

One-Month Series
BEYOND BACK TO BASICS,"A Design for Living"
MAA Intergroup Sponsored
A Closed and Committed 12 Step Study and After Care Group
MONTH FOUR
Steps 10, 11, and 12

Week 1

SESSION FOURTEEN-Step 10

A

Welcome to the fourth month and fourteen session of "Before and 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 Third Step prayer:

Higher Power, I offer myself to You, to build with me and do with me as You will. Relieve me of the bondage of self, that I may better do Your will. Take away my difficulties, that victory over them may bear witness to those I would help of Your Power, Your Love, and Your Way of life. May I do Your will always!

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 changed 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

We have already accomplished a lot. Last month we took Steps Five through Nine. If you have written your list of persons you have harmed and have begun the process of making amends, please state your name, followed by "yes."

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

B

We encourage you to get your amends made as soon as you can. You will find, as we have, that a whole new life will unfold for you if you do. This week we will continue the **Guidance** process by taking Steps Ten and Eleven and 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 have a lack of 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] are not going to 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 bring this up again because, at this point in our media fasting, we may be thinking that when we are done with this fast, we will be able to use our alcoholic media again without triggering a binge.

A

The hope that one day we can use media with impunity is normal for all real media addicts, but it is also lethal. 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 [binging 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 have to continue to remember and hold in our consciousness every day.

A

If we want to keep everything we have gained thus far, we must continue to take Steps One through Nine daily. Persistence is the key to long-term recovery. Basically, it is a daily routine of rinse and repeat. This is what Step Ten is all about.

Step 10 -- "Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it."

B

In Steps One through Three, we made the decisions that put us on the spiritual path. In Steps Four through Nine, we took the actions necessary to remove those things that had separated us from the God of our understanding. Now, we're ready to grow into the promised spiritual awakening guaranteed 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 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

In this paragraph, the authors explain how to live, one day at a time. We call this our twenty-four-hour plan. We continue to take inventory, continue to make amends, and continue to help others every day. Let's look at the third sentence in this paragraph again. It is very important. It reads, "We have entered the world of the Spirit."

A

This sentence contains an amazing revelation. Basically, the Big Book authors have just informed us that our lives have already been transformed as a result of taking Steps One through Nine. They state that we have already had a "revolutionary change in [our] way of living and thinking."

B

How could that be? Well, it's very simple. There is no way a newcomer can take these Steps without "divine help." You have not only developed a belief in a God of your understanding, but you have come to rely upon this Power to guide you through the inventory and restitution process. You are now living in the solution. The authors summarize the process we use 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 they instruct us "to watch for selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear." We have a new code we are living by love and tolerance. The authors provide us with specific directions on how to rid ourselves of our self-centered behaviors. First, we must realize they are not consistent with our Creator's plan for our lives.

B

Next, we take the steps necessary to move from self-will to God's will. We discuss our shortcomings with our sponsor or someone else in the program, ask the "One who has all power" to remove them, and if necessary, "set right the wrong(s)." We then try to help someone else.

A

We in Media Addicts Anonymous wish to recover completely from media addiction. This means recovery from both the allergy of the body and obsession of the mind. If we are still fighting media our lives will still be unmanageable. Let's read again what the Big Book promises us when we continue to work Steps One through Nine on a daily basis. These are known as the "Tenth Step Promises":

- "And we have ceased fighting anything or anyone—even (electronic media). For by this time sanity will have returned. We will seldom be interested in (electronic 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."

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 [the] 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, they insist that our lives have already changed. We are now "conscious" of the Presence of God. As we continue with the recovery process, the "Power greater than ourselves" will guide our thoughts and actions and strengthen our intuition—our "vital sixth sense."

B

Now that we have made it to Step Ten, we want to share another story of an early AA member who writes about his daily Tenth Step and how, through taking the Steps of AA, he came to the conclusion that acceptance was the answer to all his problems. (We will change alcoholic terms to media.)

- "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 with media].... It helped me a great deal to become convinced that [media addiction] was a disease, not a

moral issue; that I had been [binging] 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 need to 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.... 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 is 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."...My 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

It is now time to take the Tenth Step. 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 AA members to help us take the Tenth Step. You can find the seeds of this prayer on page 84 of the Big Book:

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

B

Although we have asked our Higher Power to remove our selfishness, dishonesty, resentment, and fear, it is up to us to stay vigilant if at any point throughout the day they crop up again. When this happens, we immediately ask for them to be removed again. We also don't do this alone. We talk to someone else. We call our sponsor or another MAA member.

A

If we have hurt someone by our behavior, or have been inconsiderate of another, we make amends as quickly as we can. We don't want to take these problems into the next day. We want to clean up our mess as we go along.

B

Next, we find someone who we can help. Perhaps we call another member of MAA. Giving service always brings us back into balance, we again begin to focus on what really matters. When we observe our situation, we can ask:

- "What would consideration look like in this situation? What would faith look like this situation? What would generosity look like in this situation?"

You will find the Tenth Step worksheet in your Before and Beyond Back-to-Basics packet. Please make sure you have downloaded and/or printed them so you will have them available as you need them.

A

I will read this prayer out loud for all of us. Please close your eyes and listen carefully so that you can 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 these crop up in me, help me to immediately ask you to remove them from me and help me discuss these feelings with someone. God, help me to quickly make amends if I have harmed anyone and help me 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 continue to set right any new mistakes as you go along?"

If so, please state your name, followed by "Yes."

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 the principle of TRANSFORMATION.

- PERSEVERANCE is persistence, determination, steadfastness, purposefulness, patience, and diligence. It's falling down ten times and getting up eleven. Our goal is spiritual progress not spiritual perfection. We are going to be working the steps for the rest of our lives, God willing. There will be days we fall short. Days we make mistakes. We may take steps backwards. But in Step Ten we make the commitment to persist until we succeed. In our daily prayers we ask God to do for us what we could not do for ourselves, that is, "To 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 (CONFESSION) and make amends (INTEGRITY) quickly if we have harmed anyone. 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. There is a difference between change and

TRANSFORMATION. Change is ego-based. TRANSFORMATION is Spiritually based. TRANSFORMATION is the difference between a caterpillar and a butterfly. Once the caterpillar becomes a butterfly, it can't go back to being a caterpillar. Step Ten is the step of real TRANSFORMATION. Steps One through Nine are but the foundation of our recovery. We must have PERSEVERANCE if we are to TRANSFORM into a beautiful butterfly. TRANSFORMATION doesn't happen overnight. TRANSFORMATION happens when you are not looking for it. All the Principles of the program are written into Step Ten. We are willing to let God TRANSFORM us one day at a time.

B

Please use the 10th Step worksheet when you find yourself becoming resentful, angry, fearful, or agitated and call your sponsor or another member to give this Tenth Step away. You can find it on the Media Addicts Anonymous Website, under month 4 week 1. Thank you all for your commitment and devotion to recovery. Next week we will discuss Step Eleven. Thank you all for reading today.

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 or get a volunteer to time keep)

Reader 1 _____ Reader 2 _____ Reader 3 _____

(Share until 8:35 AM)

A

That is all the time for sharing we have today.

Announcements

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)

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

This ends our session of Before & 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.

Questions

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

(A & B field questions)

End of Week 1

Month 4 Week 2

SESSION FIFTEEN-Step 11

A

Welcome to the fourth month and fifteen session of "Before and 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 Tenth Step prayer:

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

Thank you .

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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

We are expanding our limited consciousness to a new God consciousness. We are doing this by living Steps Ten, Eleven, and Twelve every day. 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

In order to remain sober with media, we need power. Where are we going to find this power? We will gain this power through working Step Eleven.

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:

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

Seven words stand out in Step Eleven that are worth reviewing before we proceed. They are Prayer, Meditation, Conscious, Contact, Knowledge, God's Will, and Power.

- "Prayer" is a solemn request for help or expression of thanks addressed to a Higher Power.
- "Meditation" is the act of contemplation, quiet reflection, concentration, and stilling 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 given from a Power greater than yourself for the highest good of all.
- "Power" is the ability to do something or act in a particular way with potency and strength.

A

What we learn from these words is that we are going to develop and cultivate a daily practice in which we intentionally invoke the presence of a Power greater than ourselves. In this devotional, we will contemplate and correspond with this Power, just as we would a trusted parent or friend. During this daily connection, we will be given all the understanding we need to fulfill our Higher Power's desire for us in our life situation, and if we ask for it, we will also be given the ability to carry out the actions advised by our Higher Power.

B

We have referred to "prayer and meditation" as two-way prayer, and week two we started to practice two-way prayer. Prayer is talking to God, and meditation is listening to God. We listen to receive guidance from the "One who has all knowledge and power."

A

The Big Book authors have been inviting us to have this conscious contact with the God of our understanding by interspersing references about 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 are encouraging us to take a daily "quiet time" where we make conscious contact with our Higher Power. It is during this period of meditation that our Higher Power will guide us to a new way of living based on the assets of PATIENCE, TOLERANCE, KINDLINESS, and LOVE. The Big Book authors tell us not to be shy in addressing the God of our understanding:

- "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 be given expert advice on how to proceed with your business or relationships at no cost to you except your time, wouldn't you want this free consultation with an expert? 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

Here is another reference to 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 need to do in order 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 give us three times in our day this activity can take place: at night, in the morning, and as needed throughout the day. At night, we review the day's activities and take these issues 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 notice in this review, just like our inventories, we look at our assets as well as our liabilities. In other words, we see what worked and what didn't work and if we need to take any actions to keep us on track. Some people do this inventory in the morning instead at the end of the day. Here is an example of a daily review:

Back-to-Basics EVENING / MORNING INVENTORY

WHAT WORKED FOR ME TODAY (or yesterday if Morning Inventory)?

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

Now give yourself this prayer-formation*:

"Congratulations __ (your name) __ you successfully accomplished __ (your accomplishment) __ today. I am so proud of you, and that is more God's success than mine!"

* Prayer-formations can begin to change negative self-talk and can raise your reward hormone system (like Dopamine and Serotonin). Say your prayer-formations with enthusiasm. It's okay, no one else will hear you and yes, you deserve it!

WHAT DIDN'T WORK FOR ME TODAY (or yesterday)?

- Where did I get stuck today?
- Where did I try to run the show today?
- Where could I have asked for H.P.'s help today?
- Where could I have been more considerate of others or myself today?
- Where could I have been more giving today?
- Where could I have allowed my self to receive more today?
- Where could I have been more appreciative today?
- Where could I have been more honest today?
- Where could I have been more tolerant today?
- Did I feel self-pity today? If so, how can I move into self-compassion?
- Is there anything I need to confess today?
- Where can I find peace as I sleep tonight? (or start my day)

A

This is self-reflection and is part of the meditation process. This 11th Step review is in your Back-to-Basic packet. Please make sure to download them and print them out so you can begin this daily review. Many of us share these worksheets with an "11th Step 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."

Let's look at the third sentence again. It reads: "Before we begin, we ask God to direct our thinking..." Before we begin what? Before we begin listening to God. How do we know that we're supposed to listen to God? Because, right afterward, it says, "...we ask God to direct our thinking." If we ask God to direct our thinking, doesn't it stand to reason that our next thoughts and ideas are going to come from God? What do we do with these thoughts and ideas? We write them down. Why? So we won't forget them.

B

The authors indicate during our "quiet time" our questions will be answered. They reveal how the One "who has all knowledge and power" is going to 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 is going to communicate with us through "inspiration, an intuitive thought or a decision." If the "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! From first-hand experience, we can state that this kind of prayer has been working in our lives ever since we began a daily "quiet time."

B

However, from time to time we may not feel we are receiving God-given thoughts or ideas? Remember, all we ever have is "a daily reprieve contingent upon the maintenance of our spiritual condition." If we don't

feel the presence of God, it means we have work to do. Maybe we've taken back our will in some area of our lives, or maybe we haven't made a necessary amends. If this is the case, we need to take the actions that 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

In order for two-way prayer to be effective, we must train our minds to call in the presence of God. It may take 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)

A

It is essential that we "sit quietly," especially during periods of stress or uncertainty, so we can clearly hear what God has to say.

- "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 take action only on the guidance that passes all four elements of the test for God's will.

B

To finish taking the Eleventh Step, I would like to invite you all to close your eyes and I will lead us in the Eleventh Step prayer. Silently let these words drop into your heart and 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 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. The principle of KNOWLEDGE leads to POWER.

- Step Eleven possesses three Principles. The first is AWARENESS: To improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power through prayer and meditation. We have seen that a psychic change is possible just by being AWARE of a Higher Power. Conscious contact is moment-to-moment AWARENESS that our Higher Power is guiding our daily activities. AWARENESS leads to the second Principle: KNOWLEDGE. The more we are aware of our Higher Power's presence, the more KNOWLEDGE we are given on how to proceed, i.e., the more GUIDANCE we have. When we have KNOWLEDGE, we ultimately have POWER because KNOWLEDGE is POWER! What is this POWER? It is the POWER to carry out the Will of the Spirit of the Universe. It is the POWER to live our life's purpose on a daily basis. When we first came to MAA we were told that when it came to our media addiction, we had a lack of power. 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 can't be solved by using two-way prayer and living the Principles of the Eleventh Step.

Next week we will proceed to the Twelfth Step.

B

Thank you all for reading today.

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 8:35 AM)

A

That is all the time for sharing we have today.

Announcements

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)

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

This ends our session of Before & 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.

Questions

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

(A & B field questions)

End of Week 2

Month 4 Week 3

SESSION SIXTEEN-Step 12

A

Welcome to the fourth month and sixteenth session of "Before and 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 11th Step Prayer:

"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. How 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."

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

Congratulations, everyone for having taken the first eleven steps. We are now in a position to be able to offer the gifts we have received to others.

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 notice that Step Twelve has three different objectives. Here they are:

- The first purpose of Step Twelve is to declare that we have had a spiritual awakening as a result of taking all twelve steps.
- The second objective of Step Twelve is to direct recovered members to carry this message of hope and recovery to other media addicts who are still suffering.
- The third consideration of Step Twelve is to practice the PRINCIPLES of the twelve steps in all our affairs.

We will explore each of these three objectives separately.

B

OBJECTIVE ONE—SPIRITUAL AWAKENING: By working Steps One, Three, and Eleven, we have made conscious contact with the God of our understanding. This action has created in each of us a spiritual awakening. Spirit is now guiding us “in such a way that it is indeed miraculous.” You may be asking yourself at this point:

- "Is this true? Have I really had a spiritual awakening? Because I am still struggling in some parts of my life, I am not perfect. Sometimes I feel guided, other times I feel lost. Can I really know I have had this life-changing spiritual experience?"

A

The Big Book Authors say that life-changing experiences come suddenly to some, gradually to others. In Appendix II of the Big Book, they write about this “transformation of thought and attitude.” The authors define “spiritual experience” and “spiritual awakening:”

- "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."

B

In the first printing, back in 1939, the Twelfth Step used to read: “Having had a spiritual experience as the result of these steps...” During the two years between the first and second printings, the word “experience” was discussed at length. Eventually, the word “experience” was replaced with the word “awakening.” The Big Book authors made this modification to include those whose lives had truly changed, but more slowly over a period of 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."

A

Many of you will find this to be the case also. Your life is transforming, but gradually rather than suddenly. You may not be able to point to a specific experience that brought about the change, but the spiritual awakening has occurred nonetheless. For it is impossible for someone to go through all twelve steps sincerely and earnestly and not receive a spiritual awakening.

B

Even if an individual goes through the steps with inner resistance, the fact that they completed the steps has changed them. This is why we continue to repeat the *Back-to-Basics, A Design for Living* sessions for every time we take the steps, another layer is peeled away and Spirit has a chance to move deeper within us and effectuate change.

A

A spiritual awakening is nothing more than a PSYCHIC change that, among other things, may remove our obsession to hide or act out in destructive behaviors. Bill W's rapid conversion experience at Towns Hospital is the exception rather than the rule. Here the authors describe a 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.”

B

The Big Book authors invite you to notice if friends and family are beginning to see a difference in you. This is a sign that something transformative has taken place and you may not yet be aware of it. Let’s look at the fifth sentence in the above paragraph again: “What often takes place in a few months could seldom have been accomplished by years of self-discipline.” The Big Book authors make it clear that, if you take the Steps and then help others through them, you will recover within “a few months.”

A

We realize that some of you will have a full spiritual awakening during the first month, but others may not “get it” right away. Nevertheless, you will still have a gradual spiritual awakening as the result of going

through the process again and again. This is one of the greatest promises in the Big Book. Even under the most difficult circumstances, if you do the work, in about 90 days, you will overcome any difficulty in having a personal relationship with the God of your own understanding.

The Big Book authors tell us that even the **awareness** of a Power greater than ourselves IS 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’ve made conscious contact with the God of your own understanding and started listening to guidance, you have, in fact, already had the “psychic change.” Take a moment and let that sink in. You have taken the Steps and the result was spiritual awareness. You are now living a spiritual way of life.

A

We are going to meditate for one minute. In this meditation, please observe how you have begun to transform yourself and your life through conscious contact with your Higher Power. (pause for 1 minute)

We will now take one minute to write what we observed in our meditation—the changes that have come about by taking the Steps thus far. Have you had miracles happen? What has God done for you that you could not do for yourself? (pause for 1 minute)

(We will now take 30 seconds for each of you to state one change you have seen in yourself.)

Thank you.

B

OBJECTIVE TWO—CARRYING THE MESSAGE: Now, let’s look at what we have to do in order to maintain this spiritual transformation. Chapter 7 in the Big Book, in its entirety, is devoted to carrying the message of recovery to others.

- “Practical experience shows that nothing will so much insure immunity from [binging 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

When we work with others, our lives will change.

- “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 our message of recovery to others. They offer many valuable suggestions. Here are a few of them:

- “See [the media addict] alone, if possible. 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. Outline the program of action, explaining how you made a self-appraisal, how you straightened out your past, and why you are now endeavoring to be helpful to [them]. It is important for [them] to realize that your attempt to pass this on... plays a vital part in your own recovery."

B

Never talk down to anyone or be holier than thou. The authors ask us to treat the prospect with 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 prospect doesn't respond at once:

- "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

Keep the focus on trusting God and cleaning house. Every addict has excuses why they can't stop or why they need to keep using. Maybe they are in a very bad time in their life and need comfort and escape. Maybe they just lost their job. Maybe they are sick and can't get out of bed. The Big Book makes it clear that we can recover no matter our circumstances:

- "...[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

Don't let the prospect become overly dependent on you. You are not their therapist, mother, or Higher Power. It is important that your prospect depend on the God of their understanding and not 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 prospect towards a spiritual path of progress. Here the authors tell us that the rewards will be great.

- “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 keep 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. You should not hesitate to visit the most sordid spot on earth on such an errand. Keep on the firing line of life with these motives and God will keep you unharmed."

B

We always want to use our own experiences rather than someone else's when possible.

- "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."

The Big Book authors tell us that as long as we are doing the work of our Higher Power and we are in fit spiritual condition, we can go anywhere and do anything that we are called upon to do.

A

When the obsession is removed, we are no longer fighting the urge and media no longer has the power over us. We are trusting in a Power greater than ourselves, and while we respect our past compulsions around media, we do not fear it.

- "*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

The Big Book authors give one stipulation to this idea of being able to go where media is being used:

- "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?"

There is a warning to not try to be more spiritually evolved than you are:

- "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

The authors advise us that we want to keep ourselves open to human connection and to not push our abstaining from media 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 electronic 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

You never know how your sobriety will inspire and help others who also have a problem with media addiction. The Big Book authors advise us not to get up on a soapbox and preach media sobriety. Compassion and Tolerance are key components in working with newcomers.

- "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. We would not even do the cause of temperate [media usage] any good, for not one [media addict] in a thousand likes to be told anything about [media] by one who hates it."
- "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] 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 Twelfth Step question, "Will you carry this message to other media addicts? Will you be willing to sponsor and give support to MAA meetings? Would you consider being a group sponsor for Back-to-Basics groups?"

If so, please state your name, followed by "Yes."

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

B

Next week we will complete the Twelfth Step by exploring the principles of the MAA Back-to-Basics program. Thank you all for reading today.

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 8:35 AM)

A

That is all the time for sharing we have today.

Announcements

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)

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B

This ends our session of Before & 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.

Questions

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

(A & B field questions)

End of Week 3

Month 4 Week 4

SESSION SEVENTEEN-Step 12

A

Welcome to the fourth month and seventeenth session of "Before and 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 read to us the 12th Step Prayer:

Higher Power, please help me to carry the message of recovery to other addicts who are suffering. Help me to be unselfish with my time and resources and give back what I have so generously been given. Provide me with the guidance and wisdom to talk with another addict and reach out to my fellows so my own sobriety will be strengthened.

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

Today we complete the Twelfth Step.

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."

Let's now look at the third objective in Step Twelve:

PRACTICING THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS

B

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.” We will now look at the third objective in Step Twelve. **OBJECTIVE THREE—PRACTICING THESE PRINCIPLES IN ALL OUR AFFAIRS:** Where have we found the PRINCIPLES of MAA? They are found in the Twelve Steps. In taking us through the twelve steps, the Big Book authors have shown us twelve distinct phases that contain within them the Principles crucial to achieving long-term recovery from media addiction.

A

Let's review the principles we have learned so far. You will notice that each Principle has a partner. When we work to achieve the first Principle, we acquire the gift of receiving the second Principle.:

- *Step 1: “We admitted that we were powerless over media — that our lives had become unmanageable.” Principles 1 & 2: **HONESTY** leads to **ACCEPTANCE***
- *Step 2: “Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.” Principles 3 & 4: **FAITH** leads to **BELIEF***
- *Step 3: “Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God as we understood [God].” Principles 5 & 6: **FAITHFULNESS** leads to **GUIDANCE***
- *Step 4: “Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.” Principles 7 & 8: **COURAGE** leads to **CLARITY***
- *Step 5: “Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.” Principles 9 & 10: **CONFESSION** leads to **FREEDOM***
- *Step 6: “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.” Principles 11 & 12: **WILLINGNESS** leads to **SURRENDER***
- *Step 7: “Humbly asked [God] to remove our shortcomings.” Principles 13 & 14: **HUMILITY** leads to **UNITY***
- *Step 8: “Made a list of all the persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.” Principles 15 & 16: **CONSIDERATION** leads to **FORGIVENESS***
- *Step 9: “Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.” Principles 17 & 18: **INTEGRITY** leads to **PEACE***
- *Step 10: “Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.” Principles 19 & 20: **PERSEVERANCE** leads to **TRANSFORMATION***
- *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.” Principles 21, 22, & 23: **AWARENESS** leads to **KNOWLEDGE**, **KNOWLEDGE** leads to **POWER***

B

Now that we have reviewed these principles, let's look at the principles for Step Twelve. Step 12 -- “Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to media addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.” *Principles 24 & 25: **GENEROSITY** leads to **GRATITUDE**.*

- **GENEROSITY** is the full-throated spirit of service. Without **GENEROSITY** our whole fellowship would not survive. Someone was generous enough with their time and energy to help you. **GENEROSITY** helps us keep what we have so generously been given. Bill W, the co-founder of AA, could

not stay sober without helping other alcoholics. This is the genius of the Twelve-Step Programs. Bill W's call to Dr. Bob, on that shaky night when he had a choice either to drink or to find another alcoholic to help, was a choice that changed the world. Millions of people are now recovering from all kinds of addictions because of this man's profound decision.

- When you care about someone else's recovery, you will care more about your own. When you see someone else's recovery, you will better see your own. The final step of MAA is to pay it forward. You've worked your way through the entire process of growing and setting yourself up for success in sobriety. Now you have the opportunity to guide less-experienced members through their own journey. GENEROSITY encompasses our Twelve Traditions as well: "Our common welfare should come first; our leaders are but trusted servants"; "Our primary purpose is to carry the message to other media addicts"; "We are self-supporting through our own contributions"; "Anonymity is the spiritual foundation of all the steps, ever reminding us to put PRINCIPLES before PERSONALITIES." GENEROSITY allows us to accept each other as we are, to Live and Let Live.
- GENEROSITY leads to GRATITUDE. For it is in giving that we receive. It is in pardoning that we are pardoned. It is by allowing our addiction to die that we are reborn into a life of sane and happy usefulness. GRATITUDE pours out of the heart from one who thought they were lost forever and now they are found. Being GENEROUS with our time and talents, by working with others, creates GRATITUDE in those we work with. This GRATITUDE connects us in a deeper way to others. We have moved from self-centered fear and compulsion to a deep and gratifying purpose. We are GRATEFUL for every day we are able to give back what we have so generously received.

A

As Group Sponsors, we have found many things to be grateful for as we serve this group. First and foremost, it helps our own sobriety. We learn how to be compassionate leaders as Group Sponsors and see others grow and recover, just as we are recovering a day at a time. It is a source of fulfillment we could not have experienced any other way.

B

The Big Book authors give us two last principles that are not necessarily apparent in the Twelve Steps: *they are adamant that we enjoy our lives*. To legitimately live the principles of MAA, our recovery needs to not only be filled with service and usefulness but also with CHEERFULNESS and LAUGHTER.

A

We are to share with newcomers the joy and vitality of life that has come to us in recovering from media addiction. This paragraph from the Big Book may be one of the most important messages a recovering media addict can hear: *Principles 26 & 27: TWO LAST HIDDEN PRINCIPLES, **CHEERFULNESS AND LAUGHTER***

- "We have been speaking to you of serious, sometimes tragic things. We have been dealing with [media addiction] in its worst aspect. But we aren't a glum lot. If newcomers could see no joy or fun in our existence, they wouldn't want it. *We absolutely insist on enjoying life*. We try not to indulge in cynicism over the state of the nations, nor do we carry the world's troubles on our shoulders. When we see a [person] sinking into the mire that is [media addiction], we give [them] first aid and place what we have at [their] disposal. For [their] sake, we do recount and almost relive the horrors of our past. But those of us who have tried to shoulder the entire burden and trouble of others find we are soon overcome by them. So we think CHEERFULNESS and LAUGHTER make for usefulness. Outsiders are

sometimes shocked when we burst into merriment over a seemingly tragic experience out of the past. But why shouldn't we laugh? We have RECOVERED, and have been given the power to help others."

B

Here the Big Book authors tell us that, after having gone through the steps we have recovered. What have we recovered? We have recovered our dignity, self-esteem, and connection to ourselves and to our fellows.

A

We have recovered our purpose in life and the joy and vitality of authentic living. We have recovered our true nature and found there the God of our understanding. Where we were once lost, now we are found.

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

B

Our joy of life is our super-power to keep healthy dopamine and serotonin levels up high enough so that we don't seek dopamine hits from media and other sources. Make sure you have a solid "Media Replacement Plan." Please review the article in your packet about activities that help elevate your mood. Daily attention to living positively will help us experience the principles of Cheerfulness and Laughter.

A

We are recovered but not cured. We must be careful not to fool ourselves or deny how serious our addiction really is. The Big Book warns us to be careful not to try to recapture the old feelings of using the kinds of media that trigger a media binge:

- "For most normal folks, [being on media] means conviviality, companionship, and colorful imagination. It means release from care, boredom, and worry. It is joyous intimacy with friends and a feeling that life is good. But not so with us in those last days of heavy [binging on media]. The old pleasures were gone. They were but memories. Never could we recapture the great moments of the past. There was an insistent yearning to enjoy life as we once did and a heartbreaking obsession that some new miracle of control would enable us to do it. There was always one more attempt—and one more failure... Then would come oblivion and the awful awakening to face the hideous Four Horsemen—Terror, Bewilderment, Frustration, Despair. Unhappy [bingers] who read this page will understand!"

B

If we allow ourselves to forget or rationalize where our media addiction has taken us, we will be prey to its seduction again. We cannot rest on our laurels or feel that after a time of sobriety, we can let up. We must be willing to say "good-bye" forever to those things that trigger in us a media binge. In order to do this, we must find ways to be happy in sobriety. The Big Book authors make this clear.

- "Now and then a serious [media binger], being [sober] at the moment, says, 'I don't miss it at all. Feel better. Work better. Having a better time.' As ex-problem [media addicts], we smile at such a sally. We

know our friend is like a [child] whistling in the dark to keep up [their] spirits. [They] fool [themselves]. Inwardly, they would give anything to [watch] half a dozen [shows or play a half dozen video games] and get away with [it]. They will presently try the old game again, for [they aren't] happy about [their] sobriety. [They] cannot picture life without [the reward of media]. Someday [they] will be unable to imagine life either with [media] or without it. Then [they] will know loneliness such as few do...[They] say, 'Yes, I'm willing. But am I to be consigned to a life where I shall be stupid, boring, and glum, like some righteous people I see? I know I must get along without [triggering media], but how can I? **Have you a sufficient substitute?'**”

A

Do we have a sufficient substitute for media? Why yes we have! We replace media with something that will gratify us and give us more satisfaction and happiness than our addiction ever did. Besides the newfound connection we have with our Higher Power, better health, and recreation, the Big Book authors tell us that sharing our newfound vitality and freedom with others will give our lives deeper meaning.

- "Yes, there is a substitute and it is vastly more than that. It is a fellowship in [Media Addicts] Anonymous. There you will find release from care, boredom, and worry. Your imagination will be fired. Life will mean something at last. The most satisfactory years of your existence lie ahead. Thus, we find the fellowship, and so will you."

B

In Media Addicts Anonymous, we understand media addiction better than family and friends ever will. We support each other in ways no one else can, because others may not understand our need to be sober from media. To be in a media sober community, built together in unity, recovering from media addiction one day at a time, and living the Twelve Steps, for us is a blessed place to be. You are no longer alone. You matter. You have the potential to connect to others in significant and deeper ways.

A

In Session Three we read that all addictions are manifestations of our inability to CONNECT with ourselves, our Higher Power, and others. Perhaps as little children, we did not receive the nurturing and bonding we needed to thrive. Maybe we had no one to model healthy relationships for us. People's unstable behaviors could have scared us, and we vowed never to put ourselves in a place to be hurt and therefore shut people out.

B

Because we could not connect to important people in our lives, we found other "things" that felt safe or good to connect to, like food or drugs.

- Searching for love, purpose, and safety, we media addicts compulsively sought satisfaction through the many sources of media. Electronic screens became our mother, our father, our friend, our lover, and even our Higher Power.

A

The Tenth, Eleventh, and Twelfth Steps begin to transform this underdeveloped part of the addict self:

- In Step Eleven we become open to connecting and experiencing the love from our Higher Power. By continuing to make amends (Step Ten), we learn how to get along with and appreciate REAL people.

More importantly, as we find other ways to live without the constant use of our media, we connect to our inner lives and begin to love ourselves, our bodies, and the wonders of nature.

B

As you start to share this program with other media addicts, work with a sponsor, and connect with a media action partner, you will find a place of belonging.

- Here is where we discover genuine friendships and find that we never have to isolate or be lonely again. Get ready to have your hearts open and your true purpose blossom through the love and connection with your Higher Power and service to others, which is the Twelfth Step. You will be part of building a community of recovering members all taking this journey of media sobriety together.

A

This concludes our presentation of Step Twelve. Let God guide you when you make your Twelfth Step calls and the “Spirit of the Universe” will keep you safe and protected. In addition, by relying upon guidance, you will “be of maximum service to God and the people about [you].”

B

Being of service to others is critical to our continued growth and the maintenance of our sobriety. Keep in mind that one of the primary services we can perform is to take prospective members through the Twelve Steps. Each time we do this, we learn more about our lifesaving program and gain additional insight into the “All-Powerful Creator” who is at the heart of our new way of living.

A

Now, all that’s left is to practice these principles on a daily basis. We are going to close this final session by reading these passages from The Big Book:

- “Our book is meant to be suggestive only. We realize we know only a little. God will constantly disclose more to you and to us. Ask [God] in your morning meditation what you can do each day for the [person] who is still sick. The answers will come, if your own house is in order. But obviously you cannot transmit something you haven’t got. See to it that your relationship with [God] is right, and great events will come to pass for you and countless others. This is the Great Fact for us. Abandon yourself to God as you understand God. Admit your faults to [God] and to your fellows. Clear away the wreckage of your past. Give freely of what you find and join us. We shall be with you in the Fellowship of the Spirit, and you will surely meet some of us as you trudge the Road of Happy Destiny. May God bless you and keep you—until then.”

B

We wish to welcome those who have taken all Twelve Steps to the “fourth dimension of existence.” We thank you for providing us the opportunity to be your guides for this miraculous spiritual journey.

A

It is time now to make a commitment to practice these principles in all our affairs. Will those who have taken all Twelve Steps, please be ready to respond to the following question, “Will you, to the best of your ability, practice these principles in all your affairs?”

If so, please state your name, followed by “Yes.”

According to the Big Book authors, those who answered “yes” to this question have taken all Twelve Steps. Congratulations Back-to-Basics graduates! We are so proud of you.

B

Thank you for allowing us to be of service.

[A and B Qualify about their experience Sponsoring B2B]

B

Thank you all for all for reading today and thank you for allowing us to be of service. Next week we will begin the Back-to-Basic 4 month cycle again, beginning with week 1. (Or if there is 5 weeks in the month, We will have a Gratitude Meeting) Because today is our last day of this cycle and our topic is on the 12 Step and service. ___A___ and I will both qualify on sponsorship and what it has been like to be of service to Back-to-Basics groups.

After that we will open the room of for sharing up to 3 minutes each. ___A___ will go first and I will follow. (3 minute qualifications)

(Share until 8:35 AM)

A

That is all the time for sharing we have today.

Announcements

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)

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

This ends our session of Before & 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.

Questions

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

(A & B field questions)

End of month 4 week 4

Month 4 week 5, if there is a week 5

If this is a 5 session of the month

Before and Beyond Back-to-Basics

Gratitude Meeting Format

A

Welcome to the Gratitude meeting of "Before and Beyond Back to Basics—A Design for Living" open 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.

My name is __A__, and I am __B__. We are recovered members of Media Addict Anonymous and we are your Group Sponsors. We will lead today's Gratitude meeting.

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.

Before we begin, remember we will be starting on Step One next week in our Before and Beyond Back-to-Basics session.

Here is how our meeting will unfold today:

- a) Will begin by opening up our intention letters that you wrote on the first day of our meeting 4 months ago and reading them if you have them.
- b) We will then take 3 minutes for each member to share their gratitude and what they received these last 4 months.
- c) If there is time, we will have another 1-2 minutes to share a second time.
- d) After 50 minutes, we will take questions and close with the serenity prayer.

B

Please take a moment and look around the room, look into the eyes of the other Back-to-Basics members and acknowledge how far we have come in these 4 months. These people were your tribe, your support

team. Let's take a moment to congratulate ourselves and each other for having made it through these four months. (Allow time for this)

A

Now close your eyes and become aware of your body and your breath...(pause)...Take a moment to bring your awareness home to yourself...(pause)...Remember what it was like the first day we met...What you were thinking, how you were feeling...Remember that you made an intention for yourself and you wrote it down. Now open your eyes. Let's go around the room and read them to each other. (1 min each)

(After everyone has read...)

B

We will now go around the room and every person will have 3 minutes (or TBD) to share what they are grateful for. Please share your journey with us as you see it today, what have you learned about yourself, and what have you learned about media addiction. You are welcome to share gratitudes with other group members as well.

We will begin with _____

(After everyone has shared...)

A

We will go around the room one more time and you will have 1 (or 2 minutes) to share again. Sometimes in gratitude meetings, we remember things we forgot to say we were grateful for or we want to comment on something we've heard.

We will begin with _____

(After approximately 50 minutes...)

B

Remember we are going to begin Step 1 next week. Please find ways of giving service and keep in touch with each other by continuing your two outreach calls. We will now take time for questions. Are there any questions about going forward?

A

We do have some announcements:

(Announcement start date of next session, who Group Sponsors will be, etc.)

Let's end with WE VERSION of the Serenity Prayer.