

**BACK TO BASICS, “A Design for Living”  
A Closed and Committed 12-Step Study and Media Sobriety Group**

**WEEK 3 – Steps 4 through 9**

**MONDAY MEETING**

*B qualifies on Step 5. Please ask a member to lead the group in the First Step Prayer.*

**STEPS 4 AND 5 (CONTINUED)**

A

**Opening Business**

Welcome to the third week of “Back to Basics: A Design for Living” for media addicts. We encourage you to set aside all nonessential electronic media during these sessions. Focusing on the material without distractions is essential to fully harnessing the recovery power of this Back-to-Basics process.

Let us introduce ourselves: **[All Groups Sponsors share their names]**. We are recovered but not cured members of Media Addicts Anonymous, and we are your Group Sponsors. Thank you for allowing us to serve you today.

Congratulations on making it to week three!

Another reminder that we have a lot of material to cover, please stay alert and mindful of your place in the reading order, which will be shared daily in the chat. We encourage you to enjoy the reading and extract as much as possible from it, even if you’ve encountered it before.

We have asked **(name)** to lead us in the First Step Prayer.

**Dear Higher Power, My name is (name), I am a real media addict and I need your help today.**

Thank you **(name)**.

B

**Thank You, Sponsors!**

Before we begin today's session, we would like to thank all the sponsors in the group who gave their time this weekend to listen to their sponsee's Fourth Step. We appreciate you sharing your experience, and strength, and hope to help a fellow sufferer. Back to Basics would not be sustainable without our wonderful sponsors.

A

**The Only Way Out Is Through**

So far, we have taken Steps 1 through 3, learned Two Way Prayer, and have begun working on our Fourth and Fifth Steps. At this point in the Twelve Step process, you may feel overwhelmed and even a little moody—ok, maybe a lot moody! We have found that in the recovery process, “*The only way out is through.*” Our self-pity, fears, and resentments kept us trapped in the cycle of

addiction. The only way to true freedom is to admit to ourselves what has held us back and to be honest about this with someone else.

B

### Fourth Step Report and Celebration

If you have written your *Short-Form Fourth Step Inventory* (i.e. Resentment, Fear, or Sex/Fantasy) and have shared it with your sponsor, or made an appointment to do so, please say, “yes” when I call your name. *[Stop screen sharing and go around the room and call on each member in Months 1-3.]*

Congratulations! We commend you for having the willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness to do what is necessary to recover from media addiction. Your willingness to take these steps paves the way to the promised spiritual awakening we've found to be miraculous. If you are *ALL IN*, you will absolutely get what you came for in joining Back to Basics.

A

### Continue to Move Gently Forward

Writing our Fourth Step Inventory can evoke memories and feelings similar to grieving at a funeral. Be gentle with yourself through this process, but do your best to persevere. This work is not for the faint of heart. If you're experiencing resistance or hesitation, know that this is normal. However, remember the Big Book authors' wisdom: "The result was [nothing] until we let go absolutely."

B

### A Few Housekeeping Items

Here's how our session will unfold today,

1. We are going to introduce the assets that are Part 2 of the 4th Step Inventory - Liabilities to Assets
2. Next, we will talk about the 4th Step Long Form Inventory worksheet
3. Then, we complete our discussion of Step 5

A

### So That There is No Confusion:

**First-month members:** If you haven't already completed Part 2 - Liabilities to Assets on your 4th Step worksheet, please do so by tomorrow. This is crucial as we will be taking the 6th and 7th Steps then.

**Second and third-month members:** Please fill out the Liabilities to Assets worksheet in your packet, using it with your fear and sex inventories.

**Everyone:** Ensure you complete these worksheets by the end of today, allowing you to participate fully in tomorrow's 6th and 7th Step work.

In addition, please complete your Long Form 4th Step Inventory and read it to your sponsor by this weekend. Once you have read all three of these documents to your sponsor, this will complete your 5th Step.

B

## Turning Liabilities Into Assets

The Big Book authors tell us that "[t]aking a personal commercial inventory is a fact-finding and a fact-facing process. It is an effort to discover the truth about the stock-in-trade." Part of the fact-finding process is to also see what our assets are, and how we can apply them, with the help of our Higher Power, to rectify our liabilities. The Big Book makes it 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 [media addict], 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 [media] returns and we [click] again. And with us, to [click] is to die. If we were to live, we had to be free of anger."

A

How do we keep from harboring the emotions that shut us off from the "sunlight of the Spirit?" We start by taking our liabilities and turning them around to assets. We include our Higher Power in this process by asking H.P. to direct our thinking and actions toward the betterment of our character. In this way, we show a willingness to see "the flaws in our make-up, which caused our failure."

B

Focusing on the asset side of our Inventory allows us to let go of our long-held stories and to embrace our innate ability to be considerate, honest, and compassionate—in short, to live with a "purity of Spirit." Last week, we gave you a list of the liabilities, which are identified in the Big Book. We took stock of these liabilities, wrote them down as our Fourth Step Inventory, and read them to another person.

B

Today we will examine the assets that serve as antidotes to these unhelpful character traits. Identifying these assets allows us to see our side of the street more clearly and prepares us for Steps Six and Seven when we ask God to remove our shortcomings. We want to have identified our assets so that when we do ask God to remove our shortcomings, our Higher Power can replace our liabilities with them. Will each reader please read one each?

- The antidotes to **Self-pity** are **Self-compassion** and **Working with Others**. Self-compassion is the ability to sit with pain and difficulty while staying gentle with ourselves. It calls for tenderness and self-nurture. Working with Others draws us out of self-pity and shifts our focus toward the well-being of others.
- The antidote to **Resentment** is **Forgiveness**: It is a conscious decision to let go of deeply held negative feelings emotions and bitterness toward someone who wronged or harmed us or others.
- The antidote to **Fear** is **Faith**: A transformative power of trusting belief that transcends current circumstances and anchors us in possibility. Faith is the courageous act of 'acting as if' - deliberately choosing to focus on what we desire rather than what we dread."
- The antidote to **Selfishness** is **Consideration** and **Compassion**: Consideration is the mindful awareness and thoughtfulness toward another person's needs and feelings, leading to respectful and caring actions. Compassion is a deep emotional response to the

suffering of others, characterized by empathy and a desire to alleviate their pain through supportive actions.

- The antidote to **Self-centeredness** is **Faith-centeredness** or **God-centeredness**: This is where we stop playing God, let go of our need for control, and accept things as they are and as they unfold—surrendering to God's will for us and others. This surrender does not imply passivity; rather, it signifies an active choice to align one's intentions with a greater purpose.
- The antidote to **Dishonesty** is **Honesty**: To live honestly is to interact truthfully, ethically, and in a straightforward manner (without ambiguity or evasiveness). We speak and act with integrity, which means our inner truth aligns with our outer life.
- The antidote to **False Pride** is **Humility**. It is the ability to see ourselves and others in a realistic, non-hierarchical way—feeling neither superior nor inferior while recognizing the innate gifts, imperfections, and worthiness of others as well as our own.
- The antidote for **Jealousy** is **Gratitude**. Gratitude softens our hearts whereas jealousy hardens it. Jealousy leads to anger, bitterness, and despair; gratitude opens pathways to forgiveness.
- The antidote for **Mistrust** is **Vulnerability**. Being vulnerable means letting down your guard and being open with others. This openness counters the closed-off nature of mistrust.
- The antidote for **Envy** is **Contentment**: It is the state of acceptance and satisfaction with what we have and who we are without longing or craving for more. Living contentedly brings a sense of ease, gladness, and peace with the way things are.
- The antidote for **Procrastination** is **Action**: This is the willingness to address a problem or difficulty by carrying out a series of tasks, over time, to achieve a desired change or outcome. Taking even small steps can create momentum and transform intentions into tangible results.

A

Our liabilities close us off from other people, which prevents us from sharing our gifts with the world and from fulfilling our Higher Power's plan for us. The one asset that can counteract most liabilities is **GENEROSITY**. Generosity means giving humanity the benefit of the doubt and sharing ourselves authentically with the world.

B

### Fourth Step Long Form Worksheet

We have found that some fears and resentments may require deeper exploration than the Short 4th Step Inventory allows. This is when we use the **Fourth Step Long Form Inventory**. The Longer form has more questions to help us address these more complex feelings. We use the Long Form to discover our part in situations more clearly and to find ways to heal and achieve peace.

A

**The Long Form** helps you identify both your liabilities and the assets you can use to counteract them. It consists of two parts. **Part 1** examines your liabilities, emotions, and reactions when you feel fear, resentment or relationships. **Part 2** explores questions that help transform these liabilities into assets to find peace and resolution.

## B

**This form is found in your Week 2 Assignments packet.** To complete the Long Form, choose one of your more challenging resentments, fears, or sex relationships from your Fourth Step Inventory, depending on which month you are in. Be sure to set aside time this week to read this worksheet to your sponsor.

## A

We will read through the resentment worksheet together to see how this process unfolds. Choose a person you resent from your month one *Fourth Step Inventory* (e.g., “*I have resentment toward Mary because she gossiped about me to my friends at the gym.*”) and answer the following questions. **Each reader read 5.**

## • PART I

- Why do you resent this person? i.e., What do you think they did wrong?
- What thoughts arise when you feel this resentment?
- How do you react when these thoughts arise?
- Where do you feel this resentment in your body?
- Are all these thoughts true? (pass)
  
- How has this resentment affected you or is affecting your life now?
- How has this resentment affected those around you?
- Do you feel fear with this resentment? How so? What are you afraid of losing or think you've lost? Do you fear you will not get what you want? What did/do you want in this situation?
- Did you try to play God and be in control in this situation? How so?
- Do you feel low self-esteem or unworthy when you have these resentful thoughts? (pass)
  
- When you have this resentment, do you make yourself feel superior to others? How?
- Do you feel inferior? How?
- Do you envy others when you experience this resentment? Who are you jealous of? What do you envy in others that you think you lack?
- How are you dishonest with yourself when you have this resentment?
- When or how do you become dishonest with others? (pass)
  
- How do you blame others in this situation?
- When or how do you blame yourself?
- When were you thinking only of yourself in this situation or due to this resentment?

- Where do you lose power when you have these feelings?
  - How were you inconsiderate of others in this situation? (pass)
  
  - How were you inconsiderate of yourself in this situation?
  - At what point did you feel the fear of losing something or not getting what you want?
  - Did you (or do you) feel you wanted something that did not belong to you? (i.e., When or how did you experience envy?)
  - When or how did you procrastinate or avoid taking action?
- Here your sponsor will ask you:
 

*“Are you willing to have God remove this resentment and the shortcomings you have acknowledged above? Would you have the willingness to replace these liabilities with assets?”*  
(pass)
  
  - If you answer “yes,” you then look at the assets you want to bring into your life. *(This prepares you for the Sixth and Seventh Steps, which we will take at our next group session.)*

- **PART II**

- What would your experience be like if you felt acceptance for this situation?
- What would this situation be different if you felt worthy—if you had self-esteem?
- How would it be different if you saw the other party as worthy?
- What would it look like if you had faith in your Higher Power? (Pass)
  
- How would this situation be if you had faith in yourself?
- How could you envision the situation if you had faith in the other person or institution?
- Where or how could you be more considerate of yourself in this situation?
- How would letting go of this resentment help you be more considerate of others?
- What would it be like not to blame others for your resentment? (pass)
  
- What would it be like not to blame yourself in this situation?
- How would the situation differ if you were honest and authentic with yourself?
- How would it be different if you were honest and authentic with others?
- How would experience this situation if you saw yourself and others as equal? If you had true humility (neither superior nor inferior to others)?
- How would this situation differ if you mustered the energy and willingness to take action? (pass)

- Where can you be generous in this situation?
  - How can you give your **Love** and your **Gifts** to others and not hold back?
  - Where could you give the gift of “*live and let live*” to other people?
  - Where could you find gratitude for this situation?
  - What useful lessons have you learned from experiencing this situation? (pass)
- Here, your sponsor will ask you:
    - *Are you willing right now to forgive every person involved in this situation 100 percent for everything you believe or know they did to you?*
    - *Are you willing right now to forgive yourself 100 percent for carrying this resentment?*
- PART III
    1. Discuss if you have any wrongs to set right and any amends to make to this person and to yourself.
    2. Make a list of amends. We will discuss how to make amends in our next group session.
- **WRITE DOWN YOUR LEARNINGS:** (*Have you noticed any patterns?*) (pass)

A

### Discuss Amends With Your Sponsor

You will conclude this Fourth Step by discussing with your sponsor any wrongs you need to set right and any amends you must make to this person. (You may also do this for institutions, other living beings, yourself, or even your Higher Power.) We will answer any questions you may have about this worksheet after we end today's session.

B

Please start writing your list of amends now, using the resentments, fears, or relationships you entered in your **4th Step Resentment Inventory - Part 1**. We will discuss how to make amends when we get to the Eighth and Ninth Steps later this week.

A

### Not Regretting the Past

As mentioned earlier, in our full Fourth Step Inventory process, it's helpful to consider our assets as well as our liabilities. This helps us regain some of the self-esteem and self-worth we lost while acting out in our addictions. Even though we've done foolish and destructive things in our lives, we are less likely to repeat them if we are willing to admit our faults, learn from them, and make things right. If we are genuinely sorry, we believe we will be forgiven. The Big Book authors tell us:

- “If we are sorry for what we have done and have the honest desire to let [our Higher Power] 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 [use again]. We are not theorizing. These are facts out of our experience.”

B

It is also important to forgive ourselves. The Big Book says that when we felt remorse, "we were sore at ourselves." Being sore at ourselves can lead to self-pity. If we hold onto self-condemnation and never let go of the past, this could lead to a slip or relapse. Therefore, it is important to forgive ourselves as well as others. The Big Book promises that:

- "We are going to know a new freedom and 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...."

A

This can only be accomplished when we have also forgiven ourselves. Any time we can't forgive ourselves, we are not trusting in the goodness of others and our Higher Power. This could lead us to compulsively seek relief through media and our devices. To overcome this, we can pray and ask our Higher Power to help us forgive ourselves for any wrongs we have committed.

B

### A New Code of Living

To sum up: If we are to safeguard our sobriety and have a personality change, we must admit our wrongs, change our ways, ask our Higher Power for forgiveness, and forgive ourselves. Now that we are committed to doing whatever it takes to recover from media addiction, we lead our lives by a new code—a **code of tolerance, patience, kindness, and love**. Rather than seek revenge, we look for ways to help others. We find others who are wounded and still hurting, and we show them empathy. Our Higher Power will guide and support us in this new way of being if we ask sincerely.

A

### Finding Relief Through Confession

Let's now continue to look at what the Big Book tells us about Step 5.

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

Most of you have begun reading your Fourth Step to your sponsor. In taking Step 5, we are told that we need to share our "*moral inventory*" not only with ourselves and our Higher Power but also with another human being. This is essential for our recovery. In sharing "*the exact nature of our wrongs*" with another person, we find a relief we could never feel when turning to media. The Big Book authors are emphatic that if we don't share our wrongs with another living human being, we are at risk of relapsing into media drunkenness.

- "We think we have done well enough in admitting these things to ourselves.... In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further.... If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome [media addiction]. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience ... almost invariably they got drunk."

B

When we confess our resentments and fears to another person, we open our eyes to the shortcomings that had blocked us from the "*sunlight of the Spirit*." Here are the 5th Step promises found on page 75 of the Big Book:



- “We pocket our pride and go to it, illuminating every twist of character, every dark cranny of the past. Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone in 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 [media] 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.”

A

Those of us who have given away our Fourth Step can attest to this feeling of relief, serenity, and closeness to our Higher Power and others. Every time we share our Fourth Step Inventory with someone, we release bitterness, guilt, and shame—emotions that have held us back from manifesting the life purpose our Higher Power would have for us.

B

Through SHARING, we identify with others and realize we are not alone. We find freedom as our spiritual experience begins to unfold, and we witness our compulsive need for media being removed.

A

As we suggested last week, after taking the Fifth Step with your sponsor, please take about an hour of quiet time to pause and reflect on the Steps you have taken thus far. Take down the Big Book carefully read the first Five Steps and ask yourself if you have omitted anything.

B

Please continue to make a searching and fearless moral inventory using the *Long Form* worksheet. This process of cleaning up the wreckage of the past paves the way to a joyous and abundant future through the “*miracle of healing*.”

A

### Step Five Principles- Confession Leads to Freedom

Let’s look at the Principles of Step 5: “*Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.*”

#### The principle of **CONFESSION** leads to the principle of **FREEDOM**.

- Once we honestly look at our liabilities, we cannot stop there. If we keep our realizations to ourselves, we are very likely to fall back into our addiction for we are missing a crucial step: We must find the courage to share our shortcomings with another human being. We do this through the time-honored practice of **CONFESSION**.
- By embracing the principles of **COURAGE** and **CLARITY**, we pave the way to confession. Through confession, we see our liabilities clearly, and we acknowledge the values and principles we wish to live by. We are now free to choose a new way of life.
- Confession ultimately leads to **FREEDOM**. Media controlled our minds. Confession frees our minds. When we confess our fears, resentments, and character liabilities to another person, we are finally able to release the guilt, shame, and self-limiting beliefs that hounded us into using media for relief.
- Now turning to *real* people and to our Higher Power, we find a lasting relief, which media with all it promises of comfort, could never deliver. **CONFESSION** brings us daily

**FREEDOM.** Confession is essential if we have a slip. We must confess this misstep to someone as quickly as possible, so we may stop acting out and return to our newfound freedom.

B

### Looking Ahead

Tomorrow, we will take Steps Six and Seven. First-month members, if you have not filled out the 5th column on your Fourth Step Inventory Part 2 - *Liabilities to Assets*, please do so for our session tomorrow. Month two and three members complete your Liabilities to Assets worksheets on fear and sex. **Remember this worksheet in your packets.** We also remind you to attend your MAA home group and give service by sharing your program of recovery so far.

Now B will qualify on the Fifth Step and answer questions.

*If time permits, B qualifies on Step 5. End with the Serenity Prayer and answer any pending questions on the Fourth Step worksheets.*

END OF MONDAY MEETING

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## TUESDAY MEETING

*B qualifies on Steps 6 and 7 as time permits. Please ask a member to lead the group in the Set Aside Prayer.*

### STEPS 6 AND 7

A

**Welcome** to Day 2 of Week 3 of “Back to Basics, A Design for Living.” Please put down all nonessential electronic media while participating in these sessions.

We have asked **(name)** to lead us in the Set Aside Prayer.

*“Dear Higher Power, please help me set aside everything I think I know about myself, my problems, and about you. I ask that I may have an open mind so I might learn to live my life on a spiritual basis. Please help me see the truth so I can be restored to sanity. AMEN.”*

Thank you **(name)**.

### Step Review-Have I Let Go of My Defiance?

Before we move on to Step Six, let's consider the five Steps we have taken so far and ask ourselves whether we have taken them sincerely and thoroughly or whether there are places we are still holding back:

1. We admitted we were powerless over media—that our lives had become unmanageable.
  - Have I been honest about my media addiction? Have I accepted that my life is unmanageable when I use alcoholic media compulsively? Am I able to see that I have an allergy of the body and an obsession of the mind and that I have no defense against the first compulsive click? Can I now see that I must abstain from alcoholic media if I want long-term recovery? *Have I let go of my resistance?*

B

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
  - Am I willing to believe in a Power greater than myself? Do I have faith that this Higher Power can restore me to sanity? Am I willing to set aside everything I think I know about God and the universe? *Have I let go of my resistance?*

A

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
  - Have I decided to be faithful to my Higher Power rather than to my addictive media? Am I willing to turn my will and my life over to the God of my understanding? Am I willing to listen and follow the guidance from this Source rather than look for relief from media? *Have I let go of my resistance?*

B

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.

- Have I been courageous in looking at my past? Have I been honest in my reflections regarding my resentments, fears, behaviors, and motivations? Have I been thorough in identifying past patterns and character traits that led to my present unhappiness? Have I begun to find clarity in seeing my way out of my suffering? *Have I let go of my resistance?*

A

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

- Did I find the courage to honestly confess all my liabilities to my sponsor and Higher Power? Did I find relief in doing so? Did this process begin to free me from guilt and shame? Did I omit anything? If so, am I willing to confess this too? *Have I let go of my resistance?*

B

You will notice that the final question in each paragraph is: “Have I let go of my resistance?” Resistance often manifests as defiance, a common trait among those struggling with media addiction. As long as we cling to this resistance, we have not fully surrendered to the recovery process. Until we cultivate the willingness to release our defiance, true freedom from media addiction will remain elusive.

A

### Pausing To Reflect

We will now pause for one minute to reflect on these five questions and consider how our media recovery program is going so far. *[Time for 1 minute]*

By taking the first five Steps to the best of our ability, we have made a good beginning, but more action is required if we are to have the personality change and freedom from our media addiction that is promised by the Big Book authors.

B

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

#### **What Do You Mean I Have Defects of Character?**

A moment ago we were talking about defiance and now, in Step Six we are talking about “defects of character.” Defects and defiance are two words that many of us bristle at. You might be thinking:

- “As media addicts, our self-esteem is already fragile, and now you start to talk about our defects! We have already been examining ourselves in our 4th Step. We feel pretty humbled, and you hit us with these shaming, guilt-producing trigger words. Thanks a lot!”

So let's take a breath and look more closely at what the 6th Step means by “defects of character”:

- Your character reflects how the world perceives you—it's about your personality, behavior, and reputation. A character defect can be seen as an area for growth or improvement.
- Character traits that may not serve us well are simply habits or tendencies that can create challenges in our lives and relationships. Recognizing these traits is an opportunity for personal development and positive change.

Remember, character isn't just about what we say, but also what we do.

A

### You Are Not Something Wrong

It is our actions or inactions that people watch and judge us by. Whereas we may judge ourselves by our intent rather than what we actually do or don't do. Guilt comes when we have DONE something wrong or neglected to do something right. Shames presents itself when we feel we "Are Something Wrong" and nothing we can do will make us right.

B

Here is an important distinction: while we all suffer from character flaws, the part of you flowing from the Divine Source of all creation did not make a mistake with you. Your true self is already healed and whole; you have simply forgotten who you ultimately are. Rest assured, you are not "Something Wrong," but rather a unique expression of life, with your own special gifts waiting to be rediscovered.

A

Very often our shortcomings and imperfections are qualities within us that we can't seem to manage no matter how many self-help books we read or workshops we go to—for example, always showing up late, not keeping our promises, or chronically procrastinating. They are parts of our character that seem impossible to fix.

B

The comfort and relief that Steps 6 and 7 have to offer us is that we don't get to fix them. We don't have to fix them. We are going to surrender them and allow our Higher Power to take them away root and branch. This is, hands down, the coolest thing we get to do at this point in our 12-step process!

A

The Big Book authors ask us a simple question:

- *"Are we now ready to let [your Higher Power] remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can [your Higher Power] now take them all—everyone?"*

Our first impulse was "Heck yes! Take it all!" Because at first glance, Step Six seems like a piece of cake. Of course, we want all our character defects to be removed! We are so darned tired of suffering and feeling miserable.

## B

**What Do We Mean By Entirely?**

But we had to pause when saw the word “*entirely*.” This word means completely, 100 percent, totally, absolutely, without resistance or defiance. There is no bargaining or negotiating here. Step Six asks us for a legitimate surrender.

## A

So we need to pause and discern whether we are entirely ready to have our liabilities removed. Are we honestly ready to surrender them? Let’s not proceed if we are merely paying lip service to this Step. Here is our list of liabilities, see if there are any you still want to hold onto. Each reader please take two.

- **Self-pity:** Excessive, self-absorbed unhappiness over one's own troubles
- **Resentment:** Consequence of being angry or bitter toward someone for an extended period
- **Fear:** Preoccupation with the possibility of losing something you own or have or with not getting what you want
- **Selfishness:** Concern only for ourselves and our own welfare or pleasure without regard for others
- **Self-centeredness:** Making ourselves the center of the universe and wanting to control and play God
- **Dishonesty:** Deception, cheating, lying, stealing, or withholding the truth
- **False Pride:** Feelings of being *better than* (grandiosity, superiority, know-it-all all) or *less than* (shame, unworthiness, low self-esteem)
- **Jealousy:** Characterized by the fear of losing a valued relationship to a perceived rival, often manifesting as possessiveness and attempts to control a partner's interactions with others.
- **Mistrust:** Involves suspicion and doubt regarding another person's motives or reliability, often leading to defensive behaviors such as snooping or questioning their actions to confirm suspicions.
- **Envy:** The desire to have a quality, possession, or other desirable attribute belonging to someone else
- **Procrastination:** Putting off work or not following through with the right actions.

B

### A Moment of Pause

Observe how these character defects have affected your life and those around you. Take a moment to reflect: Where are you resisting change? Are there defects or limitations that you continue to want to hold on to? How or where do you continue to fall back into your comfort zones? Look for your blind spots. Here is where the truth will set you free.

*[Pause for 30 seconds]*

A

### Ask To Be Willing

We stated in our first session that we are not saints. Rather we are simply willing to live life on a spiritual basis. Therefore, we seek *spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection*. If we cannot say that we are *entirely* ready to have God remove our defects of character, the Big Book authors encourage us to ask our Higher Power to help us be willing:

- “*If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing.*”  
Willingness is key.

B

### How To Find Forgiveness

Sometimes, giving up a resentment feels impossible. We've built our life story and our identity on a wrong that has been committed against us. This is when we look to those qualities (or assets) that can help us overcome our resentments, and we ask “Creative Intelligence” for willingness and more willingness to let go.

A

We become open to relying on our Higher Power for guidance, clarity, and direction in taking action toward forgiveness. One early A.A. member shares her journey of becoming willing to release her resentments.

- “Self-pity and resentment were my constant companions, and my inventory began to look like a thirty-three-year diary, for I seemed to have a resentment against everybody I had ever known. All but one 'responded to the treatment' suggested in the steps immediately, but this one posed a problem.”
- “This resentment was against my mother, and it was twenty-five years old. I had fed it, fanned it, and nurtured it.... It had provided me with excuses for my lack of education, my marital failures, ... inadequacy, and of course, my [media addiction].... I was reluctant to let it go.... In my prayers [one] morning I asked God to point out to me some way to be free of this resentment.”

B

God answered her prayers. That same day she read an article in a magazine by a prominent clergyman who had written that if you want to be free of resentment, pray for the person you resent:

- “Ask for their health, their prosperity, their happiness, and you will be free. Even when you don't really want it for them.... Do it every day for two weeks and ... you will realize that where you used to feel bitterness, resentment, and hatred, you now feel [compassion,] understanding, and love. It worked for me then, and it has worked for me many times since, and it will work for me every time I am willing to work it.”

Emmet Fox, a spiritual teacher who was around in the early days of A.A. wrote:

- “Bless a thing and it will bless you. Curse it and it will curse you.... If you bless a situation, it has no power to hurt you, and even if it is troublesome for a time, it will gradually fade out, if you sincerely bless it.”

A

This quote and the passage in the Big Book above teach us that what we give forth returns to us. Resistance blocks us from receiving our blessings. When we bless others and bless our troubles, we are no longer hurt by them. When we fight and struggle with the way things are and with our need to be right, we lose the blessings we seek. **What we resist persists.**

B

When we resist, we mistakenly radiate resentment towards others who have harmed us, believing we are righting a wrong or getting even (if only in our hearts and minds). Then we learn that we have been dosing ourselves with this bitter poison of resentment and making ourselves ill. It is not easy to let go of resentments, but if we take action through prayer and include our Higher Power in the process, miracles will unfold in our lives.

A

### Decision Time Once Again

According to the Big Book authors, having taken Steps 1 through 5, it is decision time once again. During the Fourth and Fifth Steps, we identified our liabilities and assets using the Fourth Step Inventory - Parts I and II, which we discussed during our last few sessions. Through this exercise, we've been preparing ourselves to turn our shortcomings over to the God of our understanding.

B

We will now pause to meditate and pray to our Higher Power for the willingness to remove those character liabilities we are powerless over and are still holding on to. We also ask our Higher Power to lift the obsession of the mind. Are you willing to ask for these things to be removed? We will return after taking one minute to silently reflect on this question. *[Time for 1 minute]*

Now, it is time to answer the **Sixth Step question**:

*“Are [you] now ready to let God remove from [you] all the things which [you] have admitted are objectionable?”* If so, please say “yes,” when I call your name. If you can't say “yes” please state if you are willing to ask your Higher Power to help you to become willing. *[Stop screen share and call on all members of the group.]*

Thank you everyone! According to the Big Book authors, if you answered “yes” to this question **you have completed the Sixth Step** and are now ready to proceed to Step Seven.



## A

### The Principles of Step Six

Before we move on to Step Seven, let's take a look at the **PRINCIPLES OF STEP 6** by which we aspire to live. **Step 6**, "*Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.*" The principle of **WILLINGNESS leads to SURRENDER!** Could this be true? Could we finally surrender?

- **WILLINGNESS** is letting go of our reluctance to move forward. It means being open to doing something we have never done before. It is a byproduct of **FAITH**. Once we come to believe, we show our faithfulness to our Higher Power's will for us by becoming **WILLING**—willing to go to any lengths for recovery, willing to live life on life's terms, willing to live H.P.'s purpose for us. Being entirely ready, we are *ALL IN*.
- Willingness leads to **SURRENDER**. Our willingness in Step 6 prepares us for even more willingness in Step Eight (as we list all the people we have harmed and set out to make amends to them). We surrender our defects to our Higher Power, and by doing so, we give up our attachment to our liabilities."
- "In the past, we may have believed that surrender would ultimately lead to defeat, but it means victory over the unmanageability of our disease. In the past, we were merely compliant and tried to manage our liabilities merely to please others. When we **SURRENDER**, we allow our Higher Power to have all of us, good and bad, and to mold us into whom H.P. would have us be."

## B

Let's now look at Step 7:

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

After taking Step 6, all that is left to do is ask our Higher Power to remove our liabilities and to strengthen our assets, so that we may be of maximum service to Divine Source and our fellows. This prayer is found in the second paragraph on page 76 of the Big Book:

- *"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."*

## A

### Let's Unpack This One

This prayer is so significant that we should take a moment to unpack its meaning.

- It begins with "*My Creator.*" This recognizes that, no matter what we believe about ourselves, each of us emanates from a Divine Source, and we hold the qualities of this creative source within us.

- *“I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad.”* This part of the prayer reflects our willingness to be loved by our Higher Power completely. By admitting that God can now have all of us, we authentically lay ourselves bare, not shying away from our vulnerability, just as we would give ourselves to a trusted friend or partner—warts and all. In this prayer, we recognize that we have assets within us, just as we have liabilities.
- *“I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character.”* We pray for our defects of character to be removed. *Character* has to do with our personality, temperament, mentality, habits, and so forth, while *defect* implies imperfection, faults, weakness, limitations, shortcomings, and so on.
- *“... which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows.”* We seek to have those defects removed, which impede our usefulness to God and our fellows. What the Big Book authors remind us is that our character defects are not removed for self-centered reasons—simply to make us look or feel better. They are removed to serve our Higher Power and our fellow humans.
- *“Grant me strength as I go out from here....”* The last part of this prayer asks for the strength we need to stand where we are right now—accepting life on life's terms—and the strength to move forward.
- *“... to do your bidding.”* Earlier, when we took the Third Step, we decided to have a new director in the movie of our lives. In surrendering this role to our Higher Power, we ask for continual guidance from our Creator, reflecting our desire to carry out God's will.

If you are ready to take the Seventh Step, please read the following prayer out loud. I will begin, **B** will go next, and then we will go around the room. *[Stop screen share. Post the prayer below in the Zoom chat. Go around the room, and each person reads the prayer.]*

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

Congratulations! According to the Big Book authors, **you have now taken Step Seven!**

B

### The Seven Step Principles

We will finish this session by looking at the **PRINCIPLES OF STEP SEVEN**: *“Humbly asked [God] to remove our shortcomings.”* The principle of **HUMILITY** leads to the principle of **UNITY**.

- **HUMILITY** is the ability to see ourselves and others in a realistic and nonhierarchical way—to feel neither superior nor inferior. Without humility, we cannot own our shortcomings, nor can we change what we cannot see in ourselves. Humility allows us to release the guilt and shame that hold us back as we let go of the notion of perfection and begin to understand that God's forgiveness is a given.
- The principle of **HUMILITY** is simple and easy to understand: When we are humble, we can see both good and bad in every person. We do not place others on pedestals. Yet, we are willing to be right-sized and to listen to those who have come before us and who have experienced freedom. Thus, humility opens us up to others and to new possibilities.

- **HUMILITY** leads to **UNITY** because it bonds us with others and is the first step to true belonging. It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from, media addiction is the great equalizer. **UNITY** with other addicts allows us to be *just another bozo on the bus trying to find our way home*. **HUMILITY** and **UNITY** are prerequisites to Step 8 (being willing to make amends) and to Principle 8 (living lovingly).

A

### Looking Ahead

Thank you all for reading today. Tomorrow we will discuss Steps Eight and Nine. *[If time allows, B qualifies on Steps 6 and 7.]* We will now listen to **B** qualify on Steps 6 and 7 and then take questions.

*[After B qualifies, end with the Serenity Prayer.]*

END OF TUESDAY MEETING

## WEDNESDAY MEETING

*B qualifies on Step 8 if time permits. Please ask a member to lead the group in the Seventh Step Prayer.*

### STEPS 8 AND 9

**IMPORTANT: PUT THE 8TH AND 9TH STEP ACTION FORM INTO THE CHAT AT THE BEGINNING OF THE MEETING.**

A

Welcome to Day 3 of Week 3 of “Back to Basics, A Design for Living.” Please put down all nonessential electronic media while listening to these sessions.

We have asked ([name](#)) to lead us in the Seventh Step Prayer.

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

Thank you ([name](#)).

### Making A List

Now that we have taken Steps Six and Seven, let’s look at Step Eight.

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

When writing our Resentment Inventory, we listed all the hurts others caused us. Now it is time to look at where we may have caused harm. When we only see our side of the story, we get only half of the equation. We may believe that one person or institution is the cause of all the hurt and unhappiness in the situation and that we are the blameless victim.

B

As media addicts we very much like to view ourselves as victims. Holding firmly to our stories of what others did to us, we get to be right. Unfortunately, we have found that being “right” does not necessarily make us happier. It certainly did not give us freedom from suffering. Holding on to resentment is like taking a little of bit poison every day. If we were to be truly free, we had to open our minds to seeing both sides of the story.

A

In the Big Book Chapter 2, “*There is a Solution*,” the authors remind us that we have been sick with media addiction and that this illness has not only affected us but also our family, friends, employers, children, and loved ones.

- “An illness of this sort—and we have come to believe it an illness—involves those about us in a way no other human sickness can. If a person has cancer all are sorry for [them,] and no one is angry or hurt. But not with the [media addict’s] illness, for with it there goes

annihilation of all the things worthwhile in life. It engulfs all whose lives touch the sufferers. It brings misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad [spouses] and parents—anyone can increase the list.”

B

So now we want to make an honest attempt to clear away the pain and wreckage of our past. One way we do this is by making amends or restitution to those we have harmed. The Big Book authors mention that they “*Made a list.*” Remember we began to compile our list as part of our Fourth Step. It is now time for action.

- “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.”

A

### Mine Your Inventory

This is why we hold on to our Fourth Step Inventory. Within it lies our Eighth Step list of amends. Referring to the Fourth Step Inventory we go through our Inventory and uncover where we were at fault and where amends are called for. We ask ourselves where we were unwilling to forgive someone who we believe had harmed us. If we want to be free from suffering, we must find a way to forgive both ourselves and others.

B

### Others Were Doing The Best They Could

When we step into recovery, we begin to let go of being a victim, and we take responsibility for our part in any situation. We start to see that other people’s behaviors had nothing to do with us—that they too were acting out their disease. We acknowledge that our parents gave us the best they were equipped to give and that we also were doing the best we could. We admit that while certainly not always, we often allow ourselves to remain in harmful situations.

A

By taking full responsibility for everything that we have done and accepting what happened to us in the past (which cannot be undone), we start to see that everything has happened *for* us rather than *to* us. Every hardship has made us stronger.

B

### Complete Your Eighth Step Worksheet

You have been given a worksheet titled: “**B2B EIGHTH AND NINTH STEP – AMENDS ACTION FORM.**” Please complete this worksheet by tomorrow and be as thorough as you can. Please share your list with your sponsor this weekend.

A

### Merely Staying Sober is Not Enough

Looking at our past, we must also be honest about how we have harmed others through our media addiction. Merely staying sober by not bingeing on media is not sufficient for recovery. The Big Book authors tell us:

- “Sometimes we hear [a media addict] say that the only thing [they need] to do is to keep sober. Certainly [they] must keep sober, for there will be no [progress] if [they don’t]. But [they are] yet a long way from making good to [their partners, children, friends, employers] or parents whom for years [they have] so shockingly treated.... “
- “The [media addict] is like a tornado roaring [their] 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 [person] is unthinking when [they say] that sobriety is enough.”

## B

### How Has My Media Addiction Affected Others?

Bearing this in mind, we will now spend a few minutes looking at where our media addiction has affected other people. Please answer the following questions as part of your homework this week. Each reader read two.

- Where have you used media to avoid getting close to someone else? Who was hurt by this?
- How have you used media to fight with someone? Who was hurt by this? (Pass)
- How have you used media to gossip or destroy someone's reputation? Who was hurt by this?
- Where have you used media to avoid not working for your boss? (Include yourself if you are self-employed.) Who was hurt by this? (Pass)
- Where have you used media to avoid helping or giving service to others? Who was hurt by this?
- How have you used media to avoid seeking help from your Higher Power? Who was hurt by this? (Pass)
- How have you used media to avoid your own feelings? Who was hurt by this?
- How have you used media to avoid being in your body and in nature? Who was hurt by this? (Pass)

Remember to complete the “*People We Have Harmed*” worksheet before tomorrow's session so you may answer “yes” to taking Step Eight. **We have put the worksheet in the chat.** We will now prepare you to take Step Nine.

## A

### 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 of the Big Book.

- “Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris that 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 alcohol [or in our case, media addiction].”

We may be hesitant to make amends to those who are still upset with us or suspicious of our motives. The authors provide us with guidelines on how to approach these individuals:

- “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.... 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.”

B

In the last sentence, the authors clearly state our purpose for living—that we are here to serve our Higher Power and our fellows. They ask us to allow our actions, rather than our words, to demonstrate to others that we have changed.

- “It is seldom wise to approach an individual, who still smarts from our injustice to [them], 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 [acquaintances and friends are] sure to be impressed with a sincere desire to set right the wrong. [They are] going to be more interested in a demonstration of goodwill than in our talk of spiritual discoveries.”

A

### Amends To Someone I Don't Like

One of the most difficult amends to make is to someone we genuinely do not like. But whether we like the person or not, we must forge ahead.

- “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 [them] in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret.”

The Big Book authors even provide us with instructions on what to say:

- “Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue. Simply we tell [them] that we will never get over [our media addiction] 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 [them] what [they] should do. [Their] faults are not discussed. We stick to our own. If our manner is calm, frank, and open, we will be gratified with the result.”

B

### We Pay Our Debts

The authors are clear that we must clean up the ravages of our past and pay off our debts. In this process, we are encouraged to rely on God for the strength and courage needed to make good on our “*past misdeeds*.”

- “Most [media addicts] owe money. We do not dodge our creditors.... Arranging the best deal we can, we let these people know we are sorry. Our [media addiction] 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 [compulsively use media again] if we are afraid to face them.”

A

### Courage Is Facing The Fear

Keep in mind that courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is facing fear and walking through it. The Big Book authors instruct us to let the God of our understanding be our guide. This reliance on 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.”

B

### Seek Higher Power’s Guidance

We are advised to be very conscientious of how we make amends. We must be sure we are not hurting anyone or implicating others through our amends process. The more serious the situation, the more we seek our Higher Power's guidance. Also, please remember to review your amends with your sponsor (or a trusted fellow in recovery who knows us well) before approaching someone you have harmed. We need to be clear when making amends, and first taking them to our Higher Power and a trusted person in recovery, is always a good idea! The Big Book says:

- “Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people, we secure their consent. If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked [our Higher Power] to help, and the drastic step is indicated, we must not shrink.”
- “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 bygones be bygones. Each might pray about it, having the other one's happiness uppermost in mind.”

A

### How To Handle Infidelity

Media addiction in the form of pornography, dating, and hook-up sites, can cause real injury to loved ones and wreak havoc on the entire family. The Big Book authors carefully give us guidelines on how to approach our family and loved ones.

- “The chances are that we have domestic troubles. Perhaps we are mixed up with [a person online] we wouldn't care to have advertised.... [Media addiction and porn addiction] does complicate sex relations in the home.... [P]erhaps [a media addict] is having a secret and exciting affair with [a person] who understands. Whatever the situation, we usually have to do something about it. If we are sure our [partner] does not know, should we tell [them]?”
- Not always, we think. If [they know] in a general way that we have been wild, should we tell [them] in detail? Undoubtedly, we should admit our fault. [They] may insist on knowing all



the particulars.... We feel we ought to say to [them] that we have no right to involve another person. We are sorry for what we have done and, God willing, it shall not be repeated. More than that we cannot do; we have no right to go further. Though there may be justifiable exceptions, and though we wish to lay down no rule of any sort, we have often found this the best course to take.”

B

### How to Handle Jealousy

The authors invite us to allow the principles of the program to guide both partners in finding a healthy and healing resolution. We are reminded how difficult some amends can be, especially if jealousy is involved.

- “Our design for living is not a one-way street.... It is better ... that one does not needlessly name a person upon whom [they] can vent jealousy.... Keep it always in sight that we are dealing with that most terrible human emotion—jealousy.”

**Please read the article in your packets on envy and jealousy for more answers and resolutions.**

A

### A Period of Reconstruction is Ahead

Online gambling, debting, and compulsive shopping can have a grave effect on the financial security of families, employees, and businesses. In these cases, we must take sincere actions to right the wrongs we caused to those we promised to serve, love, support, and protect. The Big Book authors emphatically state that being sober with our media is only the beginning. We must take additional action if we are to recover.

- “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.**”

B

### Living the Steps

We are told that to recover from our media addiction, we don't just take the Steps; rather we *live* the Steps on a daily basis. Here is a story of one man who was willing to go to any length to recover from alcoholism:

- “While drinking, he accepted a sum of money from a bitterly-hated business rival, giving him no receipt for it. He subsequently denied having received the money and used the incident as a basis for discrediting the man. He thus used his own wrong-doing as a means of destroying the reputation of another. In fact, his rival was ruined. He felt that he had done a wrong he could not possibly make right.”

- “If he opened that old affair, he was afraid it would destroy the reputation of his partner, disgrace his family and take away his means of livelihood. What right had he to involve those dependent upon him? How could he possibly make a public statement exonerating his rival? After consulting with his wife and partner he came to the conclusion that it was better to take those risks than to stand before his Creator guilty of such ruinous slander.”
- “He saw that he had to place the outcome in God’s hands or he would soon start drinking again, and all would be lost anyhow. He attended church for the first time in many years. After the sermon, he quietly got up and made an explanation. His action met widespread approval, and today he is one of the most trusted citizens of his town.”

A

### Don’t Worry If You Can’t Right Every Wrong-But Don’t Delay

The Big Book authors tell us not to worry if we can't make amends to everyone we have wronged:

- “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.... There may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases. But we don’t delay if it can be avoided. We should be sensible, tactful, considerate, and humble without being servile or scraping. **As God’s people, we stand on our feet; we don’t crawl before anyone.**”

### Principles of Step Eight

We will end this session by learning the **PRINCIPLES OF STEP EIGHT**: *“Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.”*

The principle of **CONSIDERATION** leads to the principle of **FORGIVENESS**.

- **CONSIDERATION** is being conscientious of another person’s well-being and showing them kindness, thoughtfulness, and sensitivity. Consideration is the antidote to selfishness. When we consider our part in any problematic situation, we can see more clearly where we have harmed another. We begin to show others empathy and compassion. We become **WILLING** to stop blaming others and to forgive them instead.
- **CONSIDERATION leads to FORGIVENESS**, for when we consider the pain and unhappiness the other person is suffering, it becomes easier to release our grudges against them. This also makes it easier for us to feel compassion for ourselves and to **FORGIVE** ourselves. Self-forgiveness is essential in the recovery process. When we harm another person, we harm ourselves. A quote by Ian Maclaren states, *“Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle.”*

B

**Looking Ahead**

Tomorrow we will continue our discussion on Step Nine and how to make clean amends. Please make sure you bring your completed **B2B Eighth and Ninth Step – Amends Action Form** list with you tomorrow. A copy of this is in the chat. **B** will qualify now on Step Eight. *(If time allows.)*

*[Close with the Serenity Prayer.]*

END OF WEDNESDAY MEETING

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## THURSDAY MEETING

*If time permits, B qualifies on Step 9. Please ask a member to lead with the Seventh Step Prayer.*

### STEP 9 (CONTINUED)

A

Welcome to Day 4 of the third week of “Back to Basics, A Design for Living.” Please put down all nonessential electronic media while listening to these sessions.

We have asked (name) to lead us in the Seventh Step Prayer.

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

Thank you (name).

### Taking Step Eight Together

Before we continue with Step Nine, let us take **Step Eight** together. I will call your name, and please say “yes” if you made a list of your amends. *[Stop screen-sharing and call on group members.]*

Thank you! According to the Big Book authors, if you answered “yes” to this question **you have taken Step 8!** Now that you have made your list, you are ready to begin making amends. This, of course, requires more action.

B

### Make Your Amends As Soon As Possible

Our amends must be made if we are to have a lasting recovery from media addiction. Therefore, we strongly suggest making your amends as soon as you possibly can. Miracles will happen, and you will feel real freedom upon completing your amends.

A

The Ninth Step is often the Step where people get stalled. Once you have identified, with the help of your sponsor, which amends you must make, please work through your list systematically and swiftly. Stay the course and only pause *if* it has been revealed to you to delay specific amends. By not following through with our amends, we increase our chances of losing our sobriety. This has been our experience, and we urge you to keep this in mind.

B

Remember, we agreed at the beginning of this journey that we were willing to go to any lengths to recover. We might mistakenly believe that something in our life should take precedence; however, whatever we put ahead of our recovery is itself at risk of being lost if we are not solid in our sobriety. We therefore must prioritize and protect our recovery. Any negligence, procrastination or laziness should be replaced with vigilance, enthusiasm, and action.

A

### Dr. Bob Made His Amends In One Day

Dr. Bob, the Akron, Ohio A.A. cofounder, realized that he could not stay sober until he made his reparations. He was so sincere and desperate to recover from alcohol, he completed all his amends in one day.

- “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 (he was a well-known doctor in his town). ...At midnight he came home exhausted, but very happy. **He has not had a drink since.**”

B

### The Ninth Step Promises

The authors conclude with a list of blessings we can expect to receive once we've taken the Ninth Step. They tell us precisely what is going to happen after we commence clearing the wreckage of our past. These are the promises we can expect once we complete our amends.

- “If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are halfway 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.”

A

A new way of living awaits us if we diligently make our amends and commit to living them daily—a life filled with serenity and peace. Our self-centered fears will diminish, allowing us to walk freely in the world with our heads held high. Our connection with our Higher Power will grow, and we will know how to move forward in powerful and loving ways.

B

If cleaning “*our side of the street*” can transform our relationship with media in healthy ways and keep us blissfully connected to our Higher Power, is it not worth letting go of resentments and fully forgiving ourselves and others for their wrongdoings? Would we rather be right, or would we rather be happy?

A

### Higher Power Is Doing For Us What We Could Not

As you sincerely work these Steps—that is, turn your life over to your Higher Power, take personal inventory, share your shortcomings with another person, become willing to have these shortcomings removed, ask your Higher Power for guidance, and diligently make amends to those you've harmed—you will indeed find *“that God is doing for [you] what [you] could not do for [yourself].”*

B

This process has been repeated over and over by many of our members, and its promises have been realized time and again. It has indeed been time-tested. We invite you to test it for yourself. *“With all the earnestness at [your] command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start.”*

A

### What We Need To Know About Making Amends

As we become ready to embark on the **Ninth Step**, please keep in mind the sensitive and delicate nature of making amends. We must first prepare ourselves with the guidance of our Higher Power. As so many of us have learned the hard way, our attempts at making amends can backfire and cause more harm than good. So, let's review what we have learned about **MAKING AMENDS**. Each person read one bullet point.

- **Direct Amends**: We make direct amends whenever possible; meaning we go to the person we harmed and face them directly.
- We don't make direct amends if doing so would injure them or someone else. Consider the adage *“First do no harm.”* We have no right to compound any existing harm we have already created, not even if we are desperate to free our conscience. This would be a selfish act.
- We take all these considerations to God and to another person, such as our sponsor, who is neutral, objective, and knows how to make clean amends.
- **Indirect Amends**: If we cannot speak to the person we have wronged directly or determine whether it would be appropriate, we can write them a letter. If someone has passed away, we can still write them a letter. If we cannot locate someone we have wronged, we can write a letter to them and send it to ourselves.
- Another form of indirect amends would be for us to make financial or service contributions to organizations that help people overcome the type of harm we inflicted on the person (or institution) in our Amends List.
- By writing a letter of amends, we want to use our words, which have power, to let our Higher Power know we are sorry, and to reach out with our hearts to the other person—even if they are not in our lives—letting them know we admit our wrongs and would make them right if we could.
- **Living Amends**: Living amends may also take the form of an ongoing course of positive action towards a loved one, a person, or an institution we have harmed. We don't avoid creditors. We pay our debts. We stop compulsive gambling and spending.

- We are willing to let go of relationships (online, fantasy, or otherwise), which interfere with our committed relationships. We sincerely make amends and live them daily, with the help of our Higher Power.
- We invite our loved ones to allow us to change and to let go of the past with us. We ask them to pray with us, to help make our relationships more spiritual, and to find forgiveness and peace—as a couple, a family, or as friends.

B

### Practical Guidelines For Making Amends

Let us give you some practical guidelines for making amends. We will also provide you with a script you can use to help you make healthy and clean amends. Start by making the amends you think will be the easiest first. As we discussed above, there are three kinds of amends:

1. **Direct amends** entails contacting someone we've harmed directly and talking to them, either face-to-face or on the phone.

A

2. **Indirect amends** have to do with making amends when direct contact is not possible or appropriate. Sometimes we may need to pray for the person for a while to ensure we've truly forgiven them. Other times, it may be dangerous to contact someone, so we pray for them instead. If someone is no longer living or we've lost contact with them and cannot reach them in person, we can write them an *Amends Letter*, mailing it to them (or ourselves), and surrender it to a Higher Power.

B

3. **Living amends**: Through *living amends*, we change our behavior around the person we have harmed and do everything we can, through our actions, to show them that we are genuinely remorseful. Sometimes living amends must be made before we feel certain that we can live up to the direct amends we wish to make. In this case, we **opt first for action, then words**.

A

### MAKING DIRECT AMENDS

When making direct amends, it is wise to keep it simple. Here is an easy script to use:

- Here's what I have done wrong or here is where I was wrong.

*"I apologize for this"* or some of us also say, *"Could you forgive me for this?"*

Is there anything I can do to make this right?

Is there anything else I have done to harm you that you want to discuss?

I will repeat the above four lines to help us incorporate them into our amends: *"Here's what I have done wrong. I apologize for this (or could you forgive me?). Is there anything I can do to make this right? Is there anything else I have done to harm you that you want to discuss?"*

B

### CLEAN AMENDS AND DIRTY AMENDS

**Clean amends** are clear and concise. They focus on what you did wrong and on the other person's well-being. Here is an example of simple clean amends:

- *Mary, I yelled at you the other day and you did not deserve that. I regret having done that. Can you forgive me for this? Is there anything I can do to make this right with you? Is there anything else I don't know about that you want to discuss with me?*

A

**Dirty amends**, on the other hand, add an excuse and shift the focus back to you. Here is an example of dirty amends:

- *Mary, you know the other day when I raised my voice, I was having a really hard day. My boss yelled at me, I got rear-ended and threw my back out, and I think I am coming down with a cold. Anyway, I'm sorry. I was just having a bad day.*

B

As you can see in this example, the whole apology was about the person making the amends rather than the person it was meant for. Dirty amends are full of self-pity, where you're trying to get the other person to feel sorry for you, so they won't be upset with you.

A

### DOUBLE-DOG DIRTY AMENDS

When you make amends to someone hoping that they will see they have wronged *YOU* and need to make amends to *you*, some of us refer to it as a **Double-Dog Dirty amends**. This has nothing to do with making amends: It is sheer manipulation—trying to get the other person to admit they are wrong to allow your ego to hold on to its sense of entitlement to its resentment. Here is an example of a double-dog dirty amends:

- *Mary, you know the other day when I raised my voice, I was having a really hard day. I had a flat tire on the way to work, my boss yelled at me, you did not call me on time, and I felt like you were giving me the cold shoulder. Anyway, I am sorry I raised my voice. I was just having a bad day.*

B

If we are to make clear, clean amends, we must let go of manipulation and self-centeredness. Sometimes you might think you need to make amends when you don't.

- This is where your Higher Power and the help of a wise advisor or sponsor come into play. Don't attempt to figure out your amends on your own. Seek help and feedback from others.
- Also, remember this: Don't make amends until you feel you have fully forgiven all parties and have worked through your role in the situation. Otherwise, you may end up making a "Double-dog Dirty" amends.

A

### Keep It Simple



Keep amends simple and sincere and leave the rest to your Higher Power. If you have expectations about how the other person is supposed to react, you may end up despondent if the person doesn't accept your amends or responds in a different way than you expected.

- Sometimes people are not ready to forgive and will not welcome your amends. Don't take this personally. Allow people time. Remember that we make amends for our personal recovery and surrender the outcome. People are free to accept them or not. This is why we keep our amends clean and simple.

B

It is often suggested that we make living amends until our Higher Power tells us the right time to make direct amends. Listen to your Higher Power every step of the way.

A

### Start Now To Make Amends

Please begin to make amends to those whom you have harmed. By making amends, you will help repair the ruptures you created and will convert the barriers of separation into bridges of reconciliation. By leaning on your Higher Power, you will receive much-needed “*strength, inspiration, and direction*” to change lives, starting with your own. Here are two good reasons:

- All addictions have one thing in common—the inability to connect with other people. Very often, we attach to our addictions instead. We love to spend time with fantasy characters in movies and shows but find it difficult to enjoy real people. This is why making amends is essential to overcoming our media addiction.
- When we make amends sincerely, we connect with another human being in an authentic and considerate way. Our hearts open to them, and we often experience their hearts opening up in return. Because we now feel nourished by these personal connections, we no longer fear people or need to hide compulsively behind our media. We begin to view others through a different lens, and we start to see ourselves in a new light.

B

Part of your assignment for our next session is to begin making amends, one at a time, to those on your *People We Have Harmed* list. Start with just one person. If you are not sure how to proceed with specific amends, ask for help from your sponsor or spiritual advisor and, of course, from your Higher Power. Log the details of your amends on the **B2B Eighth and Ninth Step – Amends Action Form** to keep track of the amends you make. Do not delay unless there is good reason or guidance not to.

A

### Principles of Step Nine

Let's end our discussion by looking at the **PRINCIPLES OF STEP 9**: “*Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*”

The principle of **INTEGRITY** leads to the principle of **PEACE**.

- **INTEGRITY** means living in alignment with your values and inner truth. It entails being honorable and honest and having the decency to rectify a wrong. When we live in integrity, we reflect fairness, sincerity, and trustworthiness. We respect ourselves and others.

- We make certain not to injure anyone when we make our amends. We hold on to our integrity even if we feel tempted to let ourselves off the hook. Integrity means we make clean amends, without delay. We show others that they can trust us. We take responsibility for *our side of the street*. We build our character through completed amends made without expectations.
- **INTEGRITY** requires **FAITH** and **CLARITY** and demands even greater **COURAGE** than what we cultivated in Step 4. Integrity *is* courage combined with **HUMILITY**, **WILLINGNESS**, and **CONSIDERATION**.
- Step Nine promises that “*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.*” Thus, making amends with integrity leads us to **PEACE**—the peace of knowing we are good with God, good with ourselves, and good with others.

B

### Looking Ahead

This concludes our discussion of Step Nine. Tomorrow, we'll explore a method to help you find forgiveness for those who've wronged you. In your packets, you'll find the "Forgiveness Letter" assignment:

Write an apology letter to yourself from one of the people or institutions you listed in your Fourth Step Inventory. Include everything you'd want to hear from them to heal your resentment. Keep it simple, short, and concise. Be prepared to read this letter to your sponsor during your upcoming appointment this weekend.

A

Please DO NOT write The Forgiveness Letter about someone to whom you have extreme emotional trauma. (Save this for therapy) Please use wisdom and common sense. This exercise is meant to heal you and not trigger you. So please, if you have any questions on who to write about, ask your sponsor or Group Sponsors.

Thank you all for reading today. Now let's listen to **B** qualify on the Ninth Step. *[If time allows.]*

*[Close with the Serenity Prayer.]*

*Group Sponsors: Tomorrow is Forgiveness Friday! Please select two second or third-month members to play A and B, acting out the Forgiveness Letter demonstration. To ensure everyone gets to experience the full effect of the letter, make sure to give the script to the members today and stop screen sharing for the demonstration. Here is the script: [https://35836e37-e9d3-4e04-a90c-eed292ede8b4.filesusr.com/ugd/7ab8aa\\_17ecb0c839594cf6a35803c4c671e240.pdf](https://35836e37-e9d3-4e04-a90c-eed292ede8b4.filesusr.com/ugd/7ab8aa_17ecb0c839594cf6a35803c4c671e240.pdf)*

END OF THURSDAY MEETING

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## FORGIVENESS FRIDAY

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR FORGIVENESS FRIDAY:** *Today 2 members in their 2nd or 3rd month will demonstrate the Forgiveness Letter to the group. You can either ask in advance or choose two members today. Please decide which one will read A and who will read B. Please give the “actors” the script ahead of time. The demo script is on the website. You may place it in the chat: [https://35836e37-e9d3-4e04-a90c-eed292ede8b4.filesusr.com/ugd/7ab8aa\\_17ecb0c839594cf6a35803c4c671e240.pdf](https://35836e37-e9d3-4e04-a90c-eed292ede8b4.filesusr.com/ugd/7ab8aa_17ecb0c839594cf6a35803c4c671e240.pdf)*

A

### Opening

Welcome to our Back to Basics “Forgiveness Friday.” Please put down all nonessential electronic media while participating in this session and join us in saying the WE version of the Serenity Prayer:

*God, grant us the serenity to accept the things we cannot change, the courage to change the things we can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

Today, we will demonstrate how to write and process a *Forgiveness Letter*. Please pay close attention to this method. Understanding this exercise will enable you to write your own letter and experience the freedom and healing this process can provide.

B

### The Reason For the Forgiveness Letter

The Fourth and Ninth Steps ask a lot from us. First, we are asked to admit that we have done something wrong in the past. Second, we are asked to make restitution for the harm we have caused to others. Many of us find it problematic to admit our wrongs when we feel the person hurt us more than we hurt them. We feel we have a right to hold on to the resentments and blame we have for them. We cast ourselves in the role of victim, and we want to keep the other person in the role of perpetrator.

A

Sometimes, we feel we must hold on to these roles. Otherwise, we might be blaming the victim. Yes, some of us were very hurt when bad things happened to us—things that should not have happened. We may believe that these things should not be forgiven or forgotten, ever. This is part of our story, part of our identity. We may feel we are entitled to this resentment. Otherwise, we could be hurt again.

B

For a real media addict, it is imperative to rethink these roles. If we resist this, a state of self-pity and defiance can easily take hold and undermine our recovery, driving us back to media drunken insanity. If we want to be free—not only of the media obsession but free of all resentments and fear—we must be willing to set aside everything we think we know about a situation and look at it from as many angles as we can. In doing so, we begin to loosen up those hard-held beliefs that have caused our suffering for all these years.

## A

This method *will* work if you are sincere, and if you really want to see the truth—*if you really want to find freedom*. However, this method *will not* work if you cling to staying in the role of the only injured party. The truth is, given the choice, we all would like to find a way to forgive and let go of the past. It's painful to hold onto resentment, fear, and contempt for those we feel owe us an apology. It's a waste of a good life. For this reason, we write the apology letter we always wanted to have—to help loosen the grip our resentments have had on us.

## B

As we work the Steps, we now live on a different plane of consciousness. We are trying to live our lives on a spiritual basis. We are trying to live our lives according to principles rather than our emotions. We know, that if we are going to maintain long-term abstinence and recovery, we must free ourselves from the bitterness of the past. But how?

## A

One tool we have found to be effective in being able to forgive and move on is the *Forgiveness Letter*, which is an apology letter we write to ourselves from the person who has harmed us and then we re-read the letter twice, using turnarounds—once from us to the person who has harmed us, and then from us to ourselves. This helps us see all sides of a situation and helps us to forgive others as well as ourselves. Today we show you how to correctly do the Forgiveness Letter.

## B

### Review of How to Write the Forgiveness Letter

Again, as stated yesterday, here is how to write the *Forgiveness Letter*:

***Using one person on whom you wrote your Fourth Step Inventory Long Form or someone on your resentment list, write an apology letter from that person to you.***

Please write a letter from a person who you feel has harmed you. Let them give you the apology you always wanted or needed to hear from them, so you may be able to heal this resentment. Write everything you would like to hear them say to you, so that you may feel satisfied and happy.

Don't hold back, and please keep the letter simple and concise. Be prepared to read this letter to your sponsor during your one-hour appointment this weekend.

## A

### What to Expect in our Forgiveness Letter Demonstration

First, we need **[or we have asked]** two volunteers from 2nd and 3rd month of our Back to Basics group to act out two parts:

- a) The Sponsor/Facilitator
- b) The person going through the Forgiveness Letter process

[You may have already asked 2 people, but if not get two volunteers right now. Once you have 2 volunteers...]

We will ask NAME to read Part A (Sponsor/Facilitator) and NAME to read Part B (Person writing the letter).

We have placed the script in the chat. [ [https://35836e37-e9d3-4e04-a90c-eed292ede8b4.filesusr.com/ugd/7ab8aa\\_17ecb0c839594cf6a35803c4c671e240.pdf](https://35836e37-e9d3-4e04-a90c-eed292ede8b4.filesusr.com/ugd/7ab8aa_17ecb0c839594cf6a35803c4c671e240.pdf) ]

## B

Please read the provided generic script we have provided exactly as written. We are not using any personal letters or experiences for this demonstration. Instead, our actors will perform for us what this process should look like when done correctly.

After the demonstration, we will ask our two “actors” to share their experience playing the parts of the Facilitator/Sponsor and Sponsee. [2 minutes each]

Then we will ask a 2nd or 3rd-month member who has previously shared their own *Forgiveness Letter* to qualify for 2 minutes.

After this, we will ask a 2nd or 3rd-month member who has facilitated the *Forgiveness Letter* process to qualify on this process for 2 minutes.

We will then go around the room and invite each member to share what it was like to witness the *Forgiveness Letter* process, or if you have done this letter before, you may share your own experience.

We will wrap up by answering any questions you may have regarding the Forgiveness Letter.

## A

### What to Expect in the Demonstration

In today’s demonstration, Name of A will act as the sponsor, and Name of B will act as the sponsee. The sponsee will read their letter, and A will ask them questions. Please be aware that when you are working with your sponsee, you will witness someone working through a process of discovery and forgiveness. This may be an emotional experience for the person who is reading their letter as well as for you as you witness it. We ask you to hold this space sacred as you witness this process so we may all be enlightened and healed by this experience.

## B

As a reminder, this is simply a demonstration. Name of B did not write the letter they will read. They are merely acting out a sample letter created for this demonstration. In your case, however, you will be writing the *Forgiveness Letter* from a person for whom you wrote a Fourth Step

Inventory Long Form or someone on your resentment list. Again, we ask our volunteers in the demonstration to please stick to the provided script.

Are there any questions before we begin? If not, let's have our two volunteers come forward to demonstrate the Forgiveness Letter process. We will now go out of Zoom "share mode" so we can be present to witness this live demonstration.

**\*\*\*\*\*LIVE DEMONSTRATION\*\*\*\*\***

A

Okay, let's begin. **[Name of B]**, who did you write your Fourth Step Inventory Long Form on?

B

My mom.

A

Okay, good. Please read the letter from your mom just as you wrote it.

B

**Dear [Name of B],**

**First, let me tell you how much I love you. You were always so special to me. When you were growing up, I loved watching you dance and sing. You were quite the entertainer.**

**I want to apologize to you, my dear (B), for all the times I was not there for you, for all the times I was in a drunken stupor and could not see what was going on in your life. I am sorry I was not there to protect you from your overly strict and abusive teacher and that I could not see how hard you were trying to be a good child. I am sorry that I taught you things that hurt you and made you feel inadequate.**

**I would never want to hurt you. I love you. I am so sorry for my inability to see you and understand what was going on for you. Can you forgive me for abandoning you?**

**If there is something I can do to make this right with you, please let me know. I want all to be right with us going forward.**

**Love,**

**Mom**

A

Thank you. How does it feel to hear this apology?

B

I feel good. I have always wanted her to see that she hurt me by not being there for me.

A

Thank you. In this situation, what roles did you cast your Mom in?

B

I cast her in the role of abandoner, of an unfit mother. As someone who didn't love me enough to protect me.

A

Thank you. What roles did you cast yourself in?

B

The lost child. The victim of abuse by my teacher. The good child who is not being validated. Someone unworthy of my mother's attention.

A

Thank you. What roles did the other person cast you in?

B

Someone who didn't need protection. Someone doing okay without her. Someone she didn't need to worry about.

A

Thank you. As far as you can observe, what roles did your mother cast herself in?

B

Someone barely holding it together. Someone who was trying to be a good mother and teach her child how to be good and how to get to Heaven. Someone who wants the best for her child.

A

Thank you. Now read the letter again and this time read it as if this is the apology letter YOU wrote to your mom. **Hint:** Keep it simple and clear when changing words and keep it as close to the original letter as possible.

B

I will read the same letter as if I wrote it to my Mom, changing words and phrases to fit her and the situation.

**Dear Mom,**

**First, let me tell you how much I love you. You have always been so special to me, even when I didn't show it. When I was growing up, I loved watching you bake cookies and plan holidays. You were quite the cook, and you loved making holidays special.**

I want to apologize to you, my dear Mother, for all the times I was not there for you, for all the times I was in a media blackout and a self-absorbed fantasy stupor and could not see what was going on in your life. I am sorry I was not able to tell you about my strict and abusive teacher at school and that I could not see how hard you were trying to be a good Mom. I am sorry that I believed things that hurt you and made you feel guilty for them and inadequate.

I would never want to hurt you. I love you. I am sorry for my inability to see you and understand what was going on for you. Can you forgive me for abandoning you?

If there is something I can do to make this right with you, please let me know. I want all to be right with us going forward.

Love,

(B)

A

Thank you. How does it feel to give this apology?

B

I feel sad. I can see that I didn't see her either. I didn't see what she was going through. I can see that I didn't trust her enough to tell her about my school teacher and how afraid I was. I can also see how much she did for the family and how she made the holidays awesome. Basically, I can see that it was not all bad. There were a lot of good times too.

A

Thank you. As you reread it, did you notice if you still cast your mother in the same role as before?

B

No, I was beginning to see her as more loving than I had remembered. She was there for me more than I gave her credit for. I think this time, I cast her in the role of caring mother rather than abandoning mother.

A

Thank you. Did you notice if you were in the same role you cast yourself before?

B

No. I can see where I hurt my mom—that I abandoned her, that I didn't see her, that I didn't appreciate her or really know what she was going through. I can see that I was in a media stupor—that I was a drunk too, that I wanted to escape too. I can see that I was just like her.

A

Thank you. Does this situation look any different to you from this perspective?



B

It does, though it's hard to admit it. I still feel like she should have been there for me because I was the child, and she was the parent, but I think I'm looking at it with more adult eyes now. I can see that she was doing the best she could, given everything that was going on in her life. I can see that she loved me, even though I wanted her to show it in a different way. I can also see that I punished her for not being the mother I wanted and that my behavior towards her hurt her.

A

Thank you. Now read the letter again and this time read it as if this apology letter is a letter YOU wrote to YOURSELF. Please slow it down so you can really FEEL your apology.

B

I will read a letter that I wrote to myself, changing some words to make it clear what I did to me.

Dear **(B)**,

**First, let me tell you how much I love you. You have always been so special to me. When we were growing up, I loved watching us dance and sing. We were quite the entertainers!**

**I want to apologize to you, **(B)** for all the times I was not there for you—for all the times I was in a media-drunken stupor and could not see what was going on in your inner and outer life. I am sorry I was not there to protect you from the strict, abusive teacher by either speaking up or finding adult support and that I could not see how hard you were trying to be good but instead repeatedly told you how bad you were. I am sorry that I told you things about yourself that hurt you and made you feel inadequate.**

**I would never want to hurt you. I love you. I am so sorry for my inability to see you and understand what was going on for you. Can you forgive me for abandoning you by not letting you be your authentic self?**

**If there is something I can do to make this right with you, please let me know. I want all to be right with us going forward.**

**Love,**

**(B)**

A

Thank you. How does it feel to give this apology to yourself?

B

It feels personal. It feels like I am now really getting in touch with myself and seeing how I don't love myself enough, how I abandon myself, and how much my self-talk is abusive and unkind. I did always tell myself how bad I was. I never let myself off the hook. I shamed myself all the time. I never stood up for myself.

A

Thank you. As you reread it did you notice any recurring roles that you have played out with yourself?

B

Dictator. Abuser. Strict disciplinarian. Abandoner. Never satisfied with who I am. Shaming myself.

A

Thank you. Did you notice more deeply how you have limited yourself with these roles?

B

Yes, I am harder on myself than anyone else. I abandoned myself by not speaking up and by not allowing myself to feel worthy. I don't validate myself, and I expect other people to do that for me. This limits my ability to take care of myself and be happy.

A

Thank you. Does this situation look any different to you from this perspective?

B

Yes. I can see that when it comes to hurting myself, I do it better than anyone else. I can see that others are not as hard on me as I am on myself. I can see that I need to find ways to be kinder and more loving to myself.

A

Thank you. Now, let's do some recasting. What roles can you recast the other person in that would serve you both?

B

I think I am going to say, "loving mother," because she was loving. She did the best she could. She still is trying to make me happy.

A

Thank you. What roles can you recast yourself in that would serve you, the other person, and the world?

B

Resourceful adult. A good parent to myself. Compassionate and understanding of myself. A nurturing, loving, forgiving friend. I could be the kind of mother to myself I wanted my mother to be for me.

A

Thank you, B.

[This ends the demonstration. GS pick up at A and B now]

A [GS]

### A Few Important Points

Thank you A and B for a great job in demonstrating the Forgiveness Letter. Before we open the meeting for sharing on what we have just witnessed, we would like to go over a few important points. You may have noticed that as sponsors, or facilitators, for the Forgiveness Letter, we do not comment on what the sponsee shares. The sponsor says only, “*Thank you.*” Their job is to listen and hold space for the sponsee to find their own answers to the questions.

B

Our job as sponsors is to allow our sponsees to make their own discoveries. The only time a sponsor might give some feedback is if the person reading the letter feels stuck and asks for help. Then it might be appropriate to give some suggestions for the turnarounds. We do not try to do this worksheet for them. What makes this process valuable is the sponsee's own self-discoveries.

A

You will notice that as the sponsee reads their second and third letters—the apology to the other person and the apology to themselves—they try to keep each one as close to the original as possible. However, there may be instances when an exact turnaround does not feel authentic, as it does not apply to you literally. In these instances, you may replace words or phrases with something more applicable, that rings true. Also please keep the letter simple and not too long so that you may have easier turnarounds.

B

### Qualifications and Sharing

We would now like to hear from A and B, who demonstrated the Forgiveness Letter. Let's first hear from B then we will hear from A.

What was it like B playing the part of the sponsee? [2 min]

What was it like A playing the part of the sponsor [2 min]

**Qualification by the sponsee:** We have asked (member) to qualify for two minutes on what it was like to read their Forgiveness Letter to their sponsor. [Time for 2 minutes]

**Qualification by the sponsor:** We have asked (member) to qualify for two minutes on what it was like to facilitate their sponsee's Forgiveness Letter. [Time for 2 minutes]

## A

We will now open the meeting up for sharing. Each person has 2 minutes to share. Please keep the focus on what it was like to witness the Forgiveness letter demonstration or, if you have done this exercise before, on what it was like to share your own Forgiveness Letter or facilitate it.

*[Time for 2 minutes. Stop sharing 5 minutes before the hour.]*

## B

Thank you all for sharing. Does anyone have any questions about the Forgiveness Letter? This is not a discussion. We wish only to answer any questions you might have about how to write the letter and do the turnarounds.

*[Q&A for 5 mins]*

We will now close our meeting with the Serenity Prayer.