

Twelve-Step Recovery: From Exile to Restoration through Faith

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In discussing the development and implementation of twelve-step recovery, I hope to show the recovery experience as a movement from spiritual emptiness to spiritual fulfillment through faith. Research will include an introduction to the Oxford Group and the origins of Alcoholics Anonymous to the widespread indoctrination of the twelve-steps for recovery from various forms of addiction and illness. In the experience of twelve-step recovery, one finds physical and mental obsessions, often incurable through psychology and medicine, relieved through a spiritual experience, an experience realized through the twelve steps.

An individual begins recovery in a state of powerlessness and unmanageability due to some physical/mental malady. The individual's illness has resulted in some type of physical, social, and/or spiritual exile. Through surrendering to a power greater than herself/himself and the process of the twelve-steps, an individual survives their destructive obsessions and enters into a spiritual way of life. Faith, in a power greater than herself/himself, becomes an essential part of an individual's recovery. Faith restores the individual to sanity. The object of faith is a God of the individual's understanding, opening the experience of restoration to all people, regardless of religious sect or denomination, and, in many cases, atheism and agnosticism.

The movement of twelve-step recovery has manifested itself in various communities of individuals united under a set of moral principles, the twelve steps. These principles transcend gender, ethnicity, socio-economic and professional situations, and political and religious affiliations. Consequently, individuals come together in recovery dialogue that crosses all boundaries of social orientation and identification. These communities are united in a common, spiritual purpose without a common understanding of God. Therefore, individuals enter into a broad and dynamic dialogue of faith based on the common experience of spiritual exile and restoration.

The research for this presentation is in progress.