Understanding the AA Promises

A reading guide, in your own time

Use this independent editorial overview alongside the original AA reading. The wording below is paraphrased, not the AA text. The numbering is a reading aid; the Big Book does not give a formal numbered list.

Theme	Meaning, paraphrased	Original reflection question
1. Freedom and happiness	Life may feel less confined and more satisfying.	Where would I like more room to choose?
2. Your relationship with the past	The past can be acknowledged without continual regret or denial.	What can I discuss honestly with someone trustworthy?
3. Understanding serenity	Serenity becomes something understood through experience.	What does steadiness mean to me today?
4. Experiencing peace	A sense of peace becomes possible.	What does a manageable afternoon look like for me?
5. Experience that helps others	Difficult experience can become useful to another person.	What could I share without exposing more than I want?
6. Feeling useful	A sense of worth and purpose can replace discouragement.	Which contribution feels realistic this week?
7. Interest in others	Attention extends beyond personal concerns toward other people.	Whom would I like to listen to?
8. Less self-serving behavior	Decisions become less driven by personal advantage.	Can I help without expecting recognition?
9. A changed outlook	Your perspective on life can shift.	Am I responding differently to anything lately?
10. Fear about people and money	Social and financial fears lose their hold.	What support would help with a specific worry?
11. Handling difficult situations	Previously confusing situations become easier to navigate.	What question can I ask before deciding?
12. Help beyond oneself	Change is understood through a relationship with God.	How do I respond to the spiritual language?

Serenity and peace share a sentence in the original; this guide separates them for reflection. These themes are not a timetable, clinical predictions or a scorecard.

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One theme. One honest question.

Choose any theme, or leave the page blank. You do not need to agree with every phrase. Take a question to a trusted person rather than grading your recovery.

A theme I want to explore, or a phrase I question:

Something specific I have noticed - or have not noticed:

A question I would like to discuss:

Someone I can ask, and a practical next step:

Read the original

aa.org/faq/what-are-promises
Full official passage. In the Big Book: chapter 6, printed pages 83-84.

Open the official chapter PDF | Read AA's Twelve Steps

This worksheet does not direct amends or replace professional care. For safety, abuse, legal or health concerns, seek appropriate guidance. In immediate danger, contact local emergency services.