

Life with Hope



A return to living through
the 12 steps and the 12 traditions of
Marijuana Anonymous

12 Step Workbook

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Marijuana Anonymous
World Services, Inc.
P.O. Box 2912
Van Nuys, CA 91404
<http://www.marijuana-anonymous.org>

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Marijuana Anonymous

THE TWELVE STEPS OF MARIJUANA ANONYMOUS*

1. We admitted we were powerless over marijuana, that our lives had become unmanageable.
2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.
3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God.
4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves.
5. Admitted to God, to ourselves, and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs.
6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.
7. Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.
8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed and became willing to make amends to them all.
9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible except when to do so would injure them or others.
10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.
11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, as we understood God, praying only for knowledge of God's will for us and the power to carry that out.
12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to marijuana addicts and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

* Approved by the General Service Conference of Marijuana Anonymous, October 1989

The Twelve Steps of Alcoholics Anonymous

1. We admitted we were powerless over alcohol—that our lives had become unmanageable. 2. Came to believe that a Power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity. 3. Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God *as we understood Him*. 4. Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves. 5. Admitted to God, to ourselves and to another human being the exact nature of our wrongs. 6. Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character. 7. Humbly asked Him to remove our shortcomings. 8. Made a list of all persons we had harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all. 9. Made direct amends to such people wherever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others. 10. Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it. 11. Sought through prayer and meditation to improve our conscious contact with God, *as we understood Him*, praying only for knowledge of His will for us and the power to carry that out. 12. Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to alcoholics, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

The Twelve Steps are reprinted with permission of Alcoholics Anonymous World Services, Inc. Permission to reprint and adapt the Twelve Steps does not mean that A.A. is in any way affiliated with this program. A.A. is a program of recovery from alcoholism—use of the Twelve Steps in connection with programs and activities which are patterned after A.A., but which address other problems, does not imply otherwise.

Preface

This Step Workbook is the result of a cumulative effort by the Worldwide fellowship of Marijuana Anonymous. For years sponsors adapted the worksheets from other 12 Step groups, substituting language and ideology. Beginning in 2002, fellows began discussing the need of creating our own companion to *Life With Hope*, our basic text, to help us navigate our way through the Steps.

At the Marijuana Anonymous World Service Conference in Orange County in May of 2004, a motion was passed to begin this important work. It was agreed that each district (at the time there were twelve, how fortuitous) would focus on one Step and the Literature Committee would ultimately edit and assemble the worksheets into a cohesive workbook. This is the result of those efforts. It took four years and countless marijuana addicts to accomplish this task.

You can write directly in this book, couple it with a notepad, or go on-line and work on your computer. We have but one request before you begin. Please do this work with the guidance of a sponsor or spiritual advisor. As with recovery, this work is not intended to be done alone. Success depends upon us sharing the process.

You are about to embark upon a life-changing journey with the support of the fellowship of Marijuana Anonymous, your sponsor, and your Higher Power. Behold the miracles.

Thank you for allowing us to be of service.

MAWS Literature Committee
May 2008

Step One

We admitted we were powerless over marijuana and that our lives had become unmanageable.

With the First Step we begin the recovery process. Working this step enables us to move forward through the Twelve Steps of Marijuana Anonymous. We may now find it useful to carefully examine some of our old beliefs, ideas, thoughts, and behaviors.

Step One is about honesty, our most helpful ally to a successful Step One. With the practice of this principle, we can face the reality of our addiction.

Step One is about admitting that we are powerless over marijuana, and that our lives have become unmanageable. We suggest exploring the following questions, and writing out your answers, allowing for reflection, discovery, and discussion with your sponsor.

Getting Started:

- Begin reading LIFE WITH HOPE through Step One. Note passages that are meaningful to you and statements or words that you don't understand.
- Look up dictionary definitions of the words you didn't understand.
- Look up the words *powerless* and *unmanageable* in the dictionary, and then write what these words mean to you. Review Step One with your sponsor or a trusted fellow MA member.

Write A History Of Your Marijuana Use:

Write a history of your marijuana use. Detail your experiences. Ask yourself the following:

- What early life experiences led me to using?
- How did I feel the first time I used?
- What were my feelings over time as I continued to use?
- Did marijuana turn on me, and if so, when?
- Describe your life during your last 60 days of using.
- What brought me to Marijuana Anonymous?

Answer the following questions and review them with your sponsor:

Recall Experiences In Which You Were Powerless Over Your Marijuana Use:

- How did I try to control my using?
- How did my marijuana use keep me from realizing my potential?
- How did my marijuana use keep me from doing what I wanted to do with my life?
- Do I think I can control other people, places and things?
- Where in my life am I powerless?
- Where in my life do I have power?

Explain How Your Life Is *Unmanageable*:

- Did I make deals with myself that I was unable to keep?
- What are some triggers that cause me to crave marijuana?
- Have I ever experienced confusion, paranoia, and fear associated with my using?
- Was I withdrawn and isolated?
- Was I brought to the depths of despair and hopelessness?
- How was my life unmanageable when I was using? How is it unmanageable today?

Denial, Surrender, Honesty and Acceptance:

- How have I been living “the fantasy of functionality?”
- Am I done with the idea of being able to use again?
- Do I blame the world or others for my problems?
- What does surrender mean to me?
- Has my way of life been working for me?
- Am I still looking for a way to control my using?
- Am I ready to admit that I am powerless over marijuana and that my life has become unmanageable?

Some say that Step One is the only step we are asked to work “perfectly.” Others say we need only work the *first half* of the step “perfectly.” We do that when we admit, accept and surrender to the fact that we are powerless over marijuana.

When we can do that, and accept that our lives have become unmanageable, we are ready for **STEP TWO.**

Step Two

Came to believe that a power greater than ourselves could restore us to sanity.

Step Two is about open-mindedness, change and hope. We consider trusting a power greater than ourselves, (and greater than our obsession with marijuana), that can help us deal with everyday life. We define insanity as repeating the same behaviors over and over again, while expecting different results.

It is not necessary to acquire a major God Consciousness to be able to cease using. All we need is to maintain an open mind and a hopeful heart. Higher Power means different things to different people. There is room in Marijuana Anonymous for all beliefs, or none. Each of us finds a Power that works for us. Some of us draw strength and support from the fellowship. We begin to see that a power greater than ourselves could do for us what we could never do alone.

Getting started:

- Read Step Two in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Two with your sponsor, or a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words *believe*, *restore*, and *sanity* in the dictionary and then write what the words mean to you.
- What does a Higher Power mean to you?

The following questions are categorized for your convenience.

Recall Experiences Of Insanity:

- Give some examples of repeating the same behaviors over and over again and expecting different results.
- Do I have thoughts of using again someday, even though I need or wish to stop using? Explain.

Examine Beliefs Of A Power Greater Than Ourselves:

- What is my concept of a Power greater than myself?
- Can I become open-minded to a new concept of a Power that works for me?
- How can I focus on using a Higher Power to benefit my recovery?

Becoming Open-Minded:

- Has a lack of open-mindedness contributed to my reaching a bottom?
- Am I ready to accept and/or choose a power greater than myself that is positive, powerful and with which I am comfortable?
- Do I believe a Higher Power can do for me what I could not do alone?

Discuss your answers with your sponsor, or a trusted fellow MA member.

Welcome to **STEP THREE . . .**

Step Three

Made a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the care of God, as we understood God.

In Step Two we examined our concept of a Higher Power. The program of recovery can work for anyone who can accept a power greater than him or herself.

Step Three doesn't say, "We turned our will and our lives over," rather, it suggests that we "*made a decision*" to do so. The idea of turning our will and life over to the care of a Higher Power can seem impossible to some of us. However, it can be done gradually, over time. This is possible when we become willing and have faith. What is important is that we start the process.

By staying in the present, we release the past and let go of the future. Doing so helps us relinquish our self-will. Many of us found that simply making this decision opened us up to a spiritual connection. This decision was an act of faith in and of itself.

For some of us, our faith started to grow as a direct result of our abstinence from marijuana. Others of us had to "act as if." We find that praying for willingness often helps.

Even if we do not understand or feel connected to a Higher Power, it is possible to work Step Three. To release our self-will, we make a decision to turn our will and our lives over to the *care* of a higher power. We let go and let god, as we understand (or don't understand) god.

Getting Started:

- Read Step Three in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Three with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words *decision*, *will*, *acceptance*, and *faith*; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.

Review the Third Step prayer on page 13 of LWH:

- What, if anything, about this prayer works for you?
- What, if anything, about this prayer do you resist?
- Write your own version of this prayer, using as little or as much of the original as you choose.

Willingness/Willfulness:

- What does willingness mean to me?
- How does self-will affect my life?
- Am I willing to be open to the idea of surrendering my will to the care of a Higher Power? What stands in the way of my willingness, if anything?
- Do I try to control people, places, and things? Do I blame myself when I am not successful at doing so?
- Have I tried to stop using marijuana through self-will? Was I successful? If not, why do I think that is?

Understanding the Care of a Higher Power:

- Do I have faith that my Higher Power can relieve my obsession with marijuana? If not, do I have the willingness to “act as if” a Higher Power could do so?
- Where in my life do I believe my Higher Power can take care of me? Where, if anywhere, do I feel my Higher Power cannot take care of me?
- Where in my life right now do I feel my Higher Power is taking care of me?
- What does turning my will and my life over to the care of a Higher Power mean to me?
- What fears do I have about turning my will and life over to the care of my Higher Power?

Discuss your answers with your sponsor, or a trusted fellow MA member.

Welcome to **STEP FOUR** . . .

Step Four

Made a searching and fearless moral inventory of ourselves

Now that we've been honest enough to take Step One, open-minded enough to take Step Two, and willing enough to take Step Three, we are ready for Step Four. Before we start this step, it is important to ask what it is that we want from recovery.

Step Four does take courage. It begins the process of learning who we are. Many of us feared beginning this step, but once we did the work, we found it was less difficult than we had imagined. The inventory is a detailed description of our character challenges, or defects of character, removed of judgment. Remember, it is an inventory; no action other than writing is required.

While we look at our character challenges and wrongs in Step Four, many of us found it helpful to examine our character assets as well. We encourage you to look at and list all aspects of your character in this step. As you work in this process you will likely gain a greater understanding and acceptance of the person you have been, and see the potential of the person you are becoming.

Taking this inventory is not a thinking exercise, it's a writing exercise. As you work on your inventory, try not to leave anything out because of shame, fear or embarrassment. What you record is between you, your Higher Power, and your sponsor or other trusted person with whom you share this step. We find that the more thorough and honest we are, the better results we get from this step. Remember, we are only as sick as our secrets. Ask your Higher Power for help every time you sit down to write. There is no rush. We have found the rewards to be substantial.

Getting Started:

The inventory suggested in LWH (and this workbook) is really four separate inventories: resentments, fears, sexual history, our assets, and a final inventory to cover anything that might have been missed. Each inventory is unique, and it is suggested that you do them one at a time, in the order set out below. Included are templates that might be helpful when doing this step; we suggest that you make several copies of each before beginning, if you choose to use them.

These inventories may be handwritten or done on computer. If writing by hand, have plenty of paper, or a notebook, and a quiet place to work. For many of us, writing by hand is more intuitive and less from reasoned thinking, which is best avoided here. Some find the use of a computer to be of assistance in doing this work. Whatever our preference, the reward is release from the past and freedom from the pain that has enslaved us.

Before beginning this inventory we recommend an exercise to facilitate openness and willingness. For many of us, this means a prayer to a higher power. Here's an example:

Higher Power would you please bring to mind all of my resentments (fears, memories of sexual misconduct, etc.) that I need to look at in this inventory.

The exact words we say aren't as important as saying the words we choose with a spirit of openness. Many of us have found that saying the prayer out loud is helpful. If we just relax and ask for help, it's amazing how freely the information we need to look at will flow onto the paper.

Three things to remember: 1) Stay focused. 2) Pray. 3) Keep writing!

We are ready to begin.

The Resentment Inventory:

We usually begin with the resentment inventory, which is generally divided into four columns. It is strongly suggested that we complete one column at a time, from top to bottom (going onto several sheets if necessary), before beginning the next column. In other words, we list all of the people, principles, and institutions that we resent before looking at anything in the 2nd column (the cause), leaving enough room to fill in each cause of our resentments. Experience shows that when we write more than one column at a time, the process becomes too confusing. Once we have completed our first column, we move on, remembering that we can always go back and make additions as other people, principles, and institutions towards which we hold resentments come to mind.

In the second column, for each person / principle / institution in column one, we write down the cause or causes for each resentment. For example:

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2
I'm resentful at:	The Cause (Why I'm Angry)
Mom	put too much pressure on me enabled my addiction by looking the other way; embarrassed me in front of my friends
Dad	belittled me; made me feel like I wasn't good enough; didn't defend me with Uncle Joe

In column three, we identify how the "causes" in column two impacted our well-being, what part of us was hurt or threatened. Examples:

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3
Mom	Too much pressure	Self-esteem
	Enabled	Self-esteem, security, ambitions
	Embarrassed	Self-esteem, personal relationships

Again, note that for each column 2 cause, there can be more than one area affected. It is

important to be thorough (which is one of the reasons why it is recommended that we attempt to finish each column before starting the next). Of course, if we think of things we've forgotten that belong in a previous column, by all means we fill in those blanks. But again, we find it best to work on one column at a time and to be as exhaustive as possible.

In preparing to be rid of these resentments, we realize that the people who wronged us were perhaps spiritually sick. We say a prayer for each every resentment, such as:

“ _____ is a sick person. How can I be helpful to them? Higher Power, save me from being angry. Help me show _____ the same tolerance, kindness, and patience that I would cheerfully grant a sick friend.”

In the fourth column we identify our part in each resentment. This means that we look for what we did to create or aggravate the situations described in the earlier column. Where were we to blame? Sometimes this is obvious: when we resent a spouse or partner for being jealous, for example, we might come to understand fairly easily how our actions may have led to our partner's feelings. Other times, our part may be more difficult to identify. Perhaps our anger at someone at work is completely understandable, based upon how they have treated us. In such a case, we may find that where we have failed is in our refusal to forgive: we have allowed the resentment to fester and grow, perhaps even gaining enjoyment out of it! Sometimes we rack our brains and cannot find our part in the resentment. This is where a sponsor's help can prove invaluable.

Whenever you get stuck, take a break. These inventories take most of us weeks to complete--some of us have spent much longer, though such delay is not usually necessary. The sooner we begin, and the more we do each day, the sooner we will be finished. We find that when we return to working on our inventory after a break of more than a few minutes, it's a good idea to perform the willingness exercise (or prayer) again.

Once we have finished the fourth column of our resentment inventory, we look over our worksheet for things we may have missed or where we could have been more thorough.

We are now ready for the fear inventory.

The Fear Inventory:

The fear inventory is a lot like the resentment inventory, except that here, the focus is on our fears. We list each fear in the first column. When we have written out all of our fears to the best of our ability, we explore the cause or causes of our fears in the second column. In the third column, we write how each fear affects our lives today. In the fourth column, we write down our part, if any.

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
Fear of Heights	My brother pushed me off the second floor balcony	Affects my ability to fly; my ambition to be a pilot	I bullied my brother

We then ask our Higher Power to remove the fear. We do this for each individual fear.

“Higher Power please remove my fear of _____ and direct my attention towards what you would have me be.”

Again, we should remember to take breaks, and to take advantage of whatever prayers, tools or techniques that we have found that help us to be more willing, honest and open minded. For years, we have run away from ourselves with marijuana. Even without the marijuana, our tendency is to hide the truth rather than to face it. But if we are to grow as individuals, if we are to truly deal with this disease of marijuana addiction, we must face each of our fears, so that we can work through them. Remember always that we will not be working through them alone.

Once we have conquered the fear inventory, we are ready for the sex inventory.

The Sex Inventory:

We begin by listing each of our sexual partners. In the second column, we ask ourselves how we behaved by answering these questions: Did we harm that person? Did we use them or take advantage of them? As always, we try to be as honest and thorough as we can. Remember that we are not concerned here with what others may have done to us. If we have a resentment against someone because of something done to us, then we add them to our resentment inventory.

In the third column, we describe what part of us was hurt or threatened. What part of us caused the harm? Where was I selfish, dishonest, inconsiderate, jealous, suspicious or bitter?

In the fourth column, we write down where we were at fault. In the fifth column we describe what we could have done instead. Again, we always try to remember to be thoroughly honest every step of the way.

COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4	COLUMN 5
Pat	Yes	Selfish, jealous	Made a scene; didn't listen	Talked it out calmly; paid more attention
Chris	No			
Jan	Yes	Dishonest, jealous	Lied	Told the truth

Secrets and Other Issues:

We may find that there are instances where we have harmed people, lied, cheated or stole. We may have secrets that we have yet to uncover. We list them now.

Assets:

At this point, many of us have found that it is also important that we take a look at the things that we've done right. We look to see where we have had a positive impact on ourselves and others. We do this so that we might have a more complete picture of ourselves. We also want to know those character traits and behaviors that we wish to foster in our lives.

We ask ourselves: what qualities do I have that I like?

We suggest looking over everything one more time, asking our Higher Power to help us find anything important we might have missed. If we have been exhaustive, if we have searched our hearts and souls, we may feel a sense of relief having completed this step.

We are now ready for **STEP FIVE**.

Step Four Worksheets

Review of Our FEARS

Instructions for Completion:

Complete each column from top to bottom before proceeding to the next column.

Column 1 *We list our fears thoroughly. We put them on paper, even though we had no resentment in connection with them*

Column 2 *We ask ourselves why we are afraid.*

Column 3 *How does our fear affect our lives today?*

	COLUMN 1	COLUMN 2	COLUMN 3	COLUMN 4
	I'm fearful of:	Cause of my fear?	How does the fear affect my life?	What was my part, if any?
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				

REVIEW OF OUR FEARS

COLUMN 1

COLUMN 2

COLUMN 3

COLUMN 4

	I'm fearful of:	Cause of my fear?	How does the fear affect my life?	What was my part, if any?
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				
21				
22				
23				
24				

Step Five

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

Step Five requires courage and rigorous honesty. This step continues the process begun in Step Four, uncovering things about ourselves of which we might not have been aware, or were unwilling to face. Admitting what we find to our Higher Power, to ourselves and to another human being helps us to overcome our feelings of shame, guilt and embarrassment that may have kept us from realizing our true potential.

By the time we reach Step Five, many of us know with whom we will be sharing our Fourth Step inventory. Most commonly that person is a sponsor we have already chosen.

However, it's not imperative that you share your Fifth Step with your sponsor. *Life With Hope* suggests that a spiritual advisor or even a total stranger can hear your Fifth Step. (We have found it to be highly beneficial if the person has at least some understanding of the Twelve Step philosophy.)

The Fifth Step is about discovering patterns resulting from our resentments, fears and selfishness. By identifying and sharing them, we find we can move beyond them.

Getting Started:

- Read Step Five in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Five with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words *humility*, *humiliation*, and *honesty*; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.

Trust:

- Do I have a lack of trust in myself or others?
- What factors, if any, contribute to my lack of trust?

Humility:

- What excuses, if any, interfere with my ability to share my inventory?
- Is there anything blocking me from having the courage to take this step?

Many of us found it helpful to pray for trust, humility, and courage.

We now meet with our sponsor or spiritual advisor to share our fourth step inventories.

After Sharing:

- Upon conclusion of sharing our inventories, some of us have found it helpful to spend time alone in quiet reflection.
- If we discover any additional resentments, fears or secrets, we share them with our sponsor or spiritual advisor at this time.

For many of us, after completing this step the wreckage of our past becomes a resource from which we can learn and grow. Many of us experience a new sense of empowerment, self-acceptance, integrity, and humility.

We are now ready to move on to **STEP SIX**.

Notes for the Sponsor:

Each sponsor develops their own approach to working with sponsees. That approach may vary from sponsee to sponsee and is almost certain to change over time.

Even without prior expertise, most sponsors are able to note patterns that are revealed by listening without judgment and keeping an open heart and mind.

Some of us may help our sponsees prepare a preliminary list of those they might owe an amends; others might leave that to the sponsees themselves. Likewise, some sponsors apply the same process to character defects. Still others do not include this process at all in the Fifth Step.

After a sponsee has shared their list, many sponsors have found it helpful to ask one final time if there are any other secrets that haven't been revealed or didn't fit under any other category. This gentle prompting can help the sponsee dredge out any lingering "skeletons in the closet."

As a sponsor you may find that while relief is a frequent result of taking this step, anxiety and discomfort may also result from unearthing old memories and feelings. Sponsees may want to run away from what they've found. They may be tempted to avoid us because we "know too much." You may wish to help them resist these urges and turn to the experience of other addicts who are likely to reassure them with their own stories of struggle along this path.

The Fifth Step work that a sponsor and sponsee complete together is effective and often transformative. It may, however, also reveal certain issues or circumstances that the sponsor does not feel capable of handling. In most cases, the sponsor is not a qualified therapist. The sponsor may advise the sponsee to seek appropriate professional help such as a licensed counselor, a legal advisor, or a doctor. In some cases, even the sponsor may wish to seek outside advice, being mindful not to breach the special trust formed in the sponsor-sponsee relationship.

Many of us have found that a great resource in working with a sponsee is our own sponsor; always being careful to maintain the confidentiality of our sponsee.

Step Six

Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character.

Having completed Steps Four and Five, we now carry an awareness of the harm we have done to others and ourselves with more clarity and detail than ever before. In the patterns that emerged while sharing these details fully and openly for the first time, we have begun to recognize our defects of character.

Step Six says simply that we “Were entirely ready to have God remove all these defects of character”. This step requires that we practice the spiritual principles of willingness and faith. We need to be willing to let our Higher Power remove our defects of character and to have faith that when we are ready to let go, our Higher Power will be there to help us. Some defects of character we cannot wait to get rid of, while others we do not know how we can do without. This movement towards the new and unknown can be exciting and scary. On the one hand, we envision ourselves becoming more like how we always wanted to be and cannot wait to move on to the Seventh Step. On the other hand, we cannot imagine entirely letting go of some of our character traits, thus moving into an entirely new way of being.

Getting Started:

- Read Step Six in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Six with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words defect and willing; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what the words mean to you.
- Review the word faith (from Step Three). Has your concept changed at all?

Willingness:

- List examples of times when you practiced the spiritual principle of willingness? What were the results?
- Do I have character defects that I can't wait to get rid of?
- Do I have character defects that I can't imagine living without?

Faith:

We can practice the same faith we used to stop using marijuana, in letting go of our character defects. We become willing to surrender our character defects.

- List examples of times when you practiced the spiritual principle of faith. What were the results?
- Is there anything blocking me from having the courage to take this step?
- If my Higher Power is going to do all this for me, what's my job?

Character Defects:

Many of us bristled at the words “character defect.” While we didn't claim to be perfect, the idea of having “defects” still made us think less of ourselves. Some of us use an alternative term, such as “character challenges,” as it's more encouraging and suggests that we can overcome them. With our diligence, our sponsor's guidance, and HP's help, many of us have found that we can indeed eventually lessen, or free ourselves of many of the traits that no longer serve us. The changes begin as long as we are willing and have faith. By writing, sharing, and praying, we increase our readiness to let go of these character defects.

- What are my character defects? Write down each defect and give a brief description of it.
- What are some examples of situations in which I acted on my defects?
- How do my defects affect myself and others?
- Do I have defects that I know I am attached to?
- Do I have defects that I think cannot be removed?
- What do I think would happen if these defects were removed?
- What might I do in place of acting on these defects?
- Do I trust my Higher Power to do what is best for me?
- What would my life look like if each character defect were entirely removed?

Character defects are often rooted in normal and desirable human traits that have been allowed to run riot during our active addiction. There is transformation available in examining these themes, for it is in the shadows of our worst traits that we may discover our greatest assets.

- Can I connect any of my character defects to an underlying strength?
- What might happen if I was left with only the strength, but not the character defect that grew from it?

It is widely acknowledged that working the sixth step is an ongoing, even life-long process. Many of us have experienced the dramatic lifting of some of our character defects, but few of us found that all of our defects were lifted at once, so we needed to accept that being ready also meant *staying* ready. This approach to the Sixth Step has been described as embracing a life-long ‘Sixth Step attitude’: being constantly open to discovering our defects and surrendering them to a higher power.

By practicing Step Six, we acquire the humility needed to take **STEP SEVEN**.

Step Seven

Humbly asked God to remove our shortcomings.

The spiritual principle of Step Seven is humility. In this step we let go of our ego and humbly submit to a power greater than ourselves so that our shortcomings may be removed. Step Seven doesn't mean that we think less of ourselves; it means we think of ourselves less.

Getting Started:

- Read Step Seven in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Steps Six and Seven with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words: *humility* and *surrender*; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.

Humility:

Humility is needed to calmly ask for help and let go. We take the action and leave the results of our request to our Higher Power. Where humility once represented weakness to many of us, it now begins to hold the key to serenity.

- How do I feel about the idea of practicing humility?
- How does humility affect my recovery?
- What can I do to practice humility in this step and in my daily life?

Surrender:

Having faith that our Higher Power knows what's right for us requires a complete surrender. We need to get out of the way, and allow the changes in our thinking and behaviors to happen.

- How do I feel about surrendering and letting my Higher Power work in my life?
- Am I willing to let go and surrender my character defects to my Higher Power?

Taking Action:

Some form of prayer is customary when we ask our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings, but the spiritual path may vary. Some of us write our own prayer and keep it between our Higher

Power and ourselves. Others share the experience with our sponsors and others still invite members of our sponsorship “family tree” to share in the ritual. How we ask our Higher Power to remove our shortcomings is a personal choice. It is suggested that we make the choice with help from our sponsor or spiritual advisor.

This seemingly simple act of prayer gives our Higher Power permission to work in our lives. When something happens to trigger our character defects, we are more apt to recognize it and have an opportunity to seek help from our Higher Power.

- How will I ask my Higher Power to remove my shortcomings?
- Do I choose to share the experience with my sponsor and other trusted members of the fellowship?
- Do I believe that my Higher Power will remove my shortcomings?

Progress Not Perfection:

We often hear the phrase “progress, not perfection.” Sometimes we make a little progress, and sometimes a lot. Any progress helps build the foundation for our recovery. When we strive for perfection, our ego gets in the way of letting our Higher Power into our recovery. It’s important to take a step back. Looking at the progress we’ve made gives us an opportunity to see how much better our lives have become and how much our Higher Power has played a part; this is our recovery in action.

- How do I practice perfection in my life?
- How can I learn to apply spiritual principles and the tools of recovery in situations when I attempt perfection?
- What will I do when a character defect reoccurs in my life after I’ve asked my higher power to remove it?

As we ask our Higher Power to remove our character defects, we ask to transform them into new useful patterns of thinking and behaving. When we ask humbly, we discover that our Higher Power can remove our imperfections and help us gain self-forgiveness.

We are now ready to take **STEP EIGHT**.

Step Eight

Made a list of all people we have harmed, and became willing to make amends to them all.

Step Eight incorporates honesty, openness, willingness, faith, acceptance, love and forgiveness. This Step is about *becoming willing* to make amends, not actually making the amends. We look back and try to discover where we've been at fault. Having begun this work in Step Four, we identify all the people we have harmed and in what ways.

Although we may be tempted to rush out and make our amends, it's important for us to remember that Step Eight is merely making a list. If we try to make amends without our sponsor's guidance and a plan, we may end up doing more harm than good.

Getting Started:

- Read Step Eight in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Eight with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words amends and forgiveness; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.
- Review the word willing from Step Six. Has its meaning changed for you at all since you worked that Step?

Willingness:

Some of us need to begin by praying for help to become willing to make our list. Staying focused on that objective is often very helpful.

- Am I willing to make my list?
- List any resentments preventing me from being willing to make an amends.
- Is it possible to let go of those resentments now? If not, can I add those names to my list anyway, and work towards becoming willing later?
- What might help me to become more willing?
- Are there amends I need to make that might cause harm to myself, or others?
- What concerns and/or fears am I having?

Writing Our List:

We write down whom we have harmed as a result of our character defects, and precisely how we harmed them. We categorize our list according to those we feel should receive immediate amends, those we are willing to approach soon, those we will approach later, and those we can't imagine ever being willing to approach. Our list may include people who have passed away, or those we have little chance of locating. We may also want to add ourselves to the list.

We write down the harm we have caused spiritually, socially, mentally, physically and financially.

For Example:

Spiritually

- Did we force others to adhere to our beliefs without respect for theirs?
- Had we used sarcasm or other means to undercut others' beliefs?

Socially

- Had we hurt others to feel superior, or had we acted passively to gain control?
- Did we isolate from our family and friends?

Mentally

- Did we maliciously toy with other people's minds?
- Were we neglectful, manipulative, or exploitive?

Physically

- Did we abuse others, or let others batter us (or our children)?
- Had we sexually harmed or cheated on someone?
- Did we try to do our best, or did we do just enough to get by?

Financially

- Were we careless and wasteful, or greedy and miserly?
- Had we deprived others of necessities?
- Had we cheated or stolen from others?

Wherever possible, we write down what we might do to set things straight with the people on our list. Where applicable, we identify what might stop us from making an amends to a particular person.

It may be that we are not responsible for some of the harm we place on our list. Reviewing each amends with our sponsor or spiritual advisor is essential. They can help us gain insight, strength, hope and the forgiveness necessary to proceed to **STEP NINE**.

Step Nine

Made direct amends to such people whenever possible, except when to do so would injure them or others.

Step Nine is an action step. By taking the information we've acquired in the first eight steps, we begin the process of making amends. We continue the work begun in Step Four—cleaning up the wreckage of our past. The Ninth Step is about our admission of wrongful conduct, a sincere apology, and reasonable reparation. There are many approaches to this step. Ultimately, how we choose to accomplish it will be a personal choice, guided by our sponsor or spiritual advisor.

The purpose of Step Nine is not to win the admiration of others, but to restore our self-esteem, and further our spiritual growth. The form of our amends may vary, but our attitude is always the same—willingness to take responsibility for our behavior and taking action to right our wrongs.

Although many of us approached this step with hesitation, we found it to be one of the most deeply rewarding and spiritual experiences of our lives.

Getting Started:

- Read Step Nine in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Nine with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words *justice*, *integrity*, and *reparation*; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.

Preparation:

Many of us have found it helpful to begin by writing letters to each person on our list a reviewing them with our sponsors. This helps ensure that we keep the focus on ourselves and not blame others for our actions. It prevents us from beginning with a sincere apology and ending up with the “yeah, buts.” (For example: “Yeah, I stole your money, but you were cheap.”)

When beginning our letters it is suggested we come clean about our addiction, whenever possible, not as an excuse, but as a potential explanation of our behavior. We make amends for what we have not done, as well as for what we have done—such as isolation and neglect of others.

In some cases we make amends to those who have harmed us, maybe even more than we harmed them. The Ninth Step is about clearing up our side of the street, not taking the inventory of others.

Taking Action/Making Amends:

Whenever possible we make our amends face to face. Some of us use our letters as a script, to make sure we say exactly what we mean to say when making our actual amends. Utilizing the phone, mail or email is sometimes our only option.

In some cases, making an amends might do more harm than good. Again, that is something to be discussed and decided upon with the guidance of our sponsor. Concern about consequences does not excuse us from making amends, unless to do so would injure ourselves or others. When we owe financial amends to practicing addicts, we seek options for our safety that do not put us at risk for relapse and illegality by being in the proximity of drugs.

Sometimes making direct amends isn't possible. If the person we have harmed has died or is untraceable, we can write a letter and read it to our sponsor and then make an indirect or living amends. These can include contributing to charities, doing volunteer work, or making an honest change in our behavior towards others.

The Ninth Step is about taking responsibility for our actions. We acknowledge where something we've done or said has caused harm to others. We are facing our past and owning our part. We make our amends and leave the results to our higher power.

The rewards we receive from taking this Step are profound and sublime. Miracles become an everyday reality. The hard work we put into the first nine steps is a valuable gift.

In order to keep that gift, we turn to **STEP TEN**.

Step Ten

Continued to take personal inventory and when we were wrong promptly admitted it.

Step Ten is the beginning of the “maintenance” steps, combining what we have learned in the first nine steps and putting that knowledge to work on a daily basis. Coupled with Steps Eleven and Twelve, Step Ten is about our continued commitment to spiritual progress. Taking a daily personal inventory enables us to maintain our self-reflection and awareness, and assures our ongoing growth in recovery. As we gain an understanding of our thoughts and actions (as well as their consequences), and willingly correct ourselves, our lives are transformed.

Getting Started:

- Read Step Ten in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Ten with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words promptly, perseverance, and commitment; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.

The Daily Inventory:

It is suggested that we get into a routine of daily self-reflection. Some of us have found it helpful to pick a time of day when we can sit quietly and review the previous twenty-four hours. We might choose to do this exercise before going to bed at night, or we might prefer to examine the previous day first thing in the morning. The time of day doesn't have to be the same, but doing so helps to establish a habit of consistency. While a daily moral inventory may be done in written form, a mental list is also helpful as this practice is integrated into everyday life.

This is an ongoing process. We strive for progress, not perfection. Many days we don't handle everything as we'd wished, yet it's important that we forgive ourselves if we fall short of our own expectations. This is not a test; there are no right or wrong answers. These are ideals we're striving for, rather than a checklist of perfectionism.

We didn't get to the Tenth Step in one day. Self-mastery is a process, not an event. Easy does it.

We consider these questions, aware that some days not all of them will apply:

- Did I stay sober today?
- Did I pray or meditate?

- Did I pray for someone else?
- Did I talk to my sponsor today?
- Did I go to a meeting?
- Did I read any Twelve Step literature?
- What Steps did I consciously work today?
- Did I do anything to help my recovery?
- Did I learn anything about myself today?
- Did my disease influence my life today?
- Was I fearful? If so, about what?
- Was I obsessed about anything today? If so, what?
- Was I honest?
- Did I worry about yesterday or tomorrow?
- Did I gossip today?
- Did my resentments lead me to do things I regretted?
- Was I overly emotional?
- Was I judgmental, prejudicial, or unfairly discriminating?
- Did I have a negative attitude and inflict it upon those around me?
- Was I tolerant and open-minded?
- Was my attitude loving and forgiving?
- Was I good to myself today? If so, how?
- Was I kind to someone else today? If so, how?
- Did I give of myself today without expecting anything in return?
- Have I expressed gratitude to my Higher Power for everything that went right today?
- Did I make any mistakes today? Did I promptly admit them, and make amends, if appropriate?

- Do I have any unfinished business to address tomorrow?

Daily practice of Step Ten helps restore us to sanity by keeping us on the best terms possible with the world around us. We begin to truly experience peace and serenity. We are now ready to improve our conscious contact with our Higher Power. To do that, we now focus on **STEP ELEVEN**.

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.

Like Step Ten, The Eleventh Step is one we don't have to wait to work. Step Eleven is about nurturing and improving our relationship with the Higher Power of our understanding and increasing our spiritual awareness. Many of us have found that when we pray for knowledge of God's will for us, we discover the right actions to take and the right words to say. Like Steps Ten and Twelve, the Eleventh Step is one we don't have to wait to work.

One of the challenges of the Eleventh Step is learning how to understand the difference between God's will and self-will. We need only ask for our Higher Power's guidance and wisdom to be assured that our own desires are not the focus. The more we let go of our wish list, the more we allow our Higher Power to work in our lives. As we experience the power of prayer and meditation in our lives, our awareness grows stronger and our faith deepens.

Getting Started:

- Read Step Eleven in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Eleven with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words *prayer*, *meditation*, and *spiritual*; write out the definitions that you find to be significant, and write what each word means to you.

Prayer:

Some of us begin and end our day thanking our Higher Power for another day clean and sober. Others use formal prayers from recovery literature, organized religion, or our spiritual practice. Many talk directly from our hearts, letting God know our innermost thoughts and feelings. Any method we choose will yield positive results. Over time, we usually find that communication with our Higher Power becomes easier and allows for a deeper relationship to develop.

In addition to praying for knowledge of God's will for us, we also pray for the "power to carry that out." We may become aware of God's will, but due to many factors, we may feel unable to follow through. In order to successfully work the Eleventh Step, it becomes necessary to practice the spiritual principle of faith and trust God's will in our daily life. If we focus on being grateful for the things that are good in our lives, the desire to carry out God's will becomes easier.

What method(s) of prayer have I tried?

- Which, if any, works best for me?
- Have I felt a connection to my Higher Power?
- Have I found that any of my prayers have been answered? (Such as: relief from the obsession to use, or help in taking the next right action)

- Have I been able to establish a daily practice of prayer?
- If not, is there anything I might do to help me integrate prayer more easily into my life?

Meditation:

Just as prayer is a form of talking to God, meditation is a form of listening to God. Meditation techniques are designed to help us develop the ability to be aware of our Higher Power. Some prefer guided meditations, others practice moving meditations, still others prefer simple breathing techniques. No matter which form of meditation we perform, the process of quieting the mind further develops our awareness and our connection to our Higher Power.

Some meditation methods suggest that we pay attention to our breath, as a way of quieting our mind. For some of us, repeating a phrase of a spiritual nature, such as “Let go and let God,” and staying focused on the words, can help calm our mind. When our minds wander, as they invariably will, we gently and lovingly bring them back into focus. With all techniques, there tends to be a constant process of refocusing our awareness when it becomes distracted. With regular practice, the ability to focus and maintain our awareness increases. As we calm our minds, our intuition grows; serenity and solutions come to us.

Which, if any, meditation techniques have worked for me? How have they worked?

- Have I made progress toward developing a regular meditation practice?
- Have I noticed any changes in my ability to meditate since entering recovery?
- In what ways, if any, have I or my life changed as a result of meditation?

As we improve our ability to stay in conscious contact with our Higher Power, we develop a greater understanding of self-love, inner peace, true joy and happiness. We intuitively know what to do in the moment; our guidance comes from our Higher Power. If we maintain this connection, we’ll remain in harmony with God’s will for us.

Have I experienced moments of conscious contact with my Higher Power?

- How do I know when I’ve achieved a conscious contact with my Higher Power?
- What factors help me do this?
- What gets in the way of my attaining a conscious contact with God?
- How do I know God’s will for me? Do I always know? Sometimes know? Never know?
- Is anything blocking me from carrying out God’s will?
- How can I help myself carry out my Higher Power’s will for me in all areas of my life?

Step Eleven allows us the strength and courage to incorporate the program in all aspects of our lives. We’re now able to be of help and service to others, which leads us to **STEP TWELVE**.

Step Twelve

Having had a spiritual awakening as the result of these steps, we tried to carry this message to marijuana addicts, and to practice these principles in all our affairs.

Step Twelve promises us that if we honestly and thoroughly apply the first eleven steps in our lives we will achieve a spiritual awakening. Through this awakening, with the help of our Higher Power and the tools of the program, we are given the gift of recovery.

Getting Started:

- Read Step Twelve in LIFE WITH HOPE.
- Review Step Twelve with your sponsor, or with a trusted member of MA.
- Look up the words *service* and *result*; write out the definition that you find to be significant, and write what service means to you.

Service:

This step is about the concept of service, an essential part of our recovery and of MA as a whole. Without service, there would be no program. Having been spared from active addiction, we are free to help other addicts and give back what has been so freely given to us.

We begin to work the Twelfth Step as soon as we enter the rooms. We are of service to others when we attend meetings, reach out to newcomers, use the phone, take service commitments, and when we sponsor fellow addicts. The more we help others, the more we help ourselves.

- How have I been of service?
- How do I carry the message of recovery?

Practicing the Principles:

Each step carries at least one main spiritual principle. We strive to apply these principles not only to the program and the fellows in it, but to all aspects of our lives.

- Look up the meaning of each principle in the dictionary.
- How do I use each one in my life today?
- If I don't already practice the principle, how might I begin?
- What, if anything, stands in my way?

Step One: Honesty

Step Two: Hope

Step Three: Faith

Step Four: Courage

Step Five: Integrity

Step Six: Willingness

Step Seven: Humility

Step Eight: Reflection

Step Nine: Justice

Step Ten: Perseverance

Step Eleven: Spiritual Awareness

Step Twelve: Service

It is essential that we take *all* of the steps and practice *all* of the principles if we are to maintain our recovery. In order for us to keep what we've been given, we need to give it away. If we closely examine our evolving relationship with our Higher Power, ourselves, and others, we can see a definite shift in our attitudes and perceptions. As we make spiritual progress we gain inner strength, self-esteem, and serenity. We can look at our part in every situation and be willing to do whatever it takes to practice the principles of this program.

- What benefits have I experienced as a result of working these steps?
- Have I experienced a spiritual awakening? If so, how has it manifested?
- How has living the principles affected my daily life?

As we continue to be of service and to practice these principles in all our affairs, we are transformed from suffering addicts into people who are able to be happy, joyous and free.

We take these steps for ourselves, not by ourselves. Others have gone before; others will follow. We recover.

