

The Idiot's Guide to the first Three Steps for Chaos Creators, Excitaholics, and Adrenaline Addicts

© Idiots Guide to the First Three Steps for Friends and Families of Alcoholics (Chaos Creators/Excitaholics) 2008, 2010, 2012, 2016, 2020 by Billiekai Boughton.: Billiekai@gmail.com

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Context adapted for the experience of those who create unnecessary chaos in their lives and the lives of others.

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous does not directly tell us directly how to work the first two steps. In the portion of "How It Works" read at many meetings, we hear "Our description of the *Chaos Creator*, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas. That we were *Chaos Creators* and could not manage our own lives, that probably no human power could have relieved us of our addiction to adrenaline, and that God could and would if He were sought." [Pages 58-60]

The sentence which follows is not often read in meetings; "Being convinced, we were at Step Three." Convinced of what? The answer is that we are 'convinced of these three pertinent ideas mentioned above.'" And how do we get convinced? We read the description of the Chaos Creator (or Excitaholic), the chapter to the agnostic, and the personal experiences before and after, that are specifically designed to "make clear these three pertinent ideas." The original manuscript read that if we were not convinced, "we ought to reread the book to this point or else throw it away." This is a program of self-diagnosis.

We compare our experiences to those of the book; the way we thought, felt, and used adrenaline with the experiences of the people described in the book, to see how they match up, this is how we take steps one and two. Relating to the experiences in the book may create a problem for the modern reader. The English of today is significantly different from that of 1939, when this book was first published. If you have ever tried to read Shakespeare, you are perhaps aware of the effect time has upon language. Going through the Big Book in the way described here should help you overcome this language problem, and give you an understanding of the Big Book which is reflected in your own experience. You may begin to see the Big Book in a new light, and perhaps it will have real meaning in your own life today.

Much of this workbook consists of statements from the Big Book which have been turned into questions. We found it helpful to view the book in this light rather than as a book of answers; the answers you will find only in your own experience, and within your own heart. For the sake of clarity, some questions are paraphrased rather than directly quoted. If there is something you relate to, describe it, and ask yourself "What was my experience with this?" "Did this happen to me? Did I feel like this?" "Did I think like this?" "Did I give into my addiction to adrenaline and create chaos in my life?"

This is not a homework assignment where we try to get through it as quickly as we can with a minimum effort. If you are really a Chaos Creator/Excitaholic, having an understanding of these steps could mean the difference between life and death.

This guide is written to be used by Chaos Creators/Excitaholics. Some of us thought we were not addicted to excitement or do not intentionally over complicate our lives, and were surprised to discover in the course of this work that we actually are addicted to adrenaline. We ask you only to try to keep an open mind and remember that this is a program of self-diagnosis. Doing the work will reveal your truth.

This guide is not meant to replace the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, it is meant to be used along with it. Read through the book as you answer each question. The authors hope you will find this way of working the steps as enlightening as we have. Because of the difficulty many of us have had in keeping an open mind, we began with this prayer:

The Set Aside Prayer

“God please enable me to set aside everything I think I know about myself, recovery, You and the Twelve Steps; that I might have an open mind and a new experience.”

What are some things that you do to create chaos in your life?

Here are some examples:

- Being chronically late or regularly late
- Overspending
- Agreeing to do/take on too much
- Not saying no when you know you should (no boundaries)
- Knowing what is *right* for everyone else all the time
- Worrying
- Neglecting responsibilities or relationships
- Ignoring physical problems hoping they will go away or fix themselves
- Arguing with a drunk
- Picking a fight
- Fixing other people, doing for them what they can do for themselves
- Manipulating others to get what you want
- Trying to control something or someone to get the outcome you desire
- Attempting to make something (or everything) perfect
- Obsessing
- Projecting
- Wallowing in self-pity
- Being a Martyr
- Being critical of others
- Feeling you are the right person to “teach them a lesson”

Make a list of the things that you do here:

Definitions:

ex·cite·ment

Pronunciation: \ik-'sīt-mənt\

Function: *noun*

Date: 1604

- 1 : something that **excites** or rouses
- 2 : the action of **exciting** : the state of being **excited**

ad·dic·tion

Pronunciation: \ə-'dik-shən, a-\

Function: *noun*

Date: 1599

- 1 : the quality or state of being **addicted** <addiction to reading>
- 2 : compulsive need for and use of a habit-forming substance (as heroin, nicotine, adrenaline, or alcohol) characterized by tolerance and by well-defined physiological symptoms upon withdrawal; *broadly* : persistent compulsive use of a substance known by the user to be harmful
- 3 : anything you cannot quit of your own volition

adren·a·line

Pronunciation: \ə-'dre-nə-lən\

Function: *noun*

Date: 1901

: **EPINEPHRINE** —often used in nontechnical contexts <the fans were jubilant, raucous, their adrenaline running high — W. P. Kinsella>

epi·neph·rine

Variant(s): also **epi·neph·rin** \,e-pə-'ne-frən\

Function: *noun*

1: a colorless crystalline feebly basic sympathomimetic hormone C₉H₁₃NO₃ that is the principal blood-pressure raising hormone secreted by the adrenal medulla and is used medicinally especially as a heart stimulant, a vasoconstrictor in controlling hemorrhages of the skin, and a muscle relaxant in bronchial asthma —called also *adrenaline*

cor·ti·sol

Pronunciation: \'kòr-tə-,sòl, -,zòl, -,sòl, -,zòl\

Function: *noun*

Etymology: *cortisone* + *-ol*

Date: 1951

: a glucocorticoid C₂₁H₃₀O₅ produced by the adrenal cortex upon stimulation by ACTH that mediates various metabolic processes (as gluconeogenesis), has anti-inflammatory and immunosuppressive properties, and whose levels in the blood may become elevated in response to physical or psychological stress —called also *hydrocortisone*

Emotional Sobriety:

1. A person whose ideals are grounded in a power greater than themselves.
2. A person who relies on God.

Tips for transcribing in your book:

- Purchase a large print 4th Edition Big Book (available online and at the Serenity Shop)
- Use a pencil so you can erase mistakes

Shorthand suggestions:

Step # = S1, S2, S3, etc...

Promise = (P)

Alcohol = Adrenaline = (A)

Drug = Adrenaline = (A)

Alcoholic = Chaos Creator = CC

Alcoholic(s) = Excitaholic(s) = (E) (use either CC or (E) as needed for context)

Alcoholics Anonymous = Al-Anon = Al-A

Do I Believe = DIB

Can I See = CIS

Emotional Sobriety = [EM]

Words for drunk = crazy, spun, spinning, freaking out

Drink = chaos

Drinking = thinking or emotions (as appropriate for the sentence)

i.g. Do I lose control of my thinking after things do not go my way?

Can I control my emotional nature after I have started creating chaos (worrying, controlling, manipulating, etc ...check your list!)?

What happens to me after I put adrenaline in my body?

The First Step

The First Step - Part One the Physical Allergy:

There are three parts to Step One. The first part deals with the physical allergy. This means that after we have given into the first small amount of adrenaline with an obsessive thought, argument (with yourself or someone else), or responded to the rapidly forming knot in the pit of our stomach, we lose control of our emotional sobriety. Many of us have experienced this when we decided we were only manipulating and controlling someone else for their "own good", and wound up fueling our own addiction. As a Chaos Creator or Excitaholic, perhaps we decided we were going to meet with a certain person one more time. Vowing this time, "Things are going to be different. This time I will get the outcome I want." We lied to others we cared for regarding where we were going and what we were doing, "for the weekend." We fully indulged in our addiction to adrenaline and were amazed when the sun rose the next morning and our lives were crazier than ever!

The Doctor's Opinion Questions -Page xxiii to Page 1.

The Physical Allergy

1.a.) Am I the type of Chaos Creator who failed completely with other methods of trying to stay permanently emotionally sober, or trying to control my addiction to excitement?

b). What are some of the methods I have tried?

Page xxv, Paragraph 5

2. Was I ever told I could not control my emotions because I had some form of a mental disorder?

Page xxvi, Paragraph 2

3. Does the Doctor's theory that I have an allergy to adrenaline explain why I cannot control how much chaos I create, or not being able to stop the insanity once I start? What are some examples?

Page xxviii, Paragraph 1

4. a). When I put adrenaline into my body, or start creating chaos, do I have a craving for more? What happens to me?

b). Has this craving happened to me with other behaviors? What are they?

Page xxviii, Paragraph 1

5. a). Was frothy emotional appeal enough to keep me emotionally sober permanently? (Like someone begging me to stop).

b.) If something can keep me emotionally sober, must it have depth and weight? (Do I believe, "Just Say No" or "Just don't think about it" and "Don't argue no matter what" is going to have enough depth and weight?)

Page xxviii, Paragraph 2

6. a.) Do I create chaos for the effect produced by adrenaline? What are some examples?

b.) What effect did addiction to adrenaline have on my life? My body? What meaning does chaos creating have for me?

c.) Was the effect so great that after a time, even though I knew it was bad for me, I could not stop and I could not tell the true from the false?

(Examples: meeting that certain person one more time in secret, lying to people we care about, overspending, being chronically late, hiding things hoping not to get caught, trying to fix others, interfering, stealing, manipulating someone or something to get what I want or think I deserved, and then telling myself that it was okay.)

d.) Did my life seem like the only normal one to me?

(For example: The first time I wrecked a car, slept with someone in a relationship other than my own, stole, lost a job due to my attitude or performance, got someone else fired, woke up to a phone call in the middle of the night demanding I come and clean up someone else's "problem"? These instances seem unhealthy and abnormal to me the first time, but by the twentieth time, it's normal.)

e.) Did I ever experience a sense familiarity or "sense of ease and comfort" when creating chaos or when indulging my addiction to adrenaline? Is this still working?

f) Am I uncomfortable when things are running smoothly?

g) Do I constantly anticipate problems? Am I always waiting for the other shoe to drop?

7. a). Have I ever said to myself or someone else, "I must stop," but couldn't?

b). Have I ever tried to stop, or control the when/where/how I created chaos in my life or how often I indulged in my addiction?

c.) What are some of the things I did?

Page xxix, Paragraph 2

8. Am I the type of Chaos Creator with whom the psychological approach; treatment centers, detoxing, counseling, therapy, church/temple, retreats etc. failed? What are some examples?

Page xxix, Paragraph 3

9. Did I only create chaos or self sabotage when things were going badly, when I was under stress; or did I also invite crises when things were going well?

Page xxix, Paragraph 4
Page xxx, Paragraph 1

10. a.) Can I start creating chaos or indulge in the addiction to adrenaline without developing a craving for more? (to test this, try starting an argument and stopping in the middle, or think about something that is disturbing you and then do not obsess over it, find someone that you think needs your help, spend some time with them, and don't give them any advice at all, or don't get involved in a heated debate that is going on right next to you.)

b.) Did this seem strange to me, that what worked to control or manipulate a person once, may not work again? Was I frustrated when I did not get the outcome I desired? How many more tactics did I have to try before getting what I wanted? Or was just the process of trying to figure out how to manipulate someone exciting enough to fill adrenaline need for me?

c.) Do I believe the only hope for me is to not create chaos in the first place?

Page xxx, Paragraph 5

The First Step Part Two -The Mental Obsession Questions:

The second part of Step One deals with the mental obsession. This simply means that no matter how bad it was the last time we thought we knew best, no matter how much we have to lose, no matter how much we want to quit creating problems forever; on our own unaided-will we will always strive to have chaos again by trying to fix, control and manipulate. Bill Wilson compares this to putting your hand on a hot stove over and over again. It is not a matter of “learning our lesson,” if it were, wouldn’t we have learned it long ago? This is the kind of lesson we never learn. We just keep doing it over and over again; until we kill ourselves. Before you move on to the mental obsession, make sure you are absolutely clear on the physical allergy. Remember, this is not about just telling other people what you think they want to hear, it’s about what you really believe is true for you.

1. Did I turn to creating chaos when I was lonely?

Page 1, Paragraph 1

2. Were there things which happened early in my chaos creating career that were “ominous warnings,” which I failed to heed? What were they?

Page 1, Paragraph 3

3. When I was younger, did I think of myself as a leader?

Page 1, Paragraph 5

4. a). Was I someone driven to succeed?

b). Did I enjoy some successes early in life?

c). Did I feel like I had to “prove to the world that I was important?”

d.) Did I create chaos when I was in school or at work, needing and demanding that I be heard or paid attention to?

e.) Did I constantly feel the need to force people to hear me out, feeling like if they would just hear me that I would feel better?

5. a.) Did I develop theories about how I would be successful in life while trying to control people, places, and things?

Page 2, Paragraph 2

b.) Am I convinced I know what is best for other people?

6. a.) Did my friends sometimes think I was crazy or emotionally unstable?

Page 3, Top Paragraph

7. Did controlling people, places, and things or indulging the drama I created, become more important over time? In what ways?

Page 3, Paragraph 1

8. a.) Did the crises I invited become serious during this time? How?

b.) Did I fight with my spouse, friends, parents, siblings, coworkers, or boss?

c.) Did I become a loner? Did I isolate myself?

Page 3, Paragraph 2

9. Did I begin to create chaos or fantasize about a different life first thing in the morning? Would I wake up obsessing or angry with a knot in my stomach?

Page 3, Paragraph 3

10. Did I try to fix and control others or fantasize to escape from problems, sometimes brought on by the chaos I created?

Page 4, Paragraph 1

11. Did I become an unwelcome hanger on at my job? School? Friends, neighbors or ex-lovers'? My child's school?

Page 5, Top Paragraph

12. a.) Did the knot in my stomach (or other pain in my body) at some point cease to be a luxury and become a necessity?

b.) Did someone in my life cease to be a luxury and become a necessity?

Page 5, Paragraph 1

13. a.) Did I feel a sense of impending calamity, like something bad is always about to happen?

b.) Did I have to focus on fixing someone/something else to be able to function at all?

Page 6, Paragraph 1

14. a.) Has this, or did this, go on for years?

b.) Did I think of suicide to escape?

c.) Did I try taking liquor/drugs/lovers/more work to escape the problems I had created? Did I call the police or treatment centers for another person even though I had a deep lingering feeling that something was wrong with me too?

d.) Did I lose weight or gain weight? Stop taking care of myself? What did my health and teeth look like? What did my finances look like? Did my addiction to stress create illness in my body?

e.) Did the stress I created effect how I interacted with my children, coworkers, family, friends, partners, loved ones?

Page 6, Paragraph 2 Page 7, Top Paragraph Page 7, Paragraph 2

15. a). Did I seek help, gain knowledge about myself, learn my adrenaline or "stress" triggers and try to get in touch with my feelings?

b). Did this "self knowledge" work, or did I create chaos again?

16. a). Do I now realize that self-knowledge did not get me emotionally sober? Do I understand that self-knowledge will never keep me permanently emotionally sober?

b). Was I told I would die if I didn't change? Or that I would kill someone? Go to jail? Be committed to an institution?

Page 7, Paragraph 3

17. a). Did I feel loneliness, despair, and self-pity?

b.) Did I ever feel that my emotions, stress, or living in crises were my masters?

c.) Did this (that I had no power) scare me? Was I afraid?

d.) Did fear get me, or keep me, emotionally sober? Did I invite chaos again anyway?

Page 8, Paragraph 2

18. a). Has my human will failed me? (Did I really “decide” to create chaos again, or did I just convince myself that “life” was happening to me so I could feel sorry for myself again? So I could feel like a Martyr? So I could be angry again?)

b.) Have I been pronounced incurable? Do I feel unfixable?

c.) Am I ready to admit complete defeat? What meaning does this have for me?

Page 11, Paragraph 3

19. Do I understand the price of freedom will be the destruction of my self-centeredness?

Page 14, Paragraph 1

20. Where had I been unmindful of others welfare?

P.9 top paragraph

21. Do I understand the absolute necessity of demonstrating these principles in all my affairs if I want to get and stay emotionally sober?

Page 14, Paragraph 6

The Three Types of Chaos Creators:

Type 1: The Moderate Chaos Creator.

We have all known people who would have an argument over dinner and leave it at the table; or after a couple of minutes say something like, "Oh I see your point", or "Maybe you are right." There were also people who could make an effortless suggestion and let go of the outcome.

22. a.) Do I have little trouble letting go of a conflict entirely if given good reason?

b.) Can I give advice and then leave it alone?

c.) Does this describe me, or do I know people like this?

Page 20, Paragraph 5

Type 2: The Hard Chaos Creator.

There were those people too, who we created excitement with, who were able to keep up with us. They created chaos as much as we did, used the same tactics we did, but something happened which caused them to stop or moderate on their own. Perhaps they got married, had a child, got hurt, or went back to school. They grew out of it, while we continued to grow into it. Though they may have indulged in excitement or controlled people, places and things as much or more than we did, they are very different from a Real Excitaholic.

23. a). If a Doctor, employer, judge or probation officer told me to stop worrying or "stressing" for good, could I do it? Just stop instantly cold turkey?

b.) If I fell in love, and my beloved asked me to stop being controlling for good, could I do it?

c.) If I moved to a different place, could I stop trying to fix people forever?

d.) Does this describe you, or do I know people who did stop for reasons like these?

Page 20, Paragraph 6 Page 21, Top Paragraph

Type 3: The Real Excitaholic/Chaos Creator

24. a.) Did I at some stage in my constant use of adrenaline, lose control of my emotions?

b.) Did I do absurd, incredible, and tragic things while drunk on adrenaline or chaos?

c.) Was I a real Dr. Jekyll & Mr. Hyde?

d.) Was I seldom mildly crazy, or was I more or less insane all the time?

e.) Was the person I became when creating chaos very different from who I was when calm; how so?

f.) Did I become dangerously antisocial when trying to control people, places, and things?

g.) Did I have a knack for creating chaos and over complicating things at the worst possible time?

h.) Am I incredibly selfish and dishonest where addiction to excitement and obsessing are involved?

i.) Do I use my gifts to build up a bright future, just to screw it up by creating chaos again?

j.) Do I go to bed crazy, and wake up obsessing right where I left off the night before? Or wake up looking for someone/something to control or argue with?

k.) Did I stash money, phones, other people's things, food, keep secrets, tell lies, argue, or be defensive so that nobody could really know me?

l.) Did I mix controlling people, places, and things with manipulation, over complicating, and obsessive thinking?

m.) Does this description of the Real Excitaholic or Real Chaos Creator [roughly] sound like me? In what ways?

Page 21, Paragraph 1

25. Based on my own experience, have I discovered my own truth, am I a Real Excitaholic? A Real Chaos Creator? Am I addicted to adrenaline? What does this mean for me?

26. Did I ever decide to quit for good, to not even obsess one more time, not create another problem, argument or issue?

Page 5, Paragraph 4

27. a). Did this work? (Deciding to quit for good) or did I become crazy again, even though I promised myself I would not?

b). Did I begin to wonder if I was crazy?

Page 5, Paragraph 5

28. Were there times when I stayed emotionally sober, or controlled myself, only to be followed by a worse relapse or emotional hangover? When?

Page 5, Paragraph 6
Page 6, Top Paragraph

29. a). Having acknowledged that I cannot control the amount of chaos I cause after I start, do I agree that this is all beside the point if I never start it?

b). Therefore, is it obvious to me then, that the main problem centers in my mind rather than in my body?

Page 23, Paragraph 1

30. Have I tried to assert my will power to stay stopped? How did that work out?

Page 23, Paragraph 3

31. Am I powerless over whether I will start? Have I lost control over staying stopped?

Page 23, Paragraph 4 Page 24, Top Paragraph

32. a) In the past, before I created the next problem, did the knowledge of what might happen stop me?

b). Based on my own experience, is there any reason why “thinking through the next problem”, will ever work in the future?”

Page 24, Paragraph 2

33. a) Do I believe that a wholesale psychic change would be a miracle for me?

b) Do I believe anything less than a miracle (a spiritual experience) will save me?

Page 25, Paragraph 2

34. Do I have any choice but to die a chaos creator’s death or accept spiritual help?

Page 25, Paragraph 3

35). a) In the past, have I been unwilling to admit I am a Real Excitaholic or Chaos Creator? (Meaning that I could not control the amount of chaos I created and stay stopped for good on my own power.) What does being a Chaos Creator mean to you?

Page 30 Paragraph 1

36. Do I have any reservations, or any lurking notion that someday I might be able to control myself normally on my own will?

Page 33, Paragraph 1

37. Did I read the “Jaywalker story” and, if I apply it to my chaos creating/adrenaline career, does it fit exactly?

Page 37, Paragraph 4

38. Do I believe I could stay stopped on the basis of self-knowledge, applying all these things I have learned about myself and my disease up to this point?

Page 39, Paragraph 1

39. Is it obvious to me that without spiritual help; the time and place WILL come and I WILL cause chaos, NO MATTER HOW MUCH I WANT TO STAY EMOTIONALLY SOBER TODAY?

Page 41, Paragraph 2
Page 42, Top Paragraph

The First Step Part Three -*The Unmanageability of the Spirit*

We Agnostics Questions -Pages 44-52

The third part of the First Step deals with the unmanageability of the spirit. Why is it that no matter what the consequences, we always end up creating chaos? Without something to take the place of the adrenaline rush in our lives, we are doomed. Many of us thought that if we could just stay away from “him/her”, life would be wonderful; but we later discovered this was not so. Abstinence from “him/her”, without working the steps may feel good for a while. But it’s much like peeing in your pants on a really cold day; it feels nice and warm for a while, but when the cold wind blows it obviously is not a long-term solution. We become so “restless, irritable, and discontent” that after a time, we cannot imagine how creating chaos could make us feel any worse, and so we do. We must somehow find a way to “experience a sense of ease and comfort” WITHOUT creating chaos. This “spiritual unmanageability” is what the other eleven steps treat. “When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.” [page 64] This part of Step One, unmanageability, has nothing to do with God, just us on our own power trying to run on our own will.

40. a) Am I having trouble with personal relationships? With whom?

b) Can I control my emotional nature? How?

c.) Am I prey to misery and depression? When?

d.) Can I make a living? Even if I can, am I satisfied with it?

e.) Do I have a feeling of uselessness? In what way, at home, work?

f.) Am I full of fear? What am I really afraid of?

g.) Am I unhappy? With what?

h.) Do I seem unable to be of real help to other people? In what way?

i.) Is a basic solution to these things more important than anything in the world around me?

Page 52, Paragraph 2

Summary the First Step:

If you are really an Excitaholic the only solution to the physical allergy is to never create chaos. We cannot however apply this solution because of the mental obsession, which always leads us back to searching for what we can get through adrenaline, no matter how dangerous that may be. Rather than give us hope, the First Step is designed to utterly destroy whatever hope we may have left that we can stay emotionally sober without spiritual help. It means that for us, the war on excitement and adrenaline is over, and we lost. This is called surrender. In a very real way, the other eleven steps do the same thing for us slowly what the excitement did quickly; they give us a sense of ease and comfort, remove our loneliness and make room for the Sunlight of the Spirit. Once we have a spiritual awakening as the result of working these steps, the mental obsession is removed. The Twelve Steps are a recipe for a spiritual experience.

What Does Surrender Mean?

The 12 Steps as Ego Deflating Devices, excerpts of a letter from Psychiatrist Dr. Harry Tiebout M.D.

Al-Anon, still very much in its infancy, was celebrating a third or fourth anniversary of one of the groups. The speaker immediately preceding me told in detail of the efforts of his local group -- which consisted of two women -- to get him to straighten up and become its third member. After several months of vain efforts on their part and repeated nose dives on his, the speaker went on to say: "Finally, I got cut down to size and have been emotionally sober ever since," a matter of some two or three years. When my turn came to speak, I used his phrase "cut down to size" as a text around which to weave

my remarks. Before long, out of the corner of my eye, I became conscious of a disconcerting stare. It was coming from the previous speaker. It was perfectly clear: He was utterly amazed that he had said anything which made sense to a psychiatrist. The incident showed that two people, one approaching the matter clinically and the other relying on his own intuitive report of what had happened to him, both came up with exactly the same observation: the need for ego reduction. *It is common knowledge that a return of the full-fledged ego can happen at any time.*

Years of emotional sobriety are no insurance against its resurgence.

No Al-Anon, regardless of their veteran status, can ever relax their guard against a reviving ego.

The function of surrender in Al-Anon is now clear. It produces that stop by causing the individual to say, "I quit. I give up on my headstrong ways. I've learned my lesson." Very often for the first time in that individual's adult career, she has encountered the necessary discipline that halts her in her headlong pace. Actually, she is lucky to have within her the capacity to surrender. It is that which differentiates her from the wild animals. And this happens because we can surrender and truly feel, "**Thy will, not mine, be done.**" Unfortunately, that ego will return unless the individual learns to accept a disciplined way of life, which means the tendency toward ego comeback is permanently checked. This is not news to Al-Anon members. They have learned that a single surrender is not enough. Under the wise leadership of the Al-Anon founders the need for continued endeavor to maintain that miracle has been steadily stressed. The Twelve Steps urge repeated inventories, not just one, and the Twelfth Step is in itself a routine reminder that one must work at preserving emotional sobriety. Moreover, it is referred to as Twelfth Step work -- which is exactly what it is. By that time, the miracle is for the other person." -Dr. Harry M. Tiebout, M.D.

Step Two

Step Two We Agnostics Questions/Pages 44-55

List the 10 most insane things I ever did when creating chaos:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____

The Twelve Promises of Chaos.

Many of us searched for years for the answer to the question of “Why did I create chaos?” Some of us found it the last place I ever thought to look: In the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. We did have to rephrase a few lines though. (Thanks to Dan S. for the idea.)

If we are painstaking about creating chaos, we will be amazed before we are half way through. When creating chaos, we are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. When creating chaos we will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. When creating chaos, we will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, when creating chaos, we will see how our experience can benefit others. When creating chaos, that feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. When creating chaos, we will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. When creating chaos, Self-seeking will slip away. When creating chaos, our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. When creating chaos, fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. When creating chaos, we will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that chaos was doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

The problem with these promises was that in the end, they became lies. We had to seek a new Higher Power!

1. Do I have any other alternative besides being doomed to a miserable death (spiritual or physical) or living on a spiritual basis?

Page 44, Paragraph 2

2. Have I faced the fact that I must find a spiritual basis of life - or else?

Page 44, Paragraph 3

3. a) Is a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life sufficient to overcome my adrenaline addiction?

b.) If it was, why didn't I stop long ago?

Page 44, Paragraph 4 Page 45, Top Paragraph

4. a.) Have I ever wished to be morally or philosophically comforted?

b.) Have I ever willed these things with all my might?

c.) Did I find that the needed power wasn't there?

d.) Have I found that such codes and philosophies did not save me no matter how hard I tried?

Page 45, Top Paragraph

5. a.) Is lack of power my dilemma?

b.) Do I have to find a Power by which I can live?

c.) Does it have to be a Power greater than me? Is this obvious?

Page 45, Paragraph 1

6. a.) When God is mentioned, has a subject been reopened which I thought I had neatly evaded or entirely ignored?

b.) Does the word God bring up a particular idea which someone tried to impress upon me during childhood?

c.) Did I reject this idea of God and did I then think I had abandoned the God idea entirely?

d.) Was I bothered with the thought that faith and dependence upon a power greater than myself was somewhat weak and even cowardly?

Page 45, Paragraph 3 Page 46, Top Paragraph

7. Have I discovered that I do not need to consider another's conception of God? That I can create my own conception?

Page 46, Paragraph 2

8. a.) Do I have my own conception of God?

b.) Do I agree this is all I need to commence spiritual growth and to effect my first conscious relationship with God?

Page 47, Paragraph 1

The "Second Step Question"

9. a.) Do I now believe or am I even willing to believe, that there is a power greater than myself?

b.) Why?

Page 47, Paragraph 2

10. a.) Has even casual reference to spiritual things made me bristle with antagonism?

b.) Do I agree this thinking has to be abandoned?

Page 48, Top Paragraph

11. Do I believe in many things for which there is good evidence, but no perfect proof?

Page 48, Paragraph 3

12. a.) Did I believe I already knew everything I needed to know about living life?

b.) Wasn't this rather egotistical of me?

Page 49, Paragraph 1

13. a.) Did I use the shortcomings of a few as a basis to condemn them all?

b.) Did I criticize them for being intolerant, while being intolerant of them myself?

Page 50, Paragraph 1

14. In the past, have I stuck to the idea that self-sufficiency would solve my problems?

Page 52, Paragraph 4

15. Faced with the First Step; a self-imposed crisis I cannot evade, am I now willing to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or God is nothing?

Page 53, Paragraph 2

Consider each of the following questions on the next page over the course of 2 days.

1. Day One: on each of the following questions, ask myself “What are my prospects for the future in this area of my life if God is nothing, and does not exist; if all I have is what I’ve had in the past to deal with these things?”

- Assert that every thought you have and everything you lay eyes on had nothing to do with God or any kind of Devine Influence.
- Observe how you feel as a result and record your answers below.

2. Day Two: go back through these questions and ask myself “What are my prospects for the future in this area of my life if God is everything, and does exist; and have God’s power will deal with them?”

- Assert that every thought you have and everything you lay eyes on had everything to do with God or Devine Influence.
- Observe how you feel as a result and record your answers below.

a.) Am I having trouble with personal relationships?

If God is nothing?

If God is everything?

b.) Can I control my emotional nature?

If God is nothing?

If God is everything?

c.) Am I prey to misery and depression?

If God is nothing

If God is everything

d.) Can I make a living?

If God is nothing

If God is everything

e.) Do I have a feeling of uselessness?

If God is nothing

If God is everything

f.) Am I full of fear?

If God is nothing

If God is everything

g.) Am I unhappy?

If God is nothing

If God is everything

h.) Do I seem unable to be of real help to other people?

If God is nothing

If God is everything

16. Do I believe the answer to these problems is inside rather than outside of myself?

Page 52, Paragraph 2

17. a.) Have my ideas been working as far as solving the problems listed above?

b.) Do I believe the God idea might, am I willing to try?

Page 52, Paragraph 3

18. Do I agree God either is or isn't? What is my choice to be?

Page 53, Paragraph 2

19. Do I agree, that deep down within every man, woman, and child is the fundamental idea of God?

Page 55, Paragraph 2

20. a.) Am I willing to search fearlessly within my own heart to find God, am I willing to believe God is there?

b.) Do I agree that it is only there that God can be found?

Page 55, Paragraph 3

Go back and review the list of the 10 most insane things you ever did when you were creating chaos, which you made at the beginning of this step. The most insane thing you ever did is probably not on this list, because you did it while you were emotionally sober. In all likelihood the most insane thing you ever did was this: with the things on this list happening when you invited crises, you made a decision to do it again; and you made this decision when you were as emotionally sober as you are right now.*

*Credit to Joe H. of Santa Monica, CA for this wisdom.

Step Three

Step Three How it works: Questions - Pages 58-63

1. Have the description of the Excitaholic, the chapter "To the Agnostic" and my personal adventures before and after made clear these three pertinent ideas?

a.) That I am a Chaos Creator and cannot manage my own life?

b.) That probably no human power can relieve my addiction to adrenaline or chaos?

c.) That God can and will if He is sought?

Page 60, Paragraph 2

2. a.) Am I convinced that my life, run on my own will, can hardly be a success? (The first Requirement for Step Three).

b.) Am I convinced that my romances, finances, friendships, marriage, career, my life, run on my will, can hardly be a success?

Page 60, Paragraph 4

3. On that basis (running my life on my will) am I almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though my motives are good?

Page 60, Paragraph 4

4. a.) Have I tried to live by self-propulsion?

b.) Am I like an actor who wants to run the whole show, am I forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery, and the rest of the players in my own way?

Page 60, Paragraph 4

5. a.) When life doesn't treat me right, do I decide to exert myself more?

b.) Admitting I may be somewhat at fault, am I sure that other people are more to blame?

Page 61, Paragraph 6.

6. Am I not really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind?

Page 61, Paragraph 1

7. Have I been a victim of the delusion that I can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if I could only get life arranged to suit myself?

Page 61, Paragraph 1

8. Am I not, even in my best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony?

Page 61, Paragraph

9. Do I believe selfishness and self-centeredness is the root of my troubles?

Page 62, Paragraph 1

10. Am I driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking and self-pity?

Page 62, Paragraph 1

11. Have I found that at sometime in the past, I have made decisions based on self, which later placed me in the position to be hurt?

Page 62, Paragraph 1

12. a.) Do I believe my troubles are basically of my own making, and they arise out of me?

b.) Am I an example of "self-will run riot?"

c.) If my problems are of my own making, why is this good news?

Page 62, Paragraph 2

13. a.) Do I believe, above everything, I must be rid of this selfishness or it will kill me?

b.) Do I agree I cannot do this on my own will?

Page 62, Paragraph 2

14. a.) Have I had moral and philosophical convictions galore?

b.) Could I live up to them, even though I would have liked to?

c.) Can I reduce my self-centeredness by wishing or trying on my own power?

d.) Do I have to have God's help?

Page 62, Paragraph 2

15. a.) Do I have to quit playing God?

b.) Does playing God work for me?

Page 62, Paragraph 3

16. Do I agree that from now on in this drama of life, God's role is going to be the Director; my role is going to be an actor in God's play?

Page 62, Paragraph 3

17. Am I willing to trust that God will provide what I need, *if I keep close to Him and perform His work well?*

Page 63, Paragraph 1

18. a.) Have I really thought about what this means before taking this step, am I sure I am ready?

b.) Am I at last willing to abandon myself utterly to God as I understand God?

Page 63, Paragraph 2

The following is taken from the Big Book, and phrased in the first person. ***Read this out loud to someone each day for a week, and then decide if: a.) It applies to you. b.) You are ready to quit living like this. c.) You are ready to accept living on Gods terms.***

The first requirement for Step Three is that I be convinced that my life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis I am almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though my motives are good. I try to live by self-propulsion. I am like an actor who wants to run the whole show; I am forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in my own way. If my arrangements would only stay put, if only people would do as I wished, the show would be great. Everybody, including myself, would be pleased. Life would be wonderful. In trying to make these arrangements I may sometimes be quite virtuous. I may be kind, considerate, patient, generous; even modest and self-sacrificing. On the other hand, I may be mean, egotistical, selfish and dishonest. But, as with most humans, I am more likely to have varied traits.

What usually happens? The show doesn't come off very well. I begin to think life doesn't treat me right. I decide to exert myself more. I become, on the next occasion, still more demanding or gracious, as the case may be. Still the play does not suit me. Admitting I may be somewhat at fault, I am sure that other people are more to blame. I become angry, indignant, self-pitying. What is my basic trouble? Am I not really a self-seeker even when trying to be kind? Am I not a victim of the delusion that I can wrest satisfaction and happiness out of this world if I only manage well? Is it not evident to all the rest of the players that these are the things I want? And do not my actions make each of them wish to retaliate, snatching all they can get out of the show? Am I not, even in my best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony?

I am self-centered - ego-centric, as people like to call it nowadays. I am like the retired businessman who lolls in the Florida sunshine in the winter complaining of the sad state of the nation; the minister who sighs over the sins of the twentieth century; politicians and reformers who are sure all would be Utopia if the rest of the world would only behave; the outlaw safe cracker who thinks society has wronged him; and the Excitaholic who has lost all and is locked up in a psych ward. Whatever my protestations, am I not concerned with myself, my resentments, and my self-pity? Selfishness - self-centeredness! That, I think, is the root of my troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and self-pity, I step on the toes of my fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt me, seemingly without provocation, but I invariably find that at some time in the past I have made decisions based on self, which later placed me in a position to be hurt.

So my troubles, I think, are basically of my own making. They arise out of myself, and I am an extreme example of self-will run riot, though I usually don't think so. Above everything, I, as an Excitaholic, must be rid of this selfishness. I must, or it will kill me! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without God's aid. I had moral and philosophical convictions galore, but I could not live up to them even though I would have liked to. Neither could I reduce my self-centeredness much by wishing or trying on my own power. I have to have God's help.

This is the how and the why of it. First of all, I have to quit playing God. It didn't work. Next, I will decide that hereafter in this drama of life, God is going to be my Director. He is the Principal; I am His agent. He is the Father, and I am His child. Most Good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which I will pass to freedom.

When I sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. I have a new Employer. Being all powerful, He will provide what I need, if I keep close to Him and perform His work well. Established on such a footing I'll become less and less interested myself, my little plans and designs. More and more, I will become interested in seeing what I can contribute to life. As I feel new power flow in, as I enjoy peace of mind, as I discover I can face life successfully, as I become conscious of His presence, I begin to lose my fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. I will be reborn.

19. Does this description fit you? How?

20. a.) Am I convinced that my life, job, relationships, marriage, friendships and everything else in my life run on self will is going to be a failure?

b.) What meaning does this have in my life today?

I thought well before taking this step making sure I was ready; that I could at last abandon myself utterly to God. I'll find it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as another member of program that has done this work or a spiritual advisor. But it is better to meet God alone than with one who might misunderstand. The wording was, of course, quite optional so long as I expressed the idea, voicing it without reservation. This was only a beginning, though if honestly and humbly made, an effect, sometimes a very great one, will be felt at once.

21. Are you willing to follow up this decision with the action required of you in Steps Four through Nine? If you are ready, do the Third Step Prayer (Page 63)

I am now at Step Three. I said to my Maker, as I understood Him:

"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!"

Summary of Step Three:

There is an old proverb from India which illustrates the point of the Third Step well. Two men were walking down an unpaved road, they were barefoot. The road was covered with small rocks which hurt their bare feet when they stepped on them. One of the men said to the other, "This journey would be much easier on our feet if this road was paved with leather." The wiser of the two men replied, "Yes, this is true, but we could get the same effect by wearing a pair of shoes."

Excitaholic's wish to pave the road with leather so they don't need to wear shoes. The Twelve Steps are designed to become our shoes. The Steps help us change to fit into the world as it is, rather than continuing to try to get the world to change so we can be happy.

The following joke illustrates the rest of Step Three:

Question: Three bullfrogs are sitting on a log. One bullfrog makes a decision to jump in the pond. How many are left?

Answer: Three. The bullfrog only made a decision, he hasn't done anything yet. The way we implement the decision we made in Step Three is to complete Steps Four through Nine.