

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

**MODULE FOUR
“Steps 10 through 12”**

MODULE 4, MEETING 1

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

~ A ~

Welcome to the FOURTEENTH session of Before and Beyond 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 Before-and-Beyond-Back-to-Basics meetings offer. We ask that you allow us to see you during the meeting by keeping your camera on.

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

We have already accomplished so much. We have been through Steps One through Nine together, which is quite a feat.

If you have completed the *B2B Eighth Step Worksheet – People We Have Harmed* form and have begun making amends, please state your name and say “yes.” If you haven’t, please say, “I pass.” I will call each of your names as you appear on my screen. *[Stop screen sharing and call on members by screen image layout.]*

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

~ B ~

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

~ A ~

In the Chapter “*More About Alcoholism*,” the Big Book authors make it clear that true media addicts (of the *hopeless variety*) have lost the ability to control their alcoholic media because they lack power.

- “We [media addicts are individuals] who have lost the ability to control our [media consumption]. We know that no real [media addict] ever recovers control. All of us felt at times that we were regaining control, but such intervals—usually brief—were inevitably followed by still less control, which led in time to pitiful and incomprehensible demoralization.”
- “We are convinced that [media addicts] of our type are in the grip of a progressive illness. Over any considerable period, we get worse, never better.... We are like [people] who have lost their legs; they never grow new ones. Despite all we can say, many who are real [media addicts] will not believe they are in that class. By every form of self-deception and experimentation, they will try to prove themselves exceptions to the rule.... If anyone who is showing inability to control [their media usage] can do the right-about-face and [use] like a gentleman, our hats are off to [them]. Heaven knows, we have tried hard enough and long enough to [use media] like other people!”

~ B ~

We reiterate this assertion about our lack of control and power over our media consumption for a reason: At this point in our media fast, some of us may be thinking that once the fast is over, we will be able to resume using our alcoholic media without triggering a binge.

~ A ~

It is normal for real media addicts to hope that one day we can use media with impunity, but this way of thinking is lethal for our recovery. The Big Book authors continue:

- “...Most of us have believed that if we remained sober for a long stretch, we could thereafter [use media] normally. ...We have seen the truth demonstrated again and again: ‘*Once [a media addict], always [media addict].*’ Commencing to [use] after a period of sobriety, we are in a short time as bad as ever. If we are planning to stop [bingeing on our triggering media], there must be no reservation of any kind, nor any lurking notion that someday we will be immune to [media].”

~ B ~

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

~ A ~

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

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

~ B ~

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

~ A ~

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

- “This thought brings us to Step Ten, which suggests we continue to take personal inventory and continue to set right any new mistakes as we go along. We vigorously commenced this way of living as we cleaned up the past. We have entered the world of the Spirit. Our next function is to grow in understanding and effectiveness. This is not an overnight matter. It should continue for our lifetime.”

~ B ~

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

Here, the authors instruct us to remain vigilant for “*selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear*” as we aspire to live by the codes of *tolerance* and *love*. Someone once said, “*What you consume, consumes you. What consumes you, controls your life.*” If we are consumed by fear, self-pity, and anger, it will be nearly impossible to experience *tolerance* and *love*. The authors provide specific directions on how to abide by these codes and rid ourselves of self-centered thinking and behavior.

~ B ~

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

~ A ~

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

- “And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even [media]. For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in [media]. If tempted, we recoil from it as from a hot flame. We react sanely and normally, and we find that this has happened automatically. We will see that our new attitude toward [media] has been given us without any thought or effort on our part. It just comes! That is the miracle of it. We are not fighting it, neither are we avoiding temptation. We feel as though we have been placed in a position of neutrality—safe and protected. We have not even sworn off. Instead, the problem has been removed. It does not exist for us. We are neither cocky nor are we afraid. That is our experience. That is how we react so long as we keep in fit spiritual condition.”

~ B ~

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

- “It is easy to let up on the spiritual program of action and rest on our laurels. We are headed for trouble if we do, for [media] is a subtle foe. We are not cured of [media addiction]. What we really have is a daily reprieve contingent on the maintenance of our spiritual condition. Every day is a day when we must carry the vision of God’s will into all of our activities. ‘*How can I best serve Thee—Thy will (not mine) be done.*’ These are thoughts which must go with us constantly. We can exercise our will power along this line all we wish. It is the proper use of the will.”

Another reward is **God-consciousness**—direct contact with the “*Spirit of the Universe.*”

- “Much has already been said about receiving strength, inspiration, and direction from [our Higher Power] who has all knowledge and power. If we have carefully followed directions, we have begun to sense the flow of [] Spirit into us. To some extent, we have become God-conscious. We have begun to develop this vital sixth sense. But we must go further and that means more action.”

~ A ~

Once again, the authors insist that our lives have already changed. We are now “*conscious*” of the presence of God. As we continue with the recovery process, this “*Power greater than ourselves*” will guide our thoughts and actions and will strengthen our intuition—our “*vital sixth sense.*”

~ B ~

Now that we have made it to Step Ten, we’d like to share another story of an early A.A. member who writes about his daily Tenth Step and about how—upon taking A.A.’s Twelve Steps—he concluded that acceptance was the answer to all his problems. (We will substitute the term *media* for *alcohol* and *MAA* for *A.A.*)

- “If there ever was anyone who came to [MAA] by mistake, it was I. I just didn’t belong here. Never in my wildest moments had it occurred to me that I might like to be a [media addict]. ...Of course, I had problems, all sorts of problems. If you had my problems, you’d [binge on media] too was my feeling.... To this day, I am amazed at how many of my problems—most of which had nothing to do with [media addiction] ... have become manageable or have simply disappeared since I quit [getting drunk on media]....”
- “It helped me a great deal to become convinced that [media addiction] was a disease, not a moral issue; that I had been [bingeing] as a result of a compulsion, even though I had not been aware of the compulsion at the time; and that sobriety was not a matter of willpower. The people of [MAA] had something that looked much better than what I had, but I was afraid to let go of what I had in order to try something new; there was a certain sense of security in the familiar.”
- “After I had been around [MAA] for seven months, ... I was finally able to say, ‘*Okay, God. It is true that I—of all people, strange as it may seem, and even though I didn’t give my permission—really, really am a [media addict] of sorts.*’ And it’s all right with me. When I stopped living in the problem and began living in the answer, the problem went away. From that moment on, I have not had a single compulsion to [get drunk on media].”

- “And acceptance is the answer to *all* my problems today. When I am disturbed, it is because I find some person, place, thing, or situation—some fact of my life—unacceptable to me, and I can find no serenity until I accept that person, place, thing, or situation as being exactly the way it is supposed to be at this moment. Nothing, absolutely nothing, happens in God’s world by mistake. Until I could accept my [media addiction], I could not stay sober; unless I accept life completely on life’s terms, I cannot be happy. I must concentrate not so much on what needs to be changed in the world as on what needs to be changed in me and in my attitudes.”
- “... and acceptance taught me that there is a bit of good in the worst of us and a bit of bad in the best of us; that we are all children of God and we each have a right to be here. When I complain about me or about you, I am complaining about God’s handiwork. I am saying that I know better than God.”
- “For years I was sure the worst thing that could happen to [me] would be that I would turn out to be a [media addict]. Today I find it’s the best thing that has ever happened to me. This proves I don’t know what’s good for me. And if I don’t know what’s good for me, then I don’t know what’s good or bad for you or for anyone....”
- “Before [MAA] I judged myself by my intentions, while the world was judging me by my actions.” ...[M]y serenity is inversely proportional to my expectations. The higher my expectations ... the lower is my serenity. ...I ... [ask] myself, *How important is it, really? How important is it compared to my serenity, my emotional sobriety?* And when I place more value on my serenity and sobriety than on anything else, I can maintain them at a higher level....”
- “... I do whatever is in front of me to be done, and I leave the results up to [God]; however it turns out, that’s God’s will for me. ...[For] my serenity is directly proportional to my level of acceptance. When I remember this, I can see I’ve never had it so good.”

~ A ~

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

God, please help me watch for Selfishness, Dishonesty, Resentment, and Fear. When those crop up in me, help me to immediately ask you to remove them and to discuss these feelings with someone. God, help me to quickly make amends if I have harmed anyone and to resolutely turn my thoughts to someone I can help. Help me to be loving and tolerant of everyone today. AMEN.

~ B ~

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

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

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

Tenth Step Inventory Part 1- Resentment

I am resentful at	The CAUSE	Affect My	Exact Nature of our wrongs*
<small>(People, Place, Institution)</small>	Exact reason why I am angry	<p>SELF –ESTEEM I am... or I should be...</p> <p>PRIDE</p> <p>AMBITIONS I want...</p> <p>SECURITY I need...</p> <p>PERSONAL RELATIONS Men / women are... or men or women should be...</p> <p>SEX RELATIONS my husband / Boyfriend is... or my wife/girlfriend should be...</p> <p>POCKETBOOK</p>	<p>Where was I:</p> <p>SELFISH (attitude)</p> <p>SELF-SEEKING (action / acting on my own behalf)</p> <p>DISHONESTY (what is the story / lie I am telling myself?)</p> <p>AFRAID (frightened/FEAR)</p>
<small>Bottom pg. 44 / Ex. pg. 45 to complete resent. inventory</small>	<small>Bottom pg. 44 / Example pg. 45</small>	<small>pg. 45 / Example pg. 45</small>	<small>page 47 / please read pg. 44 & 47</small>

SICK MAN'S PRAYER "Though we did not like their symptoms and the way these disturbed us, they, like ourselves, were sick too. We asked God to help us show them the same tolerance, pity, and patience that we would cheerfully grant a sick friend. When a person offended we said to ourselves, "This is a sick man. How can I be helpful to him? God save me from being angry. Thy will be done." Pg. 67

*See The Nature of Our Wrongs form for examples

Tenth Step Inventory Part 2- Fear

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

Revised 05/29/23

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

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

What would consideration look like in this situation?

What would faith look like in this situation?

What would generosity look like in this situation?”

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

~ A ~

Now, I will read the **Tenth Step Prayer** out loud. Please close your eyes and listen carefully, so you may feel the Tenth Step in your heart and be ready to answer the Tenth Step question.

God, please help me watch for Selfishness, Dishonesty, Resentment, and Fear. When those crop up in me, help me to immediately ask you to remove them and to discuss these feelings with someone. God, help me to quickly make amends if I have harmed anyone and to resolutely turn my thoughts to someone I can help. Help me to be loving and tolerant of everyone today. AMEN.

~ B ~

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

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

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

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

~ A ~

We will now look at the **PRINCIPLES OF STEP TEN**: “*Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.*”

The principle of **PERSEVERANCE** leads to **TRANSFORMATION**.

PERSEVERANCE is persistence, determination, steadfastness, patience, and diligence. It means to fall down ten times and to get up eleven. We will work the Steps for the rest of our lives, God willing. There will be days we fall short and days we make mistakes. We may sometimes even take a step backward, but in Step Ten, we make the commitment to persist until we succeed. Our goal with step work is “*spiritual progress rather than spiritual perfection.*”

- In our daily prayers, we ask God to do for us what we could not do for ourselves, which means to help us “*to continue to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear.*” When those crop up, we ask God at once to remove them. We discuss them with someone immediately (**CONFESSION**), and we make amends quickly if we have harmed anyone (**INTEGRITY**). Then we resolutely turn our thoughts to someone we can help (**GENEROSITY**). “*Love and tolerance of others is our code.*”
- **DAILY PERSEVERANCE** ultimately leads to **TRANSFORMATION**. Note that there is a difference between *change* and *transformation*. Change is ego-based, while transformation is spiritually based. Transformation is the difference between a caterpillar and a butterfly. Once the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it cannot go back to being a caterpillar.
- In our Twelve-Step program, Steps One through Nine serve as the foundation of our recovery. Step Ten, however, is the step of real transformation. We must persevere if we are to transform into beautiful butterflies, and transformation does not happen overnight. Transformation occurs as we persevere over time when we are not looking. All the Principles of the program are encompassed by the Tenth Step—allowing our Higher Power to transform us, one day at a time if we persevere.

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

Sharing

~ B ~

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

[Stop the screen sharing.]

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

Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

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

~ A ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

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

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

END OF MODULE 4, MEETING 1

MODULE 4, MEETING 1 Homework Assignments

- 1) Fill out the *Tenth Step Short Form* on any selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, or fear you are having this week.

- 2) Fill out the *Tenth Step Long Form* on the same issue to gain a better understanding of your wrongs and more clarity about what needs to be done.

- 3) Read both your *Tenth Step Short Form* and *Long Form* to your sponsor, co-sponsor, action partner, or fellow member of MAA.

MODULE 4, MEETING 2

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

~ A ~

Welcome to the FIFTEENTH session of Before and Beyond 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 Before-and-Beyond-Back-to-Basics meetings offer. We ask that you allow us to see you during the meeting by keeping your camera on.

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

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

~ A ~

This brings us to:

Step 11 –*Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.*

Step Eleven asks us to do three things:

1. To improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power through prayer and meditation,
2. To pray only for knowledge of our Higher Power's will for us, and
3. To be given the power to carry out the will of our Higher Power.

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

~ A ~

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

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

~ B ~

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

- “Step Eleven suggests prayer and meditation. We shouldn’t be shy on this matter of prayer. Better [people] than we are using it constantly. It works, if we have the proper attitude and work at it.”

~ A ~

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

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

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

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

~ A ~

The Big Book authors provide step-by-step instructions on how to stay in conscious contact with our Higher Power. They suggest we conduct regular reviews with our Higher Power—in the morning, at night, and as needed throughout the day. At night, we review the day’s activities and bring these matters to our Higher Power:

- “When we retire at night, we constructively review our day. Were we resentful, selfish, dishonest, or afraid? Do we owe an apology? Have we kept something to ourselves which should be discussed with another person at once? Were we kind and loving toward all? What could we have done better? Were we thinking of ourselves most of the time? Or were we thinking of what we could do for others, of what we could pack into the stream of life?”

~ B ~

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

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

- **What WORKED for me today (or *yesterday* if completing a Morning Review)?**

- How was I loving today?
- Where was I accepting of others or my situation?
- When did I consider others today?
- When did I consider myself?
- Where did I find peace today?
- Where did I use my gifts?
- Where did I have faith?
- What can I celebrate as an accomplishment today?

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

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

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

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

- **What DIDN'T WORK for me today (or *yesterday*)?**

- When did I get stuck today?
- Where did I try to run the show?
- Where or when could I have asked for my Higher Power's help?
- Where could I have been more considerate of others or myself?
- When could I have given more?
- Where could I have allowed myself to receive more?
- When could I have been more appreciative?
- Where could I have been more honest?
- Where could I have been more tolerant?
- Did I feel self-pity today? If so, how can I move into self-compassion?
- Is there anything I must confess today?
- Where can I find peace as I sleep tonight [*or start my day*]?

~ A ~

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

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

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

~ A ~

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

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

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

- “We [media addicts] are undisciplined. So, we let God discipline us in the simple way we have just outlined. But this is not all. There is action and more action. ‘*Faith without works is dead.*’”

~ A ~

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

- “What used to be the hunch or the occasional inspiration gradually becomes a working part of the mind. Being still inexperienced and having just made conscious contact with God, it is not probable that we are going to be inspired at all times. We might pay for this presumption in all sorts of absurd actions and ideas. Nevertheless, we find that our thinking will, as time passes, be more and more on the plane of inspiration. We come to rely upon it.”

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

- “I was to test my thinking by the new God-consciousness within. Common sense would thus become uncommon sense.”

~ B ~

When we ask God for direction and strength, we are calling upon the “*Spirit of the Universe*” for guidance and power to overcome our difficulties. In other words, “*When God guides, God provides.*” Please take a moment to write that sentence down.

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

~ A ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

Now I would like to invite you all to close your eyes and I will lead us in the **Eleventh Step Prayer**. Silently allow these words to seep into your heart and to connect you with your Source of Power.

“God, should I find myself agitated, doubtful, or indecisive today, please give me inspiration and help me to have an intuitive thought or a decision about this problem I face. Higher Power, help me not to struggle. Instead, help me to relax and take it easy. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful that you are running the show. Please free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done, always.”

~ A ~

Let’s now look at the **principles of the Eleventh Step**. Step Eleven: *“Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God as we understood [God], praying only for knowledge of [God’s] will for us and the power to carry that out.”*

The principle of AWARENESS leads to KNOWLEDGE, and the principle of KNOWLEDGE leads to POWER.

- We discovered three Principles in Step Eleven: **AWARENESS**, **KNOWLEDGE**, and **POWER**. The Eleven Step asks that we improve our conscious contact with God through prayer and meditation. *Conscious contact* is a moment-to-moment **AWARENESS**, which allows us to tune in to our Higher Power’s guidance in our daily activities. We are told that a *psychic change* is possible just by being aware of a Higher Power.
- Awareness leads to the principle of **KNOWLEDGE**. The more we stay in daily contact with our Higher Power, the more knowledge we receive regarding how to solve our problems. It becomes clear to us that *“When God guides, God provides.”*
- As the adage goes, *“Knowledge is power.”* Thus, it follows that as we receive more knowledge, our **POWER** grows. This is the power to carry out the will of our Higher Power. It is the power to live our soul’s purpose on a daily basis.

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

Sharing

~ B ~

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

[Stop the screen sharing.]

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

Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

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

~ A ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

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

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

END OF MODULE 4, MEETING 2

MODULE 4, MEETING 2 Homework Assignments

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

“God, should I find myself agitated, doubtful, or indecisive today, please give me inspiration and help me to have an intuitive thought or a decision about this problem I face. Higher Power, help me not to struggle. Instead, help me to relax and take it easy. Help me know what I should do and keep me mindful that you are running the show. Please free me from my bondage of self. Thy will be done, always.”

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

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

MODULE 4, MEETING 3

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

~ A ~

Welcome to the SIXTEENTH session of Before and Beyond 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 Before-and-Beyond-Back-to-Basics meetings offer. We ask that you allow us to see you during the meeting by keeping your camera on.

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ A ~

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

~ B ~

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

Step 12 – "*Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these Steps, we tried to carry this message to other compulsive media addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.*"

Please note that the Twelfth Step has **three objectives**:

- **First:** To experience a spiritual awakening by having taken all eleven Steps.
- **Second:** To carry this message of hope and recovery to other media addicts who still suffer.
- **Third:** To practice the principles of the Twelve Steps in all our affairs.

We will explore each of these three objectives separately.

~ A ~

Objective One – Spiritual Awakening

By taking the first Eleven Steps, we made *conscious contact* with our Higher Power, which led to a *spiritual awakening*. We now find Spirit guiding us in ways that are indeed miraculous. Yet, you may be asking yourself:

- “*Is this true? Have I really had a spiritual awakening? Because I am still struggling in some parts of my program, I am not perfect. Sometimes I feel guided, other times I feel lost. How can I really know that I have had this life-changing spiritual awakening?*”

~ B ~

The Big Book Authors share with us that spiritual experiences, or awakenings, may happen suddenly for some but gradually for others. In *Appendix II of the Big Book*, they write about this “*transformation of thought and attitude.*”

- “The terms ‘*spiritual experience*’ and ‘*spiritual awakening*’ are used many times in this book which, upon careful reading, shows that the personality change sufficient to bring about recovery from [media addiction] has manifested itself among us in many different forms.”

Let's look at the difference between “*spiritual experience*” and “*spiritual awakening*.”

~ A ~

In the first printing of the Big Book in 1939, the Twelfth Step read as follows: “*Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these Steps....*” Bill Wilson wrote this because he had had an intense spiritual experience in Towns Hospital, where he was enveloped in glowing light and love from a Presence he had never encountered before. He believed this was a common occurrence and was possible for everyone. He therefore set out to help other alcoholics to have the same experience.

However, other A.A. members shared with Bill that this was not the norm and that most were experiencing a more gradual form of spiritual consciousness. In the two-year period between the first and second printings of the Big Book, the word “*experience*” was discussed at length, and eventually, it was replaced with “*awakening.*” The Big Book authors made this change to encompass all those whose lives had been transformed more gradually over time.

- “Yet it is true that our first printing gave many readers the impression that these personality changes, or religious experiences, must be in the nature of sudden and spectacular upheavals. Happily, for everyone, this conclusion is erroneous.”

~ B ~

Many of us find this to be the case: We have witnessed our spiritual lives transform gradually rather than immediately. Even though we might not be able to point to a specific experience that brought about this change, our spiritual awakening *has* occurred nonetheless. In our experience, it is impossible for anyone to work all Twelve Steps, **honestly and committedly**, and not ultimately receive the promised spiritual awakening.

~ A ~

Even if you walk through the Steps with either some reluctance or resistance, you still are changed by having completed them. Also, every time we go through the Steps, we allow Spirit to move deeper within us and to effectuate change, and we grow closer to our Creator. Each time we repeat Back to Basics, we peel away more of our layers, which brings us closer to our authentic selves.

~ B ~

As noted, Bill W's rapid conversion experience at Towns Hospital is the exception rather than the rule. However, when our mental obsession is removed and our struggle with media abates, a profound spiritual awakening unfolds—and therein lies the miracle. The Big Book authors describe the more gradual spiritual experience:

- “Among our rapidly growing membership of thousands of alcoholics, such transformations, though frequent, are by no means the rule. Most of our experiences are what the psychologist William James calls the ‘*educational variety*’ because they develop slowly over a period of time. Quite often friends of the newcomer are aware of the difference long before [they are themselves].”
- “[They] finally realize that [they] have undergone a profound alteration in [their] reaction to life; that such a change could hardly have been brought about by [themselves] alone. What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline. With few exceptions, our members find that they have tapped an unsuspected inner resource which they presently identify with their own conception of a Power greater than themselves.”

~ A ~

The Big Book authors invite us to observe whether friends and family have noticed a difference in us. When this happens, it is an indication that something transformative has occurred within, although we may not be able to see it yet. Let's look again at the second sentence in the last paragraph: “*What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline.*” Here, the authors are clear about their observations and expectations: if we take the Steps and help others through them, we will recover within “*a few months.*”

~ B ~

We realize that some of you may have a profound spiritual awakening during the first month, while others might not “*get it*” right away. Nonetheless, you will still experience a gradual spiritual awakening as you go through the process again and again. Even in difficult circumstances, if you do the work, in about 90 days, you will develop a personal relationship with *a God of your own understanding*.

~ A ~

The Big Book authors tell us that the **AWARENESS** of a Power greater than ourselves *IS* in itself a spiritual awakening.

- “Most of us think this awareness of a Power greater than ourselves is the **ESSENCE** of spiritual experience. Our more religious members call it ‘*God-consciousness*.’”

~ B ~

If you have made conscious contact with a *Power greater than yourself* and have started to listen to the guidance from this Higher Power, you in fact have already had a “*psychic change*.” Take a moment and let this sink in: You have taken the Steps, and the result was *spiritual awareness*. You are indeed living a spiritual way of life.

~ A ~

We will now meditate for one minute. In this meditation, please observe how you have begun to experience a life-changing transformation through conscious contact with your Higher Power.

[Time for 1 minute.]

Let's now take two minutes to write down what we have observed in our meditation. Please answer these questions:

- *What changes have come about so far by taking the Steps?*
- *Have you had miracles happen?*
- *What has God done for you that you could not do for yourself?*

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

Thank you all for sharing!

Objective Two – Carrying the Message

~ B ~

Now, let's look at what we must do to maintain our spiritual transformation. Chapter 7 in the Big Book, titled “*Working with Others*,” is devoted entirely to the purpose of carrying the message of recovery to others. It cannot be emphasized enough how important working with others is to our sustained sobriety from media addiction.

- “Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from [bingeing on media] as intensive work with other [media addicts]. It works when other activities fail. This is our twelfth suggestion: *Carry this message to other [media addicts]!* You can help when no one else can. You can secure their confidence when others fail.”

~ A ~

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

- “Life will take on new meaning. To watch people recover, to see them help others, to watch loneliness vanish, to see a fellowship grow up about you, to have a host of friends—this is an experience you must not miss. We know you will not want to miss it. Frequent contact with newcomers and with each other is the bright spot of our lives.”

The Big Book authors provide us with specific instructions on how to carry the message of recovery to others.

- “At first, engage in general conversation. After a while, turn the talk to some phase of [media addiction]. Tell [them] enough about your [media] habits, symptoms, and experiences to encourage [them] to speak of [themselves]. If [they] wish to talk, let [them] do so. You will thus get a better idea of how you ought to proceed. When you discover a prospect for [Media Addicts] Anonymous, find out all you can about [them]. If [they] don't want to stop [compulsively using media], don't waste time trying to persuade [them]. You may spoil a later opportunity.... [Y]our attempt to pass this on ... plays a vital part in your own recovery.”

~ B ~

Never act *holier than thou* or speak to a prospective fellow condescendingly. Treat them with kindness, dignity, and respect:

- “...Never talk down to a [media addict] from any moral or spiritual hilltop; simply lay out the kit of spiritual tools for [their] inspection. Show [them] how they worked with you. Offer [them] friendship and fellowship. Tell [them] that if [they] want to get well, you will do anything to help.”

~ A ~

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

- “Do not be discouraged if your prospect does not respond at once. Search out another [media addict] and try again. You are sure to find someone desperate enough to accept with eagerness what you offer. We find it a waste of time to keep chasing a [person] who cannot or will not work with you. If you leave such a person alone, [they] may soon become convinced that [they] cannot recover by [themselves]. To spend too much time on any one situation is to deny some other [media addict] an opportunity to live and be happy.”

~ B ~

Every addict has excuses for why they cannot stop or why they need to keep using. The Big Book makes it clear that we can recover no matter our circumstances—if we keep the focus on trusting God and cleaning house.

- "... [They may] clamor for this or that, claiming [they] cannot master [their media addiction] until [their] material needs are cared for. Nonsense. Some of us have taken very hard knocks to learn this truth: Job or no job, [spouse or no spouse]—we simply do not stop [being drunk on media] so long as we place dependence upon other people ahead of dependence on God. Burn the idea into the consciousness of every [person] that they can get well regardless of anyone. The only condition is that [they] trust in God and clean house."

~ A ~

Do not allow "*the prospect*" to become overly dependent on you. **You are not their therapist, parent, or Higher Power.** It is critical that they depend on the God of their own understanding rather than on you.

- "...When and how to give ... makes the difference between success and failure. The minute we put our work on a service plane, the [media addict] comes to rely on our assistance rather than upon God."

~ B ~

Always direct your prospective fellows towards a spiritual path of progress, and remarkable things will happen.

- "Both you and the new [person] must walk day by day in the path of spiritual progress. If you persist, remarkable things will happen. When we look back, we realize that the things which came to us when we put ourselves in God's hands were better than anything we could have planned. Follow the dictates of a Higher Power and you will presently live in a new and wonderful world, no matter what your present circumstances!"

~ A ~

Go where you are needed, keep your motives clean, and God will protect you from harm.

- "Your job now is to be at the place where you may be of maximum helpfulness to others, so never hesitate to go anywhere if you can be helpful.... Keep on the firing line of life with these motives and God will keep you unharmed."

~ B ~

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

- "If you have been successful in solving your own domestic problems, tell the newcomer's family how that was accomplished. In this way you can set them on the right track without becoming critical of them. The story of how you and your [partner] settled your difficulties is worth any amount of criticism."

~ A ~

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

- “Assuming we are spiritually fit, we can do all sorts of things [media addicts] are not supposed to do. People have said we must not go where [media is being broadcast]; we must not have it in our homes; we must shun friends who [are compulsively using media]; we must avoid [places] which [are meant to draw us into media]; ...our friends must hide their [media or video games] if we go to their houses; we mustn’t think or be reminded about [our addictive media] at all. Our experience shows that this is not necessarily so. We meet these conditions every day. A [media addict] who cannot meet them, still has a [MEDIA ADDICT’S] MIND; there is something the matter with [their] SPIRITUAL STATUS. [Their] only chance for sobriety would be someplace like the [the Sahara Desert], and even there a [tribesman] might turn up with a [smart phone] and ruin everything!”

~ B ~

We therefore visit places where media is inescapable, but only when we have legitimate social, personal, or business reasons for being there.

- “So our rule is not to avoid a place where there is [media], if we have a legitimate reason for being there.... To a person who has had experience with a [media addict], this may seem like tempting Providence, but it isn’t. You will note that we made an important qualification. Therefore, ask yourself on each occasion, ‘*Have I any good social, business, or personal reason for going [online or using media]? Or am I expecting to STEAL a little vicarious PLEASURE from the atmosphere of such places?*’”

In all situations, please do not try to be more spiritually evolved than you are. Be honest about your motives and exercise discretion in your early sobriety:

- “If you answer these questions satisfactorily, you need have no apprehension. Go or stay away, whichever seems best. But be sure you are on solid spiritual ground before you start and that your motive in [getting on media] is thoroughly good. Do not think of what [kind of hit] you will get out of the [media]. Think of [how you will use it to further your Higher Power’s purpose for you]. But if you are shaky, you had better work with another [media addict] instead!”

~ A ~

Media addiction kept us isolated from others. Now that we are media sober, we want to regain meaningful and authentic human connections. It is therefore important that we spend time with friends and family. We do not shy away from social gatherings, which amplify our joy and boost our sense of belonging. Rather, we are fully present to those around us and do not push our media abstinence on them.

- “Why sit with a long face in places where there is [media], sighing about the good old days. If it is a happy occasion, try to increase the pleasure of those there; if a business occasion, go and attend to your business enthusiastically.... Let your friends know they are not to change their habits on your account. At a proper time and place explain to all your friends why [electronic media] disagrees with you. If you do this thoroughly, few people will ask you to [use media]. While you were [compulsively using media], you were withdrawing from life little by little. Now you are getting back into the social life of this world. Don't start to withdraw again just because your friends [use media].”

~ B ~

The Big Book authors advise us not to get up on our soapbox and preach media sobriety. Being sanctimonious gets us nowhere. Compassion and tolerance are essential to working with others.

- “We are careful never to show intolerance or hatred of [media] as an institution. Experience shows that such an attitude is not helpful to anyone. Every new [media addict] looks for this spirit among us and is immensely relieved when they find we are not witch burners. A spirit of intolerance might repel [media addicts] whose lives could have been saved, had it not been for such stupidity....”
- “Someday we hope that [Media Addicts] Anonymous will help the public to a better realization of the gravity of the [media addiction] problem, but we shall be of little use if our attitude is one of bitterness or hostility. [Undeclared media addicts] will not stand for it. After all, our problems were of our own making. [Smart phones] or other alcoholic media were only a symbol. Besides, we have stopped fighting anybody or anything. We have to!”

~ A ~

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

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

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

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

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

Sharing

~ B ~

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

[Stop screen sharing.]

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

Reader 1
Reader 2
Reader 3

Who else would like to share?

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

~ A ~

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

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

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

~ B ~

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

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

~ B ~ (continued)

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

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

END OF MODULE 4, MEETING 3

MODULE 4, MEETING 3 Homework Assignments

- 1) Complete writing assignment #1 listed under Module Four Assignments, Meeting 3, on our website at www.mediaaddictsanonymous.org under Open Back-to-Basics Step Study on the homepage.
- 2) Complete writing assignment #2.
- 3) Volunteer to sponsor someone in MAA.
