.

Mend Relationships: Identify people who have been negatively affected by a DRA member's dual disorder and through dual recovery, work to mend those relationships.

Maintain Dual Recovery and Prevent Relapse: Continue to strengthen personal assets for dual recovery and remove personal liabilities that pose a risk for relapse by continuing to work with a personal source of help (Higher Power).

Help Others: Share with others who experience dual disorders how dual recovery is possible.

Adapted from the DRA Questions & Answers

The Goals of Dual Recovery

The goals for dual recovery are probably similar for each of us whether we are seeking help for the first time or coming back to try again. We want to:

- stop the pain and confusion caused by the symptoms of our illnesses, the consequences and problems our symptoms create, and our ineffective means of coping
- maintain a safe recovery and prevent relapse
- improve the quality of our lives

Those goals are the focus of the Twelve Steps, a program for dual recovery.

Excerpt from "The Twelve Steps and Dual Disorders" by Tim Hamilton & Pat Samples, © Hazelden

The Traditional Twelve Steps

In the mid 1930s, two alcoholics named Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith, discovered they could recover from their hopeless state of alcoholism by helping each other get and stay sober one day at a time. This led to the founding of Alcoholics Anonymous. They also discovered that staying sober required much more than just not drinking. It required a profound change in the way an alcoholic approached life. A change they called “a spiritual awakening.” The 12 Steps are the guidelines that they developed that would produce these changes in even the most advanced cases. Alcoholics Anonymous and their Twelve Steps soon became the single most effective program for the treatment of alcoholism the world had ever seen.

The now famous 12 Steps to recovery are rooted in timeless spiritual concepts and the hard won practical experience of the early members of Alcoholics Anonymous. Though the original Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous may be couched in terms that sound dated to some and overtly religious to others, the underlying principles of personal growth and healing have proved to transcend all such boundaries for those who are willing. In the early days of AA, they discovered that the Steps could work equally well for the ardent atheist as they did for the deeply religious. The Steps helped men and women from all races and backgrounds and all walks of life.

The Twelve Steps for Dual Recovery

In the late 1980s, Tim H., a recovering man with a dual diagnosis, realized that he was a whole person. He could not divide his recovery into separate parts for each illness. He wanted to find a way to address the needs of both his psychiatric illness and his chemical dependency in one program. He began to apply the principles of the Twelve Steps to all aspects of his dual disorders. Before long he found others with a desire for dual recovery and they began to meet, exchange ideas and share what they were learning. Over time this group became Dual Recovery Anonymous.

The Twelve Steps of Dual Recovery Anonymous are based on the proven principles of the traditional Twelve Steps. The DRA Steps were expanded to include the whole disease of chemical dependency, and our emotional or psychiatric illnesses. They retain much of the same language as the traditional Twelve Steps but with certain modifications to better meet the needs of people with a dual diagnosis.

Working the Steps

There is a lot of ambiguity built into the Steps and that is part of their power. While working the Steps, an individual finds their own meaning as they progress. They come to terms with the principles of dual recovery in a very personal way. In effect, they grow and heal as human beings in ways they never before perceived. A new life unfolds before them that is based on their continued willingness and active involvement in dual recovery. The Steps are not a simple intellectual exercise. Results are based on honesty, open-mindedness, and willingness. It is not the intellect, but action, that leads to change on the deep levels necessary to lift our compulsions and improve our lives. Yet these Steps are a gentle and non-judgmental tool with forgiveness and self-nurturing build right in.

If you would like to learn more about the Twelve Steps of Dual Recovery Anonymous, please follow the links through the next 12 pages. Each Step is written out, and then briefly described. Members then discuss their thoughts and feelings about each of the Steps and offer insights that may help you on your personal journey of dual recovery.

The First Step of DRA

1, “We admitted we were powerless over our dual illness of chemical dependency and emotional or psychiatric illness - that our lives had become unmanageable.”

A core principle behind the First Step is recognizing that we have two chronic disorders—chemical dependency and an emotional or psychiatric illness. These two no-fault illnesses are creating big problems in our lives. That every way we have tried to cope with these problems has not worked. We simply cannot do it alone. Help is required.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the First Step

- “When I was in treatment they had us draw up timelines of our drinking and drugging history and timelines of our psychiatric history. Later, we compared these two timelines. It clearly showed me how my use of alcohol and drugs was directly related to my depression and medication issues.”
- **“For me, the First Step was about honestly recognizing that I had serious problems that I simply could not deal with by myself. I tried everything and just kept digging myself in a deeper hole. I’d quit drinking for awhile but eventually I’d get so wound up and pissed off that I’d smoke some weed or start drinking again just to cool off. Pretty soon I’d be drunk again. Then I’d forget to take my meds. I hated the things I did when I was like that. I scared my wife and children. I worried my parents near to death. I’d end up in jail or the psych ward—and I’d do this over and over again no matter how ashamed and disgusted I was with myself. The harder I tried to control my drinking the worse it got.”**
- “Taking the First Step was a huge relief for me. Yes, I was an addict. Yes, I had bipolar disorder. I already knew all that. But by working with my sponsor and hearing other people at meetings share their stories, I realized I didn’t have to be strong enough to deal with all these things all by myself. In fact, I learned that I could not. Willpower had nothing to do with it. It was like a big wall came down inside of me so that I could let other people know I needed help. That didn’t make me a bad or weak person, but a sick person who wanted to get well.”
- **“The First Step... well, you can’t do anything about a problem unless you really honestly believe it is a problem. If you don’t think there’s a problem, you know — nothing changes. You also have to understand it correctly so you can start making the right choices. Like, if I blamed my drinking on my boyfriend or my boss, I’m looking in the wrong direction. I could try and change them all day and I’d only end up drunk over it. See, once you realize you have a problem, you must also identify the cause and true nature of the problem or you will likely waste a lot of time and energy chasing the wrong solutions while your real problems just gets worse.”**
- “I had a really hard time believing that my drinking and drugging were causing more problems than they were solving. I drank to kill painful feelings... frightening feelings. I felt like drinking and using was what was keeping me functional and sane. What I didn’t or wouldn’t see was that alcohol and street drugs reacted with my medications in some pretty strange ways. They also added to my depression over time until I finally became psychotic. Though drinking gave me some seeming temporary relief from my inner pain, it made it impossible to heal or treat the root of those feelings correctly. While working through Step One, I finally began to put two and two together and I began seeing a clearer picture of these cause and effect relationships.”

- **“I kept relapsing my first couple years around the program. I’d get clean and get my meds dialed in and go for a month or two and then relapse big time for a few days. The deal was that I always had a little doubt left when I worked the First Step. I always had this little twinkling thought that maybe I really didn’t have a schizoaffective disorder. Like somehow it was a mistake or a temporary thing. Now I know that the point of the First Step is to remove ALL doubt. It wasn’t until I fully accepted the reality and seriousness of my mental illness, that I finally became empowered to start dealing with it in a constructive and healthy way. Only then was I able to build up any appreciable clean and sober time.”**
- “I always thought that if I could just stop using I would be ok. That wasn’t even the issue. I knew how to stop—it’s called running out of blow or crank or whiskey. What I didn’t know how to do was to stay stopped. Working Step One made that perfectly clear to me... I didn’t have a clue how to stay stopped. Plus, I had never once thought about doing it forever. Thank God I had heard in a meeting about the One Day at a Time concept. I only had to not pick up or drink for today. Tomorrow is another day and I can do it again for that day.”
- **“It was hard for me to accept that my body processed alcohol and mood altering drugs different than most other people. I had always thought that if I could just get my anxiety and other symptoms under control, I could then drink and use like my friends. I had to go out and put my doubts to the test several times. Finally, after a short stint in jail and a long stay in the hospital, I surrendered to the idea that no matter what, I just can’t take that first sip of booze or hit on the pipe. Once I do I just can’t stop.”**
- “The first time I introduced myself as an addict at a meeting I felt a profound shift inside myself—a new sense of hopefulness. I guess until that moment I was still stuck in the middle of Step One somewhere. I could not yet see a solution to my misery.”

The Second Step of DRA

2. **“Came to believe that a Higher Power of our understanding could restore us to sanity.”**

A core principle behind the Second Step is coming to believe that there is a source of wisdom, courage, and strength, greater than ourselves that we can tap into that will help us to hope, cope, and heal.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Second Step

- “Well, after working Step One and finding out that I couldn’t do this recovery thing by myself, I would have been in a hell of a fix if there wasn’t someone or something out there somewhere that was more knowledgeable, stronger, and wiser than myself that was willing and capable of helping me and supporting me in my recovery.”
- **“I knew deep down that God would always be there for me, but in my active addiction and the worst of my depression I just didn’t feel worthy of His or anyone’s love. Now I see that He was guiding me all along including helping me get to my first DRA meeting. That’s were I met my sponsor. She helped me so much by making me feel accepted and loved. Even though she is not from my religion, her gentle guidance and help with the Steps and other early recovery issues brought me back and restored my faith. Now I know that my Higher Power’s will for me is to be healthy, happy and free and I need to stay in dual recovery to do that best.”**

- “I really liked the idea of finding my own higher power—one that made sense to me. I had been told what to believe and what was right or wrong all my life. This program gave me the freedom to finally figure things out for myself. I don’t need to convince anyone else that my higher power can beat up their higher power or that mine is the only real one. I don’t need to even let anyone know what my higher power is. All I say is that I have one and it helps me to recover.”
- **“The Second Step is all about hope. It doesn’t say that we have to believe in miracles or divine beings. It only says that we identify a source of help that makes sense to us. It may be spiritual in nature or it might not be—it can be a combination of things. The main point is that we begin to believe that with this source of help, we can begin to change our thinking and actions and learn to keep our disease in remission. That’s a pretty hopeful thing to believe if you stop and think about it.”**
- “I started by using my DRA Group as my Higher Power. I was very angry at God back then and didn’t want anything to do with Him. My feelings have changed considerably over time but that’s really just my own business. The deal is that we start with an open mind and build from there.”
- **“I like to start with the last part of Step Two. It implies that we had lost our sanity by suggesting it needs to be restored. It says, “...could restore us to sanity.” As a person who lives with and has to manage a chronic psychiatric disorder on a daily basis, I am not entirely happy with this choice of words. But then again, I find it uncomfortably accurate and accept it as it relates to my thinking and behaviors where cocaine was concerned. Man—the things I did and said to stay on a run. I would have sold my grandmother’s teeth for one more line and I love my grandma. I really needed help to get out of that kind of lifestyle. So in my mind, Step Two is about research and planning.”**
- “Somewhere, I think maybe in the NA book, it says that the insanity of this disease is “repeating the same mistakes over and over and expecting different results.” That’s what I did all the time. Every time I drank I told myself that this time I would only drink a couple of beers then go home. I did that day after day and the next thing I’d know I was totally blasted or it was the next day and I didn’t remember much of anything. I did the same things with my meds. Time and time again I’d be feeling level for awhile and so I’d go off my meds. Each time I’d end up manic. I just couldn’t get it through my head that the meds were what was keeping me level. I really think my intensions were good back then, I mean, I was miserable and sick and I hated it. I didn’t like ending up back at the hospital all the time, I wanted a way out but it felt like death was the only option. For me, getting into a dual treatment center was a life-saver. They made the Second Step real for me. I could see and experience all the help that was available to me. I believed they really cared and would continue to help me. I believed that with their help, I could quit the vicious cycles I was trapped in and get healthy again.”

The Third Step of DRA

3. “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power, to help us to rebuild our lives in a positive and caring way.”

A core principle behind the Third Step is becoming willing to trust our higher or helping power and to make a decision to follow its guidance. We are willing to begin letting go of our old ideas.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Third Step

- “My own best thinking got me nowhere. Well, it got me drunk and back on the street. Once I decided to start listening to the experts and began trying the things that other members in my Group were doing, I started making headway. I had to become ‘Willing to Cooperate.’”
- **“Step Three sounded really big to me at first. I thought, oh hell, here is where they trap me into going to church. Instead I found out that all it asked me to do was to make a decision. A decision to give up my old ways of doing things and start trying new ways to cope and heal.”**
- “Here’s how my sponsor put it:
Step 1, I can’t.
Step 2, We can.
Step 3, I’ll let my Higher Power help me. “
- **“When I think of Step Three I usually think of this little saying from my days in OA. It’s called ‘I put my hands in yours’ or ‘Rozanne’s Prayer.’ ‘I put my hand in yours and together we can do what we could never do alone. No longer is there a sense of hopelessness; no longer must we each depend on our own unsteady willpower. We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours, and as we join hands, we find love and understanding beyond our wildest dreams.’”**
- “Step Three is about making a decision. A deadly serious decision. I think if you still have doubts about anything in the first Two Steps you better go back and work on those Steps some more.”
- **“I have to work on this Step on a continuing basis. It is part of my daily meditation and prayer routine, but a lot of times it is almost a minute-by-minute struggle for me. I have a heck of a rebellious streak and I tend to automatically want to discard many suggestions just because they sound too simplistic or I hear them from sources I consider non-valid in one way or another. That’s how I have to handle this “turning it over” stuff. It is a matter of progress and not perfection.”**
- “In Step Three, we “make a decision” between living in the problem or living in the solution. The only thing left is putting that decision into action. This action is using the tools of recovery and working the rest of the Steps.”
- **“I had problems with the idea of turning my will and life over to the care of anyone or anything. I didn’t like the implications of loss of control. My sponsor asked me if I would consider letting my higher and helping power simply care about me. I knew my doctor and some people at my home Group really did care about me already, so I could go that far. Then my sponsor asked me if I’d consider at least listening to their advice and weigh their experience when they shared it. I said sure, I’m a reasonable person. I mean, I was already doing that pretty much anyway. Then we discussed letting them help me when I needed help since I was already at least weighing their advice. Yes, of**

course I could do that. And that's were we left it for a few weeks while I continued to go to meetings and deal with all the normal issues of early recovery."

The Fourth Step of DRA

4. "Made a searching and fearless personal inventory of ourselves."

A core principle behind the Fourth Step is to identify our assets and liabilities for recovery. Things that will help us in dual recovery and the things that will harm our dual recovery. It's an opportunity to start identifying and healing the pain from the past and to stop the progression of our illnesses.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Fourth Step

- "I like DRA's concept of writing out our Assets and Liabilities for recovery. When we get them down on paper we have a list of Strengths or Assets to build our dual recovery on and a list of Liabilities which are targets for personal growth and change. It's really easy for some of us to get into beating ourselves up over this Fourth Step business. That's why when I sponsor somebody and help them with their Fourth Step inventory, I tell them to list one Asset for every Liability they can think of to keep the columns balanced. I don't think being unnecessarily hard on ourselves is working an honest program. Everyone has lots of Assets and they need to practice recognizing them."
- **"I was carrying around a lot of pain and shame from being abused when I was a kid. I wasn't really ready in early recovery to deal with that. It triggered my symptoms in a big way and I kept getting stuck there. I talked to my counselor about it and he suggested that I leave the childhood stuff out of my Fourth Step. To deal with it in therapy latter when I was ready. He said I needed to look fearlessly at myself though, particularly the last few years—with honesty and an attitude of self-care and love. Then he suggested that knowing about this trigger and how it affected my symptoms was an Asset to my recovery."**
- "I had no idea how many resentments I really had. Doing my Fourth Step was a real eye opener. I was blaming lots of people for lots of things but never resolving any issues. Things just kept building up inside. There is a saying that says "resentments are like taking poison and expecting the other person to die." That's exactly how I felt, poisoned by my own resentments."
- **"It took all of the faith and trust I developed in the Program by working the first three Steps, to get enough courage to be honest and really search for the truth about myself in the Fourth Step—to be able to face and walk through my fear—to be able to reach out and ask my sponsor for advice and support. I recommend to anyone that they do the Steps in order. They are numbered for a good reason."**
- "Underneath most of the things I wrote about in my first couple of Fourth Steps was Fear. Once I began to honestly evaluate the various resentments and relationship problems I was writing about, I began to see a pattern. I was a terribly insecure person inside who tried to project the image of a strong secure stoic guy that really didn't need anybody. Inside, a little scared boy—outside, a Clint Eastwood wannabe. I had built a protective wall or facade around my self so no one could get in and hurt me. The other side of that coin was that no one could get in and help me or meet my needs for true bonding, trust, or intimacy."
- **"I had several grudges against people who I was sure had treated me rotten in various**

personal relationships, but under it all when I properly inventoried my part in the situation, I had been far too demanding of them. I had driven them away by demanding that they make me feel secure and loved. Now I know that's an area I have to keep working on."

- "The Fourth Step isn't about a list of every bad thing we ever did, though it may start out that way. Mine did, but then I started looking for patterns and so I rewrote my Fourth and grouped items that were of a similar pattern. Under those groupings I tried to distill the particular pattern or defect of character I found down into a line or two. For the most part, it's those patterns, inappropriate coping mechanisms, and mistaken beliefs that I want to discuss with my sponsor in the Fifth Step."

The Fifth Step of DRA

5. "Admitted to our Higher Power, to ourselves, and to another human being, the exact nature of our liabilities and our assets."

A core principle behind the Fifth Step is that in sharing our list of assets and liabilities, we learn more about ourselves, see through our blind spots, find out what is true, where we are misguided, and what areas we need to work on.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Fifth Step

- "My Fifth Step was a true consciousness changing life-affirming breakthrough. It was the first time in my life that I had ever been able to honestly share who I really was on the deepest level with another human being. It was the beginning of the end of a life of feeling somehow different than, and isolated from, everyone else. It was the point where I finally felt a sense of truly belonging to the human race. It may well have been the first time I felt true acceptance and honest compassion for myself. When I think of my experience with my first Fifth Step I remember the results more than the process. It seemed less like something I did than something that happened to me."
- **"The strangest thing happened to me when I shared my Fifth Step with my sponsor. I read off my list of resentments, my assets for recovery, my values and where I felt I'd fallen short, my secrets... you know, all that stuff and it felt really good, but suddenly when I was nearly done I realized how much resentment I had for my bi-polar illness. All the hospitalizations, family problems, job problems, and how it affected my whole life since I was a teenager. I was in tears in no time just trying to explain how much that hurt and how damned unfair it was. None of that was written down in my Fourth Step but it was like the thing that bugged me the most. I learned that this was an important area I needed to explore and work on."**
- "I think picking just the right person to share your Fifth Step with is really important. Spouses, lovers, and family members should not be considered... I mean, there's no law against it, but they are too close and might be hurt or unable to see things from that close perspective that someone with a bit more objectivity and distance might see. Sponsors are good as long as they have experience and really understand the Steps. Many therapists and clergy have training and experience with the Steps and can be wonderful resources."

- **“As a sponsor, it’s not my job to judge a person who shares their Fourth Step work with me. I just quietly listen, sometimes asking them to explain little things, and sometimes I share a story from my own life that may relate to what they are sharing. The point is not to bring focus on myself, but to offer them another perspective or insight. Taking another members Fifth Step is a huge honor. To me it’s an almost sacred honor. I remember how scared I was when I shared my first Fifth Step. I felt awkward and was worried that my sponsor might think less of me because of my past behavior. Some of that stuff was so embarrassing. Yet she listened to every word and in the end gave me a hug and told me how proud she was of me. She actually said it was an honor and thanked me for trusting her. That’s the gift I want to pass along.”**
- “It says in the Big Book, that people who tried to avoid the Fifth Step invariably relapsed. They say this is because we hadn’t finished our “housecleaning.” “They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock.” So the best reason to do this Step is to stay clean and sober. I mean, I think that’s the reason to do all the Steps, but I’ve seen a lot of guys get stuck on their Fourth and Fifth and end up having problems. When I did mine, I had a lot of issues that were about illegal activities I had engaged in over the years. It took me over a year to find just the right person who I felt enough trust in to share those things with. I was really on slippery ground there for awhile. But getting all that out finally, and then working on solutions made all the difference.”
- **“Without the Fifth Step, we can’t be sure our perspective on certain issues still isn’t clouded by denial, our ego, or low self-esteem. Remember, our very best thinking got us to the very depths of our disease. Until we do a Fifth Step, the Fourth Step is still nothing but our very best thinking. I think that’s really why it’s important to share our inventory work with another person.”**

The Sixth Step of DRA

6. **“Were entirely ready to have our Higher Power remove all our liabilities.”**

A core principle behind the Sixth Step is that we review what we have done in the first five Steps and decide if we’re ready for the new life offered in dual recovery. Being ready involves a clear decision, a commitment. We must be willing to let go of our old ideas to make way for new ones.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Sixth Step

- “Once I got done with my inventory and Fifth Step, I felt really different about some things. I actually felt a desire to grow and change that went way past just keeping clean and taking my meds. I think it was because I had a direction to go and things to do that were solidly based in reality and really, I figured most of it out by my own efforts. Not by myself—but it was my work. No one did it for me.”
- “The Sixth Step was hard for me. I had such a habit of saying “Yes but” to any suggestions for change or anything new. I always seemed to have an excuse why something wouldn’t work for me. There is a certain comfort in old familiar patterns and ways of thinking. Letting go of things that I knew didn’t work was really a challenge for me. So when it says, “entirely ready” that was a big deal for me. I could know intellectually why something needed to change but getting it to sink in on a deeper level was hard work. I had to go back and use Step Three a lot for each little thing that needed changing. Interestingly though, it was at this point that I quit having cravings and drug dreams all the time. I knew I was moving ahead in spite of my fear.”

- **“I had a hard time figuring this Step out until one day when the topic of our meeting was The Serenity Prayer. One member shared how she used it to align her will with that of her Higher Power which she called God. This little prayer I felt, could be just the tool to help me get ready to change.**

*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.”*

- “I first thought that Steps Six and Seven were about miracles. Like somehow if I was ready and willing enough, God would simply remove my liabilities. But it’s really about me becoming willing to do the legwork it takes to follow His will for me. The wisdom and guidance is there, but it’s up to me to take the responsibility to put it into practice and use it. I have to walk the walk.”
- **“Step Six boils down to getting sick and tired of being sick and tired. You can’t live with the consequences of your old ways of thinking and doing things anymore. The problems were made perfectly clear in the earlier Steps so now you have awareness. Awareness makes it even more uncomfortable. So you become willing to change. In fact you become willing to go to any length necessary to change. I guess the other option would be to go back to drinking and drugging till you aren’t aware any more.”**
- “Even though I was clean and sober for awhile, I still was filled with self-defeating thoughts and behaviors, resentments, and mistaken beliefs about the world and myself. I was still afraid of feeling a lot of things and of my own emotions and reactions. All these things left me very vulnerable to relapse and symptom flare-ups. In Step Six I realized just how much work I still had ahead of me. I stopped and reviewed the first three Steps, talked at length with my therapist, my sponsor and a counselor at my church. I knew I couldn’t change everything all at once but I needed a plan. I needed some way to break all these things down into manageable portions that I could deal with. That’s basically what my Sixth Step was. Oh, and lots of praying for willingness and strength to stick with it.”

The Seventh Step of DRA

7. **“Humbly asked our Higher Power to remove these liabilities and to help us to strengthen our assets for recovery.”**

A core principle behind the Seventh Step is taking the actions required to move forward in our dual recovery. We ask for and follow the good advice we are given.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Seventh Step

- “Step Seven is where the rubber meets the road. We take actions to implement the changes we need to make. We ask our higher and helping powers for help and guidance. We continue to ask for help and feedback because it usually takes a lot of time to make these changes and it’s easy to revert back to our old coping strategies.”
- **“Step Seven was really a turning point for me in my ability to trust my Higher Power and the Program of recovery. Up till then I was mostly trying to stay straight and keep my act together one day at a time. All of a sudden I really wanted to change a lot more... to work at bringing myself into a more harmonious relationship with the world. To find out what this talk of serenity was all about.”**

- “For me, Step Seven involved considerable risk taking. Trying to do new things in new ways. It took practice to learn to reach out at meetings and develop new friendships. I took a big risk when I accepted a service position in my Home Group. It took a lot of faith and help from my Higher Power to do these things... to not just say no automatically.”
- **“Step Seven starts with the word “Humbly” so we can gather that humility is an important key to this Step. Humility is just about the exact opposite of humiliation. It is a sense of our very humanness. A realistic acceptance of our strengths and weaknesses. We have been developing a more realistic acceptance of ourselves by working the first six Steps. Here’s where I think humility really pays off. We get better on two levels. One we have a lot of control over. It’s an intellectual choice as to how we behave and react to situations. We know what’s right and we try to do it. But there’s a deeper level of change that we can’t really predict just when or how it happens. That’s when we undergo changes on our personality and in our automatic reactions to what life throws our way. We can take all the Steps and do our best to use all the tools and assets we have, but those deeper changes happen in God’s own time and manner. So when I say humility, I mean that we do what we can as best we can and the rest is up to our Higher Power.”**

The Eighth Step of DRA

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

A core principle behind the Eighth Step is preparing ourselves to mend relationships and get ourselves prepared to do our part to repair any hurts we have caused others.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Eighth Step

- “It took me quite awhile to complete my list. There were a few obvious people I had harmed and I took them right from my Fourth Step work, but the more I thought about it, new names and situations would pop into my mind. Some, I wasn’t even sure if I had really harmed. A couple had passed away. My sponsor said that didn’t matter, go ahead and put them down, maybe write a little about your relationship with that person and why you feel you had harmed them, and we will discuss it latter.”
- **“Step Eight is our chance to start mending the past. Then we can leave it behind us once and for all.”**
- “I did and said things when my psychiatric illness was out of control that I really feel bad about. Part of the time I compounded those problems by using drugs too. There were whole sections of town I was ashamed to go back to because I was afraid of running into certain people. Not that they would hurt me, but that I would be so embarrassed if I ran into them. I knew I owed some of them money but I wasn’t sure how much. I knew I had said things when I was high that were really disgusting and hurt peoples feelings. I knew I confused and upset some dear friends. I hated having to worry all the time that my past would come back to haunt me by running into some of these people. I needed to figure out a way to set things straight and feel better about myself. I was already doing well—staying clean—taking my meds, and improving the quality of my life, but this shame hanging over my head was eating at me. Making a list helped me start to sort all this out.”

- **“My sponsor read my list and told me that I had forgot someone. The person who I had probably hurt the most. She told me to put my own name on the list too.”**
- “At first this Step really scared me. Facing all those people.... But then a friend in DRA reminded me that I was only writing out a list. I was growing stronger all the time and this was only the planning and preparation stage. She said to trust the Program and only take one Step at a time. My feelings and attitude would eventually align with the courage and support I needed to make the proper amends when the time came. She said, First Things First.”
- **“When I was psychotic I really hurt some people. I couldn’t help myself but I still felt bad about it. Writing about what I did really helped ease the way for me to say I was sorry. I needed that time and space to focus on these issues and get right in my mind where my responsibility lay. I may not have been truly responsible for some of the things I did and said, but I could take responsibility to do my best to clean up the mess. I eventually shortened my list. I realized that my low self-esteem was making me feel responsible for things that I had no part in. It really pays to work with others that have been through this process to get more perspective on things.”**

The Ninth Step of DRA

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

A core principle behind the Ninth Step is cleaning up the wreckage of the past. We don’t need any old baggage holding back our spiritual growth and personal dual recovery.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Ninth Step

- “I learned that when I honestly do my part in making an amends, the results are then in God’s hands. I am not responsible for people that refuse to accept my apology and I refuse to get involved if they just want to argue. Fortunately, this only happened with one person. So my sponsor suggested that I pray for that person’s well-being and serenity and know that I did everything possible. Someday, when they are ready, they may remember my amends and find peace over the issue.”
- **“I planned my amends making efforts so that there was always a meeting to attend afterwards. I knew I would need some support whether it went really well or not. Knowing that there was a meeting within the hour gave me a lot of courage to move ahead.”**
- “I spent several sessions with my therapist before making amends to my dad. There were so many complex issues and so much personal history that I really needed to make sure I was emotionally strong and stable enough incase things didn’t go all that well. I needed to remember that it says, “...except when to do so would injure them or others.” Well, I am one of those “others”. Fortunately, my dad was very happy to hear of my progress in dual recovery. I could tell that he didn’t fully trust me yet as I’d made a lot of promises before about my drinking, but he was truly interested in my program of recovery, the day treatment center, and the recovery house where I’m living. He couldn’t help but notice how much better I was so maybe in time he can learn to trust me again.”

- **“After the Ninth Step I felt like a huge weight was lifted off my shoulders. I felt free, even lighter than I did before. Guilt is a very heavy burden and I was glad to get rid of it.”**
- “It took me some time to get through Steps Eight and Nine. I finally ended up doing some mock amends or role playing with my therapist first before actually doing an amends. What I didn’t want to do is go to make an amends and end up groveling and begging for forgiveness. I mean, I wanted and needed to maintain my dignity as a human being. My old pattern, because I was so afraid of rejection I guess, would have been to plead and beg that they don’t abandon me.”
- **“It’s ok to take people with you too. I mean, if I was going to make amends to some big guy who I was physically afraid of, I’d set things up to happen at a public place and take a friend or two.”**
- “My ex boss passed away while I was in treatment and his business was liquidated. I owed him an amends and some money and now he was dead. My sponsor suggested that I write out the amends just as if I was talking to my boss and read it aloud to her and my Higher Power—sort of like a little Fourth and Fifth Step. I found out where he was buried and went and read it at his grave too. He was an animal lover so I gave the money I owed him to the local Humane Society. Afterward, I felt like my business with him was finished and that somehow, he knew it too.”
- **“I think it’s important for those of us with a dual disorder to make certain we are ready to do this process. I wouldn’t recommend it if you were in the middle of changing your meds, or weren’t pretty stable for awhile. I didn’t get all of my amends made till I had nearly two years of recovery. I made my list and worked on it but a couple of the amends were potentially pretty triggering events. I was willing but just not ready till I was ready.”**

The Tenth Step of DRA

10. “Continued to take personal inventory and when wrong promptly admitted it, while continuing to recognize our progress in dual recovery.”

A core principle behind the Tenth Step is learning to examine our thoughts, feelings, and actions, on a daily basis. So that we can fix things or set them right as soon as possible. This frees us to focus on our dual recovery, live in harmony, and continue to grow on a day by day practical level.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Tenth Step

- “I know I’m not perfect. Having Step Ten as part of my daily Program of recovery keeps me from letting things build up. I’ve learned it’s easier in the long run to make quick simple amends as soon as they are due. At work, people now say I’m a caring, thoughtful, polite kind of a guy. That feels a whole lot better than what they used to call me.”
- **“Becoming self-aware is what Step Ten is to me. It’s like, I never use to see the good things I did or give myself any credit. In just the same way, I never use to understand why I’d piss people off. Sometimes I did, but on the small things I usually didn’t even notice. This new lifestyle takes constant practice. It’s not all that natural feeling to me yet, but it’s getting easier all the time.”**
- “The biggest thing I have a problem with is watching out for my old negative self-talk. Step Ten gives me an opportunity to do some of my affirmations to help correct it.”

- **“First thing I ask myself is if I’ve followed the three suggestions for dual recovery:**
 - **Today, I will be free of alcohol and other intoxicating drugs.**
 - **Today, I will follow a healthy plan to manage my emotional or psychiatric illness.**
 - **Today, I will practice the Twelve Steps to the best of my ability.****I do that in the morning and again in the evening. It sounds sort of simplistic maybe, but it keeps me from forgetting my recovery goals.”**
- **“Part of continuing to take a personal inventory is monitoring my symptoms. I keep a mood log which my psychiatrist gave me. It really helps me to see little changes so we can deal with them before they turn into a major flare-up. I also journal a lot. I write down the events of the day, how I felt about them, what I did to solve problems, and things I may want to discuss with my sponsor or therapist later.”**
- **“I do my Tenth and Eleventh Steps every evening. It’s become almost a ritual. I sit and close my eyes with the TV and everything off and go over the events of the day in my mind. I ask myself if there were things I could have done differently. Did I ruffle anyone’s feathers or forget to say a simple thank you. I also review any situations where I got upset. How did I handle that. In any case, I want to make sure I’m leaving yesterday behind me. If I owe anyone a thank you or an apology, I jot it down on a post-it note and put it on my mirror. That way I’ll see it first thing in the morning and be sure to remember to set things right the very next day.”**
- **“For a long time I kept my Fourth Step journal near my bed. I had my Assets and Liabilities listed out and I could get a sense of how I was changing and what areas may need a little more effort. One thing I’m practicing now is trying to notice more and acknowledge the areas where I am growing and doing better. I know it’s mostly God’s doings but I can pat myself on the back for doing my part.”**
- **“I use the phone a lot. I call my sponsor almost every day and I have a list of DRA friends both online and by phone I keep in touch with every day. It really helps to bounce things off these people and listen to what’s going on in their lives. I trust them to give me honest feedback and not just tell me what they think I want to hear.”**
- **“Step Ten is about making a habit of putting out life’s little fires before they get too big.”**

The Eleventh Step of DRA

11. “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power, praying only for knowledge of our Higher Power’s will for us and the power to carry that out.”

A core principle behind the Eleventh Step is to continue to live in the solution by making sure our thoughts, feelings, attitudes, and values, are inline with what our higher or helping power wants for us.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Eleventh Step

- **“To me the Eleventh Step is about asking for God’s guidance and then listening for His answers. It’s teaching me how to create calm in the face of chaos. I take several small timeouts every day**

for Step Eleven. Sometimes it's as short and simple as, "Thank you, Thy will, not mine, be done."

- **"Step Eleven reminds me that this is a "we" program. I can't do it alone even though I am sober and symptom free now. I have to seek the continued guidance and strength of my Higher Power. The Big Book says that what we really have is a daily reprieve contingent upon the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Steps Ten through Twelve are how we maintain that spiritual condition. Some patriot once said something like, the price of freedom is eternal vigilance. I think that sums up recovery too. You just can't let your guard down because our illnesses are still right there just waiting to take control again."**
- "As I got more time in dual recovery and more time clean and sober, my need to see my treatment team, psychiatrist, and counselor decreased. My meds were working fine and I was back at work. Since I'm an agnostic, I had to put extra effort into making sure I was following my treatment plan and doing everything I could for my dual recovery. It's really easy after awhile to get sort of complacent, especially when things are all going well. I started going to an early morning AA meeting before work. It was just the ticket and I still go to my weekend DRA meetings where I can freely share about my dual recovery. But that early morning meeting focuses me on recovery when I need it most and sustains me throughout the day."
- **"I had problems concentrating and staying focused and every time I'd try to meditate I'd either fall asleep or forget why I was sitting there and start daydreaming. My sponsor suggested I read a page out of The Twelve Steps and Dual Disorders book and one page out of the Big Book every day no matter what. That would be my personal way to seek my Higher Powers guidance."**
- "Step Eleven is where I began to make a really personal relationship with my Higher Power. When I first came to DRA I didn't really know what I thought about God so I just used the Group. But over time—well this is hard to explain—I still don't know what God really is exactly, but when I meditate I find a place inside me that is at peace and I feel connected and loved. When I have a problem or a big decision to make, I seem to come up with pretty good answers during or after meditation."
- **"I do the same prayer and meditation for my dual recovery that I do for my religion. To me it's all the same. My faith, my program of recovery, my DRA Group, my church activities, all these are my Higher Power's will for me to make me the best person I can be. These are the activities that give me strength, courage, and guidance and give meaning and purpose to my life."**

The Twelfth Step of DRA

12. “Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to others who experience dual disorders and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

A core principle behind the Twelfth Step is that once we’ve experienced the benefits of working the Steps, we will want to continue to strengthen our own dual recovery by helping others and doing service work. We continue to live by and practice the principles found in the Steps every day.

IN OUR OWN WORDS: Members share their thoughts on the Twelfth Step

- “At first I didn’t understand when my sponsor said, “You got to give it away to keep it” but after being around the Program for awhile, I began to feel a lot of gratitude. I wanted to give back some of what was given to me so freely. I began to be a temporary sponsor for newcomers. It was then that I realized how this helping others business revitalized and strengthened my own personal recovery. I needed to help others as much for my own recovery as for theirs.”
- **“I’ve found the principles I learned by working the Twelve Steps are really good principles to live my whole life by. Not just so I could get and stay clean and sober and manage my dual disorders. But like when I interact with people at work or my family. They gave me integrity.”**
- “I remember how confused and frightened I was in early recovery. If I can tell my story at a meeting and reassure a newcomer so maybe they find a little more hope and stick with it, and be lucky enough to listen to a newcomer’s story to remember how it was for me. Maybe I won’t have to go back out and use again to remember how bad it felt.”
- **“Anyone can do some Twelfth Step work. You don’t have to have much recovery to pour coffee, or help clean up after a meeting. Besides, that’s the best way to get to really know people. You can’t really give what you don’t have, but we all have our story. That’s worth sharing even if it’s just telling someone at your first meeting that you are brand new to DRA.”**
- “A spiritual awakening? Well, I suppose it’s very different for everyone, but it’s really the changes we find in ourselves after working the Steps and being in recovery for awhile. Deep positive changes in the way we look at things, in the way we react to life. We go from dependence to freedom, we go from letting everything in the world bug us to knowing how to find peace even when everything is going to sh*t. And from trying to control everything by ourselves with our willpower to letting others and even God help us.”