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The Steps of AA and Basic Elements of the Psychotherapeutic Process: A Comparison

Step 0 “If you want what we have...”	Development of the desire to change
Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable.	Define the problem in specific terms
Step 2 Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.	Participate in the process long enough to develop a sense of hope and trust
Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, <i>as we understood him</i> .	Commit to making changes; acknowledge the importance of out influences and select appropriate source(s) for guidance
Step 4 Made a fearless and searching moral inventory of ourselves.	Close examination of personal strengths and weaknesses; use of new categories to assess self and personality organization; development of personal and sophisticated value system
Step 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.	Invite others into private life; break isolation and sense of shame and guilt; explore themes of character development
Step 6 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.	Become open to change by relinquishing defenses; develop a willingness to be changed by outside forces
Step 7 Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.	Actively pursue change operating in a framework of humility; asked to be influenced by outside systems
Step 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.	Develop a concrete plan to repair damaged relationships
Step 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.	Act on a plan to repair relationships and develop increased empathy toward others
Step 10 Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.	Maintenance of introspective process, including stance of humility, recognition of personal limitations and continued commitment to change and growth; early repair of interpersonal conflict
Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, <i>as we understood him</i> , praying only for knowledge of his will for us and the power to carry that out.	Development of personal spiritual life using tools developed over humankind’s history; build connection to larger world and an ongoing willingness to learn
Step 12 Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics and practice these principles in all our affairs.	Develop a perspective of unity of life and become involved in the lives of others without losing personal focus. Generalize the lesson learned to lifestyle