

One-Month Series
BEFORE & BEYOND BACK TO BASICS,
"A Design for Living"
(An Open MAA Intergroup Sponsored Meeting)

MONTH THREE

Steps 4-9

SESSION NINE-Steps 4 and 5 WEEK 1

A

Welcome to the third month and ninth session of "Before & Beyond Back to Basics—A Design for Living" meetings for media addicts. Please put down all non-essential electronic media while participating in these sessions. By focusing on this meeting without distractions you will be able to access the recovery power of what these Back-to-Basics meetings offer. We ask that if you are speaking or reading that you allow us to see you in Zoom.

My name is __A__, and I am ____B____. We are recovered members of Media Addicts Anonymous and we are your Group Sponsors.

We have asked _____ to lead us in the First Step Prayer.

God, Creative Intelligence, Universal Mind, Spirit of Nature, Spirit of the Universe, my name is __ (your name) __ and I am a real media addict ... and I need your help today.

Thank you _____.

B

Most of what we will be reading in this Back-to-Basics group will be taken directly from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In MAA we respect AA's request to read the Big Book as is, changing nothing. Back-to-Basics is a sponsored group. If you were reading the Big Book one-on-one with your sponsor, you probably would be asked to change alcohol to media so you could understand the full impact of how media is just like alcohol. Therefore, as your Group Sponsors, when reading, wherever it mentions terms related to alcoholism, we will often substitute or add media addiction concepts to help us understand how media addiction is similar to alcohol addiction and why our solution is to be found in the

Big Book of AA. To make this format more inclusive, we have also changed the pronouns from third-person singular to third-person plural. These two adjustments are made to serve each individual being sponsored both personally and in this sponsored group as a whole, to obtain as much benefit from the Big Book as possible.

A

So far, we have taken Steps 1-3, learned Two-way Prayer, and begun our 4th and 5th steps. At this point in the 12 Step process, you may be feeling overwhelmed and even a little moody. Okay, maybe a lot moody! We have found that in the recovery process, "The only way out is through." Our self-pity, fears and resentments kept us in the cycle of addiction. The only way to true freedom is to see what has held us back and to be honest with someone else about it. If you have written down your Fourth Step inventory worksheet and shared them with your sponsor (or have made an appointment to share them with your sponsor), please say, 'yes' when I call your name.

B

Congratulations! We commend you for having the willingness, honesty, and open-mindedness to do what is necessary to recover from media addiction. Your willingness to take these Steps guarantees the promised spiritual awakening we have found to be miraculous. If you are ALL-IN, you will absolutely get what you came to Back-to-Basics for. We want to acknowledge your courage. If you are still holding back, still finding resistance, this is normal. But remember the Big Book authors tell us that: "the result was nil until we let go absolutely." Writing our 4th Step inventory brings up the past with memories and feelings that are not unlike attending a funeral. Stay gentle with yourself through this process; do your best to continue soldiering through.

A

Remember that the Big Book authors tell us that when we are conducting an inventory, we look at our assets as well as our liabilities. They tell us that when we are connected to our Higher Power, these assets are automatically within each and every one of us. Therefore, even if we are not aware of our assets in the situation, they are still there. The inventory process helps us let go of our old stories and embrace the natural goodness within us to be honest and kind and to live with purity of Spirit.

B

Let's look at how these assets are antidotes to our problems and how by using our assets, we open ourselves to the “sunlight of the Spirit.” In the last session we listed the liabilities media addicts need to look at for our inventory. Here are the assets that are antidotes to these liabilities.

- The antidotes to Self-pity are **Self-compassion and Working with others**. Self-compassion is nurturing tenderness; the ability to be in pain & difficulty while staying gentle with yourself; working with others is getting outside of self by focusing on others.
- The antidote to Resentment is **Forgiveness**. Forgiveness is a conscious decision to let go of deeply held negative feelings or to stop being angry with someone who has done something wrong.
- The antidote to Fear is **Faith**. Faith is the complete trust or confidence in someone or something.
- The antidote to Selfishness is **Consideration**. Consideration is being conscientious of another person's well-being and showing kindness, thoughtfulness, and sensitivity toward them.
- The antidote to Self-centeredness is **Faith-centeredness or God-centeredness**. We let go of playing God and accept God's plan for us and for others.
- The antidote to Dishonesty is **Honesty**. Honesty is being truthful, straightforward, and ethical.
- The antidote to Pride is **Humility**. Humility is the ability to see yourself and others in a realistic and non-hierarchical way; to feel neither superior nor inferior.
- The antidote for Mistrust is **Trust**. Trust is the firm belief in the reliability, truth, ability, or strength of someone or something.
- The antidote for Envy is **Contentment**. Contentment is the state of being satisfied and pleased with what you have; feeling at ease with the way things are.
- The antidote for Procrastination is **Action**. Action is the process of carrying out a task, especially when dealing with a problem or difficulty.

A

Our liabilities contribute to closing ourselves off from other people and impede our ability to share our gifts to the world and fulfill our Higher Power's plan for us. The overall asset that can be applied to all liabilities is **Generosity**. Generosity is

authentically sharing ourselves with the world and giving all humanity the benefit of the doubt.

B

Now let's read through the long version of a resentment or fear inventory (this is the second 4th step worksheet in your packet). These questions will help you look at your liabilities and the assets you can use to counteract those liabilities. Please fill this out and read it to your sponsor this week. This long-form is meant to be used for resentments or fears that are felt deeply and may be difficult to process and release by using only questions in the graph worksheet alone.

Here is the worksheet. Make sure that you have set aside at least one hour to read this inventory to your sponsor.

A

First, you pick a person or a fear you have on your inventory worksheet and write it down. For instance, "I have a resentment or fear towards John."

PART I

- Why do you resent this person or have this fear?
- What is your reaction when you have this resentment or fear?
- Where do you feel it in your body?
- How has this affected you in your life?
- When were you thinking only of yourself?
- How were you inconsiderate of others?
- How were you inconsiderate of yourself?
- At what point did you feel the fear of losing something or not getting what you want?
- Did you try to play God and be in control? How?
- Where were you dishonest with yourself?
- How were you dishonest with others?
- In this situation, when have you blamed others?
- When have you blamed yourself?
- How did you feel superior?
- Where did you feel shame or low self-esteem?

- When did you feel you wanted something that didn't belong to you? (Where did you envy?)
- When did you procrastinate or avoid taking action?

Here your sponsor or 4th Step Action Partner will ask you this question: “Are you willing to have God remove these **liabilities** and replace them with **assets**?”

If you say, “Yes” then you begin looking at the assets you want to bring into your life. (We will be taking the Sixth and Seventh Steps later this month; this is just making preparation for those steps.)

PART 2

- What would this situation look like if you had faith in God?
- How would this situation look if you had faith in yourself?
- What would this situation be like if you had faith in the other person or institution?
- What would this situation look like if you had consideration for yourself?
- Describe this situation if you had consideration for others?
- Describe this situation if you were not blaming yourself or others?
- How would this situation be different if you were honest and authentic with yourself?
- How would this situation be different if you were honest and authentic with others?
- How would this situation feel if you had humility?
- What would this situation look like if you felt self-esteem?
- What would you see in this situation if you saw yourself and others as equal?
- How would this situation be different if you felt you were worthy?
- How would this situation be different if you saw them as worthy?
- How would this situation be different if you felt acceptance?
- How would this situation be different if you felt the energy and willingness to take action?

- Where can you be generous in this situation?
- How can you give your love and your gifts to others and not hold back?
- Where can you give the gift of "live and let live" to other people?
- Where can you find gratitude for this situation?
- What useful lessons have you learned because of this situation?

Here your sponsor or action partner will ask you:

- Are you willing right now to forgive every person involved in this situation 100% for everything you believe they did to you?
- Are you willing right now to forgive yourself 100% for carrying this resentment or fear?

Then you will discuss with your sponsor or action partner if you have any wrongs to set right and any amends to make to this person or to yourself. (You can also do this for institutions) If you have any questions on this worksheet, we will answer them after the close of this session.

Start now to make your list of amends. We will discuss how to make amends when we get to the 8th and 9th steps. Hold on to this list and your list of liabilities and bring them both to this month's sessions.

B

We look at assets as well as liabilities in our inventory because many of us have lost much of our self-esteem and self-worth as a result of our media addiction. Even though we've done some pretty foolish and destructive things while acting out in our addiction, we will never have to repeat those actions again, provided we are willing to admit our faults and correct them. If we are genuinely sorry, God has already forgiven us. Now, it is time to forgive ourselves. The Big Book authors tell us:

- "If we are sorry for what we have done, and have the honest desire to let God take us to better things, we believe we will be forgiven and will have learned our lesson. If we are not sorry, and our conduct continues to harm others, we are quite sure to [use again]. We are not theorizing. These are facts out of our experience."

It is also our experience that if we don't forgive ourselves, we are liable to use again. Any time we can't forgive ourselves, we know we are not trusting in our Higher Power and we are in danger of losing our sobriety. We must pray and ask

our Higher Power to help us forgive ourselves for any wrongs we have committed.

A

Now that we are committed to doing whatever it takes to recover from media addiction, we live our lives following a different kind of code; the code of tolerance, patience, kindness, and love. We look to see where others are wounded and hurting too. We show empathy. We look for ways we can help others rather than seek revenge. Our Higher Power will aid us in this new way of living and thinking if we sincerely ask.

B

Let's continue now to see what the Big Book tells us about Step 5.

Step 5 — Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.

In taking the Fifth Step, we are told that we need to share our inventory not only with ourselves and our Higher Power but also with another human being. This action is essential for our recovery, for by sharing “the exact nature of our wrongs” with another person, we find a new kind of relief that turning to media never gave us. The Big Book authors make it clear that if we don't share our wrongs with another flesh and blood person, we may get media drunk again.

- “We think we have done well enough in admitting these things to ourselves...In actual practice, we usually find a solitary self-appraisal insufficient. Many of us thought it necessary to go much further...If we skip this vital step, we may not overcome [media addiction]. Time after time newcomers have tried to keep to themselves certain facts about their lives. Trying to avoid this humbling experience...almost invariably they got drunk.”

A

When we confessed our resentments and fears to another person, we became aware of the shortcomings that had been blocking us from the “sunlight of the Spirit.” The Big Book authors announce that, once we admit our shortcomings, our lives begin to change. We start to experience a “transformation of thought and attitude.”

- “Once we have taken this step, withholding nothing, we are delighted. We can look the world in the eye. We can be alone at perfect peace and ease. Our fears fall from us. We begin to feel the nearness of our Creator. We may have had certain spiritual beliefs, but now we begin to have a spiritual

experience. The feeling that the [media] problem has disappeared will often come strongly. We feel we are on the Broad Highway, walking hand in hand with the Spirit of the Universe.”

B

Those of us who have given away our Fourth Step can attest to this perfect peace and greater closeness to our Higher Power and to others. Every time we share our Fourth Step inventory with someone else, we begin to release the guilt, shame, and things that hold us back from manifesting the life purpose our Higher Power would have for us.

A

We discover that we are not alone as we identify with others and find freedom. Through SHARING we are in the process of having a spiritual experience, and as a result, our need to compulsively use media is being removed.

B

But there is one more action we need to take with our Fourth Step. After giving our Fourth Step to another person, the Big Book authors ask us to pause and reflect. This is something we should not overlook if we are to be ready to continue with the rest of the steps:

- “Returning home we find a place where we can be quiet for an hour, carefully reviewing what we have done. We thank [our Higher Power] from the bottom of our heart... Taking [the Big Book] down from our shelf we turn to the page which contains the twelve steps. Carefully reading the first five proposals we ask if we have omitted anything... Is our work solid so far?”

Please make time after meeting with your sponsor to follow the instructions from the paragraph above.

A

So, continue making a searching and fearless moral inventory using the worksheet above. We are in the process of cleaning up the wreckage of the past so we can experience the “miracle of healing,” and a joyous and abundant future.

We will complete our session today by looking at the principles of Step Five. Step 5: “Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.” The principle of CONFESSION leads to the principle of FREEDOM.

- Once we have honestly looked at our liabilities, we must not keep it to ourselves; to do so would be to fall back into our addiction. We had to find

more COURAGE and more CLARITY. We did this through the time-honored practice of CONFESSION. When we confess our fears, resentments, and character liabilities to another person, we are acknowledging the values and principles we wish to live by. CONFESSION allows us to release the guilt, shame, and self-limiting beliefs that plagued us and made us turn to media for relief instead of our Higher Power or real people. CONFESSION ultimately leads to FREEDOM. With CONFESSION comes true relief, a kind of long-lasting relief that media, in all its seductive programming will never deliver. Media addiction controlled our minds. CONFESSION frees our minds. CONFESSION is the crucial next action after embracing the principles of COURAGE and CLARITY. CONFESSION is essential if we have a slip. We want to confess this to someone as soon as possible so we don't act out more. CONFESSION brings us daily FREEDOM.

Thank you all for reading today. Next session we will be taking Steps Six and Seven.

B

Sharing

We will now open up the room for sharing for 3 minutes each. We will begin with our three readers in the order they read and then I will take more names. (A will keep time)

Reader 1 _____ Reader 2 _____ Reader 3 _____

(Share until 7:40 AM)

A

That is all the time for sharing we have today.

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 at mediaaddictsanonymous.org.

Contributions can be made via PayPal on the MAA website. Please consider donating as we are a new group and need your support. (Repeat website)

Right now Media Addicts Anonymous has daily open meetings. You will find that information on the MAA website.

Before we close the meeting, we encourage you to exchange names for outreach. If you want to contact someone you heard on today's meeting or are looking for a sponsor or media sobriety partner, please use the chat room to connect with other members.

Closing:

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

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.

Are there any questions about Before & Beyond Back-to-Basics or MAA?

(A & B field questions)

Week 2 Month 3

STEPS 6 & 7

A

Welcome to the third month and 10th session of "Before & Beyond Back to Basics—A Design for Living" meetings for media addicts. Please put down all non-essential electronic media while participating in these sessions. By focusing on this meeting without distractions you will be able to access the recovery power of what these Back-to-Basics meetings offer. We ask that if you are speaking or reading that you allow us to see you in Zoom.

My name is __A__, and I am ____B____. We are recovered members of Media Addicts Anonymous and we are your Group Sponsors..

We have asked ____ to lead us in the Set Aside Prayer.

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

Thank you _____.

B

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A

Before we move on to the 6th Step, let's consider the five Steps we have taken so far and ask ourselves if we have taken them sincerely and thoroughly, or if there is something we may have omitted:

1. We admitted we were powerless over Media—that our lives had become unmanageable.
 - Have I gotten really honest about my media addiction? Am I now able to accept that my life is unmanageable when I compulsively use alcoholic media? Am I able to see that I have an allergy of the body and an obsession of the mind when it comes to media? Am I able to see that only by completely abstaining from any triggering and alcoholic media will I truly be able to recover from media addiction? Have I let go of my defiance?

B

2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
 - Have I found faith in a Higher Power? Am I beginning to believe that this Higher Power is restoring me to sanity? Have I let go of my defiance?

A

3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood God.
 - Have I made a decision to be faithful to a Higher Power rather than faithful to my media addiction? Am I willing to turn my will and my life over to the God of my understanding? Am I willing to look for guidance from this Source rather than look for relief from media? Have I let go of my defiance?

B

4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
 - Have I shown courage as I reflected on past resentments, fears, and behaviors? Have I been thorough in searching for anything in the past that has led to my present unhappiness? Have I begun to find the clarity needed to see the way out of my suffering and misery? Have I let go of my defiance?

A

5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
 - Was I able to honestly confess my liabilities to my sponsor? Did I find relief in doing so? Did this process bring me freedom from guilt and shame? Did I omit anything? If so, am I willing to confess this too? Have I let go of my defiance?

B

You will notice that the last question in every paragraph above is: "Have I let go of my defiance?" Defiance is the number one trait of all media addicts. Until we are willing to do whatever it takes to recover and let go of our defiance, we cannot hope to find a way out from this baffling mental and physical illness of media addiction.

A

We will now pause for one minute to meditate on these questions and consider how our program is going so far. **[Time for 1 minute]**

Having taken the first five Steps to the best of our ability, we have made a good beginning. More actions are required if we really want to be rid of our media addiction.

B

These actions produce results. Many of these results are in the form of promises which, as our lives change, become an integral part of our spiritual being.

A

Step 6 -- *Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.* In this Step, the Big Book authors have us answer a simple question:

- "Are we now ready to let God remove from us all the things which we have admitted are objectionable? Can [your Higher Power] now take them all—every one?"

At first glance, Step Six seems like a piece of cake. Of course we want all our defects of character removed; we are tired of suffering.

B

We must pause, however, and look at the word "entirely." This word means completely, 100%, totally, absolutely. It's important to pause and see if you are entirely ready to have your liabilities removed. We don't want to proceed if we are merely giving lip service to this Step. Let's take another look at our list of liabilities.

- **Self-pity** (excessive, self-absorbed unhappiness over one's own troubles)
- **Resentment** (the consequence of being angry or bitter toward someone for an extended period of time)
- **Fear** (the fear of losing something you have or not getting what you want)
- **Selfishness** (concern only for ourselves and our own welfare or pleasure without regard for others)
- **Self-centeredness** (making ourselves the center of the universe, wanting to control and play God)
- **Dishonesty** (involves deception, cheating, lying, stealing or withholding the truth)
- **Pride** [feelings of being better than (grandiosity, superiority, know it all) or less than (shame, unworthiness, low self-esteem)]

- **Mistrust** (jealousy that has to do with suspicion, distrusting other's motives, or doubting the faithfulness of a friend)
- **Envy** (the desire to have a quality, possession, or other desirable attribute belonging to someone else)
- **Procrastination** (putting off work or not following through with right actions)

A

Observe how these defects of character have affected your life and the lives of others. Take a moment to reflect. Are there still defects you want to hold on to?

[Pause for 30 seconds]

B

We stated in our first session that we are not saints; rather we are people who are willing to live life on a spiritual basis. Therefore, we seek spiritual progress not spiritual perfection.

A

If you cannot say that you are entirely ready to have God remove a defect of character, the Big Book authors ask if you would ask the God of your understanding to help you be willing. "If we still cling to something we will not let go, we ask God to help us be willing."

B

Sometimes giving up a resentment feels impossible. We have built our life story and our whole identity on a wrong we feel has been committed against us. This is where we must ask for willingness and more willingness and, of course, use our Higher Power to guide us and give us the clarity and action to find forgiveness. One early AA member tells of how she became willing to release her resentments:

- "Self-pity and resentment were my constant companions, and my inventory began to look like a thirty-three-year diary, for I seemed to have a resentment against everybody I had ever known. All but one 'responded to the treatment' suggested in the steps immediately, but this one posed a problem. This resentment was against my mother, and it was twenty-five years old. I had fed it, fanned it, and nurtured it... It had provided me with excuses for my lack of education, my marital failures, ... inadequacy, and of course, my [media addiction]... I was reluctant to let it go... In my prayers [one] morning I asked God to point out to me some way to be free of this resentment."

A

God answered her prayers by an article she read in a magazine that day. A prominent clergyman wrote that if you wanted to be free of a resentment, pray for the person you resent.

- "Ask for their health, their prosperity, their happiness, and you will be free. Even when you don't really want it for them... Do it every day for two weeks and...you will realize that where you used to feel bitterness, resentment, and hatred, you now

feel compassionate understanding and love. It worked for me then, and it has worked for me many times since, and it will work for me every time I am willing to work it."

B

The spiritual teacher Emmet Fox said:

- "Bless a thing and it will bless you. Curse it and it will curse you...If you bless a situation, it has no power to hurt you, and even if it is troublesome for a time, it will gradually fade out, if you sincerely bless it."

This passage in the Big Book and this quote teaches us that what we give out comes back to us. If we bless others and bless our own troubles, we can no longer be hurt by these things. It is when we fight and struggle with our way of doing things and the need to be right, we actually lose the blessings we seek. Resentment is a poison we think we are sending out to harm someone else, but ultimately we are the ones poisoned by it. It is not easy letting go of resentments, but if we take action through prayer and include our Higher Power in this process, miracles will happen.

A

According to the Big Book authors, it is decision time once again. During the Fourth and Fifth Steps, we identified our liabilities using the assets and liabilities checklist that we discussed last session. In the Sixth Step, we are thoroughly preparing ourselves to turn these shortcomings over to the God of our understanding.

B

We need to approach this Step with honesty and sincerity, otherwise we will just be going through the motions. If we are still holding on to some of our shortcomings, we need to pray for the willingness to let them go.

A

In order to do this, we will pause to meditate and pray—to ask God for the willingness to remove the liabilities we still want to hold on to. We can also ask God to remove our desire for triggering media and to lift the obsession of the mind. Are you willing to ask for these things to be removed? We will come back after 1 minute of silence.

[Time for 1 minute]

Now, it is time to answer the Sixth Step question:

"Are [you] now ready to let God remove from [you] all the things which [you] have admitted are objectionable?" If so, please say "yes" when I call your name.

Thank you.

According to the Big Book authors, if you answered "yes" to this question you have completed the Sixth Step and are ready to proceed to Step Seven.

B

Before we move on to Step Seven, let's look at the new principles from step 6 by which we want to begin to live. "Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character." The principle of WILLINGNESS leads to SURRENDER! Could this be true? Could we finally really surrender?

- In taking Step Six, we said to our Creator: "I am willing that you should have all of me, good and bad." WILLINGNESS is letting go of the reluctance to move forward. WILLINGNESS is being open to doing something we have never done before. It is a byproduct of FAITH. Once we come to believe, we can then show our FAITHFULNESS to God's will for us, by being WILLING. Being entirely ready, we are all in. We are willing to go to any lengths for recovery. Willing to go to any lengths to live life on life's terms. Willing to go to any lengths to live God's purpose for us. The WILLINGNESS prepares us for more WILLINGNESS in Step Eight. WILLINGNESS leads to SURRENDER. We SURRENDER our defects to God. By doing so, we give up the attachments to our liabilities. In the past we may have believed that to SURRENDER would mean defeat, but actually it means victory over the unmanageability of our disease. In the past we were compliant and tried to manage our liabilities to please God and others. When we SURRENDER, we allow our Higher Power to have all of us, both good and bad, and to mold us into what God would have us be.

A

Let's now look at **Step 7 -- Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings**. This Step is straightforward. It consists of a prayer in which we ask God to remove our liabilities and strengthen our assets so we can be of maximum service to all. This prayer is found in the second paragraph on page 76:

- "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 out from here, to do your bidding. Amen."

B

This prayer is so important that we should take a moment to unpack its meaning.

- It begins with "My Creator". This is a recognition that, no matter what we believe about ourselves, each of us emanate from a divine source and this means that we have the qualities of this divine creative source within us.
- "I am now willing that you should have all of me, good and bad". The next part of this prayer is our willingness to be loved by our Higher Power completely, to be vulnerable and authentic by saying that God can now have all of us, just as we would give ourselves wholly to a trusted friend or partner—warts and all. We recognize in this prayer that we have within us assets as well as liabilities.
- "I pray that you now remove from me every single defect of character." We then pray to have every single defect of character removed. Character has to do with

our personality, temperament, mentality, habits, etc. "Defect" means imperfection, weakness, limitation, shortcoming, etc.

- "Remove from me every single defect of character which stands in the way of my usefulness to you and my fellows". We ask for all defects of character be removed which stand in the way of our usefulness to God and to our fellows.
- What the Big Book authors are reminding us is that our defects of character are not removed for self-centered reasons— just to make us look or feel better. They are removed because this is how we can best serve God and our fellows.
- "Grant me strength as I go out from here." The last part of this prayer is to ask for strength going forward. We let go of yesterday and ask for the strength to go out from where we stand right now. "...to do your bidding." This is followed with the desire to follow God's guidance. Earlier, when we took the Third Step, we decided to have a new director in our movie of life. In allowing our Higher Power this role, we ask for continual guidance to do our Higher Power's will.

A

If you are ready to take the Seventh Step, please read the prayer out loud. I will begin, **B** will go second and then we will go around the room. *[Go around the room and each person reads.]*

"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 out from here, to do your bidding. Amen."

Congratulations! According to the Big Book authors, you have taken Step Seven!

B

We will finish this session by looking at the principles of Step Seven: "Humbly asked [God] to remove our shortcomings." The principle of HUMILITY leads to the principle of UNITY.

- HUMILITY is the ability to see yourself and others in a realistic and non-hierarchical way; to feel neither superior nor inferior. HUMILITY is one of the simplest principles to understand because it's straightforward. When you're humble, you can see that there is both good and bad in every person. HUMILITY allows us to let go of the guilt and shame that held us back. HUMILITY opens us to more solutions because we are willing to be rightsized and listen to those who have come before us and have found freedom. It doesn't matter who you are or where you come from; media addiction is the great equalizer. HUMILITY is owning our shortcomings because we can't change what we can't see. HUMILITY leads to UNITY because HUMILITY unifies us with the human race and is the first step in truly belonging. UNITY with other addicts allows us to be just another Bozo on the bus trying to find our way home. HUMILITY and UNITY are the prerequisites for Step 8 and Principle #8.

Sharing

We will now open up the room for sharing for 3 minutes each. We will begin with our three readers in the order they read and then I will take more names. (A will keep time)

Reader 1 _____ Reader 2 _____ Reader 3 _____

(Share until 7:40 AM)

A

That is all the time for sharing we have today.

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 at mediaaddictsanonymous.org.

Contributions can be made via PayPal on the MAA website. Please consider donating as we are a new group and need your support. (Repeat website)

Right now Media Addicts Anonymous has daily open meetings. You will find that information on the MAA website.

Before we close the meeting, we encourage you to exchange names for outreach. If you want to contact someone you heard on today's meeting or are looking for a sponsor or media sobriety partner, please use the chat room to connect with other members.

Closing:

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

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.

Are there any questions about Before & Beyond Back-to-Basics or MAA?

(A & B field questions)

END OF MEETING

WEEK THREE/MONTH THREE

Please ask a member to lead the group in the Seventh Step Prayer

STEPS 8 & 9

A

Welcome to the third month and 11th session of "Before & Beyond Back to Basics—A Design for Living" meetings for media addicts. Please put down all non-essential electronic media while participating in these sessions. By focusing

on this meeting without distractions you will be able to access the recovery power of what these Back-to-Basics meetings offer. We ask that if you are speaking or reading that you allow us to see you in Zoom.

My name is __A__, and I am ____B____. We are recovered members of Media Addicts Anonymous and we are your Group Sponsors..

We have asked _____ to lead us in the Seventh Step Prayer.

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 out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.

Thank you _____.

B

Most of what we will be reading in this Back-to-Basics group will be taken directly from the Big Book of Alcoholics Anonymous. In MAA we respect AA's request to read the Big Book as is, changing nothing. Back-to-Basics is a sponsored group. If you were reading the Big Book one-on-one with your sponsor, you probably would be asked to change alcohol to media so you could understand the full impact of how media is just like alcohol. Therefore, as your Group Sponsors, when reading, wherever it mentions terms related to alcoholism, we will often substitute or add media addiction concepts to help us understand how media addiction is similar to alcohol addiction and why our solution is to be found in the Big Book of AA. To make this format more inclusive, we have also changed the pronouns from third-person singular to third-person plural. These two adjustments are made to serve each individual being sponsored both personally and in this sponsored group as a whole, to obtain as much benefit from the Big Book as possible.

A

Now that we have taken Steps Six and Seven, we will move on to Steps Eight and Nine. In the Big Book Chapter 2, "There is a Solution," the authors remind us that we have been sick with media addiction and this illness has not only affected us, but also our family, friends, employers, children, and loved ones.

- "An illness of this sort—and we have come to believe it an illness—involves those about us in a way no other human sickness can. If a person has cancer all are sorry for [them] and no one is angry or hurt. But not with the [media addict's] illness, for with it there goes annihilation of all the things worthwhile in life. It engulfs all

whose lives touch the sufferer's. It brings misunderstanding, fierce resentment, financial insecurity, disgusted friends and employers, warped lives of blameless children, sad [spouses] and parents—anyone can increase the list."

B

So now, we must make an honest attempt to clear away the wreckage of our past. We do this by making amends or restitution.

Step 8 -- *Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.* The Big Book authors state, "Made a list." Remember we began to compile our list as part of our Fourth Step. It is time now to take action.

- "Now we need more action, without which we find that, 'Faith without works is dead.' Let's look at Steps Eight and Nine. We have a list of all persons we have harmed and to whom we are willing to make amends. We made it when we took inventory."

A

That's why we hold on to our Fourth Step inventory. It contains our Eighth Step amends list. Referring to the assets and liabilities checklist, go through and find the places where you were at fault and where you need to make an amends. For instance, were you unwilling to forgive someone who you believe harmed you? Our resentment inventory lists all the hurts others have done us. Most addicts see themselves as victims.

B

When we step into recovery, we stop being a victim, for we have found that victims never recover. We start to become responsible for everything that ever happened to us and our part in it. We start to see our parents as doing the best they could. We see that we were doing the best we could. If we are to let ourselves off the hook, we must also let others be forgiven.

A

On the MAA website in our Open Back-to-Basics page there is a worksheet entitled: "People We Have Harmed." Please copy this document and fill this list out as thoroughly as you can by next week. You will be sharing this list with your sponsor (or Step Action Partner) before our next meeting.

B

In addition to our inventory, we must also get honest with how we have harmed others through our media addiction. Merely staying sober with media is not enough. The Big Book authors tell us:

- "Sometimes we hear [a media addict] say that the only thing [they need] to do is to keep sober. Certainly [they] must keep sober, for there will be no [progress] if [they don't]. But [they are] yet a long way from making good to [their partners, children, friends, employers] or parents whom for years [they have] so shockingly treated...The [media addict] is like a tornado roaring [their] way through the lives of others. Hearts are broken. Sweet relationships are dead. Affections have been uprooted. Selfish and inconsiderate habits have kept the home in turmoil. We feel a [person] is unthinking when [they say] that sobriety is enough."

A

With this understanding in mind, we are going to spend a few minutes today looking at where our media addiction has affected other people. Please think about the answers to the following questions (as part of your homework this week please write out your answers):

- Where have you used media to avoid getting close to someone else? Who was hurt by this?
- Where have you used media to fight with someone? Who was hurt by this?
- Where have you used media to gossip or destroy someone else's reputation? Who was hurt by this?
- Where have you used media to avoid not working for your boss (include yourself if you are self-employed)? Who was hurt by this?
- Where have you used media to avoid helping and giving service to others? Who was hurt by this?
- Where have you used media to avoid seeking help from your Higher Power? Who was hurt by this?
- Where have you used media to avoid your own feelings? Who was hurt by this?
- Where have you used media to avoid being in your body and in nature? Who was hurt by this?

Remember to fill out your "People We Have Harmed" worksheet before next week's session so you can answer "yes" to taking Step Eight. We will now prepare you to take Step Nine.

B

Step 9 -- ***Made direct amends to such people, wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.*** The amends process is explained in detail on pages 76 through 83.

- "Now we go out to our fellows and repair the damage done in the past. We attempt to sweep away the debris which has accumulated out of our effort to live on self-will and run the show ourselves. If we haven't the will to do this, we ask until it comes. Remember it was agreed at the beginning *we would go to any lengths for victory over alcohol.*" (or in our case, *media addiction*)

A

We may be hesitant to make amends to those who are still upset with us or suspicious of our motives. The authors provide us with guidelines on how to approach these individuals:

- "Probably there are still some misgivings. As we look over the list of business acquaintances and friends we have hurt, we may feel diffident about going to some of them on a spiritual basis... To some people we need not, and probably should not emphasize the spiritual feature on our first approach. We might prejudice them. At the moment we are trying to put our lives in order. But this is not an end in itself. Our real purpose is to fit ourselves to be of maximum service to God and the people about us."

B

In that last sentence, the authors clearly state our purpose for living. They tell us why we are here—to serve God and our fellows. Then they ask us to let our actions, rather than our words, demonstrate to others that we have changed.

- "It is seldom wise to approach an individual, who still smarts from our injustice to [them], and announce that we have gone religious. In the prize ring, this would be called leading with the chin. Why lay ourselves open to being branded fanatics or religious bores? We may kill a future opportunity to carry a beneficial message. But our [acquaintances and friends are] sure to be impressed with a sincere desire to set right the wrong. [They are] going to be more interested in a demonstration of good will than in our talk of spiritual discoveries."

A

One of the most difficult amends to make is to someone we genuinely don't like. But whether we like the person or not, we must proceed.

- "Nevertheless, with a person we dislike, we take the bit in our teeth. It is harder to go to an enemy than to a friend, but we find it much more beneficial to us. We go to [them] in a helpful and forgiving spirit, confessing our former ill feeling and expressing our regret."

The Big Book authors even provide us with instructions on what to say.

- "Under no condition do we criticize such a person or argue. Simply we tell [them] that we will never get over [media addiction] until we have done our utmost to straighten out the past. We are there to sweep off our side of the street, realizing that nothing worthwhile can be accomplished until we do so, never trying to tell [them] what [they] should do. [Their] faults are not discussed. We stick to our own. If our manner is calm, frank, and open, we will be gratified with the result."

B

The authors make it clear what we are to do about our debts, which is to pay them. This process encourages us to rely on God for the strength and courage to make good on our "past misdeeds."

- "Most [media addicts] owe money. We do not dodge our creditors... Arranging the best deal we can, we let these people know we are sorry. Our [media addiction] has made us slow to pay. We must lose our fear of creditors no matter how far we have to go, for we are liable to [compulsively use media again] if we are afraid to face them."

Keep in mind that courage is not the absence of fear. Courage is facing the fear and walking through it.

The Big Book authors instruct us to let the God of our understanding be our guide. This reliance upon God is essential, if we are to outgrow the fears that have separated us from the "One who has all power."

- "Although these reparations take innumerable forms, there are some general principles which we find guiding. Reminding ourselves that we have decided to go to any lengths to find a spiritual experience, we ask that we be given strength and direction to do the right thing, no matter what the personal consequences may be. We may lose our position or reputation or face jail, but we are willing. We have to be. We must not shrink at anything."

A

We are advised to be very conscientious of how we are making amends. We may need to make sure that we are not hurting anyone else or implicating anyone else. The more serious the situation the more we seek our Higher Power's help.

- "Before taking drastic action which might implicate other people, we secure their consent. If we have obtained permission, have consulted with others, asked [our Higher Power] to help, and the drastic step is indicated, we must not shrink. Perhaps there are some cases where the utmost frankness is demanded. No outsider can appraise such an intimate situation. It may be that both will decide that the way of

good sense and loving kindness is to let by-gones be by-gones. Each might pray about it, having the other one's happiness uppermost in mind."

Media addiction in the form of pornography, dating, and hook-up sites, can cause very real injury to loved ones and can wreak havoc on the whole family. The Big Book authors carefully give us guidelines on how to approach this.

- "The chances are that we have domestic troubles. Perhaps we are mixed up with [a person on line] we wouldn't care to have advertised... [Media addiction] does complicate sex relations in the home...perhaps [a media addict] is having a secret and exciting affair with [a person] who understands. Whatever the situation, we usually have to do something about it. If we are sure our [partner] does not know, should we tell [them]? Not always, we think. If [they know] in a general way that we have been wild, should we tell [them] in detail? Undoubtedly, we should admit our fault. [They] may insist on knowing all the particulars... We feel we ought to say to [them] that we have no right to involve another person. We are sorry for what we have done and, God willing, it shall not be repeated. More than that we cannot do; we have no right to go further. Though there may be justifiable exceptions, and though we wish to lay down no rule of any sort, we have often found this the best course to take."

B

The authors invite us to allow the principles of the program to guide both partners in finding a healthy and healing resolution. We are reminded how difficult some amends can be, especially if there is jealousy.

- "Our design for living is not a one-way street... It is better...that one does not needlessly name a person upon whom [they] can vent jealousy...Keep it always in sight that we are dealing with that most terrible human emotion—jealousy."

Online gambling and compulsive shopping can have a grave effect on the financial security of families, employees, and businesses. In these cases we must take sincere actions to right the wrongs we have caused to those whom we promised to love, support, and protect. The Big Book authors emphatically state that being sober with our media is only the beginning. We must take additional action if we are to recover.

- "Yes, there is a long period of reconstruction ahead. We must take the lead. A remorseful mumbling that we are sorry won't fill the bill at all. We ought to sit down with the family and frankly analyze the past as we now see it, being very careful not to criticize them. Their defects may be glaring, but the chances are that our own actions are partly responsible. 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... The spiritual life is not a theory. *We have to live it.*"

A

Here we're told that, in order to recover from our media addiction, we don't just take the Steps, we *live* the Steps, on a daily basis. Here is a story of one man who was willing to go to any length to recover from alcoholism.

- "While drinking, he accepted a sum of money from a bitterly-hated business rival, giving him no receipt for it. He subsequently denied having received the money and used the incident as a basis for discrediting the man. He thus used his own wrongdoing as a means of destroying the reputation of another. In fact, his rival was ruined. He felt that he had done a wrong he could not possibly make right. If he opened that old affair, he was afraid it would destroy the reputation of his partner, disgrace his family and take away his means of livelihood. What right had he to involve those dependent upon him? How could he possibly make a public statement exonerating his rival? After consulting with his wife and partner he came to the conclusion that it was better to take those risks than to stand before his Creator guilty of such ruinous slander. He saw that he had to place the outcome in God's hands or he would soon start drinking again, and all would be lost anyhow. He attended church for the first time in many years. After the sermon, he quietly got up and made an explanation. His action met widespread approval, and today he is one of the most trusted citizens of his town."

The Big Book authors give us directions on what to do if we can't make amends to someone face-to-face.

- "There may be some wrongs we can never fully right. We don't worry about them if we can honestly say to ourselves that we would right them if we could. Some people cannot be seen—we send them an honest letter... There may be a valid reason for postponement in some cases. But we don't delay if it can be avoided. We should be sensible, tactful, considerate, and humble without being servile or scraping. As God's people we stand on our feet; we don't crawl before anyone."

B

We will end this session by learning the principles of Step Eight: "Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all." The principle of CONSIDERATION leads to the principle of FORGIVENESS.

- CONSIDERATION is being conscientious of another person's well-being, being kind, thoughtful, and sensitive to them. CONSIDERATION is the antidote to selfishness. When we consider our part in any problematic situation, we are able to see more clearly where we have harmed another. We show others empathy and

compassion. We become WILLING to stop blaming others and forgive them instead. CONSIDERATION leads to FORGIVENESS, for when we consider the pain and unhappiness the other person has been suffering, it's easier for us to let go of our personal grudges against them. We also become willing to show empathy and compassion for ourselves and FORGIVE ourselves. Self-forgiveness is essential in the recovery process. If we have harmed another person, we have harmed ourselves. There is a quote by Ian Maclaren: "Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a great battle."

A

Next week we will continue our discussion on Step Nine and how to make clean amends. Please make sure you come with your list of "People We Have Harmed" worksheet filled out.

B

Sharing

We will now open up the room for sharing for 3 minutes each. We will begin with our three readers in the order they read and then I will take more names. (A will keep time)

Reader 1 _____ Reader 2 _____ Reader 3 _____

(Share until 7:40 AM)

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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.

Are there any questions about Before & Beyond Back-to-Basics or MAA?

(A & B field questions)

END OF MEETING

WEEK FOUR/MONTH THREE

Please ask a member to lead in the Seventh Step Prayer.

STEP 9 (continued)

A

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My name is __A__, and I am ____B____. We are recovered members of Media Addicts Anonymous and we are your Group Sponsors.

We have asked _____to lead us in the Seventh Step Prayer.

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 out from here, to do your bidding. Amen.

Thank you _____.

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A

Before we continue with Step Nine, we will take Step Eight together. If you have made your list of amends, please say "yes" when I call your name.

According to the Big Book authors, if you have answered "yes" to this question you have taken Step 8. Now that you have made your list, you are ready to begin making amends; this means more action.

B

Amends need to be made as soon as possible if we are to recover from media addiction. Remember, we have to stay ahead of our disease. Therefore, it is imperative we get through our amends as soon as we possibly can. Miracles will happen and real freedom will be felt.

A

The Ninth Step is often the step where people seem to stall. We must not let our amends sit and wait for a better day UNLESS it has been revealed to us that we must

wait. By not following through with our amends as soon as we possibly can, the chance of losing our sobriety becomes greater.

B

Remember we agreed in the beginning that we are willing to go to any lengths to recover. Whatever we put before our recovery we may lose, therefore recovery needs to be one of the most important things in our life. Any procrastination or laziness needs to be replaced with action and enthusiasm.

A

Dr. Bob, the Akron, Ohio, AA co-founder, found that he could not stay sober until he made his amends. He was so sincere and desperate to recover from alcohol, he accomplished all of his amends in one day.

- "One morning he took the bull by the horns and set out to tell those he feared what his trouble had been. He found himself surprisingly well received, and learned that many knew of his drinking. Stepping into his car, he made the rounds of people he had hurt. He trembled as he went about, for this might mean ruin, particularly to a person in his line of business (he was a well-known doctor in his town)... At midnight he came home exhausted, but very happy. He has not had a drink since."

B

The authors conclude the Ninth Step with a list of blessings we can expect to receive by taking the Ninth Step. They tell us precisely what is going to happen once we commence to clear away the wreckage of our past. These are the promises we can expect after we complete our amends.

- "If we are painstaking about this phase of our development, we will be amazed before we are half way through. We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word serenity and we will know peace. No matter how far down the scale we have gone, we will see how our experience can benefit others. That feeling of uselessness and self-pity will disappear. We will lose interest in selfish things and gain interest in our fellows. Self-seeking will slip away. Our whole attitude and outlook upon life will change. Fear of people and of economic insecurity will leave us. We will intuitively know how to handle situations which used to baffle us. We will suddenly realize that God is doing for us what we could not do for ourselves. Are these extravagant promises? We think not. They are being fulfilled among us—sometimes quickly, sometimes slowly. They will always materialize if we work for them."

A

A new way of living filled with serenity and peace are what we are promised if we are painstaking about making our amends and following through with living them. Our self-centered fear will be diminished, and we can walk freely in the world with our heads held high.

Our connection with our Higher Power will increase, and we will know how to move forward in our lives in powerful and loving ways. If cleaning our side of the street can keep us healthy around our media and connected to our Higher Power in a state of spiritual bliss, is it not worth letting go of resentments and fully forgiving ourselves and others of any wrongs they have committed towards us? Would we rather be right or would we rather be happy?

B

As you sincerely work these Steps, turn your life over to your Higher Power, take personal inventory, share your shortcomings with someone else, be willing to have these shortcomings removed, ask for your Higher Power's guidance, and be diligent in making amends to anyone you have hurt because of your media addiction and shortcomings, you will certainly find that God is doing for you what you could not do for yourself. This process and promise has been repeated by many of our members over and over; it is time tested. We invite you to test it out for yourself.

A

As we become ready to embark on the Ninth Step, please be aware that making amends is sometimes a sensitive endeavor. We must prepare ourselves with our Higher Power beforehand or, as many of us learned the hard way, our attempts at making amends could backfire and cause more harm than good. So, let's review what we have learned about making amends.

- We make direct amends when possible, meaning we seek out the person we have harmed and face them directly.
- We don't make direct amends if to do so would injure them or someone else. We don't have the right to do this, even if we want to free our conscience. This would be selfish.
- We take all these considerations to God and, if needed, to another person who is wise and who understands how to make good clean amends.
- We don't avoid creditors. We pay our debts. We stop compulsive gambling and spending.
- If we can't speak to the person we have wronged, we write them a letter. If someone has passed away, we can still write them a letter. If we can't locate someone we have wronged, we can write a letter to them and send it to ourselves.
- We want to use our words, which have power, to let our Higher Power know we are sorry, and to reach out with our hearts to the other person—even if they are not in our lives—letting them know we admit our wrongs and would make them right if we could.
- We are willing to let go of relationships (online, fantasy, or otherwise) that interfere with our committed relationships. We sincerely make amends and live them on a daily basis with the help of our Higher Power.

- We invite our loved ones to allow us to change and let go of the past with us. We ask them to pray with us, to help make our relationships more spiritual, and to find forgiveness and peace as a couple, family, and friends.

B

Let us give you some very practical guidelines for making amends. We will also provide you with a script you can use to help you as you make healthy and clean amends. Start by doing the amends you think will be the easiest first. There are three kinds of amends:

1. Direct amends: A "direct amends" is talking to a person you have harmed either face-to-face or on the phone.
2. Living amends: A "living amends" is changing your behavior around the person you have harmed and doing everything you can, through your actions, to show them that you are sorry. Sometimes a living amends needs to be made before you feel certain you can live up to making a direct amends.
3. Indirect amends: An "indirect amends" is making amends indirectly. Sometimes you need to pray for the person awhile to make sure you have forgiven them. It might be dangerous to contact someone. You can pray for them. If someone is no longer living or you have lost contact with them and can't reach them directly, you can write them an amends letter and either send it in the mail or give it to God.

A

MAKING DIRECT AMENDS: When making a direct amends, it's wise to keep it simple. Here is an easy script to use:

- A. Here's what I have done wrong.
- B. "I apologize for this" or some of us also say, "Could you forgive me for this?"
- C. Is there anything I can do to make this right?
- D. Is there anything else I have done to harm you that you want to discuss?

To better absorb this simple amends script, I will repeat the above four lines again. "Here's what I have done wrong. I apologize for this (or could you forgive me?) Is there anything I can do to make this right? Is there anything else I have done to harm you that you want to discuss?" Here is an example of a simple clean amends:

- Mary, I yelled at you the other day and you did not deserve that. I regret having done that. Could you forgive me for this? Is there anything I can do to make this right with you? Is there anything else I don't know about that you want to discuss with me?

B

It's important to realize that clean amends are clear and concise. There is a difference between a clean amends and a dirty amends. A clean amends focuses on what you did and on the other person. A dirty amends has an excuse added to it and focuses on you. For example, here is a dirty amends:

- Mary, you know the other day when I raised my voice, I was having a really hard day. My boss had yelled at me and I got rear-ended and threw my back out, and I think I am coming down with a cold...anyway I am sorry, I was just having a bad day.

As you can see, the whole apology was about the person making the amends rather than the person the amends was meant for. This amends is filled with self-pity. You are trying to get the other person to feel sorry for you so they won't be upset.

A

There is another type of amends some of us call a double-dog-dirty amends. This is when you make amends to someone hoping they will see they have wronged YOU and actually need to make an amends to you. This is not an amends, its manipulation, trying to get the other person to admit they are wrong. It's the ego's way of still holding on and feeling entitled to its resentment. For example, here is a double-dog-dirty amends:

- Mary, you know the other day when I raised my voice, I was having a really hard day. I had a flat tire on the way to work, my boss yelled at me, you didn't call me on time, and I felt like you were giving me the cold shoulder...anyway, I am sorry I raised my voice. I was just having a bad day.

If we are to make clear, clean amends, we must not be manipulative or self-centered.

B

Sometimes you might think you need to make an amends when you really don't.

- This is where your Higher Power and the help of a wise advisor or sponsor comes in handy. Don't attempt to figure out your amends all alone. Get help and feedback from others. Another important detail to remember is: **don't make an amends until you feel you have fully forgiven and worked through your side of the situation.** Otherwise, you may end up making a double-dog-dirty amends.

Make your amends as simple and sincere as you can and leave the results to your Higher Power. If you have expectations about how the other person is supposed to react, you may become despondent if the person doesn't respond the way you want them to or doesn't accept your amends.

- Sometimes people are not ready to forgive and won't welcome your amends. Don't take this personally. Allow people time. Remember, we make amends for our personal recovery; people are free to accept them or not. This is why we keep our amends clean and simple, and let go of the outcome.

It is often suggested to make living amends until your Higher Power tells you the time is right to make a direct amends. Use your Higher Power every step of the way.

A

Please start making amends to those whom you have harmed. By making amends, you will convert the barriers that have separated you from others to bridges of reconciliation.

By listening to the God of your understanding, you will be given the "strength, inspiration and direction" to change lives, starting with your own. Miracles will occur.

- All addictions have one thing in common: the inability to connect to other people. We attach instead to our addictions. For instance, we love spending time with fantasy characters on TV, but find it difficult to fully enjoy real people. This is why making amends is so important to overcome media addiction. When we sincerely make an amends, we are connecting in an authentic and considerate way to another person. Our hearts will open to them, and our experience is that their hearts will often open to us too. Our fear of people and the compulsive need to hide alone with our media leaves us because we are feeling nourished by these connections. We are seeing others in a different light, and we also start to see ourselves in a different light.

Part of your assignment for the next session is to start making amends to those on your amends list. If you are not sure how to proceed with a specific amends, ask for help from your sponsor or spiritual advisor and, of course, your Higher Power. List your amends on the "Amends Action Form" to keep track of the amends you make. Do not delay.

B

Let's end our discussion by looking at the principles of Step 9: "Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others." The principle of INTEGRITY leads to the principle of PEACE.

- INTEGRITY is being honorable and honest. It is the decency to rectify something you have done wrong in the past. When we have INTEGRITY we show fairness, sincerity, and trustworthiness. We respect ourselves and we respect others. We make sure when we make our amends not to injure anyone. We hold to our INTEGRITY even if we are tempted to try to let ourselves off the hook. INTEGRITY means we make clean amends and we do so right away. We build our character by making amends. We show others that they can trust us. We take responsibility for our side of the street. INTEGRITY asks for an even greater amount of COURAGE, the COURAGE we began to cultivate in the Fourth Step. INTEGRITY is COURAGE mixed with FAITH, CLARITY, WILLINGNESS, HUMILITY AND CONSIDERATION. Step Nine promises that: "We are going to know a new freedom and a new happiness. We will not regret the past nor wish to shut the door on it. We will comprehend the word "serenity" and we will know PEACE. Therefore, INTEGRITY leads to PEACE. The PEACE of knowing we are good with God, good with ourselves, and good with others.

A

This concludes our discussion of Step Nine, the third Spiritual Activity of Restitution. Next week we are going to have a very special session. We are going to show you a method to help you forgive those who you feel have wronged you. You will see this in your packets on the MAA website as the "Forgiveness Letter". Here is what it looks like:

WRITE AN APOLOGY LETTER TO YOURSELF FROM SOMEONE WHO YOU FEEL HAS HARMED YOU.

CHOOSE ONE OF THE PEOPLE YOU DID YOUR 4TH STEP ON. (MOTHER/FATHER SISTER/BROTHER ARE GOOD ONES)

WRITE A LETTER FROM THE PERSON WHO HAS HARMED YOU. LET THEM GIVE YOU THE APOLOGY YOU ALWAYS WANTED OR NEEDED TO HEAR FROM THEM SO YOU FEEL YOU CAN HEAL THIS RESENTMENT. WRITE EVERYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO HEAR THEM SAY TO YOU FOR YOU TO FEEL HAPPY.

DON'T HOLD BACK, AND PLEASE KEEP THE LETTER SIMPLE AND NOT TOO LONG.

PLEASE BE READY TO READ THIS LETTER TO YOUR SPONSOR DURING YOUR 1 HOUR APPOINTMENT THIS WEEKEND.

B

Sharing

We will now open up the room for sharing for 3 minutes each. We will begin with our three readers in the order they read and then I will take more names. (A will keep time)

Reader 1 _____ Reader 2 _____ Reader 3 _____

(Share until 7:40 AM)

A

That is all the time for sharing we have today.

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Closing:

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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

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.

Are there any questions about Before & Beyond Back-to-Basics or MAA?

(A & B field questions)

END OF MEETING

FORGIVENESS SESSION Week FIVE/MONTH THREE

Present Forgiveness letter of there is 5 weeks in this month. Please read these instructions. Demonstration of Forgiveness letter. Read this script as written. Please do not use any other personal letter. Please ask one person who has done the forgiveness letter to qualify and one person who has facilitated the forgiveness letter to qualify. Both qualify after the letter is demonstrated. Please keep to the script in the sharing afterwards.

A

Welcome to the third month and 13th session of "Before & Beyond Back to Basics—A Design for Living" meetings for media addicts. Please put down all non-essential electronic media while participating in these sessions. By focusing on this meeting without distractions you will be able to access the recovery power of what these Back-to-Basics meetings offer. We ask that if you are speaking or reading that you allow us to see you in Zoom.

My name is __A__, and I am ____B____. We are recovered members of Media Addicts Anonymous 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.

Here is how today will unfold:

1. We are going to explain why we do the Forgiveness Letter. What we want to accomplish by doing it.
2. ___B___ and I will act out and demonstrate what this process looks like.
3. We will then have two members qualify on what it was like facilitating this process and reading their Forgiveness Letter.
4. After that we will answer any questions you have about the Forgiveness Letter.
5. And finally we will go around the room and each member share for 2-3 minutes on what it was like to witness the Forgiveness Letter, or if you have done this letter before, to share your experience.

B

The 4th and 9th Steps ask a lot from us. First, we are asked to admit where we have done something wrong in the past. Second, we are asked make restitution for how, what we did, contributed to hurting others.

For many of us, admitting that we did something to someone who we feel hurt us more that we hurt them is problematic. We feel we have a right to hold onto the role of being the victim and we want to keep them in the role of the perpetrator. We need to hold onto these roles, if we don't it's blaming the victim. We were hurt, bad things were done to us, things that should not have happened, hurt us. These things that should not be forgiven or forgotten. This is part of our story, part of our identity. We feel we are entitled to this resentment.

A

For a media addict of the hopeless variety, this kind of thinking may lead us back to the kind of self-pity that leads eventually to defiance and getting drunk on media again. If we truly want to be free, not only of the media obsession, but free of all resentments and fears, we must be willing to set aside everything we think we know about a situation and look at it from as many different angles as we can. In this way we can begin to loosen up the hard-held beliefs that have caused us to suffer all these years.

B

This method will work if you are sincere and you really want to see the truth. If you really want to find freedom. This method will not work if you really need to stay in the role of insured party. The truth is, given the choice, we all would like to find a way to forgive and let go of the past. It's painful carrying resentments, fear, and contempt for those we feel owe us an apology. For this reason, we write the apology letter we always wanted to have.

A

As we work the steps we are now living on a different plane of understanding. We are trying to live our lives on a spiritual basis. We are trying to live according to principles rather than according to our emotions. We know, if we are going to maintain long-term abstinence and recovery, we must free ourselves from the bitterness of the past. But how?

B

One tool we have found effective in being able to forgive and move on is the "Forgiveness Letter." Today we are going to give you a demonstration of the "Forgiveness Letter." This is a method we use to help us see all sides of a situation and to help us forgive others as well as ourselves.

A

To review, here is the assignment that you got last week, remember this is in your packet on the MAA website under Open B2B meetings:

USING THE SAME PERSON YOU DID YOUR 4TH STEP LONG-FORM ON, WRITE AN APOLOGY LETTER TO YOURSELF FROM THIS PERSON.

WRITE A LETTER FROM THE PERSON WHO HAS HARMED YOU. LET THEM GIVE YOU THE APOLOGY YOU ALWAYS WANTED OR NEEDED TO HEAR FROM THEM SO YOU FEEL YOU CAN HEAL THIS RESENTMENT. WRITE EVERYTHING YOU WOULD LIKE TO HEAR THEM SAY TO YOU FOR YOU TO FEEL HAPPY.

DON'T HOLD BACK, AND PLEASE KEEP THE LETTER SIMPLE AND NOT TOO LONG.

PLEASE BE READY TO READ THIS LETTER TO YOUR SPONSOR DURING YOUR 1 HOUR APPOINTMENT THIS WEEKEND.

In this demonstration I will play the sponsor and ___B___ will play the sponsee. The sponsee will read their letter and I will ask questions. Please be aware that when you are working with your sponsee, you are going to witness someone working through a process of discovery and forgiveness. This may be an emotional experience for the person who is reading their letter and also for you witnessing it. As we demonstrate this letter, we ask you to hold this space sacred so we can all be enlightened and healed through witnessing this process. Just to be clear, this is a demonstration. This is a generic letter. ___B___ did not write this letter, they are merely reading it as a demonstration.

Okay, let's begin. Remember you are invited to write the forgiveness letter on the same person you did your Long-form 4th step on. ___B___, Who did you do your Long-form 4th step on.

B

My mom.

A

Okay, good. Please read the letter from your mom just as you wrote it.

B

Dear (B),

First, let me tell you how much I love you. You were always so special to me. When you were growing up, I loved watching you dance and sing. You were quite the entertainer.

I want to apologize to you my dear (B) for all the times I was not there for you, for all the times I was in a drunken stupor and could not see what was going on in your life. I am sorry I was not there to protect you from your overly strict and abusive teacher and that I could not see how hard you were trying to be good. I am sorry that I taught you things that hurt you and made you feel inadequate.

I would never want to hurt you. I love you. Can you forgive me for my inability to see you and understand what was going on for you? Can you forgive me for abandoning you?

If there is something I can do to make this right with you, please let me know. I want all to be right with us going forward.

Love,
Mom

A

Thank you. How does it feel to hear this apology?

B

I feel good. I have always wanted her to see that she hurt me by not being there for me.

A

Thank you. In this situation, what roles did you cast the other person in?

B

I cast her in the role of abandoner, of an unfit mother. As someone who didn't love me enough to protect me.

A

Thank you. What roles did you cast yourself in?

B

The lost child. The victim of abuse by my teacher. The good girl not getting validated. Someone unworthy of my mother's attention.

A

Thank you. What roles did the other person cast you in?

B

Someone who didn't need protection. Someone doing okay without her. Someone she didn't need to worry about.

A

Thank you. As far as you can observe, what roles did the other person cast themselves in?

B

Someone barely holding it together. Someone who was trying to be a good mother and teach her child how to be good and how to get to heaven. Someone who wants the best for her child

A

Thank you. Now read the letter again and this time read it as if this is the apology letter YOU wrote to your mom.

B

I will read the same letter as if I wrote it to my Mom, changing words to fit her and the situation.

(Hint: keep it simple and clear when changing words and keep as close to the original letter as possible)

Dear Mom,

First, let me tell you how much I love you. You have always been so special to me, even when I didn't show it. When I was growing up I loved watching you bake bread and plan holidays. You were quite the cook and you loved making holidays special.

I want to apologize to you, my dear Mother, for all the times I was not there for you, for all the times I was in a Media blackout and self-absorbed fantasy stupor and could not see what was going on in your life. I am sorry I was not able to tell you about my strict and abusive teacher at school and that I could not see how hard you were trying to be a good Mom. I am sorry that I believed things that hurt you and made you feel guilty for them and inadequate.

I would never want to hurt you. I love you. Can you forgive me for my inability to see you and understand what was going on for you? Can you forgive me for abandoning you?

If there is something I can do to make this right with you, please let me know. I want all to be right with us going forward.

Love,

(B)

A

Thank you. How does it feel to give this apology?

B

I feel sad. I can see that I didn't see her either. I didn't see what she was going through. I can see that I didn't trust her enough to tell her about my school teacher and how afraid I was. I can also see how much she did for the family and how she did make the holidays awesome. Basically, I can see that it was not all bad. There was a lot of good times too.

A

Thank you. As you reread it, did you notice if you still cast the other person in the same role as before?

B

No, I was beginning to see her as more loving than I had remembered. She was there for me more than I give her credit for. I think this time I cast her in the role of caring mother rather than abandoning mother.

A

Thank you. Did you notice if you were in the same role you cast yourself before?

B

No. I can see where I hurt my mom. That I abandoned her. That I didn't see her. That I didn't appreciate her or really know what she was going through. I can see that I was drunk on media. That I was a drunk too. That I wanted to escape too. I see I was like her.

A

Thank you. Does this situation look any different to you from this perspective?

B

It does, though it's hard to admit it. I still feel like she should have been there for me because I was the child and she was the parent. But I think I am looking at it with more adult eyes right now. I can see that she was doing the best she could, given everything that was going on in her life. I can see that she loved me, even though I wanted her to show it in different ways. I can also see that I punished her for not being the mother I wanted and that my behavior towards her did hurt her.

A

Thank you. Now read the letter again and this time read it as if this apology letter is a letter YOU wrote to YOURSELF. Please slow it down so you can really FEEL your apology.

B

I will read a letter that I wrote to myself, changing some words to make it clear what I did to me.

Dear (B),

First, let me tell you how much I love you. You were always so special to me. When we were growing up I loved watching us dance and sing. We were quite the entertainers.

I want to apologize to you, for all the times I was not there for you. For all the times I was in a media drunk stupor and could not see what was going on in your inner life. I am sorry I was not there to protect you from your strict and abusive teacher by speaking up and getting adult support and that I could not see how hard you were trying to be good but rather always told you how bad you were. I am sorry that I told you things about yourself that hurt you and made you feel inadequate.

I would never want to hurt you. I love you. Can you forgive me for my inability to see you and understand what was going on for you? Can you forgive me for abandoning you by not letting you be your authentic self?

If there is something I can do to make this right with you, please let me know. I want all to be right with us going forward.

Love,
(B)

A

Thank you. How does it feel to give this apology to yourself?

B

It feels personal. It feels like I am now really getting in touch with myself and how I don't love myself enough. How I abandon myself. How much my self-talk is abusive and unkind. I did always tell myself how bad I was. I never let myself off the hook. I shamed myself all the time. I never stood up for myself.

A

Thank you. As you reread it did you notice any recurring roles that you have played out with yourself?

B

Dictator. Abuser. Strict disciplinarian. Abandoner. Never satisfied with myself. Shaming myself.

A

Thank you. Did you notice more deeply how you have limited yourself with these roles?

B

Yes, I am harder on myself than anyone else. I abandoned myself by not speaking up and by not allowing myself to be worthy. I don't validate myself and expect other people to do that for me. This limits me in my ability to take care of myself and be happy.

A

Thank you. Does this situation look any different to you from this perspective?

B

Yes. I can see that, when it comes to hurting myself, I do it better than anyone else. I can see that others are not as hard on me as I am on me. I can see that I need to find ways to be kinder and more loving to myself.

A

Thank you. What roles can you recast the other person in that would serve you both?

B

I think I am going to say, "loving mother" because she was loving. She did the best she could. She still is trying to make me happy.

A

Thank you. What roles can you recast yourself in that would serve you, the other person, and the world?

B

Resourceful adult. A good parent to myself. Compassionate and understanding with myself. A nurturing, loving, forgiving friend. I could be the kind of mother to myself I wanted my mother to be for me.

A

Thank you, __ B __. This ends the demonstration.

We would like to go over a few points before we have our qualifications. You will notice as the sponsor or facilitator for the Forgiveness Letter, I do not comment on what the sponsee shares. I only say, "thank you," my job is to listen and hold space for the sponsee to find (his/her) own answers to the questions. My job was to allow __ B __ to find their own discoveries. The only time a sponsor might give some feedback is if the person reading the letter feels stuck and asks for help. Then I might give some suggestions for the turn arounds. I do not try to do this worksheet for them. What makes this process valuable is the sponsee's own legitimate self-discoveries.

B

You will notice that I try to keep each of my letters as close to the first letter as possible, turning the ordinal letter around to my apology to my mom and then myself. I added only the things that made sense, for instance instead of singing and dancing, which was

what my mom loved about me, I write baking bread and planning holidays. We want to keep the letter simple too. Not too long so we can have easier turn-arounds.

A

We have asked ___(member)___ to qualify for 2 minutes on what it was like reading their forgiveness letter to their sponsor.

(Qualification by the sponsee)

We have asked ___(member)___ to qualify for two minutes on what it was like facilitating their sponsee's forgiveness letter.

(Qualification by the sponsor)

B

We will now open up the meeting for sharing. Each person has 2-3 minutes to share. Please keep the focus on what it was like to witness the Forgiveness letter or, if you have done this exercise before, what it was like doing it or facilitating it.

(At 5 min before the hour)

A

That is all the time for sharing we have today.

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(A & B field questions)