**BACK TO BASICS, “A Design for Living”**

A Closed and Committed 12-Step Study and Media Sobriety Group

**Assignments for Month 1 Week 1 – Step 1**

**SATURDAY AND SUNDAY ACTIONS TO BE DONE BEFORE FIRST MEETING (IF POSSIBLE)**

If you have not completed your pre-commitment assignments, here is a check list below. Please try to have them completed before our first meeting. We realize it may be a lot to do, but without a weekend of media, you will have more time. Having these plans in place will help this month be clear and simpler. You deserve to start on the best footing you can.

1. Listen to the **There is a** **Solution qualification** by MAA cofounder, Cindy.

You can **listen to the recording**:

* **Online** at MAA’s website (<https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/there-is-a-solution>). Scroll down to view a list of recordings by year.
* **By phone** by dialing **978-990-5099** (free) and entering Pin number **385988#**. Enter the reference code **6#**.

**Cindy, Reference #6, “*Looking for God in All the Wrong Places*.”**

1. Make sure you have completed your ***Resistance Worksheet***.
2. Make sure you have completed your ***Fasting Plan***.
3. Please complete your writing on your **media addiction history**.
4. Have fun creating an awesome ***Media Replacement Plan****.* (See more on this MAA Tool below.):

**MAA’s Tool 6: Media Replacement Plan**

Because many of us use media as our main source of **relaxation**, **reward**, and **recreation**, we need to find other activities that bring us joy and fulfillment. When we stop compulsively using media, a void will be created. It will be difficult to obtain long-term sobriety if we don't have a plan to fill this void. Therefore, a *“Media Replacement Plan”* is an important system to create as soon as possible, so we may have enjoyable and healthy activities to replace media. Here are some examples:

A. **Fun, Pleasure, and Relaxation**

We write a list of things we love to do for fun, relaxation, and pleasure, and we post it where we can see it. We share this plan with our sponsor or media sobriety action partner and use these activities daily in place of our electronic media.

B. **Connection and Play**

We schedule time in our week for play and community. We have often used electronic media as a substitute for true recreation and human connection. We become willing to learn how to play and have more fulfilling relationships with others. When we are with others, we turn off our electronic media and focus on our loved ones.

C. **Brain Health Awareness**

We exercise our mind in healthy ways whether through study, moderate reading, journaling, or meaningful conversations. We read things that require thought and effort. We may also take classes or workshops to expand our interests and knowledge. We find ways to keep our minds sharp by memorizing phone numbers, poems, and so on—things people used to do before smart phones were created.

D. **Creativity**

We take time to nourish our own creativity. This may include participating in artistic endeavors, such as writing, visual arts, music, theater, dance, or singing, or in any other creative processes that fulfill us.

1. Create a compassionate ***Media Withdrawal Plan*** using the following MAA Tool as a guide:

**Tool 7: Media Withdrawal Plan**

Media is a mind altering and mood-altering drug. As with any drug, there will be symptoms of withdrawal and detoxification. Withdrawal comes in many forms, such as moodiness, anxiety, lack of sleep, boredom, agitation, and so on. Withdrawal from media addiction is easier when you have a plan and when you have sustained support. Therefore, we suggest the following actions:

1. **Sobriety Action Partner**: Have a Media Sobriety Action Partner you can call on a daily basis.
2. **Ask for Help**: If we are craving our media, we first ask our Higher Power to remove the desire and then we call our sponsor or another MAA member.
3. **Outreach Calls**: Make 2-3 outreach calls to other media addicts each day.
4. **Help Someone Else**: When you are feeling down, reach out to someone you can help.
5. **Track Your Urges**: As we abstain from *“alcoholic media,”* we track our urges to uncover the unconscious aspects of our compulsions. We notice what we are thinking and doing when we have the urge to use our media. In this way, we expose our disease and start to see what makes us vulnerable to using media compulsively.
6. **Surf the Urge**: *Urge Surfing* means feeling the urge but not acting on it. It’s noticing your urges and simply watching them rise and fall like waves, while relaxing and not responding. Urges usually peak after 20-30 minutes. If we can ride out the wave, it will pass. We have found that every time we surf the urge without acting on it, we get better and better at urge surfing. Urges will show up less over time, and they also become weaker.
7. Fill out the ***Urge Surfing Worksheet***. It really helps.

**Weekday Media Fast Writing and Assignments**

***Note****: What follows are daily writing prompts developed from the Big Book of A.A. and the Back-to-Basic meeting script. Please use these prompts to write about your compulsive media addiction and recovery. Call or meet with your sponsor four times a week to read your writings.*

**Day 1 – Read this paragraph and answer the questions below:**

* “If, when you honestly want to, you find you cannot quit your [compulsive media behaviors] entirely, or 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.”

**Question 1**:Do you believe that you are a media addict? If so, why?

**Question 2**: What do you think it means that a spiritual experience will conquer this illness?

**Day 2 – Read these paragraphs and choose one question or more to write on:**

* “Some of us have tried to hold on to our old ideas and the result was nil until we let go absolutely.”

**Question 1**:What do you feel you are still holding onto and what do you think it means to let go absolutely?

* “Lack of power, that was our dilemma.”

 **Question 2**:Where do you feel lack of power when it comes to media?

* “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.”

 **Question 3**:Where do you feel that faith is a part of your make-up?

**Day 3 - Read these paragraphs and choose one question or more to write on:**

* “After they have succumbed to the desire again, as so many do, and the phenomenon of craving develops, they pass through the well-known state 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 little hope of their recovery.”

**Question 1**: Describe your last binge. What were the thoughts and actions leading up to it? Where did you rationalize? Where did you feel the phenomenon of craving?

**Question 2**: How do you believe media addiction has affected your brain and your ability to prioritize your life goals?

* “The fact is that most [media addicts], for reasons yet obscure, have lost the power of choice [to use 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 again the first [click].”

**Question 3**: Where do you feel defenseless against the first click?

**Day 4 – Read these paragraphs and choose one question or more to write on:**

* “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.”

**Question 2**: When and where did you first realize that something was not right about the way you were using media?

* “Thus [I became] convinced that God is concerned with us humans when we want Him enough."

**Question 3**: What does the above sentence mean to you?

* “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 a peace and serenity as I had never known.”

**Question 3**: Have you accepted in your innermost being that you are a media addict? If so, how is this acceptance taking you towards *victory* as well as *peace* and *serenity*?

**Day 5: Friday 1-hour session – Fellowship Friday**

Bring your Resistance Worksheets to Friday’s session.

**Day 6 and 7 – Weekend Actions**

1. Complete any writing or other assignments for this week and read or share them with your sponsor.
2. **Saturday Qualifications Call**: Attend the *Open Back to Basics* (or *There is a Solution*) phone meeting and volunteer to do service (Saturdays at 2 PM Eastern Time).

Free conference line call-in phone number: **978-990-5000** Enter Pin: **385988#**

If you can’t make the live call, you can **listen to the recording**:

* **Online** at MAA’s website (<https://www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org/there-is-a-solution>). Scroll down to view a list of recordings by year.
* **By phone** by dialing **978-990-5099** (free) and entering Pin number **385988#**. Enter **0#** to access the most recent meeting’s recording.

To listen to earlier meeting recordings, enter the playback reference number. The reference numbers are listed on the MAA Solutions Recordings webpage, starting with **6#**. (There are more than 60 recordings now.)

Enjoy this media sober weekend! Reach out to everyone in the group. Remember, we must enjoy our lives no matter what. We must find a way to be satisfied and happy without our addictive media; otherwise, the obsession of the mind will propel us right back to a binge. Optimism and cheerfulness are key. Gratitude is the door that opens to us a world we never could have imagined.