



June 12, 2022

From the Addiction & Recovery Taskforce: Step One

Disclaimer: For the purposes of this series, persons with substance use disorder may be referred to as addicts.

Step One - We admitted that we were powerless over our addiction, that our lives had become unmanageable.

It is necessary for addicts to admit that they have the disease of addiction and are powerless over it. Addiction is a physical, mental, and spiritual disease that affects every area of our lives.

Most of us try to stop using on our own without success. We rationalized the mess that we had made of our lives with drugs. The process of the first step helps to rid us of all reservations so we can surrender. Reservations rob us of the benefits of recovery.

We felt miserable without drugs and our lives were unmanageable. This is the second admission that must be made in order to build a strong foundation of recovery. Unmanageability manifests itself in many ways; unemployability, isolation, degradation, and lack of positive relationships. Families are baffled by our actions and sometimes desert or disown us.

We find that we must completely change our old ways of thinking or go back to using. Surrender means we accept our addiction and life the way it is and we become willing to do whatever is necessary to stay clean. Help for addicts begins only when we are able to admit complete defeat.

Step one teaches us that we do not have to use and this is a great freedom for us. We learn to incorporate this step into our daily lives and are rescued from insanity, depravity, and death.

The admission of both powerlessness and an inability to manage our own lives opens the door for a power greater than ourselves to help us. We continue this journey by moving on to Step Two

“Blessed Juneteenth!”

Many of you may already be making plans for Independence Day, July 4th. The national celebration commemorates the Declaration of Independence of the United States; the day citizens of the thirteen American colonies were no longer subject to Great Britain.

However, not all American citizens were freed on the Fourth of July. By 1776, there were an estimated 2.5 million enslaved people of African ancestry who were “owned” by fellow American colonists. That number soared to about 4 million by the start of the Civil War in 1861. For enslaved People of Color, the promise “that all men are created equal” meant nothing. Although President Lincoln declared all enslaved people in the Confederate States free via the Emancipation Proclamation (January 1, 1863), the proclamation could only be enforced by advancing Union troops. When the Civil War officially ended in April 1865, it took until June for Union army soldiers to reach Texas, the most remote state of the Confederacy. On June 19, 1865 Union Army General Gordon Granger finally proclaimed freedom to the remaining enslaved people of Texas. June 19th – or “Juneteenth” – has been celebrated continuously in various parts of the United States since 1865.

Last June (2021), Juneteenth National Independence Day was officially recognized as a federal holiday. This holiday is a celebration of freedom and independence for *all* people, equally endowed by God with the unalienable rights of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. We encourage all PSEC congregations to recognize and celebrate Juneteenth.

Rev. Leslie Mamas,
PSEC Racial Justice Initiative

**Love one another;
Work against racism**

Racial Justice Initiative
Pennsylvania Southeast Conference
of the United Church of Christ