## Pre-Commitment Assignments



# A Closed Big Book Step Study Action Group

MAA



Back to Basics

A Design For Living

6/28/25

**CLOSED BACK-TO-BASICS, A DESIGN FOR LIVING**

**STEP STUDY ACTION GROUPS**

-Pre-Commitment Assignments-

Please get these assignments completed before the Friday Commitment meeting, if possible, or by the first call with your sponsor. You will be assigned a sponsor at the commitment meeting**.**

1. Please begin fasting from any unnecessary media at least 24 hours before our commitment meeting on Friday.

2.Listen to the qualification by MAA Co-founder, Cindy B

Phone call in number: 978-990-5099 Access Code: 385988# Reference #6

or MAA Website: https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/there-is-a-solution

Reference # 6"Looking For God in all the Wrong Places" Cindy B.

The following is to be written and read to your sponsor before the first weekly session on Monday.

3. Fill out your "Resistance Worksheet," and when you get a sponsor, read it to your sponsor.

4. Fill out the "Fasting Plan" worksheet, and when you get a sponsor, finalize what your media fasting and sobriety plan will look like.

**5**. Write for at least 30 minutes on your personal history of media addiction and read this to your sponsor.

* + - Begin with your first media memories.
    - Discuss how much media you used, how you have tried to solve the problem, and failed.
    - How does media affect your other compulsions, for example, shopping, gambling, sex, overeating, self-harming, etc?

Use the Signs and Symptoms of Media Addiction to help you see all the symptoms that apply to you and your addictions. (see below)

Signs and Symptoms of Media Addiction

1. Dissatisfaction with everyday life—We depend on media as a way to avoid emotional discomfort, boredom, pain, and problems. Media has become our main source of relief, reward, relaxation, recreation, and relationships.
2. Mental obsession—We have a *fear of missing out* so we want our media with us at all times. We are preoccupied with what's trending in the news and social media. We lose ourselves in gossip, too much information, and the absorption of negative media, all of which result in constant unrest and agitation.
3. Depression, shame, and hopelessness—We feel depressed, shameful, and guilty about the amount or type of media we are consuming. We want to stop, but we don't believe we can live without our media dependency. This hopelessness has caused some of us to have suicidal thoughts or prolonged periods of depression and anxiety.
4. Compare and despair—We compare ourselves with what we see in magazines, films, TV, and social media. We try to create a persona that other people will admire, but end up feeling despair when we can't live up to those ideals. We are compelled to follow seemingly perfect people on social media even though we know it repeatedly makes us feel inferior.
5. Isolation—We prefer to be alone with our media rather than socialize. When we are with other people, we often become distracted by our devices. Isolation causes us to avoid those activities in life which used to bring us joy and connection.
6. Fantasizing—Rather than having meaningful relationships with real people, we turn to media to satisfy our need for romance, intimacy, and sexual fantasy. We end up feeling a deeper loss of intimacy with others which leads to more deprivation and loneliness than before.
7. Risky behavior—We will endanger our health, life, or someone else's life to get our media fix. We may drive while sending text messages, overeat while bingeing on TV, or deprive ourselves of sleep while using all forms of media.
8. Time irreverence—Time is the only commodity we can never get back. When grazing or bingeing on media, we lose track of time and forget what is truly important in our lives. Media takes priority over everyone and everything.
9. Avoiding our life's purpose—We abandon creative endeavors, intellectual pursuits, and prioritization of our goals because we focus on passive media consumption instead. We jeopardize our income, education, careers, and overall success by procrastinating and repeatedly using media during study and work hours. We lose faith in ourselves and hope for the future.
10. Disconnection from our bodies and nature—We become detached from our body and do not fully enjoy all of our senses. We fail to meet our body’s basic needs for rest, sleep, exercise, and good nutrition. We hide indoors with media while avoiding the nourishment and beauty of the natural world.
11. Physical ailments—With prolonged media usage we experience backaches, neck pain, headaches, disturbances in sleep, digestive issues, carpal tunnel syndrome, and vision problems.
12. Withdrawal symptoms—When we stop using our addictive media, we experience withdrawal and detoxification symptoms. Any time we give in to our compulsion to use our addictive media, we reignite the “craving” and find it increasingly more difficult to stop again.

**WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO SEEING YOU AT THE COMMITMENT MEETING!**

**Resistance Worksheet:**

**Preparing for Your Media Fast**

This is a worksheet that will help you prepare for your Media Fast

This exercise intends to show you a set of questions you can answer if you are having resistance to media fasting.

We all have resistance to recovery. It takes time to reach a bottom where we are willing to do anything to stop the insanity of media addiction. What if you could speed up this process? That is what the Resistance Worksheet helps us to do. To see the reasons why we don't want to give up our alcoholic media. What's in our way? Why do we say we want to stop, but we can't seem to?

Please read the instructions, then fill out the worksheet and read it to your sponsor

(This worksheet can be used for any goal you have resistance towards achieving)

**Instructions:**

1. Read through the whole worksheet before answering the questions. If, after reading the worksheet, you feel you understand how to proceed, you don't need to use these instructions. If, however, the worksheet is difficult to understand, use these instructions to help you fill it out.
2. Trust yourself to get through it, even if you don't completely understand it right away.
3. Write your goal and date first.
4. Answer #1 with all your heart. See the vision of you reaching the goal, and see why you want to reach it.
5. With #2, take a moment to go into the place where you have fear and resistance around this goal. Be honest with yourself. Why don't you want to do this goal? If you wanted to achieve this goal, you would have already achieved it. Something in you really doesn't want it. Take some time to see why you don't. Let that part of you do the talking.
6. Now that you have a better understanding of what your resistance is, refine that in one short, simple sentence; the simpler the better. Write that into #3. Example: "If I don't use media, I will not be able to handle my feelings."
7. Questions 4-6 are like a meditation. Get quiet. We are going inside ourselves and really listening. We go in without any motives other than to find the truth.
8. When you write the sentence for #7, try to keep the turnaround as close to the original resistance statement as possible. Look for the opposite of the resistance words. (Example: I *will not*, changes to *I will.* *Lose* changes to *gain*. *Lost* changes to *found*. *Can't* change to *can*, and so forth. The sentence above could be revised two ways: If I don't use media, I **will** be able to handle my feelings, or If I **do** use media, I will not be able to handle my feelings.)
9. When you give examples to the new statement, really look for them. This may be a place where your sponsor or action partner can help you see something you don't. We really want to look closely so that we can see if our resistance is true. We are looking for truth and freedom to move beyond our fears.

**Example:**

RESISTANCE: "If I don't use media, I will not be able to handle my feelings."

TURN AROUND "If I don't use media, I will be able to handle my feelings."

* + - 1. When I have felt uncomfortable before and didn't turn to media, I did handle it, I did get through it.
      2. Using media is not helping me handle my feelings at all; they still come up, so it is a lie that the media is handling them.
      3. Sometimes using media makes me have more feelings of anger, self-doubt, or fear.
      4. By not using media, I reach out to other people more, and that has helped me get through feelings.

1. 9-10 are about being realistic with ourselves. Everything has a price. If we want to change, it will come with a price. So here is where we decide on what we will pay to achieve this goal. At the same time, our goal will also bring benefits, and we want to at once let ourselves really have those benefits. We look at what we will now allow into our lives, and the benefits we will get when we work towards this goal.
2. Here we are pointing out what has been standing in our way. What have been the liabilities that have kept us away from achieving this goal? It could be self-pity, fear, defiance, defensiveness, mistrust, etc. Be honest with the things that you have put in your way as obstacles to achieving your goal. Let them see the light of day.
3. We all have liabilities, but we all have assets too. You may have noticed in this worksheet that we are looking at opposites. So now let’s look at the opposite of each of your liabilities and find an asset that you can incorporate and work towards. For instance, if I put *self-pity,* I could work towards *self-compassion*, *fear*, work towards *faith*, *defensiveness*, work towards *openness*, and so forth. If you need help with these, ask your sponsor to help you*.*
4. By the time you are finished with this worksheet, it will be easier to see what you are up against, and what assets you need to incorporate to achieve this goal, and hopefully, your resistance to taking this fast (or whatever goal you listed) will have become much less.
5. Trust yourself and your answers. This is a personal exercise, and your inner wisdom will help you see the truth.

**Resistance Worksheet\***

(**Example of a Restance Worksheet Here)**

<https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/_files/ugd/bfbab3_8c0515b6da904b21b6cb56c40760f511.pdf>

Goal: (One-month media fast or any other goal)

Start Date:

End Date:

1. Why do I want this goal? (Why am I making this goal? What will I gain? How do I expect to benefit from achieving this goal?)
2. Why don't I want this goal? (If you think you have no resistance, look deeper.) (How will I benefit from hanging on to my current media use? What do I think I will lose if I go on a media fast?)
3. Write one short sentence: What is my resistance? What is it I am afraid of, or what is it that keeps me from enthusiastically committing to my month of media fasting? (Example: I will NOT be able to handle my feelings if I don't use my media.)

4. \*Can you absolutely know that your statement in #3 is true? (This is a yes or no question only) (Can you absolutely know that your answer to question #3 will come to pass? Can you say with 100% certainty that your fears will come true?)

5. What are your reactions when you believe this thought in #3? (What feelings come to mind and what reactions do you experience when you believe that your answer to question #3 is true?)

6. Who would you be and how would you live without this thought? (How would you describe yourself and your life if you did not have these reactions in #5? If you did not have these thoughts?)

7. Turn this thought around to the exact opposite. (Example: I WILL be able to handle my feelings if I don't use them.) (Turn around the answer to question #3 and make a sentence of the exact opposite.)

8. Give 3 examples where this opposite statement in #7 is just as true as your original statement in #3.

1.

2.

3.

9. What are you willing to give up to reach this goal of a one-month media fast? (What are you willing to give up, to put down, or to sacrifice to be successful with your media fast?)

10. What are you willing to receive to obtain this goal? (What are you willing to receive, to accept or to experience to be successful with your media fast?)

11. What are your liabilities that you need to address? (What are your character defects or weaknesses that would hinder you from reaching your goal of completing a media fast?)

12. What are the assets you will activate to accomplish your goal? (What strengths and character traits can you draw from to help you reach your goal of completing a media fast?)

\*These questions and turnarounds were inspired by the work of Byron Katie, Stoic philosophers, as well as other authors.

**FASTING PLAN AND TOP/MIDDLE/BOTTOM LINES**

During our Closed Back to Basics (B2B) container, we will be fasting from all unnecessary media and technology. Please use this worksheet to reflect on your personal boundaries—your Top, Middle, and Bottom lines. Honest self-reflection is key to recognizing and addressing addictive behaviors. The more open and willing you are to surrender unnecessary media, the more freedom and recovery you will experience. This approach has worked for us, and we want you to have the best chance at recovery in B2B.

Understanding Bottom Lines

Bottom lines are self-defined activities or behaviors that we commit to abstain from in order to support our physical, mental, emotional, sexual, and spiritual well-being. Recovery begins with acknowledging that certain addictive behaviors have made our lives unmanageable and that we are powerless to stop without help.

Creating Your Fasting Plan

When fasting from unnecessary media, it’s important to have a clear and practical plan. Start by identifying which types of media are essential for your daily life, and which are destructive or unnecessary. This clarity will help you set healthy boundaries and stay committed to your recovery.

Reflection and Action

Please reflect on the following questions as you create your fasting or sobriety plan:

* + Which media or technology is truly essential for your daily functioning?
  + Which media or technology do you use out of habit, boredom, or compulsion?
  + What are your personal Top, Middle, and Bottom lines regarding media use?
  + How will you handle cravings or urges to use unnecessary media?

Action Step:  
Write your fasting plan below, using blue lettering.

**Top Lines** (Your Best Life and Your Necessary Media): Top Lines constitute what you want your life to look like on a good day. All the things that maintain your mental and physical health, including social activities. Your Top Lines also include the media essential for work, family, recovery, or personal needs. All this needs to be discussed with your sponsor. Use only what's necessary when you are fasting. Remember: when in doubt, leave it out. All media should contribute to an abundant and useful life. These are your top lines, combined with using all the steps and tools of recovery. If you are fasting, these are the only types of media you use.

**Bottom Lines** (Addictive Media):  
Identify your "alcoholic media" - the media you can't stop using once you start or that triggers obsessive thoughts. These are your bottom lines.

**Middle Lines** (Triggers):  
What triggers your desire to use media? What are your "gateway drugs"? Examples include:

Discussing movies or TV shows

Receiving subscription updates

These are things to avoid and form your middle lines.

Take action to remove potential triggers from your phone, computer, and household. If you live with someone who uses your addictive media, communicate your needs and ask for their support. Do the same when visiting friends. Most true friends will support your one-month fast if you explain its importance.

Please create your top line, middle lines, and bottom lines with media.

**Top Lines-**

**Best Life Living Examples:**

I am living joyfully and freely, embracing a life without unnecessary media. My top-line activities include:

* + - Working the 12 steps daily
    - Meditating for inner peace
    - Attending MAA meetings regularly
    - Engaging in fulfilling non-media activities
    - Using media only for essential work, family, or recovery needs
    - Taking daily walks without my phone
    - Going to the museum with friends

**Essential Media Examples:**

Top Line Media represents the critical communication channels that contribute directly to your professional, educational, and personal growth. These are the media types that add genuine value to your life, supporting your core responsibilities and relationships.

* + - * Work email
      * Job-related communication tools
      * Educational resources
      * Marketing tech tools and research
      * Academic research databases
      * Shared family messaging groups
      * Recovery program online meetings
      * Support group communication
      * Banking and financial management apps
      * Healthcare patient portals

**My Top Lines:**

Best Life Living:

Essential Media:

**Middle Line Examples:**

Avoid these potential triggers that may lead to media relapse:

* + - * Negative self-talk and self-pity
      * Discussing addictive media with others
      * Failing to communicate my media boundaries to friends and family
      * Keeping media devices easily accessible

**My Middle Lines:**

**Bottom Line Examples:**

Media, I abstain completely from even if I am not fasting:

* + - Any media that triggers compulsive use
    - Media that leads to obsessive thoughts
    - Specific platforms or content types identified as personally addictive

**My Bottom Lines**

**Media Addicts Anonymous**

**Plans for Happy Media Fasting**

**Part 1: Media Replacement Plan**

Many of us turn to media as our primary source of relaxation and entertainment. When we stop compulsively using media, we may feel a void. To achieve long-term media sobriety, it’s essential to have a plan to fill that space with healthy, enjoyable alternatives. Creating a Media Replacement Plan will help you build a more fulfilling, balanced life.

A. Fun, Pleasure, and Relaxation

List activities you genuinely enjoy—things that bring you fun, relaxation, and pleasure. Post this list somewhere visible and share it with your sponsor or accountability partners. Use these activities daily to replace electronic media.

B. Connection and Play

Schedule time each week for play and social connection. Many of us have used media as a substitute for real recreation and relationships. Be willing to learn new ways to play and connect. When spending time with others, turn off your devices and be fully present.

C. Brain Health Awareness

Engage your mind in healthy ways: study, thoughtful reading, journaling, or meaningful conversation. Challenge yourself with activities that require focus and memory, like memorizing poems or phone numbers, or taking a class to learn something new.

D. Creativity

Nourish your creativity through writing, art, music, dance, theater, or any creative pursuit that fulfills you. Set aside time each week to explore and express your creative side.

Assignment:

* List 10 things you can do for fun, pleasure, and relaxation.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

7.

8.

9.

10.

* Name three people you want to connect with more. How can you start today?

1.

2.

3.

* List three ways to exercise your brain this week.

1.

2.

3.

* List three ways to be more creative. Can you start one this week?

1.

2.

3.

**Part 2: Daily Body Care & Adequate Sleep**

Media can distract us from caring for our bodies. Lasting sobriety depends on good sleep and body awareness. Set a media curfew and a regular bedtime. Keep electronics out of your bedroom. During the day, nourish your body with healthy food, exercise, and fresh air. Spend time in nature, unplugged, to ground yourself and awaken your senses. When needed, seek support from healthcare and healing professionals.

Please answer:

* What time do you want to go to bed?
* What time do you want to wake up?
* What are three things you can do this month to better care for your body?

1.

2.

3.

Urge Surfing Worksheet

Instructions:  
Complete this worksheet before using media for relief, recreation, relaxation, or retaliation. This is a mindful “pause”—a way to check in with yourself and make a conscious choice.

Important:  
Filling out this worksheet does not mean you’re forbidden from using media. If, after completing it, you still wish to use media, give yourself permission to do so—consciously, not compulsively. However, please commit to answering every question in order, without skipping ahead.

Step-by-Step Process

1. Pause and Breathe  
   Close your eyes and take 3 deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth.
2. Acceptance  
   Accept how you’re feeling right now. Accept the urge, accept yourself, and accept your life as it is. Let go of judgment.
3. Self-Appreciation  
   Find something—no matter how small—that you appreciate about yourself right now. (Completing this worksheet counts!)
4. Celebrate Your Life  
   Calculate the number of days you’ve been alive:
   * Multiply your age by 365.
   * Add the days since your last birthday.
   * Write the total here: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
     Congratulate yourself for making it this far!
5. Sing!  
   Sing any song for up to one minute. It doesn’t have to be good—just have fun.
6. Find Humor  
   Notice something funny about this moment (maybe your singing!).
7. Reflect on Your Intention  
   For one minute, write what you hope to get from using media right now. What do you think it will give you?
8. Recall a Difficult Media Experience  
   Close your eyes for 30 seconds. Remember one of your worst media binges.
9. Reality Check  
   Did you get what you wanted from media during that binge? Did it deliver on its promise?
10. Aftermath Reflection  
    Write for one minute about how you felt after that binge. What did you think about yourself and your life?
11. Life Inventory
    * Of the total days you’ve been alive, estimate what fraction you’ve spent on media (e.g., 1/4, 1/3, 1/2, etc.): \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
    * In the last 10 years, how much of your life was spent binging on media? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
12. Willingness  
    Are you willing to ask your Higher Power to remove your compulsion to use media right now? (Yes/No)
13. Serenity Pause  
    Pause for at least 15 seconds. Say the Serenity Prayer (or another calming prayer/affirmation).
14. Ask for Help  
    In your own words, ask your Higher Power to remove the compulsion to use media.
15. Listen  
    Wait quietly and listen. (You may repeat your prayer up to three times.)
16. Gratitude  
    Write down at least one thing you’re grateful for right now.
17. Make Your Decision  
    Decide:  
    I am choosing to (circle one): USE / NOT USE my media because \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.
18. Alternative Activity  
    If you choose not to use media, what wonderful activity will you do instead?
19. Visualize Success  
    Imagine how you’ll feel after doing that alternative activity, especially at the end of the day. Write a few sentences:
20. Move Forward  
    Move into your next activity with clarity and enthusiasm, whatever you decided.
21. Repeat as Needed  
    You can always return to this worksheet whenever you need support.

Remember: This worksheet is here to help you pause, reflect, and make empowered choices. You’re doing great—one mindful moment at a time!

**Commitments for Closed Back to Basics Step Study Action Groups— PDF**

<https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/_files/ugd/7ab8aa_115a48c94d7b4ae0a24ac6bc29da7a84.pdf>

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