Changed Attitudes Can Aid Recovery: Where do I fit in?

All of us have positive and negative attitudes.

Now close your eyes. What are some positive attitudes? Take a few minutes to think of a situation where you have a positive attitude. How does your body feel?

What are some negative attitudes? Now take a few minutes to think of a situation where you have a negative attitude. What’s the difference? Which feels better?

This workshop is to suggest some tools to aid recovery. This doesn’t mean that you will always experience a positive attitude, but you will have the choice to choose a positive attitude over a negative one. This workshop uses ideas from Valli, the WSO executive director, on working the 12 Steps in 15 minutes. I need two volunteers.

Think back to your negative attitude. Does someone want to share the situation?

1. **We admitted we were powerless over alcohol – that our lives had become unmanageable.** What are you powerless over in this situation? List the people, places and things that you are powerless over. How has your life become unmanageable?

2. **Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.** Where is your Higher Power in this situation? What are you doing that just might be insane? Are you doing the same thing over and over but expecting different results?

3. **Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over the care of God as we understood him.** Are you ready to turn over any outcome to the care of God? Is your Higher Power trustworthy enough to handle this? **Let’s say a prayer turning over this specific negative attitude.** If you are not ready to turn this over, let’s pray for willingness, if you can.

4. **Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.** Talk briefly about any important points you have not mentioned. **List three shortcomings you’re using in this situation. (Partner, write these down).**

5. **Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.** See if you can identify the “self-defeating assumptions” (Courage to Change [B-16] November 6) that cause your negative attitude. Examples: “I am bad, I am not enough”; I am unlovable, unwanted, unsafe or defective.” Sometimes our attitudes are about the world or life: “The world is unsafe, life is unfair.”

6. **Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.** Talk about the defects of character you listed in Step Four. What are the paybacks? What are you getting by using this character defect? What are the costs? **Are you ready to let God remove those defects? If not, pray for that willingness.**

7. **Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings.** Ask your HP, either silently or out loud, to remove all those shortcomings that do not serve you or others in this situation.

8. **Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.** Who have you hurt? Don’t forget you. If you have hurt someone else, you have surely hurt yourself. Are you willing to make amends to each of these people, including you?
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. Please share how you plan to make amends. Make a commitment to those amends promptly. If you are new to the Steps and amends, check with your Sponsor before you make them.

10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. Commit to looking out for the defects that came up for you and make amends, if necessary. Do that for three days.

11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. How can you bring God into this situation? Can you commit to praying for three days for knowledge of God’s will for you and the power to carry that out?

12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others, and to practice these principles in all our affairs. Have you had any spiritual awakening because of working the Steps this time? What principles are involved in this situation? Examples include honesty, humility, love, integrity, faith, hope, detachment and God-reliance. Try to live the principles that are involved. Share the lesson(s) you learned in a meeting.

Your turn. Changing attitudes using the 12 Steps in 15 minutes. Find a partner.

1. Pick a specific negative attitude and the situation that “pushed your buttons.” For example, don’t work the Steps like this on your relationship with your mother. Work them on your negative attitude when your mother visits without calling first.
2. Use your situation, not someone else’s. For example, work the Steps on your negative attitude toward your son’s drinking last Sunday, not just on your son’s drinking.
3. Keep your comments brief, whether you are helping someone else through the Steps or having someone else help you through the Steps.
4. Move quickly through the Steps. Don’t use too much detail. Raise your hand if you get stuck.
5. Don’t worry if it doesn’t work perfectly the first time. Practice will help!
6. Congratulate yourself on the work you did today.
7. Amends can be very simple: For you, read a page or two in a daily reader. For others, a simple apology with a commitment to change is often enough.
8. Remember, not all will get through the first time! That’s okay. When you’re not in a workshop, you can take more time if it’s needed.
9. Please replace your chairs.
10. Thanks so much for coming!