

THERE IS A SOLUTION MEETING FORMAT
MONTH 1 BACK-TO-BASICS SPEAKER(S)
Saturday 2:00 pm to 3:30pm ET

Conference Call Number: 978-990-5000

Access code: 385988#

International phone numbers may be found here:

<https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/free-international-calls>.

Moderators, Speakers, and Dashboard Operator: Thank you for your service. Please plan to dial into the conference call 10-15 minutes before the start of the meeting.

Instructions are in italicized, red font here and throughout the document. To ensure the meeting flows smoothly, please familiarize yourself with the script before the meeting starts.

Moderators: Please coordinate with the speakers the order of their qualifications. To make it simple, you could let everyone know you're going in alphabetical order.

Know when the next cycle of Back-to-Basics begins to announce it at the end of the meeting. Before the meeting starts, ask for three members to read (1) The Opening (Set Aside) Prayer, (2) The Steps of Media Addicts Anonymous, 3) The Closing (Third Step) Prayer. Please ask them to be ready by accessing the online script now at <https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/meetings>, under "2:00pm ET There Is a Solution phone meeting," and opening the format for this meeting. Please be prepared to use a timer at appropriate intervals during this meeting.

Also remind each speaker before they qualify to time themselves for 10 minutes. Moderator B should serve as back up timekeeper. Please remind people to **press *6 to unmute** their mics whenever there is a long pause before the next qualifier or before someone is next to ask a question.

Dashboard Operator: (1) Please mute **all** phone lines before the meeting starts by **pressing *5**. (2) After readers are selected and all phone lines are muted, start the recording by **pressing *9**. (3) As soon as the meeting ends, please send the MAA Technology Coordinator the name(s) of today's speakers in the order they spoke. Please check the spelling of their names and include their **last initial**. Thank you.

Touch Tone Phone Commands for Dashboard Operator:

- *2 – get participant count
 - *5 – mass mute of all the participants
 - *6 – only for participants to mute and unmute their microphones
 - *8 – turn off entry and exit tones
 - *9 – start recording and stop recording
-

MODERATOR A

****[Moderator B, be ready to chime in with your name when Moderator A introduces themselves in the second paragraph.]***

Today is (date with year). This meeting is being recorded and will be posted on the Media Addicts Anonymous website at mediaaddictsanonymous.org.

Welcome to our Saturday “*There is a Solution*” meeting of Media Addicts Anonymous, where **two or more speakers, who have completed their first month of Back to Basics**, will share their experience, strength, and hope with those of us who are interested in recovering from media addiction. My name is (Name), and I am (Name Moderator B), and we are media addicts in recovery. We will moderate today’s meeting.

Thank you all for being here and welcome to our fellowship, where we have found a solution to the media problem that really works. So that you may focus and fully absorb our speaker’s message, we ask that you please put down all unnecessary devices.

We have asked (Name) to start us off with the **Set Aside Prayer**.

SET ASIDE PRAYER

God, please help us set aside everything we think we know about ourselves, our problems, our addictions, and about you. We ask that we may have an open mind and an open heart so we might have a new experience with these things. Help us to see the truth, so that we might learn to live our lives on a spiritual basis and be restored to sanity. Amen.

MODERATOR B

Thank you, (Name). We begin our meeting by providing a brief introduction about media addiction as we understand it. Researchers have used two major frameworks to explain media addiction: (1) the Cognitive Behavioral Model and (2) the Addiction Model. The Cognitive Behavioral model focuses on behavioral change only, where the solution is targeted toward modifying habits.

There are three types of media addicts: the moderate user, the heavy user who is desperate enough to change, and the real media addict of the hopeless variety.

Behavioral modification may work for the moderate media user and even the heavy user who is desperate enough, but there is a third type of user for whom behavior modification has little to no effect. This is the media addict of the hopeless variety, also known as a real media addict.

The Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous says (and we will replace references to *alcohol* with *media* so we can hear it from this perspective):

“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] consumption, once [they] start to [binge on it].”

MODERATOR A

Media addiction is an illness of both body and mind, as described by Dr. Silkworth, the physician of A.A. cofounder, Bill Wilson. Here is how Joe M and Charlie P relay Dr. Silkworth's conversation with Bill W in their Big Book study series, known as The Big Book Comes Alive:

The doctor told him, "Bill, I do not believe that [media addiction] is a matter of willpower; I do not believe it is a matter of moral character.... I believe people like you are suffering from an illness, and it seems to be a very peculiar illness. It is two-fold: it's an illness of the body AND an illness of the mind. It seems to me anytime you put any [alcoholic media] whatsoever into your system, it develops an actual physical craving which makes it virtually impossible for you to stop [using] after you have once started."

"You have developed what we refer to as an obsession of the mind. You [get on media], and then you trigger that allergy and are unable to stop. You can't safely [use media] because of your body, you can't stay sober because of your mind; therefore, you've become absolutely powerless over [your alcoholic media]."

MODERATOR B

Basically, an addict of this type is not able to safely use their alcoholic substance, be it food, drugs, gambling, credit cards, or media. They lose the power to stop once they have started. "*Frothy emotional appeal seldom suffices.*" The allergy of the mind and body kicks in for the media addict, and they want more.

While some of us have been able to stop using media for a limited time, the problem is, we can't say stopped. Periods of abstinence give us a semblance of confidence that we have licked this thing, but eventually, we binge again—often even worse than before. After each failed attempt to get sober from media, we feel even more hopeless. Yet, we keep trying to manage our media. Here are some of the things we've tried:

- We got rid of our TVs
- Got rid of cable service
- Unsubscribed from streaming services
- Remove social media and streaming apps from our phones and computers
- Applied black and white settings to our phones
- Set timers for our phone usage
- Blocked websites on our computers
- Only watched on weekends
- Only watched with someone else
- Timed our alcoholic media and bookended our use
- Only browsed titles on social media, streaming services, and news outlets.

These actions might be helpful or workable for moderate media users, but for those of us who are real media addicts, such actions did not address the issues underlying our compulsive media use.

We were under the illusion that we could be normal users. When we believed we might be able to use alcoholic media again, the mental obsession kicked in, and the inevitable slip or binge ensued. We were only complying. We never surrendered.

When we were first confronted with the reality of our media addiction, we didn't want to believe it. We hoped for an easier, softer way. We tried and tried, but eventually we had to become honest with ourselves.

MODERATOR A

In chapter 5 of the Big Book, the authors describe a solution to our addiction and lay out a path to recovery. We will now read How It Works, followed by the Twelve Steps of Media Addicts Anonymous:

“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! Half measures availed us nothing. We stood at the turning point. We asked God's protection and care with complete abandon.”

(Name), would you please read the *12 Steps of Media Addicts Anonymous*?

THE TWELVE STEPS OF MAA

1. We admitted we were powerless over media—that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
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.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to other media addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

MODERATOR B

Thank you, (Name). The Big Book gives us a “design for living,” which removes the need to compulsively use media. Only a spiritual transformation will relieve us from this obsession and the resulting devastation.

We are excited to share with you our solution—a way to be happy, joyous, and free, which does not include using media. Today, we have member(s) who have completed their first month in our Back-to-Basics program who will share their experience, strength, and hope as they recover from media addiction. Everyone will have a chance to ask them a question later, so please grab a pen and paper.

To keep this meeting safe and to avoid triggering addictive media use, we refrain from naming media titles, discussing specific media content, or making reference to current events.

Our speakers today are (list the names of the speakers). Each speaker has 10 minutes for their qualification. Speakers, please time yourselves for 10 minutes. I will now turn it over to our first speaker. Please go ahead, (Name).

[After the first qualification] Thank you (Name of previous speaker). Our next speaker will now qualify. (Name), **please time yourself for 10 minutes.**

[Moderator, please repeat the prior sentence, before each remaining speaker qualifies. If there is a pause when you call on someone's name, please say:] Please press **star-6 (*6)** to unmute your phone.

[Note: If less than four people show up, each speaker may be allotted additional time. Moderator B should serve as backup timekeeper to make sure speakers do not go beyond their allotted time.]

MODERATOR A

[After the speakers qualify:] Thank you (state all the names) for your wonderful qualifications. We now read this passage from the Big Book:

“We have been speaking to you of serious, sometimes tragic things. We have been dealing with [media addiction] in its worst aspect. But we aren’t a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn’t want it. We absolutely insist on enjoying life. We try not to indulge in cynicism over the state of the nations, nor do we carry the world’s troubles on

our shoulders. When we see a [person] sinking into the mire that is [media addiction], we give [them] first aid and place what we have at [their] disposal. For [their] sake, we do recount and almost relive the horrors of our past. But those of us who have tried to shoulder the entire burden and trouble of others find we are soon overcome by them.”

“So, we think cheerfulness and laughter make for usefulness. Outsiders are sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past. But why shouldn't we laugh? We have recovered and have been given the power to help others.”

MODERATOR B

Next, we will proceed with the Seventh Tradition and announcements, after which we will begin our Question and Answer portion of the meeting. Let's now pause for one minute so you may reflect upon ([list the Names of the speakers](#)) message and write your questions. You may begin. *[Moderator: Time for 1 minute of silence.]* That's time. Thank you.

Seventh Tradition and Announcements

MAA has no dues or fees. We are self-supporting through our own contributions. Contributions can be made via credit card, debit card, or PayPal on the MAA website at mediaaddictsanonymous.org/donate. Please give what you can, and if you can give nothing at this time, keep coming back. You are more important than your money.

On the first and third Saturday of the month, this meeting has one or more speakers, who have completed three months, in our Back-to-Basics program. On the second and fourth Saturdays, we have two or more members who have finished their first month of Back to Basics share their experience with fasting from all unnecessary media while working all 12 Steps. Four times a year, on the fifth Saturday, we hold special format meetings.

The Back-to-Basics program is an adjunct structure of MAA, developed to help members to more quickly recover from media addiction. It consists of Big Book Step Studies, designed to allow members to get sober from compulsive media use in a small, stable, and safe group setting. Back-to-Basics Step Study groups meet five times per week, and members fast from all unnecessary media, while completing all Twelve Steps of MAA with the support of a sponsor.

The complete program consists of three four-week cycles. To join a Back-to-Basics Step Study, please submit an online application form at mediaaddictsanonymous.org/intergroups. More details on the program's structure and requirements can be found there.

We also have open Back-to-Basics groups, which meet once a week. Fasting is not required, and participants complete all 12 Steps in about four months. Everyone is welcome to attend, whether you have completed a closed Back-to-Basics program or never participated in one. Details can be found on the MAA website.

Media Addicts Anonymous is a growing 12-Step fellowship, founded in 2020. We hope you have already or will soon decide to join our fellowship, commit to your recovery, and support our meetings. At the end of this meeting, we will stop the recording and share phone numbers for member outreach.

MODERATOR A

Questions and Answers:

We will now open the meeting up to those who have questions for our speakers. If you would like to ask a question, please press ***6 to unmute** your phone and state your name. I will take down some names and will call on you when your turn comes. Please press ***6 again to mute** your phone until I call on you.

*[Moderator: As you gather names from volunteers with questions, please repeat them so they know you heard them to confirm that you heard them. Moderator: This is a time for **questions only**. If people share their experience rather than ask a question or take too long to lead up to their question, please encourage them to be brief, so others may have a chance to participate. And again, if there is a pause when you call on someone to ask their question, please say:]* Please press **star-6 (*6)** to unmute your phone.

Wrap Up at 3:25 ET.

That is all the time we have for questions. Thank you all for joining us today. The opinions expressed here are strictly those of the individuals who shared them. The things we have heard were spoken in confidence and should be treated as confidential. Let there be no gossip or criticism of one another. Rather, let us all reach out to each other with understanding, love, and the spirit of fellowship.

We have asked (**Name**) to close this meeting with the WE version of the **Serenity Prayer**, after which we will stop the recording, welcome newcomers, and share phone numbers.

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

Dashboard Operator: Stop the recording: Press the Record (toggle) button on the online Dashboard or press ***9** if you are on the phone.

Moderator:

- *Ask the speaker if they would like to share their phone number.*
- *Announce: "The next session of Back to Basics starts on Friday, (**date**) with a 90-minute Commitment Meeting."*
- *Ask if there are any newcomers who would like to introduce themselves.*
- *Ask if anyone would like to leave their phone number for outreach.*

Thank you all for joining us today and thank you all for giving service. Have a great weekend!

END OF MEETING

Dashboard Operator:

As soon as the meeting ends, please send the MAA Technology Coordinator the name(s) of today's speakers in the order they spoke. Please check the spelling of their names and include their last initial.