

# **A WAY OUT**

A guide to working the  
12 Step program

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## **STEP ONE**

### **We admitted we were powerless over others - that our lives had become unmanageable**

The idea represented in Step One is overwhelming to most of us until we have begun to see our lives as they really are. It is uncomfortable for us to admit that we are powerless and that our lives are unmanageable. We fight for control and want to keep from being controlled by others. It may be that we are preoccupied with being the smartest or the fastest, or with having the best job. Our obsession may be our status in life, we find it difficult to believe that we could be powerless. Whatever we do, and however it may be labelled, some of our behaviour involves doing things that are against our better judgement. Step One places us on the threshold of identifying the root cause of the behaviour over which we have no control and which we seem unable to stop.

1. When did you first recognise your need to be in control? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. What happened, and how did you feel? \_\_\_\_\_

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Prior to becoming aware of our problem, we try everything possible to “fix” things. We know that something is wrong and that our life is not working. No matter what we do or where we look, things get progressively worse. We may suffer anxiety attacks, or uncontrollable compulsive behaviour. When we actually come to grips with ourselves and realise that we need help, we are ready for Step One. We have no alternative but to admit that we are powerless, and that our lives have become unmanageable.

3. When did you become concerned about your condition? \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What did you do about it? \_\_\_\_\_

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Step One is the foundation for all Steps. When working this Step, we see the facts of our lives in true perspective. It is not the purpose of this Step to judge ourselves. It is an opportunity to observe our behaviour and to admit that we need help. When we surrender to this idea, we will see our behaviour as it really is and be willing to be honest with ourselves. It is through this honesty that we begin to achieve serenity.

Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over others - that our lives had become unmanageable

5. Describe some of your behaviours that indicate you are operating in a dysfunctional manner and need help \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Step One consists of two distinct parts:**

Part 1: The admission that we have an obsessive desire to control and that we are experiencing the effects of an addictive process that has rendered us powerless over our own behaviour

Part 2: The admission that our lives have been, are now, and will continue to be unmanageable by us alone.

6. What difficulties are you having in recognising your powerlessness? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. What difficulties are you having in recognising that your life is unmanageable?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Admitting our powerlessness over addictive behaviour is what brings us to the Program. Here we can begin a process of recovery that will transform our lives. Since dysfunctional behaviour is a major characteristic of our disease, we must realise that our mind, with its acquired traits, habits, and character defects, has caused us to become powerless over our behaviour. By recalling our childhood histories, we see that years before we realised it, we were out of control. Our obsessions even then were not a habit but indeed the beginning of a fatal progressive disease.

8. What childhood memories most vividly illustrate the fact that you were raised in an unhealthy environment?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Our instinct cries out against the idea of personal powerlessness and the fact that we are not in control. We have been accustomed to accepting full responsibility for all that happens in our lives as well as in the lives of others. This contradicts the idea that we are powerless. How can we be fully responsible and at the same time be powerless? Until we hit bottom through utter defeat, we will be unable to take the first step toward liberation and renewed strength. The fact that we are powerless is a truth we must realise before we can totally surrender.

9. What are the major control issues in your life today? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. What is the key issue that caused you to hit bottom and admit utter defeat?

Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over others - that our lives had become unmanageable

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Admitting that our lives are unmanageable is equally as difficult as admitting that we are powerless. We see ourselves as responsible adults, holding a job, managing a house, and performing the required tasks on a daily basis. We have been taught from childhood that the best way to succeed is to manage our lives effectively. We are told that truly successful people manage their own lives as well as the lives of others.

11. What is your attitude toward your performance at work or at home? \_\_\_\_\_

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12. How do you see yourself as being unable to manage your life? \_\_\_\_\_

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13. In what area are you having the most difficulty? \_\_\_\_\_

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In order to come to terms with the facts that our lives are unmanageable, we need to recognise that managing our lives impossible. As we reflect on our lives, we can conclude that no matter what we are doing to manage our lives, the results were never quite what we planned. When we take time to realise that our depressions and frustrations are signs that we are not doing as good a job as we think we are doing, we begin to see the unmanageability. We see how we rationalise our behaviour and make excuses for ourselves, blaming our action on fatigue, stress, or other people. Once we can look at our lives objectively and recognise our own faults, we drop our disguise and become more honest with ourselves. We see that our lives are unmanageable and not at all what we would like them to be.

14. Explain situations in which people expressed concern about your behaviour.

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15. Who were they and what caused their concern? \_\_\_\_\_

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Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over others - that our lives had become unmanageable

Though the 1st Step may seem overwhelming, it merely points out our human limitations which have for so long been a source of discomfort to us. For most of our lives, we have tried to hide from ourselves. This has prevented us from facing the reality of our situation. Step One is the first step toward the humility we need to find spiritual guidance through reliance on a Higher Power.

16. What are the major limitations that have caused discomfort? \_\_\_\_\_

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17. What does humility mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_

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In the process of accepting our powerlessness and unmanageability, we must be willing to put aside the false pride that nearly killed us. Although working Step One can be painful for us, the road to recovery begins with surrender. Until we accept this truth, our progress toward recovery will be hindered. Although it is difficult for many of us to accept this fact, we must realise that we cannot manage our own lives or control our thinking. Our healing begins when we are willing to acknowledge our problem. This first step forms the foundation for working each of the Twelve Steps.

18. What is the primary behaviour pattern or habit you would like to correct in your process of recovery? (e.g. relationship addiction? Always having to be right? Overpowering guilt? Non-assertiveness? Fear of abandonment? And so on)

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19. What are the consequences in your life of practicing this behaviour pattern or habit? (e.g. violence, unhappiness, feeling out of control, fear of intimacy)

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20. What is your self-talk (words you say to yourself or thoughts you have) that prompts your behaviour? (e.g. He is not going to do this to me again)

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21. What is your life rule that prompts your self-talk and subsequent behaviours? (e.g. When I grow up, no one is going to push me around. If I don't do it to them first, they will do it to me)

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## THE PROBLEM

The following characteristics are those commonly found in codependents, adult children of the alcoholic/etc – people from dysfunctional families. The following exercise is intended to help you identify the areas in your life where there are difficulties.

### **A. We are isolated and are also afraid of authority figures.**

1. When did you first become aware that you were isolated and afraid of authority figures?

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2. In what ways are you experiencing this isolation and fear in your life today?

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### **B. We are approval seekers and lose our identity in the process.**

1. In what ways did you seek approval from your family or your peers as you were growing up?

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2. How do you do it today? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **C. We are frightened by angry people and any personal criticism.**

1. When do you recall first being frightened by angry people and becoming sensitive to personal criticism?

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2. When do you recall first being sensitive to personal criticism?

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- 3.. How are dealing with this today? \_\_\_\_\_

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Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over others - that our lives had become unmanageable

**D. We either become alcoholics or marry them, or both - or we find another compulsive personality, such as a workaholic, to fulfill our need for abandonment.**

1. Who among your friends, relatives, and business associates demonstrates compulsive personality styles?

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2. Of your close relationships, describe those who are alcoholic or workaholic, or who manifests other addictive personalities

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**E. We live life from the viewpoint of helping and seeking victims, and we are attracted by the weakness in our love and friendship relationships.**

1. List the things you do for others, that they could do for themselves, so that you feel needed.

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**F. We have an overdeveloped sense of responsibility, and it is easier for us to be concerned with others rather than with ourselves. this enables us to avoid looking closely at ourselves.**

1. Describe those areas of your life in which you feel a high degree of responsibility.

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2. Identify those areas you are most concerned about \_\_\_\_\_

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**G. We feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves; instead, we give in to others.**

1. Identify recent situations in which you were afraid to express your feelings and, instead, gave in to others

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**H. We are addicted to excitement.**



Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over others - that our lives had become unmanageable

1. List areas of your life in which you have noticed that you are addicted to the excitement of a relationship, work, or an activity

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- I. We confuse love with pity and tend to “love” people we can pity and rescue.**

1. Consider the individuals you love. How do you confuse love with pity and tend to love people you can pity and rescue?

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- J. We stuff back our feelings from our traumatic childhoods and lose the ability to feel or express our feelings. it hurts so much (denial).**

1. How do you express your feelings and acknowledge them when something is upsetting you in your work or relationship?

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- K. We judge ourselves harshly and we have a very low self-esteem, sometimes compensated for by trying to appear superior.**

1. In what ways do you think, feel, or act superior in an effort to compensate for your feelings of low self-esteem?

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## NOTES ON STEP 1:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over others - that our lives had become unmanageable

This image shows a full page of blank white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a guide for writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## STEP TWO

### **Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity**

Acceptance of our powerlessness leads us naturally to Step Two. By this time, we have begun to see the results of our past beliefs. "Came to believe" implies a former non-belief, or living life with other beliefs. The result of this lifestyle is our powerlessness and unmanageability. For some of us, belief in our self-will was all we had. Belief in a Higher Power did not seem necessary. Until we took Step One and admitted our powerlessness and unmanageability, we were operating on self-will alone. We simply did not entertain the idea of a Higher Power. As we begin to accept the notion of a Power greater than ourselves, we start to function in a healthier way. We begin to feel a sense of peace and serenity that we never felt before. We recognise that we are human beings who are struggling to survive with certain limitations.

1. What are some of your fears that block your acceptance of a Higher Power?

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Step Two is referred to as the Hope Step. It is the springboard from which we begin the journey toward spiritual awakening. In Step One, we felt hopeless and beaten as we surrendered. Step Two gives us new hope as we begin to see that there is help available if we simply come to believe. We no longer need to struggle alone. It is our choice to end our old patterns of behaviour and emerge into a new lifestyle. Our deep desire is to become the person we were meant to be. Step Two provides us with the foundation for the spiritual growth we seek in order to achieve our fulfilment.

2. What is your interpretation of a Higher Power at this point? Describe the attributes of that Power.

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3. The Twelve Steps have a spiritual foundation. What does this mean to you?

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Newcomers often find two major problems with this Step. The first is a belief in a Power greater than ourselves. We may have heard or read that "faith as small as a mustard seed can work wonders". If doubt persists, we may be denying the idea of a Higher Power's healing presence. We might find it impossible to imagine that even a Higher Power could heal our obsessions and compulsions. By accepting the fact that the most devout spiritual seekers suffer from dark moments of doubt, our faith can be strengthened. Our willingness to believe and to ask to have our faith strengthened marks the beginning of our spiritual development. This is the foundation of the ACA Twelve Step Program. The second problem with this Step is the implication of insanity. Having recognised that our lives are unmanageable, we must come to terms with the fact that we need a new director. These are powerful issues and, at first, can be frightening. For many of us, they are definite contradictions of our old beliefs and lifestyle.

4. What do you hope to gain from accepting the concept of a Power greater than yourself?

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5. In what areas of your life can you recognise insane behaviour?

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6. What does "faith as small as a mustard seed can work wonders" mean to you?

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Before entering the Program, many of us move away from the idea of anything spiritual. We don't understand it, or don't like the idea of it. Our lack of trust in others sometimes blocks our ability to accept that there could be a spiritual being who could offer us support. The basis for these beliefs may lie in the fact that we have become accustomed to having our self-will dictate every action. We are self-sufficient and don't see a need for outside support. Our prayers may not have been answered, and we may have lost confidence in a Higher Power. It is possible that our self-esteem is so low that we do not feel worthy of a Higher Power. We believe that we need to do everything ourselves, and we don't trust anyone.

7. Explain how lack of trust can block your acceptance of a Higher Power.

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8. What are some experiences you remember that caused you to lose faith in your Higher Power

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9. What are your memories of the spiritual environment in your home?

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If we have been successful in completing Step One, we have a good foundation for accepting the concept of a Higher Power. Having surrendered our powerlessness in Step One, we have become aware that our self-will has been getting in our way. When we discover there is a Power greater than ourselves, we let go of our self-will and can find our own Higher Power.

10. How has self-will been active in your life?  
Describe areas where your self-will dominates your actions

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11. What relief do you expect to feel when you become ready to let go of your self-will?

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Many people have found that all that is required to “come to believe” is to attend meetings on a regular basis. Through the dynamics of the Program, it becomes obvious that something is working for the people at the meetings. If we are willing to keep an open mind and recognise the success that people are enjoying, the rest can happen easily.

12. What is your pattern of attending meetings?

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13. How do you see attendance at meetings as necessary to your program?

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Our willingness to surrender and believe in the process helps us to replace our self-will and allows our unconscious to take over. When this happens, the idea of a Higher Power becomes acceptable to us. We shift our attention away from wanting our addictive behaviour to change, and we begin to understand that life is a process. Working the Steps and being healed is a process. This shift of focus reveals the presence of a Higher Power assisting, empowering, and doing things for us that we could not possibly have managed ourselves.

14. List examples of your willingness to trust in the process and surrender to the idea of a Higher Power being available to you

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During the beginning stages of accepting the presence of a Higher Power, it is sometimes helpful to make a game of it. We can look at chance events and coincidences in our lives as being miracles, or gifts, from our Higher Power. By taking time to thank our Higher Power for simple things, like “not getting a ticket for running a red light” or “finding a beautiful dress on sale”, we can learn to accept and appreciate His presence in our lives. This may seem silly at first, but it helps us to “come to believe”.

15. In what ways can you imagine yourself “playing games” in order to become familiar with the concept of a Higher Power? Example.

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Step Two does not mean that we must immediately come to believe in a Higher Power as He may be presented in various religious denominations. In fact, our belief in a Higher Power may come only as a result of seeing His power at work in our lives, all that is required is a willingness to believe there is a Power greater than ourselves. This Power can be whatever we choose it to be. It can be God as we understand Him, a friend, a partner, a person from the Program, or the Program itself. For some of us a Higher Power can be Love.

16. Describe your religious or spiritual belief. What are your reasons for believing as you do?

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17. Explain the Higher Power of your choice. How do you interact with this Higher Power?

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Belief in a Power greater than ourselves is central to becoming the happy, positive, and loving person we are truly meant to be. Inasmuch as our old ways led us into the depths of despair, we become self-centred, lonely, and detached from ourselves. We found that our reasoning mind could not solve all our problems.

18. Why is a belief in a Higher Power central to our being able to lead a fully rewarding life? What relief do you expect this belief to give you?

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Step Two implies that we are insane. The dictionary defines insanity as “inability to manage one’s own affairs and perform one’s social duties” and “without recognition of one’s own illness”. If this is our first exposure to the Steps, we may not be totally aware of the extent of our illness. We may still be blaming outside circumstances for our condition rather than admitting responsibility for our own behaviour.

19. Describe the fears in your life today (e.g. emotional and financial security, relationships, authority figures, rejection, abandonment, sex, or death)

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20. How do you see yourself as unable to manage your own affairs \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

21. What do you believe is that extent of your illness? Explain. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Many of us acquired certain characteristics and personality traits that protect us from the realities of life. Some of the more common characteristics are being defiant, self-sufficient, indifferent, resentful, self-deluded, and self-centred. These alone are an indication that we suffer from some form of insanity – that we behave insanely in many areas of our lives.

22. How do the characteristics listed above affect your ability to function normally in your current environment?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In order to make changes in our lives, we must be willing to look at ourselves honestly and recognise our own degree of insanity. It is easy for the alcoholic or chemically dependant person to accept his insanity, because his addictive behaviour is obviously insane. For adult children, it is more difficult to accept insanity because we are not aware of our behaviour. It is easy for us to deceive ourselves and look to outside sources for the cause of our dysfunction. We have a degree of responsibility in being aware of people, places, and things that activate our insane behaviour. When we break through this self-delusion, we become ready to accept our behaviour as being insane in many cases.

23. List the major areas in your life that indicate you behave insanely. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

24. In what ways do you blame others for your behaviour, rather than looking at yourself?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

As we come in contact with others and listen to their stories, we are exposed to experiences similar to ours. It becomes clear to us that we each maintain “emotional sobriety” only one day at a time and that we are in remission rather than totally cured. We must continually work at improving the quality of our lives. We eventually come to the realisation that anything we do or think that is destructive to ourselves or someone else is insane. Based on this, worry is insane, as well as depressions, compulsions and obsessions. The mere fact that we believe we can control others is insane.

25. How do worry, depressions, obsessions, and compulsions affect your behaviour?

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26. What are you willing to do to reduce the amount of stress in your life?

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27. What is your most effective tool for maintaining “emotional sobriety”?

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Our society as a whole is insane. We are taught from youth to do what is right, and it is expected that we know the difference between right and wrong. Based on our role models, the message as to what is right or wrong is not always clear. It is expected that we conduct ourselves responsibly and are able to manage our own lives. Since in reality we cannot manage our own lives, it must be concluded that we do not know the difference between right and wrong. When we accept this, we are truly ready to admit that we behave insanely.

28. How did the role models in your life contribute to your condition today?

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29. How did the role models in your life contribute to your current attitude toward life?

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30. What were the things most lacking in your role model?

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When we started this program, we may have been expecting instant results. During our childhood, it may have been common to see anger or confusion when things didn't happen “right now”. In this program sudden change is the exception, not the rule. It requires patience and understanding to achieve the recovery we are looking for. Each of us is unique, and recovery begins for us at different stages in the Steps. Some of us may experience instant relief, while others may not begin to feel different until later in the Steps.



Step 2 Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity

31. What childhood experiences have influenced your desire to have things happen “right now”.

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32. How have patience and understanding affected your ability to progress toward recovery?

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Coming to believe in a Higher Power and admitting our insanity require a great deal of humility. Lack of humility is what got us to the position we are in today, and it is important to practice humility in all our affairs. Humility is a recurrent theme of the Program, and our growth is enhanced by our willingness to be humble. As we attend meetings and work the Steps, we discover a peace and serenity that is possible only through our surrender and the desire to improve the quality of our lives.

33. List specific examples in which you are humble.

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When we become ready to accept fully our powerlessness and unmanageability (Step One) when we accept a Higher Power and our insanity (Step Two), we will be ready to take action and turn our lives over to the care of God as we understand Him (Step Three). There is no need to hurry. The important thing is that we are ready and that we have the faith necessary to proceed with the remaining Steps.

## NOTES ON STEP 2

[illegible]

Step 2 Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity

[illegible]

## **STEP THREE**

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

Step Three requires that we take affirmative action as a result of the developing awareness we have gained from working the first two steps. In Step One, we admitted we were powerless, that our lives had become unmanageable. In Step Two, we came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

1. List way in which Step One prepared you for Step Three.

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2. List ways in which Step Two prepared you for Step Three.

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Step Three seems to require more of us than the first two steps because we are now asked to turn ourselves over to a Higher Power with total abandon. If we feel pressured by this decision, we are going too fast. We must slow down and take the time needed to become ready to proceed. It is in these first three steps that we set the foundation for working all of the steps and for achieving the peace and serenity we are looking for.

3. List examples that indicate that you are prepared to turn your will and your life over to the care of your Higher Power.

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4. What resistance do you have that indicates you may have blocked a Higher Power from your life?

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The key to success in working Step Three lies in our willingness to turn our lives over to the care of a Higher Power. This is difficult for many of us because we are so accustomed to handling our lives on self-will alone. Our self-will has barred a Higher Power from our lives, and the idea of surrendering is frightening. We learned to pray to a Higher Power and ask Him for things we want, but we were always in control. We are accustomed to asking Him for guidance in helping us achieve our goals. This is different from turning our very essence over to Him to do whatever He wants without our having any say in the matter.

Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him

5. When, where, and how does self-will appear in your life?

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6. What goals or objectives do you pray for that show you are asking for *your will* rather than your Higher Power's will?

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If we have successfully worked Steps One and Two, we have accepted our situation and are ready to look for a new manager for our lives. Letting our Higher Power guide our lives becomes a little easier when we realise that we haven't done such a good job so far. Our fears and resentments become manageable when we choose our Higher Power as our new director. We discover that we can impact our lives in a positive way. As we begin to rely on a Higher Power, we become willing to turn our lives over and to trust the results.

7. What are your expectations as to the outcome of turning your life over to our Higher Power's management?

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In the beginning stages of turning our lives over, we will possibly experience resistance. This may be attributed to our need for independence since most of us thrive on being in charge and cling to the illusion of being free to "do our own thing". We may concede only the problems that are causing us the most pain. This is usually a start, and will provide us with the confidence needed as we see that our Higher Power has answers to all of our problems. As we become more comfortable with the fact that our problems do diminish, we become more willing to accept the notion of turning our entire lives over to His care.

8. Is your focus more on turning only your problems over rather than surrendering completely? Explain

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9. Are there ways in which your trust in your Higher Power is deepening \_\_\_\_\_

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Experience tells us that the more willing we are, the faster the Program will come to us, the faster we will get its meaning and be able to live it. If we try too hard consciously, we will become impatient and block our progress with frustration, irritation, resentment, and self-pity.

Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him

10. List the ways in which obsessive thinking and compulsive behaviour still cause problems in your life.

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The central theme of Step Three is best expressed by the slogan “Let Go and Let God”. The idea of letting go can help us greatly because we see that surrendering our will only allows us for further growth. We begin to realise that our Higher Power takes good care of us. As long as we do the “footwork” and do not expect our Higher Power to do everything for us, we will find our Higher Power’s will for us and be able to carry out His plan.

11. What meaning does the statement “Pray to God, but row toward shore” have for you as it relates to doing the “footwork

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Our thinking mind, using instinct and logic to bolster our ego, tells us that we will become nothing if we turn our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power. Strange as it may seem, the more we are willing to depend on a Higher Power, the more independent we become. Our dependence on our Higher Power is actually a means of gaining the true spiritual independence that we all seek.

12. Dependence on your Higher Power is really a means of gaining independence. What does this mean to you?

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Caution is an important factor in completing this Step. If we are not completely comfortable with the idea of turning our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power, we must slow down and do more work. Some of us may still be experiencing the powerful impact of our addictive behaviour. Whatever it involves, be it relationships, money, drugs, or food, we face the prospect of spiritual as well as physical death. We began this program because the path we were on was destroying our life. This behaviour was a way to temporarily numb the emotional pain, distract our boredom, or relieve us of stress. Being asked to trust in a Higher Power may present a challenge to us since we in no way can manipulate or manage our Higher Power.

13. What behaviour do you still feel enslaved by that prevents you from turning *all* of your life over to your Higher Power?

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The Twelve Steps is a spiritual program. Step Three is an opportunity to let a Spiritual Power greater than us take charge of the rest of our lives. Fundamentally, this also means we must stop feeling responsible for everything and everybody. This is simply to say that the way to experience peace and serenity is to surrender.

Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him

14. Measure your present acceptance of the Twelve Steps as a spiritual program of recovery.

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It is not important to understand a Higher Power in order to let go. We need only believe in the process of our own well-being. If we are having trouble take Step Three, it is probably because we did not successfully take Step Two. In this case, it is important to return to Step Two before proceeding.

15. What is your response to the statement "It isn't necessary (or possible) to understand your Higher Power. We need only accept that the Power is there and know it can restore us to sanity"?

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Once we are ready to take Step Three, we will see a change come over us. We will appear calmer and feel that a weight has been lifted from our shoulders. It can happen right away or gradually over a day or two as our consciousness begins to recognise that a Higher Power seems to be taking over. Don't expect to remain in this state of euphoria forever. There will be times when we take our wills back, and we need only to recognise this. There are no saints in this Program; we will have slips. However, as we continue to work the Program on a daily basis, we will see that we become more ready and willing to continually turn our lives over.

17. In what ways are you aware of your tendency to take charge of matters that would be better left to your Higher Power?

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There is a paradox in the way this program seems to work. When we give up managing our own lives and begin to trust our Higher Power's will for us, we will find that we are calmer and more accepting of things around us. Friends will compliment us on how well we are managing our lives. As we stop trying to keep ourselves on a straight and narrow path of self-discipline, people will begin to recognise how well-disciplined we are.

18. What changes have you or others noticed in your behaviour that can be attributed to working the program?

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Most of us who start this Program do so in search of answers to the complex questions of life and also to find a way to stop repeating painful cycles of ineffectual behaviour. In the past, some of us may have experimented with lifestyles and beliefs that appeared to present solutions. What we are really looking for is a personal experience of our Higher Power that transcends the arguments over mankind's conflicting dogmas.

Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him

In concluding the examination of your preparedness to turn your will and life over to your Higher Power, what was revealed to you about how you have?

19. 'MADE A DECISION ...' Have you stopped *thinking* about it and *done* it? If you haven't yet made a decision, list the things that are holding you back.

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20. "TO TURN OUR WILL AND OUR LIVES OVER ..." Do you trust that turning over doesn't mean giving up your life? If your answer to this question is "no", explain why you feel this way.

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21. "TO THE CARE OF GOD ..." How do you see your Higher Power as caring for you?

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22. "AS WE UNDERSTAND HIM ..." How do you understand Him now? If you are still struggling with the idea of your Higher Power, what events have formed your present view?

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If you are prepared to take Step Three, repeat the step *out loud* right now. Follow your assertion of the Third Step with the AA Third Step prayer. This prayer is a powerful way to focus on your daily intention to turn your life over to the care of your Higher Power.

#### THIRD STEP PRAYER

"God, I offer myself to You - to build with me and do with me as You will. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Your will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Your Power, Your Love, and Your Way of Life. May I do Your Will always".

#### THIRD STEP GIFT

Striving for recognition ...  
An appearance of authority ...  
Accomplishment ...  
A relationship that fits my pictures.  
All a mirage, relentless ...  
Thirsting to fill the emptiness within ... Incessantly demanding more and more.  
Yet - ever present, within, Serene and uncritical ...  
Poised in the gentle stillness  
of infinite patience ...  
Spirit ...  
My Higher Power , comforting love, awaits.

*Alcoholics Anonymous, Alcoholics Anonymous World Services. Inc., [New York p 68]*

Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him

## NOTES ON STEP 3

[illegible]



### **HIGHER POWER EXERCISE**

The purpose of this writing exercise is to deepen your contact with your own Higher Power (Inner Wisdom, Higher Self).

This process works best when you can write uninterrupted for a period of time and when you can be quiet and meditative with soft music playing.

Don't look for anything profound as a result of doing this exercise. This is an opportunity to discover a special part of you and say "hello". The growth of your relationship with your Higher Power will take place as you acknowledge its existence and call on your Higher Power for guidance.

There are six stages involved in completing this process. Each builds on the other so, for best results, follow the sequence as listed.

### **LIFE SEGMENTS**

Use the Higher Power worksheet (LIFE SEGMENTS) to divide your life into ten-year-segments. In each segment, list the heroes you worshipped, wisdom figures you thought to be wise, or people you admired and wanted to imitate. They can be people you have known personally, either living or dead. They can be people you have never known – mythical, historical, or religious figures, characters from books, TV, or movies.

EXAMPLES: Parent, grandparent, aunt, Jesus Christ, Virgin Mary, saint, priest, rabbi, Buddha, Greek Gods, prophet, teacher, coach, political figure, Billy Graham, Joan of Arc, John F Kennedy, Martin Luther King, animals, objects.

Note briefly the specialness about each figure and what you received from them.

### **SPECIALNESS RECEIVED**

Transfer the list of special things you received from these figures to the Higher Power worksheet (SPECIALNESS RECEIVED)

### **MEDITATION**

After attempting the above, sit quietly, meditate, and listen to music. Use the image of a kaleidoscope. Close your eyes and let all of the figures you have cherished blend together. Don't try to think up an image; just let it happen. Trust that it will come to you without any effort on your part. Accept that the image is forming in your mind at this moment. Now relax and see within yourself your own Higher Power. Let your creative mind present you with an image of all those special people that you have known or related to. Let your imagination create that special someone or something that makes you feel quiet, safe, accepted, understood, loved, and supported – that something or someone with whom you can share everything about yourself without reservation.

### **RESULT OF MEDITATION**

Begin slowly to open your eyes and return to the present. When you are ready, without interruption, draw a picture or describe in writing the Higher Power that you discovered as a result of this experience. List the qualities that your Higher Power has that are meaningful to you.

### **DIALOGUE WITH YOUR HIGHER POWER**

There is a final step necessary to get in touch with your Higher Power. Since your Higher Power is not part of your intellect, He cannot be contacted by thinking. Relax for a moment and pretend your mind is a tape recorder. Run a cleaning tape through it so that all thoughts and concerns are erased from your mind. There is no need to think about anything. Relax and let your mind go blank, wait for whatever comes to mind and write it down without worrying about it.

Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him

Let your hand do the writing. Record what you hear or feel spontaneously. Nothing is irrelevant; try to capture every word and image that occurs to you. It may seem silly, nonsensical, or embarrassing, but write it anyway. Write fast so that you don't have time to think about what you are doing. Don't take time to censor or to make sense of your writing.

Some suggestions that may help you in this process are as follows:

1. Avoid looking at the page.
2. Close your eyes while writing.
3. Ignore punctuation rules.
4. Write with your other hand as a means of keeping out of your head.
5. Allow dialogue to develop. You are the pen through which your Higher Power is communicating and responding to questions.

Limit writing to approximately 15 minutes.

Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him

<b>Example</b>	<b>1-10yrs</b>	<b>11-20yrs</b>	<b>21-30yrs</b>
Grandfather Love Playtime Walks Advice			
<b>31-40yrs</b>	<b>41-50yrs</b>	<b>51-60yrs</b>	<b>61-70yrs</b>

Step 3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him

## Specialness received during life segments

Love \_\_\_\_\_

Advice \_\_\_\_\_

Playfulness \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible][illegible]

# STEP FOUR

## Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

Our introduction to the ACA Program occurs as a result of a series of very painful events brought about by the external pressures of reality. The pain of this reality has weakened the defenses that comprise our denial system, and we are forced to look at ourselves and see the consequences of our addictive behaviour. Our shock and acknowledgement of the serious problems in our lives form the beginning of an adventure in self-discovery and recovery. We start facing ourselves and uncovering our acquired character defects. When we accept the fact that these character defects are acquired, we can come to terms with how they have controlled us in the past, and then we can let go of them.

1. What anxieties do you have about preparing your inventory?

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As part of this process, we become aware of the denial that has protected us from the reality of our addicted behaviour and preserved our limited sense of self-worth and dignity. Step Four will help us deal with our denial system, which has been one of our major survival techniques. Denial has distorted our perception and impaired our judgement so that we have become self-deluded and incapable of accurate self-awareness.

2. How do you see denial as one of your survival techniques? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Describe your behaviour when you are in denial. \_\_\_\_\_

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Denial is the core component of our illness. To a greater or lesser extent, it can be found in all of us. It can be the fatal aspect of our illness because it keeps us locked in an increasingly destructive pattern. It consists of many defenses and manoeuvres that we use to protect ourselves from the reality of our condition. Step Four is a helpful tool for penetrating our denial system, and it provides us with an opportunity to learn a great deal about our illness and its consequences. Denial is seen in many different forms and operates in various ways, some of which are as follows:

- A. Pretending that something does not exist when in reality it does.
- B. Being willing to admit that there is a problem but unwilling to see the severity of it.
- C. Seeing the problem as being caused by someone or something else.  
The behaviour is not denied, but its cause is someone else's responsibility.
- D. Offering excuses, alibis, justifications, and other explanations for behaviour.
- E. Dealing with the problem on a general level, avoiding the personal and emotional awareness of the situation or conditions.
- F. Changing the subject to avoid threatening topics.

- G. Becoming angry or irritable when reference is made to this condition.  
This helps to avoid these issues.

4. In what environments is denial most active? (e.g. family, work, social relationships)

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During the first three steps, we faced many changes in our lives. In Step One, we admitted that we were powerless, that our lives had become unmanageable. In Step Two, we came to believe in a Higher Power as a means of restoring our sanity. In Step Three, we made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood Him.

5. Review Step One and list any areas in which you are having difficulty accepting the idea of powerlessness and unmanageability

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6. Review Step Two and list any areas in which you are having difficulty accepting the idea of a Higher Power and your insanity.

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7. Review Step Three and list any areas in which you are having difficulty accepting the idea of turning your will and your life over to the care of your Higher Power.

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An inventory is not a history. It relates to what is on hand at the moment. It is a list of things in stock now and does not concern what was there in the past. Looking at the inventory in this way, it is easier to make it a fearless inventory because we have no reason to fear the present. Writing is important and is a key to success in working Step Four. As we list our qualities, we will discover both good and bad traits that will amaze us. It is important not to judge ourselves but rather to recognise that our main goal is to accept what we discover.

8. What is your interpretation of a fearless inventory?

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As we more completely understand the childhood origin of much of our behaviour, we will develop a mature perspective on our being adult children. Understanding our behaviour is only part of the task we are faced with in reach our inner child. We have no doubt identified some of our childhood behaviours, and we understand them to be dysfunctional. However, we continue to repeat them unconsciously and are frustrated by their reappearance. This can be likened to gardeners continually lopping off tops of weeds that,

just as persistently, regrow from the roots that lay hidden beneath the surface. Step Four uncovers many childhood roots that can be dealt with through the help of our Higher Power.

This process is a vital key to our personal transformation.

9. Which of your childhood behaviours do you most often repeat? \_\_\_\_\_

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10. How is understanding your behaviour helping you to get to know your inner child?

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Two of the linkpins that hold our problem behaviour in place are resentment and fear. They have had a strong impact on our childhood, and we still find them deeply influencing our adult behaviour. Resentment, among other feelings of unexpressed anger, is thought to be the source from which many mental and physical ills originate. Going through life with deep resentments can only result in futility and unhappiness. If we allow our resentments (fancied or real) to dominate us, they have the power to destroy us.

11. List three major resentments you have towards people, institutions, or principles.

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The destructive power of fear is equally detrimental and corrosive to the fabric of our lives. At this point in our recovery, we may find fear in all our behaviours. Whatever its origin, given a particular situation in our daily lives (e.g. fear of abandonment or authority figures), fear will set in motion a sequence of circumstances that will bring about a misfortune we feel we don't deserve. As we inventory our fears, we may find that their presence is particularly evident when our self-reliance fails us. Our belief may be that if we only had enough self-confidence, we wouldn't have this problem. Here, again, our self-delusion is dangerous. If we have sincerely taken Step Three, we are now prepared to trust and rely upon an infinite Higher Power instead of our finite selves.

12. List three major fears you have toward people, institutions, or principles.

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Being willing to face our resentments and our fears takes courage. However, our faith in our Higher Power is the taproot through which we will let Him demonstrate what He can do. The spiritual sickness that is tied to resentment and fear is the malady we can overcome by sincerely working these Steps with our Higher Power. Having a spiritual healing will straighten out the crippling mental and physical conditions of our lives.

13. How can your relationship with your Higher Power help you to overcome your resentments and fears?

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Step Four provides a means for viewing ourselves honestly, possibly for the first time. This can be the beginning of a new awareness of ourselves. Some of the discoveries may be overwhelming to us. In that case, we need only turn the responsibility for acceptance of ourselves over to our Higher Power. If we have successfully worked Steps One through Three, this should be relatively easy.

14. What difficulties might you encounter in attempting to look at yourself honestly and recognise who you really are?

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As we prepare our Fourth Step inventory, we will be looking at our character traits and seeing our strengths and weaknesses. Our strengths are seen in behaviour that has positive effects on ourselves as well as on others. Our weaknesses manifest themselves in behaviour that is destructive to ourselves and to others. Before we can correct our problem areas, we need to examine and acknowledge our weaknesses. This understanding lies in discovering how we talk to ourselves – the ideas, beliefs, and attitudes that govern how we act.

15. What do you consider to be your main strengths? \_\_\_\_\_

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16. What do you consider to be your weaknesses? \_\_\_\_\_

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The inventory you will be preparing is for your own benefit. It can be a tool for making a major breakthrough in your recovery and for setting you on to the road to freedom. As you write the inventory, certain feelings may arise. If you notice that you are having difficulty being completely honest, denial may still be at work. Stop for a moment and reflect on what your true feelings are. Take time to “tune in” to your true feelings so that you can rid yourself of the excess baggage you have been carrying for an indefinite period of time. Remember that your Higher Power is with you and prepared to offer the support and guidance you need to complete this work.



17. What are your current feelings toward preparing your inventory (e.g. fear, anger, judgement)?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## IMPORTANT GUIDELINES IN PREPARING YOUR INVENTORY

The material offered in this Fourth Step Inventory is somewhat different from the inventory guides used in other Twelve Step Programs. The emphasis is on the character defects most commonly seen in adult children. When preparing the inventory, choose behaviour traits that specifically apply to you. Use recent event and record word and actions as accurately as possible.

The inventory begins with an exercise on resentment and fear, followed by a series of character traits to be examined. This process enables you to prepare for the Fifth Step. You are the primary beneficiary for your honesty and thoroughness in this inventory.

It is important not to write in generalities. As you will note in the example provided for “Isolation”, being specific is helpful in identifying where the trait is active. When you list specific examples of your behaviour, include WHO, WHEN, WHERE, WHAT. As part of being specific, give all the names of all persons involved in the situation with you (WHO). Record the date this behaviour took place (WHEN). Indicate where this behaviour took place (WHERE). Finally, describe your behaviour and tell what you did (WHAT).

Remember, the work you are doing as part of this Step is a demonstration of your faith that your Higher Power can do for you what you cannot do for yourself.

## RESENTMENT EXERCISE

Resentment is a source of all forms of spiritual disease. Our mental and physical ills are the result of this unwholesome condition. Learning to deal with resentment is an important part of our recovery process.

List situations in which resentment is a problem for you. Answer the following questions when describing these conditions.

- a. What or who do you resent? (e.g. people, institutions, principles)
- b. Why are you resentful? (e.g. What happened to cause this resentment?)
- c. How has this resentment affected you? (e.g. self-esteem, finances, goals, relationships, sex, physical harm, or threats)
- d. What character defect is active? (e.g. approval seeking, control, abandonment)

EXAMPLE: (a) I RESENT my boss (b) BECAUSE he doesn't care to hear my story about why I am depressed. (c) THIS AFFECTS my self-esteem. (d) THIS ACTIVATES unexpressed anger and approval seeking.

1. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_
2. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_
3. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_
4. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_
5. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_
6. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_

## FEAR EXERCISE

Fear is a source of all forms of spiritual disease. Our mental and physical ills are the result of this unwholeness condition. Learning to deal with fear is an important part of our recovery process.

List situations in which fear is a problem for you. Answer the following questions when describing these conditions.

- a. What or who do you fear? (e.g. people, institutions, principles)
- b. Why are you fearful? (e.g. What happened to cause this resentment?)
- c. How has this fear affected you? (e.g. self-esteem, finances, goals, relationship, sex, physical harm, or threats)
- d. What character defect is active? (e.g. approval seeking, control, abandonment)

EXAMPLE: (a) I FEAR my partner (b) BECAUSE I can never please him. (c) THIS AFFECTS my self-esteem and my sexuality. (d) THIS ACTIVATES my fear of abandonment.

1. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_
2. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_
3. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
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(d) \_\_\_\_\_
5. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_
6. (a) \_\_\_\_\_  
(b) \_\_\_\_\_  
(c) \_\_\_\_\_  
(d) \_\_\_\_\_

## **CHARACTER TRAITS (WEAKNESSES)**

Below is an example to assist you in completing the questions asked about the traits. Be as thorough as possible. Use additional pages as needed.

### **ISOLATION**

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate that you are isolating yourself.
  - a. I turned down an invitation to Sharon's party last Saturday, because I feared being able to participate.
  - b. I feel bashful at work when George, my supervisor, asked me why I did not actively participate in the Monday morning management meeting.
2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. fear, resentment, anger, guilt)
  - a. I am afraid to be less than perfect and to let myself go. This inhibits my ability to have fun. I worry about not fitting in as well as being noticed.
  - b. I fear personal criticism if I express myself freely. Instead, I isolate myself by not speaking up.
3. What is being hurt, threatened or interfered with? (e.g. self-esteem, security, personal or sexual relations)
  - a. My self-esteem is affected when I expose myself to others. I judge myself without mercy. This interferes with my desire to have a love relationship and meet new people.
  - b. I feel my job security is at risk.

## **CHARACTER TRAITS (STRENGTHS)**

Below is an example to assist you in completing the questions asked about the traits. Be as thorough as possible. Use additional pages as needed.

### **RECOVERY FROM ISOLATION**

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate that you are isolating yourself less frequently.
  - a. Today I went to lunch with Diane and Evelyn. I felt comfortable and at ease and was able to share in the conversation. I took a risk and shared some special feelings about my desire to be in an intimate relationship. I did not feel threatened by sharing this.
  - b. During last Monday's management meeting I expressed a concern relative to rising business expenses. Rather than be criticised I was acknowledged for taking the time to provide the information.
2. What do you hope to achieve as you become more confident about situations in which you would usually isolate yourself?
  - a. I want to cultivate new, healthy relationships which will help me feel more comfortable in social settings. I hope to become more flexible so that I can learn to be spontaneous and have fun.
  - b. I want to become more assertive and expressive in business settings. I believe this will be an opportunity to actualise my full potential.

## ANGER

## DESCRIPTION

Anger is a major source of many of our problems. It is a feeling that we often suppress because it is so uncomfortable for us. In our chaotic homes, the turmoil was so intense that we learned to deny our anger. We felt safer not expressing our anger and hoped it would go away. We eventually became aware of its presence. Repressed anger leads to serious resentment and depression. It causes physical complications that lead to stress-related illnesses. Denying anger causes problems in relationships because we are not being truthful about our feelings. We are fearful of alienating people and destroying relationships.

## FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOUR

1. RESENTMENT
2. SELF-PITY
3. JEALOUSY
4. PREJUDICE
5. DEPRESSION
6. SADNESS
7. PHYSICAL ILLNESS

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate that you are angry  

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. resentment, anxiety, guilt, insecurity)  

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3. What is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? (e.g. self-esteem, goals, security, personal or sexual relations)  

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## RECOVERY FROM ANGER

## DESCRIPTION

Learning to express anger is a major step toward recovery. It releases us from a lot of hidden emotions and allows healing to take place. Expressing anger is a vehicle for setting boundaries and help us to be honest with ourselves. As we become willing to express anger honestly, we find that we move beyond the emotion and that we are better able to cope with the situation. Our relationships improve as we begin to feel safe in expressing ourselves. Stress-related problems diminish, and we feel better physically.

## FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOUR

1. EXPRESS ANGER
2. IDENTIFY TRUE FEELINGS
3. MAKE REASONABLE REQUESTS
4. SET BOUNDARIES
5. INNER CALM AND PEACE

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you are expressing anger in a healthy way

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

2. What do you hope to achieve as you identify and release your anger?

[illegible]

## APPROVAL SEEKING

### DESCRIPTION

As a result of our dysfunctional upbringing, we fear disapproval and criticism. What we wanted so desperately as children was to receive approval from our parents, grandparents, siblings, and significant others. This occurred rarely for most of us, so we were constantly seeking validation of ourselves. The need for validation continues into adulthood and manifests itself in the way we pattern our behaviour around the desires of others. This behaviour keeps us out of touch with our true feelings and causes us to be insecure. It prevents us from discovering our wants and needs. We were always on the lookout for others' reactions and attempts to manage their impressions of us. We constantly please everyone and remain loyal to extremes.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                          |                                    |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. ABANDONMENT OF SELF   | 6. PEOPLE PLEASING                 |
| 2. DISHONESTY            | 7. FEAR OF PERSONAL CRITICISM      |
| 3. IMPRESSION MANAGEMENT | 8. IGNORING YOUR OWN NEEDS         |
| 4. FEAR OF FAILURE       | 9. INSECURITY (LACK OF CONFIDENCE) |
| 5. EXTREME LOYALTY       |                                    |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you are seeking approval

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. fear, insecurity)

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3. What areas are being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? (e.g. self-esteem, goals, security, personal or sexual reactions)

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## RECOVERY FROM APPROVAL SEEKING

## DESCRIPTION

We begin to rely on our own approval and on that of our Higher Power. We understand that wanting approval is okay, but we no longer need to seek approval, or validation, from outside sources. We accept compliments from others and learn to simply say thank you, believing that the compliment is sincere. We say yes when it feels comfortable, and we are willing to say no when it doesn't feel right.

## FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

1. RECOGNISE OUR FEELINGS
2. TELL THE TRUTH ABOUT HOW WE FEEL
3. SELF LOYALTY
4. SECURITY IN BEING OURSELVES

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you are seeking approval.

[illegible]

2. What do you hope to achieve as you need for approval lessens?

[illegible]



## CARETAKING

### DESCRIPTION

As long as we take care of others, solve their problems, and supply their needs, we are not required to look at ourselves. As this trait becomes more pronounced, we lose our own identity. As children, we took on the concerns and problems of others far beyond our years and, in many cases, were deprived of a normal childhood. The attention we got caused us to believe we had God-like powers. Taking care of other boosted our self-esteem and made us feel indispensable. It gave purpose to our life. As caretakers, we are most comfortable with chaotic situation in which we can be reassured that we are needed. We often end up as martyrs and never experience the joy of taking care of ourselves.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                            |                                 |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1. HELP AND SEEK "VICTIMS" | 5. MAKE OURSELVES INDISPENSABLE |
| 2. RESCUE PEOPLE           | 6. MARTYRDOM                    |
| 3. IGNORE OUR NEEDS        | 7. LOSS OF IDENTITY             |
| 4. SUPER-RESPONSIBLE       |                                 |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you are being a caretaker.

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. guilt, low self-esteem, resentment, anxiety)

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3. What is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? (e.g. self-esteem, goals, security, personal or sexual relations)

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## RECOVERY FROM CARETAKING

### DESCRIPTION

As we leave the role of caretaker, we stop being responsible for everyone and allow each individual to find his own way. We understand that everyone has a Higher Power, which is the best source for guidance, love, and support. We become free from the burden of meeting everyone's needs and find time to develop our own personalities. Our obsession to care for others is replaced with the acceptance that we are powerless over the lives of others and that our only responsibility in life is for our own welfare and happiness.

## FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

1. STOP RESCUING
2. LEARN TO CARE FOR OURSELVES
3. SET BOUNDARIES
4. DEVELOP OWN IDENTITY
5. DETACH FROM “VICTIM”

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you are not being a caretaker.

[illegible]

2. What do you hope to achieve as you become more aware of your needs and stop being a caretaker?

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## CONTROL

As children, we had little control over our environment or the events that took place in our lives. As adults, we control our feelings and behaviour, and we try to control the feelings and behaviours of others. We become rigid, manipulative, and we lack spontaneity in our lives. There is an element of distrust in our need to control. We trust only ourselves to carry out a task or to handle a situation. We manipulate others in order to manage their impressions of us, and we keep a balance that feels safe for us. We fear that our lives will get worse if we let go of control. We become stressed and anxious when control is not possible.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                           |                           |
|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. OVERREACTION TO CHANGE | 5. JUDGEMENTALISM         |
| 2. RIGIDITY               | 6. LACK OF TRUST          |
| 3. INTOLERANCE            | 7. DIFFICULTY HAVING FUN  |
| 4. FEAR OF FAILURE        | 8. MANIPULATION OF OTHERS |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you are attempting to control or manipulate people or situations.

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. fear, insecurity, lack of trust, resentment, anger)

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3. What is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? (e.g. self-esteem, goals, security, personal or sexual relations)

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## RECOVERY FROM CONTROL

As we become more aware of our controlling behaviour, we realise that we are powerless and that we have no control over anything or anyone except ourselves. We stop manipulating situations in an effort to get our way, and we begin to accept our Higher Power as the ultimate source of security. As we begin to surrender our will and our lives to the care of our Higher Power, we eliminate a great deal of stress and anxiety. We become willing to participate without being concerned about the outcome. Recital of the Serenity Prayer can be a helpful tool in correcting our desire to control.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                         |                               |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. ACCEPTANCE OF CHANGE | 4. REDUCTION IN STRESS LEVELS |
| 2. TRUST IN PEOPLE      | 5. LEARN TO HAVE FUN          |
| 3. LET GO               | 6. ACCEPT OTHERS AS THEY ARE  |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you no longer feel a need to be in control.

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2. What do you hope to achieve as you become less controlling?

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## FEAR OF ABANDONMENT

### DESCRIPTION

As children, we observe unpredictable behaviour. Never knowing from one day to the next whether our parents will be there, many of us were abandoned either physically or emotionally. Fear of abandonment was a pattern established in early childhood because of our desperate attempts to please our parents. However, as their addiction increased in severity, we simply did not exist. As adults, we choose partners with whom we can re-enact this fear. By trying hard to be perfect and to meet our partner's needs, we avoid conflicts in order to avoid experiencing the pain of our past. Reducing this pain takes preference over dealing with the issue, or conflicts, and creates an environment of tension and poor communication.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                  |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. INSECURITY    | 4. WORRY                     |
| 2. CARETAKING    | 5. LEARN TO HAVE FUN         |
| 3. CO-DEPENDENCY | 6. ACCEPT OTHERS AS THEY ARE |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you no longer feel a need to be in control.

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. inadequacy, jealousy, need to be needed)

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3. What is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? (e.g. self-esteem, goals, security, personal or sexual relations)

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## RECOVERY FROM FEAR OF ABANDONMENT

### DESCRIPTION

By relying upon the ever-present love of our Higher Power, our self-worth increases; our fear of, and need for, abandonment diminishes. We seek out healthy relationships with people who love and take care of themselves. We feel more secure in revealing our feelings. We transfer old dependence on others to our Higher Power. We learn to understand and accept a nurturing and loving fellowship in ACA. Our self-confidence grows as we begin to realise that we will never again be totally alone.

## FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

1. TRUE EXPRESSIONS OF FEELINGS
2. SELF-CONFIDENCE
3. CONSIDER OUR OWN NEEDS IN A RELATIONSHIP
4. REDUCE OUR CARETAKING AND CO-DEPENDENCY TRAITS

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you no longer fear abandonment.

[illegible]

2. What goals do you hope to achieve as your fears of abandonment lessen?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## FEAR OF PEOPLE AND AUTHORITY FIGURES

### DESCRIPTION

Unwarranted fear of people in roles of authority is a result of low self-esteem. We are unable to deal with people whom we perceive as being in a position of power. Common assertiveness displayed by people is often misinterpreted by us as anger. This can cause us to feel intimidated and to become oversensitive. No matter how competent we are, we compare ourselves to others and often conclude that we are inadequate. As a result, we accept compromise and avoid confrontation or criticism.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                        |                          |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. FEAR OF REJECTION   | 4. COMPARING             |
| 2. OVER SENSITIVITY    | 5. REACT RATHER THAN ACT |
| 3. SELF-ESTEEM (PRIDE) | 6. INADEQUACY            |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you fear people and authority figures.

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. resentment, anxiety, anger, guilt, insecurity)

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3. What is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? (e.g. self-esteem, goals, security, personal or sexual relations)

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## RECOVERY FROM FEAR OF PEOPLE AND AUTHORITY FIGURES

### DESCRIPTION

As we begin to feel comfortable and involved with people and authority figures, we stop focusing on pleasing and begin to behave as our true selves. We then recognise everyone as being like us, with their own fears, defenses, and insecurities. Others' behaviour (assertiveness etc) no longer dictates how we feel about ourselves. We start acting rather than reacting when responding to others. We recognise that our ultimate authority figure is our Higher Power, who is always with us.

## FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

1. INCREASED SELF-ESTEEM
2. STAND UP FOR OURSELVES
3. ACCEPT CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM
4. INTERACT WITH PEOPLE AND AUTHORITY FIGURES

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you are gaining confidence around people and authority figures.

[illegible]

2. What do you hope to achieve as you become confident and secure around people and authority figures?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



## FROZEN FEELINGS

### DESCRIPTION

Many of us have difficulty expressing feelings or even realizing that we have feelings. We harbour deep emotional pain and a deeply felt sense of guilt. As children, our feelings were met with disapproval, anger, and rejection. As a means of survival, we learnt to hide our feelings or to repress them entirely. As adults, we are not in touch with our feelings. We can only experience “acceptable” feelings in order to be safe. Feelings are distorted so that we can protect ourselves from reality. Distorted and repressed feelings cause resentment, anger, and depression, which eventually lead to physical illness.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                               |                          |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. OUT OF TOUCH WITH FEELINGS | 4. AVOIDANCE OF FEELINGS |
| 2. DISTORTED FEELINGS         | 5. PHYSICAL ILLNESS      |
| 3. SUPPRESSED FEELINGS        |                          |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate that you are not expressing your feelings.

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. fear, resentment, anger, guilt, depression)

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3. What is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with (e.g. self-esteem, goals, security, personal or sexual relations)

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## RECOVERY FROM FROZEN FEELINGS

### DESCRIPTION

As we get in touch with our feelings and learn to express them, wonderful things begin to happen. Our stress levels begin to decrease, and we begin to see ourselves as worthwhile people. We learn that expression of feelings is a great way to communicate, and we find that our needs can be met. All we have to do is ask. As we begin to release our feelings, we experience some levels of pain. But the pain goes away, and we develop a sense of peace and serenity. The more willing we are to take risks in releasing our emotions, the more effective our recovery will be.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                                |                            |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|
| 1. FACING REALITY              | 3. ABILITY TO CRY          |
| 2. OPEN EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS | 4. EXPRESS NEEDS TO OTHERS |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you are learning to be aware of your feelings and to express them

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2. What do you hope to achieve as you become more comfortable expressing your feelings?

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## ISOLATION

### DESCRIPTION

We find it safe in many instances to detach ourselves from surroundings that are uncomfortable to us. By isolating ourselves, we are preventing others from seeing us as we really are. We tell ourselves that we are not worthy and, therefore do not deserve anything. We also tell ourselves that we cannot be punished or hurt if we don't express our feelings. Rather than take risks, we choose to procrastinate, thereby eliminating the need to face an uncertain outcome.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                               |                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. FEAR OF REJECTION          | 4. DEFEATISM       |
| 2. FEEL DIFFERENT FROM OTHERS | 5. LONELINESS      |
| 3. NON-ASSERTIVENESS          | 6. PROCRASTINATION |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you are isolating yourself.

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. fear, resentment, anger, guilt)

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3. What is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? (e.g. self-esteem, goals, security, personal or sexual relations)

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## RECOVERY FROM ISOLATION

## DESCRIPTION

As we begin to feel better about ourselves, we become willing to take risks and to expose ourselves to new surroundings. We seek out friends and relationships that are nurturing, safe, and supportive. We learn to participate and to have fun in group activities. It becomes easier to express our feelings as we develop a higher sense of self-esteem. We recognise that people will accept us for who we really are. Our self-acceptance allows us to experience the precious gift of life.

## FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

1. SELF-ACCEPTANCE
2. FREE EXPRESSION OF EMOTION
3. CULTIVATE MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS
4. COMPLETE PROJECTS
5. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION FUNCTIONS

1. List specific examples that indicate you isolate yourself less frequently

[illegible]

2. What do you hope to achieve as you feel more confident about situations from which you would normally isolate yourself?

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## LOW SELF-ESTEEM

### DESCRIPTION

Low self-esteem is rooted in our early childhood, during which we never felt quite adequate. As a result of constant criticism, we believed that we were the cause of many of the family problems. In order to feel accepted, we tried to please. The harder we tried, the more frustrated we became. Low self-esteem affects our ability to set and achieve goals, and so we are afraid to take risks. We feel responsible for things that go wrong, and when something goes right, we do not give ourselves credit. Instead, we feel undeserving and believe it is not going to last.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                      |                        |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| 1. NON-ASSERTIVENESS | 5. ISOLATION           |
| 2. FEAR OF FAILURE   | 6. NEGATIVE SELF-IMAGE |
| 3. INADEQUACY        | 7. PERFECTIONISM       |
| 4. FEAR OF REJECTION |                        |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you have low self-esteem.

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. fear, resentment, anger, guilt)

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3. What is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? (e.g. goals, security, personal or sexual relations)

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## RECOVERY FROM LOW SELF-ESTEEM

### DESCRIPTION

As we build confidence in our abilities, our self-esteem increases. We are able to interact with others and to accept ourselves for who we really are. We see our good qualities, as well as our bad, and learn to love ourselves. We become willing to take risks, and we realise we can achieve any things that we never dreamed possible. Sharing feelings with others becomes more comfortable, and we feel safe allowing people to know us. Relationships become healthier because we no longer look to others for validation.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                         |                     |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| 1. SELF-CONFIDENCE      | 4. SELF-LOVE        |
| 2. ASSERTIVENESS        | 5. EXPRESS FEELINGS |
| 3. INTERACT WITH OTHERS | 6. TAKE RISKS       |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate self-esteem is improving.

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2. What do you hope to achieve as you feel better about yourself?

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## OVERDEVELOPED SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

### DESCRIPTION

As children in a dysfunctional home, we felt responsible for what happened. We tried to be “model children” in order to solve our parents problems. We developed the belief that we are responsible for the emotions and actions of others; even the outcome of events. We are hypersensitive to the needs of others, and we make an effort to take responsibility for others. It is important to us to be as perfect as possible. We volunteer to do things so that people will appreciate us. Our sense of responsibility causes us to over commit, and we have a tendency to assume more than we are capable of handling.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |  |                                   |
|--|-----------------------------------|
| 1. SELF-ACCEPTANCE                             | 4. COMPLETE PROJECTS              |
| 2. FREE EXPRESSION OF EMOTION                  | 5. ACTIVE PARTICIPATION FUNCTIONS |
| 3. CULTIVATE MUTUALLY SUPPORTIVE RELATIONSHIPS |                                   |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you isolate yourself less frequently.

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. fear, perfectionism, guilt, resentment)

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3. What is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? (e.g. self-esteem, goals, security, personal or sexual relations)

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## RECOVERY FROM OVERDEVELOPED SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

## DESCRIPTION

Accepting the fact that we are not responsible for others allows us time to take care of ourselves. We understand that we do not have an influence on the lives of others, and thus we realise that people are responsible for their own actions. As we take responsibility for our own actions, we become aware that we must take care of our own needs and rely on our Higher Power for guidance. We find time to support and nurture ourselves, as well as others.

## FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

1. TAKE CARE OF SELF
2. ENJOY LEISURE TIME
3. ACCEPT OUR SHORTCOMINGS

1. List specific examples that indicate you not taking responsibility for others

[illegible]

2. What do you hope to achieve as you allow others to take responsibility for themselves and you begin taking care of you?

[illegible]



## SEXUALITY

### DESCRIPTION

We find ourselves confused and uncertain about our sexual feelings toward others, particularly those we are close to or those with whom we desire to be emotionally intimate. We have been trained to think of our sexual feelings as unusual, or abnormal. Because we do not share our feelings with others, we have no opportunity to develop a healthy attitude about our own sexuality. As small children, we may have explored our physical sexuality with peers and been punished for our transgressions. The message was "sex is dirty, not talked about, to be avoided".

Some of us saw our parents as nonsexual beings and believed we were the result of a "virgin birth". We may have been molested by a parent or a close relative who was out of control because of excessive drinking or substance abuse. We are uncomfortable in our sexual role and may be sexually unsatisfied. We are inhibited from discussing sex with our partner for fear our partner will not understand and will abandon us. If we have children, we may avoid discussions about sexuality and deny their need for sexual identity.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                     |                              |
|---------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. LUST             | 5. SEXUAL IDENTITY CONFUSION |
| 2. INCEST           | 6. LOSS OF MORALITY          |
| 3. SEXUAL OBSESSION | 7. FRIGIDITY                 |
| 4. SEDUCTIVE        | 8. IMPOTENCE                 |

1. List specific examples of your behaviour that indicate you have problems dealing with your sexuality.

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2. What do you believe is the underlying cause of this behaviour? (e.g. inadequacy, anxiety, insecurity, guilt)

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3. What is being hurt, threatened, or interfered with? (e.g. self-esteem, goals, security, personal or sexual relations)

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## RECOVERY FROM SEXUALITY ISSUES

### DESCRIPTION

By realising upon the consistent love of our Higher Power, our self-worth increases. As we increase our self-love and our ability to take care of ourselves, we seek out healthy people who love and take care of themselves. We are no longer afraid of commitment and are better prepared to enter into healthy relationships – emotionally, intellectually, sexually. We feel more secure in sharing our feelings, strengths, and weaknesses. Our self-confidence grows and allows us to be vulnerable. We give up the need for perfection in ourselves and in others and, in doing so, open ourselves to discussion and change. We are honest about our own sexuality in discussions with our children, and we accept their need for information and sexual identity development.

### FEELINGS AND BEHAVIOURS

- |                                   |                              |
|-----------------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. HONEST EXPRESSION OF FEELINGS  | 4. SELF-CONFIDENCE           |
| 2. CONSIDERATION OF OUR OWN NEEDS | 5. ACCEPTANCE OF SEXUAL SELF |
| 3. SHARE INTIMATE FEELINGS        |                              |

1. List specific examples of how your behaviour is improving.

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2. What do you hope to achieve as you feel more confident with your sexuality?

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### CHARACTER TRAIT EXERCISE (WEAKNESSES)

Use the following characteristics to identify your actions when displaying character defect. Review what you wrote in your inventory and note the ways in which the following characteristics appear.

1. **PRIDE:** Inordinate self-esteem. Disdainful behaviour or treatment.
2. **GREED** (Selfishness): Excessive or reprehensible acquisitiveness. Not having enough. Energy focused on having our way. To get our way, we injure others in the process.
3. **LUST** (Lechery): An intense desire, need, or sexual urge. Often motivated by the fear of rejection.
4. **DISHONESTY** (Deceit): Disposition to defraud or deceive. Justifying our behaviours to others by explaining ourselves dishonestly.
5. **GLUTTONY** (Covetousness): One given habitually to greedy or voracious eating or drinking. Fear of rejection or worthlessness.
6. **ENVY** (Jealousy): Painful or resentful awareness of an advantage enjoyed by another, joined with a desire to possess the same advantage. Belief may be that one person is the source of one's love.
7. **LAZINESS:** Disinclined to activity or exertion; not energetic or vigorous. Fear of responsibility.

Select a character trait from your inventory (e.g. approval seeking). Describe what you discovered about the trait that caused you to slip into one or more of the characteristics listed above (e.g. approval seeking may prompt dishonesty)

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

### CHARACTER TRAIT EXERCISE (STRENGTHS)

In recovery, we replace fear with faith and deepen our trust in our Higher Power. We view ourselves as a combination of desirable and less desirable traits. We accept ourselves and all that we find within us.

1. **HUMILITY** (Modesty): Admit powerlessness and unmanageability as we accept our strengths and weaknesses.
2. **GENEROSITY** (Sharing): Feeling good about ourselves empowers us to care about the welfare and happiness of others.
3. **CONFIDENCE AND ACCEPTANCE OF SEXUAL SELF:** Feeling comfortable with being sensuous, without having it lead to sexual intercourse. Clearly expressing preferences for sexual activity with partner.
4. **HONESTY:** Telling the truth, adhering to the facts, and responding to questions about our behaviour with a feeling of security and self confidence.
5. **TEMPERANCE:** Moderation in activities, thoughts or feelings. Stop using food or drink to avoid feelings or to conceal low self-esteem.
6. **AMICABLE, TRUSTFUL:** Encouragement and enthusiasm expressed toward others.
7. **ENERGETIC:** Self-starter; handle tasks without having to be told. Lively, prompt. Pay attention to work; find easier or simpler ways to do tasks.

Select a character trait from your inventory (e.g. approval seeking). Describe what you discover about the trait when you are demonstrating recovery. (e.g. tell the truth about how we feel)

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

### NOTES ON STEP 4:

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Step 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## STEP FIVE

### Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

Some of the truths of our lives were revealed in Step Four. The task of taking inventory was not easy. It demanded honesty, thoroughness, and balance. It took great courage to face the facts we discovered about ourselves by venturing into uncharted areas. If completed honestly, Step Four brought to light unresolved feelings, unhealed memories, and personal defects that have produced resentment, depression, and loss of self-worth. This process helped us confront the denial and self-deception that have patterned our lives.

1. How successful do you feel you were in completing your Step Four inventory? Explain

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Thoroughness in the Fourth Step helped us to see things as they really are. If we worked hard to uncover all the facts and did so thoroughly, Step Five will be more effective and rewarding. Balance in the Fourth Step inventory meant focusing on our strengths and weaknesses. Step Four helped us to boost our self-esteem because we accepted all aspects of ourselves. For those who have been honest, thorough, and balanced, the writing of Step Four has been a gratifying experience. It has exposed us to many new discoveries and has provided us with a great sense of relief.

2. What part of our inventory gave you the most difficulty?

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3. Having completed Step Four, what is your current opinion of yourself? How do you see yourself increasing your strengths and improving on your weaknesses?

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It is important to realise that the relationship with we have with our Higher Power is the source and foundation of our courage to enter into the task ahead of us. Reliance on our Higher Power will help us become more willing to take risks. This willingness makes it possible for us to proceed with Step Five.

4. In what ways are you now experiencing fear or lack of courage in preparing your Fifth Step?

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Step 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

A good Fifth Step is possible after the successful completion of Step Four. We have accepted the reality of our character defects and the influences they have had on our lives. Having made a searching and fearless moral inventory, we are in a good position to complete the requirements of Step Five.

5. How will Step Five help you to recognise and deal with your own shortcomings?

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We will be telling our life story to three individuals - our Higher Power, ourselves and another human being. It is important to tell all that needs to be told so that we cleanse our being and are ready to move forward toward a deepened sense of spirituality. We may experience removal of guilt and feel like a weight has been lifted. Some of us will feel cleansed and renewed.

6. List any fears you have that need to be turned over (Step Three) before you can successfully complete Step Five.

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7. Review your Step Four inventory to verify its completeness. What, if anything, has been omitted?

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Step Five is a pathway out of isolation and loneliness. It is a step toward wholeness, happiness, and a real sense of gratitude. It questions our humility. Are we truly humble in the sense that we see ourselves as one of many human beings, all as children of a Higher Power? If we are humble, we will feel secure and self-accepting when admitting to our Higher Power the exact nature of our wrongs. Humility will also allow us to shift the weight of the Fifth Step onto our Highest Power and experience success in working the Fifth Step.

8. In view of your former attempts to change ineffective behaviour traits or patterns, how do you consider this Step essential to improvement?

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Step Five has three distinct parts. Admitting the exact nature of our wrongs to ourselves is the least threatening part and can be done with minimal risk. It does not provide an arena for testing our honesty or for seeing our own self-deception.

Talking to ourselves holds back our ability to see ourselves in a realistic perspective. Fooling ourselves has been a pattern of our lives. Being alone with our own thoughts and feelings keeps us isolated and is limiting in nature. This isolation not only keeps others out, it keeps us in. The admission of our wrongs to ourselves prepares us for our conversation with our Higher Power.



Step 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

9. How has admitting your shortcoming only to yourself in the past caused you to excuse them or do nothing constructive about them?

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10. How has isolating yourself kept you from being honest with yourself and others?

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Step Five is an advancement to ultimate surrender to our Higher Power, "Letting Go and Letting God." We must give up our desire to control the outcome. We must be willing to surrender the past and turn it over to a compassionate Higher Power who is understanding and forgiving. Admitting our wrongs to our Higher Power is not for His benefit. It is an opportunity for us to realise that our Higher Power already knows you and is patiently waiting for us to confess how we still try to run the show. Trusting that our Higher Power is loving and forgiving, we become willing to admit our character defects to Him. In doing this, we experience a deepening sense of self-acceptance.

11. What method do you feel most comfortable with when admitting your wrongs to your Higher Power?

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12. How can kneeling for part of your admission to your Higher Power help you to experience humility?

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Nothing draws us to each other like honesty and humility. These qualities represent true humanity, which is what really attracts us to others. If we have been humble and honest with our Higher Power and ourselves, completing the final stage of Step Five will be relatively easy. We need only find the right person with to share our wrongs.

13. Describe your experience in admitting your wrongs to your Higher Power.

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14. Describe your experience in admitting your wrongs to yourself.

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Step 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

15. What life experience helped you to understand that being honest is an important part of acknowledging your faults?

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The difficult part of Step Five is facing the need to admit our wrongs to another human being. This can be a frightening experience – to allow another person to see many parts of us that have been hidden behind our wall of self-deception. Some of our concerns may be that we will be laughed at or rejected for the horrors that we reveal. This is a true test of our ability and willingness to be completely honest and to accept the consequences.

16. What value do see in admitting your faults privately to another person whom you respect and whom you trust to keep your confidence?

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17. Explain any resistance you have to discussing your faults openly with another person

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Decide on a dependable person, one familiar with the Program. Trusting the person we choose is essential to our success so that we can feel safe and unthreatened when exposing ourselves and our behaviour. Sharing will flow easily if we understand one another and accept the limitations we all share as human beings. It is also important to recognise the unlimited forgiveness of our Higher Power.

18. What qualities are you looking for in choosing a person to share your 5th Step with?

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When bringing our hidden thoughts to others, we need to do more than just to be heard. We must be ready to listen to the other person's response. The interchange can be helpful and productive if we are willing to listen with an open mind to someone else's viewpoint. This broadens our awareness of ourselves and gives us an opportunity to change and grow. Feedback is vital to us as a means of completing the process of revelation. Questions asked in a caring and understanding manner can reveal feelings and situations that we were not aware of prior to sharing our life story.

19. Why is it important to allow feedback when sharing your Fifth Step with another person? What can be gained from listening to the other person's viewpoint?

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Step 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

When preparing for the Fifth Step, either as the participant or the listener, the following suggestions are helpful:

- A. Be aware of the vulnerability of the participant.
- B. Allow sufficient time to complete each thought, but stay focused on the subject. Discourage unnecessary explanations.
- C. Minimise distractions. Telephone calls, children, visitors and extraneous noises can interfere with the flow of concentration.
- D. Prayer may prove useful – before, during and after.
- E. Listen carefully. Ask questions if necessary so that the information will be understood by both parties.
- F. Remember that Step Five asks only that we admit the exact nature of our wrongs. It is not necessary to discuss how changes are going to be made.
- G. Be supportive and acknowledge the person for the effort exerted in completing the Step.
- H. When completed, each may share feelings about the experience and toward the other person.

Upon completion of Step Five, we may have expectations about where we should be in our personal recovery. How we feel is beside the point. We may not feel any differently than we did before. The real test of the Fifth Step admission is how willing are we to change our ways.

20. What was revealed to you in sharing your Fifth Step with your Higher Power, yourself, and another human being?

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21. Briefly review Steps One through Four and identify anything you may have omitted that was brought to light as a result of sharing your life story with another person.

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We realise that we are not always in control of things. Longstanding habits may have weakened our will to such an extent that it is extremely difficult to break our behaviour patterns. We need to be realistic and understand that admitting the exact nature of our wrongs is not an insurance against future relapses. We can expect to have relapses and still know that our relationship with our Higher Power will help us to face and overcome them.

22. Describe your feelings after taking Step Five.  
Did you feel closer to your fellows, more a part of the human race?

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Step 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

23. Describe any areas about which you felt uncomfortable while sharing.

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24. Did you experience an increased level of peace and serenity, or was there sadness, anxiety, etc? Explain.

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It is not our intentions that matter. If we sincerely desire to change our ways, all our Higher Power asks is that we pick ourselves up one more time than we fall. The end result of making our admission is not “results” so much as an experience of the reality of our Higher Power’s love.

25. In what ways did Step Five bring you closer to your Higher Power and help you to gain a better opinion of yourself?

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## NOTES ON STEP 5

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Step 5 Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs

This image shows a full page of blank, lined paper. It features approximately 30 evenly spaced horizontal grey lines across the entire width of the page, typical of notebook or composition paper. There are no margins, text, or other markings present.

## STEP SIX

### Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character

Our success in working Steps One through Five is an indication of our readiness to complete Step Six. Steps One and Two prepared us for Step Three, at which time we made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power as we understand Him. Step Four and Five helped us to uncover our defects of character. We faced them courageously and share them with our Higher Power, ourselves, and another human being. We have acknowledged our shortcomings without guilt because we have learned that blaming and punishing ourselves stunts our growth. The guilt feelings are natural, but to cling to them will keep us at a standstill. Step Six is another opportunity to turn our will over. The trust we have developed in, and our current feeling toward, our Higher Power is an encouraging prospect for having our character defects removed.

1. List those areas in your life about which you still have guilt feelings

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2. Are you consciously aware of being ready to have your Higher Power remove your character defects? List some of the changes you see in yourself as a result of being ready.

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The character traits we have identified as defects are deeply ingrained patterns of behaviour. They are tools we have acquired and used for survival in our daily lives. As we become aware of these defects and accept them, we can deal with them from a position of strength with the help of our Higher Power. Sharing our awareness of our defects honestly with our Higher Power and trusting that He will help us to remove them is the foundation of our strength and our hope.

3. What anxieties are present when you consider the idea of having your “survival tools” removed?

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4. What feelings surface when you think of surrendering to your Higher Power and trusting that He will remove all your defects?

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In our culture, self-will is a highly valued trait. We are taught from an early age that we should try to improve ourselves. Our parents, teachers, and employers have told us that it

is our duty to them and to our Higher Power that we work on our own defects. As a result, we use our self-will to accumulate and demonstrate success. It is a rare person who attribute his or her success to the existence of a Higher Power and surrenders to Him.

5.     How are you relating to your Higher Power at this point in working the Steps?

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6.     How much of your progress do you attribute to your relationship with your Higher Power?

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7.     What is the touchstone (role model or ideal) you use to remind you of true surrender?

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We are often comfortable with some of our defects. They have been familiar tools to us. The thought of having them removed can be threatening to our security. As difficult as it may seem, we must be willing to let go of these defects in order to become entirely ready to have our Higher Power remove them. Being entirely ready requires a dedication like that illustrated in preparing for a race, learning to speak in front of an audience, or developing skills as an artist. Certain tasks must be performed in order to succeed.

8.     Identify any character defects you are not entirely ready to have removed. Explain briefly your attachment to these defects

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9.     List ways that indicate you are willing to accept the notion that your Higher Power loves you just the way you are, defects and all

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Preparing to be entirely ready to have our Higher Power remove our defect of character is accomplished through the training we have undergone in the first Five Steps. We have inadvertently begun to experience confidence in the ongoing process of working and living the Steps one day at a time. Being entirely ready implies trust, faith, and belief that the one we are going to ask will fulfil our request.

10.    In what ways have the first Five Steps helped you to prepare for Step Six?

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11.     What is your current level of confidence in working the Steps as a means of improving the quality of your life?

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An important ingredient in preparing for Step Six is humility. We must relinquish our egos, truly seek our Higher Power's will for us. Our trust in our Higher Power tells that He will remove only the defects that are necessary.

The way to learn what our Higher Power has in mind for us is to be ready for our Higher Power to remove our desire for things that are not good for us.

12.     How do you see humility as necessary for letting go and allowing your Higher Power to remove your defects?

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The task of removing all of our character defects is more than we can handle, we are not able to do it alone. Step 6 does not say we have to do the removing. All we have to do is allow it to happen, let go. It is not an action step that we actually take. It is a state of being that take us.

One day we realise that we no longer have any qualms about letting our Higher Power remove any and all of our character defects as He sees fit. This we do by faithfully working the Program, day by day, whether we feel we're making progress or not.

13.     Give an example of how you are inspired by the prospect of having your Higher Power remove your character defects?

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14.     What experiences have you had that indicate you are making progress toward allowing your Higher Power to remove your defects?

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For some of the more deeply rooted defects, we may find it necessary to become a detached observer. By becoming an observer of our behaviour and of the behaviour of others, we notice how we act or react in various situations.

When we see ourselves thinking negatively or doing something that is not constructive, we can make a note of it and ask for help from our Higher Power. By doing this, the task will become much easier.

15.     What character defects are going to be the most difficult to give up?

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16.    Why are these defects so important, and what do you fear as a result of having them removed?

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Some people reach a stated of preparedness quickly and are ready to have their Higher Power remove all of their character defects. For most of us, the process is slow and gradual. When we cling to old habits and unproductive ways of thinking, we block the process of change and the flow of inspiration. One way to use our Higher Power's help is to allow solutions to come to us by turning to our Higher Power. This can be done by saying the Serenity Prayer as often as necessary.

17.    How are the Program tools (slogans, prayers, writing) you use in your daily life helping you with Step 6?

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18.    What is the most effective means by which you turn to your Highest Power for guidance? (e.g. prayer, meetings)

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It may be beneficial to analyse our communication with our Higher Power. The following statements are examples of the distinction between asking and admitting. "Dear Higher Power, I want to be more patient" is make a demand and telling our Higher Power what we want. "Dear Higher Power, I am impatient" is presenting the truth about ourselves. This allows our Higher Power to make the decision for us based on our admission.

19.    List examples of your prayers that show you are making demands on your Higher Power, rather than asking what your Higher Power wants for you.

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As we live the principles of the Program in our daily lives, we gradually and unconsciously become ready to have our defects of character removed. What sometimes happens is that we are not aware of being ready to have our defects removed or of asking our Higher Power to remove them. The first awareness we have is that we are different somehow. We have changed. Often the change is noticed by others before we become aware of it ourselves. The approval-seeking person begins to function more adequately; the control addict becomes warmer and more relaxed; the super-responsible individual is no longer victimising himself by doing for others what they can do for themselves. People who work the Program as an integral part of their lives become calmer, more serene, and wear genuine smiles. Much of the work we do in the Program is done without conscious action on our part.

Step 6      Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character

20. What changes have occurred in your life that most effectively show your behaviour is improving?
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21. What parts of THE PROBLEM (See Step One) do you feel you are overcoming or coming to terms with?
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22. What parts of THE PROBLEM (See Step One) do you feel are still actively causing you discomfort?

There is a radiant, confident personality in each of us, hidden under a shroud of confusion, uncertainty and defects. If someone were to ask whether we wanted to be freed from our character defects, there could only be one answer – that we are entirely ready to have our Higher Power remove them.

23. Describe your understanding of the words “entirely ready”. What do they mean in relation to your complete surrender to your Higher Power’s will?

## NOTES ON STEP 6

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# STEP SEVEN

## Humbly asked him to remove our shortcomings

Attainment of greater humility is the foundation principle of the ACA Twelve Step Program. It is through humility that we reach the goals as outline in the Steps. The basic ingredient in humility as it applies to the program is a desire to seek and do our Higher Power's will.

1. What is your definition of humility?

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In working and living Steps One and Two, a degree of humility was necessary when we admitted our powerlessness and came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. In Step Three, humility allowed us to turn our will and our lives over to the care of our Higher Power as we understand Him. Without humility, Steps Four and Five would be extremely difficult. In Step Six, our being ready to have our defects removed was in direct proportion to the degree of our humility.

2. Have you practiced humility while working the Steps?

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The entire emphasis in Step Seven is humility. This is the point at which we change our attitude and more from being self-centred to self-less. This produces harmony with our Higher Power and other people. As we grow in the Program, we see humility as being absolutely necessary for survival. Humility is simply the growing awareness that "Of myself I am nothing, the Father does the work." Only by a deepening awareness of this can we humbly ask our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings.

3. Give examples of how being humble is helping you to focus less on yourself and more on your Higher Power.

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We desire humility because we realise that it is the only way to achieve the peace, serenity, and happiness we seek. If we desire to be a maturing, growing, useful, joyous person, we will have to develop an inner calm, even in a turbulent insane world. To achieve this inner calm, we must develop the ability to accept things as they are when we cannot change them and ask our Higher Power for the courage to change the things we can.

4. Describe a recent event that prompted you to use the Serenity Prayer in order to help you achieve inner calm.

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Step Seven implies removal of all shortcomings. It is important that we deal with them individually, preferably with the easiest ones first to build confidence in our progress. Our commitment to doing the footwork one day at a time supports the idea that progress will come at a comfortable pace with our Higher Power's help. If we ask our Higher Power to remove a character defect and it is not removed, we do not need to be discouraged or angry. We need to be patient and realise that we have more work to do. We may not be entirely ready to have it removed, or we may not have humbly asked our Higher Power.

5. What does "Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings" mean to you?

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6. Are you ready to have all your shortcomings removed, or do you have favourites you feel justified in keeping? Explain

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In preparing to have our defects removed, we must demonstrate our complete willingness on an ongoing basis. We must cooperate. We cannot expect our shortcomings to be removed if we continue to behave the way we did before and simply wait for our Higher Power to do all the work. Even though we asked it, it is important to be aware of any tendencies to repeat old behaviour. Anytime we become aware of the "old defects" at work, being gentle with ourselves at that moment is very important. Our Higher Power loves us wherever we are, and it is an opportunity for us to love ourselves. This is simply an indication that some part of us still wants to hang on, that we are learning to accept our Higher Power's will, but that we are not yet humble enough to willingly let go.

7. How do you see yourself behaving in the "old" manner?

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8. What are your fears surrounding the idea of no longer having certain familiar behaviours?

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Being open to the wisdom and guidance of our Higher Power is vital at this time. When meditating on the recurrence of behaviours that we consider "immature", it is wise to remind ourselves that our inner-child is "unmatured". If we are willing to grow spiritually and emotionally, we will see progress. Any improvement is cause for gratitude and joy. We need to remember that this process of spiritual development is lifelong, yet we practice it one day at a time or one minute at a time if necessary.

9. Where do you see yourself as being "unmatured?"

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10. How can you acknowledge the progress you have made in handling situations maturely?

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No matter how hard we try, we can never hope to eliminate all our character defects, in spite of all the praying we do for guidance. Achieving sainthood is not part of this program. We simply do the best we can. We are not expected to fit any image at all. We are only required to humbly ask that our shortcomings be removed.

11. In what ways have you become more patient with yourself as a result of working the Program?

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Humbly ask our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings is a true means of surrender and may be difficult for some of us. As M Scott Peck pointed out in his book, *The Road Less Travelled*, depression often accompanies the process of releasing. "There are many factors that can interfere with the giving up process and, therefore prolong a normal, healthy depression into a chronic pathologic depression. Of all the possible factors, one of the most common and potent is a pattern of experiences in childhood wherein parents or fate, unresponsive to the needs of a child, took away 'things' from the child before he or she was psychologically ready to give them up or strong enough to truly accept their loss. Such a pattern of experience in childhood sensitises the child to the experiences of loss and creates a tendency far stronger than that found in more fortunate individuals to cling to 'things' and seek to avoid the pain of loss or giving up. For this reason, although all pathologic depressions involve some blockage in the giving-up process, I believe there is a type of chronic neurotic depression that has as its central root a traumatic injury to the individual's basic capacity to give up something ..."

Much of the work done in this Workbook is to heal the pain of the inner child.

12. What "things" were taken away from you as a child before you were ready to give them up?

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13. How has this contributed to your current situation?

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Humbly asking a child to set the table for dinner, then impatiently doing it yourself can be likened to humbly asking your Higher Power to remove your shortcomings, then insisting on removing them yourself. In neither case are you humbly asking for anything to be done. No one can truly take credit for removing any of their character defects. If we expect any credit, we are doomed to failure. Sudden changes can and do happen, but we cannot expect them or direct them. Our Higher Power causes them when we are ready for them. When we humbly ask our Higher Power to do the removing, it becomes His responsibility and we cannot accept credit or blame for what follows.

14. What is your reaction to the idea that your Higher Power will not remove all your character defects?

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15. What is your reaction to the idea that they cannot be removed until you are ready?

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The items that remain in our inventory after this process is completed must belong there. It is an opportunity for us to take these remaining “defects” and allow our Higher Power to turn them into positive traits. With our Higher Power’s help, this can be a rewarding and exciting experience. Natural leaders may be left with a quest for power but with no desire to misuse it. Natural lovers may be left with exquisite sensuality but with enough consideration not to hurt anyone with it. Those who are meant to be materially wealthy will be, but without greed and possessiveness.

16. What personality characteristics remain in your inventory that have the potential of being assets rather than liabilities?

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In order to work the Program successfully, we must practice The Steps on a daily basis until it becomes routine. In this way, we will eventually be capable of breaking the bonds of our old and unhealthy habits and behaviours. We will begin to trust the thoughts and feelings that show up as a result of our conscious contact with our Higher Power. We will come to know that the guidance we receive from our Higher Power is always available; all we need to do is listen and act without fear.

### SEVENTH STEP PRAYER

“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in our way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me the strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen”.

Big Book (AA)

### SERENITY PRAYER

“God grant me the serenity  
to accept the things I cannot change,  
the courage to change the things I can  
and the wisdom to know the difference.”

## SERENITY PRAYER EXERCISE

The following examples are intended to help you in using the Serenity Prayer as part of your ongoing recovery process. It is a tool that can be used daily when seeking your Higher Power's help. The exercise gives you the opportunity to take a situation through the prayer.

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God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change ...	Like the way _____ ignores me, especially when I want praise.
the courage to change the things I can ...	especially my own character defects and feelings toward myself for never having enough approval from people I look up to.
and the wisdom to know the difference ...	between the lasting satisfaction of my reparenting myself with the approval and the temporary satisfaction of depending on _____ for it.

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God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change ...	Like the way my childhood was.
the courage to change the things I can ...	especially my own victimised feelings about my childhood.
and the wisdom to know the difference ...	between staying in a victim role and continually turning those years over to my Higher Power.

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God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I cannot change ...	Like my father's disease of alcoholism.
the courage to change the things I can ...	especially my feeling of abandonment, anger, isolation.
and the wisdom to know the difference ...	between my father's love being unavailable to me and my Higher Power which is always available to me.

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Select a specific situation or condition in your life that is currently a source of resentment, fear, sadness or anger. It may involve relationships (family, work, or sexual), work environment, health or self-esteem.

## GOD, GRANT ME THE SERENITY TO ACCEPT THE THINGS I CANNOT CHANGE

1. State the condition or experience you are aware of that you cannot change (e.g. childhood, partner's behaviour, employment conditions, parents' behaviour)

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## THE COURAGE TO CHANGE THE THINGS I CAN

2. Indicate the specific condition or situation where you believe change is possible.

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## THE WISDOM TO KNOW THE DIFFERENCE

3. Identify your understanding and acceptance of what you can and cannot change (e.g. frozen feelings; anger vs. peace)

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4. List any insights gained from this exercise.

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## NOTES ON STEP 7

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## STEP EIGHT

### **Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all**

Step Eight is the beginning of the end of isolation from our fellows and from our Higher Power. Relationships are what Step Eight and Nine are all about – our relationships with other people, with ourselves, and with our Higher Power. In this step, we must show desire and willingness to write down each of our past misdeeds, the dates, and the names of those people involved. We cannot remake the present until we undo the past. This is done gradually by gently loving ourselves as we mature and by allowing our inner child to grow up.

1. How will Step Eight improve your relationship with others?

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The first Seven Steps are “personal” in that they are concerned with an examination of our behaviour patterns and are intended to make us aware of our personal experiences. By the time we reach this point in recovery, we are beginning to see how important it is for us to let go of the past with its painful and sometimes pleasurable memories. Through these chances in our awareness, we learn to live each day in harmony with ourselves and others. Releasing the past opens the path to a new life for us, a life based on living one day at a time.

2. List three persona experiences that require making amends.

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3. How will making amends release the past?

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In order to find enjoyment in recovery, it is important that we develop the ability to overcome guilt, shame, resentment, low self-worth, and fear of other people. To accomplish this may seem like an awesome task since we have probably tried to do it before. This time, however, we have the opportunity to restore our personal integrity and self-authority by working the Steps. We can trust in the process because it has worked miracles for millions of people.

4. How will making amends help remove your guilt, shame and resentments?

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Step 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all

5. What do you hope to achieve by making amends?

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The first part of Step Eight specifically states that we make a list of those we have harmed. When making the list, many of us may hit a solid article. It may be a severe shock to realise that we must make a face-to-face admission of our past wrongs to those we have harmed. It was embarrassing enough to admit them to ourselves, to our Higher Power, and to another human being in Step Five. In Step Nine, we actually have to visit or write the people concerned.

6. What is your interpretation of “harmed?” List the actions or experiences you believe are harmful to yourselves or to others.

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Those who have successfully worked the First Five Steps are usually aware of those they have harmed by the time they reach Step Eight. You may discover that the person you have harmed most is yourself. Sometimes we realise that we have become our own worst enemy, and our resentment against ourselves manifests itself in the form of excessive self-blame, guilt, and sometimes shame. Guilt is an appropriate response to regrets over actions in conflict with our personal values. Shame is excessive guilt and may cause us to view ourselves as bad or worthless, which is unhealthy.

7. Are you willing to forgive yourself for the things you have done to cause harm or injury to others? List the major ways in which you have harmed yourself.

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When starting Step Eight, make a list of the people you feel uncomfortable with. Just make a list. Don't worry about the details. Making the list enables us to go where our mind takes us. Our list may start with family members, business associates, friends, creditors, and neighbours. Its length is not important, yet it may reveal a somewhat unrealistic view of the power of our personal influence. Step Eight is another exercise in the preparation for the ongoing process of healing that this Program offers. The powerful elixir of honesty is what makes the healing process take place.

8. Examine the list of people you have harmed. Identify the things you have done that caused physical, mental, or spiritual harm to each person.

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9. Which people on your list do you feel the greatest need to make amends with?

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Step 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all

In order to complete this Step, we must be willing to face the facts and make amends. We must be ready to accept the consequences and take whatever measures are necessary to make restitution. This may be difficult for some of us because it means fully and completely acknowledging our past in every dispute in which harm has come to someone as a result of our action or inaction. We need to do this, regardless of cause, no matter how justified we may have felt. Only by expressing genuine regret for our own part in the dispute can we complete our housecleaning. This housecleaning is necessary for us to develop spiritually and to achieve the peace and serenity we desire.

10. Are you willing to go to any length to make the amends? Identify any reluctance and describe your feelings toward the person.

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Forgiveness is the next key factor in completing Step Eight. We must be willing to forgive ourselves as well as those who we feel have caused us harm. This takes a great deal of humility on our part. We have already become aware that resentments and grudges are luxuries we cannot afford. They not only destroy our serenity and sanity, but are more harmful to us than to the person we resent. A resentment or grudge is like an open sore eating away at our insides, making us grouchy, bitter, ill-tempered, and unable to concentrate on growth because our energy is spent on our grudge or resentment.

11. In the process of preparing to make amends, have you felt a sense of forgiveness surfacing? If so, what does it feel like?

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12. How are resentments and grudges interfering with your willingness to make amends?

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The most effective means of overcoming resentment is forgiveness of ourselves and of others. Forgiveness of others begins when we become aware of our own contribution to the difficulties in our relationships. Looking at ourselves helps us become willing to release our anger and our condemnation of others. Through acceptance, forgiveness, and turning it over to our Higher Power, we will be able to rid ourselves of these grudges and resentments. When we understand the damage we have done, we need to make amends and reduce our likelihood of repeating this pattern of behaviour. If we do not forgive ourselves, we cannot forgive others. If we do not forgive others, we cannot make amends with dignity, self-respect, and humility. Amends without forgiveness can lead us into a new argument, or dispute. Our willingness to make amends must stem from a true desire for forgiveness.

13. What part is your Higher Power playing in your preparation for making amends?

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Step 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all

14. Why is forgiveness of yourself such a key factor in completing this step?

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When looking back at those we have harmed, we see how our character defects have played a major part in sabotaging ourselves and others. The following are examples of this behaviour:

- A: When we became angry, we often harmed ourselves more than we did others.
- B: When confronted with an issue about which we felt guilt and were in denial, we lashed out at the other person rather than looking at ourselves.
- C: Frustrated by our lack of control, we behaved badly and intimidated those around us.
- D: Our fear of abandonment sometimes destroyed relationships because we did not allow the other person to be himself; rather, we smothered him in an effort to maintain the relationship.

15. What are the major character defects that caused injury to yourself or to others?

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Humility can help us see each human being as having an equal right to be here and to live as happily as we do. This does not mean we have to agree with everyone about everything, but it does mean that we can stop hating people for what they have done and stop resenting them because their views are different from ours. Our own sanity will be preserved, and our serenity greatly enhanced, if we can forgive and even love our enemies rather than hate them or wish them harm.

16. Explain how you see humility as necessary to complete Step 8 successfully.

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As we proceed through the Steps, we do indeed learn to forgive, like, and love the enemy within us. As we learn to understand our inner enemy and accept him, our spiritual growth will advance at a rapid pace. As we forgive our outer enemies, they become less enemies and, in some cases, become close friends.

17. How do you see forgiveness of your inner and outer “enemy” as contributing to your acceptance of yourself and others?

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Step 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all

If we are willing to make amends and face our past, we become more tolerant and forgiving, less rigid and judgemental. We will begin to realise that our Higher Power is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. At this point, we are beginning to experience real changes in our viewpoints, and beliefs, and we are becoming ready and willing to participate in the process of reconciliation. Now we are ready to move on to Step Nine and actually make the amends we have found to be necessary.

18. List examples in which your changing viewpoints and attitudes allow healthy relationships to develop.

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### AMENDS LIST EXERCISE

Following are three main categories in which we have caused harm and for which we must be willing to make amends.

**MATERIAL WRONGS:** Your actions affecting an individual in a tangible way, such as one of the following:

1. Money – borrowing or spending extravagance; stinginess; spending in an attempt to buy friendship or love; withholding money in order to gratify yourself.
2. Contracts – entering into an agreement that is legally enforceable, then not abiding by the terms, or simply cheating (e.g. a business transaction that is to provide products or services – agreeing to repay loans or make payments on time).
3. Person or Property – any injury or damage as a result of your action.
4. Personal Abuse – physical or sexual.

**MORAL WRONGS:** Dealing with what is right and what is wrong in behaviour as well as the moral duty and/or obligation. Also including the question of rightness, fairness, or equity. The principle issue is involving others in your wrongdoing:

1. Setting a bad example for children, friends, or anyone who looked to you for guidance.
2. Excessive preoccupation with selfish pursuits and using justification as your way to deny your actions. This caused you to be totally unaware of the needs of others. (e.g. preoccupation resulted in lost caring for, or attention to, children or relationship partner. Another example would be obsession with an addictive partner, possibly causing job ineffectiveness).
3. Being forgetful of special occasions (e.g. birthdays and holidays pass unnoticed).
4. Moral harms (e.g. sexual fidelity, broken promises, verbal abuse, lack of trust, unkind criticism, lying).

**SPIRITUAL WRONGS:** Principally, “acts of submission” that are in neglect of obligations to your Higher Power, to yourself, to family, and to community.

Step 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all

1. Making no effort to fulfil your obligations and showing a lack of gratitude toward others who have stepped in for you (e.g. family and children, work tasks).
2. Avoiding self-development (e.g. health, educations, recreation, creativity).
3. Being inattentive to others in your life by showing a lack of encouragement to them.

#### EXERCISE

4.

1. List six people who come to mind as being someone whom you have harmed.

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Identify how you harmed them. The categories listed will enable you to be very specific (e.g. moral, unkind criticism).

- a. \_\_\_\_\_
- b. \_\_\_\_\_
- c. \_\_\_\_\_
- d. \_\_\_\_\_
- e. \_\_\_\_\_
- f. \_\_\_\_\_

3. Select the person to whom you have caused the most harm. Answer the following questions using the person you selected.

**NAME:** ..... **HARM:** .....

- a. **FACTS** - What is the reason for making the amends? \_\_\_\_\_

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- b. **FEARS** - What is your resistance to making the amends? \_\_\_\_\_

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- c. **FEELINGS** - What are your feelings about making the amends \_\_\_\_\_

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- d. **DEFECTS** - What character trait was activated in your relationship with this person?

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- e. **FORGIVENESS** - Are you willing to ask for forgiveness and face the consequences? Explain why.

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Step 8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all

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f. AMENDS - When and how do you plan to make amends? \_\_\_\_\_

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**NOTES:**

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## STEP NINE

### **Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others**

Step Nine is another action step and again requires that we demonstrate a willingness to confront issues of our past, which may have been dormant for a long time. This Step clearly requires courage and a renewed understanding of our intention to free ourselves from the guilt we may feel for any hurt done to others. The benefits to us are certainly worth taking the risk of making amends.

1. What does “making *direct* amends” mean to you? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Do you understand that there is no need to review each matter to see who is at fault? Explain.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Engaging in this process of forgiveness is like having surgery performed on us. The distant memories, which may still be painful and linger in our minds, can encumber us. They diminish our vitality and joy for living. Making amends somehow seems to make many of these memories simply disappear. Being attached to someone in our memory as a result of an uncomfortable experience and, then, making amends with that person, can be likened to the release of a butterfly trapped in the hands of a curious child. Letting go allows both to explore and move about in their own independent and natural state. It also allows for a new relationship to emerge.

3. How do you see forgiveness as setting you free and healing your painful memories?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Good judgement, a careful sense of timing, courage and prudence are qualities that we will need when taking Step Nine. It is wise to reflect upon the intended amends for a while. Our objective is not to buy our peace of mind at the expense of others. Forethought will prepare us for the appropriate time and deter us from causing any further harm. The process may include seeking guidance from a trusted friend as well as humbly asking our Higher Power for guidance, support, and the willingness to do whatever is necessary.

4. What is the importance of reflecting on your amends prior to making them?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Step 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

Step Nine requires that direct amends be made wherever possible. We must be careful not to procrastinate by telling ourselves the time is not right. We may be tempted to skip the more humiliating and dreaded meetings or to find excuses to dodge the issues entirely. We must be sure that we are not delaying because of fear. Fear is lack of courage, and courage is an important part of this Step. The readiness to accept the full consequences of our past and, at the same time, take responsibility for the well-being of others is the very spirit of Step Nine.

5. How can you get the strength, support, and courage from a supportive and loving friend to make these direct amends

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6. Before you start making amends, how will you make sure there is no lingering residue of resentment or self-righteousness left in you to prevent your amends from being meaningful?

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Amends will be possible with almost everyone, even those who may not be aware of what we have done to them. In every word or action that violates the Golden Rule, "Do unto others as we would have them **do** unto us," there are amends to make. If someone is unable to accept a restitution, their part of the problem will have to remain unresolved, and our using the Serenity Prayer will be helpful for our own peace of mind.

7. Describe how you will use prayer and meditation before making *direct* amends.

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When looking at making amends, we see that Step Nine has two distinct parts:

**"MADE DIRECT AMENDS TO SUCH PEOPLE WHEREVER POSSIBLE....."**

***People who need to be dealt with as soon as possible and are readily accessible.***

These people include family members, employees or employers, or creditors to whom we owe financial amends. They may include friends as well as enemies. It is harder to go to an enemy than to a friend, but we will find it much more beneficial to us. When we are ready to face the consequences of our past, we will be able to go to them, admit the damage we have done, and make our apologies. The generous response of most people to such sincerity will often astonish us. Even our severest and most justified critics will frequently meet us more than halfway on the first attempt.

8. What people on your amends list fall into this category?

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Step 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

9. Examine whether complete disclosure will seriously harm anyone to whom you are making amends

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***Situations whose very nature will never allow us to make direct personal contact.***

This may involve people who no longer a part of our lives or who have died. In these cases, indirect amends can satisfy our need to make things right. We can make indirect amends through prayer or by writing a letter, as if we are actually communicating with the person. Indirect amends can also be made by doing a kindness for someone else's child or parent when we no longer have any responsibility for caring for the person. We can make amends to our adult children by respecting them as adults, by maintaining our own recovery, and by being healthy and reasonably happy adults ourselves.

10. What people on your amends list fall into this category? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. Examine whether complete disclosure will seriously harm anyone to whom you are making amends.

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Step 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

**“.....EXCEPT WHEN TO DO SO WOULD INJURE THEM OR OTHERS.”**  
***People to whom we can only make partial restitution because complete disclosure could cause harm to them or others.***

These people may include our spouses, ex-partners, former business associates, or friends. We must analyse the harm that could come to them if complete amends were made. This is especially true in cases where infidelity is present in a marriage. Amends in this area can cause irreparable damage to all parties concerned. Even in cases where the matter can be discussed, we should avoid harming third parties. It does not lighten our burden when we make the crosses of others harder to bear. Amends for unfaithfulness can be made indirectly by a change in behaviour, by concentrating more sincere affection and attention on the one who has been deceived.

12. What people on your amends list fall into this category? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

13. Examine whether complete disclosure will seriously harm anyone to whom you are making amends  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

In cases involving serious consequences, such as potential loss of employment, imprisonment, or other harm to one's family, each one of us has to make the decision carefully. We should not be deterred from making amends by fear for ourselves but only by the real possibility of injury to others. If we choose to delay making amends out of fear, we will be the ones to suffer in the end. We will delay our growth, experience regression, become more emotionally ill, and possibly return to our insane behaviour.

14. What people on your amends list fall into this category? \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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15. Examine whether complete disclosure will seriously harm anyone to whom you are making amends.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

***Situations where actions should be deferred.***

In these areas, it can be helpful to seek other counsel when we assess our judgement of the situation. It is seldom wise to approach an individual who still smarts from the injustices we have done. In situations where our own hurts are still deeply imbedded, patience might prove to be wise. We can know that amends must be made eventually, but our timing is important so that we can gain and grow from the experience.

16. What people on your amends list fall into this category?

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17. Examine whether complete disclosure will seriously harm anyone to whom you are making amends.

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When you actually start the process of making amends, be careful not to confuse apologies with amends. Apologies are sometimes called for, but apologies are not amends. We may discover in apologising that we explain excessively, and this is not as effective as simply changing. Amends are made by acting differently. We can apologise a hundred times for being late for work, but this will not “mend” tardiness. Appearing at work on time is a change in behaviour, and thus becomes an amend.

18. List two examples of your distinguishing apologies from amends \_\_\_\_\_

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Occasional emotional or spiritual lapses, or “slips”, are to be expected and need to be dealt with in a timely manner. When these lapses occur, we must accept them as signals that we are forgetting something. Perhaps we have taken part of our will back from our Higher Power and need to go back to Step Three; or possibly we have eliminated something from our inventory and must go back to Step Four; or we may have a character defect that we are not willing to let go of and must return to Step Six.

19. Give examples of recent “slips” and how you dealt with them \_\_\_\_\_

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20. What character defects caused the “slips? \_\_\_\_\_”

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Step 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

In reality, the entire Twelve Step Program is one of constant repetition and gradual improvement. Most of us need to go over the Steps regularly throughout our lifetime. After the first time, the Steps do not have to be repeated in order. As we grow spiritually, we will be able to rely on them as one of the major factors in our journey toward recovery and a spiritual awakening.

21. What hesitancy do you have in working the Steps as a lifetime process?

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In repairing the damage we have done to others, we will also be overhauling our own lives. If we do it thoroughly, we can find ourselves returned to an amazingly peaceful state without hatred, guilt, or resentment. We will feel a glow of satisfaction in knowing we have honestly done everything we can to pay off every material, moral, and spiritual debt we owe to our fellow human beings.

22. Did you have any difficulty performing this process? If you did have resistance, how were you able to find it?

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The importance of Step Nine is obvious. It finally gives the chance to eradicate past concerns and to start living the present. We have taken the opportunity to balance good with evil, and it will make us feel good about ourselves. As difficult as it may have been to make amends and to replace our misery with happiness, the joy we try to give will not measure up to the pleasure this Step gives us.

23. In what way do you see that Step Five and Step Nine are exacting Steps and are important to your recovery?

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We are now in a place to rebuild self-esteem freely, to achieve unity with self and others, to increase self-acceptance and self-respect, and to be in harmony with our Higher Power and with our own personal world.

24. Referring to your amends lists, estimate a reasonable amount of time in which the direct amends can be completed.

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## AMENDS TO OTHERS EXERCISE

The following is a summary of ideas and procedures that individuals have found useful in preparing for their Step Nine amends and in making amends.

### ATTITUDE

- A. Be willing to love and forgive yourself and the person to whom the amends are made.
- B. Know what you want to say and be careful not to blame the person in your communication.
- C. Take responsibility for what you are going to say.
- D. Be willing to accept the outcome.
- E. Don't expect a particular response from the person.
- F. Be willing to turn it over to your Higher Power.

### PREPARATION

- A. Devote time to prayer and meditation. If you are angry or upset, delay the amend and do more Step Four inventory work.
- B. Keep it simple. Details and explanations aren't necessary.
- C. Remember that the amend does not pertain to the other person's part in the situation.
- D. Express your desire or ask permission to make amends. Example:  
"I am involved in a program that suggest I be aware of the harm I have done to others and that I need to take responsibility for my actions. I'd like to make amends to you. Are you OK to receive it?"

### SAMPLE AMENDS

- A. I was (scared, overwhelmed, feeling abandoned, etc) when \_\_\_\_\_ happened between us. I ask your forgiveness for (harm done) and for anything else I may have done that caused you pain either by my thoughts, words, or actions. I didn't intend to cause you pain, and I ask your forgiveness.
  - B. I want to make an amend to you about \_\_\_\_\_. For all those words that were said out of (fear, thoughtlessness, etc) and out of my confusion, I ask your forgiveness.
- 1. Select a person to whom you wish to make amends and who falls into one of the following categories.
    - A. Someone who needs to be dealt with as soon as possible.
    - B. Someone to whom you can make only partial restitution.
    - C. Someone whose situation requires that action should be deferred.
    - D. Someone with whom you will never be able to make direct personal contact.
  - 2. List the ways in which you would communicate the amend.

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### AMENDS TO SELF EXERCISE



Following are some guidelines to use when making amends to yourself.

## ATTITUDE

- A. Be willing to love and forgive yourself.
- B. Know what you want to say and take responsibility for your actions.
- C. Don't have unreasonable expectations of yourself.
- D. Be willing to turn it over to your Higher Power.

## PREPARATION

- A. Devote time to prayer and meditation. Delay the amend if you are angry or upset, and do more Step Four inventory work.
- B. Keep it simple. Explanations are not necessary.
- C. Remember the amend is to yourself and don't be concerned with the other persons involved.

## SAMPLE AMENDS

- A. I was (scared, overwhelmed, feeling abandoned, etc) when \_\_\_\_\_ happened. I forgive myself for the (harm done) and anything else I may have done in the past by my thoughts, words, or actions that may have caused me harm.
- B. I want to make an amend to myself about \_\_\_\_\_. I forgive myself for all the words that I said out of (fear, thoughtlessness, etc) and out of my confusion.

1. Write an amendment letter to yourself using the above information as a guideline.

[illegible]

2. What are your feelings as a result of writing this letter? \_\_\_\_\_

[illegible]

Step 9 Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others

## NOTES ON STEP 9

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

## STEP TEN

### Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it

The initial work we have done with the Steps shows us the ineffective behaviour we have been using for a considerable length of time. For many of us, the Steps may have served as an antidote to relieve some of the pain of our addictive behaviour. Our commitment to continue working the Steps is an acknowledgement of our intention to improve the quality of our lives and our relationships.

1. What addictive behaviours have improved since working the Steps?

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2. What addictive behaviours are still lingering?

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Having completed Steps One through Nine, our initial housecleaning is complete, and we can begin the maintenance, sustenance, and growth phases of the Program – Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve. It has become apparent that spiritual growth is a lifelong process; our progress must be maintained on a daily basis, one day at a time. When we accept the notion that the healing process is for the rest of our lives, the urgency to get through the work diminishes.

3. Where are you most satisfied with your progress in completing the first Nine Steps?

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4. Where are you most disappointed with your progress in completing the first Nine Steps?

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Some of us have the illusion that after we have completed the first Nine Steps, we are home free. We are comfortable with ourselves and no longer see a need to attend meetings regularly. We allow other activities to come into our lives, which interfere with our attending meetings, and we find excuses for missing meetings, such as being tired, or having to drive too far. Some of us drop out completely. If we choose this path, we will eventually realise that our recovery is in jeopardy. We may become irritable, short-tempered, or negative in our attitudes.

Step 10 Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it

5. What is your current participation in meetings? Are you attending regularly?

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6. What indications do you have that you are feeling comfortable and no longer need to attend meetings?

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At some point, we may begin to wonder if our new problems are related to missed meetings. When we decide to return to the meetings, we will see the warmth and enthusiasm that is present. The emotional and spiritual uplift we will feel can help us get back on the path. Once we accept that we cannot afford to give up the Program, we will feel a gentle inner force compelling us to continue to develop further, to grow spiritually, one day at a time, beyond all imaginable boundaries.

7. What problems have arisen that you attribute to missing meetings?

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Step Ten suggests that we continue to take personal inventory and, when wrong, promptly admit it. This is an important process in our recovery; we cannot afford to hang on to useless, harmful attitudes and practices. We need to be on the look out for signs that we are trying to manage our lives alone, thereby slipping into past patterns such as resentment, fear, dishonesty, or selfishness. When we see our defects crop up, it's time to ask your Higher Power to remove them at once, discuss them with someone, and make amends promptly if we have caused harm.

8. What do you believe is the value of promptly admitting your wrongs?

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In order to successfully complete the remaining Steps of the Program, we need to acknowledge fully our need for continued spiritual development. Just as our stomachs tell us when it is time to eat, so do our souls tell us when it is time for spiritual nourishment. We recognise that we must take care of ourselves emotionally and spiritually. We begin to appreciate and love ourselves as being whole and complete. We are able to see long-range possibilities for our future successes. With the help of our Higher Power, we are able to "Let Go and Let God" so that our stress is minimised. Daily practice of Step Ten maintains our honesty and humility and allows us to continue our development.

9. What are you doing to take care of yourself spiritually? \_\_\_\_\_

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Step 10 Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it

The program suggests three types of ongoing inventories.

### **SPOT CHECK INVENTORY**

This is a short review of our actions, and motives done several times a day as the need arises. Taking frequent inventories and promptly admitting our wrongs keeps us free from guilt and supports spiritual growth.

10. Have you acquired the habit of self-appraisal? If not, how can you acquire it?

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During our daily activities, it is sometimes hard to recognise that seemingly nice actions are actually a sign that our old behaviour is returning. An example of this is when we do a favour for someone. In the process, we think that no one else will take the time to do what we are doing. This triggers a feeling of superiority and tends to make us feel self-righteous. It can also be a sign that we are still seeking approval by “people pleasing”.

11. What are your true motives behind the nice things you do during the day? List two examples.

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Another tendency is to see a wrong we are doing and blame someone else. We become angry and sometimes lose our tempers. We justify our anger rather than take responsibility for our behaviour. In the end, we realize that our anger was not necessarily related to the other person's actions. It was a result of our own fears, anxieties, and feelings of insecurity.

12. Give examples of being angry with someone as a cover-up for your own inner feelings of insecurity.

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### **DAILY INVENTORY**

A daily review of the day's activities serves different and complementary purposes. It reminds us that this is a daily program, lived one day at a time. It keeps us focused on today and helps prevent us from worrying about the future or living in the past. We take this inventory much the same as in Step Four, except we are concerned only with today. The review is usually a “quickie” done on the run or just before we go to sleep.

13. How can you learn from daily inventories so that each day is better than the one before?

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Step 10 Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it

As we take our daily inventory, questions arise, and we try to be as honest and humble as possible. Some of the questions we ask ourselves are as follows:

- A. Are we slipping back into control and manipulation, and are we trying to arrange the outcome of events? It is important that we recognise our behaviour and ask our Higher Power to correct it.
- B. Are we comparing ourselves to others and feeling inferior, thus causing us to isolate ourselves? We need to reach out to our supportive friends and to acknowledge our current state, thereby renewing our self-acceptance.
- C. Are we becoming obsessive/compulsive and not taking care of ourselves? Although we dislike “pressure”, we may still put ourselves under all types of stress. This is a signal to slow down and proceed with moderation.
- D. Are we frightened by angry people and authority figures, and do we hesitate to stand up to them? We need to remind ourselves that our ultimate authority figure, our Higher Power, is always with us.
- E. Are we becoming caretakers and feeling responsible for all persons and all things? We must remember that we are responsible only for ourselves.
- F. Are we depressed? If so, we need to examine the core issue that is causing us to feel sorry for ourselves.
- G. Are we withholding our true feelings and finding it difficult to express our wants and needs, or are we simply giving in to others? We must overcome this so that frozen feelings do not become a pattern of behaviour.

14. What character defects show up most regularly when taking your daily inventory?

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15. What is your resistance to having these defects removed?

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### **LONG-TERM RECOVERY INVENTORY**

This is done once or twice a year and gives us the chance to reflect on our progress from a better perspective. We can see the remarkable progress we have made, which gives us a great deal of satisfaction. We must be careful not to inflate our egos, and we must remind ourselves that our progress is a reflection of our spiritual growth. Long-term inventories help us to recognise problem areas and make the necessary corrections. We sometimes find brand new defects as a result of our new experiences.

16. What new defects have surfaced as a result of your new experiences?

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When a character defect appears or a new one is identified, we can do an inventory, keeping in mind the following points:

- A. Repeating patterns are old choices of our subconscious mind and are founded upon struggle, helplessness, guilt, revenge, and disapproval.

Step 10 Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it

- B. We feel safe when something is familiar, even though it is an addiction from the past.
- C. We victimise ourselves by allowing the past to possess us. We can let go of the past with the help of our Higher Power.
- D. Clinging to any character defects is a sure way to keep ourselves from obtaining what we want.
- E. Releasing an old character trait is frightening. By surrendering to our Higher Power, we can trust that we will be given one that is appropriate.
- F. Reach out. Your loving supportive friends are an important ingredient to recovery and are available to us throughout the Program.

17. How do you include your good qualities in your personal inventory? (e.g. kindness, understanding)

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18. Do you realise that you are not cured of your addictive behaviour but rather have been given only a daily reprieve? What is your reaction to this?

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It is to be expected that our inventories will show us where we are slipping into old behaviour patterns. The wrong we admit is that we violate our contact with our Higher Power, which we made in the Third Step. When we turned our wills and our lives over to our Higher Power's care, we agreed that we would accept our Higher Power's will for us. Now we must admit that we have repossessed our wills and lives, and we must return to Step Three. It is important to realize that pride and fear are always working to keep us from the painful task of dealing with our own faults.

19. In what areas are you slipping back into old behaviour patterns?

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20. When you have slips, why is it important to return to Step Three?

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Good work on Step 10 has many benefits and rewards, most important of which is that it strengthens and protects our recovery. It brings rewards in several areas, such as:

- A. *Personal relationships.* Troubled relationships seem to disappear. By taking inventory and admitting our wrongs promptly, the misunderstandings usually dissolve.
- B. *Freedom from fear of "being found out".* Our refusal to admit wrongs is rooted in feelings of inferiority and inadequacy. We always needed to look right to other people. It is a relief to learn that we do not need to put up a false front any longer. It is OK to be ourselves.

Step 10 Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it

- C. *Freedom from guilt.* Guilt is one of the prices we pay for not admitting our wrongs. When we realise how harmful this is, we become more willing to face our wrongs and quickly admit them. At this point, the guilt can be removed.
- D. *Ability to help others.* A surprising benefit to admitting our wrongs is that we become able to help others make similar admissions. When we admit our wrongs and stop accusing others, the way is shown to a real understanding of another's problems and to what the person can do about it.

21. In which areas of your life are you experiencing the most benefits and rewards?

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A final thought about Step Ten is to pay special attention to acting promptly. The sooner we admit our wrongs, the sooner the harm can be repaired to ourselves as well as to others. Delay in admitting our wrongs show resistance to practicing Step Ten. This can be harmful because matters usually become worse. Eternal vigilance in taking a Ten Step inventory is the price of freedom. It is our path toward freedom, and it releases us to complete the final two steps and to obtain the serenity and spirituality we are looking for.

22. How are you going to practice making a daily review of your activities so that you can promptly admit and correct your wrongs?

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Step 10 Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it

### STEP TEN DAILY INVENTORY LOG

USING THE FOLLOWING RATINGS, RECORD YOUR PERFORMANCE EACH DAY:

POOR = 1  
 FAIR = 2  
 AVERAGE = 3  
 GOOD = 4  
 EXCELLENT = 5

CHARACTERISTIC (WEAKNESS)	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SU N
Anger/Resentment							
Approval seeking							
Caretaking							
Control							
Denial							
Depression/Self-pity							
Dishonesty							
Frozen feelings							
Isolation							
Jealousy							
Perfectionism							
Procrastination							
Worry (past or future)							

CHARACTERISTIC (STRENGTH)	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT	SU N
Forgiveness							
Generosity							
Honesty							
Humility							
Patience							
Risk-taking							
Self-nurturing							
Tolerance							
Trust							

Step 10 Continued to take personal inventory and, when we were wrong, promptly admitted it

1. What were your experiences in completing this exercise?

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2. how did it help you to be more aware of your behaviour?

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## NOTES ON STEP 10

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out

## STEP ELEVEN

### **Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood Him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and for the power to carry that out**

Step Eleven is our opportunity to develop a deepening relationship with our Higher Power. Having developed this relationship in Steps Two and Three, we have been able to rely on it during the subsequent Steps. The relationship we developed with our Higher Power was the source of courage and strength for doing the work suggested in the Steps.

1. As a result of your journey in working the Steps, what has been your experience in catching a glimpse of your Higher Power's will?

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At this point in working the Twelve Steps, we have no doubt noticed that to "make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God" is not a single event. It is a daily routine. Now we are being asked to "pray for knowledge of His will for us and for the power to carry that out." Turning our will over may have been more of a challenge than seeking the knowledge of our Higher Power's will for us because of our persistent and repeated feelings of distrust. We were first confronted with the power of our ego (self-will) in Step One. A psychiatrist and pioneer in the field of addiction, H M Tiebout, MD, wrote that the ego is made up of the persisting elements, in the adult psyche, of the original nature of the child. When infantile traits continue into adulthood, the person is referred to as being immature. The ego is the arch-enemy of our emotional sobriety.

2. How have you experienced the realisation that "knowledge of God's will" come to you only as a result of your surrendering to Him?

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If we are periodically puzzled by the daily challenges we face from "His Majesty the Baby," we must accept that we are adult children and are still growing up. The inner child of our past tolerates frustration poorly, tends to want to do things in a hurry, and is impatient with delay. The hallmark of our adult life is the tendency to be under pressure for accomplishment. Big plans, schemes and hopes abound. Unfortunately, these are not always matched by an ability to produce. We are clearly not doing our Higher Power's will when we are expressing this behaviour. "Like the cat with nine lives, the ego has a marvellous capacity to scramble back to safety - a little ruffled, perhaps, but soon operating with all its former aplomb, convinced once more that now it, the ego, can master all events and push ahead."

3. Identify behaviour that you continue to demonstrate as an example of "His Majesty the Baby".

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4. How does your ego get in the way of your relationship with your Higher Power?

Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out

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Doing our Higher Power's will may get so entangled with the reassertion of our old feelings and attitudes that our emotional sobriety becomes a shambles of discontent and restlessness. As we see this struggle in process, the need for our Higher Power becomes clearer.

5. What is your understanding of your Higher Power's will for you at this point in your life?

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Step Eleven is where we focus on the daily process that is necessary for our spiritual awakening. We may have had spiritual experiences prior to this, but a spiritual experience is not a spiritual awakening. In fact, many spiritual experiences may be required before a spiritual awakening is possible. It is only through experience that the existence of a Power greater than ourselves is finally proven to us. A spiritual awakening comes when we know there is a Higher Power that has been taking of our wills and our lives and when we know we can depend on that Higher Power to run the show from now on.

6. Identify some significant spiritual experience you have had while working the Steps.

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7. Identify situations in which you believe you have had a spiritual awakening.

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Step Eleven suggests that we improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power as we understand Him. In order to do this, we must already have established contact. We have made conscious contact with our Higher Power at least three times in earlier Steps. In Step Three, we made a decision to turn our wills and lives over to our Higher Power's care. In Step Five, we admitted our wrongs directly to Him. In Step Seven, we humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. Step Eleven seeks to improve that contact, thereby enabling us to bring our Higher Power into our lives on a daily basis. It is now that we can begin to enjoy the quality relationship that is possible with Him.

8. How has your relationship with your Higher Power improved since you began working on the Steps?

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9. In what areas do you have difficulty asking for guidance from your Higher Power?

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Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out

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The Program implies that our Higher Power is a loving power who has only the best interests of each individual in mind. The basic premise includes the idea that this loving power wants to enrich our lives. It is exciting to realize that we have abundant life if we accept the protection and care of our Higher Power. The AA pioneers believed that this abundant life could be had for the asking. "We found that our Higher Power does not make too hard terms with those who seek Him. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all men.

19. Give examples that show your Higher Power to be a loving Power who has your best interests at heart.

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The means recommended to improve our conscious contact are prayer and meditation. These are the channels by which we reach Him and He reaches us. To pray is to petition our Higher Power for what we would have Him give us, to ask His guidance in our affairs. Prayer tells our Higher Power what we want. Meditation is listening to our Higher Power's will for us. Meditation techniques are designed to quiet our minds and rid us of our daily thoughts and concerns. In doing this, we allow our Higher Power to enter into our minds so that we can hear His messages for us.

11. What are your past experiences of prayer when you petition your Higher Power?

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12. What are your past experiences of meditation?

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Assuming you are willing, how do we pray, and what do we pray for? Many of us were taught to pray before we understood what it meant. In the beginning, we may have used prayer "Now I lay me down to sleep, etc". We asked our Higher Power to bless Mommy and Daddy and significant others. As we grew up, our dysfunctional family experiences caused some of our dreams to shatter. We may have had a tendency to blame our Higher Power for not answering our prayers. Based on the principles of the Program, our attitude toward prayer changes as we work the Steps. We learn to ask for our Higher Power's will for us and to accept that He knows what is best. The old habit of praying for material things diminishes, and we replace it with prayers for guidance. We begin to rely on some of the slogans and prayers, such as "Let Go and Let God" or the Serenity Prayer. Our prayers can be as simple as "God, please help me," or "Thank you God." Any prayer is helpful if it helps the individual. The only requirement for prayer to be successful is that it be sincere, humble, and not for our own selfish gain.

Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out

13. List examples of how you pray to your Higher Power. How has your quality of prayer improved?

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14. In what way do you feel uncomfortable when praying to your Higher Power for help and guidance?

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Meditation is an ancient art that requires quieting the mind and not thinking. It is the channel through which we receive guidance from our Higher Power. In order to meditate successfully, we must be willing to quiet our conscious mind and to remove the barriers of our conscious thoughts. This is difficult for some of us because we are unaccustomed to sitting still and relaxing. Meditation helps calm us emotionally and to relax us physically. It helps us release energy we normally expend in keeping our emotions in high gear and our bodies taut.

15. Because you have opened your mind to inspiration, in what ways have you discovered that meditation can reveal solutions you had not dreamt of?

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**An overview of prayer and meditation in a given day may be outlined as follows:**

**1. Beginning of the day**

- A. Review our plans for the day.
  - 1. Ask your Higher Power to direct your thoughts and actions.
    - a. To keep us free from self-pity, dishonesty, selfishness.
    - b. To give us the guidance needed to take care of any problems.
  - 2. Ask your Higher Power for freedom from self-will.
    - a. To prevent our making requests unless others will be helped.
    - b. To stop us from praying for our own selfish ends.

**2. During the day, in moments of indecision or fear**

- A. Ask your Higher Power for inspiration and guidance.
- B. Ask your Higher Power for clear, intuitive answers.
- C. Reflect on Step Three and turn it over.

- Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out
1. Relax and breathe deeply several times.
  2. Beware of any desire to struggle with a situation or person.
- D. Pray to your Higher Power as often as necessary during the day.
1. "Please remove this \_\_\_\_\_" (feeling, obsession, addiction, etc)
  2. "Your will be done."
- E. If possible, call a support person simply to acknowledge what is happening.

### 3. End of the day

- A. Review the events of the day by practising Step Ten and taking a personal inventory.
- B. Take time to pray for knowledge of His will for us.
- C. Acknowledge that this review is not intended to cause obsessive thinking, worry, remorse, or morbid reflection.
- D. Pray to your Higher Power, asking:
  1. For forgiveness.
  2. For guidance in corrective action we need to take.

The methods of prayer and meditation may vary; however, it is our intentions and the prayer content that matter. Our commitment is primarily to deepen our relationship and open our communication with our Higher Power. This means being honest, sharing our innermost selves, confessing our wrong doings, and bringing our failings to Him for forgiveness. By our dedication to prayer and meditation, and by becoming aware of our Higher Power's unconditional love and forgiveness, we are empowered to continue our life in awareness of His constant presence. If we continue to pray with patience and trust, the result can only be humility, love and faith.

16. In what ways has Step Eleven changed your view of the method or use of prayer and meditation?

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The importance of Step Eleven is that it tells us precisely the things to pray for. In the Step of spiritual awakening, we pray only for knowledge of His will for us and for the power to carry that out. The word "only" emphasises the fact that from now on, we pray for nothing else except His will and the courage to go forward and do what He makes us want to do.

17. What resistance do you experience when you read the part of Step Eleven which states to pray "only" for knowledge of His will and for the power to carry that out?

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The miracle of this Step is that it changes our past method of praying into a form of meditation, whether we know how to meditate or not. Praying only for His will and for the power to carry that out drives all our personal concerns from our consciousness and allows us to concentrate only on His concerns. This very prayer empties our mind of our wants and allows our Higher Power to enter.

Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out

18. What thoughts have you had that you assumed were from your Higher Power, only to discover that they were unconscious desires (e.g. praying for a new relationship leads us into past behaviour)?

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19. What was the result of acting on these illusions? \_\_\_\_\_

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If we have thoroughly placed our will in His care and pray, we must trust that our will is being directed by Him. The power to carry that out will be the courage to do so, and He will also give us that.

Seeking guidance is a tricky matter because we are so accustomed to running our lives rigidly and making demands on our Higher Power.

Our own desires and opinions are so much a part of us that we are likely to view the will of a Higher Power in terms of our own feelings.

20. How is your own ego and self-will getting in the way of your praying for your Higher Power's will?

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In Step Eleven, we concede complete willingness to accept our Higher Power's will and whatever terms are offered. We are no longer in a position to demand anything, and the best we can hope for is relief from our agony. We stop making demands on our Higher Power and let things work out in a natural way.

21. Give examples that show you are not putting demands on your Higher Power and are willing to let things work out in a natural way.

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Prayer and meditation are used 'to improve our conscious contact with God as we understand Him'. If we are progressing satisfactorily with Step Eleven, there will be signs along the way.

One sign is a deep sense of gratitude, accompanied by a feeling of belonging in the world at last. Another is our feeling of being worthy. We have a sense of being guided and sustained as we proceed with our activities.

22. What is your opinion of your self-worth today?

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Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out

23. In what areas of your life do you have a sense of gratitude?

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It is not always easy to maintain this new way of life. We may face boredom and disillusionment after the early stages of inspiration and excitement. Step Eleven reminds us of the need to maintain the wonderful way of life we've been given. It is no quick fix. It is really Step Two and Three practiced on a daily basis. It can be our guide for the rest of our lives. If we understand and follow it carefully, some of the changes in our lives will border on the miraculous. We can have continuous recovery along with the qualities we were seeking but never found.

24. How is boredom a problem for you now that you are achieving some peace and serenity in your life?

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Step Eleven does exact a price, and we must pay it if we accept favourable results. There is a price in giving up the self-will that led us into trouble. Part of the price is facing the need to become open-minded and being willing to change. Doing our Higher Power's will can be as simple as accepting that there is no strain in doing our Higher Power's will. As soon as we accept it on our own, we will experience complete peace and joy. Unless we experience this, we are refusing to acknowledge His will for us. Step Eleven calls for faith and persistence - the very qualities that we applied so wrongly to our compulsive behaviour.

25. How willing are you to allow change, now, to your willingness prior to working the Steps?

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26. What is your current level of faith and persistence?

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Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out

### **JUST FOR TODAY**

I will take a good look at myself and see that I have many addictive and compulsive traits that have become dominant in my life. I am at the mercy of these traits and unable to manage them. Seeing this, I admit that I need help.

I will acknowledge the presence of a Power greater than myself who has created me, is aware of all my needs, and is fully capable of healing me and restoring me to a condition of clarity and stability. This Power is my Higher Power as I choose to understand Him.

I will let go of the inclination to figure out my problems with my mind. No more analysing ... no more questioning. I now make a conscious decision to turn my life and my will over to the care and keeping of my Higher Power. I surrender to the thinking that tells me I must "run my own show" and make my own life happen. I am ready to be a TRANSFORMED (changed) person, beginning right now.

I will release the past, letting go of any guilt or regrets about what happened "back then". Finding fault or blaming myself and/or others keeps me stuck in the past.

I will forgive myself and others for the way we've been. I realise that our actions have risen out of fear and insecurity. I now allow myself and others to "be". I no longer pass judgement on our lives, our chosen paths, or our pattern of growth.

I will drop all anxiety about the future. I will live THIS DAY with as much joy, trust, and serenity as I can, realising that this day is all I can handle.

I will let go of my tendencies to be dependent on persons, possessions, and patterns to fulfill me. I recognise that these things are only a temporary part of my existence and cannot provide the lasting security, inner peace, or true freedom that I yearn to experience on a daily basis.

I will take responsibility for all aspects of my life; my choices, my feelings, my physical and mental health, my spiritual well-being, my paths of growth, and the principles and values by which I live.

I will utilise all the energies within me that contribute to the betterment of my life and to the lives of others (e.g. expressing honesty, integrity, and kindness). To all else, I firmly say, "No, thank you."

I will thank my Higher Power for the opportunity to be set free from old attitudes and behaviour patterns that prevent me from moving in the direction of my needed healing.

I will willingly share with others the wisdom, peace and strength I have received through this program.

I will go forth into this day with enthusiasm, believing in my own value and worthiness and with determination to enjoy this day and give it my positive best, come what may.

Step 11 Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood him, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out

### **JUST FOR TODAY EXERCISE**

Review your expectations for today. Remember to ask for knowledge of your Higher Power's will for you, and for the power to carry that out.

1. Just for today, I will \_\_\_\_\_  
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2. Just for today, I will \_\_\_\_\_  
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3. Just for today, I will \_\_\_\_\_  
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4. Just for today, I will \_\_\_\_\_  
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5. Just for today, I will \_\_\_\_\_  
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6. Just for today, I will \_\_\_\_\_  
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7. Just for today, I will \_\_\_\_\_  
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8. Just for today, I will \_\_\_\_\_  
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## NOTES ON STEP 11

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## STEP TWELVE

### **Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs**

The Twelfth Step is where we were headed when we started our journey toward recovery and a spiritual awakening. As we worked our way through the Steps, something inside told us that there was hope at the end of the journey. The mystery surrounding the Twelve Steps is that they really work for those who are willing to surrender to a Higher Power. AA tells us: "The joy of living is the theme of the Twelfth Step, and action is its key word. If we have practiced the other eleven steps to the best of our ability, we will have a spiritual awakening.

1. List three ways in which the Twelve Steps have helped you to experience the joy of living.

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The process of working the Steps can be likened to the transformation of a caterpillar to a butterfly. The caterpillar is not clear that it is going to be a butterfly. Everything that is part of its death and re-birth in the cocoon must be experienced. The story is told of a man who noticed a cocoon on a bush in his yard. As he started to pull it from the bush and throw it away, he noticed the end was opening and a butterfly was struggling to escape. In an effort to help the emerging butterfly, he took it inside and carefully cut the cocoon away with a razor blade. The butterfly feebly crawled from the open cocoon and, within a few hours, died. It needed the strength it would have gained from the struggle to free itself in order to survive in the outside world. In a like manner, our working the Steps is something that only we can do. Any attempts to have another person do our work or find answers for us inhibits our own recovery and limits our ability to become strong.

2. Explain your understanding of the butterfly story as it applies to your needs to have your own experiences.

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Our spiritual awakening is a gift that places us in a new state of consciousness and being. It is usually accompanied by a complete change in values. Where there used to be darkness, we now begin to see the light. For most of us, the awakening is subtle and can only be viewed with hindsight. The maturity we gain by working the Steps enables us to view many experiences, often painful, as being spiritual in nature. Our awakening can be viewed as the sum total of these individual experiences. With each of them, we can identify in some way or another how our Higher Power is guiding us.

3. Which spiritual awakenings have been the most rewarding for you?

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Step 12 Having had a spiritual awakending as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs

4. How can you further enhance your spiritual awakenings?

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We become able to do, feel and believe things that are not possible by our own resources. We find in ourselves a degree of honesty, humility, peace of mind, and love that we had not previously possessed. Our new values are based on a realistic view of ourselves as children of our Higher Power, and we recognise a need for emotional and spiritual balance in our lives. With the help of our Higher Power, we have discovered new abilities in ourselves we never knew existed.

5. In what ways do you see yourself as a child of your Higher Power, needing emotional and spiritual balance?

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It is important to remember that our spiritual awakening is an ongoing process. It may have begun early in the Steps, but it continues for the rest of our lives. It is not a distinct event with a clear beginning and ending. As our spiritual awakening continues, we become more lovable, make friends more easily, and feel more comfortable with people. Our relationships with our families improve as we draw closer, yet we recognise each other's independent identity. We no longer have unrealistic expectations of ourselves, and we accept ourselves for who we are.

6. Evaluate our current relationships with your family and friends.

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7. How do these compare with your previous relationships?

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Because we know this Program works and is working for us, we are ready to carry the message to others. This is the means by which the Program grows, prospers, flourishes. We have healthy tools for reaching out to those people who are in bondage, as we once were. The message we carry is a liberating one. Sharing the message strengthens our own recovery and continues our spiritual growth. The gift we receive may be new strength or new insights. It is also a means of helping ourselves to grow emotionally. Whatever it may be, we can be assured of satisfaction from our desire to help another human being. The most effective way of convincing people of the value of the Steps is to be ourselves the way our Higher Power created us. This alone will reflect examples of our miraculous transformed lives.

Step 12 Having had a spiritual awakending as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs

8. Given that you have something to share with others, are you willing to carry this message to those in need?

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9. In what specific way are you planning to accomplish this? (e.g. service work)

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There is no formal qualification for working this Step, other than the willingness and desire to tell our stories as honestly as we can. This is one time when being ourselves is the gift we give to others. This can happen anywhere when we are called upon to do volunteer work, share in meetings, or interact with co-workers and family members. As we share our story with others and help them recognise their need, we are learning to be humble and to express ourselves honestly. When we carry the message, we share how the Twelve Steps have transformed our lives, taking time to share our miraculous experiences with others who are in need of help. We tell them what we used to be like, what happened to us as a result of the Steps, and what we are like now. As we share our experiences, strength, and hope with newcomers, we help them find a way to solve their own problems, look at themselves honestly, and stop finding fault with others.

10. Given your expanded self awareness from working the Steps, how are you now clear that you will never have enough insight into another's life to tell him what is best to do?

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Working with newcomers can be a rewarding experience. They are usually troubled, confused, and resentful. They are looking for "instant relief". They need guidance, and we can help them understand that the Program represents pain and hard work. The rewards and miracles far outweigh the pain. We need to encourage the newcomers to be gentle with themselves and to take the Program one day at a time. This is also a growth experience for us as we reflect back on where we were when someone introduced us to the Program. When carrying the message, we must emphasize that the decision to join the Program is an individual one that is made by most of us when we have suffered enough, are tired of hurting, or in other words, when we have "hit bottom".

11. Are you clear that sharing with others can do more for you than it can for them? Explain how carrying this message is an obligation you have to yourself

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A recurring message through the Twelve Steps is the importance of humility and obedience to our Higher Power. As we diligently practice these principles in our daily affairs, the key factor for success is our relationship with our Higher Power. Working closely with our Higher Power helps us stay on the right course by considering Him as a source of guidance and support. We realise now that we cannot achieve peace in the world

Step 12 Having had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to others and to practice these principles in all our affairs until we have achieved peace within ourselves independently of a Higher Power. We must individually admit we are powerless and begin to work on our spiritual development, one day at a time, for the rest of our lives.

12. Examine the degree to which you rely on your Higher Power. Give examples.

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We can view our progress by comparing where we were with where we are right now. Are we less isolated and no longer afraid of authority figures? Have we stopped seeking approval and become accepting of ourselves as we really are? Are we more selective of the people we choose to form relationships with, and are we able to keep our own identity while in a relationship? Have we developed the ability to express our feelings? Have our fears lessened? Have a lot of our character defects been transformed into assets, and are we behaving in a sane manner? If we are able to answer in the affirmative to the above, we have come a long way since Step One when our character defects were active and damaging.

13. Describe the progress you see in yourself as a result of this Twelve Step Workbook.

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As we practice this new behaviour in our daily affairs, like in general seems to start working better. For some of us, our examples in family and work environments have a positive effect on those around us, and we can see recovery in our loved ones. This is truly a measure of our progress and of our determination to change our lives and our behaviour. The more committed we are to living the Steps on a daily basis, the more likely we are to have a continual spiritual awakening for the remainder of our lives.

14. What changes do you see in your family and friends that you can attribute to changes in your behaviour?

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A key factor in practicing the Steps in all our affairs is to become accustomed to “living” the Steps. If we are truly committed to working the Steps, we will see that most of our problems can be resolved through the Steps. The practice of taking a problem through all the Steps is very healing and can be done in a relatively short time. In doing this, we find support and guidance from our Higher Power. The end result usually provides an inner peace and an ability to deal directly with the problem.

15. Having completed this workbook, what are you planning to do in order to continue “living” the Steps, one day at a time?

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There is no doubt that the Program really does work in all areas of our lives.

We find that as our faith in our Higher Power increases, we become more willing to trust.

The process is gradual, regenerative, and never-ending. We slowly become Higher Power-orientated and thus learn the meaning of love, growth and serenity.

- [illegible]

[illegible]

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# TWELVE STEP EXERCISE

1. Identify a situation or condition in your life that is currently a source of resentment, fear, sadness or anger. It may involve relationships (family, work or sexual), work environment, health, or self-esteem. Write a concise statement describing the situation and indicating your concern

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2. Use the following exercise to apply the principles of the Twelve Steps to the above.

**STEP ONE:** In what ways are you powerless, and how is this situation showing you the unmanageability of your life?

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**STEP TWO:** How do you see your Higher Power as helping you to restore your sanity?

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**STEP THREE:** How does being willing to turn your life over to the care of your Higher Power assist you in dealing with this?

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**STEP FOUR:** What character defects have surfaced? (e.g. fear of abandonment or authority figures, control, approval, seeking, obsessive/compulsive behaviour, rescuing, excessive responsibility, unexpressed feelings)

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**STEP FIVE:** Admit your wrongs, at least to your Higher Power and yourself.

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**STEP SIX:** Are you entirely ready to have your Higher Power remove the character defects that have surfaced?

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**STEP SEVEN:** Can you humbly admit to your Higher Power and ask Him to remove your shortcomings? If not, what is your resistance?

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**STEP EIGHT:** Make a list of the persons being harmed \_\_\_\_\_

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**STEP NINE:** What amends are necessary, and how will you make the amends?

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**STEP TEN:** Review the above Steps to be sure that nothing has been overlooked.

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**STEP ELEVEN:** Take a moment for prayer or meditation, asking your Higher Power for knowledge of His will for you.

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**STEP TWELVE:** How can your understanding and spiritual awakening assist you in dealing with your problem?

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**NOTES:**

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

# METHODS OF STUDY

There are two methods of effectively using this workbook; self-study and group study. The information in this appendix is intended as a guideline to assist you in successfully completing the workbook. The information contained in the self-study section also applies to group study.

## SELF-STUDY

Read the entire Step narrative for each Step before reading the questions. Then return to the beginning of the narrative and answer the questions. This will give you a better perspective of the material.

As you proceed through the “Steps, it is important to pace yourself. Work on only one Step at a time and allow sufficient time to complete each process. This may take a week or longer. Allow yourself time to digest and reflect on its meaning. Be patient with yourself. This is an opportunity to see how impatience can interfere with your effectiveness. Don’t be discouraged if Steps One, Two and Three seem overwhelming to you. It is in these three Steps that we form the foundation for working the Program.

Depending upon the level of your commitment to do the writing, you may discover that you will want to go through the Twelve Steps more than one time. The Twelve Step Program is a lifelong process to be used daily as part of our lives. It is not expected or intended that this workbook be your only involvement with working the Twelve Steps.

Wherever possible, share your insights with someone you can trust. Communicating your discoveries to another human being can work miracles. In many Anonymous programs, this person is referred to as a sponsor. A sponsor is familiar with the Steps, and his insights and experience may be invaluable. It is important to be aware that your listener is not there to give advice. The healing is a result of your relationship with your Higher Power.

If this workbook is your first exposure to the Twelve Steps and you are not presently attending an Anonymous Twelve Step Program meeting, it is suggested that you find a meeting to attend. The following listings will help you to identify which program is best for you. Other resources can be found in the library or in the telephone directory under “social service organizations” or “crisis intervention”.

## GROUP STUDY

Once you have identified a group you feel comfortable with, you are ready to start a committed Step Study Writing Workshop. The following information will assist you in forming the workshop. There is additional information available on “Adult Children” or “Co-Dependents” which can be included in the workshop.

Starting a Step Study is not difficult. It involves making an announcement at one or more Anonymous meetings. It is possible that many people will show up only one or two times to check out the meeting. It is suggested that the meeting be closed to newcomers on the third week. The workshop is designed to last twenty-three weeks, in accordance with the Appendix Three weekly writing exercise.

Even though you start the workshop and function as secretary, it is important to have a different leader each week. It is recommended that leadership rotate by “family group” rather than by individuals. This gives each “family group” an opportunity to lead on a periodic basis.

Previous workshops have revealed that trust develops most quickly when there are small “family groups” with a maximum of seven individuals. E.g. if there are 24 participants, it is recommended that the workshops be formed into four “family groups”, each containing six members. The small “family groups” will be together to complete the evening’s writing exercise and to share within their group for a specified period of time. The final portion of the meeting is devoted to sharing in one all-inclusive group. There is no ideal arrangement, other than to keep the working “family groups” small.

When people get together to work on material as challenging as the Steps, it is important that everyone be in agreement regarding the commitment to work the Steps as a group.

During the workshop, various issues among the participants will surface. There will possibly be dissension within the small groups as to compatibility. In previous workshops, these issues were resolved without making changes within the group. It was found that the struggles within each family group were re-enactments of family of origin situations. Leaving the groups as original established for the duration of the workshop fosters growth and strengthens the bonds within the family group.

As participants surrender to the guidance of their Higher Power, many problems will be dealt with in a more constructive manner. As Adult Children we are inclined to be caretakers, enablers and people pleasers. This manifests itself by our inability to be confrontive toward inappropriate, incongruent, or self-destructive behaviour. Instead we tend to be overly nice to each other. In keeping with the intention of having a safe environment for the “family group” members to alter old patterns of behaviour, heavy confrontation is not needed. Straightforward feedback is important, with communication being expressed as one’s personal experience in a given situation.

Due to early exposure to negative behaviour (e.g. resentment, greed, sexual abuse, dishonesty, gluttony, envy, laziness) and negative feelings (e.g. self-pity, sadness, insecurity, worry, fear of rejection, fear of abandonment) they seem normal to us. As we progress through the Steps, this negativity will be reduced. We will experience growth in all areas by increasing our self-worth and self-esteem. Therefore, positive feelings and positive thoughts need to be frequently encouraged. It is helpful to take time periodically during the workshop to ask people’s feelings about the progress of the workshop. This enables the facilitator to encourage open and honest communication within the entire group.

There is not right way to work the material. Each person has something to contribute in whatever way he or she chooses to work the material. The results will be varied, but each participant will experience some degree of growth and change.

## **Common feelings and behaviours of codependents/adult children**

We have feelings of low self-esteem as a result of being criticized. We perpetuate these parental messages by judging ourselves and others harshly. We try to cover up our poor opinions of ourselves by being perfectionistic, controlling, contemptuous and gossipy.

We tend to isolate ourselves out of fear and to feel uneasy around other people, especially authority figures.

We are desperate for love and approval and will do anything to make people like us. Not wanting to hurt others, we remain “loyal” in situations and relationships even when evidence indicates our loyalty is underserved.

We are intimidated by angry people and personal criticism. This causes us to feel inadequate and insecure.

We continue to attract emotionally unavailable people with addictive personalities.

We live life as victims, blaming others for our circumstances, and are attracted to other victims as friends and lovers. We confuse love with pity and tend to “love” people we can pity and rescue.

We are either super-responsible or super-irresponsible. We take responsibility for solving others’ problems or expect others to be responsible for solving ours. This enables us to avoid being responsible for our own lives and choices.

We feel guilty when we stand up for ourselves or act in our own best interests. We give into others’ needs and opinions instead of taking care of ourselves.

We deny, minimise or repress our feelings as a result of our traumatic childhoods. We are unaware of the impact that our inability to identify and express our feelings has had on our adult lives.

We are dependent personalities who are so terrified of rejection or abandonment that we tend to stay in situations or relationships that are harmful to us. Our fears and dependency stop us from ending unfulfilling relationships and prevent us from entering into fulfilling ones.

Denial, repression, isolation, control, shame and inappropriate guilt are legacies from our family of origin. As a result of these symptoms, we feel hopeless and helpless.

We have difficulty with intimacy, security, trust and commitment in our relationships. Lacking clearly defined personal limits and boundaries, we become enmeshed in our partners’ needs and emotions.

We tend to procrastinate and have difficulty following projects through from beginning to end.

We have a strong need to be in control. We over-react to change over which we have no control.

## The Problem

Many of us found that we had several characteristics in common as a result of being brought up in an alcoholic or otherwise dysfunctional household.

We had come to feel isolated, uneasy with other people, especially authority figures. To protect ourselves we became people pleasers, even though we lost our own identities in the process. All the same, we would mistake any personal criticism as a threat.

We either became addicts ourselves or married them or both. Failing that, we found another compulsive personality, eg. a workaholic, to fulfill our need for abandonment.

We lived from the standpoint of victims. Having an overdeveloped sense of responsibility, we preferred to be concerned with others rather than ourselves. We somehow got guilt feelings when we stood up for ourselves rather than giving in to others. Thus, we became reactors rather than actors, letting others take the initiative.

We became dependent personalities – terrified of abandonment – willing to do almost anything to hold on to a relationship in order not to be abandoned emotionally. Yet we kept choosing insecure relationships because they matched our childhood relationship with our parents.

These symptoms of the family disease of codependence/addiction made us “co-victims” – those who take on the characteristics of the disease without necessarily ever taking a drink. We learnt to stuff our feelings down as children and kept them buried as adults. As a result of this conditioning, we confuse love with pity, tending to love those we could rescue. Even more self-defeating, we became addicted to excitement in all our affairs, preferring constant upset to workable relationships.

*This is a description, not an indictment.*



## The Solution

The solution is to become your own loving parent. As the 12step group becomes a safe place for you, you will find the freedom to express all the hurts and fears you have kept inside and to free yourself from the shame and blame that are carryovers from the past. You will become an adult who is no longer imprisoned by your childhood reactions.

You will recover the child within you, learning to accept and love yourself.

The healing begins when we risk moving out of isolation. Feelings and buried memories will return. By gradually releasing the burden of unexpressed grief, we slowly move out of the past. We learn to reparent ourselves with gentleness, humour, love and respect.

This process allows us to see our biological parents as the instruments of our existence. Our actual parent is a Higher Power some of us choose to call God. Although we had dysfunctional parents, our Higher Power gave us the 12 Steps of Recovery.

This is the action and work that heals us; we use the Steps, we use the meetings, we use the telephone. We share our experiences, strength and hope with each other. We learn to restructure our thinking one say at a time. When we release our parents from responsibility for our actions today, we become free to make healthy decisions as actors, not reactors. We progress from hurting to healing to helping. We awaken to a sense of wholeness we never knew was possible.

By attending these meetings on a regular basis, you will come to see parental alcoholism for what it is; a disease that infected you as a child and continues to affect you as an adult. You will learn to keep the focus on yourself in the here and now. You will take responsibility for your own life and supply your own parenting.

You will not do this alone. Look around and you will see others who know how you feel. We will love and encourage you no matter what. We ask that you accept us just as we accept you.

This is a spiritual program based on action coming from love. We are sure that as the love grows inside of you, you will see beautiful changes in all your relationships, especially with your Higher Power, yourself and your parents.

## Personal statements and affirmations

The following statements and affirmations can be made to a group member, either aloud or silently, as an expression of support.

### **Affirmation**

Nothing you have done or will do can separate you from your Higher Power or from my loving concern. I may not agree with your actions, but I will love you as a person and do all I can to hold you in thoughts of affirming love.

### **Prayer**

I promise to lovingly hold you in my thoughts, believing that your Higher Power wishes only good to come to you.

### **Openness**

I promise to strive to become a more open person, disclosing my feelings, my struggles, my joys and my hurts as well as I am able. I will succeed only if I can trust you with my problems and my dreams. I extend my trust to you and affirm your worth to me as a person and a partner in my recovery.

### **Confidentiality**

I promise to keep whatever is shared within the confines of the group, in order to provide the atmosphere of safety necessary for openness.

### **Availability**

Anything I have – time, energy, insight etc – is at your disposal, to the limit of my resources. As part of this availability, I pledge my time on a regular basis, whether in prayer or in an agreed-upon meeting.

### **Honesty**

I agree to tell the truth, so far as I know it, even if it means risking pain for either of us. I will trust our relationship enough to take that risk, realising that it is in speaking the truth in love that we will find fulfilment in all things. I will try to express this honesty in a sensitive and loving manner.

### **Sensitivity**

My desire is to be known and understood by you. I commit to understanding you and your needs to the best of my ability.

### **Accountability**

I will seek the loving sharing of my supportive friends, so that I might give more of myself. I understand that I am accountable for the choices I make in my life.