

Awareness, Entry #1 of 1

Carrying the message brings us awareness of our gifts and limitations, and guides us to change (*Living Clean*, Chapter 1, “Living Clean”).

The effort we put into our recovery—working Steps, studying Traditions, living by spiritual principles—frees us up to be ourselves. We develop a connection with a Higher Power, come to understand more about what makes us tick, clean up wreckage—past and present—mend old relationships, and build new ones. Each element of this process expands our awareness. The message we carry is enriched by personal experience with the daily application of spiritual principles.

Life can get really good, often better than we'd ever imagined. We're free from active addiction and less consumed by self-centered fear. We might drop habits from our daily routine without paying an immediate price. We stop writing, reflecting, and meditating. We call our sponsor less often. All the external evidence indicates that we're okay. When anxiety bubbles up, we stuff it down with ice cream, hide it beneath new clothes, or flee from it on a fast motorcycle.

Attending meetings regularly—even when we've slacked off on other good habits—gives us the chance to correct course. We may notice that our attempts to share feel stiff or detached. There may be some satisfaction in the nostalgia of sharing about our past, but the absence of connection to our current emotional or spiritual life reveals a bit of emptiness. We recognize the dangers of living an unexamined life. We may be in trouble, but seeing it coming is a good start.

With this awareness, we can turn to the practices that feed our recovery. We take responsibility for the brewing storm in our brains or bellies and share our sense of disconnect. By attending meetings, we can take in some gentle cues about what's important. Awareness can bring us back from the edge if we let it.

I will conduct the spiritual maintenance needed to bolster or maintain my recovery, always seeking to continue, improve, and practice with guidance from Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve.