

STEP

1 | Powerless BODY

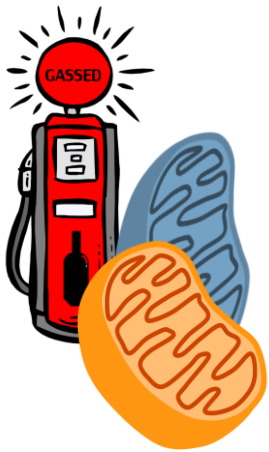
We admitted we were powerless over alcohol — that our lives had become unmanageable.

You may as well surrender, this is a bio-genetic disorder. Our bodies process alcohol differently than 93% of other people. Once we start to drink, we crave booze because it has become our mitochondria's (the cell's energy factory) preferred choice of fuel.

*Once an alcoholic,
always an alcoholic.*

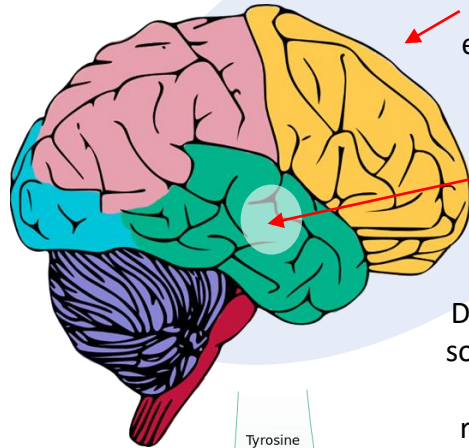
Our 'will' is powerless against the broken biology of our bodies. We can't think our way out of it — high IQ or not. Medical science recognizes alcoholism as a biological disease.

Our founders did not dare to call it a disease in 1939, but in 1956 the AMA recognized Alcoholism as a disease based on the five criteria used to identify any real disease.



STEP

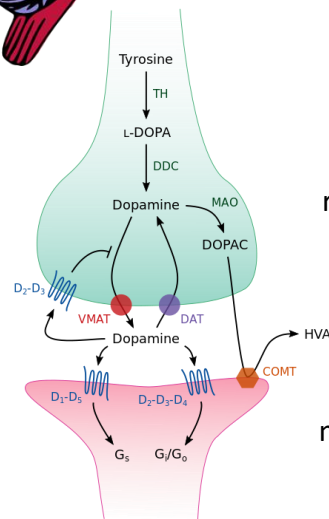
1 | Unmanageable MIND



Here in the frontal Cortex lies the Self, and everything we know as our thinking mind, it is the home of our innermost selves.

The middle of our brain houses the limbic system with the Amygdala, which can cause an alcoholic to be more reactive than a defective Smoke Detector. We overreact, and yes, even when sober. Early on, we found alcohol would calm this problem. But, as with any addiction, it required more and more to do less and less.

When we drank, our brains were smashed with neurotransmitters, which gave us that feeling of ease and comfort. We flooded our rewards pathway with glutamate, dopamine, and other neurotransmitters until our brain downregulated (turned off) many of the receptors that communicated pleasure and relief to the body. We had to use more and more alcohol to get relief and it had an even more subtle effect — things that used to give us pleasure didn't do that anymore. The good news? Sober, the brain can turn these pleasure receptors back on — over time.



**Restless,
irritable,
and discontent?**

The middle brain, which is convinced it needs 'something' is sending out survival alerts. It can even shut the frontal cortex down to make certain it gets what it now believes it needs to survive. We have become powerless over alcohol physically and neurologically.

Nearly 90-years of AA has proven that there is such a thing as 'Spirit over Matter.' And so, we come to believe that there is a power greater than our genetic and biochemical reactions.

The proof is in the millions of lives that have been transformed and saved over the last almost a century of AA. But as good as it is, it can only work with the willingness to change.

The opinions expressed are those of the author and not Alcoholics Anonymous. The author is a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous not a scientist or medical expert, and so this information, which is greatly over-simplified, should not be considered as medical or therapeutic advice.

STEP 2

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

Sanity. (From Latin *sānitās* health, from *sānus* healthy). We come to believe that something can make us mentally and physically healthy again. But, given the severe psychological, physiological, and neurological challenges we just discussed, we might wonder, how? The enemy is within, but that's okay because the solution is spiritual.

We all begin by being open and willing to accept the idea that there is a power greater than our 'Selves'. And that power is available to everyone.

Self is the concept we have of who we are. Some people call it ego. Regardless, Self has become the boss. We need a new boss, a new manager.

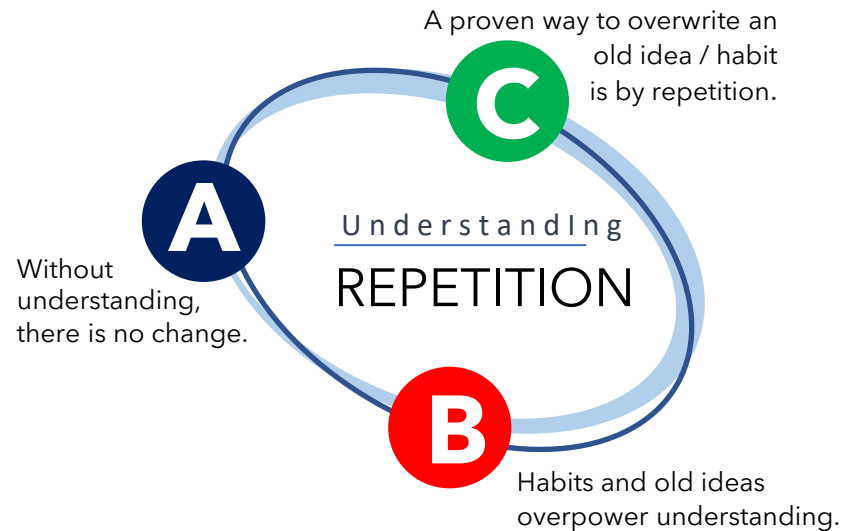
We must become open to understanding that something that may not 'feel' right at first — and that Self isn't going to love this. But fear not, we need only be willing, open, and honest (these are essential) to make a lasting change.

Step 2 doesn't happen all at once. It is, as our founders described, an awakening; a 'coming to'.

STEP 3

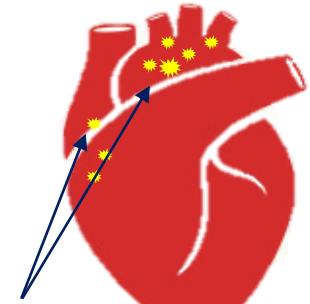
Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood Him.

Step 3 is the most important decision of our lives. It is a decision to stop playing God, and it isn't easy. We have been managing on our own for a long time. Now we see in Step 3 that we must act on this decision many times each day. We do this by practising the Principles of AA in our lives, and it works! We have seen many others have a complete psychic change — over time.



Step 3 points to our spiritual path in AA. We follow our Step 3 decision with immediate action; repetition strengthens the right cortex of our brain, and we recover mentally and physically.

Step 3 connects us to something powerful. Our book says the idea of God is within. Next, we prepare to 'unblock' and open our heart.



Sensory neurons

THE HEART & THE LITTLE BRAIN

40,000 Sensory neurons in the heart are part of a fascinating network known as the intracardiac nervous system. This intricate system is like a "little brain" within the heart itself. Most of these sensory neurons cluster around the top of the heart, where blood vessels enter and exit. Some of these clusters also extend down the back of the heart, with a particular abundance on the left side. Our elders were right after all, there actually is a "Language of the Heart." The fundamental idea of God is deep down in *every person*.