

**Media Addicts Anonymous presents
OPEN BACK TO BASICS
Open Big Book 12-Step Study Group**

**MODULE FOUR
“Steps 10 through 12”**

MODULE 4, MEETING 1

Group Sponsors: Before the meeting begins, make sure you have three readers available (no abstinence requirement). Have at least one Group Sponsor stay after the meeting for a few minutes to answer any questions about Open Back to Basics, Closed Back to Basics, or MAA.

~ A ~

Welcome to the FOURTEENTH session of Open Back to Basics. Please put down all nonessential media while participating in this session. By focusing on this meeting without distractions, you will be able to access the recovery power that these Open-Back-to-Basics meetings offer. We ask that you allow us to see you during the meeting by keeping your camera on.

My name is **A**, and I am **B**. We are members of Media Addicts Anonymous, abstaining from our alcoholic media, and we are your Group Sponsors. Please join us in saying the WE VERSION of the Serenity Prayer:

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

~ B ~

The only requirement for participation in this weekly Open 12-Step Study Group is a desire to stop using media compulsively. Taking the 12 Steps can be a life-changing experience. The Steps provide us with a new way of living, free from the compulsive use of our "alcoholic" media. The authors of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous tell us that "A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, 'a design for living' that really works."

If you are new to this meeting, we welcome you. Is there anyone here for the first time? Please raise your hand and introduce yourself. *[Group Sponsors to allow time for newcomers to identify themselves.]* We stay on after this meeting for fellowship and to answer any questions.

~ A ~

Most of what we will read in this Open-Back-to-Basics group is taken directly from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In MAA, we respect AA's request to read the Big Book as is, without changing anything. However, we have made some exceptions. If you were reading the Big Book with your sponsor, you may be asked to change the term alcohol to media so that you can fully grasp the extent to which media's impact is similar to that of alcohol. Therefore, as we read, wherever the Big Book mentions alcoholism, we will often substitute or add terms related to media addiction. This is to help us understand how media addiction parallels alcohol addiction and why our solution is to be found in the Big Book of AA. To make this format more inclusive, we have changed all pronouns from third-person singular to third-person plural. These two adjustments have been made to serve each person and to help them gain as much benefit from the Big Book as possible.

~ B ~

At the end of the meeting, we will exchange contact information so you can connect with others between meetings. This will be especially helpful to those looking for a sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of MAA to connect with. We will also make some suggestions for homework that you can do between meetings to help you stay media sober. While the homework assignments are not mandatory, they are designed to keep you focused on your sobriety and help prevent cravings.

Today our readers, in alphabetical order, will be 1) _____, 2) _____, and 3) _____.

~ A ~

We have already accomplished so much. We have been through Steps One through Nine together, which is quite a feat. If you have completed the *Eighth Step Worksheet – People We Have Harmed* form and have begun making amends, please state your name and say “yes.” If you haven’t, please say, “*I pass.*” I will call each of your names as you appear on my screen.

[Stop screen sharing and call on members by screen image layout.]

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

~ B ~

We encourage you to make your amends as soon as you can. You will find, as we have, that a whole new life will unfold when you do. We will continue the **GUIDANCE PROCESS** by taking Steps Ten and Eleven. Then we will continue the **SHARING PROCESS** by presenting Step Twelve.

~ A ~

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 alcoholic media 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. By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule.... If anyone who is showing inability to control [their media usage] can do the right-about-face and [use] like a gentleman, our hats are off to [them]. Heaven knows, we have tried hard enough and long enough to [use media] like other people!”

~ B ~

We reiterate this assertion about our lack of control and power over our media consumption 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.

~ A ~

It is normal for real media addicts to hope that one day we can use media with impunity, but this way of thinking is lethal for our recovery. 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 [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 triggering media], there must be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to [media].”

~ B ~

We are sorry to be the bearers of this bad news. We, who have recovered from media addiction, were not thrilled with this truth, but it is a truth we must hold in our consciousness every day. We may have recovered, but we are never cured.

~ A ~

If we are to keep everything we have gained so far, we must continue to take Steps One through Nine thoroughly and without unnecessary delay. Persistence in completing all 12 Steps is the key to long-term recovery. This brings us to Step Ten, which is all about the daily upkeep of our recovery from addiction and the maintenance of emotional sobriety.

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

~ B ~

In Steps One through Three, we made **decisions**, which commenced our spiritual journey. In Steps Four through Nine, we took the necessary **actions** to remove the obstacles that had separated us from our Higher Power. Having made those decisions and taken these actions, we are ready to grow into the **SPIRITUAL AWAKENING** promised by the Big Book authors.

~ A ~

The key to the Tenth Step is the word “*continue*.” The Big Book authors emphasize the importance of *continuing* to take the 12 Steps.

- “This thought brings us to Step Ten, which suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world of

the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.”

~ B ~

Let’s re-read the third sentence in this paragraph: “*We have entered the world of the Spirit.*” The Big Book authors have just informed us that our lives have already been transformed because of taking Steps One through Nine. They tell us that something within us has changed profoundly, and we are now living a spirit-centered life.

~ A ~

They show us that the way to continue to recover is by clearing up our mistakes as we go. We continue to take inventory, continue to make amends, and continue to help others every day. We do not do this alone, however. We seek spiritual help from the “*One who has all power.*”

~ B ~

As we worked through Steps One through Nine, we began to develop a belief in a God of our own understanding, and we came to rely upon this Power to guide us through our personal inventory and restitution process. We started to see that “*God was doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.*” We have begun to live day by day in “*the solution.*” The authors summarize the process we follow to remain spiritually connected:

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

~ A ~

Here, the authors instruct us to remain vigilant for “*selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear*” as we aspire to live by the codes of *tolerance* and *love*. 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.

~ B ~

We must first seek what is consistent with our Creator’s plan for our lives, and then we must take all necessary steps to move from self-will toward God’s will. We call upon the “*One who has all power*” to remove our shortcomings and to “set right the wrong(s).” We do not do this in isolation but rather discuss our situation with our sponsor or another program fellow, and then resolutely— that is, with determination—turn our attention to someone we can help.

~ A ~

If we wish to recover completely from media addiction, we must address both the allergy of the body and the obsession of the mind. This is why we have been cultivating conscious contact with “*a Power greater than ourselves.*” When we find ourselves still struggling with our obsession with media, we must intensify our efforts to protect and enhance our spiritual condition. Let’s read what are known as the Big Book’s “*Tenth Step Promises:*”

- “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 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.”

~ B ~

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

- “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 God’s will into all of our activities. ‘*How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done.*’ These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power 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.”

~ A ~

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 ~

Now that we have made it to Step Ten, we’d like to share another story of an early A.A. member who writes about his daily Tenth Step and about how—upon taking A.A.’s 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.” ...[M]y 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 ~

The Big Book authors write: “*We continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along.*” Here is an easy prayer provided by early A.A. members to help us take the Tenth Step. You can find the seeds of this **TENTH STEP PRAYER** on page 84 of the Big Book:

God, 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. God, help me to quickly make amends if I have harmed anyone and to resolutely turn my thoughts to someone I can help. Help me to be loving and tolerant of everyone today. AMEN.

~ B ~

Although we’ve asked our Higher Power to remove our selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear, it is up to us to remain vigilant as they crop up throughout the day. When this happens, we again immediately ask for these defects of character to be removed. We do not do this alone: We share this with our sponsor or another MAA member.

~ A ~

If we have hurt someone by our behavior or have been inconsiderate, we make amends as quickly as we can. We do not want to take these problems into the next day, but rather we aim to clean up our mess as we go about our daily life in recovery.

~ B ~

Next, we find someone whom we can help: We may call another MAA member. Giving service always brings us back into balance and helps us to regain focus on what really matters.

You will find Tenth Step worksheets, in Short and Long Form, on the BBB2B website. Please make sure to download and/or print these forms to have them handy.

Below are screen shots of the two-page *Tenth Step Inventory Short Form* worksheet:

Tenth Step Inventory Part 1- Resentment

I am resentful at <small>(People, Place, Institution)</small>	The CAUSE Exact reason why I am angry	Affect My SELF –ESTEEM I am... or I should be... PRIDE AMBITIONS I want... SECURITY I need... PERSONAL RELATIONS Men / women are... or men or women should be... SEX RELATIONS my husband / Boyfriend is... or my wife/girlfriend should be... POCKETBOOK	SICK MANS PRAYER "Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too. We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves, "This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done." Pg. 67	Exact Nature of our wrongs*
<small>Bottom pg. 44 / Ex. pg. 45 to complete resent. inventory</small>	<small>Bottom pg. 44 / Example pg. 45</small>	<small>pg. 45 / Example pg. 45</small>		<small>page 47 / please read pg. 44 & 47</small> *See The Nature of Our Wrongs form for examples

Tenth Step Inventory Part 2- Fear

Name the FEAR <small>Read page 68 instructions for FEAR</small>	Why do I have this fear? If this happens then what? Is there a historical reason for it?	Has self reliance failed? Yes / NO How have I relied on myself?	How would God have me be?	
<p>Prayer</p> <p><small>Read page 76. " step 6 and 7 When ready we say something like this: "My creator I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad. I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows. Grant me strength, as I go from here to do your bidding. Amen."</small></p> <p><small>"We resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help. Love and tolerance is our code." (Page 84 88)</small></p>		<p>Harms done / Amends</p> <p><small>Read page 68 instructions for steps 8 and 9</small></p>	<p>Did I cause harm?</p>	<p>Do I owe an amends?</p>

Revised 05/29/23

~ B ~ (continued)

Notice that the *Short Form* has two pages—the first is a Resentment Inventory, and the second is a Fear Inventory. On the first page, 1) we name a resentment, 2) identify its cause, 3) list the parts of self that were threatened (such as self-esteem, pride, ambitions, security, personal relations, sex relations, pocketbook), and 4) look at the nature of our wrongs (e.g., where was I selfish, self-seeking, dishonest, or afraid). On the second page, we examine our underlying fears, and in Column 4, we ask, “*How would God have me be*” in this situation?

The *Tenth Step Long Form* is another option for completing a more in-depth Tenth Step inventory. It has three parts, each with a set of specific questions, such as:

What would consideration look like in this situation?

What would faith look like in this situation?

What would generosity look like in this situation?”

Feel free to use either the Short Form or the Long Form worksheet when doing your Tenth Steps. As you complete your worksheets, you may find it helpful to refer to the downloadable PDF, titled *The Nature of Our Wrongs*, which provides examples of how selfishness, dishonesty, self-seeking, or fear could be at play.

~ A ~

Now, I will read the **Tenth Step Prayer** out loud. Please close your eyes and listen carefully, so you may feel the Tenth Step in your heart and be ready to answer the Tenth Step question. *God, 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. God, help me to quickly make amends if I have harmed anyone and to resolutely turn my thoughts to someone I can help. Help me to be loving and tolerant of everyone today. AMEN.*

~ B ~

Will those who have completed the first Eight Steps and are working on their Ninth Step amends please be ready to respond to the following **Tenth Step question**:

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

If so, please state your name, followed by “yes.” If not, please say, “I pass.” I will call each of your names as you appear on my screen. *[Stop screen sharing and call on members by screen image layout.]*

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

~ A ~

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 TRANSFORMATION.

PERSEVERANCE is persistence, determination, steadfastness, patience, and diligence. It means to fall down ten times and to get 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. We may sometimes even take a step backward, but in Step Ten, we make the commitment to persist until we succeed. Our goal with step work is “*spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.*”

- In our daily prayers, we ask God to do for us what we could not do for ourselves, which means to help us “*to continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.*” When those crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately (**CONFESSION**), and we 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**. Note that there is a difference between *change* and *transformation*. Change is ego-based, while transformation is spiritually based. Transformation is the difference between a caterpillar and a butterfly. Once the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it cannot go back to being a caterpillar.
- In our Twelve-Step program, 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. Transformation occurs as we persevere over time when we are not looking. All the Principles of the program are encompassed by the Tenth Step—allowing our Higher Power to transform us, one day at a time if we persevere.

Please use the *Tenth Step worksheets* when you find yourself becoming resentful, angry, fearful, or agitated and call your sponsor or another member to give this Tenth Step away. Thank you all for your commitment and devotion to recovery.

Sharing

~ B ~

We will now open up the room for 3-minute shares. We will begin with our three readers in the order they read, and then I will take more names.

[Stop the screen sharing.]

[Ask A to keep time or get a volunteer to time the shares.]

Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

[Stop the individual shares at 5 minutes before the close of the meeting and return to screen sharing.]

~ A ~

That is all the time we have today for sharing. If you are comfortable sharing your information, we encourage you to put your name and number in the chat now so you can connect with other members of our group. *[Group Sponsors to add their contact information to the chat as well.]*

MAA has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, which are for the development of MAA literature, costs incurred by the MAA General Service Board, phone and video meeting services, and the maintenance of the MAA website. Contributions can be made via credit card, debit card, or through PayPal on the MAA website at mediaaddictsanonymous.org. Please give what you can, and if you can give nothing at this time, keep coming back because you are more important than your money.

In closing, the opinions expressed here today are strictly those of the individuals who gave them. The things we have heard here are spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. We do not take outside the meeting whom we hear at the meeting. If we try to absorb what we have heard, we are bound to gain a better understanding of the way to handle our problems and begin to change our lives. Let us talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, and let there be no gossip or criticism of one another, but only Love, Understanding, and Fellowship.

~ B ~

This ends our session of Open Back to Basics. To close, please join us in the WE VERSION of the Serenity Prayer:

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

Thank you for joining us. We hope to see you here next week. The homework assignments we recommend for this week are, and I will post them in the chat: 1) fill out the *Tenth Step Short Form* on any selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, or fear you are having this week, 2) fill out the *Tenth Step Long Form* on the same issue to gain a better understanding of your wrongs and more clarity about what needs to be done, and 3) read both your *Tenth Step Short Form* and *Long Form* to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of MAA. *[Group Sponsors to copy the homework assignments in the chat by pasting the list below.]*

Feel free to stay after the meeting for a few minutes if you have any questions or would like to connect.

END OF MODULE 4, MEETING 1

MODULE 4, MEETING 1 Homework Assignments

- 1) Fill out the *Tenth Step Short Form* on any selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, or fear you are having this week.
- 2) Fill out the *Tenth Step Long Form* on the same issue to gain a better understanding of your wrongs and more clarity about what needs to be done.
- 3) Read both your *Tenth Step Short Form* and *Long Form* to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of MAA.

MODULE 4, MEETING 2

Group Sponsors: Before the meeting begins, make sure you have three readers available (no abstinence requirement). Have at least one Group Sponsor stay after the meeting for a few minutes to answer any questions about Open Back to Basics, Closed Back to Basics, or MAA.

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If you are new to this meeting, we welcome you. Is there anyone here for the first time? Please raise your hand and introduce yourself. *[Group Sponsors to allow time for newcomers to identify themselves.]* We stay on after this meeting for fellowship and to answer any questions.

~ A ~

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Today our readers, in alphabetical order, will be 1) _____, 2) _____, and 3) _____.

~ A ~

In the last session, we took Step Ten. Remember **Step Ten is practicing Steps Four through Nine on a daily basis**. Today we will be exploring Step Eleven, which is to improve our spiritual connection to our Higher Power through prayer and meditation.

~ B ~

When we were active in our media addiction, we lived according to our *lower power*, that part of ourselves that told us to hide in a cave and be small and insignificant. *We* consumed media, and *it* consumed us. We lived according to our feelings and our ego's need to feel safe and self-important. Lost in media binges, we were basically worshiping "*false idols*" and living in the delusional thinking of our lower power (or false self).

~ A ~

When we came into Back to Basics, right away we were urged by the Big Book to find a Power greater than ourselves, meaning something greater than our ego or our addiction. We were told that this power could restore us back to our true sane self. To live emotionally sober and media sober, we needed to upgrade from a *lower power* to a "*Higher Power*."

~ B ~

In Steps Two and Three, we were able to find this Higher Power within ourselves and within this fellowship. The Big Book tells us that we must not stop there—that we must continue to upgrade the connection we have with this Power.

~ A ~

This brings us to:

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.*

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.

~ B ~

Seven terms stand out in Step Eleven, which are worth reviewing before we proceed. They are **Prayer, Meditation, Conscious, Contact, Knowledge, God's will, and Power**.

- **Prayer** is a solemn request for assistance, or an expression of gratitude addressed to our Higher Power.
- **Meditation** is the act of contemplation, quiet reflection, concentration, and stilling of the mind.
- Being **Conscious** is having knowledge or awareness of something.
- **Contact** is the state or condition of communicating, connecting, or meeting with another.
- **Knowledge** is the realization, perception, and understanding of a given subject.
- **God's will** is a personal directive from a Power greater than one's self for the highest good of all.
- **Power** is the ability to act with potency and strength to achieve our purpose, mission, or goals.

~ A ~

From these words, we learn that we are to cultivate a daily practice in which we intentionally invoke the presence of a Power greater than ourselves. In this devotional, we contemplate and correspond with this Power, just as we would a trusted parent or friend. During this daily connection, we will be given the understanding needed to fulfill our Higher Power's desire for us and for our life. If we ask for it, we will also be granted the grace to act in accordance with our Higher Power's guidance.

~ B ~

Earlier we learned that the combination of prayer, meditation, and writing is what we call "*Two-Way Prayer*." In Week Two, we started to practice Two-Way Prayer. Remember, prayer is talking to God, and meditation is listening to God. We open our souls and speak our problems to our Higher Power, and then we listen for guidance from the "*One who has all knowledge and power*."

~ A ~

The Big Book authors invite us to have this *conscious contact* with the God of our understanding by interspersing references to *Two-Way Prayer* throughout the book. Here is one passage in the Big Book that refers to guidance:

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

~ B ~

In this passage, the Big Book authors encourage us to take daily “*quiet time*,” where we make conscious contact with our Higher Power. It is during this period of meditation that our Higher Power guides us to a new way of living, grounded in the assets of **PATIENCE**, **TOLERANCE**, **KINDLINESS**, and **LOVE**. The Big Book authors tell us not to be shy in addressing our Higher Power:

- “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.”

~ A ~

If you had the opportunity to receive expert advice on how to conduct your business or relationships at no cost to you except your time, wouldn’t you want this free consultation? When we seek God’s guidance, we find a “*new power, peace, happiness and ... direction*.” How does our Higher Power guide us?

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

~ B ~

Our Higher Power will answer specific questions we pose during Two-Way Prayer:

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

We are to pray earnestly and with the sincere desire to be given advice and direction:

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

These are just a few examples from the Big Book on prayer and meditation. They are sufficient to get us started. We now know what we must do to live in the “*Realm of the Spirit*.”

~ A ~

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 ~

As you may have noticed, in this daily review, we look at our **Assets** as well as our **Liabilities**, just as we do when we approach Steps Six and Seven, after completing our Fourth (or Tenth) Step Inventory. We look at what worked, what did not work, and where we must take action to stay on track. Some people conduct this daily survey in the morning instead of at the end of the day. Here is an example of a daily review:

Back To Basics Daily Eleventh Step Evening (Or Morning) Review

- **What WORKED for me today (or *yesterday* if completing a Morning Review)?**
 - How was I loving today?
 - Where was I accepting of others or my situation?
 - When did I consider others today?
 - When did I consider myself?
 - Where did I find peace today?
 - Where did I use my gifts?
 - Where did I have faith?
 - What can I celebrate as an accomplishment today?

- Now give yourself this **PRAYER FORMATION**:

“Congratulations (your name), you successfully (name your accomplishment(s)) today. I am so proud of you, and this is more God's success than mine!”

Prayer Formations allow us to put a stop to negative thoughts and self-talk, and they can raise our reward neurohormones—dopamine and serotonin.

Say your Prayer Formations with enthusiasm. No one will hear you, and you deserve it!

- **What DIDN'T WORK for me today (or *yesterday*)?**
 - When did I get stuck today?
 - Where did I try to run the show?
 - Where or when could I have asked for my Higher Power's help?
 - Where could I have been more considerate of others or myself?
 - When could I have given more?
 - Where could I have allowed myself to receive more?
 - When could I have been more appreciative?
 - Where could I have been more honest?
 - Where could I have been more tolerant?
 - Did I feel self-pity today? If so, how can I move into self-compassion?
 - Is there anything I must confess today?
 - Where can I find peace as I sleep tonight [*or start my day*]?

~ A ~

This form of self-reflection is part of the Eleventh Step meditation process. There are many ways to practice Step Eleven. One way is the **Eleventh Step Daily Review**, mentioned in your homework assignment for this week. You can download or print it if you wish to include it in your daily practice. You may also consider finding an **Eleventh Step Action Partner**. Many of us share our daily or evening reflections with an action partner.

The authors provide us with further directions for conducting our daily “*quiet times*.”

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

This paragraph holds the basic ingredients for why we practice **Two-Way Prayer**. The third sentence starts with, “*Before we begin . . .*” By this, the authors mean before we begin to listen to God. We know that we’re supposed to listen to God because we’re told to “*...ask God to direct our thinking*.” Therefore, it stands to reason that if we ask God to direct our thinking, then our next ideas, insights, and thoughts will come from God. What do we do with these thoughts and ideas? We write them down. Why write them? So that we may refer to them later and remember to follow God’s guidance.

~ B ~

The authors suggest that during our “*quiet time*,” our questions will be answered. They reveal how the One “*who has all knowledge and power*” will respond to our requests for help.

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

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

~ A ~

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

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

The authors then describe what we are to do throughout the day anytime we become troubled or confused.

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

This is an ironclad guarantee. *It works, if you work it!* Our experience has shown us that when we let go and let our Higher Power guide us, life becomes so much easier.

~ B ~

Yet, from time to time, we may feel we are off-track or that we can't feel our Higher Power's presence in our lives. This is an indication that we have work to do. Remember, all we ever have is “*a daily reprieve contingent upon the maintenance of our spiritual condition.*” We must look closely at our actions and our life. Maybe we've taken *our will* back in certain areas of our life; maybe we've become defiant and want to run the show; or maybe we haven't made the necessary amends to those we have harmed. In such cases, we must take those actions which reconnect us to 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 ~

For Two-Way Prayer to be effective, we must train our minds to call in the presence of God. Often it takes most of us some time to master this practice:

- “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.”

As we become more proficient in listening to God, common sense soon becomes uncommon sense:

- “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 that sentence down.

“*When God guides, God provides.*” *[Pause for 1 minute]*

~ A ~

It is essential that we “*sit quietly*” so that we may clearly hear what God has to say—especially during periods of stress and uncertainty, or if we have the urge to use our alcoholic media.

- “Meditation is based on the belief that God speaks to those who are open to listen. We write down the thoughts and ideas we receive so we can contemplate on the guidance we received and the necessary actions to take. We come to trust in infinite God rather than our finite selves. If what we have written is honest, loving, considerate, and generous, we can conclude that this guidance is keeping with God’s will for us. If what we have written is dishonest, resentful, selfish, or fearful, we can assume this guidance is based on self-will rather than God’s will.”

We only take **ACTION** on guidance that passes all four elements of the test for God’s will as outlined in the *How to Listen to God* document.

~ 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 ~

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 on a daily basis.

- When we arrived in MAA, we were told that we lacked power over our media addiction. We knew that our own lack of willpower around media had thrown us into despair. *“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... But where and how were we to find this Power? “[Our] main [objective in these Steps has been] ... to find a Power greater than ourselves which will solve our problems.”* There is no problem that cannot be solved if we live by the Principles of Step Eleven.

Sharing

~ B ~

We will now open up the room for 3-minute shares. We will begin with our three readers in the order they read, and then I will take more names.

[Stop the screen sharing.]

[Ask A to keep time or get a volunteer to time the shares.]

Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

[Stop the individual shares at 5 minutes before the close of the meeting and return to screen sharing.]

~ A ~

That is all the time we have today for sharing. If you are comfortable sharing your information, we encourage you to put your name and number in the chat now so you can connect with other members of our group. *[Group Sponsors to add their contact information to the chat as well.]*

MAA has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, which are for the development of MAA literature, costs incurred by the MAA General Service Board, phone and video meeting services, and the maintenance of the MAA website. Contributions can be made via credit card, debit card, or through PayPal on the MAA website at mediaaddictsanonymous.org. Please give what you can, and if you can give nothing at this time, keep coming back because you are more important than your money.

In closing, the opinions expressed here today are strictly those of the individuals who gave them. The things we have heard here are spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. We do not take outside the meeting whom we hear at the meeting. If we try to absorb what we have heard, we are bound to gain a better understanding of the way to handle our problems and begin to change our lives. Let us talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, and let there be no gossip or criticism of one another, but only Love, Understanding, and Fellowship.

~ B ~

This ends our session of Open Back to Basics. To close, please join us in the WE VERSION of the Serenity Prayer:

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

Thank you for joining us. We hope to see you here next week. The homework assignment we recommend for this week is, and I will post it in the chat: 1) make a plan for your daily quiet times by completing the “Plan Your Quiet Time” worksheet and begin to follow it, 2) complete an *Eleventh Step Long Form*, and 3) complete an *Eleventh Step Short Form*. *[Group Sponsors to copy the homework assignments in the chat by pasting the list below.]*

Feel free to stay after the meeting for a few minutes if you have any questions or would like to connect.

END OF MODULE 4, MEETING 2

MODULE 4, MEETING 2 Homework Assignments

1) Make a plan for your daily quiet times by completing the “Plan Your Quiet Time” worksheet and begin to follow it (see form on the www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org homepage under Open-Back-to-Basics Step Study, Module Four). Use the daily prayers from the Big Book, the Guided Two-Way Prayer Meditation Script, and the audio recordings of prayers and meditations on the MAA website at <https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/resources>. Consider including the Eleventh Step Prayer from today’s script:

“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.”

2) Complete an **Eleventh Step Long Form** (see form on the www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org homepage under Open-Back-to-Basics Step Study, Module Four) to see if you would like to include it in your daily practice.

3) Complete an **Eleventh Step Short Form** (see form on the www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org homepage under Open-Back-to-Basics Step Study, Module Four) from page 86 of the Big Book to experience another way of daily reflection.

MODULE 4, MEETING 3

Group Sponsors: Before the meeting begins, make sure you have three readers available (no abstinence requirement). Have at least one Group Sponsor stay after the meeting for a few minutes to answer any questions about Open Back to Basics, Closed Back to Basics, or MAA.

~ A ~

Welcome to the SIXTEENTH session of Open Back to Basics. Please put down all nonessential media while participating in this session. By focusing on this meeting without distractions, you will be able to access the recovery power that these Open-Back-to-Basics meetings offer. We ask that you allow us to see you during the meeting by keeping your camera on.

My name is **A**, and I am **B**. We are members of Media Addicts Anonymous, abstaining from our alcoholic media, and we are your Group Sponsors. Please join us in saying the WE VERSION of the Serenity Prayer:

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

~ B ~

The only requirement for participation in this weekly Open 12-Step Study Group is a desire to stop using media compulsively. Taking the 12 Steps can be a life-changing experience. The Steps provide us with a new way of living, free from the compulsive use of our "alcoholic" media. The authors of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous tell us that "A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, 'a design for living' that really works."

If you are new to this meeting, we welcome you. Is there anyone here for the first time? Please raise your hand and introduce yourself. *[Group Sponsors to allow time for newcomers to identify themselves.]* We stay on after this meeting for fellowship and to answer any questions.

~ A ~

Most of what we will read in this Open-Back-to-Basics group is taken directly from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In MAA, we respect AA's request to read the Big Book as is, without changing anything. However, we have made some exceptions. If you were reading the Big Book with your sponsor, you may be asked to change the term alcohol to media so that you can fully grasp the extent to which media's impact is similar to that of alcohol. Therefore, as we read, wherever the Big Book mentions alcoholism, we will often substitute or add terms related to media addiction. This is to help us understand how media addiction parallels alcohol addiction and why our solution is to be found in the Big Book of AA. To make this format more inclusive, we have changed all pronouns from third-person singular to third-person plural. These two adjustments have been made to serve each person and to help them gain as much benefit from the Big Book as possible.

~ B ~

At the end of the meeting, we will exchange contact information so you can connect with others between meetings. This will be especially helpful to those looking for a sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of MAA to connect with. We will also make some suggestions for homework that you can do between meetings to help you stay media sober. While the homework assignments are not mandatory, they are designed to keep you focused on your sobriety and help prevent cravings.

Today our readers, in alphabetical order, will be 1) _____, 2) _____, and 3) _____.

~ A ~

Congratulations to those who have taken the first eleven Steps! We can now offer others a priceless gift—the solution to their media problem. Here is where we consider our soul's purpose. We ask ourselves, "*What were we put on this earth to do?*" Some of us have wondered, "*Am I here to serve God, or is God here to serve me?*"

~ B ~

The Big Book tells us that our service to God and God's service to us form a symbiotic relationship: By serving others, we ultimately serve God and ourselves. Step Twelve is perfect in helping us to begin understanding this new relationship.

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 experience 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 really 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 really 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 ~

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 to have the same experience.

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-year period 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.”*

~ B ~

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, it is impossible for anyone to work all Twelve Steps, **honestly and committedly**, and not ultimately receive the promised spiritual awakening.

~ A ~

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 Spirit to move deeper within us and to effectuate change, and we 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.

~ B ~

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 the psychologist William James calls the ‘*educational variety*’ because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before [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.”

~ A ~

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.*”

~ B ~

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 do the work, in about 90 days, you will develop a personal relationship with *a God of your own understanding*.

~ A ~

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*.’”

~ B ~

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 in fact 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 ~

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?*

We will copy the questions into the chat, and we will now take **30 seconds** for each of you to state one change you have seen in yourself. *[Cut and paste the questions into the chat, stop screen sharing, and time each for 30 seconds. To keep things moving, call on members by name.]*

Thank you all for sharing!

Objective Two – Carrying the Message

~ B ~

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 is to our sustained sobriety from media addiction.

- “Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure 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 ~

We are told that if we work with others, our lives will take on a whole new meaning.

- “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.”

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.... [Y]our attempt to pass this on ... plays a vital part in your own recovery.”

~ B ~

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 with you. Offer [them] friendship and fellowship. Tell [them] that if [they] want to get well, you will do anything to help.”

~ A ~

Don't be discouraged and don't waste your time if a person does not respond immediately:

- “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 ~

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."

~ A ~

Do not allow "*the prospect*" to become overly dependent on you. **You are not their therapist, parent, or Higher Power.** It is critical that they depend 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 service plane, the [media addict] comes to rely on our assistance rather than upon God."

~ B ~

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 which came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands were better than anything we could have planned. Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances!"

~ A ~

Go where you are needed, keep your motives clean, and God 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."

~ B ~

Only share what you have experienced personally. Rather than giving advice or criticizing, keep the focus on your own 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."

~ A ~

The Big Book authors tell us that if we keep in “*fit spiritual condition*,” we can go anywhere and do anything we are called upon to do. We stay alert around our media triggers but do not fear them if we are spiritually fit.

- “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 the [the Sahara Desert], and even there a [tribesman] might turn up with a [smart phone] and ruin everything!”

~ B ~

We therefore 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!”

~ A ~

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 [electronic 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].”

~ B ~

The Big Book authors advise us not to get up on our soapbox 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. [Smart phones] or other alcoholic media were only a symbol. Besides, we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. We have to!”

~ A ~

It is time now to make a commitment to work with others. Will those who have taken the first eleven Steps, please be ready to respond to the following **Twelve-Step Questions**:

- *Will you carry this message to other media addicts? For example, are you willing to sponsor and give service at MAA meetings?*
- *Would you be willing to start a new MAA meeting and to help MAA grow?*
- *Are you willing to bring another media addict into the MAA program and walk them through the Twelve Steps?*

If you are willing, please state your name, followed by “yes.” If not, please say, “*I pass.*” I will start with **(name)** and call each of your names as you appear on my screen. ***[Stop screen share and call on members.]***

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

Next week we will complete the Twelfth Step and explore the principles we are to “*practice in all our affairs.*”

Sharing

~ B ~

We will now open up the room for 3-minute shares. We will begin with our three readers in the order they read, and then I will take more names.

[Stop screen sharing.]

[Ask A to keep time or get a volunteer to time the shares.]

Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

[Stop individual shares at 5 minutes before the close of the meeting and return to screen sharing.]

~ A ~

That is all the time we have today for sharing. If you are comfortable sharing your information, we encourage you to put your name and number in the chat now so you can connect with other members of our group. *[Group Sponsors to add their contact information to the chat as well.]*

MAA has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, which are for the development of MAA literature, costs incurred by the MAA General Service Board, phone and video meeting services, and the maintenance of the MAA website. Contributions can be made via credit card, debit card, or through PayPal on the MAA website at mediaaddictsanonymous.org. Please give what you can, and if you can give nothing at this time, keep coming back because you are more important than your money.

In closing, the opinions expressed here today are strictly those of the individuals who gave them. The things we have heard here are spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. We do not take outside the meeting whom we hear at the meeting. If we try to absorb what we have heard, we are bound to gain a better understanding of the way to handle our problems and begin to change our lives. Let us talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, and let there be no gossip or criticism of one another, but only Love, Understanding, and Fellowship.

~ B ~

This ends our session of Open Back to Basics. To close, please join us in the WE VERSION of the Serenity Prayer:

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

~ B ~ (continued)

Thank you for joining us. We hope to see you here next week. The homework assignments we recommend for this week are, and I will post them in the chat: 1) complete writing assignment #1 listed under Module Four Assignments, Meeting 3, on our website, 2) complete writing assignment #2, and 3) volunteer to sponsor someone in MAA. *[Group Sponsors to copy the homework assignments in the chat by pasting the list below.]*

Feel free to stay after the meeting for a few minutes if you have any questions or would like to connect.

END OF MODULE 4, MEETING 3

MODULE 4, MEETING 3 Homework Assignments

1) Complete writing assignment #1 listed under Module Four Assignments, Meeting 3, on our website at www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org under Open-Back-to-Basics Step Study on the homepage.

2) Complete writing assignment #2.

3) Volunteer to sponsor someone in MAA.

MODULE 4, MEETING 4

Group Sponsors: Before the meeting begins, make sure you have three readers available (no abstinence requirement). Have at least one Group Sponsor stay after the meeting for a few minutes to answer any questions about Open Back to Basics, Closed Back to Basics, or MAA.

~ A ~

Welcome to the SEVENTEENTH session of Open Back to Basics. Please put down all nonessential media while participating in this session. By focusing on this meeting without distractions, you will be able to access the recovery power that these Open-Back-to-Basics meetings offer. We ask that you allow us to see you during the meeting by keeping your camera on.

My name is **A**, and I am **B**. We are members of Media Addicts Anonymous, abstaining from our alcoholic media, and we are your Group Sponsors. Please join us in saying the WE VERSION of the Serenity Prayer:

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

~ B ~

The only requirement for participation in this weekly Open 12-Step Study Group is a desire to stop using media compulsively. Taking the 12 Steps can be a life-changing experience. The Steps provide us with a new way of living, free from the compulsive use of our "alcoholic" media. The authors of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous tell us that "A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, 'a design for living' that really works."

If you are new to this meeting, we welcome you. Is there anyone here for the first time? Please raise your hand and introduce yourself. *[Group Sponsors to allow time for newcomers to identify themselves.]* We stay on after this meeting for fellowship and to answer any questions.

~ A ~

Most of what we will read in this Open-Back-to-Basics group is taken directly from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In MAA, we respect AA's request to read the Big Book as is, without changing anything. However, we have made some exceptions. If you were reading the Big Book with your sponsor, you may be asked to change the term alcohol to media so that you can fully grasp the extent to which media's impact is similar to that of alcohol. Therefore, as we read, wherever the Big Book mentions alcoholism, we will often substitute or add terms related to media addiction. This is to help us understand how media addiction parallels alcohol addiction and why our solution is to be found in the Big Book of AA. To make this format more inclusive, we have changed all pronouns from third-person singular to third-person plural. These two adjustments have been made to serve each person and to help them gain as much benefit from the Big Book as possible.

~ B ~

At the end of the meeting, we will exchange contact information so you can connect with others between meetings. This will be especially helpful to those looking for a sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of MAA to connect with. We will also make some suggestions for homework that you can do between meetings to help you stay media sober. While the homework assignments are not mandatory, they are designed to keep you focused on your sobriety and help prevent cravings.

Today our readers, in alphabetical order, will be 1) _____, 2) _____, and 3) _____.

~ A ~

Today we will complete Step Twelve. Next week, we will end this round of the Steps with a **Gratitude Meeting**, during which time you will all have an opportunity to share about your four-month journey working through the Twelve Steps and staying media sober. We look forward to seeing you next week and sharing in fellowship.

~ 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 authors have revealed various principles to us that are crucial to achieving long-term recovery from media addiction.

~ A ~

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.

- **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 ~

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 expressed through a full-throttled spirit of service. Without generosity, our fellowship would not survive. Someone generously gave their time and energy to help you in your recovery. This generosity is what helps us keep what we have so generously been given—the gift of recovery. When you witness someone else's recovery, you will see your own more clearly. When you care about someone else's recovery, you will care more about your own.
- 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. This is the genius of our Twelve-Step Program.
- Our final step in MAA is to pay it forward. With the support of your sponsor, the Group Sponsors, and your MAA fellows, you have worked your way through the Twelve Steps, maintained your sobriety, and grown and transformed spiritually. Now you are equipped to guide less experienced MAA members through their own journey of recovery. **GENEROSITY** allows us to accept other media addicts where 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, and it is [by overcoming our addiction that we are reborn into a life of sanity, happiness, and usefulness of purpose].”* Gratitude emanates from the hearts of those who thought they were lost forever but have now been found. 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. 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 so generously received.

~ A ~

There are two final Principles revealed by the Big Book authors, which are not obvious parts of the Twelve Steps: The authors are adamant that we should enjoy our lives to the fullest. To live fully by the Principles of MAA, we must not only infuse our recovery journey with **SERVICE** and **USEFULNESS** but also with **CHEERFULNESS** and **LAUGHTER**!

~ B ~

By living the principles of cheerfulness and laughter, we impart to newcomers the joy and vitality we have come to enjoy upon recovering from our 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 walked 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 which is indeed miraculous. [God] has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves.”

~ B ~

Joy of life is our superpower. It helps keep our mood elevated and prevents us from seeking dopamine hits from alcoholic media consumption and other unhealthy sources of reward. Having a solid **Media Replacement Plan** is essential. Keeping a daily gratitude journal helps incorporate the principles of Cheerfulness and Laughter into our lives. The documents entitled **True Fun** and **Hormone Health** on our website offer further suggestions for healthy, joyful living.

~ A ~

Let us be clear, 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 of 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 [bingers] who read this page will understand!”

~ B ~

If we allow ourselves to rationalize or to 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 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?*’”

~ A ~

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. 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.”

~ B ~

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.

~ A ~

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.

~ B ~

Because we could not connect to 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 became our mother, our father, our friend, our lover, and even our Higher Power.

~ A ~

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

- 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.

~ B ~

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

- Here, in the Twelfth Step, we discover genuine friendships and learn 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.

~ A ~

This concludes our presentation of Step Twelve. Please allow your Higher Power to guide you as you do Twelfth Step outreach, and you will find that the “*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].*”

~ B ~

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

~ A ~

Now, all that is left is to practice these principles on a daily basis in all areas of our lives. Let's close this session by reading this passage from The Big Book:

- “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.”

~ B ~

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.

~ A ~

It is now time to make a commitment to practice these principles in all our affairs. Will those who have taken all Twelve Steps, please be ready to respond to the following question:

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

If so, please state your name, followed by “yes.” If not, please say, “*I pass.*” I will call each of your names as you appear on my screen. *[Stop screen sharing and call on members by screen image layout.]*

According to the Big Book authors, those who answered “yes” to this question **have taken all Twelve Steps. Congratulations** to those of you who are now Open-Back-to-Basics graduates! We are so very proud of you!

Thank you for allowing us to be of service. Next week 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.*”

Sharing

~ B ~

We will now open up the room for 3-minute shares. We will begin with our three readers in the order they read, and then I will take more names.

[Stop screen sharing.]

[Ask A to keep time or get a volunteer to time the shares.]

Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

[Stop the individual share at 5 minutes before the close of the meeting and return to screen sharing.]

~ A ~

That is all the time we have today for sharing. If you are comfortable sharing your information, we encourage you to put your name and number in the chat now so you can connect with other members of our group. *[Group Sponsors to add their contact information to the chat as well.]*

MAA has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, which are for the development of MAA literature, costs incurred by the MAA General Service Board, phone and video meeting services, and the maintenance of the MAA website. Contributions can be made via credit card, debit card, or through PayPal on the MAA website at mediaaddictsanonymous.org. Please give what you can, and if you can give nothing at this time, keep coming back because you are more important than your money.

In closing, the opinions expressed here today are strictly those of the individuals who gave them. The things we have heard here are spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. We do not take outside the meeting whom we hear at the meeting. If we try to absorb what we have heard, we are bound to gain a better understanding of the way to handle our problems and begin to change our lives. Let us talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, and let there be no gossip or criticism of one another, but only Love, Understanding, and Fellowship.

~ B ~

This ends our session of Open Back to Basics. To close, please join us in the WE VERSION of the Serenity Prayer:

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

Thank you for joining us. We hope to see you here next week. The homework assignments we recommend for this week are, and I will post them in the chat: 1) complete writing assignment #1 listed under Module Four Assignments, Meeting 4, on our website, 2) review your Media Replacement Plan and add more activities that bring you pleasure and fun, and 3) consider starting a new MAA meeting (see guidelines on the MAA website). *[Group Sponsors to copy the homework assignments in the chat by pasting the list below.]*

Feel free to stay after the meeting for a few minutes if you have any questions or would like to connect.

END OF MODULE 4, MEETING 4

MODULE 4, MEETING 4 Homework Assignments

- 1) Complete writing assignment #1 listed under Module Four Assignments, Meeting 4, on our website at www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org under Open-Back-to-Basics Step Study on the homepage.
- 2) Review your Media Replacement Plan and add more activities that bring you pleasure and fun.
- 3) Consider starting a new MAA meeting (see guidelines on the MAA website).

MODULE 4, MEETING 5

Group Sponsors: Have at least one Group Sponsor stay after the meeting for a few minutes to answer any questions about Open Back to Basics, Closed Back to Basics, or MAA. Today is the last session of this Twelve-Step cycle. Be prepared to begin with Module 1, Meeting 1 next week or make sure you find a B2B Group Sponsor to take your place.

~ A ~

Welcome to the EIGHTEENTH and final session of Open Back to Basics. This will be our Gratitude session. Please put down all nonessential electronic media while participating in these sessions. By focusing on this meeting without distractions, you will be able to access the recovery power of what these meetings have to offer. We ask that you allow us to see you during the meeting by keeping your camera on.

My name is **A**, and I am **B**. We are members of Media Addicts Anonymous, abstaining from our alcoholic media, and we are your Group Sponsors. Please join us in saying the WE VERSION of the Serenity Prayer:

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

~ B ~

The only requirement for participation in this weekly Open 12-Step Study Group is a desire to stop using media compulsively. Taking the 12 Steps can be a life-changing experience. The Steps provide us with a new way of living, free from the compulsive use of our "alcoholic" media. The authors of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous tell us that "A new life has been given us or, if you prefer, 'a design for living' that really works."

If you are new to this meeting, we welcome you. Is there anyone here for the first time? Please raise your hand and introduce yourself. *[Group Sponsors to allow time for newcomers to identify themselves.]* We stay on after this meeting for fellowship and to answer any questions.

~ A ~

Because today is the last session of our Twelve-Step cycle, everyone will be given the opportunity to pause and reflect on how working the Twelve Steps has changed their lives and to think about the gratitude they have for this amazing process and those who have supported them through it.

Here is how our meeting will unfold:

1. We will begin with a guided meditation.
2. We will then take three minutes for each member to share on what they are grateful for and where they are on their journey.
3. After 50 minutes, we'll talk about options going forward and take questions.

[Stop screen share and allow time for this.]

Meditation

~ A ~

- Close your eyes and take a long, deep breath ... *[Pause]*
- Think about how far you have come in your recovery whether you've only been with us for a week or whether you have been on this journey with us through the whole Twelve Steps ... *[Pause]*
- Think about the people who have supported you through the process—your sponsor, the Group Sponsors at this meeting, and your fellow MAA members ... *[Pause]*
- Become aware of your body and your breathing ... *[Pause]*
- Take a moment to bring your awareness home to yourself ... *[Pause]*
- Take another long, deep breath ... *[Pause]*
- Remember what it was like the first day you admitted you were powerless over media—that your life had become unmanageable ... *[Pause]*
- Remember when you came to believe in a Power greater than yourself ... *[Pause]*
- Remember when you realized that a Power was restoring you to sanity ... *[Pause]*
- Think about the decision you made to trust in your Higher Power and give up your control by turning your will and your life over to your Higher Power's care ... *[Pause]*
- Remember writing your Fourth Step inventory and thinking about your resentments, your fears, and your sexual conduct ... *[Pause]*
- Remember reading it all to someone else and then taking a quiet hour to reflect on how far you had come... *[Pause]*
- Having looked at your character defects and brought them to the light, were you ready to have God remove them and do you remember humbly asking God to do that? ... *[Pause]*
- Think about the list you made of all the people you had harmed, including yourself ... *[Pause]*
- Remember the first amends you made and how scared you were; do you still have more to make? ... *[Pause]*
- Are you continuing to take personal inventory and promptly admitting it when you are wrong? Are you taking time at night to do a review and take a Tenth Step inventory ... *[Pause]*
- Remember the first time you tried Two-Way Prayer; are you still finding time in your day to meditate and pray? ... *[Pause]*
- Take a moment to feel how it feels to be media sober and to have had a spiritual awakening as a result of these steps ... *[Pause]*
- Are you ready to carry this message to other media addicts and practice these principles in all your affairs? ... *[Pause]*
- Now slowly open your eyes and come back into the room.

~ B ~

We now ask that each person share for 3 minutes *[or as determined by GS]* what they are grateful for. Please share the following:

- *Your journey with us as you see it today,*
- *What you learned about your media addiction, and*
- *What you learned about yourself.*
- *You are welcome to direct your gratitude to other group members as well.*

I will copy and paste these questions into the chat. *[Pause to do that.]*

I will call on *(name)* to begin and then call each of your names as you appear on my screen. *[Stop screen sharing and call on people to keep things moving. Time each member and GSs for 3 minutes.]*

~ A ~

*[After everyone has shared, and **if time allows** ...]*

We will go around the room one more time and you will have one minute each *[or 2 minutes]* to share again. Sometimes, in gratitude meetings, we remember a gratitude we forgot to mention earlier, or we feel we'd like to comment on something we heard during the earlier shares.

We will begin with *(name)*, and again, I will call on each of you by name as you appear on my screen. *[Time each share for 1-2 mins, depending on the size of the group. Stop shares at 50 minutes after the hour and start screen sharing again.]*

~ B ~

Thank you all for sharing today.

At this point, some of you may be wondering how you can sustain your media recovery and continue to carry the message. Here is a list of options you can consider:

- 1) Go to open MAA meetings and volunteer to be a sponsor to a newcomer of your choice.
- 2) Offer to be a Group Sponsor at a Open-Back-to-Basics meeting.
- 3) Join or start your own ComFast (Committed to Fasting) group (6 to 7 people) that meets 5 days a week for 15 minutes where members are committed to fasting from all unnecessary media for one month as they read through the *AA Twelve and Twelve* two paragraphs at a time with each person sharing for 1 to 2 minutes.
- 4) If you've been a Group Sponsor in a closed B2B group before, consider being one again so you can carry the message to many media addicts all at once.
- 5) Go to open MAA meetings and volunteer to do service such as moderating, tech hosting, qualifying, and leading business meetings.

Does anyone have any questions about these options or anything else? *[Stop screen sharing and time for 5 to 10 minutes, depending on the remaining time.]*

~ A ~

That is all the time we have for our meeting today. If you are comfortable sharing your information, we encourage you to put your name and number in the chat now so you can connect with other members of our group. *[Group Sponsors to add their contact information to the chat as well.]*

MAA has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, which are for the development of MAA literature, costs incurred by the MAA General Service Board, phone and video meeting services, and the maintenance of the MAA website. Contributions can be made via credit card, debit card, or through PayPal on the MAA website at mediaaddictsanonymous.org. Please give what you can, and if you can give nothing at this time, keep coming back because you are more important than your money.

In closing, the opinions expressed here today are strictly those of the individuals who gave them. The things we have heard here are spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. We do not take outside the meeting whom we hear at the meeting. If we try to absorb what we have heard, we are bound to gain a better understanding of the way to handle our problems and begin to change our lives. Let us talk to each other, reason things out with someone else, and let there be no gossip or criticism of one another, but only Love, Understanding, and Fellowship.

~ B ~

This ends our session of Open Back to Basics. To close, please join us in the WE VERSION of the Serenity Prayer:

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

Thank you for joining us. We hope you will come back next week to start Step One with us again.

Feel free to stay after the meeting for a few minutes if you have any questions or would like to connect.

END OF MODULE 4, MEETING 5