

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

WEEK 4 – Steps 10, 11, and 12

MONDAY MEETING

This meeting will run 5-7 minutes longer. *B qualifies on Step 10. Ask a member to lead the group in the Third Step Prayer.*

STEP TEN

A

Introduction and Housekeeping

Welcome to the fourth week of “Back to Basics: A Design for Living” for media addicts. We encourage you to disconnect from all nonessential electronic media during these sessions. To fully harness the recovery power of this process, it’s crucial to engage with the material without distractions.

Since 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 Third Step Prayer:

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

Thank you (name).

B

Thanks to Our Amazing Sponsors!

Before we begin our final week of Back to Basics, we would like to thank all our sponsors for supporting their sponsees over the past three weeks. We would also like to thank all those who have served our meetings and to those of you who will step up to serve as Group Sponsors for the next month of B2B. This is a “we” program. The only way it works is when we all pitch in.

A

A Reminder: This is a Progressive Illness

In the Chapter “More About Alcoholism,” the Big Book authors make it clear that true media addicts (of the hopeless variety) have lost the ability to control their media use because they lack power:

- “We [media addicts are individuals] who have lost the ability to control our [media consumption]. We know that no real [media addict] ever recovers control. All of us felt at

times that we were regaining control, but such intervals—usually brief—were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization.”

- “We are convinced that [media addicts] of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period, we get worse, never better... We are like [people] who have lost their legs; they never grow new ones. Despite all we can say, many who are real [media addicts] will not believe they are in that class.”

We reiterate this assertion in the Big Book about our lack of control and power for a reason: At this point in our media fast, some of us may be thinking that once the fast is over, we will be able to resume using our alcoholic media without triggering a binge.

B

Holding onto the hope that we can one day use media like others is not only unrealistic—it’s dangerous. The Big Book authors continue:

- “...Most of us have believed that if we remained sober for a long stretch, we could thereafter [use media] normally. ...We have seen the truth demonstrated again and again: ‘Once [a media addict], always [a media addict].’ Commencing to [use] after a period of sobriety, we are in a short time as bad as ever. If we are planning to stop [bingeing on our alcoholic media], there must be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to [media].”

This reality may be disappointing, but accepting it is essential for our freedom. We know it’s the truth we must face every day: once we cross the line into true media addiction, there’s no going back to the way we were. Just as a cucumber, once turned into a pickle, can never become a cucumber again, our minds and bodies have been changed by our addiction in ways that can’t be undone. We may recover, but we are never cured.

A

Have You Begun to Make Amends?

Last week, we took Steps Five through Nine. If you have completed the People We Have Harmed worksheet and have begun making amends, please state your name and say “yes.” I will start with (name), and then go around the room.

[Stop screen share and call on members.]

Thank you all! Please take a moment to acknowledge how far you have come.

We encourage you to make amends as soon as possible. You will find, as we have, that a whole new life will unfold when you do.

B

Steps One Through Nine are Only the Beginning

A well-known actor and martial artist was once asked, “Which belt is the hardest to earn?” Everyone assumed he’d say the black belt. But he surprised them: “The white belt,” he replied. Why? Because the white belt demands the most courage. It takes humility, perseverance, and the willingness to be a true beginner. The hardest part isn’t learning the moves—it’s facing your self-

doubt, frustration, and fear of the unknown. Every other belt, every achievement, is built on this foundation.

A

That's exactly what Steps One through Nine are for us. They are our white belt—the groundwork of discipline, honesty, and willingness. With these steps, we reach point zero: a place of true beginning, where real growth in understanding and effectiveness can finally start. Steps One through Nine plant the seed of rearranging our character and are the prerequisites for Steps 10, 11, and 12.

B

Growing in Understanding and Effectiveness

Now let's look at Step Ten, which is about the daily upkeep of our recovery and the maintenance of emotional sobriety.

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

After we complete step 9, the Big Book goes on to say: “This brings us to Step Ten, which suggests we continue to take **personal inventory** and set right any new mistakes as we go along. We **vigorously** commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have **entered the world** of the **Spirit**. Our next **function** is to **grow** in **understanding and effectiveness**. This is **not** an **overnight** matter. It should **continue** for our lifetime.”

Let's break down this important 10th Step message:

- *“Vigorously commenced this way of living.”*
We don't approach recovery passively or half-heartedly. To "vigorously commence" is to actively and energetically begin living by the principles of the Steps, making them a daily habit and not just a one-time event. It's about bringing enthusiasm and commitment to our new way of life.
- *“We have entered the world of the Spirit.”*
This signifies a profound spiritual shift. We are no longer living only for ourselves or according to old patterns of self-will. Instead, we are now living with spiritual principles—honesty, humility, service, and love—at the center of our lives. We are connected to something greater than ourselves and open to spiritual growth.
- *“Our next function is to grow.”*
Everything we have done before is just planting the seed. We don't have a plant yet. Step Ten is where we begin to nurture that seed, allowing it to grow through continued action and self-reflection.
- *“Grow in understanding and effectiveness.”*
 - Understanding means deepening our awareness of ourselves, our motives, our relationships, and our connection to a Higher Power. It means learning from our experiences and being open to new insights.
 - Effectiveness means becoming more skillful in applying spiritual principles in our daily lives. It's about being able to handle life's challenges with grace, to make amends promptly, and to help others more effectively.
- *“This is not an overnight matter.”*
Recovery and spiritual growth are lifelong processes. We don't become perfect or fully

healed instantly. Patience and persistence are required, as real change unfolds over time through daily practice.

- *“This should continue for our lifetime.”*
The work of recovery doesn’t end after the Steps are completed once. Maintaining sobriety and spiritual health is an ongoing journey. We must continue taking personal inventory, making amends, and seeking growth for as long as we live. This lifelong commitment is what keeps us free and growing.

This approach to Step Ten ensures that recovery is not just about cleaning up the past, but about living and growing every day, grounded in spiritual principles and persistent action. This is our “Design for Living.”

A

Living in the Solution

Someone once said, “What you consume, consumes you. What consumes you, controls your life.” If we are consumed by fear, self-pity, and anger, it will be nearly impossible to experience tolerance and love. The authors provide specific directions on how to abide by these codes and rid ourselves of self-centered thinking and behavior.

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

B

In a moment, we’ll introduce a worksheet you can use to practice this process. But notice the sequence of Step 10:

- First, we ask our Higher Power to remove the character liability.
- Next, we discuss it with someone else, just as we did in Step Five. A personal self-appraisal isn’t enough; sharing it with another person is essential.
- Finally, we **resolutely**—meaning with determination—turn our thoughts to someone we can help.

A

Our Tenth Step isn’t complete until we have reached out to help another person. By following these directions, we stay out of self-centered fear and in the solution, living by the code of love and tolerance. This is how we maintain our spiritual condition and continue to grow in recovery.

B

Tenth Step Promises

The Tenth Step is where the real transformation of recovery becomes visible—not just in what we do, but in how we experience life. The Big Book describes a remarkable shift that happens when we persistently practice these principles: we begin to live in the freedom and peace that once seemed impossible. These are the Tenth Step Promises. They show us what’s possible when we maintain our emotional sobriety by sustaining our spiritual condition by continuing to take personal inventory:

- “And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even [media]. For by this time, sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in [media]. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward [media] has been given to us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes!”
- “That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we have been placed in a position of neutrality, safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.”

A

Keeping In Fit Spiritual Condition (FSC)

How do we “keep in fit spiritual condition?” By taking a daily inventory. What is our REWARD? “A daily reprieve.” The Big Book describes this “daily reprieve.”

- “It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for [media] is a subtle foe. We are not cured of [media addiction]. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of [Higher Power’s] will into all of our activities. ‘How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done.’ These are thoughts that must go with us constantly. **We can exercise our willpower along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.**”

Another reward is God-consciousness—direct contact with the “Spirit of the Universe.”

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

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

B

The 10th Step promises are the litmus test of recovery—when we are living these promises, our alcoholic media is no longer a problem. We are free. The only way we can continue to live this freedom is to continue to practice Step Ten. The promises tell us that recovery is not about constant struggle, but about entering a new way of life where **peace, neutrality, and freedom** become our **reality**.

A

Tenth Step Worksheets in Your Packets

You will find Tenth Step worksheets, in Short and Long Form, in your Back-to-Basics packet. Please download and/or print these forms to have them handy. Let’s go through the Short Form. Here’s a brief example of a filled-out worksheet. Will each reader read one bullet point?

- **Example of 10th Step Short Form Worksheet**

Open with the Third Step Prayer:

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

- **1: Share Resentment:**

I’m resentful of/at: Mary

The causes: (19 words or less.) She gossiped about me to my boss, Henry.

Affects my self-esteem, security, ambitions, personal relations, and sex relations because she told him about my surgery, and this may affect my job, household income, and relationship.”

Is any fear involved? Yes.”

- **2: Resentment Prayer:**

“God, _____ is spiritually sick. How can I be helpful to them? God save me from anger. Help me avoid retaliation or argument. Thy will be done.”

Or:

“God, I resent Mary. Help me show her the same tolerance, pity, and patience I’d give a sick friend. Help me avoid retaliation. Thy will, not mine, be done.”

- **3: Character Liabilities:**

Where am I selfish? I want special treatment, and I’m trying to control how Henry sees me. I also assume Mary is jealous and out to compete with me, though I don’t know that.

Where am I dishonest? I should have told Henry myself. I blame Mary out of fear. I’m also creating stories about Henry’s reaction.

- **I made it mean:** Mary and Henry are out to get me.

Where am I self-seeking? I’m trying to play God, focusing only on my own problems, not Henry’s position.

- **Where am I frightened?** Losing my job and not having money for the mortgage.

Where am I inconsiderate? I didn’t consider Henry’s concerns, nor was I honest about my medical situation at the start.”

- **4: Core Fear—Fear Form:**

What fear feeds this resentment? Losing my job and not being able to work.

Why do I have it? Henry fired someone who couldn’t keep up; my doctor may require me to rest for a month.

Where was my trust, Infinite God or Finite Self? In my finite self.

Did self-reliance work? No.

- **Fear Prayer:**

“God, please remove my fear and direct my attention to what you’d have me be.”

What would God have me be? Honest with Henry, understanding of Mary, forgiving. Trust my boss, trust God.

(Optional HP message:) “Dear One, I will help you walk through this. Trust me, and those who care for you. Be faithful and honest.”

- **5: Do I need to make amends?** Yes

Direct Amends or Living Amends: Direct amends.

I need to make amends to Henry for delaying honesty about the surgery, and to Mary for yelling at her.

6: Turn to Service. How Can I Help? I’ll help my co-worker fix the printer.”

- **7: Feedback (Optional)**

“That’s all I have. Any feedback?”

Sponsor: You did a great job being honest. I relate to fears about health and work. It sounds wise to make amends to Henry and Mary. When will you do that?

You: After this call.

Sponsor: That sounds great. Thank you for sharing.

- **8: Closing Prayer: End with the Seventh Step Prayer:**

“My Creator, I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. Please remove every defect which blocks my usefulness to you. Grant me strength as I out from here to do your bidding. Amen.”

B

Practicing Step Ten

As you complete your Tenth Step worksheet, you may find it helpful to refer to the downloadable PDF in your packets, ***The Nature of Our Wrongs***, which offers examples of how selfishness, dishonesty, self-seeking, or fear might be showing up in your life.

Another option is the “**Long Form**” Tenth Step Inventory, which breaks the process into three parts with specific questions and can be used when a situation is especially triggering. You can use either the **Short** or **Long Form** worksheets; choose what works best for you in each particular situation. What is important is that you do this when a resentment or emotional situation arises.

A

This week, we invite everyone to complete one Tenth Step with your sponsor and one with a group member, and to facilitate a Tenth Step for someone else in the group. Use the WhatsApp chat to connect and coordinate with each other. Please complete these as soon as possible. If you have any questions, we’ll address them at the end of today’s session.

B

A Review of How to Practice Step Ten

Even after we ask our Higher Power to remove selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear, we need to stay alert. When these emotional tendencies show up, we pause and we ask for help right away and talk about them with our sponsor or another MAA member. If we've hurt someone or acted inconsiderately, we make amends as soon as possible. We don't want to carry these problems into tomorrow—we clean up our side of the street as we go.

A

Next, we turn our attention outward and look for someone we can help, maybe by calling another MAA member or offering service. This action brings us back into balance and reminds us what really matters. When we reflect on our situation, we can ask ourselves:

- What would consideration look like here?
- What would faith look like?
- What would generosity look like?
- What would Love have me do?

B

The Tenth Step Prayer

Here's a simple prayer, inspired by early A.A. members and found in the spirit of page 84:

- **“Higher Power, please help me watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When these crop up in me, help me to immediately ask you to remove them and to discuss these feelings with someone. Please help me to quickly make amends if I have harmed anyone, and resolutely turn my thoughts to someone I can help. Help me to be loving and tolerant of everyone today. Amen.”**

Acceptance is the Answer to All My Problems

As part of understanding emotional sobriety and Step Ten, we'd like to share this story of an early A.A. member who writes about his daily Tenth Step and about how, upon taking all Twelve Steps, he concluded that acceptance was the answer to all his problems. (We will substitute the term *media* for *alcohol* and *MAA* for *A.A.*)

- “If there ever was anyone who came to [MAA] by mistake, it was I. I just didn't belong here. Never in my wildest moments had it occurred to me that I might like to be a [media addict]. ...Of course, I had problems, all sorts of problems. If you had my problems, you'd [binge on media] too, was my feeling... To this day, I am amazed at how many of my problems—most of which had nothing to do with [media addiction] ... have become manageable or have simply disappeared since I quit [getting drunk on media]...”
- “It helped me a great deal to become convinced that [media addiction] was a disease, not a moral issue; that I had been [bingeing] as a result of a compulsion, even though I had not been aware of the compulsion at the time; and that sobriety was not a matter of willpower. The people of [MAA] had something that looked much better than what I had, but I was afraid to let go of what I had in order to try something new; there was a certain sense of security in the familiar.”
- “After I had been around [MAA] for seven months, ... I was finally able to say, ‘*Okay, God. It is true that I, of all people, strange as it may seem, and even though I didn't give my permission, really, really am a [media addict] of sorts.*’ And it's all right with me. When I

stopped living in the problem and began living in the answer, the problem went away. From that moment on, I have not had a single compulsion to [get drunk on media].”

- “And **acceptance** is the answer to *all* my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation—some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God’s world by mistake. Until I could accept my [media addiction], I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life’s terms, I cannot be happy. I must concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.”
- “... and acceptance taught me that there is a bit of good in the worst of us and a bit of bad in the best of us; that we are all children of God and we each have a right to be here. When I complain about me or about you, I am complaining about God’s handiwork. I am saying that I know better than God.” For years, I was sure the worst thing that could happen to [me] would be that I would turn out to be a [media addict]. Today, I find it’s the best thing that has ever happened to me. This proves I don’t know what’s good for me. And if I don’t know what’s good for me, then I don’t know what’s good or bad for you or for anyone....”
- “Before [MAA] I judged myself by my intentions, while the world was judging me by my actions.” ...My serenity is inversely proportional to my expectations. The higher my expectations ... the lower is my serenity. ...I ... [ask] myself, *How important is it, really? How important is it compared to my serenity, my emotional sobriety?*”
- “And when I place more value on my serenity and sobriety than on anything else, I can maintain them at a higher level... I do whatever is in front of me to be done, and I leave the results up to [God]; however it turns out, that’s God’s will for me. ...[For] my serenity is directly proportional to my level of acceptance. When I remember this, I can see I’ve never had it so good.”

A

Taking the Tenth Step Together

Now, I’ll read the Tenth Step Prayer aloud. Please close your eyes and listen, letting the words settle in your heart as you prepare to answer the Tenth Step question:

Higher Power, please help me watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear. When those crop up in me, help me to immediately ask you to remove them and to discuss these feelings with someone. Please help me to quickly make amends if I have harmed anyone, and resolutely turn my thoughts to someone I can help. Help me to be loving and tolerant of everyone today. Amen.

B

If you have completed the first Eight Steps and are working on your Ninth-Step amends, please be ready to answer these questions:

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

If so, please state your name, followed by “yes.” I’ll start with (name), and then we’ll go alphabetically around the room.

[Stop screen share and call on members, including GS.]

Thank you, everyone! According to the Big Book, those who answered “yes” have now taken Step Ten.

A

The Principles of Step Ten

We will now look at the principles of Step Ten: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.”

The principle of PERSEVERANCE leads to the principle of TRANSFORMATION.

- **PERSEVERANCE** is persistence, determination, steadfastness, patience, and diligence. It means falling down ten times and getting up eleven. We will work the Steps for the rest of our lives, God willing. There will be days we fall short and days we make mistakes. Sometimes we may even take a step backward, but within Step Ten, we commit to persist until we succeed. Our goal with step work is spiritual progress, not spiritual perfection.
- In our daily prayers, we ask God to do for us what we could not do for ourselves—to help us “continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.” When these crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately (**CONFESSION**) and make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone (**INTEGRITY**). Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help (**GENEROSITY**). “Love and tolerance of others is our code.”
- Daily **PERSEVERANCE** ultimately leads to **TRANSFORMATION**. There is a difference between change and transformation: change is ego-based, while transformation is spiritually based. Transformation is like the difference between a caterpillar and a butterfly—once the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it cannot go back.
- Steps One through Nine serve as the **foundation** of our recovery. Step Ten, however, is the step of real transformation. We must persevere if we are to transform into beautiful butterflies, and transformation does not happen overnight. It occurs as we persevere over time, often when we are not looking. The principles of Step Ten allow our Higher Power to transform us, one day at a time, if we persevere.

B

Assignments and Looking Ahead

Please use the Tenth Step worksheets when you find yourself becoming resentful, angry, fearful, or agitated, and call your sponsor or another member to work through this Tenth Step with them. Please do all your 10th Step assignments this week. Thank you all for your commitment and devotion to recovery. Tomorrow we will discuss Step Eleven.

We will now pray out and then listen to B qualify on the Tenth Step

[Pray out and share after the prayer]

[Stop screen share.]

[End with the Serenity Prayer.]

Let's close with 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.

END OF MONDAY MEETING

TUESDAY MEETING

B will qualify on Step 11. Please ask a member to lead the group in the Tenth Step prayer.

STEP ELEVEN

A

Opening with the 10th Step Prayer

Welcome to the second session of the fourth week 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 Tenth Step prayer:

Higher Power, please help me watch for Selfishness, Dishonesty, Resentment, and Fear. When those crop up in me, help me to immediately ask you to remove them and to discuss these feelings with someone. Please help me to quickly make amends if I have harmed anyone, and resolutely turn my thoughts to someone I can help. Help me to be loving and tolerant of everyone today. AMEN.

Thank you (name).

Understanding What We Mean By a Design for Living

In the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, the phrase “a design for living” appears several times, especially in the early chapters. The authors make it clear that A.A. is not just a way to stop drinking—it’s a blueprint for a new way of life, or “A Design for Living.”

B

Many of us began our 12-step journey thinking our problem was simply media insanity. We believed we just needed a self-improvement plan to control our lives and media habits—if we could only fast from all media, everything would be fine.

A

As we started working through the steps and surrendering some of our ego, we found relief and began to feel better about ourselves. We thought, “I’ve got this now. I know my problems and how to put down the phone or remote.” We made new friends and did things we hadn’t done in years. But some of us confuse feeling better with truly getting better.

B

The truth is, this isn’t a self-improvement program—it’s a spiritual-improvement program. We’re not just learning how to manage our media use; we’re learning how to live and grow spiritually, in which we depend on a Higher Power to guide us in all things.

A

There’s a saying that captures this difference: “Church is a place where they say, ‘*Here are the principles—please live them.*’ The 12-step program says, ‘*Here are the principles—you will not be able to live them.*’

B

What is Your Intolerable Situation?

Remember what we read together from the Big Book in our first week:

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

So, let us ask you: What is your **intolerable situation**? Is it just media, or is it something deeper? For many of us, our obsessive use of media wasn’t the real problem. In fact, for a long time, media/tech were our solutions—until it became the bigger problem. Yes, in the end, our media addiction was an intolerable situation!

A

But fasting from media is not recovery from media addiction, just as abstinence alone is not recovery from alcoholism. True recovery is when something inside us is fundamentally rearranged. Working Steps 1 through 9 begin that rearrangement, or psychic (soul) change. But the real “design for living” is found in Steps 10, 11, and 12.

B

There’s an old saying in AA: “*If you want to know why you’re drinking, stop drinking.*” By now, most of us have been fasting from media for at least three weeks—some much longer. Have our lives become more manageable? In some ways, we can say, “Yes—the media insanity has quieted.” But in other ways, we’ve felt more emotionally raw or unsettled. Some of that is withdrawal, but some of it is simply learning to live life on life’s terms, without the escape of media and tech.

A

We have found that the further we drift from our Higher Power, the closer we get to our addictive media. The reverse is also true. This isn’t a theory—it’s our experience. Relapse doesn’t start with a click or a binge.

B

It unfolds in four stages: spiritual, emotional, mental, and finally, physical. Steps 10, 11, and 12 address all of these. In fact, they are the only defense we know against that first click, that first slide back into old patterns. As we read in the first week:

- “But the actual or potential alcoholic, with hardly any exception, will be **ABSOLUTELY UNABLE TO STOP DRINKING ON THE BASIS OF SELF-KNOWLEDGE**. This is a point we wish to emphasize and re-emphasize, to smash home upon our alcoholic readers as it has been revealed to us out of bitter experience.”

A

Self-knowledge alone will never be enough. Our hope, our freedom, and our new design for living come only when we surrender and connect to something greater than ourselves—a Power that can do for us what we could never do alone.

B

Fred's Story Reimagined for the Media Addict

Just for fun, let's look at Fred's story in the Big Book—not as a tale of alcohol, but as a modern parable about media addiction. We will tell his story as if we are talking about someone who is a media addict rather than an alcoholic.

- “Fred is a partner in a well-known tech consulting firm. His income is good, he has a fine home, is happily married, and is the father of promising college-age children. He's charismatic and makes friends with everyone. If ever there was a successful professional, it's Fred. To all appearances, he is a stable, well-balanced individual. Yet, he is addicted to media.”

A

However well-adjusted Fred was, a digital burnout landed him in the hospital. He was ashamed and didn't want to admit he had a problem with tech and media. He told himself he just needed to rest his mind.

- “Far from admitting he was a media addict, he told himself he came to the hospital to rest his nerves. The doctor suggested he might be worse off than he realized... We told him what we knew about media addiction. He was interested and conceded that he had some of the symptoms, but he was a long way from admitting that he could do nothing about it himself.”
- “He was positive that this humiliating experience, plus the knowledge he had acquired (from us), would keep him off addictive media for the rest of his life. Self-knowledge would fix it. He made up his mind to quit his alcoholic media altogether. It never occurred to him that perhaps he could not do so...”

B

Fred would not believe himself a media addict, much less accept a spiritual remedy for his problem. But that wasn't the end of Fred's story. He disappeared for a while, but soon enough, he was back in the hospital. Let's let Fred speak for himself:

- “I was much impressed with what you fellows said about media addiction, and I frankly did not believe it would be possible for me to binge again. ... I reasoned I was not so far gone as most of you, that I had been usually successful in overcoming my other personal problems, and that I would therefore be successful where you had failed. ... I felt I had every right to be self-confident, that it would be only a matter of exercising my willpower and keeping on guard.”
- “As I crossed the threshold of my hotel room, the thought came to mind that it would be nice to scroll through a couple of news feeds before dinner. That was all. Nothing more. I opened my favorite app and started scrolling. Then I watched a few videos. After dinner, I decided to check social media before bed, so I did.”
- I remember staying up most of the night watching and scrolling, and the next morning, I felt exhausted and ashamed. I have a shadowy recollection of missing meetings and disappointing my family. Then came the hospital with the unbearable mental and physical suffering.”

A

Fred realized that self-knowledge and willpower were not enough. He experienced what we call a “mental blank spot.”

- “As soon as I regained my ability to think, I went carefully over that evening. Not only had I been off guard, but I had made no fight whatever against the first click. This time, I had not thought of the consequences at all. I had commenced to use media as carelessly as though it were harmless. I knew from that moment that I had a media addict’s mind. I saw that willpower and self-knowledge would not help in those **strange mental blank spots**. ... It was the crushing blow.”

B

When Fred finally admitted defeat, the spiritual solution and the program of action were given to him. This time, he was open to the spiritual solution.

- “Then they outlined the spiritual answer and program of action ... The moment I made up my mind to go through with the process, I had the curious feeling that my media addiction was relieved, as in fact it proved to be. Quite as important was the discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems. I have since been brought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before. ... I would not exchange its best moments for the worst I have now. I would not go back to it even if I could.”

A

The Lesson of Fred's Story

Fred’s experience illustrates that self-knowledge and willpower are insufficient to overcome media addiction. The story emphasizes the necessity of conceding to one’s innermost self that one is a media addict and the importance of seeking a spiritual solution, relying on a Higher Power for defense against the first click.

B

This is Not a Self-Improvement Workshop

This is why a Higher Power is absolutely essential. Everything we’ve done so far—every inventory, every amend, every act of surrender—has been about moving closer to that Power. If we think this is merely a self-improvement workshop or that our main goal here is to fast from media, we’re missing the “Holy Grail” of recovery. Every single step we’ve taken has been to help connect, get closer to, and rely on a Power greater than ourselves—a Power that can restore us to sanity.

A

The 12 Steps are not tools for self-mastery or mere self-control. They are a daily practice of surrender, connection, and spiritual growth. This design for living asks us to reach for something beyond ourselves, to trust in a Higher Power, and to let that Power guide every part of our lives. Over time, we discover that true freedom and lasting change do not come from our own willpower, but from aligning our lives with the wisdom and strength that only a Higher Power can provide.

B

There’s a saying: “If you walk toward God, God will run toward you.” This is not about trying harder or being better on our own. It’s about opening ourselves to something greater, and allowing that Presence to do for us what we could never do alone. When we seek that connection, we find

a new power, a new peace, and a new direction for living—one that is truly sustainable and transformative.

A

Bound by Limitations: The Struggle of Lower Power Living

During our active media addiction, we were governed by our lower power - the part of us that urged us to retreat, to make ourselves small and insignificant. Media consumption became our primary focus, and in turn, it consumed us. We lived reactively, driven by our feelings and our ego's desperate need for safety and self-importance. Immersed in media binges, we essentially worshipped "false idols," trapped in the delusional thinking of our lower power (or false self).

B

Guided by a Higher Power: Aligning Our Lives with the Limitless

When we entered MAA's Back to Basics, the Big Book immediately encouraged us to seek a Power greater than ourselves - something beyond our ego or addiction. We were told that this power could restore us to our authentic, sane selves. To achieve emotional and media sobriety, we needed to elevate our perspective from a lower power to a "Higher Power."

A

In Steps Two and Three, we discovered this Higher Power within ourselves and our fellowship. However, the Big Book emphasizes that this is just the beginning. We must continually strengthen and deepen our connection with this power. This realization leads us naturally to the next step in our journey:

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

B

Step Eleven asks us to do three things:

1. To improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power through prayer and meditation,
2. To pray only for knowledge of our Higher Power's will for us, and
3. To be given the power to carry out the Will of our Higher Power.

Unpacking Step Eleven

Seven key terms are essential in Step Eleven, and it's important to review them before we continue: Prayer, Meditation, Conscious, Contact, Knowledge, God's Will, and Power. These concepts are vital for grasping the essence of this step. *Each reader, please read one each.*

- **Prayer:** A sincere appeal for help or an expression of gratitude directed to our Higher Power.

- **Meditation:** The practice of focused contemplation, silent reflection, mental concentration, and calming the mind.
- Being **Conscious:** Possessing active awareness or knowledge of something.
- **Contact:** The state of actively communicating, connecting, or interacting with another entity.
- **Knowledge:** The acquisition, comprehension, and understanding of information about a specific subject.
- **God's Will:** A personal guidance from a Higher Power, aimed at achieving the greatest good for all involved.
- **Power:** The capacity to act effectively and forcefully to accomplish our purpose, mission, or goals.

A

These definitions reveal that our task is to develop a daily ritual where we **purposefully** invite the presence of a Power greater than ourselves. In this spiritual practice, we reflect upon and communicate with this Power, much like we would with a trusted mentor or confidant. Through this daily connection, we gain the insight necessary to align with our Higher Power's vision for our lives. Moreover, if we sincerely request it, we'll be granted the strength and ability to act in harmony with the guidance we receive from this Higher Power.

A

References to Two-Way Prayer

The Big Book encourages us to develop conscious contact with the God of our understanding, frequently referencing Two-Way Prayer. For example:

- "...So we clean house with the family, asking each morning in meditation that our Creator show us the way of patience, tolerance, kindliness, and love."

We are invited to take daily quiet time, making conscious contact with our Higher Power. Through meditation, we receive guidance for living with patience, tolerance, kindliness, and love. The authors remind us:

- "Step Eleven suggests prayer and meditation. We shouldn't be shy on this matter of prayer. Better [people] than we are using it constantly. It works if we have the proper attitude and work at it."

B

Imagine receiving expert advice for your life at no cost, except for your time. When we seek God's guidance, we find new power, peace, happiness, and direction. The Big Book explains how this guidance comes:

- "God speaks directly to us through inspiration, an intuitive thought, or a decision."

We are encouraged to bring our specific questions to God during meditation:

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

And we are to pray sincerely for guidance and strength:

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

These examples from the Big Book show us how to begin living in the "realm of the spirit" through prayer and meditation.

A

Daily Reviews

The Big Book authors provide step-by-step instructions on how to stay in conscious contact with our Higher Power. They suggest we conduct regular reviews with our Higher Power—in the morning, at night, and as needed throughout the day. At night, we review the day's activities and bring these matters to our Higher Power.

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

B

A Practical Guide to the Eleventh Step Review

The Eleventh Step invites us to deepen our conscious contact with our Higher Power through prayer and meditation. One of the most effective ways to do this is through a daily review—a practice that helps us see both our assets and liabilities, much like the inventories we did in Steps Four and Ten. This balanced self-examination has a proven record for helping addicts stay spiritually on course.

A

It's important to remember: there's no single “right” way to do an Eleventh Step review. Some people prefer to reflect in the morning, others at night. What matters is that you find a rhythm that works for you. We encourage you to try this Short Form worksheet in your B2B packets, as a starting point, and see what it reveals for the next few weeks.

B

The Nightly Eleventh Step Questions

The Big Book (page 86) offers a set of questions for end-of-day reflection. These are designed to help us see where we were aligned with spiritual principles—and where we fell short. Consider these prompts each night. *Each reader, please read three.*

- Was I resentful?
- Was I selfish?
- Was I dishonest?
- Was I afraid?
- Do I owe an apology?
- Have I kept something to myself that should be discussed with another person at once?
- Was I kind toward all?
- Was I loving toward all?
- What could I have done better?

- Was I thinking of myself most of the time?
- Did I think of what I could do for others?
- Did I think of what I could pack into the stream of life?

After reviewing these questions, we ask for God's forgiveness and guidance on what corrective measures to take.

A

Why This Matters

This daily review is more than a checklist; it's a spiritual practice that keeps us honest, humble, and connected. It helps us notice patterns, make amends quickly, and stay open to growth. Over time, this process transforms our thinking and our actions, grounding us in the principles we're learning.

B

Some of us find it helpful to share our 11th Step review with an action partner. Others write it out as part of their nightly routine. However you approach it, let this be a time of honest self-reflection and quiet listening for your Higher Power's direction.

A

Morning Quiet Time

The Big Book encourages us to begin each day with a period of quiet time, grounding ourselves spiritually and preparing for what lies ahead. This daily practice starts by inviting God to guide our thoughts, setting the stage for Two-Way Prayer and openness to spiritual direction. As we reflect in silence, we seek answers and inspiration from our Higher Power, writing down any insights so we can revisit them later. The authors offer clear guidance for this process:

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

B

If we face indecision, we ask God for inspiration or an intuitive thought, then relax and trust that the right answers will come.

- "We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle. We are often surprised how the right answers come after we have tried this for a while... We find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it."

We conclude our quiet time with a prayer for guidance throughout the day:

- "We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will and are careful to not request for ourselves only."

This simple routine helps us remain open to divine direction and supports a life rooted in spiritual principles.

A

Conscious Contact Throughout the Day

The Big Book instructs us to maintain conscious contact with our Higher Power as we move through the day. Whenever we feel agitated or uncertain, we pause and ask for the right thought or action:

- “As we go through the day, we pause, when agitated or doubtful, and ask for the right thought or action. We constantly remind ourselves we are no longer running the show, humbly saying to ourselves many times each day, ‘Thy will be done.’”

By doing this, we reduce the risk of fear, anger, worry, or poor decisions and become more efficient and less exhausted:

- “We are then in much less danger of excitement, fear, anger, worry, self-pity, or foolish decisions. We become much more efficient. We do not tire so easily, for we are not burning up energy foolishly as we did when we were trying to arrange life to suit ourselves. It works—it really does.”

Experience shows that when we consistently surrender and let our Higher Power guide us, life becomes much easier.

B

We May Experience Dry Spells

At times, we may feel disconnected from our Higher Power or off-track in our spiritual practice. These dry spells are normal and can signal the need to deepen our efforts. Our “daily reprieve” depends on maintaining our spiritual condition, so it’s important to honestly examine our actions and attitudes during these periods. Often, these feelings arise because we have taken our will back in certain areas, become defiant, or neglected to make necessary amends. When this happens, we must take action to reconnect with the source of “all knowledge and power.”

- “We [media addicts] are undisciplined. So, we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined. But this is not all. There is action and more action. ‘Faith without works is dead.’”

A

By recognizing these moments and responding with renewed commitment, we restore our connection and continue to grow spiritually. We must train our minds to invite the presence of a Higher Power. For most of us, it takes time to become proficient at listening for divine guidance, but with practice, we develop this ability, and what once seemed like a hunch or rare inspiration becomes a regular part of our thought process.

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

B

When we ask God for direction and strength, we are calling upon the “*Spirit of the Universe*” for guidance and power to overcome our difficulties. In other words, “*When God guides, God provides.*” Please take a moment to write this profound sentence down. “***When God guides, God provides.***” *[Pause for 30 seconds]*

A

The Importance of Quiet Reflection

Quiet reflection is essential for building faith that “when God guides, God provides.” In moments of stress or the urge to return to addictive media, sitting quietly and listening for guidance helps us stay connected to our Higher Power. As the “How to Listen to God” booklet explains, meditation involves being open to divine guidance, writing down the thoughts we receive, and discerning whether they are honest, loving, considerate, and generous. We act only on guidance that meets these criteria, ensuring our actions align with God’s will rather than self-will.

B

Now I would like to invite you all to close your eyes, and I will lead us in the **Eleventh Step Prayer**. Silently allow these words to seep into your heart and to connect you with your Source of Power.

“God, should I find myself agitated, doubtful, or indecisive today, please give me inspiration and help me to have an intuitive thought or a decision about this problem I face. Higher Power, help me not to struggle. Instead, help me to relax and take it easy. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful that you are running the show. Please free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done, always.”

A

Remember: The Eleventh Step is about far more than simply abstaining from media or any specific behavior, though we do ask our Higher Power to help us remain vigilant, honest, and committed in our media abstinence. Its true purpose is to guide us toward a new way of living, one grounded in daily spiritual connection, honest self-examination, and a willingness to grow. This is the essence—the very heart—of our design for living.

B

Important Distinction: What is the Difference Between Steps 10 and 11

Since both Steps 10 and 11 encourage us to reflect and take action regarding our mental and emotional shortcomings, it’s important to clarify the differences between them.

- **Tenth Step:** “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.” The Tenth Step emphasizes daily accountability and focuses on our interactions with others. We take immediate action to admit our wrongs and make amends, often with the support of a sponsor. This quick personal inventory encourages us to shift our focus from ourselves by taking action to help someone else.
- **Eleventh Step:** “Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God’s will for us and the power to carry that out.” In contrast, the Eleventh Step is a more introspective process that centers on our relationship with ourselves and a Higher Power. It involves seeking guidance for our actions in life through prayer and meditation.

While the 10th Step involves taking action based on our personal inventory, the 11th Step focuses on seeking guidance from our Higher Power and taking action from that exchange. Together, these steps balance self-awareness with spiritual development.

A

Principles of Step Eleven

Let's now look at the **PRINCIPLES OF THE ELEVENTH STEP**. **Step Eleven** – *“Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood [God], praying only for knowledge of [God's] will for us and the power to carry that out.”*

The principle of **AWARENESS** leads to **KNOWLEDGE**, and the principle of **KNOWLEDGE** leads to **POWER**.

- We discovered three Principles in Step Eleven: **AWARENESS**, **KNOWLEDGE**, and **POWER**. The Eleven Step asks that we improve our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation. *Conscious contact* is a moment-to-moment **AWARENESS**, which allows us to tune in to our Higher Power's guidance in our daily activities. We are told that a *psychic change* is possible just by being **AWARE** of a Higher Power.
- **AWARENESS** leads to the principle of **KNOWLEDGE**. The more we stay in daily contact with our Higher Power, the more knowledge we receive regarding how to solve our problems. It becomes clear to us that *“When God guides, God provides.”* As the adage goes, *“Knowledge is power.”* Thus, it follows that as we receive more knowledge, our **POWER** grows. This is the power to carry out the Will of our Higher Power. It is the power to live our soul's purpose daily.”

When we first arrived at MAA, we faced the reality that we lacked control over our tech and media addiction, which had led us into despair. As the Big Book states, "Lack of power, that was our dilemma. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves."

B

Again, our main objective in working the 12 Steps has been to uncover this greater Power that can solve our problems. By embracing the principles of Step Eleven, we learn that no problem is insurmountable when we connect with our Higher Power for strength and guidance.

11th Step Assignment for Today: Create a Job Description for Higher Power

Here is a brief assignment for you to complete after this meeting. If you're unable to do it immediately, please make sure to finish it by this evening. We will share the assignment in the chat now. Here it is:

Create two columns:

1. What you **need** from your Higher Power
2. What you **do not** need from your Higher Power

Complete both columns by tomorrow's session and read them to your sponsor.

[Put the assignment in the chat]

A

Looking Ahead

Tomorrow, we will proceed to the Twelfth Step. Our meeting tomorrow may run 5-10 minutes longer. Please plan accordingly. Now, B will qualify on Step 11 and take questions.

[You can pray out first and then qualify if you are at the “end of the meeting” time]

[Stop screen share.]

[End with the Serenity Prayer.] Let's close with 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.

END OF TUESDAY MEETING

WEDNESDAY MEETING

This meeting will last 5 minutes longer. Please encourage members to stay on track with the reading. *If time permits, B qualifies on Step 12. Ask a member to lead the group in the Eleventh Step Prayer.*

STEP TWELVE

A

Welcome and Important Note

Welcome to the third session of Week Four of “Back to Basics: A Design for Living.” Please note that this session may run five minutes longer than usual. To ensure we cover all material efficiently, kindly set aside any nonessential electronic devices and focus on the discussion. Thank you!

We have asked (name) to lead us in the **Eleventh Step Prayer**:

“God, should I find myself agitated, doubtful, or indecisive today, please give me inspiration and help me to have an intuitive thought or a decision about this problem I face. Higher Power, help me not to struggle. Instead, help me to relax and take it easy. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful that you are running the show. Please free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done, always.”

Thank you (name).

Congratulations to all of you who have completed the first eleven Steps! You now possess two priceless gifts—a personality change and a solution to media addiction—that you can share with others.

B

Do I Have a Higher Purpose?

At this juncture, we're invited to contemplate our soul's purpose. We ask ourselves, "What is my true calling in this world?" Some of us may have pondered the profound question: "Am I here to serve a higher purpose, or do I expect the universe to cater to my desires?" This reflection marks a significant shift in our perspective, from self-centeredness to a more selfless outlook.

A

The Big Book reveals a profound truth: our service to Higher Power and Higher Power's service to us create a mutually beneficial relationship. By helping others, we simultaneously serve our Higher Power and enrich our own recovery. Bill Wilson, co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous, maintained his sobriety by dedicating himself to helping others achieve sobriety, illustrating that this process is essential for personal recovery. Step 12 provides the ideal framework for us to start comprehending and embracing this new dynamic. It guides us towards a life of purpose, where our actions benefit not only ourselves but also those around us and our Higher Power.

B

Introducing Step 12

Step 12 – “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive media addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

Please note that the Twelfth Step has **three objectives**:

First: To acknowledge a spiritual awakening by having taken all eleven Steps.

Second: To carry this message of hope and recovery to other media addicts who still suffer.

Third: To practice the principles of the Twelve Steps in all our affairs.

We will explore each of these three objectives separately.

A

OBJECTIVE ONE – SPIRITUAL AWAKENING

By taking the first Eleven Steps, we made *conscious contact* with our Higher Power, which led to a *spiritual awakening*. We now find Spirit guiding us in ways that are indeed miraculous. Yet, you may be asking yourself:

- “*Is this true? Have I had a spiritual awakening? Because I am still struggling in some parts of my program, I am not perfect. Sometimes I feel guided, other times I feel lost. How can I know that I have had this life-changing spiritual awakening?*”

B

The Big Book Authors share with us that spiritual experiences, or awakenings, may happen suddenly for some but gradually for others. In *Appendix II of the Big Book*, they write about this “*transformation of thought and attitude*.”

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

Let's look at the difference between “*spiritual experience*” and “*spiritual awakening*.”

A

Two Distinctions

In the first printing of the Big Book in 1939, the Twelfth Step read as follows: “*Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these Steps...*” Bill Wilson wrote this because he had had an intense spiritual experience in Towns Hospital, where he was enveloped in glowing light and love from a presence he had never encountered before. He believed this was a common occurrence and was possible for everyone. He therefore set out to help other alcoholics have the same experience.

B

However, other A.A. members shared with Bill that this was not the norm and that most were experiencing a more gradual form of spiritual consciousness. In the two years between the first and second printings of the Big Book, the word “*experience*” was discussed at length, and eventually, it was replaced with “*awakening*.” The Big Book authors made this change to encompass all those whose lives had been transformed more gradually over time.

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

A

Many of us find this to be the case: We have witnessed our spiritual lives transform gradually rather than immediately. Even though we might not be able to point to a specific experience that brought about this change, our spiritual awakening *has* occurred nonetheless. In our experience, no one can work all Twelve Steps, **honestly and committedly**, and not ultimately receive the promised spiritual awakening.

B

Even if you walk through the Steps with either some reluctance or resistance, you still are changed by having completed them. Also, every time we go through the Steps, we allow the Spirit to move deeper within us, effectuate change, and grow closer to our Creator. Each time we repeat Back to Basics, we peel away more of our layers, which brings us closer to our authentic selves.

A

The Educational Variety

As noted, Bill W's rapid conversion experience at Towns Hospital is the exception rather than the rule. However, when our mental obsession is removed and our struggle with media abates, a profound spiritual awakening unfolds—and therein lies the miracle. The Big Book authors describe the more gradual spiritual experience:

- “Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics, such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule. Most of our experiences are what psychologist William James calls the ‘*educational variety*’ because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often, friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before [they are themselves].”
- “[They] finally realize that [they] have undergone a profound alteration in [their] reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by [themselves] alone. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions, our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.”

B

Have Others Noticed a Change in You?

The Big Book authors invite us to observe whether friends and family have noticed a difference in us. When this happens, it is an indication that something transformative has occurred within, although we may not be able to see it yet. Let's look again at the second sentence in the last paragraph: “*What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline.*” Here, the authors are clear about their observations and expectations: if we take the Steps and help others through them, we will recover within “*a few months.*”

A

We realize that some of you may have a profound spiritual awakening during the first month, while others might not “*get it*” right away. Nonetheless, you will still experience a gradual spiritual awakening as you go through the process again and again. Even in difficult circumstances, if you sincerely take all the steps, in about 90 days, you will develop a personal relationship with a *God of your own understanding*.

B

Awareness = Awakening

The Big Book authors tell us that the **AWARENESS** of a Power greater than ourselves *IS* in itself a spiritual awakening.

- “Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the **ESSENCE** of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it ‘*God-consciousness*.’”

If you have made conscious contact with a *Power greater than yourself* and have started to listen to the guidance from this Higher Power, you have already had a “*psychic change*.” Take a moment and let this sink in: You have taken the Steps, and the result was *spiritual awareness*. You are indeed living a spiritual way of life.

A

Mediation on Having Had a Spiritual Awakening

We will now meditate for one minute. In this meditation, please observe how you have begun to experience a life-changing transformation through conscious contact with your Higher Power. *[Time for 1 minute]*

Let's now take two minutes to write down what we have observed in our meditation. Please answer these questions:

- *What changes have come about so far by taking the Steps?*
- *Have you had miracles happen?*
- *What has God done for you that you could not do for yourself?*

[Copy these questions into chat and time for 2 minutes]

We will now take 30 seconds for each of you to state one change you have seen in yourself. *[Stop screen share and time each member for 30 seconds]*

Thank you all for sharing!

B

OBJECTIVE TWO – CARRYING THE MESSAGE

Now, let's look at what we must do to maintain our spiritual transformation. Chapter 7 in the Big Book, titled “*Working with Others*,” is devoted entirely to the purpose of carrying the message of recovery to others. It cannot be emphasized enough how important working with others will help us sustain sobriety from media addiction.

- “Practical experience shows that nothing will so much ensure immunity from [bingeing on media] as intensive work with other [media addicts]. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: *Carry this message to other [media addicts]!* You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail.”

A

Life Will Take On New Meaning

We are told that if we work with others, our lives will have a deeper purpose, filled with connection with others.

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

Specific Instructions While Working With Others

The Big Book authors provide us with specific instructions on how to carry the message of recovery to others.

- “At first, engage in general conversation. After a while, turn the talk to some phase of [media addiction]. Tell [them] enough about your [media] habits, symptoms, and experiences to encourage [them] to speak of [themselves]. If [they] wish to talk, let [them] do so. You will thus get a better idea of how you ought to proceed.”
- “When you discover a prospect for [Media Addicts] Anonymous, find out all you can about [them]. If [they] don't want to stop [compulsively using media], don't waste time trying to persuade [them]. You may spoil a later opportunity.... Your attempt to pass this on ... plays a vital part in your own recovery.”

Never act *holier than thou* or speak to a prospective fellow condescendingly. Treat them with kindness, dignity, and respect.

- “...Never talk down to a [media addict] from any moral or spiritual hilltop; simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools for [their] inspection. Show [them] how they worked for you. Offer [them] friendship and fellowship. Tell [them] that if [they] want to get well, you will do anything to help.”

Don't be discouraged, and don't waste your time if a person does not want to stop using their alcoholic media:

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

B

We All Have Excuses

Every addict has excuses for why they cannot stop or why they need to keep using. The Big Book makes it clear that we can recover no matter our circumstances—if we keep the focus on “trusting God and cleaning house.”

- “... [They may] clamor for this or that, claiming [they] cannot master [their media addiction] until [their] material needs are cared for. Nonsense. Some of us have taken very hard knocks to learn this truth: Job or no job, [spouse or no spouse]—we simply do not stop [being drunk on media] so long as we place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God. **Burn the idea** into the consciousness of every [person] that they can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that [they] **trust in God and clean house.**”

Too Much Dependence Doesn't Serve

Avoid letting "the prospect" become overly dependent on you. Remember, you are not their therapist, parent, or Higher Power. They need to rely on the God of their own understanding rather than on you.

- “...When and how to give ... makes the difference between success and failure. The minute we put our work on [a dependency] plane, the [media addict] comes to rely on our assistance rather than upon God.”

A

Always direct your prospective fellows towards a spiritual path of progress, and remarkable things will happen.

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

Keep Your Motives Clear and Clean

Go where you are needed, keep your motives clean, and your Higher Power will protect you from harm.

- “Your job now is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others, so never hesitate to go anywhere if you can be helpful.... Keep on the firing line of life with these motives, and God will keep you unharmed.”

Only Share What You Have Experienced Personally

Rather than giving advice or criticizing, keep the focus on your personal path of recovery.

- “If you have been successful in solving your own domestic problems, tell the newcomer's family how that was accomplished. In this way, you can set them on the right track without becoming critical of them. The story of how you and your [partner] settled your difficulties is worth any amount of criticism.”

B

Can We Navigate Environments Where Media Is Present?

The Big Book authors assure us that if we maintain a "fit spiritual condition," we can confidently face any situation or environment, including those where media is being used. While we remain vigilant about our media triggers, we need not fear them when we're spiritually grounded. This spiritual fitness allows us to participate fully in life, even in situations that might have once posed a threat to our recovery.

- "Assuming we are spiritually fit, we can do all sorts of things [media addicts] are not supposed to do. People have said we must not go where [media is being broadcast]; we must not have it in our homes; we must shun friends who [are compulsively using media]; we must avoid [places] which [are meant to draw us into media]; ...our friends must hide their [media or video games] if we go to their houses; we mustn't think or be reminded about [our addictive media] at all.
- Our experience shows that this is not necessarily so. We meet these conditions every day. A [media addict] who cannot meet them, still has a [MEDIA ADDICT'S] MIND; there is something the matter with [their] SPIRITUAL STATUS. [Their] only chance for sobriety would be someplace like [a deserted island in the Pacific], and even there, a [Pirate] might turn up with a [smart phone] and ruin everything!"

A

Do You Still Have a Media Addict's Mind?

We therefore will visit places where media is inescapable, but only when we have legitimate social, personal, or business reasons for being there.

- "So our rule is not to avoid a place where there is [media] if we have a legitimate reason for being there.... To a person who has had experience with a [media addict], this may seem like tempting Providence, but it isn't."
- "You will note that we made an important qualification. Therefore, ask yourself on each occasion, *'Have I any good social, business, or personal reason for going [online or using media]? Or am I expecting to STEAL a little vicarious PLEASURE from the atmosphere of such places?'*"

In all situations, please do not try to be more spiritually evolved than you are. Be honest about your motives and exercise discretion in your early sobriety:

- "If you answer these questions satisfactorily, you need have no apprehension. Go or stay away, whichever seems best. But be sure you are on solid spiritual ground before you start and that your motive in [getting on media] is thoroughly good."
- "Do not think of what [kind of hit] you will get out of the [media]. Think of [how you will use it to further your Higher Power's purpose for you]. **But if you are shaky, you had better work with another [media addict] instead!**"

B

Not Missing a Thing: Thriving in Life with Media Sobriety

Media addiction kept us isolated from others. Now that we are media sober, we want to regain meaningful and authentic human connections. It is, therefore, important that we spend time with friends and family. We do not shy away from social gatherings, which amplify our joy and boost our sense of belonging. Rather, we are fully present to those around us and do not push our media abstinence on them.

- “Why sit with a long face in places where there is [media], sighing about the good old days? If it is a happy occasion, try to increase the pleasure of those there; if a business occasion, go and attend to your business enthusiastically.... Let your friends know they are not to change their habits on your account.”
- “At a proper time and place, explain to all your friends why [tech and media] disagrees with you. If you do this thoroughly, few people will ask you to [use media]. While you were [compulsively using media], you were withdrawing from life little by little. Now you are getting back into the social life of this world. Don’t start to withdraw again just because your friends [use media].”

A

Sharing the Message Through Compassion and Tolerance

The Big Book authors advise us not to get up on our soapboxes and preach media sobriety. Being sanctimonious gets us nowhere. Compassion and tolerance are essential to working with others.

- “We are careful never to show intolerance or hatred of [media] as an institution. Experience shows that such an attitude is not helpful to anyone. Every new [media addict] looks for this spirit among us and is immensely relieved when they find we are not witch burners. A spirit of intolerance might repel [media addicts] whose lives could have been saved, had it not been for such stupidity....”
- “Someday we hope that [Media Addicts] Anonymous will help the public to a better realization of the gravity of the [media addiction] problem, but we shall be of little use if our attitude is one of bitterness or hostility. [Undeclared media addicts] will not stand for it. After all, our problems were of our own making. [Smartphones or other addictive media] were only a symbol. Besides, we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. We have to!”

Commitment Time Again

As we move forward, it's time to consider how we can engage in Step 12 actions. We invite you to explore a variety of ways that B2B graduates can make a meaningful impact, support others, and contribute to the growth of MAA. Here are some options to reflect on. Each reader, please read one.

- Carry the Message: Am I open to sponsoring others and providing service at MAA meetings?
- Start a New Meeting: Would I consider initiating a new MAA meeting to help expand our community?
- Group Sponsorship: Would I be willing to serve as a Group Sponsor for Back to Basics and support its development?

- Guide Others: Am I ready to welcome another media addict into the MAA program and guide them through the Twelve Steps?
- Join the B2B Steering Committee or MAA General Service Board: Do I have an interest in contributing my skills and support by serving on the Steering Committee or as a General Service Representative if needed?

B

These suggestions are merely starting points to inspire your commitment as you embrace Step 12. Remember, participation in these activities is entirely voluntary, and every effort, big or small, contributes to our collective journey of recovery.

If you're willing to help carry the message to other media addicts who still suffer, please state your name followed by "yes." I'll start with (name), and then we'll go around the room.

[Stop screen share and call on members.]

Thank you, everyone! According to the Big Book authors, if you answered "yes" to this question, you have taken Step Twelve. This is a monumental achievement. Congratulations!

A

Looking Ahead

Tomorrow, we will complete the Twelfth Step by exploring the principles of MAA Back to Basics.

Now, B will qualify on Step 12 and sponsorship, and then take questions.

[You can pray out first and then qualify if you are at the "end of the meeting" time]

[End with the Serenity Prayer.]

Let's close with 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.

END OF WEDNESDAY MEETING

THURSDAY MEETING

Both A and B will qualify for their experience sponsoring Back to Basics. Please give priority to new Group Sponsors. Ask a member to read the Twelfth Step Prayer.

STEP TWELVE (CONTINUED)

A

Welcome to the fourth session of Week Four 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 read the Twelve-Step Prayer:

Higher Power, please help me carry the message of recovery to other addicts who are suffering. Help me to be unselfish with my time and resources and give back what I have so generously been given. Provide me with guidance and wisdom to talk with another addict and reach out to my fellows so that my own sobriety will be strengthened.

Thank you ([name](#)).

Gratitude Friday—Bring Your Letter

Today we will complete Step Twelve. Tomorrow is **Gratitude Friday**, during which time you will all have an opportunity to share about your four-week journey working through the Twelve Steps and staying media sober. Please remember to bring the letter that you wrote to yourself on Day 1 for tomorrow’s special session.

B

Step 12 – “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive media addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.”

We will now look at the third objective in Step Twelve.

OBJECTIVE THREE – PRACTICE THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS

The **PRINCIPLES of MAA** are found within the Twelve Steps. As we have gone through the Twelve Steps together, the Big Book revealed various principles crucial to achieving long-term recovery from media addiction.

A

Review of the Principles of Steps One Through Eleven

Let us now review the principles we have learned so far. Notice that for each Step, there are two related principles. When we follow the first principle, we will enjoy the benefits of the second principle. Each reader, please read one.

- Step 1: “We admitted that we were powerless over media—that our lives had become unmanageable.” Principles 1 & 2: **HONESTY** leads to **ACCEPTANCE**.

- Step 2: *"Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity."* Principles 3 & 4: **FAITH** leads to **BELIEF**.
- Step 3: *"Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood [God]."* Principles 5 & 6: **FAITHFULNESS** leads to **GUIDANCE**.
- Step 4: *"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves."* Principles 7 & 8: **COURAGE** leads to **CLARITY**.
- Step 5: *"Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs."* Principles 9 & 10: **CONFESSION** leads to **FREEDOM**.
- Step 6: *"Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character."* Principles 11 & 12: **WILLINGNESS** leads to **SURRENDER**.
- Step 7: *"Humbly asked [God] to remove our shortcomings."* Principles 13 & 14: **HUMILITY** leads to **UNITY**.
- Step 8: *"Made a list of all the persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all."* Principles 15 & 16: **CONSIDERATION** leads to **FORGIVENESS**.
- Step 9: *"Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others."* Principles 17 & 18: **INTEGRITY** leads to **PEACE**.
- Step 10: *"Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."* Principles 19 & 20: **PERSEVERANCE** leads to **TRANSFORMATION**.
- Step 11: *"Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood [God], praying only for knowledge of [God's] will for us and the power to carry that out."* Principles 21, 22, & 23: **AWARENESS** leads to **KNOWLEDGE**, and **KNOWLEDGE** leads to **POWER**.

B

Step Twelve's Principles Explained

Now that we have reviewed these principles, let us look at the **PRINCIPLES FOR THE TWELFTH STEP**. **Step 12:** *"Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to media addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs."*

Principles 24 & 25: **GENEROSITY** leads to **GRATITUDE**.

- **GENEROSITY** is the lifeblood of our fellowship, expressed through wholehearted service. Without it, our community would not thrive. Remember, someone selflessly gave their time and energy to support you in your recovery journey. This spirit of giving is what allows us to preserve and cherish the precious gift of recovery we've received.
- When you actively participate in another person's recovery, you gain a clearer perspective on your own. By investing in someone else's journey, you deepen your commitment to your own recovery. This reciprocal process of caring and sharing strengthens both the giver and the receiver, creating a powerful cycle of healing and growth within our fellowship.

- Bill Wilson, the cofounder of A.A., could not stay sober without helping other alcoholics. Bill's call to Dr. Bob Smith on that precarious night, where he had but two options— either to drink or to find another alcoholic to help—was a choice that changed the world. Millions of people are now recovering from all kinds of addictions because of one man's profound decision. **Carrying the message: this is the genius of our Twelve-Step Program.**

A

Our final step in MAA encourages us to pay it forward. With the support of your sponsor, the B2B Group Sponsors, and your MAA fellows, many of you have had the opportunity to work through the Twelve Steps, maintain media sobriety, and experience spiritual growth and transformation. Now it is time to guide less experienced B2B members through their own recovery journey. **GENEROSITY** allows us to accept other media addicts as they are—to Live and Let Live—and to support them by sharing our own experience, strength, and hope.

- The spirit of **GENEROSITY** is also reflected in MAA's Twelve Traditions, as follows:
 - 1st: *"Our common welfare should come first."*
 - 2nd: *"Our leaders are but trusted servants."*
 - 5th: *"Our primary purpose is to carry the message to the media addict who still suffers."*
 - 7th: *"We are self-supporting through our own contributions."*
 - 12th: *"Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all our Traditions, ever reminding us to place **PRINCIPLES** before **PERSONALITIES**."*
- **GENEROSITY** leads to **GRATITUDE**. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in pardoning that we are pardoned. It is by overcoming our addiction that we are reborn into a life of sanity, happiness, and usefulness of purpose.

B

Gratitude emanates from the hearts of those who thought they were lost forever but have now found freedom. This gratitude grows and spreads easily: By giving generously of our time and talent, we plant seeds of hope in those we work with. We become connected to others in more profound ways.

A

This process of giving moves us from a state of self-centered fear and compulsive behavior into a deep and gratifying sense of purpose. We find ourselves grateful for each day that we can give back what we have received so generously. We feel profound gratitude as Group Sponsors for serving this Back-to-Basics group. There is so much to be grateful for. First, we know and appreciate that this work supports our sobriety and recovery.

B

Group Sponsorship has also taught us how to become compassionate leaders, as we witness the growth and recovery of others along their path while maintaining our own abstinence, one day at a time. We have found a source of fulfillment in this work, which we could not have experienced in any other way.

A

But Wait! There Are Two More Essential Principles!

The Big Book authors reveal two additional principles that, while not explicitly part of the Twelve Steps, are crucial to our recovery:

1. Enjoy life to the fullest
2. Embrace cheerfulness and laughter

To truly embody the principles of MAA, we must not only dedicate ourselves to **SERVICE** and **USEFULNESS** but also cultivate **CHEERFULNESS** and **LAUGHTER** in our recovery journey. These elements bring joy and lightness to our path, making our recovery not just meaningful but also enjoyable and sustainable.

B

We Are Not a Glum Lot!

By living the principles of cheerfulness and laughter, we impart to newcomers the joy and vitality we have come to enjoy upon the relief from our compulsive, obsessive media addiction. This paragraph from the Big Book may be one of the most important messages a recovering media addict can hear:

Principles 26 & 27: **TWO HIDDEN PRINCIPLES – CHEERFULNESS and LAUGHTER.**

- “We have been speaking to you of serious, sometimes tragic things. We have been dealing with [media addiction] in its worst aspect. But **we aren’t a glum lot**. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn’t want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life.”
- “We try not to indulge in cynicism over the state of the nations, nor do we carry the world’s troubles on our shoulders. When we see a [person] sinking into the mire that is [media addiction], we give [them] first aid and place what we have at [their] disposal. For [their] sake, we do recount and almost relive the horrors of our past. **But those of us who have tried to shoulder the entire burden and trouble of others find we are soon overcome by them.**”
- “So, we think CHEERFULNESS and LAUGHTER make for usefulness. Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past. But why shouldn’t we laugh? We have **recovered** and have been given the power to help others.”

Here, the Big Book authors remind us that, having worked through the Steps, we have now **recovered**. Not only have we recovered from our addiction, but we have also recovered our dignity, self-esteem, and a connection to ourselves as well as to our fellows.

A

We have recovered our purpose, our vitality, and the joy of authentic living. We have recovered our true nature, found the God of our understanding, and surrendered to this Higher Power. Where we were once lost, we are now found.

- “The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had **deep and effective spiritual experiences** which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our

fellows, and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered our hearts and lives in a way that is indeed miraculous. [God] has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves."

The joy of life is our superpower. It elevates our mood and helps us resist the urge to seek dopamine hits from unhealthy sources, such as addictive media. To support this, ensure you have a solid Media Replacement Plan in place.

B

We've included resources in your packet to help you grow in cheerfulness and gratitude. Please refer to the *Definition of True Fun* and review *300 Things to Do Other than Use Media* to find activities that can help you elevate your mood. You may also find it helpful to read *How to Hack Your [Neuro] Hormones for a Better Mood*.

A

Finally, the *Emotional Prosperity Challenge*, also in your packet, helps guide you through gratitude exercises. Choosing grounded positivity and gratitude daily will help us incorporate the principles of Cheerfulness and Laughter into our lives more easily. [Put this into the chat: https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/files/ugd/bfbab3_12507babd78e47dd8c7449837cd6f86e.pdf]

B

The Hideous Four Horsemen

Let us be clear: when we have completed 3 months of B2B and all our amends, we are *recovered*, but we are not *cured*. We must not fool ourselves or deny the seriousness and cunning nature of our addiction. The Big Book authors warn us not to try to recapture our old feelings by using the types of media that are very likely to trigger a binge. They remind us of the dark days of obsession and oblivion and our powerlessness over our disease:

- "For most normal folks, [being on media] means conviviality, companionship, and colorful imagination. It means release from care, boredom, and worry. It is joyous intimacy with friends and a feeling that life is good. But not so with us in those last days of heavy [bingeing on media]."
- "The old pleasures were gone. They were but memories. Never could we recapture the great moments of the past. There was an insistent yearning to enjoy life as we once did and a heartbreaking obsession that some new miracle of control would enable us to do it."
- "There was always one more attempt—and one more failure.... Then would come oblivion and the awful awakening to face the hideous Four Horsemen—**Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, [and] Despair**. Unhappy [media bingers] who read this page will understand!"

A

We Can't Leave a Back Door Open on Our Alcoholic Media

If we allow ourselves to rationalize or forget where our media addiction landed us, we will fall prey to its seduction all over again. We cannot rest on our laurels nor pretend that we can let up on our abstinence once we've attained sobriety. We must be willing to bid our alcoholic media goodbye—FOREVER. If we find ways to be joyous and happy in our sobriety, we will succeed in this. The Big Book authors make this clear:

- “Now and then a serious [media binger], being [sober] at the moment, says, ‘*I don't miss it at all. Feel better. Work better. Having a better time.*’ As ex-problem [media addicts], we smile at such a sally. We know our friend is like a [child] whistling in the dark to keep up [their] spirits. [They] fool [themselves]. Inwardly, they would give anything to [watch] half a dozen [shows or play a half dozen video games] and get away with [it].”
- “They will presently try the old game again, for [they aren't] happy about [their] sobriety. [They] cannot picture life without [the relief and reward of media].... [They] say, ‘*Yes, I'm willing. But am I to be consigned to a life where I shall be stupid, boring, and glum, like some righteous people I see? I know I must get along without [alcoholic media], but how can I? Have you a sufficient substitute?*’”

B

Do we have a *sufficient substitute* for our alcoholic media? Of course, we do! We have a replacement for our media consumption, which provides gratification and happiness—something we could never experience while consuming our alcoholic media.

The Best Years Lie Ahead!

Besides improved health and more meaningful recreation, our newfound connection with ourselves and our Higher Power has imbued us with vitality and freedom. The Big Book authors tell us that sharing this newfound freedom and vitality with others will infuse our lives with deeper meaning and a sense of fulfillment.

- “Yes, there is a substitute, and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in **[Media Addicts]** Anonymous. There you will find release from care, boredom, and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus, we find the fellowship, and so will you.”

A

MAA: Part of Your Media Replacement Plan

In Media Addicts Anonymous, we understand media addiction better than family and friends ever could. We support each other in ways no one else can because others may not understand our need to abstain from alcoholic media and stay sober.

This is a blessed place to be—living the Twelve Steps, recovering from media addiction one day at a time, supporting others, and belonging to a media-sober community that was built upon harmony and unity. We hope that you know that you are no longer alone, that you matter, and that you have the potential to connect to others in deep and significant ways.

B

All Addictions Stem From a Lack of Connection

In our third session, we learned that all addictions are manifestations of our loss of connection with ourselves, with our Higher Power, and with others. Perhaps, as children, we failed to receive the nurture and bonding necessary for us to thrive, and maybe we lacked a role model for healthy relationships. Other people's unstable or erratic behaviors may have frightened us, and so we may have vowed never to put ourselves at risk of being hurt again, and we, therefore, shut people out.

A

Because we could not connect with important people in our lives, we sought other things to connect with. These *things* temporarily soothed us, allowed us to feel good, and made us feel safe—such things as food, drugs, sex, or other rewarding yet unhealthy behaviors and substances.

- Searching for love, purpose, and safety, we media addicts compulsively sought satisfaction through many types of media. Electronic screens had become our mother, our father, our friend, our lover, and even our Higher Power.

The Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Steps allow us to begin to transform this underdeveloped part of ourselves—the addict self:

- Our daily Tenth Step practice of self-reflection and accountability regularly helps us examine our behaviors and promptly admit our wrongs. We learn to live authentically with real people rather than media idols. We gain the ability to form genuine relationships and adhere to principles and skills that may have been underdeveloped before, since addictive media kept us emotionally and socially away from real-world interactions.
- In Step Eleven, we learn to connect with the God of our understanding and to be open to experiencing our Higher Power's love. By continuing to make amends, we learn to get along with REAL people and to appreciate them. Equally as important, when we find ways to live without constant media use, we connect to our inner lives and begin to love ourselves and our bodies in addition to all of nature's wonders.

You will find a place of belonging as you begin to share this program with others, sponsor other media addicts, and connect with media sobriety action partners.

- Here, in the Twelfth Step, we discover genuine friendships and learn that we never have to isolate ourselves or be lonely again. Get ready to have your heart opened and your true purpose blossom, with connection and love from your Higher Power, as you serve others. You will play a part in building a strong community of fellow members, all taking this journey of recovery together.

B

Final Words

This concludes our presentation on Step Twelve. Please allow your Higher Power to guide you as you do Twelfth Step outreach, and you will find that the “*Source Who Has All Power*” will protect you. By relying on guidance, you will “*be of maximum service to God and the people about [you].*”

A

Service to others is essential for our ongoing growth and sobriety maintenance. One of the most impactful ways to serve is by guiding prospective members through the Twelve Steps. This process not only helps others but also deepens our understanding of this lifesaving program and strengthens our connection to the "All-Powerful Creator" at the core of our new way of life.

B

For those in Months 1 and 2, you may have the chance to sponsor a new member in the next Back to Basics round. We also invite those who have completed Months 3 or 4 to consider serving as Group Sponsors for the upcoming Back to Basics session next month.

A

Now, all that is left is to practice these principles daily in all areas of our lives. Let's close this session by reading this passage from The Big Book, *A Vision For You*:

- "Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask [God] in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the [person] who is still sick. The answers will come if your own house is in order."
- "But obviously, you cannot transmit something you haven't got. See to it that your relationship with [God] is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us. Abandon yourself to God as you understand [God]."
- "Admit your faults to [God] and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you—until then."

We wish to welcome those who have taken all Twelve Steps to the **"fourth dimension of existence!"** We thank you for providing us with the opportunity to be your guides for this miraculous spiritual journey.

B

Committing to the Step Twelve Principles

It is now time to commit to practicing these principles in all our affairs. Will those who have taken all Twelve Steps, please be ready to respond to the following question [please put it in the chat]:

"Will you, to the best of your ability, practice these principles in all your affairs?"

If so, please state your name, followed by "yes." I will start with (name), and we will go alphabetically around the room. *[Stop screen share and call on members.]*

According to the Big Book authors, those who answered "yes" to this question have taken all Twelve Steps. Congratulations on completing this month of Back to Basics! We are so very proud of you!

A

Looking Ahead

Thank you all for your commitment to this group and to your recovery. We, as your Group Sponsors, have been inspired by you.

Tomorrow, we will hold a special **Gratitude Meeting** so that we may witness for each other that “*God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.*” Please bring with you the letter you wrote during our first meeting to our session tomorrow.

We will now qualify what it has been like to serve as your Back-to-Basics Group Sponsors.

[Group Sponsors share on their experience sponsoring this B2B Group. If time permits, allow all Group Sponsors to qualify. Please give new Group Sponsors priority to share.]

[End with the Serenity Prayer.]

Let's close with 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.

END OF THURSDAY MEETING

FRIDAY MEETING

[Remind members that they need to have handy the Intention Letter they wrote on the first day of this month's Back to Basics. You will be putting the questions into the chat, have them ready. Leave 10 minutes for announcements and questions at the end. Be ready to post this link into the chat: <https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/b2b-growth-and-fellowship-week> .]

GRATITUDE FRIDAY FORMAT

A

Welcome to the Gratitude session of the MAA "Back to Basics – A Design for Living" meetings for media addicts.

We have ask __name__ to lead us in the 11th Step Prayer:

“God, should I find myself agitated, doubtful, or indecisive today, please inspire me and help me to have an intuitive thought or a decision about this problem I face. Higher Power, help me not to struggle. Instead, help me relax and take it easy. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful that you are running the show. Please free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done, always.”

Growing in Understanding and Effectiveness

Before we begin our gratitude session, let's take a moment to review Steps 10 and 11 together. On pages 84–86 of the Big Book, we read:

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

Our focus now is to **grow in understanding and effectiveness**, as the Big Book reminds us.

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

On page 86, the Big Book guides us on what to do at night:

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

And for our mornings:

- “On awakening, let us think about the twenty-four hours ahead. We consider our plans for the day. Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking, especially asking that it be divorced from self-pity, dishonesty, or self-seeking motives. We relax and take it easy. We don't struggle...We usually conclude the period of meditation with a prayer that we be shown all through the day what our next step is to be, that we be given whatever we need

to take care of such problems. We ask especially for freedom from self-will and are careful to not request for ourselves only.”

B

This next week is **Growth and Fellowship Week**—a time for us to continue our media fast, focus on the maintenance Steps (10, 11, and 12), build our personal fellowship through group and MAA meetings, and complete any outstanding assignments before next Friday’s commitment meeting.

The next six days are dedicated to deepening your understanding of the steps and building effectiveness in your daily 11th Step practice. Developing these habits now is essential, as they are the foundation for maintaining your recovery beyond this group. This is your opportunity to practice together, support each other in regular 10th Steps, and send your 11th Step reviews to a member nightly.

A

This week is called “**Growth and Fellowship Week**” for a reason. We don’t want to lose momentum with our program, and we want to build on what we have achieved so far. Here are your assignments for the next 6 days, each reader takes 3:

- **Continue to fast from all unnecessary media.**
- Continue to meet as a group at our regular time—members will continue to lead these meetings.
- Listen to Lynn F.’s “A Vision For You” OA recording. Notice what parts of her story about food remind you of your own media behaviors. Take a few notes about how she works Steps 10, 11, and 12, and share them with your sponsor this week. (Pass)
- Ask someone to be your 11th Step Action Partner. Each night this week, text them your 11th Step.
- Do two 10th Step calls this week with someone from your B2B group.
- Help two people in your B2B group with their 10th Step this week. (Pass)
- Continue your daily quiet time, meditation, and 2-way Prayer. You may also want to attend MAA’s daily 2-Way Prayer Meeting at 1 PM ET.
- Complete any unfinished assignments and read them to your sponsor.
- Attend next **Friday’s Commitment Meeting** for the next round. (Pass)

Some members have asked what to do after leaving Back to Basics. MAA Closed Back to Basics is a workshop to help you start your media recovery, but everyone needs ongoing support. When you leave this container, you will need a fellowship. If you think you can stay media sober without one, you are mistaken. Don’t risk losing what you’ve gained—if you’re not already attending regular MAA meetings and have a home group, start now.

B

We, as your group sponsors, will be contacting new members and preparing for the next round of MAA Back to Basics. Our next round begins a week from today, Friday _____ at _____. If you are continuing, you are required to be there. Please take 30 seconds now to put this in your calendar and set a reminder. We’ll also send a reminder email. **[time for 30 seconds]**

[If this applies:] We're excited for some of our members to step up as Group Sponsors next month. At the end of today's session, we'll announce next month's Group Sponsors. We have much to celebrate and be grateful for today.

A

As we welcome new members next month, we'll be inviting those of you who do not currently have a sponsee to consider sponsoring someone. Sponsorship is a vital part of working the 12th Step and an opportunity to share your experience, strength, and hope by guiding another person through the steps. We are here to support you in this important service and will provide any guidance you need along the way.

If you have any questions about *Growth and Fellowship Week*, please hold them until the end of the meeting—we'll be happy to answer them then.

B

Here is how our meeting will unfold:

1. We will begin with a short meditation
2. Then we will open our intention letters and read them
3. We will then go around the room and share what we have received this past month
4. After 50 minutes, we will take questions.
5. We will finish with announcements for the next round of B2B and Growth and Fellowship Week.

A

Please take a moment and look around the room. Look into the eyes of your Back-to-Basics family and acknowledge how far we all have come during this one month. These people were your tribe, your support team. Let's take a moment to congratulate ourselves and each other for having made it through these four weeks. **[Stop screen share and allow time for this.]**

B

SHORT MEDITATION

- Now close your eyes and become aware of your body and your breath ... **[Pause]**
- Take a moment to bring your awareness home to yourself ... **[Pause]**
- Remember what it was like the first day we met ... **[Pause]**
- Remember what you were thinking and how you were feeling ... **[Pause]**
- Remember that you made and wrote a letter from your Higher Power to you ... **[Pause]**
- Now open your eyes and open the envelope that holds this letter.

Let's go around the room and read them to each other. Let's start with **(name)**, and we will then go around the room in reverse alphabetical order. **[1 min each]**

A

[After everyone has read....]

We now ask that each person share for 2-3 minutes *[for as determined by GS]* what they are grateful for. Please share the following: *[Group Sponsor: Copy and paste these questions into the chat.]*

- **What did you learned about yourself this month in B2B?**
- **Any gratitude you may have to the group members, Group Sponsors, and B2B.**
- **Will you be returning next month?**

[Stop screen sharing and call on people to keep things moving. You can go around the room in alphabetical order if you wish as well. Time each member and GS for 2-3 minutes. Leave 10 minutes for announcements and questions at the end.]

A

Announcements

Here are the announcements for the next round of Back to Basics:

- The date for the next Commitment Meeting and the first session of the upcoming month is _____ at _____. Please make sure it is on your calendar.
- Your Group Sponsors next month will be _____.
- Please go to the MAA website under Step Studies and scroll down to *Growth and Fellowship Week*. The following assignments will be listed there. Here is the link: <https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/b2b-growth-and-fellowship-week>

[Put link into the chat]

B

Again, your directions for Growth and Fellowship Week:

1. Continue fasting from all unnecessary media.
2. Meet as a group at the regular time, with group members leading the meetings.
3. Listen to Lynn F.'s "A Vision For You" OA recording. Notice what parts of her story about food remind you of your own media behaviors. Take notes on how she works Steps 10, 11, and 12, and share them with your sponsor this week.
4. Ask someone to be your 11th Step Action Partner. Each night, text them your 11th Step review.
5. Do two 10th Step calls this week with someone from your B2B group.
6. Help two people in your B2B group with their 10th Step this week.
7. Continue your daily quiet time, meditation, and 2-way Prayer. You may also want to attend MAA's daily 2-Way Prayer Meeting at 1 PM ET.
8. Complete any unfinished assignments and read them to your sponsor.
9. Attend next Friday's Commitment Meeting for the next round.

A

Q & A

If you have any questions about **Growth and Fellowship Week** or anything else, please ask now.

[Stop screen sharing and time for 8 minutes.]

Let's close with 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.