

Step One: We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.

The Principle for this step is *Honesty*

The first principle of our 12-step recovery program is honesty. It should be the foundation of our very lives. Indeed, there are many levels or types of honesty that can be applied in our lives: “cash register” honesty, “being brutally” honest, “simply being” honest, “superficial” honesty and at times being as honest “as I needed to be.”

According to [Wikipedia](#) honesty is “the human quality of communicating and acting truthful and with fairness, as best one is able. It is related to truth as a value. This includes listening, reasoning and any action in the human repertoire, as well as speaking. Superficially, honesty means simply, stating facts and views as best as one truly believes them to be. It includes both honesty to others, and to oneself (see: self-deception) **and about one’s own motives and inner reality.**” Honesty refers to a facet of moral character and denotes positive, virtuous attributes such as integrity, truthfulness, and straightforwardness along with the absence of lying, cheating, deception or theft.” (emph. added)

There is an honesty based on fact, and there is honesty based on feeling. As human beings we have a propensity to be honest; and yet when it came to our alcoholism and our addictions, our feelings would get the better of us. Often we succumbed to that irritating, but rarely ignored, little voice in our head that would cause us to “feel” better. This comfort-at any-cost-now voice is not to be confused with that other small still voice, the honestly

factual one, which unerringly points us to do the right thing, however immediately painful. Obeying the wrong voice puts our own well-being and that of those around us in peril.

Talk about unmanageability. Without any reservation, we put our loved ones at risk in various ways by driving intoxicated or on a high, by spending the rent or grocery money, and worst of all by forcing our families to endure constant and unrelenting emotional trauma. We were often unaware of it ourselves when we blindly justified our alcoholic behavior and frequently denied our alcoholism and our inability to manage it. Here are some symptoms of the denial we refused to face. The denial that allowed us to lie to ourselves, an inability to stop after one drink (“Oh, I’m only going to stop in for just one”), drinking in the morning or during the night, drinking to stop the shakes, drinking when it snatched failure out of the jaws of success, sleeplessness, loss of memory and blackouts, social and on-the-job isolation, and so on and on.

As indicated above, honesty superficially means simply stating facts and opinions as best as one truly believes them to be. However, we alcoholics can so distort our own perception of the truth as to believe a lie, to actually convince ourselves of a lie. There was indeed a time when I honestly thought I needed a drink or a fix or a buzz, when in all actuality nothing could have been further from the truth. My own motives and inner reality had effectively distorted my ability to see the truth. Looking back on it now, it is indeed miraculous that, at some point in time (which most of us, now sober, can identify), I somehow came face to face with the truth about myself and the nature of my disease.

Nothing short of the Grace of a very loving and benevolent God could have impacted my life in such a way as to open my eyes, my mind, my heart and my life, “the hour I first believed,” and forever changed my future.

How is HONESTY practiced? By seeking the truth in everything we do. The truth of who we are and why we do the things we do, without the distortion of our ego’s need to justify unacceptable behaviors. When we can come face to face with the TRUTH, only then will we be set free. A freedom we are able to distinguish in the happy faces of our new found friends in the program, and it is then that our next principle Hope is born into our life.

Think of any other principles that might apply to this step or topics for discussion -- Surrender, Truthfulness, Determination, Admission, Self-deception, Self-recognition, Dependence, Powerlessness, Unmanageability and the Types of Honesty.

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Hope Outreach Foundation exists to raise funds to provide individuals in early recovery the opportunity to attend spiritual retreats. Helping them to acquire the knowledge to begin life anew guided by spiritual principles.

...and to practice these "principles" in all our affairs.