

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

**MODULE ONE
“Overview and Step 1”**

MODULE 1, MEETING 1

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 MAA.

~ A ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

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

History

~ A ~

Everything we are about to read (and every action we are going to take to recover from media addiction) originated from the work of AA's co-founders, Bill Wilson and Dr. Bob Smith. Their goodness and generosity in sharing the recipe for recovery, found in the Big Book of AA, has changed our lives and has helped millions of alcoholics and addicts all over the world. It was in 1939 that the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous (or the Big Book for short) was printed and made available to alcoholics. Before publication, AA had only about 100 sober members; however, after publication, its fellowship grew rapidly, solidly grounded in the Big Book's foundational teachings.

- **Clarence Snyder**, an alcoholic from Cleveland, Ohio, was one of the first to use the Big Book with prospective AA fellows. He helped build the AA fellowship, using the Big Book to guide his members' recovery process. Snyder, who was led through the 12 Steps by Dr. Bob, modeled a one-on-one sponsorship style in which an experienced member of the fellowship would walk a newcomer through all 12 Steps as quickly as possible.
- Cleveland groups emphasized the *Four Absolutes of Honesty, Purity, Unselfishness, and Love* as well as the importance of working with other alcoholics. Their slogan was: "*Trust God, clean house, help others.*" Unlike the New York AA groups, the Cleveland groups put more emphasis on the spiritual aspect of the program. New York's slogan was, "*Don't drink and go to meetings.*" Snyder believed that relying only on meetings to keep sober, without working the 12 Steps and finding faith in a Higher Power, would doom AA to failure. Dr. Bob said to him once, "There is an easy way and a hard way to recover from alcoholism. The hard way is by just going to meetings."

~ B ~

We bring up Snyder's approach because, up until this point in AA's history, the recovery rate for alcoholics was around 30 percent, which at this time was still considered somewhat high, given that the true alcoholic faced little to no hope for recovery before AA. In Clarence's groups, he had a 75-percent success rate by following the Big Book, using the one-on-one sponsorship method with newcomers, and emphasizing the spiritual aspect of the program. While this one-on-one approach is taken for granted in most 12-Step programs today, in 1939, it had not yet been conceived.

~ A ~

Due to the sudden swell in membership, newcomers were often put to work taking other newcomers through the 12 Steps before they even completed the Steps themselves. Because of its success, Cleveland's Big-Book style of sponsorship quickly spread to other AA groups.

~ B ~

Bill Wilson, AA's co-founder, was impressed at the growth and success Cleveland was having in sobering up alcoholics. Bill wrote in the book, AA Comes of Age:

- Yes, Cleveland's results were of the best. Their results were in fact so good, and AA's membership elsewhere was so small, that many a Clevelander really thought AA's membership had started there in the first place. The Cleveland pioneers had proved three essential things: the value of personal sponsorship; the worth of AA's Big Book in indoctrinating newcomers; and finally, the tremendous fact that AA, when the word really got around, could now soundly grow to great size.

~ A ~

The phenomenal success rate of the early AA members was due to a simple format, used at that time, to help beginners take all 12 Steps in a short period. This format, which could be taught to newcomers right away, enabled them to be helped quickly by a life-changing spiritual awakening.

- AA's remarkable recovery rate during the 1940s was due, in large part, to these Back-to-Basics meetings. For thousands of alcoholics, these meetings became the foundation stone of their recovery. The Big Book authors tell us they have found a way out that works. In fact, they guarantee that if we follow the directions and are sincere and honest in our effort, we will recover. "Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path."

~ B ~

If you carry any prejudice towards the Big Book, we ask you to keep an open mind and give the Big Book method an honest try. We think if you do, you will be pleasantly surprised.

Overview

~ A ~

The purpose of our 12-Step study group is to provide a safe, structured environment where participants find the support to take the 12 Steps together with other media addicts, learn the principles of recovery, and identify their own personal unnecessary media. By doing so, we will be able to stay ahead of our disease and learn to live a spiritually fulfilled and useful life without using media as a drug.

~ B ~

In order for this process to work, we encourage you to use an action partner, a sponsor, or a co-sponsor to help you in your recovery. When you keep your commitments and complete the assignments of this group, you will be surprised at how fast you will grow in this program.

~ A ~

This is a **WE** program. We attend these open Back-to-Basics meetings together, we read the Big Book together, we stay sober together, we take the Steps together, and we recover together. Here are the guidelines we will be using for these sessions:

- We encourage you to do your best to attend every weekly session of this four-month series. We will be reading appropriate parts of the Big Book, specifically those passages that relate to taking the 12 Steps.
- We will be your guides through all 12 Steps as written by the Big Book authors. If you follow their directions, you will recover from media addiction.
- We suggest you commit to fasting from all unnecessary media or at least abstain from your alcoholic media. We have found it necessary to put down media in order to work the Steps with a clear mind.
- Making outreach calls to other members of this group will help you keep on track and stay out of isolation. Program calls are important, especially in the beginning of recovery when people may be experiencing withdrawal.
- Let your sponsor, co-sponsor, or action partner know that you are going through this process and get their support. If you don't have a sponsor, co-sponsor, or action partner, we encourage you to get one.
- Call your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or a group member if you feel you are about to use your alcoholic media.
- If you are someone who has already completed three months of a closed Back-to-Basics Step Study and has remained abstinent, volunteer to sponsor another member of this group. Sponsorship adds to the quality of your recovery.
- Attend other MAA meetings and share your experience, strength, and hope.

~ B ~

Our readings will be taken from the first 164 pages of the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. We encourage you to read the Big Book on your own as well. Let's begin.

- "We, of Alcoholics Anonymous, are [individuals] who have recovered from a seemingly hopeless state of mind and body. To show other alcoholics *precisely how we have recovered* is the main purpose of this book."

~ B ~ (continued)

The Big Book authors immediately tell us that the purpose of their book is to show us how to recover from alcoholism, or in our case, media addiction. This is a revolutionary statement because, until this book was written, there was no hope for real alcoholics, let alone real media addicts. Today, everyone who is willing to follow the directions that the Big Book provides can recover. They go on to say (the bracketed words are where we have inserted media concepts)

- "You may already have asked yourself why it is that all of us became so very ill from [media addiction]. Doubtless you are curious to discover how and why, in the face of expert opinion to the contrary, we have recovered from a hopeless condition of mind and body. If you are [a media addict] who wants to get over it, you may already be asking – 'What do I have to do?' It is the purpose of this book to answer such questions specifically. We shall tell you what we have done."

~ A ~

The Big Book authors agree that they have found a way out that works.

- "The tremendous fact for every one of us is that we have discovered a common solution. We have a way out on which we can absolutely agree, and upon which we can join in brotherly [and sisterly] harmonious action. This is the great news this book carries to those who suffer from [media addiction]."

They tell us that the way they recovered from alcoholism was through deep and effective spiritual experiences.

- "The great fact is just this, and nothing less: That we have had deep and effective spiritual experiences which have revolutionized our whole attitude toward life, toward our fellows, and toward God's universe. The central fact of our lives today is the absolute certainty that our Creator has entered into our hearts and lives in a way which is indeed miraculous. [God] has commenced to accomplish those things for us which we could never do by ourselves."

~ B ~

We of Media Addicts Anonymous have found that, much like alcoholics, it was not our compulsive media use that was our problem, but rather, it was learning how to live without the numbing effect of our alcoholic media—which was terrifying to us. One AA member put it this way in the Big Book:

- "AA does not teach us how to handle our drinking... It teaches us how to handle sobriety... It's no great trick to stop drinking; the trick is to *stay* stopped. I had come to AA to learn how to handle sobriety—which is what I could not handle in the first place. That's why I drank."

He goes on to write about his struggle with alcohol, but we are going to substitute media so that we might relate his story to our compulsive media behaviors:

- "I had to [use media]...to live, to cope with the demands of everyday existence. When I encountered disappointments or frustrations...my solution was to [binge on my electronic devices]. I had always been oversensitive to criticism... When I was criticized or reprimanded, [electronic screens were] my refuge and comfort. When I was faced with a special challenge or social event... I had to fortify myself with a couple of [videos, games, social media posts, or shopping]. Too often I would overdo it... Above all, I was suffering inner pain because my performance and my accomplishments in life failed to live up to my own expectations of myself. I *had* to anesthetize that pain with [electronic media]. Of course, the more I [binged on media], the more unrealistic my expectations became and the poorer my performance... So the need to [get drunk on media] grew still greater."

~ A ~

The primary goal for these open Back-to-Basic sessions is to provide you with "a design for living," an effective solution to relieve your media addiction and a proven method to create a happy, useful, and satisfying life. One early AA member wrote:

- "But the moment I made up my mind to go through with the process, I had the curious feeling that my [media addiction] was relieved, as in fact it proved to be. Quite as important was the discovery that spiritual principles would solve all my problems. I have since been brought into a way of living infinitely more satisfying and, I hope, more useful than the life I lived before. My old manner of life was by no means a bad one, but I would not exchange its best moments for the worst I have now. I would not go back to it even if I could."

~ B ~

By using the methods described in the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous, we are going to give you the way to recover from compulsively using media and acquire the time-tested principles that will give you a life second to none. If that is something you are looking for, you have come to the right place.

~ A ~

Next, the authors explain that, for us, there is no middle ground. We will either find a "new way of living" or else succumb to the ravages of compulsive media addiction.

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

~ B ~

Then they describe the media addict and tell us what it is going to take to recover:

- “If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit [your compulsive media behaviors] entirely, or if when [using media], you have little control over [how long you indulge in your activity], you are probably [a media addict]. If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which only a spiritual experience will conquer.”

To be sure that everyone comprehends what we just read, I will read the last sentence again: “If that be the case, you may be suffering from an illness which ONLY a spiritual experience will conquer.” This makes clear what we should do in order to recover from our media addiction: We must undergo a life-changing, **spiritual transformation**.

Meditation and Intention

~ A ~

Since this is our first open Back-to-Basics session, we would like to take a few minutes for each of us to set an intention for ourselves and for this group as we work together through these Steps. Please grab a notebook or paper so you can write your vision and intention for this month after we have a short meditation. *[Stop screen sharing and read the following meditation script. Don't rush.]*

Now, everyone, please close your eyes. Take a deep breath and relax. For the next few minutes, set aside your problems and worries. Just breathe and be present in this very moment.

[Pause for 5 seconds.]

Feel what it is like to be here with other people who understand your situation and who understand how desperate you are to stop hurting yourself with media. Know that you belong here. Notice that you are not alone. Feel hope for yourself and everyone in this group.

[Pause for 5 seconds.]

Reflect on why you are here. Think about what you wish to gain from these sessions.

[Pause for 5 seconds.]

Envision your ideal day. What would it look like without the compulsive use of media? See yourself going throughout your day without struggle.

See yourself feeling safe and protected.

Feel yourself connected to a Higher Power.

Feel yourself connected to others.

See yourself connected to your true nature.

[Pause for 5 seconds.]

Now make an intention for yourself. What do you wish to get out of open Back-to-Basics? How would your life change? What would be different?

[Pause for 5 seconds.]

Envision yourself showing up as you would like to show up. See yourself achieving media sobriety. Feel yourself growing the way you wish to grow. Allow your spirit to carry you to your highest intention.

[Pause for 10 seconds.]

Now open your eyes, and we will take 2 minutes to write down the intention you have given yourself.

[Time for 2 minutes.]

That is all the time we have for writing today.

~ B ~

We will now open up the room for 3-minute shares. You can read your intention if you would like. We will begin with our three readers in the order they read, and then I will take more names.

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

Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

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

~ A ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

Thank you for joining us. We hope to see you here next week. The homework assignments we recommend for this week are, and I will post them in the chat: 1) write out your history of media addiction, 2) read it to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or a fellow member of MAA, and 3) fill out a resistance worksheet. *[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 1, MEETING 1

MODULE 1, MEETING 1 Homework Assignments

- 1) Write out your history of media addiction (see guide on the www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org homepage under open Back-to-Basics Step Study, Module One).
- 2) Fill out a resistance worksheet (see worksheet on the www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org homepage under open Back-to-Basics Step Study, Module One).
- 3) Read both to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or a fellow member of MAA.

MODULE 1, MEETING 2

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

~ A ~

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

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

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~ B ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

At our last meeting we learned that to recover from media addiction, we must undergo a life-changing, spiritual transformation. You may be asking, “*What do they mean by a spiritual transformation?*”

Overview of 12 Steps and Spiritual Journey

The Big Book chapter titled *How it Works* describes what this commitment and process of spiritual transformation looks like:

- “Rarely have we seen a person fail who has thoroughly followed our path. Those who do not recover are people who cannot or will not completely give themselves to this simple program, usually men and women who are constitutionally incapable of being honest with themselves. There are such unfortunates. They are not at fault; they seem to have been born that way. They are naturally incapable of grasping and developing a manner of living which demands rigorous honesty. Their chances are less than average. There are those too who suffer from grave emotional and mental disorders, but many of them do recover if they have the capacity to be honest.”
- “Our stories disclose in a general way what we used to be like, what happened, and what we are like now. If you have decided you want what we have and are willing to go to any length to get it—then you are ready to take certain steps. At some of these, we balked. We thought we could find an easier, softer way. But we could not. With all the earnestness at our command, we beg of you to be fearless and thorough from the very start. Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas, and the result was nil until we let go absolutely. Remember that we deal with [media addiction]—cunning, baffling, powerful! Without help, it is too much for us. But there is One who has all power—that One is God. May you find [God] now!”

~ B ~

Before we continue, let’s pause and take a moment to answer this call to action from the Big Book authors. “*May you find [God] now!*” The authors urge us to find a Higher Power now. This sounds like an impossible demand, right? Why would we need to find a Higher Power with such immediacy? Because every action we take as we move through the 12 Steps requires the support of a source greater than our finite selves. The authors tell us that this is imperative to our survival and recovery from media addiction, likening it to a do-or-die situation.

- “Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked [God’s] protection and care with complete abandon.”

~ A ~

The authors make it clear that to recover, we must “*completely give ourselves to this simple program,*” be honest with ourselves, and seek help from the “*One who has all power.*”

~ B ~

They also tell us that, although we might wish to find easier and softer ways to conquer our media addiction, the result will be nil unless we surrender completely. This is a somber reminder of what we are dealing with—an addiction that is “*cunning, baffling, and powerful.*”

~ A ~

Only a spiritual transformation can relieve us from our obsession with media and from the devastation that follows our complete loss of control.

~ B ~

Now let’s see why we are going to need a Higher Power. “*Here are the steps we took, which are suggested as a program of recovery:*” Would each read four please.

- Step 1:** We admitted we were powerless over [media]—that our lives had become unmanageable.
- Step 2:** Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
- Step 3:** Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood [God].
- Step 4:** Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
- Step 5:** Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
- Step 6:** Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
- Step 7:** Humbly asked [God] to remove our shortcomings.
- Step 8:** Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
- Step 9:** Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
- Step 10:** Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
- Step 11:** Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood [God], praying only for knowledge of [God’s] will for us and the power to carry that out.

Step 12: Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to [media addicts], and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

- “Many of us exclaimed, ‘*What an order! I can’t go through with it.*’ Do not be discouraged. No one among us has been able to maintain anything like perfect adherence to these principles. We are not saints. The point is that we are willing to grow along spiritual lines. The principles we have set down are guides to progress. We claim spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.”

As you can see, every Step takes us further on our spiritual journey—a journey that we do not take alone. In this journey, we are accompanied by other recovering media addicts and by a Higher Power.

~ A ~

Also, the authors reassure us that our journey through the 12 Steps is not about being perfect. The only requirement asked of us is the willingness to grow along spiritual lines. The 12 Steps serve merely as guideposts for progress, not hammers to beat ourselves with. **Spiritual progress is our only goal—not spiritual perfection.**

~ B ~

An early AA member put it this way:

- “Steps **1, 2, and 3** get you right with **God**.
Steps **4, 5, 6, and 7** get you right with **yourself**.
Steps **8 and 9** get you right with **others**, and
Steps **10, 11, and 12** **keep you right with God, yourself, and others.**”

Please keep this vision in mind as we move through these Steps together. The Big Book goes on to say:

- “Our description of the alcoholic, the chapter to the agnostic, and our personal adventures before and after make clear three pertinent ideas:
 - (a) That we were [real media addicts] and could not manage our own lives.
 - (b) That probably no human power could have relieved our [media addiction].
 - (c) That God could and would if [God] were sought.”

~ A ~

These 12 Steps are the solution we have found to help a real media addict recover. The Big Book authors admit that working the Steps will be challenging, but when they “*picked up the spiritual tools laid at their feet,*” something extraordinary happened:

- “Almost none of us liked the self-searching, the leveling of our pride, the confession of shortcomings which the process requires for its successful consummation. But we saw that it really worked in others, and we had come to believe in the hopelessness and futility of life as we had been living it. When, therefore, we were approached by those in whom the problem had been solved, there was nothing left for us but to pick up the simple kit of spiritual tools laid at our feet. We have found much of heaven and we have been rocketed into a **fourth dimension of existence** of which we had not even dreamed.”

~ B ~

For those who are agnostic or atheist, these ideas may seem impossible or even off-putting. But the authors tell us this need not stand in the way of your recovery:

- “To [those who feel they are atheists or agnostics] such an experience seems impossible, but to continue as [they are] means disaster, especially if [they are media addicts] of the hopeless variety. To be doomed to a [media addict’s] death or to live on a spiritual basis are not always easy alternatives to face.”

~ A ~

Not only is a spiritual experience possible but also easier than you might think if you keep an open mind and work the 12 Steps as described in the Big Book. They tell us we “*need not be disconcerted*” if we cannot see how we could achieve spiritual living when we neither believe in nor care to believe in a Higher Power.

- “But it isn’t so difficult. About half of our original fellowship was of exactly that type. At first, some of us tried to avoid the issue, hoping against hope we were not true [media addicts]. But after a while, we had to face the fact that we must find a spiritual basis of life—or else....”
- “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.”

~ B ~

We find it comforting that the newcomer can begin this media recovery program without a specific belief in God or, for that matter, any beliefs whatsoever. All that is necessary is to know that others have recovered from media addiction by following the directions outlined in the 12 Steps. If others can do it, so can you!

~ A ~

Many of us have had this spiritual experience through working the 12 Steps: It does work if you work at it! A power greater than ourselves has taken away our obsession for alcoholic media and restored us to sanity. The 12 Steps have changed our need to numb out with media by helping us clear away the past and live our lives on a spiritual basis. This program will change your life too *if* you honestly want it.

~ B ~

Our lack of willpower in curbing our media usage had thrown us into despair. The Big Book was written specifically to give us a spiritual solution for our powerlessness and despair.

- “**Lack of power, that was our dilemma**. We had to find a power by which we could live, and it had to be a Power greater than ourselves. Obviously. But where and how were we to find this Power? Well, that’s exactly what this book is about. Its main objective is to enable you to find a Power greater than yourself, which will solve your problem. [This]

means we have written a book that we believe to be spiritual as well as moral. And it means, of course, that we are going to talk about God.”

~ A ~

The authors ask us to develop our own concept of God. In other words, they want us to find **a God of our own understanding**.

- “Much to our relief, we discovered we did not need to consider another’s conception of God. Our own conception, however inadequate, was sufficient to make the approach and to effect contact with [God]. As soon as we admitted the possible existence of a Creative Intelligence, a Spirit of the Universe underlying the totality of things, we began to be possessed of a new sense of power and direction, provided we took other simple steps.”

Many of us felt unsure about trying to connect with a God we had denied or rejected. Some of us did not know the first thing about reaching the spiritual realm, but the Big Book authors assure us that this realm is easier to connect with and closer than you think. It waits for you to open your mind to its reality.

- “We found that God does not make too hard terms with those who seek [God]. To us, the Realm of Spirit is broad, roomy, all-inclusive; never exclusive or forbidding to those who earnestly seek. It is open, we believe, to all [people].”

~ B ~

To recap what we just learned, the Big Book authors have told us that we will take actions that shall lead us into the *“realm of the spirit.”* Our personalities will transform from *self-directed* to *God-directed*, and our *“whole attitude and outlook upon life will change”* from *“self-sufficiency”* to *“God-sufficiency.”*

~ A ~

To be clear, neither AA nor MAA is a religious program. We are free to call this power by any name we choose, provided it is a *“Power greater than ourselves.”* The Big Book authors use different names for this power, including *Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, Spirit of the Universe, Creator, and Great Reality*. Often, they refer to this power as “God,” but they use the term for convenience rather than for religious reasons. Please refer to your Higher Power in any manner that feels comfortable to you.

~ B ~

To recover from media addiction, we must find a *“Power greater than ourselves.”* But where are we to find this Power? The authors answer this as follows:

- “Actually we were fooling ourselves, for deep down in every man, woman, and child is the fundamental idea of God. It may be obscured by calamity, by pomp, by worship of other things, but in some form or other, it is there. For faith in a Power greater than ourselves, and miraculous demonstrations of that power in human lives, are facts as old as [humans themselves]. We finally saw that faith in some kind of God was a part of our make-up, just as much as the feeling we have for a friend. Sometimes we had to search fearlessly, but [God] was there. [God] was as much a fact as we were. We found the

Great Reality deep down within us. In the last analysis, it is only there that [God] may be found. It was so with us.”

~ A ~

These are dramatic and, for some of us, revolutionary concepts. Let’s summarize them. First, the authors of the Big Book announce that they have found a way to free us from the bondage of media addiction.

~ B ~

Next, they describe the solution as finding and calling upon a “*Power greater than ourselves.*”

~ A ~

Then, they tell us where to find this Power—right inside each one of us. Sometimes this is the last place we ever think to look.

Introduction to the First Step

~ B ~

We will give you a simple prayer to start your journey toward conscious contact with a Higher Power and to deepen your spiritual journey. This is commonly referred to as the First Step Prayer. It goes like this: “*Dear Higher Power, my name is (your name), and I am a real media addict, and I need your help today.*”

Let’s take a moment to say this prayer together. Please unmute your mics.

First Step Prayer

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

This is our first step towards being open-minded and willing to connect with a personal Higher Power.

~ A ~

Our next step is to locate the feeling of this Higher Power. Open your heart and see if you can connect with a power greater than yourself. Look into your heart and see if you can feel the subtle energy of a God of your own understanding. I will set the timer for one minute. Please close your eyes and look, or listen, within. *[Time for 1 minute.]*

Thank you. Even if you did not feel anything or sense anything, do not worry. We all need to start somewhere. Making the attempt is what matters.

~ B ~

Now that we know WHERE to find this Power, much of the rest of the Big Book is devoted to the question of HOW to connect with and benefit from this Power.

~ A ~

We connect to and utilize this Power by taking the 12 Steps. In the next session, we will focus on Step One.

Sharing

~ B ~

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

[Stop screen sharing.]

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

Reader 1

Reader 2

Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

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

~ A ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ B ~ (continued)

Thank you for joining us. We hope to see you here next week. The homework assignments we recommend for this week are, and I will post them in the chat: 1) listen to a qualification by Cindy, 2) create a Media Usage Plan, and 3) create your own Media Replacement Plan. *[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 1, MEETING 2

MODULE 1, MEETING 2 Homework Assignments

1) Listen to qualification by Cindy at MAA’s Call-in Number 978-990-5099, Access Code 385988#, Reference #6, or you can access it on the MAA website at <https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/there-is-a-solution>, Reference #6, “Looking for God in All the Wrong Places.”

2) Create your Media Usage Plan and consider fasting from all unnecessary media while working the Steps (see worksheet on the www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org homepage under Open Back-to-Basics Step Study, Module One).

3) Create your own Media Replacement Plan (see worksheet on the www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org homepage under Open Back-to-Basics Step Study, Module One).

MODULE 1, MEETING 3

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

~ A ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

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

The Nature of our Addiction

~ A ~

To help us understand the truth about media addiction, our reading today will focus on describing the physical symptoms and the mental insanity of alcohol addiction. The same symptoms apply to media addiction. We begin with the first chapter of the Big Book, titled "***The Doctor's Opinion***," by **Dr. William D. Silkworth**, a physician in New York City.

In the late 1930s, little was known about alcoholism. Dr. Silkworth, who dedicated his life to helping alcoholics, discovered something about them that no one else was talking about. At the time, alcoholism was considered a moral issue. He writes:

- "Men and women drink essentially because they like the effect produced by alcohol. 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 alcoholic 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 taking a few drinks—drinks which they see others taking 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 drink again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an **entire psychic change** there is very little hope of [their] recovery."

~ B ~

What Dr. Silkworth says about alcoholics accurately describes the media addict. Please listen carefully, and let's re-read his statement and this time substitute *media* for *alcohol*.

- "Men and women [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 addicted] life seems the normal one. They are restless, irritable, and discontented unless they can again experience the sense of ease and comfort which comes at once by [watching online videos or playing a few games or shopping or surfing the net or losing themselves on social media activities] which they see others taking 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 [become drunk on media] again. This is repeated over and over, and unless this person can experience an entire psychic change there is very little hope of [their] recovery."

~ B ~ (continued)

Media addiction, or “*Internet Disorder*,” has been researched for a while now. What medical professionals have discovered is that media addiction is very similar to alcoholism. Let’s read what one professional found in her research into media addiction. The following is an excerpt from an article written by Christina Gregory, PhD, on the signs and symptoms of Internet disorders.

- “Some evidence suggests that if you are suffering from [media addiction], your brain makeup is similar to those [who] suffer from a chemical dependency, such as drugs or alcohol. Interestingly, some studies link [media addiction] to physically changing the brain structure—specifically affecting the amount of gray and white matter in regions of the prefrontal brain. This area of the brain is associated with remembering details, attention, planning, and prioritizing tasks. ...One of the causes of [media addiction] is [a] structural [change] to the prefrontal region of the brain ... rendering you unable to prioritize your life. [That is,] the Internet takes precedence to necessary life tasks.”
- “[Media addiction], in addition to other dependency disorders, [seems] to affect the pleasure center of the brain. The addictive behavior triggers a release of dopamine to promote the pleasurable experience activating the release of this chemical. Over time, more and more of the activity is needed to induce the same pleasurable response, creating a dependency. [For instance,] if you find online gaming or online shopping a pleasurable activity and you suffer from an addiction to the Internet, you will need to engage in more and more of the behavior to institute the same pleasurable feeling prior to your dependency.”

~ A ~

We learn from this article that a media addict’s brain is similar to that of an alcoholic. We see that media changes the structure of the brain. This structural change impedes our ability to prioritize and manage our lives. Like alcohol, there is also a physical component to media addiction—a release of dopamine that creates a pleasurable state in the media addict’s body, which then triggers the compulsion for more and more media to gain the same initial dopamine hit.

~ B ~

As you see, the media addict’s obsessive need to use media mirrors Dr. Silkworth’s description of the downward cycle of compulsive behavior in alcoholics. Dr. Silkworth witnessed how recovery was possible, even for the most doomed alcoholic, *if* they could undergo a psychic change.

- “On the other hand—and strange as this may seem to those who do not understand—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 that required to follow a few simple rules.”

~ A ~

Dr. Silkworth's statement leads us to the solution to the media addict's problem. His understanding of compulsive disease tells us that when a media addict's mind is triggered and succumbs to yet another binge, little hope of recovery exists without a psychic change.

~ B ~

Let's acknowledge that people differ in the variety of media they are addicted to. One person may be addicted to social media and another to online movies and videos. Someone can spend hours on end playing video games, while another may get drunk on online research, and yet another will binge-read novels.

~ A ~

For the alcoholic, it does not matter what brand or type of alcohol they drink—it still gets them drunk. The same is true for the media addict when it comes to their varieties of alcoholic media.

~ B ~

To help us understand what constitutes a true alcoholic, the Big Book provides us with three types of users. Again, we will replace the word *alcohol* with *media*.

- “Moderate [users] have little trouble in giving up [media] entirely if they have a good reason for it. They can take it or leave it alone. Then we have a certain type of [compulsive media user]. [They] may have the habit badly enough to gradually impair [them] physically and mentally.... If a sufficiently strong reason ... or the warning of a doctor becomes operative, this [individual] can also stop or moderate....”
- “But what about the real [media addict]? [They] may start off as a moderate [user; they] may or may not become a continuous [compulsive user]; but at some stage [in their media usage] career, [they begin] to lose all control of [their media use], once [they] start to [binge on it]. Here is [the person] who has been puzzling you, especially in [their] lack of control.... [They are] seldom mildly [drunk on media]. [They are] always more or less insanely drunk.”
- “[Their] disposition while using [media] resembles [their] normal nature but little. [They] may be one of the finest [people] in the world. Yet let [them binge on media] for a day, and [they] frequently become disgustingly, and even dangerously anti-social. [They] have a positive genius for getting [media drunk] at exactly the wrong moment, particularly when some important decision must be made or engagement kept. [They are] often perfectly sensible and well-balanced concerning everything except [media], but in that respect [they are] incredibly dishonest and selfish.”
- “[They] often possess special abilities, skills, and aptitudes, and [have] a promising career ahead of [them]. [They use their] gifts to build up a bright outlook for [their] family and [themselves] and then [pull] the structure down on [their heads] by a senseless series of sprees. [They are individuals] who [go] to bed so intoxicated [on media they] ought to sleep the clock around. Yet early next morning [they search] madly for [their smartphone they] misplaced the night before. This is by no means a comprehensive picture of the true [media addict], as our behavior patterns vary. But this description should identify [them] roughly.”

~ A ~

Why does a **real media addict** compulsively and obsessively get drunk on media when others can quit or take it or leave it? Let's see what the Big Book authors say about this third type of media drunk, the one **of the hopeless variety**.

- “Why [do so many media drunks] behave like this? If hundreds of experiences have shown [them] that one [click] means another debacle with all its attendant suffering and humiliation, why is it [they click that first click]? Why can't [they] stay on the [sobriety] wagon? What has become of the common sense and willpower that [they] still sometimes [display] with respect to other matters? Perhaps there never will be a full answer to these questions. Opinions vary considerably as to why the [media addict] reacts differently from normal people. We are not sure why, once a certain point is reached, little can be done for [them].”
- “We cannot answer the riddle. We know that while the [media addict] keeps away from [their triggering media], as [they] may do for months or years [at a time], [they react] much like other [people]. We are equally positive that once [a media addict] takes any [alcoholic media whatsoever] into [their] system, something happens, both in the bodily and mental sense, which makes it virtually impossible for [them] to stop. The experience of any [real media addict] will abundantly confirm this.”

~ B ~

The Big Book authors then explain the main reason a real media addict cannot stay sober from alcoholic media is because **our minds have no defense against the first click**.

- “These observations would be academic and pointless if our friend never [clicked] the first [click], thereby setting the terrible cycle in motion. Therefore, the main problem of the [media addict] centers in [their] **mind**, rather than in [their] body. If you ask [them] why [they] started on that last bender, the chances are [they] will offer you any one of a hundred alibis. Sometimes these excuses have a certain plausibility, but none of them really makes sense in the light of the havoc [a media addict's binge] creates....”
- “If you draw this fallacious reasoning to the attention of [a media addict, they] will laugh it off, or become irritated and refuse to talk. Once in a while, [they] may tell the truth. And the truth, strange to say, is usually that **[they have] no more idea why [they clicked that first click] than you have**. Some [media addicts] have excuses with which they are satisfied part of the time. But in their hearts, they really do not know why they do it.”

~ A ~

As media addicts, we continue to try to hold on to the possibility that we can still control our media usage. But the truth is—if we are willing to admit it—our minds really have no defense against the first click. The Big Book goes on to say:

- “Once this malady has a real hold, they are a baffled lot. There is the obsession that somehow, someday, they will beat the game. But they often suspect they are down for the count.... The tragic truth is that if [this person is a real media addict], the happy day may not arrive. [They have] lost control. At a certain point in the [behavior of every media addict, they pass] into a state where the most powerful desire to stop [getting drunk on media] is of absolutely no avail. The fact is that most [media addicts], for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice in [media]. Our so-called willpower becomes practically nonexistent. **We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness with sufficient force, the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first [click].**”

~ B ~

Let me read this last statement once more, for if we are ever to recover from media addiction permanently, we must understand this truth clearly: *“We are unable, at certain times, to bring into our consciousness, with sufficient force, the memory of the suffering and humiliation of even a week or a month ago. We are without defense against the first [click].”*

~ A ~

The Big Book then gives us the excellent example of Jim, a hopeless alcoholic who, after brief sobriety, offhandedly picks up a drink. See if you can identify.

~ B ~

Jim was a World War I hero with a charming wife and family. He had inherited a lucrative automobile company and was a good salesman. By all accounts, he had everything in life he needed to be happy and to succeed. Jim was normal except for a nervous disposition and at age thirty-five became a violent drunk. This resulted in him having to sell his business and work for the guy he sold it to. He was sent to an asylum as a last-ditch effort to save his job. While in the asylum, he was introduced to A.A.'s 12 Steps by two recovering alcoholics, and he became sober. When he started to apply the principles of A.A. to his life, everything began to improve.

~ A ~

But then he became complacent, and **he failed to enlarge his spiritual life**. To his consternation, he found himself drunk half a dozen times in rapid succession, despite the knowledge that he could lose his family and job. He ended up back in the asylum. His A.A. friends questioned him as to how this happened. This is his story:

- “I came to work on Tuesday morning. I remember I felt irritated that I had to be a salesman for a concern I once owned. I had a few words with the boss, but nothing serious. Then I decided to drive to the country and see one of my prospects for a car. On the way, I felt hungry, so I stopped at a roadside place where they have a bar. **I had no intention of drinking.** I just thought I would get a sandwich. I sat down at a table and ordered a sandwich and a glass of milk. Still no thought of drinking. I ordered another sandwich and decided to have another glass of milk.”
- “Suddenly the thought crossed my mind that if I were to put an ounce of whiskey in my milk it couldn't hurt me on a full stomach. I ordered a whiskey and poured it into the milk. I vaguely sensed I was not being any too smart but felt reassured as I was taking the whiskey on a full stomach. The experiment went so well that I ordered another whiskey and poured it into more milk. That didn't seem to bother me, so I tried another.”

- “Thus started one more journey to the asylum for Jim. Here was the threat of commitment, the loss of family and position, to say nothing of that intense mental and physical suffering that drinking always caused him. **He had much knowledge about himself as an alcoholic.** Yet **all reasons for not drinking were easily pushed aside in favor of the foolish idea** that he could take whiskey if only he mixed it with milk.”

~ B ~

Do you relate to Jim's thinking pattern when it comes to your alcoholic media? We media addicts can be rational and logical in many areas of our lives, but when it comes to our compulsive need to use media, we lose all sense of reality. The Big Book authors call this “*plain insanity.*”

- “Whatever the precise definition of the word may be, we call this **plain insanity**. How can such a lack of proportion, or the ability to think straight, be called anything else”

~ A ~

They caution us not to think that this extreme case of misjudgment does not relate to us.

- “You may think this an extreme case. To us, it is not far-fetched, for this kind of thinking has been characteristic of every single one of us.... Our sound reasoning failed to hold us in check. **The insane idea won out.** Next day we would ask ourselves, in all earnestness and sincerity, how it could have happened.”

~ B ~

Reflect on your last binge and see if it isn't true that your sound reasoning went out the window right before you decided to use media. Notice how the insane idea won out and how you were without defense against the first click.

~ A ~

Sometimes we may feel justified in turning toward our chosen media, because we feel lonely, tired, worried, or angry. The Big Book authors tell us that even this sort of justification is a part of the insanity of an addict, who must face the inevitable negative consequences of a media binge.

- “In some circumstances, we have gone out deliberately to get drunk, feeling ourselves justified by nervousness, anger, worry, depression, jealousy, or the like. But even in this type of beginning, we are obliged to admit that our justification for a spree was insanely insufficient in the light of what always happened. We now see that when we began to [use alcoholic media] deliberately, instead of casually, there was little serious or effective thought during the period of premeditation of what the terrific consequences might be.”

~ B ~

To help us understand even better the pure insanity of the media addict and alcoholic, the Big Book authors give us an even more extreme example of a compulsive jaywalker.

- “Our behavior is as absurd and incomprehensible with respect to the first drink as that of an individual with a passion, say, for jaywalking. He gets a thrill out of skipping in front of fast-moving vehicles. He enjoys himself for a few years in spite of friendly warnings. Up to this point, you would label him as a foolish [person] having queer ideas of fun. Luck then deserts him and he is slightly injured several times in succession. You would expect him, if he were normal, to cut it out. Presently he is hit again, and this time has a fractured skull. Within a week after leaving the hospital a fast-moving trolley car breaks his arm.”
- “He tells you he has decided to stop jaywalking for good, but in a few weeks, he breaks both legs. On through the years, this conduct continues, accompanied by ... continual promises to be careful or to keep off the streets altogether. Finally, he can no longer work, his wife gets a divorce, and he is held up to ridicule. He tries every known means to get the jaywalking idea out of his head. He shuts himself up in an asylum, hoping to mend his ways. But the day he comes out he races in front of a fire engine, which breaks his back. Such [an individual] would be crazy, wouldn't he?”

~ A ~

While you may wonder how this analogy could apply to you, the authors ask that you consider where your addictions may eventually lead you. For instance, when media addicts use their devices while driving, they willfully put themselves and others at risk.

- “You may think our illustration is too ridiculous. But is it? We, who have been through the wringer, have to admit if we substituted [media addiction] for jaywalking, the illustration would fit exactly. However intelligent we may have been in other respects, where [media] has been involved, we have been strangely insane. It's strong language—but isn't it true? Some of you are thinking: *Yes, what you tell us is true, but it doesn't fully apply. We admit we have some of these symptoms, but we have not gone to the extremes you [people] did, nor are we likely to, for we understand ourselves so well after what you have told us that such things cannot happen again. We have not lost everything in life through [compulsive media usage] and we certainly do not intend to. Thanks for the information.*”
- “That may be true of certain [non-media addicted] people who, though [bingeing] foolishly and heavily at the present time, are able to stop or moderate because their brains and bodies have not been damaged as ours were. But the actual or potential [media addict], with hardly any exception, will be **absolutely unable to stop [compulsively bingeing on media] on the basis of self-knowledge [alone]**. This is a point we wish to emphasize and re-emphasize, to smash home upon our [media addict] readers as it has been revealed to us out of bitter experience.”

~ B ~

This point is our basic message today. That the real media addict will be unable to stop bingeing on media based on self-knowledge and willpower alone. Many of us have studied and learned all about the seductive and addictive qualities of media, but even with this knowledge, we still could not stop.

~ A ~

We hope that we have been able to reach you today and drive home the reality of the hopeless media addict. If you cannot admit your powerlessness over media and that your life has become unmanageable, it will be difficult for you to accept what you need to do to recover from this addiction and to go to the lengths necessary to work the 12 Steps successfully.

Step One

~ B ~

Now let's continue with the First Step.

Step 1 – We admitted we were powerless over media; that our lives had become unmanageable.

Admission is the first action we must take if we genuinely want to recover from our compulsive media behaviors. The Big Book authors devote 51 pages to the first part of this recovery process—which is to admit honestly that we have a problem. We will not be able to accept that we *are* real media addicts if we cannot see the problem and admit it.

~ A ~

Now that we grasp the full meaning of our addiction and of the **First Step**, "*We admitted that we were powerless over media—that our lives had become unmanageable,*" we can introduce the first two principles of the 12 Steps, or the **Principles of Step One**.

The principle of HONESTY leads to the principle of ACCEPTANCE.

- Unless we see reality honestly, we cannot hope to find solutions. While we were under the spell of our addiction, we believed that it was not that bad or that we could stop at any time. Recovery begins when we admit we are media addicts. How can we admit something without being honest? Step One requires this **HONESTY**: We become honest about media and how it affects our lives.
- Once we are honest about our powerlessness against the first compulsive click, it is easier to **ACCEPT** the fact that we are media addicts and that our lives have become unmanageable.
- **ACCEPTANCE** is the beginning of the **SURRENDER** process. It allows us to stop judging our addiction as a moral issue, to *accept the things we cannot change*, and to move into the solution that gives us *the courage to change the things we can*. **HONESTY about our media addiction leads to ACCEPTANCE** of ourselves and of the solution.

Sharing

~ B ~

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

[Stop screen sharing.]

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

Reader 1

Reader 2

Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

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

~ A ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

Thank you for joining us. We hope to see you here next week. The homework assignments we recommend for this week are, and I will post them in the chat: 1) create a Media Withdrawal Plan, 2) fill out the Urge Surfing worksheet, and 3) listen to the qualification by Jane. *[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 1, MEETING 3

MODULE 1, MEETING 3 Homework Assignments

- 1) Create your Media Withdrawal Plan (see worksheet on the www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org homepage under Open Back-to-Basics Step Study, Module One).
- 2) Fill out the Urge Surfing worksheet for practice before you need it. It really helps.
- 3) Listen to qualification by Jane at MAA's Call-in Number 978-990-5099, Access Code 385988#, Reference #7, or you can access it on the MAA website at <https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/there-is-a-solution>, 1/16/2021, "From Media Insanity to Restored to Sanity."

MODULE 1, MEETING 4

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

~ A ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

We will now review what we have learned about media addiction so far:

Media is a mind-altering and mood-altering drug. It is our dope, or our dopamine high, as described by medical professionals. We have a physical allergy to media because of its mood-altering effect on our body. Because we have overused media in the past, this has affected our minds in that we are no longer able to use media with impunity.

~ B ~

In addition to this physical allergy, we have a mental obsession, which means we may be able to stay media sober for a while, but because of our obsession, we will eventually get drunk. We turn to media for **relief, reward, recreation, and relaxation** but then end up with deep **regret** and **remorse**. We have a mental block when it comes to media and are unable to remember how bad the last binge or media blackout was, so we pick up media again without any thought of the consequences to our lives or to the lives of others. Our minds minimize the severity of our addiction, and we revert to the cycle of compulsive, self-destructive behavior.

~ A ~

Media addiction, like alcoholism, is a disease. **It is not a moral issue**. We are not bad people or weak-willed. When we consume media, we have an **allergic response** to it, which triggers the compulsive need to use more and more media.

The solution is a spiritual one. Unless we experience a **complete psychic change**, we cannot hope to become sober nor to stay sober with media.

~ B ~

The 12 Steps of A.A. and MAA offer the solution that allows us to have this psychic change. If we want to be free from our media addiction and to live our lives without self-medicating, we must decide to be **all in**. We must be willing to go to any lengths to achieve this recovery.

~ A ~

“Lack of power is our dilemma,” so we must find a Higher Power. It does not matter who or what we call this Higher Power, but we must have *a power greater than ourselves* that will relieve our **obsession of the mind**, so we can restore our brain back to its true nature.

~ B ~

If this is the first time you are reading the Big Book, you may be wondering how 12-Step programs got started. It all began when one alcoholic in recovery helped another hopeless alcoholic find freedom.

Bill's Story

~ A ~

We will now relate the story of one of A.A.'s cofounders **Bill Wilson** an alcoholic of the hopeless variety. In the 1920s, Bill had a dream of becoming a successful Wall Street stock analyst and making millions in the stock market. When his story begins, Bill is twenty-two years old and returning home from World War I. He believes he is a leader in the making and is optimistic about his prospects. He says, *"My talent for leadership, I imagined, would place me at the head of vast enterprises, which I would manage with the utmost assurance."*

~ B ~

He took courses in law, business, and economics, but he almost did not pass his courses because of his drinking. He quit school to become a Wall Street tycoon. His ideas gained the attention of Wall Street brokers, and he had some early success. The more successful he became, the more he drank, but he was not worried. He writes:

- "For the next few years, fortune threw money and applause my way. I had arrived. My judgment and ideas were followed by many to the tune of paper millions. The great boom of the late twenties was seething and swelling. Drink was taking an important and exhilarating part in my life. Everyone spent in thousands and chattered in millions.... I made a host of fair-weather friends."

~ A ~

After a while, his drinking began to affect his performance and those around him. When his coworkers confronted him, he became defensive. Bill started to isolate himself. He says:

- "My drinking assumed more serious proportions, continuing all day and almost every night. The remonstrances of my friends terminated in a row and I became a lone wolf.... The local banker watched me whirl fat checks in and out of his till with amused skepticism."

~ B ~

Then the unthinkable happened. In October 1929, the stock market crashed, and the rug was pulled out from under Bill. With his fortune lost, he did what he had always done when faced with a problem. He turned to booze for strength and relief.

- "I was finished and so were many friends. The papers reported men jumping to death from the towers of High Finance. That disgusted me. I would not jump. I went back to the bar.... Tomorrow was another day. As I drank, the old fierce determination to win came back."

~ A ~

Bill reached out to a wealthy friend in Canada, who invited Bill and his wife, Lois, to come to live with him. By the next spring, Bill and Lois were living their accustomed lifestyle once again. But his drinking eventually caught up with him, and his friend asked him to leave. He and Lois then went to live at her parents' house.

~ B ~

Bill was not to have any employment nor draw a sober breath for the next five years. His wife had to go to work to provide for them. Not only that but Bill's behavior ostracized him from his friends and coworkers. His ability to manage his life was becoming more and more difficult, but he still believed he could control things.

- "Liquor ceased to be a luxury; it became a necessity.... I began to waken very early in the morning shaking violently.... Nevertheless, I still thought I could control the situation...."

~ A ~

Things looked hopeless for a long time, but then a promising business opportunity came Bill's way.

- "Stocks were at the low point of 1932, and I had somehow formed a group to buy. I was to share generously in the profits."

~ B ~

But before the deal could go through, Bill went on a bender, and the deal dried up. Finally, Bill began to see that something was very wrong.

- "This had to be stopped. I saw I could not take so much as one drink. I was through forever.... My wife happily observed that this time I meant business. And so I did."

~ A ~

Nonetheless, he soon got drunk again with zero thought of the consequences. He says:

- "There had been no fight. Where had been my high resolve? I simply didn't know. It hadn't even come to mind. Someone had pushed a drink my way, and I had taken it. Was I crazy?"

~ B ~

Bill tried many more times, sometimes with more success, but each time he ended up falling back off the wagon.

- "The remorse, horror, and hopelessness of the next morning are unforgettable. The courage to do battle was not there. My brain raced uncontrollably and there was a terrible sense of impending calamity."

~ A ~

He began stealing from his wife to buy booze and even became suicidal. Forty pounds underweight, he was admitted to a hospital to detox his brain. A doctor told him that in alcoholics, the will is weak when it comes to alcohol, though it might remain strong in other aspects of his life.

~ B ~

With this information, Bill believed he now understood himself and his problem. He left the hospital with high hopes and stayed sober for four months. “*Surely,*” he thought, “*this [is] the answer—self-knowledge.*”

~ A ~

But the day came when he drank once more. He returned to the hospital, and the doctor told his wife, Lois, that he would die of heart failure during delirium tremens or develop a wet brain by year's end. They had no more hope for him.

- “It was a devastating blow to my pride. I, who had thought so well of myself and my abilities, of my capacity to surmount obstacles, was cornered at last.... No words can tell of the loneliness and despair I found in that bitter morass of self-pity. Quicksand stretched around me in all directions. I had met my match. I had been overwhelmed. Alcohol was my master.... Trembling, I stepped from the hospital a broken man.”

~ B ~

Bill had finally seen the truth of his condition. He finally admitted he was powerless over drinking, but Bill could not stop drinking on this admission alone. Soon after, he was drunk again, and everyone, even Bill, thought he would die of alcohol poisoning.

~ A ~

However, something miraculous was about to happen. Looking back on this time, Bill relates:

- “How dark it is before the dawn! In reality, that was the beginning of my last debauch. I was soon to be catapulted into what I like to call the **fourth dimension of existence**. I was to know **happiness, peace, and usefulness** in a way of life that is incredibly more wonderful as time passes.”

Bill and Ebby T

Near the end of a bleak November in 1934, an old schoolmate and drinking buddy of Bill's, **Ebby T**, calls him on the phone and asks to drop by. Ebby, who earlier that year had been committed for “*alcoholic insanity*” was, to Bill's surprise, sober. Bill had been drinking all day but hoped to recapture the spirit of their earlier drinking days and invited Ebby to dinner. Bill was not prepared for what he saw. He writes:

- “The door opened and [Ebby] stood there, fresh-skinned and glowing. There was something about his eyes. He was inexplicably different. What had happened?”

~ B ~

Ebby turned down Bill's offer of alcohol, which disappointed him but made him curious. He asked Ebby what was going on. Ebby tells him, “*I've got religion.*” Bill was shocked but he let Ebby continue, because as he writes, “*My gin would last longer than his preaching.*”

~ A ~

However, Ebby doesn't preach to Bill. Instead, he describes a group of people he has recently met, who have found a spiritual solution to many of the world's difficulties, including alcoholism. They had taught Ebby how to recover from his "alcoholic illness" by practicing the **Four Spiritual Activities** (**surrender, sharing, restitution, and continuance in relying on God's guidance**)—activities which later became the foundation of the A.A. program.

~ B ~

Ebby told Bill he was visiting to pass his experience along to Bill if he wanted it. As they talk for hours, Bill remembers how much he had disliked religion as a child and how his grandfather had mild contempt for preachers and church folk.

~ A ~

Bill had to swallow hard while listening to Ebby talk about spiritual things, but he could not help but be curious. There was something in the way Ebby looked and talked that he could not deny.

- "My friend sat before me, and he made the point-blank declaration that God had done for him what he could not do for himself. His human will had failed. Doctors had pronounced him incurable. Society was about to lock him up. Like myself, he had admitted complete defeat. Then he had, in effect, been raised from the dead, suddenly taken from the scrap heap to a level of life better than the best he had ever known! Had this power originated in him? Obviously, it had not. There had been no more power in him than there was in me.... That floored me.... Here was something at work in a human heart that had done the impossible. My ideas about miracles were drastically revised right then. I saw that my friend was much more than inwardly reorganized. He was on a different footing. His roots grasped a new soil."

~ B ~

Yet despite Ebby's living example, Bill still felt vestiges of his old prejudice against God and religion bubble up. Ebby then suggested to Bill, "*Why don't you choose your own conception of God?*"

- "That statement hit me hard. 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.... Thus [I became] convinced that God is concerned with us humans when we want Him enough.... Scales of pride and prejudice fell from my eyes. A new world came into view."

~ A ~

Soon after Ebby's visit, Bill checked into Towns Hospital. Under the care of Dr. Silkworth, Bill underwent alcohol withdrawal for the fourth time. But this time, while in the hospital, Bill applied the *Four Spiritual Activities* to his drinking problem. Bill decided to surrender completely. He writes:

- "**There I humbly offered myself to God, as I then understood Him, to do with me as He would. I placed myself unreservedly under His care and direction.**"

~ B ~

Immediately after his surrender, Bill began sharing his shortcomings with Ebby. Bill writes:

- “My schoolmate visited me, and I fully acquainted him with my problems and deficiencies.... I ruthlessly faced my sins and became willing to have my new-found Friend take them away, root and branch. I have not had a drink since.”

~ A ~

Together Bill and Ebby identified the blocks that were preventing Bill from tapping into this Power that was greater than human power—the Power that would solve his problem. Then Bill learned how to remove these blocks by making **Restitution**.

- “We made a list of people I had hurt or toward whom I felt resentment. I expressed my entire willingness to approach these individuals, admitting my wrong. Never was I to be critical of them. I was to right all such matters, to the utmost of my ability.”

~ B ~

Then Bill learned to get quiet, to listen to the God of his understanding, and to follow **Guidance**. These actions are essential for establishing a two-way relationship with the “*One who has all power.*”

- “I was to test my thinking by the new **God-consciousness** within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense. I was to sit quietly when in doubt, asking only for direction and strength to meet my problems as He would have me.”

~ A ~

Bill learned that, while these concepts are simple, they are not easy—that there was a price to pay. The price? An eradication of self-centeredness and fear.

- “Never was I to pray for myself, except as my requests bore on my usefulness to others. Then only might I expect to receive. But that would be in great measure.”

~ B ~

Ebby tells Bill that as he works through the **Four Spiritual Activities** of **Surrender, Sharing, Restitution, and Guidance**, he will enter a new relationship with his Creator and receive the secrets to a new way of living that would address all his problems. As long as he remained willing, honest, and humble and believed in God's power to remove his desire to drink, Bill would be able to maintain lifelong sobriety, provided he helps others do the same.

- “Particularly was it imperative to work with others as [Ebby] had worked with me. **Faith without works was dead**, he said. And how appallingly true for the alcoholic! For if an alcoholic failed to perfect and enlarge his spiritual life through work and self-sacrifice for others, he could not survive the certain trials and low spots ahead. If he did not work, he would surely drink again, and if he drank, he would surely die. Then faith would be dead indeed. With us, it is just like that.”

Bill's Spiritual Awakening

~ A ~

With Ebby as his guide, Bill took the 12 Steps and had a sudden conversion experience. He had the “*entire psychic change*,” which Dr. Silkworth speaks of in “*The Doctor's Opinion*.” Bill describes the details of his spiritual awakening:

- “These were revolutionary and drastic proposals, but the moment I fully accepted them, the effect was electric. There was a sense of victory, followed by such peace and serenity as I had never known. There was utter confidence. I felt lifted up, as though the great clean wind of a mountain top blew through and through. God comes to most men gradually, but His impact on me was sudden and profound.”

~ B ~

When Bill made this direct contact with the “*Spirit of the Universe*,” he was able to recover from alcoholism. He had learned that alcoholism was a physical and mental illness that only a spiritual solution could conquer.

~ A ~

Dr. Silkworth, Bill's physician, observed dramatic changes in him and encouraged him to continue to work with other alcoholics, for this seemed to be the only way for Bill to achieve long-term sobriety. Dr. Silkworth writes:

- “In late 1934, I attended a patient who, though he had been a competent businessman of good earning capacity, was an alcoholic of a type I had come to regard as hopeless. In the course of his third treatment, he acquired certain ideas concerning a possible means of recovery. As part of his rehabilitation, he commenced to present his conceptions to other alcoholics, impressing upon them that they must do likewise with still others. This has become the basis of a rapidly growing fellowship of these men and their families. This man and over one hundred others appear to have recovered. I personally know scores of cases who were of the type with whom other methods had failed completely.”

~ B ~

Bill had to work with other alcoholics to stay sober himself. With these discoveries, he later developed a plan of action with the help of other alcoholics and the support of his wife Lois, which became the foundation of the A.A. program.

- “My wife and I abandoned ourselves with enthusiasm to the idea of helping other alcoholics to a solution of their problems.... I soon found that when all other measures failed, working with another alcoholic would save the day.... I would be amazingly lifted up and set on my feet....”

~ A ~

Helping others brought purpose and joy back into Bill's life. By helping others, he was helping himself.

- “The joy of living we really have, even under pressure and difficulty. I have seen hundreds of families set their feet on the path that really goes somewhere.... There is scarcely any form of trouble and misery which has not been overcome among us.”

~ B ~

Alcoholics Anonymous, a worldwide organization that has helped millions of people, came about because **one man decided to help another man**. This is the power of what service can do and the power of what God can do for us. Bill writes:

- “Most of us feel we need look no further for Utopia. We have it with us right here and now. Each day my friend’s simple talk in our kitchen multiplies itself in a widening circle of peace on earth and goodwill toward [all humanity].”

~ A ~

This week we highlighted important passages in the Big Book, which we hope helped you in recognizing the plight of the true media addict and the steps we need to take to recover. We hope we have shown you enough evidence to want to proceed on your path to recovery.

Taking the First Step

~ B ~

Like Bill Wilson and Ebby T, it’s time for you to begin to take your journey toward a spiritual awakening that will change your life. Now let’s prepare to take the First Step.

Step 1 – We admitted we were powerless over Media; that our lives had become unmanageable.

This is the first step in the surrender process, but before we can surrender, we must be honest and willing to see the truth of our condition. Once we fully admit that we have a problem with media, **only then can we begin to accept the solution**. The Big Book authors tell us exactly what we must do.

- “We learned that we had to fully concede to our innermost selves that we were [media addicts]. This is the first step in recovery. The delusion that we are like other people, or presently may be, has to be smashed.”

~ A ~

To smash the delusion that you are *not* a media addict, we will ask a simple question: Are you ready to concede to your innermost self that you are powerless over media and that your life has become unmanageable?

Before you answer, let’s pause for **one minute** to ponder this important question: *Are you powerless over media, and has your life become unmanageable?* **[Time for 1 minute.]**

First Step Question. I will now ask again:

Are you ready to concede to your innermost self that you are powerless over media and that your life has become unmanageable?

All that is required is a “yes” or “no” answer. I will go around the room and when I call your name, answer “yes,” if you agree that you are powerless over media and that your life has become unmanageable. If you are not sure, please say, “pass.” **[Stop screen sharing and call on members by name and wait for their answer.]**

~ A ~ (continued)

Thank you everyone! According to the Big Book authors, if you answered “yes” to this question **you have taken Step One, and you have begun the surrender process**. This is a remarkable accomplishment! Please congratulate yourself for taking this important first step. By being honest and admitting our problem, we can begin now to accept the solution.

Sharing

~ B ~

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

[Stop screen sharing.]

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

Reader 1

Reader 2

Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

[Stop the individual 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.]*

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~ B ~

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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 writing on quotes from the Big Book and 2) read them to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of MAA. *[Group Sponsors to copy the homework assignments in the chat by pasting the list below.]*

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

END OF MODULE 1, MEETING 4

MODULE 1, MEETING 4 Homework Assignments

Spend 15 minutes a day, Monday through Friday, writing on quotes from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous and associated questions listed under Module One Assignments, Meeting 4, on our website at www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org under Open Back-to-Basics Step Study on the homepage. When finished, read them to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of MAA.
