

Welcome to Step Three

The Twelve Steps

Step-Working Guide · The Recovery Files

In this workbook

1. **Welcome to Step Three** — key ideas, worksheet

Each topic's scored self-assessment and mind map are in the app.

TOPIC

Welcome to Step Three

KEY IDEAS

Welcome to Step Three

Decision and Surrender

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

The Third Step represents one of recovery's most profound challenges and opportunities—the conscious choice to release control and trust in guidance beyond our own limited understanding. True surrender involves far more than intellectual agreement; it demands an ongoing practice of releasing the illusion of control.

Control Attachment

The Illusion of Management

Control attachment involves the persistent belief that personal management and oversight produce better outcomes than spiritual guidance.

This reflects deep-seated assumptions about self-reliance and the illusion that comprehensive control is both possible and necessary. It creates spiritual obstacles by maintaining the exhausting burden of comprehensive personal responsibility.

Will Assertion

The Battle for Direction

Will assertion involves the persistent pursuit of personal agenda despite spiritual guidance suggesting a different direction.

This reflects the ongoing battle between self-will and spiritual will. It creates spiritual conflict by maintaining divided loyalty between personal preferences and spiritual guidance, preventing the unified direction that enhances peace.

Trust Deficiency

Doubting Spiritual Care

Trust deficiency involves doubt about spiritual care, reliability, or active involvement in personal circumstances.

This reflects fundamental questions about the nature and dependability of a higher power. It prevents the deep trust necessary for genuine surrender, maintaining the burden of comprehensive self-reliance.

Surrender Resistance

The Gap Between Belief and Practice

Surrender resistance involves intellectual agreement with Third Step principles while maintaining behavioral patterns of self-will.

This reflects the common gap between spiritual understanding and spiritual practice. It prevents experiential learning that comes from actually practicing surrender rather than just understanding it conceptually.

Spiritual Disconnection

Uncertainty and Doubt

Spiritual disconnection involves uncertainty about spiritual guidance, difficulty sensing direction, and doubt about personal capacity for spiritual relationship.

This reflects challenges in developing practical spiritual connection. It prevents the ongoing relationship that makes surrender feel safe and desirable rather than threatening.

Fear-Based Decision Making

Survival Mode vs. Trust

Fear-based decision making involves choices motivated primarily by avoidance of feared outcomes rather than trust in spiritual guidance.

This reflects how fear can override spiritual principles in practical decision-making. It maintains survival-mode thinking that prevents the growth and opportunity available through trust-based choices.

Perfectionist Surrender

Unrealistic Expectations

Perfectionist surrender involves unrealistic expectations about the timeline and completeness of Third Step development.

This reflects how perfectionist thinking can impede spiritual progress. It establishes impossible standards that lead to discouragement rather than the patient, gradual development that characterizes authentic spiritual growth.

Deepening Practice

Developing Trust and Connection

Developing trust, releasing control, seeking guidance, and practicing willingness are key to deepening Third Step practice.

Regularly affirming care, letting go of outcomes, listening for guidance, and taking guided action build the spiritual connection necessary for surrender. It's about moving from self-reliance to collaborative relationship.

The Gift of Step Three

Transformation and Freedom

The Third Step invites spiritual transformation—moving from the exhausting burden of self-management to a collaborative relationship with spiritual guidance.

Through ongoing practice, the fear of losing control transforms into the freedom of releasing burdens too heavy for one person. Surrender evolves from crisis-driven desperation to daily, moment-to-moment spiritual partnership.

WORKSHEET**Step Three Worksheet**

Surrendering Will and Life

PROFILE**Understanding Your Third Step Profile**

1. What aspect of surrender presents your greatest challenge, and what contributes to this difficulty?

2. How has your understanding and practice of the Third Step evolved throughout recovery?

3. What specific fears emerge when you consider deeper surrender?

4. In what areas of life do you find surrender easiest, and what makes them different?

5. How do you distinguish between healthy self-responsibility and problematic self-will?

PSYCHOLOGY**The Psychology of Your Journey**

6. How does your personal history influence your capacity for trust and surrender?

7. What role do past experiences with authority or religion play in your practice?

8. How do your different surrender challenges reinforce each other?

9. What early warning signs indicate when you're operating from self-will?

10. How might trauma or attachment patterns influence your surrender capacity?

PRACTICE

Developing Your Practice

11. What specific practices have proven most effective for cultivating trust?

12. How do you seek and recognize spiritual guidance in daily decisions?

13. What role does community support play in maintaining Third Step practice?

14. How do you handle periods when spiritual guidance seems unclear?

15. What would it look like to deepen surrender in your most challenging area?

RESILIENCE

Building Resilience

16. How has your relationship with control changed throughout recovery?

17. What practices help you maintain spiritual perspective during stress?

18. How do you balance appropriate action with spiritual trust?

19. What would it mean to view challenges as opportunities for spiritual growth?

20. How might sharing your journey benefit both you and others?

MAPPING**Your Personalized Surrender Map**

List specific examples for each dimension:

Control Attachment:

Will Assertion:

Trust Deficiency:

Surrender Resistance:

Spiritual Disconnection:

Fear-Based Decision Making:

Perfectionist Surrender:

ACTION**Action Planning**

Specific surrender challenge to address:

Measurable goal:

Practical steps:

Accountability measures:

Timeline:

Remember: The challenge of surrender can gradually transform into the joy of spiritual partnership—each act of letting go marking another opportunity to choose the spiritual guidance that provides direction beyond the limitations of self-will.