

## STEP THREE

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

Step Three called us into action, for it was only by action that self-will could be removed. Our inability to surrender had always blocked the effective entry of a Higher Power into our lives. Willingness was the lever with which we moved this obstruction. When we took this step, we were practicing the principle of faith.

Step Three asked us to make a decision based upon our acceptance of our addiction and powerlessness that we had identified in Steps One and Two. Before, we alternated between being controlling or controlled. We either drove other people away with our self-centeredness, demanding that others react to our plans and schemes as we would have them react, or we resigned from the world by refusing to make decisions for ourselves. In either extreme, it was selfishness that ran our lives.

Our intoxicated way of life had made things worse. We did whatever we could to make other people, places, and things be what we wanted. When this proved to be impossible, we would be hurt and blame others for our problems. So we tried even harder to control and consequently suffered even more. We were actually quite uncaring although we usually did not consider ourselves to

be so. Why not decide to put our lives in the care of God, *as we understood God?* Our way had certainly not worked for us.

The program of recovery works both for people who do not believe in God and for people who do. It does not work for people who think *they* are God. Spiritual awakening is not possible for those who remain dishonest, close-minded, and unwilling. Intolerance, belligerence, and denial keep us from open-minded investigation. For addicts, the consequences of these attitudes are dangerous.

The Third Step does *not* say, "We turned our will and our lives over to the care of God, *as we understood God.*" It says rather, "We made a decision" to do so. We didn't turn it all over perfectly or all at once. *We* made a decision. What an accomplishment this was! We made a decision; it was not made for us by marijuana, our families, a probation officer, judge, therapist, or doctor. We made it ourselves. We made a decision to have faith and began putting our trust in a power greater than ourselves. Step Three was neither another assertion of our willpower nor another resignation from responsibility. It was a decision.

How were we going to believe that God could care for us? How could we learn to live without self-will and obsession? We were taught that a little willingness goes a long way towards building faith. Most of us resisted. We tried to understand this step before we made the decision to have faith and act upon it. We then found that simply making this decision opened us up to a spiritual connection

and was an act of faith in and of itself. What we chose to do was to let go and let a *caring* God into our lives.

Step Three was a decision not only to have faith but also to live by faith. Our lives had been centered around marijuana — getting it, and staying high. We found that by deciding to turn our will and lives over to the care of God, as we each understood God, our lives and the responsible use of our freedom to choose were returned to us.

For many of us that decision was followed with a prayer to our Higher Power similar to this one: *“Higher Power, I have tried to control the uncontrollable for far too long. I ask that you take this burden from me. I acknowledge that my life is unmanageable. I ask for your care and guidance. Grant me honesty, courage, humility, and serenity, to face that which keeps me from you and others. I give this life to you, to do with as you will.”*

If at all possible, we took this step with our sponsor, a spiritual advisor, or someone else we trusted. If we could find no one to share this with, then we prayed earnestly to our Higher Power. It was the beginning of learning how to “turn it over” and to “let go and let God” (both well known twelve-step sayings).

By starting to trust our Higher Power, we cleared the way for growth and recovery. Now we no longer have to rely on the weak force of self-will to solve our problems. Faith and acceptance are our new solutions. The power of faith gives our lives a new direction. Learning to live by

**Step Three****Life With Hope**

faith took practice; it opened the way to a new reliance on a Higher Power and the restoration of our inner wisdom. The turning point for us was the decision to relinquish control. However, no matter how sincere our efforts, we do make mistakes. Then we admit our humanity and try again.

Having made the decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power, it was time to implement the decision. We had to look at exactly what it was that we decided to turn over. We needed to discover and examine the patterns and conditions of our lives. Moreover, we needed to rediscover what in our lives made us believe in ourselves, and acknowledge gratitude for the people who had made our lives better. It was time for Step Four.