

## STEP THREE

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

In Steps One and Two, we accepted our personal powerlessness, the unmanageability of our lives, the need for faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and the reality of our own insane actions.

Our addiction continued to fight for its life. The cravings still possessed us, and we were feeling an unbelievable variety of uncomfortable and awful feelings: anger, rage, shame, longing, self-loathing, and despair. We lost our best friend. We were alone, facing the rest of our lives without our drug.

Now we came to a Step where it was suggested that we make a decision. We needed to decide that we were no longer in charge and that we needed help. This decision greatly contradicted what we have been taught. How many times had we heard that we should be able to use willpower to rid ourselves of the nasty little habit of smoking? From childhood, we were taught to rely on ourselves. We learned that no one was going to do it for us. We knew that if we wanted it done right we should do it ourselves.

Unfortunately, relying on ourselves proved ineffective in dealing with our addiction to nicotine. It didn't keep us safe from smoking. We found it extremely difficult to ask for help. We associated help with dependence and weakness. We weren't interested in being told how to run our lives.

Gradually, in meetings, through listening to others or by reading, we begin to see that what we had proudly viewed as self-reliance was really arrogance, rebelliousness, defiance, and denial. We could also see that these attitudes were really unhealthy for us. With this awareness, we saw that asking for help was an act of strength, not weakness. We understood that by being humble we could allow something kind and powerful to help us. We needed this understanding in order to decide to ask for the help we so desperately needed.

We surrendered. Through surrender came the willingness to try anything, including letting ourselves be helped by something good and wonderful. As Bill Wilson, who first wrote about these Twelve Steps said, "Our whole trouble had been the misuse of will power. We had tried to bombard our problems with it instead

of attempting to bring it into agreement with God's intention for us."

Our goal was to make contact with a Higher Power -- one that would help us to change ourselves and our lives. We found that as we made this contact, we were able to make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of our own God. We found support. We discovered a new sense of well-being of body, emotion, and spirit.

We found that by keeping close to our Higher Power, we experienced the Third Step in action. 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, leaving it to our Higher Power to help take care of us. As we felt the new Power flow in, we enjoyed peace of mind, discovered we could face life successfully, felt our Higher Power, and began to lose our fear of yesterday, today, and tomorrow. We sought freedom from self-will and ego, and the wisdom to recognize our Higher Power's will for us. We did this in many ways, including repeat the following:

### ***Third Step Prayer***

*Relieve me of the bondage of self.*

*Help me abandon myself to the spirit.*

*Move me to do good in this world and show kindness.*

*Help me to overcome and avoid anger, resentment, jealousy and any other kind of negative thinking today.*

*Help me to help those who suffer.*

*Keep me alert with courage to face life and not withdraw from it, not to insulate myself from all pain whereby I insulate myself from love as well.*

*Free me from fantasy and fear. Inspire and direct my thinking today; let it be divorced from self pity, dishonesty and self-seeking motives.*

*Show me the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.*

*I pray for all of those to whom I've been unkind and ask that they are granted the same peace that I seek.*

Through trust in our Higher Power, we found that we were taken care of in surprising and simple ways. This gave us new confidence and an increasing faith. Our victory over our own difficulties encouraged us to continue, and we became an example for others as well.

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