

Surrender School Step Study

Work the steps using a “Study Guide for Overeaters”

Step Three – [Pages 20 - 24](#) and Video [Session D](#)

Big Book “*How It Works*” – [Pages 58 - 63](#)

SET ASIDE PRAYER

God, please set aside everything I think I know about myself, my emotional sobriety, the 12 Steps and You; for an open mind and a new experience of myself, my emotional sobriety, the 12 Steps and especially You!

LINK:

<https://surrenderschool.org/wt-s-usingastudyguide/>

Password: **Surrender2023!**



1. Read the [Study Guide \(Step Three\)](#), pages 20-24

2. Optional Homework:

1. Watch the [video of Step 3: Session D: Homework](#) and [view the slide show](#).
2. Read: *Big Book "How It Works,"* pages 58-63
3. Listen to these *OA Podcasts on Step Three*.

1. [Step Three](#) by Roy L. from *A Design for Living*

2. [Step Three](#) from *Overeaters Anonymous: "The Importance of Working All Twelve Steps"* podcast series

3. [Step 3](#) by Abi G. from *OA Great Britain*

4. [How It Works: Step 3](#) by Sue G. from *Choose Your Own Conception: OA Big Book Study*

3. Watch [video for Session D](#)

Step Two – [Pages 20 - 24](#) and Video [Session D](#)

Step Three

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

Step Three:

Step Three is discussed in the Big Book from the bottom of [page 60 to the bottom of page 63](#). We will find that this section contains extremely important information, but that the step itself is a relatively simple step. It is the first step in which we actually DO something, but what we do is not that complicated or time-consuming.

Before we start discussing Step Three, however, it’s important to discuss the first two and half pages of Chapter Five (“*How It Works*”)—[pages 58 to 60](#).

[Page 58](#) stresses “**rigorous honesty**”. It points out that the only thing that stands in the way of recovery is a lack of the ability to be honest with one’s self. It also asks us if we are committed “**to go to any lengths**” to find recovery.

SESSION D - STEP 3
2023 STEP STUDY

SURRENDERNSCHOOL.ORG

[Link to Video:](#)
[0:51 – 3:22](#)

Chapter 5

HOW IT WORKS

RARELY HAVE we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those, too, who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.

Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it—then you are ready to take certain steps.

At some of these we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.

Remember that we deal with alcohol—cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find Him now!

Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked His protection and care with complete abandon.

[Link to the original “How It Works”](#)

Question: Are you practicing “rigorous honesty”?

Step Two – [Pages 20 - 24](#) and Video [Session D](#) Big Book “*How It Works*” – [Pages 58 - 63](#)

[Link to Video:](#)
[3:21 - 4:55](#)

The original steps:

Originally AA had six steps and not twelve. There are many sources for this statement (see *AA Comes of Age and The Language of the Heart*, both available from AA); you can find one source in the Big Book on page 292 of the third edition or page 263 of the fourth edition.

As you may know, the Big Book was written as a do-it-yourself manual for people who were not able to have contact with AA members who had recovered.

Bill Wilson, who basically wrote the Big Book, considered it necessary to make certain that he provided more detail for the steps than existed previously. He therefore added what turned out to be six more steps.

That’s important to know because the six steps that he added are clearly not steps which have the same kind of significance as the original six steps.

Here are the twelve steps of Overeaters Anonymous. Immediately after six of them, in [brackets], I’ve put the original six steps (as found first in the Big Book on the pages above, underlined, and then in italics from *AA Comes of Age* on page 160):

Step Two – [Pages 20 - 24](#) and Video [Session D](#)
Big Book “*He Sold Himself Short*” – [Pages 258 - 267](#)

The original steps:

Originally AA had six steps and not twelve. There are many sources for this statement (see [AA Comes of Age](#) and [The Language of the Heart](#), both available from AA); you can find one source in the Big Book on [page 292](#) of the third edition or [page 263](#) of the fourth edition.

[Link to Video:](#)
[4:57 - 6:31](#)

HE SOLD HIMSELF SHORT

263

it was Dr. Bob’s afternoon off—he had me to the office and we spent three or four hours formally going through the Six-Step program as it was at that time. The six steps were:

1. Complete deflation.
2. Dependence and guidance from a Higher Power.
3. Moral inventory.
4. Confession.
5. Restitution.
6. Continued work with other alcoholics.

The Big Book pioneer story [“He Sold Himself Short”](#) (p. 263) also contains a version of the six steps recorded by Earl T. (Treet), founder of AA in Chicago. Dr. Bob was Earl’s sponsor

Step Two – [Pages 20 - 24](#) and Video [Session D](#)

1. We admitted we were powerless over food, that our lives had become unmanageable.

[*Complete deflation.* We admitted that we were licked, that we were powerless over alcohol.]

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.

[*Moral inventory.* We made a moral inventory of our defects or sins.]

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

[*Confession.* We confessed or shared our shortcomings with another person in confidence.]

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 wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

[*Restitution.* We made restitution to all those we had harmed by our drinking.]

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

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.

[*Dependence and guidance from a Higher Power.* We prayed to whatever God we thought there was for power to practice these precepts.]

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

[*Continued work with other alcoholics.* We tried to help other alcoholics, with no thought of reward in money or prestige.]

Step Three is merely a decision to do the rest of the steps:

Step Three is therefore not a huge step that requires lots of time and action. It is simply an acknowledgement of the ***consequences*** of the willingness through hope that we developed in Step Two.

If you are willing to try to find a Higher Power through the steps (Step Two), then you have to make a decision to work the steps. And that really is all Step Three is—a ***decision***.

[Link to Video: 6:31 - 8:56](#)

So my decision to turn my will and my life over to the care of my Higher Power is *simply a decision*. It’s not actually turning my will and my life over. It’s just a *decision* to do that. **In order to turn my will and my life over, I have to get rid of the things in myself that are blocking me from my Higher Power.** We’ll see the complete truth of this statement when we discuss Step Four next chapter.

The discussion preceding Step Three:

[Link to Video: 8:55 - 10:20](#)

So what of the discussion on pages 60 through 64 about Step Three? Why is it there?

I believe there are two main purposes of that discussion. The first is to explain WHY we have to make the decision to turn our will and our life over; this involves a discussion of “selfishness” from the Big Book perspective. The second is to tell us WHAT we have to do in order to make that decision; this involves setting out the words of the Step Three prayer.

The pages discussing the WHY are divided into two parts. The first part (bottom of page 60 through bottom of page 63) discusses the WILL part of “turn our will and our lives over to the care of” our Higher Power. The second part (bottom of page 63 to top of page 64) discusses the LIFE part of “turning our willing and our life over”.

[Link to
Video:
10:20 -
12:05](#)

SESSION D - STEP 3
2023 STEP STUDY

SURRENDERNSCHOOL.ORG

Step Two – [Pages 20 - 24](#) and Video [Session D](#)
Big Book “*How It Works*” – [Pages 58 - 63](#)

[Link to Video:](#)
[12:56 – 16:21](#)

The Big Book uses a number of words to describe that universal characteristic: self-willed, self-propulsion, self-seeker, manager, self-centered, egocentric, selfish, self-centered, fearful, self-deluding, self-pitying.

These words are all used to describe a person who basically wants life to go his or her way, **regardless** of the motivation.

Page 60 – AA’s Big Book

Being convinced, *we were at Step Three*, which is that we decided to turn our will and our life over to God as we understood Him. Just what do we mean by that, and just what do we do?

The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. Most people try to live by self-propulsion.

The Big Book’s special definition of selfish:

The Big Book says at page 62:

Selfishness - self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the alcoholic is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn't think so. Above everything, we alcoholics must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us!

This notion of selfishness—wanting my way—is at the heart of the Big Book’s approach to the steps. Selfishness according to the dictionary is “wanting my way for my own comfort or convenience”.

The Big Book, however, discusses selfishness in a broader, more generic, way—as “wanting my way”, period—not only for my own comfort or convenience, and perhaps even for the best of motives.

The Promises of the program:

At the top of page 63 the Big Book has some promises, and some people interpret those promises as being the promises of Step Three. I’ve been taught that this is not the case.

Let’s read those promises carefully. I’ll emphasize the conditional and forward-looking parts of these promises:

When we SINCERELY took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, IF we kept close to Him and performed His work well. Established on such a footing we BECAME less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we BECAME interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. AS we felt new power flow in, AS we enjoyed peace of mind, AS we discovered we could face life successfully, AS we became conscious of His presence, we BEGAN to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We were reborn.

These are really the promises of the whole program, not of Step Three. They are conditional on doing the steps; and Step Three is simply the beginning— the decision to do the steps.

“Your job now is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others”. We can’t do that job until we have worked the steps and recovered. The Big Book makes that clear on page 164: “But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got.”)

Step Two – [Pages 20 - 24](#) and Video [Session D](#)
Big Book “*How It Works*” – [Pages 58 - 63](#)

[Link to Video: 23:55 - 24:25](#)

Taking Step Three:

Step Three prayer. The Big Book says that the language is optional so long as the idea is expressed, and that it is “very desirable” to say that prayer “with an understanding person”.

God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!

SESSION D - STEP 3
2023 STEP STUDY

SURRENDERNSCHOOL.ORG

Step Two – [Pages 20 - 24](#) and Video [Session D](#)
Big Book “*How It Works*” – [Pages 58 - 63](#)

[Link to Video: 24:27 - 26:31](#)

A beautiful prayer! We’re offering ourselves to God. We want certain things to happen to us—relief from the bondage of self, difficulties taken away—not for those things to benefit US, but so that those things will help us benefit OTHERS. This is the first time the Big Book really begins to say that we need to get out of our skin and to help others.

So that’s it! That’s Step Three.

We don’t have to be really really really ready; we simply have to make a decision. The “really really really ready” part comes if we actually start to do some work—start Step Four.

LINK:

<https://surrenderschool.org/wt-s-usingastudyguide/>

Password: **Surrender2023!**

Home About Us Food First Work the Steps Book Studies 2023 Step Study Sponsors and Study Partners

Protected: Work the Steps using a “Study Guide for Overeaters”

This step study uses *A Study Guide for Overeaters* (available free from oabigbook.info).

This guide is one compulsive overeater’s interpretation of the Big Book’s direction for working the steps.

***Important Notice:** This study will be recorded in video/audio format and will be made available on the Surrender School website. To preserve the anonymity of the speaker at the public media level, please do not share the URL of this video on social media.

Need Zoom Instructions for this Step Study – [Click Here.](#)

Join our Homework Group: [Register Here.](#) You will get Zoom Instructions Immediately.

1. Read the [Study Guide \(Step Four—Resentments\)](#), pages 25-36

2. Optional Homework:

1. Watch the [video of Step 4 Session E: Homework](#) and [view the slide show.](#)

2. Read: Big Book [“How It Works,”](#) pages bottom 63-67

3. Listen to these *OA Podcasts on Step Four.*

1. [Step 4](#) by Susan G. from *A Design for Living*

2. [Step Four](#) from *Overeaters Anonymous: “The Importance of Working All Twelve Steps”* podcast series

3. Watch [video for Session E](#)

4. Optional: Complete the [resentments form](#)

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.