

STEP TWO

"Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."

In Step One we first made the admission that we were, are now, and will remain powerless over clutter, which implies in no uncertain terms that we have an obsession to clutter and an allergy of the body that leads either to death or insanity. Secondly and more importantly, we came to recognize that our lives have been, are now, and will remain unmanageable by us alone. This conviction that we are compulsive clutterers and that our lives are unmanageable by us alone leads us naturally into Step Two.

Once again, Step Two can be viewed as having two aspects. The first aspect concerns the beginning of our spiritual development, which is the foundation of the CLA program. Since we recognized that our lives have been, are now, and will remain unmanageable by us alone (having completed a thorough Step One), we must now come to grips with the fact that we need a new Manager, as the old one (the thinking mind with its acquired character defects) led us into the depths of deep despair, self-centeredness, loneliness, and an apartness from our True Self. We found that the thinking mind could not solve our problems. Thus, the conclusion that we must start to find a new Manager of our life (a Power greater than ourselves) is paramount if we want to become happy, positive, and loving as we are meant to be.

We have to believe -- that a Power exists which is greater than ourselves -- and this belief is absolutely necessary if we are honestly to complete the remaining ten Steps of Clutterers Anonymous. At this point all we really need is a truly open mind. (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*)

Thus, Step Two can become the springboard on which we can begin the journey toward spiritual awakening. Remember, all that is needed is willingness, open-mindedness and rigorous honesty.

The second aspect of Step Two concerns sanity. "Sanity" involves living sanely. Since this step is about the restoration of our sanity, how can this occur? We may not relate with "soundness of mind," but we surely can identify with insanity as being unsoundness of mind. (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*) The True Self is sane, whereas the false self (the thinker with its acquired character defects) has not usually been an example of sane living. The problem facing us then is how can we regain the sanity which is the True Self? By eliminating the acquired insane ways of living, we are left with the True Self and its sanity.

"Sanity" is defined as "soundness of mind." (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions, p. 33*). What we are concerned with now is becoming aware of the old patterns of insane thinking (the reactions towards people, places and things that have caused havoc in our lives.) We often say insanity is repeating the same destructive behaviors but somehow expecting better results!

Step Two, properly approached, worked, and lived, will start the beginning of the end of our old life, and the beginning of our emergence into a new life (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*)

Many compulsive clutterers face a blank wall when they come to Step Two. There may be as many different concepts of God as there are addicts trying to answer the question. The following arbitrary categories may be helpful.

1. Atheists -- "There is no God."
2. Agnostics -- "I don't know whether there is a God or not, so I can't be sure what God is like if there is one."
3. Deists -- "I believe there must be someone or something which created this universe and originally got this world started, but I don't think that Creator takes any personal interest in anything happening in human affairs currently."
4. Rebels or the Disillusioned -- "I believe that there is a God, that God created this world and every detail of it, but I am angry at that God for the way things have gone wrong and do not want any part of that God."
5. Baffled Believers, Type A -- "I believe in a personal God who created and controls this world, who loves me, but my love for God seems imperfect, since I cannot shake this addiction even when I pray asking God to remove it from me. What's wrong with me when I pray?"
6. Baffled Believers, Type B -- "I believe in a personal God who created this world and who loves me. This God expects us pretty much to solve our own problems, and therefore does not miraculously intervene to change things such as my addiction. I seem to be left on my own, and I am incapable of healing myself of this disease."

Now, there must be some fortunate individuals whose faith is sufficient in itself to solve their potential addiction, and they have no problem with clutter. We do not include them in the list above, since they would not need to be in our group, unless God sent them to help the rest of us!

It may be helpful to decide which of these categories you fall into, even if just to satisfy your curiosity. All of us, however, need help from some power outside of ourselves and greater than we are, to help us with our addiction. The promise of Step Two is that such a power exists and will help us back to sanity. In Twelve Step literature, this is called "God as we understood Him," or simply "Higher Power," and is to be taken to mean only what the individual understands God to be. Don't be turned off by the fact most writers mean a personal God, and in America they usually mean a Judeo-Christian God. They are simply writing from their own experience. Others depart from this institutionalized

religion and for lack of anything better provisionally assume the Group itself can function as their Higher Power.

The purpose of writing this second step is to help us become aware of the acquired, destructive thinking that has wrecked our lives. Go through the following examples and be as honest and specific as you are able at this time. Give specific examples and situations from your own life. You are after the destructive, acquired character defects.

QUESTIONS FOR WRITING

SPIRITUAL DEVELOPMENT HISTORY

1. Describe your understanding of your Higher Power.
2. Describe your earliest spiritual experience. What was it like?
3. Who in your early life reminds you of your Higher Power?
4. If you were God, how would you change your world and what would you do with a person such as yourself?
5. What requisite qualities do you think an adequate Higher Power should have? How is that different from what qualities you think your Higher Power does have?
6. Where did you get your notions, beliefs, and concepts about God? Who or what taught you about God in the first place?
7. What does sanity mean to you? How would you like to be different?

8. List any angers and resentments you have against God.

9. If you had an audience with God, what would you ask God?

RESTORATION TOWARD SANITY

Answer the questions below honestly and with a truly open mind. Remember, insanity is not a part of your True Self. Insanity exists in the acquired false self, which is not a part of the real you, so dig deep!

10. Do you have any fears in your life today? (fear of people, emotional insecurity, sexual insecurity, financial insecurity) List these fears.

11. Can you recognize self-centeredness in your life? If so, give examples.

12. Do you believe "The main problem of the alcoholic [clutterer] centers in his mind, rather than his body? (*AA Big Book*, p. 23) Why or why not?

13. What areas of your life do you feel that you have little or no control over? (family, job, CLA, spiritual or emotional) Why do you feel you have little or no control over these areas?