

# Back To Basics

The SA Beginner's Meetings

These sessions are adapted with the author's permission  
from:

Back To Basics  
The Alcoholics Anonymous Beginner's Meetings  
"Here are the steps we took..." in Four One-hour Sessions

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**Preface – Willingness is the key**

Midway through in the Big Book we come across these declarations of our willingness:

*“If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it -- then you are ready to take certain steps” (pg 58).*

and

*“Remember it was agreed at the beginning we would go to any lengths for victory over [lust]” (pg 76).*

So please stand, as we start with a question:

**“Are you now willing to go to any length for victory over lust?”**

Please answer, one at a time, yes or no.

Before we begin taking any steps, let's ask God for humility by saying the Set Aside Prayer (This prayer is derived from the Chapter to the Agnostic, primarily pages 47 and 48):

**“Dear God, please set aside anything I think I know about myself, my disease, the 12 Steps, and especially you God; so that I may have an open mind and a new experience with all these things. Please help me see the Truth. Amen.”**

## **Session #1—Overview and Step One**

There was a period in the history of Alcoholics Anonymous when the program produced a 50 to 75 percent recovery rate from alcoholism. So, how can we get reconnected with this miraculous piece of our glorious past? We need to take a trip back in time. OK, let's go.

It is the Fall of 1946. You have a drinking problem and you telephone Alcoholics Anonymous for help. A.A. responds by sending two people out to see you.

These ex-problem drinkers talk about their personal experiences with alcohol and how they found a way out. They tell you that, as part of their recovery, they try to be of service to others. After listening to their stories, you agree to be hospitalized. They take you to a local sanitarium where you are withdrawn from alcohol. The process takes three days. During this period of time, you are visited by many of the members of the local A.A. group.

Upon your release, you are assigned a sponsor whose responsibility it is to accompany you to the Alcoholics Anonymous Beginner's Meetings. You take all Twelve Steps in one month. Your life changes – you never drink again.

Sounds incredibly simple doesn't it? Well, it was simple and it worked! A.A.'s remarkable recovery rate during the 1940's was due, in large part, to these four one-hour sessions. For many thousands of alcoholics, the Beginner's Meetings became "the foundation stone of (their) recovery."

So, let's imagine you're in a Midwest city. You are sitting at a table in the meeting room of a local church. You have copy of the book titled Alcoholics Anonymous with you, along with a pencil and paper. The first of the four one-hour sessions is about to begin. This meeting is being hosted by one of the local groups. The leaders are "home group" members who have taken the Steps and have helped others through them. It is now their turn to conduct the Beginner's Meetings.

The changes we've made to this 1946 A.A. meeting are to use the page numbers from a later edition of the book Alcoholics Anonymous, rather the First Edition which was in use at the time. We also changed the references of 'alcohol' to 'lust' and references of 'alcoholism' to 'sexaholism' when we're quoting from the "Big Book" in order to address sexaholism (except when referring to a specific person, e.g. 'Bill W's alcoholism').

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**Welcome** to the first of four one-hour S.A. meetings that will change your life! During the next several hours, you will learn how to recover from the affliction of sexaholism by taking the Twelve Steps as outlined in the book Alcoholics Anonymous.

Sexaholics Anonymous has found an answer to this insidious illness. As members of S.A., we are here today to share our solution with you – a spiritually based program of action that will remove your compulsion to lust and provide you with a new way of living without lust.

Our names are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and we are members of Sexaholics Anonymous. We lead these meetings to help insure our sobriety. We receive no payment for this service. Our reward is to watch people recover and to see them help others.

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We will start this session by reading a statement from the book Alcoholics Anonymous:

*“We are not an organization in the conventional sense of the word. There are no fees or dues whatsoever. The only requirement for membership is an honest desire to stop lusting. We are not allied with any particular faith, sect, or denomination, nor do we oppose anyone. We simply wish to be helpful to those who are afflicted.”*

The book we are reading from is our textbook for recovery. We will be using this book extensively during these sessions.

What we just read, sums up the S.A. fellowship quite well. We are not a religion and we don't get involved in politics, psychology or medicine.

As the title of the book implies, we are an anonymous society. You can be assured we will protect your anonymity at this and any other meetings of Sexaholics Anonymous. We ask that you do the same for us. And for everyone else who is here.

The “Big Book” of A.A. was first published in April 1939. It was written by several of the first 100 men to recover from alcoholism. Since then, it has been used by addicts all over the world as a program of recovery.

The original title of the book was 100 Men, because at the time it was being written, there were no women in the A.A. program. Then Florence R. started attending meetings in New York City. She stayed sober long enough to convince the men to change the name of the book – which they did. But, because the book was so close to publication, the authors didn't have time to change the contents. Please keep this in mind, as you read the book.

So that we can complete each session within an hour and still provide ample time for questions, we request that you write down anything that you do not understand or need clarified and save it until the end of the session. We will try to answer questions at that time.

The “Big Book” is the primary book we will discuss during these meetings, except for an occasional reference to an A.A. newsletter article, to some of the source material used to write the “Big Book,” or the S.A. sobriety definition. This first meeting is an exception, as we will refer to the book Sexaholics Anonymous for a description of lust. If you cannot find something we say in the “Big Book,” consider it to be our opinion rather than fact.

We will do our best to keep our opinions out of these discussions. We are here to carry the message by using the S.A. program as written and practiced by the early members.

The Beginners' Meetings started in the early 1940's when A.A. started growing so rapidly it became impossible for the older members to individually take new prospects through the Steps. The sessions were formalized in a September 1944 pamphlet titled Alcoholics Anonymous – An Interpretation of our Twelve Steps, published by the Washington, D.C. Group. Since 1944, this pamphlet has been reprinted throughout the country. The preface to the pamphlet contains the following:

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*“These meetings are held for the purpose of acquainting both the old and new members with the 12 steps upon which our program is based.”*

*“So that all twelve steps may be covered in a minimum amount of time, they are divided into four classifications, and one meeting each week will be devoted to each of the four subdivisions.”*

In 1945, the A.A. Grapevine, which is a newsletter published by the A.A. New York City headquarters, devoted three articles to the Beginners' Meetings. These articles described the sessions in St. Louis, Missouri; Rochester, New York; and St. Paul, Minnesota.

Each group has developed its own guidelines for conducting the Beginners' Meetings. However, all these groups have one thing in common. They provide a safe, structured environment in which newcomers learn the principles of S.A., take the Steps, and have spiritual experiences.

In order for the process to work, newcomers must be matched up with those S.A. members who are willing to sponsor them through the four one-hour sessions. In addition, the newcomers and “sponsors” must make a commitment to attend all the meetings together.

So that newcomers and “sponsors” will better understand what is expected of them, we are going to explain some of the guidelines for these sessions:

For the Newcomers:

- 1) Your primary obligation is to attend all four sessions.
- 2) We will read the appropriate parts of the “Big Book” to you, specifically those passages that relate to taking the Twelve Steps. If you have brought a “Big Book” and are able to follow along, please do so. We will announce each passage by page number and paragraph before we read it. If you don't have a Big Book, we ask that you participate by listening. We will guide you through all Twelve steps as written by the “Big Book” authors. Please follow their directions, as we read them to you, and you too, will recover from sexaholism.
- 3) Although a written inventory is part of the Fourth Step, this doesn't mean you have to do the writing. The person who is “sponsoring” you through these sessions can help you write your inventory or he or she can write it for you.

For the sponsor or Sharing Partner:

- 1) Your time commitment to the newcomer is approximately four weeks. After that, both you and the newcomer will be expected to assist other people through the Twelve Steps.
- 2) During the next month, call or visit the newcomer frequently to offer encouragement and moral support.
- 3) Attend the weekly Beginners' Meetings with the newcomer.
- 4) Offer to help the newcomer with his or her inventory. If necessary, fill out the checklist based on what the newcomer tells you. Keep in mind, the newcomer may not be able to complete the inventory without your assistance.
- 5) Share your Guidance with the newcomer, so he or she can see how two-way prayer is working in your life.



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- 6) Based on your personal experience, answer any questions the newcomer may have about the S.A. program or the S.A. way of life.

It is time to assign sponsors or sharing partners to those who need them. Will the newcomers please stand. These are the people who are here to take the Twelve Steps. If you have a sponsor or sharing partner that is with you, please be seated. If you don't have a sponsor or sharing partner, or he or she is not at this meeting please remain standing. We need to assign someone to help you during these sessions.

This is a **WE** program. We attend the Beginners' Meetings together, we read the "Big Book" together, we take the Steps together, and we recover together.

[Ask for volunteers to assist those who are standing.]

Thank you. Please be seated. Now that everyone has a sponsor or sharing partner, we can proceed.

Let's start on Roman numeral page 13 (xiii). The first paragraph states:

*"We, of [Sexaholics Anonymous], are more than one hundred men and women who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other [sexaholics] **precisely how we have recovered** is the main purpose of this book."*

So, the "Big Book" authors immediately tell us that the purpose of this book is to show us how to recover from sexaholism. This is a revolutionary statement, because until this book was written, there was no hope for sexaholics. Now, anyone who is willing to follow the directions they have provided, can recover.

The message of hope is expressed again at the bottom of page 17:

*"The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly and harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer from [sexaholism]."*

At the bottom of page 25, paragraph 3, the authors explain that for us, there is no middle ground. We are either going to die from sexaholism or else find a spiritual solution:

*"If you are as seriously [sexaholic] as we are, we believe there is no middle-of-the-road solution. We are in a position where life was becoming impossible, and if we had passed into the region from which there is no return through human aid, we had but two alternatives: One was to go on to the bitter end, blotting out the consciousness of our intolerable situation as best as we could; and the other, to accept spiritual help."*

In the first paragraph on page 44, they describe the sexaholic and then tell us what it is going to take to recover. Starting with line four, they write:

*"If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when [lusting], you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably*

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*[sexaholic]. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.”*

To make sure everyone understands what we just read, we are going to read the last line again:

**“...If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness ONLY a spiritual experience will conquer.”**

Now we know what we have to do in order to recover from sexaholism. We must undergo a life changing, spiritual transformation.

We realize this is not the answer many of you expected to find in Sexaholics Anonymous. But, please keep in mind that sexaholism is a fatal illness. Recovery requires “revolutionary and drastic proposals,” because prior to S.A., most sexaholics either died from disease, homicide, suicide, or were locked up in prisons, or mental institutions.

In the middle of page 44, paragraph 2, the authors once again tell us our options:

*“To one who feels he is an atheist or agnostic such an experience seems impossible, but to continue as he is means disaster, especially if he is a [sexaholic] of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to a [sexaholic] death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.”*

Not only is a spiritual experience possible, it is a guarantee, provided you keep an open mind and take the Steps as described in the “Big Book.”

In the next paragraph, paragraph 3, on page 44, they tell us that no matter what our present beliefs, there is hope for us:

*“But it isn’t so difficult. About half our original fellowship were exactly that type. At first some of us tried to avoid the issue, hoping against all hope we were not true [sexaholics]. But after a while we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life — or else. Perhaps it is going to be that way with you. But cheer up, something like half of us thought we were atheists or agnostics. Our experience shows that you need not be disconcerted.”*

We find it amazing that a newcomer can start the S.A. program without any specific beliefs or, for that matter, without any beliefs whatsoever. All a person needs is the **“willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness”** to believe that **we believe** this program works.

And let us assure you, we do believe. The Twelve Steps have changed our lives and the lives of countless other sexaholics. This program will change your life too, if you honestly want to recover from this deadly affliction.

Let’s see what we can learn about this spiritual solution. In the first paragraph on page 45, the “Big Book” authors tell us:

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*“Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power?”*

*“Well, that’s exactly what this book is about. Its main object is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself which will solve your problem. That means we have written a book which we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God.”*

In the second paragraph on page 46, the authors ask us to develop our own concept of God. In other words, they want us to find a God of our own understanding:

*“Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another’s conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect a contact with Him. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps. We found that God 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...”*

The “Big Book” authors inform us that we are going to take some actions which will lead us into the “realm of the spirit.” Our personalities will change from self-centered to God-centered. Our “attitude and outlook upon life” will change from “self-sufficiency” to “God-sufficiency.”

As we said earlier, Sexaholics Anonymous is not a religious program. We’re free to call this Power anything we wish, as long as it is a Power greater than ourselves. The “Big Book” authors use many different names for this Power including Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, Spirit of the Universe, Creator, and the Great Reality, among others. Quite a few times they call this Power, God, but they use the word God merely for convenience rather than for any religious purpose. Please refer to this Power by any name you believe in or feel comfortable with.

So, in order to recover from sexaholism, we have to find a Power greater than ourselves. But where are we going to find this Power? The authors provide us with the answer to that question in the second and third paragraphs on page 55:

*“Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child, is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as man himself”*

*“We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but He was there. He was as much a fact as we were.*

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*We found the Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis it is only there that He may be found."*

These are dramatic and for some of us revolutionary concepts. Let us summarize them for you. First, the authors of the "Big Book" tell us they have found a way to free us from the bondage of sexaholism. Next, they describe the solution as a Power greater than ourselves. Finally, they tell us where to find this Power—right inside each and every one of us.

Now we know **where** to find this Power. Much of the rest of the "Big Book" is devoted to the question of **how** to find this Power.

Basically, we find the Power to overcome our lust by taking the Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous. These Steps are found on pages 59 and 60. We will now read the Twelve Steps along with the page numbers where each Step is located in the book.

1 We admitted we were powerless over lust – that our lives had become unmanageable. This step is described on Roman numeral pages 25–32 (xxv – xxxii), and on pages 1–43. [The directions for taking Step One are on page 30, para. 2, lines 1-3.]

2 Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. This step is described on pages 44–60. [The directions for taking Step Two are on page 47, para. 2, lines 1–3.]

3 Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God. This step is described on pages 60 – 63. [The directions for taking Step Three are on page 63, para. 2, lines 1-8.]

4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. This step is described on pages 63-71. [The directions for taking Step Four are on page 64, para. 1, lines 1-9; para. 2, lines 1-6.]

5 Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. This step is described on pages 72-75. [The directions for taking Step Five are on page 75, para. 1, lines 1-4; para. 2, lines 1-2.]

6 Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. This step is described on pages 75-76. [The directions for taking Step Six are on page 76, para. 1, lines 3-5.]

7 Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings. This step is described on page 76. [The directions for taking Step Seven are on page 76, para. 2, lines 1-7.]

8 Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. This step is described on page 76. [The directions for taking Step Eight are on page 76, para. 3, lines 3-5.]

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

This step is described on pages 76-84.

[The directions for taking Step Nine are on page 76, para. 3, lines 6-11.]

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

This step is described on pages 84-85.

[The directions for Step Ten are on page 84, para. 2, lines 1-14 and page 86, para. 1, lines 1-14.]

11 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 step is described on pages 85-88.

[The directions for taking Step Eleven are on page 86, para. 1, lines 1-14 (*When We Retire*); para. 2, lines 1-5 (*Upon Awakening*); page 87, para. 3, lines 1-3, page 88, lines 1-7 (*Throughout The Day*).]

12 Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other Sexaholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

This step is described on pages 89-103 and pages 567-568.

[The directions for taking Step Twelve are on page 89, para. 1, lines 1-7.]

(Instructions on how to carry S.A.'s lifesaving message of recovery to others are found throughout pages 89-103).

**Step 1 We admitted we were powerless over lust – that our lives had become unmanageable.**

The book Sexaholics Anonymous was written as a companion volume to the Big Book. On page 192 it provides some insight into the sexaholic's problem:

*“The real problem for all of us [sexaholics]—single, married, man, woman, from whatever lifestyle—is one and the same: the spiritual misconnection.”*

This spiritual misconnection refers to lust. More about lust is found in Sexaholics Anonymous, beginning on page 40:

*Why in Step One do we say we are powerless over **lust** instead of **sex**? Is not some form of sex what we are addicted to? Yes, we answer, but our problem is not simply sex, just as in compulsive overeating the problem is not simply food. Eating and sex are natural functions; the real problem in both of these addictions seems to be what we call **lust—an attitude demanding that a natural instinct serve unnatural desires.***

*When we try to use food or sex to reduce isolation, loneliness, insecurity, fear, tension, or to cover our emotions, make us feel alive, help us escape, or satisfy our God-hunger, we create an unnatural appetite that misuses and abuses the natural instinct. It is not only more intense than the natural but becomes something totally different. Eating and sex enter a different dimension; they possess an unnatural spiritual component.*

*The addiction is thus to lust and not merely to the substance or physical act. **Lust—the attitude itself—becomes the controlling factor in the addiction.***

*This may be why people exhibit lust in more than one area. Often, those of us addicted to substances or forms of behavior discover we are also addicted to negative attitudes and emotions. ‘I remember that when I came off lust, alcohol, and tranquilizers, resentment burst forth like a dammed-up volcano. I remember thinking that controlling lust must be like trying to control a piece of jello; you press in here and it bulges out there. Or like trying to rout a gopher; you plug up one tunnel only to have the beast go to work in another.’*

*People may not be allergic to food and sex in the sense some people are allergic to pollen, strawberries, or cats, but we do become “allergic” to **lust** for food and sex. Misusing the natural instinct of sex for an unnatural end over and over again increasingly sensitizes us to the triggers of that association, until a simple thought or look elicits the compulsion.*

*For the sexaholic, lust is toxic. This is why in recovery, the real problem is spiritual and not merely physical. This is why change of attitude is so crucial.”*

Surrender is essential in order to recover from sexaholism. The “Big Book” authors devote 51 pages of the book to the first part of the surrender process which is to admit we have a



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problem. The authors begin by describing the physical and mental symptoms of sexaholism. Later they ask us to acknowledge that we are Sexaholics. Before we can do this, we need to know what a sexaholic is.

Much of the first chapter of the “Big Book” is based on two letters written by Dr. William D. Silkworth, a physician at Towns Hospital in New York City. In the late 1930’s, very little was known about addiction, but much of what Dr. Silkworth wrote then is still relevant today.

On Roman numeral page 25 (xxv), paragraph 1, Dr. Silkworth describes how Bill W., one of the co-founders of Alcoholics Anonymous, recovered from alcoholism. Bill had once been a well respected Wall Street stock analyst, but he had lost everything due to his drinking:

*“In late 1934 I attended a patient who, though he had been a competent businessman of good earning capacity, was an alcoholic of a type I had come to regard as hopeless.”*

*In the course of his third treatment he acquired certain ideas concerning a possible means of recovery. As part of his rehabilitation he commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing upon them that they must do likewise with still others. This has become the basis of a rapidly growing fellowship of these men and their families. This man and over one hundred others appear to have recovered.*

*I personally know scores of cases who were of the type with whom other methods had failed completely.”*

For several years prior to 1934, Dr. Silkworth had been treating alcoholics at Towns Hospital with very little success. Then, during Bill’s fourth trip to the hospital, he discovered the spiritual solution to alcoholism which he helped develop into the A.A. program.

One of the things we learn from Bill’s experience while in Towns Hospital is that we have to work with other sexaholics in order to stay sober ourselves. We also learn that sexaholism is a physical and a mental illness which only a spiritual experience would conquer.

On Roman numeral page 26 (xxvi), paragraph one, the authors confirm that Dr. Silkworth is well aware of the physical aspects of sexaholism:

*“The physician who, at our request, gave us this letter, has been kind enough to enlarge upon his views in another statement which follows. In this statement he confirms what we who have suffered [sexaholic] torture must believe—that the body of the [sexaholic] is quite as abnormal as his mind. It did not satisfy us to be told that we could not control our lusting just because we were maladjusted to life, that we were in full flight from reality, or were outright mental defectives. These things were true to some extent, in fact, to a considerable extent with some of us. But we are sure that our bodies were sickened as well. In our belief, any picture of the [sexaholic] which leaves out this physical factor is incomplete.”*

Let’s look at this abnormal physical reaction to lust. Lust is a poison. The normal reaction to lust is to have one or two lust “drinks” to indulge a little, and then stop. A lust “drink” may

be a look, a fantasy, a thought, a touch, or some other action. But, our reaction is much different. We have one or two lust “drinks” just to get started.

Toward the bottom of Roman numeral page 30 (xxx), paragraph five, Dr. Silkworth tells us that, because of this abnormal reaction, we must refrain from lust:

*“All these [sexaholics], and many others, have one symptom in common: they cannot start to [lust] without developing the phenomenon of craving. This phenomenon, ... differentiates these people, and sets them apart as a distinct entity. It has never been, by any treatment with which we are familiar, permanently eradicated. The only relief we have to suggest is entire abstinence.”*

So much for sexaholics ever being able to “control and enjoy” lust again.

Abstinence might work if sexaholism was only a physical illness, but Dr. Silkworth found that sexaholism has a mental component as well. In addition to an abnormal physical reaction, we have a mental obsession. Our minds tell us we are OK, even as lust is bringing us closer and closer to death. No matter how much we may want to stop, sooner or later we will return to lust.

Dr. Silkworth describes this mental obsession in his letter on Roman numeral page 28 (xxviii). Please keep in mind Dr. Silkworth is talking about sexaholics, not the general population, when he writes at the bottom of the page:

*“Men and women [lust] essentially because they like the effect produced by [lust]. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their [sexaholic] life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by taking a few [lust] “drinks”—[lust] “drinks” which they see others taking with impunity.”*

Starting with line four on page 30, the authors describe how this mental obsession kills so many of us:

*“Therefore, it is not surprising that our [sexaholic] careers have been characterized by countless vain attempts to prove we could [lust] like other people. The idea that somehow, someday he will control and enjoy his [lust] is the great obsession of every abnormal [lust user]. The persistence of this illusion is astonishing. Many pursue it into the gates of insanity or death.”*

They further emphasize the mental obsession on page 34, paragraph two, by stating that, no matter how strong our willpower or our conviction, we cannot stop lusting on our own:

*“For those who are unable to [lust] moderately the question is how to stop altogether. We are assuming, of course, that the reader desires to stop. Whether such a person can quit upon a nonspiritual basis depends upon the extent to which he has lost the power to choose whether he will [lust] or not. Many of us felt that we had plenty of character. There was a*



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*tremendous urge to cease forever. Yet we found it impossible. This is the baffling feature of [sexaholism] as we know it—this utter inability to leave it alone, no matter how great the necessity or the wish.”*

You see, if our minds didn't deceive us into thinking it's OK to lust, we would never trigger the physical craving for more and more lust. So, we have an abnormal reaction of the body and an obsession of the mind which dooms us to a sexaholic death.

The doctor's description of the allergy of the body and the obsession of the mind form the basis for SA's sobriety definition (Sexaholics Anonymous p. 191):

*“For the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. In SA's sobriety definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and a woman. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, **sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust.**”*

“No sex with self or others (except the spouse)” means freedom from the allergy of the body, and “progressive victory over lust” means freedom from the obsession of the mind. But how do we get that freedom?

Back on Roman numeral page 29 (xxix) of the Big Book, Dr. Silkworth tells us our only hope is a life changing conversion experience. In line three, he writes:

*“...After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to [lust] again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope for his recovery.”*

So, a prominent doctor tells us that the medical community can't help us. Our only hope is a spiritual awakening.

The next chapter of the “Big Book” deals with Bill W., our New York City co-founder, and how he overcame alcoholism. In this chapter we learn more about the physical and mental aspects of sexaholism, and also more about the spiritual solution. Some people have difficulty with Bill's story because he was such a low-bottom, hopeless alcoholic. Here, as elsewhere in the book, we ask that you look for similarities rather than differences. See where you can identify with Bill as he continues to use alcohol long after it has become a problem.

In the first seven pages, Bill describes the progressive nature of his drinking. In the 1920's, he was a successful Wall Street stock analyst. In a few short years he loses everything. He becomes an unemployed, hopeless alcoholic.

On Page 8, paragraph one, Bill has a moment of clarity. He realizes he is powerless over alcohol. He is licked—defeated:

*"No words can tell of the loneliness and despair I found in that bitter morass of self-pity. Quicksand stretched around me in all directions. I had met my match. I had been overwhelmed. Alcohol was my master."*

But Bill can't stop drinking on this admission alone. In late November 1934, he is visited by an old high school chum, Ebby T. Bill is drunk. Ebby has been sober for several months. When Bill asks Ebby how he stopped drinking, Ebby tells him, "I've got religion." Bill is shocked but he lets Ebby continue because, as he writes, "my gin would last longer than his preaching."

But, Ebby doesn't preach to Bill. Instead, he describes a group of people he has recently met called the Oxford Group. They had found a spiritual solution to many of the world's difficulties, including alcoholism, womanizing, smoking, gambling, drug addiction, and other spiritual illnesses. These people rely upon a Power greater than themselves and live based on the Guidance they receive from this Power. They taught Ebby how to recover from his "alcoholic illness" by practicing Four Spiritual Activities—activities that later became the foundation of the S.A. program:

1. Surrender—our First, Second and Third Steps.
2. Sharing—our Fourth, Fifth, Sixth, Seventh Steps.
3. Restitution—our Eighth and Ninth Steps.
4. Guidance—our Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Steps.

Soon after Ebby's visit, Bill checks into Towns Hospital. There, under the direction of Dr. Silkworth, Bill is physically withdrawn from alcohol for the fourth time. While in the hospital, Bill applies the Oxford Group Four Spiritual Activities.

In the second paragraph on page 13, Bill makes a complete Surrender:

*"There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as he would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction."*

Immediately after his Surrender, Bill begins Sharing his shortcomings with Ebby. Starting on page 13, paragraph 2, line 2, Bill writes:

*"...I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new found Friend take them away, root and branch..."*

*"My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies."*

Together, Bill and Ebby identify the blocks that were preventing Bill from tapping into the Power greater than human power—the Power that would solve his problem. When Bill wrote, "I ruthlessly faced my sins..." he used the Oxford Group definition for the word "sin." According to the Oxford Group, sin is anything that blocks or separates us from God or from one another.

Then on page 13, paragraph 3, line 2, Bill learns how to remove the blocks by making Restitution. This is an important part of moving from the problem of relying on self-will toward the solution of relying upon God's will:

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*“...We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment. I expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals, admitting my wrong. Never was I to be critical of them. I was to right all such matters, to the utmost of my ability.”*

In the next paragraph, Bill gets quiet, listens to the God of his understanding, and Guidance. These actions are essential for establishing a two-way relationship with the “One who has all power”:

*“I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would become uncommon sense. I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me.”*

At the bottom of page 14, para 6, line 2, Ebby explains the necessity of working with others:

*“...Particularly was it imperative to work with others as he had worked with me. Faith without works was dead, he said. And how appallingly true for the [sexaholic]! For if a [sexaholic] failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely [lust] again, and if he [lusted], he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us it is just like that.”*

With Ebby as his guide, Bill takes the Steps and has a sudden conversion experience. He has the “entire psychic change” that Dr. Silkworth talks about in “The Doctor’s Opinion.” In the second paragraph on page 14, Bill describes his spiritual awakening:

*“These were revolutionary and drastic proposals, but the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric. There was a sense of victory, followed by such a peace and serenity as I had never known. There was utter confidence. I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through. God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound.”*

Bill makes direct contact with the “Spirit of the Universe” and recovers from alcoholism. He hasn’t had a drink since.

There is additional material within these 51 pages of the “Big Book” that further explains the physical and mental aspects of sexaholism and how our lives have become unmanageable as the result of our lust. If you need more proof, please read on. All we’ve done is highlight some of the more important passages. However, we hope we’ve shown you enough for you to proceed.

Now, it’s time for each of us to start our personal journey toward that spiritual experience which will change our lives. Let’s see who is ready to take the First Step?

**We admitted we were powerless over lust — that our lives had become unmanageable.**

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The “Big Book” authors tell us exactly what we have to do. On page 30, paragraph 2, they write:

*“We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were [sexaholics]. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.”*

In order to smash the delusion that you’re not a sexaholic, we are going to ask each of you to answer a simple question, “Are you ready to concede to your innermost self you are powerless over lust?” In other words, “Are you a sexaholic?” All that is required is a yes or no answer.

Looking again at page 44, the Big Book authors describe it this way:

*“If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit entirely, or if when [lusting], you have little control over the amount you take, you are probably [sexaholic].”*

If you have reservations about taking the First Step, please let us know. Your sponsor or sharing partner is willing to spend time with you this week to discuss your uncertainty. We want to give you every opportunity to comprehend the devastating consequences of this terrible affliction.

Maybe you don’t believe you’re a sexaholic. Maybe you think you’re here by mistake. We just want you to know we’d rather be inside the fellowship of Sexaholics Anonymous by mistake, than outside the fellowship, lusting and dying by mistake. It’s something to think about.

Now, will those who are ready to take the First Step, please stand. This is the First Step question:

**“Do you concede to your innermost self that you are a Sexaholic?”**

Please answer, one at a time, yes or no.

[Have each newcomer answer the question.]

There is another question associated with taking Step 1. On page 33 at the end of paragraph 1 it says: “Commencing to [lust] after a period of sobriety, we are in a short time as bad as ever. If we are planning to stop lusting, there MUST be NO reservation of ANY kind, nor ANY lurking notion that someday we will be immune to (or able to control) [lust].” The authors repeat this on page 85, “We are not cured of [sexaholism].”

So now please answer the second First Step question:

**“Do you concede to your innermost self that you will never be able to control and enjoy lust, and never be immune to lust or UNAFFECTED by lust?”**

Please answer yes or no.

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Thank you. According to the “Big Book” authors, those who answered “yes” to both questions have taken Step One. Please be seated.

That’s enough for today. In the past hour, we have covered 51 pages of the “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous and taken the First Step. This is a remarkable achievement. Congratulations.

Next week we’ll discuss Steps 2, 3 and 4. We will take the Second and Third Steps during the meeting and we will provide you with guidelines for taking the Fourth Step. You will share your Fourth Step inventory with another person between the second and the third sessions.

Are there any questions?

[Please remain seated. We will close this meeting as they did in the 1940s: with a moment of silence followed by the Lord’s Prayer.]

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## Notes and Questions



## **Session #2 – Steps 2, 3, & 4**

We are about to take our second journey back to the early days of Alcoholics Anonymous—back to the four one-hour Beginners' Meetings of the mid-1940's. During this session we will complete the surrender process we started in the previous session. In addition, we will learn how to eliminate those parts of our character that have prevented us from establishing an intimate, two-way communication with the God of our understanding.

Before we go any further, let's again ask God for humility by saying the Set Aside Prayer (derived from pages 47 and 48):

**“Dear God, please set aside anything I think I know about myself, my disease, the 12 Steps, and especially you God; so that I may have an open mind and a new experience with all these things. Please help me see the Truth. Amen.”**

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**WELCOME** to session number two of the Sexaholics Anonymous Beginners' Meetings. Together, we are taking the Twelve Steps based on the directions found in the “Big Book” of Alcoholics Anonymous and the personal experiences of the A.A. pioneers.

Our names are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and we are members of Sexaholics Anonymous. We are grateful our S.A. Group has asked us to lead these sessions. This is one way we can be of service to others and, at the same time, grow in the “fellowship of the Spirit.”

Our goal is to recover from the seemingly hopeless state of mind and body known as sexaholism. And recover we will. The August 1946 A.A. Grapevine contains an article titled, “Minneapolis Record Indicates that 75% are successful in A.A.” The article demonstrates the importance of the Beginners' Meetings. In Minneapolis, about half of those who stayed on the program for three months recovered from alcoholism. Almost 3-fourths of those who remained involved for six months never drank again.

In other areas of the country where Beginners' Meetings are an integral part of the recovery process, we see similar results. We remain involved in the Beginners' Meetings by taking the Twelve Steps, helping others through the steps, and if possible, leading these sessions. If you participate in the Beginners' Meetings long enough, you **will** experience the miracle and you **will** recover from sexaholism.

During this session, we will take Steps Two and Three and we will provide you with guidelines for taking the Fourth Step. This week, each newcomer will share his or her inventory with another human being.

Older members have told us the only way to understand the “Big Book” is to try to explain it to someone else. They were right. We didn't realize how little we knew about this textbook for recovery until we started leading these meetings.

So, we want to thank you for providing us the opportunity to “grow in understanding and effectiveness” by once again taking the Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous along with you.



## Sexaholics Anonymous

As we have learned right here in these Beginners' Meetings, each time we take the Steps, we grow closer to the "One who has all power."

Before we begin, we need to make sure each newcomer has someone at this meeting to help them with the Steps. In order for this process to work, "sponsors" or sharing partners need to accompany the newcomers through the sessions.

Are there any newcomers here for this 2nd session without a sponsor? If so, please stand. [Ask for volunteers to sponsor those who are standing.] Thank you. Please be seated.

*(Optional): Is there anyone here tonight who didn't have the opportunity to take the First Step last week and would like to do so now? Would you please stand. **"Do you concede to your innermost self you are a sexaholic?"** Please answer, yes or no. **"Do you concede any reservations or lingering ideas that one day you will be UNAFFECTED by lust?"** Please answer, yes or no. Thank you, please be seated. If you answered yes to both questions, you have taken Step One.*

As we explained, the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous contains step-by-step directions on how to recover from sexaholism by finding a Power greater than ourselves. This Power will remove our obsession to lust, and lead us to a "new freedom and a new happiness."

This removal of our obsession to lust is described in SA's sobriety definition (SA p. 191):

*"For the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. In SA's sobriety definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and a woman. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust."*

Let's start with a brief review of last week. In the last paragraph on page 64 of the "Big Book," we find an excellent overview of the recovery process. The "Big Book" authors write:

*"...for we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically."*

This is our goal—to overcome the spiritual malady that has separated us from God and has doomed us, until now, to the living Hell of sexaholism.

How do we overcome this malady? The Big Book authors tell us we need to experience a spiritual awakening, which Dr. Silkworth defines as a "psychic change". Doctor Silkworth describes the effect of this change on the sexaholic in the first paragraph on Roman numeral page 29 (xxix). There, Dr. Silkworth writes:

*"On the other hand—and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand—once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems he despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds himself easily able to control his desire for*



*[lust], the only effort necessary being that required to follow a few simple rules.”*

What are these simple rules? They are **“trust in God... clean house”** and **“help others.”** If we follow these guidelines, we will receive the ultimate reward—a spiritual awakening.

Last week we started our journey to this spiritual awakening by taking Step One. We conceded to our innermost selves we were powerless over lust, that is, we are sexaholics.

Those of you who have taken Step One, either at the conclusion of last week’s Meeting, in today’s meeting, or during the week with their sponsor or sharing partner, please stand.

Congratulations. Please be seated. We commend you for admitting you have a problem. As the “Big Book” says, “This is the first step in recovery.” Your admission is a major realization, since most sexaholics live in total denial they have a progressive and fatal illness.

Thank you. We are now ready to proceed.

## **Step 2 Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.**

Now that we have admitted we are sexaholics, let’s look at what we have to do in order to recover. At the bottom of page 44, paragraph four, we learn:

*“If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome [sexaholism], many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such codes and philosophies did not save us, no matter how hard we tried. We could wish to be moral, we could wish to be philosophically comforted, in fact, we could wish these things with all our might, but the needed power wasn’t there. Our human resources, as marshaled by the will, were not sufficient; they failed utterly.”*

What is it going to take for us to find this Higher Power? The answer is in the back of the “Big Book” within Appendix II. In the second paragraph on page 568, we find:

*“Most emphatically we wish to say that any [sexaholic] capable of honestly facing his problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided he does not close his mind to all spiritual concepts. He can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial.*

*“We find that no one need have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. Willingness, honesty, and open mindedness are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.”*

The “Big Book” authors tell us it is our arrogance and our shortsightedness that keep us in the darkness and block us from the “sunlight of the Spirit.”

Bill W., our New York City co-founder, had a great deal of difficulty accepting this spiritual solution to alcoholism. In “Bill’s Story” he describes how he “came to believe.”

In late November 1934, Ebby T. visits Bill at his Brooklyn New York home. It is during this visit that Bill first learns about the concept of “God as you understand God.”

As we mentioned last week, Ebby is one of Bill’s high school friends and a former drinking companion. Ebby has been sober in the Oxford Group for several months. He tells Bill his life has been transformed as a result of practicing the Four Spiritual Activities of Surrender, Sharing, Restitution, and Guidance.

Bill is shocked when Ebby starts talking about God. However, he does listen because he realizes Ebby’s life has truly changed—he is sober for the first time in many years.

Let’s pick up the story in the first paragraph of page 12:

*“Despite the living example of my friend there remained in me vestiges of my old prejudice. The word God still aroused a certain antipathy. When the thought was expressed that there might be a God personal to me this feeling was intensified. I didn’t like the idea. I could go for such conceptions as Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind or Spirit of Nature but I resisted the thought of a Czar of the Heavens, however loving His sway might be. I have since talked with scores of men who felt the same way.”*

Then, Ebby presents Bill with a revolutionary concept:

*“My friend suggested what then seemed a novel idea. He said, Why don’t you choose your own conception of God?”*

*“That statement hit me hard. It melted the icy intellectual mountain in whose shadow I had lived and shivered many years. I stood in the sunlight at last.*

*“It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning. I saw that growth could start from that point. Upon a foundation of complete willingness I might build what I saw in my friend. Would I have it? Of course I would!”*

Now, let’s look at how the “Big Book” authors describe this “Power greater than ourselves.” In the middle of page 46, paragraph one, they ask us to set aside our contempt for spiritual principles and consider our own concept of this Power. If we do, we will be in a much better position to understand the S.A. solution for the lust problem. Starting with line three in the first paragraph, they write:

*“...We found that as soon as we were able to lay aside prejudice and express even a willingness to believe in a Power greater than ourselves, we commenced to get results, even though it was impossible for any of us to fully define or comprehend that power which is God.”*

The “Big Book” authors clearly state that it is impossible to define God. We have to stop trying to comprehend this Power with our mind and start accepting this Power with our heart. On the top of page 47, they explain the concept of “God as you understand God”:

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*“When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own conception of God. This applies, too, to other spiritual expressions which you find in this book. Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you. At the start, this was all we needed to commence spiritual growth, to effect our first conscious relation with God as we understood Him. Afterward, we found ourselves accepting many things which then seemed entirely out of reach. That was growth, but if we wished to grow we had to begin somewhere. So, we used our own conception, however limited it was.”*

Sometimes we have to take our lives right to the brink of disaster and look death squarely in the eye before we are willing to acknowledge the “Presence of God.” But there is hope even for the most stubborn of us. Starting with the seventh line down from the top of page 48, the “Big Book” authors state that most of us eventually become “teachable”:

*“...Faced with [sexaholic] destruction, we soon become as open minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect [lust] was a great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness. Sometimes this was a tedious process; we hope no one else will be prejudiced for as long as some of us were.”*

In the third paragraph on page 52, the authors make a powerful case for the existence of God:

*“When we saw others solve their problems by a simple reliance upon the Spirit of the Universe, we had to stop doubting the power of God. Our ideas did not work. But the God idea did.”*

Once again we need to make a decision. We have to decide whether or not we believe in a Creator—a Spirit of the Universe—a God of our understanding. In the second paragraph on page 53, the “Big Book” authors write:

*“When we became [sexaholics], crushed by self-imposed crisis we could not postpone or evade, we had to fearlessly face the proposition that either God is everything or else He is nothing. God either is, or He isn’t. What was our choice to be?”*

Now, it’s time to choose. Are we willing to concede that there is a **“Power greater than ourselves?”** If we are, we’re ready to take Step Two.

In the middle of page 47, paragraph two, we find the directions:

*“We needed to ask ourselves but one short question. ‘Do I now believe, or am I even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than myself?’ As soon as a man can say that he does believe, or is willing to believe, we emphatically assure him that he is on his way. It has been repeatedly proven among us that upon this simple cornerstone a wonderfully effective spiritual structure can be built.”*

Let’s see who is ready to proceed? Will those who have taken Step One please stand. This is the Second Step question:

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**“Do you now believe, or are you even willing to believe, that there is a Power greater than yourself?”**

Please answer, one at a time, yes or no. After you have answered, please be seated.

[Have each newcomer answer the question.]

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

Now, let’s move on to the Third Step.

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

This Step begins just below the middle of page 60, paragraph three. How do we know that? Well, in this case, the “Big Book” authors tell us:

“Being convinced, we were at Step Three...”

Convinced of what? If we’ve taken Step Two, we believe that a Power greater than ourselves can restore us to sanity. But, even though we may believe that the “Power of God” is the answer, this doesn’t necessarily mean we are willing to accept this solution. In order to recover from sexaholism, we must make a decision to put this Power to work in our lives. In other words, we have to get out of the way and let God direct our lives.

On pages 62 and 63, the “Big Book” authors show us how to become God directed. But, first they disclose how operating on self-will keeps us separated from this “inner resource.” In the fourth paragraph on page 60, they explain that, when we live on self-will, we are like actors trying to control every detail of a play:

*“The first requirement is that we be convinced that any life run on self-will can hardly be a success. On that basis we are almost always in collision with something or somebody, even though our motives are good. Most people try to live by self-propulsion. Each person is like an actor who wants to run the whole show; is forever trying to arrange the lights, the ballet, the scenery and the rest of the players in his own way.”*

Does this sound familiar? At one time or another, haven’t we all tried to convince those around us they would be much better off if they just did things our way? Attempting to control others is one of the characteristics of selfishness.

In the first paragraph on page 62, the authors declare that it is this selfish, self-centeredness that has gotten us into trouble. We need to take responsibility for our selfishness and ask God to remove this shortcoming from our lives:

*“Selfishness—self-centeredness! That, we think, is the root of our troubles. Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking and self-pity, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate. Sometimes they hurt us, seemingly without provocation, but we invariably find that at some time in the past we have made decisions based on self which later placed us in a position to be hurt.”*

*“So our troubles, we think, are basically of our own making. They arise out of ourselves, and the [sexaholic] is an extreme example of self-will run riot, though he usually doesn’t think so. Above everything, we [sexaholics] must be rid of this selfishness. We must, or it kills us! God makes that possible. And there often seems no way of entirely getting rid of self without His aid.”*

Then at the bottom of page 62, paragraph three, the authors tell us what we have to do in order to rid ourselves of selfishness:

*“This is the how and why of it. First of all, we had to quit playing God. It didn’t work. Next, we decided that hereafter in this drama of life, God was going to be our Director. He is the Principal; we are His agents. He is the Father, and we are His children. Most good ideas are simple, and this concept was the keystone of the new and triumphant arch through which we passed to freedom.”*

*“When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all powerful, He provided what we needed, if we kept close to Him and performed His work well.”*

So, now we know our place in God’s Universe. Contrary to what we may have thought in the past, the whole world does not revolve around us. Once we step aside and put God in the center, we are amazed at how much better our lives become.

Realizing there is a “Power greater than ourselves” is the essence of God Consciousness. As we become aware of the “realm of the spirit,” our lives change. Starting with line five on page 63, the authors explain this awareness:

*“Established on such a footing, we became less and less interested in ourselves, our little plans and designs. More and more we became interested in seeing what we could contribute to life. As we felt new power flow in, as we enjoyed peace of mind, as we discovered we could face life successfully, as we became conscious of His presence, we began to lose our fear of today, tomorrow or the hereafter. We are reborn.”*

We have been delivered from the gates of Hell, and we have come back to tell what it was like. It isn’t a pretty picture. We will never have to “relive the horrors of the past,” if we are willing to remain in the “sunlight of the Spirit.”

It is decision time once again. The “Big Book” authors tell us we are now ready to take Step Three. Toward the bottom of page 63, paragraph three, they provide us with the directions:

*“We found it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as our wife, best friend, or spiritual adviser. But it is better to meet God alone than with one who might misunderstand. The wording was, of course, quite optional so long as we expressed the idea, voicing it without reservation. This was only a beginning, though if honestly and humbly made, an effect, sometimes a very great one, was felt at once.”*

We are so fortunate that, in the years since the “Big Book” was written, the fellowship has grown to where very few, if any, newcomers have to take the Third Step alone. We’re here today to take this monumental Step with you right now.

Although they say the wording is optional, the authors do provide us with a prayer we can use to take the Third Step. The prayer is in the middle of page 63. Please listen closely before praying it. Starting with the second line in the second paragraph, it reads:

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***“...God, I offer myself to Thee—to build with me and to do with me as Thou wilt. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Thy will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Thy Power, Thy Love, and Thy Way of life. May I do Thy will always!”***

We would like each of you who is ready to take the Third Step to read the prayer along with us.

**Let's read the Third Step Prayer together.**

[Read the prayer a second time.]

According to the “Big Book” authors, we have taken Step Three.

Even though we have taken a considerable amount of time on the first three Steps, we have only made a series of decisions. Now we need to take some specific actions that will result in the “personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from sexaholism.”



#### **Step 4 Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.**

At the bottom of page 63, paragraph four, the “Big Book” authors tell us what we need to do now that we’ve made our decision to proceed:

*“Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal housecleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face, and to be rid of, the things in ourselves which had been blocking us.”*

Please note the authors say **AT ONCE**. They tell us we need to take the Fourth Step immediately after the Third Step Prayer. We must overcome those things that have prevented us from tapping into the spiritual solution to our problem. We have to get rid of those things which have been blocking us off from God or else our initial contact with God won’t last.

So, now we are going to establish a direct line of communicating with God by eliminating those aspects of our personalities which have kept us in the depths of loneliness and despair. The “Big Book” authors say that lust is but a symptom of our problem. Sure, lust has cut us off from God, but once we stop lusting, we’re still separated from the “One who has all power” because of our shortcomings. Now, it’s time to look at these “causes and conditions” by making an inventory.

The “Big Book” authors start by comparing a personal inventory to a business inventory. Toward the top of page 64, paragraph one, they write:

*“Therefore we started upon a personal inventory. This was Step Four. A business which takes no regular inventory usually goes broke. Taking a commercial inventory is a fact-finding and fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade. One object is to disclose damaged or unsalable goods; to get rid of them promptly and without regret.”*

So, we are going to conduct the equivalent of a commercial inventory on our lives. This implies we are going to look at our assets and liabilities. That’s what a commercial inventory is all about—to examine our achievements and our disappointments—to accentuate the positive and eliminate the negative.

Then on page 64, paragraph 2, the authors tell us exactly what we have to do in order to conduct a Fourth Step inventory:

*“We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations.”*

Before we get into the details on how to complete this Step, we want to emphasize a few things. First, there is no right or wrong way to do this inventory. Various assets and liabilities checklists are in use today. You can use any one of them.



## Back to Basics

Second, the assets and liabilities checklist described on page 64 precedes the three column inventory shown on page 65. Because this “commercial inventory” comes first, we assume the “Big Book” authors are asking us to utilize this simple checklist before attempting the much more difficult example on the following page.

Third, Dr. Bob, our Akron, Ohio co-founder has been using an assets and liabilities checklist for many years. Dr. Bob believes that initially, newcomers should be taken through a simplified version of the Steps. Later on, they can work the program in more detail.

Dr. Bob takes newcomers through the Steps as quickly as possible. In many instances, he completes the process during the person’s three to five day stay at St. Thomas hospital in Akron, Ohio. Thousands of addicts have recovered by following Dr. Bob’s “keep it simple” approach.

The “Big Book” authors also urge us to take the Steps quickly. We must discover “the truth about the stock-in-trade” in order to remove those behaviors that have cut us off from the “sunlight of the Spirit.” At the bottom of page 65, paragraph 3, they provide us with some of the details:

*“We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully.”*

Please note that the authors ask us to be thorough and in the very next sentence tell us what to do when we are finished. Since this is all in one paragraph, we assume they are asking us to complete this inventory in one sitting.

Keep in mind this is only a suggestion. You can spend as much time on this inventory as you wish, just as long as you and your sponsor or sharing partner complete it before the next session.

When making an inventory, we’ve found it helpful to use an assets and liabilities checklist. There are several lists in use today. One can be found in the Washington, D.C. Alcoholics Anonymous pamphlet. Another list has been published in the August 1946 A.A. Grapevine. A third list is in a book distributed by a Minneapolis, Minnesota group titled, An Interpretation of the Twelve Steps of the Alcoholics Anonymous Program. Another comes from Dr. Bob our Akron, OH co-founder, and yet another is listed in A.A.’s Twelve Steps and Twelve Traditions. You can use any or all of these checklists. Hopefully, our explanation of this checklist will make it easier for you to complete your inventory.

The Washington, D.C. pamphlet contains specific instructions for taking a Fourth Step inventory:

*“...Some, in error, think the inventory is a lot of unpaid debts, plus a list of unmade apologies. Our trouble goes much deeper. We will find the root of our troubles lies in—Resentments—False Pride—Envy—Jealousy—Selfishness and many other things. Laziness is an important one. In other words we are making an inventory of our character—our attitude toward others—our very way of living.” (A.A. – Interpretation of our Twelve Steps, page 15.)*

Now, let's look at what we put on paper. From pages 64 to 71, the Big Book authors provide us with a list of shortcomings we need to eliminate and a list of assets we need to accentuate.

We are now going to define these shortcomings in a way that, hopefully, will provide you with a clearer understanding of their meaning. Let's start with **RESENTMENT**, which is the consequence of being angry or bitter toward someone for an extended period of time over some real or imagined insult. It is a hostile or indignant attitude in response to an alleged affront or personal injury.

**FEAR** is being afraid of losing something we have or not getting something we want. It manifests itself in many ways such as phobia, terror, panic, anxiety, and worry.

**SELFISHNESS** is concern only for ourselves, our own welfare or pleasure, without regard for, or at the expense of others.

**DISHONESTY** involves theft or deception. It includes taking things that don't belong to us, cheating people out of what is rightfully theirs, and lying to or withholding the truth from others.

**FALSE PRIDE** is any form of judgment, either feeling better than or less than someone else—both these feelings may be present at the same time. Feelings of superiority include prejudice about race, education or religious beliefs, and sarcasm—putting someone else down to make us feel better about ourselves. Feelings of inferiority include self-pity, which is excessive concern about our own troubles, and low self-esteem—the lack of self-worth or self-respect.

**JEALOUSY** has to do with people—being suspicious of another's motives, doubting the faithfulness of a friend, wanting someone's attention or approval, or desiring another person's characteristics.

**ENVY** has to do with things—wanting someone else's possessions.

**LAZINESS** means lacking the will or the desire to work. Procrastination, which is postponing or delaying an assigned job or task, is a form of laziness.

Now we know WHAT to inventory. Next, we need to decide WHO does the writing. For guidance on this subject, let's look to our New York City co-founder, Bill W.

On page 13, Bill describes the inventory process he went through in one day. Starting with line five in the second paragraph, he states:

*"...I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new-found  
Friend take them away, root and branch."*

Bill doesn't say, "I ruthlessly wrote down my sins." All he does is acknowledge that he has some shortcomings.

## Back to Basics

In the third paragraph on page 13, Bill describes how he shared his inventory with his “sponsor”:

*“My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies. We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment.”*

Here again, Bill doesn’t say “My schoolmate visited me and I read him my inventory.” He also doesn’t say, “I made a list of people...” Rather, Bill writes, “**we** made a list of people...”

So, together Bill and Ebby made an amends list. Let’s think about this for a minute. Bill is in Towns Hospital in December 1934, being withdrawn from alcohol for the third time in that year. He is suffering from delirium tremens—he is a very sick man. Ebby has been sober for several months. Who do you think did the writing? (It wasn’t Bill!)

On page 64, paragraph 3, they ask us to examine our resentments:

*“Resentment is the “number one” offender. It destroys more [sexaholics] than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease...”*

*“...In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry.”*

In the first paragraph of page 66, the authors emphasize that our resentments keep us separated from our Creator. We must eliminate them if we are to have a spiritual awakening:

*“It is plain that a life which includes deep resentment leads only to futility and unhappiness. To the precise extent that we permit these, do we squander the hours that might have been worthwhile. But with the [sexaholic], whose hope is the maintenance and growth of a spiritual experience, this business of resentment is infinitely grave. We found that it is fatal. For when harboring such feelings we shut ourselves off from the sunlight of the Spirit. The insanity of [sexaholism] returns and we [lust] again. And with us, to [lust] is to die.”*

Then, on page 67, paragraph two, the authors instruct us to look at our part in each situation to see if we need to make an amends:

*“Referring to our list again. Putting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our own fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other man’s. When we saw our faults we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.”*

Let’s look at the third sentence again. It reads, “Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?” These behaviors are based on self-will. In addition, they are

the opposites of the Four Standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness, and Love, which is used as a test for God's will.

Early on Bill W., Dr. Bob and many of the "Big Book" authors learned to test everything they thought, said or did. Now, they are asking us to do the same thing—test our actions. We need to know which path we're on. Are we living in the solution and "walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe," or are we living in the problem and sinking deeper and deeper into "that bitter morass of self pity?" It is our selfishness and self-centeredness that keeps us blocked from the "One who has all power" and prevents us from finding the spiritual solution to our difficulties.

We can use either the S.A. test for self-will or the Four Standards as a test for God's will to determine if we need to make an amends:

S.A. Test for self-will

Selfish(ness)  
Dishonest(y)  
Self-seeking  
Frightened (or Fear)

Test for God's will

Unselfishness  
Honesty  
Purity  
Love

Concerning our resentments, the "Big Book" authors provide us with specific instructions on what to do. We must get beyond them if we "expect to live long or happily in this world."

In the third paragraph on page 66, the authors explain that when we hold onto grudges, we are actually allowing others to control our lives.

*"We turned back to our list, for it held the key to the future. We were prepared to look at it from an entirely different angle. We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrong-doing of others, fancied or real, had power to actually kill. How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than [lust]."*

If we don't deal with our resentments, the future will just be a repeat of the past. Every time we are reminded of an old hurt, the old pain returns and we feel it again and again. In the past we may have used lust to numb this pain, but now we are going to take actions to eliminate this pain.

The first thing we do is talk about our resentments with our sponsor or sharing partner. Healing starts with sharing the hurt. But, the healing is not complete until we forgive those who have offended us. We overcome resentment with forgiveness. Therefore, forgiveness is the asset that corresponds to the liability of resentment.

We must change our attitude about the experience. We do this by seeing the source of our pain in a new light. We see the person as a sick individual who needs our prayers, not our anger. Whether it is a person who is still in our lives, someone who has passed on, someone we may never see again, or ourselves, the process is the same. Starting with the first line on page 67, the "Big Book" authors write:

## Back to Basics

*"Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too. We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves, "This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done."*

*"We avoid retaliation or argument. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. We cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one."*

Next, the authors ask us to look at our fears. At the top of page 68, they write:

*"We reviewed our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them. We asked ourselves why we had them. Wasn't it because self-reliance failed us? Self-reliance was good as far as it went, but it didn't go far enough. Some of us once had great self-confidence, but it didn't fully solve the fear problem, or any other."*

If we have faith that God will keep us safe and protected, we will receive the strength and direction to overcome all of our fears. We overcome fear with faith. Therefore, according to the "Big Book" authors, faith is the asset that corresponds to the liability of fear.

In the second paragraph on page 68, they inform us that we will lose our fears if we trust our Creator. If we act according to God's will rather than according to self-will, "great events will come to pass:"

*"Perhaps there is a better way—we think so. For we are now on a different basis; the basis of trusting and relying on God. We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. We are in the world to play the role He assigns. Just to the extent that we do as we think He would have us, and humbly rely on Him, does He enable us to match calamity with serenity."*

*"We never apologize to anyone for depending upon our Creator. We can laugh at those who think spirituality the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All men of faith have courage. They trust their God. We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him demonstrate, through us, what He can do. We ask Him to remove our fear and direct our attention to what He would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear."*

In the middle of page 69, paragraph one, the authors mention six additional shortcomings we need to address. They also ask us to make a list of those we have harmed. This will become our amends list—the people to whom we need to make restitution:

*"We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness? Where were we at*

*fault, what should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it.”*

According to the “Big Book” authors, the additional shortcomings we inventory are **SELFISHNESS, DISHONESTY, INCONSIDERATION, JEALOUSY, SUSPICION**, and **BITTERNESS**. For clarity, we have substituted **FALSE PRIDE** for **INCONSIDERATION**, **ENVY** for **SUSPICION** and **LAZINESS** for **BITTERNESS**.

So much for the liabilities side of the ledger. Now, what about the assets?

The “Big Book” authors list assets throughout Chapter 5. We’ve already presented passages that refer to the assets of **FOREGIVENESS** and **FAITH**, which are the opposites of **RESENTMENT** and **FEAR**.

Additional assets listed in the “Big Book” and the June 1946 issue of *The A.A. Grapevine* are **UNSELFISHNESS, HONESTY, HUMILITY, TRUST, CONTENTMENT**, and **ACTION**.

We have now looked at both sides of the ledger. Our inventory consists of a list of liabilities to watch for and assets to strive for.

We have completed our presentation of the Fourth Step, but before we end this session, we need to consider one more detail—the person or persons with whom we share our inventory.



Step Five reads: **“Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.”**

According to the “Big Book” authors, we must discuss our “problems and deficiencies” with at least one other person. This individual can be the member of S.A. who is “sponsoring” you through these sessions, but it doesn’t have to be. The “Big Book” authors provide us other options.

Starting with the fourth paragraph on page 73, they give us directions on how to choose the person or persons with whom we share our inventory. Our sponsor or sharing partner may assist us in putting our checklist together, but we may feel more comfortable sharing the intimate details with a third party. The “Big Book” authors provide us with guidelines regarding the individual or individuals with whom we review our shortcomings:

*“We must be entirely honest with somebody if we expect to live long or happily in this world. Rightly and naturally, we think well before we choose the person or persons with whom to take this intimate and confidential step. Those of us belonging to a religious denomination which requires confession must, and of course, will want to go to the properly appointed authority whose duty it is to receive it. Though we have no religious connection, we may still do well to talk with someone ordained by an established religion...”*

*“If we cannot or would rather not do this, we search our acquaintance for a close-mouthed, understanding friend. Perhaps our doctor or psychologist will be the person.”*

Therefore, you can share your inventory with any number of people. For those who are still uncertain who that person should be, have your sponsor help you decide.

So, we’ve explained what needs to be inventoried, who does the writing, and the person or persons with whom we share our checklist. Now we are going to provide you with an example to illustrate the inventory process.

We have a one-page checklist for you to use. It has the liabilities on the left side and the assets on the right side of the sheet, which is the same format used in the June 1946 issue of *The A.A. Grapevine*.

In our example, the sponsor or sharing partner does the writing. The first thing he or she does is fold the checklist so the assets are hidden from view.

Then, the sponsor or sharing partner starts asking the newcomer about his or her resentments. As the newcomer talks about his or her “grudge list,” the sponsor or sharing partner writes that person into the resentment space on the checklist. It is usually best to leave these descriptions short and vague rather than use names: “dad,” “mom,” “wife,” ex-wife,” “boss,” “co-worker,” “friend,” etc.

Keep in mind that it is not necessary to list every resentment the newcomer has ever had in order for the inventory to be thorough. The objective is to get “to causes and conditions” and “get rid of them promptly and without regret.” Sometimes it takes only a few incidents

to make clear that RESENTMENT has been blocking the newcomer from an intimate, two-way relationship with the “One who has all power.” Besides, it is more productive to take a few resentments through the entire inventory and restitution process than to list so many resentments that the newcomer becomes overwhelmed.

It is the pain associated with this “fact-finding and fact-facing process” that must be relieved as quickly as possible. Once the newcomer develops confidence and conviction that this course of action will reduce the “terror, bewilderment, frustration, (and) despair” associated with living on self-will, he or she will be much more inclined to doing additional inventory work in the near future.

Next, the sponsor or sharing partner asks the newcomer to describe the reason why he or she is angry and to look at his or her part in each situation. If they both agree that the newcomer needs to make an amends, the sponsor puts a mark (a circle, a checkmark, an x, etc.) on that person’s name.

After the sponsor or sharing partner has compiled the resentment list, he or she moves on to the fear inventory by asking “who or what are you afraid of right now?” Often fears include people and institutions.

Then the newcomer describes the events surrounding each fearful episode. Once again, the sponsor or sharing partner asks the newcomer to look at his or her part in each situation. If they both agree that the newcomer needs to make an amends, the sponsor puts a mark (a circle, a checkmark, an x, etc.) on that person’s name.

After compiling the RESENTMENT and FEAR checklists, the sponsor or sharing partner asks the newcomer to consider the remaining items on the liabilities side of the sheet. He or she asks, “Toward whom have you been SELFISH?” “Where have you been DISHONEST?” “What about FALSE PRIDE, feeling better than or less than someone else?” “Are you JEALOUS of any relationship?” “Do you ENVY anyone’s possessions?” “Where have you been LAZY?” As each incident comes up, the sponsor or sharing partner adds the name to the list and, if an amends is agreed upon, he or she puts marks in the appropriate boxes.

After completing the liabilities side of the checklist, the sponsor or sharing partner unfolds the sheet so that together they can look at the assets side of the ledger. The assets opposite the liabilities with the LEAST marks are the positive characteristics that the newcomer already has. Those assets opposite the liabilities with the MOST marks are the qualities that will be strengthened as the newcomer makes the necessary amends.

In our example, the sponsor or sharing partner and the newcomer have put together a list with only a few entries for FALSE PRIDE, JEALOUSY, and ENVY and numerous entries for RESENTMENT, FEAR, SELFISHNESS, DISHONESTY, and LAZINESS.

The sponsor or sharing partner summarizes the session by saying, “this inventory shows that, for the most part you are HUMBLE, TRUSTING, and CONTENT. In addition, you will become more FORGIVING, UNSELFISH, and increase in FAITH and ACTION as you make amends for your resentments, fears, selfishness, dishonesty, and laziness.



## Back to Basics

We look at assets as well as liabilities because many of us have lost much of our self-esteem and self-worth as the result of our sexaholism. Even though we've done some pretty foolish and destructive things because of our lust, we will never have to repeat those actions again, provided we are willing to admit our faults and try to correct them. If we are genuinely sorry, God has already forgiven us. Now, it is time to forgive ourselves.

The "Big Book" authors tell us this at the top of page 70. Starting with line four in the first paragraph, they write:

*"If we are sorry for what we have done, and have the honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven and will have learned our lesson. If we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to [lust]. We are not theorizing. These are facts out of our experience."*

So, it is time to make a searching and fearless moral inventory—time to clean up the wreckage of the past so we can experience the "miracle of healing." We have copies of the assets and liabilities checklist for anyone who would like to use this format for their Fourth Step inventory.

If any of you have doubts about the value of the Fourth Step, let us read to you what the "Big Book" authors have to say. At the bottom of page 70, paragraph four, they make it clear that God will take away all our difficulties, if we let God:

*"In this book you read again and again that faith did for us what we could not do for ourselves. We hope you are convinced now that God can remove whatever self-will has blocked you off from Him."*

Please let God guide you through the inventory process. If you do, you'll find the Fourth and Fifth Steps simple and straight forward. Just take the time to complete one of the checklists, either by yourself or with your sponsor or sharing partner. Then share your list with another person.

As we have already said, there is no right or wrong way to do the Fourth and Fifth Steps. Just do them.

Are there any questions?

[Please remain seated. We will close this meeting as they did in the 1940s: with a moment of silence followed by the Lord's Prayer.]

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

Sexaholics Anonymous

Notes and Questions

### **Session #3 — Steps 5, 6, 7, 8 & 9**

This is the third in a series of four Sexaholics Anonymous Beginners' Meetings. We're pretending that it's the fall of 1946, and we are attending A.A. meetings in which newcomers are taking the Twelve Steps in four one-hour sessions.

For those of you who are planning to lead a Beginners' Meeting, we want to assure you that there are no hard-and-fast "rules" on how to do it. Our format is based on written and oral histories of A.A. oldtimers who attended and led these meetings throughout the United States and Canada in the 1940s. Please feel free to modify or adapt our approach to your specific needs, but keep in mind the closer you stay to the "original" program the closer you'll get to the extraordinary success of A.A.'s early days.

Let's begin by asking God for humility with the Set Aside Prayer (derived from pages 47 and 48):

**"Dear God, please set aside anything I think I know about myself, my disease, the 12 Steps, and especially you God; so that I may have an open mind and a new experience with all these things. Please help me see the Truth. Amen."**

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**WELCOME** to the third session of the S.A. Beginners' Meetings. Together, we're taking the Twelve Steps as described in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. Our objective is to make conscious contact with the Power greater than human power that will free us from the deadly affliction of sexaholism.

Our names are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and we are members of Sexaholics Anonymous. We're here to guide you in your journey toward a spiritual solution to your lust problem.

In the last two weeks, we have taken steps One through Four. Hopefully during the past week each newcomer has taken the Fifth Step with his or her sponsor or sharing partner.

*(Optional: Are there any newcomers here without their "sponsor?" If so, please stand. We will assign a sponsor to each of you who needs one. [Ask for volunteers to sponsor those who are standing.] Thank you. Please be seated.)*

Let's see how many are still on track—"on the beam" as some of us like to say. Will all who have shared a Fourth Step inventory with another person or persons, please stand.

We congratulate you for having the honesty, open mindedness, and willingness to do what is necessary to recover from sexaholism.

You are well on your way to that promised spiritual awakening. We want you to know that everything you read and hear today is for your benefit. You've done the work—now you will receive the rewards. Thank you. Please be seated.

As we said last week, we don't care who did the writing, just as long as you and your sponsor came up with a list of character defects and a list of individuals and organizations to whom you need to make your amends. You will turn over your shortcomings to the God

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of your understanding in Steps Six and Seven and you will make restitution to those whom you've harmed in Steps Eight and Nine.

We are now entering the phase of the program where more and more actions are required. These actions produce results. Many of these results are in the form of promises which, as our lives change, become an integral part of our spiritual being.

If our lives didn't get better, why would we want to stay sober? If all we had to look forward to was restlessness, irritability and discontentment, why do the work? S.A. offers so much more than just freedom from lust. We have found a new way of living far more beautiful than anything we could have imagined. That's why we take the Steps, and that's why we take them again and again

Before we move on to Steps Six, Seven, Eight, and Nine, let's review what the "Big book" authors have to say about the Fifth Step. This is the Step during which God reveals to us, with the help of another person, the shortcomings that have been blocking us from the "sunlight of the spirit."

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

On Page 72, in the middle of the second paragraph, the “Big Book” authors tell us why we need to admit our shortcomings to another person. Starting with the ninth line in the second paragraph, they state:

*“...The best reason first: If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome [lust]. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience, they have turned to easier methods. Almost invariably they returned to [lust]. Having persevered with the rest of the program, they wondered why they fell. We think the reason is that they never completed their house cleaning. They took inventory all right, but hung on to some of the worst items in stock. They only thought they had lost their egoism and fear; they only thought they had humbled themselves. But they had not learned enough of humility, fearlessness, and honesty, in the sense we find it necessary, until they told someone else all their life story.”*

Once again, the “Big Book” authors instruct us to take “stock,” in other words, to conduct a commercial inventory of our life. They ask us to look at the assets of HUMILITY, FEARLESSNESS, and HONESTY and the liabilities of EGOISM and FEAR.

We share our inventory because we are great at self deception. Aren’t we the ones who used to say we didn’t have a problem with lust? Didn’t we tell ourselves over and over that we were doing fine as we were sinking deeper and deeper into the abyss of sexaholism?

Since we’re not good judges of character, especially our own, we confide in someone else. Only another person can see us as we really are.

As explained last week, we can share our checklist with any number of people. Some of those mentioned on page 74 of the “Big Book” are church leaders, doctors, psychologists, and friends.

The person we choose has to be closemouthed, trustworthy and supportive. He or she must never discuss our inventory with anyone else. Starting with the seventh line in the last paragraph on page 74, the “Big Book” authors write:

*“...It is important that he be able to keep a confidence; that he fully understand and approve what we are driving at; that he will not try to change our plan.”*

The “Big Book” authors give us specific instructions for taking the Fifth Step. At the top of page 75, they tell us that, as soon as we decide who is to listen to our inventory, we take action immediately:

*“When we decide who is to hear our story, we waste no time. We have a written inventory and we are prepared for a long talk. We explain to our partner what we are about to do and why we have to do it. He should realize that we are engaged upon a life-and-death errand. Most people*

*approached this way will be glad to help; they will be honored by our confidence.”*

In the second paragraph on page 75, the “Big Book” authors provide us with more directions:

*“We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past.”*

Then, they announce that once we admit our shortcomings, our lives will change. We begin to experience a “transformation of thought and attitude.” On page 75, starting with the second line in the second paragraph, they describe some of these changes:

*“...Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual experience. The feeling that the [lust] problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.”*

We are now well on our way toward recovering from sexaholism. The “Big Book” authors state we are in the process of having a spiritual experience and as a result, our obsession to lust is being removed.

It is now time to ask the God of our understanding to remove the blocks we identified in Steps Four and Five. Let’s proceed to the Sixth Step.

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

In Step Six, the “Big Book” authors have us answer a simple question. Starting with line three in the first paragraph on page 76, they ask:

*“...Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can He now take them all—every one? If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.”*

So, according to the “Big Book” authors, it is decision time once again. We realize they want you to take your Sixth Step on the same evening you share your Fourth Step with your “sponsor.” In case your sponsor didn’t direct you to page 76 of the “Big Book,” we’ll take you through the Sixth Step now. If you have already taken the Sixth Step, we ask that you take it again now with the Group.

During the Fifth Step, we identified our liabilities using one of the checklists we discussed last week. In Step Six, we make the preparations necessary to turn these shortcomings over to the God of our understanding.

Let’s start with a moment of silence so we can ask God to remove the liabilities that we found were blocking us when we shared our inventory. These are the items on the left side of our assets and liabilities checklist that have entries next to them. If we are still holding on to some of these shortcomings, we pray for the willingness to let go of them.  
(Observe one to two minutes of silence)

Now, will those who have taken the Fifth Step please stand. This is the Sixth Step question:

**“Are you now ready to have God remove from you all the things which you have admitted are objectionable?”**

Please answer, one at a time, yes or no. After you have answered, please be seated.

[Have each newcomer answer the question.]

Thank you.

According to the “Big Book” authors, those who answered “yes” to this question have taken Step Six and are ready to proceed to the Seventh Step.



## **Step 7 Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.**

This step is straightforward. It consists of a prayer in which we ask God to remove our liabilities and strengthen our assets so we can be of maximum service to all.

The prayer is found in the second paragraph on page 76. It reads :

***“...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 the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.”***

We would like each of you who is ready to take the Seventh Step to read the prayer along with us a second time.

Let's read the Seventh Step Prayer together.

[Read the prayer a second time.]

According to the “Big Book” authors, we have taken Step Seven.

Now, it is time to clear away the wreckage of our past. We do this by making amends or restitution.

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

The “Big Book” authors state, “made a list.” Do we need to make this list? Actually, no! We made our list as part of our Fourth Step. In the middle of page 76, paragraph three, the “Big Book” authors confirm this:

*“Now we need more action, without which we find that ‘Faith without works is dead.’ Let’s look at Steps Eight and Nine. We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory.”*

That’s why we hold onto our Fourth Step inventory. It contains our Eighth Step amends list. Referring to our assets and liabilities checklist, our amends are the names written in to it.

We congratulate those who came up with a list of individuals and organizations to whom you are willing to make amends. According to the “Big Book” authors, you have taken Step Eight.

Let’s move on to Step Nine.

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

The amends process is explained in detail on pages 76 through 83. In these pages four types of amends are described. They are direct amends, living amends, amends-in-kind, and amends to those who cannot be seen. On page 76, starting with the sixth line in the third paragraph, the “Big Book” authors tell us what to do:

*“...Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven’t the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning we would go to any lengths for victory over [lust].”*

We may be hesitant to make amends to those who are still upset with us or suspicious of our motives. In the fourth paragraph on page 76, the “Big Book” authors provide us with guidelines on how to approach some of those to whom we owe an amends:

*“Probably there are still some misgivings. As we look over the list of business acquaintances and friends we have hurt, we may feel diffident about going to some of them on a spiritual basis. Let us be reassured. To some people we need not, and probably should not emphasize the spiritual feature on our first approach. We might prejudice them. At the moment we are trying to put our lives in order. But this is not an end in itself. Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us.”*

In the last sentence of this paragraph, the authors clearly state our purpose for living. They tell us why we are here—to serve God and our fellows.

Then, on page 77, they ask us to let our actions, rather than our words, demonstrate that we have changed. Starting with line four, they write:

*“...It is seldom wise to approach an individual, who still smarts from our injustice to him, and announce that we have gone religious. In the prize ring, this would be called leading with the chin. Why lay ourselves open to being branded fanatics or religious bores? We may kill a future opportunity to carry a beneficial message. But our man is sure to be impressed with a sincere desire to set right the wrong. He is going to be more interested in our demonstration of good will than our talk of spiritual discoveries.”*

One of the most difficult amends to make is to someone we genuinely don’t like. But, whether we like them or not, we must proceed. In the first paragraph on page 77, starting with the ninth line, we find:

*“...Nevertheless, with a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. It is harder to go to an enemy than to a friend, but we find it much more beneficial to us. We go to him in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.”*

## Back to Basics

In the next paragraph, paragraph two, on page 77, the authors even provide us with instructions on what to say when we are making a direct amends:

*“Under no conditions do we criticize such a person or argue. Simply we tell him that we will never get over [our troubles] until we have done our utmost to straighten out the past. We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that nothing worthwhile can be accomplished until we do so, never trying to tell him what he should do. His faults are not discussed. We stick to our own. If our manner is calm, frank, and open, we will be gratified with the result.”*

The authors make it clear what we are to do about our debts, which is to pay them. This is another form of direct amends. We may not like the sacrifice required to make good on our bills, but sacrifice we must. The process forces us to rely on God for the strength and courage to make good on “past misdeeds” which takes us out of self-will and into God’s will. Under God’s direction, we find it much easier to make restitution than we ever thought possible. In the middle of page 78, paragraph two, they write:

*“Most [sexaholics] owe money. We do not dodge our creditors. Telling them what we are trying to do, we make no bones about our [troubles]; they usually know it anyway, whether we think so or not. Nor are we afraid of disclosing our [troubles] on the theory it may cause financial harm. Approached in this way, the most ruthless creditor will sometimes surprise us. Arranging the best deal we can we let these people know we are sorry. Our [self-will] has made us slow to pay. We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to [lust] if we are afraid to face them.”*

Keep in mind that courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is facing the fear and walking through it.

Then on top of page 79, paragraph two, the “Big Book” authors again instruct us to let the God of our understanding be our guide. This reliance upon God is essential, if we are to outgrow the fears that have separated us from the “One who has all power”:

*“Although these reparations take innumerable forms, there are some general principles which we find guiding. Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything.”*

The “Big Book” authors suggest we ask others for help before we make some of our more difficult amends. We need direction, preferably from someone who understands the inventory and restitution process. At the top of page 80, they caution us not to create further harm as we clean up our side of the street:

*“Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people, we secure their consent. If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked God to help and the drastic step is indicated, we must not shrink.”*

## Sexaholics Anonymous

In the first paragraph on page 82, we are yet again advised to seek God's aid as we make good on our past misdeeds:

*"Perhaps there are some cases where the utmost frankness is demanded. No outsider can appraise such an intimate situation. It may be that both will decide that the way of good sense and loving kindness is to let by-gones be by-gones. Each might pray about it, having the other one's happiness uppermost in mind."*

This is an example of how we must be tactful and considerate of others, as we make our amends. Nobody said it would be easy—it just has to be done.

An amends-in-kind is described on page 82, paragraph one:

*"Good generalship may decide that the problem should be attacked on the flank rather than risk...face-to-face combat."*

An amends-in-kind is often used when a direct amends would cause further injury to the person injured or others. It involves making restitution to people in a similar situation or circumstances as those originally injured. Some examples might include taking a Beginner's Meeting into a halfway house or prison; supporting the SA Correctional Facilities Committee; volunteering at a homeless shelter; making contributions to organizations that combat human trafficking or that assist people to exit the sex industry; or by taking on a service position in a 12-Step home group.

On page 82 of the "Big Book," starting with the second line in paragraph two, the "Big Book" authors emphatically state that **STOPPING LUST IS ONLY THE BEGINNING**. We must take additional actions if we are to recover from sexaholism, these actions are the basis of our living amends:

*"...Sometimes we hear a [sexaholic] say that the only thing he needs to do is to keep sober. Certainly he must keep sober, for there will be no home if he doesn't. But he is yet a long way from making good to the wife or parents whom for years he has so shockingly treated..."*

*"The [sexaholic] is like a tornado roaring his way through the lives of others. Hearts are broken. Sweet relationships are dead. Affections have been uprooted. Selfish and inconsiderate habits have kept the home in turmoil. We feel a man is unthinking when he says that sobriety is enough."*

This idea is echoed in SA's sobriety definition (S.A. p. 191), which makes it clear that sobriety **MUST** include progressive victory over lust:

*"For the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. In SA's sobriety definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and a woman. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, **sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust.**"*

**NOT LUSTING IS NOT ENOUGH.** The “Big Book” authors make that perfectly clear. At the top of page 83, they write:

*“Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead. A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won’t fill the bill at all. We ought to sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past as we now see it, being very careful not to criticize them. Their defects may be glaring, but the chances are that our own actions are partly responsible. So we clean house with the family, asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.”*

*“The spiritual life is not a theory. We have to live it.”*

So, in our living amends we practice “patience, tolerance, kindness, and love” in all our affairs. This is one of the greatest amends we can make to family and friends. As the “Big Book” authors write, “our behavior will convince them more than our words.” Here we’re told that, in order to recover from sexaholism, we have to live the S.A. program. So, we don’t just take the Steps, we live the Steps, on a daily basis.

Then further down on page 83, paragraph three, the authors give us directions on what to do if we can’t make amends to someone face-to-face:

*“There may be some wrongs we can never fully right. We don’t worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could. Some people cannot be seen—we send them an honest letter.”*

The authors conclude the Ninth Step with another list of benefits. Starting at the bottom of page 83, paragraph four, they tell us precisely what is going to happen once we commence to clear away the wreckage of our past. They describe these benefits as promises. The “Big Book” is filled with promises. These are just a few of them:

*“If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.”*

*“Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them.”*

What a message of hope! It is almost beyond comprehension that all of these wonderful events will **“come to pass”** if we just make amends to those whom we have harmed. But, they will happen—that’s a guarantee.

Dr. Bob, our Akron, Ohio, co-founder, learned that he could not stay sober until he made his amends. He accomplished this in one day. At the top of page 156, we read about Dr. Bob's Ninth Step:

*"One morning he took the bull by the horns and set out to tell those he feared what his trouble had been. He found himself surprisingly well received, and learned that many knew of his drinking. Stepping into his car, he made the rounds of people he had hurt. He trembled as he went about, for this might mean ruin, particularly to a person in his line of business."*

*"At midnight he came home exhausted, but very happy. He has not had a drink since."*

This concludes our discussion of Step Nine. For the newcomers, part of your assignment for the next week is to start making amends to those on your list. If you are not sure how to proceed with a specific amends, ask your sponsor or sharing partner for help.

Our next session we will take Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve. Before we end this session, we want to lay the groundwork for the Eleventh Step. This is the Step that puts us directly in contact with the spiritual solution to our lust problem.



Step Eleven 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.”**

Many S.A.s refer to **“prayer and meditation”** as two-way prayer. Prayer is talking to God, and meditation is listening to God. We listen in order to receive guidance from the One **“who has all knowledge and power.”**

The “Big Book” authors have been preparing us for this conscious contact with the God of our understanding by interspersing references about two-way prayer throughout the book. So, before we look ahead to the Eleventh Step, we’re going to look back to some of the previous “Big Book” references to guidance.

Let’s start by defining the word, “guidance.” The dictionary tells us that “to guide” means to lead, direct, influence, or regulate. Two synonyms are “to disclose” and “to show.”

When we look in the “Big Book” for passages that refer to guidance, we find there are at least eighteen of them. We just read one of them a few minutes ago. Let’s go back to page 83 and reexamine the last sentence in the first paragraph:

*“...So we clean house with the family, asking each morning in meditation that our Creator **SHOW** us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.”*

In this passage, the “Big Book” authors instruct us to conduct a daily “quiet time.” It is during this period of meditation that God will **SHOW** us—in other words, God will guide us—to a new way of living based on the assets of **PATIENCE, TOLERANCE, KINDLINESS and LOVE.**

There are many more references to guidance, starting all the way back at the First Step. We’re only going to mention a few of them.

On page 13 in “Bill’s Story,” our co-founder talks about “prayer and meditation.” Starting with the third line in the fourth paragraph, Bill explains:

*“...I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for **DIRECTION** and strength to meet my problems as He would have me.”*

When we ask God for **DIRECTION** and strength, we are calling upon the “Spirit of the Universe” for the guidance and power to overcome our difficulties. In other words, “When God guides, God provides.”

It is essential that we “sit quietly,” especially during periods of stress or uncertainty, so we can clearly hear what God has to say. Meditation is based on the belief that God speaks to those who are willing to listen. We write down the thoughts and ideas we receive so we can separate and take action on the guidance that comes from “infinite God rather than our finite selves.”

How do we determine the source of our guidance? We use the test we described last week, which is the S.A. test for self-will. The “Big Book” authors show us how to use this test

three times. In the Fourth Step we apply the test in connection with our assets and liabilities checklist to determine if we need to make amends. We also use this test in our Tenth and Eleventh Steps.

Let's look again at how the authors use the S.A. test for self-will in the Fourth Step:

**S.A. Test for self-will**

Selfish(ness)  
Dishonest(y)  
Self-seeking  
Frightened

**Test for God's will**

Unselfishness  
Honesty  
Purity  
Love

We use essentially the same test to examine what we put on paper during our "quiet time." If what we have written is honest, pure, unselfish AND loving, we can conclude that this guidance is in keeping with God's will for us. If what we have written is dishonest, resentful, selfish OR fearful, we can assume this guidance is based on self-will rather than God's will. We take action only on the guidance that passes all four elements of the test for God's will.

On page 57, starting with the third line in the second paragraph, the "Big Book" authors state that God "is constantly being revealed" to us:

*"...He has come to all who have honestly sought Him."*

*"When we drew near to Him, He DISCLOSED Himself to us!"*

When we seek God's guidance, we find a "new power, peace, happiness and...direction" beyond our wildest dreams. As we will learn next week, our Creator speaks directly to us through "inspiration, an intuitive thought, or a decision."

At the bottom of page 69, we find yet another reference to two-way prayer: Starting with the sixth line in the third paragraph, the "Big Book" authors write:

*"...In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. The right answer will come, if we want it."*

When we ask specific questions, we receive specific answers. In the second paragraph on page 70, we are told what to ask for:

*"...We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for GUIDANCE in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing."*

These are just a few examples from the "Big Book" on prayer and meditation. They are sufficient to get us started. We now know what we need to do in order to live in the "realm of the Spirit."

We're going to provide you with some additional material on how to establish a conscious contact with God. In the late 1930's, a member of the Oxford Group and friend of Dr. Bob wrote a short essay titled, How to Listen to God. It is one of the clearest set of instructions we have found on how to practice the Eleventh Step.

## Back to Basics

We will briefly take you through this four page pamphlet. It contains universal spiritual principles that can be applied by “anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life.” We suggest you conduct your daily morning meditation based on these guidelines. Next session, let us know what happened.

In the opening paragraphs, The Oxford Group author states that “prayer and meditation” will change our lives:

*“These are a few simple suggestions for people who are willing to make an experiment. You can discover for yourself the most important and practical thing any human being can ever learn—how to be in touch with God.*

*All that is needed is the willingness to try it honestly. Every person who has done this consistently and sincerely has found that it really works.”*

We have found that two-way prayer “works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it.” With time and practice, it will “gradually become a working part of the mind.” At the bottom of the first page, the author provides us with directions for conducting a “quiet time”:

*“Anyone can be in touch with God, anywhere and at any time, if the conditions are obeyed.*

*“These are the conditions:*

- to be quiet and still;*
- to listen;*
- to be honest about every thought that comes;*
- to test the thoughts to be sure they come from God;*
- to obey.”*

Within the remaining pages of the pamphlet, the author explains each of these conditions in detail. In the middle of the second page, he encourages us to record our thoughts and ideas:

*Write!*

*“Here is the important key to the whole process. Write down everything that comes into your mind. Everything. Writing is simply a means of recording so that you can remember later.”*

On the third page, he explains how to distinguish between God directed and self-directed guidance:

*Test*

*“...Take a good look at what you have written. Not every thought we have comes from God. So we need to test our thoughts. Here is where the written record helps us to be able to look at them.*

- a) Are they completely honest-pure-unselfish-loving?*
- b) Are they in line with our duties-to our family-to our country?*
- c) Are they in line with our understanding of the teachings found in our spiritual literature?”*

The author of the pamphlet tells us to test our guidance using the Four Standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness and Love. This test will help us determine if what we have written is consistent with God's will or self-will.

Next, the author instructs us to check what we have put on paper. Here is where your sponsor or sharing partner can be very helpful.

#### *Check*

*"When in doubt and when it is important, what does another person who is living two-way prayer think about this thought or action? More light comes in through two windows than one. Someone else who also wants God's plan for our lives may help us see more clearly."*

*"Talk over together what you have written. Many people do this. They tell each other what guidance has come. This is the secret of unity. There are always three sides to every question—your side, my side, and the right side. Guidance shows us which is the right side—not who is right, but what is right."*

Then the author explains what, to many of us, is the most difficult part of all:

#### *Obey*

*"Carry out the thoughts that have come. You will only be sure of guidance as you go through with it. A rudder will not guide a boat until the boat is moving. As you obey, very often the results will convince you that you are on the right track."*

Remember, our Creator has given us free will—we're free **not** to listen to the God directed messages we receive. But, we must be prepared to accept the consequences if we choose not to follow God's plan for our lives.

If we don't receive any definite thoughts or ideas during our meditation, this is a sign we have additional work to do. There may still be "things in ourselves which (have) been blocking us":

#### *Blocks*

*"If I am not receiving thoughts when I listen, the fault is not God's.*

*Usually it is because there is something I will not do:*

- *something wrong in my life that I will not face and make right;*
- *a habit or indulgence I will not give up;*
- *a person I will not forgive;*
- *a wrong relationship in my life I will not give up;*
- *a restitution I will not make;*
- *something God has already told me to do that I will not obey."*

## Back to Basics

Look this list over. Most of these items are described in the “Big Book” as part of our inventory and restitution process. If we have been thorough and honest in Steps Four through Nine, we will have removed the blocks that have prevented us from establishing and maintaining a two-way relationship with the God of our understanding.

So, you have two assignments for this week. Start making amends to those whom you have harmed and start practicing “prayer and meditation” on a daily basis. Write down your guidance and discuss it with your sponsor or sharing partner. Also bring it with you to the next meeting.

As for the results, they are summarized near the end of the “How to Listen to God” pamphlet.

*“There is a way of life, for everyone, everywhere. Anyone can be in touch with the living God, anywhere, anytime, if we fulfill [God’s] conditions.”*

*When man listens, God speaks*

*When man obeys, God acts*

*This is the law of prayer.”*

By making amends, you will convert the barriers that have separated you from others to bridges of reconciliation. By listening to the God of your understanding, you will be given the “strength, inspiration, and direction” to change lives, starting with your own. Miracles are about to occur, and we look forward to hearing about them next session.

Are there any questions?

[Please remain seated. We will close this meeting as they did in the 1940s: with a moment of silence followed by the Lord’s Prayer.]

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## Notes and Questions



### **Session #4 – Steps 10, 11 & 12**

This is our fourth session back to the fall of 1946 and the A.A. Beginners' Meetings. During this session we will spend much of our time sharing the results of our two-way communication with the God of our understanding. We will experience the "psychic change" that occurs as we move from a "life run on self-will" to a life guided by "the vision of God's will."

We have demystified the Twelve Steps and shown you just how simple this program truly is. For those of you who will be completing your Steps today, we congratulate you for your efforts and we welcome you to the "sunlight of the Spirit."

Please remember that, in order to remain spiritually fit, we must be of service to other sexaholics. We can think of no greater service than helping others through the Twelve Steps so that they too, can find the spiritual solution to their lust problem.

It is important to remember that recovery is an ongoing process. We don't just take the Steps once and then "rest on our laurels." Remember, "lust is a subtle foe." We must repeat the process again and again in order to "keep in fit spiritual condition."

So please, come back for the next series of Beginners' Meetings. We are sure you will gain additional insight into the "Big Book" and continue to enhance your relationship with the "One who has all power."

As we continue our journey, let's again ask God for humility by saying the Set Aside Prayer (derived from pages 47 and 48):

**"Dear God, please set aside anything I think I know about myself, my disease, the 12 Steps, and especially you God; so that I may have an open mind and a new experience with all these things. Please help me see the Truth. Amen."**

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**WELCOME** to the fourth of the one-hour S.A. Beginners' Meetings. This is the payoff. This is what we have been waiting for—to recover from the seemingly hopeless state of mind and body known as sexaholism. By completing the Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous, you will experience the spiritual awakening that will change your life forever.

Our names are \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ and we are members of Sexaholics Anonymous. It is a pleasure to be a part of this life changing process—to watch people grow spiritually right before our very eyes.

Let's see who's ready to be rocketed into the "fourth dimension of existence" that the "Big Book" authors write about. Will all who have taken Steps One through Eight and are working on their Ninth Step amends, please stand.

Thank you. Please be seated. Some of you may not realize it yet, but you are in the process of experiencing the "personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from sexaholism."



We commend you for choosing to let the God of your understanding direct your lives. Now it is time to expand upon this new God-consciousness. We do this by living Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve on a daily basis.

The Tenth Step has us practice Steps Four through Nine on a regular basis. The Eleventh Step shows us how to improve our spiritual connection 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.

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

In Steps One through Three, we made the decisions that put us on the spiritual path. In Steps Four through Nine, we took the actions necessary to remove those things which had separated us from God. Now, we're ready to grow into the promised Spiritual Awakening.

The key to Step Ten is the word continue. In the middle of page 84, paragraph two, 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 the 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 a lifetime."*

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, and continue to help others every day.

Let's look at the third sentence in this paragraph again. It is very important. It reads, "We have entered the world of the Spirit."

This sentence contains an amazing revelation. Basically, the "Big Book" authors have just informed us that our lives have already transformed as a result of taking Steps One through Nine. They state that we have had a "revolutionary change in (our) way of living and thinking."

How could that be? Well, it's very simple. There is no way a newcomer can take these Steps without "divine help." You have not only developed a belief in a God of your understanding, but you have come to rely upon this Power to help you through the inventory and restitution process. You are now living in the solution. Some of you may not realize it yet, but the "psychic change" has already occurred.

One of the results of our psychic change is what the SA sobriety definition (Sexaholics Anonymous p. 191) refers to as progressive victory over lust:

*"For the married sexaholic, sexual sobriety means having no form of sex with self or with persons other than the spouse. In SA's sobriety definition, the term "spouse" refers to one's partner in a marriage between a man and*

*a woman. For the unmarried sexaholic, sexual sobriety means freedom from sex of any kind. And for all of us, single and married alike, **sexual sobriety also includes progressive victory over lust.***

Further down on page 84 in the “Big Book,” paragraph two, the authors summarize the process we use to remain spiritually connected:

*“...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.”*

In this paragraph, the “Big Book” authors present the S.A. test for self-will a second time. Earlier, we discussed how to use this test to check the liabilities side of our Fourth Step inventory to determine if we needed to make amends. In the Tenth Step, the authors advise us to apply the same test, with minor variations, to our daily inventory. Here, they instruct us “to watch for Selfishness, Dishonesty, Resentment and Fear.”

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

The “Big Book” authors affirm that if we follow this “course of action” on a daily basis, God will remove the obsession to lust. This is another of the many promises we find throughout the text of the book. At the bottom of page 84, paragraph three, they write:

*“And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even [lust]. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in [lust]. 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 toward [lust] has been given us without any effort on our part. It just comes! This 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. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.”*

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

The “Big Book” authors describe this daily reprieve in the middle of page 85, paragraph 1:

*“It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for [lust] is a subtle foe. We are not cured of [sexaholism]. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a*

*day when we must carry the vision of God's will into all of our activities.  
How can I best serve Thee—thy will (not mine) be done."*

Another reward is God Consciousness—direct contact with the "Spirit of the Universe." In the next paragraph on page 85, the "Big Book" authors tell us:

*"Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action."*

Once again, the authors insist that our lives have already changed. We are now "(conscious) of the Presence of God." As we continue with the recovery process, the "Power greater than ourselves" will guide our thoughts and actions and strengthen our intuition—our "vital sixth sense."

Now, it's time to find out who is ready to proceed. The directions for taking the Tenth Step are found in the second paragraph on page 84. Starting with line two, the "Big Book" authors write"

*"...we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along."*

Will those who taken the first Eight Steps and are working on their Ninth Step amends please stand. This is the Tenth Step question.

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

Please answer, one at a time, yes or no. After you have answered, please be seated.

[Have each newcomer answer the 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.

**Step 11 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, and then we will give everyone the opportunity to share the guidance they received while practicing the Eleventh Step during the past week.

The description of the Eleventh Step starts at the bottom of page 85, paragraph three, and extends through page 88. But, as we've already seen, the “Big Book” authors have been writing about two way prayer throughout the Book.

At the bottom of page 85, we find:

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

“Prayer and meditation” puts us directly in contact with the “Power greater than ourselves.” Hopefully, that's what each of us has been doing this past week—praying and listening to the source of “all knowledge and power.”

Then at the top of page 86, lines 2-4, they make the statement:

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

Then the “Big Book” authors provide step-by-step instructions on how to practice two-way prayer. They explain what we are to do at night, in the morning, and throughout the day.

At night, we review the day's activities. In the first paragraph on page 86, they ask us to use the S.A. test for self-will to judge our actions:

*“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?”*

This paragraph contains the third reference to the S.A. test for self-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 based on the Four Standards:

**S.A. Test for self-will**

Resentful  
Selfish(ness)  
Dishonest(y)  
Afraid (or Fear)

**Test for God's will**

Purity  
Unselfishness  
Honesty  
Love

We 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.”*

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 for a minute. 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, immediately 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 our next thoughts are going to be from God? What do we do with these thoughts and ideas? We write them down. Why? So we won’t forget them.

After putting our guidance on paper, we check it against the S.A. test for self-will. We do this because not everything we receive during our period of meditation comes from God. However, with time and practice we will begin to trust “our vital sixth sense.” Starting on the top of 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, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it.”*

In December 1934, Bill W. our New York City cofounder used the Four Standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness, and Love to check his guidance. In the fourth paragraph on page 13 of his story, Bill exclaims:

*“I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense.”*

For Bill, it was **“common sense”** to use alcohol to escape his problems, and **“uncommon sense”** to stay sober and let God guide him through his difficulties. Bill’s life changed as the direct result of listening to and following guidance.

In 1939, the “Big Book” authors gave us the opposites of the Four standards as a way to check what we think, say and do. As for our daily meditation, here’s how it works. When we finish our “quiet time,” we check what we have put on paper. If what we have written is Honest, Pure, Unselfish, **AND** Loving, we can be assured these thoughts or ideas are consistent with God’s will. Conversely, if what we have written is Dishonest, Resentful, Selfish **OR** Fearful, we can be equally assured these thoughts or ideas are consistent with self-will.

## Back to Basics

The authors indicate it is during our “quiet time” that our questions will be answered. In the third paragraph on page 86 they reveal how the One “who has all knowledge and power” is going to respond 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 a 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.”*

So, according to the “Big Book” authors, God is going to communicate with us through “inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision.” If the “inner resource” is going to supply us with “the right answers” wouldn’t it be a good idea to jot them down so we can review them from time to time?

We close our time of “prayer and meditation” by asking God to guide us throughout our daily activities. In the first paragraph on 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.”*

The authors then describe what we are to do anytime we become troubled or confused. We relax and wait for guidance. Starting with the third paragraph on page 87, they suggest that:

*“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.”*

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 or guidance? 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 need to take the actions necessary to reconnect us to the source of “all knowledge and power.”

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



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*"We [sexaholics] 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."*

In order for two-way prayer to be effective, we must constantly 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 ...direction."

We will conclude our discussion of the Eleventh Step with a moment of silence so each of us can make contact with the "Spirit of the Universe" and receive Divine guidance right now. At this time, we ask you to meditate and write down the guidance you receive during this "quiet time."

[observe two to three minutes of silence]

Thank you. At the end of last session we asked you to meditate during the week and write down the guidance that came to you. We realize these thoughts and ideas can be very personal and are normally discussed with your sponsor or sharing partner. However, if you believe what you have written passes the test for God's will and can be of benefit to others, we ask that you share it now with the group. In addition, you will be helping those who are still struggling with the Eleventh Step to see how "God will constantly disclose more to you and to us."

Who's willing to share what they have written either during the past week or during tonight's "quiet time"?

[For the next 10-15 minutes, have those who are practicing two-way prayer share their guidance.]

Thank you. Whether you shared guidance or listened to others share the guidance, you have taken Step Eleven. We can now proceed to the Twelfth Step.



**Step 12 Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other sexaholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.**

Now that we've made conscious contact with the God of our understanding, we have received the greatest gift of this program—a spiritual awakening. God is now guiding us in such a way that it is indeed miraculous.

This life changing experience comes suddenly to some, gradually to others. Let's see what else we can learn about this miraculous event. In Appendix II on page 567, we learn more about this amazing "transformation of thought and attitude."

This appendix was written after the publication of the first printing of the "Big Book" in 1939. In the first printing, the Twelfth Step read:

"Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps..."

In the two years between the first and second printings, the word "experience" was discussed at length. Eventually the word "experience" was replaced with the word "awakening." The "Big Book" authors made this modification in order to include those whose lives had truly changed but more slowly over a period of time.

Many of you will find this to be the case also. Your life has changed, but gradually rather than suddenly. You may not be able to point to a specific experience that brought about the change, but the spiritual awakening has occurred nonetheless.

At the top of page 567, the authors define "spiritual experience" and "spiritual awakening":

*"The terms "spiritual experience" and "spiritual awakening" are used many times in this book which, upon careful reading, shows that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from [sexaholism] has manifested itself among us in many different forms."*

*"Yet it is true our first printing gave many readers the impression that these personality changes, or religious experiences, must be in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals. Happily for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous."*

A spiritual awakening is nothing more than a psychic change that, among other things, removes our obsession to lust. So, Bill W.'s rapid conversion experience at Towns Hospital is the exception rather than the rule.

Further down on page 567, paragraph four, we find the description of a more gradual spiritual experience:

*"Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of [sexaholics] such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule. Most of our experiences are what the psychologist William James calls the "educational variety" because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before*

*he is himself. He finally realizes that he has undergone a profound alteration in his reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by himself alone. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves."*

Let's look at the fifth sentence again. It reads, "what often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline." The "Big Book authors make it clear that, if you take the Steps and then help others through them, you will recover within "a few months."

We realize that some will have a conversion experience during the first month, but others may not "get it" right away. Nevertheless, you will still have a gradual spiritual awakening as the result of going through the process again and again.

This is one of the greatest promises in the "Big Book." Just think of it. Even under the most difficult circumstances, if you do the work you will overcome your lusting problem in about 90 days or so.

In the first paragraph on page 568, we learn how easy it is to have the promised spiritual awakening:

*"Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the essence of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it "God-consciousness."*

That's all there is to it. If you've made contact with the God of your understanding and you have started listening to guidance, you have in fact, already had the "psychic change." You are now living in the "sunlight of the Spirit."

Now, let's look at what we have to do in order to maintain this spiritual transformation. Chapter 7, in its entirety, is devoted to carrying the message of Sexaholics Anonymous to others. In the first paragraph on page 89, the "Big Book" authors tell us how to expand our new God-consciousness:

*"PRACTICAL EXPERIENCE shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from [lust] as intensive work with other [sexaholics]. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: Carry this message to other [sexaholics]! 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 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."*

## Back to Basics

On pages 89 through 103, the 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. For now, we are only going to cover a few of them.

At the top of page 90, they start with the following advice:

*“When you discover a prospect for [Sexaholics Anonymous], find out all you can about him. If he does not want to stop [lusting], don’t waste time trying to persuade him. You may spoil a later opportunity.”*

In the middle of page 91, paragraph three, the “Big Book” authors even provide us with specifics on what to say. First, we tell the prospect our story:

*“See your man alone, if possible. At first engage in general conversation. After a while, turn the talk to some phase of [lust]. Tell him enough about your [lusting] habits, symptoms, and experiences to encourage him to speak of himself. If he wishes to talk, let him do so. You will thus get a better idea of how you ought to proceed.”*

Then we explain how we recovered. In the first paragraph on page 94, the “Big Book” authors write:

*“Outline the program of action, explaining how you made a self-appraisal, how you straightened out your past, and why you are now endeavoring to be helpful to him. It is important for him to realize that your attempt to pass this on to him plays a vital part in your own recovery.”*

On page 95, starting with the tenth line in the first paragraph, the authors ask us to treat the prospect with dignity and respect:

*“Never talk down to a [sexaholic] from any moral or spiritual hilltop; simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools for his inspection. Show him how they worked with you. Offer him friendship and fellowship. Tell him that if he wants to get well you will do anything to help him.”*

Even if we are unsuccessful in getting through to the prospect, the authors encourage us not to give up. In the first paragraph on page 96, they advise us to plant the seed and move on:

*“Do not be discouraged if your prospect does not respond at once. Search out another [sexaholic] and try again. You are sure to find someone desperate enough to accept with eagerness what you offer. We find it a waste of time to keep chasing a man who cannot or will not work with you. If you leave such a person alone, he may soon become convinced that he cannot recover by himself. To spend too much time on any one situation is to deny some other [sexaholic] an opportunity to live and be happy.”*

In the middle of the first paragraph on page 98, they tell us what to do about the person who makes one excuse after another as to why he or she can’t stop choosing lust:

*“...He clamors for this or that, claiming he cannot master [lust] until his material needs are cared for. Nonsense. Some of us have taken very hard*

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*knocks to learn this truth: Job or no job—wife or no wife—we simply do not stop [lusting] so long as we place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God.”*

*“Burn the idea into the consciousness of every man that he can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that he trust in God and clean house.”*

How much simpler can it get? **“Trust God and Clean House!”**

In the first paragraph on page 100, the “Big Book” authors tell us we grow spiritually when we “sponsor” someone else into the fellowship:

*“Both you and the new man 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!”*

Back on page 63, the authors stated that God is our “new Employer.” Now, in the second paragraph on page 102, the authors even give us a new job description.

*“Your job now is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others, so never hesitate to go anywhere if you can be helpful. You should not hesitate to visit the most sordid spot on earth on such an errand. Keep on the firing line of life with these motives and God will keep you unharmed.”*

This completes the Twelfth Step as described in the “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 in these Beginners’ Meetings. Each time we do this, we learn more about this lifesaving program and gain additional insight into the “All Powerful Creator” who is at the heart of our new way of living.

Who knows, maybe in a couple of months, some of you will be back to lead these sessions. As we have discovered, conducting these Beginners’ Meetings is a real test of how well we know the “Big Book”.

Now all that’s left is to practice these principles in all our lives. What principles? The Twelve Steps of Sexaholics Anonymous! These are the principles we rely upon in order to remain in the “sunlight of the Spirit” for the rest of our lives.

It is time to make a commitment to work with others. Will those who have taken the first Eleven Steps, please stand. This is the Twelfth Step question.

**“Will you carry this message to other Sexaholics?”**

Please answer, one at a time, yes or no. After you have answered, please be seated.

[Have each newcomer answer the question.]

According to the “Big Book” authors, those who answered “yes” to this question have taken Step Twelve. This is a monumental achievement. Congratulations.

We are going to close this session by reading two key passages about the recovery process. The first one is on page 164, starting with the second paragraph. It emphasizes the importance of Divine 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 Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man 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 Him 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 Him 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 surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny.”*

*“May God bless you and keep you—until then.”*

The second passage is on page 25. We have waited until now to share this page with you because back when we started this journey, you may not have understood the significance of what is written here. Having taken the Twelve Steps and having had a Spiritual Awakening, you are now in a position to see the words from an entirely new perspective. Your life has changed. You now realize, *“There is a Solution.”*

*“...Almost none of us like the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into the fourth dimension of existence of which we had not even dreamed.”*

*“The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows and toward God’s universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. He has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.”*

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

Are there any questions?

[Please remain seated. We will close this meeting as they did in the 1940s: with a moment of silence followed by the Lord’s Prayer.]

Our Father, who art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy Kingdom come, Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those that trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever.  
Amen.

## Notes and Questions



## **Appendix 1 – For the Sponsor**

### **Back to the Basics of Sponsorship**

#### **What a Sponsor Is and Is Not**

Based on passages from the book *Alcoholics Anonymous*.

#### **What a Sponsor is:**

The "Big Book" authors describe a sponsor as a spiritual advisor, (sharing) partner, and a closed-mouthed, understanding friend.

#### **A sponsor is a spiritual advisor (Step 3)**

*We found it very desirable to take this spiritual step with an understanding person, such as our... spiritual adviser. (A.A., p. 63)*

#### **A sponsor is a (sharing) partner (Step 5)**

*... We explain to our partner what we are about to do and why we have to do it. (A.A., p. 75)*

#### **A sponsor is a close-mouthed, understanding friend (Step 5)**

*... [We] search our acquaintance for a close-mouthed, understanding friend.... [We] are very anxious that we talk to the right person. It is important that he be able to keep a confidence; that he fully understand and approve what we are driving at; that he will not try to change our plan. (A.A., p. 74 & p. 75)*

#### **What a Sponsor is Not:**

The "Big Book" authors explain that a sponsor is not a banker, a nurse, or an enabler. He or she is neither arrogant nor condescending, an innkeeper, a marriage counselor, a gossip, or the judge of anyone's sex conduct. The sponsor is also not a doctor, minister, crusader or reformer.

#### **A sponsor is not a banker or a nurse**

*If he is not interested in your solution, if he expects you to act only as a banker for his financial difficulties or a nurse for his sprees, you may have to drop him until he changes his mind. (A.A., p. 95)*

#### **A sponsor is not an enabler (passage #1)**

*... The minute we put our work on a service plane, the alcoholic commences to rely upon our assistance rather than upon God. He clamors for this or that, claiming he cannot master alcohol until his material needs are cared for. Nonsense. Some of us have taken very hard knocks to learn this truth: Job or no job—wife or no wife—we simply do not stop drinking so long as we place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God. (A.A., p. 98)*



**A sponsor is not an enabler (passage #2)**

*When we see a man sinking into the mire that is alcoholism, we give him first aid and place what we have at his disposal. For his sake, we do recount and almost relive the horrors of our past. But those of us who have tried to shoulder the entire burden and trouble of others find we are soon overcome by them. (A.A., p. 132)*

**A sponsor is neither arrogant nor condescending (passage #1)**

*That the man who is making the approach has had the same difficulty, that he obviously knows what he is talking about, that his whole deportment shouts at the new prospect that he is a man with a real answer, that he has no attitude of Holier Than Thou, nothing what-ever except the sincere desire to be helpful . . .—these are the conditions we have found most helpful. (A.A., p. 18)*

**A sponsor is neither arrogant nor condescending (passage #2)**

*Never talk down to an alcoholic from any moral or spiritual hilltop; simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools for his inspection. Show him how they worked with you. Offer him friendship and fellow-ship. (A.A., p. 95)*

**A sponsor is not an innkeeper (passage #1)**

*... Be certain he ... is not trying to impose upon you for money, connections, or shelter. Permit that and you only harm him. You will be making it possible for him to be insincere. (A.A., p. 96)*

**A sponsor is not an innkeeper (passage #2)**

*For the type of alcoholic who is able and willing to get well, little charity, in the ordinary sense of the word, is needed or wanted. The men who cry for money and shelter before conquering alcohol, are on the wrong track. (A.A., p. 97, & p. 98)*

**A sponsor is not a marriage counselor**

*When working with a man and his family, you should take care not to participate in their quarrels. You may spoil your chance of being helpful if you do. (A.A., p. 100)*

**A sponsor is not a gossip**

*Another principle we observe carefully is that we do not relate intimate experiences of another person un-less we are sure he would approve. We find it better, when possible, to stick to our own stories. . . . for one careless, inconsiderate remark has been known to raise the very devil. (A.A., p. 125)*

**A sponsor is not the judge of anyone's sex conduct**

*... We want to stay out of this controversy. We do not want to be the arbiter of anyone's sex conduct. (A.A., p. 69)*

### A sponsor is not a doctor

*... God has abundantly supplied this world with fine doctors, psychologists, and practitioners of various kinds. Do not hesitate to take your health problems to such persons. Most of them give freely of themselves, that their fellows may enjoy sound minds and bodies. Try to remember that though God has wrought miracles among us, we should never belittle a good doctor or psychiatrist. Their services are often indispensable in treating a newcomer and in following his case afterward. (A.A., p. 133)*

### A sponsor is not a minister

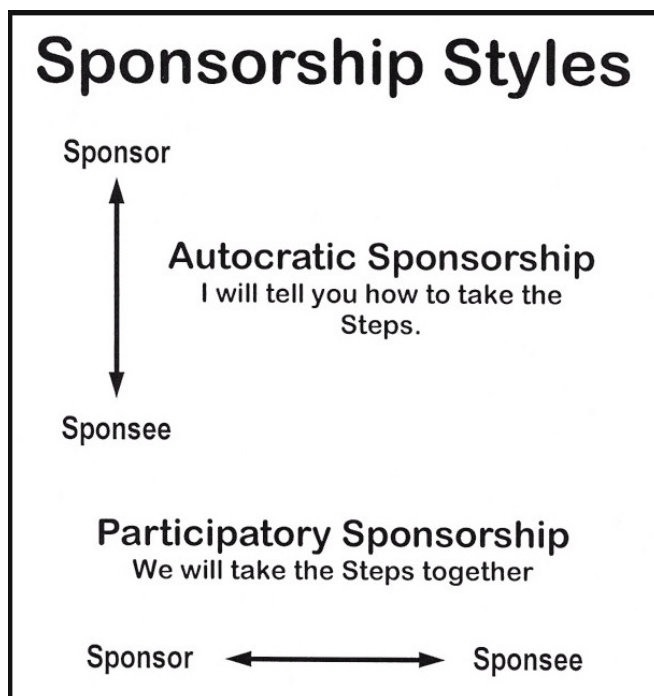
*... Let him see that you are not there to instruct him in religion.... We represent no particular faith or denomination. (A.A., p. 93, & p. 94)*

### A sponsor is not a crusader or reformer

*... You will be most successful with alcoholics if you do not exhibit any passion for crusade or reform. (A.A., p. 95)*

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## Sponsorship Styles



In the 1940's, the A.A. Beginners' Meetings provided a safe and structured environment where newcomers **TOOK** all Twelve Steps and recovered from alcoholism, as well as a place where those who had been through the Steps learned how to sponsor those who were just starting on their spiritual journeys. The Beginners' Meetings fostered participatory sponsorship and many newcomers were sponsored by two or more A.A. members, the sponsor and his or her apprentice(s). The term the early A.A.'s used to describe this relationship was co-sponsorship.

## Key Concepts of Sponsorship from the 1940's

### 1. Put no block between the newcomer and Step Twelve.

Get the newcomer to Step Twelve as quickly as possible, so he or she can experience the life-changing spiritual awakening that occurs as the direct result of taking the Steps. Assure the newcomer that our pro-gram of recovery will relieve his or her alcoholism. Show the newcomer that the process is simple, straightforward and that it really works.

### 2. Call the newcomer.

Demonstrate that you are there for the newcomer by checking in with him or her on a regular basis. Remember, the newcomer is very ill and needs your encouragement and support.

### 3. Read the appropriate parts of the “Big Book” to the newcomer.

The newcomer is in no physical or emotional condition to read, let alone comprehend, the “Big Book” by him or herself. Therefore, read and explain the appropriate parts of the book to the newcomer, specifically those 50 or so passages that pertain directly to taking the Twelve Steps.

### 4. The healing is in the sharing not in the writing.

Sit down with the newcomer and guide him or her through the Fourth Step inventory. If necessary, write the inventory while the newcomer does the talking. This will help relieve any anxiety or apprehension the newcomer may have about this part of the program.

### 5. Assist the newcomer with his or her amends.

Work together on the newcomer's amends. Be the first person the newcomer sees after an amends is made.

### 6. Share guidance with the newcomer.

Show the newcomer that you believe in and are practicing two-way prayer on a daily basis.

### 7. Co-sponsor the next newcomer.

Have the newcomer accompany you as you work with the next person. This way, the newcomer will gain confidence in his or her ability to guide others through the recovery process.

## **Appendix 2 - Suggested Guidelines for Beginners' Meetings**

### **For the Newcomer:**

- 1) Your primary obligation is to attend all four sessions.
- 2) We will read the appropriate parts of the "Big Book" to you, specifically those passages that relate to taking the Twelve Steps. If you have brought a "Big Book" and are able to follow along, please do so. We will announce each passage by page number and paragraph before we read it. If you don't have a Big Book, we ask that you participate by listening. We will guide you through all Twelve steps as written by the "Big Book" authors. Please follow their directions, as we read them to you, and you too, will recover from sexaholism.
- 3) Although a written inventory is part of the Fourth Step, this doesn't mean you have to do the writing. The person who is sponsoring you through these sessions can help you write your inventory, or he or she can write it for you.

### **For the Sponsor or Sharing Partner:**

- 1) Your time commitment to the newcomer is approximately four weeks. After that, both you and the newcomer will be expected to assist others through the "Big Book" and the Twelve Steps.
- 2) During the next month, call or visit the newcomer frequently to offer encouragement and moral support.
- 3) Attend the weekly Beginners' Meetings with the newcomer.
- 4) Offer to help the newcomer with his or her Fourth Step. If necessary, fill out the checklist based on what the newcomer tells you. Remember, the newcomer is still very sick and may not be able to complete the inventory without your assistance.
- 5) Share your guidance with the newcomer so he or she can see how two-way prayer is working in your life.
- 6) Answer any questions the newcomer may have about the S.A. program or the S.A. way of life.

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## MINNEAPOLIS RECORD INDICATES THAT 75 % ARE SUCCESSFUL IN A.A.

The Minneapolis Group, in March, 1943, inaugurated a system for keeping a record of the sobriety of members from three months on up. As a result, the following exact percentages have been arrived at:

### *For the Year 1945*

5-yr. members	100 %	successful	0 %	slipped
4-yr.      “	100 %	“	0 %	“
3-yr.      “	100 %	“	0 %	“
2-yr.      “	89 %	“	11 %	“
18-mo.    “	90 %	“	10 %	“
1-yr.      “	80 %	“	20 %	“
9-mo.     “	82 %	“	18 %	“
6-mo.     “	70 %	“	30 %	“
3-mo.     “	48 %	“	52 %	“

(Of those who slipped in 1945, only 16½ % have worked back to any degree of sobriety.)

### *Over-all Percentages*

1943	78 %	successful	22 %	slipped
1944	83 %	“	17 %	“
1945	77 %	“	23 %	“



**Appendix 4 - Comparison of Assets and Liabilities Checklists Used by AA's in the 1940's and 1950's**

<p><b><u>Big Book</u></b> (BB-pp. 64-69)</p> <p>1. <u>Resentment</u> (p. 64)</p> <p>2. <u>Fear</u> (p. 68)</p> <p><u>Harms</u> (p. 69)</p> <p>3. Selfish(ness)</p> <p>4. Dishonest(y)</p> <p>5. Inconsiderat(ion)</p> <p>6. Jealousy</p> <p>7. Suspicion</p> <p>8. Bitterness</p>	<p><b><u>Dr. Bob</u></b> (BB-p. 263)</p> <p>1. <u>Resentment</u></p> <p><u>Harms</u></p> <p>2. Selfishness</p> <p>3. Conceit</p> <p>4. Jealousy</p> <p>5. Carelessness</p> <p>6. Intolerance</p> <p>7. Ill-temper</p> <p>8. Sarcasm</p>	<p><b><u>12x12</u></b> (12x12-p. 48)</p> <p>1. <u>Anger</u></p> <p>2. <u>Fear</u></p> <p><u>Harms</u></p> <p>3. Pride</p> <p>4. Greed</p> <p>5. Lust</p> <p>6. Gluttony</p> <p>7. Envy</p> <p>8. Sloth</p>	<p><b><u>B2B</u></b> (BB + AAGV-6/46)</p> <p>1. <u>Resentment</u></p> <p>2. <u>Fear</u></p> <p><u>Harms</u></p> <p>3. Selfishness</p> <p>4. Dishonesty</p> <p>5. False Pride</p> <p>6. Jealousy</p> <p>7. Envy</p> <p>8. Laziness</p>
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**Appendix 5 – Example of Assets & Liabilities Checklist During 4th Step Inventory**

<b>Fourth Step Inventory</b> Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book" pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)				
<b>Liabilities</b> Watch for—				
Resentment	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Court</i>	<i>God</i>
Fear	<i>Court</i>	<i>Relapse</i>	<i>Health</i>	
Selfishness	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Friend #1</i>	
Dishonesty	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Friend #2</i>
False Pride	<i>God</i>	<i>Employer</i>		
Jealousy	<i>Family Member</i>			
Envy				
Laziness	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Myself</i>	
<i>Shame</i>	<i>Friend #2</i>			

**Appendix 6 – Example of Assets & Liabilities Checklist with 8th Step Amends List**

<b>Fourth Step Inventory</b> Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the "Big Book" pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)					<b>Assets</b> Strive for—
<b>Liabilities</b> Watch for—					
Resentment	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Court</i>	<i>God</i>	Forgiveness
Fear	<i>Court</i>	<i>Relapse</i>	<i>Health</i>		Faith
Selfishness	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Friend #1</i>		Unselfishness
Dishonesty	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Friend #2</i>	Honesty
False Pride	<i>God</i>	<i>Employer</i>			Humility
Jealousy	<i>Family Member</i>				Trust
Envy					Contentment
Laziness	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Myself</i>		Action
<i>Shame</i>	<i>Friend #2</i>				<i>Self-respect</i>



**Appendix 7 – Example of Assets & Liabilities Checklist with 9<sup>th</sup> Step Type of Amends Added**

# Fourth Step Inventory

**Liabilities**  
Watch for—

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the “Big Book”  
pg. 64:1(1-7); pg. 64:3(1-9); pg. 68:1(1-3); pg. 69:1(1-6:edited)

**Assets**  
Strive for—

Resentment	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Court</i>	<i>God</i>	Forgiveness
Fear	<i>Court</i>	<i>Relapse</i>	<i>Health</i>		Faith
Selfishness	<i>Ex</i>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Friend #1</i> <span>DIRECT</span>		Unselfishness
Dishonesty	<i>Ex</i> <span>LIVING</span>	<i>Myself</i>	<i>Employer</i> <span>LIVING</span>	<i>Friend #2</i> <span>DIRECT</span>	Honesty
False Pride	<i>God</i>	<i>Employer</i>			Humility
Jealousy	<i>Family Member</i> <span>LETTER</span>				Trust
Envy					Contentment
Laziness	<i>Ex</i> <span>IN-KIND</span>	<i>Employer</i>	<i>Myself</i> <span>LIVING</span>		Action
Shame	<i>Friend #2</i>				Self-respect

Example of Assets and Liabilities Checklist with Ninth Step Type of Amends Added

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**Appendix 8 – Assets and Liabilities Checklist for Fourth Step Inventory**

# Fourth Step Inventory

Assets and Liabilities Checklist from the “Big Book”  
pg. 64:1 (1-7); pg. 64:3 (1-9); pg. 68:1 (1-3); pg. 69:1 (1-6; edited)**Liabilities**  
Watch for—**Assets**  
Strive for—

Resentment	Forgiveness
Fear	Faith
Selfishness	Unselfishness
Dishonesty	Honesty
False Pride	Humility
Jealousy	Trust
Envy	Contentment
Laziness	Action

**Assets and Liabilities Checklist**

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## **Appendix 9 – Questions for Sharing Partner to ask during completion of Assets and Liabilities Checklist**

### **Resentment Inventory**

1. Who or what are you angry at?

### **Fear Inventory**

2. Who or what are you afraid of?

### **Harms Inventory**

3. Toward whom have you been selfish?
4. Where have you been dishonest?
5. What about false pride—do you feel better than or less than others?
6. Are you jealous of any relationship?
7. Do you envy anyone's possessions?
8. Where have you been lazy?

During the discussion of each event or situation, ask your partner to “resolutely look for your own mistakes.... Though a situation had not been entirely your fault, you are to disregard the other person entirely. Where were you to blame?” (pg 67, edited).

Ask him or her, “Are you prepared to forgive those toward whom you feel resentment?” If not, then “we ask God to help us be willing” (pg 76).

Ask, “Are you ready to overcome your fear with faith?” Together, “We ask God to remove our fear and direct out attention to what God would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear” (pg 68, edited).

In terms of harms, ask your partner, “What are you ‘willing to do to set these matters straight?’” (pg 67, edited). Keep in mind there are four types of amends: direct, living, in-kind, and letters. Together, decide what would be the most appropriate “course of action” for each incident or circumstance.

Conclude the sharing session with a prayer (pg 76).

## **Appendix 10 - Test for Self-will vs. God's Will**

From the "Big Book" of Alcoholics Anonymous

### **Self-will**

### **God's Will**

#### **Fourth Step Test**

Selfish(ness)	←————→	Unselfishness
Dishonest(y)	←————→	Honesty
Self-seeking	←————→	Purity
Frightened	←————→	Love

*"Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened?"*

(Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 67, para. 2, lines 3-4)

#### **Tenth Step Test**

Selfishness	←————→	Unselfishness
Dishonesty	←————→	Honesty
Resentment	←————→	Purity
Fear	←————→	Love

*"Continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear."*

(Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 84, para. 2, lines 8-9)

#### **Eleventh Step Test**

Resentful	←————→	Purity
Selfish(ness)	←————→	Unselfishness
Dishonest(y)	←————→	Honesty
Afraid	←————→	Love

*"Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest or afraid?"*

(Alcoholics Anonymous, p. 86, para. 1, lines 2-3)

## Appendix 11 - "Big Book" References to Guidance

The dictionary tells us that "to guide" means to lead, direct, influence, or regulate. Two synonyms are to disclose and to show.  
(*Back to Basics*, p. 113)

The following passages are quoted from Alcoholics Anonymous (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Each is cited by **page:paragraph**

**01. 10:4**

With ministers, and the world's religions, I parted right there. When they talked of a God personal to me, who was love, superhuman strength and **DIRECTION**, I became irritated and my mind snapped shut against such a theory.

**02. 13:2**

There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and **DIRECTION**.

**03. 13:4**

...I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for **DIRECTION** and strength to meet my problems as He would have me.

**04. 46:2**

As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and **DIRECTION**, provided we took other simple steps.

**05. 49:0**

When, however, the perfectly logical assumption is suggested that underneath the material world and life as we see it, there is an All Powerful, **GUIDING**, Creative Intelligence, right there our perverse streak comes to the surface and we laboriously set out to convince ourselves it isn't so. We read wordy books and indulge in windy arguments, thinking we believe this universe needs no God to explain it. Were our contentions true, it would follow that life originated out of nothing, means nothing, and proceeds nowhere.

**06. 50:4**

Here are thousands of men and women, worldly indeed. They flatly declare that since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking. In the face of collapse and despair, in the face of the total failure of their human resources, they found that a new power, peace, happiness, and sense of **DIRECTION** flowed into them. This happened soon after they whole-heartedly met a few simple requirements.

**07. 57:3**

When we drew near to Him He **DISCLOSED** Himself to us!

**08. 67:1**

We avoid retaliation or argument. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. We cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will **SHOW** us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one.

**09. 68:3**

We never apologize for God. Instead we let Him **DEMONSTRATE, through us**, what He can do.

**10. 68:3**

...We ask Him to remove our fear and **DIRECT** our attention to what He would have us be.

**11. 69:3**

. . . In meditation, we ask God what we should do about each specific matter. **THE RIGHT ANSWER** will come, if we want it.

(The right answer is Divine Guidance)

**12. 70:2**

We earnestly pray for the right ideal, for **GUIDANCE** in each questionable situation, for sanity, and for the strength to do the right thing. If sex is very troublesome, we throw ourselves the harder into helping others. We think of their needs and work for them. This takes us out of ourselves. It quiets the imperious urge, when to yield would mean heartache.

**13. 79:1**

Although these reparations take innumerable forms, there are some general principles which we find guiding. Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and **DIRECTION** to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be.

**14. 83:1**

. . . So we clean house with the family, asking each morning in meditation that our Creator **SHOW** us the way of patience, tolerance, kindness and love.

**15. 85:2**

Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and **DIRECTION** from Him who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of His Spirit into us. To some extent we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense.

**16. 86:2**

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.

**17. 86:3**

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 a 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**.

**18. 87:1**

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. We may ask for ourselves, however, if others will be helped. We are careful never to pray for our own selfish ends. Many of us have wasted a lot of time doing that and it doesn't work. You can easily see why.



**19. 87:3–88:0**

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.

(What is the right thought or action? GUIDANCE)

**20. 117:0**

We urge you to try our program, for nothing will be so helpful to your spouse as the radically changed attitude toward him or her which God will **SHOW** you how to have.

**21. 158:2**

On the third day the lawyer gave his life to the care and **DIRECTION** of his Creator, and said he was perfectly willing to do anything necessary. His wife came, scarcely daring to be hopeful, though she thought she saw something different about her husband already. He had begun to have a spiritual experience.

**22. 164:1**

Still you may say: "But I will not have the benefit of contact with you who write this book." We cannot be sure. God will determine that, so you must remember that your real reliance is always upon Him. He will **SHOW** you how to create the fellowship you crave.

**23. 164:2**

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.

**24. 164:2**

Ask Him in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the man who is still sick. **THE ANSWERS WILL COME**, if your own house is in order.



## **Appendix 12 - "How To Listen To God"**

By John E. Batterson  
(An Oxford Group pamphlet/technique used by early A.A. members)

These are a few simple suggestions for people who are willing to make an experiment. You can discover for yourself the most important and practical thing any human being can ever learn - how to be in touch with God.

All that is needed is the **willingness to try it honestly**. Every person who has done this consistently and sincerely has found that it really works.

Before you begin, look over these fundamental points. They are true and are based on the experience of thousands of people.

- 1) God is alive. He always has been and He always will be.
- 2) God knows everything.
- 3) God can do anything.
- 4) God can be everywhere - all at the same time. (These are the important differences between God and us human beings).
- 5) God is invisible - we can't see Him or touch Him - but, **God is here**. He is with you now. He is beside you. He surrounds you. He fills the room or the whole place where you are right now. He is in you now. He is in your heart.
- 6) God cares very much for **you**. He is interested in you. He has a plan for your life. He has an answer for every need and problem you face.
- 7) God will tell you all that you **need** to know. He will not always tell you all that you want to know.
- 8) God will help you do anything that He asks you to do.
- 9) Anyone can be in touch with God, anywhere and at any time, **if the conditions are obeyed**.

These are the conditions:

- To be quiet and still
- To listen
- To be honest about every thought that comes
- To test the thoughts to be sure that they come from God
- To obey

So, with these basic elements as a background, here are specific suggestions on **How to Listen to God**:

### **1. TAKE TIME**

Find some place and time where you can be alone, quiet and undisturbed. Most people have found that the early morning is the best time. Have with you some paper and pen or pencil.

## 2. RELAX

Sit in a comfortable position. Consciously relax all your muscles. Be loose. There is no hurry. There needs to be no strain during these minutes. God cannot get through to us if we are tense and anxious about later responsibilities.

## 3. TUNE IN

Open your heart to God. Either silently or aloud, just say to God in a natural way that you would like to find His plan for your life - you want His answer to the problem or situation that you are facing just now. Be definite and specific in your request.

## 4. LISTEN

Just be still, quiet, relaxed and open. Let your mind go "loose." Let God do the talking. Thoughts, ideas and impressions will begin to come into your mind and heart. Be alert and aware and open to every one.

## 5. WRITE!

Here is the important key to the whole process. Write down everything that comes into your mind. **Everything**. Writing is simply a means of recording so that you can remember later. **Don't** sort out or edit your thoughts at this point.

Don't say to yourself:

- This thought isn't important
- This is just an ordinary thought
- This can't be guidance
- This isn't nice
- This can't be from God
- This is just me thinking..., etc.

Write down everything that passes through your mind:

- Names of people
- Things to do
- Things to say
- Things that are wrong and need to be made right

Write down everything:

- Good thoughts - bad thoughts
- Comfortable thoughts - uncomfortable thoughts
- "Holy" thoughts - "unholy" thoughts
- Sensible thoughts - "crazy" thoughts

Be honest! Write down **everything**! A thought comes quickly, and it escapes even more quickly unless it is captured and put down.

## 6. TEST

When the flow of thoughts slows down, stop. Take a good look at what you have written. **Not every thought we have comes from God.** So we need to test our thoughts. Here is where the written record helps us to be able to look at them.

- a) Are these thoughts completely **honest, pure, unselfish and loving?**
- b) Are these thoughts in line with our duties to our family - to our country?
- c) Are these thoughts in line with our understanding of the teachings found in our spiritual literature?

## 7. CHECK

When in doubt and when it is important, what does another person who is living two-way prayer think about this thought or action? More light comes in through two windows than one. Someone else who also wants God's plan for our lives may help us to see more clearly.

Talk over together what you have written. Many people do this. They tell each other what guidance has come. This is the secret of unity. There are always three sides to every question - your side, my side, and the right side. Guidance shows us which is the right side - not who is right, but what is right.

## 8. OBEY

Carry out the thoughts that have come. You will only be sure of guidance as you go through with it. A rudder will not guide a boat until the boat is moving. As you obey, very often the results will convince you that you are on the right track.

## 9. BLOCKS?

"What if I don't seem to get any definite thought?" God's guidance is as freely available as the air we breathe. If I am not receiving thoughts when I listen, the fault is not God's.

Usually it is because there is something **I will not do:**

- Something wrong in my life that I will not face and make right
- A habit or indulgence I will not give up
- A person I will not forgive
- A wrong relationship in my life I will not give up
- A restitution I will not make
- Something God has already told me to do that I will not obey

Check these points and be honest. Then try listening again.

## 10. MISTAKES

"Supposing I make a mistake and do something in the name of God that isn't right?" Of course we make mistakes. We are humans with many faults. However, **God will always honor our sincerity.**

He will work around and through every honest mistake we make. He will help us make it right. But, **remember this!**

Sometimes when we do obey God, someone else may not like it or agree with it. So when there is opposition, it doesn't always mean you have made a mistake. It can mean that the other person doesn't want to know or to do what is right.

"Supposing I fail to do something that I have been told and the opportunity to do it passes?" There is only one thing to do. Put it right with God. Tell Him you're sorry. Ask Him to forgive you, then accept His forgiveness and begin again. God is our Father - He is not an impersonal computer. He understands us far better than we do.

## 11. RESULTS?

We never know what swimming is like until we get down into the water and try. We will never know what this is like until we sincerely try it.

Every person who has tried this honestly finds that a wisdom, not their own, comes into their minds and that a Power greater than human power begins to operate in their lives. It is an endless adventure.

There is a way of life, for everyone, everywhere. Anyone can be in touch with the living God, anywhere, anytime, **if we fulfill His conditions.**

**When man listens, God speaks.**

**When man obeys, God acts.**

**This is the law of prayer.**

God's plan for this world goes forward through the lives of ordinary people who are willing to be governed by Him.

**Appendix 13 - Tenth Step Guidelines**

1. Was I resentful?
2. Was I selfish?
3. Was I dishonest?
4. Was I afraid?
5. Do I owe an apology?
6. Have I kept something to myself which should be discussed with another person at once?
7. Was I kind and loving toward all?
8. What could I have done better?
9. Was I thinking of myself most of the time?
10. Was I thinking of what I could do for others, what I could pack into the stream of life?
11. "This is a good place to remember that inventory-taking is not always done in red ink. It's a poor day indeed when we haven't done something right" (12&12 pg. 93).
12. After making our review, we ask God's forgiveness and inquire what corrective measures should be taken.

## **Appendix 14 - Eleventh Step Guidelines**

The following summarizes the description of the 11<sup>th</sup> Step provided in *Alcoholics Anonymous* (primarily on pp. 86-88). This is supplemented by some suggestions [in brackets] that we have found helpful.

### **Preparing for the Day Ahead**

1. We ask God to direct our thinking, asking especially that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonest or self-seeking motives.
2. We consider our plans for the day. We can now use out mental faculties with assurance.
3. If we face indecisions or we can't determine what course to take, we ask God for inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision. We relax and take it easy.
4. We pray to be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of problems.
5. We ask especially for freedom from self-will.

[We might also pray for help with specific defects or problem areas, and review out 10<sup>th</sup> step corrective measures for the day ahead]

### **Prayer to be of Use**

6. We ask for guidance in the way of patience, kindness, tolerance, and love especially within the family.
7. We pray as to what we can do today for the person who is still sick

[We might also pray for specific people in need, or those with whom we're angry.]

### **Spiritual/Religious Exercises**

8. If appropriate, we attend to our religious devotions, or say set prayers which emphasize 12 step principles.
9. We may read from a spiritual book.

### **Practicing the 11<sup>th</sup> Step Throughout the Day**

10. We pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action.
11. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day "Thy will be done."