

**Media Addicts Anonymous presents
OPEN BACK-TO-BASICS STEP STUDY**

MODULE TWO

“Steps 2 through 4”

MODULE 2, 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 M.A.A.

~ A ~

Welcome to the FIFTH session of Open Back-to-Basics Step Study. 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 (and any other leaders)**. 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 Twelve-Step Study is a desire to stop using media compulsively. Taking the Twelve 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."

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Safety Statement: M.A.A.'s Tradition One states: "Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends upon M.A.A. unity." For the welfare and safety of this group, we do not allow any behaviors of a flirtatious, or aggressive nature including any discrimination concerning gender identity or orientation, race, creed, or religion. In this meeting we honor this statement and each other.

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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.

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Most of what we will read in the open Back-to-Basics Step Study is taken directly from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In M.A.A., we acknowledge A.A.'s request to read the Big Book as is, without changing anything. However, we have made some exceptions. We have changed the term "alcohol" to "media" so that you can fully grasp the extent to which media addiction is similar to that of alcoholism, and we will often substitute or add language related to tech or media usage. To make this format more inclusive, we have changed all pronouns from third-person singular to third-person plural.

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

~ A ~

Step Two

In our last session, we began the **SURRENDER** process by completing Step One: *We admitted we were powerless over media and that our lives had become unmanageable.* We commend you for admitting you have a problem. As the Big Book says, "*This is the first step in recovery.*" Your admission is a major accomplishment. Many media addicts live in complete denial that they have a problem.

~ B ~

Remember that the principles of Step One are twofold: **HONESTY** leads to **ACCEPTANCE**. We must be honest before we can admit that we are indeed media addicts. When we can accept this truth, we are better able to take the remainder of the Twelve Steps. We have only just begun the **SURRENDER** process, and acceptance is the key to success as we proceed with the other Steps.

~ A ~

In our session today, part of our objective is to find a Power greater than ourselves, who will relieve us from the hopeless and compulsive nature of media addiction. The second part is to become willing to turn our will and lives over to this Power. Now that we have admitted we are real media addicts, let's look at the next step we need to take to recover from media addiction.

~ B ~

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

Remember, in our last session, the Big Book authors told us that our problem with addiction stems from a spiritual disease:

- “For we have been not only mentally and physically ill, we have been spiritually sick. When the spiritual malady is overcome, we straighten out mentally and physically.”

~ A ~

We read from “*The Doctor’s Opinion*” (by Dr. Silkworth), and it bears re-reading. Understanding this chapter is essential if we are to be serious about taking Step Two. Again, we will replace *drinking* with *media usage*:

- “[People use media] essentially because they like the effect produced by [media]. The sensation is so elusive that, while they admit it is injurious, they cannot after a time differentiate the true from the false. To them, their [media drunk] life seems the only normal one. They are restless, irritable and discontented, unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by [getting drunk on their media], [media] which they see others [using] with impunity. After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known stages of a spree, emerging remorseful, with a firm resolution not to [use] again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire **psychic change** there is little hope of [their] recovery.”

Here Dr. Silkworth goes on to say:

- “On the other hand[,] ... once a psychic change has occurred, the very same person who seemed doomed, who had so many problems [they] despaired of ever solving them, suddenly finds [themselves] easily able to control [their] desire for [media], the only effort necessary being [they follow] a few simple rules.”

~ B ~

What does Dr. Silkworth mean by psychic change? The dictionary states that *psychic* means “*phenomena that are apparently inexplicable by natural laws.*” What we are looking for in Step Two is a mystical or supernatural experience. In short, a miracle—just like the miracle that has brought you to Back-to-Basics. Something unconventional needs to happen within the media addict for them to be relieved of their obsession to use media.

~ A ~

For some, seeking a miraculous event sounds silly, like magical thinking, but moral codes or rationality have not gotten us sober. The Big Book tells us that such moral codes or philosophies (while worthy) are insufficient in helping the real media addict.

- “If a mere code of morals or a better philosophy of life were sufficient to overcome [media addiction] many of us would have recovered long ago. But we found that such

codes and philosophies did not save us.... We could wish to be philosophically comforted ... but the needed power wasn't there. Our human resources ... were not sufficient. They failed utterly.”

~ B ~

As media addicts, we learn that our own willpower has failed us utterly. We need power if we are to overcome our media addiction, but what will it take for us to find this Power? The answer is in Appendix II of the Big Book.

- “Most emphatically we wish to say that any [media addict] capable of honestly facing [their] problems in the light of our experience can recover, provided [they do] not close [their minds] to all spiritual concepts. [They] can only be defeated by an attitude of intolerance or belligerent denial. We find that no one [should] have difficulty with the spirituality of the program. **Willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness** are the essentials of recovery. But these are indispensable.”

~ A ~

What we need then are three things: **willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness**. The Big Book authors ask us to set aside everything we think we know about God and spirituality and to keep an open mind. They also encourage us not to allow denial to keep us in the dark and block us from the “*sunlight of the Spirit*.”

~ B ~

At the beginning of A.A., many members—even Bill W, the New York City cofounder—had great difficulty accepting a spiritual solution to the alcohol problem. In *Bill's Story*, he describes how he “*came to believe*.” In late November 1934, Ebby T visited Bill at his Brooklyn, New York, home. It is during this visit that Bill first learns about the concept of “*God as you understand God*.”

~ A ~

As we mentioned in our first session, Ebby was Bill's high school friend and a former drinking companion. In Bill's story, Ebby had been sober for several months. As they meet, he tells Bill that his life has been transformed because of practicing the **Four Spiritual Activities** of **SURRENDER, SHARING, RESTITUTION, and GUIDANCE**.

~ B ~

Bill had known Ebby for most of his life, so he was shocked when Ebby started talking about God. He felt compelled to listen, because he realized something about Ebby had changed. His eyes were clear, his face fresh and healthy, and he was sober for the first time in many years. Still, religion had left such a bad taste in Bill's mouth as a youth that he resisted Ebby's solution.

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

~ A ~

We have Ebby T to thank for the solution to the “**God dilemma**.” It was at this moment that Ebby presented Bill with a revolutionary proposition:

- “My friend suggested what then seemed a novel idea. He said, ‘*Why don’t you choose your own conception of God?*’ That statement hit me hard. It melted the icy intellectual mountain in whose shadow I had lived and shivered [for] many years. I stood in the sunlight at last. It was only a matter of being willing to believe in a Power greater than myself. Nothing more was required of me to make my beginning. I saw that growth could start from that point. Upon a foundation of complete willingness, I might build what I saw in my friend. Would I have it? Of course I would!”

~ B ~

For those of you who do not believe in a Higher Power or have been hurt by religion and its followers, Step Two may seem like too big of a pill to swallow.

- “Many of us have been so touchy that even casual reference to spiritual things made us bristle with antagonism.... Faced with [our addictive] destruction we soon became as open-minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect [media] was a great persuader.”

~ A ~

The rational and scientifically-minded kept wondering why they should believe in a Power greater than themselves. The writers of the Big Book realized that “*The practical individual of today is a stickler for facts and results.*”

~ B ~

The early A.A. members assure us that there is good reason to contemplate intangible or mystical parts of reality, which even the best minds may not comprehend. In scientific exploration, scientists begin their research proposing a hypothesis (or assumption) to explain a phenomenon. This focuses their research and enables them to test or disprove their theory.

- “[We] readily [accept] theories of all kinds, provided they are firmly grounded in fact. We have numerous theories; for example, about electricity. Everybody believes them without a murmur of doubt. Why this ready acceptance? Simply because it is impossible to explain what we see, feel, direct, and use without a reasonable assumption as a starting point.”

~ A ~

The Big Book authors ask us to keep an open mind, or make a “**reasonable assumption**,” regarding spiritual matters. This is not irrational or a sign of weakness, for even in science there is no perfect proof.

- “Everybody, nowadays, believes in scores of assumptions for which there is good evidence, but no perfect visual proof. And does not science demonstrate that visual proof is the weakest proof? It is being constantly revealed, as [humankind] studies the material world, that outward appearances are not inward reality at all.”

~ B ~

In our own personal stories and the stories shared in the second half of the Big Book, we all have various ways to approach a Higher Power, and we have all had to find our own way in dealing with resistance to a Power greater than ourselves.

- “Whether we agree with a particular approach or conception seems to make little difference.... These are questions for each individual to settle for [themselves]. ... On one proposition, however, [... we] are strikingly agreed. Every one of [us] has gained access to, and believes in, a Power greater than [themselves]. In each case this Power has accomplished the miraculous, the humanly impossible. As a celebrated American statesman put it, '*Let's look at the record.*'”
- “Here are thousands of [people who] ... flatly declare that since they have come to believe in a Power greater than themselves, to take a certain attitude toward that Power, and to do certain simple things, there has been a revolutionary change in their way of living and thinking.... When many hundreds of people are able to say that the consciousness of the Presence of God is today the most important fact of their lives, they present a powerful reason why one should have faith.”

~ A ~

The Big Book authors beg us to lay aside our prejudice—even towards organized religion.

- “We have learned that whatever the human frailties of various faiths may be, those faiths have given purpose and direction to millions. ... We used to amuse ourselves by cynically dissecting spiritual beliefs and practices when we might have observed that many spiritually-minded persons of all races, colors and creeds were demonstrating a degree of stability, happiness and usefulness, which we should have sought for ourselves. We missed the reality and the beauty of the forest because we were diverted by the ugliness of some of the trees. We never gave the spiritual side of life a fair hearing.”

~ B ~

However fully we can define our Higher Power at this time, the Big Book authors ask us to set aside our contempt for spiritual principles and to open our minds to the possibility that a spiritual way of life is the answer to our media problem.

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

~ A ~

The Big Book authors clearly state that it is impossible to define God. We must stop trying to comprehend this Power with our **MIND** and start accepting this Power with our **HEART**.

- “When, therefore, we speak to you of God, we mean your own *conception* of God. This applies, too, to other spiritual expressions which you find in this book. Do not let any prejudice you may have against spiritual terms deter you from honestly asking yourself what they mean to you. At the start, this was all we needed to commence spiritual growth, to effect our first conscious relation[ship] with God as we understood [God].

Afterward, we found ourselves accepting many things which then seemed entirely out of reach. That was growth, but if we wished to grow, we had to begin somewhere. So, we used our own conception, however limited it was.”

~ B ~

What is the alternative? For those of us who bristle at even the slightest mention of God or spiritual matters, we are invited to see where we may have handicapped ourselves through obstinacy, hypersensitivity, and prejudice.

- “Faced with [media addictive] destruction, we soon became as open-minded on spiritual matters as we had tried to be on other questions. In this respect, [the devastating effects of our alcoholic media were] a great persuader. It finally beat us into a state of reasonableness. Sometimes this was a tedious process. We hope no one else will be prejudiced for as long as some of us were.”

~ A ~

The Big Book authors make a powerful case for the existence of a Higher Power.

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

One early A.A. member, who could not stop drinking and doubted that he could ever believe in any kind of God, had a powerful spiritual awakening while in a hospital trying to sober up. Alone in his room, he asked himself this question:

- *“Is it possible that all the religious people I have known are wrong? ... Who [am I] to say there is no God?”* This man recounts that he tumbled out of bed to his knees.... He was overwhelmed by a conviction of the Presence of God. It poured over and through him with the certainty and majesty of a great tide at flood. The barriers he had built through the years were swept away. He stood in the Presence of Infinite Power and Love. He had stepped from bridge to shore. For the first time, he lived in conscious companionship with his Creator.”

~ B ~

Following his spiritual awakening, this man found an unshakeable faith that became the cornerstone of his recovery. The Big Book tells us:

- “His alcoholic problem was taken away. That very night, years ago, it disappeared. Save for a few brief moments of temptation the thought of drink has never returned; and at such times a great revulsion has risen up in him. Seemingly, he could not drink even if he would. God had restored his sanity.”

~ A ~

This kind of healing is nothing short of miraculous. This is what the Big Book writers promise. By thoroughly trusting in this new Power, not only is sanity restored but also the temptation for media is abated.

- “And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even [addictive media]. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in [addictive media]. If

tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we will find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward [addictive 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 had been placed in a position of neutrality—safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.”

~ B ~

The question is, *“Are you willing to believe in a Power greater than human power, a Spirit of the Universe, a God of your understanding? Are you willing to believe in a power greater than yourself?”*

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

~ A ~

We will begin to make this choice today. Are you willing to concede that there is a *Power greater than yourself*? If you are, you are ready to take Step Two. Here are the directions from the Big Book:

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

~ B ~

Being willing to believe is the cornerstone of our new spiritual way of life, and it is the first action we can take toward our media recovery. Here is a **prayer that can help us take the Second Step**. It's called the **Set Aside Prayer**:

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

Let us say this prayer together.

~ A ~

Now it is time to answer the **Second Step question**:

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

Because this is such an important and life-changing question, we will pause for one minute to meditate and listen for an answer. When we come back in one minute, I will ask the question again. *[Time for 1 minute.]*

It is now time to take Step Two:

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

If you are ready to commit to this step today, when your name is called, please say “yes.” If not, say, “I pass.” *[Group Sponsor calls on each member by name.]*

Thank you! According to the Big Book authors, if you answered “yes” to this question, you have taken Step Two: *“Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.”*

~ B ~

Having taken Step Two, let's look at the **Principles of Step Two**. If we can practice those principles, we will progress faster in our recovery.

Principle of FAITH leads to BELIEF.

- **FAITH** is believing in something that you cannot see or that has not yet been manifested. It is essential for our journey of recovery. Even as we begin to see and accept that we are media addicts and that our mind, body, and spirit have been degraded by our disease, we still may not be able to imagine how we could find our way back to a sane life.
- We have been told that **FAITH** in a power greater than ourselves—greater than our addiction—could restore us to our true (sane) nature. We had been living a self-centered life, and we were trying to run the show. In Step Two, we came to see that we could begin to live a **faith-centered life**.
- This is a new way of thinking and being. First, we *CAME*, then we *CAME TO*, and then **we CAME TO BELIEVE**. Over time, as we witness ourselves being restored to sanity, **FAITH becomes BELIEF**, for we will serve as living proof that a Higher Power is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves.

~ B ~ (continued)

Sharing

We will now open up the room for 3-minute (or other length) 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? This is also a time when newcomers can ask questions if they would like.

[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.]*

If you have completed your Twelve Steps in M.A.A. and are willing to be a temporary sponsor in Open Back-to-Basics to listen to someone's homework assignments, please raise your hand... Thank you.

If you are looking for a Co-Sponsor or Action Partner please raise your hand... Thank you.

M.A.A. has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, which are for the development of M.A.A. literature, costs incurred by the M.A.A. General Service Board, phone and video meeting services, and the maintenance of the M.A.A. website. Contributions can be made via credit card, debit card, or through PayPal on the M.A.A. 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) spend 15 minutes a day walking outside without your phone on or any other media, 2) spend 15 minutes a day writing on the prompts for Step Two, and 3) read your writing to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of M.A.A. *[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 2, MEETING 1

MODULE 2, MEETING 1 Homework Assignments

1) Spend 15 minutes a day walking outside without your phone on or any other media. This quiet time will give you a chance to be with Nature and your Higher Power.

2) Spend 15 minutes a day, Monday through Friday, writing on the Step Two prompts listed under Module Two Assignments, Meeting 1, at www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org under Open Back-to-Basics Step Study on the homepage.

3) Read your writing prompts to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of M.A.A.

MODULE 2, MEETING 2

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~ A ~

Step Three

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

The Big Book authors state, “*Being convinced, we were at Step Three...*”

Convinced of what? When we took Step Two, we came to believe that a “*Power greater than ourselves*” could restore us to sanity. However, even though we may believe that a Higher Power is the answer, this doesn’t necessarily mean that we are willing to embrace this solution. Knowing and acting on our knowledge are two different things. “*Faith without works is dead.*” To recover from media addiction, we must make a **DECISION**: We must decide to put this Power to work in our lives.

~ B ~

This is where the Big Book authors show us how to become “*God-directed,*” but first they disclose how operating on self-will keeps us separated from this “*inner resource*” of wisdom. They explain that, when we operate on self-will, we become like theater actors who try to control every detail of a play—an exhausting exercise in futility.

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

~ A ~

Does this sound familiar? At one time or another, haven’t we all tried to convince those around us they would be much better off if they just did things our way? Attempting to control everything in our lives is one of the characteristics of a compulsive media addict. We want to feel safe and happy, but we’ve fallen prey to the delusion that self-will and control are the answers.

The passage continues:

- “What usually happens? The show doesn’t come off very well. [They begin] to think life doesn’t treat [them] right. [They decide] to exert [themselves] more. [They become] ... more demanding or gracious, as the case may be. Still, the play does not suit [them.] ... [They become] angry, indignant, self-pitying. What is [their] basic trouble? [Are they] not really a self-seeker? ... [Are they] not a victim of the delusion that [they] can wrest

satisfaction and happiness out of this world if [they] only [manage] well? ... [Are they] not, even in [their] best moments, a producer of confusion rather than harmony? Our actor is self-centered—ego-centric, as people like to call it nowadays.”

~ B ~

Then the authors declare that **self-pity, delusional thinking, and self-centeredness** are what make us miserable.

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

~ A ~

They make the point that addicts are the personification of self-will run amok and that this is our downfall.

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

The authors make clear that to rid ourselves of this self-centered fear, **we need to stop playing God.**

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

~ B ~

By making God (rather than their egos) their employer, the authors saw miracles manifest in their lives.

- “When we sincerely took such a position, all sorts of remarkable things followed. We had a new Employer. Being all-powerful, [God] provided what we needed, if we kept close to [God] and performed [God’s] work well.”

~ A ~

As the authors have shared, we too can discern our place in God’s Universe. Contrary to what we may have thought, the whole world does not revolve around us. Realizing there is a “*Power greater than ourselves*” is the essence of God-consciousness. As we become aware of the “*realm of the Spirit,*” our lives begin to change.

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

~ B ~

Some people may feel that it is a weakness to depend upon a Higher Power, but the writers of the Big Book tell us that:

- “We never apologize to anyone for depending upon our Creator. We can laugh at those who think spirituality is the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All [people] of faith have courage. They trust their God.”

~ A ~

It is decision time once again. The Big Book authors tell us that we are now ready to take Step 3, and they provide us with the directions.

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

We are here today to take this monumental Step together.

~ B ~

Although they say the wording is optional, the authors do provide us with a prayer we can use to take the Third Step. This **Third Step Prayer** is on page 63 of the Big Book.

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

~ A ~

In this Third Step Prayer, we make the decision to do something that does not come naturally to most of us: We are making a contract, a promise, or a covenant with our Higher Power for the express purpose of being relieved of the bondage of our self-obsessed fears and addictive behaviors.

~ B ~

With Step 3, we ask our Higher Power to take our difficulties away so that, once victorious over them, we may show others, who are as lost as we were, that there is another way. We decide to use a Higher Power rather than self-power, to trust in our Higher Power's love for us and others, and to lead a spiritual life. We commit here and now to allow a Power greater than ourselves to

run the show. This is our second chance to stop mere compliance and replace it with **ultimate SURRENDER**. Here are the points this prayer makes:

- **First**, we make an offering. Many spiritual practices include the beautiful tradition of making symbolic offerings. For instance, you might place flowers, incense, food or wine on an altar. In our case, the “*offering*” to our Higher Power is OURSELVES. We present our Higher Power with the most valuable thing we can give: We surrender ourselves to the God of our understanding.
- **Second**, by offering ourselves, we cede our talents and skills to our Higher Power, so we may build something good and useful. What to build is guided by the wisdom of our Higher Power. This means that, from now on, we ask for inspiration in all our life goals. We ask for God's direction.
- **Third**, we ask for relief from our human frailties and addictions, so we may be fortified and free to build a life of purpose, reflecting our Higher Power's mission for us.
- **Fourth**, we ask that our difficulties and obstacles be removed, so we may give others hope and be an example of how God can work miracles in our life.
- **Fifth**, we are made aware that we help others through the Power of God—that this Power loves us unreservedly. By surrendering our cares to God and by adopting this new “*Way of Life*,” we serve as a testament to this Love and to the workings of this Power in our lives.
- **Sixth**, we commit to following the guidance of our Higher Power in every area of our life.

~ A ~

In preparation for taking the Third Step and reading the Third Step Prayer, we will meditate for one minute to connect to our Higher Power before making this important commitment. *[Time for 1 minute.]*

Now, for those who are ready, we will each take the Third Step, one at a time. If you are not ready to commit to this step today, when your name is called, please say “I pass.”

We will copy the Third Step Prayer as it appears in the Big Book into the chat. When you are called on and you are ready to commit, please read the prayer out loud as is, or make it personal by using your own words and/or by using the language of your choice. The prayer is said out loud so you may experience deeply the covenant you are making, and so we may all witness this trusting relationship you are developing with your Higher Power. *[Copy and paste the Third Step Prayer into the chat.]*

I will start, and B will go next. Then I will call on each of you by name. *[Stop screen sharing.]*

Third Step Prayer

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

[Resume screen sharing.]

Thank you to those who have taken Step Three. According to the Big Book authors, **we have:** “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood [God],” and we are well on our way to a new life, a new freedom, and a new happiness.

~ B ~

We will complete this session by introducing the **Principles of Step Three.**

The principle of **FAITHFULNESS** leads to **GUIDANCE.**

- In Step Three, we take the **FAITH and BELIEF** we sowed in Step Two and allow them to take root and to blossom. **FAITHFULNESS** means being loyal, constant, unswerving, steadfast, dedicated, and committed. Our loyalty to something greater than ourselves begins to grow. As we come to **BELIEVE**, we become willing to make a deeper commitment. In Step Three, we make the life-changing resolution to make a contract with the *One Who Has All Power*. This is a pivotal point in our recovery.
- When we are faithful to our Higher Power, we are faithful to our true selves. This faith leads to **GUIDANCE**. Up to this point, we have been faithful only to our media addiction. Now we make the decision to abandon our loyalty to this fruitless addiction and become faithful to something with **purpose**. We decide to be faithful to the God of our understanding and to allow this Power to **GUIDE** and direct our lives. We now know that we cannot manage our life on our own, and we learn that God *can* and *will*, if we seek God. Guidance brings us the power we had been lacking. **SPIRITUAL GUIDANCE** brings us strength and courage to take the remaining Steps.

~ B ~ (continued)

Sharing

We will now open up the room for 3-minute (or other length) 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? This is also a time when newcomers can ask questions if they would like.

[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.]*

If you have completed your Twelve Steps in M.A.A. and are willing to be a temporary sponsor in Open Back-to-Basics to listen to someone’s homework assignments, please raise your hand... Thank you.

If you are looking for a Co-Sponsor or Action Partner please raise your hand... Thank you.

M.A.A. has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, which are for the development of M.A.A. literature, costs incurred by the M.A.A. General Service Board, phone and video meeting services, and the maintenance of the M.A.A. website. Contributions can be made via credit card, debit card, or through PayPal on the M.A.A. 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) practice sleep reverence by setting a time to go to bed and a time to wake up every day, 2) create a media curfew time by setting a time to be off all media at the end of the day and the time you will start media at the beginning of the day, and 3) spend 15 minutes a day writing on the prompts for Step Three and read your writing to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of M.A.A. *[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 2, MEETING 2

MODULE 2, MEETING 2 Homework Assignments

1) Practice sleep reverence by setting a time to go to bed and a time to wake up every day. By doing so, you will have more emotional energy to work the Steps and stay media sober. Share these pre-set times with your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of M.A.A. to stay accountable.

2) Establish a media curfew time by setting a time to be off all media at the end of the day and the time you will start media at the beginning of the day. Discuss this media curfew strategy with your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of M.A.A.

3) Spend 15 minutes daily, Monday through Friday, writing on the Step Three prompts listed under Module Two Assignments, Meeting 2, at www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org under Open Back-to-Basics Step Study on the homepage. When finished, read your writing to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of M.A.A.

MODULE 2, MEETING 3

Group Sponsors: Before the meeting begins, make sure you have three readers available (no abstinence requirement). This session includes a meditation and a writing assignment. When reading the meditation portion of the script, turn off screen share and be prepared to read from your own copy. 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 M.A.A.

~ A ~

Welcome to the SEVENTH session of Open Back-to-Basics Step Study. 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** (and any other leaders). 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 Twelve-Step Study is a desire to stop using media compulsively. Taking the Twelve 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."

~ A ~

Safety Statement: M.A.A.'s Tradition One states: "Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends upon M.A.A. unity." For the welfare and safety of this group, we do not allow any behaviors of a flirtatious, or aggressive nature including any discrimination concerning gender identity or orientation, race, creed, or religion. In this meeting we honor this statement and each other.

~ B ~

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 the meeting for fellowship and to answer any questions.

~ A ~

Most of what we will read in the open Back-to-Basics Step Study is taken directly from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In M.A.A., we acknowledge A.A.'s request to read the Big Book as is, without changing anything. However, we have made some exceptions. We have changed

the term “alcohol” to “media” so that you can fully grasp the extent to which media addiction is similar to that of alcoholism, and we will often substitute or add language related to tech or media usage. To make this format more inclusive, we have changed all pronouns from third-person singular to third-person plural.

~ 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 M.A.A. 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 ~

How to Talk to God

Let's review what we have accomplished so far. We admitted that we were powerless over our compulsive media habits and that our media addiction had made our lives unmanageable.

We found within ourselves the willingness to believe in the possibility that a Higher Power could take away our compulsive desire for media and bring us back to a balanced and sane mind.

Then we took a huge leap and made the decision to be faithful to this spiritual Power. We made a contract or covenant to turn our will and lives over to our Higher Power and to be guided by this Power. We decided to allow this Power to love us, show us how to serve, give us victory over our hardships, and transform us into a beacon of hope for others so that they too may be relieved of the bondage of fear and addiction.

~ B ~

Taking these first three Steps is the start to experiencing the change required to not only recover from media addiction but also to be rocketed into a new spiritual dimension. By reciting the Third Step Prayer, we begin our conversation with God. Prayer is the act of talking to God, but how do we listen to God? How do we hear answers to our prayers? Now that you have taken the first three Steps, we invite you to take quiet time each day to connect with your Higher Power, and today we will show you how to listen to your Higher Power and expand your God-consciousness.

~ A ~

Normally this lesson would be presented as part of 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.* We have found that our Higher Power's guidance and help is a prerequisite to taking Steps 4 through 10 successfully. Therefore, we will now dip into Step 11 (the meditation component of the Twelve Steps)

immediately after having taken Step Three, so we may begin to practice stillness and to hear the soft voice of our Higher Power.

~ B ~

How to Listen to God

In the late 1930s, **John E. Batterson**, a friend of A.A.'s cofounders, wrote the short essay, "How to Listen to God." This pamphlet provides instructions on how to practice *Two-Way Prayer*. It contains universal spiritual principles that can be applied by "*anyone or everyone interested in a spiritual way of life.*" We invite you to use some of these suggestions as you establish your own daily quiet time.

~ A ~

Prayer is talking to God, and meditation is listening to God. In the opening paragraphs, Batterson states that "*Prayer and Meditation*" will change our lives:

- "These are a few simple suggestions for people who are willing to make an experiment. You can discover for yourself one of [the] most important and practical things any person can learn—how to be in touch with [a Power greater than yourself.] All that is needed is the **willingness to try it honestly**. People who have done this consistently and sincerely have found that it really works."

We too have found that practicing Two-Way Prayer really "*works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it.*" With time and practice, it will "*gradually become a working part of [our] mind.*"

~ B ~

Before we go further, let us address the potential elephant in the room. Some of you may feel uncomfortable when we bring up the topic of "*Talking to God.*"

You may feel uneasy when we refer to a Higher Power that speaks to you. It might appear as if we are defining your Higher Power for you—much like one might feel if they were invited to join a religious cult.

Perhaps your conception of God does not include the possibility that you could receive information or inspiration from a source greater than yourself. You may think that people who talk to God are crazy.

~ A ~

Others may feel that God has better things to do than to speak to them. You may feel that you are not worthy of having a close relationship with the "*One who has all power,*" because you believe this power does not deal with petty problems such as your own.

~ B ~

Some of you may have been so hurt by religion and God that the idea of communing with any kind of Higher Power may feel akin to touching a raw wound. You cannot imagine reconciling this hurt with a new conception of God. Whatever you may be feeling or thinking, remember we are not asking you to believe anything.

~ A ~

We merely ask that you be willing to try something new—to experiment. It might seem like magical thinking to listen for the voice of a greater Power, but we who have kept at this method have had real breakthroughs. Our Two-Way Prayers have brought us deep solace. They have brought relief and clarity into our lives.

One of our members was having a difficult time with her image of God. She felt that her Higher Power was judgmental and punitive, and she could not entrust her problems to this Power. Her sponsor suggested to her: *“It is your conception of your Higher Power that is limiting what God can do for you. Would you be open to receiving a bigger, better Higher Power.”* She realized that she could search for and deserved to find a Divine Power that would empower her rather than shame her.

~ B ~

We wish to provide you with suggestions that allow you to find a loving Higher Power that can help you in every area of your life—one that gives you comfort, knowledge, and the power to manifest your soul's purpose.

~ A ~

Remember, we are talking about the God of YOUR understanding. Take what you like, and leave the rest. Set aside all you think you know about God, and see if there is something more to discover. We invite you to upgrade your Higher Power to something truly vital and fulfilling.

~ B ~

If “God” is not the right name for you, remember that you can call your Higher Power whatever feels right for you: ***Spirit of the Universe, Divine Love, Higher Self, Great Mystery, Source, or Goddess***. One of our members calls her Higher Power her “***Healing Power***.” The important thing is that you feel and learn to know and trust this Higher Power. We will present some possibilities, based on our own experience, and we invite you to consider them when contemplating your own Higher Power. You don't have to agree with all of them. Please take home only those which resonate with you. ***[Each reader is to read two.]***

- Your Higher Power is alive, has been and always will be.
- Your Higher Power cares for you and loves you unconditionally, without limits.
- Your Higher Power has a plan for your life and a solution for every problem you face.
- Your Higher Power knows everything, can do anything, and can be everywhere at the same time.
- Though you can't see or touch It, your Higher Power can touch you, is with you, and is all around you.
- Your Higher Power is in you right now—in your body and your heart.
- Your Higher Power will tell you all you need to know but may not tell you all you want to know.
- Your Higher Power will help you carry out anything that They inspire you to do.

~ A ~

To hear the God of your own understanding, we suggest trying these five things:

1. Be quiet and still.
2. Listen.
3. Be honest about every thought that arises.
4. Test the thoughts to be sure that they come from your Higher Power.
5. Sincerely follow through with the guidance that shows up.

How to Listen to Your Higher Power

With these basic ideas as a backdrop, here are specific suggestions on how to listen to your Higher Power: *[Each reader is to read one.]*

1. Take Time

Find a place and time where you can be alone, quiet, and undisturbed. Most people have found that early morning is the best time. Have with you some paper and a pen or pencil. We are creating an intimate relationship with the God of our understanding, and all relationships need time and attention.

2. Relax

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

3. Tune In

Open your heart to your Higher Power. Either silently or aloud, tell God, in a natural way, that you would like to find the plan for your life or that you want God's answer to the problem or situation you are facing now. Be specific in your request.

4. Listen

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

5. Write!

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

Don't say to yourself: This thought isn't important, this can't be guidance, this isn't nice, or this is just me thinking. Write down everything: good thoughts, bad thoughts, comfortable thoughts, uncomfortable thoughts, "holy" thoughts, "unholy" thoughts, sensible thoughts, or "crazy" thoughts.

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

6. **Test**

After a set time, or when the flow of thoughts slows down, stop writing and take a good look at what came through. Not every thought we have comes from our Higher Power, so we then ask ourselves some specific questions to verify the source of these thoughts:

- Are these thoughts completely honest, pure, unselfish, and loving?
- Are they in line with our duties to our family and to our community?
- Are these thoughts in line with our spiritual teachings?

7. **Check**

When in doubt and/or when you have an important decision to make, ask another person for support and share what you have written. More light comes through two windows than one. Many people share what guidance has come to them. This is the secret of unity.

8. **Follow the Guidance**

Take action. You will only be sure of guidance when you follow through. A rudder will not guide a boat until the boat moves. As you follow this guidance, very often the results will convince you that you are on the right track.

9. **Blocks**

God's guidance is as freely available as the air we breathe. If you feel you are not receiving clear inspiration, you need to be honest. Ask yourself, "*Is something wrong in my life? Is there a harmful habit or indulgence I will not give up, a wrong relationship I will not let go, a restitution I have yet to make, a person I will not forgive, a guidance from my Higher Power I ignored?*" You need to review these points honestly and then take the time to listen again.

10. **Mistakes**

We may feel guided to take a certain action and later find that we have made a mistake or hurt ourselves or others. This can be painful and confusing and may make us doubt either ourselves or our Higher Power.

Here we must accept that we are human and will make mistakes. However, our Higher Power will always honor our sincerity. They will work around and through every honest mistake we make. Our Higher Power will help us make it right. In some instances, others may not like our answers, but this does not mean we have made a mistake.

Suppose you fail to do something you've been told, and your opportunity for carrying it out passes. There is only one thing to do. Make it right with your Higher Power. Ask for forgiveness, then try again. Your Higher Power is not impersonal and understands you far better than you do.

11. **Results**

We never know what swimming is like until we get into the water and try. We will never know what Two-Way Prayer is like until we sincerely try it. People who have tried this earnestly have received wisdom—not their own—into their hearts and minds. A Power greater than human power begins to operate in their lives. This can be an everlasting adventure!

~ B ~

There is a way for everyone, everywhere, to listen to God. Anyone can connect with their Higher Power if they follow the above guidelines. When you listen, your Higher Power speaks to you. When you follow the guidance, your Higher Power supports your actions. This is referred to as “*the law of prayer.*” God’s plan for this world unfolds through the lives of ordinary people, like us, who are willing to be directed by a Power greater than themselves.

Please grab a notebook or paper, which you will need for Two-Way Prayer. **A** will now lead us in a short, guided meditation followed by Two-Way Prayer.

~ A ~

Guided Two-Way Prayer Meditation

This meditation will last approximately 8 to 10 minutes. ***[Stop screen sharing now. Please proceed slowly to allow participants the time to drop into the meditation.]***

- Please sit as comfortably as you can and close your eyes.
- Take three deep breaths.
- Inhale through your nose and exhale through your mouth. ***[Pause 10 seconds]***
- For the next few minutes, let go of your problems and your worries. They will be there later, but just for this little while, while we practice our meditation, set aside all your worries.
- Notice how it feels to not have anything to worry about. Notice how it feels to allow your body to relax deeply.
- Allow your shoulders to relax.
- Relax your jaw and your tongue.
- Relax your forehead, eyebrows, and your eyes.
- Relax the muscles around your nose and your mouth.
- Relax your scalp and the back of your neck. ***[Pause]***
- Pull your shoulders back and down in line with your hips.
- Relax your neck and shoulder muscles as you breathe slowly and deeply.
- Feel the strength of your shoulder blades.
- Notice the strength in your lower back. ***[Pause]***

- Relax your thighs. Relax your calves and ankles.
- Relax your feet. Feel your toes relax.
- Feel your entire body sink into deep relaxation and let go completely. *[Pause]*
- Relax and breathe. *[Pause]*
- Breathe and relax. *[Pause 3 seconds]*
- Allow yourself to accept all that you are right now.
- Allow yourself to accept your body just as it is at this very minute.
- Allow yourself to accept your life just as it is at this very moment.
- Allow yourself to accept other people in your life just as they are presently.
- Let go of everything you think you know about yourself and others.
- Let go of everything you think you know about God.
- Open your heart and your mind to see yourself and your life more clearly.
- See yourself in a neutral way, without judgment, open to all possibilities. *[Pause 10 seconds]*
- Now begin to feel the presence of a Higher Power within you, meeting you deep within.
- Feel your Higher Power's presence in your heart.
- Feel the love, wisdom, gentleness, and joy of your Higher Power resting in your warm and strong heart. *[Repeat, then Pause 15 seconds]*
- We sit with a gentle focus to access our Higher Power's vision for our life, for this day, for right now.
- With a calm mind and peaceful heart, ask your Higher Power:
 - *"What is your vision for me today?"*
 - *"What is your will for my life?"*
- Focus and listen. *[Repeat, then Pause 5 seconds]*
- Open your heart to your Higher Power.
- Ask for answers to a problem or situation that you face today.
- Be definite and specific in your request. *[Pause 10 seconds]*
- Listen and breathe. Breathe and listen.
- Be still, quiet, and open. *[Pause 10 seconds]*
- Let your mind go loose.

- Let your Higher Power do the talking. *[Pause 10 seconds]*
- Thoughts, ideas, and impressions will start to trickle into your heart and mind.
- Be alert, aware, and open to each one of them. *[Pause 30 seconds]*
- If you feel your mind wandering or have distracting thoughts, it's completely natural. It happens. Just let them go with each exhalation.
- Return to your calm mind and peaceful heart and ask your Higher Power again:
 - *“What is your vision for me today?”*
 - *“What is your will for my life?” [Pause 5 seconds]*
- Listen and breathe. Breathe and listen. *[Pause 30 seconds]*
- Continue to reach out with your mind and heart to your Higher Power. Feel the calm and peace in your heart.
- Let each passing thought go. Let all thoughts go.
- Return to the strength and warmth of your beating heart and ask your Higher Power again:
 - *“What is your vision for me today? What is your will for my life?” [Pause 5 seconds]*
- Listen and breathe. Breathe and listen. *[Pause 30 seconds]*
- Now with your eyes still closed, embrace the feelings or images you just experienced.
- Hold this vision in your mind's eye. Feel your Higher Power's response in your heart. Allow yourself to respond with gratitude.
- Now slowly return to your surroundings by feeling the support of your seat, and gently open your eyes. Revive your body by rolling your shoulders, rubbing your hands, and stretching your arms, legs, and body. Place your warm hands over your eyes. *[Pause 2 seconds]*
- Whatever you received in your meditation—elaborate plans, images, words, peace—accept it as a gift and commend yourself for this self-nurturing moment and for choosing to sit with and rely upon your Higher Power. *[Pause 5 seconds]*
- Rub your hands together again and hold them to your heart. Take a deep breath and smile. *[Pause 3 seconds]*

This concludes our Guided Meditation. *[Resume screen share.]*

~ B ~

Let's take three minutes to write down any thoughts, ideas, or images we received during this guided meditation. *[Time for 3 minutes.]*

Now let's take one minute each to share what guidance we received. Who is willing to start by reading what they have written? *[Time for one minute each or as time allows. If people are slow to participate, call on people to keep things moving.]*

Thank you all for sharing. We suggest you begin practicing Two-Way Prayer on your own or with your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of M.A.A., or with a group like we did today at **M.A.A.'s Sunday Two-Way Prayer Meeting** (time and Zoom ID can be found on the M.A.A. website's meeting page).

~ B ~ *(continued)*

Sharing

We will now open up the room for 3-minute *(or other length)* 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? This is also a time when newcomers can ask questions if they would like.

[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.]*

If you have completed your Twelve Steps in M.A.A. and are willing to be a temporary sponsor in Open Back-to-Basics to listen to someone's homework assignments, please raise your hand... Thank you.

If you are looking for a Co-Sponsor or Action Partner please raise your hand... Thank you.

M.A.A. has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, which are for the development of M.A.A. literature, costs incurred by the M.A.A. General Service Board, phone and video meeting services, and the maintenance of the M.A.A. website. Contributions can be made via credit card, debit card, or through PayPal on the M.A.A. 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) strengthen your relationship with your Higher Power, 2) practice Two-Way Prayer for 15 minutes a day, and 3) listen to a guided Two-Way Prayer meditation recorded on our 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 2, MEETING 3

MODULE 2, MEETING 3 Homework Assignments

- 1) Strengthen your relationship with your Higher Power.
- 2) Practice Two-Way Prayer for 15 minutes a day.
- 3) Listen to a guided Two-Way Prayer meditation with your choice of a male or female voice available on the www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org homepage in the menu bar across the top under Intergroups / Resources.

MODULE 2, 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 M.A.A.

~ A ~

Welcome to the EIGHTH session of Open Back-to-Basics Step Study. 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** (and any other leaders). 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 Twelve-Step Study is a desire to stop using media compulsively. Taking the Twelve 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."

~ A ~

Safety Statement: M.A.A.'s Tradition One states: "Our common welfare should come first. Personal recovery depends upon M.A.A. unity." For the welfare and safety of this group, we do not allow any behaviors of a flirtatious, or aggressive nature including any discrimination concerning gender identity or orientation, race, creed, or religion. In this meeting we honor this statement and each other.

~ B ~

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 the meeting for fellowship and to answer any questions.

~ A ~

Most of what we will read in the open Back-to-Basics Step Study is taken directly from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In M.A.A., we acknowledge A.A.'s request to read the Big Book as is, without changing anything. However, we have made some exceptions. We have changed the term "alcohol" to "media" so that you can fully grasp the extent to which media addiction is similar to that of alcoholism, and we will often substitute or add language related to tech or media usage. To make this format more inclusive, we have changed all pronouns from third-person singular to third-person plural.

~ 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 M.A.A. 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 ~

So far, we have taken the first three Steps and learned to speak and listen to the God of our understanding. In taking these first three Steps, we made potentially life-changing **DECISIONS**. Now it is time to take **ACTION**—action that will result in the *“personality change sufficient to bring about recovery”* from media addiction. Remember, if we are to be free of the things that trigger our media use for relief, we need to look at the root cause of our compulsion. The Big Book authors tell us:

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

We will now launch into **ACTIONS**, which will begin to transform our fears and self-centeredness into faith and God-centeredness. We are now about to move on to the **SHARING** process of our program.

Step 4

We begin by taking Step 4: *“Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.”* The Big Book authors tell us what we must do:

- “Next we launched out on a course of vigorous action, the first step of which is a personal house cleaning, which many of us had never attempted. Though our decision was a vital and crucial step, it could have little permanent effect unless at once followed by a strenuous effort to face and be rid of the things in ourselves which had been blocking us. Our [media] was but a symptom. So we had to get down to **causes and conditions**.”

~ B ~

Please note the authors' use of *“at once.”* They instruct us to **take the Fourth Step immediately after the Third Step Prayer**. This enables us to see more clearly the *“causes and conditions”* that created our media problem. Once we identify the true causes, we must overcome them without delay, as those are the things that have prevented us from tapping into the spiritual solution to our problem.

By acknowledging and addressing those aspects of the self that imprisoned us in the depths of loneliness and despair, we find ourselves in a more favorable place to maintain direct

communication with our Higher Power. The Big Book authors disclose that liquor (or in our case, media addiction) is but a symptom. Yes, our media binges have cut us off from God, but even once we've stopped being media drunk, we still find ourselves separated from the "*One who has all power*," because we have not addressed our personal liabilities. Now, it is time to look at these "*causes and conditions*" by courageously taking a personal inventory of our own character traits.

The Big Book authors start by comparing a personal inventory to a business inventory.

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

~ A ~

We will now conduct the equivalent of a commercial inventory of our lives. This means that we will look at our assets and our liabilities. This is what a commercial inventory is all about. It is an examination of what is working and what is not working in our lives. It allows us to accentuate our positives and eliminate the negatives.

- "We did exactly the same thing with our lives. We took stock honestly. First, we searched out the flaws in our make-up which caused our failure. Being convinced that self, manifested in various ways, was what had defeated us, we considered its common manifestations. We went back through our lives. Nothing counted but thoroughness and honesty. When we were finished we considered it carefully."

~ B ~

The book *Back-to-Basics: The Alcoholics Anonymous Beginners' Meetings* presents us with a list of liabilities we need to eliminate and with a list of assets we need to accentuate. We have added **SELF-PITY** to this list, since self-pity is often the number one excuse media addicts use to justify slipping back into their alcoholic media. We have found that excessive self-pity leads to slips and relapses, so we must do our utmost to avoid this liability.

Here is a **List of the Liabilities** mentioned in the Big Book: *[Each reader is to read two.]*

- **Self-pity**: Excessive, self-absorbed unhappiness over one's own troubles.
- **Resentment**: Consequence of being angry or bitter toward someone for an extended period.
- **Fear**: Preoccupation with the possibility of losing something you own or have or with not getting what you want.
- **Selfishness**: Concern only for ourselves and our own welfare or pleasure without regard for others.
- **Self-centeredness**: Making our self the center of the universe and wanting to control and play God.
- **Dishonesty**: Deception, cheating, lying, stealing, or withholding the truth.

- **False Pride:** Feelings of being *better than* (grandiosity, superiority, know it all) or *less than* (shame, unworthiness, low self-esteem).
- **Mistrust:** Jealousy that has to do with suspicion, distrusting others' motives, or doubting the faithfulness of a friend.
- **Envy:** The desire to have a quality, possession, or other desirable attribute belonging to someone else.
- **Procrastination:** Putting off work or not following through with right actions.

We will give you the list of assets, which are antidotes to our liabilities, but for the moment, let's take a closer look at the liability of self-pity.

~ A ~

SELF-PITY involves self-absorbed sadness for ourselves, because we think we have too many problems, have experienced too much suffering, and that life is not fair. Self-pity is not to be confused with grief. Grieving is about feeling authentic pain and emotions after experiencing a real loss. It's a healthy and necessary process to work through anger, despair, sadness, guilt, or frustration. With self-pity, one excessively dwells on themselves and their sorrows. When you pity yourself, you see yourself as a victim and as the only person who is genuinely suffering. One author wrote:

- *"We can hug our hurts and make a shrine out of our sorrows, or we can offer them to God as a sacrifice of praise. The choice is ours."*
- *"Self-pity is when we refuse to see the little things that we can be grateful for, even in the midst of the pain. Self-pity is dismissing the reality that others also face challenges and hurt deeply. Self-pity is resisting the thought that one day God can bring something good out of what is terrible."*

When we overindulge in self-pity, we put ourselves at risk of slipping back into our addictive behavior. When consumed with self-pity, we feel victimized, and the world becomes a terrifying place where we lose our sense of agency. This often paralyzes us and blinds us to the ways we could improve our situation.

~ B ~

In Alcoholics Anonymous there is a much-repeated saying: *"Poor me, poor me, pour me a drink."* The Big Book refers to the alcoholic trait of self-pity often. Here are just a few examples:

[Each reader is to read one.]

- "No words can tell of the loneliness and despair I found in that bitter morass of **self-pity**."
- "Driven by a hundred forms of fear, self-delusion, self-seeking, and **self-pity**, we step on the toes of our fellows and they retaliate."
- "I was not too well at the time and was plagued by waves of **self-pity** and resentment. This sometimes nearly drove me back to drink...."
- "When we were invited out, our husbands sneaked so many drinks that they spoiled the occasion. If, on the other hand, they took nothing, their **self-pity** made them killjoys."

- “Admitting [they] may be somewhat at fault, [they are] sure that other people are more to blame. [They become] angry, indignant, **self-pitying**.”

We must avoid self-pity at all costs. There is a subtle difference between pity and compassion. While pity has to do with feeling merely sympathy, compassion encompasses both sympathy and a willingness to help. If we swap out self-pity for self-compassion, we find opportunities to help ourselves rather than feel sorry for ourselves. Therefore, **SELF-COMPASSION is the antidote to SELF-PITY**.

~ A ~

Self-pity leads us to **RESENTMENT**, and the Big Book authors tell us that resentment is the primary obstacle to living a spiritual way of life:

- “Resentment is the ‘number one’ offender. It destroys more [media addicts] than anything else. From it stem all forms of spiritual disease....”

The authors emphasize that our resentments separate us and keep us from being guided by our Higher Power. We must eliminate these resentments if we are to live happily and free.

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

~ B ~

Here the Big Book tells us that not only are these states of being a waste of a good life, but they are also fatal for the media addict. Anything that cuts us off from God has terrible repercussions, as it will certainly make us gravitate back to media for relief.

- “[When we harbor resentments] the insanity of [getting drunk on media] returns and we [binge] again.... If we were to live, we had to be free of anger.... [These resentments] may be the dubious luxury of normal [people], but for [media addicts] these things are poison.”

We have found that resentment is a poison that no media addict can afford, but what are we to do when these emotions surge, and we feel someone else is to blame? What we do is write those resentments down. We try to look at the whole picture. We ask ourselves, “*Is there something I am missing?*” To be rid of resentments, we must commit them to paper:

- “In dealing with resentments, we set them on paper. We listed people, institutions or principles with whom we were angry.... Referring to our list again[, p]utting out of our minds the wrongs others had done, we resolutely looked for our own mistakes. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking and frightened? Though a situation had not been entirely our fault, we tried to disregard the other person involved entirely. Where were we to blame? The inventory was ours, not the other [person’s].”

Let’s look at the third sentence again. It reads, “*Where had we been selfish, dishonest, self-seeking, and frightened?*” These **four liabilities** make up the opposite of the **Four**

Standards of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness, and Love, which the Big Book uses as a test for our Higher Power's will for us.

~ A ~

Our Fourth Step Inventory is the method to become aware of the path we are on. Are we living in the solution and *“walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe”* or are we living in the problem and sinking deeper and deeper into *“that bitter morass of self-pity?”* What blocks us from the *“One who has all power”* and prevents us from finding the spiritual solution to our difficulties?

Concerning our resentments, the Big Book authors provide us with specific instructions on what to do. We must overcome them if we *“expect to live long or happily in this world.”* The Big Book authors explain that when we hold on to grudges, we are allowing others to control our lives, or as the saying goes, *“We allow them to live rent-free in our heads.”*

- “We turned back to the list, for it held the key to the future. We were prepared to look at it from an entirely different angle. We began to see that the world and its people really dominated us. In that state, the wrong-doing of others, **fancied or real**, had power to actually kill. How could we escape? We saw that these resentments must be mastered, but how? We could not wish them away any more than [our media addiction]. When we saw our faults, we listed them. We placed them before us in black and white. We admitted our wrongs honestly and were willing to set these matters straight.”

~ B ~

If we don't manage our resentments, the future will just repeat the past. Every time we are reminded of an old hurt, the old pain returns, and we feel it again and again. In the past, we may have used media to numb this pain, but now we will take necessary **ACTIONS** to free ourselves of this pain.

~ A ~

After writing down our resentments, we talk about them with another person who has more experience in the program. Healing begins when we **SHARE** our hurt, *but* this healing is not complete until we have forgiven those who have offended us. We overcome resentment with forgiveness. Thus, **FORGIVENESS is the asset that counteracts the liability of RESENTMENT.**

~ B ~

Through this process, we begin to change our attitude about our experience. We do this by beginning to see the source of our pain in a new light. We see the person as a sick individual who needs our prayers rather than our anger. Whether it is us, a person who remains in our lives, someone who has passed on, or someone we may never see again, the process is the same. The Big Book says:

- “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, [compassion], and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended, we said to ourselves, *‘This is a sick [person]. How can I be helpful to [them]?’* *God save me from being angry. Thy will be done.*’ We avoid retaliation or argument. We wouldn't treat sick people that way. If we do, we destroy our chance of being helpful. We

cannot be helpful to all people, but at least God will show us how to take a kindly and tolerant view of each and every one.”

The preceding paragraph and the **Sick [Person's] Prayer** are found on Page 67 of the Big Book. You may wish to say this prayer before you reflect on your own role and on your liabilities as you complete the last column of your *Fourth Step Inventory*.

~ A ~

Next, the authors ask us to look at **OUR FEARS**.

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

If we have faith that God will keep us safe and protected, we will find the strength to overcome all our fears. We overcome fear with faith. Thus, according to the Big Book authors, **FAITH is the asset that serves as an antidote to the liability of FEAR**. Here's how they put it:

- “Perhaps there is a better way—we think so. For we are now on a different basis; the basis of trusting and relying upon God. We trust infinite God rather than our finite selves. We are in the world to play the role [God] assigns. Just to the extent that we do as we think [God] would have us, and humbly rely on [God], does [God] enable us to match calamity with serenity. We can laugh at those who think spirituality the way of weakness. Paradoxically, it is the way of strength. The verdict of the ages is that faith means courage. All [people] of faith have courage. They trust their God. We never apologize for God. Instead we let [God] demonstrate through us, what [God] can do. We ask [God] to remove our fear and direct our attention to what [God] would have us be. At once, we commence to outgrow fear.”

~ B ~

As we share our Fourth Step with “*another human being*,” we identify a list of people we have harmed. Our list may include people who have passed, ourselves, pets, and any entity or place to whom we owe restitution. This will become the basis of our *Amends List*.

- “We reviewed our own conduct over the years past. Where had we been selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate? Whom had we hurt? Did we unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness? Where were we at fault? What should we have done instead? We got this all down on paper and looked at it.”
- Below are the templates that can be used to inventory your resentments, fears, and sex conduct. **[Scroll down to next page.]**

B2B FOURTH STEP INVENTORY SHORT FORM

MONTH 1 – RESENTMENTS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read pages 64-67 of the *Big Book*.
2. Complete the table below. Enter the names of 10 or more people or institutions you have resentments toward, meaning you are angry at them or feel hurt or threatened by them.
3. Write the reasons you feel this way in two lines or less.
4. Select the part(s) of self (or your identity) that this situation has affected from the following list:
Self-esteem, pride, security (physical or financial), ambitions, personal relations, sexual relations
5. Answer the question: "What liabilities played a part in my story?"

Here are the **LIABILITIES** we will be focusing on:

- **Self-pity:** Excessive, self-absorbed unhappiness over one's own troubles.
- **Resentment:** Consequence of being angry or bitter toward someone for an extended period.
- **Fear:** Preoccupation with the possibility of losing something you own or have or with not getting what you want.
- **Selfishness:** Concern only for ourselves and our own welfare or pleasure without regard for others.
- **Self-centeredness:** Making ourselves the center of the universe and wanting to control and play God.
- **Dishonesty:** Deception, cheating, lying, stealing, or withholding the truth.
- **False Pride:** Feelings of being *better than* (grandiosity, superiority, know it all) or *less than* (shame, unworthiness, low self-esteem).
- **Mistrust:** Jealousy that has to do with suspicion, distrusting others' motives, or doubting the faithfulness of a friend.
- **Envy:** The desire to have a quality, possession, or other desirable attribute belonging to someone else.
- **Procrastination:** Putting off work or not following through with right actions.



Person or institution whom I felt caused harm.	Reason I feel this way is. What did they do?	Part(s) of self, or identity, affected by this situation.	Which LIABILITIES played a part in my story?
Example: My Boss	He yelled at me when I didn't complete my report on time.	Self-esteem Pride Security Ambitions Personal relations	I felt it was unfair (Self-pity). I was angry and hurt (Resentment). I'm worried about my performance review (Fear). I believed he doesn't appreciate my work (False Pride). I didn't communicate my difficulties (Dishonesty). I spent 2.5 hours doing online shopping (Procrastination).
Example: My Partner	She came home late and said she had been out drinking with a few guys from work.	Self-esteem Pride Security Personal relations Sex relations	I felt abandoned and hurt (Self-pity, Selfishness). I was angry that I had to eat alone (Self-centeredness). I was jealous of the attention she was getting and giving others (Envy, Mistrust). I was worried she might leave me (Fear, Security).
Example: My Brother	He dated my best friend without telling me.	Self-esteem Pride Personal relations	I was angry he kept a secret from me (Resentment, False pride, Mistrust). I felt betrayed and excluded (Self-pity, Self-centeredness). I was scared to lose my best friend (Fear). I was jealous of their bond (Envy, Selfishness).

B2B FOURTH STEP INVENTORY SHORT FORM

MONTH 2 – FEARS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read pages 67-68 of the Big Book.
2. Column 1: Take quiet time to reflect and list your fears before filling in columns 2, 3, and 4.
3. Column 2: List why you have this fear, based on previous experience. Use your very first related experience if you can remember it.
4. Column 3: Look at how relying on yourself has failed you and write the behaviors you engage in to manage this fear.
5. Column 4: Imagine what your life would look like if you trusted and relied on your Higher Power.

List the Fear	Why do I have this fear? Remember your earliest experience of this.	How has self-reliance failed me? What do I do to manage my fear?	What would my life look like if I were to "trust infinite Higher Power rather than our finite selves?"
Example: Fear of Confrontation	In the second grade, the principal told my schoolmates and me that we were not allowed to play kickball during recess, and I argued with her about it, she called my mother and got me into trouble.	I engage in people-pleasing, isolate, withdraw, and keep my mouth shut to prevent experiencing similar situations.	I would be honest instead of inauthentic. I would feel at ease with who I am and would accept myself, while also respecting other people's rights to their own thoughts and opinions. I would accept that I don't know everything and am not always right.
Example: Fear of Heights	My family went on vacation to New York City, and my father took me up to the top of the Empire State Building and lifted me up to look over the ledge, I didn't like it at all. I was very scared.	I never go near the edge of anything. I panic when I am in high places like on a bridge and avoid flying if I can. I avoid making plans with my family to see the Grand Canyon.	I would still exercise caution, but I would also trust and relax into the experience, knowing that Higher Power has my back and will not let me fall if I am careful.
Example: Fear of being incompetent	My father yelled at me in front of my siblings and said that I was "so stupid I couldn't pour water out of a boot if the instructions were written on the heel." This shamed and humiliated me deeply.	I try to hide my faults, isolate, lie, cheat, and pretend to be someone I am not.	I would love myself no matter what, stop comparing myself to others, and stay calm and relaxed in any or most situation. I would see that my worthiness is not based on other peoples' views of me but comes from my own relationship with myself and with my Higher Power.

B2B FOURTH STEP INVENTORY SHORT FORM MONTH 3 – SEX CONDUCT AND FANTASY

INSTRUCTIONS:

1. Read pages 68-71 of the Big Book.
2. Column 1: List the names of people with whom you have had sex or sexual fantasies.
3. Column 2: List where you were selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate.
4. Column 3: Write whether you used this relationship to arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness.
5. Column 4: List whom you hurt because of your conduct. This may include yourself if you were acting out of integrity and your friends and family members if they knew about it.
6. Column 5: Ask yourself where you were at fault and what you should have done instead.

Person's Name	Where was I selfish, dishonest, or inconsiderate?	Did I unjustifiably arouse jealousy, suspicion, or bitterness?	Whom did I hurt?	Where was I at fault and what should I have done instead?
Example: A movie star I was obsessed with	Wasted time on media, fantasizing about being with him. I lied to myself that it was even possible. I ignored anyone real who was interested in me.	No	Myself, my friends, and my family members, because I could have spent more time with them, connecting, and living in the here and now.	I was lying to myself. I should have stopped and joined MAA to let go of the fantasy I was holding onto through media.
Example: Melissa	I wanted a partner so badly that I hung on even when she wasn't interest in me.	I would tell her about other people who were interested in me hoping to make her jealous.	Me, because I was not in integrity. Melissa, because she was too nice to tell me the truth, and my best friend, because I never stopped talking about her.	I lied to myself, because deep down, I knew she didn't care. I should have relied on Higher Power and trusted that I would meet someone else who really did care for me.
Example: Chris	I stayed with them for 7 years even though I knew after 7 days they weren't right for me. I lied and said I cared about them and never considered how much this lie would hurt them.	I made up stories about being unavailable to do things with them (like going to their brother's wedding), which must have caused suspicion as to how serious I was about our relationship.	Me, Chris, their family, and my family, because I was always pretending and not being honest.	I engaged in people-pleasing, because I didn't want to hurt their feelings and didn't want any conflict. I was only in it for the sex, while I knew the relationship meant much more to them. I should have ended it before I let it go too far.

~ A ~

Once you've completed each part of Step Four: *"Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves,"* it is helpful to start thinking about the people we have harmed. Using the resentments, fears, shame, or guilt you entered in your Short Form, please start to make a list of people you have harmed. This will form the basis of your list of amends which you will be working on when we reach Steps Eight and Nine.

Now let's take a look at the **Principles of Step Four**.

The principle of **COURAGE** leads to the principle of **CLARITY**.

- **FAITH** and **FAITHFULNESS** from Step Three lead to **COURAGE**. We were told at the beginning of the Twelve Step process that we needed to be fearless: *"With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start."*
- Facing ourselves and our character deficiencies is one of the most courageous actions we can undertake. Because we have developed faith and have chosen faithfulness, we

find the courage to look at ourselves honestly. This **COURAGE** leads to **CLARITY**. By being willing to look at ourselves honestly, we begin to emerge from the fog and to find clarity. We cannot fix what we cannot see, and we cannot change what we do not admit. Clarity is a powerful principle, for it is by living the principle of clarity that we move out of the darkness and into the “*sunlight of the Spirit.*”

~ B ~

Sharing

We will now open up the room for 3-minute (or other length) 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? This is also a time when newcomers can ask questions if they would like.

[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.]*

If you have completed your Twelve Steps in M.A.A. and are willing to be a temporary sponsor in Open Back-to-Basics to listen to someone’s homework assignments, please raise your hand... Thank you.

If you are looking for a Co-Sponsor or Action Partner please raise your hand... Thank you.

M.A.A. has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions, which are for the development of M.A.A. literature, costs incurred by the M.A.A. General Service Board, phone and video meeting services, and the maintenance of the M.A.A. website. Contributions can be made via credit card, debit card, or through PayPal on the M.A.A. 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 Fourth Step Inventory Short Form on Resentments (or, depending on where you are on this Step, on Fears or on Sex Conduct and Fantasy), 2) make 3 outreach calls this week to other members in this group or the M.A.A. fellowship, and 3) make an appointment to read your Fourth Step to someone even if your writing isn't finished. *[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 want to connect.

END OF MODULE 2, MEETING 4

MODULE 2, MEETING 4 Homework Assignments

ALL INVENTORY FORMS are posted on the www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org homepage under [Open Back-to-Basics Step Study](#), Module Two.

- 1) Fill out the *Fourth Step Inventory Short Form – Resentments* (or *Fears* or *Sex Conduct and Fantasy* depending on where you are on this Step).
- 2) Make 3 outreach calls this week to other members in this group or the M.A.A. fellowship. Writing a Fourth Step brings up difficult feelings we have been trying to avoid by compulsively using media. Reaching out to others assures us that we won't feel alone and fall into self-pity.
- 3) Make an appointment to read your Fourth Step to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of M.A.A. even if your writing isn't finished. This will motivate you to get your writing done and is courteous to the other person who will need to make time in their schedule to listen to you. (This will be your Fifth Step "*admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs,*" which we will discuss at our next meeting.)
