

### **Members like you share their experience:**

My sponsor told me to read Appendix 2 from the AA Big Book. I found out that I could define “spiritual awakening” not as the religious conversion I first feared, but as the personality change required to bring about recovery or “a profound alteration in my reaction to life.” That clicked for me. After that I started to see that the Steps were basically a very practical way to work at changing myself for the better. I guess you could relate spiritual growth or awakening to gaining emotional maturity or strength.

I had to get over my aversion to some of the words and labels used at meetings. They kept reminding me of my parent’s stern religious views. I couldn’t deny the obvious evidence that people were doing well in DRA, but this God and prayer talk just made me gag. I got sort of angry one time when I was still in treatment and actually said that at a meeting. No one berated or chastised me like my parents would have. After the meeting one of the members talked to me about how flexible the DRA program was. She shared with me that she was a Buddhist and at first she had some of the same worries that I did. I’m glad now that I spoke up. I could see that I needed to keep an open mind.

I’m a long time AA and DRA member. To tell you the truth, I don’t believe there is a God. I know that the Twelve Steps can work for anyone though because I’ve been sober for 16 years. I haven’t had a major flare-up of my psychiatric symptoms for the last eight years. To me, spirituality is all about how I behave as a person—my values. Keeping connected with recovering people and helping newcomers. Things like being

grateful and not letting my ego swell up too far. It’s being ok with saying I’m sorry when I’ve hurt someone and being tolerant of other people’s views. It’s accepting my illnesses and living in the solution not the problem. To me, that’s what spiritual growth is all about.

Alcohol and pot used to be my higher power. Now it’s the Fellowship of DRA. What could be a better guiding and helping force than the loving friends I’ve made in recovery?

Nature is what I use. I’ve always loved to spend time out in the forests hiking, camping, and fishing. That’s where I find my best answers and deepest joy. I don’t have to worry about who or what created all that beauty, I just have to be there and breathe it all in. That’s meditation and prayer to me, and it fills me with life.

I call Step One the “I Can’t Step.” In Step One we admit the truth about our situation—that our best thinking and all our will-power could not keep us sane and sober. Step Two is the “We Can Step.” In Step Two we identify resources that can help us. We begin to believe that with these new sources of help, we can change our thinking and actions and learn to keep our disease in remission. “I can’t” do it alone—together “we can.” In Step Three we decide to ask our chosen helping or higher powers for help—to accept and follow their expert advice. We become willing to cooperate. There, you see, we’ve made it through Step Three. That didn’t sound like religion did it?

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.



Welcome to Dual Recovery Anonymous

## **A Spiritual Dimension**

DRA members are free to interpret and personalize the Twelve Steps in a way that will meet their own needs for dual recovery. Members are free to develop their own beliefs and lifestyles to support their dual recovery.

**Spiritual Beliefs:** Some members of DRA do incorporate spiritual or religious beliefs into their Twelve Steps. They may find that their concept of a Higher Power is one that is based on spiritual principles. They are comfortable with a more traditional approach to dual recovery that includes prayer and meditation.

**Alternative Beliefs:** Some members decide that alternative approaches are more appropriate for their dual recovery. They may be uncomfortable with spiritual principles or the practice of prayer and meditation.

There may be several reasons a DRA member chooses an alternative approach:

- A DRA member may be agnostic or atheist. The concept of spiritual principles may not be compatible with their beliefs or world view.
- A DRA member may have had negative religious experiences at some point in their lives.
- A DRA member may have engaged in cult practices or engaged in extensive use of psychedelic drugs.
- A DRA member may be affected by a psychiatric illness with symptoms that include auditory or visual hallucinations and thought disorders that are associated with religious or spiritual images and themes.

DRA members are free to develop and follow alternative approaches to the Twelve Step program. Their concept of a Higher Power may include any or all of the following:

- The Twelve Steps
- DRA meetings and the fellowship
- Following a lifestyle of G.O.D.  
**Good Orderly Direction**
- Plan for health (appropriate sleep, diet, exercise, use of psychiatric medications to manage symptoms)
- Counseling and support

DRA members are free to choose and work with more than one Higher Power. DRA members are also free to change their concept of a Higher Power as time goes by.

DRA members are not limited to identifying a single source of help. There are many ways to define a higher or helping power. Some members use traditional religious beliefs and some don't. Members may consider their caseworker, counselor, sponsor, DRA group, and any other source of help they value, as their personal higher or helping power. DRA members do not judge how other's define higher power, spiritual experience, or spiritual awakening. These terms are subject to each person's individual concept and understanding. What is important is that members choose a higher or helping power that they trust as a personal source of help—a concept that makes at least some sense to them and that provides caring, positive support.

Finally, although the literature of most Twelve Step organizations, including Dual Recovery Anonymous, includes the words "God" and "higher power" we recognize some people object to them or feel uncomfortable with those words. Feel free to substitute any terms that work for you in your personal program of recovery. DRA is not affiliated with any religion, nor does it have any opinion on the matter of a supreme being. Our program of dual recovery is based on the principles of personal freedom and choice.

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For information about starting a group or locating a meeting in your area contact:

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DRA Web Site - <http://draonline.org>

## What if I don't Believe in God?

The spiritual beliefs and spiritual experiences of DRA members are as diverse as those found in society at large. Some members of our Fellowship work the Twelve Steps and their personal program of recovery from a perspective based in their personal spiritual and religious beliefs. Some members have difficult or ambivalent feelings about God and spiritual matters so tread lightly, searching for their own truth and meaning while working the DRA program. It is not unusual for DRA members to be agnostics or atheists. Their personal program of dual recovery may have nothing whatsoever to do with God, religion, or what we commonly think of as spiritual matters.

Working a DRA program of dual recovery is a highly individual process. It is a program of freedom and choice. We don't all think and feel the same. Our Second Tradition clearly states that DRA has only two requirements for membership; a desire to stop using alcohol and other intoxicating drugs, and a desire to manage our emotional or psychiatric illness in a healthy and constructive way. Neither of these requirements has any bearing on one's spiritual belief system. We practice tolerance in DRA. Differences regarding spiritual concepts, or a lack thereof, do not keep us from working our individual programs of dual recovery. Therefore, we don't need to defend or debate our personal beliefs with anyone.