

ISA Step Study Guide and Homework Invitations

January 2020

Weeks 13 through 24

Week 13

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -

Step 5 in Sex Addicts Anonymous, page 37
Resentments worksheet(s)

Week 13 Assignments -

3 outreach calls

Daily Nurturing Activity

Daily Sensory Exercises

Pair and Share –

Fears worksheet

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

The outreach calls are really important, and the nurturing and sensory exercises. You are invited to invoke the help of a Power greater than yourself to give you willingness and the ability to do things which are difficult or challenging! All of us struggle with the outreach calls and nurture and sensory exercises. Even if you've not done much with those up until now, TODAY IS A NEW DAY! You are invited to do something nice for yourself today, and to reach out to someone today.

Suggestions for doing the FEARS inventory work:

First, pray. One suggestion is to invite your Higher Power to show you what you're ready to see, and to protect you from what you're not ready for.

Next, list 2-5 separate fears in the "What am I afraid of?" space. If using the Word/PDF files, you'll need to use 2-5 separate FEARS sheets (1 sheet per fear). If using the excel file, click on the "FEARS" tab below.

Be as specific as possible. It may be helpful to take fears that came up in the RESENTMENTS inventory and inventory them on the FEARS sheet. Again, recalling **the first time you felt that fear or a specific example or event** in which that fear was present might help you become clearer about the true nature of the fear. There may be many examples to choose from, but try to focus on one event which stands out more clearly in your mind.

Try to keep asking yourself, “Why?” until you get to the core. This process has been referred to as “keep digging until your shovel hits metal.” One example is the FEAR OF CHANGE or the UNKNOWN. “Why am I afraid of the future?” Because I might not like what's in the future – it might be upsetting or undesirable. “Why am I afraid of things being upsetting or undesirable?” I don't want to deal with emotional pain. “Why not?” Because it may be too big for me to handle. “Why does that cause fear?” I may have to ask for help. “So, what? Why would asking for help be scary? Because that makes me seem weak (shame).

Try to determine what Character Weaknesses (“defects” or “defaults” are behind that fear. Continuing the example, “I mistrust God (lack of faith). I want guarantees and the comfort of predictability. I'm a bit lazy, not wanting to do the work it takes to grow, but desiring it to be handed to me instead. I have not fully believed others who testify of God's love and care and trustworthiness. Lack of self-confidence: I doubt myself and my capabilities to deal or cope with tough situations, but instead I view myself as weak and maybe unworthy of help. (shame)

Examine what you do when you feel that fear. This is what is sometimes referred to as “self-seeking” behavior. Continuing with the example: “I try to control things so that change doesn't occur, or I demand that my HP show me what my future is. I don't attempt new things or go out of my comfort zone easily. I have let opportunities for fun or enriching experiences pass by.”

Remember the purpose. Step Four is about getting to know ourselves better. It's not about shaming ourselves. (We will inventory shame in a couple weeks, anyway.) This is an opportunity to really be there for ourselves and show ourselves love and gentleness and understanding.

The "Self-care" section is designed to help you deal with any strong emotions that might come up while answering these questions, and offers some suggestions or options for actions that may be helpful in the moment. (If they aren't helpful to you right now, you can skip them.)

Don't forget the outreach calls and nurturing/sensory exercises this week as well as pair-and-share what you discover through inventorying your fears. These connections that we're building are very valuable and important to our recoveries. Remember, we are doing Step 4, 5, 4, 5, 4, 5.... So we need to be writing and sharing with our sponsors or pair-and-share partners. Now is a great time to renew your commitment to reaching out to each other, no matter how much you have or haven't in the past. :)

May you find strength, solace, and clarity this week.

Bonus idea: Accept All Possible Outcomes

One participant found the exercise they call, “Accept All Possible Outcomes” to be helpful in releasing fears. Using their imagination, they brainstorm -- writing down any and all ways they can think of that a particular situation could turn out, both positive and desirable as well as negative or tragic possibilities. Then, one by one, they imagined how they would feel if each of those situations were to occur. They envisioned themselves feeling however they might feel (anger, grief, happiness, contentment, etc.) and in the case of the less-pleasing scenarios, they imagined themselves working through it, being supported, handling it, and being okay. It might not be what they wanted, but they imagine themselves living through it and moving on. Once they have emotionally/spiritually/energetically experienced each of their possible imagined situations, and being okay, they feel prepared for anything, and the fear is tremendously diminished.

Action Items Week 13:

- 1) Outreach calls**
- 2) Daily Nurturing Activity**
- 3) Daily Sensory Exercises**
- 4) Pair and Share – Fill in 2-5 Fears**

Week 14

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -
Fears worksheet

Week 14 Assignments -

3 outreach calls
Daily Nurturing Activity
Daily Sensory Exercises
Pair and Share –
Intimacy worksheet

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

Suggestions for doing INTIMACY inventory work:

First, pray. One suggestion is to invite your Higher Power to show you what you're ready to see, and to protect you from what you're not ready for.

Next, list 2-6 separate people in the "With whom?" space. If using the Word/PDF files, you'll need to use 2-6 separate Sex & Intimacy sheets (1 sheet per person). If using the excel file, click on the "Intimacy" tab below.

There are three different possibilities, and many have found it helpful to do at least one of each type of relationship. One choice is to examine what happened between you and

- **someone you wanted to be close with** (either platonically (friendship or family) or romantic/sexually). Is there a friend in school that abandoned or rejected you? Is there a parent or family member that you wanted to feel close to? A crush you had on someone? You could **inventory positive experiences** that went well in addition to ones that were painful.
- **someone who wanted connection with you** (either platonically or romantic/sexually). Was there a younger sibling that looked up to you? Was there a step-parent who you resisted allowing to get close to you? Was there someone who had a crush on you? Again, consider answering questions about both a positive and a negative experience.
- someone with whom **I engaged in sexual behavior** of any type or to any degree. This is similar to the more traditional "sex inventory" part of Step 4.

Do the best you can, and try to keep it balanced. Once again, it may be helpful to think of a specific interaction or event that exemplifies the relationship (or lack of one) and answer the questions with that event or exchange in mind. Not all of the questions may apply, or you may not be able to answer all of them. That's not important. What is important is looking for your "default" behaviors... and also **congratulating yourself on the successes**. We may be in recovery to increase our ability to be intimate with self, others, and a Higher Power – but that doesn't necessarily mean that we've NEVER had closeness and connection with ANYONE. :))

Again, the Affirmations and the "Self-care" section is designed to help you deal with any strong emotions that might come up while answering these questions, and offers some suggestions or options for actions that may be helpful in the moment. (If they aren't helpful to you right now, you can skip them.)

Bonus material: Brené Brown on vulnerability

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDS5bqvOlhc>

Don't forget the outreach calls and nurturing/sensory exercises this week as well as calling your pair-and-share partner to talk about what came up for you in your intimacy inventory.

Peace and blessings!

Action Items Week 14:

- 1) Outreach calls
- 2) Daily Nurturing Activity
- 3) Daily Sensory Exercises
- 4) Pair and Share – Fill in 2-6 Sex and Intimacy sheets

Week 15

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -

Sex and Intimacy worksheet

Week 15 Assignments -

3 outreach calls

Daily Nurturing Activity

Daily Sensory Exercises

Pair and Share –

Shame worksheet

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

What is shame?

Do you feel "less than" others, like you don't measure up, like you're not good enough, like you're not worthy or deserving of love and belonging? Why? What things don't you like about yourself? What do you hope nobody ever finds out? What parts of your body, behavior, circumstances thoughts or feelings do you feel embarrassed or guilty about? The answers to these questions could indicate shame.

“When we compared our thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with what we thought we ‘should’ be thinking, feeling, and doing (and came up short), some of us interpreted it to mean we were bad, weak, or useless individuals with nothing to contribute to the world. Step One helped us realize that we do not have to let our shame dictate our sense of self-worth. Shame is one option, but there is another option: self-acceptance and trust in a Higher Power.” (*First Step to Intimacy – A Guide to Working the First Step on Intimacy and Sexual Avoidance or Sexual Anorexia*)

Researcher/teacher/speaker Brené Brown has helped a lot of people better understand, recognize, cope with and heal from shame.

If you haven't watched the **Bonus material: Brené Brown recording** from last week, it might be helpful this week in better understanding what shame is and how to recognize it in your life. --> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mDS5bqvOlhc>

This week we'll be looking at the ways shame shows up and affects our lives.

Suggestions for doing the SHAME inventory work:

First, pray. One suggestion is to invite your Higher Power to show you what you're ready to see, and to protect you from what you're not ready for.

Next, list 2-5 separate items in the "What (precisely) do I feel shame about?" space. If using the Word/PDF files, you'll need to use 2-5 separate Shame sheets (1 sheet per item). If using the excel file, click on the "Shame" tab below.

Be as specific as possible. It may be helpful to recall either **the first time you felt that shame or a specific example or event** in which that shame was present. There may be many examples to choose from, but try to focus on one event which stands out more clearly in your mind. If it's an event where someone said or did something to shame you, then their name goes in the "Who shamed me?" space. If it's something you feel shame about without anyone actually saying anything, the answer to the question, "Who shamed me?" would be yourself.

What was my physical response to the shame? Many have found it helpful to get present to where in their body they feel the effects of the shame. Thinking about this in regards to events in the past may help you start recognizing when you're experiencing shame in the present day by paying attention to the cues your body gives you, for example: blushing, averting your eyes, or having an impulse to hide or run away.

What did I want / what was I trying to do? (Instincts questions) Looking at what needs you were trying to get met, socially, sexually, or in regards to security in that situation, or considering what outcome(s) you were hoping for, is a way to examine the "selfish" category of the "My Part" questions. (Remember, "selfish" -- for the purposes of this inventory -- often simply means "what I wanted to happen." It doesn't NECESSARILY refer to a negative type of selfishness.)

What story did I tell myself? When it didn't turn out as you had hoped, what lies did you tell yourself or others? Many have found that bringing to light their false conclusions or beliefs alleviates much of the emotional pain they're feeling. Did you believe and accept as true what another person told you about yourself? Did you invent a story that helped you cope with difficult circumstances as a child, such as, "If only I were _____ enough, this situation would change," or something similar? This is the "dishonesty" element of the "My Part" questions.

What fears did I have? This question asks you to consider how your fears contribute to your shame. What are you afraid might be the case if you don't "measure up" or perform according to what you or others think should happen?

How did I react? How did you cope with the shame? What did you do to feel better? This is the “self-seeking” category of the “My Part” questions.

What was I powerless over? In the situation where you felt shame, was there something that you could not change or control? (Perhaps someone else’s feelings or behavior, or certain circumstances were beyond your ability to fix, manage, or control.) Shame can sometimes be an indicator that you are finding yourself in a situation where you don’t have power or control over something. Examining that in your past may help you recognize similar patterns in your life today.

Again, the Affirmations and the "Self-care" section is designed to help you deal with any strong emotions that might come up while answering these questions, and offers some suggestions or options for actions that may be helpful in the moment. (If they aren't helpful to you right now, you can skip them.)

Don’t forget the outreach calls and nurturing/sensory exercises this week as well as calling your pair-and-share partner to talk about what came up for you in your intimacy inventory.

Peace and blessings!

Action Items Week 15:

- 1) Outreach calls**
- 2) Daily Nurturing Activity**
- 3) Daily Sensory Exercises**
- 4) Pair and Share – Fill in shame worksheet**

Week 16

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -
Shame worksheet

Week 16 Assignments -

3 outreach calls
Daily Nurturing Activity
Daily Sensory Exercises
Pair and Share –
Grief worksheet

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

This week we'll be filling in the ASSETS worksheet. On both the PDF (or Word) file and the Excel spreadsheet, the ASSETS sheet has a number of blanks under each heading. The challenge is to try to come up with 10 items to list in each of the 10 categories!

Feel free to be creative with it. For example, under "Skills, Activities I'm Good At," some people listed things like "I speak the foreign language of 'mumbling teenager with their mouth full.'" Under "Creative Activities I Enjoy," someone put both "Parenting" and "Making up excuses for not getting housework done."

For some people, the ASSETS inventory is easy and fun, but for some of us, it is the most difficult one! If you feel challenged by the questions, perhaps you could ask others during outreach calls what they're writing for their assets, or you can ask friends and family for help. There are a couple of bonus ideas after the Action Items this week, too.

Action Items Week 16:

- 1) Outreach calls
- 2) Daily Nurturing Activity
- 3) Daily Sensory Exercises
- 4) Pair and Share – Fill in grief worksheet

Week 17

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -
Grief worksheet

3 outreach calls
Daily Nurturing Activity
Daily Sensory Exercises
Pair and Share –
Assets worksheet

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

This week we'll be filling in the ASSETS worksheet. On both the PDF (or Word) file and the Excel spreadsheet, the ASSETS sheet has a number of blanks under each heading. The challenge is to try to come up with 10 items to list in each of the 10 categories!

Feel free to be creative with it. For example, under "Skills, Activities I'm Good At," some people listed things like "I speak the foreign language of 'mumbling teenager with their mouth full.'" Under "Creative Activities I Enjoy," someone put both "Parenting" and "Making up excuses for not getting housework done."

For some people, the ASSETS inventory is easy and fun, but for some of us, it is the most difficult one! If you feel challenged by the questions, perhaps you could ask others during outreach calls what they're writing for their assets, or you can ask friends and family for help. There are a couple of bonus ideas after the Action Items this week, too.

Action Items Week 17:

- 1) Outreach calls
- 2) Daily Nurturing Activity
- 3) Daily Sensory Exercises
- 4) Pair and Share – Fill in assets worksheet

Bonus: Extra ASSETS ideas

For one week, write down every compliment you receive.

3 x 3 x 3: Three times a day, for three minutes at a time, for three weeks, write everything that you're grateful for.

Week 18

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -
Assets inventory

Week 18 Assignments -

3 outreach calls
Daily Nurturing Activity
Daily Sensory Exercises
Pair and Share –
Defaults worksheet (up to Step 6)

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

This week we'll be filling out the "Defaults" sheets. Now, when you go to fill in the "defaults," please do **NOT** go through the list of suggested words and write down everything that you think is "wrong" with you. The list of "defects" is only there to give you ideas of how to word things, **should you need the ideas**.

Instead, you're encouraged to look at the "My Part" sections of the other inventory pages to see if there was anything that might be considered a "character weakness" or "area for growth." Or, you could list something you have been struggling with lately that you would like to see change. You could also list "defaults" drawn from a previous 4th Step inventory, or ones you are struggling with recently. As a last resort, you could look through the list of "defects" and choose some that apply.

The invitation is to choose the "defaults" you feel represent your most frequent patterns or things that are alive in you today. Try to limit yourself to 2-5. The numbered column only goes to 10 – if you're trying to list more than 10, you're doing it wrong! (Just kidding!) Most of us could go down that list and agree that most of them apply to us... but not all of them are our favorites -- our most often used defaults.

Some have found it helpful to consolidate some similar words into categories, such as:
Pride -- This word encompasses grandiosity, feeling better than others, lack of humility, arrogance, etc.

Misuse of imagination -- For one participant, this can show up as the "what-iffier," which is using their imagination to worry about what could happen (for example, "What if _____ happens?") and also fantasy, which can be sexual fantasy, or creating a "mental monolith" (rock-solid idea of what things will or are "supposed to" look like) or scripting (writing a mental

script of what I'm going to say and what they're going to say, etc.), and feeling frustrated when people don't follow the script

Dishonesty -- Lying, being deceitful or secretive, projecting a false image of myself, and being superficial can all be categorized as dishonesty.

Indecisiveness -- The behaviors of indecisiveness, lack of confidence in decision-making, being paralyzed by fear, being overly cautious, and procrastination can all be combined under the heading of indecisiveness.

There is no RIGHT WAY to do this work. Each person will think up their own words and phrases to describe the patterns they noticed as they worked the inventory tabs, and each individual will decide if combining more than one "default" into a group makes sense to them. (If not, just put the same word in that space.)

Now, let's try to lift up the "default" and see what's underneath.

What fears are driving that "default" thought pattern or behavior?

One suggestion to help you answer this question is to check back in the "My Part" sections of the other inventory pages and look for the fears listed near where this "default" shows up. Asking yourself the following questions may also help: "What am I afraid might happen if I don't do this "default" behavior? What are my core fears, and are they influencing this "default" thought pattern or behavior?"

The next space is, "**What beliefs are driving the fear?**"

"What would it mean about me if the things I'm afraid of should happen? Why do I do the things I do? What do I think might happen?"

The next space is, "**What need is the character aspect ("default") trying to meet?**"

"Is there something that would help ease the fears driving the DEFAULT behavior? What am I actually trying to accomplish or prevent with the DEFAULT behavior?"

Here are a few examples of DEFAULTS, FEARS, BELIEFS, AND NEEDS:

Default - being bossy/controlling;

Fear - fear of the future/the unknown;

Belief - I have to make sure it happens the way I want in order for me to feel secure.

Need - I have a need for security.

Default - Isolationism

Fear - Fear of letting people get close

Belief - They will probably hurt, reject, or abandon me

Need - I need safety, connection and support.

Default - Indecision

Fear - Fear of making decisions

Belief - I might be humiliated if I make a mistake

Need - Basic human needs (food, shelter, safety, etc.) and freedom to learn from my choices without being ridiculed or ostracized

Now let's take a sneak peek ahead into Step 6 for a moment, to give us some additional guidance and understanding of what we're about to do with this week's part of the Step 4 inventory.

"On the other side of every character defect is a character asset. Part of the process of becoming entirely ready is to practice these character assets in our actions and choices, instead of our defects. If we suffer from emotional rigidity, we can look for ways to become more flexible. If we are perfectionists, overly self-critical, or impatient, we can practice acceptance. Practicing new ways of behavior can help open our hearts to the spiritual changes God wants for us." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 42)

One member believes this is a widely misunderstood suggestion. It may appear to be saying, "Stop acting out your defects and start doing the opposite." But many of our character "defects" were adaptive thought patterns and behaviors: at one point in our life, they were essential for survival. They served us. They were developed from a sense of self-love and self-protection.

Although these beliefs, patterns and behaviors no longer serve us today, letting them go needs to be a loving choice instead of a violent or shaming one – otherwise it feels like we're rejecting part of ourselves, which triggers the desire to hold onto them all the more.

So, let's interpret the reading from Step 6 another way. In an overall fashion, in recovery we are encouraged to practice the opposite expressions of the character "weaknesses" by, for example, trying to be more flexible, accepting, honest, etc. But when it comes to Steps 6 and 7, it has also been extremely helpful for many of us to understand the word "removal" outside the traditional understanding of the word.

Thesaurus.com reports the origin of the word "remove" to be from an Old French word, "remouvoir" which means "to move, stir, leave, depart, or take away;" and also from the Latin "removere" which means "to move back or away, take away, put out of view, subtract." So, instead of thinking of the "removal of our defects of character" spoken of in Step 7 as if we were asking our Higher Power to cut out and throw away our "undesirable traits, attitudes, and beliefs that make our lives unmanageable, cause pain to others, and block our spiritual growth," (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 40), let's think in terms of "MOVE OVER," "PUT OUT OF VIEW," or to "CHANGE THE POINT OF VIEW." We are actually aiming for **transformation**.

**You see, at the heart of every character "default" or DEFENSE
is a positive character trait: an ASSET!**

"We also discover that our character defects can become useful in God's hands. ... Aspects of ourselves that we were ashamed of and tried to keep hidden can sometimes blossom unexpectedly into gifts that enrich our recovery, when brought into the light of a loving Higher Power. Anger may contain the seeds of courage; envy can turn to empathy; self-centered pride may grow into a healthy self-love." (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 45)

For example, dishonesty can stem from an ability to be creative. Indecisiveness prevents a person from rushing into situations; so caution and thinking things through are some strengths imbedded in that "default." Arrogance is a "default," but being aware of strengths, gifts, and abilities is an asset or strength. The misuse of imagination is not healthy, but our imagination can be used to create works of art, to solve problems, and to mentally envision or rehearse positive changes in our lives.

Many people subscribe to this same concept. Researcher/author/teacher Brené Brown shares the following in her book, *Daring Greatly*:

"In my experience the heart of valuable feedback is taking the 'strengths perspective.' According to social work educator Dennis Saleebey, viewing performance from the strengths perspective offers us the opportunity to examine our struggles in light of our capacities, talents, competencies, possibilities, visions, values, and hopes. This perspective doesn't dismiss the serious nature of our struggles; however, it does require us to consider our positive qualities as potential resources. Dr. Saleebey proposes, 'It is as wrong to deny the possible as it is to deny the problem.'" (*Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead* by Brené Brown, page 199)

As you're writing about your "defaults," you're invited to prayerfully consider what could be a different way to look at that "negative" behavior. Looking up and writing a definition of the "default" word might be helpful in recognizing what might be good about it. If you get stumped, it's a great question to ask your fellow travelers during outreach calls. Be creative – there are no "right" or "wrong" answers – just let your HP reveal what you need at this time.

The following is a list of ideas that have been the result of various conversations on the topic of good things that could be at the core of the "defects." This is not a list of the "correct" things -- it's merely a collection of ideas from others. Take what you can use and leave the rest!

IDEAS OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS THAT COULD BE AT THE CORE OF DEFAULTS

FEAR -- CAUTION

Fear, Anxiety – belief that something/someone is dangerous, excessive worry or unease about uncertain outcomes, apprehension, dreading something

CAN BE caution, considering potential outcomes and thoughtfully preparing for possible challenges, prudence

Timidity, Insecurity, Cowardice – lack of courage or bravery, feeling threatened, inadequate, or unsafe, not confident, avoiding conflict

CAN BE gentleness, mildness, humility, being a peacemaker, gets along with others

Indecisive, Uncertain, Non-committal – difficulty making decisions, irresolute, unsettled, hesitant, tentative

CAN BE open-minded, seeing all sides, cautious, analytical, disciplined, putting own thoughts in check, thinking things through and gathering more information before making a decision, methodical

Skeptical, Suspicious – having doubts or reservations, not convinced, lack of trust

CAN BE curiosity, seeking truth or evidence, wants their trust to be verified, not easily fooled/taken advantage of

ARROGANCE -- SELF-ESTEEM

Arrogance, Pride, Egotism – Offensive display of superiority or self-importance, conceited, lack of humility, feeling better than and worse than others

CAN BE self-esteem, confidence which inspires others' trust, secure in one's knowledge, experience, and expertise, courage to act according to what one believes to be correct

Closed Mindedness, Opinionated, Stubborn – Contempt prior to investigation, failing to remain teachable, being unreceptive to or disregarding new ideas or arguments, unwilling to try things or follow suggestions

CAN BE ability to focus or concentrate on a solution-based approach, maintain a purpose in mind, determined, calling it as I see it (stating observations), persistent, loyal or faithful

Gossiping – Speaking or writing about others in a negative manner, especially to get them in trouble or to feel superior to them and bond with someone else against the target of the gossip

CAN BE interest in and awareness of the challenges of others, ability to communicate and bond

Prejudice, Bigotry – Pre-judging people based on a group they belong to, negative feelings about someone based on their religion, race, nationality, age, disability, sexual orientation, accent, politics, economic status, physical characteristics like height, weight, hair style, clothing style, or physical fitness

CAN BE good at noticing details and drawing conclusions; may be helpful in determining trustworthiness of others

Being Aloof, Indifference – Antisocial, withdrawn, detached (usually from distaste)

CAN BE self-protection, objectivity, remaining uninvolved in other people's' drama, detaching with love

Knowing it All, Preachy – self-righteous, giving (often unsolicited) advice

CAN BE being knowledgeable, well-informed, educated, having wisdom and confidence

Boasting, Competitiveness – talk with excessive pride and self-satisfaction about one's achievements, possessions, or abilities, having a strong desire to win or be the best at something

CAN BE being satisfied and pleased with one's own efforts, having the persistence and confidence and drive to keep trying

Lack of Compassion or Empathy – not having sympathy or concern for the sufferings or misfortunes of others

CAN BE staying out of other people's business, serenity, trust in God, professional detachment or non-codependence (detaching with love)

Not Asking for Help – would rather suffer and struggle alone than to reach out to others

CAN BE self-sufficient when appropriate

Ingratitude, Entitlement – belief that one is inherently deserving of privileges or special treatment

CAN BE sense of one's identity, self-worth, and potential, having self-respect, dignity

ANGER, HATRED -- PASSION

Anger, Resentment – strong feeling of annoyance, displeasure, or hostility; often masks other emotions, harboring bitterness or indignation at having been treated unfairly

CAN BE passion, motivation for change, awareness of injustice, could prevent one from getting hurt again, can provide motivation for standing up for oneself or setting appropriate boundaries

Antagonistic – showing opposition or hostility towards something/someone, quarrelsome, contrary, contentious _____

CAN BE able to understand and express a divergent or opposite viewpoint

Vengeful – seeking to harm someone in return for a perceived injury, retaliation, negative Step 9

CAN BE seeking justice, trying to right a wrong

Hatred – intense dislike or ill will

CAN BE hatred of injustice can provide motivation for taking steps to change what is wrong in society (social action)

Sadistic – abusing others for enjoyment

CAN BE passionate, creative, not being afraid to do what is necessary when it's the right thing to do, for example enforcing a consequence or punishment, pleasure comes from envisioning a desired outcome such as lessons learned and behaviors changed

Self-Hatred – intense dislike of oneself

CAN BE observing need for self-improvement

SADNESS -- TENDERNESS

Depression, Sadness (not clinical) – feelings of despondency and dejection, unhappiness **CAN BE** empathy, grief (which is healing when it moves through the 5 stages), ability to hold onto a memory, sentimental

Pessimism, Negative Thinking – seeing the worst aspect of things, believing the worst will happen, criticism about something or about oneself

CAN BE attention to detail, recognizing when improvements need to be made

Self-Pity – excessive, self-absorbed unhappiness over one's own trouble

CAN BE validation of my own grief or pain, compassion for self, sense of dignity or fairness

Apathy – lack of interest, enthusiasm, or concern

CAN BE surrendering control and trusting God

Self-negligence or Poor Self-care – failure to take proper physical care of oneself in areas such as feeding, cleaning, and grooming

CAN BE freedom from judging oneself by appearance, occasional healthy sacrifice when appropriate (example - mother with newborn, helping in an emergency situation)

Shame – painful feeling of humiliation or distress caused by the belief that one is –or is perceived to be – inferior or unworthy of affection or respect because of one's actions, thoughts, or experiences; measuring self against others and coming up short, "beating yourself up" or criticizing one's self

CAN BE humility, strong sense of identity, looking for ways to change a situation

Negative Body Image – distorted perception of the aesthetics or sexual attractiveness of one's own body

CAN BE health-conscious, self-aware

WEAK/IMMATURE -- CHILD-LIKE

Weak, Spineless, Poor Boundaries – lacking strength and energy, lack of self-confidence, liable to break or give way under pressure, feeble, lacking strength of character or boldness, letting others control one due to fear of being alone, abandoned, or independent

CAN BE humility, meekness, gentleness and submissiveness when appropriate

Dependency, Over-dependency – inability to function without the help of someone or something else, relying on others to provide for us what we ought to provide for ourselves

CAN BE inter-dependence, accepting help

Codependency – emotional or psychological dependence on someone who requires support, usually due to physical or mental illness or addiction

CAN BE care GIVING (not care TAKING)

Immature – not fully developed/undeveloped, untrained, having or showing emotional or intellectual development appropriate to someone younger, childish attitudes or responses

CAN BE child-LIKE in a sweet-natured, trusting, open way (instead of child*ish*)

Naïve – inexperienced, gullible, easily persuaded to believe something, impressionable

CAN BE innocent, pure-minded

Disorganization – not properly planned or controlled, messy, haphazard

CAN BE flexibility, adaptability, spontaneity, relaxed, accepting, tolerant, free spirit

Irresponsible, Unreliable, Untrustworthy – careless, thoughtless, delinquent, negligent, undependable

CAN BE adjustable, adaptable, self-reliant, able to find solutions and ways to get what one wants

Recklessness, Impulsivity – acting without considering or caring about the consequences

CAN BE spontaneity

SELFISHNESS -- SELF-AWARENESS

Self Centeredness, Selfishness – considering self first in situations, not having enough regard for others or thinking about how circumstances hurt or help others, thinking, "What's in it for me?"

CAN BE self respect and self-care

Vanity, Narcissism – spending excessive time thinking about oneself, self-admiration, self-absorption, attention-seeking, preoccupied with oneself and one's physical appearance **CAN BE** healthy self-esteem

Gluttony, Greed – Wanting and taking too much: food, sex, time, money, comfort, leisure, material possessions, attention, security Acquiring things (material things, relationships, attention) at the expense of others

CAN BE healthy enjoyment of pleasure

Jealousy, Envy – Wanting what others have, including material possessions, relationships physical attributes, or talents

CAN BE recognizing the potential for something better for myself

Laziness, Procrastination, Sloth – Not carrying our own load as much as we are able, letting others provide things for us that we ought to get for ourselves, putting things off repeatedly, failing to plan, poor punctuality, rushing

CAN BE being able to relax and play

Lust – uncontrolled or illicit sexual desire, intense or passionate longing or craving for expensive objects, power, or sex

CAN BE deep desire for something can motivate change

Inconsiderate, Thoughtless, Rude – without due regard for the rights or feelings of others, offensively impolite or ill-mannered

CAN BE not being overly concerned with what others think, minding one's own side of the street

CONTROL -- LEADERSHIP

Controlling – maintain influence or authority over people, places, or things, limit, supervise, govern, regulate

CAN BE organization, leadership skills

Manipulative – to handle, manage or use something or someone, to exploit or control someone through an imbalance of power, using bribery or punishment to trick others into acting as we wish

CAN BE good salesman, able to convince others

Rigidity – inflexibility, not permitting change

CAN BE inflexibility, not permitting change

Meddling – interfere in or involve oneself with something that is not one's concern

CAN BE awareness of others' needs and courage and empathy to serve

Miserliness, Deprivation – hoarding or spending as little money as possible, denying necessities

CAN BE frugality, able to save money and spend wisely

Perfectionism – Expecting or demanding too much from ourselves or others, treating things that aren't perfect as not good enough, not recognizing a good try or progress

CAN BE striving for improvement or achievement or excellence, goal-setting

Impatience – Being frustrated by waiting, wanting something to change or improve rather than accepting it as it is

CAN BE motivation or energy for change

Intolerance – Not accepting people or things for who or what they are

CAN BE motivation for setting proper boundaries

Judgmental, Complaining, Fault-finding – Noticing and listing, out loud or to ourselves, the faults of others, expressing dissatisfaction or annoyance about a situation or event

CAN BE being observant of others, honest

DISHONESTY -- IMAGINATIVE

Dishonesty, Lying, Deceiving – to cause someone to believe something untrue by saying a false statement, half-truths, withholding important information, exaggerating (represent something as being larger, greater, better, or worse than it actually is), or being insincere (not meaning what is being said)

CAN BE creativity, ingenuity, inventiveness

Rationalization, Minimizing, Justifying – Blaming others, saying and/or believing there were good motives for bad behavior, saying that what was done really wasn't that bad

CAN BE critical thinking skills, creativity

Cheating – act dishonestly or unfairly to gain an advantage

CAN BE creative problem-solving, vision, ability to see potential in people or things

Stealing – taking things that aren't ours

CAN BE ability to acquire stuff, sense of community, ability to share

Denial, Complacency – inability to see what we are doing, how risky and serious it is and how much harm it may cause

CAN BE contentment, acceptance

Fantasy – the activity of imagining things, especially the impossible

CAN BE imagination, creativity, mental rehearsal

Secretive – hiding feelings, intentions, behaviors, and evidence

CAN BE keeping confidences

Try to answer as many questions as you can, up to but not including the Step 6 section. If you get stuck on one of the questions, skip it and go on – answering some of the other questions might help you gain enough clarity to return and fill it in later. You may not be able to fill in all the spaces at this time – don't worry. Do what you can, and surrender the rest to HP.

Action Items Week 18:

1) Outreach calls

2) Daily Nurturing Activity

3) Daily Sensory Exercises

4) Pair and Share – Defaults Worksheet, until Step 6 part

Bonus - the power of thoughts and intention

When we look at our “character defaults,” we may feel some shame. But thinking about these aspects in a different light can be powerful. Our thoughts and intentions have a great impact on us.

If you would like to watch a short video about what a researcher named Masaru Emoto discovered in regards to how water reacts to the energy of intention, visit:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=au4qx_l8KEU

Bonus: Kintsugi -- Be Proud of Your Scars

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wG2MUeVixao>

Week 19

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -

Defaults worksheet

Week 19 Assignments -

3 outreach calls

Daily Nurturing Activity

Daily Sensory Exercises

Pair and Share –

Read Step 6 in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 40

Fill in Step 6 on Defaults worksheet

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

“Wanting our lives to change is not the same as being actually ready for change.” (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 40)

“Becoming entirely ready involves a deeper commitment to recovery, a willingness to let the God of our understanding effect important changes within us -- changes in our ways of thinking and feeling, changes in our behavior. ... “Although there is no perfect, infallible way of knowing that we are “entirely” ready, we will know when our doubts and reservations are no longer blocking our way.

“Many of us had tried to purge ourselves of our worst traits, and our efforts failed, just as our attempts to be free of our addiction failed. We may have tried vows and resolutions, or adopted beliefs or practices designed for self-improvement, only to see our defects manifesting again, despite good intentions. We wondered how God could remove our character defects. But we need not concern ourselves with this in order to work Step Six. All we have to do is become willing, and leave the rest to our Higher Power.” (*Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 42)

So, we’ve learned that taking control or attempting to force change doesn’t work. However, there may be some things we can do to help ourselves become willing or to prepare for the transformation (removal) of our defaults. Here are some ideas:

To become entirely ready to have God “remove” (transform) your “defects” of character, it might be helpful to address the beliefs and fears and needs behind them. What exercises might help you better understand your feelings and needs? What might help you come up with healthier ways of getting those needs met?

Examples of such exercises might include:

- Affirmations: What truths can you affirm to yourself today to counteract the false beliefs which drive the fears which your DEFAULTS are attempting to protect you from?
- Journaling about the beliefs, doubts, fears, and needs behind the DEFAULTS
- Releasing visualization exercises, or
- Mentally rehearsing behaving in a way that exemplifies using the Character Strength (asset).
- Practicing, in a general way, the OPPOSITE of the DEFAULT, as mentioned on page 42 of *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, 2nd-to-last paragraph.

Action Items Week 19:

- 1) Outreach calls
- 2) Daily Nurturing Activity
- 3) Daily Sensory Exercises
- 4) Pair and Share – Read Step 6, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 40

Week 20

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -
Defaults worksheet

Week 20 Assignments -

3 outreach calls

Daily Nurturing Activity

Daily Sensory Exercises

Pair and Share –

Journal about turning your “defects” (garbage) into compost

Read Step 7 in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 43

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

In previous ISA Step Studies, it was shared where the concept for working the Defects part of the Fourth Step came from. In the book, *You Are Here: Discovering the Magic of the Present Moment*, the author was talking about nonviolence and nondualism. He said, "You don't have to struggle with your body, or with your hate, or with your anger. Treat your in-breath and out-breath tenderly, nonviolently, as you would treat a flower. Later you will be able to do the same thing with your physical body, treating it with gentleness, respect, nonviolence, and tenderness. When you are dealing with pain, with a moment of irritation, or with a bout of anger, you can learn to treat them in the same way. Do not fight against pain; do not fight against irritation or jealousy. Embrace them with great tenderness, as though you were embracing a little baby. Your anger is yourself, and you should not be violent toward it. The same thing goes for all of your emotions. ...

"It's like looking at a flower: letting it be as it is, mindful of the fact that it is there, a kind of miracle. See the flower as it is. See the breath as it is. We let the flower be as it is, and we should not do violence to our breath either. Then we move to the physical body. ... Do not turn

yourself into a battlefield, with good fighting against evil. Both sides belong to you, the good and the evil. Evil can be transformed into good, and vice versa. They are completely organic things. If you look deeply at a flower, at its freshness and its beauty, you will see that there is also compost in it, made of garbage. The gardener had the skill to transform this garbage into compost, and with this compost, he made a flower grow. Flowers and garbage are both organic in nature. So looking deeply into the nature of a flower, you can see the presence of the compost and the garbage. The flower is also going to turn into garbage; but don't be afraid! You are a gardener, and you have in your hands the power to transform garbage into flowers, into fruit, into vegetables. You don't throw anything away, because you are not afraid of garbage. Your hands are capable of transforming it into flowers, or lettuce, or cucumbers.

"The same thing is true of your happiness and your sorrow. Sorrow, fear, and depression are all a kind of garbage. These bits of garbage are part of real life, and we must look deeply into their nature. You can practice in order to turn these bits of garbage into flowers. It is not only your love that is organic; your hate is, too. So you should not throw anything out. All you have to do is learn how to transform your garbage into flowers. ... All mental formations—such as compassion, love, fear, sorrow, and despair—are organic in nature. We don't need to be afraid of them, because transformation is possible. Just by having this deep insight into the organic nature of mental formations, you become a lot more solid, a lot calmer and more peaceful. With just a smile, and mindful breathing, you can start to transform them. If you feel irritation or depression or despair, recognize their presence and practice this mantra: 'Dear one, I am here for you.' You should talk to your depression or your anger just as you would to a child. You embrace it tenderly with the energy of mindfulness and say, 'Dear one, I know you are there, and I am going to take care of you,' just as you would with your crying baby. There is no discrimination or dualism here, because compassion and love are you, but anger is too. All three are organic in nature, so you don't need to be afraid. You can transform them. Let me repeat: ... we do not turn ourselves into a battlefield of good versus evil. The good must take care of the evil as a big brother takes care of his little brother, or as a big sister takes care of her little sister—with a great deal of tenderness, in a spirit of nonduality. Knowing that, there is a lot of peace in you already. The insight of nonduality will put a stop to the war in you. You have struggled in the past, and perhaps you are still struggling; but is it necessary? No. Struggle is useless. Stop struggling." (*Thich Nhat Hanh, You Are Here: Discovering the Magic of the Present Moment, p. 5*)

READ STEP 7

Consider the character "defaults" (weaknesses) which you've been shown during the last few weeks and the strengths which are at the core of them, and talk with a sponsor or your sharing partner or a trusted individual about ways you can ask for and open yourself up to those weaknesses being transformed. If you haven't already filled in the spaces under Step 6, you could do that this week, too.

Action Items Week 20:

1) Outreach calls

2) Daily Nurturing Activity

3) Daily Sensory Exercises

4) Pair and Share – Journal about the transformation of your “defaults” (garbage) into compost from which plants may grow

5) Pair and Share – Read Step 7, *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 43

Week 21

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -

Garbage to compost to flowers (journaling exercise)

Read Step 7 in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 43

Week 21 Assignments -

3 outreach calls

Daily Nurturing Activity

Daily Sensory Exercises

Pair and Share –

Question: What role has humility played in my recovery?

Fill in Step 7 spaces

7th Step prayer

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

A quote about Step Seven and humility

“True, most of us thought good character was desirable, but obviously good character was something one needed to get on with the business of being self-satisfied. With a proper display of honesty and morality, we'd stand a better chance of getting what we really wanted. But whenever we had to choose between character and comfort, the character-building was lost in the dust of our chase after what we thought was happiness. Seldom did we look at character building as something desirable in itself, something we would like to strive for whether our instinctual needs were met or not. We never thought of making honesty, tolerance, and true love of man and God the daily basis of living.

“This lack of anchorage to any permanent values, this blindness to the true purpose of our lives, produced another bad result. **For just so long as we were convinced that we could live exclusively by our own individual strength and intelligence, for just that long was a working faith in a Higher Power impossible.** This was true even when we believed that God existed. We could actually have earned religious beliefs which remained barren because we

were still trying to play God ourselves. As long as we placed self-reliance first, a genuine reliance upon a Higher Power was out of the question. That basic ingredient of all humility, a *desire to seek and do God's will*, was missing.

“To those of us who have hitherto known only excitement, depression, or anxiety—in other words, to all of us—this newfound peace is a priceless gift. Something new indeed has been added. Where humility had formerly stood for a forced feeding on humble pie, it now begins to mean the nourishing ingredient which can give us serenity.

“This improved perception of humility starts another revolutionary change in our outlook. Our eyes begin to open to the immense values which have come straight out of painful ego-puncturing. Until now, our lives have been largely devoted to running from pain and problems. We fled from them as from a plague. We never wanted to deal with the fact of suffering. Escape via the bottle was always our solution. Character-building through suffering might be all right for saints, but it certainly didn't appeal to us. Then, in [SAA], we looked and listened. Everywhere we saw failure and misery transformed by humility into priceless assets. We heard story after story of how humility had brought strength out of weakness. In every case, pain had been the price of admission into a new life. But this admission price had purchased more than we expected. It brought a measure of humility, which we soon discovered to be a healer of pain. We began to fear pain less, and desire humility more than ever.” (*Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions*, page 71)

This week we'll be looking at Step 7. Some ideas are to review Step 7 from the SAA green book again, if you wish, and possibly read about Step 7 or even just the 7th Step prayer from the AA Big Book and/or the “12 x 12.” To read these online, visit https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/alcoholics-anonymous
https://www.aa.org/pages/en_US/twelve-steps-and-twelve-traditions

You're invited to **ponder about the meaning of humility and its role in your recovery**. Remember, doing the work doesn't make it *happen*; it makes it *possible*.

This week we will be **filling in the Step 7 spaces** on the "DEFAULTS" page. You are invited to consider ways to ask HP to transform the defaults into assets; some suggestions might be to write the default on a piece of paper and put in a God Box (or God Can – I can't but God can!) or burn it, or release it in a helium balloon, etc.

You are also invited to **write your own 7th Step prayer**. It can be writing out a lengthy 7th Step prayer which encompasses all the defaults you've listed, or you can write one for each. It can be prayed one time, or you can write a shorter 7th Step prayer you can pray daily. Completely up to you! Ask your sponsor or sharing partner for guidance if you'd like.

Action Items Week 21:

1) Outreach calls

2) Daily Nurturing Activity

3) Daily Sensory Exercises

4) Pair and Share – Journal about the question: What role has humility played in my recovery?

5) Pair and Share – Create your own 7th Step prayer and either share ABOUT it or SHARE THE PRAYER with a sponsor or sharing partner

Week 22

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -

Question: What role has humility played in my recovery?

Fill in Step 7 ispaces

7th Step prayer

Week 22 Assignments -

3 outreach calls

Daily Nurturing Activity

Daily Sensory Exercises

Pair and Share –

Read Steps 8 and 9 in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 45-52

Fill in Harms and Amends through Step 8 (leave Step 9 empty)

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

This week we will be reading Steps 8 and 9 in the Green Book. Remember, this is just a brief study of what the Steps might look like with an intimacy avoidance focus. *There is no right or wrong way* to work the Steps, and **if you feel you need to spend a greater amount** of time on a particular Step, you're invited to do as your HP guides. However – Don't forget: There are also benefits to reading, studying, pondering, and sharing about Steps you're not ready to take yet, so you're invited to keep up with the readings and pair-and-share discussions about how the principles of Steps 8 and 9 could apply to you.

If you are ready, you're invited to fill in the "Harms and Amends" page (one page per harm, if using the Word/PDF. Fill in the spaces up **until, but NOT INCLUDING, Step 9**. Step 9 is something that a lot of thought and prayer and consultation needs to go into, to gain clarity and guidance, and to possibly avoid creating a need for future amends.

Things that have helped some of us in regards to Steps 8 and 9:

Admitting wrongs and making amends can bring up painful feelings. Remorse (which is healthy and leads to change) can turn into shame, which tells us we're bad people having done wrong things. Fear of hurting others again can fuel further intimacy avoidance. It is important to remember that you are NOT what you have DONE. **AFFIRMATION: My worth is independent of anything I've done, or what anyone else thinks of me.**

Some have found it helpful to practice making observations without interpretation or judgment, talking about their emotions in regards to what is occurring, identifying their needs in the situation, and making requests of others in order to help get those needs met. Applying those principles of communication to the amends process makes some important changes. Instead of thinking of things in terms of "right" or "wrong," it is less judgmental to simply state what happened without labeling it as "bad" or "wrong."

Just as the word "defect" encourages some of us to think we're defective, the phrase "my wrongs" gives a certain impression. It changes when said like this: "I feel _____ (troubled, uneasy, unsettled, heartbroken, regretful, remorseful, disappointed (in myself), heavy-hearted, saddened, etc.) that I did _____ because it did not meet my need for _____." For example, "I feel saddened and disappointed in myself that I yelled at my son, because it did not meet my need to cultivate loving, respectful relationships." Or, "I feel regretful that I did not keep my promise to get to bed at a certain time because it did not meet my need to allow time for connection before sleeping."

On the bottom of page 45 in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, it talks about seeking to reclaim the truth about our actions. Looking at amends in the way described above is one way to help facilitate what is described at the top of page 46: claiming both integrity and compassion.

Additionally, examining our motivation for making the amend is necessary. Our emotions will tell us why we're considering attempting to set things right. Amends are for US, not for the people we harmed. They are part of OUR program. But, we should not make amends with the expectation of getting something from the other person (such as their forgiveness). A sign of recovery is desiring to make things right because it's in alignment with Love or with the Higher Power's will. It comes from a desire to own our part and do what we can to fix or restore, if possible, what we damaged.

The important elements of an amend are outlined in the Green Book on pages 48-49:

1. "Admit the wrongs we have done..." (Some of us would edit that to, "Acknowledge that my behavior caused harm." I own that I damaged something, or I took something that wasn't mine, or I broke something, or I hurt someone, or whatever. I become crystal-clear about WHAT I did that needs amending.

2. "Express remorse." (See ideas for feeling words above.)

3. "Offer some kind of reparation." After pinpointing exactly WHAT was damaged, then you can think about doing something to try and replace, repair, or restore it. If it can't be *actually* repaired, at least it can be *symbolically* repaired.

4. "Change how we behave today." Sometimes the best amend is responding to someone or some situation differently than we did before.

Action Items Week 22:

1) Outreach calls

2) Daily Nurturing Activity

3) Daily Sensory Exercises

4) Pair and Share – Read Steps 8 and 9 in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 45-52

5) Pair and Share – Fill in Harms and Amends through Step 8 (leave Step 9 empty)

Week 23

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -

Read Steps 8 and 9 in *Sex Addicts Anonymous*, page 45-52

Fill in Harms and Amends through Step 8 (leave Step 9 empty)

Week 23 Assignments -

3 outreach calls

Daily Nurturing Activity

Daily Sensory Exercises

Pair and Share –

(If ready,) Fill in Step 9 column and discuss with sharing partner and sponsor,

Read Step 10 in Green Book,

Start thinking about Step 10 questions for yourself

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

Just a reminder – Even though as a group we're moving pretty quickly, as individuals you may want to spend more time on a particular step with the help of a sponsor or a fellow traveler.

This week the group will be finishing looking at amends. It is important that you **discuss your amends plans with a sponsor** or someone with experience in recovery. They can help you determine the best timing and method for your particular circumstances. If you are ready, you may choose to fill in the Step 9 column.

Keep in mind that filling in the column doesn't necessarily mean doing the amend **this week**. Remember, this is just a brief overview of what it might be like to work the Steps on avoidance – we are not recording all the harms of our life at this time, nor making all the amends we might eventually need to make. We are just looking at a few things.

Even if you're not ready to formally take Step 9, the practice of Ho'oponopono may be helpful in clearing negative energy. It consists of 4 steps, which can be done in any order: I'm Sorry, Please Forgive Me, Thank You, I Love You. For more information, visit:

<https://www.laughteronlineuniversity.com/practice-hooponopono-four-simple-steps/>

We will be taking a look at Step 10 this week, also, by reading Step 10 in the Green Book. Also, you're invited to begin considering what questions you want to ask yourself for your continued personal inventory. Below are some questions that one member found helpful. They can be journaled, or answered mentally during an evening spiritual routine. Often it is useful, when going through a tough time, to send the written answers to Step 10 questions to a sponsor or accountability partner. We aren't MAKING the questionnaire this week, though -- only THINKING about it and TALKING about it. Suggested questions (feel free to ponder and adapt according to your personal needs):

1. How am I feeling right now & why?
2. What am I grateful for today?
3. What did I do well/accomplish today?
4. With whom did I connect?
5. What was I powerless over?
6. How did I handle it?
7. How did my self-will show up? (Or, what do I need to surrender & ask to be transformed?)
(See list below)
8. Do I owe amends? (Anything I regret?)
9. What can I do differently next time?
10. Who needs my prayers?
11. What moments of spiritual intimacy have I experienced today?

List of self-will words:

Selfishness (desired outcome)

Desire to control people or my surroundings

Impatience

Self-pity

Grandiosity/arrogance

Self-hatred

Shame

Pessimism

Fear

Jealousy

Envy

Resentment

Unkindness/unloving behavior

Dishonesty

Secretiveness

Isolation

Loneliness

When the individual who created this list is short on time, they shorten it to 2 questions:

How did self-will show up today?

(If something weighs on them in answer to that question, they examine if they owe amends)

With whom did I connect today?

A couple of other possible questions are:

“Do you live each day as it were your last?”

“Did you make time today to address your priorities?”

Action Items Week 23:

1) Outreach calls

2) Daily Nurturing Activity

3) Daily Sensory Exercises

4) If ready, talk with a sponsor or accountability partner about amends and fill in Step 9 column. (If not ready, skip to next action item.)

5) Pair and Share – Read Step 10, start thinking about Step 10 questions for yourself

Week 24

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -

(If ready,) Fill in Step 9 column and discuss with sharing partner and sponsor,
Read Step 10 in Green Book,
Start thinking about Step 10 questions for yourself

Week 24 Assignments -

3 outreach calls

Daily Nurturing Activity

Daily Sensory Exercises

Pair and Share –

Share a daily Step 10 with a sponsor or accountability partner for one week

Read Step 11 in Green Book

Read Chapter 16, Spirituality, from Sexual Anorexia, page 335

Answer the question, "Why do I want to be in my Higher Power's will?"

Start thinking about how you're going to work Step 11

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

This week we'll be creating our individual Step 10 questionnaires. They can have as many or as few questions as you feel would be helpful to you – but if they're too long or complicated they will be difficult to do daily. You're invited to answer them daily and share your answers with someone – a sponsor, an accountability partner, or with different step study participants on outreach calls – whomever you choose. You can email or text them, you can call and read your answers – just somehow communicate them.

We're also reading Step 11 from the "green book" as well as Chapter 16 from Sexual Anorexia (pg 335) this week and pondering how to implement, continue, or improve a daily quiet time with HP.

Even though as a group we're moving pretty quickly, as individuals you may want to spend more time on a particular step with the help of a sponsor or a fellow traveler. Those outreach calls are really important. Keep doing those, and the nurturing and sensuality exercises.

You're also invited to answer to the question, "**Why do I want to be in my Higher Power's will?**" It is pre-supposed that we each WANT to find out what our Higher Power wants for us and ask for help in carrying that out... but sometimes, we might really prefer to stay in self will!! During those times, it's helpful to remember why we might want to adjust our attitude and actively seek the will of the God of our understanding. How about you – Why might you want to seek and do HP's will?

Action Items Week 24:

1) Outreach calls

2) Daily Nurturing Activity

3) Daily Sensory Exercises

4) Pair and Share –

-Read Step 11

-Read Chapter 16, Spirituality, in Sexual Anorexia, page 335

5) Begin thinking about how you're going to work Step 11

6) Pair and Share – Answer the question, “Why do I want to be in my Higher Power’s will?”

Week 25

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -

Share a daily Step 10 with a sponsor or accountability partner

Pair and Share:

Read Step 11 in Green Book

Read Chapter 16, Spirituality, Sexual Anorexia pg 335

Start thinking about how you're going to work Step 11

Answer the question, "Why do I want to be in my Higher Power's will?"

Week 25 Assignments -

3 outreach calls

Daily Nurturing Activity

Daily Sensory Exercises

Pair and Share –

Daily Step 11,

Read Step 12 in Green Book

Read Chapter 17, Passion, in Sexual Anorexia page 349

Answer the question, "Why do I want to be of service to others?"

Start thinking about how you're going to work Step 12

Potential Reminders to Email Participants

This week you're invited to practice a daily Step 11, inviting connection with a loving Higher Power. What that will look like for each of us may differ. We may also try out different spiritual practices to see if they feel right for us.

As we move into Step 12, here's a thought that might surprise some:

Those that stay sober are not necessarily doing so because they have a sponsor, but because they're **being** a sponsor.

This week, we'll read and share about Step 12 from the “green book” and Chapter 17, Passion, from Sexual Anorexia, page 349.

Action Items Week 25:

- 1) Outreach calls
- 2) Daily Nurturing Activity
- 3) Daily Sensory Exercises
- 4) Pair and Share – Daily Step 11
- 5) Pair and Share
 - Read Step 12 in Green Book
 - Read Chapter 17, Passion, Sexual Anorexia, pg 349
- 6) Pair and Share – Answer the question, “Why do I want to be of service to others?”
- 7) Start thinking about how you’re going to work Step 12

Week 26

During the Meeting -

Introductions and Nurture, Sensory Reports

Insights from Sharing Partner Discussion -

Daily Step 11,
Read Step 12 in Green Book
Read Chapter 17, Passion, Sexual Anorexia
Answer the question, "Why do I want to be of service to others?"
Start thinking about how you're going to work Step 12

Week 26 Assignments -

Continue making outreach calls
Continue doing daily nurturing activities
Continue doing daily sensory exercises
Continue doing regular Step 10
Continue doing daily Step 11
Be of service to the fellowship!!

Keep moving forward!!

Wrap-up

(However the group wants to wrap up. It can be a celebration, it can include testimonials of how the Step Study has helped you, or any other way the group wishes to make use of the closure meeting.)

It should be announced that there is a Post-ISA Step Study Peer Support Group that meets on Mondays at 8:00 AM US Central time. There are reports of nurturing and sensory experiences, shared victories, and often a topic and experience, strength, and hope shared on that topic (feedback in “I” experiences is encouraged, but not advice-giving).

See [https://saatalk.info/us/members/my-meetings/edit-meeting?xmeeting\[id\]=169](https://saatalk.info/us/members/my-meetings/edit-meeting?xmeeting[id]=169) for contact information to request access information. Everyone from the Step Study is welcome, and/or another such meeting can be started.