

Back to the Basics of Recovery

Session #4-Steps 10, 11, and 12

WELCOME to session number four of *Back to the Basics of Recovery*. This is the payoff-the reward for our efforts, which is to overcome our “**seemingly hopeless state of mind and body.**”

We will start with a moment of silence, followed by the Serenity Prayer.

We have demystified the Twelve Steps and shown you just how simple this program really is. However, we must keep in mind that recovery is an ongoing process. We don't just take the Steps once and then “**rest on our laurels.**” We must repeat the process again and again in order to “**keep in fit spiritual condition.**” By taking the Steps over and over, we enlarge and expand on the “**spiritual awakening**” that brings about “**a new freedom and a new happiness.**”

Our names are _____ and _____, and we will be your guides for this meeting. During this session we will take Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve.

The Tenth Step is a summary of Steps Four through Nine. The Eleventh Step shows us how to enhance our spiritual connection with the “**One who has all Power**” through prayer and meditation. The Twelfth Step provides us with guidelines for carrying our life-saving message to others. Let's start with the Tenth Step. It reads:

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

In Steps One, Two and Three, we made the decisions that put us on the spiritual path. In Steps Four through Nine, we took the activities necessary to remove those things that had been blocking us from the “**God-consciousness within.**” Now, we're ready to grow into the promised spiritual awakening that will enable us to “**be of maximum service to God and the people about us.**”

The key to the Tenth step is the word “**continue.**” In the second paragraph on page 84, the “Big Book” authors emphasize the importance of continuing to take the steps:

“This ... brings us to Step Ten, which suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up our past. We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime. ...”

(pg. 84, para. 2, lines 1-8 edited)

In this paragraph, the authors explain how to live, one day at a time. We call this our twenty-four hour plan. We continue to take inventory, continue to make amends, continue to forgive, and continue to help others every day.

Please note that starting with this paragraph on page 84, the “Big Book” authors dramatically change the tone of the book. Until this point, they have used words, “**next,**” “**at once,**” “**promptly,**” and “**we waste no time**” to emphasize that we take the first nine steps quickly. Now, at Step Ten, they tell us that, “**This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.**” Here, they suggest we take Steps Ten, Eleven and Twelve on a daily basis for

the rest of our lives.

On page 84, starting with the eighth line in the second paragraph, the authors summarize steps Four through Nine. Once again, they are emphatic that we take these steps quickly:

“...Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone. Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance of others is our code.”

(pg. 84, para. 2, lines 8-14.)

Let's look at the first three sentences in this passage in more detail. **“Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.”** These are the first four liabilities from our Fourth Step inventory. **“When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them.”** This sentence summarizes Steps Six and Seven. “We discuss them with someone immediately” (This is Step Five) **“and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone.”** This refers to Steps Eight and Nine.

Again, when the authors ask us to make this daily review, they basically use the same words they used when they introduced us to the inventory and amends process earlier in the book. Here they write, **“at once,” “immediately,”** and **“quickly.”**

(Refer to Page 16 Handout)

Also in this paragraph, the “Big Book” authors present the test for “self-will vs. God's will” for a second time. In the second session, we described how we use this test to check the liabilities side of our Fourth Step inventory to determine if we need to make more amends. In the Tenth Step, the authors advise us to apply this same test, with minor variations, to our daily inventory. Here, they instruct us **“to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentments and fear.”**

The authors even provide us with specific directions on how to rid ourselves of these self-centered behaviors. First, we must realize they are not consistent with God's plan for our lives. Next, we take actions necessary to move from self-will to God's will. We discuss our shortcomings with our sharing partner, ask the **“One who has all power”** to remove them, and if necessary, **“set right the wrong(s).”** We then try to help someone else.

The “Big Book” authors state that if we routinely follow this process, God will remove our addictive and compulsive behaviors. This is another of the many promises we find throughout the text of the book. In the third paragraph on page 84, they write:

“And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone. ... For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in (our old way of living). If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude ... has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we had been placed in a position of neutrality-safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. ...That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.

(pg. 84, para. 3, lines 1-4; pg. 85, lines 1-9, 11-12, edited)

How do we **“keep in fit spiritual condition?”** By taking a daily inventory. What is our reward? A daily reprieve.

Now it is time to take Step Ten. The directions are in the second paragraph on page 84.

We would like everyone who is ready to take the Tenth Step to answer this question in unison. It is:

“Will you continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as you go along?”

And, your answer is? (Have the participants answer the Tenth Step question.)

Thank you. According to the “Big Book” authors, those who answered “yes” to this question have taken Step Ten.

Now, let's move on to the Eleventh Step. It reads:

Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood (God), praying only for knowledge of (God's) will for us and the power to carry that out.

This is the Step we prepared for last session. We are now going to examine **“prayer and meditation”** in more detail. Then, we will practice the Eleventh Step by taking a five minute “quite time” in order to listen to and record our guidance from the indwelling spirit.

The description of Step Eleven is found on pages 85 through 88 of the “Big Book.” In the third paragraph of page 85, the authors ask us to conduct an Eleventh Step on a regular basis:

“Step Eleven suggests prayer and meditation. We shouldn't be shy on this matter of prayer. Better men (and women) than we are using it constantly. It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it. ...”

(pg. 85, para. 3, lines 1-2; pg. 86, lines 1-2, edited)

“Prayer and meditation” puts us in direct contact with the **“Power greater than (ourselves) which will solve (our) problem.”** Starting with the second line on page 86, they provide us with some of the details:

“... It would be easy to be vague about this matter. Yet, we believe we can make some definite and valuable suggestions.”

(pg. 86, lines 2-4)

Then the authors provide step-by-step instructions of how to practice two-way prayer. They tell us what we are to do at night, morning, and throughout the day.

(Refer to “Eleventh Step Inventory” in handouts)

At night, we review the day's activities. In the first paragraph on page 86, the authors write:

“When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?”

(pg. 86, para. 1, lines 1-9)

This paragraph contains the third reference to the test for “self-will vs. God's will.” The “Big Book” authors once again have made minor changes to the test they presented to us in the Fourth and Tenth Steps. Nevertheless, it is still the opposite of the test for God's will on the assets side of our Fourth Step inventory sheet: **(Refer to Page 16 Handout)**

<u>Test for self-will</u>	<u>Test for God's will</u>
Resentful	Forgiving
Selfish	Unselfish
Dishonest	Honest
Afraid	Faithful

We can also use this same test during our morning meditation to check our guidance.

In the second paragraph on page 86, the authors provide us with directions for conducting a daily “quiet time”:

“On awakening let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.”

(pg. 86, para. 2, lines 1-5)

Let's look at the third sentence again. It reads, **“Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking. . .”** Please concentrate on these words. They are very important. **“Before we begin,”** before we begin what? Before we begin listening to God. How do we know that we're supposed to listen to God? Because, right afterward, it says **“we ask God to direct our thinking.”** If we ask God to direct our thinking, doesn't it stand to reason that some of our next thoughts or feelings just might be of a spiritual nature? What do we do with these thoughts and feelings? We write them down. Why? So we won't forget them.

After we write down our thoughts and feelings, we test them to determine the source. We do this because not everything we receive is from the Indwelling Spirit. Some of the messages may be our ego at work. However, with time and practice we will begin to trust **“our vital sixth sense”** and be able to separate the spiritual from the **“ego-centric.”** Starting with the first sentence on page 87, the “Big Book” authors explain:

“What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, become more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely on it.”

(pg. 87, lines 1-9)

Again, please note the change in the tempo of the book. Here, the authors write, **“gradually”** and **“as time passes.”** They are emphasizing that this part of the program is going to take practice-practice-practice.

The authors are emphatic that all of our questions will be answered. In the third paragraph on page 86, they reveal how the **“God consciousness within”** is going to reply to our requests for help:

“In thinking about our day we may face indecision. We may not be able to determine which course to take. Here we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or decision. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while. ...”

(pg. 86, para. 3, lines 1-6)

According to the “Big Book” authors, God is going to communicate with us through **“inspiration, an intuitive thought, or a decision.”** If the **“One who has all power”** is going to provide us with **“the right answers,”** wouldn't it be a good idea to record them so we don't forget them?

We end our **“prayer and meditation”** by asking God to guide us during our daily activities. In the first paragraph of page 87, the “Big Book” authors write:

“We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will, and are careful to make no request for ourselves only”

(pg. 87, para. 1, lines 1-6)

The “Big Book” authors then describe what to do anytime we have become troubled or confused. We relax and ask for guidance. Starting with the third paragraph on page 87, the authors tell us:

“As we go through the day we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day 'Thy will be done.' We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves. “It works-it really does.”

(pg. 87, para. 3, lines 1-3; pg. 88, lines 1-7; para. 1 line 1)

This is an ironclad guarantee. **“It works!”** From first-hand experience, we can state that two-way prayer has been working in our lives ever since we began a daily “quiet time.”

But what if we don't receive any God given thoughts, images or feelings? Let us assure you, this can happen at any time. Remember, all **“we really have is a daily reprieve contingent upon the maintenance of our spiritual condition.”** If we don't feel **“the Presence of God,”** it means we have work to do. Maybe we've taken back our will in some area of our lives, or, maybe we haven't made a necessary amends. If this is the case, we take the actions that reconnect us to the **“One who has all power.”**

Starting with the second paragraph on page 88, the “Big Book” authors state, once again, that we need God's help:

“We . . . are undisciplined. So we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined.

“But this is not all. There is action and more action. 'Faith without works is dead ... “”

(pg. 88, para. 2, lines 1-2; para. 3, lines 1-2, edited)

In order for two-way prayer to be effective, we must continually practice being in the presence of God. If we do the work, we will receive the rewards: a life filled with **“power, peace, happiness, and a sense of direction.”**

We are now going to take a five minute “quiet time” so each of us can make contact with the **“Spirit of the Universe”** and receive divine guidance right now. Please write down or capture on your fingertips any thoughts, images, or feelings you receive during this period of silence.

[Five minutes of silence and add time for sharing partners to share]

Thank you. As we mentioned last session, guidance can consist of thoughts, images, sounds or feelings. We realize these messages can be very personal and are normally discussed with only your sharing partner. However, if you believe the group will benefit from what you have received, we ask that you consider sharing it with us now. In addition, you will be helping those who are still struggling with the Eleventh Step to see how **“God constantly disclose(s) more to you and to us.”**

Who's willing to share what they have written or captured on their fingertips?

[For the next 10 minutes, have the participants share their guidance.]

Thank you. Whether you shared guidance or listened to others share their guidance, you have taken Step Eleven. Now, we can proceed to the Twelfth Step. It reads:

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to (others) and practice these principals in all our lives. (edited)

Now that we've made conscious contact with the **“Spirit of the Universe,”** we have received the greatest gift of this program – a spiritual awakening. God is now guiding us **“in a way which is indeed miraculous.”**

Chapter 7, in its entirety, is devoted to carrying our message of recovery to others. In the first paragraph on page 89, the “Big Book” authors tell us how we can expand upon our new God-consciousness:

PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from (relapse) as intensive work with other(s). It works when other activities fail. You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail. ...”

When **WE** work with others, **OUR** lives change. In the second paragraph on page 89, the authors state:

“Life will take on a new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends – this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.”

(pg. 89, para. 2, lines 1-7)

On pages 89 through 103, the “Big Book” authors provide us with specific instructions on how to carry our lifesaving message of recovery to others. They offer many valuable suggestions on these pages.

In the first paragraph on page 100, the “Big Book” authors inform is that we grow spiritually when we work with newcomers:

“Both you and (your sharing partner) must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress. If you persist, remarkable things will happen. When we look back, we realize that the things which came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands were better than anything we could have planned. Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances!”

(Pg. 100, para. 1, lines 1-9, edited)

This concludes our presentation on Step Twelve as found in our “Big Book.” Let God guide you when you make your Twelfth Step calls and the **“Spirit of the Universe”** will keep you safe and protected. In addition, by relying upon guidance you **WILL “be of maximum service to God and the people about (you).”**

Being of service to others is critical to our continued growth and the maintenance of our sobriety. Keep in mind that one of the primary services we can perform is to take prospective members through the Twelve Steps. Each time we do this, we learn more about our lifesaving program and gain additional insight into the **“All Powerful Creator”** who is at the heart of our new way of living.

Now, all that's left is to practice the principals of the Twelve Steps in all our (lives.) If we do this, we will remain in the **“sunlight of the Spirit”** for the rest of our lives.

We are now ready to take the Twelfth Step. We would like everyone who is ready to take this Step to answer this question in unison. This is the Twelfth Step question.

“Will you carry this message to others?”

And, your answer is?

(Have the participants answer the Twelfth Step question.)

Thank you. According to the “Big Book” authors, these who answered “yes” to this question have taken the Step Twelve.

We are going to close this session by reading the second, third, and forth paragraphs on page 164. Here the “Big Book” authors make yet one more statement concerning the importance of guidance and the necessity of working with others:

“Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask (God) in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the (person) who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with (God) is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us.

“Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to (God) and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surly meet some of us as you (travel) the Road of Happy Destiny.

“May God bless you and keep you – until then.”

(pg. 164, para. 2, lines 1-10; para. 3, lines 1-6; para. 4, line 1, edited)

Please don't let anyone talk you out of your miracle. We have taken the Twelve Steps the

way Bill W., Dr. Bob, and many of the pioneers intended for them to be taken. As the “Big Book” authors write in the second paragraph on page 132:

“ . . .We have recovered, and have been given the power to help others.”

(pg. 132, para. 2, lines 5-6)

We welcome all who have taken the Twelve Steps to the **“fourth dimension of existence.”**
We thank you for the opportunity to be your guides for this miraculous spiritual journey.

Are there any questions?

[After all questions have been answered, the meeting leader brings the session to a close.]

(Optional)

We will close this meeting with a moment of silence followed by:

The "We" version of the Serenity Prayer, or The Third Step Prayer, or The Seventh Step Prayer or, any other agreed upon Prayer. (including Unity Prayer, below) **(Share screen)**

Unity Prayer

I put my hand in yours, and together we can do what we could never do alone;

No longer is there a sense of hopelessness;

No longer must we each depend on our own unsteady willpower.

We are all together now, reaching out our hands for power and strength greater than ours;

And as we join hands, we find love and understanding **beyond our wildest dreams!**

(written by Reinhold Niebuhr)