Step Study Outline

**Step Three:**

**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.**

**Spiritual Aspect: Faith**

Why Step Three is Needed

We have arrived at a turning point. We found that trying to solve the entire world’s problems (or just those of our dual diagnosed loved one) by ourselves is not possible. We have no power over anyone else’s behavior. In Step One, we accepted our powerlessness and identified the problems with trying to control our dual diagnosed loved one. In Step Two we identified a source of help that could restore us to sanity. In Step Three we take action: we turn our lives over to our Higher Power, giving up the illusion of control. We cannot assume we know what our Higher Power’s will for us is, but we begin to understand that our Higher Power will guide our path in the best direction. With the help of our Higher Power we can move forward in our own recovery.

We don’t have to figure it all out, know the results or even feel comfortable letting go of our efforts to control. We know that our past efforts were not successful, so we need a new approach.

How Step Three Works

We allow our Higher Power to help us and to care for us. When we turn over our will and our life to our Higher Power we relinquish any stake in the outcome. We accept that by following our Higher Power’s will, things will be the way they are supposed to be. The outcome may not be what we expected, and the solution may not come in our desired time-frame, but things will work out. “Everything will work out in the end, and if it doesn’t, then it’s not the end.” We have to be patient and wait for answers.

We develop a working, interactive relationship with our Higher Power: we listen to and communicate with our Higher Power. Our Higher Power works in lots of ways, and we have to recognize and learn to use the guidance we receive. Our Higher Power helps us to reach within ourselves and trust in our inner sense of what is right for us.

Our role is to take action on this guidance. The decision may be too big to do all at one time, so we break it down. Sometimes one person or one thing at a time…the issue that’s causing the most problem in our lives…may be the place to start.

We don’t ignore our dual diagnosed loved one; nor do we do nothing. We stay open to finding new resources that may help ourselves and our dual diagnosed loved one without imposing our own will on our dual diagnosed loved one. We stay open to opportunities that present themselves through our Higher Power. We use our talents and gifts to the best of our ability and let our Higher Power take care of the rest.

The Tools to Help Us

We make the decision, then make it again each time we are faced with a new challenge or opportunity. This may happen daily, hourly, even constantly at first.

We must be willing to trust that our Higher Power will be with us and help us. Some of us find that writing down our challenges and struggles, and placing them in a “God Box” releases us from the burden of “needing” to solve anything or to make decisions for others.

We also trust in the other people who aid our recovery: our counselors, Dual Anon members and sponsors. Continued contact with other people in recovery is important. By routinely using the Serenity Prayer, meditation, and spiritual readings we develop a habit of “letting go”. We may set aside a special time each day to connect with our Higher Power, even five minutes out of a hectic schedule is helpful.

Connecting with nature is helpful, whether it be gardening, owning a pet, or enjoying a sunset. Taking care of our bodies is a gateway to spiritual growth. A healthy body is our vehicle for experiencing the world: eating healthy, exercising, and getting enough sleep will make a difference. We learn to accept and appreciate where we are right now, and avoid rehashing the past or jumping into the future.

We must be patient while waiting for guidance. Recovery takes time, and it takes its own time.

We learn to work on the timetable of our Higher Power, not our own timetable.

Challenges

Rejection of religion and God because of past experiences may be a challenge. We choose a Higher Power we can relate to. We may be unsure of what “God” is, but our understanding will grow in our recovery.

We may be fearful of losing our free will. Is this a cult? Will there be a lack of self-determination? We have the free will to choose our Higher Power, one we know is looking out for us. No one forces us to turn over our will: we choose to rely on our Higher Power and we do it when we are ready.

We may feel uncertain about how to “turn it over.” We surrendered to co-dependence at one time. Now we surrender to our Higher Power and use that guidance to keep moving in a good direction. We may have trouble acknowledging that we also have an illness…of codependency…and we are powerless over our own illness. We may not want to face the fact that we also need help and have to turn our own lives over to the care of a Higher Power so we can become healthier.

We’re so familiar with believing that we know what is best for us and for others, that even when we turn it over to our Higher Power, we may keep “taking it back,” thinking that our solutions are better. It is so difficult to break the old habits of telling others what to do. We may believe that our dual diagnosed loved one will really fall apart if we’re not there to watch over them. We retrain our thoughts, remembering that each person has their own Higher Power who will guide them; their lives are not for us to manage.

Anger and resentment toward our dual diagnosed loved one, ourselves, and the world in general may surface and slow our recovery. We must learn to turn all our concerns, past, present and future, over to the care of our Higher Power.

Benefits

Having faith in our Higher Power to guide us helps us learn that our Higher Power is in control of our lives. We discover that we want a new outlook.

We feel relief from our “assumed” responsibilities and worries. The burden is off our shoulders. We have time to concentrate on ourselves. We feel peace and comfort as we learn to listen to direction from our Higher Power. We have to do our part to follow the lead of our Higher Power, but we will be shown the way. We learn what it means to “Let Go TO Let God.”

We develop confidence. Bit by bit we get stronger and start to believe in the program and in ourselves.

Stepping Forward

The first Three Steps built a foundation for recovery. They moved us from insanity and failure to a place of rebuilding. Now that we have acknowledged we are powerless over our dual diagnosed loved one and our own codependency, we’ve placed our recovery in the hands of our Higher Power with the faith that we can be restored to sanity. We are open to following our Higher Power’s will for us, instead of trying to force our own self-will. We make a commitment to place our life in the care of a Higher Power to rebuild our lives in a positive and caring way. We know that whatever happens we will be guided and cared for. We are no longer in charge. We put ourselves in more capable and caring hands.

With the backdrop of what we’ve learned in Steps One, Two and Three, we are ready to evaluate the potential for change in our lives. We look forward to the insight that can be realized by making a personal assessment of our assets and liabilities in Step Four, in order to identify our opportunities for improvement and recognize our strengths. Step Four will help us set the stage for the positive change we can experience with the help of our Higher Power and the Dual Anon program. The belief that we can become more spiritually attuned and calm in the face of our challenges is reason to hope and continue in our pursuit of serenity and peace.

Dual Anon Step Study Literature Credits:

The Twelve Steps and Dual Disorders by Tim Hamilton and Pat Samples

How Al-anon Works for Families and Friends of Alcoholics

Paths to Recovery Al-Anon’s Steps, Traditions and Concepts

Courage to Change – One Day at a Time in Al-Anon II

Codependents Guide to the Twelve Steps by Melody Beattie

A Woman’s Way through the Twelve Steps by Stephanie S Covington

A Gentle Path through the Twelve Steps by Patrick Carnes

[NA Recovery.org](http://www.na-recovery.org/)

[[12 Wisdom Steps.com](http://12wisdomsteps.com/" \o "12 Wisdom Steps)](http://12wisdomsteps.com/)

Members’ Experience, Strength and Believable Hope